The Research Packet For

THE SNAP TASK FORCE

Meeting of June 17, 2021

Prepared by the staff of Food Bank For New York City
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## SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) TASK FORCE

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I. United States Department of Agriculture

USDA to invest $1 Billion to Purchase Healthy Food for Food Insecurity Americans and Build Food Capacity


First Investment of the New ‘Build Back Better’ Initiative Will Serve as a Bridge from Pandemic Assistance to Food System Transformation

WASHINGTON, June 4, 2021 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced an investment of up to $1 billion, including $500 million in American Rescue Plan funding, in The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) to support and expand the emergency food network so states, food banks and local organizations can reliably serve their communities. Building on lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, USDA will enter into cooperative agreements with state, Tribal and local entities to more efficiently purchase food from local producers and invest in infrastructure that enables partner organizations to more effectively reach underserved communities. USDA believes the food system of the future should be fair, competitive, distributed, and resilient; it must support health and ensure producers receive a fair share of the food dollar while advancing equity and contributing to national climate goals. This investment represents the first part of USDA’s new Build Back Better initiative to help achieve that vision and start building a better food system today.

“Hunger is on the decline thanks to aggressive action by the Biden-Harris Administration, but we must do more to improve partnerships and infrastructure that power emergency food distribution to ensure the food provided is nutritious and supports a better food system,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “Now is the time to apply lessons
learned from food assistance activities early in the pandemic to improve how USDA purchases food and supports on-the-ground organizations with TEFAP. We will put special emphasis on reaching rural, remote and underserved communities, local and regional food systems, and socially disadvantaged farmers.”

**USDA Proposed Rule: Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the SNAP - Withdrawal**


This document informs the public that the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is withdrawing the proposed rule titled Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that published in the Federal Register on July 24, 2019.

This rule would have refined how receipt of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits may confer categorical eligibility for SNAP. The rule would have also required state agencies to include in their SNAP state plan of operations all non-cash TANF benefits and certain cash TANF benefits that confer categorical eligibility.

After reviewing and considering the comments received, the proposed rule is being withdrawn.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is withdrawing the proposed rule titled Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that was published in the Federal Register on July 24, 2019. This rule would have limited significantly the ability of states and local social services districts like NYC to grant categorical eligibility for SNAP based on receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits. Specifically, the proposed rule would have limited the type of TANF “benefits” that could be used to grant categorical eligibility to “ongoing” and “substantial” benefits. The proposed rule defined “ongoing” benefits as those that a household receives or is authorized to receive for a period of at least six months and “substantial” benefits as those valued at a minimum of $50 per month. The proposed rule also limited the types of non-cash TANF benefits that could be used to grant categorical eligibility to those that focus on subsidized employment, work supports, and childcare. Finally, the proposed rule would have required state agencies to inform FNS of all non-cash TANF benefits that confer categorical eligibility. The proposed rule would have cost $2.314 billion in administrative expenses between 2019-2023 and resulted in 3.1 million individuals in 1.7 million households losing SNAP eligibility in Fiscal Year 2020.
USDA SNAP Emergency Allotments


The attached is updated guidance to States in implementing Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020, which provides for the issuance of additional months of emergency allotments (supplements) based on a public health emergency declaration by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act related to an outbreak of COVID-19 when a State has also issued an emergency or disaster declaration.

States that have already received FNS approval for EA issuance in March and April, or April and May, are approved to continue issuing EA benefits each month. This approval to extend these EAs will remain in place until such a time as the Secretary for Health and Human Services rescinds the public health emergency declaration that was issued on January 27, 2020, under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act or the State-issued emergency or disaster declaration expires. This approval is contingent upon the State submitting the information below to the FNS Region no sooner than the 15th of each month for the subsequent month and awaiting FNS acknowledgement before sending the Emergency Allotment issuance file(s) to their Electronic Benefits Transfer processor.

USDA FACT SHEET: Updates on USDA Activities to Contain the COVID-19 Pandemic


WASHINGTON, June 9, 2021 — In January 2021, President Biden released the National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness. The plan is driven by science, data, and public health to improve the effectiveness of our nation’s fight against COVID-19 and to restore trust, accountability and a sense of common purpose in our response to the pandemic.

