

GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM
Center for Employment & Economic Supports

September 30, 2014

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TO: Subscribers**SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION:** Commissioners, TA Directors, SNAP Directors, WMS Coordinators, Staff Development Coordinators, Financial Directors, MA Directors, Adult Services Directors**FROM:** Phyllis Morris, Deputy Commissioner
Center for Employment and Economic Supports**SUBJECT:** State Takeover of the SSI State Supplement Program (SSP)**EFFECTIVE DATE:** October 1, 2014**CONTACT PERSON:** CEES SSP Bureau at 518-408-4757

The purpose of this GIS is to provide social services districts (SSDs) with additional information on the SSI State Supplement Program (SSP) and the transition from federal to State administration of the program.

As you are aware, the Social Security Administration (SSA) has been administering the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program and, under contract with New York State, the State Supplement Program (SSP). The single monthly benefit currently received by these individuals includes both the federal SSI benefit and the State funded SSP benefit. Effective with benefits issued October 1, 2014, the responsibility for the administration of the State Supplement Program will transfer from SSA to New York State OTDA.

OTDA's priority in converting SSP from federal to State administration is to minimize any adverse impact on recipients or on the agencies that serve this vulnerable group. Recipients have been notified about this change by both OTDA and SSA. Samples of the letters sent to recipients by OTDA were provided to local districts on August 1, 2014 (GIS 14 TA/DC029) and are also posted on the OTDA website. OTDA, in cooperation with SSA, has also conducted outreach to SSA Field Office staff, advocate and community action groups, congregate care facility operators, State agencies, HUD related housing authorities, financial institutions and elected officials. In addition, a message on the transition has been posted on the OTDA internet homepage.

Revised regulations that repeal the current Part 398 of Title 18 NYCRR and add a new Part 398 in relation to Supplemental Security Income Additional State Payments will become effective October 1, 2014.

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SSP Management

SSP will be administered and operated by the SSP Bureau within the Center for Employment and Economic Supports.

OTDA will not operate any walk in facilities for the program. A fully staffed Customer Support Center with a toll free number, 1-855-488-0541, will take calls Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. All SSP-related inquiries, including change reporting, should be directed to the Customer Support Center hotline. SSP may also be contacted by email at otda.sm.ssp@otda.ny.gov or by fax at 518-486-3459.

SSP case management will be conducted through a separate electronic system, which is not currently accessible to local districts.

Effective with October benefits, SSA will no longer report SSP benefits on the State On-Line Query (SOLQ) system. Local district staff may obtain SSP benefit information through WMS. GIS message 14 TA/DC036, sent on September 10, 2014, provided instructions on how to access SSP benefit information on WMS.

SSA will no longer collect certain SSP related information that has historically been included on the State Data Exchange (SDX) file passed to NYS. OTDA will update the SDX file with the SSP information before sending it to the downstream users. Information on SDX changes was distributed on May 6, 2014, via GIS 14 TA/WMS024. Revisions to the SDX manual are forthcoming.

Recipients will receive notices from both SSA and OTDA. OTDA generated notices are produced through the SSP system in both English and Spanish and are issued via a print vendor. Assistance in other languages is available by calling the Customer Support Center number. The notices are stored in the SSP system and will not be available in Computer Outlook to Laser Disc (COLD) system. Recipients who receive alternate format notices from SSA will also receive notices in the same format from SSP. Alternate formats include large print, Braille, audio and data CDs, registered mail, and readers.

Many of the SSP related forms have been posted to the OTDA website.

Recipients may obtain copies of notices and forms, including a Benefit Verification letter, by contacting the SSP Bureau.

SSP recipients are afforded appeal rights under NYS regulations through OTDA's Office of Administrative Hearings. The SSP Bureau is responsible for the preparation of fair hearing materials. SSP recipients have the option of telephone or in person hearings.

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Eligibility, Benefit, and Payment Information

Total benefit amounts have not changed. Most SSI recipients will receive two payments each month – the federal portion from SSA and the State portion from NYS.

SSP benefits will be issued in the same way that SSI benefits are issued. SSP benefits will be delivered on or before the first of each month.

The file format sent to the banks for SSP direct deposits will differ slightly from the file sent by SSA in that only the last 4 digits of the social security number will be sent for SSP direct deposits while SSA provides the entire 9 digits. Information about this change was provided in GIS 14 TA/DC039, issued on September 26, 2014.

SSP benefits amounts will continue to be based on the five categories of State Living Arrangements. OTDA, rather than SSA, will determine SSP eligibility, the State Living Arrangement category, and benefit amounts. Recipients who receive SSI are eligible for a full SSP benefit based on their living arrangement category. The SSI Benefit Levels Chart, which provides the maximum benefit levels, is available on the OTDA website.

Recipients who receive only SSP benefits will report changes to OTDA rather than SSA. Recipients who receive both SSI and SSP should report changes to SSA. The definition of State Living Arrangement (SLA) A, Living Alone, has been modified slightly to align with SNAP policy.

The Interim Assistance Reimbursement (IAR) process with SSA for federal SSI benefits will remain the same but a separate process has been established for SSP benefits. Detailed information on the SSP process will be provided shortly.

Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) amounts for residents of congregate care facilities remain the same but the PNA is paid from the SSP portion of the benefit.

SSI payees will also be the payee for the SSP benefit. SSP-only recipients may also designate a payee.

Temporary Assistance (TA) Implications

There is no change in determining the monthly TA grant and allowances for a TA household that contains either a SSI/SSP or SSP only beneficiary. The SSI/SSP or SSP only beneficiary's income or resources must not be counted in determining eligibility or degree of need and their presence must not be counted in the TA household count or case count when:

1. The household is categorically eligible for FA (case type 11) including Safety Net Assistance, Federally Participating (case type 12).

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2. The household is categorically eligible for Emergency Assistance to Needy Families (case type 19). Once a household is determined to meet all of the eligibility requirements of EAF any SSI/SSP or SSP only beneficiary's income that is retained is considered a resource and must be used to alleviate or end the household's immediate or emergency need.
3. The household is categorically eligible for Safety Net Assistance (case type 16) including Non-Federally participating (case-type 17) only when the household would be eligible for a federal category of assistance (because there is a child in the case who meets the definition of a TANF child) except that they have exhausted the State 60 month time limit for the receipt of cash assistance. These households are also known as "MOE eligible" households.

Detailed information will be provided shortly.

SNAP

Both SSI and SSP-only recipients remain eligible for SNAP under the New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP). OTDA will utilize the modified SDX to identify individuals who are categorically eligible for SNAP and the automatic enrollment process will remain the same.

More information will be forthcoming.

Medicaid Implications

Recipients of SSI and SSP, and SSP-only recipients, remain automatically eligible for Medicaid.

Individuals determined eligible for SSI and/or a SSP are automatically eligible for Medicaid. A separate Medicaid application is not required.

Please contact the Local District Support Unit for questions related to Medicaid eligibility. Contact number for Upstate is (518) 474-8887 and for NYC is (212) 417-4500.

More Information

Additional information is available by calling, emailing, or visiting the SSP website.

SSP Customer Support Center: 1-855-488-0541

Web address: www.otda.ny.gov/programs/ssp

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