



The Research Packet For

# THE SNAP TASK FORCE

Meeting of September 17, 2020



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## SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) TASK FORCE

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### I. United States Department of Agriculture



## **USDA: FRAUD ALERT: USDA Warns of Text Message Scam Targeting SNAP Recipients**

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFNS/bulletins/29fae45?reqfrom=share>

**WASHINGTON, September 10, 2020** – USDA issued the following notice today to protect SNAP participants, after receiving reports of several possible SNAP Fraud attempts:

*Be aware of a scam using texting to obtain your personal information. The text might say you were chosen to receive food stamps or SNAP. If you do not know if a request for information about SNAP is real or not, contact your local SNAP office.*

*Never share personal information with individuals or organizations that you do not know. Personal information includes your social security number, bank information, or SNAP electronic benefits transfer card or PIN number.*

*If you think the text is a scam, do not reply at all. Just delete.*

If SNAP participants are unsure if a request for information is legitimate, USDA advises they contact their local SNAP office. If they do not know their local SNAP office, participants should contact their state agency. State contact information is available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>.

To stay on top of potential scams, please visit USDA's SNAP scam alert webpage at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/scam-alerts>.

## **USDA: Extended Free Meals for Kids Through December 31, 2020**

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/08/31/usda-extends-free-meals-kids-through-december-31-2020>

### **Summer meal programs can continue operating as funding allows**

**(Washington, DC, August 31, 2020)** – Today, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will extend several flexibilities through as late as December 31, 2020. The flexibilities allow summer meal program operators to continue serving free meals to all children into the fall months. This unprecedented move will help ensure – no matter what the situation is on-the-ground – children have access to nutritious food as the country recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**USDA has been and continues to be committed to using the Congressionally appropriated funding that has been made available.**

**“As our nation reopens and people return to work, it remains critical our children continue to receive safe, healthy, and nutritious food. During the COVID-19 pandemic, USDA has provided an unprecedented amount of flexibilities to help schools feed kids**

**through the school meal programs, and today, we are also extending summer meal program flexibilities for as long as we can, legally and financially,” said Secretary Perdue.** “We appreciate the incredible efforts by our school foodservice professionals year in and year out, but this year we have an unprecedented situation. This extension of summer program authority will employ summer program sponsors to ensure meals are reaching all children – **whether they are learning in the classroom or virtually** – so they **are fed and ready to learn, even in new and ever-changing learning environments.”**

“School Nutrition Association greatly appreciates USDA addressing the critical challenges shared by our members serving students on the frontlines these first weeks of school. These waivers will allow school nutrition professionals to focus on nourishing hungry children for success, rather than scrambling to process paperwork and verify eligibility in the midst of a pandemic.” **said School Nutrition Association (SNA) President Reggie Ross, SNS.** “We look forward to continuing our dialogue with USDA to ensure school meal programs are equipped to meet the future needs of America's students.”

### **USDA: Farmers to Families Food Box Program Reaches 75 Million Boxes Delivered**

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<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/08/28/farmers-families-food-box-program-reaches-75-million-boxes>

**Washington, D.C., Aug. 28, 2020)** – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced today that the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s **(USDA) Farmers to Families Food Box Program has distributed more than 75 million food boxes in support of American farmers and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.** Earlier this week, President Trump **announced an additional up to \$1 billion will be added** to the Farmers to Families Food Box Program **while the economy continues to reopen.**

“The delivery of 75 Million food boxes has helped an incredible number of Americans in need,” said **Secretary Perdue.** “I couldn’t be prouder of the great job done by the food box program staff and the many farmers, distributors and non-profits that helped to get this program off the ground for the American people. Each of these milestones is marked by pride and has required hours of hard work and dedication from USDA employees, farmers, ranchers, distributors and the brave volunteers of countless non-profits going the last mile to reach Americans in need. We are well into the second round of deliveries and we’re working harder than ever to continue to build on the success of the program.”

