



The Research Packet For
THE SNAP TASK FORCE
Meeting of February 18, 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: Biden Administration Expands P-EBT to Benefit Millions of Low-Income and Food Insecure Children During Pandemic

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/01/22/biden-administration-expands-p-ebt-benefit-millions-low-income-and>

USDA Says SNAP Benefits Are Inadequate for Most Participants and Begins Process to Extend Emergency Allotments to States and Update Thrifty Food Plan Formula

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22, 2021 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced several efforts today to expand nutrition assistance to hard-hit families across the country due to the coronavirus pandemic. In support of President Biden's call to action on hunger and with authorities provided by Congress, USDA is increasing the Pandemic-EBT benefit by approximately 15%, providing more money for low-income families and millions of children missing meals due to school closures. Separately, in response to this national emergency, USDA is looking at ways to increase Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to all participants, especially lowest-income households and those struggling to afford a healthy diet for their families.

As a part of the end of year COVID relief package, Congress bolstered food assistance programs, including boosting monthly SNAP benefits by 15% and provided new funding for food banks and school and childcare meals.

P-EBT Benefit Increase

Upon taking office, the Biden administration took immediate action to deploy the emergency resources and new flexibilities Congress has provided. Established under Families First Coronavirus Response Act passed by Congress in March, the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) connects low-income families with kids with food dollars equivalent to the value of the meals missed due to COVID-related school and childcare closures. To date, the program has capped P-EBT benefit amounts at \$5.86 per child per school day and many households have had trouble claiming benefits. USDA will increase the current daily benefit amount by approximately 15% to tackle the serious problem of child food insecurity during this school year when need is greatest.

"As soon as the President took office, he called for immediate action on the hunger crisis gripping vulnerable families and children. The announcement today provides more food dollars directly to food insecure kids living in low-income households who are

missing critical meals due to school closures," said Stacy Dean, Deputy Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services.

SNAP Emergency Allotments to States

Separately, USDA will begin working with the Department of Justice (DOJ) to review its authority to allow states to provide extra SNAP benefits through Emergency Allotments to the lowest-income households. Last spring, Congress passed emergency increases to SNAP benefits to help address food insecurity during the pandemic. But those benefit increases have not been made available to the lowest-income households who make up 37% of SNAP households. Increasing SNAP benefits will not only help families most in need, but it is also a critical and effective form of economic stimulus. A [recent USDA study](#) found that in a slow economy, "\$1 billion in new SNAP benefits would lead to an increase of \$1.54 billion in Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—54% above and beyond the new benefits." Moreover, SNAP benefits reduced the poverty rate by nearly 8% in 2009 and had a significant effect on reducing child poverty.

II. New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance



[New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance](#)

General Information System (GIS) Message: 200% of Poverty Income Standards Chart – June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2022

<https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2021/21DC007.pdf>

February 10, 2021, The purpose of this GIS is to inform social services districts (districts) that the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently published its annual update of the HHS poverty guidelines to account for increases in prices over the last calendar year as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). The figures on the chart provided below represent 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for a given family size, both by monthly and annual income. These revised figures are effective June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2022. The revised chart should be used when determining eligibility for TANF-funded "non-assistance" programs consistent with the provisions outlined in 00-LCM-20 TANF Services for Individuals and Families with Incomes up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and by 16-LCM-03 which made changes to the LDSS-4725 TANF Services Application/Certification Review Form (Rev. 2/16); the LDSS-4726 TANF Services Application/Certification (Rev. 2/16); and, the LDSS-4770 TANF Youth Services Application (Rev. 2/16).

**200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines Chart
June 1, 2021 through May 31, 2022**

Family Size	Monthly Income	Annual Income
1	\$2,146	\$25,760
2	\$2,903	\$34,840
3	\$3,660	\$43,920
4	\$4,416	\$53,000
5	\$5,173	\$62,080
6	\$5,930	\$71,160
7	\$6,686	\$80,240
8	\$7,443	\$89,320

For family units with more than eight members, add \$756 monthly or \$9,080 annually for each additional family member.

Please note the above guidelines are applicable to the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia.

The 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines do not go into effect for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) on June 1st. Poverty guidelines for SNAP are updated each year on October 1st.

General Information System (GIS) Message: 2021 SSI COLA NYSNIP Standard Benefit Amount Adjustments

<https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2021/21DC008.pdf>

The Social Security Administration (SSA) annually evaluates the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) data to determine if a cost of living adjustment (COLA) should be made to RSDI (regular Social Security and Social Security Disability benefits) and federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to reflect an increase or decrease in the cost of living. Historically, when COLA adjustments have been required, the adjustments take place effective January 1st of each year. Effective January 1, 2021, RSDI and SSI recipients will receive a 1.3% COLA increase. SSA and SSI benefits will be increased accordingly.

Purpose The purpose of this GIS is to inform social services districts (districts) about the effect of the annual Social Security COLA on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, and, particularly, on the benefits of SNAP recipients participating in the New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP) benefits.

