

**GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
CENTER: Employment & Economic Supports**

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TO: Commissioners; TA & FS Directors, WMS Coordinators, Staff Development Coordinators

FROM: Russell Sykes, Deputy Commissioner, Center for Employment & Economic Supports

SUBJECT: OMRDD Regional Meetings and Food Stamp Applications for Group Home Residents

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: Dave Staszak, 518-473-1469

The purpose of this GIS is to notify the local districts of upcoming Regional Meetings scheduled by the New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD). The purpose of the Regional Meetings, as described in the attached notice from OMRDD, is to ensure that voluntary operators of OMRDD-certified Congregate Care residences apply for food stamp benefits on behalf of all eligible residents of their facilities. The Regional Meetings are scheduled at various locations around the state from December 1st through December 9th.

We expect that these meetings will result in a temporary but significant increase in the number of applications for food stamp benefits being filed by or for residents of OMRDD-certified group homes. In order to handle this increase in applications, we recommend that local districts work closely with group home providers in their county to facilitate the application process and minimize the impact on local district operations.

We remind the local districts that federal regulations permit residents of group homes to “apply either through use of an authorized representative employed and designated by the group living arrangement or on their own behalf or through an authorized representative of their choice.” Most group homes will designate an authorized representative and file applications on behalf of their residents. When one provider is filing multiple applications on behalf of multiple residents, it makes sense to schedule one block of time with the authorized representative to quickly conduct all of the interviews. Additionally, we remind local districts that authorized representatives applying on behalf of group home residents, as with any applicant, are eligible to have the face-to-face application interview waived in favor of a phone interview based on hardship.