

NEW YORK PUBLIC WELFARE ASSOCIATION

157TH ANNUAL WINTER CONFERENCE

Cultivating Resilience

Program Brochure

January 27–30, 2026

The Albany Marriott Hotel

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Agenda at-a Glance

Tuesday, January 27:

3:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Exhibitor Setup.....	Ballroom Foyer
4:30 pm - 6:00 pm	Registration.....	Empire Foyer

Wednesday, January 28:

7:30 am - 8:45 am Breakfast.....Albany/Colonie, Empire, State Room, Restaurant, & Hotel Lounge

8:00 am - 5:00 pm Registration.....Empire Foyer

9:00 am - 5:00 pm Exhibit Area Open.....Ballroom Foyer

9:00 am - 5:00 pm All-Day Refresher Break • Sponsored by *Conduent*.....Ballroom Foyer

9:00 am - 5:00 pm NYS ITS-IES System Demo.....Board Room

9:00 am - 10:30 am Concurrent Sessions

NYPWA Board of Directors' Meeting.....Capital Room

Anatomy of a Child Victims Act Case: Lessons Learned in

Defending the LDSS (*Restricted to LDSS*).....Empire

Understanding Wendy's Wonderful Kids and the Child-Focused

Recruitment Model.....Schenectady/Troy

From Training to Transformation: Strengthening Domestic Violence Practice in

Westchester County through Safe & Together™ Training, Coaching,

and Evaluation.....Salons A/B

Long Term Care Update.....Salon C

Updates from the Division of Child Care Services (*Vendors Are Prohibited*).....Salon D

From Chaos to Coordination: How Schenectady County Streamlined Shelter

Tracking with VenTek.....Salon E

Benefits of a Universal SNAP Caseload in a Larger County.....Salon F

Staff Development Association Meeting (Restricted to LDSS).....Salons G/H

10:30 am Coffee Break • Sponsored by *Binti*.....Ballroom Foyer

11:00 am - 12:15 pm Opening Address & Keynote.....Salons D/E

11:30 pm - 1:15 pm Lunch.....Albany/Colonie, Empire, State Room, Restaurant, & Hotel Lounge

1:30 pm - 5:00 pm

State & Local Commissioners' Dialogue — Coffee Break •

Sponsored by *Northwoods (Restricted to Commissioners)*.....Salons A/B

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm Concurrent Sessions

"Your Funeral, My (Re-) Trial" Ethical Issues in DSS Legal Practice.....Empire

Introducing the New York State Housing Access Voucher Pilot Program.....Schenectady/Troy

Updates to State Issued Child Fatality Reports.....Salon C

An Overview of Resources and Best Practices for Employment Program

Monitoring and Supervision (*Vendors Are Prohibited*).....Salon D

The SNAP Recoupment Process.....Salon E

The Box Experience: Resilient Thinking and Creative Action in Times of Change.....Salon F

Effective Child Support Administration

(Restricted to LDSS & Vendors Are Prohibited).....Salons G/H

3:00 pm Coffee Break • Sponsored by *KPMG*.....Ballroom Foyer

Agenda at-a Glance

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm Concurrent Sessions

Child Support Caselaw Update.....	Empire
Understanding the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.....	Schenectady/Troy
An Introduction to the NYS FACS.....	Salon C
For Your Consideration: A Medicaid Roundtable	
Discussion (<i>Restricted to LDSS & Vendors Are Prohibited</i>).....	Salon D
Reimagining Reimbursement Tracking and Reporting.....	Salon E
Developing Resilient Human & Social Service Leaders.....	Salon F
<i>Deputy Commissioners' Leadership Network Meeting (Restricted to LDSS)</i>	Salons G/H
5:00 pm - 6:00pm Commissioners' Reception.....	Private
6:00 pm - 7:00pm Networking Reception.....	Hotel Lounge
7:00 pm Dinner on Your Own	

Thursday, January 29:

7:30 am - 8:45 am	Breakfast.....	Albany/Colonie, Empire, State Room, Restaurant, & Hotel Lounge
8:00 am - 5:00 pm	Registration.....	Empire Foyer
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	Exhibit Area Open.....	Ballroom Foyer
9:00 am - 5:00 pm	All-Day Refresher Break • Sponsored by <i>Equifax</i>	Ballroom Foyer
8:00 am - 9:00 am	Leading Through Change: AI Strategies for DSS Resilience & Impact <i>(Restricted to LDSS Commissioners & Vendors Are Prohibited)</i>	Salons G/H

9:00 am - 10:30 am Concurrent Sessions

Child Welfare Caselaw Review, Part I.....	Empire
From Lived Experience to Leadership.....	Schenectady/Troy
Effectively Implementing the Blind Removal Process and Results.....	Salon A
Making Leaders Better Succeeders.....	Salon B
The Schenectady Outreach Hub: Program Updates on the Multifaceted Approach That Serves Our Most At-Risk Community Members.....	Salon C
Diving into the Executive Budget.....	Salon D/E
Navigating the ABAWD Time Limit: Lessons and Best Practices from the Field.....	Salon F
Statewide Homeless Data.....	Salons G/H

10:30 am	Coffee Break • Sponsored by Curam by Merative	Ballroom Foyer
10:45 am - 12:15 pm	Child Welfare Caselaw Review, Part II.....	Empire

11:00 am - 12:15 pm Concurrent Sessions

The Importance of Sibling Connections for Children and Youth in Foster Care.....	Schenectady/Troy
Access and Barriers to Care for New York's Youth with Complex Needs.....	Salon A
Ethical Decision Making.....	Salon B
Working Collaboratively with Legal Services Providers.....	Salon C
Temporary Assistance & Employment Roundtable <i>(Attendance Limited to State & Local DSS)</i>	Salon D
Hot Topics for State & Local Fiscal Administrators.....	Salon E

Agenda at-a Glance

An Interactive Conversation on Child Welfare Policy

(Restricted to LDSS Commissioners & Designees & Vendors Are Prohibited).....Salon F

Medicaid Eligibility Updates.....Salons G/H

11:30 am - 1:15 pm Lunch.....Albany/Colonie, Empire, State Room, Restaurant, & Hotel Lounge

12:15 pm - 1:15 pm Large County Lunch (*LDSS Commissioners Only*).....Board Room

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm Concurrent Sessions

From Filing to Fact Finding and Beyond: Litigating Abuse & Neglect Cases.....Empire
Navigating the Federal Landscape: What is Next for the

Homeless Service System?.....Schenectady/Troy

Supporting Prevention Providers in NYC: The State of Prevention and

What Comes Next.....Salon A

From Awareness to Action: Erie County's Trauma-Informed Journey.....Salon B

What are SNAP Payment Error Rates and How Do We Improve Them?.....Salon C

Child Support Program Updates, Part I.....Salon D

Integrated Eligibility System Program Update (*Vendors Are Prohibited*).....Salon E

Staffing: A Focused Unit for Immediate Needs in Temporary Assistance.....Salon F

Medicaid Eligibility Client Management System Update.....Salons G/H

3:00 pm Coffee Break • Sponsored by **TipCo Automated Systems**.....Ballroom Foyer

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm Concurrent Sessions

Integrated Eligibility Systems Meeting (*LDSS Workgroup Only*).....Board Room

Your Precedent is Required. Medicaid Fair Hearing and Article 78 Decisions.....Empire

