

Local Law 134 of 2017 Annual Report 2023: January 1 - December 31

Local Law 134 of 2017 requires the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) to submit to the Speaker of the City Council the following annual report for 2023 regarding the department’s activities with respect to supplemental nutrition assistance enrollment and recertification for seniors.

Such report shall provide an overview of the department’s activities with respect to supplemental nutrition assistance enrollment and recertification for seniors, including the public campaign and the enrollment and recertification program, and shall include (i) the number of seniors enrolled in the supplemental nutrition assistance program in the previous calendar year; (ii) the number of seniors recertified for the supplemental nutrition assistance program in the previous calendar year; and (iii) a comparison of the annual rate of enrollment for seniors versus the number of seniors in the city that the department estimates are likely to be eligible based on readily available community data such as census data. Beginning on February 1, 2019, the report shall indicate how the data required by this subdivision compares to the previous year. The report shall further indicate the method by which seniors enrolled in or recertified for the supplemental nutrition assistance program, whether online, by mobile application, by telephone, by paper application, or by other means.

Method of Enrollment and Recertification for SNAP

To make SNAP enrollment easier, a Simplified SNAP Application/Recertification form (LDSS 5166) is available for seniors (60 years of age and older) and New Yorkers with disabilities, whose households are without earned income. Clients can access the Simplified SNAP application online at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/snap-benefits-food-program.page> or they may call Infoline to request that a paper version be mailed to them.

Pursuant to a waiver granted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service which the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) pursued at HRA/DSS' request, cases with all adults 55 years of age or older and/or cases where all adults are disabled can also recertify for the SNAP benefits by phone using an automated Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), if there is:

- No budgeted earned income (from job or self-employment);
- No change to unearned income (Supplemental Security Income [SSI], Social Security, pension, etc.); and
- No change in residence or household composition.

Seniors may also apply and recertify (if they have changes to residence or income) or manage their SNAP case using the ACCESS HRA (AHRA) website or mobile application using a smartphone or tablet. They may also submit documentation using the ACCESS HRA Mobile app. Clients who lack internet access or internet-ready mobile devices, or who need additional in-person assistance, may also visit an open HRA center or a partnering Community-Based Organization. In addition, HRA has partnered with Hunger Free America to take SNAP applications and recertifications from seniors or individuals with disabilities over the phone who are unable to avail themselves of the aforementioned methods. HRA's partnership with Hunger Free America included targeted outreach to recipients of NYC's GetFoodNYC delivery program who were likely eligible but not enrolled in SNAP, and the organization continues to assist seniors and other individuals who may be homebound or digitally disconnected with applying for SNAP over telephone by utilizing a verbal signature.

HRA also permits all SNAP eligibility interviews to be conducted by phone "On-Demand" by clients initiating a call to HRA at their convenience, rather than visiting a center for an in-person interview, unless they chose to.

SNAP Campaign Advertising in 2023

In 2023 we launched an outreach campaign targeting existing clients, including seniors; this campaign included collateral distributed at Benefits Access Centers, food pantries, community-based organizations, libraries, and senior centers.

Seniors were a part of our target audience for organic social media throughout 2023; our target audiences also included a focus by neighborhood; in addition, we also targeted single parents/guardians.

SNAP Outreach Senior Center Engagement

In 2023, DSS Outreach continued in-person services at community partner locations. From January 2023– December 2023, DSS Outreach provided recurring in-person and virtual services at thirty-two (32) older adult centers and older adult serving partner organizations.

ACCESS HRA, ACCESS HRA Provider Portal, and SNAP application trainings also continued to be offered virtually. In 2023, DSS conducted a total of eighty-one (81) trainings, which included 1,730 attendees, in using these tools to submit SNAP and other benefit applications; and provide benefit case management via ACCESS HRA. Training attendees include staff from other municipal agencies and community partner organizations, including older adult center staff. These trainings were also a forum for questions and concerns from providers and advocates working directly with HRA and DHS clients, including older adults.

(i) the number of seniors enrolled in the supplemental nutrition assistance program in the previous calendar year

- There were 567,078 seniors on SNAP during 2023. This is an unduplicated count over the course of the year
- There were 546,848 seniors on SNAP during 2022. This is an unduplicated count over the course of the year.
- There were 513,830 seniors on SNAP during 2021. This is an unduplicated count over the course of the year.
- There were 490,793 seniors on SNAP during 2020. This is an unduplicated count over the course of the year.
- There were 481,520 seniors on SNAP during 2019. This is an unduplicated count over the course of the year.
- There were 477,290 seniors on SNAP during 2018. This is an unduplicated count over the course of the year.
- There were 470,197 seniors on SNAP during 2017. This is an unduplicated count over the course of the year.

