



# Office of Children and Family Services

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## Administrative Directive

<b>Transmittal:</b>	24-OCFS-ADM-14
<b>To:</b>	Local Departments of Social Services Commissioners
<b>Issuing Division/Office:</b>	Division of Child Care Services
<b>Date:</b>	July 19, 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Implementation of the Online Child Care Assistance Application (CCAA)</b>
<b>Suggested Distribution:</b>	Social Services Directors Temporary Assistance Directors Child Care Assistance Supervisors Temporary Assistance Supervisors Child Care Assistance Staff
<b>Contact Person(s):</b>	Darci Primeau, Bureau of Child Care Assistance, 518-402-3001 <a href="mailto:Darci.Primeau@ocfs.ny.gov">Darci.Primeau@ocfs.ny.gov</a> <a href="mailto:ocfs.sm.districtsupport.subsidy@ocfs.ny.gov">ocfs.sm.districtsupport.subsidy@ocfs.ny.gov</a>
<b>Attachments:</b>	None

### Filing References

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	NYS Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
24-OCFS-INF-01		18 NYCRR 404.1(d), 415.3(a)			

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Directive (ADM) is to inform local social services districts (districts) of the implementation of the online version of the application, the Child Care Assistance Application (CCAA), for families applying only for child care assistance,<sup>1</sup> and to advise districts of the related requirements.

### II. Background

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is committed to reducing the burden on families in New York State when applying for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). The

<sup>1</sup> The term “applying only for child care assistance” means that the family is applying solely for child care assistance when funds are available. Families “applying only for child care assistance” are not applying for guaranteed child care, nor are they applying for any other benefits, such as Public Assistance (also known as Cash Assistance and Temporary Assistance), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Home Energy Assistance Program, Medicaid, or other services.

objective of this initiative is to streamline access to the CCAP for parents and caretakers, to simplify the eligibility determination process, and to ultimately serve a greater number of families through the CCAP.

18 NYCRR section 415.3(a) requires districts to accept applications for the CCAP that are submitted by mail as well as other electronic means, as approved by OCFS. Other approved electronic means include facsimile, electronic mail, or online applications. Districts were previously advised in 20-ADM-12, *Implementation of the Electronic LDSS-2921*, that districts outside New York City must accept applications for certain benefits and services, including child care services by using the E-2921 through myBenefits, at [www.mybenefits.ny.gov](http://www.mybenefits.ny.gov). The hardcopy or electronic LDSS-2921, *New York State Application for Certain Benefits and Services*, is required to be completed by an applicant who wants to apply for child care assistance provided as a guarantee, pursuant to SSL 410-w, or to apply for other benefits and services. If a family only wants to apply for child care assistance, and no other benefits or services, the family may complete the OCFS-6025, *Application for Child Care Assistance*, as recently released in 24-OCFS-LCM-02-R1, or the online CCAA portal.

Districts without a previously approved online application are required to accept applications for CCAP electronically through the OCFS CCAA upon the release of this ADM. Applicants who reside in a district with a previously approved electronic application cannot use the CCAA portal and must use their local district online application.

### III. Program Implications

The CCAA portal allows families across New York State to apply for the CCAP, excluding the following:

- children who are placed with a relative or alternate caretaker or placed in foster care; or
- children with an open protective case or preventive case with a protective component; or
- when the applicant is located outside of New York State; or
- families residing in a district that has a previously approved online application.

The CCAA portal is linked on the OCFS website and is accessed through a personal NY.gov account. The portal allows an applicant to complete an online version of the OCFS-6025, *Application for Child Care Assistance*, and to upload required documentation needed to complete the application process. The CCAA portal will be accessible through specific internet browsers on both desktop and mobile devices. Once the application has been submitted for review, the district will receive the application in the portal. The district accepts, assigns, and reviews the application in the portal. The district can communicate with the applicant when additional information and/or documentation is needed. This portal will streamline the application process for both applicants and district staff. This online application does not replace the districts' requirement to distribute paper copies of the OCFS-6025, *Application for Child Care Assistance*, and the OCFS-6026, *How to Complete the Application for Child Care Assistance*, or to accept applications in person, by mail, and by other approved electronic means. The CCAA portal is the electronic version of the OCFS-6025 paper application. This system cannot be utilized to make eligibility determinations, and the district must complete determinations offline following the same procedures used for paper applications.

