

**Temporary Assistance and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment Plan
January 1, 2014– December 31, 2015**

Section 1 Assurances/Signature

As a condition of the receipt of federal and State funds the Oswego County Department of Social Services submits this Temporary Assistance and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment Plan (Plan) to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. The Plan outlines the administration of employment services for Temporary Assistance (TA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applicants and recipients for the period January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2015. As Commissioner of the Oswego 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.

_____, Social Services Commissioner

Gregg Heffner, LCSW-R

Date: November 14, 2013

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.

Attachment A is an organizational chart of the Oswego County Department of Social Services highlighting the units responsible for the districts employment programs. Included are the Employment and Training, Temporary Assistance, and Child Support units. Integrated Service teams comprised of staff from these three units are responsible for service delivery to clients, while employment and training staff are primarily responsible for the employment functions. Employment functions include: assessment, employment plan development, assignment to work activities, monitoring of participation, job development, job placement and job retention activities, developing and monitoring treatment plans for exempt individuals with potential for being restored to self-sufficiency, coordination and provision of supportive services, dispute resolution, and disability determinations as they relate to employment-related activities. While the employment unit takes the lead in administering these programs and services, the information is shared and services coordinated with all members of the integrated teams.

Administrative oversight is provided to these teams through a DSS Managers group which is comprised of:

- **Commissioner of Social Services**
- **Director of Assistance Programs**
- **Director of Finance**
- **Director of Mental Health Services**
- **Coordinator of Employment Services**
- **Child Support Coordinator**
- **Director of Administrative Services**
- **Director of Social Services**
- **Grade B Supervisors/Children and Family Services**

Section 2.2 TA and SNAP E&T Provider Agencies

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 necessarily 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.

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 (e.g., WIA programs, SED funded services, OTDA Wage Subsidy providers).

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

Provider	Total Contract Cost (per yr.)	Funding Source(s)	Categories of Clients Served	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
OCDSS	\$263,623 \$371,136 \$162,321 \$94,004 \$30,039 \$105,100 \$228,307 \$40,000	NYS OTDA FFFS	TANF/TANF 200% Eligible	BSR: Vehicle repair payments, vehicle insurance payments, registration/license payments, car seats, tires, tuition, professional licenses, Metrix Distance Learning licenses clothing/equipment needed for job offer. TOP/EIT: Payments for: Automotive repairs, automotive insurance and automotive registrations/licenses, car seats, gas cards and tires Entry Employment Experience Program Drug and Alcohol programs Domestic Violence programs Disconnected Youth TANF 200% Summer Youth TANF 200% FFFS Summer Youth
OCDSS	\$50,802	NYS OTDA	TANF/TANF 200% Eligible	Transitional Jobs Program II
OCDSS	\$65,338	NYS OTDA	TANF/TANF 200% Eligible	Transportation Initiative Program Vehicle repair payments, vehicle insurance payments, registration/license payments to accept or maintain employment
Total	\$			

TABLE 2 – Other Service Providers

Provider	Funding Source(s) (if known)	Categories of Clients Served	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
ACCES-VR			Assessment, career planning, job search placement, job coaches, vocational training, supportive services
Arise			Assessment, Advocacy,
Catholic Charities: Oswego County Salvation Army:		FA, SNA, SNF, SNAP	Food Bank
City of Fulton – CDA Oswego County Planning Dept. City of Oswego – CDA		FA, SNA, SNF, SNAP	Housing Assistance
Clear Point Credit Counseling Solutions		FA, SNA, SNF, SNAP	Financial/Budgeting
Cornell Cooperative Extension		FA, SNA, SNF, SNAP	Apples
Fulton Education Center	State Ed.	FA, SNA, SNF, SNAP	HSE Preparation
Oswego County BOCES	State Ed. FSET Ventures III	FA, SNA, SNF, SNAP	HSE Preparation, Adult Basic Education, ESL, Job Readiness/Skills Training
Oswego County Child Care Council			Assists clients in finding child care providers. Assists individuals who are interested in becoming a child care provider.
Oswego County Opportunities, Inc.		FA, SNA, SNF, SNAP	Literacy Skills/training, Headstart, WIC
Oswego County Youth Bureau		FA, SNA, SNF, SNAP	Americorp
Oswego County Food Pantry Assoc.		FA, SNA, SNF, SNAP	Food Banks
Oswego Library			JRT
SUNY-Oswego		FA, SNA, SNF, SNAP	VITA
Oswego County Workforce New York One Stop Center	NYSDOL- WIA NYS OTDA	FA, SNA, SNF, SNAP	Voc. Training, OJT, JRT

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	_____	Applicants	<u> X </u>
Supervised Job Search	<u> X </u>	FA & SN with children	<u> X </u>
Job Readiness Training	<u> X </u>	SN without Children	<u> X </u>
Job Club	_____	SNAP	<u> X </u>
Job Placement Services	<u> X </u>	200% of Poverty	<u> X </u>
Grant Diversion	_____		
Job Development (employer outreach)	<u> X </u>		
WOTC pre-certifications	<u> X </u>		

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)

- **Jobs staff participate in orientation sessions held for applicants for Temporary Assistance. Jobs staff meet with clients to provide employment services such as resume assistance and job referrals. Jobs staff may also register clients in the Welfare-to-Work Case Management System (WTWCMS).**

In addition, Jobs staff may be requested to do the following:

- **attend case eligibility review sessions as scheduled**
- **participate in case conferencing**
- **perform 30-day follow-up on entered employments**
- **provide monthly recap reports on entries to employment**
- **participate in team meetings with LDSS staff.**
- **provide post-employment services**

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, the 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 SSD.

[Click here and type the additional items included]

Section 3.2 Orientation (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.5)

Check one of the following:

] The district provides orientation in accordance with Dept. Reg. 385.5 and no additional information is provided at orientation.

[XX] In addition to the requirements outlined in Section 385.5 of the regulations, the district’s orientation provides the following.

Oswego County has an up-front Applicant orientation for all individuals applying for temporary assistance. Staff from the Integrated Team (Employment and Training, Temporary Assistance, and Child Support units) conduct this orientation. Orientations are conducted in groups and include:

- **Information regarding the temporary nature of welfare with emphasis on time limits**
- **Alternatives to Temporary Assistance**
- **Information on childcare in lieu of TA**
- **Information on one-time payments**
- **Available tax credits and Child care assistance**
- **Child support requirements**
- **Alimony/maintenance/spousal support requirements**
- **Application process requirements, including but not limited to:**
 - **drug and alcohol screening**
 - **medical review process for individuals claiming they are unable to work**
 - **FEDS review process**
 - **Domestic violence information**
- **Student Loan repayment obligation**
- **Employment Activity requirements**
- **Work requirements for applicants**
- **Work requirements for recipients**

Following the orientation, all Applicants are generally scheduled within a one week period for the Employment Assessment.

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

Orientation sessions are conducted by staff from the Employment, Child Support and Temporary Assistance units at the Oswego County Department of Social Services. All applicants (exempt and non-exempt) participate in an orientation. Orientations are conducted in group settings. However individual sessions may be conducted when appropriate, at the discretion of the local district.

Section 3.3 Assessment and Employment Planning

Temporary Assistance Assessment (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.6 and 385.7)

a. Check one of the following:

The district conducts assessments in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.6(a) and 385.7(a) with no additional requirements.

In addition to the requirements outlined in 18 NYCRR 385.6(a) and 385.7(a), the district's assessment also includes the following elements:

Oswego County has an assessment process in place for both applicants and recipients of temporary assistance. Assessments are completed using the NYS Assessment Tool and Employment Plan. Assessments conducted by other agencies may also be accepted as long as they cover the same elements.

Applicants are generally scheduled to meet with an Employment Specialist within one week of their orientation session to complete the NYS Employment Assessment tool, and if appropriate, the Employment Plan. Oswego County establishes a plan of service specific to the needs of each individual. Taken into consideration are the individual's employment status, goals, barriers to employment and supportive service needs. The plan is re-evaluated as appropriate, or at minimum, every six months.

Oswego County uses a case management system designed to move temporary assistance applicants and recipients to their optimum level of self-sufficiency. Case management involves Employment and Training Staff, and as needed, staff from the Temporary Assistance, Child Support and Children and Family Services Units. The Employment Plan is developed with the client, considering the client's optimal level of self-sufficiency as the focal point. Goals are continually evaluated, new goals are set and progress is documented.

In addition, intensive services are provided to Family Assistance (FA) cases with earned income. A self-reliance plan is developed and tailored to each family's specific circumstances and addresses areas such as employment, transportation, childcare, child support, housing, substance abuse treatment, and life skill development.

b. A copy of the assessment tool used by the district is attached. Additional assessment tool(s) used by the district is (are):

- **TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education)**
- **Others may include, but are not limited to:**
 - **Budgeting**
 - **Career Zone**
 - **Job Zone**
 - **Labor Market Research**
 - **Prove It/Metrix**
 - **Self Assessment/Computer Self Assessment**
 - **Value Surveys**

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

Following Orientation, applicants for temporary assistance are scheduled for Employment Assessment within a one week period. The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE –see Attachment B) is administered at the assessment appointment to assess basic math and reading levels. Employment Staff then meet with each applicant to complete the NYS Assessment Form (LDSS-4980) and if applicable, the NYS Employment Plan (LDSS-4978). The Employment Specialist reviews the NYS Assessment Form and TABE results with the applicant and uses this information to determine the “work readiness” of the applicant. Applicants who are not exempt from work activities and determined "work ready" are assigned to the Applicant Job Search. If the Employment Specialist determines that the applicant is not work ready, the applicant will be assigned to appropriate activities, workshop(s) and/or referred to other services to address needs. At the point the individual is determined work ready, s/he will be assigned to job search (see Attachment C).

The Employment Specialist uses the NYS Employment Plan to work with the individual to establish a plan of service to move the individual to self sufficiency. The plan outlines/defines the work activities the individual will be assigned to participate in to move the individual toward this goal. The employment plan addresses any supportive services that are needed for the individual to participate in work activities discussed and included in the plan. The Employment Plan is developed with the individual based on his/her needs and preferences. However, if preference cannot be accommodated, it is noted in the plan.

Applicants claiming an exemption from work activities due to mental health issues sign the appropriate releases and LDSS-4526. If the applicant is claiming to be exempt from work activities due to alcohol or substance abuse reasons, the Employment Specialist will have the applicant sign the appropriate releases. If an applicant is claiming an exemption due to a medical reason, the TA Examiner issues a 10-day document requirement along with the LDSS-4526.

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

Administer Assessment Tools: Minimum of HSG/GED, Interpret Results: Min BA/BS

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

Employment and Training Unit Staff

f. Applicants in households with dependent children are required to participate:

Yes No

Applicants in households without dependent children are required to participate:

Yes No

Temporary Assistance Employment Plans (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.6(b) and 385.7(b))

a. A copy of the district’s employment plan is attached and:

The district completes employment plans in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.6(b) and 385.7(b) and no additional information is contained in the plan.

