



NEW YORK STATE
OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE
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ALBANY, NEW YORK 12243-0001

David A. Paterson
Governor

Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

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| Transmittal: | 09-LCM-16 |
| To: | Local District Commissioners |
| Issuing Division/Office: | Center for Employment and Economic Supports/ Employment and Advancement Services Bureau |
| Date: | November 5, 2009 |
| Subject: | Availability of Safety Net Assistance Project (SNAP 8) Funding |
| Contact Person(s): | Program Related Questions: Susanne Haag at (518) 486-6291 Fiscal Related Questions: Regions 1-4: James E. Carroll (800) 343-8859 ext. 4-7549 or 518-474-7549 or via e-mail at James.Carroll@otda.state.ny.us Region 5: Michael Borenstein (631) 854-9704 or via e-mail at Michael.Borenstein@otda.state.ny.us |
| Attachments: | Attachment 1: Funding Level Maximums Attachment 2: SNAP 8 Budget Instructions Form 1: Proposed Safety Net Assistance Project Submittal Form Form 2: SNAP 8 Budget Form Form 2A: SNAP 8 Budget Narrative Form |
| Attachments Available On – Line: | Yes |

Section 2

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) is to inform social services districts (districts) of the opportunity to apply for a portion of the \$765,000* made available through the SFY 2009-10 Enacted State Budget to provide enhanced services for Safety Net Assistance Non-Maintenance of Effort recipients who are currently unable to obtain or retain employment due to a mental health and/or physical

disability. These individuals are receiving public assistance, but not eligible for federally-funded programs and services. Projects funded under this initiative are referred to as Safety Net Assistance Projects (SNAP).

II. Background

Since SFY 2000-01, the Enacted State Budget has provided funds to support intensive services necessary to help Safety Net Assistance Non-MOE recipients with mental health and/or physical disabilities obtain and retain employment or receive federal disability benefits. The SFY 2009-10 Enacted State Budget includes funding to support SNAP services in districts with a population less than 2 million.

The SFY 2009-10 (SNAP 8) funding will be available for existing as well as new and innovative projects that can serve as models for providing specialized services for the target population. All eligible districts, including districts with currently funded SNAP projects, are encouraged to submit proposals for consideration. All of the SFY 2009-10 SNAP funds available will be awarded through the process described in this LCM. Therefore, districts with approved SNAP projects will need to submit a proposal for consideration to be eligible for SNAP funding beyond their current SNAP award. Maximum SNAP funding levels are established using the SNA Non-MOE caseload data reflecting the number of recipients who are coded as work-limited or exempt from participation in work activities due to a temporary illness or longer term incapacity. Attachment 1 provides the local district funding maximums.

These funds are intended to provide districts with additional resources to serve SNA Non-MOE recipients with mental health and/or physical disabilities obtain and retain employment. The following are examples of services which may be funded under this project:

- Assessment – Identification and assessment of the participant’s strengths as well as factors which may prevent the client from achieving long-term economic independence including, but not limited to, learning disabilities, mental health issues, and physical disabilities.
- Specialized Medical or Vocational Examinations – A potential resource for districts to send individuals for medical, psychological and intelligence evaluations to determine employability, work limitations, recommendations about treatment needs, or evaluate for potential eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (see 08 ADM-05). Examinations funded under a SNAP grant should be specialty examinations or otherwise represent enhancements to the routine disability determination process.
- Case Management Services – Case managers would develop client trust and multi-faceted strategies that will eventually lead some of this population to long term independence. Individuals receive case management intended to help participants view employment as a desirable step, and to move individuals to employment (or, help individuals apply for and receive federal disability benefits). Services may include case management focused on wellness plans

intended to restore an individual's ability to work as well as counseling individuals on the benefits of work and availability of transitional and other benefits available to low-income workers including Earned Income Tax Credits. Case management may also focus on assisting individuals through the federal disability application and/or appeals process.

