



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

MICHAEL P. HEIN
Commissioner

BARBARA C. GUINN
Executive Deputy Commissioner

General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

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| Transmittal: | 20 TA/DC078 Upstate and New York City |
| Date: | August 06, 2020 |
| To: | Subscribers |
| Suggested Distribution: | Commissioners, TA Directors, SNAP Directors, HEAP Coordinators, WMS Coordinators, Medicaid Directors |
| From: | Jeffrey Gaskell, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs |
| Subject: | COVID-19 TA Waiver Extension Dates |
| Effective Date: | Immediately |
| Contact Information: | Temporary Assistance (TA) Questions – TA Bureau – (518) 474-9344 or otda.sm.cees.tabureau@otda.ny.gov Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Bureau Questions – (518) 473-1469 or otda.sm.cees.snap@otda.ny.gov HEAP Bureau Questions – (518) 473-0332 or NYSHEAP@otda.ny.gov |

Section 2

In response to the outbreak of COVID-19 and the declaration of a State disaster emergency (Executive Order 202, March 7, 2020), the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) released a series of GIS messages which advised social services districts (districts) of immediate measures that can be taken to simplify and streamline program administration for clients and staff. Some of these measures are set to expire on August 5, 2020.

The purpose of this GIS message is to extend the following items until September 4, 2020:

- Allowing TA eligibility interviews to be conducted by phone;
- Allowing TA recertification interviews to be conducted by phone;
- Allowing drug/alcohol and domestic violence screenings to be conducted over the phone;
- Extending domestic violence waivers set to expire between March 7, 2020 and September 3, 2020 through September 4, 2020;
- Enabling districts with local procedures such as a call-in process or other process that requires frequent contact with individuals experiencing homelessness and residing in emergency housing to conduct these contacts via phone, reduce frequency, or suspend them;
- Allowing continued flexibility on taking negative action on TA mail-in recertifications; and,
- Allowing temporary modifications to previously approved Case Supervisory Review (CSR) plans, temporary approvals for new CSRs, and the option for districts to request new temporary CSR plans.

These measures are outlined in greater detail in [20 TA/DC016](#), [20 TA/DC028](#), [20 TA/DC041](#), [20 TA/DC043](#), [20 TA/DC057](#) and [20 TA/DC072](#).

The expiration of the above provisions may be extended by future guidance.

Districts are reminded that for shelter arrears payments made under NYCRR 18 §352.7(g)(3), the payments are limited to a total period of six months once every five years unless the district determines at its discretion that additional shelter arrears payments are necessary based on the individual case circumstances. COVID-19 related issues may constitute such circumstances. Situations must be evaluated and documented on a case by case basis.

Districts have the ability to request waivers for regulations that are not otherwise required by law as outlined in [11-INF-07](#). Examples of waivers that districts may request for a specified limited time period include:

- Permitting individuals who have an outstanding utility arrears repayment agreement to receive a new utility arrears payment outside the utility cold weather period if otherwise eligible; and/or
- Allowing interviews for specific vulnerable populations to be conducted via telephone or using a platform such as Skype or Zoom.

All waiver requests must be approved by OTDA prior to implementation. Please send all waiver requests to OTDA via email as indicated below:

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Deputy Commissioner
Employment and Income Support Programs
Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
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