### **USDA Approves Program to Feed Kids in Idaho**

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<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/08/19/usda-approves-program-feed-kids-idaho>

### **Pandemic EBT now available in all 50 states**

**WASHINGTON, August 19, 2020** – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue today announced the approval of Idaho to operate Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT). This new program, authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and signed by President Trump, provides the value of school breakfast and lunch to families of children who would otherwise receive free and reduced-price school meals, if not for COVID-related school closures.

Eligible Idaho households will receive Pandemic EBT as either a supplemental food purchasing benefit for current SNAP participants, or as a new EBT benefit for non-SNAP households to offset the cost of meals that would have otherwise been eaten at school.

### **Background:**

Under FFCRA, states have the option to submit a plan to the Secretary of Agriculture for providing Pandemic EBT benefits to SNAP and non-SNAP households with children who temporarily lost access to free or reduced-price school meals due to pandemic-related school closures. State agencies may operate Pandemic EBT if a school is closed for at least five consecutive days during a public health emergency designation when the school would otherwise be in session.

With Idaho's approval, all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and U.S. Virgin Islands have been approved for Pandemic EBT. Previous announcements of approvals include: Michigan, Rhode Island, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Arizona, Illinois, Alabama, Wisconsin, California, Connecticut, Kansas, Virginia, Maryland, New Mexico, Delaware, Oregon, Maine, North Dakota, West Virginia, Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, New Jersey, Ohio, New Hampshire, Indiana, Louisiana, Colorado, Missouri, Wyoming, Kentucky, Tennessee, District of Columbia, Arkansas, Washington, Florida, Minnesota, Hawaii, Mississippi, Alaska, Georgia, Iowa, the US Virgin Islands, Nebraska, South Carolina, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Montana, Utah, and Nevada.

## **II. New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance**



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

<https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2020/20DC088.pdf>

**September 09, 2020**, The purpose of this GIS is to advise social services districts (districts) that Emergency Allotments (EA) will be issued to some Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipient households that received benefits for the month of September 2020. **The 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 (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) memorandum of March 20, 2020. This GIS builds upon GIS 20 TA/DC080, which issued Emergency Allotments for August.

The EA benefits will be issued as supplements only to SNAP households that have not or will not receive the maximum household benefit, based on the household's size, for September 2020.

The supplement will be the difference between the amount of SNAP benefits the household received for the month and the maximum benefit amount for the household's size.

SNAP Households that received the maximum benefit, based on their household's size, for September are not eligible for an EA supplement.

Below is a chart of the maximum monthly benefits by household size.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MAXIMUM ALLOTMENT
1	\$ 194
2	\$ 355
3	\$ 509
4	\$ 646
5	\$ 768
6	\$ 921
7	\$1,018
8	\$1,164
For each additional member	\$ 146

**Please Note: Only EA supplements will be automatically issued by OTDA.**

\*\*\* *Districts must continue to process cases and issue regular SNAP benefits for September as usual.*

The mass issuance of EA supplements for September 2020 will be issued on staggered schedules as described below.

**New York City** The EA supplements will be issued in ten cohorts, based on the case toe-digit, **on 9/16 through 9/18** and from **9/21 through 9/25** and **9/28 and 9/29**.

**Rest of State** The EA supplements will be issued in eight equal cohorts, divided on a random basis across each district's caseload, from 9/15 through 9/18 and from 9/22 through 9/25.

**General Information System (GIS) Message : Upstate and NYC – Updates Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program(SNAP) Standards for October 2020**

<https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2020/20DC087.pdf>

September 02, 2020 In compliance with federal requirements 7 CFR 273.9(a)(3), effective October 1, 2020, the SNAP standards will be as follows: The standard deduction amounts that will be used in the annual SNAP mass re-budgeting for October 1, 2020:

Household Size	Standard Deduction
<b>1</b>	<b>\$167</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>\$167</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>\$167</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>\$181</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>\$212</b>
<b>6+</b>	<b>\$243</b>

The minimum allotment for one and two-person households will remain at \$16.

