



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	18-LCM-13
To:	Social Services District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Division of Child Support Services
Date:	June 25, 2018
Subject:	Noncustodial Parent Employment Program
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Attachments:	Attachment 1 – Application Cover Page Attachment 2 – Program Narrative Attachment 3 – Budget Form Attachment 4 – Budget Narrative Attachment 5 – Budget Instructions
Attachment Available Online:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2

I. Purpose

This Local Commissioner Memorandum (LCM) provides Social Services Districts (districts) with information regarding the opportunity to apply for funding to support a program under the Noncustodial Parent Employment Program (NCPEP). The funds available through the NCPEP are for a program designed to address underemployment and unemployment among noncustodial parents (NCPs), promote timely and consistent payment of child support, and improve the financial stability of families to support better outcomes for their children.

II. Background

According to the 2016 US Census Bureau report entitled *Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2013*, child support is a critical source of income for custodial families. “Child support income accounted for over two-thirds (70.3 percent) of the mean annual personal income for custodial parents below poverty who received full child support,” yet “less than half (45.6 percent) received full payments” (Grall, 2016).

The New York child support program caseload includes low-income NCPs, some of whom struggle to meet their child support obligations and support their children financially. Many NCPs are willing to meet their child support obligations but lack the education, training, work experience or job seeking skills to find stable employment. Thus, an initiative such as the NCPEP is intended to assist NCPs to identify and address barriers to their ability to financially support their children.

In 2015, OTDA implemented the NCPEP as a pilot program, which is currently in its third, and final, year. While the purpose of the NCPEP remains the same, the first iteration was a court-based only referral and compliance monitoring program, meaning that noncustodial parents had to be ordered by family court judges or support magistrates to participate in the program, and to impose consequences to those who failed to participate. To date we have found that Noncustodial Parent Employment Program sites with strong linkages with their courts have shown stronger outcomes. Additionally, programs that use an assessment and case management model have shown better outcomes than those using a more generic approach. The NCPEP seeks to build upon what has been learned in the first two (2) years of the NCPEP pilot to maximize opportunities for NCPs to participate in these programs, overcome barriers to employment and career advancement, obtain employment, and enable regular and consistent payment of child support.

III. Program Implications

A. Funding

A total of \$395,000 in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds will be used to provide funding to support up to seven (7) district programs. Awards of up to \$100,000 will be made.

OTDA reserves the right to:

1. award funds by geographic region to reach underserved areas (the geographic distribution of funds will be considered in the event that an underserved region is identified by OTDA);
2. use data collected from the NCPEP to document each district's ability to support an employment program; and
3. make awards in excess of the amount listed above, should additional funds be made available to support the NCPEP. In the event the amount requested by selected organizations exceeds the amount available, OTDA will reduce the award amounts to stay within the overall funding limit. Necessary award reductions may be achieved by a proportionate decrease across all selected proposals, or by reducing the requested award amount(s) of lower scoring applications.

B. Program Period

The initial program period will run for a one-year period beginning October 1, 2018 with the option to extend for up to four (4) additional one-year periods contingent on the availability of the TANF funds. Funds for Years 2 through 5 will be awarded based upon program performance, utilization of funds awarded, and timely submission of required reports. Funds are subject to federal availability and State appropriation authority.

C. Eligible Applicants

Only districts will be allowed to apply for this funding.

D. Eligible Participants

Eligible participants are limited to NCPs who meet all of the following criteria:

1. are underemployed (working less than 20 hours per week) or unemployed;
2. are recipients of public assistance or individuals whose income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty level; and
3. have a child support order payable through the support collection unit of a district.

Additional eligibility requirements for purposes of establishing TANF eligibility for participants may be found in 00-LCM-20.

