



David A. Paterson  
Governor

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

David A. Hansell  
Commissioner

May 6, 2008

Mr. Shawn Yetter  
Commissioner  
Tioga County Department of Social Services  
P.O. Box 240  
Owego, New York 13827

Dear Commissioner Yetter:

I am pleased to inform you that your Temporary Assistance and Food Stamp Employment Plan for the period January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2009 is approved by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). A copy of your final plan is enclosed.

The plan will be made available to our Office of Administrative Hearings for use by administrative law judges when conducting employment-related fair hearings. Any amendments necessary to reflect changes to your district's policies or procedures that are covered by the plan must be submitted to your OTDA Employment Technical Advisor for approval.

We look forward to continuing our work over the next few years as we work to continually enhance employment services provided to low-income individuals so they are prepared to retain employment and access the array of work supports available in New York. As always, feel free to contact me or Barbara Guinn at (518) 486-6106 for any assistance to support your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RSJ', written over a horizontal line.

Russell Sykes  
Deputy Commissioner  
Center for Employment and Economic Supports

Enclosure

cc: Barbara Guinn  
Valerie Nitti  
James Yonkers

S-6-9-08

*"providing temporary assistance for permanent change"*

**Temporary Assistance and Food Stamps Employment Plan  
January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2009**

**Section 1 Assurances/Signature**

As a condition of the receipt of federal and State funds the Tioga Department of Social Services submits this Temporary Assistance and Food Stamp Employment Plan (Plan) to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. The Plan outlines the administration of the employment services for Temporary Assistance (TA) and Food Stamp (FS) applicants and recipients program for the period January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2009. As Commissioner of Tioga 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

Date: December 6, 2007

**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.

The Tioga County Department of Social Services is co-located in the Health & Human Services Complex with Tioga County Department of Mental Hygiene, Tioga County Department of Public Health and the Tioga Employment Center.

DSS staff that are involved in the delivery of employment services/activities are physically located within the Tioga Employment Center offices within the complex.

The Employment Principal Welfare Examiner has the responsibility for functions relating to service delivery of employment activities, including program development, reporting and in addition supervises the Low Income Day Care Subsidy program.

The Director of Employment & Transitional Supports has the responsibility for all administrative functions relating to service delivery of employment activities noted above.

The total number of employees of the local Department of Social Services is

103

### Section 2.2 TA and FSET Provider Agencies

Table 1 lists the local contracts or agreements with agencies to provide employment services to TA and FS 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, 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.

Agencies/providers that offer services to participants but which have no direct financial agreement with the district are included in Table 2 (e.g., Bridge, EDGE, OTDA Wage Subsidy, etc.).

**TABLE 1 - Contracts Associated with Employment Programs and Services**

Provider	Total Contract Cost (per yr.)	Funding Source(s)	Categories of Clients Served	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
Literacy Volunteers	\$32,632	FSET	All	Operation of Tioga Adult Literacy Lab
Tioga Opportunities	\$85,388	FFFS	TANF	Disability Case Manager to assist A/R's in SSI/SSD application process Work Crew Supervisor for WEP Program
	\$			
	\$			
	\$			
Total	\$118,020			

**TABLE 2 – Other Service Providers**

Provider	Funding Source(s) (if known)	Categories of Clients Served	Programs, Services or Activities Provided
Tioga Employment Center	WIA	TANF/SN	The Center serves both job seeking individuals as well as employers/business seeking employees. The Center partners with WIA, DOL, NYS Dept of Education, VESID, DOL Veterans Employment Services, Federal Pro-Action Program and DSS.
OTDA/JOBS		TANF/SN/FS	See Section 2.3

Section 2.3 – Jobs Agreement**Jobs Program Services – Target Groups**

("X" signifies those that apply in this district)

<b>Services</b>		<b>Target Groups</b>	
Assessment/Employability Plan	<u>X</u>	Applicants	<u>X</u>
Supervised Job Search	<u>X</u>	TANF (inc. SN fam.)	<u>X</u>
Job Readiness Training	<u>X</u>	Safety Net Singles	<u>X</u>
Job Club	<u>X</u>	Food Stamps	<u>X</u>
Job Placement Services	<u>X</u>	200% of Poverty	<u>X</u>
Grant Diversion	<u>X</u>		
Job Development (employer field visits)	<u>X</u>		

**Other Services Requested**

Described below are additional services/duties which will be requested of Jobs staff (i.e., WTCMS data entry, case conferencing, job fairs etc.)

