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Governor

NEW YORK STATE  
OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE  
40 NORTH PEARL STREET  
ALBANY, NY 12243-0001

Brian J. Wing  
Commissioner

## Local Commissioners Memorandum

### Section 1

<b>Transmittal:</b>	03 LCM 7
<b>To:</b>	Local District Commissioners
<b>Issuing Division/Office:</b>	Temporary Assistance
<b>Date:</b>	June 30, 2003
<b>Subject:</b>	Food Stamp Management Evaluation Procedures
<b>Contact Person(s):</b>	Paul Rickard at (518) 473-6354
<b>Attachments:</b>	Food Stamp Application Processing - Case File Review Document Food Stamp Application Processing - Self -Assessment Interview/Observation Instrument Food Stamp Management Evaluation Review Schedule
<b>Attachment Available On – Line:</b>	X

### Section 2

#### I. Purpose

The purpose of this release is to advise local districts of the continued requirement to conduct Food Stamp Management Evaluation (ME) self-assessments outside of New York City.

#### II. Background

Program Access ME's are a portion of the annual report submitted by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Division of Temporary Assistance (DTA) to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). In FFY 2002, OTDA introduced the ME self-assessment process to share program responsibility by allowing local districts to assess, evaluate and, when necessary, adjust their own management practices. OTDA required districts to retrieve a random sample of 30 cases, review these cases, complete an interview instrument, respond to individual case findings, and if indicated, submit a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to address deficiencies.

#### III. Program Implications

##### Program Access Reviews

OTDA is continuing the ME self-assessment process for program access reviews under USDA-approved procedures. Districts will continue to self-assess key areas of program access, including application processing, expedited processing, timeliness and accuracy of benefits and notices, separate determination, including transitional food stamp benefits, complaint procedures and waiting room observations. The major change in this year's program access ME outside New York

City is that Eighteen Districts will complete a self-assessment and OTDA will conduct 13 on-site reviews (see attachment A). The districts receiving on-site reviews will not be required to self-assess. Future selection of the on-site review districts will be targeted based on review findings and other factors. This will reduce the overall number of districts reporting in calendar year 2004.

The self-assessment will include a questionnaire (attachment B-1) and a review of 20 cases currently under process using a state prescribed Casefile Review Instrument (Attachment B-2). Completed forms will be sent to OTDA, and if indicated, a CAP will be submitted for areas identified as needing improvement.

### **Claims Reviews**

ME claims reviews will also be subject to self-assessment. Five districts will conduct a claims self-assessment and provide corrective action plans to address deficiencies and 21 districts will receive on-site claims reviews conducted by OTDA staff. Additional instructions will be forthcoming. (See Attachment A for the districts scheduled for claims on-site reviews / self-assessment.)

## **REVIEW GUIDELINES**

### **Program Access**

Districts will select 20 cases, including each of the following categories: temporary assistance (TA) case openings, denials, withdrawals and closings; and non-temporary assistance/food stamp (Non-TA/FS) case openings, denials and withdrawals. One recording form will be completed for each case and the reviewer may be either designated centrally or may be any supervisor who did not sign the original case action. In addition, each district will complete a structured Interview Guide to assess other pertinent areas of operation. The guide remains largely unchanged from prior years and should be sent to OTDA with the case review forms.

All districts except New York City will commence the program access ME self-assessments in July of 2003. Completed findings on the attached forms will be returned to OTDA by August 31, 2003. Districts will then provide their Corrective Action Plans to OTDA where they will be used for statewide program analysis.

Copies of the review sheets, the interview/observation instrument, and the proposed CAP will be sent to:

New York State OTDA/DTA  
Eastern Regional Team  
40 North Pearl Street  
Albany, NY 12243

## **CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

Although the sample reviewed by districts does not constitute a valid statistical sample, the review of FS processing in the several areas listed above will provide local managers with indications of those actions that were taken in error and how best to correct them. Districts experiencing significant errors in any of the review areas will submit a corrective action plan with the case review forms. In addition, NYS OTDA staff will evaluate district participation data from June 2003 and compare it to the districts' participation rate from June 2002. Districts showing a decline

in participation will submit a corrective action plan that identifies tasks that will be completed in order to increase participation.

After reviewing local findings, the district will determine if administrative deficiencies are evident and submit a plan addressing how they are to be corrected. Plans may include remedies such as: topical training, communications improvements, recordkeeping changes, staff realignments or any other locally developed processes or resources required to improve the problem area. Districts should include dates by which activities are to be conducted.

**STATE OVERSIGHT**

The DTA will review the materials submitted, as well as those obtained from the on-site reviews, and prepare a statewide ME report on program access to be submitted to USDA.

**Issued By**

**Name: Patricia A. Stevens**

**Title: Deputy Commissioner**

**Division/Office: Temporary Assistance**