E. Eligible Services

Services and expenses related to providing employment services and other permissible services are eligible for reimbursement. Districts will develop a program that aims to provide an array of services that best meet the needs of underemployed and unemployed participants. Services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Child support case assistance;
- Career counseling and development;
- Employment assessments;
- Parenting education;
- Education and training;
- Job search;
- Job placement;
- Job retention;
- Financial literacy and personal finance;
- Mediation and/or legal services;
- Soft skills (i.e. teamwork, problem solving, time management, conflict resolution);
- Mentoring opportunities for successful participants;
- Peer support groups;
- Non-medical services/referrals to address barriers to employment (e.g., substance abuse, housing); and
- Transportation (only for NCPs who are not employed, see 45 CFR § 260.31).

F. Funding Priorities

In order to be considered, applicants must:

- Demonstrate the ability of the district to effectively implement and coordinate a NCPEP;
- Demonstrate that the district has a strong referral mechanism in place to ensure a sufficient number of referrals to meet enrollment goals, including:
 - how participants will be identified;
 - how services will be requested; and
 - by which actor/agency will identify participants and request services.

- Provide a minimum of 10% matching funds; and
- Agree to cooperate with all OTDA evaluation efforts.

Priority will be given to applications submitted that:

- utilize a court-based referral model;
 - must demonstrate that the district has commitment from family court to support the implementation of a court-based referral process;
 - must demonstrate how the district will support the court (i.e. presence in or near courtroom, outreach materials, etc.)
 - must describe mechanisms for accountability for participants; and
 - must include mechanism district will use for reporting participation and outcomes to family court.

(Use of a court-based referral model is encouraged, however applicants may propose other referral sources.)

- utilize a case management model;
- demonstrate the partnership between child support services and employment services and the ability to coordinate appropriate services (i.e. child support case management and employment services by the respective programs);
- identify ways to incentivize participation and program retention, such as assistance “right-sizing” the child support order during program participation, gift cards, etc. (gift cards for use as incentives may not be purchased with TANF dollars, but may be purchased with local share);
- provide training targeting an in-demand credential in a field that is projected to need workers in the program’s geographical area;
- address the variety of needs associated with NCP underemployment and unemployment;
- demonstrate that the district has an established network of community-based supportive services that support both the NCP and the family;
- demonstrate the ability to begin service delivery on October 1, 2018; and
- provide evidence of the district’s experience and accomplishments relevant to the services sought under this LCM, including specific outcome data related to serving NCPs in their employment and training efforts.

Performance in meeting program goals to date will be used in scoring this section for current NCPEP providers responding to this LCM, and may be supplemented by descriptions of barriers encountered and how those are addressed in this application. If a district is not a current NCPEP provider with OTDA, it should provide evidence of performance operating a successful employment program, including quantitative evidence where available. Documentation from funding agencies, such as letters that include evidence of performance, are strongly encouraged and will be weighed accordingly. Include names and contact information of funders to verify performance. If attaching multiple documents, they may be combined into one PDF.

G. Application Format

Each NCPEP application must include the following:

1. Application Cover Page (**Attachment 1**)
2. Program Narrative (**Attachment 2**)

Narratives must not exceed ten (10) pages in 12-inch font using standard one-inch margins. Supporting documents are not included in this limit. The narrative should address the following:

- a. Services to be provided and specific goals to be achieved;
 - b. Eligible populations targeted for services;
 - c. How and from where NCPs will be recruited;
 - d. How services enable individuals to obtain and maintain employment;
 - e. Organizations that will be involved in the delivery of services and their specific roles;
 - f. How program will track and measure the:
 - i. number of NCPs referred to the program;
 - ii. number of NCPs served by the program;
 - iii. demographic data on NCPs served by the program;
 - iv. number of NCPs placed in employment;
 - v. number of NCPs who remain employed for 30, 60, 90 and 180 days or more;
 - vi. amount/frequency of each NCP's child support obligation;
 - vii. number of NCPs making full child support payments;
 - viii. number of NCPs making partial support payments; and
 - ix. amount of child support collected from program NCPs quarterly.
 - g. Description of past and/or present experiences of the district or project partner organizations in providing employment services; and
 - h. The source(s) of the 10% matching funds.
3. Budget Form and Budget Narrative (**Attachments 3 and 4**)

All applications must include a completed Budget Form and a Budget Narrative to describe the costs included. If a district plans to subcontract with another agency or organization a separate Budget Form and Budget Narrative must be submitted for the subcontractor.