WTW CMS Data Entry

Case Conferencing

Job Fairs

**Jobs Program Staffing and Location (Address)****Number of Jobs staff****1 FTE****Locations**

1. Tioga Employment Center

2.

3.

**Jobs Program LDSS Staff Contact (Name & Phone Number)**

Valerie Nitti, Director of Employment &amp; Transitional Supports (607) 687-8307

### **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 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, any activity included in the individual's Employment/Self-Sufficiency plan, 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.

#### **Section 3.2 Orientation (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.5)**

Check one of the following:

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

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

Described below is the manner in which the district completes the required orientation, e.g. done in a group setting or individually or a combination of both.

Orientation is generally done in a group setting but can/is done on an individual basis when needed to accommodate a client's specific needs.

At recertification, orientation activities are done on an individual basis and supportive services are discussed and offered to further the recipient's self-sufficiency goals/needs.

#### **Section 3.3 Assessment and Employability 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:

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

TABE Reading and Math Profile Test and a combination of assessment tools will be utilized, beginning with the general data collection sheet. As activities are assigned assessment will continue and may include formal pen and paper testing, computer based exercises and other group components. Involvement in additional assessment activities may occur as directed by Employment Staff.

- c. 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)

DSS Principal Welfare Examiner; DSS Employment Specialists; and DSS Social Welfare Examiners meeting Civil Service qualifications.

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

This is a collaborative effort with DSS Employment Staff and JOBs staff.

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

Yes       No

Applicants in households without dependent children are required to participate:

Yes       No

### Food Stamps Assessment

A district may require a food stamp work registrant to participate in an assessment.

- a. The district  does  does not require work registrants to participate in a formal employment assessment.

- b. If assessment is required, the assessment includes the following elements:

- Basic skill proficiency, educational level, including literacy and English language proficiency;

- Supportive service needs including the need for assistance with transportation or child care;
- Prior work experience and skills;
- Training and vocational interests relating to employability;
- Family circumstances as they relate to WTW participation, including special needs of a child

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

a. A copy of the district's employability 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.

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

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

N/A

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

N/A

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 typical time period it takes for nonexempt individuals to be engaged in activities for both newly opened cases and individuals whose status changes from exempt to nonexempt. Information regarding engaging exempt individuals is entered in Section 3.6

Employment Center staff (DSS and JOBS) work with each individual to assess and meet the needs of that individual. Assignments to activities are done in keeping with the goals of the individual's employment plan.

Applicants are engaged in activities from the date of application and this continues until the goal of engagement in f/t employment occurs.

Recipients whose status changes from exempt to non-exempt are re-engaged within 10 business days





Standard hours of assignment for work activities are 20 hours for households with a child under 6; 35 hours for a households with children over age 5; 55 hours for intact 2 parent households and 35 hours for SN individuals.

b. 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 FA, SNF (indicating SN households with children or Safety Net Families), SNA, (SN households without children), and/or FS (indicating NTA Food Stamp).

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









FA	SNF	SNA	FS	Activity	Definition
X	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	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, 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.

■	■	■	■	<p>Subsidized Public Sector Employment</p>	<p>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, 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.</p>
■	■	■	■	<p>Work Experience</p>	<p>Unpaid work performed at a public or not for profit organization to enable participants who cannot find unsubsidized employment to improve his or her employability. Work experience provides participants with an opportunity to acquire the general skills, training, knowledge and work habits 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 will be reported as employment.)</p>

				<p><b>On-the-Job Training (OJT)</b></p>	<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>
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■	■	■	■	<p>Community Service</p>	<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>
■	■	■	■	<p>Job Search</p>	<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>

■	■	■	■	<p>Job Readiness Training (JRT)</p>	<p>Participation in programs that include seeking and preparing for work. 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>Vocational Education</p>	<p>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 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/SN 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.</p>

