

Albany County

Temporary Assistance (TA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment Plan

January 01, 2024 - December 31, 2025

Table of Contents

1. Administration	1
1.1 Administrative Structure.....	1
1.2 TA and SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) Provider Agencies.....	2
1.3 OTDA Jobs Staff Agreement	8
1.4 Access to Services at New York State Career Centers	8
2. Orientation, Assessment and Employment Plan	9
2.1 Orientation (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.5)	9
2.2 Temporary Assistance (TA) Employment Assessment	10
2.3 TA Employment Planning (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.6 and 385.7)	11
3. Engagement	12
3.1 Federal “Engaged in Work” Requirement (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.2 (f)).....	12
3.2 Strategies/Procedures for Accommodating Individuals with Limited English Proficiency	13
3.3 Strategies/Procedures for Increasing Program Attendance	14
3.4 Strategies/Procedures for Engaging Sanctioned TA Participants	14
3.5 Strategies for Reducing the Need for TA.....	15
4. Work Activities	16
4.1 Allowable Work Activities	16
4.2 Job Development.....	19
4.3 Training Approval and Activity Enrollment Policies (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.9)	20
4.4 Post-Secondary Education Approval and Enrollment Policies.....	23
5. Work Requirements	24
5.1 Meeting TA Work Requirements.....	24
5.2 Informing SNAP Applicants and Recipients of Work Requirements	28
5.3 Meeting SNAP Work Requirements	29
5.4 Advising Households of Employment and Training Services	30
5.5 Provider Determinations	30
6. Quality Assurance/Work Verification	31
6.1 Quality Assurance Process - Random Case Sampling	31
6.2 Use of Outside Providers/Vendors	33
7. Supportive Services.....	33
7.1 TA and Non-TA SNAP Applicants and Recipients in Work Activities Approved by the District.....	34
7.2 Post-Employment/Transitional Supportive Services.....	35
7.3 Extended Support Services	36
8. Conciliation, Sanction and Dispute Resolution Procedures.....	36

8.1 Conciliation	36
8.2 Sanction.....	39
8.3 Dispute Resolution.....	39
9. Disability Determinations, Documentation and Requirements of Exempt Individuals	40
9.1 Disability Determination Process and Tools	40
9.2 Mental Health Screening and Assessment.....	42
9.3 Requirements for Exempt TA Participants (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.2 (e))	43
10. District Certification.....	45
10.1 Certification.....	45

1. Administration

1.1 Administrative Structure

- a. This agency's organizational chart is attached. It identifies the units and staff within the agency that are involved in the operation of the district's employment program.
(Attachments must be uploaded to the system through the "Documents" screen prior to submitting the plan. Use the textbox below to provide any additional information.)

Albany County Department of Social Services Organizational Chart A-1

Albany County Department of Social Services Employment Unit Organizational Chart A-2

- b. Below is a description of the office(s) in and/or outside of the Department of Social Services that are involved in the operation of the district's employment program and include the responsibilities of each office.

The Employment Unit is the office within Albany County Department of Social Services that is responsible for the operation of the Welfare-To-Work (WTW) program. This unit will design programs to identify and meet the needs of the TANF, SN-MOE, SN non-MOE and SNAP program's clientele. The Employment Unit is responsible for the development of Requests for Proposals (RFP) pursuant to Albany County's procurement policies for many of the employment services offered in Albany County. Such RFP's may be completed on a yearly basis or less frequently, as need arises. The RFP is intended to recommend the purchase of services that are not already provided by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance or by the Capitol Region Workforce Development Board (WDB) or are otherwise available without cost. Employment Unit administrative staff works with the WDB to recommend programming for eligible TANF recipients (and others at risk) under the WTW funding. When possible, that collaboration will include participating in the WDB's RFP process.

Employment Unit staff monitors and reports on all WTW programs through local databases, which are maintained by this office. State requirements for reporting and tracking through updates to the WTW Caseload Management System (WTWCMS) are accomplished by the Employment Unit staff. WTWCMS, which is maintained by New York State, calculates local district's federal and state participation rates. The employment services contract awarded through Albany County's Comprehensive Employment Services RFP are monitored by the Employment Unit Director and Resource Development Specialist. Provider payments based upon performance and achievement of benchmarks are paid directly through the Comptroller's office once the claim is approved by the Resource Development Specialist and Director.

Employment Unit staff will directly provide or participate in the delivery of services such as orientation classes, job fairs, conduct outreach to employers with potential employment opportunities suitable for our client base and job placement. Employment Unit staff will provide call-in services to meet recruitment requirements when it is deemed necessary, as well as provide liaison services between case management staff and service providers when necessary. Department of Social Services staff including Employment Unit staff are available as needed at the Department of Labor located at 175 Central Avenue to assist the underemployed Temporary Assistance population.

Employment Unit staff contacts the Temporary Assistance recipient to complete an employment assessment. Assessments are completed for individuals ages 18 and over (or 16 and 17-year-olds without a high school diploma [not attending secondary school]) in households with dependent children, are completed within time frames required by federal and state regulations and updated as needed no less than annually. During the assessment and employment plan development, Employment Unit staff will determine the recipient's employability level, then refer to either the appropriate program, monitor employment, request medical verification for those indicating a personal barrier to employment, or a combination of these. Medical verification can come from the recipient's practitioner/provider and/or the recipient may be referred for a consultative examination for further review. Employment codes can be changed to reflect present status, making the recipient either exempt from employment requirements or non-exempt and requiring participation.

Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.

Employment Unit staff works with all applicants and recipients to assist them in becoming and remaining employable.

1.2 TA and SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) Provider Agencies

- a. Table 1 lists the local contracts or agreements with agencies to provide employment services to TA and SNAP clients. These activities and services may include, but are not limited to: employability determinations; development of assessment and employment plans; conciliation and grievance activities; provision of work activities such as job readiness training; education and job skills training; monitoring and support for compliance with treatment plans for exempt individuals with the potential for restoration to self-sufficiency; job development; job placement and retention services; and other employment related activities.

Each contract listed in Table 1 contains an assurance that the activities are not otherwise available from that provider on a non-reimbursable basis, and, if not a performance-based contract, a statement regarding use of a cost allocation methodology that satisfies Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, as well as the requirements of U.S. Office of Management and Budget Circulars A-122 for nonprofit organizations, A-21 for educational institutions, or A-87 for State and local governments. Districts must maintain proper monitoring and oversight to ensure that contractors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts.

Funding sources include, FFFS, SNAP E&T, Local or "other". Categories of clients served include Family Assistance (FA), Safety Net Assistance for households with dependent children (SNA Fam), Safety Net Assistance for households without dependent children (SNA Ind), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) 200%.

Contracts or Agreements with Agencies Who Provide TA and SNAP Employment Services

Provider	Total Contract Cost per Year	Funding Source(s)	Categories of Clients Served	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
Schenectady County Chapter NYSARC, INC. DBA Pine Ridge Industries	\$100,000	FFFS Local	FA SNA Family SNA Individual	Four-stage case management through a Success Coach to assist TA recipients in retaining or obtaining employment through conducting needs assessments and identifying barriers; development of an individualized assistance plan; referrals to community resources; and monitoring outcomes, progress and ongoing need.
The Altamont Program	\$429,700	FFFS Local	FA SNA Family SNA Individual	Intensive case management with a focus on facilitating people from public dependency to the workforce through orientation and assessment, job readiness and job skills training, job search and linkage to community resources for additional services such as vocational/educational/training/job development/job placement/work experience, etc.

- b. Table 2 includes agencies/providers that offer services to participants and to which the district expects to refer participants, but which have no direct financial agreement with the district.

Categories of clients served include Family Assistance (FA), Safety Net Assistance for households with dependent children (SNA Fam), Safety Net Assistance for households without dependent children (SNA Ind), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and TANF 200%.

Agencies and Providers to whom the District Refers for Employment Services

Provider	Funding Source(s)	Categories of Clients Served	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
Albany County Mental Health Re-entry Task Force	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP	Case management and cognitive behavioral program linkage for high-risk, recently incarcerated individuals

Provider	Funding Source(s)	Categories of Clients Served	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
Albany Housing Coalition	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP	Veteran focused work site sponsor, job skills training, job placement and retention programs
Albany International Center	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP	ESL, job skills training, job placement and retention programs
BOCES-Capital Region Adult Literacy Zone	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP TANF 200%	ESL, HSE, vocational education, job skills training, job placement and retention programs
Brightside Up, Inc.	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNAP	Childcare resource and referral agency
Bryant and Stratton College	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual TANF 200%	Vocational education, job skills training, job placement and retention programs
CEO Youth Build Troy	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP	Vocational education, job skills training, job placement and retention programs
Columbia Greene Community College	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual TANF 200%	Secondary and post-secondary community college with a 1-year certificate or a 2-year associate degree
Holy Spirit Church	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP	ESL
Hudson Valley Community College	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual TANF 200%	Secondary and post-secondary community college with a 1-year certificate or a 2-year associate degree
Literacy NY - Greater Capital Region	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP	ESL, HSE prep

Provider	Funding Source(s)	Categories of Clients Served	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
Mildred Elley College	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual TANF 200%	Vocational education with a 1-year certificate, job skills training and job placement
Refugee and Immigrant Support Services of Emmaus (RISSE)	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP	ESL, Job skills training, job placement, work site sponsor
Schenectady County Community College	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual TANF 200%	Secondary and post-secondary community college with a 1-year certificate or a 2-year associate degree
The Altamont Program, Inc. - Schuylar Inn	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP	Work site sponsor
The Altamont Program, Inc. - Schuylar Inn	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual	Hosts orientation and/or assessment activities for our clients
U. S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants	Others: OTDA BRS	FA SNA Family SNA Individual	ESL, Job skills training, job placement, work site sponsor
Capital District Women's Employment & Resource Center (WERC)	Others: OTDA DOL	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP TANF 200%	Career readiness, computer skill enhancement, work force preparation training, job seekers forums, job placement and job retention services
Career Central	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP	Hosts orientation and/or assessment activities for our clients
Glenmont Jobs Corps	Others: non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual	Vocational education, job skills training, job placement and retention programs

