

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

January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2021

Rensselaer County

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Section 1- Assurances

As a condition of the receipt of federal and State funds the Rensselaer 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, 2020 through December 31, 2021. As Commissioner of Rensselaer County Department of Social Services, I hereby affirm that employment services programs will be administered in accordance with all applicable federal and State policies, laws, regulations and provisions of this Plan.

/s/ _____TB_____ 01/02/2020

Theresa Beaudoin, Social Services Commissioner

01/02/2020, Date

Amendments to this Plan:

Date Approved OTDA	Section(s) Amended

(To be completed by OTDA)

Section 2 Administration

Section 2.1 Administrative Structure

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.

Following 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. The responsibilities of each office are described below.

Rensselaer County Department of Social Services Units involved in the Welfare-To-Work Program are as follows:

TANF/SNAP Unit: Consisting of 1 Principal II, 4 Sr. Examiners, 16 Examiners, 6 Clerks

Population Served: TANF/SNAP applicants and recipients

Services Included: Orientation, Eligibility Determination, Budget/Case Management, Sanction Management

Safety-Net MOE/SNAP Unit: Consisting of 1 Principal II, 3 Examiners

Population Served: Safety-Net MOE/SNAP applicants and recipients

Services include: Orientation, Eligibility Determination, Budget/Case Management, Sanction Management

Safety-Net Non MOE/SNAP Unit: Consisting of 1 Principal II, 2 Sr. Examiners, 13 Examiners, 6 Clerks

Population Served: Safety Net Non MOE/SNAP applicants and recipients

Services Include: Orientation, Eligibility Determination, Individual Assessments and Employment Plans, Budget/Case Management, Case Management, Conciliations, Sanction Management, Engaging recipients in Job Searching, and Providing Support Services.

Employment Unit ("Project HIRE"): Consisting of 1 Employment Specialist, 2 Sr. II Examiners, 4 Sr. Examiners, 1 Clerk, 1 OTDA Job Specialist Staff, 1 Performance Improvement Assistant.

Population:Served:TANF/SNAP,Safety-Net-MOE/SNAP,Safety-Net-Non-MOE/SNAP Applicants/Recipients

Services Include: Orientation, Employment Assessments, Employment Plans, Case Management, Assignment of Work Experience and other activities, Conciliations, Dispute Resolution, Employment Strategies, Supportive Services, Post Employment Services

Rensselaer County Department of Social Services Daycare Unit

Rensselaer County CASAC Manager

Rensselaer County Veterans Service Agency

Rensselaer County Mental Health Department

Rensselaer County Employment and Training

Rensselaer County Re-Entry Task Force

Section 2.2 TA and SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) Provider Agencies

Table 1 - Contracts Associated with TA and SNAP Employment Programs and Services

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 assessments 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 oversight to ensure that contractors perform in accordance with the terms, conditions, and specifications of their contracts.

Provider	Total Contract Cost (per year)	Funding Source(s) (Check all that apply)	Categories of Clients Served (Check all that apply)	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
NYS OTDA Consultative Examination Contract	\$20,000.	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	Provides second medical opinion for employability RE: Industrial Medical Associates (IMA)
Unity House	\$30,000.	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	Provide liaison to Rensselaer County Department of Social Services for determining waivers for Domestic Violence victims

Provider	Total Contract Cost (per year)	Funding Source(s) (Check all that apply)	Categories of Clients Served (Check all that apply)	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
All Language Translations	\$15,000.	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	Provides language translator/interpreter services
Employer Resource Network (ERN)	\$12,500.	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	Provides a Success Coach to clients enrolled in Soft Skills Program
Employer Resource Network YWCA /ERN	\$12,500.	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	Provides a Success Coach in the Jamison Rounds Work Program
	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	
	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	
	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	
	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	
	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	
	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	
	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	
	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	
	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/> FFFS <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP E&T <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200%	

Table 2 – Other Service Providers

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.

Provider	Funding Source(s) (if known)	Categories of Clients Served (Check all that apply)	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
WIOA - Rensselaer County One Stop Career Center	Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200% 	Provide services through the Rensselaer County One Stop Office for Job Searching, Resume Prep, Summer Youth Employment, Provide limited funds for certain job-specific training.
OTDA Jobs Staff	State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200% 	Provide computer classes in Job Searching, Assist in Job Searching and Job Referral, assist in Rensselaer County Department of Social Services internal Job Fairs.
Questar III	NYS ED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200% 	Administering Test For Adult Basic Education (TABE Test) and enrolling individuals in High School Equivalency (HSE) classes
Capital District Educational Opportunity	NYS ED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200% 	Administering Test For Adult Basic Education (TABE Test) and enrolling individuals in High School Equivalency (HSE) classes and other vocational education programs and Perkins funding. Provides 2 weeks of Soft Skills training held @ EOC orientation and assessment sessions.
Access VR	NYS ED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200% 	provides Vocational Training and Employment Services for motivated individuals with disabilities
Rensselaer County Re-Entry Task Force	DCJS/DO CS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200% 	Job Fair
Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO)	FED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200% 	Referrals to Head Start, Early Head Start, WIC and other programs to remove barriers to employment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200% 	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Family <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Individual <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP <input type="checkbox"/> TANF 200% 	

Section 2.3 OTDA Jobs Staff Agreement

OTDA Jobs Program Services – Target Groups

(“X” signifies those that apply in this district)

Services		Target Groups	
Assessment/Employment Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Applicants	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervised Job Search	<input type="checkbox"/>	FA & SNA with children	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job Readiness Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	SNA without Children	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job Club	<input type="checkbox"/>	SNAP	<input type="checkbox"/>
Job Placement Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	TANF 200%	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grant Diversion	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Job Development (employer outreach)	<input type="checkbox"/>		
WOTC pre-certifications	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Other Services Requested

Described below are additional services/duties which will be requested of Jobs staff (e.g. WTWCMS data entry, case conferencing, job fairs)

The OTDA Job Specialist staff member enters notes into the WTWCMS system, assists clients in Job Searching skills, maintains the Project HIRE job opening bulletin board, informs Project HIRE staff of upcoming job fairs and new job postings and assists in Rensselaer County Department of Social Services Project HIRE internal Job Fair held at the Rensselaer County Department of Social Services Office at 547 River Street Troy, NY. The OTDA job staff member assists clients one-on-one with computer base job searching in the Resource Room during Job Club.