The district completes the NYS Employment Plan (LDSS-4978) in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.6(b) and 385.7(b) and no additional information is contained in the plan.

In addition to the requirements outlined in 18 NYCRR 385.6(b) and 385.7(b), the employment plan includes:

[Click here and type additional information]

b. The district administrative unit or contractor that develops employment plans is (list only if different from those performing assessments):

[Click here and type ONLY if different from those performing assessments]

c. The qualifications of the employees developing employment plans are (list only if different from the requirements for those performing assessments):

[Click here and type ONLY if different from those performing assessments]

Mental Health Screening and Assessment

a. The district is administering a screening tool for Temporary Assistance participants to help assess when a mental health condition may exist that warrants treatment? (This section is asking about screening in addition to screening for a disability that occurs as part of the application process or based on other instances of participant statements of work limitations/ inability to work or based on observed behavior.)

Yes No

b. If the district is administering a mental health screening tool, please identify the screening tool used.

[Click [here](#) and type the selected assesment tools]

c. If the district is administering a mental health screening tool, describe the district’s policy for determining when a program participant is offered a mental health screen.

[Click [here](#) and type local district procedure]

d. If the district is administering a mental health screening tool, describe the district procedure for referring a participant for a mental health evaluation, when warranted by the screening result.

[Click [here](#) and type local district procedure]

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

- a. Described below is how the district plans to meet federal and State Temporary Assistance 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 3.6
- **Oswego County strives for a weekly standard participation requirement of 30 hours per week for each individual. While this is the established standard, each case is reviewed and individuals are ultimately assigned based on the circumstances of his/her case. Work hours may vary due to work limitations or other case circumstances.**
 - **Following orientation, applicants will participate in Employment Assessment where a “work readiness” determination is made. All non-exempt Family Assistance and Safety Net applicants determined work ready will be assigned to a job search. Failure to participate will result in a case denial.**
 - **Once a case opens, the individual will be assigned to a work site**
 - **A Drug and Alcohol screening is scheduled within two weeks of the application date whenever possible. Failure to participate may result in the individual being denied.**
 - **Upon notification of a client’s status change from exempt to nonexempt, the client is scheduled for a case management meeting. Meetings are generally scheduled within one week of notice of a status change. At the meeting the Employment Specialist and the client will complete the NYS Employment Plan, assign the individual to job search and provide the job search contact record to complete. The individual is**

given a job search follow up for a future date. Based on the results of the assessment, the individual is also assigned to other appropriate work activities, which may include educational training, job readiness training, job skills training, workshops and/or work experience.

- Participation rates are monitored through information obtained through case management sessions and the use of Cognos reports. Oswego County DSS sets its standard for participation at 30 hours per week. However, each individual is assigned to work activities based on the circumstances of his/her case.
 - Oswego County uses WTWCMS and Cognos reports to monitor client participation in activities.
 - Oswego County uses the various WRTS and Cognos reports to monitor client participation in activities and to take appropriate corrective action as needed
- b. Described below is a description of 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.

Oswego County DSS Staff use the current and monthly COGNOS reports to monitor the district’s progress toward meeting work participation requirements. Staff are provided with both the “preliminary countable” and the “participation and engagement” reports specific to their caseload each month, along with a report summarizing participation and engagement status from the beginning of the program year. This information is used to ensure information is accurate and complete, and to identify cases needing to be engaged or assigned to work activities.

- c. Describe the extent to which the district requires Non-Temporary Assistance Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NTA SNAP) applicants and recipients to participate in SNAP E&T work activities. 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 an SNAP E&T activity to SNAP applicants and recipients.

Oswego County DSS Staff mandates SNAP applicants and recipients to participate in Job Search work activities.

- d. The allowable work activities that are available in the social services district are listed and defined as follows. An “X” in the appropriate column indicates the activity is available for individuals receiving Family Assistance (FA), Safety Net Assistance for households with children (SNF), Safety Net Assistance for households without children (SNA), and/or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

If a column is blank it indicates that the activity is not available for that household/case type.

FA	SNF	SNA	SNAP	Activity	Definition
X	X	X		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.
X	X	X		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-e. 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.
X	X	X		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. 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.

X	X	X	X	Work Experience	<p>Unpaid work performed at a public or not-for-profit organization to enable a participant who cannot find 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>
X	X	X		On-the-Job Training (OJT)	<p>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 due to the fact that 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>

X	X	X		Community Service	<p>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>
X	X	X	X	Job Search	<p>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 to or applying for and/or interviewing for jobs and related activities.</p>

X	X	X	X	<p>Job Readiness Training (JRT) Activities</p> <p>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 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 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.
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X	X	X	X	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 other than a baccalaureate or advanced 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.
X	X	X		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.

X	X	X	X	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.
X	X	X	X	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.
X	X	X		Provision of Childcare for Individual Participating in Community Service	Providing unpaid childcare to enable another Temporary Assistance (TANF/SNA MOE funded) recipient to participate in a community service program.
X	X	X		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.

Local District Job Search Procedures:

The district assigns Temporary Assistance applicants to Job Search. Yes No

If yes, please describe the local district procedure for TA Applicant Job Search, including the required number of job search contacts and hours per week assigned. Also include a description of how often applicants are generally required to report job search outcomes and if activities other than job search are routinely expected of TA applicants during the application period.