Provider	Funding Source(s)	Categories of Clients Served	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
Educational Opportunity Center-- Capital District	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual TANF 200%	Vocational education, job skills training, job placement and retention programs. Programs include building trades, certified nursing assistant, cosmetology (and state board prep), culinary arts, medical office administration, pharmacy technician, security guard training, welding (including welding certification upgrade) as well as National Work Readiness Credential exam, ESL, HSE prep (academic enrichment) and college prep.
Refugee Welcome Center	Others: Non-financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP	ESL
Albany Community Action Partnership	Others: Career Pathways Program	FA SNA Family	Job skills training, job placement and retention programs
Albany Community Action Partnership	Others: Health Professions Opportunities Grants-Dept. of Health & Human Services- Office of Family Assistance	FA SNA Family TANF 200%	Health care career readiness, job training, job placement and retention programs
Albany Community Action Partnership	Others: Dress for Success Program	FA SNA Family SNA Individual SNAP TANF 200%	Interview and employment appropriate clothing and case management services for women
Albany Community Action Partnership	Others: Non-Financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual	Work site sponsor, hosts orientation and/or assessment activities for our clients
St. Catherine's Center for Children, Marillac Family Tier II Shelter	Others: Non-Financial	FA SNA Family SNA Individual	Work site sponsor, hosts orientation and/or assessment activities for our clients

Provider	Funding Source(s)	Categories of Clients Served	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
Pulse Career Solutions	Others: WIOA funding	FA SNA Family SNA Individual TANF 200%	Vocational education, job skills training and job placement
Career Central--Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)	Others: Federal funding, grants	FA SNA Family SNA Individual TANF 200%	Job development, job posting, job match and referral, basic skills training, occupational training in career pathways, HSE preparation, and employment support services.
Healthy Families NY	Others: non-financial	FA SNA Family	Home Visiting Program
Perinatal and Infant Community Health Collaborative (PICHC)	Others: non-financial	FA	Home Visiting Program

c. Monitoring and Oversight of TANF and SNAP E&T Funded Contracts/Agreements

Described below is the process used to monitor district held contracts/agreements with providers that use TANF and SNAP E&T funds for employment services:

Our contracted employment services providers regularly monitor all clients daily, weekly and monthly, including those clients that may be engaged with other capital district providers. They have established databases that document, track and report all employment related activities. In addition to these databases, information will be retained on paper in case files.

Our contracted services providers electronically submit attendance reports, as well as progress evaluations, on each individual to the Employment Unit no less than monthly, but more often weekly. Monthly, all attendance and/or data from the various agencies that clients are involved with is compiled by our contracted service providers into a single document to be provided to the Employment Unit. They record all information on a DSS time sheet, which is subsequently entered monthly into WTCMS by Employment Unit staff so participation rates may be generated.

On a monthly basis, the contracted employment services provider will submit a multitude of reports and supporting documentation to the Employment Unit. These reports are reviewed and assessed for qualified benchmark and performance payment approval. Benchmarks that are not met without good cause will result in a reduction in quarterly performance payments. The Director or Assistant Director of the Employment Unit is responsible for reviewing and assessing these reports.

1.3 OTDA Jobs Staff Agreement

- a. OTDA Jobs Program Services - Target Groups (reply yes or no to the options as they apply):

Services Provided by Jobs Staff

Yes or No:	Services Provided:
N/A	Assessment/Employment Plan
N/A	Supervised job search
N/A	Job readiness training
N/A	Job club
N/A	Job placement services
N/A	Grant diversion
N/A	Job development (employer outreach)
N/A	WOTC pre-certification

Jobs Staff Target Groups

Yes or No:	Target Groups:
N/A	Applicants
N/A	FA & SNA with children
N/A	SNA without children
N/A	SNAP
N/A	TANF 200%

- b. Described below are the additional services/duties Jobs Staff will be requested to perform (e.g., Welfare to Work Case Management System (WTWCMS) data entry, case conferencing, job fairs).

N/A

1.4 Access to Services at New York State Career Centers

- a. Described below is how the district provides access to its programs and services with Career Center partners (reply yes or no to the options as they apply):

Programs and Services Provided at Career Centers

Yes or No:	Programs and Services Provided:
No	The district has employee(s) physically present at a Career Center

Yes or No:	Programs and Services Provided:
No	The district has contract staff physically present at a Career Center
Yes	The district makes available direct access to its program staff via phone or technology at a Career Center
Yes	The district makes available copies of the LDSS-2921 (Common Application) at a Career Center
No	Other (described here):

- b. Described below is how the district coordinates with Career Center partners to provide services to the district’s clients, including referral and information sharing mechanisms, or other collaboration such as participation on the local WIOA Business Services Team, etc.

The district has direct linkage with the Career Center partners through the Career Central Employment Services Manager via face to face and zoom meetings, telephone and email communication. We are an active collaborating partner on the Capital Region Workforce Development Board which is the local WIOA Business Service Team. Additionally, we are an active collaborating member on the Capital Region Workforce Partnership which evolved from the WIOA Business Service Team.

2. Orientation, Assessment and Employment Plan

2.1 Orientation (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.5)

- a. How does the district provide orientation (reply yes or no to the options as they apply)?

District Orientation Procedures

Yes or No:	District Orientation:
Yes	The district provides orientation in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.5 and no additional information is provided at orientation.
No	In addition to the requirements outlined in 18 NYCRR 385.5 of the regulations, the district's orientation provides the following:

- b. Described below is how the district completes the required orientation for all applicants and recipients of TA at application and recertification. Orientation can be held in-person, either in a group setting, individually, or a combination of both. It can also be held virtually, over the phone, or by sending orientation material to the client by mail. Please include the orientation procedure for exempt individuals and non-exempt individuals, if different:

We start our orientation process by providing applicants/recipients the Client Information Books (LDSS-4184 A, B, and C) with every TA application. Orientation is completed individually, over the phone, for our applicants and recipients as part of the assessment process in accordance with NYCRR Section 385.5. The Employment Unit worker makes four phone calls to the recipient to either conduct the interview or schedule a day and time that works for the recipient for the completion of the assessment. If we are unable to reach

the recipient by phone, due to no phone number listed or the number is no longer valid, the Employment Unit worker will send a contact letter to the recipient (Attachment B.) During orientation, the Employment Unit worker reviews the rights and responsibilities for both the Agency and the applicant/recipient. We discuss the role of the Employment Unit, describe work activities they may be assigned to, and supportive services available, including transportation, childcare, clothing, etc.

If the recipient requests orientation as an in-person activity, we will set up an appointment for the recipient to come into the Agency to see an Employment Unit worker.

2.2 Temporary Assistance (TA) Employment Assessment

- a. How does the district conduct assessments as required by 18 NYCRR 385.6(a) and 385.7(a) (reply yes or no to the options as they apply)?

District Assessment Procedures

Yes or No:	How the district conducts assessments
No	The district enters assessments directly into WTCMS.
Yes	The district uses the LDSS 4980 (New York State Assessment) and later enters information into WTCMS.
No	The district conducts assessments using a local equivalent tool, and later enters information into WTCMS. If applicable, the local equivalent contains additional elements beyond what is required:

- b. Described below is the district procedure for the completion of an employment assessment, including when initial assessments are conducted and whether an assessment is conducted in-person, virtually by phone, or a combination of both:

Assessments are completed mostly by phone, but occasionally they can be completed in-person. Using the LDSS 4980 as a guide, information is gathered by hand, along with pay stubs and/or other employment verification if the client is employed or any medical information if the client is claiming a medical exemption. The information is recorded on a paper version of the LDSS 4980 and later input into WTCMS following the interview. During the assessment, we utilize a mental health screening tool (Attachment H) to screen for possible mental health barriers. This form also addresses other barriers to employment such as transportation and childcare.

After the employment assessment is completed, the Employment Unit worker sends the Employment Plan, Additional Goals, release of information form, the role of the employment unit, a job zone flyer, a Brightside Up flyer (if applicable,) a flyer for Home Visiting Programs (if applicable) and any other additional documents needed to the recipient and puts copies of all forms sent into imaging. If the recipient is being referred to a work activity, this referral is sent also.

- c. Which district administrative unit or contractor is responsible for conducting assessments?

Albany County DSS Employment Unit staff and contracted employment services provider(s) when contracted to provide assessments.

- d. Described below are the minimum qualifications of the employees conducting the assessment (refer to requirements listed in 18 NYCRR 385.6(c) and 385.7(c)):

1. Employed as an Eligibility Examiner 1 at Albany County DSS, or
2. Other equivalent positions within the employer provider agencies or local government

NOTE: Providers include staff qualifications to this agency in their responses to RFP's for contracted employment services. This agency reviews that the individuals who the providers indicate as assessment staff meet the minimum requirement.

- e. Are applicants in households with dependent children required to participate in completion of an employment assessment?

No

- f. Are applicants in households without dependent children required to participate in completion of an employment assessment?

No

- g. Are exempt adults in households without dependent children required to participate in completion of an employment assessment?

No

- h. How often and under what circumstances is the employment assessment updated?

Assessments are updated at a minimum of six months, but no less than annually, or when case circumstances dictate change. The original assessment is conducted within three months of the case opening for family cases and within twelve months of the case opening for SN Individual cases.

2.3 TA Employment Planning (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.6 and 385.7)

- a. How does the district develop individual employment plans as required by 18 NYCRR 385.6(a) and 385.7(a) (reply yes or no to the options as they apply)?

District Employment Plan Procedures

Yes or No:	How the district develops employment plans
No	The district enters employment plans directly into WTWCMS.
Yes	The district uses the LDSS-4987 (New York State Employment Plan) and later enters information into WTWCMS.

Yes or No:	How the district develops employment plans
No	The district develops individual employment plans using a local equivalent tool. If applicable, the local equivalent contains the following additional elements beyond what is required:

- b. Who develops the employment plan (reply yes or no to the options as the apply)?

District Employment Plan Development

Yes or No:	Who develops the districts employment plans
Yes	The same administrative unit or contractor that conducts employment assessments also develops employment plans.
No	A different administrative unit or contractor develops employment plans and the contractor's qualifications include:

- c. Described below is the district procedure for the completion of an individual's employment plan:

Employment plans are completed mostly by phone, but occasionally they can be completed in-person. Using the LDSS 4978 as a guide, information gathered at assessment is then translated into a sequence of activities that are necessary for a client to meet employment goals. The information is recorded on a paper version of the LDSS 4978 and later input into WTWCMS following the interview and any referrals that may be issued by the Employment Unit staff. A copy of the employment plan is given to the client.

- d. How often and under what circumstances is the employment plan updated?