Section 2.4 Access to Services at New York State Career Centers

In New York State, TANF is a required WIOA partner and must coordinate access to TANF services with the comprehensive Career Centers.

- a. Below is a description of how the district provides access to its programs and services with Career Center partners. Check all that apply:
 - The district has employee(s) physically present at a Career Center
 - The district has contract staff physically present at a Career Center
 - The district makes available direct access to its program staff via phone or technology at a Career Center
 - The district makes available copies of the LDSS-2921 (Common Application) at a Career Center
 - Other: The district has an employee physically present at a Career Center one day a week.
- b. Please provide a description of how the district coordinates with Career Center partners with providing 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 Rensselaer County One Stop Career Center, the comprehensive American Job Center for Rensselaer County, is an integrated partner in serving Rensselaer County Social Service applicants and recipients. Through shared services with the Project HIRE Unit, DSS job search ready applicants and recipients are directly referred via appointment to the Career Center for enrollment in WIOA career development services. These services include registration, initial assessment to determine appropriate career development services, enrollment into OSOS job matching system, resume development, creation of Job Zone Accounts, career assessments, and access to multitude of career readiness workshops. Additionally, individuals who are in need of short-term classroom or on-the-job training services may have the opportunity for tuition assistance funding through WIOA Title I.

Rensselaer County Department of Social Services and the Rensselaer County Career Center have partnered together to offer job readiness soft skills "bootcamp" named the GAME Program (Gaining And Maintaining Employment) that is a job readiness workshop for DSS clients focused on employability skills. In partnership, and hosted at the Capital District Educational Opportunity Center (division of HVCC) in Troy, the 2-hour per day, 2 week workshop is co-facilitated by Rensselaer County staff from the Career Center and Social Services. The ultimate goal of this project is securing employment for DSS applicants and clients. This project serves an average of 12-18 participants each month. Mock interviewing, job-keeping skills, along with financial literacy are stressed throughout the curriculum. Small graduation ceremonies are held on the last day with the County Executive addressing the group and presenting the participants with certificates. Prior to the ceremony, participants take part in a targeted hiring event and are interviewed on the spot by several businesses for employment opportunities. Staff from DSS Project Hire are stationed at the Career Center every Thursday to meet with GAME graduates in conjunction with Career Center staff. This intense follow up ensures that all participants get placed in either unsubsidized employment or entry into further occupational skills training programs.

Rensselaer County Social Services also partners with the Career Center and the ReEntry Task Force on quarterly Job Fairs that are hosted at the DSS Building. Career Center NYSDOL Business Services staff coordinate employers to attend these job fairs that are attended on average by 20 businesses and 80 job seekers.

Section 3 Engagement and Work Preparation

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

For purposes of satisfying the federal requirement which states 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, 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 3.4. Also included is pursuit of other forms of income such as SSI and SSDI.

Include any additional information regarding the district’s local “engaged in work” requirements:

Rensselaer County Department of Social Services requires individuals to look for and secure appropriate childcare, any medical, substance abuse treatments, ESL classes, HSE classes in order to reduce barriers to employment and increase the potential for self sufficiency at the earliest point in time. Rensselaer County Department of Social Services assists the client in this process with a referral to the Child Care Council, Capital District Educational Opportunity Center, Questar III-BOCES, or Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County, YWCA-Jamison Rounds Program or Gaining and Maintaining Employment (GAME) Program as appropriate. The individual is responsible for securing medical and substance abuse treatments.

Section 3.2 Orientation (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.5)

Check one of the following:

- The district provides orientation in accordance with 18 NYCRR Section 385.5 and no additional information is provided at orientation.
- In addition to the requirements outlined in 18 NYCRR Section 385.5 of the regulations, the district’s orientation provides the following:

Described below is the manner in which the district completes the required orientation for all applicants and recipients of TA (e.g. in a group setting, individually, or a combination of both), including the orientation procedure for exempt individuals and non-exempt individuals, if different:

Orientation is provided at application and recertification. The initial orientation process is done on an individual basis within the application and eligibility appointments within the TANF/SNAP, SAFETY-NET MOE/SNAP, and SAFETY-NET NON MOE/SNAP units. The Employment Unit (Project HIRE) staff reiterates and completes the orientation process on an individual basis during the Employment Assessment and the developing of the client's Employment Plan. Furthering education with the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) with services provided and assessments for furthering job readiness. Re-orientation may occur at other times as warranted between staff and client.

Section 3.3 Assessment and Employment Planning

TA Assessment

(Reference 18 NYCRR 385.6 and 385.7)

Check one of the following:

a. The district conducts assessments as required by 18 NYCRR 385.6(a) and 385.7(a):

The district enters assessments directly into WTCMS

The district uses the LDSS 4980 (New York State Assessment) and later enters information into WTCMS.

The district conducts assessments using a local equivalent tool, and later enters information into WTCMS. Attached is the local equivalent.

The local equivalent does not contain additional elements other than what is required.