All non-exempt Family Assistance and Safety Net applicants determined “work ready” are placed on a job search after completing the Applicant orientation. Failure to participate in applicant job search may result in a case denial. Applicants are required to contact a minimum of five (5) employers per week, and are expected to complete a job search contact record. We anticipate that each contact will be one-hour long. Therefore, we expect clients to spend a minimum of five (5) hours per week on job search. The type of contacts will be based upon the applicant’s individual needs and may include (but are not limited to) contacts made in person at a business/employer, on-line application, application/resume by mail, or telephone. A business/employer contact will not be counted more than once every three (3) months. Staff from the Employment and Training unit will meet with applicants on a bi-weekly basis to review these contacts.

The district assigns TA recipients to Job Search. Yes No

If yes, please describe the local district procedures for TA Job Search, including the required number of job search contacts and hours per week assigned. Also include a description of how often recipients are generally required to report job search outcomes and who in the agency is responsible for monitoring the job search.

All non-exempt Family Assistance and Safety Net applicants continue to participate in job search once the case opens. Exempt Family Assistance and Safety Net recipients whose status changes to non-exempt are immediately placed on a job search. Recipients are required to contact a minimum of five (5) employers per week, and to document those contacts on a job search contact record. We anticipate that each contact will be one-hour long. Therefore, we expect clients to spend a minimum of five (5) hours per week on job search. The type of contacts will be based upon the recipient’s individual needs and may include (but are not limited to) contacts made in person at a business/employer, on-line application, application/resume by mail, or telephone. A business/employer contact will not be counted more than once every three (3) months. Staff from the Employment and Training unit will meet with applicants on a bi-weekly basis to review job search contacts.

Section 3.5 Job Development

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

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

District staff contact employers to solicit jobs for Temporary Assistance participants. Below is the description of how this is done, including number of staff, frequency of contacts, etc:

The district operates an Entry Employment Experience program funded through the Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS). Employment and Training unit staff are responsible for administering this program. Staff solicit job openings for temporary assistance recipients based on a client's interests/needs. Employers are provided an opportunity to interview each candidate for available job openings. Positions in the public, private or non-profit sectors may be considered. Once the employer selects a trainee, a training period is established taking into consideration the background and skills of the individual being trained. The employer is reimbursed the trainees wages during the designated training period to offset the employer's cost of training.

Full-time, permanent positions are targeted for the Entry Employment Experience program. However, part time positions can be considered when appropriate.

Employment and Training unit staff contact employers on an on-going basis. Once an individual is placed with an employer, the Employment Specialist maintains contact with the trainee and the employer as needed, or a minimum of once each month, throughout the training period.

The District also receives funding through a Transitional Jobs II Program. The Transitional Jobs II Program allows Oswego County DSS to solicit job openings for TANF/TANF 200% eligible individuals based on the interests/needs of each individual. Employers are provided an opportunity to interview and train the individual for available jobs based on the individual grant requirements. The employer is reimbursed according to the grant parameters.

Employment and Training unit staff also coordinate with other workforce programs and serve as "business service representatives" on the One Stop Business Services Team; this helps to ensure all job leads are shared between the respective workforce programs.

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

The local district has an informal agreement with the One Stop Center to share information on job development activities. The Job Development staff at the One Stop use electronic means (i.e. e-mail, NYS Job Bank) to share information on job leads and employer recruitments. As One Stop staff develop/learn of job openings and/or employer recruitments, information is shared with local district staff to make them aware of the job openings, job requirements, and the application process for referring clients. Employer recruitments are held on-site at the One Stop and at the Career Center located at the Department of Social Services.

In addition, OTDA Jobs program staff contact employers by telephone and make field visits to follow up on job leads and solicit job openings on behalf of our clients.

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

[Click here and type additional information]

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:

As a member of the Oswego County Workforce Development Board, Oswego County DSS works with partner agencies to identify appropriate education programs available in Oswego County. Oswego County DSS has access to ABE, HSE, and ESL programs through Oswego County BOCES and the Fulton City School District; these agencies serve as providers for these programs.

Oswego County DSS will conduct an assessment of the educational skills of temporary assistance recipients. The district may mandate recipients who lack a high school diploma or a HSE, those identified as basic skills deficient, and/or those in need of ESL classes, to participate in educational programs.

- b. Describe how the district identifies appropriate 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:

Oswego County coordinates with the One Stop and uses the local Demand Occupation List and the New York State Eligible Training Provider List to identify appropriate vocational and Job Skills programs for clients. Individual requesting training are also provided an opportunity to make a case for approval of a training provider/program if they can show there are three or more verifiable job openings in the local labor market for the training program being requested.

- 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:

Oswego County conducts an assessment of the educational skills of temporary assistance recipients. All non-exempt recipients who lack a high school diploma or HSE, those who are basis skills deficient, and/or those in need of ESL classes are made aware of the educational services available to meet their needs. Individuals may be mandated to participate in these programs.

