



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

SAMUEL D. ROBERTS
Commissioner

SHARON DEVINE
Executive Deputy Commissioner

January 25, 2016

Dear SYEP Provider:

The purpose of this letter is to communicate important changes and other pertinent information regarding the 2016 New York State Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). While you will receive additional correspondence regarding SYEP after the State budget is enacted, including your 2016 SYEP allocation, we wanted to ensure that essential details were relayed to you prior to the onset of this year's program.

Mandatory Financial Literacy Component

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. SYEP operators were asked to describe existing financial literacy components and include any materials disseminated to youth during the 2014 and 2015 program years. While operators will continue to have discretion in the overall design of their financial literacy components, we have compiled some best practices for those programs that do not have a financial literacy component and for those programs interested in updating their current offerings.

- According to a report by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) entitled "Building financial capability in youth employment programs", financial literacy offerings should be age-based and thus relevant to the particular life choices facing youth at the time of SYEP enrollment. For instance, curriculum may be customized to include financial aid information for college-ready youth or facts regarding credit cards for older youth. Operators may also consider tailoring curriculum to the geographic area in which youth reside to further increase applicability. For more information, the CFPB study may be accessed through the Administration for Children & Families website at:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocs/building_financial_capability_in_youth_employment_programs_2.pdf.
- SYEP operators are encouraged to work in coordination with nonprofit and/or financial institutions in their area. In 2015, 38 SYEP operators partnered with a local bank or nonprofit agency, such as CitiBank and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Please contact us if you would like assistance finding a financial literacy partner in your area.
- There were some concerns regarding attendance by youth in the financial literacy components offered during the 2015 SYEP. Program operators may consider offering all or a portion of their financial literacy component at the 2016 SYEP orientation to bolster turnout. Another option used by current SYEP operators is to

visit youth at their worksites throughout the summer to provide relevant financial literacy instruction and activities at a convenient location. Finally, operators may consider providing incentives, monetary or otherwise, upon completion of the financial literacy component to encourage full participation.

In addition to best practices gleaned from current SYEP operators, we have also compiled a list of online resources you may find helpful to enhance your financial literacy offerings.

- New York State Department of Labor CareerZone lesson plans (<https://www.careerzone.ny.gov/views/careerzone/resources/lessonPlans.jsf>): Offers nine financial literacy lesson plans for youth in grades 6 through 12. Topics include writing checks, credit scores, budgeting, savings and taxes. Numerous additional educational lesson plans are also available for immediate download.
- Money Smart Financial Education Program (<https://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart/young.html>): Online instruction featuring a game-based design. The Money Smart young adult learning track targets youth ages 13 and up, and includes eight separate learning modules. Each module is generally finished within 30 minutes and participants earn certificates upon completion. A CD-ROM version is also available upon request.
- MyMoney.gov (<http://www.mymoney.gov/Pages/for-youth.aspx>): Offers comprehensive financial literacy curriculum for youth ages 12 to 20, with materials primarily targeted toward youth in high school. Topics include the basics of managing money and developing positive relationships with financial institutions. The website is operated by the Financial Literacy Education Commission, and makes available information related to financial planning, saving, preparing for education beyond high school and understanding taxes.
- National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) High School Financial Planning Program (<http://www.hsfpp.org/>): NEFE offers six student guide books available for immediate download, as well as lesson plans and PowerPoint presentations for instructors. Topics include controlling cash flow, borrowing money, earning power, investing, financial services and insurance.
- NEFE Smart About Money (SAM) (Smartaboutmoney.org): SAM offers a free booklet available for immediate download entitled "Your Spending, Your Savings, Your Future: A Beginner's Guide to Financial Resources." The booklet addresses financial goal-setting, getting out of debt, using a checking account and credit card, monitoring and controlling spending, and boosting savings and investments. SAM also offers online resources, such as a financial identity quiz for high school and college-aged youth.
- NEFE Financial Workshop Kits (<http://www.financialworkshopkits.org/workshops.aspx>): NEFE also offers online kits, including "40 Money Management Tips" and "Budgeting for Life After Graduation." Kits include PowerPoint presentations, downloadable scripts and supplemental information. Materials target high school and college-aged youth.

2016 New York State Minimum Wage Increase

As you are aware, the New York State minimum wage increased from \$8.75 per hour to \$9.00 per hour effective December 31, 2015. 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 and 2015, district allocations were increased proportionately to account for the corresponding minimum wage increases. We anticipate that allocations will again be increased for this year's program to account for the minimum wage increase as included in the Governor's budget proposal.

Revised TANF Youth Services Application

Due to the increase in New York State school districts wholly participating in the federal Community Eligibility Provision, the TANF Youth Services Application has been revised. Specifically, school lunch has been removed as an income eligibility category under federal 200% of poverty guidelines. The updated TANF Youth Application must be used for the 2016 SYEP once officially released by OTDA. We will send you a copy of the formal release, which is expected by the end of January 2016. SYEP operators electing to use a locally developed application must ensure that school lunch is removed accordingly. In addition, locally developed applications must meet all of the required criteria to certify TANF eligibility including identification of U.S. citizenship status, categorical eligibility, gross income, inclusion of appropriate family members, parent/guardian signatures and TANF certification. If it is not possible to include all items, the TANF Youth Services Application should be used in lieu of or in addition to a locally developed form.

New York State Summer Youth Employment Program Final Report Clarifications

There has been some confusion regarding information requested as part of the SYEP Final Report in past years. Specifically, SYEP operators are often unsure how to report participant eligibility and school status. Below please find additional information regarding these demographic categories.

- **Eligibility Type:** SYEP participants should be reported as either in receipt of Family Assistance or Safety Net Family Assistance (FA or SN-Family), or eligible under federal 200% of poverty guidelines (200%). Only a district may confer categorical eligibility for individuals deemed to be in receipt of FA or SN-Family. Individuals who are not categorically eligible must complete the TANF Youth Services Application and meet the certification requirements therein to receive services under federal 200% of poverty guidelines. Applicants in receipt of SNAP, Medicaid, SSI and HEAP are automatically income eligible, and if these individuals meet all TANF eligibility requirements they should be reported under the 200% category on the Final Report.
- **School Status:** SYEP participants should be reported as in school if they are enrolled in high school or an equivalent level of vocational training. Youth who have graduated high school and enrolled in college or a career/technical school should also be reported as in school. Out of school youth are high school or college-aged youth who are not attending school or pursuing higher education.

New York State SYEP Worksite List

Last year, SYEP operators were asked to attach a complete list of worksites and the number of placements at each site for submission with the Program Summary document. While most operators were able to provide this information readily, some had difficulty compiling for the 2015 year. This is an important requirement for 2016, and all

SYEP operators must submit this information with the 2016 Program Summary, due on October 14, 2016. In addition, worksites must be identified as non-profit, public or private as indicated by program operators on the 2016 Performance Goals / Planned Program Details report. Operators should take steps prior to the onset of the 2016 SYEP to ensure this information is available for submission to OTDA by the required due date.

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
Center for Employment and Economic Supports

cc: Kathleen Dougherty
Melissa Alexander