

GOVERNMENT BENEFIT PROGRAMS RESPONSE TO HURRICANE SANDY

(Some government programs are now providing disaster related assistance to current recipients)

Note: President Obama declared New York City a disaster area on October 30, 2012.

Benefit	Description	Program Requirements	Obtaining Benefits
SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps)	<p>Automatic Replacement of SNAP Benefits</p> <p>Current SNAP recipients residing in designated areas will automatically receive 50% of their October monthly SNAP benefit amount the week of November 5th to replace food lost as a result of the storm in areas hardest hit by Hurricane Sandy.</p> <p>Designated areas are those areas where a majority of the residents of a zip code had to have been affected by the storm, either through a power outage lasting more than 4 hours or by flooding.</p>	<p>SNAP recipients in the following areas will automatically receive partial replacement benefits via EBT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan and Westchester counties • NYC: all of Staten Island • Designated zip codes in NYC: http://otda.ny.gov/news/SNAP-replacements.pdf. <p>Households that had applied for and received a replacement issuance for food prior to the issuance of the automatic replacement are excluded from the mass replacement issuance.</p>	<p>Benefits will automatically be placed on the household's CBIC card.</p>
	<p>File for Replacement SNAP Benefits</p> <p>Other current recipient SNAP households not residing in the designated zones that have lost food purchased with SNAP benefits due to Hurricane Sandy are also entitled to replacement benefits, but must apply for the benefit.</p> <p>Households that received the 50% automatic replacement (see above) may request an amount greater than the replacement benefit received through the same method as current SNAP recipients requesting replacement benefits. However, the household is only entitled to receive the difference between the requested amount and the amount previously replaced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to Hurricane Sandy, the USDA has granted a 20 day extension to the normal 10-day period for reporting the loss of food due to the disaster, thus food loss must report the loss to their local SNAP office by November 28, 2012. • File a signed and completed LDSS-2291, <i>Request for Replacement of Food Purchased with Food Stamp Benefits</i>, by December 10, 2012. 	<p>Households must file, sign and complete "A Request for Replacement Food" found at otda.ny.gov/programs/applications/2291.pdf by close of business Monday, December 10, 2012.</p> <p>While New York City residents may use the above form, it is recommended they use this version of the form for quicker and more accurate processing of requests: http://otda.ny.gov/programs/applications/2291A.pdf</p> <p>HRA allows recipients to fax the FS replacement request to 917-639-1111.</p>

Extension of Recertification Periods

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) automatically extended active SNAP cases in NYC that were due to expire on October 31st to November 30th.

In addition, all cases that are due to expire on November 30th have been extended to December 31st. These households will receive a duplicate amount of SNAP benefits during the extended month.

Any SNAP household whose certification has been extended must be allowed to recertify before the end of their extension period, even if they did not attempt to do so before their previous certification period would have expired.

No individual notices will be mailed to current households regarding this extension, although public notices will be posted in SNAP offices.

Note: If a case closed in October due to failure to recertify, HRA must reopen such cases. Contact the local center to advocate.

Relaxing Program Requirements

As of Nov. 1st, SNAP recipients residing in NYC, Nassau, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan, Orange, Putnam and Westchester counties can purchase hot and prepared food with their benefits (which is usually prohibited), as long as they are purchased in retail food stores authorized by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The exception **has been extended from November 30, 2012 to December 31, 2012.**

The food must be purchased at authorized retailers that already accept SNAP.

If a retailer is unaware of the new policy, they should call 1-800-342-3009.

Disaster SNAP Program

Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) Program extends SNAP benefits to many households which would not ordinarily be eligible.

Eligible households will receive a onetime benefit equal to the maximum monthly regular SNAP benefit for the household's size (\$526 for a family of three)

The benefits are delivered via Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT).

- The county must
 - be declared a federal disaster zone
 - obtain approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture
- The household must:
 - Not be a current recipient of SNAP benefits,
 - Have lived in one of these designated, hardest hit zip codes as of October 27, 2012:
 - Coney Island, Brooklyn (zip code 11224 and 11235)
 - Red Hook, Brooklyn (zip code 11231)
 - Gerritsen Beach South of Allen Avenue, Brooklyn (partial area of zip code 11229)
 - Lower East Side, Manhattan (zip code 10002)
 - Staten Island: Southeast shore (zip code 10306), and North Midland Beach South of Seaview Avenue (partial area of zip code 10305)
 - The Far Rockaways, Queens (zip codes 11691, 11692, 11693, 11694, and 11697),
 - Have sustained at least one of the following adverse effects due to the storm:
 - Storm-related damage to their household's home or self-employment business
 - Paid other un-reimbursed disaster-related expenses between October 27 and November 25. (The cost of food lost due to the disaster is not an allowable expense, but the cost of meals purchased at restaurants because of the storm is allowable.)