- 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 education activities:

Oswego County's policy is to approve non-exempt individuals for educational programs in addition to their required participation in other mandated work activities.

e. Education and training providers are evaluated by the following standards:

Oswego County uses a variety of methods to evaluate training providers. Internal procedures have been developed to evaluate training providers against program requirements. These include but are not limited to:

- **A Work Experience Program (WEP) Worksite Agreement process is used to evaluate public and community work experience sites.**
- **An OJT proposal/contract process to evaluate OJT and similar subsidized employment programs.**
- **Job Skills Training and Vocational education providers are approved through the New York State Eligible Training Provider List.**

f. The district procedure for advising participants of approved training providers is:

Oswego County assesses each individual based on their need, the appropriateness and ability to benefit from training, and local labor market conditions. Participants seeking classroom training are required to perform market research exploring the local job market and training providers who offer what the applicant is looking for. Oswego County does not advise participants of approved training providers other than listed OJT worksites. Rather, the New York State Eligible Training Providers list is used as a guide and the training applicant tells the Employment Advisor/Employment Specialist which provider will best meet their needs. In addition, individual are allowed to make a case for training if they can show there are three verifiable job openings available in the local labor market.

g. Describe the district's process and policy for determining whether or not a participant is approved/assigned to participate in job skills or vocational education activities:

Temporary Assistance applicants/recipients who are interested in participating in job skills or vocational education activities meet with an Employment Specialist (case manager) to determine if this work activity is the most effective method of achieving self-sufficiency. Factors to be considered in approving this work activity may include: cost of training, ability to meet federally mandated participation rates, past history of work activities/training activity assignments and success/non success in completing these activities, the need for upgrade training, individual's current skills level, individual's skills level and their ability to find gainful employment, individuals aptitude, and local demand of businesses/employers.

Before an individual is approved for training, the individual must complete a training approval process, including market research, to show they understand job opportunities, working conditions and expected earnings for their chosen field of training. They should also demonstrate a history of follow through on employment/work requirements. Those accepted for training must commit to finding and accepting employment as a result of the training. This commitment is established by reviewing their history in regards to successful completion of past required work activities, the quality of their market research,

and their response to questions asked during the interview process. Oswego County DSS retains the final say regarding approval/disapproval of job skills or vocational educational activities.

- h. The district procedure for notifying participants of approval for training or enrollment in a work activity is:

Individuals are notified of approval for training or enrollment in a work activity through meetings with an Employment Advisor/Employment Specialist. Individuals are notified verbally and/or in writing of all assignments and appointments.

- i. 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 check below:

[XX] It has been determined that the student voluntarily quit a job or reduced earnings to qualify for initial or increased Public Assistance.

[XX] 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.

[XX] 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.

[XX] The institution or student fails to monitor and report information regarding the student's attendance and performance as required.

[XX] The student fails to progress toward the completion of a course of study without good cause, as determined by the district.

[XX] The student has previously enrolled in a 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:

[Click here and type the procedure]

- j. To verify continued exempt status, the local district will monitor the high school attendance of 16-18 year old students in the following manner:

Oswego County chooses to adopt each Oswego County school district's attendance policy. Oswego County supports each individual school district's attendance policy in an effort to get teen students to attend school on a regular basis in accordance with New York State Education Law. The district monitors students' enrollment/attendance in school. Attendance is monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure the student is following the schools attendance policy. At the point of application and/or re-certification, the participant is asked to provide appropriate verification from the school. If the verification is not provided, the state form is mailed to the school. In addition, when related coding is received on the Anticipated Future Action report, a request for information will be generated.

- k. The district's procedure for ensuring that an individual's health related limitations are accommodated when assigning the individual to a work activity is:

Applicants and recipients who declare limitations are required to submit medical verification of their limitations. Based on the submitted medical documentation, any limitations and accommodations are considered prior to the assignment to a worksite. If an accommodation is needed for the recipient to participate in a work activity such as work experience, the Employment Specialist provides the work site with written notification of the client's work limitation(s) and works with the worksite to identify and address needed accommodations. The Employment Specialist continues to monitor the client's progress throughout the work assignment.

At applicant Orientation, the individual completes the "Screening For Participation In Or Exemption From Work Activities Form" prior to assignment to any work activities. If the applicant states " I am able to work (may or may not be employed at this time), but have verifiable mental or medical health limitations which may impair my ability to perform work related functions" the applicant is required to submit medical verification of those limitations. The submitted medical documentation is used to identify limitations and any accommodations needed prior to the assignment to a worksite. If an accommodation is needed for the recipient to participate in a work activity such as work experience, the Employment Specialist provides the work site with written notification of an individual's work limitation(s) and works with the worksite to identify and address needed accommodations. The Employment Specialist continues to monitor the client's progress throughout the work assignment. If the applicant becomes a recipient, the Employment Specialist continues to work with this individual, assigning this individual to appropriate work activities.

Applicants stating they are able to work without limitations, and those who decline to answer, are considered non-exempt from work activities. These individuals are scheduled for Employment Assessment where an Employment Specialist determines "work readiness" and assigns each individual to appropriate work activities. Once the applicant becomes a recipient, the Employment Specialist continues to working with each individual and assigning to appropriate work activities.

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.

After each self audit is completed, the district must submit a summary of findings 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 plan must explain how staff will:

- 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 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.

Please describe the process the district will use to review district worker collected documentation and data entry of the above listed elements (include a description of how a case sample for review will be selected, sample size and frequency of reviews):

Oswego County will perform a random sample of 12 cases per six-month period of time for paid work activities. WTWCMS, Imaging, and employment case files will be reviewed. Hours of employment will be verified through receipt of pay stubs, employer verification forms, and direct phone contact with the employer documented in case notes. The review will ensure: the hours of employment on the ABEL budget are consistent with the hours reported on WTWCMS; that documentation is in the file to support hours reported on WTWCMS; that the scheduled hours on WTWCMS are consistent with the documentation; or that any discrepancies are explained in the case notes.