Meeting Energy Emergencies through Public Assistance (*Vendors Are Prohibited*)....Schenectady/Troy

Fatherhood Engagement-Building Partnerships to Engage and

Support Fathers Statewide.....Salon A

Stronger Together: Building Collective Resilience in

New York's Public Welfare Workforce.....Salon B

Community Service as a Form of Resilience.....Salon C

Child Support Program Updates, Part II.....Salon D

DSS Fiscal Administrators Roundtable Discussion (*Restricted to LDSS*).....Salon E

Emergency Shelter Site Consideration and Development—Engaging the

Not-for-Profit Community.....Salon F

EVA in Action: New York County Success Stories and What's Next

(Vendors Are Prohibited).....Salons G/H

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm Cocktail Reception • Sponsored by the **Albany Marriott**.....Salons A/B/C

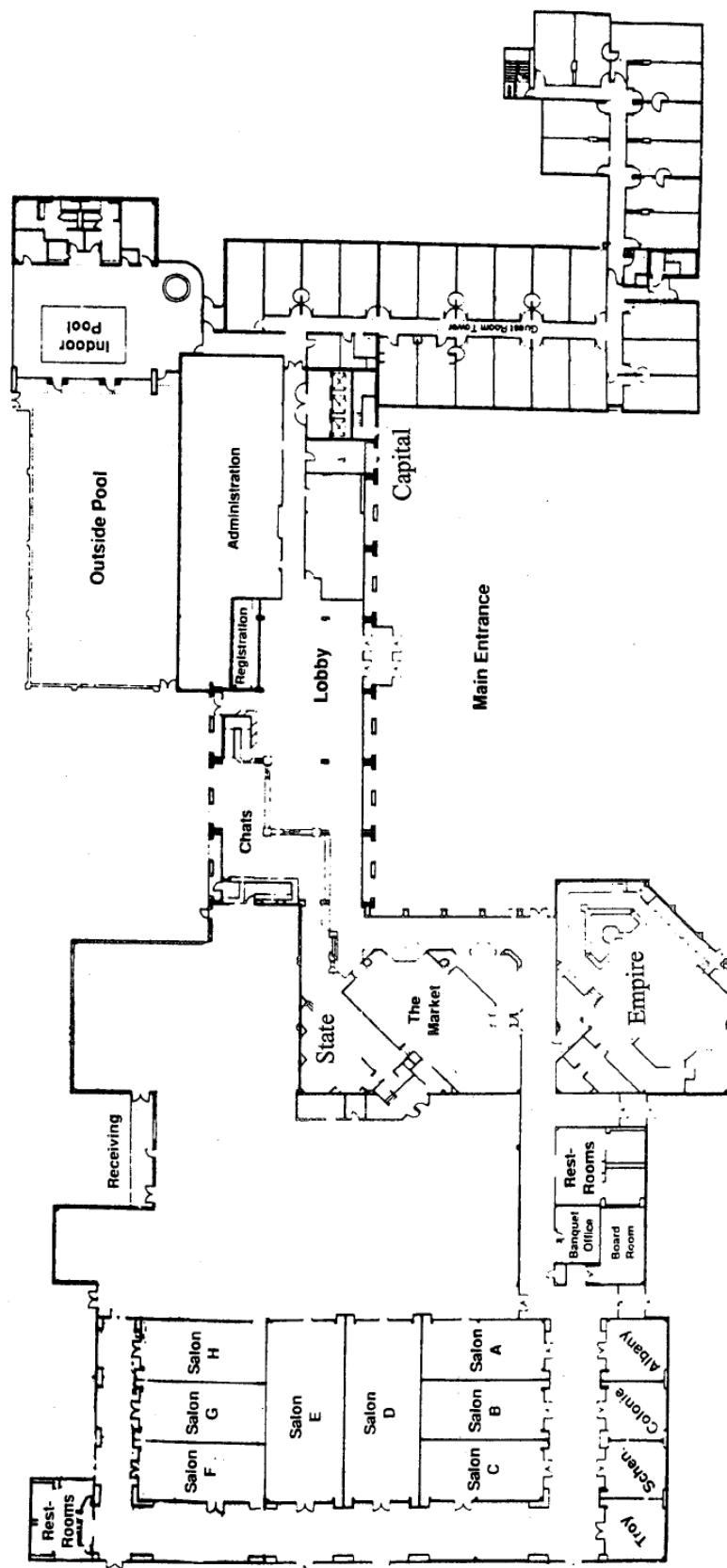
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm Annual Banquet with Live Music by **Made in the Shade**.....Salons D/E

Agenda at-a Glance

Friday, January 30:

7:30 am - 8:30 am	Commissioners' Breakfast — Coffee Break • Sponsored by Northwoods <i>(Restricted to Commissioners)</i>	Empire
8:30 am - 11:30 am	Commissioners' Meeting & Policy Discussion <i>(Restricted to Commissioners)</i>	Empire
7:30 am - 8:45 am	Buffet.....Albany/Colonie, Empire, State Room, Restaurant, & Hotel Lounge	
8:00 am - 11:00 am	Registration.....Empire Foyer	
8:30 am - 9:45 am	State & Local Child Support Dialogue <i>(Restricted to OTDA & LDSS)</i>Salons A/B	
	TA Directors Meeting <i>(Restricted to LDSS)</i>Salon C	
	Local DSS Fiscal Conversations <i>(Restricted to LDSS)</i>Salon D	
	Resilience: The Biology of Stress & The Science of Hope.....Salon F	
	Director of Services Meeting <i>(Restricted to LDSS)</i>Salons G/H	
9:00 am - 11:00 am	Meeting with State Agency Counsel.....Salon E	

Albany Marriott Hotel Map



**Welcome & Keynote Address ■ Wednesday, January 28
11:00 AM—12:30 PM ■ Salons D/E**

Presiding:

Sabrina Jaar Marzouka, NYPWA President and Commissioner of Dutchess County DCFS

Honorable Daniel P. McCoy, Albany County Executive

DaMia Harris-Madden, Commissioner, Office of Children and Family Services

Barbara Guinn, Commissioner, Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Keynote Speaker

David Hansell



David Hansell is the Senior Advisor for Child Welfare Policy at Casey Family Programs, a national foundation that works to influence long-lasting improvements to the well-being of children, families, and the communities where they live.

David joined Casey after a long and distinguished career in federal, state and local government. He served most recently as Commissioner of the New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS), with responsibility for child welfare, juvenile justice and child care services. At the federal level, he served as Acting Assistant Secretary of the HHS Administration for Children and Families (ACF). At the State level, David served as Commissioner of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, which oversees support programs and economic assistance for low-income New Yorkers.

David has also worked in the consulting and non-profit sectors. He was a Managing Director in KPMG's Advisory practice from 2012-2017, and served as Global Head of its Human & Social Services Center of Excellence, helping public sector clients around the world navigate the challenges of delivering services to constituents across a broad range of critical safety-net programs. At the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis, David served in a range of positions at Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), including Director of Legal Services and Deputy Executive Director for Government and Public Affairs.

David graduated from Haverford College and Yale Law School. He has written and spoken widely on social services issues, and is the recipient of numerous awards for his work in the non-profit and public sectors.

