Local Social Services District (SSD) Staff Counts by Function Overview

General Description

On a monthly basis, New York State Local Social Services Districts (New York City and the remaining 57 counties) report to the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) the number of full-time equivalent staff performing each of a series of social service related functions (see below). Here, these data are compiled into annual monthly averages by State Fiscal Year (SFY), April through March. Updates are scheduled to occur annually, four months after the end of the SFY. Data is available from SFY 2004-2005 to the present. This data will allow interested parties to:

- Construct trends in overall staffing, staffing by function and relate staffing to other data such as caseloads and administrative expenditures;
- Assess Social Services District differences in staffing levels and assignments;
- Ease public access to staffing data; and
- Use staffing as a covariate in modeling population outcomes.

The file is arrayed as follows:

- The column headings are the SFY the data is for, a two-digit code for each SSD, the full name of the SSD and an array of columns designating each staff function.
- The rows of the data are the table entries for the SFY and SSD, as designated by the column headings. There is one record for each month for each SSD.

The data dictionary attached to this data set provides a complete description of the data in the file.

SSDs are multifaceted organizations or sets of organizations that perform a wide array of functions from determining eligibility and distributing benefits for low income assistance programs like cash welfare, child care subsidies and medical assistance, to investigating and monitoring cases of child abuse and neglect, to directly running facilities providing services such as adult care. Because there are many funding streams associated with these programs, SSDs are required to assign costs, including those related to staffing, to the appropriate program. These functional categories are outlined in the Definitions section below.

Definitions:

Detailed definitions of the staffing categories are available in Volume 3 of the OTDA Systems Reference Manual, located at http://otda.ny.gov/resources/fiscal-reference/FRM-3.pdf.

Intake/Case Maintenance: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Employees performing direct intake/case maintenance activities related to temporary assistance programs;
- Housing Specialists responsible for meeting housing and relocation costs, moving of families, payments of rent and deposits, and authorizations of payments or other needs for housing;
- Resource Investigation and Resource Services Specialists responsible for exploring, verifying, and evaluating resources available to the client to reduce or eliminate their need for public assistance;
- Case workers performing Temporary Assistance (cash assistance) case actions;
- Clerical and stenographic support staff; and
- Employees performing administration and supervision of the above staff.

Accounting (e.g., processing Family Assistance or Safety Net grant payments), legal, eligibility systems and procedures staff, and other staff as appropriate which are clearly identified as providing support services solely to Intake/Case Maintenance units, may also be assigned to this category.

Services Program: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Services workers who provide services to adults and children. Activities include:
  - Providing information and referral services to individuals,
  - Determining client eligibility for services through interviews with the applicant/client either in office or in the applicant/client's home, and investigating and verifying information obtained concerning family composition, income, financial and other resources, past employment, legally and socially responsible relatives, and the status of children. Eligibility may be determined for institutional care, foster home care, or the day care placement of children,
  - Making collateral visits to the client's employers, relatives, friends, and hospitals, schools, other public and private agencies and community resources, when necessary,
  - Giving court testimony when necessary,
  - Providing guidance to clients and helping the client identify the need for services,
  - Developing a plan of services to meet the client's needs,
  - Authorizing the purchase of social services,
  - Coordinating services for clients through purchase of services (POS) contracts,
  - Monitoring and evaluating the plan of services including reviewing the services plan, determining whether services are provided, and making necessary revisions to the plan on a periodic basis,

- o Making referral and follow-up on the progress made by the clients by conferring with proper representatives in such areas as housing, education, employment, rehabilitation and health-related services,
  - o Making all necessary case reports, particularly for those cases where a client (child or adult) is at risk of harm from themselves or others,
  - o Reading and analyzing case records for information on background, agency contacts, and
  - o other matters bearing on eligibility or need for services,
  - o Making social studies of the client's interpersonal relationships and interactions among family members, and
  - o Directly providing services to clients;
- Staff who work on Family Type Homes for Adults activities;
- Staff working full time conducting Committee on Special Education activities; and
- Administrative staff who supervise the above staff.