The National Strategy provides a roadmap to guide America out of the worst public health crisis in a century. It is organized around seven goals:

1. Restore trust with the American people.
2. Mount a safe, effective, and comprehensive vaccination campaign.
3. Mitigate spread through expanding masking, testing, data, treatments, health care workforce, and clear public health standards.


5. Safely reopen schools, businesses, and travel while protecting workers.

6. Protect those most at risk and advance equity, including across racial, ethnic and rural/urban lines.

7. Restore U.S. leadership globally and build better preparedness for future threats.

The plan calls on all parts of the federal government to contribute its resources—facilities, personnel, and expertise—to contain the pandemic. Chief among the efforts is a whole-of-government response to stand up new federally supported community vaccination centers across the country.

Programmatic Announcements:

- Jun. 8: USDA to Invest More Than $4 Billion to Strengthen Food System.
- Jun. 4: USDA to Invest $1 Billion to Purchase Healthy Food for Food Insecure Americans and Build Food Bank Capacity.
- Jun. 3 – Jun. 9: USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service approved Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) to support children who are missing school meals due to closures and to support children who are missing child care meals. For the 2020-2021 School Year, USDA has approved $27.8 billion in Pandemic EBT benefits to 30.8 million children in 48 states and territories. USDA has also approved 8 P-EBT plans for the summer of 2021. These plans will distribute an estimated $1.7 billion to 4.4 million children. The full list of states and plans can be found at the following page: State Guidance on Coronavirus Pandemic EBT (P-EBT).
- Jun. 2: 15 new stores will join the USDA Food and Nutrition Service’s SNAP Online Purchasing pilot. In Illinois, Supermercados El Guero plans to go live with three stores, and Fairplay Foods plans to go live with seven stores, while in Oklahoma, Sooner Foods plans to go live with three stores, and Hill Food Store plans to go live with two stores located in Tennessee. The full list of states and retailers participating in the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot is available on the FNS website.
- May 27 – Jun. 2: USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service approved P-EBT to support children who are missing school meals due to closures in New Hampshire and Georgia. USDA approved P-EBT to support children who are missing child care meals due to closures in Connecticut, Colorado, and Georgia.
• May 26: USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service has approved 50 states/territories for Federal Emergency Allotments totaling $3,303,149,096 for the month of May 2021, and 20 states/territories for Federal Emergency Allotments totaling $1,031,743,074 for the month of June 2021. State agencies and territories submit their Emergency Allotments Extension requests to FNS throughout the month for acknowledgement and approval as long as they continue to meet their emergency declarations due to the pandemic.

USDA: Characteristic of SNAP Households: FY19

This report is the latest in a series of annual reports providing information about the demographic and economic circumstances of households and individuals participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at both the national and state level. This report covers Fiscal Year 2019. Annual quality control data used to produce this report can be found using the link below. Key findings for FY 2019 include:

- Forty-three percent of SNAP participants were children. Thirty-two percent of SNAP participants were nondisabled, non-elderly adults. Sixteen percent of participants were age 60 or older, and 10 percent were non-elderly adults with disabilities.
- About 36 percent of SNAP households received the maximum benefit for their family size. Ten percent received the minimum benefit ($15), which is only available to households with one or two members.
- Nearly one-third (29 percent) of SNAP households had earnings in FY 2019. More than half (54 percent) of households with children had income from earnings, while 6 percent of SNAP households that included elderly individuals had earned income. Twenty-nine percent of households with adults age 18-49 without disabilities in childless households had earned income.
- The percentage of households with elderly individuals has increased by more than 10 percentage points over the last 25 years. As the percentage of households with elderly individuals has increased, income from Social Security became the most prevalent type of household income in FY 2019. Thirty-one percent of SNAP households received income from Social Security in FY 2019.

II. New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Administrative Directive (ADM) Temporary Assistance Budgeting:2021
Earned Income Disregard and Poverty Level Income Test

Purpose
This directive advises districts of a change in the percentage of the EID used in the TA budgeting process. Annually, as required by Social Services Law (SSL) 131-a(8)(a)(iii), this percentage must be adjusted up or down to reflect the changes in the most recently published Federal Poverty Guidelines from the United States Department of Health and Human Services. Additionally, this directive updates the eligibility thresholds of the Poverty Level Income Test.