Tuesday, January 27 & Wednesday, January 28

Tuesday, January 27:

3:00pm—6:00pm

Exhibit Setup and Registration

4:30pm—6:00pm

Conference Registration

Dinner on Your Own

Wednesday, January 28:

7:30am—8:45am

Breakfast

8:00am—5:00pm

Conference Registration

9:00am—5:00pm

Exhibit Area Open

• All-Day Refresher • Sponsored By
Conduent

9:00am—5:00pm

Board Room

NYS ITS—IES System Demo

9:00am—10:30am

Concurrent Sessions

Capital Room

NYPWA Board of Directors Meeting

Empire

*Anatomy of a Child Victims Act Case: Lessons Learned in Defending the LDSS
(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)*

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY)

This presentation will summarize the defense of a CVA case involving allegations 70 years in the past, the legal issues that arose and successful strategies, as well as lessons learned regarding researching and responding to record management issues with archived child welfare records.

Presenter:

Paula Mallory Engel, Esq., Chief Human Services Attorney, Onondaga County Department of Law

Moderator:

Mark E. Maves, Esq., Counsel to NYPWA

Wednesday, January 28

Schenectady/Troy

Understanding Wendy's Wonderful Kids and the Child-Focused Recruitment Model

This session provides an overview of the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption's signature program, Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK), and its evidence-based, Child-Focused Recruitment model. Participants will learn how WWK recruiters prioritize finding the right family for each child by building trusting relationships and maintaining smaller caseloads. The session highlights the program's commitment to the belief that every child is adoptable and deserves legal permanency regardless of age, background, or special needs, and explores how this individualized approach leads to stronger permanency outcomes. Independent research has proven the WWK's Child-Focused Recruitment model to be up to three times more effective than traditional recruitment methods, particularly for older youth, sibling groups, and children with special needs.

Presenters:

Beth Stahl, Training Associate Director, Dave Thomas Foundation

Michele (Shelly) McCluskey, Family Finding Supervisor, Northern Rivers

Nicole Vorce, Supervisor, Rensselaer County DSS

Salons A/B

From Training to Transformation: Strengthening Domestic Violence Practice in Westchester County through Safe & Together™ Training, Coaching, and Evaluation

Westchester County has made significant progress in improving its child welfare response to domestic violence by embedding the Safe & Together™ Model through a comprehensive approach that combines foundational training, intensive coaching, and strong leadership engagement. Supported by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), this initiative has transformed practice and culture to better support protective parents, increase accountability for those who use violence, and improve outcomes for children. This panel will highlight how Westchester County moved from training to sustained implementation by investing in training and structured coaching for workers and supervisors, fostering leadership commitment, and developing local protocols. Panelists will share findings from a recent evaluation conducted by the OCFS Office of Research, Evaluation and Performance Analytics that demonstrate measurable gains in staff confidence, documentation quality, and alignment with Safe & Together™ principles.

Presenters:

Candace Calabrese, Safe & Together Implementation Manager, NYS OCFS

Lisette Matos, LMSW, Deputy Commissioner, Westchester County DSS

Jessica Brown, PhD, Research Scientist 3—Office of Research, Evaluation & Performance Analytics, NYS OCFS

Kristen Kirkland, PhD, Assistant Director—Office of Research, Evaluation & Performance Analytics, NYS OCFS

Salon C

Long Term Care Update

DOH will present updates on activities in the long-term care arena, focusing on the Statewide Fiscal Intermediary for CDPAP and some on minimum needs.

Presenters:

Trisha Schell-Guy, J.D., Director, Division of Program Development & Management, OHIP, NYS DOH

Deborah McClure, Director, Bureau of Medicaid Long Term Care Policy, Division of Program Development & Management, OHIP, NYS DOH

Salon D

Updates from the Division of Child Care Services

(Vendors Are Prohibited)

This interactive presentation will provide updates on the work of the Division of Child Care Services and an overview of the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) initiatives that have been accomplished or are still in

Wednesday, January 28

process during 2025. This presentation will also include updates on the implementation of the OCFS IT systems modernization initiative, including the CCAP Gateway.

Presenters:

Nora Yates, Deputy Commissioner, NYS OCFS

Emily Meyer, Associate Commissioner, NYS OCFS

Merideth Infantino, Director of Child Care Assistance and Enrollment Services, NYS OCFS

Moderator:

Kenneth Knappe, Deputy Commissioner for Finance, Suffolk County DSS

Salon E

From Chaos to Coordination: How Schenectady County Streamlined Shelter Tracking with VenTek

Representatives from Schenectady County and VenTek will demonstrate how the Shelter Tracking System has improved tracking and reporting of Temporary Housing Assistance clients. Schenectady County has successfully implemented this system to manage shelter occupancy and generate real-time data for reporting. Attendees will gain insight into how technology can streamline shelter tracking at their local districts.

Presenters:

Denise Petersen, Director of TA, Schenectady County DSS

Marion Seecoomar, Senior Social Welfare Examiner, Schenectady County DSS

Steve Seifritz, Project Manager, VenTek Inc.

Salon F

Benefits of a Universal SNAP Caseload in a Larger District

Following the appointment of a dedicated Compliance Officer, Suffolk County's SNAP program has experienced a substantial rebound grounded in smarter workflows and stronger oversight. Through a universal eligibility caseload design and deliberate report management, the department reshaped examiner workflow, reduced backlogs, and stabilized performance. This session will share the journey, challenges, and practical solutions that supported the turnaround.

Presenters:

Bryan Bogad, Social Services Examiner IV, Client Benefits Administration, Suffolk County DSS

Michael Sweet, Social Services Examiner III, Client Benefits Administration, Suffolk County DSS

Salons G/H

Staff Development Association Meeting

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY)

Chairperson:

Salvatore Patella, President, SDANYS & Staff Development Coordinator, Orange County DSS

10:30AM

- **Coffee Break • Sponsored By—Binti**

11:00am—12:30pm

Salons D/E

Opening Address & Keynote

11:30am—1:15pm

Albany/Colonie, Empire, State Room, Restaurant, & Hotel Lounge

Lunch

Wednesday, January 28

1:30pm—5:00pm

Salons A/B

State & Local Commissioners' Dialogue

Commissioners OTDA, OCFS, and their executive deputies, are invited to discuss current issues facing social services with local DSS commissioners. The session will begin with topics from local commissioners, followed by time for state commissioners to raise additional issues. **At 5:00pm the meeting will end and local commissioners will remain to vote on the slate of officers for the 2026 NYPWA Board of Directors.**

Facilitator:

Sabrina Jaar Marzouka, NYPWA President

- Coffee Break • Sponsored By—**Northwoods**

1:30pm—3:00pm

Concurrent Sessions

Empire

“Your Funeral, My (Re-) Trial” Ethical Issues in DSS Legal Practice

(1.5 Ethics & Professionalism CLEs, 90 minutes)

The first part of the program will review ethical requirements for DSS attorneys that pertain to their representation of the local social services district. The second part of the program will discuss some of the ethical problems that the LDSS attorney may encounter in their practice.

Presenter:

Mark E. Maves, Esq., Counsel to NYPWA

Moderator:

Anne E. Oh, Chief Counsel, Suffolk County DSS

Schenectady/Troy

Introducing the New York State Housing Access Voucher Pilot Program

Staff from HCR and possibly from one or more of our HAVPP Local Administrators will discuss the purpose and timeline for HAVPP and explain how Social Service Districts will play a direct and essential role in its success.

