



Office of the State Comptroller

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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County Welfare Agencies Now Refer General Assistance Recipients to Mandatory Work Programs, Comptroller's Follow-up Review Finds

TRENTON – County welfare agencies that administer general assistance benefits are now referring recipients to mandatory work programs and keeping documentation of an applicant's eligibility for benefits, according to a follow-up review released by the Comptroller's Office today.

The general assistance program is funded entirely through state aid and provides monthly cash assistance to singles and couples without children who fall below the poverty line.

OSC's 2015 audit of three county agencies – the Burlington County, Camden County, and Passaic County Boards of Social Services – projected that an estimated \$1 million could have been provided to recipients who were not engaged in required work activities like job training or community service. In their follow-up review, OSC auditors found that all three counties now have formal procedures in place to ensure that individuals are referred to work activities in a timely manner. OSC verified a sample of selected case files from each agency and found that all recipients were referred to a work activity as required. For those individuals who cannot work due to disability or age, all three agencies now keep proper documentation verifying that they are indeed exempt from pursuing work activities.

OSC's original audit additionally found that 23 percent of sampled case files did not include documentation verifying that an individual's monthly income made them eligible for cash assistance, and about 43 percent of case files did not contain documentation showing that recipients had been checked for disqualifying drug convictions.

All three agencies now retain proper support for income verification checks, along with evidence that a search of prior drug convictions have been conducted. Samples of case files from each agency confirmed that applications went through the proper checks to make sure that recipients qualified for benefits.

OSC's follow-up review can be found [here](#) and its original 2015 audit on the state's general assistance program can be found [here](#).

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