



George E. Pataki
Governor

NEW YORK STATE
OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE
40 NORTH PEARL STREET
ALBANY, NY 12243-0001

Robert Doar
Commissioner

Local Commissioners Memorandum

Section 1

Transmittal:	04-LCM-05
To:	Local District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Temporary Assistance
Date:	May 20, 2004
Subject:	Food Stamp Management Evaluation Procedures
Contact Person(s):	Denis Sheehan at 518-473-6352
Attachments:	Food Stamp Application Processing - Case File Review Document Food Stamp Application Processing - Self -Assessment Interview/Observation Instrument Food Stamp Management Evaluation Review Schedule
Attachment Available On – Line:	X

Section 2

I. Purpose

The purpose of this release is to advise local districts of the continued requirement to conduct Food Stamp Management Evaluation (ME) self-assessments outside of New York City.

II. Background

Program Access MEs are a portion of the ongoing oversight of Food Stamp program administration required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Beginning in 2002, the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) introduced the ME self-assessment process to share program responsibility, by allowing local districts to assess, evaluate and, when necessary, adjust their own management practices. OTDA required districts to retrieve a random sample of cases, review these cases, complete an interview instrument, respond to individual case findings and, if indicated, prepare and implement a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to address deficiencies.

III. Program Implications

Program Access Reviews

OTDA is continuing the ME self-assessment process for program access reviews under USDA-approved procedures. Districts will continue to self-assess key areas of program access, including application processing, expedited processing, timeliness and accuracy of benefits and notices, separate determination, including transitional food stamp benefits, complaint procedures and waiting room observations. This year, 19 districts outside of New York City will complete a self-

assessment and OTDA will conduct 14 on-site reviews (see attachment A). The districts receiving on-site reviews will not be required to self-assess. Future selection of the on-site review districts will be targeted based on review findings and other factors.

The self-assessment will include a questionnaire (Attachment B-1) and a review of 20 cases currently under process using a State prescribed Casefile Review Instrument (Attachment B-2). Completed forms will be sent to OTDA, and if indicated, a CAP must be submitted for areas identified as needing improvement. This year, OTDA has automated the Food Stamp Program Access ME Reviews. Participating districts will access the web-based questionnaires and transmit the resulting data to OTDA on-line.

Program Access Self-Assessment Guidelines

Districts will select 20 cases, including each of the following categories: temporary assistance (TA) case openings, denials, withdrawals and closings; and non-temporary assistance/food stamp (Non-TA/FS) case openings, denials and withdrawals. One recording form will be completed for each case and the reviewer may be either designated centrally or may be any supervisor who did not sign the original case action. In addition, each district will complete a structured Interview Guide to assess other pertinent areas of operation. The guide remains largely unchanged from prior years.

All districts identified for participation in the Food Stamp Program Access self-assessment process have been notified and given instructions for on-line form access. Security considerations necessitate a short window of activity for completion of the on-line forms. As such, all Program Access self-assessment forms must be electronically filed by June 15, 2004. Districts will then provide their Corrective Action Plans to OTDA, where they will be used for statewide program analysis and follow-up.

Corrective Actions

Although the sample reviewed by districts may not constitute a statistically valid sample, the review of FS processing in the several areas listed above will provide local managers with indications of those actions that were taken in error and how best to correct them. Districts experiencing significant errors in any of the review areas will submit a corrective action plan with the case review forms.

After reviewing local findings, the district will determine if administrative deficiencies are evident and submit a plan addressing how they are to be corrected. Plans may include remedies such as: topical training, communications improvements, recordkeeping changes, staff realignments or any other locally developed processes or resources required to improve the problem area. Districts should include dates by which activities are to be conducted.

State Oversight

The OTDA will review the materials submitted, as well as those obtained from the on-site reviews, and prepare a statewide ME report on program access to be submitted to the USDA. Review findings and CAPs will be used by OTDA on follow-up monitoring and subsequent ME reviews.

