



The Research Packet For
THE SNAP TASK FORCE

Meeting of May 20, 2021



Prepared by the staff of Food Bank For New York City
39 Broadway, 10th Fl.
New York NY 10006
Tel: 212.566.7855
Fax: 212.566.1463
www.foodbanknyc.org

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) TASK FORCE

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I. United States Department of Agriculture



USDA: USDA to Purchase \$159.4 Million in Nutritious Consumer-Ready Seafood and More for Food Assistance Programs

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/05/13/usda-purchase-1594-million-nutritious-consumer-ready-seafood-and>

WASHINGTON, May 13, 2021 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced it will purchase up to \$159.4 million in domestically produced seafood, fruits, legumes, and nuts for distribution to a variety of domestic food assistance programs, including charitable institutions. These purchases are being made utilizing funds under the authority of Section 32 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act (Pub. L. 74-320), as amended (Section 32). This is one of many actions USDA is taking to address the disruptions in the food system supply chain and worsened food insecurity resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The impacts of COVID-19 reverberated from our farms to our oceans," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "U.S. fisheries and the American seafood industry were dealt a heavy blow. Today, USDA is pleased to make the largest single seafood purchase in the Department's history. These healthy, nutritious food purchases will benefit food banks and non-profits helping those struggling with food hardship as the Biden Administration works to get the economy back on track for American families."

USDA: Pandemic EBT – Summer 2021 Hearing What They're Saying

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/pandemic-ebt-summer-2021>

April 26, 2021

On March 11, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 ([PL 117-2](#)). ARPA makes several significant changes to Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) through amendment of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act ([PL 116-127](#)), P-EBT's authorizing legislation. Among these changes is the extension of P-EBT to the summer of 2021.

Under ARPA, P-EBT is available this summer to all children who were eligible to receive free or reduced price meals during the current school year. This includes school children who received P-EBT benefits during the school year and those who were eligible for free or reduced price school meals but did not receive P-EBT benefits in the last month of the school year because they attended school in person and had access to a meal service at school. It also includes children who are newly determined eligible for free or reduced price meals during the covered summer period as well as children under 6 who are enrolled in SNAP during the summer.

In an effort to make the distribution of P-EBT benefits to eligible children as efficient as possible, USDA has developed a simple P-EBT summer plan template. The template allows states to elect a USDA-determined standard benefit that relieves states of the burden of determining their own benefit levels based on state-specific school district calendars. USDA has also developed a set of Summer P-EBT Q&As. Both documents are now available on USDA's [P-EBT website](#).

USDA: SNAP –Waiver Fair Hearing Timelines Guidance

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/snap-fair-hearing-waivers>

FNS is allowing states flexibility regarding fair hearing timeframes. As needed, state agencies may extend the fair hearings process up to 120 days from receipt of the request for fair hearings that were already in process or for which requests are received from March 1 through May 31, 2020. Also, the time frame for sending notices confirming oral withdrawal requests may be extended up to 30 days from receipt of the request for such requests received during this same time period.

USDA: USDA to Incentivize Purchase of Fruits and Vegetables under WIC for 4 Months with American Rescue Plan Funding

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/04/28/usda-incentivize-purchase-fruits-and-vegetables-under-wic-4-months>

WASHINGTON, April 28, 2021 – Participants in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) may soon see a temporary increase to their benefits for the purchase of fruits and vegetables. With \$490 million provided by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, USDA

has offered states, tribal nations and territories the option of boosting the cash-value voucher benefit by more than three times the current amount for up to four months to provide additional relief during this difficult time.

The cash-value voucher allows participants to purchase fruits and vegetables as part of their WIC food package. Under normal circumstances, the monthly cash-value voucher is \$9 per child and \$11 for pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women. The American Rescue Plan allows state agencies to temporarily provide up to \$35 per child and adult, per month. These additional funds will increase the purchasing power of WIC participants so they can buy and consume more healthy fruits and vegetables.

“SNAP is the most far-reaching, powerful tool available to ensure that all Americans, regardless of background, have access to healthy, affordable groceries,” said Stacy Dean, deputy undersecretary for food, nutrition, and consumer services. “With this American Rescue Plan funding, USDA is empowering states to make lasting improvements to their administration of SNAP so they can best help those facing food hardship and connect them with the assistance they need.”

State agencies may use the administrative funds, provided over the next three years, for a variety of purposes, including investing in technology to improve access to SNAP benefits, exploring opportunities to better reach vulnerable populations, and improving reporting on program outcomes to enable data-driven decision making. These efforts will help states better serve the more than 41 million Americans who rely on SNAP.

SNAP has proven to be a vital tool in ensuring those in need continue to have access to food throughout the pandemic. USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) recently [increased emergency SNAP benefits](#), providing an additional \$1 billion per month to an estimated 25 million in the lowest-income households. As of April 1, USDA issued approximately \$29 billion in additional SNAP benefits since the start of the pandemic. These benefits not only help SNAP recipients but also the communities where they live and the stores where they shop.

