

OFFICE OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE

MISSION

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), working in close collaboration with the Office of Children and Family Services and other agencies, helps needy adults and families achieve economic self-sufficiency through work, job training and child support enforcement. The Office also provides economic assistance to aged and disabled persons who are unable to work, transitional support to welfare recipients while they are working toward self-sufficiency and supportive services to low income households to help them avoid welfare dependency.

ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

The Office has its central office in Albany and three major field offices throughout the State. These offices provide direct operational support, supervision and guidance to the State's 58 local social services districts which are composed of each county and New York City. Social services districts are responsible for directly administering most welfare programs, including those that serve the homeless and refugees.

Office staff also provide legal, audit and computer systems support. Through its Division of Disability Determinations, the Office also evaluates the medical eligibility of disability claimants for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). The Office is authorized at 2,529 positions for 2006-07. Approximately 460 of these positions are paid by State tax dollars from the General Fund with partial Federal reimbursement and 1,634 are funded directly by Federal grants. The remaining 17 percent are supported by various revenues.

FISCAL BACKGROUND AND BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

A total of \$5.2 billion is recommended from all funding sources in 2006-07 to support State Operations and Aid to Localities programs including Family Assistance, Safety Net, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Home Energy Assistance (HEAP), Child Support Enforcement and Food Stamp Administration.

Aid to Localities is funded by \$4.7 billion in Federal funds, General Fund dollars and other revenue, and includes modest increases in SSI for the aged and disabled.

A State Operations appropriation of approximately \$453 million is recommended from all funding sources and will support a workforce of approximately 2,529. The recommended \$57 million General Fund State Operations appropriation includes funding for: staff and other costs related to the oversight of local district administration of public assistance and child support enforcement programs; administrative hearings for public assistance; Food Stamps; and operation of the major computer systems supporting public assistance programs.

General Fund support of \$15 million is appropriated for the cost of redesigning the Welfare Management System (WMS), costs associated with the Welfare-to-Work Caseload Management System and other related systems initiatives.

Specific priorities for the OTDA in 2006-07 include:

- Continuing to promote personal responsibility through reforms that encourage welfare recipients to attain independence;
- Targeting investments to support local districts in their efforts to assist hard-to-serve welfare recipients and low-income families in securing and sustaining employment; and
- Encouraging non-custodial parents to strengthen their ties to employment and economic support for their children.

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The welfare system in New York State has changed in basic philosophy and approach, bringing to fruition the overall objectives of State welfare reform. These changes include transforming welfare into a system of temporary income support while recipients secure employment and child support payments; promoting individual responsibility; and providing social services districts with the flexibility they need to effectively administer a work-oriented welfare system. The system has evolved from one that focused primarily on determining client eligibility and distributing benefit payments to one that now focuses on assisting individuals in achieving independence from publicly-supported welfare programs.

This approach has resulted in a dramatic decline in welfare caseloads. Since 1995, over one million recipients have left the welfare rolls, a decline of over 60 percent. In addition to generating significant State and local government savings, this historic caseload decrease has allowed the State to use the TANF Block Grant to fund supportive services that encourage employment. The programs funded include the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), child care and transportation services.

OTDA programs also emphasize prevention of welfare dependency by providing work supports and services to at-risk households. Legislation will be introduced to create a Strengthening Families through Stronger Fathers initiative to encourage employment and related activities for young, low-income non-custodial parents. These activities help families address life events, and significantly expand the resources and services available to low-income New Yorkers.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE

The Family Assistance program provides employment assessments, support services and time-limited cash assistance to eligible families with children while the parent acquires the necessary work skills to secure and retain employment.

All Family Assistance participants must undergo an assessment of their employability, skills and training needs and, unless determined to be exempt, must participate in assigned work activities to remain eligible. Federal financial participation in cash benefits for Family Assistance participants is limited to a cumulative period of five years. If the Family Assistance household is unable to transition off cash assistance during this period, the family typically moves to the Safety Net Assistance program while the head of household continues to search for a job.

In addition, Federal law mandates a 50 percent work participation rate for all Family Assistance cases. Although the Federal government applies a credit to this work requirement, the pending reconciliation bill for the Federal budget amends the credit in a manner which makes the rate more difficult to achieve.

The Governor's welfare reform program also fosters individual responsibility to help break the cycle of long-term dependency. All applicants and recipients are required to participate in screening and assessment to determine if the need for welfare results from use of illegal drugs or excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages. If a participant is unable to work because of such circumstances, he or she is referred to an appropriate treatment program. Teen parents must attend high school or other approved education programs to receive welfare benefits.

Welfare reform also requires each social services district to screen its Family Assistance caseload for domestic violence. Acting through its designated domestic violence liaison, each district informs the individual of services they may access on a voluntary basis. Districts waive application of welfare program rules, including but not limited to child support cooperation and work requirements, if the district determines that these provisions would cause further risk or make it more difficult for the person to escape domestic violence.

