



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	24-LCM-07
To:	Social Services District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Employment and Income Support Programs
Date:	July 16, 2024
Subject:	Allocations for SFY 2024-2025 Family-Centered Case Management Services
Contact Person(s):	Kyle Miller (Employment and Advancement Services): Kyle.Miller2@otda.ny.gov or (518) 473-1457
Attachments:	Attachment A – 2024-2025 Family-Centered Services Allocations by District Attachment B – 2024-2025 Family-Centered Services Program Plan

Section 2

I. Purpose

The New York State Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget appropriates \$17.2 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for social services districts (districts) to hire appropriately credentialed/experienced staff to provide case management services for families who are having difficulty stabilizing their households and transitioning toward greater financial security. The purpose of this Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) is to notify districts of their allocations, to provide general guidance for use of this funding, and to request that each district inform the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) of their plans for administration of their allocations by no later than August 30, 2024. Each district is expected to ensure its use of these resources adheres to the guidelines established in this LCM, as expenditures deviating from these guidelines will not be reimbursed.

II. Background

Districts across New York State will benefit from additional staff and resources to support the needs of families whose circumstances require a more intensive level of case management and specialized services to achieve financial stability and well-being. The target population includes households with complex needs such as mental health conditions, developmental disabilities, substance use disorders, homelessness and/or those experiencing domestic violence.

The Family-Centered Services initiative provides funding intended to support hiring between 1 to 7 full-time credentialed or appropriately experienced staff per district to provide a range of case management services that could include but not be limited to in-depth assessments, crisis intervention, resource navigation, and peer supports to stabilize household conditions for TANF eligible families. The funding allocations which determine how many Family-Centered Services staff

each district will be able to hire were calculated based on caseload size. The complete list of allocations for this initiative can be found in Attachment A.

III. Program Implications

Program Design

Districts have flexibility in determining how the credentialed/experienced staff hired through the Family-Centered Services initiative would best be utilized to support their program and client population needs. Districts may have these staff support their general Family Assistance (FA) and/or Safety Net Assistance Maintenance of Effort (SNA-MOE) applicant and recipient populations (case types 11, 12, and those type 16 and 17 that are SNA-MOE [i.e., State charge code 63 or 64]). They could also choose to target the program toward a specific FA or TANF 200% eligible population for whom there is a marked need for additional resources, such as families experiencing homelessness. Activities recommended by OTDA for Family-Centered Services staff include, but are not limited to:

- Providing assessments to determine whether individuals need specialized services to progress and potentially identifying unaddressed treatment, rehabilitation and support needs to guide employment planning;
- Assisting individuals with complex care needs in navigating State and federal benefits programs to ensure they receive all benefits to which they're entitled and do not fall out of program compliance.
- Connecting clients with behavioral health needs to Single Point of Access (SPOA) and Children's Single Point of Access (CSPOA). Where appropriate, helping clients through the process of applying for Social Security benefits and obtaining the necessary documentation;
- Identifying client treatment, rehabilitation and support needs and linking them to the necessary providers while acting as liaison to ensure the treatment is high-quality and consistent with their goals for family stabilization and well-being. Monitoring individuals' ongoing progress and ensuring they receive the supportive services to attend appointments when needed;
- When appropriate, providing direct support to assist individuals currently undergoing crisis situations including crisis intervention and connection to local crisis services, same-day assistance navigating the process of applying to have immediate needs met, or peer navigation;
- Working with district workers to determine the types of activities and the number of hours to include in applicant/recipient employment plans and providing ongoing guidance in case decision-making and how to interact effectively with individuals;
- Training staff in how to best identify and work with individuals and families with issues such as mental health disabilities, substance use, homeless/unhoused, and domestic violence;
- Identifying and maintaining partnerships with other community-based treatment and supportive service providers to ensure a strong referral network is in place. Participating actively in any existing Children's System of Care infrastructure in collaboration with the county mental hygiene department's Director of Community Services (DCS). This is a key component of ensuring that local funding and resources are coordinated and utilized for maximum benefit. It is important that staff hired through this initiative believe that recovery is possible and strive for seamless service provision and "warm handoffs" for the families served;
- Coaching households on locating and retaining housing, including building positive relationships with landlords and temporary housing providers; and
- Providing case management for unhoused families placed in hotels/motels where there is not a service provider present.