### IV. Required Action

#### Accessing and Applying Using the CCAA Portal

Districts without a previously approved online application are required to accept CCAP applications electronically through the CCAA portal upon the release of this ADM. When an application is submitted through the portal, the application is to be considered the original application, which is equivalent to a hard copy application. Applicants who have submitted their applications by electronic means must not be required to provide a hard copy as a routine practice. However, if an application includes any

electronically submitted documentation, it is appropriate for the district to follow up to obtain clarification for any illegible information, as the district would with a hard copy submission.

Districts must provide OCFS with the names of relevant staff members and their email addresses to establish access to the system. Districts are encouraged to provide an adequate number of staff members with access to the portal to ensure that all applications are processed in a timely manner. OCFS previously recommended in 24-OCFS-INF-01, *Implementation of Online Child Care Assistance Application*, that districts create a shared mailbox specifically for communication related to the online CCAP application and to allow districts to send additional information electronically to applicants regarding an open application. The email address established for the shared mailbox should be generic and not be a designated individual within the district. The shared mailbox should only be used for this purpose and should be available to all relevant staff involved in the CCAP application process.

The applicant can access the application and CCAA portal through the OCFS website. Each applicant must provide their own personal email address and select the district in which they reside to ensure that the CCAA is assigned to the appropriate district. The applicant will receive an email with a link to access or create an NY.gov account. An applicant who already has a personal NY.gov account must enter their username and password to link their account to the CCAA portal prior to starting the application process. When the applicant does not have a personal NY.gov account, they must create one. Once the applicant has completed the login process, the CCAA application will be available on the dashboard. The applicant must complete all required sections of the application and upload any necessary documentation to complete the application.

When there is only one adult applying, the applicant must complete all required sections, attest to the information, and sign the application prior to submission. When there is another adult applying for assistance on the same application, also known as a co-applicant, a second signature will be required. The primary applicant must complete all required sections, sign the application, and submit the application for review by the co-applicant. When the application has been sent to the co-applicant, the application will appear on the district's dashboard as pending signature.

The co-applicant must follow the same login process as the primary applicant. The co-applicant is required to either log in to their existing NY.gov account or create a new personal one. Co-applicants must have their own personal email address to utilize the CCAA portal and cannot use the same email address as the primary applicant. When the co-applicant has successfully linked their NY.gov account to the CCAA portal, the application can be accessed on the dashboard. The co-applicant must review all relevant sections of the application, including, but not limited to, the demographics, contact information, activity, and income. After the review, the co-applicant must choose one of three responses in the CCAA portal: "I attest that the information I provided on this application is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge," "I found issues within the application and would like it fixed by the primary applicant," or "I do not wish to sign this application."

- If all the relevant information is accurate, the co-applicant must attest, sign, and submit the application. The application will then be submitted directly to the district.
- If there are issues or inaccurate information within the application, the co-applicant cannot modify or change any of the information in the portal. The application will be sent back to the primary applicant in the portal. The primary applicant can access the application to make revisions and to correct the information in the application through the CCAA portal. It is the responsibility of the applicants listed on the application to resolve any inaccuracies. When the application has been corrected by the primary applicant and returned to the co-applicant, the application will appear on the district's dashboard as pending signature.
- If the co-applicant does not wish to sign the application, the primary applicant will be made aware through an email, and the application will be submitted without the co-applicant's signature to the district.