				<p><b>Job Skills Training</b></p>	<p>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.</p>
				<p><b>Education Training</b></p>	<p>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, English language instruction and education leading to a GED or HS 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.</p>

■		■		Secondary School	Regular attendance in accordance with the requirements of the secondary school or a course of study at a secondary school leading to a general equivalence diploma (GED), 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 GED as determined necessary by the educational institution. Secondary School or GED 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.
■		■	■	Provision of Childcare for Individual Participating in Community Service	Providing unpaid child care to enable another Temporary Assistance (TANF/MOE funded) recipient to participate in a community service program.
■	■	■		Treatment Plan for Substance Abuse	Substance Abuse 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. For FA families with dependant children this activity will be deemed to be Job Readiness Training within participation rate reporting. For SN households without children this activity will be deemed to be community service.
■	■	■	■	Treatment Plan Other than Substance Abuse	Physical health treatment and rehabilitation services including attending necessary physical therapy, mental health treatment, or rehabilitation activities in which a qualified medical or mental health professional has certified that such treatment is necessary. For FA families with dependant children this activity will be deemed to be Job Readiness Training within participation rate reporting. For SN households without children this activity will be deemed to be community service.
■	■	■	■	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 generally 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.

Applicants are referred to the Tioga Employment Center on the day of application. They are seen by JOBS Staff who complete the JOBS Intake Assessment, schedule the applicant for the 5 day Employability Skills Class and then assign Job Search. Applicants are required to keep a log for each contact made that includes the contact name and demographic information as well as time and date and duration of the contact. Logs are reviewed for completeness and reasonableness upon receipt. Applicants are seen by JOBS at 2 week intervals.

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.

Recipients see JOBS Staff based on their individual employment plan. Recipients are required to job search for 10 hours per week. Recipients are required to keep a log for each contact made that includes the contact name and demographic information as well as time and date and duration of the contact. 10 contacts are expected. Logs are reviewed for completeness and reasonableness upon receipt. Recipients are seen by JOBS Staff at weekly intervals.

Section 3.5 Job Development

Yes       No    The district conducts or receives job development activities to expand job opportunities for TA and FS clients, either directly or by contract or agreement.

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:

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

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

Section 3.6 Training Approval & Activity Enrollment Policy (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.9)

- a. Describe how the district identifies/provides appropriate education (Adult Basic Education, GED preparation), and English language instruction, program services that are available to clients whose assessment indicates such services would be an appropriate work activity assignment:

All applicants are TABE'd and assessed. Based on these tools the customer is referred to the appropriate work activity assignment. If an applicant/recipient does not have a high school diploma we refer to our GED program available at the Tioga Employment Center. This is a contract held with TEC and BOCES.

We assign applicants and recipients to the limited public resources available in our district which includes Literacy Volunteers and limited BOCES programs.

- b. Describe how the district identifies/provides appropriate Vocational Education and Job Skills programs that are available to clients whose assessment indicates such services would be an appropriate work activity assignment:

Employment Assessment in conjunction with case history assist in referring the customer to these activities.

- c. OTDA is requesting each district to increase the number of vocational training or job skills enrollments by at least 20 percent by January 2009 (generally as compared to September 2007) as one method to increase the skill development of recipients to support improved job entries. Districts that have at least

Describe what steps the district will take to increase the number of participants engaged in vocational education and job skills training programs. Such steps may include increased use of contracted services through local training providers, including WIA funded services, or use of OTDA funded Bridge or EDGE training programs. Districts should consider additional blending of activities such as work experience or employment with job skills training in fields that would improve participants' ability to obtain employment or increase wages or hours of employment.

Tioga County DSS will attempt to increase the number of customers enrolled in vocational training or job skills enrollments by increasing the use of contracted services through local training providers, including WIA funded services, and use of Bridge and EDGE programs. Please note that our district is very limited in the availability of such programs and we have significant issues with transportation for this service as it is generally offered out of county.

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

Training providers are limited in our area and we essentially utilize our local BOCES. We evaluate our providers and the services that they offer according to the program curriculum, have performance based contracts, provide outcome measures that are in keeping with the program purpose and who are willing to enroll and support the clientele that we serve.

