

OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

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| LOCAL COMMISSIONERS MEMORANDUM |  
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OTDA-4037EL (Rev. 11/98)

Transmittal No: 99 LCM-27

Date: September 27, 1999

Division: Temporary Assistance

TO: Local District Commissioners

SUBJECT: Learnfare Allocations: Base Allocations for SFY 1999-2000 and the Availability of Additional Funds to Enhance Local Learnfare Operations.

ATTACHMENTS: I: Base Allocations (Available on-line)  
II: Enhanced Allocations (Available on-line)  
III: Budget Worksheet (Available on-line)

I. Introduction:

The purpose of this LCM is to advise districts of their Base Learnfare Allocation (Attachment I) and their Enhanced Learnfare Allocation (Attachment II).

The Learnfare program in New York State establishes a system based on level of school attendance with the main objective of keeping children engaged in educational activities. Good attendance in school at an early age means better attendance throughout a child's school life, more success in school and a better opportunity for employment later in life.

All children in receipt of Temporary Assistance (TA), enrolled in grades one through six, are required to participate in Learnfare. Those children with at least three unexcused absences in an academic quarter must be offered counseling. When a child accumulates five unexcused absences during an academic quarter, the family of that child will have up to \$60 per month of their basic allowance removed from their household's TA grant for three consecutive months. The full amount of the grant reduction is returned to the family if the child has no unexcused absences in the following academic quarter.

Each district was required to submit a Learnfare Plan, developed in cooperation with local school districts, by March 31, 1999. A district that chooses to request these additional funds will need to meet the requirements listed in Section III of this release, but will not need to amend their district's Learnfare Plan previously approved by this Office. Learnfare must be implemented in all districts by September 1, 1999.

II. Program Model:

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) is interested in providing additional funding (Enhanced Learnfare Allocation) to districts that choose to develop innovative enhancements to their Learnfare Program within the parameters of Social Services Law 131-y. No waivers to operate demonstration programs outside of the current Law will be given. For example, a district cannot use these funds to extend Learnfare requirements to children above grade six. However, a district could use these additional funds to pursue counseling for children in grades one through six in a more aggressive manner. Consideration should be given to the following areas when developing submissions to accept these additional Learnfare funds:

- Enhancing and/or developing local attendance tracking systems
- Intensifying counseling component
- Enhancing case management activities
- Enhancing outreach efforts
- Other (defined by district)

These additional funds are available only to social services districts. The district may use these funds to provide services directly, through the purchase of services from appropriate vendors within the district, or through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with local schools/school districts. These funds must be used solely for the purpose of meeting costs associated with the administration of Learnfare.

III. Plan Content

A district interested in operating an enhanced Learnfare Program and wanting to request additional Learnfare funds, must submit a written proposal for review and approval by OTDA. Plans should include:

1. An understanding of the goals of the Learnfare Program and how the district's proposal will enhance local Learnfare Programs.
2. A budget worksheet (Attachment III) must be submitted. The budget worksheet must include a brief description of the enhancement, what agency will perform the service, if the district will enter into a contract or MOU and the amount of funds requested to enhance the district's existing Learnfare program. Districts may use multiple worksheets if necessary.
3. Copies of contracts or any MOU which directs the expenditure of these additional funds.

#### IV. Evaluation

All plans will be evaluated by a group consisting of staff from the Division of Temporary Assistance and the Office of Budget Management with final approval from the Division of the Budget and must adhere to the additional allocation amount offered. The review will consider the merit of the plan based on content and availability of funds. Projects will be rated according to the following criteria:

1. The district's ability to demonstrate an understanding of the issues/problems related to attendance and the goals of Learnfare and to the issues relating to transmitting this data.
2. How services will integrate into the district's existing approved Learnfare Program.
3. How services will be coordinated and to what extent these services appear to be unavailable to the district in the absence of the additional funding.
4. The ability of the district to clearly describe the service model, including, if applicable, how the target group will be identified and how services will be accessed.
5. The experience and expertise of any outside service providers with whom the district will be entering into contract.

#### V. Funding

In addition to the base Learnfare Allocation, there is \$2,000,000 available for districts seeking to enhance their Learnfare Programs. These funds are not available to supplant other funds or services available to districts from other funding streams or outside sources. Additionally, as TANF funding, services provided must fall within the guidelines for the expenditure of TANF dollars.

It is anticipated that approved proposals will operate until June 30, 2000. Funding beyond this period is subject to annual appropriation by the State Legislature.

#### VI. Fiscal Implications

Allocations shown on Attachments I and II are for the period July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000. These funds will be available for use during the current State Fiscal Year, i. e. to pay for services through 6/30/00 with claims due by 8/15/00. Since these Federal funds must be appropriated for use by New York State and we operate on a one-year budget cycle, we cannot provide an absolute guarantee of continued funding beyond these dates. However, we fully expect that any unused amounts will again be reappropriated in the SFY 2000-01 budget, making them available for another year, thus enabling us to provide a full year's funding at 100% Federal share.