Presenters:

Daniel Buyer, Assistant Commissioner, NYS Homes & Community Renewal

Rick Umholtz, Deputy Commissioner, NYS OTDA

Salon C

Updates to State Issued Child Fatality Reports

Updates have been made to the state-issued child fatality reports. This session will walk through those changes and allow attendees to ask questions about the OCFS child fatality review process.

Presenters:

Jason DeSantis, Associate Commissioner, NYS OCFS

Ed Guidry, Director, Bureau of Child Fatality Review and Prevention, NYS OCFS

Danielle Salvatore, Supervisor, Bureau of Child Fatality Review and Prevention, NYS OCFS

Heather Mason, Supervisor, Bureau of Child Fatality Review and Prevention, NYS OCFS

Salon D

An Overview of Resources and Best Practices for Employment Program Monitoring and Supervision

(Vendors Are Prohibited)

Wednesday, January 28

During this session, we will be reviewing the newly created Employment Coordinator Playbook. While many of our trainings are focused on direct service provision at the worker level, this resource has been specifically developed to assist Employment Coordinators with the routine program monitoring and oversight that should be occurring at the local district level.

Presenters:

Brionna Ryder, Senior Employment Services Advisor, NYS OTDA

Michael Thornton, Senior Employment Services Advisor, NYS OTDA

Salon E

The SNAP Recoupment Process

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA) of 2025 institutes significant changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), particularly impacting the recovery of overpaid benefits. While existing federal regulations already require states to collect SNAP overpayments, the new law strengthens these collection requirements and shifts more costs to states with high error rates. Topic to be discussed: the Recoupment process, CAMS Inquiry, BICS Inquiry, and Recoupment Management Reports.

Presenter:

Olha Fizer, Supervisor of Fiscal Operations, Westchester County DSS

Salon F

The Box Experience: Resilient Thinking and Creative Action in Times of Change

Building on the familiar idea of “thinking outside the box,” this experiential session invites you to step inside it instead – to explore how your mindset shapes your reactions during times of change and uncertainty. The Box® Experience will help you discover ways to be resilient, unlock creative approaches, and behave with intentionality. Expect a hands-on, reflective experience that pushes your boundaries and leaves you with lasting shifts in your mindset and actions.

Presenter:

Ginine M. Capozzi, Learning & Development Consultant, Knowledge Force Consulting LLC

Moderator:

Paige Rispoli, Training Specialist, Orange County DSS

Salons G/H

Effective Child Support Administration

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY & Vendors Are Prohibited)

This session is designed specifically for Child Support Coordinators and is restricted to LDSS staff who oversee the Child Support program. Please join your colleagues in addressing what is happening in your district and other regions. This session is an opportunity for meaningful dialogue on the issues that matter the most to you concerning the local administration of Child Support Services.

Facilitators:

Maria Restivo, Child Support Enforcement, Coordinator, Ulster County DSS

A. Michelle Henry-Walker, FA Coordinator-Child Support Services, Monroe County DSS

3:00PM

• Coffee Break • Sponsored By—**KPMG**

3:30pm—5:00pm

Concurrent Sessions

Empire

Child Support Case Law Update

(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)

Wednesday, January 28

Discussion of significant court decisions in 2025 relating to parentage, child support establishment, modification, and enforcement.

Presenters:

Edward W. Stano, Esq., Deputy Counsel, NYS OTDA

Nikita Valcik, Esq., Associate Attorney, NYS OTDA

Aimee Furdyna, Esq., Associate Attorney, NYS OTDA

Schenectady/Troy

Understanding the U.S Refugee Admissions Program

The U.S Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) was established in 1980 by Congress following the Vietnam War. Refugee status is a form of protection that may be granted to people who meet the definition of refugee and who are of special humanitarian concern to the United States. Refugees are generally people outside of their country who are unable or unwilling to return home because they fear serious harm. This presentation will illustrate the history and resilience of the program over time and New York's support of refugees.

Presenters:

Kristina Morelli, Bureau of Refugee Services Director, NYS OTDA

Erika Rosney, Bureau of Refugee Services Assistant Director, NYS OTDA

Marilyn Chillis, Bureau of Refugee Services Assistant Director, NYS OTDA

Salon C

An Introduction to the NYS FACS

Presentation on FACS (Foster Adoption Certification and Approval Software). We will walk through the demonstration, highlighting key parts of the new Portal.

Presenters:

Ryan Duke, Business Analyst/Child Welfare SME, Cardinality.ai

Derrick Stephens, Solutions Engineer/Training Lead, Cardinality.ai

Salon D

For Your Consideration: A Medicaid Roundtable Discussion

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY & Vendors Are Prohibited)

The Medicaid program is always changing — and so are the challenges that come with it.

This is your chance to connect with fellow LDSS staff in a dynamic, peer-led discussion. Share what's working, learn from others, and walk away with fresh ideas and the feeling that we're all winners!

Presenter:

Jim Sluder, Medicaid Director, Suffolk County DSS

Salon E

Reimagining Reimbursement Tracking and Reporting

Understanding state and federal reimbursement of local district costs is vital to a district's ability to make key policy decisions as well as budget preparation. Cattaraugus County has recently partnered with Dutchess County to redesign its accounting procedures in order to increase efficiency and provide better estimates of anticipated reimbursements. Strategies for claim analysis and data analytics will be discussed with a particular focus on state child welfare reimbursements.

Presenters:

Jessica L. Weinman, Commissioner, Cattaraugus County DSS

Brian Napoleon, Director of Fiscal Services, Dutchess County DCFS

Salon F

Developing Resilient Human & Social Services Leaders

The focus of this interactive session is to explore and discuss the characteristics, benefits, and the importance of developing resilient human and social services leaders in a Volatile-Uncertain-Complex-Ambiguous world and workforce market. This session will also focus on the NEED for leaders to promote mental wellness and self-care for themselves and staff.

Wednesday, January 28

Presenter:

Marvela L. Guice, Founder & President, DBA Marvela L. Guice Organizational & Staff Development Training Services

Moderator:

Sal Patella, Staff Development Coordinator, Orange Co DSS

Salons G/H

Deputy Commissioners' Leadership Network Meeting

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY)

Deputy Commissioners and other upper-level administrators will address issues that could arise during the conference, local experiences, new challenges, and other topics of interest.

Facilitated by Steering Committee:

Theresa Giovanniello, Deputy Commissioners, Dutchess County DCFS

Monica Brown, Executive Deputy Commissioner, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Randy Scott, Deputy Commissioner, Westchester County DSS

Cynthia Stumer, DBH, Deputy Commissioner, Orleans County DSS

Denise Read, Deputy Commissioner, Monroe County DHS

5:00pm—6:00pm

LDSS Commissioners' Private Reception

6:00pm—7:00pm

Hotel Lounge

Networking Reception

7:00pm

Dinner on Your Own

Thursday, January 29

Thursday, January 29:

7:30am—8:45am

Breakfast

8:00am—5:00pm

Conference Registration

9:00am—5:00pm

Exhibit Area Open

• All-Day Refresher • Sponsored By
Equifax

8:00am—9:00am

Salons G/H

***Leading Through Change: AI Strategies for DSS Resilience and Impact* (Restricted to LDSS Commissioners—ONLY & Vendors Are Prohibited)**

As DSS leaders across New York face rising demands and shifting expectations, many are rethinking how services are delivered, staffed, and sustained. This session explores how TipCo's EVA is supporting agencies in reducing SNAP error rates, managing ABAWD complexities, and easing the burden of policy and training updates. Join us for a forward-looking conversation on how AI is becoming a critical tool in the modernization and future of social services.

