



# Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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## Informational Letter

### Section 1

<b>Transmittal:</b>	20-INF-11
<b>To:</b>	Social Services District Commissioners
<b>Issuing Division/Office:</b>	Employment and Income Support Programs
<b>Date:</b>	October 28, 2020
<b>Subject:</b>	Further Revisions to the LDSS-5159 Notice of Utility-Related Action Form
<b>Suggested Distribution:</b>	Temporary Assistance (TA) Directors and Staff Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Directors WMS Coordinators Staff Development Coordinators
<b>Contact Person(s):</b>	Temporary Assistance Policy Questions: TA Bureau at: (518) 474-9344 Forms Questions: Kelly Whitney at: 1-800-343-8859, ext. 3-7991
<b>Attachments:</b>	<a href="#">Attachment 1 - LDSS-5159 Notice of Utility-Related Action</a>

### Filing References

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
20-INF-08 10-INF-18 02-ADM-02 93-ADM-26		352.5 370.4(b)(2)(ii)	SSL-131s	Temporary Assistance Energy Manual	18TA/DC041

### Section 2

#### I. Purpose

The purpose of this INF is to notify social services districts (districts) of further revisions to the Notice of Utility-Related Action Form [LDSS-5159](#). It is strongly recommended that districts use the [LDSS-5159](#) to communicate with utility companies when making emergency utility payments under Family Assistance (FA), Safety Net Assistance (SNA), Emergency Assistance to Families (EAF), Emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA), and Emergency Aid to Adults (EAA) and when notifying utility companies of utility restrictions for TA households.

#### II. Background

Many districts have developed their own version of this form and the variation in district versions has caused challenges for utility companies as they work to standardize their operations across districts.

In an effort to clarify TA energy policy and actions related to applicant/recipient utility accounts, the Utility-Related Action Form was released and assigned a form number. The Temporary Assistance Energy Manual will be updated to include the revised Utility-Related Action Form. Additional feedback has been received from districts and utility companies and some further edits have been incorporated.

### III. Program Implications

The [LDSS-5159](#) Utility Related-Action Form may be utilized by districts to communicate with utility companies when:

- Making TA utility arrears payments on applicant/recipient utility accounts
- Placing utility accounts on 6-month guarantees
- Placing utility accounts on direct voucher and direct voucher subject to limit
- Terminating direct voucher payments or 6-month guarantees
- Advising of a change of address.

The [LDSS-5159](#) is not mandated nor does it need to be used when information is being conveyed to a utility company via their website. However, OTDA strongly recommends that districts use the form to communicate with utility companies.

### IV. Revisions

The revisions to the Utility-Related Action Form include:

- Addition of a date section for when the form is completed
- Addition of an effective date for direct voucher to begin following an arrears payment
- Addition of an effective date for direct voucher subject to limit to begin following an arrears payment
- Addition of an effective date for direct voucher only to begin
- Removal of language stating, “send all future bills to this agency” for direct voucher subject to limit only
- Addition of an effective date for direct voucher subject to limit only

Instructions for the use of each section on the form are provided on the second page. Additionally, the instructions have information on when notification to a utility company is required.

### V. Forms Information

- The new [LDSS-5159](#): “Notice of Utility-Related Action” is a Web posted only form. Therefore, it is only available online and is not available in hard copy from OTDA.
- The above referenced document has been posted on the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Intranet website at: [http://otda.state.nyenet/ldss\\_eforms/default.htm](http://otda.state.nyenet/ldss_eforms/default.htm) and is available for downloading by local districts for reproduction locally.
- Questions concerning Web posted only forms should be directed to BMS Document Services at: (518) 474-9522.
- Since this form is not a mandated form, districts choosing to use a local equivalent of the [LDSS-5159](#) do not need OTDA approval to do so. However, please be aware the utility companies may exercise discretion in accepting local equivalents.

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## Issued By:

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**Title:** Deputy Commissioner

**Division/Office:** Employment and Income Support Programs/Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance