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TRANSMITTAL: 96 INF-15

DIVISION: SSIS

TO: Commissioners of  
 Social Services

DATE: April 3, 1996

SUBJECT: CONNECTIONS Equipment and Site Prep Costs and  
 Responsibilities in Local District Offices

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION: Directors of Services  
 CONNECTIONS Liaisons  
 Administrative Directors  
 Staff Development Coordinators  
 Systems Coordinators  
 Child Welfare Staff  
 Fiscal Staff

CONTACT PERSON: William Travis  
 (518)473-6183

ATTACHMENTS: Revised Scalable Site Preparation Model (3/22)  
 CONNECTIONS Installation Timetable  
 (Attachments available on-line)

FILING REFERENCES

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
96 INF-7					
95 INF-42					
95 INF-21					

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The following information is provided to Local Districts to help you plan for the CONNECTIONS effort in your Local District, prepare for any costs that might be incurred, and initiate any necessary local legislative appropriations process. A separate INF will be provided to Voluntary Agencies to allow them to effectively prepare for CONNECTIONS implementation. The 60 day CONNECTIONS Installation Timetable, which provides a 60 day countdown of installation activities to be undertaken to make a site operational, is attached to allow Local Districts to understand and prepare for the activities that are involved. A revised Scalable Site Preparation Model is attached to this INF to help you determine your site preparation requirements for space, electricity and HVAC.

As you are aware, the Department will be providing equipment to Local Districts for the CONNECTIONS project. There are, however, costs that will be incurred by the Local Districts. One instance of additional costs incurred by Local Districts is for site preparation. Another is for Supplemental Equipment acquisitions that Local Districts choose to make. The costs, responsibilities and procedures to follow are detailed below. If sufficient funds are not available under the Family and Children Services Block Grant allocation to cover your costs, Local District funds may be necessary to cover the expenditure.

ONLY THOSE PCS AND PRINTERS THAT ARE PURCHASED FROM THE CONNECTIONS CONTRACTOR OR HAVE PRIOR APPROVAL BY THE DEPARTMENT CAN BE ADDED TO THE CONNECTIONS NETWORK. Requests for additional PC equipment other than that obtained for the baseline CONNECTIONS system will not be acted upon by the Department until the CONNECTIONS application/network has been functioning statewide for three consecutive months.

Please note that it is essential to meet the site preparation and installation schedules for Department provided equipment and services in order to insure that the expenditures for Baseline Equipment are eligible for the 75% Federal share (25% State share) under SACWIS. Under the current Federal mandates, the enhanced SACWIS funding is only available for expenditures made by September 30, 1996. (Note that the Department is pursuing an extension of the deadline both directly and in cooperation with other states, through the American Public Welfare Association (APWA)). Only after the Baseline Equipment has been installed can it be billed to the Department, processed and paid by the Office of the State Comptroller in order to meet the September 30, 1996 deadline. To ensure meeting that deadline, the Department has instituted an internal policy that all contractor invoices must be received by the Department by COB Friday, August 16, 1996.

If delays occur, due to local district problems in completing site preparation activities, that require the Department to reschedule installation for all or part of a county, we will be unable to insure that enhanced funding is available for the equipment subsequently installed. Consequently, such Baseline Equipment installed subsequent to August 16, 1996 that cannot be billed to the Department, processed and paid by the Office of the State Comptroller in order to meet the September 30, 1996 deadline will be subject to reduced Federal participation (50%). In such

cases, Local Districts will then be responsible for the non-Federal share. We remain committed to assisting local district staff with respect to site preparation issues. Site preparation questions related to potential delays should be directed to the NYS DSS Command Center at 1-800-603-0877. Note also the reconciliation process on Page 5 which relates to extraordinary circumstances.

The only costs that Local Districts will incur for staff training related to CONNECTIONS are for travel expenses. These expenses will be claimed as part of the administrative claim (i.e., RF2A, Schedules D and D2) and will be reimbursed at prevailing rates including Family and Children Services Block Grant funding.

#### BASELINE EQUIPMENT

Only Local Social Services Districts and Voluntary Agencies will receive fully funded CONNECTIONS equipment. Any other sites/locations/facilities or staff other than those described under Baseline are not eligible for equipment as part of the enhanced Federal funding (i.e., Family Court, Local District legal staff, clerks or other support staff, etc.). "Baseline" equipment, as used herein, is defined as those equipment requirements identified to and confirmed by the Department by April 2, 1996. The Division of Services and Community Development will officially inform each Local District of its baseline allocation of PCs by April 2, 1996. In line with the Department's long-term goal of moving to a paperless environment, the Department will provide a minimal number of printers to the Local Districts as a convenience. Local Districts will be informed of the number of Baseline Printers as part of the site survey process. Local Districts will be provided the opportunity to request additional "Extended" Baseline PCs between April 2, 1996 and April 22, 1996 as indicated below. Department concurrence with these requests will be provided by the Department by May 1, 1996. Any equipment requirements identified and confirmed after May 1, 1996 will be considered "Supplemental".

Baseline PCs: The CONNECTIONS Contractor is responsible for providing PCs to the Department and installing them for all Local District child welfare staff who have full time (or part time staff that add up to full time equivalents) responsibility for the management or provision of foster care, protective, preventive or adoption services. Assuming installation by August 16, 1996, the costs for these PCs will be paid by the Department to the CONNECTIONS Contractor at no cost to the Local Districts.

Baseline Printers: As part of the site survey and installation process, the Department will determine the number of printers required at each location, consistent with the Department's long term goal of moving to a paperless environment. Siting of these printers will be based on the level of printing needed for the CONNECTIONS system, the physical layout of the LANs, and convenience of access for CONNECTIONS staff. Each site will have a minimum of one printer. Assuming installation by August 16, 1996, the costs for these Baseline printers will be paid by the Department to the CONNECTIONS Contractor at no cost to the Local Districts.

Extended Baseline PCs: If the Local District has additional PC equipment requirements that can be demonstrated to meet the Federal SACWIS criterion, the Local District may opt to purchase the additional PCs and installation services through the CONNECTIONS contract and pay the non-Federal share. This process of identifying additional PC needs (between April 2 and April 22, 1996) and receiving Department concurrence must be completed by May 1, 1996 in order for the Department to add the "Extended" Baseline Equipment to the installation schedule for Baseline Equipment that will allow us to meet the enhanced funding constraints. Requests should be transmitted to Carol Van Kloberg, Director, Services Information at (518) 432-2911.

Site Preparation: Cable acquisition and pulling the cables for Baseline Equipment will be the responsibility of the CONNECTIONS Contractor and, assuming installation by August 16, 1996, will be paid for by the Department. Site preparation for electrical work, conduits, carpentry, wire/cable molding and HVAC is a Local District responsibility and will have to be paid for up-front by the Local District. Local costs for site preparation are eligible for the 75% enhanced funding as long as the local expenditures are paid and recorded on the Local District's claiming system by September 30, 1996. The remaining 25% may be paid for out of the Family and Children Services Block Grant allocation. If sufficient funds are not available under your Block Grant to cover your costs, Local District funds may be necessary to cover the expenditure. Claiming instructions are included in 95 INF-42.

Installation: The CONNECTIONS Contractor is responsible for installing all Baseline Equipment at no cost to the Local District, assuming installation by August 16, 1996. Generally, only Baseline and Extended Baseline Equipment, as confirmed by the Department by May 1, 1996, will be included as part of the initial CONNECTIONS installation process. The non-Federal share of delayed Baseline and all Extended Baseline installation costs are the responsibility of the Local District.

Furniture: Furniture is a Local District responsibility. It is not an allowable cost for SACWIS funding at the enhanced rate. Costs for furniture must be paid for up-front by the Local District and claimed through the normal administrative claiming process (i.e., RF2A, Schedules D and D2). The Department will attempt to facilitate this furniture acquisition by providing options through the CONNECTIONS contracts.

Security: Local Districts are responsible for theft prevention costs; however, these costs are reimbursable at the normal administrative rate in the same manner as "furniture" described above. Local Districts are responsible for replacing Department equipment that is lost or stolen, as well as paying for and repairing equipment that is damaged through other than normal use. (The cost of replacing lost or stolen equipment is non-reimbursable.) Please note that as part of the CONNECTIONS procurement, the Contractor is making available at additional Local District cost, an ergonomic, theft deterrent stand that can hold a PC or a printer.