Presenters:

Andrea Tipping, CEO & Co-Founder, TipCo Automated Systems

Greg Tipping, Co-Founder & Chief Product Officer, TipCo Automated Systems

9:00am—10:30am

Concurrent Sessions

Empire

Child Welfare Caselaw Review, Parts I

(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)

A review of the reported child welfare cases from July 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025. Part 1 will primarily focus on abuse and neglect cases.

Presenters:

Mark E. Maves, Esq., Counsel to NYPWA

Jennifer Sadaka, Esq., Senior Team Leader/Legal Trainer, NYC ACS

Vineet Chawla, Esq., Executive Agency Counsel/Legal Trainer, NYC ACS

Schenectady/Troy

From Lived Experience to Leadership

Parent Advocates bring invaluable lived experience to New York City's child welfare, behavioral health, and education systems. They play a critical role in ensuring families are supported, respected, and empowered. Yet, advocates often face barriers such as limited professional development opportunities, a lack of citywide coordination, and systems that are not fully trauma-informed. Vision: A unified citywide network where

Thursday, January 29

parent voice drives policy, practice, and program improvements across child welfare, behavioral health, and education.

Presenter:

Jessica Cooper, FTNYS/NYCRO Family Policy Advisor, NYS OCFS

Salon A

Effectively Implementing the Blind Removal Process and Results

On October 21, 2024, Suffolk County implemented the Blind Removal Policy on all CPS removals of children from their families. Blind Removal meetings were created to facilitate an unbiased decision-making process in which a caseworker does not disclose any personal and demographic information about a child/family when information about the case is being presented to directors, assistant directors, and others before a removal of a child from their family is initiated. The goal of blind removals in child welfare is to reduce bias in the decision-making process and to create a more equitable system of care by focusing on safety, risk and family strengths instead of demographic information.

Presenters:

John E. Imhof, Ph. D., Commissioner, Suffolk County DSS

Brian Calo, Assistant Division Administrator for FCSA; Suffolk County DSS

Amanda Pon, Bureau Director, FCSA

Moderator:

Robert Horan, Staff Development Coordinator, Otsego County DSS

Salon B

Making Leaders Better Succeeders

Staff Development Coordinators from Suffolk and Delaware Counties will showcase their Supervisory Training Programs designed to elevate and support new supervisors. Learn how these trainers meet the needs of an agency's future leaders.

Presenters:

Erin Hume-Cocks, Staff Development Coordinator, Delaware County DSS

Stephanie Macauley, Staff Development Coordinator, SDC Suffolk County DSS

Moderator:

Paige Rispoli, Training Specialist, Orange County DSS

Salon C

The Schenectady Outreach Hub: Program Updates on the Multifaceted Approach That Serves Our Most At-Risk Community Members

Community providers are increasingly finding themselves on the front lines of critical social issues. Housing insecurities, substance abuse disorders, and mental health-related disparities not only have devastating effects on those most at-risk, but they continue to challenge behavioral health and emergency service providers each day. In Schenectady, N.Y., a partnership between the police, county behavioral health professionals, and key stakeholders continues to transform the way communities approach these issues. From the inception of their diversion and deflection programs aimed at helping those with substance use disorders, to their most.

Presenters:

Michelle Cejka, Adult Behavioral Health Coordinator, Schenectady County

Lieutenant Ryan Macherone, Lieutenant of Neighborhood Engagement, Schenectady City Police Department

Lauren Pierce, Behavioral Health Navigator, Schenectady City Police Department

Jennifer Hayden, Dual Recovery Coordinator, Schenectady County Office of Community Services

Thursday, January 29

Salons D/E

Diving into the Executive Budget

Budget experts from OCFS, OTDA, and DOH will discuss the Governor's budget proposal for social services in SFY 2026-27. There will be an opportunity to dig deeper into the Governor's budget as our panel of local district fiscal experts seeks to clarify the new budget proposals.

Presenters:

Laura Fiske, Director, Budget Director, NYS OCFS

Michael Kendall, Director, Bureau of Budget Management, NYS OTDA

Jeremy Russell, Medicaid Unit Manager, Bureau of Budget Management, NYS DOH

Salon F

Navigating the ABAWD Time Limit: Lessons and Best Practices from the Field

This interactive session will explore New York State's updated Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) policy and the latest implementation guidance following federal changes. Through facilitated discussion and local district examples, participants will examine effective approaches to applying exemptions, engaging participants, collaborating with workforce partners, and tracking compliance. The session will highlight best practices shared by local districts, allowing attendees to exchange ideas, troubleshoot challenges, and identify practical strategies for successful implementation in their own communities.

Presenters:

Teodora McAdoo, SNAP E&T Policy Supervisor, NYS OTDA

Stuart Allen, Temporary Assistance Specialist 1, NYS OTDA

Shernette Grant, Temporary Assistance Specialist 1, NYS OTDA

Salons G/H

Statewide Homelessness Data

Learn about statewide trends in homelessness and how the NYS HMIS Datawarehouse can be used to replace district reporting. The discussion will also offer insights into analyzing data related to homelessness.

Presenters:

Sarah Watson, Assistant Director, NYS OTDA

Linda Camoin, Assistant Director, NYS OTDA

Jason Gallacchi, Program Research Specialist, NYS OTDA

Arden Estep, Housing Specialist 2, NYS OTDA

10:30AM

- **Coffee Break • Sponsored By—Curam by Merative**

10:45am—12:15pm

Empire

Child Welfare Caselaw Review, Parts II

(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)

A review of the reported child welfare cases from July 1, 2025, to December 31, 2025. Part 2 will focus on termination of parental rights and other miscellaneous cases in the child welfare area.

Presenters:

Mark E. Maves, Esq., Counsel to NYPWA

Jennifer Sadaka, Esq., Senior Team Leader/Legal Trainer, NYC ACS

Vineet Chawla, Esq., Executive Agency Counsel/Legal Trainer, NYC ACS

Thursday, January 29

11:00am—12:15pm

Concurrent Sessions

Schenectady/Troy

The Importance of Sibling Connections for Children and Youth in Foster Care

Most children in foster care have a sibling also in care, yet despite the benefits of joint placements, an estimated half of these children are separated from one or more siblings. This workshop will provide research on New York State's sibling policies pertaining to placement and visitation. It will also compare New York's definition of a sibling with other states that provide state-run, locally administered foster care. The presentation will provide insight drawn from the lived experience of those impacted by sibling separation and highlight the value of keeping siblings connected while in care. Featuring a panel that aims to bridge the gap between lived experience and empower attendees to advocate for policies and practices that truly serve the best interests of siblings in care. Join us to learn how to build stronger, more resilient sibling connections.

Presenters:

Selena Bermejo-Romero, Advocacy Specialist 2, NYS OCFS

Kelly Pennebaker, Child & Family Services Specialist 2, NYS OCFS

Hon. Julie A. Cecile, Family Court Judge, Onondaga

Salon A

Access and Barriers to Care for New York's Youth with Complex Needs

CCBH and COFCCA are working collaboratively on a project to look at a target population of youth with complex behavioral health needs in New York. Join these panelists to hear about the analysis conducted to date on the services they access and the gaps or barriers to care that result in unmet needs and escalating conditions.