The local equivalent does contain additional elements beyond what is required, listed below:

b. Describe the district procedure for the completion of an employment assessment:

All adult clients and those clients 16 and older who are not attending school are given an employment assessment. The Assessment is completed during the application process. TANF (within 30 days) and SAFETY NET MOE (within 45 days) applicants are assessed by Project HIRE. SAFETY NET NON MOE (within one year) applicants/recipients are assessed by that unit at time of interview. The information gathered by this process is part of a comprehensive strategy to help the individual become self sufficient.

c. The district administrative unit or contractor responsible for conducting assessments is:

The Project HIRE unit does the initial employment assessment/employment plans and re-assessments and updates of employment plans for all TANF and SAFETY NET MOE individuals. The SAFETY NET NON MOE unit is responsible, for that unit's individuals, for the original assessment and employment plan and updates. The SN Non MOE assessments and employment plans are completed at the eligibility interview. The information gathered at this process is part of a comprehensive strategy to help the individual become self sufficient.

d. The qualifications of the employees conducting the assessment are at minimum: [Refer to requirements listed in 18 NYCRR 385.6(c) and 385.7(c)]

The Project HIRE staff who do the individual's employment assessment and employment plan are either Senior Examiners or Senior Examiner II. They have completed the Welfare-to-Work Core Training Program and The Welfare-to-Work Caseload Management System Training provided by OTDA. The SAFETY NET NON MOE Staff who perform this duty are either Senior Examiner or Examiners. They have been given training through OTDA training courses listed above or have been trained by that unit's Principal II.

e. Applicants in households **with** dependent children are required to participate in completion of an assessment:

Yes No

- f. Applicants in households **without** dependent children are required to participate in completion of an assessment:
 Yes No
- g. **Exempt** adults in households **without** dependent children are required to participate in the completion of an assessment:
 Yes No
- h. How often and under what circumstances is the assessment updated?
The assessment is updated at the time of recertification and at any time client's circumstances change or at completion of an activity.

Temporary Assistance Employment Plan

(Reference 18 NYCRR 385.6 and 385.7)

- a. Check one of the following:
 - The district develops individual employment plans as required by 18 NYCRR 385.6(a) and 385.7(a):
 - The district enters employment plans directly into WTCMS.
 - The district uses the LDSS 4978 (New York State Employment Plan) and later enters information into WTCMS.
 - The district develops individual employment plans using a local equivalent tool and later enters information into WTCMS. Attached is the local equivalent.
 - The local equivalent **does not** contain additional elements other than what is required.
 - The local equivalent **does** contain additional elements beyond what is required, listed below:
- b. Check one of the following:
 - The same administrative unit or contractor that conducts employment assessments also develops employment plans.
 - A different district administrative unit or contractor develops employment plans, and their qualifications include
- c. Describe the district procedure for the completion of an individual's employment plan. The employment plans are completed at case opening by the Project Hire unit for TANF, SN/MOE and SN non-MOE clients by a Senior Examiner or Senior Examiner II. After the completion of the employment plan both the client and the worker sign the document.
- d. How often and under what circumstances is the employment plan updated?
The employment plans are updated at the time of recertification and at any time the client's circumstances change or at the completion of an activity.

Section 3.4 Participation Rates and Work Activities (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.8 and 385.9)

- a. Describe below how the district plans to meet federal and State TA participation rate requirements. Included is the weekly hours standard participation requirement 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 who status changed from exempt to nonexempt. Information regarding engaging exempt individuals is entered in Section 6:

All non-exempt applicants in Rensselaer County participate in job searching. As the client's cases become active, they continue with supervised job searching until they are assessed and an employment plan is developed. At that time, a comprehensive strategy of vocational education, supervised job searching, work experience, and job readiness training will be assigned to the client in order for the client to reach their goal of self sufficiency and for the district to meet Federal and State participation goals. The minimum district standard for single parent/caretaker of a child under six years old is 20 hrs/wk, for a single parent with a child six years of age and older is 30 hrs/wk, a two parent household would be 35 hrs/wk for each parent and a single individual without children would be 35 hrs/wk. Typically, the time period between cases opening and engagement in activities is 30 days.

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

	Households with Dependent Children Average Monthly	Households without Dependent Children Average Monthly
Individuals	700	600

- c. Describe below 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:

Rensselaer County Department of Social Services uses reports that can be generated from the COGNOS and WTWCMS systems on a monthly basis. Those individuals who are engaged but not meeting participation rates are given appointments so that staff can verify activity hours, review employment plans and alternatives to enhance participation rates.

- d. Describe the extent to which the district requires Non-Temporary Assistance Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NTA SNAP) recipients to participate in SNAP E&T work activities. If the district is offering Supervised Job Search as an E&T activity component, the district must describe how the job search activity will be supervised and tracked, including the frequency of monitoring the participant's job

search efforts. (Please note: Case management services must be provided to all participants enrolled in an E&T activity):

Rensselaer County Department of Social Services does not mandate Non-Temporary Assistance SNAP applicants or recipients to participate in SNAP E&T work activities. The agency does offer individuals assistance with supervised job search efforts through the Rensselaer County One Stop office at 1600 7th Ave. Troy, NY. The agency will provide job leads and access to Project HIRE's employment board as requested by the individual.

If the district is not mandating SNAP E&T work activity assignments, please describe 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 make available job search as a SNAP E&T activity to NTA SNAP applicants and recipients):

The agency offers individuals assistance with supervised job search efforts through the Rensselaer County One Stop office at 1600 7th Ave., Troy, NY. The agency will provide job leads and access to Project HIRE's employment board.

- e. Describe the district procedure for Job Search, including the required number of job search contacts and hours per week assigned. Also 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:

1. The district assigns TA **applicants** to Job Search. Yes No

If yes, the process for engaging TA **applicants** is: On the day of assessment, the individual is expected to perform job searches and continues until the case is active. For clients with children the individual is instructed to do 10 contacts within 10 days of assessment, logging them on the job search form provided by the agency and to continue this assignment until the case opens. For clients without children, the individual is instructed to make 10 contacts with applications within a ten day period logging them on the job search form provided by the agency and to continue this assignment until the case opens.

