

## General Instructions for Finance Office

The Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is required to conduct an annual time study of social services staff to address the reimbursement requirements of the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). To assure that the State, the local social services districts and, most importantly, the children in care continue to receive the appropriate amount of federal funds, each child care agency is required to conduct an annual time study of staff assigned to the social services function. The purpose of the time study is to identify the amount of time that social services staff use for specific activities. The functions and definitions used in the time study are substantially similar to those used by the State in determining the amount of time local district staff spend on federally fundable activities.

The results of the time study are associated with the Maximum State Aid Rates (MSARs) that may be claimed by social services districts to DHHS for federal reimbursement of foster care. **The outcome of these time studies does not affect the rates that are established by OCFS for the foster care programs operated by voluntary agencies; and the time study is not a review of worker or program performance. The results will be used by OCFS only to allocate activities to Federal programs.**

### **Selecting staff who are required to complete the time study**

**Staff who need to complete the Time Study Reports are those assigned to the Social Services salary sections of the Standards of Payment (SOP) reports.** This includes those who have their salary amounts reported in Account 01B of the OCFS-FC-2652, Report of Actual Expenditures and OCFS-FC-2668-2, Supplemental Memorandum Report Employee Distribution by Job Classification – Social Services.

- **Do not include staff in non-social services functions** (e.g., child care, child support, medical, maintenance, or administrative staff).
- **Do not include staff who have 100 percent of their time charged to a program other than the foster care program for which OCFS establishes a Maximum State Aid Rate** (e.g., workers that are directly charged to preventive services or special initiative programs that are funded separately from the MSAR). See below for further guidance on special initiative activities not funded as foster care.
- **Directors or Assistant Directors of Social Services are not required to participate in the time study.**
- **Social services supervisory staff, whose primary function is supervision, are not required to participate in the time study.**

Each agency must maintain documentation regarding social services staff included or excluded as participants in the time study.

## **Code 51 is for Recording Special Initiative Activities or Other Program Activities Not Funded as Foster Care**

The following is information for finance officers on how the provision of certain activities, not funded as foster care (through the MSAR), should be addressed in the MSAR Time Study:

- **Example: A caseworker assigned 100 percent to perform pre- and/or post- discharge activities paid for with special initiative funding that is not part of the regular foster care funds subject to the State's MSAR process should be advised not to complete the MSAR Time Study.**
- **Example: A caseworker assigned to both regular foster care activities and pre- and/or post- discharge activities paid for with special initiative funding that is not part of the regular foster care funds subject to the State's MSAR process should be advised to complete the MSAR Time Study. The below listed additional code (code 51) is applicable for such an individual.** Finance officers should review completed time studies to assure that the coding is correct.
- **Example: A caseworker assigned only to regular foster care activities paid for with foster care funds, and not paid for with any special initiative funding that is not part of the regular foster care funds subject to the State's MSAR process, should be advised to complete the MSAR Time Study. The below listed additional code (code 51) is not applicable for such an individual.**

Following is a definition of Code 51 and more specific information about its use:

- **Instructions for using Code 51 – Activities Not Funded as Foster Care**
  - Staff engaged in any and all **pre- and/or post- discharge activities that are funded through a special initiative or other program** could include such activities paid for as preventive, aftercare, post-adoption, independent living, or medical services, which have reimbursement mechanisms that are separate and distinct from foster care.
  - As an example, a voluntary foster care agency may receive a separate allocation from a social services district to fund pre- and/or post-discharge activities for children. **(Note: In such instances, such activities must be reported in a program cost center that is separate and distinct from the foster care program's Maximum State Aid Rate.)**
- **Instructions for Coding Non-Special Initiative Pre/Post Discharge Activities - Funded as Regular Foster Care**

- **Any and all foster care pre-discharge activities funded with foster care funds** (i.e., paid for with the Maximum State Aid Rate), should be coded the same as all other administrative activities of social workers. For example, "37" or "41" would be used for case planning or case supervision related to pre-discharge, and the codes for "42" or "48" would be used when pre-discharge services are being provided, and so on.
- **Activities occurring during a trial-discharge period of less than six months (or longer if approved in a court order)**, for a child who is maintained in the care and custody of a public official during that period, may be funded either as part of regular foster care or through special initiative funding. If funded as regular foster care, the appropriate code (based on the nature of the activity) should be entered. If funded with other than foster care funds through a special initiative, any activity should be coded as "51". **Title IV-E foster care funds may not be used for activities occurring post-discharge (final). Any such activity must be coded as provision of services to individuals "42N"**.

The documents listed below for conducting the Time Study can be accessed through the Internet at the following OCFS website:

<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/rates/FosterCare/timestudy/>

- General Instructions for Finance Office
- Instructions for Workers
- Activities Example
- Worker Activity Forms

**Please note that the Time Study Summary Report will be required to be submitted online through the Statewide Standards of Payment (SSOP) system. Excel or .pdf files will no longer be accepted as complete submissions. A new tab will be located between the current My Requests and Reports tabs. Additional details of the new module will be available by Tuesday, May 31, 2011.**

**Your final review of the workers' Time Study Activity Reports, and your completion of the Agency Wide Summary submission on SSOP, is the last step in the process before you submit the results of your time study to OCFS.**

**Review Steps for reviewing the workers' Time Study Activity Reports is below:**

**Reviewing Reports (The Main Worksheet and the Totals Page Worksheet are to be completed by the Finance Office for the entire agency in SSOP)**

**General:**

- 1. Advise caseworkers assigned 100 percent to perform pre/post discharge activities paid for with special initiative funding that is not part of the regular foster care funds subject to the State's MSAR process, that they should not complete the MSAR Time Study. Send documentation that briefly describes the special initiative payment arrangement for these workers.**
- 2. Advise caseworkers assigned to both regular foster care activities and pre/post discharge activities paid for with special initiative funding that is not part of the regular foster care funds subject to the State's MSAR process, to complete the MSAR Time Study and to use activity code 51. Review completed time studies to assure that the coding is correct, and provide documentation that briefly describes the payment arrangement, allocation method, and sources of funding for these workers.**

**For each worker's Time Study Report, review that:**

- 1. Worker's name, signature and other information have been completed on pages one and two.**
- 2. Boxes with starting and ending times have been completed for each day and are in 15-minute increments.**
- 3. Boxes with Starting and Ending times match to the starting and ending times recorded in the activity boxes for each day.**
- 4. Total Boxes Completed is filled in and matches the number of activity boxes completed for each day.**
- 5. Total Boxes Completed equals the # of hours worked, as reported for starting and ending times, multiplied by four.**
- 6. Total number of activity codes in the Time Study Activity Summary (p. 2) matches the number of codes reported for each day.**

**Additional instructions for the Finance Director to complete the Time Study Summary will be forwarded by May 31, 2011.**

The following contacts will be available for technical assistance:

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