Presenters:

Kathleen Brady-Stepien, President & CEO, COFCCA

Kayleigh Zaloga, President & CEO, NYS Coalition for Children's Behavioral Health

Salon B

Ethical Decision Making

Who on your team can get your organization into ethical trouble? Anyone who makes decisions – and that is everybody. We discuss ethics, why they are important, and what can go wrong. This is especially important for public servants who are continually put in challenging situations. We will discuss an ethical decision-making process and cap it off with a real-world case study that the team will have to work through.

Presenter:

Abrahm DiMarco, DiMarco Consulting Group

Salon C

Working Collaboratively with Legal Service Providers

Understanding how districts can connect with and utilize the legal service provider in their area, including the state funding available for legal representation to prevent evictions. The session will explore best practices for sharing information, cross-training, and warm handoffs.

Presenter:

Laura French, Program Manager, NYS OTDA

Salon D

Temporary Assistance & Employment Roundtable **(Attendance Limited to State & Local DSS Only)**

Thursday, January 29

OTDA will participate in a roundtable discussion exclusively for Temporary Assistance and Employment Directors and their staff to discuss items identified by OTDA as agency priorities and topics for discussion

identified by districts.

Presenters:

Valerie Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner of Employment & Income Support Programs, NYS OTDA
Stephanie Boshart, Director, Employment & Advancement, Employment & Income Support Programs, NYS OTDA

Stacey Nodelman, Director of Temporary Assistance Employment and Income Support Programs, NYS OTDA

Salon E

Hot Topics for State & Local Fiscal Administrators

Join local fiscal administrators and state staff from OCFS, OTDA and DOH in a discussion of fiscal issues directly affecting social services districts.

Presenters:

Mary Bucca, Assistant Director, Bureau of Financial Services, OTDA

Shonna Clinton, Chief Budgeting Analyst, OCFS

Anil Thomas, Principal Accountant, DOH

Salon F

An Interactive Conversation on Child Welfare Policy

(Restricted to LDSS Commissioners & Designees—ONLY & Vendors Are Prohibited)

The interactive discussion will focus on child welfare policy and operational issues within local districts. Former OTDA and ACS Commissioner David Hansell will lead a conversation with attendees that will focus on his experiences while serving as Commissioner of ACS, and cover some of the organizational changes they were able to bring about and lessons learned. The workshop will also cover child welfare innovations occurring around the country and will include the new ACF initiative, "A Home for Every Child." Come prepared to think about how districts can keep the focus on meeting the needs of children and families, and what we might anticipate from the federal administration over the next few years.

Presenter:

David Hansell, Senior Policy Advisor for Child Welfare Services, Casey Family Programs

Salons G/H

Medicaid Eligibility Updates

In this session, members of the New York State Department of Health's Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration (DEMI) will provide updates in the following areas: review of recently issued policy guidance, update on HR1 related changes including Community Engagement and six-month renewals for Medicaid, Payment Error Rate Measurement (PERM) and the Medicaid Eligibility Quality Control Program (MEQC), and other eligibility updates.

Presenters:

Gabrielle Armenia, Director, Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration (DEMI), NYS DOH

Anne Marie Massaro, Deputy Director, DEMI, NYS DOH

Mary Frances Carr, Bureau Director, Long Term Care/SSI-Related Populations, DEMI, NYS DOH

Kathleen Johnson, Deputy Director, DEMI, NYS DOH

Daniel Washington, Eligibility Program Manager 2, DEMI, NYS DOH

Mary Lisa, Director, Bureau of Program Review, DEMI, NYS DOH

11:30am—1:15pm

Albany/Colonie, Empire, State Room, Restaurant, & Hotel Lounge

Lunch

Thursday, January 29

12:15pm—1:15pm

Board Room

(LDSS Commissioners Only From Counties with a Population of 300 Thousand or More)

Large County Lunch

1:30pm—3:00pm

Concurrent Sessions

Empire

From Filing to Fact Finding And Beyond: Litigating Abuse & Neglect Cases

(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)

An overview of all aspects of Article 10 cases from filing the petition, discovery, motion practice, fact finding and post-disposition.

Presenters:

Jennifer Sadaka, Esq., Senior Team Leader/Legal Trainer, NYC ACS

Vineet Chawla, Esq., Executive Agency Counsel/Legal Trainer, NYC ACS

Schenectady/Troy

Navigating the Federal Landscape: What is next for the Homeless Service System?

In this workshop, Dutchess County Department of Community & Family Services and CARES of NY Inc. will discuss the evolving landscape of homeless housing and Continuum of Care funding. The discussion will focus on documented federal priorities and discuss how the Dutchess County Continuum of Care and 11 other Continuums of Care within New York State are addressing shifts within federal policies and regulations.

Presenters:

Christie Bonomo-Gose, LMSW, Director of Adult Services, Dutchess County DCFS

Michelle Sandoz-Dennis, Chief Executive Officer, CARES of NY, Inc.

Denise Galway, Chief Program Officer, CARES of NY, Inc.

Salon A

Supporting Prevention Providers in New York City: The State of Prevention and What Comes Next

To better understand the challenges faced by families involved in the child welfare system, as well as the nonprofit providers that serve them, the Citizens' Committee for Children (CCC) of New York (CCC) and the Council for Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA) partnered to survey prevention services providers. A total of 301 survey responses from case planners, supervisors, program directors, and senior management across New York City agencies will help shape recommendations and advocacy strategies to strengthen the provision of prevention services.

Presenters:

Caitlyn Passaretti, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York

Katelyn Greco, COFCCA

Salon B

From Awareness to Action: Erie County's Trauma-Informed Journey

Knowing what research says is just the beginning of implementing a culture change in an organization. Our journey began in 2015 and continues today, as we navigate daily challenges in our goal of following best practices in our field. We will share the successes and challenges we have worked through. You will leave with some behavior-based techniques to implement TIC in your organization.

Presenter:

Thursday, January 29

Melissa Eloff, Staff Development Director, Erie County DSS

Salon C

What are SNAP Payment Error Rates and How Do We Improve Them?

This workshop will describe how SNAP PERs are calculated, the history of NYS's PERs, and strategies to help districts with tools to help them identify where they're making errors and ways to improve payment accuracy. The session will include a discussion of the SNAP changes resulting from the One Big Beautiful Bill (HR1).

Presenters:

Sherry Tomasky, SNAP Policy Bureau Chief, OTDA

Jamie Weeks, NYS OTDA

Salon D

Child Support Program Updates, Part I

Come hear the latest program developments, including: federal and state level updates, annual performance and collections overview, recently issued and in development policy guidance impacting districts, recently released and in development training opportunities, and program operations updates.

Presenters:

Eileen Stack, Deputy Commissioner & Director, NYS OTDA/CSS

Susanne Dolin, Assistant Director, NYS OTDA/CSS

Monique Rabideau, Assistant Director, NYS OTDA/CSS

Elizabeth McGeough Gamache, Bureau Chief - Program Operations, NYS OTDA/CSS

Karen Sicurelli, Bureau Chief - Data Management, NYS OTDA/CSS

Evelyn Addams, Bureau Chief - Policy and Training, NYS OTDA

Salon E

Integrated Eligibility System Program Update

(Vendors Are Prohibited)

During this session, attendees will learn about IES Program updates, including accomplishments to date and plans going forward.