(ii) the number of seniors recertified for the supplemental nutrition assistance program in the previous calendar year

137,036* seniors were recertified for SNAP during 2023. Recertifications take place at the case level, but since the Local Law reporting requirement is for senior individuals, we looked at the case recertification information and then counted the number of seniors on the case.

It is important to note that just because someone was on SNAP during 2023 does not mean that they had to recertify in 2023.

2023 SNAP Recertification Rate

All SNAP	NCA SNAP
All Individuals	
78.9%	79.0%
Seniors Only	
82.6%	82.7%

213,168* seniors were recertified for SNAP during 2022. Recertifications take place at the case level, but since the Local Law reporting requirement is for senior individuals, we looked at the case recertification information and then counted the number of seniors on the case.

It is important to note that just because someone was on SNAP during 2022 does not mean that they had to recertify in 2022.

2022 SNAP Recertification Rate

All SNAP	NCA SNAP
All Individuals	
74.3%	75.3%
Seniors Only	
82.2%	82.4%

105,461* seniors were recertified for SNAP during 2021. Recertifications take place at the case level, but since the Local Law reporting requirement is for senior individuals,

* In late March 2020, HRA received from NYS OTDA a temporary waiver of the telephone interview requirement for both new applicants and households recertifying for SNAP if all eligibility criteria were able to be verified

we looked at the case recertification information and then counted the number of seniors on the case.

It is important to note that just because someone was on SNAP during 2021 does not mean that they had to recertify in 2021.

2021 SNAP Recertification Rate

All SNAP	NCA SNAP
All Individuals	
77.3%	78.0%
Seniors Only	
79.9%	80.0%

91,002* seniors were recertified for SNAP during 2020. Recertifications take place at the case level, but since the Local Law reporting requirement is for senior individuals, we looked at the case recertification information and then counted the number of seniors on the case.

It is important to note that just because someone was on SNAP during 2020 does not mean that they had to recertify in 2020.

2020 SNAP Recertification Rate

All SNAP	NCA SNAP
All Individuals	
76.7%	76.9%
Seniors Only	
80.4%	80.7%

2019 NUMBERS: 186,536 seniors were recertified for SNAP in 2019. Recertifications take place at the case level, but since the Local Law reporting requirement is for senior individuals, we looked at the case recertification information and then counted the number of seniors on the case.

It is important to note that just because someone was on SNAP during 2019 does not mean that they had to recertify in 2019.

through documentation submitted or by collateral contact. Recertifications during the subsequent months were rescheduled to later dates, resulting in lower recertification numbers than would have occurred without the waivers.

2019 SNAP Recertification Rate

All SNAP	NCA SNAP
All Individuals	
79.5%	78.1%
Seniors Only	
84.5%†	88.2%†

2018 NUMBERS: 150,460 seniors were recertified for SNAP in 2018. Recertifications take place at the case level, but since the Local Law reporting requirement is for senior individuals, we looked at the case recertification information and then counted the number of seniors on the case.

It is important to note that just because someone was on SNAP during 2018 does not mean that they had to recertify in 2018.

2018 SNAP Recertification Rate

All SNAP	NCA SNAP
All Individuals	
79.8%	78.6%
Seniors Only	
81.9%	81.7%

2017 NUMBERS: 159,190 seniors were recertified for SNAP in 2017. Recertifications take place at the case level, but since the Local Law reporting requirement is for senior individuals, we looked at the case recertification information and then counted the number of seniors on the case.

It is important to note that just because someone was on SNAP during 2017 does not mean that they had to recertify in 2017.

2017 SNAP Recertification Rate

All SNAP	NCA SNAP
All Individuals	
79.9%	79.1%
Seniors Only	
84.1%	84.6%

(iii) a comparison of the annual rate of enrollment for seniors versus the number of seniors in the city that the department estimates are likely to be eligible based on readily available community data such as census data

The data in the section below compare the annual rate of enrollment for seniors to the number of seniors in the City that DSS/HRA estimates are likely eligible based on readily available community data.

