SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) TASK FORCE

Contents

I. United States Department of Agriculture ................................................................. 3
   Reopening of Comment Period: SNAP Requirements for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents .................................................................................................................. 3
   Providing Regulatory Flexibility for Retailers in SNAP ........................................... 4
II. New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance ......................... 5
   Change to Six Most Common Non-English Languages Spoken by Limited English Proficient (LEP) Population in New York State .............................................................. 5
   Monthly Caseload Statistics .................................................................................... 5
III. New York City Human Resources Administration ............................................. 6
   POLICY BULLETIN # 19-14-OPE - REVISED INFORMATION ON THE FAIR FARES NYC PROGRAM. For FIA, HASA, AND ODV STAFF ................................................................. 6
   POLICY BULLETIN # 19-19-ELI (This Policy Bulletin Replaces PB#18-81-OPE) - INCREASED HOMELESS INCOME DEDUCTION ........................................................................... 6
   POLICY BULLETIN # 19-15 OPE - INTRODUCTION OF A NEW FORM: CLIENT SERVICE TIPS (FIA-53C) ....................................................................................................... 6
IV. Reports, News and Notable Items ......................................................................... 9
   CityLimits.Org - Trump Admin.’s Food Stamp Move Could Cost City Economy $150M .............................................................................................................................. 9
   ERS - Higher Vehicle Exclusions and Asset Limits in SNAP May Encourage Asset Accumulation Among Low-Income Households ......................................................... 9
   ERS - Grocery Store Prices Rose for the First Time in 3 Years in 2018 ...................... 10
   Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: Behavioral Science Shows Why Work Requirements Don’t Work ........................................................................................................... 11
   FRAC - SNAP Participation Lags Among Eligible Seniors in Every State, Putting Them at Greater Risk of Hunger ....................................................................................... 12
I. United States Department of Agriculture

Final Rule: SNAP Student Eligibility, Convicted Felons, Lottery and Gambling, and State Verification Provisions of the Agricultural Act

https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/fr-041519

This final rule implements four sections of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill), affecting eligibility, benefits, and program administration requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

- Section 4007 clarifies that participants in a SNAP Employment & Training (E&T) program are eligible for benefits if they enroll or participate in specific programs that will assist SNAP recipients in obtaining the skills needed for the current job market.
- Section 4008 prohibits anyone convicted of Federal aggravated sexual abuse, murder, sexual exploitation and abuse of children, sexual assault, or similar State laws, and who are also not in compliance with the terms of their sentence or parole, or are a fleeing felon, from receiving SNAP benefits.
- Section 4009 prohibits individuals with substantial lottery and gambling winnings from receiving SNAP benefits. Section 4015 requires all State agencies to have a system in place to verify income, eligibility, and immigration status.

Reopening of Comment Period: SNAP Requirements for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents

https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/fr-040819

This proposed rule seeks to amend the regulatory standards by which the U.S. Department of Agriculture evaluates State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) agency requests to waive the time limit and to end the unlimited carryover of able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) percentage exemptions. The proposed rule would encourage broader application of the statutory ABAWD work requirement, consistent with the Administration's focus on fostering self-sufficiency. The original comment period for this proposed rule ended on April 2, 2019. FNS seeks to reopen the comment period on April 8, 2019, for a period of 3 days ending April 10, 2019.
Providing Regulatory Flexibility for Retailers in SNAP

https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/fr-040519

Using existing authority in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, the Agency proposes to modify the definition of the term “variety” as it pertains to the stocking requirements for SNAP authorized retail food stores. These proposed changes would provide retailers with more flexibility in meeting the enhanced stocking requirements of the 2016 final rule which were mandated by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill), and align SNAP regulations with the requirements expressed in the Consolidated Appropriations Acts of 2017 and 2018. This proposed rule does not modify any other provisions or components of the 2016 final rule, “Enhancing Retailer Standards in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).”

