



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

Eliot Spitzer
Governor

David A. Hansell
Commissioner

Informational Letter

Section 1

Transmittal:	07-INF-12
To:	Local District Social Services Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Commissioner's Office
Date:	September 25, 2007
Subject:	Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Restructuring
Contact Person(s):	Lee Ryan, Director, Bureau of Human Resources at 518-473-6938 Lee.Ryan@otda.state.ny.us

Section 2

Purpose

During my first nine months serving as Commissioner, I have taken the opportunity to methodically review our operations and assess the agency's program structure, as well as assess my leadership team. I have sought, welcomed and greatly appreciated, the valuable input and recommendations you have provided me.

As a result of these efforts, I am pleased to announce the organizational changes I have made to enhance our operations to best serve the people in most need and partner with you to accomplish the Governor's goals and objectives.

Background

Governor Spitzer recently laid out a vision for increasing the economic security of low-income New Yorkers, and that vision is consistent with our agenda. Buoyed by our success with welfare reform, we have reframed OTDA's mission to focus on four components:

- I. To enhance the economic security of low-income working families;

- II. To assist work-capable public assistance recipients in achieving entry into the workforce;
- III. To assist individuals with priority needs other than work-readiness in accessing appropriate benefits and services; and
- IV. To enhance child-wellbeing and reduce child poverty.

These are designed to align our agency structure with the mission described above, to support the development of new initiatives that address current and anticipated needs, and to create greater operational efficiencies.

Program Implications

We will be reorganizing our program divisions into three centers, as follows:

- A **Center for Employment and Economic Supports**, which will administer both our services to public assistance recipients and our economic support programs for working families. This Center will expand the range of services offered to public assistance recipients, to help them obtain work experience, improve their skills, and overcome barriers to employment. We also now recognize that people leaving public assistance need more than transitional support; they need long-term supports to enable them to survive and move forward in the workplace. This Center will work with the Governor's new Economic Security Cabinet to strengthen those supports. Deputy Commissioner Russell Sykes will be heading this Center.
- A **Center for Specialized Services**, which will administer most of our programs for those who require benefits and services addressed to needs other than work-readiness. It will include our Division of Disability Determinations, our Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance, and a newly-consolidated Bureau of Housing and Shelter Services. We will be recruiting a new Deputy Commissioner to head this Center.
- A **Center for Child Well-Being**, which will administer our programs directed to improving the lives of children. It will include our Division of Child Support Enforcement, and our Responsible Fatherhood Initiative. Deputy Commissioner Scott Cade will be heading this Center.

We will also be creating an **Office of Planning and New Initiative Development**, which will oversee the development of new agency programmatic initiatives, our many collaborations with other state agencies, and our reporting to the Governor's Office on the progress we are making. Lorraine Noval will be the Director of this Office.

Finally, I am delighted to announce that the **Executive Deputy Commissioner** position in the agency, which has been vacant for some time, will be filled on October 22, 2007. I have asked Elizabeth Berlin, currently Commissioner of the Albany County Department of Social Services, to assume that role. One critical area I have asked Beth to oversee is local district relations. To assist her with this effort, I have created a Special Liaison to the local districts, and Dale Peterson will serve in this position.

These organizational changes complement those made earlier this year: renaming the Bureau of Audit and Quality Control as the Bureau of Audit and Quality Improvement, reporting directly to the Commissioner. Jim White will continue as Director. With the hiring of Dan Chan, our new Chief Information Officer, I integrated the Division of Information Technology into the re-named Division of Program Support and Quality Improvement to create the Division of Operations and Program Support. Deputy Commissioner John Paolucci will continue to head this division. You can access organizational charts reflecting our new structure on [OTDA's Intranet](#)

I hope that these changes will enhance our working relationship with the local social services districts. Please know that you can always contact me with any concerns you may have.

Issued By:

Name: David A. Hansell

Title: Commissioner

Division/Office: Office for Temporary and Disability Assistance