USDA: USDA Enhances Administrative Funds to States to Improve SNAP

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/news-item/fns-000221>

WASHINGTON, April 29, 2021 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing states with \$1.135 billion from the American Rescue Plan Act to support and enhance their administration of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP) at a time when millions of Americans are struggling to put food on their tables. This is a unique opportunity for states to maximize the impact of SNAP now and into the future.

II. New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance



Revision to the LDSS-4314 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits Household Composition Desk Guide

<https://otda.ny.gov/policy/directives/2021/LCM/21-LCM-05.pdf>

Purpose The purpose of this Local Commissioners Memorandum (LCM) is to inform social services districts (districts) of a revision to the LDSS-4314 SNAP Benefits Household Composition Desk Guide, (Rev. 3/21).

The LDSS-4314 "SNAP Benefits Household Composition Desk Guide" has been revised to reflect the following changes: • Under "Students" the following two additional SNAP student eligibility criteria were added to the list of criteria for determining SNAP eligibility for a student who is enrolled at least half-time in an institution of higher education: - 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.

General Information System (GIS) Message: COVID-19 May Emergency Allotments to SNAP Households

<https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2021/21DC026.pdf>

The purpose of this GIS is to advise social services districts (districts) that Emergency Allotments (EA) will be issued to all Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipient households that received benefits for the month of May 2021. The emergency allotments were authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 and are being issued in accordance with the terms of the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS), memorandums of March 20, 2020 and April 1, 2021. From March 2020 through March 2021, the EA supplemental SNAP benefits were issued only to SNAP households that did not receive the maximum benefit for the household's size.

Beginning in April 2021, all households, including those already receiving the maximum benefit for the household's size, and households that formerly would have received a monthly supplement of less than \$95, will receive a supplement of at least \$95. For households receiving supplements greater than \$95, this policy change will not affect the supplement they receive. For households receiving supplements greater than \$95,

the supplement will continue to be the difference between the amount of SNAP benefits the household received for the month and the current maximum benefit amount for the household's size. This new supplementation policy went into effect on April 1, 2021 and only applies to any future months for which EA supplemental benefits are to be issued. It is not retroactive and does not affect any months prior to April 2021.

Please Note: The maximum allotments listed below reflect the updated SNAP standards, that temporarily are in effect between January 1, 2021 and September 30, 2021.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MAXIMUM ALLOTMENT
1	\$234
2	\$430
3	\$616
4	\$782
5	\$929
6	\$1,114
7	\$1,232
8	\$1,408
For each additional member	+\$176

New York City The EA supplements will be issued in ten cohorts, based on the case toe-digit, from May 17th – May 21st, and from May 24th – May 28th. The supplemental benefits will be available the next day following issuance. The supplements will be issued using Payment Type Codes 20 and 22, and a unique authorization number. • The supplements will be issued using single issuance code 20 Daily Retroactive Benefit (PA) for PA/SNAP cases. • The supplements will be issued using single issuance code 22 Daily Retroactive Benefit (NPA) for SNAP-only cases. • The unique authorization number for these payments is 20200113. Rest of State Supplements will be authorized on a staggered schedule to all districts outside of NYC as follows: • May 11, 2021 – May 15, 2021 • May 18, 2021 – May 22, 2021

General Information System (GIS) Message: Implementation of Deferred Enforced Departure for Venezuela and Designation of Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status

<https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2021/21DC028.pdf>

The purpose of this GIS message is to inform social services districts (districts) that: (1) in accordance with the January 19, 2021 presidential memorandum, the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implemented Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for Venezuela for an 18-month period; and, (2) on March 9, 2021, the DHS Secretary designated Venezuela for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for an 18-month

period. DED for Venezuelans DED is an administrative stay of removal ordered by the president. The authority to grant DED arises from the president's constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States (U.S.). The president can authorize DED for any reason related to this authority. DED has been authorized in situations where foreign nationals may face danger if required to return to countries experiencing political instability, conflict, or other unsafe conditions, or when there are other foreign policy reasons for allowing a designated group of foreign nationals to remain in the U.S. Although DED is not a specific immigration status, non-citizens covered by DED are not subject to removal from the U.S. for the period of time they are covered under DED. The DED designation for Venezuela became effective January 20, 2021 and will remain in effect through July 20, 2022. As noted in the LDSS-4579: "Non-Citizen Eligibility Desk Aid," non-citizens granted DED are considered Permanently Residing Under Color of Law (PRUCOL) by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). If otherwise eligible, non-citizens granted DED can receive Safety Net Assistance (SNA). Non-citizens granted DED are ineligible for Family Assistance (FA), the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The following is a list of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) documents Venezuelan nationals granted DED may present to districts: • Form I-766, Employment Authorization Document (EAD), with a category code of A11, or • Any other authoritative USCIS document indicating DED granted.