FA and SNA-MOE individuals and families determined to be in need of these services would be directed to the Family-Centered Services staff through referrals by their initial case manager/district worker as outlined by the district Family-Centered Services Program Plan. Case managers/district workers should make the referrals whenever potentially complicated barrier issues are identified, or when a client/family is struggling to meet eligibility requirements, engage in their plan for employability (for instance, if they are approaching program time limits or have a sanction or other non-compliance they don't appear to be attempting to resolve), or comply with the requirements of their Independent Living Plan (ILP) as required to remain in temporary housing.

Staff Recruitment

OTDA strongly encourages districts to reach out and foster partnerships with local educational institutions that train Master's-level and other appropriate licensed clinical counselors. These institutions represent a strong recruitment source for the new staff positions, as well as potential partners for future initiatives to potentially expand the Family-Centered Services program for the benefit of all parties, such as internships placing Master's program students with the districts. However, districts are not precluded from hiring staff who do not hold specific educational credentials if the individual(s) possess the appropriate work and lived experience as well as the knowledge, skills, and ability to do the job. Staff should be culturally competent and have training in trauma-informed practices.

Target Population /Participant Eligibility

FA and/or SNA-MOE applicant and recipient populations (case types 11, 12, and those type 16 and 17 that are SNA-MOE), or a specific FA or TANF 200% eligible population for whom there is a marked need for additional resources are eligible to be served by the Family-Centered Case Management staff supported through this funding. If a district chooses to utilize their Family-Centered Services staff to serve other populations in addition to those eligible for TANF, their salaries must be cost-allocated appropriately. While Attachment A indicates a specific number of staff correlated with the allocation amount, which was based on OTDA's estimates for FTE salaries, districts are not precluded from hiring more than this number if the staff are hired at a lower salary cost or their activities are cost-allocated. The only restriction is that districts cannot exceed their total allocation.

OTDA has set a 15% spending limitation on administrative costs. It is expected that because the staff hired through this initiative will be providing direct services, their salaries and most of the costs associated with the program will be considered non-administrative. However, OTDA acknowledges that some program expenses may fall under the definition of administrative costs. Federal regulations define non-administrative (program) and administrative costs as follows:

- Non-administrative (program) costs are the direct salaries and fringe benefit costs of the staff providing direct services; providing program information to clients; developing employability plans, providing work activities and work subsidies for eligible program participants; providing post-employment services and work supports; and performing case management services. Non-salary costs of staff performing work activities that are considered programmatic are also allowable program costs. Non-salary costs may include, but not be limited to travel, postage, utilities, rental costs, maintenance, supplies, and equipment. Contracts whose main purpose is to provide services defined as program costs as above are considered program as well.
- Administrative costs are the salaries, fringe benefits, and non-salary costs of staff performing activities related to eligibility determinations; preparing program plans, budgets, and schedules; monitoring programs and projects; performing procurement activities; providing public relations; performing accounting, legal, payroll and personnel activities; property management; and preparing reports and other documents.

Community of Practice and Reporting

Once the new Family-Centered Services staff are hired, OTDA intends to work with districts to establish a statewide Community of Practice among these staff and other stakeholders across every district. It is envisioned that this Community of Practice will meet quarterly to share best practices, give updates on the progress of their local Family-Centered Services initiatives, report what training/resources staff might need from OTDA and other agencies, and discuss issues and case trends they are encountering in their regions.

