

GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM DIVISION:
Center for Employment and Economic Supports

December 22, 2008

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TO: Commissioners, TA Directors, Temporary Housing/Emergency Unit Staff; temporary Assistance Staff; Parole Liaisons; Staff Development Coordinators

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

SUBJECT: Survey of Social Services Districts (SSDs) for Information Needed to Implement New Law Regarding Temporary Housing for Sex Offenders

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: TA Questions - Temporary Assistance Bureau at 1-800-343-8859; ext. 4-9344

The purpose of this GIS message is to request information from each local district that will assist with OTDA and SSDs compliance with Chapter 568 of the Laws of 2008 which added a new subdivision 8 to Section 20 of social services law. This change will become effective on January 23rd, 2009.

Before asking for the information we need, let us explain what this new law is and what it requires.

The law requires the Division of Parole (DOP), the Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA) and OTDA to promulgate rules and regulations for the placement of certain sex offenders.

For SSDs, compliance with the regulations will be required when the district has received advance written notice from DOP or the Department of Correctional Services prior to the arrival of the parolee/release that an inmate who has been designated as a Level II or Level III sex offender is likely to be in need of Temporary Housing Assistance (THA) on release from prison. This referral process is not new. Please see 05 INF-26(Revised). However, under the new law, the SSDs will now have certain responsibilities when such a referral is received.

Social services officials must consider the following factors when making a determination in regard to the appropriate placement of such individuals in shelter:

1. the location of other sex offenders required to register pursuant to the Sex Offender Registration Act, specifically whether there is a concentration of registered sex offenders in a certain residential area or municipality;
2. the number of registered sex offenders residing at a particular property;
3. proximity of the entities with vulnerable populations;
4. accessibility to family members, friends or other supportive services, including but not limited to locally available sex offender treatment programs; and
5. investigation and approval of such placement by the State Division of Parole.

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In order to have the information necessary to comply with factors one, two and three, local district workers responsible for temporary housing placements must be able to access a Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) application via the web or Centraport. That application will have the information needed by the local district worker to allow for an informed judgment about whether or not a placement is appropriate.

The specifics of making such determinations will be forthcoming in an ADM and are not intended to be detailed here.

In order to further the implementation of this Law on January 23, 2009, we request that each Social Services Commissioner:

1. Provide OTDA with the name, user identification number, phone number and email address of the person who will administer the entitlements for access to the DCJS site. Instructions for granting the entitlements and the date of the availability of the site will be provided through the normal OFT Customer Relations process.
2. Begin the process of identifying the individuals in the agency, and/or in any alternate agency or not-for-profit who are responsible for the placement of homeless individuals on behalf of the local district. Such individuals will need access to the secure DCJS website via either Centraport, or for those alternative agencies or not-for-profits without access to Centraport, via the internet.
3. Provide the name, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address for the person assigned to be the Local District Assigned Parole Liaison. This person will be the liaison with whom DOP or DOCS will confer when either will send DSS a referral that a Level II or III sex offender is expected to be released and in need of THA.
4. Inform OTDA of any alternate site where a homeless person must present in order to receive a THA placement during normal business hours.
5. Inform OTDA of the after hours contact for homeless individuals.

We ask that you provide the information on the attached form and that you return it to Kim Heroth via e-mail at Kim.Heroth@OTDA.state.ny.us no later than COB Tuesday, December 30, 2008. Please write "**Parole Liaison**" in the subject line of the e-mail message.

If you have any questions, please contact Dottie Mullooly at (518) 474-5396 or Kim Heroth (518) 408-3702.