Information Letter (INF) Changes in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Summary of Other Available Federal and State Tax Credits for Tax Year 2020

<https://otda.ny.gov/policy/directives/2021/INF/21-INF-03.pdf>

The purpose of this Informational Letter (INF) is to inform social services districts (districts) of changes in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and to provide districts with a summary of other available federal and State tax credits for Tax Year 2020. Districts are encouraged to inform clients and other low-income households of tax credits, the need to file federal and State income tax returns to claim these tax credits, and free tax filing services available through Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites, Facilitated Self Assistance (FSA) sites, and free online filing resources. Details on how to obtain EITC outreach materials are found in Part III of this INF.

Background The EITC represents a significant potential tax benefit and work support for struggling households with earned income. As in previous years, New York State, New York City and federal EITCs are considered exempt both as income and as a resource for purposes of Temporary Assistance (TA), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) eligibility. These tax credits are an important anti-poverty tool which can dramatically increase the economic resources available to eligible lower-income workers. Workers who qualify for EITCs and file both State and federal tax returns can receive tax credits totaling as much as \$8,658 (or \$8,991 if including New York City EITC). In addition, households that qualified but failed to claim EITCs may file retroactively for up to three prior years.

Administrative Directive Memorandum (ADM) New snap –Only Application Form

<https://otda.ny.gov/policy/directives/2020/ADM/20-ADM-14.pdf>

Summary Although New York State has the highest participation rate among adults who are age 60 or older or disabled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) of any state, historically, the participation rate among this population has been lower than among the general population. One reason suggested for the lower participation rate among adults who are age 60 or older or disabled is the length and complexity of the application forms. II. **Purpose** The purpose of this ADM is to introduce a new SNAP-only application form, the LDSS-5166: "Application/Recertification for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits". This form is designed to be used by households in which all adults are 60 years or older, or disabled, and in which no adult has earned income, and will be the application and recertification form routinely used for the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) when the ESAP is launched in 2021. (Further information, training and a directive about the ESAP will be provided prior to implementation.) As noted above, this new form may be used only to apply and recertify for SNAP benefits. It may not be used to apply for Temporary Assistance (TA) benefits.

Applicants can send the application and documents to MARU by fax at **(917)639-1111**
 Applicants can mail application and documents to:

Division of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Services
Mail Application & Referral Unit (MARU)
 P.O. Box 29197
 Brooklyn NY, 11201

Monthly Caseload Statistics – December 2020

<https://otda.ny.gov/resources/caseload/2020/2020-12-stats.pdf>

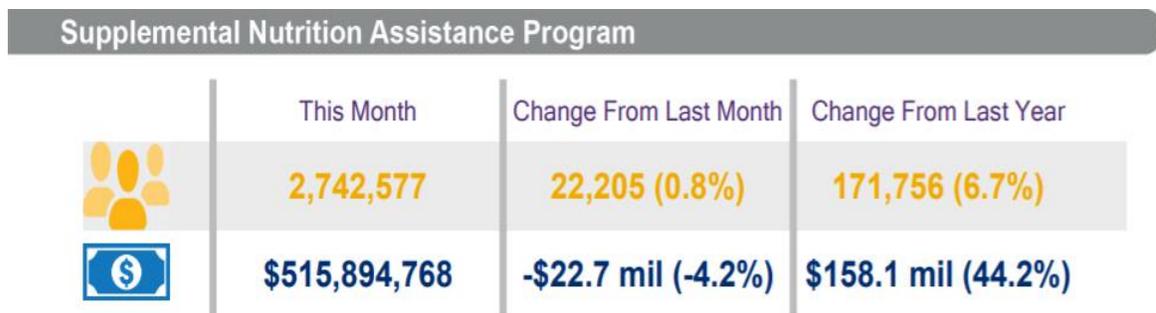


Table 1
 TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE CASES
 December 2020

Region	Cases				
	Temporary Assistance by Program			Supplemental Security Income	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
	Total	Family Assistance-FP	Safety Net Assistance		
New York State	262,497	73,856	188,641	653,456	1,580,350
New York City	197,457	47,577	149,880	385,638	968,509
Rest of State	65,040	26,279	38,761	267,818	611,841

III. Reports, News and Notable Items

USDA Press Releases

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

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/temporary-increase-maximum-allotments-due-covid-19-revised-12282020>

USDA Deploys 127 Disaster, Public Health Specialists to Assist with Federal Response

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10, 2021 — In January 2021, President Biden released the [National Strategy for the COVID-19 Response and Pandemic Preparedness](#) (PDF, 24 MB). 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.
4. Immediately expand emergency relief and exercise the Defense Production Act.
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. **The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responding** to the President's call to action. In addition to personnel, USDA is offering its facilities, cold chain infrastructure, public health experts, disaster response specialists, and footprint in rural areas and Tribal communities across the country.