Program Implications
The EID will increase from 54% to 55% effective June 1, 2021. Districts must begin using the new EID for eligible cases with ABEL budgets effective June 1, 2021, or later. ABEL supported this change effective April 11, 2021 for Rest of State (ROS) and May 16, 2021 for New York City (NYC). The eligibility criteria for a TA household to receive the EID remains unchanged.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Family Unit</th>
<th>Annual Poverty Guidelines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$12,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$17,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$21,960</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$26,500</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>$31,040</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$35,580</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$40,120</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$44,660</td>
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<tr>
<td>Each Additional Person</td>
<td>+$4,540</td>
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SNAP households continue to receive a 20% earned income disregard from their gross earned income. Please note that the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines do not change for the SNAP Program on June 1, 2021. SNAP Poverty Level changes will be adjusted on October 1, 2021, as usual.

General Information System (GIS) Message: Impact of the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)


This GIS provides guidance to local social services districts (districts) on how the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) impacts Temporary Assistance (TA), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) benefit eligibility. ERAP is an economic relief program developed to help eligible households address rental and utility arrears accrued at their primary
residence during the COVID-19 crisis. The program provides significant economic relief to low-income and moderate-income tenants and will help landlords obtain overdue rents. Approved applicants may receive:

- Up to 12 months payment of rental arrears accrued on or after March 13, 2020;
- Up to 3 months of future rental assistance if the household is “rent burdened”, which means they are expected to pay 30 percent or more of their gross monthly income towards their rent;
- Up to 12 months payment of electric or gas utility arrears accrued on or after March 13, 2020.

Payments will be made directly to the landlord/property owner and, in most instances, directly to the utility company on behalf of the tenant. Tenants, landlords/property managers, and utility companies will be notified of ERAP assistance provided on behalf of any ERAP recipient. Tenants must be eligible for ERAP rental arrears to receive utility arrears assistance or help with paying future rent through ERAP. Individuals who do not need assistance paying for rental arrears but need help paying for utility costs are encouraged to apply for HEAP or TA through their districts.

A call center is open to handle ERAP inquiries over the telephone and webchat. The telephone number is 1-844-NY1-RENT (1-844-691-7368). The webchat can be accessed from the OTDA ERAP website. Districts may refer individuals to the call center or webchat if they have questions about the program or an ERAP application they’ve filed. Both the telephone number and webchat went live on June 1, 2021.

For TA, while the ERAP application period is open, applicants/recipients (A/R) should be directed to pursue and use ERAP as an available resource as a condition of eligibility in accordance with 18 NYCRR 352.23. Information regarding ERAP can be found on the OTDA ERAP website here: https://otda.ny.gov/programs/Emergency-Rental-Assistance/

General Information System (GIS) Message Federal Assistance Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP) Resource


The purpose of this General Information System (GIS) message is to provide information to social services districts (districts) about the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBBP) that low-income families and individuals may be eligible for, starting May 12, 2021. The EBBP is a temporary program to help eligible households struggling to afford internet service during the pandemic.
The benefit provides $50 or $75 monthly discounts for broadband service, and a one-time discount of up to $100 for a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet, for those who apply and are determined to be eligible for the program. Many New Yorkers, including applicants and recipients of TA, SNAP and HEAP may be eligible for the program and may not be aware of the program or know how to apply.

Attached to this GIS is a copy of the EBBP consumer handout with information about program eligibility and steps to apply for EBBP. This information is also available online at: https://getemergencybroadband.org, or by calling 833-511-0311. Districts are encouraged to add this information to their local district websites, post the information to bulletin boards in the reception areas, and to share this information with community partners who serve low-income people. EBBP will end when the fund runs out of money, or six months after the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) declares an end to the COVID-19 health emergency, whichever is sooner.

Pandemic EBT(P-EBT) Benefit September 2020- March 2021

https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/

Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Benefits September 2020 – March 2021

New York State is providing Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) food benefits to all households with children who receive free school lunch under the National School Lunch Act and whose school was closed or operating with reduced in-school attendance due to COVID-19 during the 2020-2021 academic year.

The distribution of Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) benefits for families of schoolchildren for the period of September 2020 through March 2021 is now underway. The first cohort of benefit recipients can now see the deposits reflected in their SNAP EBT accounts, but the funds are not available for use until Tuesday, June 15, 2021.