Applicant Job Search	Minimum Number of Contacts	Minimum Number of Hours	Additional Information
TANF and SNA MOE	10	N/A	the client is then followed by Project Hire staff with additional 10 employment applications due every 10 days until the case is active. Clients are also advised to actively search for childcare providers if necessary at this time
SNA Individuals	10	N/A	Applicants return every 10 days with 10 employment applications until case is active

2. The district assigns TA **recipients** to Job Search. Yes No

If yes, the process for engaging TA **recipients** is: When a client becomes a recipient who has children under six years old on the case, they are instructed to do 20 hrs of job searching per week which includes applying for the position and logging them on the job search form provided by the agency. A client with a child six years of age and older would be required to do 30 hrs of job searching, applying for each position and logging them on the job search form provided by the agency. These clients are required to turn in the job search log each week. Clients without children are required to do a minimum of 10 job contacts each week with applications and at least 35 hours of job search averaged weekly. In all cases, individuals participating in a combination of different activities will not be required to participate more than 40 hours per week in activities. Clients are required to return the forms and documentation bi-weekly to the SAFETY NET NON-MOE unit.

f. Describe the district’s process and policy, including the guidelines workers follow, when determining whether participation in self-employment is approved as part of an individual’s required work activities. If the district always approves self-employment as part of an individual’s required work activities, please note this policy below.
 Rensselaer County Department of Social Services approves self-employment as a work activity. The hours will be determined by taking client's written documentation of net income (after subtracting certain allowable business expenses) divided by the federal

minimum wage. The client may be assigned other activities to ensure the client meets the hours required for participation.

- g. The allowable work activities that are available in the social services district are listed and defined in the table on the next two pages. An “X” in the appropriate check box indicates the activity is available for individuals receiving Family Assistance (FA), Safety Net Assistance for households with children (SNA Fam), Safety Net Assistance for households without children (SNA IND), and/or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. A blank check box indicates the activity is not available for that case type.

	Activity and Definition
<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Fam <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Ind <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP	<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>
<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Fam <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Ind <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP	<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>
<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Fam <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Ind <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP	<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>
<input type="checkbox"/> FA <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Fam <input type="checkbox"/> SNA Ind <input type="checkbox"/> SNAP	<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>In addition to those components noted above, work experience will include unpaid internships that are part of any non-graduate student’s education curriculum. (Note: Paid internships are to be reported as employment.)</p>

Activity and Definition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — FA — SNA Fam — SNA Ind — SNAP 	<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>OJT will be unsubsidized (for which the employer does not receive a subsidy) or subsidized using TANF funds or other funds to offset the cost of the training provided to the participant. A subsidized OJT will be subsidized for up to the full cost of providing such training and wages/benefits provided to the program participant. Positions will be subsidized for the length of time determined appropriate by the State or social services district. OJT is distinct from subsidized employment since the individual must participate in workplace training to attain full and adequate job performance and the subsidy provided is intended to offset the cost of such training.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — FA — SNA Fam — SNA Ind — SNAP 	<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>Community service assignments will primarily be voluntary in nature including participation in VISTA, AmeriCorps, and unpaid volunteer activities at a school, Head Start programs, religious or faith-based institutions, community organizations or a nonprofit or public agency but will also include such mandated participation when court ordered. Participation in activities to support these organizations is deemed to provide a service to the community. In those instances, where the participation could meet the federal definition of work experience or community service and the district or program provider would like to have another recipient provide childcare for the community service individual, such hours of work may be reported as participation in community service.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — FA — SNA Fam — SNA Ind — SNAP 	<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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — SNAP 	<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>

Activity and Definition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 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> <p>Traditional JRT activities will include: resume preparation, training in interview skills, instruction in workplace expectations, training in effective job seeking, life skills essential to workplace success, time management, goal setting, budgeting, basic math and literacy skills, household management, interpersonal skills, decision making skills, anger management, parenting skills when it has been determined that such training could help reduce unplanned work leave or apprehension toward entering employment.</p> <p>For TANF and SNA MOE funded families, JRT also includes substance abuse and other treatment and rehabilitative services that are required for individuals who are unable to work or individuals whose employability and employment retention requires such services. Such services, which should be reported on WTWCMS as such, will be deemed within WRTS participation rate logic to be JRT for recipients of TANF and SNA MOE funding but will be deemed to be Community Service for recipients of SNA non-MOE, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical health treatment and rehabilitation services including attending necessary physical therapy, and doctor appointments. Such treatment will include medical, behavioral and other treatment necessary for individuals suffering from substance abuse (current and former users) with such required treatment ranging from detoxification services to after care/abstinence maintenance. • Mental health services including therapy, counseling, and other services to address mental or emotional disorders that can interfere with an individual's daily life functions, ability to work, looking for work or the ability to retain employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — FA — SNA Fam — SNA Ind — SNAP 	<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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 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>

Activity and Definition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 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, 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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — FA — SNA Fam — SNA Ind — SNAP 	<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 equivalence (HSE) diploma, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received a certificate of general equivalence. 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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — FA — SNA Fam — SNA Ind — SNAP 	<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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — FA — SNA Fam — SNA Ind — SNAP 	<p>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.</p>

Section 3.5 Job Development

The district conducts or accesses job development services to expand job opportunities for TA and SNAP participants. Yes No

If yes, the district participates in job development activities in the following manner:

District staff contacts employers to solicit jobs for TA and SNAP participants.