Employment plans are updated at every assessment, as goals are achieved or when case circumstances dictate change. Employment plans are reviewed no less than annually. When employment plans are updated, a copy of the employment plan is given to the client.

3. Engagement

3.1 Federal “Engaged in Work” Requirement (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.2 (f))

- a. Federal requirements state that parents or caretakers must be engaged in work as soon as the district determines they are ready, but no later than within 24 months of receiving federally funded assistance. The district’s definition of “Engaged in Work” is:

Compliance with assessment, employment planning, all activities included in the individual’s Employment/Self-Sufficiency plan, including any need to attend treatment/rehabilitation programs, or any of the work activities listed in Section 4.1. Also included is pursuit of other forms of income such as SSI and SSDI.

- b. Described below is additional information regarding the district's "Engaged in Work" requirements:

There is no additional information to add regarding Engaged in Work activities.

3.2 Strategies/Procedures for Accommodating Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

- a. Described below is how the district accommodates non-English speaking participants' access to employment activities and services:

Participants with limited English comprehension, verbal and/or written, will be assisted by Employment Unit staff in order to assure full understanding of all parties' responsibilities. The Employment Unit staff will assign non-English speaking participants to services provided by organizations such as United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants of Albany (USCRI), Refugee and Immigrant Support Services of Emmaus, Inc. (RISSE), Refugee Welcome Center, Albany International Center, Altamont Program, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services of New York State (BOCES) and Capital District Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) that provide bilingual instruction and will assist those participants in obtaining Limited English Proficiency (LEP) services. Our contracted employment providers will be utilizing translation services to assist our recipients with assigned work activities.

We utilize the Interpreter Services Guides (PUB # 4843) to determine native language and where possible, provide publications and notices using the identified language (as well as in English) from the OTDA library. The district staff have access to interpretation and translation services in the following manner:

1. Telephone interpretation and translation services are contracted through Language Line Services, Inc.
2. Written translation services and face-to-face interpretation and translation services are contracted through Language Today.
3. Sign language interpretation services are contracted through Geneva Worldwide.

3.3 Strategies/Procedures for Increasing Program Attendance

- a. Described below are the district policies and/or procedures used to reduce the number of times participants fail to participate in work activities. This includes absences with good cause:

Participants that continually fail to meet the required hours of participation will be contacted by phone by their Employment Unit worker. The purpose of this additional contact is to allow the Employment Unit worker and the participant an opportunity to review the issues surrounding the non-compliance and stress the importance of future compliance. Intervention may assist in uncovering underlying issues such as, but not limited to, mental health barriers, basic day care or transportation issues. Referrals for other services will be identified and occur as needed. The participant's response will be monitored for improvement. If outreach is unsuccessful, the State developed conciliation notice will be issued to offer conciliation in accordance with Section 341 of the Social Services Law and 18 NYCRR 385.11.

Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.

3.4 Strategies/Procedures for Engaging Sanctioned TA Participants

- a. The following are strategies used to engage sanctioned participants. If a district uses one of the options, a description will be provided (reply yes or no to the options as they apply and provide a description for “yes” responses):

Strategies and Procedures for Engaging Sanctioned TA Participants

Yes or No:	Strategies and Procedures for Engaging Sanctioned TA Participants
Yes	<p>Described here are the strategies the district uses to attempt to engage sanctioned participants as soon as they are sanctioned:</p> <p>We make every attempt to uncover any obstacle or barrier that has prevented an individual's compliance prior to imposing a sanction. We give each participant the opportunity to comply and engage in appropriate employment activity. It is our hope that this process will reduce the number of participants that are sanctioned, thereby reducing or eliminating actions required by both the Employment Unit workers and the Temporary Assistance examiners.</p> <p>The sanctioned participant will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to comply with employment programming by participating in an employability assessment/evaluation to ensure that any barriers to compliance have been mitigated. The sanctioned participant is afforded the opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to comply by engaging in 10 days of employment programming. This would allow the sanctioned participant to be added to the case and the budget as soon as possible.</p> <p>Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.</p>
Yes	<p>Described below are the strategies the district uses to attempt to engage sanctioned participants when the durational period of the sanction is completed:</p> <p>One month prior to the end of the durational period of a TA sanction, the sanctioned participant will be given the opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to comply</p>

Yes or No:	Strategies and Procedures for Engaging Sanctioned TA Participants
	<p>with employment programming by participating in an employability assessment/evaluation to ensure that any barriers to compliance have been mitigated. The sanctioned participant is afforded the opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to comply by engaging in ten days of employment programming. This would allow the sanctioned participant to be added to the case and the budget as soon as the day after the durational portion of the sanction expires.</p> <p>Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.</p>
Yes	<p>All sanctioned participants remain assigned to their Employment Unit workers who attempt to re-engage the sanctioned individual in employment activities before, during and after the sanction period as indicated above. The Employment Unit worker sends a contact letter to the sanctioned participant to have them call to get into compliance to get the sanction lifted. If they do not respond to the contact letter, we send a new contact letter to the sanctioned participant every three months. If the sanctioned participant calls or comes into the Agency, we explain the how they can get into compliance to get the sanction lifted. Periodic call-ins and/or investigative interviews may be completed during a sanction period and the individual is offered additional opportunity to engage in employment activities and discuss issues that may be contributing to the non-compliance.</p> <p>Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.</p>

3.5 Strategies for Reducing the Need for TA

- a. Described below are the district’s strategies for reducing the need for TA:

At orientation, Employment Unit staff meets with individuals to describe the availability of Childcare subsidies to TANF and SN-MOE applicants and also describe the work activity process.

The Employment Unit worker will assist with non-recurring needs if necessary to help an individual sustain employment. Our contracted services provider for Job Coaching, Pine Ridge Industries, works with our employed clients to help them address barriers to maintain their employment.

Emergency Assistance to Families (EAF) funds may be issued to provide a single issuance payment in lieu of ongoing Temporary Assistance when such payment will allow the client to maintain self-sufficiency. Examples of these payments include a payment to halt an eviction, or emergency automobile repairs when transportation problems cause disruption in employment.

4. Work Activities

4.1 Allowable Work Activities

- a. Below is a list of activities available to individuals receiving Family Assistance (FA), Safety Net Assistance for households with dependent children (SNA Fam), Safety Net Assistance for households without dependent children (SNA Ind), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. In the chart below, the case type is listed next to each activity available to it in the district.

Allowable Work Activities by Case Type

Activity and Definition	Case Type
<p>Unsubsidized Employment – Full time or part time employment in the public or private sector that is not subsidized by TANF or any other public program (excluding employer tax credits). Unsubsidized employment includes self-employment and/or paid internships.</p>	<p>FA SNA FAM SNA Ind SNAP</p>
<p>Work Experience – Unpaid work performed at a public or not-for-profit organization to enable a participant who has not obtained unsubsidized employment to improve his or her employability. Work experience provides participants with an opportunity to acquire training, knowledge, work habits, and work references necessary to obtain and retain employment. Participation in work experience includes training required for the participant to complete the work experience assignment. For example, an individual who is expected to provide clerical support in a government agency may be provided training to develop or refine filing and data entry skills as needed to perform the tasks required as part of the work activity assignment.</p>	<p>FA SNA FAM SNA Ind SNAP</p>
<p>Job Search – The act of seeking or obtaining employment or preparing to seek or obtain employment and will include: looking for suitable job openings in a group or individual setting; making contact with potential employers; learning appropriate workplace expectations and behaviors in preparation for submitting job applications and interviewing; preparing and applying for, and/or interviewing for jobs and related activities.</p>	<p>FA SNA FAM SNA Ind SNAP</p>
<p>Vocational Education – Vocational education is defined as an organized educational program that directly relates to the preparation of individuals for current or emerging occupations that require training up to a four-year degree. Vocational education does not generally include basic or remedial education or English as a Second Language (ESL) but may include work focused general education and language instruction that is a regular or integral part of a vocational education program. Social services districts are responsible for ensuring that any such remedial education or ESL is a regular part of the program for participants with similar skill sets as the TANF/SNA MOE client, is determined necessary by the program provider, and is limited in hours to less than one half of program participation. Vocational education programs include the completion of activities that provide individuals the knowledge and skills to perform a specific trade, occupation or vocation. Vocational education must be provided by an education or training organization.</p>	<p>FA SNA FAM SNA Ind SNAP</p>

Activity and Definition	Case Type
<p>Secondary School – Regular attendance in accordance with the requirements of the secondary school or a course of study at a secondary school or other State accredited institution leading to a high school equivalency (HSE) diploma, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received a certificate of general equivalency. Secondary school participation may include general adult basic education or ESL if it is linked to attending secondary school or leading to a HSE diploma as determined necessary by the educational institution. Secondary School or HSE programs that routinely include ESL, career training, alternative school, tutoring, dropout prevention, teen pregnancy or parenting programs as a requirement of program participation as determined by the educational institution will also be permitted.</p>	FA SNA FAM SNA Ind SNAP
<p>Job Skills Training – Training or education in job skills to improve a participant's employability, to ensure clients have the basic skills competencies required by employers to support job entry and/or to advance or adapt to the changing demands of the workplace. Where identified as needed, such training may include the development of basic workplace skills including professional workplace behaviors and decision-making skills. Job skills training may include customized or technical training designed to provide participants with additional workplace skills, post-secondary education courses leading to a bachelor's or other advanced degree, or other training included under the definition of vocational education training. Job skills training may include literacy instruction, English language instruction, or other basic education for an individual who has already obtained a high school diploma or equivalency when determined from a client's assessment that such instruction is needed to improve the participant's employability.</p>	FA SNA FAM SNA Ind SNAP
<p>Education Training – Education directly related to employment for a recipient who has not received a high school diploma or equivalency must be related to a specific occupation, job or job offer or otherwise determined based on a client assessment as necessary to improve the participant's employability to support job entry, retention or advancement. Education directly related to employment may include courses designed to provide the knowledge and skills for general or specific occupations or work settings to ensure clients have the basic skills competencies required by employers and may also include Adult Basic Education (ABE), ESL instruction and education leading to a high school equivalency diploma as determined as necessary to improve the participant's job opportunities in potential occupations. Where identified as needed such training may include the development of basic workplace skills including professional workplace behaviors and decision-making skills.</p>	FA SNA FAM SNA Ind SNAP
<p>Job Readiness Training (JRT) Activities – Participation in programs that include seeking and preparing for work. JRT includes two types of activities: (1) traditional activities of resume preparation, training in interviewing skills, and instruction in workplace expectations, training in effective job seeking, including life skills training; and (2) activities that improve an individual's employability, such as substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, or rehabilitation activities in which a qualified medical or mental health professional has certified that such treatment is necessary.</p>	FA SNA FAM SNA Ind SNAP