After the Family-Centered Services program has been established, each district will also be responsible for submitting an annual report that will provide OTDA with information on district progress in applying this funding towards their stated initiatives. This report will contain information on the nature of the services provided by the staff hired under the program, the number of referrals made and households who received services and, eventually, pertinent data on recipients' outcomes such as connections to services, sanctions resolved, housing located and retained, and entries to employment. Further details on both the Community of Practice and the annual report requirements will be forthcoming as OTDA oversees the disbursement of this funding.

To establish initiation of the Family-Centered Services program, OTDA requests that all districts review their Family-Centered Services allotments outlined in Attachment A and determine where these specialized staff resources are most needed. Districts must collaborate with the county DCS in the planning phase of the Family-Centered Services program, and the program plan must include documentation that services will be coordinated with SPOA and CSPOA and not duplicative of these resources. Districts must document coordination with any existing Children's System of Care infrastructure with the county DCS. A list of DCS contacts for every county mental hygiene department can be found at https://www.clmhd.org/contact_local_mental_hygiene_departments/.

OTDA requests that all districts submit a Plan (Attachment B) to OTDA that provides an overview of the district's proposal for administering this funding. Consideration should be given as to how to best use these staff to link to existing resources and avoid duplication of effort. This overview should state the overarching objective the district intends to achieve with this funding, break down the estimated allocation of funds by number of clinical staff the district plans to hire, indicate the credential level/specializations of these prospective staff, identify the programs and services the staff would be involved in providing, and describe the target population the district plans to serve through its Family-Centered Services initiative. OTDA requests that each district submits the prospective overview of their Family-Centered Services plan to Kyle Miller at Kyle.Miller2@otda.ny.gov no later than August 30, 2024.

IV. Claiming

Expenditures for this project should be claimed through the RF17 special project claim package for the month(s) that the expenditures were made. These costs are first identified on the RF2A claim package as F17 functional costs and reported in the F17 column on the LDSS-923 "Cost Allocation Schedule of Payments Administrative Expenses Other Than Salaries" and the LDSS-2347 "Schedule D DSS Administrative Expenses Allocation and Distribution by Function and Program." After final accepting the RF2A claim package, the individual project costs are then reported under the project label **FAM CEN 2024** on the RF17.

Salaries, fringe benefits, staff counts, and central services costs are directly entered on the LDSS-4975A "RF17 Worksheet, Distribution of Allocated Costs to Other Reimbursable Programs" while overhead costs are automatically brought over from the RF2A, Schedule D and distributed based upon the proportion of the number of staff assigned to this project. Employees not working all their time on this project must maintain time studies to support the salary and fringe benefit costs allocated to the program.

Non-salary administrative costs are reported with the appropriate object of expense code(s) on the LDSS-923B "Summary - Administrative Schedule of Payments for Expenses Other Than Salaries for Other Reimbursable Programs."

Districts must follow eligibility requirements for use of these funds as described in this LCM.

Program costs should be reported as object of expense code 37 - Special Project Program Expense on the LDSS-923B "Summary - Program Schedule of Payments for Expenses Other Than Salaries for Other Reimbursable Programs."

Total project costs should be reported on the LDSS-4975 "Monthly Statement of Special Project Claims Federal and State Aid (RF-17)" as 100% Federal Share and will be reimbursed up to the amount of each district's allocation.

To receive reimbursement, claims for expenditures of FAM CEN 2024 for the period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, must be final accepted in the Automated Claiming System (ACS) by December 31, 2025.

Further instructions for completing time studies; the LDSS-923, LDSS-923B and Schedule D; and the RF17 claim package are found in Chapters 4, 7, and 18, respectively, of the Fiscal Reference Manual (FRM) Volume 3. The FRMs are available on-line at:

<https://intranet.otda.ny.gov/bfdm/finance/>.

Claiming contacts:

Regions 1-5: Justin Gross: 518-474-7549 or otda.sm.field_ops.i-iv@otda.ny.gov

Region 6: Michael Simon: 212-961-8250 or michael.simon@otda.ny.gov

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