This rulemaking would provide regulatory flexibility to 187,000 smaller authorized retailers (e.g. convenience stores, small grocery stores, combination stores, etc.) in meeting the enhanced stocking requirements of the 2016 final rule. As discussed below, the proposed changes would require the average small store to add six (6) fewer items to their stock in order to meet the new stocking requirements of the 2016 final rule, providing a savings of $16.1 million to retailers in fiscal year (FY) 2018 and approximately $22.5 million over five years, FY 2018 through FY 2022, relative to the costs of the 2016 final rule.
II. New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Change to Six Most Common Non-English Languages Spoken by Limited English Proficient (LEP) Population in New York State


Effective immediately, the six most common non-English languages are Spanish, traditional Chinese, Russian, Haitian-Creole, Korean and Bengali. Italian is no longer one of the six most common non-English languages. Accordingly, translations of vital documents into Bengali will be made available and Italian versions of these documents will no longer be posted online. Translated versions of the documents in the previously referenced six languages and Arabic can be downloaded from the OTDA intranet site at http://otda.state.nyenet/ldss_eforms/ and from the OTDA public-facing website at http://otda.ny.gov/programs/applications/

Monthly Caseload Statistics

POLICY BULLETIN# 19-14-OPE - REVISED INFORMATION ON THE FAIR FARES NYC PROGRAM. For FIA, HASA, AND ODV STAFF

Beginning March 19, 2019 eligible individuals will be able to enroll in Fair Fares NYC through Access HRA and will be mailed their fair Fares MetroCard. In addition POS and Streamlined POS (SPOS) WILL display a Fair Fares alert in the CA application interview, CA recertification interview, SNAP APPLICATION AND RECERTIFICATION INTERVIEWING ACTIVITIES WHEN ANY HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR A FAIR FARES NYC METRO CARD HAS NOT YET ENROLL. HRA ON THEIR END FIA, HASA, SEE THIS THE ALERT WILL READ- HOUSEHOLD MEMBER IS ELIGIBLE FOR FAIR FARES HALF-PRICE METRO CARD.

THE ALERT IN POS WILL APPEAR IN THE ADDRESS INFORMATION SCREEN. THE ALERT DOES NOT GIVE INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBILTY STATUS; IT WILL ONLY ALERT THAT A HOUSEHOLD MEMEBR IS ELIGIBLE.

Individuals can go to Office to apply for Fair Fares NYC.

POLICY BULLETIN # 19-19-ELI (This Policy Bulletin Replaces PB#18-81-OPE) - INCREASED HOMELESS INCOME DEDUCTION

SNAP BUDGETING: The purpose of this policy bulletin is to inform Job Center, HIV/AIDS Services Administration (HASA) and Non-Cash Assistance (NCA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Center staff of an increase in the SNAP homeless income deduction from $143.00 to $147.55 per month.

Section 4004 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 established that the homeless income deduction be indexed to inflation each year beginning in federal fiscal year 2019.

States were required to make this change in their systems as soon as possible. The Welfare Management System was programmed to reflect the change in budgets with Shelter Type code 23 effective April 1, 2019. Cases that resulted in an increase in SNAP benefits due to the increase in the homeless income deduction were re-budgeted centrally through a mass re-budget on March 22, 2019. Cases that were centrally re-budgeted have a 04/19 budget effective date and can be identified by the unique authorization number 20190051.

POLICY BULLETIN #19-15 OPE - INTRODUCTION OF A NEW FORM: CLIENT SERVICE TIPS (FIA-53C)

THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORM IS TO PROMOTE BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICES.

CLIENT SERVICE TIPS (03/21/2019)
## CLIENT SERVICE TIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tip</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smile</strong></td>
<td>Build excellent client relations by welcoming the client with a smile. A genuine smile means the same in all languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Respectful</strong></td>
<td>Being respectful builds and sustains positive relationships. Greet the client appropriately. Be polite and courteous. Respect differences (global, cultural, gender, etc.). Making eye contact shows respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Show Enthusiasm</strong></td>
<td>Maintain a positive attitude and show genuine interest. It is not necessary to act overly excited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be Trustworthy</strong></td>
<td>Trust is the foundation for healthy personal and business relationships. Trustworthiness requires people to be consistent in their appearance, attitude, communication, and actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Look, Listen, and Think Before You Speak</strong></td>
<td>Facial expressions combined with spoken words may reveal your true feelings and create either trust or mistrust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use Personal Appearance (clothing/grooming), Attitude, Vocal Tone, and Words to Build a Rapport with Your Listening Audience</strong></td>
<td>All of these things affect a client’s perception of you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avoid Using Agency OR Technical Terminology when Communicating with Clients</strong></td>
<td>Clients may not be familiar with technical terms and FIA buzz-words. Use words the client can understand and explain agency-specific terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do not get Angry</strong></td>
<td>If a client is angry and begins to complain, let them vent. Most likely it is not a personal attack on you. Ask the client questions to show that you care. You might ask them to repeat the problem just to make sure you understand. Never do anything to make the situation worse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thank Clients for their Understanding and Cooperation</strong></td>
<td>Saying thank you shows appreciation and encourages kindness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Fair Fares NYC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRONX</th>
<th>BROOKLYN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1309 Fulton Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10456 | 444 Thomas Boyland Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11212 |
| MANHATTAN   | QUEENS        |
| 413 East 120th Street  
New York, NY 10035 | 114-02 Guy Brewer Boulevard  
Jamaica, NY 11434 |
| STATEN ISLAND |                |
| 1 Edgewater Street  
Staten Island, NY 10305 |                |