This is the first disbursement of P-EBT funds for the 2020-21 school year. This initial disbursement includes approximately $120 million in P-EBT benefits being distributed to families of 137,000 New York City public school students.

Files for NYC public school children will continue to be processed through June. Enrollment rosters are not yet available for non-public schools and, consequently, the date of distribution for these funds is not confirmed.
State OTDA is providing a P-EBT helpline at 833-452-0096. The helpline is available from 8:30am – 5pm Monday through Friday. Translation services are available. Questions can also be submitted through the State’s contact form regarding P-EBT food benefits.

Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) benefits are administered directly by the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). All questions regarding P-EBT should be directed to the State. Receipt of P-EBT is separate from SNAP and receipt of P-EBT does not preclude clients from applying for SNAP benefits.

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions can be found here.

General Information System (GIS) Message – Public Charge Policy Update


The purpose of this GIS message is to notify social services districts (districts) that on March 9, 2021, the United States (U.S.) Department of Homeland Security (DHS) vacated the August 2019 “Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds” final rule (“final rule”). 19-LCM-09-T and GIS 20 TA/DC011 informed districts of the final rule, which changed how DHS determined if certain non-citizens are considered a public charge by permitting the receipt of federally funded Medicaid (MA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to be considered for public charge purposes.

As of March 9, 2021, the final rule is no longer in effect. As a result, the 1999 interim field guidance on the public charge inadmissibility provision (i.e., the policy that was in place before the final rule) is now in effect. Therefore, for some non-citizens, their receipt of Public Assistance (PA) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may be considered when evaluating whether they are likely to become a public charge, which may make them ineligible for admission to the U.S. or an adjustment of immigration status. The receipt of MA (except for long-term institutionalization at the government’s expense) and SNAP by noncitizens are no longer being considered as part of the public charge inadmissibility determination. There is no change to the eligibility criteria, application, or case closing processes associated with PA, SNAP and/or MA. Any individual who contacts their district office seeking to submit an application for benefits, withdraw an application, or to disenroll from benefits by closing their case must be permitted to do so.

Districts are reminded that, in accordance with 19-LCM-09-T, workers must not offer advice, recommendations, or opinions about how an individual’s receipt of benefits might impact a public charge determination. Individuals with questions specific to public charge, including but not limited to how the receipt of benefits might affect the individual’s immigration application or status, should be directed to contact their
immigration attorney and/or referred to the New York State (NYS) Office for New Americans (ONA) Hotline at: 1-800-566-7636.

Additional guidance for districts from the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) will be forthcoming. For questions or additional information, please contact the NYS OTDA Temporary Assistance (TA) Bureau by calling: (518) 474-9344 or emailing: otda.sm.cees.tabureau@otda.ny.gov or the NYS OTDA SNAP Bureau by calling: (518) 473-1469 or emailing: otda.sm.cees.snap@otda.ny.gov. For MA related questions, districts are directed to contact the NYS Department of Health (DOH) district liaison by calling: (518) 474-8887 (Upstate) or (212) 417-4500 (New York City

Monthly Caseload Statistics – March 2021


### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>This Month</th>
<th>Change From Last Month</th>
<th>Change From Last Year</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>2,790,766</td>
<td>29,997 (1.1%)</td>
<td>229,579 (9.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dollars</td>
<td>$602,878,785</td>
<td>$4.0 mil (0.7%)</td>
<td>$247.9 mil (69.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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#### Monthly Caseload Statistics – March 2021


### III. New York City Human Resources Administration
POLICY BULLETIN #21-20 -ELI  2021 Federal Poverty Level Guidelines for EAF and ESNA Categories of Assistance

The purpose of this policy bulletin is to inform all Job Center staff that the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines for Emergency Assistance to Families (EAF) and Emergency Safety Net Assistance (ESNA) Categories of Assistance (EXP-76D) has been revised to reflect the 2021 Federal Poverty Guidelines.

The 200% Federal Poverty Guidelines and the 125% Federal Poverty Guidelines that are listed on the EXP-76D are applied when a request for EAF or ESNA is made. The 2020 Federal Poverty Guidelines for EAF and ESNA are effective April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022.

