



Office of Children and Family Services

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Local Commissioners Memorandum

Transmittal:	24-OCFS-LCM-07
To:	Local Departments of Social Services Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development Division of Youth Development and Partnerships for Success
Date:	June 6, 2024
Subject:	Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS) Program \$1,000,000 Set-Aside Funding and Claiming Instructions (FFY 2023-2024/SFY 2024-2025)
Contact Person(s):	COPS@ocfs.ny.gov Claiming Questions (Regions I - V): Justin Gross, (518) 474-7549 or otda.sm.Field_Ops.I-IV@otda.ny.gov Claiming Questions (Region VI): Michael Simon, (212) 961-8250 or Michael.Simon@otda.ny.gov
Attachments:	OCFS-5242 , <i>Application for Community Optional Preventive Services \$1,000,000 Set-Aside Funding (FFY 2023-2024/SFY 2024-2025)</i> OCFS-5243 , <i>Community Optional Preventive Services Set-Aside Program Report</i>

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) is to advise local departments of social services (LDSSs) of the availability of \$1,000,000 in Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS) funding that has been set aside from the total COPS appropriation of \$12,124,750 available for the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2023-2024/state fiscal year (SFY) 2024-2025. The \$1,000,000 COPS set-aside funding is designated as a separate funding source from the larger COPS program and has different requirements for LDSSs applications for funding, program reporting, and financial claiming.

II. Background

COPS programs are a subset of the broader category of “preventive services.” They are intended to help families where placement is not imminent but where youth and/or families have circumstances that put them at an elevated risk of foster care placement. In 1988, the New York State Department of Social Services, now the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), issued a request for proposal (RFP) to select and fund COPS programs. About

20 programs were funded from that RFP, and OCFS issued a subsequent RFP in New York City in 2000. The Child Welfare Services finance provisions were implemented in 2002 and provided for 65% state reimbursement for all preventive services. The funding mechanism allowed for the expansion of COPS. For OCFS to approve a COPS proposal, OCFS required LDSSs to submit a plan that described the program, specified the target population in need, and demonstrated that the population was at elevated risk of foster care placement but not at imminent risk of out-of-home placement.

COPS programs are aimed at supporting community services that work with youth and families before a serious problem develops, with the long-term goal of reducing the need for foster care.

In 2008, OCFS surveyed LDSSs regarding their COPS programs, and OCFS published this information in 2009 in *Community Optional Preventive Services (COPS): Findings from OCFS's COPS Survey*. As part of this survey, OCFS specifically asked LDSSs to report on performance targets and achievement of these targets. In 07-OCFS-LCM-12, "outcome" is defined as "the anticipated change in, or maintenance of, conditions or behaviors of a targeted population as a result of the provision of services." Performance targets provide evidence of whether the program accomplished its outcomes. It is important that performance targets and outcomes established are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound.

III. Program Implications

For FFY 2023-2024/SFY 2024-2025, a total of \$12,124,750 in COPS funding was made available, of which \$1,000,000 continues to be set aside to fund eligible program(s) with evaluation results that show program effectiveness and demonstrate private monetary support. Any program costs supported through a district's share of the \$11,124,750 COPS allocation cannot be used to access funding from the \$1,000,000 set-aside funding. This \$1,000,000 set-aside amount is for COPS services provided from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. Claims for eligible COPS expenditures must be submitted by March 31, 2025.

An LDSS must file separate claims to specifically identify costs for COPS services delivered through the COPS set-aside appropriation. To receive reimbursement for a COPS program, an LDSS must demonstrate that the program had been approved by OCFS on or before October 1, 2008. In addition, the expenses claimed cannot exceed the costs for the programs that were in effect October 1, 2008. An LDSS may contract to restart a program that had ceased to provide COPS but was both approved by OCFS and in operation as of October 1, 2008; however, an LDSS may only do this at an amount not to exceed the level of funding received as of October 1, 2008.

An LDSS cannot receive state reimbursement for any COPS service provided during a time when it did not have a contract in place, and the LDSS cannot contract retroactively for the services. For example, if an LDSS terminated a contract on December 31, 2023, and did not enter into a new contract until April 15, 2024, it could claim for the services provided from October 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, and for the services provided from April 15, 2024, through September 30, 2024, but not for any services provided from January 1, 2024, through April 14, 2024. That is, no claims are permissible for the period for which a contract did not exist.

LDSSs may receive dollar-for-dollar reimbursement; i.e., 50% state reimbursement based on the private funds they receive for the costs of eligible services provided from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024, up to the amount of the \$1,000,000 COPS set-aside funding. Donated funds

must equal at least 25% of the total program cost, with a required minimum of at least \$15,000 for the period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. The dollar-for-dollar state reimbursement share cannot exceed the eligible cost of the project. If there are insufficient funds in the capped appropriation to reimburse LDSSs dollar-for-dollar for eligible COPS expenditures claimed, LDSSs will receive their proportionate share of the \$1,000,000 set-aside funding based on the total of the LDSS's actual and eligible COPS expenditures claimed. The LDSS's actual expenditure total is then compared to the statewide total of all LDSSs' eligible expenditures claimed. OCFS may reallocate any unspent funds from an LDSS to other LDSSs that have claims in excess of their allocation. Any donated funds must be received from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. For claims to be approved for payment, LDSSs must demonstrate the receipt of donated funds by **August 16, 2024**.

