



November 15, 2020

At the Department of Social Services/Human Resources Administration, we continue our work to reform social services policies and access to benefits, including the following reforms:

- We eliminated and replaced the Work Experience Program (WEP).
- We successfully advocated for a change in State law to permit clients to count approved coursework at four-year college programs towards Cash Assistance work requirements and obtain college degrees to enhance their ability to earn a living wage.
- We successfully implemented a pre-conciliation, conciliation and pre-fair hearing case review and conference process to avoid work requirement-related sanctions and advocated for a change in State law to give clients in New York City an opportunity to “cure” a work requirement violation at any time and avert a durational sanction. We also successfully advocated for a reduced State sanction period for SNAP/food stamps.
- We put in place new protocols to prevent unnecessary case closings, and State fair hearing challenges decreased by more than 47 percent.
- As a result of preventing unnecessary case closings, the City is no longer subject to a potential \$10 million annual State financial penalty for unnecessary hearings.
- We now make it easier for clients to continue their assistance if they submit required documentation within 30 days of a case closing and ensure that missing paperwork doesn’t cause someone to lose their benefits.
- Homeless clients can now seek assistance at a Job Center in their home borough.
- Now seniors can receive services at a Job Center in their home borough.
- In 2017, we implemented the Universal Receipt to provide an individual who completes a visit at a Job or SNAP Center with a document that indicates the nature and date of the visit.
 - A copy of this receipt is available on Access HRA and this receipt process has been codified into local law as a result of legislation sponsored by Speaker Johnson.
- We have transformed the process for Cash Assistance and clients can now submit recertification questionnaires online, submit documents from a smartphone, and gain access to over 100 case-specific points of information for Cash Assistance and SNAP.
- We improved Access HRA so that SNAP applications, recertifications, and renewals can be done online—now SNAP clients conduct 87% of these transactions online and documents can be submitted via our mobile app on a smartphone.
- We instituted On Demand, and now SNAP eligibility interviews are conducted at the client’s convenience by phone and the percentage of completed telephone eligibility interviews increased from 29 percent in 2013 to 97 percent in 2019.
- We created a Provider Portal, which enables community-based organizations to view a client’s case record in order to help the client with document submission, various case inquiries, and application and recertification requirements.
- We began accepting a federal waiver, without which clients who are classified as Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) were limited to SNAP/food stamps benefits for only three out of 36 months if they could not find work for at least 80 hours a month in areas of high unemployment.

- We instituted a centralized rent arrears processing unit to ensure that rent arrears payments are issued by the required due date.
- We streamlined the system for making New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) rent payments electronically, rather than the old practice of paper checks – and we are developing a similar payment system for private landlords.

In collaboration with the New York City Council, we worked to pass legislation to increase transparency and reporting on the termination, denial and re-opening of ongoing public assistance and supplemental nutrition assistance program (Food stamps) benefits.

Pursuant to Local Law 170 of 2019 and Local Law 168 of 2019, the Department of Social Services/Human Resources Administration respectfully submits the following:

Termination report: a report on instances in which ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance.

1. The total number of ongoing cash and supplemental nutrition assistance cases terminated;
2. The total number of cases terminated, disaggregated by type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance;
3. The total number of cases terminated, disaggregated by reason(s) why the ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance was terminated, using the welfare management system closing codes;
4. The data required by paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this subdivision shall be further disaggregated by:
 - (a) The council district the case head lives in;
 - (b) The reported race, ethnicity, gender and age category of the case head;
 - (c) Whether the case head has limited English proficiency; and
 - (d) Whether the case head has received a reasonable accommodation for a disability from the department.

Denial report: a report on instances in which applications for ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance were denied.

1. The total number of ongoing cash and supplemental nutrition assistance applications denied;
2. The total number of applications denied, disaggregated by type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance;
3. The total number of each type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance applications denied, disaggregated by the reason(s) why such applications were denied, using the welfare management system denial codes;
4. The data required by paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this subdivision shall be further disaggregated by:
 - (a) The council district the case head lives in;
 - (b) The reported race, ethnicity, gender and age category of the case head;
 - (c) Whether the case head has limited English proficiency; and
 - (d) Whether the case head has received a reasonable accommodation for a disability from the department.

Re-open after termination report: a report on reopened cases for the relevant reporting period.

1. The total number of reopened cases;
2. The total number of reopened cases, disaggregated by the type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance;
3. The total number of instances in which a case was reopened within three months of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance termination and was reopened for the same type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance, disaggregated using the welfare management system reopen codes;
4. The total number of instances in which a public assistance case was terminated and at least one disbursement date passed before such case was reopened for the same type of ongoing cash or supplemental nutrition assistance;
5. The data required by paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of this subdivision shall be further disaggregated by:
 - (a) The council district the case head lives in;
 - (b) The reported race, ethnicity, gender and age category of the case head;
 - (c) Whether the case head has limited English proficiency; and
 - (d) Whether the case head has received a reasonable accommodation for a disability from the department.