Presenters:

Caroline Thompson, IES Program Director, NYS ITS

Dennis Packard, IES Business Change Lead, NYS ITS

Bill Capozzi, IES Deputy Technical Director and Fair Hearings workstream lead, NYS ITS

Raju Cheeti, IES EECM/FM workstream lead, NYS ITS

Brian Waage, IES Platform and Shared Services workstream lead, NYS ITS

Tim Milos, IES Program Manager, NYS ITS

Salon F

Staffing: A Focused Unit for Immediate Needs in Temporary Assistance

Fulton County DSS has developed a unit for handling crises such as homelessness, energy emergencies, no food, transportation for employment, etc. The increased need for housing has been a drain on agency resources. Fulton County DSS deployed staff to build a new unit to provide a more focused approach to the immediate need.

Presenters:

Kristina Ruggeri, Director of Financial Assistance, Fulton County DSS

Krystena Savaria, Principal SWE, Fulton County DSS

April Perez, SWE, Fulton County DSS

Salons G/H

Medicaid Eligibility Client Management System Update

Thursday, January 29

In this session, members of the New York State Department of Health's Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration (DEMI) will provide updates on the Wave 1 implementation of the Medicaid Eligibility Client Management System (MECM) and the plans for future Wave 1 enhancements that will occur in 2026.

Presenters:

Gabrielle Armenia, Director, Division of Eligibility and Marketplace Integration (DEMI), NYS DOH

Sara Oberst, Deputy Director, DEMI, NYS DOH

Jace Perkins, Eligibility Systems Modernization, Change Management, User Acceptance Testing, Appeals Solution, DEMI, NYS DOH

3:00PM

- **Coffee Break • Sponsored By—TipCo Automated Systems**

3:30pm—5:00pm

Concurrent Sessions

Board Room

Integrated Eligibility Systems Meeting

(LDSS Workgroup Only)

Empire

Your Precedent is Required. Medicaid Fair Hearing and Article 78 Decisions

(1.5 CLEs, 90 minutes)

An overview of the Fair Hearing Process and a discussion of recent/important Medicaid Fair Hearing and Article 78 decisions.

Presenter:

Morgan R. Thurston, Esq., Assistant Welfare Attorney, Onondaga County Department of Law

Schenectady/Troy

Meeting Energy Emergencies through Public Assistance

(Vendors Are Prohibited)

Cold temperatures and increasing energy costs can cause heating emergencies for many. In some cases, loss of fuel or utility service can be life-threatening. This discussion will focus on the use of PA to meet these challenging energy emergencies, covering fuel and utility emergencies as well as heating equipment emergencies, and addressing the needs of PA, non-PA, and SSI households.

Presenters:

Meshell Garcia, Public Assistance Bureau, NYS OTDA

Stacey Nodelman, Director, Public Assistance Bureau, NYS OTDA

Salon A

Fatherhood Engagement – Building Partnerships to Engage and Support Fathers Statewide

This workshop will explore how the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is building statewide partnerships to strengthen fatherhood engagement and inclusion across the child welfare system. Presenters will discuss current OCFS fatherhood initiatives, including the Statewide Fatherhood Engagement Family Policy Advisor role, the OCFS Fatherhood Workgroup, and agency collaborations designed to uplift fathers' voices and improve family outcomes. The session will highlight data, promising practices, and real examples of how intentional father engagement enhances child and family well-being. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to integrate father-inclusive approaches within their own programs and regions.

Presenters:

Thursday, January 29

Troy Grant, Statewide Fatherhood Engagement Family Policy Advisor, NYS OCFS
Candi Griffin-Jenkins, Director of Bureau of Social Determinants of Health, NYS OCFS
Tamara Rivers, Director, Buffalo Regional Office, NYS OCFS

Salon B

Stronger Together: Building Collective Resilience in New York's Public Welfare Workforce

This dynamic session reframes resilience as a shared professional capacity rooted in connection, meaning, and the unique mission of public welfare work in New York. Participants will explore the emotional labor and systemic pressures they face daily—high caseloads, policy shifts, vicarious trauma—while learning practical, realistic tools that can be used immediately on the job. Through interactive exercises, storytelling, and peer support, this training helps workers strengthen their professional identity and build habits of collective resilience that protect their well-being and improve service delivery.

Presenters:

Sharon L. James, Chief Growth Strategist, Exquisite Growth Partners

Salon C

Community Service as a Form of Resilience

Community Service through AmeriCorps strengthens communities and individuals by filling identified needs, building meaningful skills, and creating pathways to careers. AmeriCorps is the US federal agency for national service and volunteering. Programs partner with nonprofits, governments, and other organizations to place Corps members who engage in a term of service to help communities. This ecosystem allows participants and beneficiaries to forge connections and build their own opportunities to thrive. While striving toward better conditions for those in need, members also receive Life After AmeriCorps training to fuel their personal and professional development. The challenges our communities and nation face may be complex, but AmeriCorps members are empowered to Get Things Done!

Presenters:

Casey Vincelette, Program Administrator / CMS1, NYS OCFS

Michael Stevens, Director of Communications/Senior Program Administrator / CMS 2, NYS OCFS

Salon D

Child Support Program Updates, Part II

Session will provide information on system enhancements and releases, including: Integrated Eligibility System (IES) projects, Contract Administration, Data Management, Fiscal Operations, and the State Disbursement Unit.

Presenters:

Eileen Stack, Deputy Commissioner & Director, NYS OTDA/CSS

Susanne Dolin, Assistant Director, NYS OTDA/CSS

Monique Rabideau, Assistant Director, NYS OTDA/CSS

Karen Sicurelli, Bureau Chief - Data Management, NYS OTDA/CSS

Shannon Smith, Bureau Chief - Integrated Eligibility System, NYS OTDA/CSS

Jennifer Pekins, Bureau Chief - Systems Operations, NYS OTDA/CSS

Linda Ward, Bureau Chief - Contract Administration, NYS OTDA/CSS

Jennifer Sherry, Bureau Chief - State Disbursement Unit, NYS OTDA/CSS

Tiffany Gardner, Bureau Chief - Fiscal Operations and Internal Controls, NYS OTDA/CSS

Salon E

DSS Fiscal Administrators Roundtable Discussion

(Restricted to LDSS—ONLY)

Come meet with your district colleagues from around the State to discuss policies and best practices in this new and evolving fiscal environment, including impacts on SNAP, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance, Homeless Services, Child Welfare, Child Care, and other important areas.

Facilitator :

John Befus, First Deputy Commissioner, Westchester County DSS

Thursday, January 29

Salon F

Emergency Shelter Site Consideration and Development - Engaging the Not-for-Profit Community

A panel discussion on the importance of site selection for a new emergency shelter. The discussion will include site selection, working with the local government, planning board, the local community and potential neighbors. Experienced shelter providers will detail their success in building new shelters.

Presenters:

Dana Greenberg, Director, Bureau of Housing, NYS OTDA

Michael Washburn, Assistant Director HHAP, NYS OTDA

Monica Brown, Executive Deputy Commissioner, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Salons G/H

EVA in Action: New York County Success Stories and What's Next

(Vendors Are Prohibited)

Join TipCo and four NY DSS Commissioners for a dynamic panel discussion on how EVA, TipCo's AI-powered assistant for human services, is transforming agency operations. Panelists will share real-world metrics from their agencies—highlighting reduced call volumes, improved staff efficiency, reduced overtime, enhanced resident access to services and information. We'll also preview what's to come from EVA in 2026, including new capabilities designed to meet agency needs and evolving program requirements. Hear from agency leaders on how they're using AI to modernize service delivery and prepare for the future.

