

Q. 1 Can we serve youth who had a first time work experience in our businesses last year and offer them a more challenging and independent work experience this year (or does the population need to be all first time workers)?

A. It is not necessary for the population served to be all first time workers. However, there should be clear justification, based on their pre-assessment, for the youth to continue to be served in subsidized summer employment.

Q. 2 Is there new eligibility or other forms we need to use?

A. The eligibility for the New York State Funded SYEP Program has been the same since its inception in 2000. We have no reason to believe that the eligibility for the program will be different than it was last year. In addition, we do not anticipate that there will be additional state required forms. New York State did issue a letter to local areas on February 4, 2015 with guidance on ensuring that local areas SYEP application meets state requirements. The letter is below.



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

SHARON DEVINE
Executive Deputy Commissioner

February 4, 2015

Dear SYEP Provider:

The purpose of this letter is to communicate important changes and other pertinent information regarding the 2015 New York State Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). While you will receive additional correspondence regarding SYEP after the State budget is enacted, we wanted to ensure that essential details were relayed to you prior to the onset of this year's program.

New York State Minimum Wage Increase

As you are aware, the New York State minimum wage increased from \$8.00 per hour to \$8.75 per hour effective December 31, 2014. OTDA expects that all New York State SYEP participants will be paid at least the State minimum wage for any hours of employment. In 2014, district allocations were increased proportionately to account for the minimum wage increase that went into effect on December 31, 2013. We anticipate that allocations will again be increased for this year's program as reflected in Governor Cuomo's 2015 budget proposal. Due to this anticipated increase in funding, we do not expect you will need to make substantial changes in the design of local 2015 SYEP programs, such as the number of work hours or length of employment. Further, we expect the program to be able to serve about the same number of youth as last year.

New York State SYEP Applications

The TANF Youth Services Application is the preferred instrument for New York State SYEP eligibility determinations. However, OTDA will continue to allow the use of locally developed applications as long as they include all criteria necessary to accurately determine TANF eligibility. Locally developed applications must be shared with OTDA on an annual basis. Provided below are some common areas of concern regarding locally developed SYEP applications.

1. SYEP applications must include a section for citizen/non-citizen status. When applicable, Alien Identification Numbers and Dates of Entry into the United States must be obtained for each non-citizen. Applicants should refer to the "Immigration Status List" included on pages 5 and 6 of the TANF Youth Services Application for further information regarding immigration status.
2. SYEP applications should allow applicants to attest that they are categorically income eligible for TANF services based on their receipt of services. All

applications must inquire whether applicants receive benefits under one or more of the following programs: Family Assistance/Safety Net, Medicaid, SNAP, HEAP, SSI and School Lunch. If self-attestation is used, no additional income information is required for applicants who are categorically eligible based on their receipt of these benefits.

3. Many SYEP applications ask for gross income earned by all working family members in the past six months. For SYEP eligibility, per 00-LCM-20, current income is defined as income that has been or is expected to be received *in the calendar month* of the application for TANF services, and is expected to continue beyond that month. If income in the calendar month of application is higher than the family members' regular monthly income, the applicant may provide information based on annual income from the previous 12 months. A six-month period is not acceptable for income verification.
4. Many applications ask applicants to list all family members living at the applicant's home in the last six months. As with gross income, family size should also be determined during the calendar month of the SYEP application. Per TANF guidelines, family members include the applicant's mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, any brothers or sisters (including half-siblings) who are under 18 years of age (or 18 and in secondary school) and these siblings' parents. An applicant with a child of his/her own should include the income of that child, any siblings of that child, and the child's parent. Applicants should not include any of these people if they do not reside in the same household. The income of family members such as grandparents, uncles or aunts should not be included. A married applicant should include his/her spouse but not parents or siblings. SYEP applications must make clear to the applicant and reviewer that only appropriate family members are included in the income calculations.
5. A signature line for a parent or guardian must be included on the application in addition to the applicant signature. If the applicant lives with his or her parents, a parent or other adult relative caretaker must sign the application for it to be complete. The Commissioner of the Department of Social Services or his or her designee must sign for children in foster care.
6. A form or section for certification of applicant eligibility for TANF services must be included as part of all applications. Local staff should determine whether youth applicants are eligible based on the information provided in the application.

If it is not possible for locally developed applications to meet all of the above criteria regarding U.S. citizenship status, categorical eligibility, gross income, inclusion of appropriate family members, parent/guardian signatures and TANF certification, then the TANF Youth Services Application should be used in lieu of or in addition to a locally developed form. The OTDA SYEP Provider Certification Agreement must be completed by all entities responsible for determining TANF eligibility when the TANF Youth Services Application is not used. An authorized representative must sign the Agreement to certify that TANF guidelines regarding eligibility determinations and recordkeeping are met. The Provider Certification Agreement will be distributed to all SYEP providers at a later date as part of the 2015 SYEP guidelines package.



Financial Literacy

On October 21, 2014, Governor Cuomo signed Chapter 421 of the Laws of 2014, which requires that a financial literacy education program for teenagers and young adults be included as part of the New York State SYEP. Pursuant to Chapter 421, financial literacy components must be in place by July 1, 2016. Last year, all SYEP operators were asked to describe any existing financial literacy components and include any materials disseminated to youth. We will again ask for this information as part of this year's SYEP. Providers who do not provide education related to financial literacy as part of their current program design should begin to develop such materials with the 2016 deadline in mind. Financial literacy components may be developed in coordination with nonprofit organizations and/or financial institutions. Additional information and options regarding acceptable financial literacy components will be forthcoming.

Thank you for your attention to the information included in this letter. As always, please contact us for direction or clarity on any SYEP issue. We look forward to working with you on another successful SYEP.

If you have any questions regarding the SYEP, please contact Melissa Alexander at Melissa.Alexander@otda.ny.gov or (518) 473-3018.

Sincerely,



Barbara C. Guinn

Director

Employment and Advancement Services

cc: Kathleen Dougherty
Luke Posniewski
Melissa Alexander



Office of Temporary
and Disability Assistance.