Below is the description of how this is done, including number of staff, frequency of contacts, etc.:

All Project Hire Senior Examiners, Senior Examiners II, Employment Specialist & the Performance Improvement Assistant conduct outreach for job development, together with Rensselaer County One Stop and the Rensselaer County Re-Entry Task Force, partners and holds Job Fairs at the District Office at 547 River Street Troy, NY. Rensselaer County reviews resumes and provides individuals with job leads. Project Hire refers clients to the Rensselaer County One Stop which is located at 1600 7th Ave., Troy, NY. Frequency of contacts varies depending on client need.

District contracts or has an agreement with another agency to contact employers and solicit jobs for TA and/or SNAP participants. Below is the description of how this is done, including number of staff, frequency of contacts.

OTDA Jobs Program staff are charged with job development as indicated in section 2.3. Additional information, if any, is described below:

Section 3.6 Training Approval and Activity Enrollment Policies (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.9)

- a. Describe how the district identifies appropriate education program providers for services of Adult Basic Education, 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:
Rensselaer County Department of Social Services refers individuals for the above mentioned services to Questar III BOCES, Educational Opportunity Center, and Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County. These three agencies have positive outcomes with individuals receiving HSE certifications and English secondary language skills.
Rensselaer County Department of Social Services does not have formal agreements with Questar III-Boces, Capital District Educational Opportunity Center, or Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County, but these agencies serve the same population as the Rensselaer County Department of Social Services and provide the required services, thereby making them the best available option for individuals working with Rensselaer County Department of Social Services.

- b. Describe 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: Rensselaer County Department of Social Services refers individuals to the Capital District Educational Opportunity Center and Hudson Valley Community College; these two providers are part of the SUNY system. The Department also uses Questar III-BOCES part of NYSED. The Department also uses the YWCA ready to Work Program. Also, the Rensselaer County Career Center is used for potential WIOA Title I training funds. All trainings are approved and on the New York State eligible provider list. These programs provide positive outcomes in terms of certificates, degrees, and hands-on-training at costs that are more affordable for individuals working with the Department as compared to available alternatives.

- c. Describe the process and guideline 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:
At the time of assessment and development of the employment plan, workers discuss the need in this job market to have at a minimum of a HSE certificate and to be able to read and speak English in order to become self sufficient. The individual is offered the opportunity to participate.

- d. Describe the district's process and policy, including the guideline 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 agency would deny participation in educational activities:
Individuals are given encouragement and supportive services to foster an opportunity for success in obtaining their HSE equivalency. Our workers will evaluate past attempts and try to identify reasons for the individual not being successful, such as an undiagnosed learning disability, transportation and childcare support. The plan that is developed would need the individual to accept the added responsibility and commitment to this new opportunity. Individuals with multiple past instances of not following through with goals of previous attempts would be assigned other work activities until they show forth they are willing to complete and commit to this new educational opportunity.

- e. Describe the district's process and policy for determining whether a participant is approved/assigned to participate in job skills or vocational education activities:
The individuals are identified at time of assessment and employment plan development. Workers discuss with the clients their interest in obtaining skills through education to become self sufficient and the commitment on their part for success in this endeavor. Review of necessary supportive services will be done for the success of the individual and must be adequate. Individuals with multiple past instances of not following through with goals of previous attempts would be assigned other work activities until they show forth they are willing to completely commit to this new educational opportunity. Gaining and Maintaining Employment (GAME) participants also connect with the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) to pursue educational activities.

- f. Describe the highest level of post-secondary level education that the district will approve as a work activity, up to a four-year college program:
An associates degree in a career specific field which would qualify the individual for employment in a job that is reasonably obtained in this area.
- g. Describe how the district will ensure that enrollments in post-secondary education beyond the 12-month lifetime limit are combined with a weekly average of at least 20 hours in paid employment activities which may include work study, work experience or community service:
The client's assigned worker will provide the above information when the initial employment plan is agreed upon. As the client is working toward their goal and time limit of twelve months, the worker and client will develop new strategies for completing the client's post secondary education beyond the 12 month limit by incorporating work study, work experience, community service or employment.
- h. Education and training providers are evaluated by the following standards:
Providers are evaluated by their institutional accreditations, rating of placements of graduates in positions that are directly related to the given courses of training and the amount of indebtedness the individual will be left with versus the quality of the program.
- i. The district procedure for advising participants of approved training providers is:
Discussions take place with participants during assessments formation of the employment plan. Individuals are given literature that is available from the approved training providers when available. Clients are also advised to visit the provider in person and talk to the representatives about their programs.
- j. The district procedure for notifying participants of approval for training or enrollment in a work activity is:
The employment plan is developed in person between the individual and their Project HIRE worker with both signing off on the plan. Also, additional documents of referrals, participant's rights and obligations, scheduled appointments and program schedules are signed by the individual and the client's worker. If an in person contact can't happen, a phone interview could take place with any documents developed mailed to the client to be signed and returned to Rensselaer County Department of Social Services by mail or fax.
- k. 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 checked below:
- It has been determined that the student voluntarily quit a job or reduced earnings to qualify for initial or increased TA.
 - 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.

- 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.
- The institution or student fails to monitor and report information regarding the student's attendance and performance as required.
- The student fails to progress toward the completion of a course of study without good cause, as determined by the district.
- 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.
- Additional reasons as stated below:

- I. To verify continued exempt status, the district will monitor the high school attendance of 16-18 year old students in the following manner:
Rensselaer County Department of Social Services monitors the high school attendance of 16-18 years old by verifying at time of application and recertification written proof of enrollment in a high school.
- m. The district's procedure for ensuring that an individual's health related limitations are accommodated when assigning the individual to a work activity is:
Rensselaer County Department of Social Services will provide written documentation to the individual's limitation and need of an accommodation to the work activity provider.

Section 3.7 Work Verification

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, NYCWAY 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 (Employability Code 38 or 48), and/or parent or caretaker relative of a child in the household under 12 months of age, (Employability code 31), is present in the case file and that individuals meet the exempt status based on the required documentation.