Presenters:

Sarah Merrick, Commissioner, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Kira Pospesel, Commissioner, Greene County DSS

Jennifer Jones, Commissioner, Lewis County DSS

Don Horan, Commissioner, Allegany County DSS

Greg Tipping, Co-Founder & Chief Product Officer, TipCo Automated Systems

6:00pm—7:00pm

Salons A/B/C

• **Cocktail Reception • Sponsored By—The Albany Marriott Hotel**

5:00pm—6:00pm

Salons D/E

Annual Banquet with Live Music by—Made in the Shade

Friday, January 30

Empire

LDSS Commissioners' Meeting

(Restricted to LDSS Commissioners Only)

7:30am—8:45am

Commissioners Only Networking Breakfast

8:45am—10:45am

Commissioners' Meeting & Policy Discussion

NYPWA President will facilitate a discussion on issues that arose during the conference and other compelling topic of interest to local commissioners.

10:45am—11:30am

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

- Coffee Break • Sponsored By—**Northwoods**

Friday, January 30:

7:30am—8:45am

Breakfast

8:00am—11:00am

Conference Registration

8:30am—9:45am

Salons A/B

State and Local Child Support Dialogue

(Attendance is limited to OTDA & LDSS Child Support Coordinator Staff)

This session is designed specifically for Child Support Coordinators and is restricted to LDSS participants only. This "wrap-up" session is an opportunity to discuss new policy and procedures that were presented at the conference and to strategize how local districts will be able to implement them, leaving time for Q&A.

Facilitators:

Maria Restivo, Child Support Enforcement, Coordinator, Ulster County DSS

A. Michelle Henry-Walker, FA Coordinator-Child Support Services, Monroe County DSS

Salon C

TA Directors Meeting

(Attendance is limited to LDSS Staff)

Directors will recap their conference experience and share any useful strategies they learned about or that they have already implemented locally.

Facilitator:

Jennifer A. Robinson, Executive Deputy Commissioner, Onondaga County DSS/ES

Friday, January 30

Salon D

Local DSS Fiscal Policy Dialogue

(Attendance is limited to LDSS Staff)

Fiscal administrators will recap their conference experience and share any useful strategies they learned about or that they have already implemented locally.

Facilitator:

John Befus, First Deputy Commissioner, Westchester County DSS

Salon F

Resilience: The Biology of Stress & The Science of Hope

This one-hour video documentary introduces viewers to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES). These studies brought about awareness of the toxic stressors that impact children and families and proven methods society has used to help break the cycles of adversity and disease.

Presenters:

Salvatore Patella, Staff Development Coordinator, Orange County DSS

Paige Rispoli, Training Specialist, Orange Co DSS

Salons G/H

Director of Services Meeting

(Attendance is limited to LDSS Staff)

Directors will recap their conference experience and share any useful strategies they learned about or that they have already implemented locally.

Facilitator:

Michelle Dowe, Deputy Commissioner, Schenectady County DSS

9:00am—11:00am

Salon E

Meeting with State Agency Counsel

LDSS attorneys are invited to meet with OCFS (9:00-10:15) and OTDA (10:15-11:00) counsel to discuss questions related to their respective areas of practice as well as those where clarification from the State agencies are needed.

Facilitator

Mark E. Maves, Esq., Counsel to NYPWA

Paperless Conference:

Conference information including the program brochure, meeting agendas, and materials will be in electronic format. Please plan to use your own laptop, tablet, or phone to access documents. You may wish to download or print them in advance. We will have printed name badges.

Legal Track Information

NYPWA Legal Topic Series for Attorneys and Non-Attorneys

All legal sessions are in-person only and will not be recorded. Local DSS attorneys are eligible for up to 10.5 hours of CLE credits with their paid registration and confirmed attendance.

Sign-in for CLEs opens 15 minutes prior to start of each session.

- **Anatomy of a Child Victims Act Case: Lessons Learned in Defending the LDSS (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.) (Limited to LDSS only)**
- **“Your Funeral, My (Re-) Trial” Ethical Issues in DSS Legal Practice (1.5 Ethics & Professionalism CLEs, 90 mins.)**
- **Child Support Case Law Update (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**
- **Child Welfare Caselaw Review, Parts I (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**
- **Child Welfare Caselaw Review, Parts II (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**
- **From Filing to Fact Finding And Beyond: Litigating Abuse & Neglect Cases (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**
- **Your Precedent is Required. Medicaid Fair Hearing and Article 78 Decisions (1.5 CLEs, 90 mins.)**

Materials will be posted at www.NYPWA.org for you to review and choose which documents to download to your device or print and bring to the conference.

Copies are not provided on-site.

Attorneys must attend in person to participate and to qualify for CLEs.

Documents will be posted approximately one week prior to the conference.

To access documents, click the "Education & Events" button on our website.

The NYPWA Financial Assistance Policy for Continuing Legal Education:

To apply, attorneys must submit a letter authorized by the local social services commissioner, explaining why this training is essential and include the unique circumstances as to why the agency and the attorney do not have the resources to cover the entire fee, and forward the request for a specific discount based on

need to info@nypwa.org

COMMISSIONERS OF LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
January 2026

ALBANY	Erin Stachewicz (10/24)	NIAGARA	Meghan Lutz (5/20)
ALBANY CY&F	Moira Manning (3/20)	ONEIDA	Colleen Fahy-Box (6/18)
ALLEGANY	Donald Horan (7/24)	ONONDAGA - CFS	Amy Cunningham (3/22)
BROOME	Nancy J. Williams (12/17)	ONONDAGA - DSS/ES	Sarah Merrick (1/14)
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ESSEX	Angie Allen (1/23)	SCHENECTADY	Brandy Hillard-Bouldin (1/23)
FRANKLIN	Michele Mulverhill (9/14)	SCHOHARIE	Donna Becker (6/19)
FULTON	Anne Solar (6/18)	SCHUYLER	JoAnn Fratarcangelo (3/13)
GENESEE	Carla Mindler (10/22)	SENECA	Michael Whirtley (6/24)
GREENE	Kira Pospesel (6/04)	STEUBEN	Kathryn Muller (12/00)
HAMILTON	Roberta Bly (7/12)	SUFFOLK	John E. Imhof (4/24)
HERKIMER	Timothy Seymour (10/11)	SULLIVAN	John R. Liddle (7/20)
JEFFERSON	Karen Marcum (8/23)	TIOGA	Elizabeth Myers (12/25)
LEWIS	Jennifer Jones (7/15)	TOMPKINS	Brittanie Earle (7/25)
LIVINGSTON	Tracy McCaughey (2/22)	ULSTER	Michael Iapoce (2/12)
MADISON	Jesica Prievo (12/23)	WARREN	Christina Mastrianni (9/23)
MONROE	Thalia Wright (4/20)	WASHINGTON	Duane Vaughn (9/25)
MONTGOMERY	Matthew Beck (7/23)	WAYNE	Lisa Graf (10/22)
NASSAU	Jose Lopez (4/24)	WESTCHESTER	Leonard Townes (2/21)
NEW YORK CITY	DSS: Molly Park (5/23)	WYOMING	Ben Dennis (6/25)
	ACS: Jess Dannhauser (1/22)	YATES	Amy Miller (4/11)

* - Montgomery (2011-2022)

12/22/2025

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