Services Administration: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Staff planning, implementing, preparing, developing, and coordinating programs. Such activities are needed to attain stated objectives and meet identified needs by assessing, evaluating, and monitoring programs, and making recommendations for program improvement; and
- Staff included in units that are clearly identified as solely providing support services to Services units such as:
  - o Accounting,
  - o Legal,
  - o Services Systems, and
  - o Other, as identified.

Employment Programs: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Employment Specialists or other staff working directly with clients on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Employment, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training, and non-federal employment programs;
- Employees who provide employment participants with child care information and referral services, and child care assessment services where appropriate;
- Staff employed on system-related activities of the employment programs; and
- Staff engaged in employment-related administrative and supportive service activities including administration and supervision, Fair Hearing activities, accounting and other

monitoring activities, data collection activities, legal activities including letting of contracts, program coordination and consultation activities, and other related activities.

Medicaid (MA) Eligibility Determination and Payment Authorization: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Personnel who determine eligibility for MA-Only clients;
- MA resource investigation workers not included in the F10 Fraud and Abuse function;
- Administrative and supervisory personnel engaged in directing activities of the MA program if they do not have the skilled professional medical education or training to qualify for coding to the MA Policy Planning Administration function below;
- Clerical and stenographic who support the employees listed above;
- Other units, which are clearly identified as providing support only to the above staff including accounting, legal, and MA systems and procedures staff; and
- Personnel who perform outreach activities and screening of low-income children for the State Child Health Plus program.

Medicaid Policy Planning and Administration: The employees assigned to this function include skilled medical personnel and their direct supporting staff. The skilled professional medical personnel must have professional education and training in the field of medical care or appropriate medical practice.

Duties of skilled professional medical personnel may include the following:

- Planning the scope of the MA program;
- Determining medical care to be delivered including the responsibility for determining the level of institutional care patients require, also securing nursing home beds appropriate for the medical needs of patients;
- Acting as a liaison on the medical aspects with providers of services and other agencies that provide medical care;
- Furnishing expert medical opinions for the adjudication of administrative appeals;
- Reviewing complex medical billings;
- Providing technical assistance and drug abuse screening on pharmacy billings;
- Participating in medical review or independent professional review team activities including conducting, researching, and evaluating the delivery of medical services;
- Assessing the necessity for and adequacy of medical care and services provided, as in a utilization review; and
- Assessing, through case management activities, the necessity for and adequacy of medical care and services for individual recipients.

Training: The training function includes all activities of a Social Services staff development program. Basic activities include orientation for new staff, continuing in-service training for all staff to improve job performance and knowledge, and appropriate educational programs held at suitable intervals.[1]

The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Professional social services district training personnel assigned to the staff development unit on at least a half-time basis or who are detailed to staff development for at least four or more consecutive work weeks;
- Professional training personnel assigned to staff development who devote all of their time providing training on social services programs;
- Administrative, clerical and other personnel assigned to the staff development unit who support the training personnel; and
- Staff maintaining and operating a training center or an agency library of training materials and aids that are directly related to and support the agency's in-service training program.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Personnel employed in determining SNAP eligibility of non-public assistance households;
- Personnel involved in SNAP fair hearing activities;
- The immediate supervisors of SNAP personnel; and
- Support staff including secretarial, stenographic, clerical, and accounting personnel.

Child Support: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Employees at or above the supervisory level who direct the activities of the Title IV-D[2] or Support Collection Unit (SCU), and secretaries and other support staff of such individuals;
- Employees at or below the supervisory level in the IV-D or SCU unit, who spend their time on collection and distribution activities;
- Employees at or below the supervisory level who spend their time engaged in location of absent parent activities;
- Employees at or below the supervisory level who spend time engaged in establishment of paternity activities; and

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[1] Staff development activities for non-Social Services administrative local programs are claimed in the Non-Administrative Local Program category below.
[2] Title IV-D refers to Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, which authorizes the child support enforcement program.