The District's Quality Assurance Process is as follows:

The district will perform a random sample of (6) cases semi-annually for **paid work activities** to review district worker collected documentation and data entry. Both the TA and employment case files will be reviewed. Hours of employment will be verified through receipt of pay stubs, employer verification forms or collateral contact with the employer. The review will ensure the hours of employment on the ABEL budget are consistent with the hours reported on WTWCMS and documentation is in the file to support hours reported on WTWCMS and that the scheduled hours on WTWCMS is consistent with the documentation.

The district will perform a random sample of (6) cases semi-annually for participation in **unpaid work activities** to review district worker collected documentation and data entry. The employment case files will be reviewed. Actual hours of attendance will be documented by attendance sheets showing actual hours of attendance, any excused absences during the month, any unexcused absences during the month, and holiday time. The review will ensure the actual hours of attendance reported on the monthly attendance sheets has been correctly

reported on WTCMS, excused absences and holiday time are documented in the case file and correctly reported on WTCMS in accordance with federal limitations, and documentation of actual hours of attendance is accurate and matches the hours of participation reported on WTCMS by district or provider staff.

The district will perform a random sample of (3) cases semi-annually in which a case member is reported as an employability code **38-needed in the home fulltime or employability code 48-time limit exemption** to care for a disabled household member to review district worker collected documentation and data entry. The TA case file will be reviewed to ensure there is presence of medical documentation to support the exemption and that the documentation has a timeframe for the exemption and that the individual is the appropriate caretaker.

The district will perform a random sample of (3) cases semi-annually in which a case member is reported as an employability **code 31-caretaker of a child under the age of 12 months** to review district worker collected documentation and data entry. The TA case file will be reviewed to ensure there is documentation from hospital, birth certificate or social security card present to verify the child under the age of one. TA records will also be reviewed to ensure that the household composition is in fact a one parent case and that the individual has not exceeded the 12-month lifetime limit.

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.

Use of Outside Providers/Vendors

Does the district utilize outside providers/vendors to collect documentation and enter data directly into WTCMS?

Yes No

If Yes, does the district's provider/vendor collected documentation, data entry and management of WTCMS follow the same process that would be used by the district worker?

Yes No

If No, please describe the process used below:

Section 3.8 Strategies/Procedures for Accommodating Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

Following is a description of how the district accommodates the needs of Non-English-speaking participants in accessing employment activities and services:

Rensselaer County Department of Social Services has a contract with All Language Translations. This provider allows the district to communicate with all of the different languages the agency has encountered to date. Also, this provider can have sign language interpreters available to the agency. We have also used translators from the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants when necessary. Sometimes those individuals who do not speak English are more trusting using their own family members or community friends; Rensselaer County

Department of Social Services gladly accommodates individuals who request those arrangements.

Section 3.9 Strategies/Procedures for Increasing Program Attendance

Describe district policies and/or procedures in place to reduce the amount of time participants fail to participate in work activities, including absences that are with good cause:

Individuals are counselled about the importance of reporting to paid or unpaid work on time and the relationship of attendance and success in the work place. Clients are advised during the assessment and employment plan process of having a reliable back up plan for childcare and to do their utmost on scheduling appointments when they are not at the workplace. The agency acquires school schedules from many of the county's school systems and daycare systems so the workers can remind clients to pre-plan for those dates.

Section 3.10 Strategies/Procedures for Engaging Sanctioned TA Participants

— District attempts to engage sanctioned participants as soon as they are sanctioned using the following strategies:

The district attempts to engage the individual that has been referred for sanction to increase their job search efforts to obtain employment as certain support services such as childcare and transportation assisting are still available to them. Individuals are encouraged to go to the Rensselaer County One Stop located at 1600 7th Ave., Troy, NY to review online employment opportunities and receive specific job referrals. Clients are encouraged to use the Jobs Specialist worker here at Project HIRE for employment opportunities also.

— District attempts to engage sanctioned participants when the durational period of the sanction is completed using the following strategies:

Workers make phone calls to the individual if the participant has a viable phone number. Otherwise, the district mails scheduled appointments approximately 30 days before the durational period ends and will continue making the effort on a 30 day basis from that point on. Project HIRE will notify the TANF and SAFETY NET MOE units that when a client reports for recertification, the Project HIRE worker needs to meet with the client also.

— District attempts to engage sanctioned participants during different times in the sanction period using the following strategies.

Workers start mailing scheduled appointments and making phone calls if the district has viable phone numbers approximately 2 weeks to 30 days before the durational period ends.

Section 3.11 Strategies for reducing the need for TA

District's strategies for reducing the need for TA are described below:

Individuals at time of application are asked about applying for NYS Unemployment Insurance, NYS Disability claims and payments, Workers Compensation, SSI/SSD applications and payments, child or spousal support and if housing, childcare or transportation could be potentially provided by a relative or friend. Clients are asked to do job searching at time of assessment. Referrals to appropriate community-based assistance are made available to the individual. Documentation of utility shut off, eviction notices, or a client requesting specific

assistance, such as moving expenses, when accompanied by written documentation of means of continued support, can be utilized for reducing the need of Temporary Assistance.

Section 4 Support Services

(Reference 18 NYCRR 385.4)

Section 4.1 TA and Non-TA SNAP Applicants and Recipients in Work Activities Approved by the District

- a. The social services district will provide childcare in accordance with the childcare section of the district's Child and Family County Services Plan. The district will also provide for participants 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:

Rensselaer County Department of Social Services will provide supportive services for clothing or tools up to a limit of \$175 per 12 month rolling period to those individuals where Rensselaer County Department of Social Services referred the individual to a specific employer or work experience site or in other instances on a case-by-case basis as deemed necessary or appropriate by Rensselaer County Department of Social Services.

