

**Attendance and Minutes of
The SNAP Task Force Meeting of January 18th, 2018**

ATTENDANCE SHEET

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| 1) Derek Singh – NYC HRA-FIA | 12) Langina Pena – Met Council |
| 2) Brenda Williams – HRA SNAP Outreach Services | 13) Tom Furstenberg-Carroll – Met Council |
| 3) Milagros Rodriguez – HRA SNAP Outreach Services | 14) Evalevi Lopez, Fifth Avenue Committee |
| 4) Damaris Sorrentini – HRA SNAP Outreach Services | 15) Saima Akhtar – Empire Justice Center (<i>via teleconference</i>) |
| 5) Ellen Vollinger – Food Research & Action Center (<i>via teleconference</i>) | 16) Miguelina Diaz – Hunger Free NYC |
| 6) Sayma Reza - Queens Community House | 17) Nick Posada – Fortune Society |
| 7) Adriana Mendoza – Urban Justice Center (UJC) | 18) Juana Almonte – Part of the Solution (POTS) |
| 8) Long Ho – Live-On NY | 19) Nancy Miranda - FBNYC |
| 9) Ailin Liu – Public Health Solutions | 20) Lauren Phillips – FBNYC |
| 10) Susan Salari – NYC DSS | 21) Emanuel Negrón - FBNYC |
| 11) Chris Anna Nisbet – USDA Food & Nutrition Service (<i>via teleconference</i>) | |

The meeting began at 1:13 PM

Emanuel Negrón opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and introducing all attendees. After giving an overview of the meeting's agenda, Emanuel introduced Tanya Wong, Director of Government Benefits, Legal Services New York City (LSNYC) who provided an announcement the results of recent litigation versus New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) regarding contesting WIC decisions via Fair Hearing. Tanya (LSNYC) reports that NYS DOH has agreed as terms of the settlement, training for WIC agencies and incorporating new notices that include information regarding their right to Fair Hearing. Tanya Wong (LSNYC) disseminated the "Know Your Rights" flyer in multiple languages. The flyer provides information regarding Fair Hearing rights for WIC applicants and recipients. Those interested in receiving more flyers can email twong@lsnyc.org. Emanuel introduced Ellen Vollinger from the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) to present national update.

I. Outlook in Congress on SNAP and National Updates

Ellen Vollinger from FRAC with national updates

- Imminent News of Government Shutdown – The fiscal year expires on January 19 and congress is fighting over how to keep the government open. McConnell is asking senators to be prepared to stay in session all weekend. If there is, an interruption in funding there will be a lot of pressure on the president and on congress to end the shutdown. Is there a client contingency plan? During 2010 government shutdown there was a concern for SNAP clients because of how long the shutdown lasted (17 days). Any interruptions in benefits would likely be in March. All stakeholders in touch with clients should be ready to explain what is going on and EBT processors should be prepared for any special messaging.
- Fiscal Year 19 Budget Blueprint – is not sure thing in Congress this year. The president will propose a budget for 2019, which would set goals, and framework for spending but it is likely that Congress will not attempt a budget blue print. House leadership are talking about "welfare reform" which would certainly include SNAP, but looking increasingly unlikely. Chances are slim because Senate is not interested "no appetite for it" because of lack of bi-partisan support. Speaker Ryan recently said not likely to happen.
- 2018 Farm Bill - is still a process that could go forward. House Agriculture Committee would like to mark up a bill on Valentine's Day. No Democrats on the committee have seen language from GOP. Chairman Conaway would not move a bill in committee unless he can be sure he has time to floor debate and let the whole house vote. Possible time will continue to slip. If nothing moves by late spring then there is very little time to move a farm bill before 2019 midterms. Would leave FRAC at same place for last year, continuing to provide education around Protecting and strengthening SNAP. Improving benefits levels (HR1276). Eight New Yorkers in Congress have signed on while several others have not.

II, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Emanuel Negrón introduced Chris Anna Nisbet from the USDA Food & Nutrition Service to present updates¹ from the agency. Chris Anna (USDA FNS) reported that USDA FNS is anxiously waiting to hear from the National Office for further guidance regarding the shutdown.

