



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

Transmittal:	20 TA/DC048 Upstate and New York City
Date:	May 14, 2020
To:	Subscribers
Suggested Distribution:	Commissioners, TA Directors, SNAP Directors, Employment Coordinators
From:	Jeffrey Gaskell, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs
Subject:	COVID-19 TA and SNAP Employment Requirements
Effective Date:	Immediately
Contact Information:	Employment and Advancement Services Bureau at 518-486-6106 or otda.sm.eisp.eas@otda.ny.gov

Section 2

The purpose of this GIS is to remind social services districts (districts) that consistent with the information provided in [GIS 20 TA/DC023](#), during the current public health crisis and until otherwise instructed by OTDA, districts must not take negative action against applicants or recipients for noncompliance with an employment requirement that requires in-person contact. It is appropriate for districts to refrain from making new work assignments that cannot be completed at home and to provide good cause exceptions for noncompliance for infractions incurred during this public health crisis. Districts must continue to suspend all required in-person work activity assignments until further notice and are encouraged to provide assistance to those engaging in online educational or job readiness activities to prepare for further employment opportunities and to provide assistance to those seeking help obtaining a job to find work that is deemed an essential service (see www.esd.ny.gov for the listing of essential businesses) as well as employment opportunities with other employers as non-essential businesses begin to reopen.

Employment Assessments and Employment Plans

Districts are reminded that they are still required to complete employment assessments and employment plans for applicants and recipients within 90 days of the date of eligibility for households with dependent children. During this public health crisis, employment assessments and employment plans should be completed via telephone contact. Districts should mail to individuals a copy of the completed/updated plan that was discussed by telephone.

Orientation

Districts may conduct employment orientations over the phone, online, or provide applicants and recipients with written materials by mail.

Distance Learning

Districts should continue to encourage individuals who are currently engaged in educational activities to participate via distance learning options where viable and available. [GIS 20 TA/DC016](#) indicated that until May 15, 2020, districts may report all hours of educational activities that are conducted remotely as participation in that activity regardless of the 10 hours limitation set forth on page 19 of [08-ADM-07](#) Implementation of Final TANF Rule. The May 15, 2020 deadline has been extended until otherwise instructed by OTDA.

Job Search/Job Readiness Training

Mandatory work assignments should be delayed until further notice. The NYS Department of Labor has online resources available to help districts and clients use JobZone for job search and job readiness activities. The link below gives an overview of JobZone, including a video overview and a list of available features, such as Job Search and Work Search Record. Districts may wish to include these links in any orientation materials or other communications with clients.

<https://labor.ny.gov/careerservices/jobzone/index.shtm>

JobZone FAQs may be found at: <https://labor.ny.gov/careerservices/JobZone/pdf/JobZoneFAQs.pdf>.