Also, the district uses a variety of means to assist an individual to obtain transportation to and from employment. This assistance is custom-designed for each individual based on the availability of public transportation and the availability of a vehicle they have access to. Monthly per ride bus pass/tokens are provided either at the Project Hire office or funds placed on the client's EBT card. Two ride bus tokens are also available for clients as needed. If no public transportation is available to the individual and they are starting paid employment and the individual has access to an uninsured motor vehicle, the agency may pay the first month's installment of the insurance up to \$200. Vehicle repairs up to \$650 will be done on a case-by-case basis if the client is employed and either does not work or live on a bus route that is within the two mile walking regulation. The agency will base car repair expenses on the repair estimate, age of the vehicle (less than 12 years old) and accumulated mileage of less than 175,000 miles. These insurance and car repairs are only once during a 12 month rolling time period.

- b. The district will use the following approach 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.

Please check all that apply:

- Bus pass/token
- Gas card/voucher

- Mileage reimbursement at IRS Business rate, (effective 1/1/19 is 58 cents/mi)
- Mileage reimbursement at IRS Medical/Moving rate, (effective 1/1/19 is 20 cents/mi)
- Other mileage rate, (please explain methodology used to establish reimbursement rate):

- c. OTDA policy establishes a distance not to exceed 2 miles as the maximum distance that the district can require a participant to walk to a work activity assignment or to access public transportation. The district’s policy states that an individual may be required to walk up to the distance described below each way to a work activity or to access public transportation:
Rensselaer County Department of Social Services abides by the two mile, one way walking limit established by OTDA policy. This walking requirement may be adjusted downward on a case-by-case basis because of medical limitations, or when a parent/caretaker walking with a small child or infant during periods of inclement weather conditions.
- d. The district will provide the following services to assist individuals at risk of needing TA to improve their opportunities for employment or to maintain their employment:

Section 4.2 Transitional Support Services

The district will provide the following supports and strategies to support job retention:

Rensselaer County Department of Social Services may provide to eligible families the following supports for job retention: childcare, transportation assistance, employment counselling and referral of the individual to other services available from community based organizations. These supports are issued through the Employment Unit (Project HIRE), Family Assistance, Safety Net MOE and the Safety Net Unit. Individuals are also given the website for My Benefits: www.mybenefits.ny.gov

The district will provide the following support services, for up to 90 days after case closing, to individuals whose TA cases have closed due to employment:

Rensselaer County Department of Social Services provides the following support services for those individuals of TANF and SN-MOE whose cases close for employment: SNAP benefits, low income childcare assistance, medicaid, transportation bus swipers and employment counseling.

Section 4.3 Extended Support Services

As long as funding is available (through FFFS, etc.), the district will provide the following supportive services for individuals who are eligible under the TANF Services 200% of poverty eligibility guidelines:

Individuals will be able to receive information on applying for low income childcare through Workforce Development (WDI) program by Rensselaer County Department of Social Services Daycare Unit. Also, information and referrals to existing community services will be provided.

Section 5 Conciliation, Sanction and Dispute Resolution Procedures

(Reference 18 NYCRR 385.11 and 385.12)

Section 5.1 Conciliation

The district's conciliation process for TA applicants and recipients is in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.11(a). Conciliations are conducted (check all that apply and describe the procedure.):

- in person
- by phone
- by mail

Conciliation notices will be sent by the Project HIRE staff and Safety Net Unit examiner to those individuals who are not in compliance using the WTWCMS system. The individual then has 10 days to respond from the date of the notice to request a conciliation. Individuals who respond to the conciliation notice within the ten days will be given an opportunity to document they did not willfully and without good cause fail or refuse to comply with an assignment or to dispute an activity assignment. For those individuals who do not respond to the conciliation notice or do not show their actions were not willfull and without good cause, a ten day notice of intent to sanction will be issued by the district.

The Temporary Assistance good cause/willfulness determination is made by:

- client's employment worker
- a supervisor
- separate entity:

Following the above protocol, the Senior Examiner from Project HIRE assigned to the case or, if the assigned Senior is not available, one of the two Sr. Examiner IIs or the Employment Specialist would determine if the client presented factual information that would show the client was willful and without good cause when they failed to participate with an assignment or disputing an activity assignment. In the SAFETY NET NON MOE Unit, this determination is made by an Examiner and, if an Examiner is not available, the Principal II.

The district's conciliation process for SNAP recipients is in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.11. Conciliations are conducted (check all that apply and describe the procedure.):

- in person
- by phone
- by mail

Conciliation notices concerning SNAP E&T will be sent by the Project HIRE staff and Safety Net Unit examiner to those individuals who are not in compliance using the WTWCMS system. The individual then has 10 days to respond from the date of the notice to request a conciliation. Individuals who respond to the conciliation notice within the ten days will to be given an opportunity to show that they did not willfully fail or refuse to comply with an assignment or to dispute an activity assignment. For those individuals who do not respond to the conciliation notice or do not show their actions were not willfull and without good cause will be offered an opportunity to demonstrate compliance with the SNAP-E&T activity of 10 supervised job search contacts as assigned by the district to avoid the SNAP sanction. If the individual does not accept the opportunity to avoid the SNAP sanction then a ten day notice of intent to sanction will be issued by the district.

The SNAP E&T good cause/willfulness determination is made by:

- client's employment worker
- a supervisor
- separate entity:

Following the above protocol the Sr. Examiner from Project HIRE assigned to the case or if not available one of the two Sr. Examiner II's or the Employment Specialist would determine if the client presented factual information that would show the client was willful and without good cause when they failed to participate with an assignment or disputing an activity assignment. In the SAFETY NET NON MOE Unit, this determination is made by an Examiner and, if an Examiner is not available, the Principal II.