When an application has been sent to a co-applicant and no action has been taken in fifteen days, both the primary applicant and co-applicant will receive a reminder email to complete the application. This email will be sent to both applicants daily until the co-applicant has responded to the pending application within the CCAA portal. If the co-applicant does not act on the application within 30 days of the date the primary applicant initially submitted the application to the co-applicant for review, the district is required to update the status of the application from pending signature to under review on the 30th day or the next business day, when applicable. Once the application has been marked under review in the CCAA portal, a second signature cannot be obtained in the portal. The district is required to accept the application without the second signature and process the application offline. The district must follow the same process as the paper application when a second signature cannot be obtained. The district must document the reason for refusal when making an eligibility determination for child care assistance.

#### Application Acceptance Process and Timeline

Once the application has been completed and submitted by the applicant, the application will be available to the district in the CCAA portal. Districts are required to review and accept the application in the CCAA portal. Districts must establish internal processes to ensure that the CCAA dashboard is monitored for new, pending, or revised applications submitted through the CCAA portal in accordance with the timelines established herein. Electronic applications received through the CCAA portal that are submitted prior to close of business for the district must be accepted with an applicant submission date of the current business day. Applications submitted outside normal business hours, over the weekend or on a day where district offices are closed, will have a submission date of the next business day. OCFS encourages districts to monitor the CCAA dashboard multiple times a day to accept and assign applications in a timely manner.

The date of application for child care assistance is the date that the district accepts the application in the portal. The district must determine eligibility within 30 days of accepting the application in the portal, pursuant to 18 NYCRR section 404.1(d)(1)(i).

When an application requires a second signature and the applicants have not acted on the application within 30 days of the date the primary applicant initially submitted the application to the co-applicant for review, the district is required to update the status of the application from pending signature to under review on the 30th day or the next business day, when applicable.

#### Application Review Process

The district is required to review the application following internal procedures and in compliance with all eligibility determination regulatory requirements. The district must review the full application including any documentation submitted through the portal. Districts must review and evaluate each section of the electronic application to ensure that it is complete. If additional information or documentation is necessary, the district can send individual sections of the electronic application back to the applicant through the CCAA portal. When completing the review, the system will record the activity history and save each section of the application after the district marks the section complete. The district is not required to complete the full review of an application at one time. The district can return to the application and resume review as necessary.

Districts can record comments in each section of the application to provide direction or clarification to the applicant regarding required actions necessary to process the application. When the district returns a section to the applicant, the portal will generate an email to the applicant for each section that is returned. There may be several emails sent to the applicant for one application. In addition to receiving emails regarding necessary revisions, the applicant may also view necessary revisions and comments through the CCAA portal.

The district can also upload documentation to the CCAA portal, but that documentation will not be transmitted to the applicant. As such, the district cannot use the portal to transmit additional local forms that the applicant must complete. Districts are encouraged to use the dedicated shared mailbox

established for the purposes of providing support and to communicate with applicants throughout the application process.

Once the district has marked each section of the application complete and a full review of the application has been done, the application will be closed. The district will have the option to print or download the completed application and must follow the district's local record keeping procedures.

If the applicant does not complete the electronic application or upload the necessary documents, the district must still accept the application and additional documentation in paper form. Districts can print a snapshot of the application from the portal at any time. If the applicant needs assistance with the application process, the CCAA provides the applicant with the contact information for the local district in both the portal and in the email responses. OCFS is available to provide technical support as needed. The district and applicants may utilize the applicable contacts provided under section VII below if additional assistance is needed. All applications will remain in the CCAA portal for reference in accordance with OCFS data retention policies.

If an applicant has launched an application for child care assistance in the CCAA portal but no longer wants to apply for such services, the applicant is able to withdraw the application in the portal. If the applicant withdraws the application, the application will remain in the system and will appear as withdrawn. This application may be downloaded and viewed as a PDF but can no longer be modified or changed by the applicant or the district.

If the district has conducted an initial review of the application and has returned the application to the applicant to complete revisions, the district may mark the application as expired if the applicant fails to submit revisions within 30 days. Once expired in the CCAA portal, the application may be downloaded and viewed as a PDF but can no longer be modified or changed by the applicant or the district.