**OFFICE HOURS**: Monday-Friday, 8 AM to 7 PM. • Closed Holidays

- ساعات عمل المكتب: من يوم الاثنين إلى يوم الجمعة من الساعة 8 صباحًا حتى الساعة 7 مساءً. • حظي أيام الأعياد والإجازات
- أوقات العمل: من الاثنين إلى الجمعة من الساعة 8 صباحًا حتى الساعة 7 مساءً.
- • ميعين ليوم الفرح (Bengali)
- **HORAIRES D’OUVERTURE**: Lundi-vendredi, de 8 h à 19 h. • Fermé les jours fériés
- **LE BIWO A LOUVRI**: Lendi jiska vandredi, ant 8 AM ak 7 PM. • Fèmon Jou Forye
- **GODZINY PRACY**: poniedziałek-piątek, 8:00 do 19:00. • Zamknięte w święta
- **ВРЕМЯ РАБОТЫ**: понедельник – пятница, с 8:00 до 19:00. • Закрыто в праздничные дни.
- **HORAS LABORALES**: Lunes-viernes, 8 AM a 7 PM. • Cerrado los días festivos
- **办公时间**: 周一 - 周五，早上 8:00 至晚上 7:00。• 节假日关闭
- **營業時間**: 週一 - 週五，上午 8:00 至晚上 7:00。• 節假日休息
- • مفتوحة يومياً من الساعة 8 صباحًا حتى الساعة 7 مساءً (Arabic)
IV. Reports, News and Notable Items

CityLimits.Org - Trump Admin.’s Food Stamp Move Could Cost City Economy $150M
https://citylimits.org/2019/04/11/trump-admin-s-food-stamp-move-could-cost-city-economy-150m/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eid=d48a1a04-f610-4023-9395-83e0ca26eb3a

A Trump Administration proposal potentially cutting food stamps could cost New York City almost $100 million a year in lost benefits, resulting in more than $150 million annually in lost business, say city officials.

In formal comments opposing the plan, the Office of the Mayor told federal officials nearly 50,000 city residents would lose a monthly average of $151 in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Some 9,400 NYC supermarkets, bodegas, farmers markets and other retailers that accept SNAP benefits would lose sales, government data show. The lost sales also threaten jobs and tax revenues, the city says.

“We may be saving a few bucks by not paying them SNAP, but we’re generating costs that will eventually end up as public costs for taking care of people,” says Nicholas Freudenberg, director of CUNY’s Urban Food Policy Institute.

Forty percent of the city’s ABAWD population is Black and 28 percent is Latino, according to the mayor’s office. While the city’s overall ABAWD unemployment rate was 6.4 percent in 2017, it was 10.8 percent for Blacks and 7.9 percent for Latinos. In January, 28.6 percent had no permanent address, and 4.4 percent were living in shelters.

ERS - Higher Vehicle Exclusions and Asset Limits in SNAP May Encourage Asset Accumulation Among Low-Income Households

Eligibility for USDA’s SNAP is based on a family’s level of income and assets, and the basic rules are set by the Federal Government. States can opt to align SNAP rules regarding vehicle ownership to those of the TANF program, SSI, and/or Medicaid, as long as the vehicle rules in those programs are not more restrictive than the Federal SNAP rules.

Research indicates that vehicle ownership may help increase employment, because households with reliable transportation can access better jobs further from home. Households with some savings are also better equipped to weather temporary drops in
income, or to cover unexpected expenses. The study found no overall effects of higher vehicle limits on liquid assets, such as checking and savings accounts, or vehicle assets. The study did find, however, that removing the asset limit through BBCE increased liquid assets by as much as 20.8 percent and increased the probability of owning a vehicle by 3 percentage points.

