NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
40 NORTH PEARL STREET, ALBANY, NEW YORK 12243-0001

BRIAN J. WING
Acting Commissioner

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE	

TRANSMITTAL: 97 ADM-11

DIVISION: Department of Labor Welfare-To-Work Unit

TO: Commissioners of Social Services

DATE: May 16, 1997

SUBJECT: Assessment Requirement for Recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION:	IM Directors, Employment Coordinators, CAP Coordinators
CONTACT PERSON:	Department of Labor Welfare-To-Work Unit Technical Assistance Representatives – Upstate: James Cook (315)789-1771; Donna Dwyer (315)432-1214; Janis Higgins (607)773-4811; Marlene Mackey (518)792-5811; Edris Brown (914)426-2705 — Downstate: Gail Levine (212)352-6488; Harold Brueland (212) 352-6501
ATTACHMENTS:	Model TANF Assessment Form – Available On-Line

FILING REFERENCES

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
–	–	–	PRWORA of 1996	–	–

DSS-296EL (REV. 9/89)

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I. Purpose

The purpose of this directive is to advise local social services districts of the requirement to conduct an employment assessment of all adult members of families receiving assistance under TANF.

II. Background

New York's State Plan for implementing TANF was accepted by the federal Department of Health and Human Services on December 2, 1996. While the plan indicates that the current Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program will be New York's work program under TANF, a new statutory requirement that is not part of JOBS must be addressed. Social services districts must conduct an initial assessment of all adult recipients in cases receiving TANF funds, including those individuals now categorized as exempt under JOBS.

III. Program Implications

Social services districts currently have a process in place that ensures that employable recipients are assessed. This process must now be expanded to accommodate the TANF requirement to assess all adults as described in Section IV. The following information describes who must be assessed, the components of the assessment, and the timeframes for completion.

IV. Required Action

A. Who Must be Assessed

An initial assessment must be conducted for each recipient of TANF funds (ADC and ADC-U) who is:

- o   18 years of age or older; or

- o   16 or 17 years of age and has not completed high school or obtained a certificate of high school equivalency, and is not attending secondary school.

Any current ADC recipient who has been assessed under JOBS and is currently enrolled in a JOBS activity, or who has been assessed under JOBS within the past year will be considered to have met the TANF assessment requirement. A break in assistance of less than 30 days does not invalidate any prior JOBS assessment for this purpose.

Each employable recipient must participate in the assessment as required or be subject to an individual sanction. Recipients, who are exempt according to current state regulations, who fail or refuse to participate, without good cause, in the assessment are subject to loss of eligibility until compliance, for the entire case, for TANF Program funds (ADC and ADC-U).

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B. Notice Requirements

   a. Case Closings - Non compliant person who is currently exempt.

The reason language paragraph below is for use when an exempt recipient fails, without a good reason, to comply with the requirement that they be assessed.   Districts that produce public assistance closing notices through the CNS will, by using reason code N17, produce the required reason language.

Districts that use manual notices for closings must use the appropriate State mandated or approved local equivalent notice:

o   DSS-4015:   "Notice of Intent to Change Benefits: Public Assistance, Food Stamps, Medical Assistance and Services (Timely and Adequate)".

When a full explanation of the action will not fit on the notice, an attachment will be needed.   Include enough information on the notice to identify the reason for the action and refer the recipient to the attachment for a full explanation.   When an attachment is needed, the regulatory citation must appear on the notice.   This decision is based on Department Regulations 351.2, 351.8(a) 2 and 351.21(a).

The CNS reason language produced by the use of N17 - "Failure to Complete Eligibility Process" follows:

This is because you failed to complete the public assistance eligibility process.

In addition to the eligibility interview, a recipient can be required to meet with agency staff to discuss possible employment opportunities, or other resources that may reduce or eliminate the need for public assistance.   We told you in advance that you were required to meet with (Name of Person or Unit) on (Date).

You did not go to the appointment.   When a person fails to complete the eligibility process, the case cannot get public assistance.

This decision is based on Department Regulations 351.2, 351.8(a) 2 and 351.21(a).

   b. Sanctions - Non compliant person who is currently employable.

Employable recipients that fail or refuse to participate in the assessment are subject to an individual sanction.   Districts that produce public assistance closing notices through the CNS will, by using reason code WE1, WE2 or WE3, produce the required reason language.

Districts that use manual notices for closings must use the appropriate State mandated or approved local equivalent notice:

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O   DSS 4004:   "Notice of Intent to Change Public Assistance
Grant and/or Medical Assistance Coverage for Non-Compliance with
Employment Related Requirements (Timely and Adequate)."

This decision is based on Department Regulation 385.4(b).

C. Assessment Components

     The assessment must include an evaluation of the recipient's
skills, prior work experience and employability (job readiness). The
purpose of this assessment is to gather information needed to develop the
recipient's plan to meet TANF work requirements and move toward self
sufficiency. There is no federal requirement to develop an individual
responsibility plan. Local districts may use a combination of assessment
techniques to meet the TANF requirements. For example:

          O   a JOBS assessment for all individuals, or

          O   a JOBS assessment process for the current "non exempt"
              populations and a simplified assessment for all others.

     Attached is a model assessment document that meets the minimum
TANF requirements. Local districts may wish to use this document or design
their own form which includes, at a minimum, the same elements as the
model. Districts are, of course, free to use their current JOBS assessment
document. Districts may, when they deem appropriate, assess recipients by
mail or telephone.

D. Timeframes for Implementation

     A TANF assessment must be completed for those individuals
outlined in Section IV A. according to the following timeframes:

          O   By June 2, 1997 for those individuals active as of
              December 2, 1996.

          O   Within 90 days of being determined eligible for TANF
              assistance for all others.

V. Systems Implications

     There has been a WMS Employment Subsystem modification that
allows subsystem record creation for all employability codes with the
exception of "30" - Child under 16 years.   TANF assessments should be
entered on the Employment Subsystem using existing activity and status
codes.

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VI. <u>Effective Date</u>

This directive is effective May 15, 1997 and is retroactive to December 2, 1996.

Karen B. Papandrea
Director
Welfare-To-Work

TANF ASSESSMENT

Recipient Name	Case Number, CIN or SS#

1) Prior Work Experience - Has the recipient been employed during the last two years? If yes, provide a brief summary below under "Notes/Next Steps."   Yes ☐   No ☐

2) Job Skills - Does the recipient possess job related skills? If yes, note them below under "Notes/Next Steps."   Yes ☐   No ☐

3) Barriers to Employment - Will any of the following barriers/conditions impact on the recipient's ability to accept employment?

   o   Lack of Child Care   Yes ☐   No ☐

   o   Health Problems   Yes ☐   No ☐

   o   Drug/Alcohol Abuse   Yes ☐   No ☐

   o   Non-English Speaking   Yes ☐   No ☐

   o   No Transportation   Yes ☐   No ☐

   o   Other: _____

Notes/Next Steps

Local District Evaluator   Date