Telephone Lines: Any site with a Baseline allocation of four PCs or less will access the CONNECTIONS System through a dial-up capability.

Dial-up capability requires the use of basic telephone lines. The Department will establish a toll-free calling system for CONNECTIONS users to access the applications as needed. Because these lines can be used for purposes other than CONNECTIONS, the Local District will be responsible for paying the monthly recurring cost for these telephone lines plus any additional non-CONNECTIONS related charges. The Local District may opt to use existing dial lines if the lines are available. Should the Local District require new dial lines for Baseline Equipment, the Department will pay for the installation costs occurring on or before August 16, 1996, under the guidelines described for baseline Site Preparation. The Local District will need one dial line for each PC installed at that site.

Monthly Maintenance: The CONNECTIONS Contractor will be responsible for all maintenance associated with Baseline and Extended Baseline Equipment. The Department will pay maintenance costs for Baseline Equipment installed by August 16, 1996. Maintenance costs for Extended Baseline and other equipment are the responsibility of the Local District.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL EQUIPMENT

Local Districts will be given the option of purchasing additional "supplemental" PCs and printers through the Department's CONNECTIONS Contractor for those individuals who are not included within the enhanced funding guidelines. In some situations, the acquisition of Supplemental PCs may also require the acquisition of more or other types of equipment or software (i.e., servers, telephone lines, hubs, routers, licenses, etc.) to effectively utilize these additions. Any equipment approved by the Department after May 1, 1996, for installation into the CONNECTIONS network will be considered Supplemental Equipment.

Supplemental devices will be included in the site survey for the initial CONNECTIONS implementation if the requested increase in equipment does not exceed the greater of 2 devices or 10% of the initial allocation and the Supplemental devices are located on floors where CONNECTIONS funded devices are to be installed.

Requests for Supplemental equipment should be forwarded to the Division of Services and Community Development, Attention: Carol Van Kloberg, no later than April 22, 1996.

Supplemental PCs and Printers: Supplemental PCs and Printers are subject to financial rules that differ from those that apply to Baseline Equipment. Supplemental equipment costs must be paid for up-front by the Local District. These costs are eligible for reimbursement through the normal administrative claiming process.

Site Preparation: The costs for site preparation associated with Supplemental Equipment, including cable acquisitions and installation, must be paid for up-front by the Local District. Site preparation is eligible for reimbursement through the normal administrative claiming process.

Installation: Installation is defined as those costs associated with adding the Supplemental equipment to the CONNECTIONS network. This includes delivery charges, set-up, any testing to be sure the device is working properly, and insuring that all configurations are correct. The CONNECTIONS Contractor will complete the installation of Supplemental Equipment and the Local District will be responsible for paying those costs up-front. Installation costs are eligible for reimbursement through the normal administrative claiming process.

Furniture: Costs for furniture should be paid for up-front by the Local District and claimed through the normal administrative claiming process.

Security: Local Districts are responsible for theft prevention costs for Supplemental Equipment; however, these costs are reimbursable at the normal administrative rate. As part of the CONNECTIONS procurement, the Contractor is making available to all Local Districts an ergonomic, theft deterrent stand that can hold a PC or a printer. Local Districts that opt to pay the additional cost for the stand can claim reimbursement through the normal administrative claiming process.

Monthly Maintenance: Local Districts are directly responsible for the monthly maintenance charges to support Supplemental Equipment, as well as for any separately identifiable ongoing monthly telecommunications charges.

RECONCILIATION

Following the installation of the CONNECTIONS pilots in early 1997, the Department will review the site preparation and installation effort. If a Local District can demonstrate to the Department that any failure on its part to timely complete site preparation work was due solely to extraordinary circumstances beyond its control, the Department will explore with that Local District opportunities for reallocation of the related non-Federal share SACWIS costs. Guidelines and criteria will be provided at a later date.

INFORMATION

Any questions from Regions 1-4 about claiming should be forwarded to Roland Levie at 1-800-343-8859, extension 4-7549, or Userid FMS001. Region 5, including New York City (all boroughs), should contact Marvin Gold at (212)383-1733 or Userid OFM270.

Any questions relating to the CONNECTIONS installations should be directed to the NYSDSS Command Center at 1-800-603-0877.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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George A. Mitchell, III  
Deputy Commissioner  
System Support & Information  
Services