- e. The district procedure for advising participants of the approved training providers is:

Due to the limited number of training providers available this is done by steering individuals to providers that provide pertinent training for engagement in f/t paid work.

- f. Participants must meet the following requirements in order to be assigned to education/training activities:

Approved training shall fall into two categories; Self-Initiated Training and Center-Initiated Training.

1. Self-Initiated shall be defined as education/training activities in which the individual has enrolled without the prior approval of DSS/JOBs staff. Approval of self initiated education and training must meet general standards as previously outlined in this plan. Further in the event approval is granted, the recipient must participate in the full range of other work activities that may be assigned, including, but not limited to: job search, job development and placement, community service, work experience, and unsubsidized employment.
  
2. Center initiated education/training activities are defined as those assigned by DSS/JOBs staff as part of the employment plan. Assignment to education/training activities will include an evaluation of recipient skills, abilities and needs and will be based on the availability of funds and programs in the community. Further in the event approval is granted, the recipient must participate in the full range of other work activities that may be assigned, including, but not limited to: job search, job development and placement, community service, work experience, and unsubsidized employment.

Note: Work experience will be assigned in conjunction with education/training work activities up to a level enabling the district to count the recipient as participating as defined by State and Federal regulations. For participants in approved self-initiated education/training, work experience will be required at a level to count as participating for Federal and State participation rates, or the amount required by the combination of cash and food stamps monthly grants at a level to count as participating for Federal and State participation rates

Persons participating in approved Center-Initiated education/training work experience will be required at a level to count as participating for Federal and State participation rates, or the amount required by the combination of cash and food stamps monthly grants at a level to count as participating for Federal and State participation rates, or may be excused from participation in work experience in such instances where the individual's ability to participate successfully in training would be negatively impacted by participation in work experience, and such exemption would not affect the individual's status as counting for federal and State participation levels. Each case's participation level will be determined separately. The Director of Employment & Transitional Supports, or designee, will have final sign-off on such exemptions.

Approval of education/work activities will be based on an evaluation of each individual's characteristics, and may include, but not be limited to:

- Evaluation of the individual's ability to acquire employment with current skills and/or training
- Program identifies a specific education/vocational goal
- Program will not exceed 12 months in duration, and is not part of a longer education/training program

- Individual provides requested verification of acceptance into program, schedule of courses, and other documentation that may be required to evaluate the proposed program and the steps the individual has taken to participate in the program
- Program leads to skill development in a demand occupational field as identified by the NYS Department of Labor

Persons participating in approved training will be required to meet the following requirements:

- Maintain enrollment status as governed by the training providers policy
  - Fulfill attendance and academic requirements of the program in accordance with the provider's policy, or in lieu of such policy, maintain attendance and demonstrate satisfactory progress to be established by DSS/JOBs staff in the individual's employment plan
  - Complete training by the approved date for the program
  - Report and changes to attendance, participation or education/training plan immediately to DSS/JOBs staff
  - Authorize DSS/JOBs staff to verify and discuss the individual plan with the provider
  - Provide grades and financial aid information to DSS/JOBs staff as required
  - Apply for all grants and other aid necessary to cover tuition and expenses as appropriate
  - Cooperate fully with all other work activities that may be assigned
  - Meet with DSS/JOBs staff as required
- g. The district procedure for notifying participants of approval for training or enrollment in a work activity is:

The district shall notify, in writing, all recipients of approval or disapproval for enrollment in work activities. The individual employment plan will indicate activities assigned and a copy will be provided to each applicant/recipient. Approval or disapproval of education/training work activities shall be provided in writing in the same manner.

- h. 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:

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

[ X ] 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

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.

Failure of the institution or student to monitor and report information regarding the student's attendance and performance as required.

Failure of the student to progress toward the completion of a course of study without good cause, as determined by the district.

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:

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

Staff will utilize state prescribed forms which will be sent to school districts at initial eligibility and at recertification to monitor attendance. Satisfactory school attendance will be defined as meeting local school district(s) policy for attendance and performance.

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

Staff will rely on the medical/psychiatric information given to them by the professional that assessed or evaluated the individual's condition when assigning work activities.

