

Regulatory Flexibility Analysis for Small Businesses and Local Governments

1. Effect of rule:

This rule will provide flexibility that would allow for the absence of children with disabilities from residential programs during a state of emergency when such absence is in the best interests of the children and approved by the local department of social services.

The local government entities that are impacted are local departments of social services (LDSSs). There are 58 LDSSs in New York State. The small businesses that may be impacted are the non-profit programs that provide residential committee on special education (CSE) placements in New York State. It is estimated that there are seven residential CSE programs in the state that are small businesses.

The impact this rule will have on these entities is positive as the rule provides flexibility to extend the option to seek reimbursement for absences in the event of a national or state declaration of emergency.

2. Compliance requirements:

It is anticipated that there would be minimal record keeping or reporting associated with this rule.

3. Professional services:

There are no new professional services anticipated to be required as a result of this rule.

4. Compliance costs:

There are no new anticipated compliance costs associated with this rule.

5. Economic and technological feasibility:

There are no economic or technological issues with implementation rule.

6. Minimizing adverse impact:

This rule has been written to minimize adverse economic impacts on LDSSs and local school districts. Specifically, the rule removes a barrier to reimbursement for certain expenditures but does not mandate payment. Any payment a LDSS chooses to pay, pursuant to these regulatory provisions, would reduce unanticipated savings a LDSS or school district may have otherwise realized attendant to COVID-19.

7. Small business and local government participation:

OCFS is in regular communication with the non-profit entities and LDSSs impacted by this rule. The Council on Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA), which is the umbrella organization representing some of the non-profit entities impacted by this rule, has strongly urged OCFS to remove the regulatory barrier that precluded reimbursements for residential CSE placements when a child had been absent for longer than 15 days due as a result of unanticipated absences resulting from COVID-19.