- Press Release: USDA Expands Flexibility, Encourages Program Integration in SNAP Administration.

USDA is expanding its use of contracted private sector staff to certify applicant households for benefits.

- Discontinuation of the Interest Income Verification Waiver

USDA is no longer approving new or extending older interest income waivers.

Emanuel provided updates regarding the SNAP Task Force Survey results. Based on survey results SNAP Task Force participants find Mediation and Policy Updates to be most important. Least important was international media and report. Moving forward the SNAP Task Force will focus on policy updates, mediation and local Media and Reports.

III. New York State Office of Temporary Assistance (OTDA)

Emanuel summarized policy items released by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Full summaries of each of these items are available on pages 4-6 of the January 2018 Research Packet (RP).

- Informational Letter 17-INF-15: State Minimum Wage Increase and its Effects to Temporary Assistance and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs
- Informational Letter 17-INF-16: Revisions to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Application/Recertification LDSS-4826 and How to Complete the SNAP Application/Recertification and Applicants/Recipient Rights and Responsibilities for SNAP (LDSS-4826A)
- GIS 17 TA/DC051: Release of Revised LDSS-4908NYC "NYC Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Change Reporting Desk-Aid" Reissued
- GIS 17 TA/DC054: SSI COLA NYSNIP Standard Benefits Amount Adjustment
- SNAP Participation and Benefits Value In October 2017

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¹ See pgs. 4-6, January 2018 Research Packet (RP) for full summaries of all USDA items covered

IV. Mediation

Mediation Analysis Report for December 2017

Emanuel Negrón (FBNYC) highlights from December 2017 Mediation Analysis Report. The report is based on 149 mediation requests submitted by Mediation Model participants in the month of November 2017. Emanuel thanked the 12 organizations represented in the report for submitting their issue logs, and opened the floor to discussion for Task Force participants.

Clarification for \$15 Clients utilizing the call 718 SNAP Now:

Tom Furstenburg (Met Council) requested clarity regarding \$15 clients utilizing 718 SNAP Now. Derek (HRA) said most S-15 clients are not required to utilize the call number. All that is required is to mail the interim report PO Box and if the case will be taken care of.

Document Issues:

Nick Posada (Fortune Society) reports issue with clients receiving requests for income though they have none. Nick stated that during the interview the worker was adamant that a client needed income. Derek (HRA) requested the case specifics and workers name to address the issue.

Recertification Issues:

Miguelina (HFN) reports that recertification clients are having submit documents like Green Cards and social security numbers for recertification. Derek (HRA) said if someone were to be added to the case, HRA would request this information.

Ailin Liu (PHS) reported issues with their cases when recertifying. Clients who believe that they have successfully recertified but case are actually closed then picked up by the state as a NYSNIP case. Clients receive \$15 until they verify their shelter cost. These cases are facing challenges with reading the NYSNIP notice. Derek (HRA) stated that households automatically enrolled in NYSNIP continue to receive \$15 if they do not verify shelter expenses. Emanuel (FBNYC) suggested performing case review to ensure that clients are budgeted accurately.

Long Ho (LiveOn Ny) reported issues with getting through and or wait times when contacting the HRA Infoline and rescheduling interviews. Derek (HRA) requested issues regarding rescheduling interviews to be sent to him via email.

IV. Human Resource Administration (HRA)

Emanuel Negrón (FBNYC) summarized the following policy bulletins released by HRA in December 2017 RP on pages 7-8.

- PB #17-107-OPE: Revisions to the Guide on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Budgeting (W-204G)
- PB #17-108-ELI: January 2018 Social Security COLA Changes for NYSNIP Households

- PB #17-106-OPE: Revision to the Notice of Documentation Required – Change in Household Circumstances Form (132S)

V. Reports and Notable Items from Other Sources

Emanuel Negrón (FBNYC) summarized the following reports included in the January 2018 RP on pages 8-10.

- How the Federal Safety Net Changed in 2017 – Urban Institute
- The Republican Threat to Food Stamps – The New Republic Digital Edition
- Governor Cuomo Unveils 15th Proposal of 2018 State of the State: Launch Comprehensive No Student Goes Hungry Program

The Meeting Adjourned at 2:35 PM