The district's procedure for engaging SNAP recipients in a work activity to demonstrate compliance to avoid a SNAP E&T related sanction is:

The individual will receive a conciliation notice by the postal service. Within that document they are given instructions to call a contact number to schedule an appointment to discuss the issue of non-compliance. If a sanction is warranted, the individual would be given a job search log and instructions on how to complete the log. The individual will return the log within 10 days indicating 10 employment applications on the form to demonstrate compliance and thus avoid a SNAP E&T related sanction.

Section 5.2 Sanctions

- a. 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 is:
The recipient after the minimum duration has passed must provide proof of current employment or will be required to complete a job search consisting of 10 employment applications within 5 days.
- b. The district's procedure for determining compliance for those SNAP 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 is:
The recipient after the minimum duration has passed, the individual must comply by completing 10 employment applications within 5 days. Individuals that document an exemption from work requirements may have the SNAP sanction lifted before the end of the durational sanction period.

Section 5.3 Dispute Resolution

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 is conducted in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.11.

The grievance is mediated by:

- An agreement with an independent entity
- Supervisory staff who are trained in mediation and who have no direct responsibility for the individual's case

— Designated supervisory staff who have no direct responsibility for the individual's case and who are not trained in mediation

Section 6 Disability Determinations, Documentation and Requirements of Exempt Individuals

(Reference 18 NYCRR 385.2)

Section 6.1 Disability Determination Process and Tools

The district's process for determining an individual's disabilities and/or work limitations is in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.2(d). Check **all** that apply, and describe the process:

- District participates in the OTDA managed contract for independent medical evaluations.
- District contracts directly with a physician to provide independent medical evaluations.
- District accepts physician's statement provided by participant.
- District accepts physician's statement provided by participant but refers for an independent evaluation when deemed necessary.
- Other process (please describe):

The local process for reviewing the medical documentation to determine if the individual is exempt, nonexempt, or work limited is as follows:

- District directs the contracted physician or individual's physician to determine status.
- District review team reviews and determines status (described below).
- Specialized disability/medical staff or unit reviews and determines status (described below)
- Other:

If a client claims they have a disability or limitations that prevents them from being employed, the district will issue a LDSS-4526 to the client to be completed and returned to the district within 10 days. If the client can demonstrate good cause for needing an extension due to physician being unable to evaluate an extension of up to 30 days may be granted.

When medical documentation is received by the TANF, SAFETY NET MOE or SAFETY NET NON MOE unit's, the examiner assigned to the case will review the information and, if the client's ability to be employed or assigned to other activities, or the extent of any limitations is clearly documented, make the necessary determination of exempt, non-exempt, or work limited. The unit's examiner would process employment code changes to accurately reflect the client's current condition and process the necessary 4005 or 4005a form. If additional review of the documentation is needed, then a Senior Examiner or the unit's Principal II would make the determination as to the client's exempt, non-exempt, or work limitations. If a determination still can not be made by the Examiner II or Employment Specialist, the individual would be referred to Industrial Medical Associates (IMA) for clarification.

When Project HIRE initiates the medical review for employment status, the documentation received is reviewed by the Senior Examiner assigned to the case for determination of exempt, non-exempt, or work limited; the 4005 and 4005a are processed accordingly. If additional review of the documentation is needed, then a Senior Examiner II or the Employment Specialist (Supervisor) would make the determination as to the client's exempt, non-exempt, or work

limitations. If a determination still can not be made by the Senior Examiner or Principal II, the individual would be referred to Industrial Medical Associates (IMA) for clarification.

Section 6.2 Mental Health Screening and Assessment

The district is administering a screening tool for TA participants to help determine whether a referral for a mental health evaluation is warranted, in addition to screening for a disability that occurs as part of the application or disability determination process

Yes No (*If No, section 6.2 is complete*)

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

If yes: Does the district use the LDSS 5009 - Mental Health Screening Tool and/or the computer assisted version of the Modified Mini Screening tool (MMS)?

Yes No

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

If using a screening tool other than the MMS, indicate the screening tool used:

Describe the district procedure for referring a participant for a mental health evaluation, when warranted by the screening result:

Section 6.3 Requirements for Exempt TA Participants (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.2 (e))

An exempt individual who has the potential to be restored to self-sufficiency through rehabilitation may be required to accept medical care to assist the individual 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 he/she is participating in the assigned program.

- a. Following 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 6.1 of this plan. Included here is who (e.g., medical practitioner, employment worker, TA worker, local review team, etc.) makes or assists in this determination that an individual can

restore or improve employability through treatment or other rehabilitative activities. Also included is 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 determination as to whether an individual will respond to treatment or other rehabilitation to improve or restore their ability to be employed or participate in other activities is governed by the client's personal medical practitioner, specialist, or OTDA's managed contract for independent evaluations. This information would be contained in the reports received by the District from the various professionals that have been consulted either by the client or the agency. The treatment plan is updated bi-weekly when possible but at least monthly.

- b. Following is the district's procedure for developing a treatment plan and for referring the participant to appropriate treatment, etc. Please be specific:
For TANF and SAFETY MOE individuals, the Project HIRE Senior Examiner assigned to the case would follow up with the appropriate plan developed by the medical practitioner. For the SAFETY NET NON MOE client the safety net examiner would followup with the appropriate plan developed by the medical practitioner. The district would assist with appropriate supportive services to support the rehabilitation process. As the client progresses in this process, referrals to other agencies will be done as warranted including, but not limited to, Access-VR, Northeast Career Planning, Unity House PROS, and Samaritan PROS.

- c. Following is the district's procedure for tracking the participant's compliance with the 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 Rensselaer County Department of Social Services worker assigned to the case in the applicable unit oversees the treatment plan. This would include compliance with the plan, attendance records, and progress of the client. After reviewing the monthly documentation or recertification documentation, updates are made to the client's case as needed according to medical documentation.