### Section 3.7 Work Verification

Consistent with Work Verification Plan (WVP) requirements established by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, districts must develop a quality assurance plan for addressing the work participation rate it reports. The plan must include the district's procedure for monitoring attendance in paid employment and work activities and the controls in place to ensure that federal exclusions from work participation rate requirements are accurately made, work eligible individuals are correctly identified, hours of attendance reported by providers is accurate and documented, data entry is accurate and that the district and its providers adhere to approved district and State policy for work activity definitions and the determination of excused absences and holiday reporting. Districts must describe how it will determine that system entries agree with documentation in case files. The district must also explain how it will sample cases, the sample size, and how frequently cases will be reviewed.

After the reviews are completed, the district should provide a summary of findings for management and State review, including errors identified. In addition, the district must include the corrective action it will take when monitoring reveals substantial problems.

The Quality Assurance plan must explain how staff will:

- Assure that documentation of wages and actual hours of employment are verified and accurately projected/reported and present in the case file;
- Assure 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 meet the federal definition for the activity;
- Assess that the data entered into either WTWCMS, NYCWAY or other automated system used for reporting work activities is accurate, including actual hours, excused absences and holidays; and is based on documentation in the case record; and,
- Make sure that documentation necessary to exempt an individual due to being the caretaker of a disabled household member (Employability Code 38) 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):

Tioga County is unique in that our TA and Employment programs have been integrated. Our Employment Specialists are the TA worker as well as the Employment worker to their customers. The Supervisor of the Unit reviews each case based on TA Supervisory review regulations (Tioga County has an approved Case Supervisory Review plan with OTDA-See attached). When a case is selected for TA review the entire case is reviewed including all employment activity (See attached Random Review Tool). In Tioga County we are a TOP District and all earned income cases are in the same caseload. Tioga County will perform a random sample of at least 10 cases per quarter for paid work activities. 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 and documentation is in the file to support hours reported on WTWCMS and that the scheduled hours on WTWCMS is consistent with the documentation.

Tioga County will perform a random sample of at least 20 cases per quarter for participation in unpaid work activities. The employment case files will be reviewed. Actual hours of attendance will be documented by attendance sheets showing actual hours of attendance, any excused absences during the month, any 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.

Tioga County will assess and verify that participation in the work activities reported meets the State approved definition for the activity as part of the review of sample cases.

Tioga County will perform a random sample of 1 case per quarter (we have a total of 3) in which a case member is reported as an employability code 38-needed in the home fulltime to care for a disabled household member. The temporary assistance case file 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.

Tioga County will perform a random sample of 1 cases per quarter (generally we have a total of 4) in which a case member is reported as an employability code 31-caretaker of a child under the age of 12 months. The temporary assistance case file will be reviewed to ensure there is a birth certificate present to verify the child under the age of one.

Tioga County will perform a random sample of at least 10 cases per quarter in which a case member is reported to be incapacitated to determine if s/he remains incapacitated or is now a work eligible person. The temporary assistance case file 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

A summary/management report and error trends are included in our Case Supervisory Review plan which is done quarterly.

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

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 a disabled individual has the potential to be restored to self-sufficiency. 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.):

- a. DSS Employment/Eligibility Staff, JOBs staff and Program Supervisors may make the determination individually or as a group
- b. Determinations are made based on information provided by the individuals medical/psychiatric provider or by an independent medical and/or psychological review/evaluation.
- c. LDSS 4005/4005 (a) is issued to the individual
- d. Individuals may be assigned to or be engaged in activities that accommodate identified need. The individual will then be observed and their progress monitored and assessed. If the evidence supports that the individual is making progress toward restoration to self-sufficiency then that path is continued. If the individual is not making progress we utilize the observation and information to establish a path toward disability (SSI).

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

The district relies on information and suggestion from the individual's medical/psychiatric provider or the independent review/evaluations in developing treatment plans or referring to treatment.

- c. Following is the district's procedure for tracking the participant's compliance with the treatment plan. Include if monthly attendance at rehabilitation is received, etc.:

The district reviews individual employment plans (which include compliance with specified treatment plans) on a bi-weekly basis. This is done individually and providers are contacted so that attendance, participation, and progress are monitored and so noted.

### 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.

Tioga County Employment Specialists are both the TA and Employment worker for each customer they case manage. We provide a strong orientation to employment programs and we make personal contact with each customer on an ongoing basis.

Tioga County also has a Work Experience Coordinator which supervises a work experience crew here on site. This also provides intervention as necessary.

### Section 3.10 Strategies/Procedures for Engaging Sanctioned Temporary Assistance Participants

District has no specific strategies to engage sanctioned participants.

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

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

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

Sanctioned participants generally have multiple barriers that prohibit successful, long term engagement in work and work activities. Our strategy is to identify those barriers so that the individual and DSS/JOBs staff are working on common goals to restore the individual's compliance with the "system" as well as reengagement to work toward self-sufficiency goals for themselves and their families. Homevisiting has been a positive step in this process as some barriers are not easily identified in an office setting. Our processes are further outlined in the Intensive Case Services Project outlined in 07-LCM-07 and approved by OTDA.

### Section 3.11 Diversion Strategies

District has no specific diversion strategies.

District's diversion strategies are described below:

Tioga is very creative and will look at this issue on a case by case basis. Some examples:

- VITA site
- TOP site
- Wheels-to Work
- SCU
- Daycare in lieu of TA
- Tools for Success-
  - Incentive gift for individuals that obtain employment (kit is in a lunch box and contains an alarm clock, calendar/planner, personal hygiene products, gas card/bus pass, gift card for clothes, haircut etc)
  - Gift cards for interview/new job clothes/needs to start or continue employment

- Gas Cards, Bus Passes, Bicycles, Car Repairs/Maintenance, Car Insurance payments

**Section 4 Support Services** (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.4)

**Section 4.1 For Temporary Assistance Applicants and Recipients in Work Activities**

- 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 to participants the following expenses which the district deems necessary for the individual to participate in orientation, assessment, employment planning, work activities and activities to restore self-sufficiency:
- Bus passes/tokens as needed
  - \$25.00 per month for Supported Job Search (not to exceed 3 months in a twelve month period)
  - Reimbursement for mileage in use of personal vehicles where public transportation is not available or appropriate at the current AAA rate (currently \$.15 per mile). Participants must provide verification of actual mileage to receive reimbursement. If the actual cost of gas necessary to meet the assigned participation requirement exceeds .15 cents per mile, we will increase the reimbursement to meet the actual fuel cost.
  - Automotive repairs or insurance premiums where necessary to allow the individual to obtain/retain employment. Up to 3 Estimates may be required.
  - Purchase of essential items such as clothing, footwear, tools, etc when necessary for the individual to obtain employment. Up to 3 Estimates may be required.
  - Payment for licensure, testing fees and other costs related to Federal, State or local certification requirements for specific employment goals. Verification may be required
- b. The district will use the following approach to assist those participants who need transportation to and from a work activity site (including any applicable mileage reimbursement rate and the method used by the district to arrive at that reimbursement rate):

Transportation issues will be reviewed with applicants and recipients at orientation and employment assessment. The individual employment plan will reflect the transportation options chosen to support participation in work activities. Persons who are unable to access public transportation, and are able to verify that they cannot make arrangements for transportation, will be involved in developing a transportation plan including setting specific goals to resolve the transportation difficulty.

Other assistance may be (but not limited to):

- Bus passes/tokens as needed

- Reimbursement for mileage in use of personal vehicles where public transportation is not available or appropriate at the current AAA rate (currently \$.15 per mile). Participants must provide verification of actual mileage to receive reimbursement. If the actual cost of gas necessary to meet the assigned participation requirement exceeds .15 cents per mile, we will increase the reimbursement to meet the actual fuel cost.

- c. The district will use the following approach for those individuals who reside in an area where public transportation is not available. In those instances where the district would require a participant to walk to a work activity assignment, please identify the maximum distance the client would be expected to walk, along with a rationale for the maximum distance:

The maximum distance is 2 miles by foot which coincides with our definition of "reasonable distance" outlined in the Consolidated Services Plan regarding Daycare issues.

Participants with physical limitations will be accommodated.