Activity and Definition	Case Type
<p>Subsidized Private Sector Employment – Employment in the private sector for which the employer receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds (excluding tax credits) to offset some or all of the wages and costs of employing and training a recipient in accordance with New York State Social Services Law 336-f. Subsidized private sector employment will include positions subsidized through grant diversion/Transitional Employment Advancement Program (TEAP), supported employment programs, and paid college work study programs at private institutions. Individuals participating in subsidized private sector employment are paid wages and receive the same benefits as unsubsidized employees who perform similar work. An employment situation will be subsidized for up to the full amount of wages/benefits provided to the program participant and will be subsidized for the length of time as determined appropriate by the State or social services district.</p>	<p>FA SNA FAM SNA Ind</p>
<p>Subsidized Public Sector Employment – Employment in the public sector for which the employer receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds (excluding tax credits) to offset some or all of the wages and costs of employing and training a recipient in accordance with New York State Social Services Law 336-e. Subsidized public sector employment will include positions subsidized through grant diversion/TEAP, supported employment programs, and paid college work study programs at public institutions. Individuals participating in subsidized public sector employment, and work study unless otherwise permitted under a federal work study program, are paid wages and receive the same benefits as unsubsidized employees who perform similar work. An employment situation will be subsidized for up to the full amount of wages/benefits provided to the program participant and will be subsidized for the length of time as determined appropriate by the State or social services district.</p>	<p>FA SNA FAM SNA Ind</p>
<p>Community Service – A structured program in which participants perform work for the direct benefit of the community under the auspices of public or nonprofit organizations. Community service placements must be projects that serve a useful community purpose in fields such as health, social services, environmental protection, education, urban and rural redevelopment, welfare, public recreation, public facilities, public safety, and childcare. Community service programs are designed to improve the employability of participants not otherwise able to obtain unsubsidized employment. Participation in community service may include training that is directly required for the participant to complete the community service assignment. For example, an individual who is expected to provide clerical support to a food pantry may be provided training to develop or refine filing and data entry skills.</p>	<p>FA SNA FAM SNA Ind SNAP</p>
<p>Provision of Childcare for Individual Participating in Community Service – Providing unpaid childcare to enable another TA (TANF/SNA MOE funded) recipient to participate in a community service program.</p>	<p>FA SNA FAM SNA Ind SNAP</p>
<p>SNAP E&T Supervised Job Search – The act of seeking or obtaining employment through a job search that is directly supervised and may include: case management services, career exploration, interview preparation, job application assistance, learning appropriate workplace expectations and behaviors in preparation for submitting job applications and interviewing, job leads, and direct job referrals.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>On-the-Job-Training (OJT) – Training in a public or private sector employment setting during which the participant receives work-essential paid training while he or she is engaged in productive work that provides the knowledge and skills essential to attain full and adequate performance of the job.</p>	<p>FA SNA FAM SNA Ind SNAP</p>

Activity and Definition	Case Type
Other – Any work activity that does not meet the criteria of any of the above countable activities constitutes participation that is not countable toward federal and State participation rates.	N/A

4.2 Job Development

- a. Does the district conduct or access job development services to expand job opportunities for TA and SNAP participants?

Yes

How does the district participate in job development activities (reply yes or no to the options as they apply)?

How the District Participates in Job Development Activities

Yes or No:	How the district participates in job development activities
Yes	<p>District staff contacts employers to solicit jobs for TA and/or SNAP participants. Describe how this is done, including number of staff, frequency of contact, etc.:</p> <p>We have developed a comprehensive list in excess of 130 community agencies, providers and employers. This list represents agencies and businesses that are supportive of our clients, work with our clients in various capacities and offer a multitude of services and/or resources to our clients. This list has been instrumental in the development of a network of community providers whose focus is the support of the growth of our client population towards employment. Daily, job postings are shared, job solicitations are offered, job fair invitations are generated, upcoming events are shared and community networking at its best happens. These professional connections play a key role in the development and maintenance of community relationships and keeping up to date with community events/happenings.</p>
Yes	<p>District contacts or has an agreement with another agency to contact employers and solicit jobs for TA and/or SNAP participants. Described here is how this is done, including number of staff, frequency of contacts, etc.:</p> <p>The district contracts for employment services with the Altamont Program, Inc. to solicit job opportunities and placements. This provider has a network of established employment resources and relationships and continues to develop additional resources.</p>

4.3 Training Approval and Activity Enrollment Policies (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.9)

- a. Described below is how the district identifies appropriate education program providers for services of Adult Basic Education (ABE), High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma preparation, and English Language Instruction that are available to clients whose assessment indicates such services would be an appropriate work activity assignment. Please ensure to include providers the district partners with for the provision of ABE, HSE, and English language instruction in Table 1 or Table 2 under section 1.2 of this Plan.

The Resource Development Specialist of the Employment Unit is charged with outreaching throughout the community to identify educational programs that have successful outcomes that are available for our clients. When a new program is identified, the Resource Development Specialist meets with the provider, gathers the information about the program and their target population, and disseminates the information to the Employment Unit workers so that they may discuss all options with their clients at assessment and reassessment. In addition to the assessment and reassessment information about each client, this information is also disseminated to our contracted employment services provider so they may discuss all options with clients they are working with.

- b. Described below is how the district identifies appropriate program providers of Vocational Education and Job Skills Training programs that are available to clients whose assessment indicates such services would be an appropriate work activity assignment. Please ensure to include the current providers the district partners with for the provision of Vocational Education and Job Skills Training in Table 1 or Table 2 under section 1.2 of this Plan.

The Resource Development Specialist of the Employment Unit is charged with outreaching throughout the community to identify Vocational Educational programs and Job Skills Training programs that have successful outcomes that are available for our clients. When a new program is identified, the Resource Development Specialist meets with the provider, gathers the information about the program and their target population, and disseminates the information to the Employment Unit staff so they can discuss all options with their clients at assessment and reassessment. This information is also disseminated to our contracted employment services provider so they may discuss all options with clients they are working with.

- c. Described below are the district's process and guidelines workers follow to ensure that individuals who have not attained a basic literacy level and/or have not attained a high school diploma are offered the opportunity to participate in an educational activity. This includes individuals who are 18 and older and individuals aged 16 or 17 who are not attending secondary school or its equivalent.

A list of the ACDSS approved training providers is available as part of the orientation process and a review of those providers and the programs they offer are addressed during the assessment process prior to program enrollment. Participants previous work history and personal interests are taken into consideration as the employment plan is developed.

Participants with limited English comprehension, verbal and/or written, will be assisted by Employment Unit staff in order to assure full understanding of all parties' responsibilities. We utilize the Interpreter Services Guides (PUB # 4843) to determine native language and where possible provide publications and notices using the identified language (as well as in

English) from the OTDA library. This agency has access to interpretation and translation services through the Language Line for telephone translations, Language Today for written and face-to-face translation, and Geneva Worldwide for sign language services to insure all persons have accurate translation.

During the assessment and reassessment process, the Employment Unit workers discuss educational opportunities with all recipients who have not attained a basic literacy level and/or obtained their high school diploma or the equivalent. An educational component is then added into the employment plan when appropriate and desired by the individual. In addition, our contracted employment services provider offers collaboration with basic literacy and/or HSE/Basic Education providers which allows the recipient further opportunity to incorporate these activities into their employment plan.

Clients under 18 years old who are not enrolled in high school or HSE, will be given a mandatory assignment of High School Equivalency classes.

Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.

- d. Described below are the district's process and policy, including the guidelines workers follow, when determining whether participation in educational activities is approved for individuals who have not attained a high school diploma who are interested in participating in an educational activity. Include in this section instances when the district would deny participation in educational activities.

A list of the ACDSS approved training providers is available as part of the orientation process and a review of those providers and the programs they offer are addressed during the assessment process prior to program enrollment. Participants previous work history and personal interests are taken into consideration as the employment plan is developed.

During the assessment and reassessment process, the Employment Unit staff discuss educational opportunities with all recipients who have not obtained their high school diploma or the equivalent. An educational component is then added into the employment plan when appropriate and desired by the individual. In addition, our contracted employment services provider offers collaboration with HSE/Basic Education providers which allows the recipient further opportunity to incorporate these activities into their employment plan.

Clients under 18 years old who are not enrolled in high school or HSE, will be given a mandatory assignment of High School Equivalency classes.

We do not deny participation in educational activities that are related to HSE/basic education as this is often a minimum qualification for many entry level employment opportunities.

Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.

- e. Described below is the district's process and policy for determining whether a participant is approved/assigned to participate in job skills or vocational education activities.

As part of the employment assessment the Employment Unit staff have taken into consideration the educational level completed along with basic literacy abilities of the participant, as well as the participant's interest in pursuing a job skill or vocational educational activity. The Employment Unit staff will follow the written protocol detailed in Training Approval Process (Attachment C and referenced supporting forms Attachments D, E and F), and pursuant to 18 NYCRR 385.9 (C) (4), would approve enrollment in training unless the Employment worker makes the determination, based upon an assessment and employability plan that the job skills or vocational educational activities are not appropriate (i.e.: the participant has already completed 12 months of Voc. Ed.), or if such individual has failed to make satisfactory progress in educational activities.

Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.

- f. Described below are the standards by which education and training providers are evaluated.

Training providers are limited to accredited educational programs and those listed on the NYS DOL website as training providers.

- g. Described below is the district's procedure for advising participants of approved training.

A form letter is signed by the participant requesting approval for training/vocational educational education program (Attachment D) with their expectations clearly identified. Signature on this form indicates the participant's interest in participation in a program, their agreement to meet minimum expectations and the reasons for possible discontinuance by this agency. Following the request to participate, the Training Approval Request (Attachment F) is signed by both the participant and the Employment Unit worker and sent to the training/education program for completion to verify such specifics as start date, anticipated completion date, proposed schedule, etc. Once the Employment Unit worker receives this completed and signed Training Approval Request from the program the participant is issued a Training Request Decision of approval (Attachment E).

- h. Described below is the district's procedure for notifying participants they are approved for training or enrollment in a work activity.