Claims Reviews

On-site ME claims reviews will be conducted by OTDA's Division of Audit and Quality Control. As there were no FSME claims reviews conducted in 2003, the 2004 schedule includes the required 2003 and 2004 FS Claims reviews. Please see attachment A-2, for the districts scheduled for on-site claims reviews.

Issued By _____
Name: Patricia A. Stevens
Title: Deputy Commissioner
Division/Office: Temporary Assistance

**New York State
Food Stamp Management Evaluation – Program Access Review Schedule
Federal Fiscal Year 2004**

Outside New York City	NYC
Large Counties	
<u>State On-site Reviews</u> Erie, Monroe, Suffolk, Westchester	BayRidge-60 Bushwick-66 Dekalb-64 Euclid-79 Rider-38 Waverly-13 Greenwood -85 Bergen -48 Hamilton-28 Concourse-45 Dyckman-35 Crotona-46 F42-Rockaway F26-North Brooklyn F20-Fort Greene F53 (FORMERLY F44) F21-Bushwick F23-Boro Hall F27-Bayridge F61-T.E.N
Medium Counties	
<u>State On-site Reviews</u> Albany, Cattaraugus, Nassau, Orange, Oneida, Rockland <u>County Self-Assessments</u> Cayuga, Chautauqua, Chemung, Niagara, Oswego, Rensselaer, Rockland, Schenectady, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Ulster	
Small Counties	
<u>State On-site Reviews</u> Delaware, Hamilton, Herkimer, Wyoming <u>County Self-Assessments</u> Columbia, Essex, Livingston, Montgomery, Orleans, Otsego, Schoharie	

**New York State
Food Stamp Management Evaluation—Claims Review Schedule**

Federal Fiscal Year 2003

Albany
Broome
Cayuga
Clinton
Cortland
Dutchess
Erie
Franklin
Fulton
Jefferson
Monroe
Nassau
Ontario
Onondaga
St. Lawrence
Suffolk
Westchester

Federal Fiscal Year 2004

Erie
Monroe
Niagara
Oneida
Orange
Oswego
Otsego
Rockland
Steuben
Suffolk
Sullivan
Tioga
Tompkins
Ulster
Westchester

PROGRAM ACCESS:

1) What are your days and hours of operation? Are applications accepted during this time?
If not, explain limitations (e.g., applications only taken up to 1:00 p.m., etc.)

2) Are there any restrictions on the number of applications taken in a day?
 No
 Yes

If Yes, Please explain _____

3) Do people usually have to wait in line when they come to this office to apply?
 No
 Yes

Can you estimate the average waiting time before clients are provided with an application kit?

4) How are applications made available?
Comments _____

5) Are there any limitations/conditions to obtaining an application? (e.g., – client must live
in a certain zip code? _____

6) Are applicants encouraged to file their application on initial day of contact? _____

7) Which application(s) is available?

- A/JP – “Application/Job Profile“ W-680 B (NYC Only)
- LDSS-2921 – Common Application
- LDSS-2921S - Common Application (Spanish)
- LDSS-4826 - Food Stamp Benefits Application
- LDSS 4826 - SP Food Stamp Benefits Application (Spanish)

- 8) What is the average waiting time to be seen by a “worker” Day #1? (for screening or pre-screening?) _____

- 9) Are application logs or sign-in sheets maintained? Describe what information is collected and where kept. _____

- 10) What is the average number of days between pre-screening (Day #1) and the eligibility interview appointment? _____

- 11) Are special accommodations made for individuals with special needs? What procedures are in place to ensure that the in-person interview is waived in hardship cases? (e.g. employed, elderly or disabled)

- 12) What are your procedures when an individual informs you that they cannot represent themselves? _____

Limited English Proficiency and Alien Eligibility:

- 13) What are your procedures for when a limited or non-English speaking individual comes in to apply for benefits (assuming that they have not brought their own interpreter?) _____

- 14) Do you have posters, signs or other client handouts available in other languages? _____

15) What are your procedures for when an individual informs you that he/she is a non-citizen and wishes to apply for Food Stamps? Are they scheduled for an eligibility interview? _____

16) What are your procedures for determining alien eligibility for food stamp benefits? _____