Maximum Excess Shelter Deductions: **\$586 (increase)**

Homeless Shelter Deduction: **\$156.74 (increase)**

Boarder/Lodger Exclusion: **\$204 (increase)** for 1 person or **\$374 (increase)** for 2 persons

The new Federal Poverty Limit (FPL) thresholds are as follows:

Household Size	200% of FPL*	165% of FPL**	150% of FPL***	Maximum Gross Monthly Income 130% of FPL	Maximum Net Monthly Income 100% of FPL	Maximum Allotment
1	\$2,126	\$1,755	\$1,595	\$1,383	\$1,064	\$204
2	\$2,873	\$2,371	\$2,155	\$1,868	\$1,437	\$374
3	\$3,620	\$2,987	\$2,715	\$2,353	\$1,810	\$535
4	<del>\$4,366</del>	\$3,603	\$3,275	\$2,839	\$2,184	\$680
5	\$5,113	\$4,219	\$3,835	\$3,324	\$2,557	\$807
6	\$5,860	\$4,835	\$4,395	\$3,809	\$2,930	\$969
7	\$6,606	\$5,451	\$4,955	\$4,295	\$3,304	\$1,071
8	\$7,353	\$6,067	\$5,515	\$4,780	\$3,677	\$1,224
Each Add'l Member	+\$746	+\$616	\$560	+\$486	+\$374	+\$153

SNAP households containing any aged or disabled members, and households that pay out-of-pocket dependent care costs, that pass the 200% FPL gross income test and do not contain a SNAP-sanctioned or an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) member are categorically eligible for SNAP,

meaning that such households **are not subject to a resource test**, and that such households of one or two persons are, minimally, eligible to receive the \$16 minimum allotment for households of one or two persons.

\*\*Elderly (60 years of age or older) or household members (and their spouses) who are incapable of buying food or preparing meals due to a disability may apply as a separate food unit if the income of the others with whom the individual resides (excluding the income of the elderly and disabled individual and his/her spouse) do not exceed the 165% FPL amount.

\*\*\***SNAP households with earned income budgeted for the purpose of determining SNAP eligibility and benefit amount that do not contain a household member that is sanctioned or disqualified for an Intentional Program Violation (IPV), failure to comply with work rules or voluntary job quit**, do not contain an aged or disabled member, and that do not pay out-of-pocket dependent care costs, must pass the 150% FPL gross income test.

**Standard Utility Allowances (SUA):** The Combined Standard Allowance for Heat (AC) / Utility / Phone in New York City **will increase by \$1.00** (FSUA: IND). Amounts for the Combined Standard Allowance for Heat (AC) / Utility / Phone (HT/AC Expense Indicator) in all Rest of State districts

<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>HT/AC SUA</b>	<b>UTIL SUA</b>	<b>PHONE SUA</b>
NYC	<b>\$801 (increase)</b>	<b>\$316</b>	<b>\$30</b>
Nassau & Suffolk	<b>\$744</b>	<b>\$292</b>	<b>\$30</b>
Rest of State	<b>\$661</b>	<b>\$268</b>	<b>\$30</b>

NOTE: The SUA values other than the Phone SUA include amounts for water, sewage and trash collection.



