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Center for Employment and Economic Supports

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TO: Commissioners; TA Directors; FS Directors; WMS Coordinators; CAP/TOP Coordinators;
Staff Development Coordinators

FROM: Russell Sykes, Deputy Commissioner, Center for Employment and Economic Supports

SUBJECT: 2009 Back-to-School One-Time Payment

EFFECTIVE DATE: August 11, 2009

CONTACT PERSON: Temporary Assistance Bureau at 1-800-343-8859, extension 4-9344

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) will issue a one-time non-assistance payment during August 2009 to defray the back-to-school costs, during these difficult economic times, for Temporary Assistance (TA) and Food Stamp (FS) households with children aged three through 17. Recipients of the payment may use it to purchase such items as books, pencils, pens, notebooks, calculators, backpacks, shoes, school uniforms, pants, skirts, dresses and other essential clothes and school items. There will be no local share for the cost of the one-time back-to-school payments or for the associated EBT issuance cost.

TA and FS households meeting the following eligibility criteria will receive a payment of \$200.00 per eligible child:

- The child is age 3 through 17 on August 1, 2009, regardless of the child's relationship to the head of household; and
- The child is active or sanctioned on either an Active TA or an Active FS case at any time during July 2009.

OTDA will issue the payment directly into the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cash account of the TA or FS case. Households eligible for this one-time non-assistance payment will receive a letter from NYS OTDA informing them of the total amount of the payment and conference/fair hearing rights. The letter informs food stamp only households that they may obtain the money from their EBT cash account using the same EBT card and PIN that they use for their food stamps benefits, and that the payment can be withdrawn through an ATM or spent at retail locations where EBT cards are accepted.

The payment will:

- have no effect on the household's eligibility or benefit amount for TA, FS, MA or HEAP;
- not be part of regular recurring TA grant;
- be excluded from the TA standard of need;
- be excluded as income to the TA and FS household;
- be excluded from TA and FS resource limits;

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- be excluded from the State sixty-month time limit;
- not be offset by child support collections;
- not offset TA overpayments;
- not be subject to overpayment determinations/calculations;
- not be included in Interim Assistance Reimbursement (IAR).

Rest of State (ROS) System Specifications:

As described in the WMS/CNS Coordinator Letter dated July 31, 2009, the payments were authorized by a WMS mass authorization transaction on the weekend of 8/1-8/2/09 as an unrestricted Method of Payment (01), once-only Issuance (2) payment using Payment Type Code “N4-Back to School” (BK-2-SCH) with payment Period Date of 08/09/09 to 08/09/09. The payments will be available in recipients’ EBT accounts on August 11, 2009. The payment type code (N4) will identify these payments as zero local share (no local cost). On August 10, 2009, districts will receive Eligible reports of cases and payments authorized and Exception reports of cases that require resolution.

Certain cases will appear on an Exception Report for local district resolution if the case on the date of the pull-down:

- Is in pending status;
- Has no available payment line; or
- Is closed.

Cases on the Exception Report must have the payments authorized at the local level using the eligibility criteria and payment line conventions explained above.

For example, a FS case with three children that was active 7/11/09 but closed 7/28/09 will be on the Exception Report since the FS case was closed on the date of the mass authorization. The local district must authorize the \$600.00 Back-to-School payment as:

ACT	PAY TYPE	METH	AMOUNT	ISSU	PAY SCH	PK UP	PERIOD DATE	
							FROM	TO
2	N4	01, 05 or 06	600.00	2	BLANK	1	08/11/09	08/11/09

On August 10, 2009, districts will receive a WMS GIS with the “NOTICE OF BACK TO SCHOOL PAYMENT” laser letter that OTDA will send to cases on the Eligibles list. For case payments authorized by local districts, districts must reproduce and use the “NOTICE OF BACK TO SCHOOL PAYMENT” letter, without alteration, to inform eligible households of the payment.

Additionally, since the WRTS extract date for eligible households with eligible children was 7/24/09, OTDA subsequently will run a report after the mass authorization to capture eligible TA and FS households with eligible children opened after the mass authorization

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for any period in July. The cases on this report must have the payments authorized at the local level in the same manner as those cases on the Exception Report.

Both these reports must be resolved within 30 days from the district's receipt of the report.

NYC Systems Specifications:

The payment will be authorized by a WMS mass authorization transaction on 08/07/09 as an unrestricted payment using PA Single Issue Payment Type Code N4 -Back to School (BK-2-SCH.) The payment type code (N4) will identify these payments as zero local share (no local cost). The payments will be available in recipients' EBT accounts on August 11, 2009.

Additionally, since the WRTS extract date for eligible households with eligible children was 7/24/09, OTDA subsequently will run a report after the mass authorization to capture eligible TA and FS household with eligible children opened after the mass authorization for any period in July.

Additional NYC systems information will be addressed in a separate GIS.

On August 10, 2009, districts will receive a WMS GIS with the "NOTICE OF BACK TO SCHOOL PAYMENT" laser letter that OTDA will send to cases on the Eligibles list. For case payments authorized by local districts, districts must reproduce and use the "NOTICE OF BACK TO SCHOOL PAYMENT" letter, without alteration, to inform eligible households of the payment.