The 2022 senior (age 60+) SNAP participation rate was 74.1% (478,106 enrolled/644,832 estimated eligible for SNAP), greater than the 2021 senior SNAP participation rate of 71.9% (456,630 enrolled/634,753 estimated eligible for SNAP). (We use age 60+ as the senior cutoff because SNAP eligibility rules define seniors as age 60+.)

The calculation of the SNAP participation rate equals: “the average monthly number of seniors on the SNAP caseload” divided by the “number of seniors who appear SNAP-eligible in NYC based on Census Bureau American Community Survey data.”

The latest data on SNAP participation in NYC overall—see Table 1 below for details. In brief:

- NYC’s SNAP caseload increased 1 percent between 2022 and 2021, from a monthly average of 1.69 million to 1.71 million in 2022.
- While the NYC SNAP caseload increased, there was a small decline in the number of NYC residents living in or near poverty, such that NYC’s Program Access Index (PAI; see definition below) shows that **the reach of SNAP increased**, from 90.2%% in 2021 to 91.9% in 2022.
- The estimated SNAP **participation rate in 2022**—that is, the proportion of NYC SNAP-eligible individuals who received SNAP each month—similarly increased, reaching **75.1%, compared to 72.1% in 2021**.

Table 1. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Access and Participation Rates for 2010–2022*

Program Access Index (PAI)				Participation Rate	
Year	United States	New York State	New York City	Year	New York City
2022	77.9%	82.7%	91.9%	2022	75.1%
2021	77.1%	81.9%	90.2%	2021	72.1%
2019	70.1%	83.7%	91.4%	2019	74.7%
2018	70.9%	80.8%	88.3%	2018	72.6%
2017	73.2%	81.1%	84.8%	2017	70.9%
2016	75.0%	81.6%	83.6%	2016	72.4%**
2015	75.6%	79.1%	79.4%	2015	72.5%
2014	74.1%	79.1%	80.0%	2014	73.9%
2013	75.2%	82.0%	85.9%	2013	77.0%
2012	74.2%	80.2%	83.7%	2012	76.6%
2011	72.0%	77.9%	84.2%	2011	76.4%
2010	69.0%	78.1%	84.9%	2010	76.8%

* This chart's data is limited to years 2010-2022 because HRA/DSS researchers estimate the City's SNAP participation rate based on Census Bureau survey data, and 2023 data won't be available until late 2024. Also note that 2020 estimates are not included. Due to challenges faced by the US Census Bureau in administering the American Community Survey (ACS) during COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 ACS survey data (released in late 2021) are considered "experimental," and are less robust than data from other years.

** This rate applies the eligibility rules in effect through June 2016 on the average caseload during the first half of the year, and then takes into account the increased gross income limit for working households (to 150% versus 130% FPL) for the second half of the year. This rule change led to a substantial increase in the number of SNAP-eligible individuals, but only a small increase in recipients (individuals in this income range would likely be eligible for only a small SNAP benefit), thus notably lowering the overall participation rate estimate for 2017.

Sources: US and NYS PAI: USDA, "Calculating the SNAP Program Access Index: A Step-By-Step Guide," updated annually. NYC: NYC Human Resources Administration administrative data for SNAP enrollment; U.S. Census Bureau American Community

Survey, Table S1701 located at data.census.gov for number of residents below 125% of the official poverty level, and DSS OER analysis of Public Use Microdata Sample 1-year files for estimated number of residents eligible to receive SNAP benefits.

Table 2. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation Rates for Seniors, 2013–2022	
Year	NYC Seniors (age 60+)
2022	74.1%
2021	71.9%
2019	75.6%
2018	72.9%
2017	73.0%
2016	70.9%**
2015	68.2%
2014	69.5%
2013	68.4%

* This chart’s data is limited to years 2010-2022 because HRA/DSS researchers estimate the City’s SNAP participation rate based on Census Bureau survey data, and 2023 data won’t be available until late 2024. Also note that 2020 estimates are not included. Due to challenges faced by the US Census Bureau in administering the American Community Survey (ACS) during COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 ACS survey data (released in late 2021) are considered “experimental,” and are less robust than data from other years.

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Sources: NYC Human Resources Administration administrative data for SNAP enrollment; U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample 1-year files for estimated number of residents eligible to receive SNAP benefits.