See letter "g" above for the procedure for notifying participants of approval for training. All trainings and enrollment in work activities are built into every employment plan which is developed in partnership with each individual. A copy of Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need. Every employment plan, including changes, is signed by both the individual and the Employment Unit worker or contracted employment service provider and is provided to the participant.

- i. Described below is how the district will monitor the high school attendance for 16-18 year-olds in order for them to retain their TA exempt status.

Temporary Assistance staff verify school enrollment at application and at each recertification. Albany County will follow the policy of the appropriate school district where the individual teen attends regarding school attendance.

- j. Described below is the district's procedure for ensuring that an individual's health related limitations are accommodated when assigning the individual to a work activity.

TANF, SN-MOE or SN-non-MOE individuals coded employable with limitations will be referred to our contracted employment services provider. This provider is notified of an individual's health related limitation(s) in the WTCMS appointment letter. Included in this letter is a description of the limitation(s) (i.e.: no heavy lifting, pulling, pushing, etc.). During the contracted employment services provider's assessment, a more detailed investigation into the work limitations is conducted and taken into consideration when assigning an individual to any work activity, ensuring the activity is within the scope of the individual's health related abilities.

Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.

4.4 Post-Secondary Education Approval and Enrollment Policies

- a. Described below is the highest level of post-secondary level education that the district will approve as a work activity, up to a four-year college program (please ensure to include the current providers the districts partners with for the provision of post-secondary education programs in Table 1 or Table 2 under Section 1.2 of this plan):

A four-year college program is the highest level of post-secondary level education that ACDSS will approve as a work activity.

- b. In accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.9(b), regardless of whether the college program is approved for the participant as an employment work activity, the district will approve as a work activity a work-study, internship, externship or other work placement that is part of a non-graduate student's curriculum unless one or more of the following conditions applies as described below (reply yes or no to options as they apply):

Conditions For Disapproval of Work Activities For Individuals Enrolled in College

Yes or No:	Conditions for disapproval of work activity
Yes	It has been determined that the student voluntarily quit their job or reduced earnings to qualify for initial or increased TA.
Yes	A job or on-the-job training position that is comparable to the work-study, internship, externship or other work placement cannot reasonably be expected to exist in the private, public or not-for-profit sector.
Yes	The student is not maintaining a cumulative C average (or the equivalent). The district may disregard this provision if the student documents an undue hardship.
Yes	The institution or student fails to monitor and report information regarding the student's attendance and performance as required.
Yes	The student fails to progress toward the completion of a course of study without good cause, as determined by the district.
Yes	The student has previously enrolled in work-study, internship, or other work placement and failed to complete the work placement without good cause as determined by the district.
No	Additional reasons as stated here:

5. Work Requirements

5.1 Meeting TA Work Requirements

- a. Described below is how the district plans to meet federal and State TA participation rate requirements. Included in this description is the weekly hours standard participation requirements for individuals in the different case and household types, along with the typical time period it takes for nonexempt individuals to be engaged in activities for both newly opened cases and individuals whose status changed from exempt to nonexempt. (Information regarding engaging exempt individuals is entered in Section 9).

The participation standard for all households, with or without children regardless of age, is up to 40 hours a week. Typically, the time frame that it takes for non-exempt SN individuals to be engaged in activities for newly opened cases and SN individuals whose status changed from exempt to non-exempt is within one month, if they are not homeless. Homeless SN individuals will be engaged in activities within one month after finding permanent housing. Newly opened TA or SN FAM cases or individuals on those cases whose status changed from exempt to non-exempt, with children who do not need childcare and are not homeless, will be engaged in activities within two months. Newly opened TA or SN FAM cases or individuals on those cases whose status changed from exempt to non-exempt, who are not homeless but require childcare for participation in work activities will be engaged in activities within three months. All TA and SN FAM households who are homeless, regardless of childcare needs, will be engaged in activities within one month of securing permanent housing if the previous engagement period for their situation has passed.

Note: The number of individuals expected to receive employment services in Section B below may decrease or increase based on in-person activities resuming.

- b. Estimate the number of individuals expected to receive employment services for:

Number of Individuals Who Receive Employment Services

Household Type	Number Served
Households with Dependent Children Average Monthly	375
Households without Dependent Children Average Monthly	315

- c. Described below is how the district uses work participation management reports available through COGNOS or other reports and activities to monitor district progress toward meeting work participation requirements and ensuring full engagement by adults in work or work preparation activities:

The Employment Unit Supervisory staff examines COGNOS reports to monitor countable and non-countable activities and the number of participating recipients. Non-participating recipients who are non-exempt are targeted for engagement in countable activities. COGNOS reports are provided to Employment Unit staff for ongoing management of their caseload. Additionally, Employment Unit Supervisory and Employment Unit staff utilize the various reports in WTCMS to maximize engagement and participation.

- d. Does the district assign TA applicants to Job Search? If yes, describe the district procedure for Job Search, including the required number of job search contacts and hours per week assigned. Use the “Additional Information” column in the chart below to describe how often individuals are generally required to report job search outcomes and if activities other than job search are routinely expected:

No

Applicant Job Search

Applicant Job Search	Min. Contacts	Min. Hours	Additional Information
TANF and SNA MOE	N/A	N/A	N/A
SNA Individuals	N/A	N/A	N/A

- e. Does the district assign TA recipients to Job Search? If yes, describe the district procedure for Job Search, including the required number of job search contacts and hours per week assigned. Include a description of how often individuals are generally required to report job search outcomes and if activities other than job search are routinely expected using the “Additional Information” column.

Yes

TA Recipient Job Search

Recipient Job Search	Min. Contacts	Min. Hours	Additional Information
TANF and SNA MOE	15	35	Job Search is one component of the activities that are routinely assigned to TA recipients but is not the sole activity. Through our contracted employment services provider, recipients may be assigned to multiple activities under the definitions of job readiness training activities, job skill training and work experience. Additional employment activities are assigned as appropriate. Supervised Job Search is a function of our contracted employment services provider who ensures every recipient is registered with Job Zone, provides job leads including direct referral to local job fairs and

Recipient Job Search	Min. Contacts	Min. Hours	Additional Information
			<p>monitors Job Search weekly. Each Job Search log is reviewed for completeness and reasonableness.</p> <p>In rare situations where a recipient is not assigned to a contracted provider for this function, Job Search is followed by the Employment Unit worker. The recipient must report weekly and submit the attached Job Search Log (Attachment G). This log not only tracks employer contact information but also the amount of time spent to complete each job application/contact including travel time between employers. It is required that the logs will contain at least 15 contacts weekly and will be used to determine completeness and reasonableness of the activity. Job Searches to supplement other countable employment activities can be assigned to applicants in hourly increments adjusted for individuals in combined activities not to exceed a total of 40 hours per week.</p> <p>Contracted Employment Services Provider or Employment Unit Worker will provide TANF and SN-MOE recipients with transportation resources and direct job leads as available to help facilitate their Job Search activity in addition to childcare assistance. All recipients will be referred to the NYS DOL Job Zone for additional job lead offerings as well as to other available local job search supportive services. Each individual will be provided with nearby hot spots that will enable them to access the internet from their home as well as be provided opportunities as they are available that may assist in obtaining free or reduced Wi-Fi and/or computers/laptops.</p> <p>Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.</p>
SNA Individuals	15	35	<p>Job Search is one component of the activities that are routinely assigned to TA recipients but is not the sole activity. Through our contracted employment services provider, recipients may be assigned to multiple activities under the definitions of job readiness training activities, job skill training and work experience. Additional employment activities are assigned as appropriate. Supervised Job Search is a function of our contracted employment services provider who ensures every recipient is registered with Job Zone, provides job leads including direct referral to local job fairs and monitors Job Search weekly. Each Job Search log is reviewed for completeness and reasonableness.</p> <p>In rare situations where a recipient is not assigned to a contracted provider for this function, Job Search is followed by the Employment Unit worker. The recipient must report weekly and submit the attached Job Search</p>

Recipient Job Search	Min. Contacts	Min. Hours	Additional Information
			<p>Log (Attachment G). This log not only tracks employer contact information but also the amount of time spent to complete each job application/contact including travel time between employers. It is required that the logs will contain at least 15 contacts weekly and will be used to determine completeness and reasonableness of the activity. Job Searches to supplement other countable employment activities can be assigned to applicants in hourly increments adjusted for individuals in combined activities not to exceed a total of 40 hours per week.</p> <p>Contracted Employment Services Provider or Employment Unit worker will provide SNA recipients with transportation resources and direct job leads as available to help facilitate their Job Search activity. All recipients will be referred to the NYS DOL Job Zone for additional job lead offerings as well as to other available local job search supportive services. Each individual will be provided with nearby hot spots that will enable them to access the internet from their home as well as be provided opportunities as they are available that may assist in obtaining free or reduced Wi-Fi and/or computers/laptops.</p> <p>Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.</p>

- f. Described below is the district’s process and policy used for determining whether participation in self-employment is approved as part of an individual's required work activities, including the guidelines workers follow. If the district always approves self-employment as part of an individual's required work activities, please note this policy below:

Self-employment is approved as part of an individual's required work activities if the self-employment is anticipated to lead towards the individual's self-sufficiency and the individual is earning at least the federal minimum wage. The number of hours that may be reported as self-employment may be determined by dividing the individual's net income after subtracting business expenses by the federal minimum wage. The individual may have to participate in additional employment activities to maintain their hourly participation requirement.

5.2 Informing SNAP Applicants and Recipients of Work Requirements

The district informs SNAP households where at least one member is subject to a work requirement of the applicable work rules at certification, recertification, and when a previously exempt household member or new household member becomes subject to work requirements. Notification is provided verbally and in writing.

- a. Described below is how SNAP applicants and recipients are informed in writing of SNAP work requirements (reply yes or no to options as they apply).

Written Information Provided to SNAP Applicants and Recipients

Yes or No:	How written information is provided to SNAP applicants and recipients
Yes	Eligibility staff use the LDSS-5193 <i>Important Information about SNAP Work Rules (General, Mandatory E&T, and ABAWD)</i> and the LDSS-5193A <i>Important Information about SNAP Work Rules (General and Mandatory E&T)</i> as appropriate.
No	Eligibility staff use a local equivalent consolidated work requirements notice to inform SNAP applicant and recipient households of their work requirements. Please attach a copy of the district's OTDA approved local equivalent.