- Employees at or below the supervisory level who spend their time in establishment of support obligation and enforcement activities.

Fraud and Abuse: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Employees who are assigned to the investigation function for Intentional Program Violation (IPV) SNAP claims, and other related fraud and abuse cases for the TANF, Safety Net, Child Care Block Grant, and MA programs;
- Employees assigned specifically to the prosecution function (including attorneys and hearing officers) for Intentional Program Violation (IPV) SNAP claims, and other fraud and abuse related cases for the TANF, Safety Net, Child Care Block Grant, and MA programs;
- Personnel who monitor the restitution process (collections), and follow up when payments are in arrears;
- Supervisory staff directly responsible for investigation, prosecution, and collection staff;
- Direct support staff, such as secretarial, stenographic, and clerical staff, who provide support services that are directly necessary for the fraud and abuse function; and
- Other staff whose duties are specifically related to the fraud and abuse function.

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP): The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Employees assigned to HEAP performing eligibility certification and recertification activities;
- Employees assigned to HEAP performing case worker activities;
- Employees assigned to HEAP performing administration and supervision activities;
- Resource Specialists assigned to HEAP responsible for exploring, verifying and evaluating resources available to the client;
- Clerical and stenographic support staff of HEAP coded employees, and
- Other support staff which are clearly identified as providing support services only to the HEAP program, including:
    - Accounting staff,
    - Legal staff,
    - Systems and Procedures staff,
    - Quality Control staff,
    - Fair hearing staff, and
    - Other, when identified.

<u>Welfare Management System (WMS)</u>: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Employee's data entering information into the WMS system. These employees would also produce reports, printouts of completed authorizations, and payment lists;
- Clerical and stenographic support staff; and
- Employees performing administration and supervision of the above staff.

<u>Other Reimbursable Programs</u>: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Employees assigned to special projects performing eligibility certification and recertification activities;
- Employees assigned to special projects performing case worker activities;
- Employees assigned to special projects performing administration and supervision activities;
- Resource Specialists assigned to special projects responsible for exploring, verifying and evaluating resources available to the client;
- Clerical and stenographic support staff of other reimbursable employees; and
- Other support staff which are clearly identified as providing support services only to other reimbursable programs, including:
    - Accounting staff,
    - Legal staff,
    - Systems and Procedures staff,
    - Quality Control staff,
    - Fair hearing staff, and
    - Other, when identified.

<u>TANF Reimbursable Programs</u>: The Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS), enacted each since SFY 2005-2006, provides the SSDs with the flexibility to manage federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds and programs. Persons assigned to thus function are providing direct TANF services, or related overhead support. TANF funded services includes the following categories:

- Statutory drug/alcohol screening and assessment;
- Statutory Domestic Violence Liaison;
- Financial education and asset development;
- Non-recurrent short term benefits;
- Supportive services;
- Services for children and youth;
- Prevention of out-of-wedlock pregnancies;

- Fatherhood and two-parent family formation;
- Family support/family preservation/reunification services;
- Additional child welfare services;
- Home visiting programs; and
- Assessment/service provision.

The following types of employees may be assigned to the F18 function:

- Employees providing services directly for the client such as:
  - performing eligibility certification and recertification activities,
  - performing case worker activities,
  - or Resource Specialists responsible for exploring, verifying and evaluating resources available to the client;
- Employees performing administration and supervision activities;
- Clerical and stenographic support staff of F18 coded employees; and
- Other support staff which are clearly identified as providing support services only to the F18 coded programs, including:
  - Accounting staff,
  - Legal staff,
  - Systems and Procedures staff,
  - Quality Control staff,
  - Fair hearing staff, and
  - Other, when identified.