In order for a household to be financially eligible for EAF, the household’s immediately available income on the date of application must be at or below the 200% Federal Poverty Guideline for their household size and the applicant must not have available resources to meet the emergency need.
The purpose of this policy bulletin is to inform staff that the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) has revised the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits Household Composition Desk Guide (LDSS-4314) to reflect the addition of the following two SNAP student eligibility criteria:

- Attend a SUNY/CUNY comprehensive college, technology college, or community college and are enrolled in a qualified career and technical education (CTE) program, or
• Attend a NYS Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) and are enrolled in a CTE program, remedial course, basic adult education, literacy, or English as a second language.

**POLICY BULLETIN #21-26-ELI - Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) 2020-2021 Cooling Assistance Component Opening Date**

The purpose of this policy bulletin is to inform Job Center, Non-Cash assistance (NCA) SNAP center, and Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) staff that the 2020-2021 Cooling Assistance Component (CAC) of the HEAP will open on **Monday, May 3, 2021**. Applications for the 2020-2021 CAC must be accepted starting on Monday, May 3, 2021. Benefits will be provided on a first come, first served basis to eligible applicants through Tuesday, August 31, 2021, or until funds are available, whichever comes first.

Applications for the 2020-2021 CAC must be processed in accordance with instructions found in 20-LCM-11 and as outlined in the New York State (NYS) NYS Home Energy Assistance Program Cooling Assistance Component reference tool.

**IV. Reports, News and Notable Items**

**Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) CNN – Biden nixes Trump Proposal that would have kicked 3 million off food stamps**

[https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/09/politics/food-stamps-biden-trump/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=4be2958a-bd04-489e-8214-3bee1d1cdd84](https://www.cnn.com/2021/06/09/politics/food-stamps-biden-trump/index.html?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=4be2958a-bd04-489e-8214-3bee1d1cdd84)
In one of its latest steps to erase Trump administration policies, the Biden administration has withdrawn a controversial proposal that could have kicked 3 million Americans off of food stamps and cost nearly 1 million children automatic eligibility for free school meals.

The proposal, issued in 2019, would have tightened the rules governing who qualifies for food stamps. It would have curtailed so-called broad-based categorical eligibility, which makes it easier for Americans with somewhat higher incomes and more savings to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, the formal name for food stamps. Republicans have long argued that this expanded eligibility option is a "loophole" that permits those with higher incomes and assets to get public assistance.

### V. Other Items

**HRA Mediations Liaison Update**

**May 2021.** As result of the COVID-19 Emergency, the HRA Mediation Model Liaison contact were reassign. Effective Immediately the below HRA liaison have been assign to assist in mediation cases

Arlene Henry: henrya@hra.nyc.gov  
Amina Serrar: serrara@hra.nyc.gov  
Sharon Russell: russellsh@hra.nyc.gov  
Erica Smith: smither@hra.nyc.gov  
Juanita Harris: harrisju@hra.nyc.gov  
Jacqueline Jackson: jacksonjacq@hra.nyc.gov  
Yama Phillips: phillipsy@hra.nyc.gov

**HRA Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Cards**

EBT replacement cards can be requested by calling the State OTDA at 888.328-6399. For anyone having difficulty accessing a replacement card by phone, cards can also be requested by setting up an online EBT account at [https://www.connectebt.com/](https://www.connectebt.com/). Clients can use this account to request a replacement card, check card balance, review transaction history, change a PIN, and more.

**HRA Info Line: 718-557- 1399**
Community Meals School Free Meals
https://www.schools.nyc.gov/school-life/food/community-meals

NYC Food Delivery Assistance
https://cv19engagementportal.cityofnewyork.us/#/display/5e7555117ad6750216160409

**Pandemic EBT**
EBT Customer Service to PIN: 888-326-6399
NYS OTDA P-EBT HELPLINE - 1-833-452-0096
NYS OTDA Email: otda.sm.eisp.PEBT@otda.ny.gov
OTDA FAQs: https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/Frequently-Asked-Questions-Pandemic-EBT.asp#header

**Snap Taskforce Mediation Model Training**
https://foodbanknyc.webex.com(foodbanknyc/onstage/g.php?MTID=ee3095908c22f448f6cb42d2b63a6a587

Tuesday, June 22, 2021 10:30 am
Eastern Daylight Time (New York, GMT-04:00)