In NYC

- D-SNAP will begin on Wednesday, December 12, 2012.
- Applicants must apply in person at one of the following two locations:
 - 495 Clermont Avenue in Downtown Brooklyn, from December 12th to December 18th between 8:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.
 - On the first two days, applications at this location will only be accepted alphabetically, according to the first initial of the applicant's last name: A-M on Wednesday, December 12th and N-Z on Thursday, December 13th. From Friday, December 14th to Tuesday, December 18th applications will be accepted regardless of applicant's last name.
 - New Dorp High School Cafeteria, in Staten Island (465 New Dorp Lane): Friday, December 14th, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, December 15-16th, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Monday, December 17th, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- Applications are available in multiple languages and can be found at: http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/html/programs/d_snap2.shtml
- Households should receive an approval or denial notice in the mail within three to seven days as well as an Electronic Benefit Card in a separate mailing. In a third mailing households will receive a PIN to access the SNAP benefits.

- Have lost income or been unable to access liquid resources (cash, bank accounts) between October 27 and November 25,
- Meet the D-SNAP income guidelines.
- Household income, before accounting for disaster-related expenses, is less than 250% of the federal poverty guidelines, a higher threshold than the ongoing SNAP.

HH Size	Disaster Gross Income Limit (DGIL) With Disaster Standard Expense deduction (DSED)	Disaster Gross Income Limit(DGIL) without DSED
1	\$2,268	\$1,549
2	\$2,965	\$1,879
3	\$3,416	\$2,209
4	\$4,034	\$2,550
5	\$4,452	\$2,907
6	\$4,979	\$3,264
7	\$5,363	\$3,594
8	\$5,747	\$3,924
Add'l Mem.	\$384+	\$330+

NOTE: Immigration status is not considered in determining eligibility.

Food Distribution Centers, including prepared hot food

http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/hot_food.html

Cash Assistance

Extension of Recertification Period

HRA has been directed to keep Cash Assistance cases open that were due to expire by October 31st until November 30th, 2012, if the only reason these cases would otherwise close is due to failure to recertify.

No individual notices will be mailed to current households regarding this extension,

	<p>although public notices will be posted in Job Centers.</p> <p>Protocol Easements</p> <p>The following list indicates easements of Cash Assistance protocol for New York City clients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment, eligibility, child support and substance abuse related appointments will be rescheduled by the appropriate program area or HRA vendor. • All infractions on WeCARE appointments have been suspended until further notice. 		
	<p>Job Center Closings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queens Rockaway: Rockaway Job Center and Rockaway Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - 219 Beach 59th Street • Brooklyn: Coney Island Job Center and Coney Island Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - 3030 / 3050 West 21st Street • Manhattan: Human Resources Administration (HRA) Headquarters - 180 Water Street • Manhattan: 2 Washington Street (aka) 17 Battery <p>Check OTDA's website for updates: http://otda.ny.gov</p>		
<p>Medicaid, Family Health Plus, Child Health Plus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current recipients of Medicaid, Family Health Plus and Child Health Plus can request replacement medications if medications were left behind during evacuation. • Diabetic medication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Medicaid and many commercial health 		<p>Call 1-800-541-2831 for any pharmacy related questions.</p>

	<p>insurers are waiving refill time limits, so early refills may be feasible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In addition, pharmacists may use their professional judgment to dispense limited quantities of non-controlled substances to patients who state they are in need of maintenance medications but have no evidence such as a prescription vial, label or receipt. ● Managed Care Plans (MCP) must allow members to obtain early refills as needed. ● MCPs should afford flexibility to members in obtaining needed prescriptions from pharmacies. If members are unable to reach a participating pharmacy, plans must allow members to obtain needed medications from non participating pharmacies. ● Pharmacies should dispense emergency supplies as necessary. 		
<p>Medicaid</p>	<p>The following list indicates easements of Medicaid protocol for New York City clients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All Medicaid case closings in process will be stopped and re-implemented once the crisis is over. ● No case will be closed for failure to respond to a renewal or other request for information until further notice. ● Medicaid cases due to expire in November or December, 2012 will receive an automatic two month extension. 		<p>Call the Medicaid hotline for additional assistance: 1-888-692-6116</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New applicants will be given an additional 7 days to respond to any request for additional information. This will extend the time to respond to 21 days. <p>As of Friday, November 2nd all Medicaid Community offices, with the exception of Bellevue, are open.</p> <p>Office of Mail Renewal has been temporarily relocated. Client representatives and facilitated enrollers must submit their cases to:</p> <p>340A West 34th Street Window 19 New York, NY 10001</p>		
Child Health Plus	<p>Coverage for children who failed to recertify by October 31, 2012 should be extended for the months of November, allowing the family additional time to submit the renewal application.</p> <p>Coverage for children who fail to recertify by November 30, 2012 should be extended for the month of December.</p>		
Medicare & Medicare Part D	<p>The Medicare open enrollment ends December 7th. To the extent possible, CMS encourages all beneficiaries to make their enrollment choices by December 7th. However, individuals affected by Hurricane Sandy may be eligible for additional time beyond 12/7/12 by requesting that they were affected by the storm.</p>	<p>CMS will review each extension request case-by-case to determine what action is appropriate for the individual's situation.</p>	<p>Call the Medicare hotline at: 1-800-633-4227. Representatives have information available to help beneficiaries review their plan options and make a choice, and can complete an enrollment even after December 7th.</p>
Medicare Advantage Organizations	<p>Medicare Advantage Organizations (MAO's)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are to allow plan benefits to be furnished at specified non-contracted facilities, but must be Medicare certified; waive in full, requirements for 		