The following narratives provide an example of LDSS reimbursement for a COPS set-aside program. If a district has \$15,000 donated funds and \$60,000 eligible COPS expenditures, the state share match is \$15,000 and the local share is \$45,000. This includes the \$15,000 donated funds and the \$30,000 regular local share. If a district has a \$200,000 eligible COPS expenditure, then the donated funds requirement would be \$50,000, the state share match would be \$50,000, and the local share would be \$150,000, which includes the \$50,000 donated funds and the \$100,000 regular local share.

Application Instructions

LDSSs that are applying for this separate \$1,000,000 of COPS funding may do so by submitting [OCFS-5242](#), *Application for Community Optional Preventive Services \$1,000,000 Set-Aside Funding (FFY 2023-2024/SFY 2024-2025)*, and the following documentation demonstrating that they meet the eligibility criteria:

1. Program Evaluation

LDSSs or programs must demonstrate quality of services provided and program effectiveness.

- Demonstrate how the program is a “best practice” or “evidence-based” program and include the following:
 - Disproportionate minority representation (DMR) data.
 - Amount of funds used for program evaluation.

2. Demonstrate Private Monetary Support

LDSSs must demonstrate private monetary support received from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. Documentation of private monetary support must be submitted to OCFS no later than **August 16, 2024**. The following are examples of acceptable documentation of private monetary support:

- Letter from agency/organization providing monetary support.
- Canceled check from agency/organization providing monetary support.
- Financial records showing receipt of private funds.
- Donated funds must be equal to at least 25% of the total program cost, with a minimum of at least \$15,000.

3. Program Budget

LDSSs must provide a detailed program budget.

4. Program Design

LDSSs must submit a program outline explaining the design, components, services to be provided, and population intended to be served that is being funded.

Each LDSS that applies for this separate \$1,000,000 COPS funding needs to complete [OCFS-5242](#), with the supporting documentation listed above, and submit it by **August 16, 2024**, via email to COPS@ocfs.ny.gov.

OCFS will review the timely applications for this funding with supporting documentation, and OCFS will make a determination for each LDSS that has applied for this funding. OCFS will notify LDSSs if their COPS programs have met the eligibility criteria and the amount of their allocation.

All LDSSs that have submitted [OCFS-5242](#) by **August 16, 2024**, with complete documentation, and meet the criteria for this separate COPS funding of \$1,000,000 will receive a proportionate share of the funds.

COPS Program Report Form

COPS programs that are funded out of this separate \$1,000,000 allocation will need to provide LDSSs with a report for OCFS of their progress toward meeting stated program outcomes. For each COPS program that receives this funding, LDSSs will need to complete an [OCFS-5243](#), *Community Optional Preventive Services Set-Aside Program Report*, and submit the report to OCFS by **October 16, 2024**. This template asks LDSSs to provide demographic information and to report on current performance targets or outcomes that have been required for all preventive services programs (see 07-OCFS-LCM-12).

Please complete an [OCFS-5243](#) for each COPS program that receives an allocation from the \$1,000,000 separate funding and submit the form by **October 16, 2024**, via email to COPS@ocfs.ny.gov.

IV. Claiming Instructions

An LDSS will use the following set of instructions to claim reimbursement for eligible COPS set-aside services from October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024. Claims for eligible expenditures must be final accepted in the Automated Claiming System (ACS) by March 31, 2025.

If OCFS determines there are insufficient COPS set-aside funds available to reimburse LDSSs for eligible COPS expenditures claimed, OCFS may reallocate unclaimed funding to other LDSSs that have claims in excess of their allocation.

The expenditures for the COPS 2023-2024 set-aside services should be claimed through the RF-17 claim package for special project claiming. These costs are first identified on the RF-2A claim package as F17 functional costs and reported in the F17 column on the LDSS-923, *Cost Allocation Schedule of Payments Administrative Expenses Other Than Salaries*, and the LDSS-2347 *Schedule D, DSS Administrative Expenses Allocation and Distribution by Function and Program*. After final accepting the RF-2A claim package, the individual project costs are then reported under the project label "COPS 2023-2024 SET ASIDE" on the LDSS-4975A, *RF-17 Worksheet, Distribution of Allocated Costs to Other Reimbursable Programs*.

Salaries, fringe benefits, staff counts, and central services costs are directly entered on the RF-17 Worksheet while overhead costs are automatically brought over from the RF-2A, Schedule D, and distributed based upon the proportion of the number of staff assigned to this project. Employees not working all their time on this project must maintain time studies to support the salary and fringe benefit costs allocated to the program.

Non-salary administrative costs are reported with the appropriate object of expense code(s) on page 1 of the LDSS-923B, *Summary – Administrative Schedule of Payments for Expenses Other Than Salaries for Other Reimbursable Programs*.

Program costs should be reported as object of expense code 37 (Special Project Program Expense) on page 2 of the LDSS-923B, *LDSS-923B, Summary - Program Schedule of Payments for Expenses Other Than Salaries for Other Reimbursable Programs*. Total project costs should be reported on the LDSS-4975, *Monthly Statement of Special Project Claims Federal and State Aid (RF-17)*.

Please note that by signing the RF-17 claim package certification statement, the administrative official and fiscal officer also attest that their district has met the required level of donated funds and that these amounts are included in the total costs reported on the RF-17 claim package.

Instructions for completing time studies, the LDSS-923, LDSS-923B and Schedule D, and the RF-17 claim package are found in Chapters 4, 7 and 18, respectively, of the *Fiscal Reference Manual*, Volume 3. The manual is available on the OTDA intranet: <https://intranet.otda.ny.gov/bfdm/finance/>.

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Division/Office: Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development

/s/ Nina Aledort, Ph. D., MSW

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