17) What if the household is unable to provide documentation of alien? _____

18) How do you ensure cases that include ineligible aliens are budgeted correctly? _____

APPLICATION PROCESSING:

19) Is the filing date for Food Stamps the date an application is received? _____

20) What are your procedures if an incomplete application is submitted? Are applications accepted if they contain only a name, address if they have one, and signature? _____

21) What internal controls are in place to ensure that all Food Stamp applicants are approved or denied within 30 days of application filing? _____

22) Describe procedures for registering applications in WMS and for tracking disposition, including withdrawals. Attach sample logs, if any. _____

Expedited Processing:

23) Are all PA FS applicants screened using the Expedited Screening Sheet (DSS-3938 or W140K) on the 1st day of contact?

Yes No

24) Are all NPA FS applicants screened using the Expedited Screening Sheet (Dss-3938 or W140K) on the 1st day of contact?

Yes No

25) When is the food stamp eligibility interview conducted for those individuals found eligible to receive expedited processing? _____

Separate Determinations:

26) What is the procedure when a client withdraws an application for cash assistance but wants to continue the application for Food Stamps? _____

27) How is the Food Stamp filing date protected? _____

28) How do line staff know the procedure? _____

29) What is the procedure for a separate determination of Food Stamp eligibility when a client's application for cash assistance is denied? _____

30) What are the procedures for ensuring that separate determinations are made for Food Stamps when the TA case is closed? _____

31) What are the procedures for ensuring that households closing FA or SNA-FP are reviewed for transitional Food Stamp benefits? _____

32) What WMS systems procedures does your district use to process households for transitional Food Stamp benefits? Are these cases processed through the WMS separate determination process or is an NPA FS case opened to continue the households FS benefits unreduced? _____

33) What management/supervisory controls are in place to insure that households eligible for the TBA are processed according to policy directive 02 ADM 7? _____

34) How does line staff know the procedure? Check all that apply.

- Written Instruction Verbal Instruction Training Session
 Other - describe _____

Undercare Maintenance:

Six-Month Reporting and Earned Income Budgeting Procedures:

35) Please describe the systems the district uses to receive reports of obtained employment from clients, and from other units both within the district (employment units) and external (Dept. of Labor, or WIA)? _____

36) Does this information meet the “verified upon receipt” rule?: a) Is it received from a primary source? b) Is the information questionable? c) Does the information transmitted from the primary source include the exact date and amount of wages received (to be received)? If the information transmitted does not meet these tests then the income cannot be budgeted. _____

37) Do workers understand that households cannot be required to report information other than exceeding 130% income level for a calendar month? i.e.-workers cannot require that households report new jobs, members, or other information aside from exceeding the 130% income level. What training on 01-ADM-09 and 02-ADM-7 has the district done/what training is needed?

38) How is “undercare” information conveyed to the eligibility worker to budget on a timely basis? Are there management controls (such as logs of received information done at reception, or change report units) to insure that workers are able to budget this information on a timely basis, and what are they?

39) 01-ADM-09 and 02-ADM-07 specifies that households must be notified of the 130% gross income limit by giving the household the LDSS 4791 “Important Information” when the household first applies, recertifies, or reports any change. What process assures that workers are handing out the LDSS 4791 to households at the required points.? What worker discussion of reporting requirements takes place to assure that households know what monthly gross income level they must report if they exceed it? Does this discussion explain what we mean about **gross** income and explain how soon they have to report an excess? _____

40) For NTA/FS what management/supervisory controls do you have to insure that change report forms LDSS-3151 reports have been processed during the sixth month of a typical 12 month certification period when returned by a unearned income households. Since 10/02 (02-ADM-07) the State automatically mails these forms to unearned income households at the end of the 5th month of certification. They are required to be completed by households with a change (for certification periods of 7 months or greater and have been automatically issued by the WMS system.)

COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

40) Describe procedures for responding to pre-application inquiries about Food Stamp eligibility:

41) Are civil rights complaints recorded/tracked in accordance with 03 LCM 3, "Food Stamp Program Civil Rights Complaints Procedures?" Who is your contact person for civil rights complaints? Is the information current? _____

42) How many civil rights complaints were processed last year? How many were resolved? How timely are they investigated? _____

43) How are individuals/organizations informed of the local district complaint procedures?

44) How is management review of complaints (to determine if there are problems/patterns) accomplished? _____

OBSERVATIONS:

45) Is there a line of applicants waiting?

Yes

No

Comments: _____

46) General Condition of Office

Poor

Average

Good

Comments: _____

47) Waiting Area – describe conditions (e.g., crowded, noisy, sufficient seats, clean, etc.)

48) How do applicants know where to go?

(Check all that apply)

Security Guard at door

Signs

Receptionist

Other – explain _____

49) Are the days and hours of operation posted?

No

Yes, Where? _____

50) Attitude/behavior of staff toward clients – describe based on interactions you observe

51) The following forms are required to be provided in the application kit (NYC only).
Are the following client booklets contained in the application kit?

Yes No

- Application (W-680B or LDSS-2921/LDSS-4826)
- How To Complete The Application (W-680AA or LDSS-2921-I)
- What You Should Know About Your Rights and Responsibilities - Book 1 (LDSS-4148A)
- What You Should Know About Social Services Programs - Book 2 (LDSS -4148B)
- What You Should Know If You Have An Emergency - Book 3 (LDSS-4148C)
- Yes! You Can Still Apply for Medicaid- MA Brochure
- Food Stamps- FS Brochure
- The Job Center Welcomes You Brochure

Are the Spanish packets complete? _____

52) The following forms are required to be provided in the application packet (Upstate Only).
Are the following client booklets contained in the application packet?

Yes No

- Application (LDSS-2921/LDSS-4826)
- How To Complete the Application (LDSS-2921-I)
- What You Should Know About Your Rights And Responsibilities - Book 1 (LDSS--4148A)
- What You Should Know About Social Services Programs - Book 2 (LDSS-4148B)
- What You Should Know If You Have An Emergency - Book 3 (LDSS -4148C)

53) The following posters are required to be posted in the client waiting areas:

- Food Stamp Complaint Procedures (LDSS-8036, revised 2/00)
- And Justice for All (AD-475B, revised 12/99)
- Will You Receive Food Stamps After Cash Assistance Ends (English)
- Will You Receive Food Stamps After Cash Assistance Ends (Spanish)
- Language Poster

Are these five mandated posters posted in the client waiting areas?

54) Local District Concerns/Issues – Please explain.

FFY 2004 Food Stamp Management Evaluation (Outside NYC)

Review Finding

Correct

Error

Reason: _____

FOOD STAMP APPLICATION PROCESSING
CASE FILE REVIEW DOCUMENT

District: _____

Date of Review: _____

Case Name: _____

Reviewer: _____

Case Number: _____

Case Type _____

Case Status:

- PA acceptance (Section I & IIB) NPA-FS acceptance (Section I)
- PA denial (Section I & IIA) NPA-FS denial (Section IA, IC & IIB)
- PA withdrawal (Section I & IIA) FS withdrawal (Section IA & B)
- PA closing (Section IIC)

(For PA denials, withdrawals and closings, look up corresponding NPA cases.)

Comments/Findings:

I. Application Processing Note to Reviewer: Gray Areas = System Look-Up or Info. Available on Case list

A. Application Date Agreement	Yes	No	N/A
1. Completed LDSS-2921/LDSS4826 in casefile?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Date application was filed _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> Date stamp on application			
<input type="checkbox"/> Date written on top of application			
<input type="checkbox"/> Application log date			
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____			
3. Application date recorded on WMS _____			
4. Are the dates in 2 and 3 the same?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• if no, explain why _____			