**NYSNIP BENEFITS MATRIX BY SHELTER TYPES**  
Effective 10/01/20 – 09/30/21

HOUSEHOLD		SNAP/FOOD STAMP MONTHLY BENEFIT		
		New York	Nassau/Suffolk	Upstate
Shelter Type 94 (High Shelter/SUA)	SSI Only	\$204	\$204	\$204
	Other Income	\$204	\$204	\$198
Shelter Type 95 (Low Shelter/SUA)	SSI Only	\$204	\$189	\$164
	Other Income	\$197	\$180	\$155
Shelter Type 96 (High Shelter/ SUA/\$21)	SSI Only	\$204	\$204	\$204
	Other Income	\$204	\$204	\$198
Shelter Type 96 (High Shelter/ No SUA)	SSI Only	\$18	\$18	\$18
	Other Income	\$16	\$16	\$16
Shelter Type 97 (Low Shelter/ SUA/\$21)	SSI Only	\$204	\$189	\$164
	Other Income	\$197	\$180	\$155
Shelter Type 97 (Low Shelter/ No SUA)	SSI Only	\$16	\$16	\$16
	Other Income	\$16	\$16	\$16
Shelter Type 98 (No Shelter or SUA)	SSI Only	\$16	\$16	\$16
	Other Income	\$16	\$16	\$16

Notices

**Federal regulations do not require individual notice regarding mass changes, and individual notices will not be sent this year.** If individual notices are not provided, public notice must be.

OTDA will be posting public notice in print media and social media outlets during the month of September.

Districts also are required to immediately post the attached public notice in English and Spanish regarding the October 2020 SNAP standards.

OTDA will not be printing and drop shipping copies of the posters.

Eng: <https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2020/20DC087-Attachment-1.pdf>

Spanish <https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2020/20DC087-Attachment-2.pdf>

Monthly Caseload Statistics – June 2020

<https://otda.ny.gov/resources/caseload/2020/2020-06-stats.pdf>

## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

	This Month	Change From Last Month	Change From Last Year
	<b>2,798,865</b>	<b>49,962 (1.8%)</b>	<b>175,688 (6.7%)</b>
	<b>\$588,173,012</b>	<b>\$30.4 mil (5.4%)</b>	<b>\$228.6 mil (63.6%)</b>

Table 1  
TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE CASES  
June 2020

Region	Cases				
	Temporary Assistance by Program			Supplemental Security Income	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
	Total	Family Assistance-FP	Safety Net Assistance		
New York State	278,602	80,919	197,683	664,101	1,604,434
New York City	202,078	50,655	151,423	394,217	977,349
Rest of State	76,524	30,264	46,260	269,884	627,085

## IV. Reports, News and Notable Items

### Food Research & Action Center( FRAC)

<https://frac.org/blog/congress-must-renew-and-expand-pandemic-ebt-to-feed-hungry-kids>

#### **Congress Must Renew and Expand Pandemic EBT to Feed Hungry Kids**

BY **KELSEY BOONE** AND **ETIENNE MELCHER PHILBIN**

September 14, 2020

Millions of families have lost jobs and wages due to the economic crisis created by COVID-19. In response, Congress has taken a number of steps to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on hunger, unemployment, and housing. These efforts — some of which

already have expired or will expire on September 30 — remain critical for struggling families across the country. One such effort is the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program, created by Congress through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. It provides an EBT card with the value of free school breakfast and lunch for the days that families lost access to free and reduced-price school meals due to school closures. Without Congressional action, P-EBT will end on September 30.

For families who have received P-EBT, the program offered a lifeline that filled the nutrition needs no longer being met by school meals.

FRAC calls upon Congress **to extend the P-EBT program through December 2021** and to take the following actions to expand access to the program in the coming school year.

- **Make P-EBT more responsive to the variety of ways that schools may operate in the upcoming school year due to the pandemic.** In the 2020–2021 school year, different districts are using varied models of reopening. These include fully in-person (eliminating the need for P-EBT benefits as students are present to receive meals), fully virtual instruction, and hybrid versions of the two. P-EBT benefits would be helpful to students in virtual and hybrid situations though current rules make it difficult to ensure students can and will receive benefits.
- **Extend P-EBT to low-income families who rely on meals provided through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):** Families with young children, including infants and toddlers, are disproportionately represented among those who haven't benefited from SNAP increases during the pandemic, as many were already receiving the maximum benefit. Because young children may have been receiving free or reduced-price meals in childcare, they may be receiving less food assistance now than prior to the pandemic.
- **Expand the P-EBT program to Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.** These areas were left out of P-EBT, even though they operate federal school meals programs. In Puerto Rico, this caused nearly 300,000 children in public schools to miss out on these critical benefits.