- 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:

See Section 3.9 all and Section 4.1 (a) & (b)

- 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):

This is not generally applicable in our area (never or rarely have occasion to serve such individuals).

#### Section 4.2 Transitional Supportive Services

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

See Section 3.9 all and Section 4.1 (a) & (b) including transitional Food Stamps, Medicaid, child care and any other supportive services that an individual could receive.

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

The district will provide the services described in Section 4 to individuals to maintain employment for up to 90 days after case closing due to employment. Such services will be provided on a case-by-case basis, requiring verification as necessary to establish need.

Section 4.3 Extended Supportive 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.

The district will provide services described in Section 4 to individuals to maintain employment.

Section 4.4 Supportive Services for Food Stamp Employment & Training (FSET) Participants:  
(Reference 18 NYCRR 385.4(b))

The district provides necessary childcare in accordance with the childcare section of the Child and Family County Services Plan.

a. Following is the district's policy for providing transportation services for FSET participants:

See Section 4.1 (b)

b. The district will provide the following supportive services in addition to transportation:

See Section 4

**Section 5 – Temporary Assistance Conciliation and Dispute Resolution Procedures; Food Stamp “Good Cause” Determination Procedures** (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.11 and 385.12)

Section 5.1 Conciliation

The district's conciliation process is in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.11(a).  
Conciliations are conducted (check all that apply.):

- in person  
 by phone  
 by mail, etc.  
 other as described below:

The good cause/willfulness determination is made by:

- client's employment worker  
 a supervisor  
 separate entity (please describe below)  
 other (please describe below)

### Section 5.2 Sanction

The district's procedure for determining compliance for those individuals who wish to end their employment sanction (18NYCRR 385.11(b), 385.12) is:

This is dependent on the reason for the sanction and its duration. The customer has to either show willingness to comply by participating in the previous activity that was originally assigned; provide verification of compliance (i.e. sign-in sheets or collateral contact with the assignment verifying customer participation/completion of assignment); and possibly wait for time durations to expire.

Each of these customers are involved in our approved ICS project and we continue to work with them and their individual needs throughout the sanction process.

### 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 but who are not trained in mediation

### Section 5.4 Food Stamps Good Cause Determination

The district's procedure for determining if good cause exists for applicants and recipients who fail to comply with Food Stamp Program employment requirements is in accordance with 18NYCRR 385.12(c) and is conducted:

- conciliation is offered in the same manner as described in Section 5.1 of this plan;

- ] by the Employment worker using available information, including that provided by the participant if any, to determine if there was a good cause reason.
- ] Other (described below)