- Remedial Programs for the Learning Disabled – Proposals may seek to identify learning-challenged recipients, and partner with the local education and training community to develop appropriate remedial programs. These plans would work in concert with other local services, including those provided through Vocational Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), to improve client functioning, thereby enhancing future employment opportunities.
- Support Groups – Facilitated peer groups can be developed for a wide variety of issues, such as substance abuse, learning disability, or a recipients' fear of change. The support groups' overriding goal would be to promote independence by taking incremental steps toward gainful employment.
- Life Skills Services – This would include a set of services designed to assist recipients in learning and/or improving basic daily living skills, especially money management. Funds could also be used to develop support programs to counsel recipients on managing time and stress using public transportation, balancing work and home commitments, and accepting new responsibilities.
- Outreach and Home Visiting Programs – Development and implementation of program delivery strategies that take additional steps to connect with clients, such as meeting clients at their homes. The overriding purpose of the outreach is to seek client buy-in to take steps necessary to achieve economic independence and to establish and monitor client progress with a treatment/employment plan. Districts that intend to use these funds to support home visits should review the requirements outlined in 18 NYCRR 351.28 together with 95 ADM-24 to ensure that the process is developed consistent with State requirements. For example, home visits should generally be scheduled in advance.
- Specialized Job Placement and Retention Services – Projects that successfully prepare individuals to enter employment may also dedicate funds to developing employment opportunities that provide a highly supportive environment and/or provide retention services such as a job coach.

We are seeking innovative and creative approaches to serving the Safety Net non-MOE population with mental health and/or physical disabilities that limit their opportunities for employment. Acceptable activities are not limited to the above listed examples. Plans must have key design points that encompass a combination of at least two of the following criteria:

- comprehensive assessment and early identification of employment barriers,
- case management,
- incremental steps to employment,
- specialized job preparation services,

- specialized job placement and retention services, or
- the pursuit of federal disability benefits.

Safety Net Assistance Plans of Self-Support

As part of the strategy to assist SNA Non-MOE recipients to successfully transition into the workforce, districts are encouraged to consider the establishment of Safety Net Assistance (SNA) plans of self-support as a component of their project (18 NYCRR 352.20(f); 92 ADM-37). These plans allow a district to disregard all, or a portion of a Safety Net recipient's earned income and/or resources when the district determines that the disregard will improve the individual's ability to remain economically independent. For example, a SNA Plan of Self-Support could permit an eligible individual to deposit all or a portion of his/her earnings in a dedicated account for up to one year toward a goal of purchasing a car for transportation to and from work. This would allow for the accumulation of resources to help improve the individual's financial situation before all of the individual's earned income is used to determine eligibility for ongoing public assistance. The SNA plan of self-support exemption is limited to a year and must be authorized and approved by the local district.

III. Program Implications

A. Evaluation Criteria

This will be a highly competitive grant process due to the limited amount of funding available. A review team consisting of OTDA staff will evaluate and rate all plans submitted within the established timeframe. In addition to cost effectiveness and overall fiscal appropriateness, proposals will be assessed and ranked according to the following criteria:

1. the ability to identify and assess the target population(s);
2. the number of individuals to be served;
3. a demonstrated understanding of the various problems and barriers faced by the targeted population;
4. an explanation of the service model(s) to be used, and how the model(s) will help recipients achieve the goal of long-term employment or receive federal disability benefits. Preference will be given to projects with more specialized and intensive program strategies;
5. the outcomes anticipated from the project;
6. a description of how the proposed project would augment existing employment services and other services available to SNA Non-MOE recipients with mental health or physical disabilities; and

7. if applicable, the claiming history for past or currently funded SNAP projects. Districts that received SNAP funding through the SFY 2006-07, SFY 2007-08, or SFY 2008-09 budgets that achieved lower than expected expenditures should explain what steps have or will be taken to ensure that requested funds are needed and will be claimed and that the proposed project meets required reporting timelines and/or outcome targets.

B. Funding

There is \$765,000* in State funds (SFY 09-10) available to fund SNAP projects. Districts are not required to provide a local match for these funds. Districts with a population of less than two million are eligible to apply and may request funding according to the categories shown on Attachment 1. An application for services for two or more districts should identify the approximate number of individuals to be served by district and may request an amount of funds of up to the combined award level limit for districts to be served.

It is the intent of OTDA to fund as many proposals as possible with the available funds without diluting the potential for results. As such, OTDA reserves the right to fund proposals for less than the requested amount and may also shift funds between funding levels to accommodate the funding of additional proposals.

Approved projects are expected to begin on or before January 1, 2010 and operate for one year. However, availability of unspent funds after June 30, 2010 is contingent upon re-appropriation in the SFY 10-11 State Budget.