Oswego County will perform a random sample of 12 cases per six-month period of time for participation in unpaid work activities. The employment case files will be reviewed. Actual hours of attendance will be documented by attendance sheets. The attendance sheets will show actual hours of attendance, excused absences during the month, 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 WTWCMS, excused absences and holiday time are documented in the case file and correctly reported on WTWCMS in accordance with federal limitations, and that documentation of actual hours of attendance is accurate and matches the hours of participation reported on WTWCMS by district or provider staff.

Oswego County will perform a random sample of 6 cases per six-month period of time in which a case member is reported as an employability code 38-needed in the home fulltime to care for a disabled household member. WTWCMS, Imaging, and employment case files 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.

Oswego County will perform a random sample of 6 cases per six-month period of time in which a case member is reported as an employability code 31-caretaker of a child under the age of 12 months. Imaging will be reviewed to ensure there is footprint documentation from the hospital, or a birth certificate present to verify the child under the age of one.

A DSS staff member not involved in the review will select the random sample. The district will assess and verify that participants in work activities reported meet the state approved definition for the activity as part of the review. For any category where there are less than 12 cases for paid or unpaid work activities, and less than 6 cases for Code 31's or 38's, we will review all cases in the category. A summary report will be written after each review is completed and will be forward to Kyle Miller @ Kyle.Miller@otda.state.ny.us.

Oswego County will maintain the supporting documentation for participation in paid and unpaid work activities and make it readily available for review by A&QI auditors upon request. In addition, documentation related to the caretaker of a child under 12 months of age or caretaker of a disabled household member exemptions/exclusions will also be retained and made available upon request.

Please describe the process the district will use to review provider collected documentation and data entry of the above listed elements (include a description of how a case sample for review will be selected, sample size and frequency of reviews):

N/A: All information is collected and entered by Oswego County DSS Staff.

Section 3.8 Requirements for Exempt Temporary Assistance 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 a 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 of this plan. Included here is who (e.g., physician, employment worker, Temporary Assistance 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 physician, district contracted provider, specialist evaluation obtained as result of district referral, etc.):

Oswego County DSS works with exempt recipients to achieve their optimum level of self-sufficiency. Individual's are required to provide documentation (from a medical or mental health provider) to support a mental or physical impairment impacting their ability to work, along with a plan to address the issue and improve or restore employability. The individual then meet with an Employment Specialist to discuss limitations and the potential to be restored to self-sufficiency. Goals and activities (including compliance with the required treatment plan) are established that will move the participant closer to the achievement of goals leading to self sufficiency.

Oswego County reserves the right to contract with an independent medical provider to conduct Physical, Mental, and IQ Evaluations. Should an individual be referred for an independent medical exam, Oswego County may use this information, along with any other documentation to determine the status of an individual's disability and potential to be restored to self-sufficiency. All recipients who claim a disability are required to participate in the medical review process that will be described in Section 6.

- b. Following is the district's procedure for developing a treatment plan and for referring the participant to appropriate treatment, etc. Please be specific:

The Oswego County LDSS does not develop treatment plans for individuals. Rather, we depend on the expertise of treating physicians, mental health providers, treatment facilities, etc. In addition, should Oswego County contract with an independent medical exam provider to conduct Physical, Mental, and IQ Evaluations, we would review this information and use this information in conjunction with all other available documents to determine the status of the individual's disability and potential to be restored to self-sufficiency. Finally, all recipients who claim a disability are required to participate in the medical review process that will be described in Section 6.

- 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 district requires at a minimum:

- **Updates every six months for those in the medical review system unless documentation indicates a less six-month than time frame.**

- **Quarterly updates for those individuals in the drug/alcohol treatment system**
- **Monthly attendance sheets for individuals participating in any type of rehabilitation activity or for those participating in drug/alcohol treatment**
- **Attendance at individual case eligibility review sessions as scheduled**

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:

District policies in place to reduce the amount of time participants fail to participate in work activities include the following:

- The local district continues to have all temporary assistance applicants attend an orientation. At orientation clients are educated on the benefits of full participation in work activities (opportunity to build a work reference, possible hire at worksite or referral to other employment opportunities, learning of new skills, etc.).**
- The employment plan is developed with each participant taking into consideration his/her goals.**
- Meetings may be held with participants to review progress, concerns, and to remind the participant of the importance of full attendance and how this can be used to help them in securing employment, as well as the ramifications for non-compliance.**

Section 3.10 Strategies/Procedures for Engaging Sanctioned Temporary Assistance Participants

[] District has no specific strategies to engage sanctioned participants.

[XX] District attempts to engage sanctioned participants as soon as they are sanctioned using the following strategies:

Oswego County works with sanctioned participants by requiring that they attend monthly case eligibility review meetings as part of the determination of continuing eligibility for temporary assistance. These meetings provide the participant with an opportunity to meet with an Employment Specialist to discuss the reason(s) for non-compliance and what’s needed to engage the individual to end their sanction. This may include discussion of issues such as barriers to employment and ways to overcome these barriers; the negative impact sanctions have a family and the public assistance case; child care needs; health concerns; financial obstacles; and short and long-term goals to self-sufficiency.

The Employment Specialist also requests documentation to show how the participant is meeting current responsibilities (i.e. rent, utilities) with the reduction in their temporary assistance grant. Exploration of resources (i.e. child support, employment) to assist the participant to meet their responsibilities is also covered. The participant is given written notice that failure to attend these meetings can result in a case closing.

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

As outlined above, Oswego County’s strategy to engage sanctioned participants involves immediate engagement of sanctioned participants through monthly case eligibility review meetings. These meetings continue for the duration of the sanction.