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SAFETY NET ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Article XVII of the State Constitution requires the State and its social services districts to provide for the needy. State welfare reform meets this obligation through the Safety Net Assistance program for persons who are not eligible for Family Assistance or Supplemental Security Income.

Safety Net Assistance participants are single adults and childless couples, families that have exhausted their five-year limit on Family Assistance, certain non-citizens, households where the adult is unable to work because of substance abuse and households where the adult has refused to participate in drug/alcohol screening or treatment. In addition to providing for essential needs, the Safety Net Assistance program provides employment services such as job search and work training. Unless prevented from doing so by a physical or mental disability, Safety Net Assistance participants must engage in assigned work activities to receive assistance.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICE PROGRAMS

The Governor's welfare reform program has strengthened child support enforcement to ensure that parents provide for the economic well-being of their children. Improvements include automated updating of child support awards to reflect inflation; improved customer services through website access of account information and interstate reciprocity in child support proceedings; and administrative authority for social services districts to order genetic tests, subpoena information and collect relevant data from Federal, State and local agencies. The Executive Budget continues to re-invest Federal incentive bonuses in child support initiatives to strengthen performance in "hard-to-collect" cases, and continue State-local partnerships to increase criminal prosecution of parents who refuse to pay child support. These measures have helped to increase total child support collections to their current level of \$1.5 billion.

Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides cash assistance to the aged, visually handicapped and disabled. The State's SSI benefit is currently among the highest nationally. The 2006-07 recommendation of \$655 million funds the State cost of SSI benefits for more than 630,000 recipients. Eligibility for SSI and SSDI is evaluated by OTDA's Division of Disability Determinations (DDD).

In State Fiscal Year 2006-07 the Governor continues funding for the State's transitional and emergency shelter system, which assists homeless individuals and families in achieving self-sufficiency by strengthening their independent living skills and helping them acquire permanent housing. In addition, the State has partnered with New York City in NY/NY III to provide 9,000 new units of Supportive Housing for homeless individuals living with mental illness, and homeless families with special needs.

The Federal Food Stamp Program provides low-income households with an electronic benefit card that can be used as cash at grocery stores to purchase food. New York receives \$2.1 billion per year in Federal Food Stamp benefits, with an average monthly benefit of \$200 to support needy households and those making the transition from welfare to work.

PROGRAM AND ADMINISTRATIVE COST CONTAINMENT

While welfare reform continues to be an unprecedented success, cost containment measures remain necessary not only to preserve basic income support for eligible children and adults, but also to foster individual self-sufficiency and employment. In order to accomplish this, the 2006-07 welfare budget recommendations:

- Encourage adult participation in mandatory work requirements by imposing a full welfare benefit reduction if the head of the household is out of compliance with work requirements. Currently, only a portion of the household's welfare benefit is reduced when the head of the household does not meet mandatory employment requirements;

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- Increase the amount of earnings disregarded for purpose of determining welfare eligibility to 50 percent for recipients on welfare less than five years; and reduce the disregard percentage to 25 percent for recipients on welfare more than five years;
- Hold accountable those counties that fail to meet at least a 50 percent work participation rate for their TANF Families, Five Year Families and Safety Net Singles populations; and
- Target additional funding to the Flexible Fund for Family Services to enable local administrators to make resource decisions that meet their service needs.

ALL FUNDS APPROPRIATIONS (dollars)

Category	Available 2005-06	Appropriations Recommended 2006-07	Change	Reappropriations Recommended 2006-07
State Operations	425,239,000	453,168,000	27,929,000	270,500,000
Aid To Localities	4,813,742,000	4,682,181,000	(131,561,000)	3,604,818,000
Capital Projects	30,000,000	30,000,000	0	140,086,000
Total	5,268,981,000	5,165,349,000	(103,632,000)	4,015,404,000

ALL FUND TYPES PROJECTED LEVELS OF EMPLOYMENT BY PROGRAM FILLED ANNUAL SALARIED POSITIONS

Full-Time Equivalent Positions (FTE)

Program	2005-06 Estimated FTEs 03/31/06	2006-07 Estimated FTEs 03/31/07	FTE Change
Administration			
General Fund	150	147	(3)
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	98	98	0
Special Revenue Funds - Other	56	56	0
Child Support Enforcement			
Special Revenue Funds - Other	56	56	0
Disability Determinations			
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	1,285	1,285	0
Special Revenue Funds - Other	101	101	0
Employment Services			
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	185	185	0
Executive Direction			
General Fund	16	16	0
Legal Affairs			
General Fund	150	150	0
System Support and Information Services			
General Fund	90	90	0
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	16	16	0
Special Revenue Funds - Other	59	59	0
Temporary and Disability Assistance Programs			
General Fund	36	36	0
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	21	21	0
Special Revenue Funds - Other	148	148	0
Transitional Supports and Policy, Division of			
General Fund	21	21	0
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	29	29	0
Special Revenue Funds - Other	15	15	0
Total	2,532	2,529	(3)

