



Division of Shelter Oversight and Compliance Operational Plan for Shelters for Families, Adults and Adult Families

Filing Instructions

These filing instructions outline the submission process of the operational plan to the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). This submission process will be used for the initial operational plan, all certification renewals and any revisions to the approved operational plan thereafter.

- A separate **Operational Plan** must be submitted by the social services district for each emergency shelter for which the social service district seeks reimbursement or makes payments to or from State or State-administered grants or funds. The requirements for emergency shelters are outlined by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) under New York State regulations 18 NYCRR Part 352, 18 NYCRR Part 900 and 18 NYCRR Part 491. Please refer to these regulations when filling out the operational plan and providing the required forms and documents.
 - *OTDA will no longer accept one operational plan for a facility that provides temporary housing assistance and casework services to homeless families when single adults or adult families are also housed within the same facility. The provider and district must submit a separate operational plan for each population and must demonstrate how it will maintain compliance for the safety and security of both populations.*
- Prior to the submission of an operational plan for a shelter for families, the social service district must obtain **preliminary approval** from OTDA for the establishment of such facility. OTDA will notify the social service district in writing of its approval or disapproval of a preliminary request within 30 days of receipt of the request. If it is determined that additional information is required for an approval or disapproval of the request, OTDA will advise the social service district in writing within 30 days of receipt of the preliminary request that additional information is required.
- The operational plan must be received and approved or conditionally approved by OTDA prior to a new shelter beginning its daily operations. The initial operational plan must be submitted 45 calendar days before planned use of the facility. OTDA will notify the social service district in writing of its approval or disapproval of an operational plan within 90 days of receipt of the submission. If it is determined that additional information is required, OTDA will advise the social service district in writing within 45 days of receipt of the submission of their request for such additional information. OTDA must advise the social service district within 90 days of the receipt of the additional information of its approval or disapproval of the operational plan. Once approved, an operational certificate will be issued and the approved operational plan will remain in effect for a maximum period of five (5) years.
- Following the approval of an operational plan, any changes to a shelter's policies, procedures, staffing, service mix or physical layout are to be submitted to OTDA as a proposed revision. The revision must be submitted to OTDA prior to the implementation of the proposed change(s). Revisions must include detailed information on the proposed change(s) to any: adjustments in staffing, contracts, leases, safety and security, facility renovations and/or case management practices.
- No later than 60 days prior to the expiration of the operating certificate, the social service district must submit a request to renew its operational plan. The renewal must be submitted on the approved forms and in the approved templates.
- If required, the social services district may request an extension in order to submit appropriate financial data. OTDA may grant one extension, not to exceed six months. If an extension is granted, OTDA

may continue reimbursement for costs found to be reasonable. State reimbursement will continue until such time as either the appropriate financial data is submitted and the operational plan is approved, the operational plan renewal is withdrawn, or the operating certificate expires.

Operational Plan Description

The operational plan is comprised of six sections: **General Information, Programmatic Services, Physical Environment, Attachments, Waivers, and Financial Information.** The social service district and the provider must work together to complete the required information. The social service district must review all information contained in the operational plan prior to submission to OTDA. OTDA will review the submission and work with the social service district and provider to ensure that all required information and documents have been received. The submission and approval of this operational plan will be in four phases.

- **Phase I:** The social service district sends to OTDA a request to open a new facility. Specific data and information regarding the facility, provider and social service district and contact information will need to be submitted. OTDA will review the submission and if approved, request that an operational plan be submitted.
- **Phase II:** Once a request to open a new facility has been approved OTDA will conduct a **Pre-certification Walk-thru** for the facility. Concurrently, the social service district and provider will be able to submit the operational plan and all of its required documentation. This will include program services, environmental characteristics, a safety and security plan and financial information. The social service district and provider can submit information and documents as they become available.
- **Phase III:** At this stage, all documentation should be submitted by the social service district and provider, and OTDA will be completing the operational plan review. If required, OTDA can create an **Amendment** for the operational plan, which may be comprised of requests for additional information, required document submissions and suggestions or recommendations on how to bring the facility into compliance with regulations. Any waivers that were requested will be also be reviewed and a determination will be made.
- **Phase IV:** An operational plan may be approved, conditionally approved, or denied. If the operational plan is approved, OTDA will issue an Operating Certificate for the shelter. If the operational plan is conditionally approved, OTDA will issue a temporary Operating Certificate for up to six months and will outline what conditions are on the Operating Certificate. If the operational plan is denied, DCOS will either continue to work with the social service district and provider to bring the facility into compliance or request that the operational plan be withdrawn.

Operational Plan Sections

1. General Information

The provider and social service district must provide general information regarding the facility, provider, and physical plant.

2. Programmatic Services

This section is comprised of questions and requests for documentation that outline the support services that will be provided at this facility. The operational plan will require information be submitted on: admissions and discharges, case management, in-house services, collaborative services, referrals, resident rules and obligations, resident rights, housing support, health services, school, child care, recreational services, food service, staffing and trainings. A detailed staffing schedule will also be required.

3. Environmental Characteristics and Safety & Security

This section is comprised of questions, checklists and requests for documentation regarding the physical makeup of the building and its operating systems. The operational plan will require information be submitted on building construction, floor plans, system inspections, room layouts and dimensions, fixture counts and fire and safety monitoring features to ensure that the building and its systems are in compliance with all applicable State and local laws, regulations, and codes.

This section is also comprised of questions, checklists and requests for documentation regarding all fire and safety monitoring systems, policies and protocols that have been implemented at the facility and how they are utilized to help ensure the safety of residents, staff and visitors. The operational plan will require information on the fire safety and security monitoring systems, copies of fire drills, evacuation maps and copies of staff safety trainings and certifications.

4. Required Documentation Attachments

Any necessary documentation must be attached to an operational plan.

5. Waivers

This separate attachment is for any requests to **waive a regulatory requirement** that have been submitted for the facility. Upon submitted request by the social service district, OTDA may waive non-statutory requirements of 18 NYCRR Part 352, 18NYCRR Part 491, or 18 NYCRR Part 900 and may permit the provider to establish another method of achieving the intended outcome of the waived regulation. Before approving a waiver request, OTDA may require that additional procedures be implemented to protect residents' health and safety. The social service district may submit a waiver to OTDA at any time during the operational plan review period or after approval of an operational plan. A separate request must be submitted for each waiver being sought. All waivers will be reviewed by OTDA periodically to determine whether they should remain in effect. Any waivers requested by a local social services district must be approved prior to the implementation of the waiver being sought.

6. Financial Information

The provider will also submit a copy of its most recent fiscal audit and enter an operating budget with corresponding per diem rates for the shelter into a Budget Summary Form. OTDA will review the submission and work with the social service district and provider to ensure that all required documents have been included. In addition, the review will assess operating costs to verify that all expenditures are reasonable and necessary.

- ***Note:** *Initial operational plans, revisions and renewals must include all information and documentation as requested by OTDA to ensure that the facility is in compliance with all applicable State and local laws, regulations, and codes. **Do not leave any section(s) or questions blank. If the information is not applicable to the facility, enter N/a in the space provided.***

Electronic Email Submission Using Microsoft Word, Pdf or Excel

Operational plan submissions will only be accepted via email to the following address: otda.sm.css.bss@otda.ny.gov. This office will no longer accept operational plans via postal mail.

Cheryl Contento
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If you need assistance to complete your operational plan, please call the Division of Shelter Oversight and Compliance at (518) 486-4040 | otda.sm.css.bss@otda.ny.gov