The following is a list of USCIS documents Venezuelan nationals granted TPS may present to districts:

- Form I-766, EAD, with a category code of A12, or
- Form I-797, Notice of Action, that shows the approval of an EAD with a category code of A12, or
- Form I-797, Notice of Action, indicating the approval of Form I-821, Application for Temporary Protected Status, or
- Any other authoritative USCIS document indicating TPS granted.

Monthly Caseload Statistics – February 2021

<https://otda.ny.gov/resources/caseload/2021/2021-02-stats.pdf>

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

	This Month	Change From Last Month	Change From Last Year
	2,760,769	2,481 (0.1%)	200,671 (7.8%)
	\$598,876,078	-\$17.3 mil (-2.8%)	\$243.8 mil (68.7%)

Table 1
TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE CASES
February 2021

Region	Cases				
	Temporary Assistance by Program			Supplemental Security Income	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
	Total	Family Assistance-FP	Safety Net Assistance		
New York State	257,282	71,753	185,529	649,053	1,588,466
New York City	194,880	46,625	148,255	383,118	976,433
Rest of State	62,402	25,128	37,274	265,935	612,033

III. Reports, News and Notable Items

NYC Health – Good Health, Good Value: NYC Receives \$5.5 Million Grant to Make Healthy Food More Affordable to New Yorkers

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/about/press/pr2021/good-health-good-value-nyc-receives-grant-for-affordable-healthy-food.page>

The USDA grant will help make fresh fruits and vegetables accessible for more customers who use SNAP at participating local supermarkets

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to deeply impact communities across NYC, this funding will help address food insecurity.

The City has received \$5.5 million federal grant through the Fund for Public Health NYC to help increase access to nutritious foods and fight health inequities in New York City, the agency announced today.

“The pandemic has taken a financial toll on so many of our friends and neighbors,” said **Health Department Commissioner Dr. Dave Chokshi**. “But no one should go hungry in New York City or be forced to choose between what’s healthy and what’s affordable. This investment will put nutritious food on New Yorkers’ tables and contribute to a more healthy, equitable city.”

The funding will support expansion of the Health Department’s longstanding farmers market SNAP incentive program, [Health Bucks](#). Farmers market customers now get \$2 in Health Bucks for every \$2 spent in SNAP benefits, a doubling of purchasing power, up to \$10 in Health Bucks per day. Previously, customers received \$2 in Health Bucks for every \$5 spent in SNAP at farmers markets.

INSIDER Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren want to make pandemic-era food benefits for college students permanent

Reversing Trump Policy, Biden Administration Includes Lowest-Income Households in Emergency SNAP Benefits

<https://www.cbpp.org/blog/reversing-trump-policy-biden-administration-includes-lowest-income-households-in-emergency>

Last week, Democrats introduced a [bill](#) to make the pandemic-era policy of free school lunches for all kids grades K-12 permanent. Now they want to extend the pandemic-era food benefits that apply to college students, as well.

On Tuesday, a group of lawmakers, led by Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, introduced the Student Food Security Act of 2021, which addresses food insecurity on college campuses by making the pandemic expansion of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) permanent, along with pushing the government and states to take a more proactive role in combatting food insecurity.

SNAP is a US Department of Agriculture program that supplements the food budgets of low-income families, and according to The Century Foundation, the pandemic expansion of the program affects about [3 million](#) college students.

"Far too many college students struggle to meet their basic needs while they get their education - and the pandemic has made this problem even worse," Warren said in a [statement](#). "As students take on a mountain of student loan debt, they shouldn't have to choose between paying tuition and eating. Our bill will ensure college students can succeed without going hungry."

V. Other Items

HRA Mediations Liaison Update

Reminder SNAP Mediation Liaison:

As a result of the COVID 19 emergency, SNAP has had to change the organization of the manner in which cases are processed. As such we have temporarily reassigned the HRA Mediation Liaisons until further notice. Effective immediately, please instruct the CBOs to send **all mediations** to Arlene Henry, Amina Serrar, Erica Smith, Juanita Harris, Sharon Russell and Jacqueline Jackson with a copy to Yama Phillips. **Please remove Courtney Herbert**. As always Ms. Torres can be notified if mediations exceed the protocol.

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

SNAP-NYC Benefit Center: 1 (800) 829 7005, number to call for people that want to apply for SNAP and don't have access to internet or technology

SNAP rescheduling unit **phone number (718-722-4924)**

FOOD BANK'S FREE TAX FILING SERVICE IS BACK!

MINIMAL CONTACT DROP-OFF LOCATIONS & 100% ONLINE SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR YOUR SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE

<https://www.foodbanknyc.org/taxhelp/>

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/>. 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

P-EBT

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>

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>