VII. Claiming Instructions

Claiming Instructions for the Base Allocations

Local district administrative costs (including any purchased services and MOU costs) associated with the ongoing Learnfare program should be reported as F-17 function code expenditures and claimed on the Schedule D-17, "Distribution of Allocated Costs to Other Reimbursable Programs" (LDSS-3274). The costs from the Schedule D-17 are to be brought forward to a LDSS-3922 form entitled "Financial Summary For Special Projects" labeled "Learnfare" and reported on the appropriate lines. These costs are reimbursed at the level of 100% Federal Share up to the limit of the base allocation. Costs in excess of the allocation are reimbursed at the level of 50% Federal Share, 25% State share and 25% Local Share (A-87 costs are funded at the level of 50% Federal Share and 50% Local Share) with these costs being outside the local district administrative cap.

Claiming Instructions for the Additional Funds to Enhance Learnfare Operations

Those districts that receive approval to operate an enhanced Learnfare Program will report their costs as F-17 function code expenditures and claim them on the Schedule D-17, "Distribution of Allocated Costs to Other Reimbursable Programs" (LDSS-3274). The costs from the Schedule D-17 are to be brought forward to a LDSS-3922 form entitled "Financial Summary For Special Projects" labeled "Enhanced Learnfare" and reported on the appropriate lines. These costs will be reported in the Total Column and claimed at 100% Federal Share. Reimbursement is available up to the limit of the approved plan with these costs being outside the local district administrative cap.

Any questions of a fiscal nature can be directed to the Bureau of Financial Services. Region I Through IV-Roland Levie at 1-800-343-8859, extension 4-7549 (USER ID# FMS001) and Region V-Marvin Gold at (212) 383-1733 (USER ID# OFM270).

VIII. Submission of Plans

The Plan (see Section III of this release) must be submitted to this Office no later than close of business November 1, 1999. Plans must be submitted to:

Maureen Kennedy-Ragule, Team Leader Region II  
Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance  
Section 11B  
40 North Pearl Street  
Albany, New York 12243  
FAX (518) 474-5281

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If you have questions concerning this release, please contact your Regional Team representative.

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Patricia A. Stevens  
Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Temporary Assistance

<u>District</u>	<u>Base Learnfare Allocation</u>
Allegany	\$ 5,424
Albany	22,883
Broome	24,247
Cattaraugus	10,739
Cayuga	7,910
Chautauqua	12,194
Chemung	9,718
Chenango	5,307
Clinton	7,689
Columbia	3,844
Cortland	5,833
Delaware	7,890
Dutchess	28,506
Erie	98,107
Essex	5,202
Franklin	2,883
Fulton	7,425
Genesee	4,495
Greene	5,079
Hamilton	3,367
Herkimer	5,448
Jefferson	10,997
Lewis	3,673
Livingston	3,979
Madison	7,739
Monroe	85,577
Montgomery	2,396
Nassau	118,659
New York City	1,030,391
Niagara	20,013
Oneida	31,204
Onondaga	46,386
Ontario	10,382
Orange	16,889
Orleans	8,279
Oswego	5,505
Otsego	5,291
Putnam	5,915
Rensselaer	14,982
Rockland	16,439
Saratoga	5,337
Schenectady	12,857
Schoharie	2,271
Schuyler	1,241
Seneca	3,441
St. Lawrence	9,345
Steuben	7,421
Suffolk	90,137
Sullivan	9,441
Tioga	4,971
Tompkins	3,762
Ulster	15,687
Warren	6,437
Washington	5,734
Wayne	5,124
Westchester	84,214
Wyoming	2,531
Yates	1,163
Total	\$2,000,000

<u>Enhanced Learnfare Allocation</u>	<u>District</u>
\$5,000	Chenango, Columbia, Cortland, Delaware, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Genesee, Greene, Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, Livingston, Madison, Montgomery, Otsego, Putnam, Saratoga, Schoharie, Schuyler, Seneca, Tioga, Warren, Washington, Wyoming and Yates.
\$10,000	Allegany, Cattaraugus, Cayuga, Clinton, Ontario, Sullivan, Tompkins and Wayne.
\$20,000	Chemung, Dutchess, Jefferson, Oswego, Rensselaer, Rockland, Schenectady, St. Lawrence, Steuben, and Ulster.
\$30,000	Albany, Broome, Chautauqua, Nassau, Niagara, Oneida, Onondaga, Orange, and Orleans.
\$80,000	Erie, Monroe, Suffolk and Westchester.
\$1,000,000	NYC.

Learnfare  
Budget Worksheet  
Program Year 1999-2000

Learnfare Enhancement (Must be included in narrative)	Agency Performing Service	Contract or MOU (Y or N)	Enhanced funds Requested