



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	18-LCM-09
To:	Social Services District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Integrated Family Assistance Programs/Employment and Income Support Programs
Date:	May 9, 2018
Subject:	SNAP Bonus Award Allocation
Contact Person(s):	Program: SNAP Bureau District Liaison – (518) 473-1469 Fiscal: Regions 1-4: Dan Stuhlman, (518) 474-7549, (Dan.Stuhlman@otda.ny.gov) Regions 5 & 6: Michael Simon, (212) 961-8250, (Michael.Simon@otda.ny.gov)
Attachments:	Attachment A: Local District Bonus Fund Allocation Table
Attachment Available Online:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2

I. Purpose

The United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS) has awarded \$12,097,336 in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) High Performance Bonus Award funds to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) for Best Payment Accuracy and Most Improved Payment Accuracy during federal fiscal year (FFY) 2015.

This award reflects positive efforts by social services districts (districts) and State staff to ensure SNAP payment accuracy. The purpose of this Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) is to inform district commissioners that over \$9 million in SNAP bonus funds are being allocated to districts and to provide district bonus fund allocations and the requirements and procedures to be followed by districts accessing the funds.

II. Background

Section 4021 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, amended Section 16(d) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, and imposed conditions on the use of SNAP bonus award funds and required states to submit a plan demonstrating that the funds would be put to appropriate use. Those conditions are set forth in federal regulations at 7 CFR 275.24(a)(8), which provides as follows:

(8) Bonus award money shall be used only on SNAP-related expenses including, but not limited to, investments in technology; improvements in administration and distribution; and actions to prevent fraud, waste and abuse.

(i) Bonus payments shall not be used for household benefits, including incentive payments.

(ii) State agency awardees shall submit their intended spending plans of bonus payments to FNS to verify appropriate use.

Additionally, in the award letter from USDA notifying OTDA of the bonus award, USDA reminded OTDA of the following:

“Section 4021 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 requires bonus payments to be used only for SNAP-related expenses such as investments in technology, improvements in administration and distribution, and actions to prevent fraud, waste and abuse. It cannot be used to pay for new investments required in previous years. States that receive such bonuses are encouraged to use these funds to improve program administration, particularly in the area of program integrity.”

III. Program Implications

A. Funding/Allocations

The formula developed for the allocation of the \$9,097,336 provides each district with a minimum allocation of \$25,000 with proportionately greater allotments going to districts based on the size of the district’s SNAP caseload.

B. Bonus Fund Use Plans

To receive its allocation, each district will be required to submit a plan, describing the intended use of the SNAP Bonus funds, to the OTDA SNAP Bureau at:

otda.sm.cees.snap@otda.ny.gov or at the address below:

NYS OTDA
SNAP Bureau Bonus Award Plan
40 North Pearl Street, 11C
Albany, NY 12243

District plans must be received by OTDA no later than June 30, 2018.

As noted in Section II above, bonus award funds may be used only for SNAP-related expenses including, but not limited to, investments in technology, improvements in administration and distribution, and actions to prevent fraud, waste and abuse. Bonus payments shall not be used for household benefits, including incentive payments. Also, bonus funds may **not** be used for 50% SNAP Employment & Training activities.

Plan submissions will be reviewed by the OTDA SNAP Bureau to determine if they conform with permissible uses. Districts will be notified only if the plans do **not** conform with acceptable uses, or if OTDA has questions about the intended uses. Districts will be notified of any questions or concerns before September 1, 2018.

Examples of purposes for which the funds may be used include, but are not limited to the following:

- SNAP-related staff, training or equipment costs associated with supporting district costs associated with the development and implementation of the Integrated Eligibility System.
- Purchase of hardware or software, subject to State-specified minimum requirements to better support the administration of SNAP in the district.
- Physical plant improvements to enhance compliance with SNAP program access requirements, especially for people with disabilities.
- Staff needed to determine SNAP eligibility and to issue SNAP benefits.

Districts that are not interested in accessing their allotment of bonus award funds are asked to notify the OTDA SNAP Bureau, by June 30, 2018, with a letter declining their allocation. Funds allocated for districts that choose not to apply for the funding will be reallocated.

C. Maximizing the Value of The Allocation

As noted above, SNAP bonus award allocations may only be used for SNAP-related expenses. To maximize your SNAP bonus allocation, you should submit your gross claim for costs associated with SNAP bonus activities. Your gross claim will be reimbursed at 100%. 50% of your claim will be reimbursed with Federal funds and 50% will be reimbursed with your SNAP bonus allocation. This means that if you receive a \$25,000 SNAP bonus allocation, you are eligible to claim \$50,000 of SNAP-related expenses and receive 100% reimbursement for those costs.

For example, if a district were to purchase document scanning equipment for its SNAP intake area for \$10,000, it could claim the entire amount: \$5,000 from its SNAP bonus fund allocation and \$5,000 as the 50% federal share of the administrative expense. Thus, the actual net expense to the district would be \$0.

D. Claiming Instructions

Project expenditures for the SNAP Bonus Fund Allocation must be claimed through the RF17 claim package for special project claiming. These costs should be identified as F17 functional costs and reported on Schedule D in the F17 column in the RF2A claim package. The individual project costs should also be reported on the [LDSS-4975A](#) "RF17 Worksheet, Distribution of Allocated Costs to Other Reimbursable Programs" under one or more of the following project labels:

SNAP Bonus 2018 Certification
SNAP Bonus 2018 Fair Hearings
SNAP Bonus 2018 Fraud Abuse
SNAP Bonus 2018 Other

Non-salary administrative costs are reported with the appropriate object of expense on LDSS-923B Summary – Administrative (page 1) "Schedule of Payments for Expenses Other than Salaries for Other Reimbursable Programs." Non-salary program costs should be reported as object of expense 37 – Special Project Program Expense on [LDSS-923B](#) Summary – Program (page 2) "Schedule of Payments for Expenses Other than Salaries for Other Reimbursable Programs."

Expenditures claimed for the SNAP Bonus Award will be reimbursed at 50% federal share and 50% non-federal share up to the stated SNAP Bonus allocation amount. Expenditures in excess of the bonus allocation should be reported on the RF2A claim package, Schedule D-7, Distribution of SNAP Expenditures to Activities ([LDSS-2347E](#)). Such amounts will be reimbursed at the normal rates for SNAP expenditures.

Claims for expenditures made for the period April 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019 must be final accepted in the Automated Claiming System (ACS) by November 1, 2019.

Information on the Schedule D and RF17 claim package can be found in Chapter 7 and 18 of the Fiscal Reference Manual (FRM) Volume 3. The FRMs are available online at: <http://otda.state.ny.net/bfdm/finance>.

Issued By

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