

**New York State Department of Health  
Autism Awareness and Research Fund**

**Calendar Year 2019 Report**

The following is the New York State Department of Health's (Department) report on the Autism Awareness and Research Fund. Pursuant to State Finance Law (SFL) § 95-e(2-a), the Commissioner of Health must provide a written report yearly to the Temporary President of the Senate, Speaker of the Assembly, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, Chair of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, Chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Chair of the Assembly Health Committee, the State Comptroller and the public. The report must include how the funds were expended the previous year and:

- The amount of funds disbursed from the fund and the award process used for such disbursements;
- Recipients of awards from the funds;
- The amount awarded to each;
- The purposes for which such funds were granted; and,
- A summary financial plan for the funds which shall include estimates of all receipts and all disbursements for the current and succeeding fiscal years, along with actual results from prior fiscal year.

**A. Background**

The New York State Autism Awareness Fund (Fund) is created pursuant to SFL § 95-e with the monies for such fund coming from Vehicle and Traffic Law § 404-v and Tax Law § 630-d. Vehicle and Traffic Law § 404-v authorizes the issuance of distinctive autism awareness license plates in support of autism awareness and research and requires the annual service charge received for these license plates to be deposited to the credit of the New York State (NYS) Autism Awareness and Research Fund (Fund). Additionally, Tax Law § 630-d authorizes gifts for autism awareness and research which allows, as of January 1, 2016, an individual in any taxable year to contribute to the state's Autism Awareness and Research Fund established in SFL. Such contributions are required to be credited to the Fund.

In accordance with SFL § 95-e, monies from the Fund must only be expended for autism awareness projects or autism research projects approved by the Department and all monies received during a fiscal year must be expended prior to the end of that fiscal year, to the extent practicable. SFL § 95-e(3)(b) defines "autism research project" as scientific research into the causes and/or treatment of autism, and "autism awareness project" as a project aimed toward educating the general public about the causes, symptoms, and treatments of autism.

The following is a description of activities, in calendar year 2019, to use the Fund's monies in accordance with SFL § 95-e.

**B. Calendar Year 2019**

**i. Fund Summary**

The Fund was financed through revenues generated through purchase by the public of distinctive autism awareness license plates or tax contributions. For state fiscal year (SFY) 2019-2020, a total of \$20,000 was available to the Department to support autism research and awareness projects.

## ii. Autism Awareness Project

Funding was allocated to translate the recently updated New York State Early Intervention Program's *Clinical Practice Guideline on Assessment and Intervention for Young Children birth to three years of age: Quick Reference Guide for Parents and Professionals* into Chinese. The Department's Bureau of Media, Marketing, and Creative Communication (BMMCC) work with the vendor LanguageLine Solutions to translate the Autism Quick Reference Guide.

The Autism Quick Reference Guide is used to educate the general public about the causes, symptoms, and treatments of autism spectrum disorders in young children. The guideline is intended to guide families, service providers, pediatric medical providers, and local early intervention officials with scientific evidence and expert clinical opinion on:

- effective practices for early identification of children suspected of having or diagnosed with autism;
- conducting evaluations and assessments that result in reliable information about children's developmental strengths and needs and, when possible, a diagnosis;
- determining effective intervention strategies; and
- reaching agreement on the frequency, intensity, and duration of early intervention services that will result in positive outcomes for children and families.

The Department engaged a panel of experts, including researchers, psychologists, pediatricians, developmental pediatricians, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and parents to update the Autism Clinical Practice Guideline and the Quick Reference Guide in 2017.

The updated Autism Clinical Practice Guideline and the Quick Reference Guide can be accessed electronically through the Department's website:

[https://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants\\_children/early\\_intervention/autism/](https://www.health.ny.gov/community/infants_children/early_intervention/autism/)

The updated Quick Reference Guide was translated to Chinese and posted online in December 2019. A total of \$7,493.94 was expended for the translation.

The Autism Quick Reference Guide is available in English, Spanish and Chinese for free in NYS, and hard copies for English and Spanish can be ordered through the Department's Distribution Center by emailing [ogs.sm.gdc@ogs.ny.gov](mailto:ogs.sm.gdc@ogs.ny.gov) and referencing the publication #4226 (English) or #20153 (Spanish). The Department is also actively promoting the availability of the updated Autism Quick Reference Guide broadly through the Early Intervention Program's group email, the governor-appointed Early Intervention Coordinating Council, and the Department's social media platforms.

In 2012, the Department created a "Learn the signs of Autism" poster to be shared with Early Intervention Municipalities and Providers. Using the funds for 2019, the poster was updated with correct funding information and translated to Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Bengali, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, and Yiddish. The translated posters were updated to include a photo of a child that represents the demographic. These posters are currently in the process of being printed. The printed posters will be sent to Early Intervention Programs at the municipalities, as well as agencies providing Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) services. The Department will also be sending out a notification on the BEI list serves to reach other stakeholders, such as providers and pediatricians, who will be able to order the

posters from the distribution center for free. A total of \$266.17 was expended for the translations. The estimated cost for the printing of 6,000 posters, divided by all nine languages, is \$989.00. This estimate is subject to change pending the chosen vendor. The printing of the posters will be completed prior to March 31, 2020.

**iii. Financial Plan Summary**

**Table 1: Yearly Revenue and Disbursements**

<b>SFY (Apr-Mar)</b>	<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Disbursements</b>
2015-2016	\$9,936.83	\$0.00
2016-2017	\$75,817.57	\$0.00
2017-2018	\$158,882.56	\$16,455.00
2018-2019	\$162,459.79	\$17,970.06
2019-2020	\$93,361.30*	\$8,749.11**

\*SFY 2019-20 Revenue through January 31, 2020

\*\*Total amount that will be disbursed in SFY 2019-2020 once all invoices are paid