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STATE OPERATIONS ALL FUNDS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS BY FUND TYPE APPROPRIATIONS (dollars)

Fund Type	Available 2005-06	Recommended 2006-07	Change
General Fund	50,282,000	57,001,000	6,719,000
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	217,000,000	227,300,000	10,300,000
Special Revenue Funds - Other	156,757,000	167,667,000	10,910,000
Internal Service Funds	1,200,000	1,200,000	0
Total	<u>425,239,000</u>	<u>453,168,000</u>	<u>27,929,000</u>

STATE OPERATIONS ALL FUNDS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS BY PROGRAM APPROPRIATIONS (dollars)

Program	Available 2005-06	Recommended 2006-07	Change
Administration			
General Fund	24,689,000	25,465,000	776,000
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	7,000,000	7,000,000	0
Special Revenue Funds - Other	19,850,000	21,160,000	1,310,000
Internal Service Funds	1,200,000	1,200,000	0
Child Support Enforcement			
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	3,500,000	3,800,000	300,000
Special Revenue Funds - Other	30,000,000	30,000,000	0
Departmental Administrative Reimbursement			
General Fund	(75,463,000)	(84,963,000)	(9,500,000)
Special Revenue Funds - Other	79,032,000	88,532,000	9,500,000
Disability Determinations			
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	166,000,000	176,000,000	10,000,000
Special Revenue Funds - Other	9,500,000	9,600,000	100,000
Executive Direction			
General Fund	1,818,000	1,954,000	136,000
Legal Affairs			
General Fund	13,390,000	13,786,000	396,000
System Support and Information Services			
General Fund	78,634,000	93,353,000	14,719,000
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	35,000,000	35,000,000	0
Special Revenue Funds - Other	13,100,000	13,100,000	0
Temporary and Disability Assistance Programs			
General Fund	5,189,000	5,300,000	111,000
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	5,000,000	5,000,000	0
Special Revenue Funds - Other	4,000,000	4,000,000	0
Transitional Supports and Policy, Division of			
General Fund	2,025,000	2,106,000	81,000
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	500,000	500,000	0
Special Revenue Funds - Other	1,275,000	1,275,000	0
Total	<u>425,239,000</u>	<u>453,168,000</u>	<u>27,929,000</u>

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STATE OPERATIONS - GENERAL AND OFFSET FUNDS SUMMARY OF PERSONAL SERVICE APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES 2006-07 RECOMMENDED (dollars)

Program	Total		Personal Service Regular (Annual Salaried)	
	Amount	Change	Amount	Change
Administration	11,437,000	303,000	11,304,700	300,000
Executive Direction	1,649,000	131,000	1,570,000	136,000
Legal Affairs	11,148,000	380,000	10,817,954	336,000
System Support and Information Services	7,459,000	71,000	7,437,000	71,000
Temporary and Disability Assistance Programs	3,419,000	(845,000)	2,939,019	(845,000)
Transitional Supports and Policy, Division of	1,863,000	70,000	1,824,548	76,000
Total	36,975,000	110,000	35,893,221	74,000

Program	Temporary Service (Nonannual Salaried)		Holiday/Overtime Pay (Annual Salaried)	
	Amount	Change	Amount	Change
Administration	97,800	3,000	34,500	0
Executive Direction	79,000	(5,000)	0	0
Legal Affairs	34,286	20,000	295,760	24,000
System Support and Information Services	0	0	22,000	0
Temporary and Disability Assistance Programs	445,144	0	34,837	0
Transitional Supports and Policy, Division of	0	0	38,452	(6,000)
Total	656,230	18,000	425,549	18,000

STATE OPERATIONS - GENERAL AND OFFSET FUNDS SUMMARY OF NONPERSONAL SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE UNDISTRIBUTED APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES 2006-07 RECOMMENDED (dollars)

Program	Total		Supplies and Materials	
	Amount	Change	Amount	Change
Administration	14,528,000	473,000	154,300	0
Executive Direction	305,000	5,000	32,900	1,000
Legal Affairs	2,638,000	16,000	138,500	1,000
System Support and Information Services	85,894,000	14,648,000	38,900	1,000
Temporary and Disability Assistance Programs	1,881,000	956,000	38,000	2,000
Transitional Supports and Policy, Division of	243,000	11,000	48,000	3,000
Total	105,489,000	16,109,000	450,600	8,000