When a family is found eligible for the CCAP, the district must continue to enter the case information in the Welfare Management System (WMS) and KinderSystems programs to complete the eligibility determination for each case. Districts must also continue to send any necessary notices regarding documentation requirements and case determination through KinderSystems or by using OCFS forms on the OCFS intranet, including, but not limited to, the OCFS-LDSS-4779, *Approval of Your Application for Child Care Benefits*, and the OCFS-LDSS-4780, *Denial of Your Application for Child Care Benefits*. In situations where the district has marked an application expired in the CCAA portal due to the applicant's failure to respond and complete the application, districts must issue a denial notice unless eligibility has been determined using documentation and communication received outside the CCAA portal. Districts must continue to follow eligibility determination timelines outlined in 18 NYCRR section 404.

Applicant(s) applying for child care assistance in conjunction with temporary assistance, including child care in lieu of temporary assistance, must use the myBenefits online application or the LDSS-2921 application. Pursuant to 18 NYCRR section 415.4(c)(8), when a temporary assistance case is closed, a district may not require an applicant(s) to reapply for child care assistance to receive the guaranteed transitional child care if the family remains eligible for child care services. If a temporary assistance case has been closed and the family is eligible for child care assistance under the transitional guarantee, the family may complete the LDSS-2921 form for the purpose of requesting child care assistance.

Districts must not impose unnecessary documentation requirements on families. Pursuant to 18 NYCRR section 415.4, families are only required to report changes in financial circumstances that put the family's income over 85% of the state median income (SMI). Families continue to be required to notify the district of any change in living arrangements, employment, household composition, child care provider, or other circumstances that affect the family's need or eligibility for child care services. If the application is under review and a section is returned by the district, the applicant may be able to satisfactorily report changes in their circumstances in the CCAA portal. Once a section or the full application is marked complete, all communication must be done outside the system.

## V. Systems Implications

Districts must provide OCFS with staff names and email addresses to provide access to the CCAA portal through business NY.GOV accounts. Districts should establish a shared mailbox for correspondence with applicants during the electronic application process. Additional information regarding training and informational tools will be provided to districts. Training materials, including user guides and desk aides, are available on the OCFS website at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/CCAP-Training>.

## VI. Additional Information

The CCAA portal will soon be made available in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (traditional), French, Haitian-Creole, Italian, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, and Yiddish. Hard copies of the OCFS-6025, *Application for Child Care Assistance*, and OCFS-6026, *How to Complete the Application for Child Care Assistance*, remain available in these 12 languages on the OCFS website.

To request hard copies, complete the [Request for Forms and Publications \(OCFS-4627\)](#), which can be found by clicking the link or by visiting <https://ocfs.ny.gov/forms/>.

Once completed, mail the OCFS-4627 form to the following address:

- New York State Office of Children and Family Services  
Forms and Publications Unit  
52 Washington Street, Room 116, South Bldg.  
Rensselaer, NY 12144-2834

### **OR**

- Call the OCFS Forms Hotline: (518) 473-0971

## VII. Contacts

Any questions or technical assistance needed to access a personal NY.gov account should be directed to:

The New York State Office of Information Technology Services Desk Support

- Phone number: (844) 891-1786
- Website: <https://its.ny.gov/get-help>
- Email: [fixit@its.ny.gov](mailto:fixit@its.ny.gov)

Any assistance in completing the electronic application in the CCAA portal should be directed to:  
the Human Services Call Center (HSCC)

- Phone number: (518) 474-9454
- Website: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/cwcs/call-center.php>

## VIII. Effective Date

Districts without a previously approved online application must accept CCAP applications submitted within the CCAA portal upon the release of this administrative directive.

***/s/ Nora K. Yates***

**Issued by:**

Name: Nora K. Yates

Title: Deputy Commissioner

Division/Office: Division of Child Care Services