**Section 6 – Disability Determinations** (Reference 18 NYCRR 385.2(d))

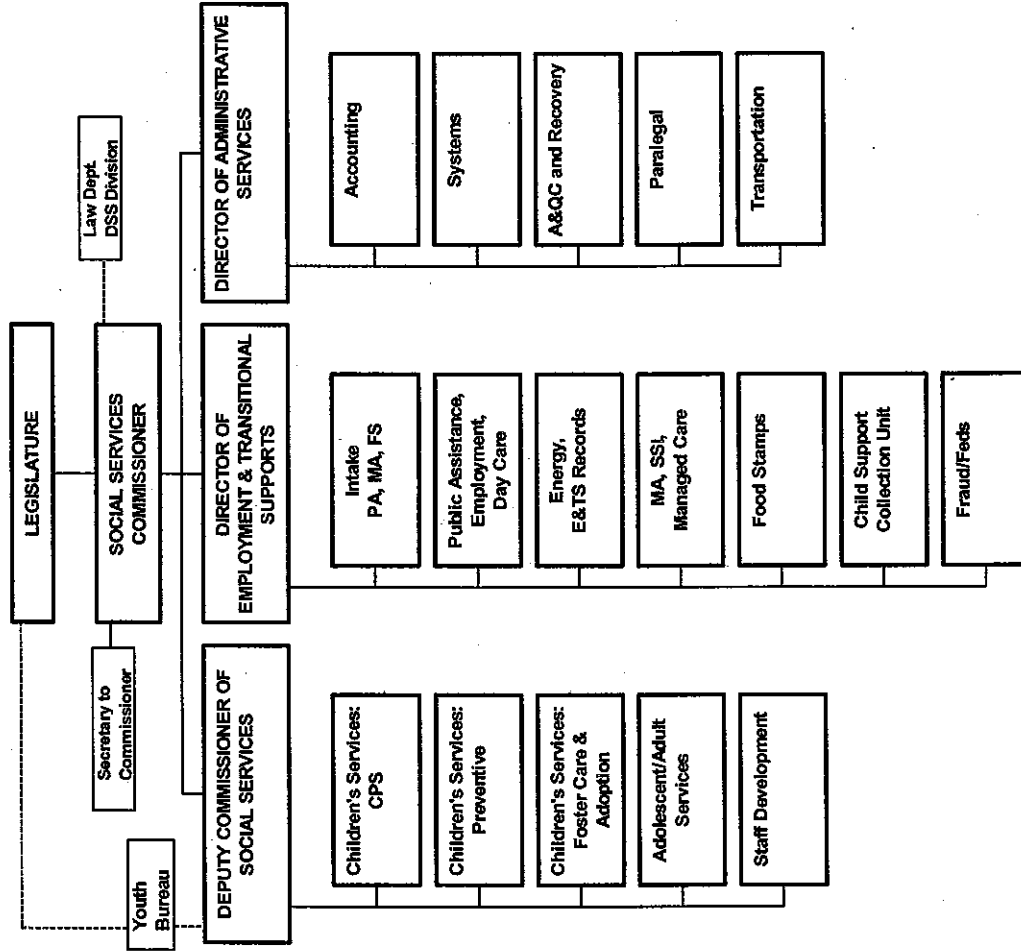
The district’s process for determining an individual’s disabilities and/or work limitations is in accordance with 18 NYCRR 385.2(d). Check all that apply:

- ] 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, described below.

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, described below:

TIOGA COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES



# DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES EMPLOYMENT PLAN

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Case# \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employment status: [ ] employable [ ] employable with supports [ ] unemployable  
(Employable with supports and unemployable need supporting documentation)

## Immediate needs:

### 1. Transportation issues:

Has no transportation: Objective \_\_\_\_\_

Plan of Action: \_\_\_\_\_

Who will accomplish and by what date? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Child Care issues:

Has no child care or not enough: Objective \_\_\_\_\_

Plan of action: \_\_\_\_\_

Who will accomplish and by what date? \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Housing issues:

Eviction imminent: Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan of action: \_\_\_\_\_

Who will accomplish and by what date? \_\_\_\_\_

### 4. Physical issues:

Minor medical or other physical limitations: Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan of action: \_\_\_\_\_

Who will accomplish and by what date? \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. Other issues:

Other issues that may be barriers to employment: Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Plan of action: \_\_\_\_\_

Who will accomplish and by what date? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Planned Participant Activities**

**1. Assessment workshop:**

a. Dates required to attend: \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. Job placement and job search services:**

a. Bi-weekly appointments with DOL Labor services rep. until employed [ ]Y [ ]N

b. Individualized job search for employment

TANF-----5 employer contacts weekly [ ]Y [ ]N

SN-----5 employer contacts weekly [ ]Y [ ]N

FS-----5 employer contacts weekly [ ]Y [ ]N

---

**3. Workfare site activity:**

a. Program and site \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly hours \_\_\_\_\_ Start date \_\_\_\_\_

Completion date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**4. TABE score date:** \_\_\_\_\_ Reading \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_

**Employment Goal (Short Term goal)** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Employment Goal (Long Term goal)** \_\_\_\_\_

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CAN THE ABOVE GOALS BE ACCOMMODATED ACCORDING TO FEDERAL AND STATE REGULATIONS AND LOCAL POLICY? [ ]Y [ ]N. IF NO, ACTIVITIES TO BE ASSIGNED ARE JUSTIFIED BECAUSE: \_\_\_\_\_

---

I have read and understand the employment plan to improve my employability and assist me in transitioning to self-sufficiency. I agree to the steps that are outlined in this plan and further agree to comply with the activities assigned in this plan.

**Participant** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employment Specialist** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_