B. Withdrawal From Program

1. Did client withdraw from PA?
2. Did client withdraw from FS?
3. What is the reason for the withdrawal? _____

STOP HERE IF FS WITHDRAW

C. Expedited Processing Timeframes

1. Is completed Expedited Service Worksheet (LDSS-3938) in casefile?
- Complete Date LDSS 3938 was completed _____
- Date missing
- Incomplete; Two or more items missing
- 3938 missing; Reviewer must complete one and attach it to this sheet
2. Does the date in 1 = the Application Date in A above?
3. Determination Yes No N/A
- Eligible for expedited processing (Complete No. 4 and go to Section D)
- Not eligible for expedited processing (Complete No. 4 and go to Section E. If ongoing FS were denied, SKIP to Section IIB)
4. Was determination correct? If not, why not -- (or other comments).
- _____

D. Expedited Processing Benefit Issuance

(Pay Type 91 = Expedited; Pay Type 93 = Single Issue but sometimes used inappropriately for expedited issuance.)

- | | Yes | No | N/A |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Date of initial food stamp issuance (on BICS) (_____) Pay Type __ | | | |
| 2. Application Date: _____ | | | |
| 3. Is the date of initial issuance within 5 calendar days of application date? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Date of Notice LDSS-3152 (manual notice or CNS) _____ | | | |
| 5. Is the date of the notice within 5 days of application date? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Notice certification period established (manual notices only)
() – () | | | |
| 7. WMS Certification period () – () | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Are the dates in 6 & 7 the same? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

E. Non-Expedited Processing Benefit Issuance

(Pay Type 96 = Ongoing; Pay Type 93 = Single Issue.)

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Date of initial food stamp issuance (on BICS) (_____) Pay Type-__ | | | |
| 2. Application Date: _____ | | | |
| 3. Is the date of initial issuance within 30 calendar days of application date? | | | |
| 4. Date of Notice LDSS-3152 (manual notice or CNS) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Is the date of the notice within 30 days of application date? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Notice certification period established (manual notices only)
(_____) – (_____) | | | |
| 7. WMS Certification period (_____) – (_____) | | | |
| 8. Are the dates in 6 & 7 the same? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

STOP HERE IF FS ACCEPTANCE

Yes No N/A

II. FS Separate Determinations/FS Denials

A. PA Denials/Withdrawals

1. Status of food stamps
 - Denied (PA/FS code will equal 03)
 - Accepted (PA/FS code will equal 70 or 71)
2. Was determination correct? Yes No N/A
3. Was FS Application denied prior to the 30th day for interview no-show?
If yes, explain _____

4. Was FS application denied for FTC with a non-food stamp requirement
such as FTC with Medical or Drug/Alcohol Evaluation? Yes No
If yes, explain _____
Date of NPA case acceptance _____
5. Was notice issued Yes No
 - case denial notice, month/date _____
 - LDSS-3152 "Action Taken" notice date _____

B. FS Denials (including denied FS when PA is approved)

1. Was determination correct? Yes No
2. Was a notice issued? Yes No
LDSS 3152 "Action Taken Notice" Date _____
or system generated client notice
3. Was FS Application denied prior to the 30th day for interview no-show?
If yes, explain _____
4. Was FS application denied for FTC with a non-food stamp
requirement Yes No
such as FTC with Medical or Drug/Alcohol Evaluation?
If yes, explain _____

**C. TA Closing (This might include *denials* of TA Case Types opened only
for Exp. FS)**

- TA case type: ____ Yes No N/A
TA closing reason code ____ Yes No N/A
Was the case determined eligible for Transitional Food Stamp Benefits? Yes No N/A
Was the determination correct? Yes No N/A
Was the household notified of TBA eligibility?
Notified through:
 manual notice

system generated client notice

Yes No N/A

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1. If not eligible for transitional benefits, was there information in the case file to make a determination on food stamps ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Was a request for contact sent to the household? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Were food stamps closed? PA/FS code might equal 08, 09, 80, 81, 90 or 91 ____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 3. Was determination correct? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| If no, why _____ | | | |
| 4. Were food stamps continued until end of original certification period? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| If no, why _____ | | | |
| What notice was issued on the food stamps action? (Possibly pertinent CNS notice type/detail?) | | | |

- CNS
- Action taken
- Notice of intent

6. Was this correct?