



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

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Informational Letter

Section 1

Transmittal:	20-INF-08
To:	Social Services District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Employment and Income Support Programs
Date:	May 29, 2020
Subject:	Revisions of the Utility Related Action Form
Suggested Distribution:	Temporary Assistance (TA) Directors and Staff Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Directors WMS Coordinators Staff Development Coordinators
Contact Person(s):	Temporary Assistance Policy Questions: TA Bureau at: (518) 474-9344 Forms Questions: Kelly Whitney at: 1-800-343-8859, ext. 3-7991
Attachments:	Attachment 1 - LDSS-5159 Notice of Utility-Related Action

Filing References

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
10-INF-18 02-ADM-02 93-ADM-26		352.5 370.4(b)(2)(ii)	SSL-131s	Temporary Assistance Energy Manual	18 TA/DC041

Section 2

I. Purpose

The purpose of this INF is to notify social services districts (districts) that the Utility Related Action Form has been revised and has also been assigned form number [LDSS-5159](#). While this form is not mandated, it is recommended that districts use the LDSS-5159 to communicate with utility companies when making emergency utility payments under Family Assistance (FA), Safety Net Assistance (SNA), Emergency Assistance to Families (EAF), Emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA), and Emergency Aid to Adults (EAA).

II. Background

The Temporary Assistance Energy Manual, released in January 2000, contained a sample Utility Related Action form (Attachment A). This form is not a mandated form but can be used to

communicate the actions districts have taken on applicant/recipient utility accounts to the utility companies. Many districts have developed their own version of this form and the variety in district versions has caused challenges for utility companies as they work to standardize their operations across districts.

In an effort to clarify TA energy policy and actions related to applicant/recipient utility accounts, the Utility Related Action Form has been revised and assigned a form number. The Temporary Assistance Energy Manual is being updated to include the revised Utility Related Action Form.

III. Program Implications

The [LDSS-5159](#) Utility Related Action Form may be utilized by districts to communicate with utility companies when making TA utility arrears payments on applicant/recipient utility accounts, placing utility accounts on 6-month guarantees, placing utility accounts on direct voucher and direct voucher subject to limit, terminating direct voucher payments or 6-month guarantees, or advising of a change of address.

The LDSS-5159 is not mandated nor does it need to be used when information is being conveyed to a utility company via their website. However, OTDA strongly recommends that districts use the form to communicate with utility companies.

IV. Revisions

The revisions to the Utility Related Action form include clearer formatting, inclusion of address changes, and options for direct vendor payments without arrears. Instructions for the use of each option on the form are provided on the reverse side of the form. Additionally, the instructions have information on when notification to a utility company is required.

V. Forms Information

- The new LDSS-5159: “*Notice of Utility Related Action*” is a Web Only form. To access the form, go to the OTDA Intranet website at: http://otda.state.nyenet/ldss_eforms/default.htm.
- The above referenced document has been posted on the OTDA Intranet website at: http://otda.state.nyenet/ldss_eforms/default.htm and is available for downloading by local districts for reproduction locally.
- This document is a Web posted only form, therefore, it is only available online and is not available in hard copy from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA).

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- Questions concerning Web posted only forms should be directed to BMS Document Services at: (518) 474-9522.

- Since this form is not a mandated form, districts choosing to use a local equivalent of the [LDSS-5159](#) do not need OTDA approval to do so. However, please be aware the utility companies may exercise discretion in accepting local equivalents.

Issued By:

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Division/Office: Employment and Income Support Programs / Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance