

Appendix E

TECHNOLOGICAL ACCESS TO WORK SUPPORT BENEFITS

Current State/local/private sector technology practices that support expedited and accurate access to benefits and services:

- **myBenefits** - This project will deploy an internet tool for NYS residents to self-screen for potential eligibility for benefits and programs such as EITC/SEITC/NYC EITC/Child Tax Credit (January 24, 2008); and, in May 2008, Food Stamps (FS), HEAP and School Meals. Also in May 2008, households in pilot districts will be able to file online FS applications through their local districts' community partner organizations. In Phase 2 of the e-app project, the online FS application/recertification will be available through public internet, and local districts will have an online eligibility interview/determination tool to support the benefit calculation and authorization, and generate client notices. Phase 2 also will support recipient inquiry/change reporting accounts, for households to check their case status, report changes and obtain copies of their budget to verify eligibility for other programs such as School Meals, subsidized housing and Women, Infants and Children (WIC).
- **New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP) Expansion** – Currently, under a federal demonstration project and data exchange with the Social Security Administration, OTDA automatically opens a case and authorizes a standardized FS benefit amount for individuals who are living alone and receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI). OTDA notifies the individual of their FS benefit availability and encourages them to provide additional information about their circumstances, so that a higher benefit amount may be calculated. OTDA will seek USDA/FNS approval to expand automated FS eligibility to households consisting of SSI couples.
- **DOH's Statewide portal** – This website for information about public health insurance programs ultimately will allow families and individuals to submit applications for health insurance online to DOH, and recertify their Medicaid/Family Health Plus/Child Health Plus (MA/FHP/CHP) eligibility by telephone. Currently, some health insurance providers assist applicants to complete electronic applications, which are then printed and submitted to local district offices for eligibility determination.
- **MA and FS Auto-enrollment** - OTDA and DOH are working to identify individuals on MA but not FS and individuals on FS but not MA. Initial matches were completed but were re-run to refine the results (for example, to not include as potentially eligible for FS those MA individuals who reside in nursing homes or hold immigration statuses that preclude FS participation). After we have validation of the matched files, the following actions are being pursued:
 1. DOH will run the FS-not-MA file against their Child Health Plus (CHP) database to eliminate children covered by CHP.

2. OTDA and DOH staff will research a sample of cases to identify trends. For example, are a large portion of the MA-not-FS individuals SSI recipients who were auto-opened for NYSNIP FS, failed to redeem their FS and, as a result, had to be auto-closed?
 3. OTDA and DOH staff will identify the missing pieces of information needed to determine eligibility for the missing program. For example, DOH may need resources information to determine MA eligibility; OTDA may need more information on household composition and expenses.
 4. Based on the above analyses, targeted outreach will be conducted to obtain the missing information and client signature on an abbreviated application, for districts to open the missing case for eligible households. WMS already supports creation of a FS application registry from a Medicaid case.
 5. In the longer term, more automated support for translating MA eligibility calculations to FS benefit calculations, to save worker time, will be pursued.
 6. Long-term, auto-enrollment will also be explored.
- **Tax Data Sharing** – DOH and Tax and Finance are exploring access to Tax data to streamline MA facilitated enrollment. OTDA uses Tax data to conduct outreach for the Noncustodial Parent Earned Income Tax Credit.
 - **New York City** – The Office of Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services is sponsoring an interagency technology initiative to improve access and service coordination for clients of nine human services agencies and up to five additional city agencies. The vision for an enterprise solution to support business needs of clients, workers, community partners and providers is documented in a report, “HHS-Connect Roadmap”. The proposal includes functionalities and features such as an open client portal, holistic worker views and electronic case folders for interagency data sharing and collaboration.
 - **NYS Tax and Finance** – Tax has expressed interest in both developing a master client index/database and in securing legislation that would allow State agencies to share data related to respective programs’ statutory purposes under a single, unified Memorandum of Understanding. Team members discussed the value of data sharing for optimizing resources devoted to administering and monitoring benefits and services programs. The team also identified the need to accommodate differences in agencies’ definitions for what appear to be common data elements like earned income.