Food Research & Action Center

Food Research & Action Center

<https://frac.org/news/frac-applauds-bideneopubliccharge02042021>

FRAC Applauds Biden's Executive Order to Begin Work to Reverse Public Charge Rules

WASHINGTON, February 4, 2021 — The [Food Research & Action Center](#) (FRAC) commends President Biden for signing Tuesday's [Executive Order](#) that paves the way for undoing the harms of the Trump administration's draconian public charge rules. These rules have deterred millions of immigrants from seeking desperately needed nutrition, health, and housing assistance and led to a hungrier, sicker, and poorer nation.

Hunger in this country has spiked dramatically as a result of the public health and economic fallout of COVID-19, and things would be far worse if not for federal nutrition programs. Through this Executive Order, the Biden administration is **signaling its** commitment to ensuring that all families in need are able to benefit from these programs as this crisis continues and beyond.

In partnership with Protecting Immigrant Families, Advancing Our Future Campaign, FRAC and its network of thousands of grassroots anti-hunger advocates have been calling for a reversal of the public charge rules that have fueled decreased participation among eligible families in vital programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid. The harmful ripple effects of these rules extend to the health and well-being of families as well as local economies.

Children Under Six Missing Out on Childcare Meals During COVID Are Now Eligible for Critical Nutrition Assistance, Under New USDA Guidance

<https://frac.org/news/newpebtguidance>

WASHINGTON, January 29, 2021 –The [Food Research & Action Center](#) (FRAC) is pleased that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has released new guidance to ensure more children receive the nutrition they need for their health, learning, and development through the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program. P-EBT provides nutritional resources to families who have lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to school closures. Families will receive money on a new or existing EBT card to help fill the school meals gap.

Under the guidance, children under 6 years old who live in households that participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) now will be eligible for P-EBT benefits when their childcare center is closed. This valuable new benefit will bring a

Since its inception, P-EBT has provided **nearly \$10.7 billion** in nutrition benefits from March 2020 through September 2020 to millions of families who lost access to free and reduced-price school meals when schools closed due to the pandemic. Proximately \$4 billion in money for food to families of young children.

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Food Assistance in COVID Relief Bills Would Reduce Hardship, Provide Economic Stimulus

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/food-assistance-in-covid-relief-bills-would-reduce-hardship-provide>

The nutrition changes that the House Agriculture Committee and Education and Labor Committee are considering this week to meet their reconciliation instructions under the House budget resolution include key investments to mitigate extraordinarily high levels of hunger and hardship.¹¹ The committees should quickly approve the bills, and the full House and Senate should enact the changes as part of the broad COVID relief package that Congress will consider in coming weeks. The major food assistance provisions in the two bills would:

- Extend through September the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefit increase in December's COVID relief package, which would help millions of families and children have enough to eat while injecting additional, high "bang-for-the-buck" stimulus into the economy;
- Help guard against food hardship among children this summer by allowing states to continue the Pandemic-EBT (P-EBT) program, which provides grocery benefits to replace meals that children miss when schools are closed;
- Invest in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to modernize the program, support innovative service delivery models, and temporarily raise the amount of fruit and vegetables participants can obtain;
- Increase federal resources for state administrative costs to help states accommodate the increased demand for SNAP; and

- Help address elevated food need in Puerto Rico and certain other U.S. territories.

IV. 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 and Sharon Russell with a copy to Courtney Herbert. **Also, please copy April Torres once Mediation requests reach Level 4.**

Arlene Henry: henrya@hra.nyc.gov

Amina Serrar: serrara@hra.nyc.gov

Sharon Russell: russellsh@hra.nyc.gov

Erica Smith: smithere@hra.nyc.gov

Juanita Harris: harrisju@hra.nyc.gov

Courtney Herbert: herbertc@hra.nyc.gov

April Torres: torresap@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/>

Intensive SNAP Eligibility Training Offered by Food Bank for New York City

Date: February 23, 2021

Time: 10:00 am - 4:30 pm

Location: Cisco Webex

Link to register:

<https://foodbanknyc.webex.com/foodbanknyc/onstage/g.php?MTID=e3f972821e7c5dc7f10e20522879a3c70>

ACCESS HRA webinars.

Offer an in-depth presentation of ACCESS HRA or the Provider Portal, you can sign up using the links below

- The **ACCESS HRA Cash Assistance Webinar** will simulate the Cash Assistance (CA) application process via ACCESS HRA. You can sign up for an upcoming session by clicking [HERE](#).
- The **ACCESS HRA SNAP Webinar** will simulate the SNAP application process via ACCESS HRA. You can sign up for an upcoming session by clicking [HERE](#).
- The **ACCESS HRA Overview Webinar** offers a general overview of the ACCESS HRA client facing website and the ACCESS HRA Mobile App. You can sign up for an upcoming session by clicking [HERE](#).
- The **ACCESS HRA Provider Portal Webinar** offers an in-depth presentation of the Provider Portal, the case management tool that allows participating organizations to view real-time case information for clients that have provided consent. You can sign up for an upcoming session by clicking [HERE](#).
- The **ACCESS HRA One-Shot Deal Webinar** will simulate the One-Shot Deal (OSD): One Time Emergency Payment application via ACCESS HRA. You can sign up for an upcoming session by clicking [HERE](#).

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.

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>