For durational sanctions, Oswego County considers participation in the work activity that the sanction occurs for the scheduled hours (or an alternative, appropriate work activity as determined by OCDSS) for five (5) or more consecutive days. If a participant does not participate for five (5) or more consecutive days, the participant is determined to not be in compliance with work requirements and the durational sanction continues.

[XX] District attempts to engage sanctioned participants during different times in the sanction period using the following strategies:

See above – the same process applies throughout the sanction process.

Section 3.11 Diversion Strategies:

[] District has no specific diversion strategies.

[XX] District’s diversion strategies are described below:

Oswego County has an up-front Applicant orientation for all individuals applying for temporary assistance. Staff from the Integrated Team (Employment and Training, Temporary Assistance, and Child Support units) conduct this orientation. Orientations are conducted in groups and include the following information offering alternatives to assistance:

- **Information regarding the temporary nature of welfare with emphasis on time limits**
- **Alternatives to Temporary Assistance**
- **Information on childcare in lieu of TA**
- **Information on one-time payments**
- **Available tax credits and Child care assistance**
- **Child support**
- **Alimony/maintenance/spousal support**
- **Job search/placement assistance**

Non-exempt Family Assistance and Safety Net applicants determined “work ready” after Employment Assessment are placed on a job search in an attempt to assist applicants to secure employment prior to case opening. Failure to participate in this results in a case denial. Applicants are required to contact a minimum of five (5) employers per week. They are required to document these contacts on a job search contact record. We anticipate that each contact will be one-hour long. Therefore, we expect clients to spend a minimum of five (5) hours per week on job search. The type of contacts are based on the applicant’s individual needs and may include contacts made in person at a business/employer, on-line application, application/resume by mail, or telephone. A business/employer contact will not count more than once every three (3) months. The

Employment and Training unit staff will meet with applicants on a bi-weekly basis to review these contacts.

Non-exempt applicants who are not determined work ready are assigned to appropriate work shop(s) and/or referred to other services to address identified needs. Employment staff will continue to monitor services and work with the applicant to address the work readiness issue. Those applicants who fail to participate in assigned workshops/services would go through the conciliation process if/when their case opens. Once the individual is determined “work ready”, s/he is assigned to job search.

Every applicant for temporary assistance is screened at intake to determine if external resources are available to meet their needs.

Section 4 Support Services (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.4)

Section 4.1 For Temporary Assistance and Non-Temporary Assistance Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program 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:

Supportive services may include, but are not limited to, transportation assistance such as automotive insurance, automotive repairs, and fees associated with driver’s license, driver’s permit, and automotive registrations; certification/licensing fees; child care; clothing/uniform costs; counseling services; educational related activities; gasoline allowance; job related safety equipment; license/work related fees; etc.

Requests for supportive services are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with respect to need, availability of funds, and the availability of services from other resources and/pr community programs to meet that need. Maximum allowable costs are established for each service. Exceptions can be made by the commissioner or his designee. Oswego County DSS retains the final say regarding approval of supportive services requests.

- 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:

[XX] Bus pass/token

Amendment Effective Date _____

- Gas card/voucher
- mileage reimbursement at IRS Business rate, (effective 1/1/13 is 56.5 cents/mi)
- mileage reimbursement at IRS medical/moving rate, (effective 1/1/13 is .24 cents/mi)
- other mileage rate, (please explain methodology used to establish reimbursement rate)

[Click here and type local district procedure]

- c. The district will use the following approach for those individuals who reside in an area where public transportation is not available. 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. Please identify the maximum distance the participant would be expected to walk, if applicable:

Oswego County accepts the OTDA policy and establishes a distance not to exceed two (2) miles as the maximum distance the district will require a participant to walk to a work activity assignment or appropriate transportation (i.e. bus) route. Oswego County does not allocate transportation support services for participants who reside within a two (2) mile radius of the work activity site. Circumstances such as transportation needed to transport a child(ren) to/from day care and a disabled condition are causes for an exception to this rule. The two (2) mile radius is the same used under non-emergency medical transportation.

- d. The district will provide the following services to assist individuals at risk of needing public assistance to improve their opportunities for employment or to maintain their employment:

Oswego County may provide individuals eligible for TANF 200% services including but not limited to the following supportive services provided it is needed to to obtain and/or maintain employment: automotive insurance, automotive repairs, fees associated with driver's license, driver's permit, automotive registrations, car/infant seats, tires, and clothing/uniform costs. Requests for any supportive services are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with respect to need, availability of funds, and availability of services through other resources or community programs. Requests are approved if they meet this criteria and fall within the maximum allowable costs. Exceptions can be made by the commissioner or his designee. Requests for supportive services not listed above are reviewed on a case-by-case situation using this criteria. Oswego County DSS retains the final say regarding approval of supportive services requests

- e. Following is a description of how the district accommodates the needs of non-English speaking participants in accessing employment activities and services (or see below):

Oswego County has the following arrangements in place to address the needs of non-English speaking participants in accessing services:

- a. **The district employs spanish speaking staff (our main alternative language)**
- b. **Access to Interpretalk; a language interpretation service**
- c. **An adaptive technology computer for the physically disabled**
- d. **An agreement with Aurora, a community based organization, to interpret for the hearing impaired.**

e. Informal Agreement with Oswego County BOCES for ABE and ESL classes for limited English speaking participants.

[] The district does not generally find the need to provide services to individuals who do not speak English (never or rarely have occasion to serve such individuals).

