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Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	14-LCM-02-T
To:	Social Services District Commissioners, Office of Welfare Inspector General
Issuing Division/Office:	Audit and Quality Improvement Office of Legal Affairs
Date:	September 19, 2022
Subject:	WMS Audit Tool in Cognos
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Attachments:	Attachment 1 - How to Access and Use the WMS Audit Tool

Section 2

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide social service districts (districts) and the Office of Welfare Inspector General (OWIG) information with regard to how to use the WMS Audit tool in Cognos, how to provision, recertify and terminate users' access, and what to do in the event the Cognos report generated is either insufficient or the tool is unavailable for use because of technical difficulties. The LCM is being reissued to clarify instructions regarding the provisioning of access to the WMS Audit Tool as well as to replace Attachment 1 – How to Access and Use the WMS Audit Tool. The revised Attachment 1 reflects the updated link to access the tool in COGNOS and provides additional information regarding use of the tool.

II. Background

With the WMS Audit Tool in Cognos, districts are able to generate investigative reports for the Welfare Management System (WMS) without Information Technology Services (ITS) or Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) intervention in most instances. Where the Cognos report generated by the tool does not meet the user's needs, and a more granular or complex report is required, or a report against a different database is required, districts may direct its request, via an authorized requestor identified by the Commissioner, to the listed OTDA Audit and Quality Improvement (A&QI) email address (refer to Section III.3.E). A&QI will then work with our ITS colleagues and OTDA program managers, where necessary, to generate and transmit the necessary report to the districts.

III. Program Implications

A. Use of Cognos

Districts are urged to utilize the audit tool in its investigative endeavors and to make use of the procedure for requesting reports from alternative databases and/or more granular/specific reports.

B. Provisioning and Recertifying Users

1. Provisioning Procedure

In order to access the WMS Audit Tool in Cognos, users must undergo the following provisioning procedures: Cognos Security Contacts must authorize named users to have access to the reporting projects and the data supporting those projects within the Cognos Reporting Application. Cognos Security Contacts for Social Service Districts are the Local Commissioner or his/her designee. Some Commissioners have retained this authority, while others have appointed multiple Security Contacts. To designate staff as a Cognos Security Contact for a district, local Commissioners are required to send an email to the ITS Cognos Security shared mailbox (its.sm.hsp.im.security@its.ny.gov) providing the individual(s) name and requesting the person(s) be appointed as the Security Contact.

In order to provision users or reflect a change in business need for users' access in instances including but not limited to, a change of job duties, retirement, or termination of employment, the appointed Cognos Security Contact for the districts must timely submit a completed Cognos User Request and Change Form. This form is available to authorized COGNOS Security Contacts via email request to the ITS COGNOS Security Shared Mailbox at its.sm.hsp.im.security@its.ny.gov.   The completed User Request and Change Form must be submitted to the same shared mailbox (its.sm.hsp.im.security@its.ny.gov). Users are required to have an active SVC account in order to be authenticated into the Cognos Reporting Application. Once the User Request and Change Form is received, ITS personnel will verify that the form is complete and that the request is from an appointed Security Contact. ITS will then log the request and contact the OTDA approver in A&QI to sign off on the request. Once sign-off has been received, the Security Contact will be notified that the request is complete, and the user will receive a "Welcome to the WMS Audit Report in Cognos" email.

2. Auditing Authorizations

On a biannual basis, ITS Cognos Administrators will audit each districts user authorizations. The ITS Cognos Administrators will confer with the appointed Security Contact in each districts, auditing the list of currently provisioned users and the data access levels of each provisioned user. During the audit, the Security Contact must make any necessary changes to the individual user's accessibility to Cognos data. Data access may need to be modified for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, a change in business need for the user, retirement, or termination of employment.

PLEASE NOTE: In order to maintain security and confidentiality, it is imperative that an individual user's accessibility be consistently monitored by districts and updated in a timely fashion, when necessary, in the manner outlined above at III B 1. Districts must not wait until an audit to address such changes.

3. Confidentiality

When granting new users access to Cognos, particularly the WMS Audit Tool functions, the districts must be aware of the confidential and sensitive nature of data they are accessing and of the districts non-delegable responsibilities to properly safeguard such data. Cognos, and all data accessed through it, are confidential and proprietary to the State of New York. Please see 18-LCM-10-T for more information regarding the use and safeguarding of protected information (https://otda.ny.gov/policy/directives/2018/LCM/18-LCM-10-T.pdf).

Access to the WMS Audit Tool shall be limited to specifically authorized employees and only for authorized purposes which have a legitimate business justification. Districts management must assure the propriety of the use of and access to such confidential and secure information by authorized employees. This access may NOT be delegated to a third party. That is, access may only be authorized for a specified districts employee.

C. Using the WMS Audit Tool

Please refer to Attachment 1 "How to Access and Use the WMS Audit Tool". Districts must document the reasons for each query run using the WMS Audit Tool and retain the documentation, in compliance with record retention policies, for possible subsequent review by OTDA.

D. Terminating Users Permissions/Notification if Access Should be Terminated

Permission to utilize the WMS Audit Tool may be terminated at any time at the sole discretion of OTDA or upon the request of the districts Cognos Security Contact.

E. How to Proceed if Audit Tool Does Not Meet the Needs of the User

Requests for more granular or complex investigative reports, or reports that may involve databases not utilized by the WMS Audit Tool, should be securely emailed to A&QI at otda.sm.aqi.auditloginfo@otda.ny.gov. OTDA A&QI will then review the request and, if approved, will facilitate the creation of the report by our ITS partners. Once the requested report has been generated, it will be transmitted securely back to A&QI, which will then securely provide the report to the requestor.

Questions or issues regarding the propriety and/or scope of requests should be sent for review to the OTDA Division of Legal Affairs Point of Contact at otda.GC.Notifications@otda.ny.gov for review and response.

F. Unavailability of Cognos

In the event Cognos is unavailable to the user, and the report is time sensitive, users may request that the report be generated by A&QI. Requests should be sent via secure email to otda.sm.aqi.auditloginfo@otda.ny.gov with a note indicating that Cognos is unavailable, and the request is time-sensitive. Please also include the reason for the request. A&QI will then review the request and, if approved, will facilitate the creation of the report by our ITS partners, where possible. Once the requested report has been generated, it will be transmitted back to A&QI, which will then securely provide the report to the requestor.

G. Technical Questions/Concerns

Users of the WMS Audit Tool who experience any problems while using the report should call the ITS Helpdesk at 1-844-891-1786. The ITS Helpdesk will do an initial assessment and then forward the ticket to ITS Cognos Administrators if needed.

H. Suggested Enhancements

If a user has any suggestions as to enhancements that would be beneficial for the districts if made available on Cognos, we ask that you please contact A&QI at otda.sm.aqi.auditloginfo@otda.ny.gov.

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