C. Reporting

The SNAP project will utilize the TANF Reporting and Control System (TRACS) 2 to report the number of participants served and other program related performance measures. Claiming information for districts receiving SFY 2009-10 SNAP funds is provided in Section IV below. Districts receiving SFY 2009-10 SNAP funds will be required to report the monthly numbers of participants served. Districts will also be required to report quarterly program outcomes which are as follows:

- Number of project participants obtaining employment;
- Wages and hours of paid employment at placement for project participants who obtain employment;
- Number of project participants who are retained in employment for at least 90 days and wages and hours of paid employment at 90 days;
- Number of project participants engaged in training or employment preparedness;
- Number of project participants who complete training or educational services;

- Number of project participants receiving a reduced cash benefit or case closing due to increased earnings;
- Number of project participants referred to, or pending federal disability benefits (SSA, SSI and/or Veteran's benefits); and
- Number of project participants awarded federal disability benefits.

Reporting periods are: January 1, 2010 – March 31, 2010; April 1, 2010 – June 30, 2010; July 1, 2010 – September 30, 2010; and, October 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010. Reports for the quarter are due the 15th of the month following the end of the quarter.

Districts with approved projects will be required to enter project description data, including target population(s), project services, project goals and budget into TRACS 2. Funding will not be posted to the TRACS claiming system until this is completed.

D. Submission of Proposals

Local social services districts may submit a proposal individually, or may collaborate with another district(s) to submit a combined plan. **Only e-mailed or certified mail submissions will be accepted.** All proposals must be submitted on the Proposed Safety Net Assistance Project Submittal Form along with the Proposed Safety Net Assistance Project Budget Form and Budget Narrative (Forms 1, 2 and 2A respectively of this release; see Attachment 2 for preparation instructions). Plans must include the name and phone number of an individual that we may contact if any questions arise in the review process. OTDA advises all districts submitting a proposal to use e-mail delivery and read receipt. Plans must be submitted to: Susanne Haag at Susanne.Haag@otda.state.ny.us.

Certified mail submissions – Susanne Haag
 NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
 Employment and Advancement Services Bureau
 40 North Pearl Street, 11-A
 Albany, New York 12243

Proposals must be received by 5 pm on **December 2, 2009** to be considered for funding. OTDA will provide an acknowledgement of receipt of submissions received prior to 5 p.m. on November 30, 2009 by 5 pm on December 1, 2009. Districts are strongly encouraged to submit proposals in time to receive this acknowledgement. OTDA will also acknowledge receipt of proposals received by 5 pm on December 2, 2009 by noon on December 3, 2009. If you have any questions concerning this release, please contact Susanne Haag at (518) 486-6291.

IV. Claiming Instructions

The administrative and/or contracted costs associated with approved projects under SNAP 8 should be reported as F-17 functional code expenditures and claimed in a column labeled SNAP 8 on the Schedule D-17, Distribution of Allocated Costs to Other Reimbursable Programs, (LDSS-3274). These costs will support an LDSS-3922 form entitled Reimbursement Claim For Special Projects.

Local district staff working only part-time on SNAP must be time studied and only those costs should be charged to SNAP. The LDSS-3922 for SNAP 8 should be submitted on a monthly basis to the Bureau of Financial Services using the TRACS system. Districts should retain the signed LDSS-3922 which supports the SNAP 8 claims submitted via TRACS for audit purposes. Instructions for completing the Schedule D-17 are found in Fiscal Reference Manual (FRM) Volume 3, Chapter 18. Instructions for completing the LDSS-3922 are found in FRM Volume 2, Chapter 3.

Those districts that still have existing SNAP funds available should claim these funds first and these claim forms should be labeled accordingly.

The costs should be reported on the LDSS-3922 in the Administration Costs and Total Costs columns and claimed at 100% state share.

A-87 costs are not reimbursable under this program and are 100% local share. Reimbursement for all other expenditures is available up to the limit of the approved project budget.

Please note that the availability of unspent funds after June 30, 2010 is contingent upon reappropriation in the State Fiscal Year 2010-2011 State Budget. Funding beyond this initial period is subject to reappropriation/appropriation in the State Budget.

Based on the information provided above, final claims for the period of January 1, 2010 through June 30, 2010 are due by August 15, 2010. An extension of funding would extend the claiming period and districts will be informed accordingly.

Any claiming questions from Regions 1 - 4 should be directed to James Carroll at (518) 474-7549, or e-mail to James.Carroll@otda.state.ny.us. Claiming questions from Region 5 should be directed to Michael Borenstein at (631) 854-9704, or e-mail to Michael.Borenstein@otda.state.ny.us.

*The Governor has recently proposed that the \$765,000 appropriated in SFY 2009-10 for SNAP be reduced by \$51,000 to \$714,000. Legislative action is required before this reduction in funds is imposed and if enacted, reductions will be applied in equal shares.

Issued By:

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