H. Evaluation and Selection Process

Each application will be reviewed by a committee of OTDA representatives. Applications will be evaluated based on responses to the topics outlined in Section (2)(III)(G)(2) (a-h), the reasonableness of proposed costs, and the degree to which the funding priorities outlined in Section (f) have been met.

a. Due Date and Forwarding Instructions

Applications must be received by OTDA by **August 9, 2018**. Completed applications may be emailed to **Ann-Marie Yeates** at Ann-Marie.Yeates@otda.ny.gov with a copy to otda.sm.dcse.bpo@otda.ny.gov, or mailed to her at:

NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
Child Support Services
c/o Ann-Marie Yeates
40 North Pearl Street, 13-C
Albany, NY 12243-0001

District Commissioners will receive an email confirming receipt of the submitted application and are advised to contact OTDA no later than two (2) business days after the application due date if a confirmation email was not received.

IV. Reporting Requirements

On a quarterly basis programs awarded NCPEP funding shall submit a report summarizing the services rendered during the quarter. A template will be provided for consistent reporting of data and narrative descriptions of program progress, including a discussion of problems encountered and steps taken to solve them. Excel 2016 will be required to utilize the template. Data to be reported includes:

- number of NCPs referred to the program;
- child support case ID of each NCP referred to the program;
- number of NCPs served by the program (for each month during the quarter);
- demographic data on NCPs served by the program;
- number of NCPs placed in employment;
- number of NCPs who remain employed for 30, 60, 90 and 180 days or more;
- amount/frequency of each NCP's child support obligation;
- number of NCPs making full child support payments;
- number of NCPs making partial support payments; and
- amount of child support collected from program NCPs quarterly.

The deadlines for submitting the quarterly reports are:

- January 15th for quarter 1 (October 1 – December 31)
- April 15th for quarter 2 (January 1 – March 31)
- July 15th for quarter 3 (April 1 – June 30)
- October 15th for quarter 4 (July 1 – September 30)

V. Claiming Instructions

Expenditures for the NCPEP should be claimed through the RF-17, *Claim Package for Special Project Claiming*. The costs will be identified as F17 functional costs and initially reported on the LDSS-2347 Schedule D, *DSS Administrative Expenses, Allocation and Distribution by Function and Program* in the F17 column in the RF2A claim package. The individual project costs should also be reported under the project label **NCPEP** on the LDSS-4975A, *RF-17 Worksheet, Distribution of Allocated Costs to Other Reimbursable Programs*.

NCPEP salary and fringe benefit costs should be included in the F17 column of the Schedule D of the RF2A claiming package and in the **NCPEP** column of the LDSS-4975A. Employees working part time on the NCPEP must maintain time reports to support the salary and fringe benefit costs allocated to the program. Instructions for completing time reports can be found in the Fiscal Reference Manual (FRM) Volume 3 Chapter 4.

Non-salary administrative costs are reported with the appropriate object of expense(s) on the LDSS-923B, *Cost Allocation, Schedule of Payments, Administrative Expenses Other Than Salaries, Other Reimbursable Programs*. Non-salary parent costs should be reported under expense 37 "Special Project Program Expense" on page 2 of the LDSS-932B *Summary - Program, Schedule of Payments for Expenses Other Than Salaries for Other Reimbursable Programs*. The costs are carried forward to the LDSS-4975A and claimed on the LDSS-4975, *Monthly Statement of Special Project Claims, Federal and State Aid*.

Expenditure claims must be submitted monthly for expenditures incurred beginning October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2019. Final expenditure claims must be accepted by November 15, 2019.

Further instructions for completing the Schedule D and RF17 claim package are found in chapters 7 and 18 respectively of the Fiscal Reference Manual (FRM) Volume 3. The FRMs are available online at <http://otda.state.ny.net/bfdm/finance/>. Submitted claims must be available for review by the NCPEP Program Manager.

Issued By

Name: Nancy Maney

Title: Deputy Commissioner

Division/Office: Integrated Family Assistance Programs