	<p>gatekeeper referrals where applicable;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> temporarily reduce plan-approved out-of-network cost sharing to in-network cost-sharing amounts; and waive the 30-day notification requirement to enrollees as long as all the changes benefit the enrollee. 		
Medicare Part D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure enrollees have adequate access to covered Part D drugs dispensed at out-of-pocket pharmacies when those enrollees cannot be expected to obtain Part D drugs at a network pharmacy Lift their refill-too-soon edits Allow an affected enrollee to obtain the maximum extended day supply, if requested and available at time of refill. 		
Medical Vans	Mobile medical vans staffed with primary care providers who will be able to provide medical care and distribute commonly prescribed drugs are now available at several locations in the Rockaways, Brooklyn, and Staten Island.		<p>http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2012/medical_vans.html</p> <p>Or call: 311</p>
Disaster Unemployment Assistance	<p>DUA is a Federal program that provides payments to individuals in federally declared disaster areas who have lost work or income as a direct result of the disaster.</p> <p>Eligible claimants have a maximum payable period of 27 weeks, beginning October 29, 2012 and ending May 5, 2013 and must continue to be unemployed as a direct result of the disaster to continue receiving DUA.</p>	<p>In order to be eligible for the current DUA operating in NYS, individuals must live or work in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Nassau, Manhattan, Orange, Putnam, Queens, Staten Island, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan, Ulster or Westchester counties and lost their income due to the effects of Hurricane Sandy.</p> <p>Eligibility rules are relaxed for individuals applying for DUA, and are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Injured in the disaster and unable to work, whether the person as an employee or self-employed. Examples of self-employment include small business owners, independent taxi drivers, vendors, independent commercial fisherman, and farmers. 	<p>In order to receive benefits individuals must apply by February 4, 2013.</p> <p>Applicants should call the Telephone Claims Center (TCC) at 1-888-209-8124, or 1-877-358-5306 if they live out of state. Individuals may also apply in person at a FEMA Disaster Recovery Center (http://www.fema.gov/disaster-recovery-centers) or a local Department of Labor One-Stop Career Center (Workforce 1 Career Centers in NYC) (http://www.nyc.gov/html/sbs/wf1/html/contact/contact.shtml)</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace is damaged, or destroyed, or the person cannot work because of the disaster. • Transportation to work is not available because of the disaster. • Cannot get to work because must travel through the affected area, which is impossible due to disaster. • Planned to begin working, but cannot because of the disaster. • Derived most of income from areas affected by the disaster, and business is closed or inoperable because of the disaster. <p>This list is not exhaustive. Applicant must submit wage information and documentation.</p>	Applicants should answer the questions to indicate they lost their job due to Hurricane Sandy.
Unemployment Insurance Benefits	Current UIB recipients who were unable to certify for their weekly benefits because of the loss of power and phone service will be able to certify November 3, 2012 through November 10, 2012 for the prior week.		These individuals should call 1-888-209-8124 (this is not available online) and speak to an agent to receive benefits for the prior week. If you are unable to access a phone to obtain benefits, individuals can visit any of the agency's career centers.
WIC	<p>Protocol Easements</p> <p>Current WIC participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May partially redeem WIC benefits if not all items are available at grocery store • Substitute certain foods if WIC brand or specified package size are not in stock • Substitute ready-to-use infant formula in areas with water supply issues 		Call 212-417-5758 to assist you in locating a WIC clinic and obtaining additional information.
NYCHA Public Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYCHA has successfully restored power, heat and water to all building affected by Hurricane Sandy. However, residents may continue to experience service disruptions as buildings are re-connected to utility power and ongoing maintenance of temporary boilers. NYCHA will have extra resources in place 		If residents experience service disruptions they should call the NYCHA Customer Service Contact Center at 718-707-7771.

	<p>for as long as necessary to ensure disruptions are kept to a minimum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NYCHA has also begun restoration efforts in housing developments to clean, sanitize and restore all areas impacted by the storm. • NYCHA has begun contacting residents of all first floor apartments in its developments in Far Rockaway and Coney Island where it is likely that apartments were flooded. • NYCHA will work with residents of impacted apartments to identify temporary housing solutions, if needed, pending the cleaning and repair of their apartments. • NYCHA's Family Services staff will provide coordination services such as child care, assistance linking children to neighborhood schools, as well as coordinating relocation for residents. 		
<p>Homes and Community Renewal Office of Rent Administration responsible for administering rent regulations</p>	<p>Residents residing in privately owned rent regulated apartments may report conditions that require emergency repairs or if they have been forced to vacate their homes.</p>		<p>Apply online at http://www.nyshcr.org/Apps/DecreasedServices</p> <p>When completing the application please indicate FEMA or Hurricane Sandy in the section stating "Other Agency Issuing Vacate Order".</p>



Note: Financial assistance received by households residing in federally declared disaster zones in receipt of needs based benefits will not have this assistance count against their eligibility or benefit amount.