Eliminating the asset limit for SNAP eligibility increased liquid asset holdings by 24.7 percent in metro areas, but had no significant effect in non-metro areas. However, non-metro households increased their vehicle ownership by 5.1 percentage points when the asset limit was removed.

ERS - Grocery Store Prices Rose for the First Time in 3 Years in 2018

Although the average increase in food-at-home prices from 2017 to 2018 was moderate, increases varied across the grocery aisle. Prices for nonalcoholic beverages were flat in 2018, and prices for dairy products fell by 0.5 percent. The other major food categories all posted price increases. Increases were largest for eggs (10.8 percent from 2017) and fish and seafood (2.1 percent from 2017). These categories represent relatively small shares of the average American’s grocery basket. Prices for foods that consumers tend to spend more on rose at rates of 1.1 percent (as fresh vegetables did) or less. Prices for sugar and sweets, meats, and cereal and bakery products rose only 0.4 percent in 2018.

On the other hand, prices for foods purchased in restaurants and other food-away-from-home eating places rose 2.6 percent in 2018, after increasing in 2016 and 2017, as
well. Food costs represent a smaller share of the prices consumers pay at eating places compared with grocery store prices. Labor costs—for cooks, servers, dishwashers, and other employees—make up a larger share of costs for eating places. Rising restaurant prices primarily reflected increases in labor and rental costs from 2016 to 2018.

![Prices at grocery stores (food at home) and at eating-out establishments (food away from home) rose from 2017 to 2018](image)


Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: Behavioral Science Shows Why Work Requirements Don’t Work

[https://www.cbpp.org/blog/behavioral-science-shows-why-work-requirements-dont-work](https://www.cbpp.org/blog/behavioral-science-shows-why-work-requirements-dont-work)

A key tenet of behavioral science is that context matters when people make decisions and, for those in poverty, the context is one of chronic scarcity — of resources, time, and attention. People living in poverty often face one crisis after another, draining the mental resources needed to solve new problems and plan for the long term.

Therefore, according to the report’s authors from ideas42, which specializes in using behavioral science to improve public benefit and related programs, work requirements are inappropriate because they:

1. **Dramatically raise the cognitive costs of participating in a program by imposing burdensome compliance demands.** Work requirements increase the burden of accessing benefits, such as by imposing complex requirements for recipients to report their work activities or exemptions. Recipients whose cognitive resources are
already taxed easily can miss an important detail required to maintain benefits. Ultimately, those who need the programs the most will lose access to them.

2. **Remove slack from the already complex lives of people living with low incomes.** Policies informed by behavioral science would create a cushion of resources, time, and attention to help people focus on efforts to escape poverty. The added rules and complexities of work requirements don’t reflect the reality of the lives of those in poverty: children get sick and many jobs don’t have paid sick leave; while families and individuals must make tough decisions between complying and taking care of their other needs.

3. **Promote harmful narratives among program staff and administrators that disempower participants.** Work requirements propagate a false idea that some people in poverty don’t deserve assistance. Such policies recast case workers and eligibility workers as accountants and gatekeepers, who focus on compliance rather than on the needs of families and individuals.

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**FRAC - SNAP Participation Lags Among Eligible Seniors in Every State, Putting Them at Greater Risk of Hunger**


Millions of older adults who struggle against hunger are missing out on a critical program to help put food on the table, according to interactive data tools produced by the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), with support from AARP Foundation. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps low-income seniors afford the food they need for their health and well-being, yet FRAC’s data tools show that nationally, close to three in five eligible older adults, on average each month, are missing out on the benefits of SNAP. FRAC’s interactive map and tables highlight SNAP participation rates among eligible seniors (60+) and for comparison, participation rates among all eligible individuals, for each state. SNAP participation rates among eligible seniors vary across the nation, but all states have substantial room to reach more seniors with the program.
Highest- and Lowest-Performing States for SNAP Participation Among Eligible Seniors on Average Each Month, FY 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Five States</th>
<th>Bottom Five States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>70% (+/- 6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>68% (+/- 7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>67% (+/- 6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>62% (+/- 6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>60% (+/- 6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See how Your State Compares:

- % of eligible seniors benefiting from SNAP in an average month in FY2015
- Average monthly SNAP benefit for senior households in FY2017

Nationally: 42% (Average monthly benefit: $125)
New York: 70% (Average monthly benefit: $179)

SOURCE: Data provided by USDA-FNS, and FRAC analysis of FY2017 SNAP Quality Control data.