### **STATE OF POLITICS: Food Insecurity Grows During COVID-19 Pandemic**

[https://nystateofpolitics.com/state-of-politics/new-york/politics/2020/09/09/food-insecurity-grows-during-covid-19-pandemic-?cid=share\\_twitter](https://nystateofpolitics.com/state-of-politics/new-york/politics/2020/09/09/food-insecurity-grows-during-covid-19-pandemic-?cid=share_twitter)

Around 2.2 million New Yorkers are struggling with food insecurity right now as a result of the pandemic.

Lawmakers are now looking at ways to fix breaks in the food supply chain and bolster food assistance programs.

Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi says these fixes have to look at the long term.

"We treat this uptick in food insecurity in New York as a peak due to COVID, and it is, but I'm afraid of putting another Band-Aid on it like we have," Hevesi said.

During a legislative hearing, the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Commissioner Michael Hein said the number of people who received **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits in the first four months of the pandemic increased by 9.3 percent.**

**The good news is eligible adults can continue to maximize their SNAP benefits, as long as there is a state of emergency in place.**

However, the P-EBT program that provides food assistance to children who would normally receive free school lunch, is about to expire.

"P-EBT can continue only through September," Commissioner Hein explained. That's where we're at, at this point. We expect beyond that it will take an action of Congress signed by the president."

Hein, like many administration officials right now, is still holding out hope that federal dollars will arrive soon to help counter the state's budget deficit that is restricting cash flow to state funded programs.

But the question that still has to be asked?

"If we do not see federal funding, is there a Plan B?" Assemblywoman Marianne Buttenschon questioned.

"What you're seeing here is everyone trying to do more with less," Hein responded. "That's what's happening right now and it's putting huge pressure on the system no doubt about that."

"We are in one of the most, if not the most, financially challenging times in our state. **The ability for us to move forward and fund many of these programs... will be contingent upon additional funding flowing from the federal government," said Hein.**

Around 2.3 million children will have received food assistance from the P-EBT program since March

## V. Other Items

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### HRA Mediations Liaison Update

As result of the COVID-19 Emergency , the HRA Mediation Model Liaison contact were reassigned. Effective Immediately the below HRA liaison have been assigned to assist in mediation cases

**All mediations** cases to Arlene Henry, Amina Serrara and Sharon Russell with a **copy to Courtney** Herbert. **Please remove Yama Phillips.**

Arlene Henry: [henrya@hra.nyc.gov](mailto:henrya@hra.nyc.gov)

Amina Serrara: [serrara@hra.nyc.gov](mailto:serrara@hra.nyc.gov)

Sharon Russell: [russellsh@hra.nyc.gov](mailto:russellsh@hra.nyc.gov)

Courtney Herbert: [herbertc@hra.nyc.gov](mailto:herbertc@hra.nyc.gov)

Foodbank Mediation Model Training:

**Date:** September 24, 2020

**Time:** 10:30 am - 1:30 pm

**Location:** Cisco Webex

**Link to register:**

<https://foodbanknyc.webex.com/foodbanknyc/onstage/g.php?MTID=e4184c9a78d123f4f02e7bb6ccddcd7f6>

### 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**

**Pandemic EBT-**

NYS OTDA P-EBT HELPLINE -1-833-452-0096

NYS OTDA Email: [otda.sm.eisp.PEBT@otda.ny.gov](mailto:otda.sm.eisp.PEBT@otda.ny.gov)

OTDA FAQs: <https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/Frequently-Asked-Questions-Pandemic-EBT.asp#header>

**Hunger Solutions New York –P-EBT Information:** <https://hungersolutionsny.org/covid-19/pebt/>