- b. Described below is the process eligibility staff follow to provide a comprehensive oral explanation to SNAP households of work requirements, including General SNAP Work Rules, Mandatory SNAP E&T, and ABAWD Rules which pertain to non-exempt individuals in the household.

When a previously exempt household member or new household member becomes subject to work requirements, the district eligibility worker from TA or SNAP will go over the information in the LDSS-5193A with the client verbally, either in person or over the phone, note in the case record that this information was given to the client and they understand it, and then complete and mail the LDSS-5193A to the client. If the meeting with the client is in-person, they may be hand-delivered the LDSS-5193A.

- c. Described below is how the district documents in the case record how the written information about SNAP work requirements was provided to the household (reply yes or no to options as they apply).

How the District Documents the Written Requirement in the Case Record

Yes or No:	How written information is provided to SNAP applicants and recipients
Yes	The district retains copies of all LDSS-5193/LDSS-5193A in the case record.
No	The district retains copies of local equivalent notices provided to the household in the case record.

- d. Described below is the district's process for documenting in the case record how the oral explanation of SNAP work requirements was provided to the household (reply yes or no to options as they apply).

How the District Documents the Oral Requirement in the Case Record

Yes or No:	How oral information is provided to SNAP applicants and recipients
No	Eligibility staff complete the LDSS-4826C and retain a copy in the case record.
No	Eligibility staff use a locally developed oral explanation tool and retain a copy in the case record.
Yes	Eligibility staff document the case record through case notes/comments.

5.3 Meeting SNAP Work Requirements

- a. Described below is the extent to which the district requires NTA SNAP recipients to participate in SNAP E&T work activities. (Please note: Case management services must be provided to all participants enrolled in SNAP E&T activity):

Albany County does not mandate NTA SNAP recipients to participate in SNAP E&T work activities.

- b. If the district is offering Supervised Job Search as an E&T activity component, describe below how the job search activity will be supervised and tracked, including the frequency of monitoring the participant's job search efforts.

Albany County does not mandate NTA SNAP recipients to participate in SNAP E&T work activities.

- c. If the district is not mandating SNAP E&T work activity assignments, please describe below how NTA SNAP work registrants are informed of the services available, upon request, for assistance with job search activities. (Please note: At a minimum, districts are required to offer job search assistance to NTA SNAP applicants and recipients):

During the application/recertification interview all NTA SNAP applicants/recipients are screened for employability status. Client rights and responsibilities are discussed at this time, and they are informed of the availability of job search assistance as well as supportive services available.

5.4 Advising Households of Employment and Training Services

At the time of recertification, non-exempt SNAP recipients who are members of certain TA/SNAP and NTA/SNAP households must be advised of the availability of employment and training services within the district and/or region. This requirement applies non-exempt recipients in households containing at least one adult, with no elderly or disabled individuals, and with no earned income at their last certification or required report.

- a. Described below is who the district provides information about employment and training services to (reply yes or no to the options as they apply):

Who the District Provides Employment and Training Services Information to

Yes or No:	Who the district provides employment and training services information to:
Yes	Required population only
Yes	Other groups described here: Applicants/Recipients are provided with information on job leads, job fairs, and given information on Career Central when they request assistance in finding employment.

- b. Described below is the method the district uses to advise SNAP recipients of available employment and training services at recertification (reply yes or no to the options as they apply):

How the District Provides Employment and Training Services Information

Yes or No:	How the district provides employment and training services information
Yes	Materials and information provided in print form
No	Materials and information provided on a website. Described here is how individuals are made aware the information is available on the website:
Yes	Material and information provided via email.

5.5 Provider Determinations

- a. Not every activity assignment/referral to training might be the right fit for every participant. As such, districts are required per federal regulations at 7 CFR 273.7(c)(18) to have procedures in place for when a provider/contractor determines an individual is not a good fit for a particular activity or program they are referred or assigned to. This is called the provider determination process. Described below is the district's process for provider determination, including the process for screening individuals prior to referral to a provider, how to communicate information related to provider determinations with the district, how workers communicate information related to provider determinations with the client, and documenting provider determinations.

The Employment Unit worker screens our recipients during the assessment, prior to referring to our contracted provider, to ensure they would be a good fit for their program.

Sometimes, the recipients do not disclose everything to us, but they may disclose it to our contracted provider during their initial needs assessment. If it is determined that the recipient is not a good fit for the program, our contracted employment services provider notifies us within five days on either the referral feedback form generated through WTCMS or email that a client is not a good fit for a particular E & T activity component and why.

Once this is received from the provider, we follow up with the client within five calendar days. If we need more information from the client, we will first try to contact them by phone. If we are unsuccessful reaching the client by phone, within three calendar days from the initial phone call, we will mail a contact letter (Attachment B) to the recipient. If the provider determination is the client is not a good fit due to a medical reason, physical/mental health, we will send for documentation of the disability within five calendar days of notification from the provider. We will then redetermine the client's employability. If the provider determination is for a reason not related to a medical issue, we will send a referral to the client for a new work activity that is more appropriate within five calendar days of the provider determination. The client is informed of the provider determination verbally, in writing (a new referral or request for documentation,) and/or both. This is then documented in WTCMS comments and IEDR comments. If written notification is sent to the client, it will be scanned into IEDR.

- b. Described below is the district process for informing providers of their authority and responsibility to determine if an individual is not a good fit for a particular activity or program.

Albany County has an open line of communication with our contracted providers and we meet with them monthly. If during their initial assessment with the recipient, it is discovered that they are not a good fit for the program or activity, our contracted employment services provider notifies us within five days. This is done on either the referral feedback form generated through WTCMS or by email stating the recipient is not a good fit for a particular E & T activity component and why.

- c. Described below is the district process for provider oversight to ensure that provider determinations are not unfair or used to discriminate against protected classes.

All provider determinations will be reviewed by Employment Unit Supervisory staff to ensure the recipient was returned for an adequate reason. Their oversight will ensure that provider determinations are not unfair or used to discriminate against protected classes.

6. Quality Assurance/Work Verification

6.1 Quality Assurance Process - Random Case Sampling

Consistent with New York State's approved Work Verification Plan (WVP), and in accordance with the requirements established by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, districts must develop a quality assurance plan to ensure that the data reported, from which their work participation rates are derived, are accurate. The plan must include the district's procedure for monitoring reported scheduled and actual attendance in paid employment and unpaid work activities and the controls in place to ensure that reported exemption statuses resulting in federal exclusions from the work participation rate calculation

are accurately made, work eligible individuals are correctly identified, hours of attendance reported are accurate and documented, data entry is accurate and that the district and its providers adhere to the approved work activity definitions and the determination of countable excused absences and holiday reporting within federal limits. Each district must maintain the documentation to verify what is being reported to NYS OTDA.

Each district must describe how it will conduct periodic self audits to determine that system entries are consistent with documentation in case files. The district must also explain how it will choose the sample size, select sample cases and establish the review period (no less frequently than semi-annually). The plan must indicate the district will maintain documentation on all pertinent findings produced through its self audit process and that case records for all reviewed cases will be available for State and other auditors in their review of the local work verification system for the standard 6 year period associated with such reviews.

The district will sample cases from each month within the (6 month) semi-annual period. The October to March review will be due by May 20th. The April to September review will be due by November 20th. The results of these audits will enable the district to identify policies, processes or cases that may need corrective action.

After each self audit is completed, the district must submit a summary of findings to OTDA A&QI at AQI.WV.SelfAudits@otda.ny.gov for State review including specific information on each of the errors identified. In addition, when monitoring reveals substantial problems, the district must describe the corrective action it will take.

The Quality Assurance (QA) plan must include the following elements:

- Ensure that documentation of wages and actual hours of employment is verified and accurately projected/reported and present in the case file, is actual and is projected correctly;
 - Ensure that the documentation for actual hours, supervision/attendance, excused absences, and holidays in other activities is present in the case file;
 - Assess whether participation in the work activities reported for work eligible individuals meets the approved federal definition for the activity;
 - Assess that the data entered into either WTWCMS, the Self-Sufficiency, Employment, Assessment and Management System (SEAMS) or other automated systems used for reporting work activities is accurate, including actual hours, excused absences and holidays; and is based on documentation in the case record; and
 - Ensure that documentation necessary to determine an individual to be exempt due to being the parent caretaker of a disabled household member (TA Employability Code 38 or 48), and/or parent or caretaker relative of a child in the household under 12 months of age, (TA Employability Code 31), is present in the case file and that individuals meet the exempt status based on the required documentation.
- a. Below is the number of random sample cases of participation in paid work activities the district will review semi-annually. Refer to the Instruction Guide for the minimum number of cases per district and guidance regarding review requirements.

- b. Below is the number of random sample cases of participation in unpaid work activities the district will review semi-annually. Refer to the Instruction Guide for the minimum number of cases per district and guidance regarding review requirements.

12

- c. Below is the number of random sample cases in which a case member is reported as an TA Employability Code 38 – “Parent needed in the home full time to care for an incapacitated/disabled household member” or TA Employability Code 48 – “Needed in the home to care for an incapacitated child full time – time limit exemption”. Refer to the Instruction Guide for the minimum number of cases per district and guidance regarding review requirements.

6

- d. Below is the number of random sample cases in which a case member is reported as an TA Employability Code 31 – “Parent or caretaker relative of a child under 12 months of age”. Refer to the Instruction Guide for the minimum number of cases per district and guidance regarding review requirements.

6

The district will review district worker or approved provider/vendor collected documentation and data entry of the above listed elements. The district will assess and verify that participation in the reported work activities listed above meet the State approved definition for the activity.

6.2 Use of Outside Providers/Vendors

- a. Does the district utilize outside providers/vendors to collect documentation and enter data directly into WTWCMS?

No

- b. If Yes, does the district’s provider/vendor documentation collection, data entry and management of WTWCMS follow the same process that would be used by the district worker?