Section 4.2 Transitional Support Services

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

Oswego County may provide individuals eligible for TANF 200% services the following supportive services to obtain and/or maintain employment: automotive insurance, automotive repairs, fees associated with driver's license, driver's permit, automotive registrations, car/infant seats, tires, and clothing/uniform costs.

Requests for any supportive services are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, with respect to need, availability of funds, and availability of services through other resources and/or community programs. Requests are approved if they meet this criteria and fall within the maximum allowable costs. Exceptions can be made by the commissioner or his designee. Requests for supportive services not listed above are reviewed on a case-by-case situation using this criteria. Oswego County DSS retains the final say regarding approval of supportive services requests

Oswego County DSS retains the final say regarding approval of supportive services requests.

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

The district may make any supportive service (as outlined in Section 4.1) available to an individual whose case has closed due to employment, provided the supportive service is necessary for the individual to retain employment. The need for the supportive service must be documented in the Employment Plan. The supportive service will be provided pending the availability of funds. In addition, Oswego County maintains regular contact with all Family Assistance (FA) earned income cases for up to a year after the case has closed due to employment.

Oswego County DSS retains the final say regarding approval of supportive services requests

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.

Oswego County may provide individuals eligible for TANF 200% services the following Supportive services to obtain and/or maintain employment: automotive insurance,

automotive repairs, fees associated with driver's license, driver's permit, automotive registrations, car/infant seats, tires, and clothing/uniform costs. Requests for any supportive services are reviewed on a case by case basis, with respect to need, availability of funds, and availability of services through other resources and/or community programs. Requests are approved if they meet this criteria and fall within the maximum allowable costs. Exceptions can be made by the commissioner or his designee. Requests for supportive services not listed above are reviewed on a case-by-case situation using this criteria. Oswego County DSS retains the final say regarding approval of supportive services requests.

Section 5 Conciliation, Good Cause, and Dispute Resolution Procedures (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.11 and 385.12)

Section 5.1 Conciliation

The district's conciliation process for Temporary Assistance 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, etc

[Click here and type the procedure]

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

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

[Click here and type the process]

The district's procedure for allowing all SNAP applicants and recipients who fail to comply with a SNAP employment requirement the opportunity to document good cause or an exemption from participation in SNAP work activities is in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.12(c). The good cause determination is made by:

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

[Click here and type the process]

Section 5.2 Sanctions

The district's procedure for determining compliance for those individuals who wish to end their employment sanction (18 NYCRR 385.11(b), 385.12), including the time period established for demonstrating compliance to the satisfaction of the district is:

For durational sanctions, Oswego County considers participation in the work activity that the sanction occurs for the scheduled hours (or an appropriate work activity as determined by OCDSS) for five (5) or more consecutive days. If a participant does not participate for five (5) or more consecutive days, the participant is determined to not be in compliance with work requirements and the durational sanction continues.

At the completion of a durational sanction, the individual is provided the opportunity to be reassigned to the work activity for which they were sanctioned (or an appropriate work activity as determined by OCDSS). If willing to comply, the participant is reassigned to the activity; if s/he is not willing to comply the sanction continues. Once the individual has demonstrated compliance by participating in the assigned activity for 5 consecutive days, temporary assistance benefits are restored retroactive to the date the individual indicated a willingness to comply, but no earlier than the expiration of the minimum duration 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(b).

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 (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.2(d))

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

Disability determinations are included in Oswego County's case management process. For clients who declare a disability or work limitation, the case management staff are responsible to review medical verification, monitor the recommended treatment plan, determine the employment status, and review progress no fewer than three months/no more than six months, unless otherwise indicated on LDSS4526.

Medical documentation is provided by the participant's practitioner. Participants are notified by phone (documented in the case record) or in writing when documentation is needed or insufficient to make a determination, or if the practitioner listed in the

participant's release does not have any recent information on the participant. The participant is given 10 days to obtain this information.

Note: the medical review process is currently being reworked – a flowchart will be issued with the final plan.

For individuals with employment limitations cited, the case manager coordinates work activities to accommodate limitations and involvement in a rehabilitation plan to return the individual to self-sufficiency. The treatment plan and progress may be monitored through individual case management sessions. Some of the goals set may include complying with the treatment plans recommended by the medical/mental health provider to return the individual to self-sufficiency.

Oswego County reserves the right to contract with an independent medical exam provider to conduct Physical, Mental, and IQ Evaluations. In addition, should an individual be referred for an independent medical exam, Oswego County may use this information, along with any other documentation to determine the status of an individual's disability and potential to be restored to self-sufficiency

Oswego County Staff conduct the mandated drug/alcohol screening. This screening is done on-site, and the tool used for the screening process is the LDSS-4571. Oswego County reserves the right to contract one or more Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) licensed providers in the county (e.g. Farnham, County of Oswego Council on Alcoholism, Harbor Lights) to conduct said mandated drug/alcohol screening process if Oswego County deems it necessary.

Clients determined from the screening to be in need of further drug/alcohol assessment are referred for evaluation with an OASAS provider via a contractual arrangement. Oswego County reserves the right to hire a staff person to conduct these assessments if Oswego County deems it necessary.

Once the assessment is complete, the client is notified of any treatment recommendations and their responsibilities regarding treatment.

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

Oswego County reviews information obtained from the participant, participant's medical providers, drug and alcohol providers, independent medical evaluations, and any other information deemed pertinent by Oswego County DSS to determine the status of the individual's disability as well as the individuals potential to be restored to self-sufficiency. Local district staff use this information to determine if the individual is exempt, nonexempt or work limited.

