

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-31

Date: October 07, 1999

Division: Temporary Assistance

TO: Local District Commissioners  
Temporary Assistance Directors  
Food Stamp Directors  
HEAP Liaisons  
WMS Coordinators  
Staff Development Coordinators

SUBJECT: Y2K Readiness Planning

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment I - New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Y2K Contingency Plan (Not available on-line)  
Attachment II - Orange County Department of Social Services Y2K Contingency Plan (Not available on-line)  
Attachment III - Readiness Checklist (Available on-line)

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) has developed a Year 2000 (Y2K) readiness plan to ensure business continuity in the event that Y2K interrupts state and local activity related to the provision of the public benefits and services. The final Y2K Contingency Plan (Attachment I) identifies operation guidelines in the event of a Y2K disaster and is meant to assist local social services districts in preparing their own local plans. The plan describes state agency roles and responsibilities and provides detailed contingency plans for:

- o Office of Legal Affairs
- o Child Support Enforcement
- o Program Support and Quality Improvement (PSQI)
- o Disability Determinations
- o Temporary Assistance

Local district responsibilities regarding general eligibility during a disaster and local district and other agency response activities are also described.

Each local district provides an array of essential services including eligibility and authorization of all Temporary Assistance (TA) benefits, Food Stamp (FS) benefits, Medical Assistance (MA), Child Support and Adult and Children's Services. In preparation for Y2K it is essential that all local districts develop contingency plans. An example of one local district's plan has been attached (Attachment II) for your information. It identifies a practical and comprehensive planning approach from the local perspective. Your district may have additional issues or needs that have to be addressed in your own individual plan.

#### CRISIS ASSISTANCE

#### CASH ASSISTANCE

Local districts have a variety of benefits and services available to address immediate and crisis needs arising out of a potential Y2K general or localized disaster. The following Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps and Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) benefits or alternatives are available:

- o Emergency Assistance for Adults (EAA): SSL 300-303, 18 NYCRR Part 397, PASB XXIV-C-1 to C-9, provides assistance to Supplemental Security Income (SSI) individuals and couples. EAA is intended to meet those needs, which if not met, would endanger the health, safety or welfare of such persons.
- o Emergency Assistance to Families (EAF): SSL 350-j, 18 NYCRR Part 372, PASB X-A to X-F, may be used to pay for those items of need found in 18 NYCRR Part 352 such as shelter, utilities, heating fuel, restaurant allowances, etc. EAF may be used to pay for the cost of services and supplies, mass feeding and clothing distribution, and other essential articles such as blankets.
- o Emergency Safety Net Assistance (SNA) SSL 131, 18 NYCRR 370.3, 97-ADM-21, may be authorized to provide for the effective and prompt relief of identified emergency needs which cannot be provided under EAF or FA. Emergency Safety Net is limited to the items, conditions and amounts specified in Part 352. Emergency needs that occur on a mass basis such as clothing distribution or mass feeding and other essential items shall be considered emergency needs.
- o Special needs can also be authorized pursuant to department Regulations 18 NYCRR Parts 352,3 - 352.7.

#### FOOD STAMPS

- o The potential for various levels of emergency Food Stamp administration is addressed in the attached Y2K Contingency Plan. Many of the Food Stamp procedures remain unchanged from the Food Stamp Disaster Plans you have received in prior years. The significant areas of change and where they are described in the contingency plan are as follows:
  - o Administrative/Management Responsibilities (page 6)
  - o Telephone Contact Update (pp. 44-47)
  - o Benefit Level Changes (p. 57)
  - o EBT and Other Issuance Procedures (pp. 39-42)

HEAP

- o As part of our Y2K contingency plan, we have maximized our 1998-99 HEAP carry forward and will advance a significant amount of HEAP funding to local districts prior to 12/31/99. Districts normally receive a nominal cash advance each December that is utilized for start-up costs and emergency payments for fuel deliveries to households with no-heat emergencies. The additional funding advanced for 1999-2000 HEAP will ensure adequate cash on hand to meet any unusual increase in energy related crisis needs.
  
- o There are a variety of HEAP emergency benefits available to assist HEAP eligible households including:
  - o Heat and/or heat related emergency benefits
  - o Furnace or heating equipment repair/replacement
  - o Temporary emergency shelter or relocation
  - o Propane installation/reconnection
  - o Purchase of safe supplemental heating equipment in the event of a weather-related or fuel supply shortage
  
- o There is also flexibility to allow local districts to purchase an appropriate supply of warm clothing, blankets, etc., as deemed necessary, to maintain the safety of HEAP-eligible households.
  
- o Detailed information regarding crisis benefits is contained in the emergency section of the HEAP Program Manual.

TRAINING

- o A series of regional training sessions have been scheduled. In addition to HEAP policy training, crisis assistance related to a Y2K disaster will be discussed. Training sites and dates are:
  - o Plattsburgh (10/15)
  - o Ronkonkoma, Long Island (10/19)
  - o Albany (10/21)
  - o Batavia (10/26)
  - o Buffalo (10/27)
  - o Kingston (10/28)
  - o NYC (10/29)
  - o Wampsville (11/3)
  - o Ithaca (11/5)
  - o Olean (11/9)

READINESS CHECKLIST

The attached Readiness Checklist should be utilized during the October-December timeframe to assist in your preparation for Y2K.

MEDICAID

Under separate cover, the Department of Health will be providing direction to local districts to address Medicaid issues which may arise in the event of any Y2K problem.

If you have any questions regarding this LCM, please contact your Regional Team Representative.

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Patricia A. Stevens  
Deputy Commissioner  
Division of Temporary Assistance

LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES DISTRICT Y2K READINESS CHECKLIST

In preparing your local Y2K contingency plan the following action items should be addressed:

ACTION ITEM	Date Initiated	Date Completed
Produce Eligibility and Benefit Lists prior to 12/31/99		
Produce Managed Care Roster and Error List prior to 12/31/99		
Produce CSMS Collection Information Report (DSS 8660) prior to 12/31/99		
Contact Appropriate Providers to Notify Them of Y2K Issues and Procedures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Landlords/Public Housing Agencies</li> <li>o Food Pantries</li> <li>o Benefit Issuance Sites</li> <li>o Shelters</li> <li>o Pharmacies</li> <li>o Transportation Providers</li> <li>o Power/Heating Fuel Providers</li> </ul>		
Ensure adequate supply of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Vouchers</li> <li>o Manual Checks</li> <li>o Bus Tokens</li> <li>o Petty Cash</li> </ul>		
Develop a Local Mobilization Plan to Ensure Adequate Disaster Coordination and Staffing to Meet Related Disaster Needs.		
Develop Back-up Plans to Deal with Potential Loss of Electric Power, Voice Communication, Radio/Television and/or Water and Sewer Service in DSS Facilities		
Train Staff Regarding the Local Contingency Plan		