Administrative Overhead: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Commissioner and staff;
- Other Administrative Directors or Deputy Commissioners who direct the activities of more than one function; and
- Other staff engaged in administrative and support services such as:
  - Accounting and other monitoring activities,
  - Data collection activities,
  - Legal activities including the letting of contracts,
  - Program coordination and consultation activities, and
  - Any activities that cannot be identified to a specific function.

Non-Administrative Local Program: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- Employees working in Adult and Family Institutions and Shelters operated by the SSD for the temporary care of needy and homeless individuals;

- Employees working in an agency operated group homes for children and group residences for children;
- Employees directly providing one or more of the following services to foster care youth in the Independent Living Program:
  - Academic support services,
  - Vocational training,
  - Independent living skills training, and/or
  - Aftercare services;
- Employees working in an agency operated senior citizen center, (This senior citizen center activity excludes purchased services and direct senior citizen services provided by services program and administration coded general services staff (see above) located at the SSD agency.);
- Employees working in an agency operated day care center, (The agency operated day care center activity excludes all purchased day care and all related administrative activities performed by services program and administration coded general services staff (see above) coded general services staff in the SSD agency.);
- Employees involved in any other "non-SSD" or non-reimbursable programs administered by the local agency such as:
  - Head Start,
  - Women, Infants & Children's Program (WIC), and the
  - Community Development Agency;
- Training provided by the Staff Development Coordinator to staff in this category;
- SSD Research and Demonstration Projects with special project funding not provided by SSDs; and
- Other local programs.
- Staff included in each activity may include:
  - Direct operating staff,
  - Supporting clerical and stenographic staff, and
  - Other supporting administrative staff.

Overall Overhead: The following types of staff are included in this function:

- The Commissioner, Deputy Commissioners, Administrative Directors, and their respective staffs, who perform activities of more than one function; and
- Other staff engaged in administrative and support services of more than one function may include as follows:
  - Accounting and other monitoring staff,
  - Data collection staff,

        o   Legal staff, and

        o   Program coordination and consultation staff.

Data Collection Methodology

As with the data definitions above, details on how SSDs are instructed to report the staffing data are provided in Volume 3 of the OTDA Systems Reference Manual, located at http://otda.ny.gov/resources/fiscal-reference/FRM-3.pdf. Reporting is a combination of directly assigning Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) to functions based on known assignments at the SSD, and also through time studies performed to allocate staff time to more function when their assignments cross functional categories. Districts enter the salary data into OTDA's Automated Claiming System (ACS) on a monthly basis, and ACS allows reporting for individual months or defined time periods (here by SFY).

Statistical and Analytic Issues/ Limitations of Data Use

Users of these data should make themselves aware of the meaning of the functional categories contained in the report before reaching analytic conclusions about specific functions or their relationship to other data, such as caseloads or administrative costs. Further, some of the allocation to function is done by applying percentages of time spent on particular functions gathered through time studies that are performed in a limited number of larger districts. Thus, these percentages may not always reflect the actual time spent on shared functions in a particular district.

Note that because the data here are annual averages, in rare instances some districts may have staff assigned to a function, but have a FTE SFY average that rounds to zero. Also, some SSDs contract out services that in other SSDs are performed by in-house staff. This will affect the apparent staffing dedicated to a function in a particular district compared to another. Users of the data should be aware of SSD contracted services when making district comparisons.

One of the functional categories in this report, Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) was not reported as a separate category until midway through SFY 2011-2012, and therefore is not reported here until SFY 2012-2013. Previous to that SFY, HEAP staffing was included in the Other Reimbursable Program category.

Another of the functional categories in this report, TANF Reimbursable Programs, was not reported as a separate category until midway through SFY 2014-2015, and therefore is not reported here until SFY 2015-2016. Previous to that SFY, TANF Reimbursable Program staffing was included in the Other Reimbursable Program category.

Due to rounding error, staffing categories may not add to total staffing in all cases.