N/A

- c. If No, describe below the process used:

N/A

7. Supportive Services

7.1 TA and Non-TA SNAP Applicants and Recipients in Work Activities Approved by the District

- a. The district must provide childcare in accordance with the childcare section of the district's Child and Family County Services Plan. The district will also provide the following expenses, which the district deems necessary for the individual to participate in orientation, assessment, employment planning, approved work activities and activities to restore self-sufficiency:
 1. CDTA swipe bus passes
 2. Transportation allowances, at the public transportation rate or the district's mileage rate (current federal IRS medical/moving rate) on a case-by-case basis
 3. Interview/employment clothing not to exceed \$150 on a case-by-case basis
 4. Items, such as boots, uniforms, etc. required for employment activities not to exceed \$250 on a case-by-case basis
 5. Employment related tools and/or safety equipment not to exceed \$400 on a case-by-case basis
 6. Car repairs/insurance will be provided when needed on a case-by-case basis for individuals who have obtained employment and/or when necessary to maintain employment not to exceed \$1,000
 7. Licenses and other work-related fees not to exceed \$500 on a case-by-case basis
 8. Academic fees, books and/or supplies if essential and not available from other sources, except as required by federal law not to exceed \$250 on a case-by-case basis
- b. Indicated below are the services the district will use to assist those participants who need transportation to and from an approved work activity site, including any applicable mileage reimbursement rate, and the method used by the district to arrive at that reimbursement rate. OTDA policy establishes a mileage reimbursement rate of no less than the IRS established rate for medical/moving purposes. In all instances, should the actual cost of transportation needed to participate in an assigned work activity exceed the reimbursement rate determined by the district, the district will reimburse for the actual costs based on reasonable documentation submitted by the work activity participant (reply yes or no to the options as they apply).

Transportation Services Provided to Clients

Yes or No:	Transportation Assistance Provided
Yes	Bus pass/token
No	Gas card/voucher

Yes or No:	Transportation Assistance Provided
No	Mileage reimbursement at the IRS Business rate (effective 1/1/2023 is 65 cents per mile)
Yes	Mile reimbursement at the IRS Medical/Moving rate (effective 1/1/2023 is 22 cents per mile)
No	Other mileage rate (the methodology used to establish reimbursement rate is described here):

- c. OTDA policy establishes a distance not to exceed two miles as the maximum distance that the district can require a participant to walk to a work activity assignment or to access public transportation. Describe below the distance an individual may be required to walk, each way, to a work activity or to access public transportation:

The maximum distance that an individual will be expected to walk is two miles; most individuals reside within two miles of a CDTA bus line. Consideration will be taken into account, on a case-by-case basis, for those with physical limitations and/or small children. Further consideration will be taken into account, on a case-by-case basis, if the weather conditions, terrain, or safety of the route the individual has to walk to access public transportation is unfit or could cause potential harm to the individual.

- d. Described below are the services the district will provide to assist individuals at risk of needing TA to improve their opportunities for employment or to maintain their employment:

The agency may provide referrals to community services who may assist those at risk of needing TA.

7.2 Post-Employment/Transitional Supportive Services

- a. Described below are the supports and strategies the district will provide to support job retention:

The Employment Unit staff remain involved with an employed individual to offer assistance with potential issues as long as the case remains financially eligible to receive Temporary Assistance benefits. Assistance is provided for transportation, uniform expenses, childcare, licensing, and other items if they are needed/required to obtain and maintain employment. Albany County also provides information to individuals and providers on free tax preparation assistance, to maximize the utilization of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). We offer financial literacy workshops to our participants which includes tax preparation, utilization of EITC and other classes in support of financial stability such as credit counseling, banking skills and financial planning. Our contracted job coaching provider works with our employed individuals to promote job retention and assistance with any barriers that arise.

- b. Described below are the support services (for up to 90 days after case closing) the district will provide to individuals whose TA cases have closed due to employment:

Transitional Childcare (TCC) assistance will be provided to eligible households whose case closed as a result of employment for one year as long as the household remains employed. If employment is lost, childcare assistance will continue for three months of inactivity. If the household remains employed when the TCC eligibility period has expired, a redetermination

for ongoing eligibility for childcare will be completed by ACDSS staff to determine if the household retains financial eligibility for low-income childcare. Additionally, continued services from Brightside Up, Inc. remain available to obtain safe and reliable alternative and/or back-up day care arrangements to support job retention. This service continues indefinitely with no income eligibility requirements.

Transitional Medicaid (TMA) will be provided for up to twelve months to income eligible TANF recipients on cases closed as a result of employment. Once the TMA eligibility period has expired, a redetermination for ongoing eligibility for Medicaid will be completed by ACDSS staff to determine if the household retains financial eligibility for this program.

Transitional SNAP benefits (TSNAP) at the same pre-employment benefit amount will be provided for five months if the TANF household is eligible and is receiving TA/SNAP at the time of closing as a result of employment. Once the TSNAP eligibility period has expired, a redetermination for ongoing eligibility for SNAP will be completed by ACDSS staff to determine if the household retains financial eligibility for this program.

In Albany County, transportation benefits will be provided through the Employment Unit or our contracted employment services provider for up to six months to individuals whose TA case closed as a result of employment and as long as the individual remains employed and provides monthly verification of income to their Employment Unit worker or contracted employment services provider.

7.3 Extended Support Services

a. Described below are the support services the district will provide for individuals who are eligible under the TANF Services 200% of poverty eligibility guidelines. These services can be provided as long as funding is available (FFFS, etc.):

1. Domestic Violence Counseling Services. The primary project goal is to assist victims of domestic violence through advocacy and non-medical counseling services. These services supplement the mandated domestic violence core services.

2. Domestic Violence Liaison Services. Through a voluntary screening process, individuals who self-identify as domestic violence victims are assessed, provided safety and service plans, and considered for waivers of specific eligibility requirements, if compliance would place them or their children at risk.

3. Family Treatment Drug Court. For TANF families finding themselves involved in the Family Treatment Drug Court, Family Treatment Court services are available to assist in arranging transportation and scheduling.

8. Conciliation, Sanction and Dispute Resolution Procedures

8.1 Conciliation

a. The district's conciliation process for TA applicants and recipients must be conducted in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.11(a). Indicate below how conciliations are conducted (reply yes or no to the options as they apply).

How the District Conducts Conciliation for TA Applicants and Recipients

Yes or No:	How conciliation is conducted
Yes	In person
Yes	By phone
Yes	By mail

The districts process for conduction TA conciliations is described below:

Any individual that fails to complete an assigned employment activity is sent a conciliation notification requesting that they contact the agency to explain the reasons for their non-compliance. An Employment Unit Supervisor will speak via telephone, or in person if requested, to give the recipient an opportunity to provide an explanation for their non-compliance. If appropriate, the Employment Unit Supervisor may request supporting documentation of claims made by the individual, and ultimately will decide if good cause/willfulness has been demonstrated for the non-compliance. If it is determined that good cause is established, the Employment Unit Supervisor will re-engage the individual in continued employment services. If good cause has not been established, the Employment Unit Supervisor will make a recommendation to the TA worker to proceed with negative action. This agency uses a willful and without good cause standard.

- b. Who makes the TA good cause/willfulness determination (reply yes or no to the options as they apply)?

How the District Makes the Good Cause/Willfulness Determination for TA Applicants and Recipients

Yes or No:	Who makes the TA good cause/willfulness determination?
No	The client's employment worker
Yes	A supervisor in the district
No	A separate entity (described here):

- c. The district's conciliation process for SNAP applicants and recipients must be conducted in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.11(d). Indicate below how conciliations are conducted (reply yes or not to the options as they apply).

How the District Conducts Conciliation for SNAP Applicants and Recipients

Yes or No:	How conciliation is conducted
Yes	In person
Yes	By phone
Yes	By mail

The district's process for conducting SNAP conciliations is described below:

Any individual that fails to complete an assigned employment activity is sent a conciliation notification requesting that they contact the agency to explain the reasons for their non-compliance. Included with the conciliation notification is an additional notification on How to Avoid Your SNAP Sanction (Attachment I). An Employment Unit Supervisor will speak via telephone, or in person if requested, to give the recipient an opportunity to provide an explanation for their non-compliance. If appropriate, the Employment Unit Supervisor may request supporting documentation of claims made by the individual, and ultimately will decide if good cause/willfulness has been demonstrated for the non-compliance. If it is determined that good cause is established, the Employment Unit Supervisor will re-engage the individual in continued employment services. If good cause has not been established and the individual has not demonstrated compliance to avoid the SNAP sanction, the Employment Unit Supervisor will make a recommendation to the TA or SNAP worker to proceed with negative action. This agency uses a willful and without good cause standard.

- d. Who makes the SNAP E&T good cause/willfulness determination (reply yes or no to the options as they apply)?

How the District Makes the Good Cause/Willfulness Determination for SNAP Applicants and Recipients

Yes or No:	Who makes the TA good cause/willfulness determination?
No	The client's employment worker
Yes	A supervisor in the district
No	A separate entity (described here):

- e. Described below is the district's procedure for engaging SNAP recipients in a work activity to demonstrate compliance to avoid a SNAP E&T related sanction:

The individual may avoid a SNAP sanction by demonstrating compliance with the SNAP assigned work activity of Supervised Job Search. The individual is required to complete five on-line and/or in person supervised job searches, record on a job search log and return it to their conciliator within ten days.

If the individual believed they had good cause, but the district determined that good cause was not established and the individual had willfully not complied, the district will offer the individual an additional opportunity to complete a Supervised Job Search to avoid the SNAP sanction at that time by completing five on-line and/or in person job searches.

8.2 Sanction

- a. Described below is the district’s procedure for determining compliance for those TA recipients who wish to end their employment sanction (18 NYCRR 385.12, 385.13), including the time period established for demonstrating compliance to the satisfaction of the district:

Sanctioned individuals that express an interest in resolving their sanction will be offered the opportunity to demonstrate their willingness to comply by engaging in ten days of employment activity by being re-assigned to employment services and monitored for compliance for the ten-day period. If the individual is engaged and fully participating with the assigned employment activity, the sanction will be lifted, retroactive to the 1st day of compliance, as the individual will have demonstrated their willingness to comply with the requirements.

Temporary Assistance benefits are restored retroactive to the date the individual indicated a willingness to comply, but no earlier than the expiration of the minimum duration period, provided the individual is otherwise eligible.

- b. Describe below the district's procedure for determining compliance for those SNAP recipients who wish to end their employment sanction (18 NYCRR 385.12, 18 NYCRR 385.13), including the time period established for demonstrating compliance to the satisfaction of the district:

Recipients must request to be added back to the case after the minimum duration has ended and comply with work requirements as directed by the district. Those who document an exemption may have their SNAP sanction lifted before the end of the durational sanction period. Sanctioned individuals that express an interest in resolving their durational sanctions will be addressed in the same manner as above once the duration of the sanction is within ten days of ending giving the individual the earliest possible opportunity to have the sanction lifted. SNAP benefits are restored effective the first of the month following the month of compliance, but no earlier than the expiration of the minimum duration period.