Program	Travel		Contractual Services	
	Amount	Change	Amount	Change
Administration	257,700	21,000	7,905,300	225,000
Executive Direction	49,500	4,000	210,600	0
Legal Affairs	130,700	15,000	2,302,800	0
System Support and Information Services	34,700	1,000	10,874,400	244,000
Temporary and Disability Assistance Programs	62,500	4,000	802,000	23,000
Transitional Supports and Policy, Division of	85,000	8,000	104,000	0
Total	620,100	53,000	22,199,100	492,000

Program	Equipment		Maintenance Undistributed	
	Amount	Change	Amount	Change
Administration	371,700	0	5,839,000	227,000
Executive Direction	12,000	0	0	0
Legal Affairs	66,000	0	0	0
System Support and Information Services	72,000	2,000	74,874,000	14,400,000
Temporary and Disability Assistance Programs	28,500	(23,000)	950,000	950,000
Transitional Supports and Policy, Division of	6,000	0	0	0
Total	556,200	(21,000)	81,663,000	15,577,000

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STATE OPERATIONS - OTHER THAN GENERAL FUND AND OFFSET FUNDS SUMMARY OF APPROPRIATIONS AND CHANGES 2006-07 RECOMMENDED (dollars)

Program	Total		Personal Service	
	Amount	Change	Amount	Change
Administration	28,860,000	1,310,000	0	0
Child Support Enforcement	33,800,000	300,000	0	0
Disability Determinations	185,600,000	10,100,000	78,000,000	3,000,000
System Support and Information Services	48,100,000	0	0	0
Temporary and Disability Assistance Programs	9,000,000	0	58,000	0
Transitional Supports and Policy, Division of	1,775,000	0	778,000	(46,000)
Total	<u>307,135,000</u>	<u>11,710,000</u>	<u>78,836,000</u>	<u>2,954,000</u>

Program	Nonpersonal Service		Maintenance Undistributed	
	Amount	Change	Amount	Change
Administration	0	0	28,860,000	1,310,000
Child Support Enforcement	0	0	33,800,000	300,000
Disability Determinations	98,000,000	7,000,000	9,600,000	100,000
System Support and Information Services	0	0	48,100,000	0
Temporary and Disability Assistance Programs	26,000	0	8,916,000	0
Transitional Supports and Policy, Division of	497,000	46,000	500,000	0
Total	<u>98,523,000</u>	<u>7,046,000</u>	<u>129,776,000</u>	<u>1,710,000</u>

AID TO LOCALITIES ALL FUNDS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS BY FUND TYPE APPROPRIATIONS (dollars)

Fund Type	Available	Recommended	Change
	2005-06	2006-07	
General Fund	1,472,953,000	1,310,059,000	(162,894,000)
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	3,294,428,000	3,335,737,000	41,309,000
Special Revenue Funds - Other	26,361,000	16,385,000	(9,976,000)
Fiduciary Funds	20,000,000	20,000,000	0
Total	<u>4,813,742,000</u>	<u>4,682,181,000</u>	<u>(131,561,000)</u>

Adjustments:

Recommended Deficiency	
Temporary and Disability Assistance,	
Office of	
General Fund	(50,000,000)
Appropriated 2005-06	<u>4,763,742,000</u>

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AID TO LOCALITIES ALL FUNDS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS BY PROGRAM APPROPRIATIONS (dollars)

Program	Available 2005-06	Recommended 2006-07	Change
Child Support Enforcement			
General Fund	34,000,000	34,000,000	0
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	120,000,000	125,000,000	5,000,000
Food Assistance Program			
General Fund	100,000	0	(100,000)
Special Revenue Funds - Other	100,000	0	(100,000)
Food Stamp Administration Program			
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	294,530,000	335,000,000	40,470,000
Special Revenue Funds - Other	6,261,000	6,385,000	124,000
Temporary and Disability Assistance Administration			
General Fund	337,950,000	359,716,000	21,766,000
Temporary and Disability Assistance Programs			
General Fund	976,593,000	794,883,000	(181,710,000)
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	2,826,473,000	2,822,312,000	(4,161,000)
Special Revenue Funds - Other	10,000,000	0	(10,000,000)
Fiduciary Funds	20,000,000	20,000,000	0
Transitional Supports and Policy, Division of			
General Fund	124,310,000	121,460,000	(2,850,000)
Special Revenue Funds - Federal	53,425,000	53,425,000	0
Special Revenue Funds - Other	10,000,000	10,000,000	0
Total	<u>4,813,742,000</u>	<u>4,682,181,000</u>	<u>(131,561,000)</u>

CAPITAL PROJECTS ALL FUNDS FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS BY PROGRAM APPROPRIATIONS (dollars)

Comprehensive Construction Program	Available 2005-06	Recommended 2006-07	Change	Reappropriations 2006-07
Supported Housing Program				
Housing Program Fund	30,000,000	30,000,000	0	140,086,000
Total	<u>30,000,000</u>	<u>30,000,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>140,086,000</u>