8.3 Dispute Resolution

- a. The district’s procedure for individuals who wish to dispute their work activity assignments, including individuals who dispute the district’s response to their request for health-related accommodations must be conducted in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.11(c). Indicate below who mediates the grievance (reply yes or no to the options as they apply).

Grievance Mediation

Yes or No:	Who makes the TA good cause/willfulness determination?
No	An independent entity which has an agreement with the district.
No	Supervisory staff who are trained in mediation and who have no direct responsibility for the individual’s case.
Yes	Designated supervisory staff who have no direct responsibility for the individual’s case and who are not trained in mediation.

9. Disability Determinations, Documentation and Requirements of Exempt Individuals

9.1 Disability Determination Process and Tools

- a. The district's process for determining an individual's disabilities and/or work limitations must be in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.2(d). Indicate below what the district's process is for determining an individual's disabilities and/or work limitations (reply yes or no to the options as they apply).

Process for Determining Disabilities and/or Work Limitations

Yes or No:	How the district determines an individual's disabilities and/or work limitation
Yes	District participates in the OTDA managed contract for independent medical evaluations.
No	District contracts directly with a physician to provide independent medical evaluations.
Yes	District accepts physician's statement provided by participant.
Yes	District accepts physician's statement provided by participant but refers for an independent evaluation when deemed necessary.
Yes	<p>Other process: When an individual indicates that they are unable to work due to medical/mental health reasons, they are requested to provide documentation of such limitation by having their health care practitioner or medical provider complete a statement (preferably the LDSS-4526). If the health care practitioner's or medical provider's statement is not complete, or fails to provide sufficient information, the Employment Unit worker may contact the health care practitioner or medical provider directly for clarification. If the individual does not have a health care practitioner or medical provider or has provided a health care practitioner's or medical provider's statement that is questionable, a referral for a consultative evaluation is made. When an individual indicates that they are unable to work because they are needed in the home to care for a disabled/incapacitated household member they are requested to provide documentation from the household member's health care practitioner or medical provider that an impairment exists, and that the household member is in need of care by completing the Caretaker Medical Information Employability Assessment (Attachment J).</p> <p>The Employment Unit worker reviews the documentation provided and if completed fully will submit the documentation to the Employment Unit Medical Review Team (MRT) for review and determination of employability status of exempt, nonexempt or work limited. The Employment Unit has a medical review team (MRT) comprised of Employment Unit staff and a supervisor who reviews all medical documentation available and, based on the totality of all information received, renders an employability code determination. This is a team review and consensus-based decision. Information is provided by the individual's medical practitioner and/or consultative evaluation.</p> <p>The decision is based primarily on the "Functional Limitations" as listed by the</p>

Yes or No:	How the district determines an individual's disabilities and/or work limitation
	physician in section IV of the LDSS-4526 (if that form has been presented) and/or whatever additional information the practitioner/provider has written either on the form or in a separate letter indicating their opinion as to the employability of the individual. If the documentation fails to provide sufficient information to render an employability determination, a call is placed by the Employment Unit worker to the practitioner/provider to clarify their position. If the Employment Unit worker is unable to make contact with the practitioner/provider, or needs further information, the individual is referred for a consultative evaluation to receive a medical report that may provide additional information needed to make an employability code determination (all medical documentation received by the Employment Unit worker is sent to the consultative evaluator for consideration). Once additional information is gathered it is submitted to MRT for final review and determination of employability status.

- b. Described below is the district's procedure for notifying an individual of their exempt or non-exempt determination whenever an individual alleges to be unable to participate, or the individual otherwise participates in the employability disability review, including when an individual is notified that their status changes from exempt to non-exempt:

Through the CNS (Client Notice System) the Employment Unit worker issues the Notice of Temporary Assistance Work Requirements Determination (LDSS-4005 or LDSS-4005a) notifying the individual of the agency's decision including an employability determination of exempt or non-exempt and any limitations that have been indicated.

- c. Described below is how the district notifies an individual of their exempt or non-exempt determination (reply yes or not to the options as they apply):

Process for Notifying an Individual of Their Exempt or Non-Exempt Status

Yes or No:	District's process for reviewing medical documentation
Yes	The district sends the LDSS-4005 or LDSS-4005a and a retains a copy in the case record.
No	The district sends a local equivalent and retains a copy in the case record.

- d. Indicated below is the process for reviewing the medical documentation to determine if the individual is exempt, nonexempt, or work limited and describe the process by which the determination is made (reply yes or no to the options as they apply).

Process for Reviewing Medical Documentation

Yes or No:	District's process for reviewing medical documentation
No	District directs the contracted physician or individual's physician to determine status.
Yes	District review team reviews and determines status (described here):
No	Specialized disability/medical staff or unit reviews and determines status (described here):

Yes or No:	District's process for reviewing medical documentation
No	<p>Other process: The Employment Unit worker reviews the documentation provided and if completed fully will submit the documentation to the Employment Unit Medical Review Team (MRT) for review and determination of employability status of exempt, nonexempt or work limited. The Employment Unit has a medical review team (MRT) comprised of Employment Unit staff and a supervisor who reviews all medical documentation available and, based on the totality of all information received, renders an employability code determination. This is a team review and consensus-based decision. Information is provided by the individual's medical practitioner and/or consultative evaluation.</p> <p>The decision is based primarily on the "Functional Limitations" as listed by the physician in section IV of the LDSS-4526 (if that form has been presented) and/or whatever additional information the practitioner/provider has written either on the form or in a separate letter indicating their opinion as to the employability of the individual. If the documentation fails to provide sufficient information to render an employability determination, a call is placed by the Employment Unit worker to the practitioner/provider to clarify their position. If the Employment Unit worker is unable to make contact with the practitioner/provider, or needs further information, the individual is referred for a consultative evaluation to receive a medical report that may provide additional information needed to make an employability code determination (all medical documentation received by the Employment Unit worker is sent to the consultative evaluator for consideration). Once additional information is gathered it is submitted to MRT for final review and determination of employability status.</p>

9.2 Mental Health Screening and Assessment

- a. In addition to screening for a disability as part of the application or disability determination process, does the district administer a screening tool for TA participants to help determine whether a referral for a mental health evaluation is warranted?

Yes

- b. Describe the district's policy for determining when a program participant is offered a mental health screen:

All recipients are offered screening as part of the employment assessment and planning process. Recipients are also screened upon re-assessment or whenever behavior dictates a need for screening, upon recommendation from providers or client self-disclosure.

- c. What screening tools does the district use (reply yes or no to the options as they apply)?

Screening Tools the District Uses

Yes or No:	Screening Tools
No	LDSS 5009 - Mental Health Screening Tool
No	The computer assisted version of the Modified Mini Screening tool (MMS)
Yes	Other Screening tool (described here): Albany County Mental Health Screening Instrument (Attachment H.)

- d. If using the MMS, indicate below the district's cutoff score (7, 8 or 9) for referral to a mental health evaluation.

The district does not use the MMS as a tool.

- e. Describe below the procedure the district uses if the screening tool warrants a mental health evaluation referral:

If the screening tool indicates a potential mental health barrier, the individual is referred for a consultative psychological evaluation. If the client is already engaged in mental health treatment, we request a Medical Examination for Employability Assessment, Disability Screening, And Alcoholism/Drug Addiction Determination (LDSS-4526) be completed by their provider.

9.3 Requirements for Exempt TA Participants (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.2 (e))

- a. An exempt individual who has the potential to be restored to self-sufficiency through rehabilitation may be required to accept medical care to assist them in recovering from a mental or physical impairment, accept referral to and enrollment in a program of vocational rehabilitation, training, and/or other essential rehabilitation, and provide requested evidence that the individual is participating in the assigned program.

Described below is the district's procedure for determining if an individual, who is unable to work due to mental or physical impairment, has the potential through treatment or other rehabilitative activities to improve the ability to work. This determination is different from the determination of the individual's disability exemption as covered in Section 9.1 of this Plan. Indicate who makes or assists in this determination that an individual can restore or improve employability through treatment or other rehabilitative activities (e.g., medical practitioner, employment worker, TA worker, local review team, etc.). Also indicate the source and type of information used to make the determination (e.g., information from individual's medical practitioner, district contracted provider, specialist evaluation obtained as result of district referral, etc.).

The Employment Unit has a medical review team (MRT) comprised of case managers and a supervisor who reviews all medical documentation available to determine, based on the totality of all information received, if the individual has the potential through treatment or other rehabilitative activities to restore or improve the ability to work. This is a team review and consensus-based decision. Information is provided by the individual's medical practitioner and/or consultative evaluation.

- b. Described below is the district's procedure for developing a treatment plan and for referring the participant to appropriate treatment, etc.

The Employment Unit worker accepts the recommendations for appropriate treatment of the treating practitioner or consultative evaluation practitioner. The Employment Unit staff also provides individuals with a list of community resources for mental health treatment. Individuals are requested to engage in appropriate treatment as defined by the practitioner and as availability of the treatment provider allows. Individuals are requested to inform their Employment Unit case manager of engagement, schedule and treatment plan.

Activities will be held virtually, or in-person based on circumstances and client need.

- c. Described below is the district's procedure for tracking the participant's compliance with their treatment plan, including who in the district is responsible for monitoring compliance. Include elements such as monthly confirmation of attendance at rehabilitation or other factors to judge participation and progress, along with how often the treatment plan is updated.

The Employment Unit worker is responsible for monitoring compliance with treatment plans. The individual is requested to provide documented attendance in appropriate treatment to their Employment Unit worker. As documentation is provided, the Employment Unit worker will review and assess if the documentation meets the employment plan in place for self-sufficiency or if a revised plan is needed. Treatment plans are the responsibility of the provider and will be required as often as treatment needs change. Updated treatment plans will be requested by the Employment Unit worker as needed but no less than annually.

10. District Certification

10.1 Certification

As a condition of the receipt of federal and State funds the Local District Commissioner of Albany County Department of Social Services submits this Temporary Assistance (TA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment Plan (Plan) to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. The Plan outlines the administration of employment services for TA and SNAP applicants and recipients for the period January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2025. Submission of this Plan certifies that the district has read and accepts the terms of this certification and hereby affirms that employment services programs will be administered in accordance with all applicable federal and State policies, laws, regulations, and provisions of this Plan.

12/13/2023
Michele McClave
Commissioner