

## **Annual Report of SNAP Enrollment and Recertification for Seniors** **March 30, 2020**

**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 2019 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**

Today, all SNAP eligibility interviews can be conducted at a client's convenience by phone, rather than waiting for a call in a rigid four-hour window under the old system, or they can come into a center for an in-person interview. On-demand interviews for SNAP recertification have been available citywide for more than three years. In September 2018, on-demand interviews for new SNAP applicants were made available citywide.

### **SNAP Campaign Advertising in 2019**

In 2019, we created the "Skip the Trip" advertising campaign to promote SNAP and to begin to rebrand HRA as an agency that is technologically advanced, and accessible to its clients. The centerpiece of the campaign was transit ads supported by print, social media, radio, and OOH (out-of-home) posters. The campaign launched in March and ran through June of 2019. All collateral, web, and social media was updated to reflect the new messaging. All deliverables were translated into Spanish with select elements translated into multiple languages.

Advertisements were run in 29 community and ethnic newspapers in 11 different languages. Ads were published in English, the six local law languages (Spanish, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Haitian Creole, Arabic, Russian, Korean), and the Agency's expanded access languages (Bengali, Polish, and Urdu). Social media ads were released in English and Spanish. The agency ran four different ads including one featuring a senior.

## **Advertising Campaign**

The “Skip the Trip” campaign consisted of:

- Ads in 29 ethnic and community newspapers with a combined circulation of 1,348,500;
- Three months of ads on social media for geographically targeted areas;
- Ads on English, Spanish, Chinese and Russian radio;
- OOH poster for 8 weeks in targeted zip codes;
- Citywide bus and subway ads; and
- Ads at targeted bus shelters.

## **LGBTQI**

When the general population campaign ended, we began a series of ads and outreach to targeted populations, with the first campaign geared to the LGBTQI population. The campaign kicked off on June 24th with an ad in the Gay City News, and on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and select dating apps, and ran until July 31st. One of the three ads featured a senior couple. Additionally, we designed special brochures targeting youth, transgender, and senior New Yorkers to distribute through our outreach team at events.

## **Looking Ahead in 2020**

### **Senior Campaign**

In March 2020, we launched a multilingual outreach campaign in community and ethnic newspapers targeting seniors. We held two focus groups at DFTA senior centers to hear directly from seniors about barriers that prevent them from using the ACCESS HRA app. One of the key findings from the focus group noted that, seniors often require assistance from younger family members or caretakers to help them download and use the Access HRA app. In response to this finding we designed two brochures - one for seniors and one for their caretakers - that will be distributed by the DSS Outreach Team and at senior centers.

### **General Campaign 2020**

Building on the success of the 2019 campaign, we are now working on a refresh of the successful “Skip the Trip” campaign for 2020. We are now in the design phase but expect to launch the refresh in the spring. We will continue to feature images of seniors in the campaign. Ads will run in buses, subways and bus shelters, on social media, the radio, and community and ethnic newspapers.

## **SNAP Outreach Events**

The SNAP Outreach team partners with 55 organizations to conduct outreach services. These outreach efforts include presentations, trainings, SNAP prescreenings, and/or application assistance. The frequency in which these engagements occur is based on the organization’s needs. In addition, the SNAP Outreach team regularly attends senior health fairs and events.

### **SNAP Outreach Senior Center Engagement**

In 2019, DSS Outreach engaged 128 senior centers and DFTA-affiliated programs (satellites and social clubs). In addition, 40 percent of DFTA's 108 providers, participated in the ACCESS HRA Provider Portal to offer ongoing SNAP case management to their clients.

DSS SNAP Outreach Services also provided on-site assistance for seniors, on a recurring basis, at 37 senior centers in 2019. Through the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP), the DSS MAP Outreach team provided direct SNAP enrollment and case management services in and around fifteen senior centers co-located at participating NYCHA developments, including both DFTA affiliated and non-affiliated senior centers.

Of 247 DFTA senior centers citywide, 113 received enhanced support services on an on-going basis, representing 52% of senior centers in the Bronx; 52% in Brooklyn; 28% in Manhattan; 52% in Queens; and 27% in Staten Island. In 2019, on-going SNAP support services were provided in 46% senior centers citywide and 61% of DFTA social clubs and satellite sites. SNAP Outreach services were provided to an additional 10 senior centers unaffiliated with DFTA.

#### **DFTA Senior Centers**

	<b>DFTA Senior Centers</b>	<b>Provider Partner</b>	<b>% Partnered</b>
<b>Bronx</b>	44	23	52%
<b>Brooklyn</b>	79	41	52%
<b>Manhattan</b>	61	17	28%
<b>Queens</b>	52	27	52%
<b>Staten Island</b>	11	3	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>46%</b>

#### **DFTA Affiliated Sites**

	<b>Affiliated Sites</b>	<b>Provider Partner</b>	<b>% Partnered</b>
<b>Bronx</b>	7	6	86%
<b>Brooklyn</b>	10	7	70%
<b>Manhattan</b>	8	3	38%
<b>Queens</b>	3	1	33%
<b>Staten Island</b>	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>61%</b>

## **Resource Fairs for Seniors in DHS Shelters**

In order to further address barriers to accessing services that many seniors encounter, the DSS Office of External Affairs partnered with the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) to conduct a series of social services resource fairs at shelters that serve older adults.

This initiative launched in the summer of 2019 and began with an explorative discussion with shelter directors. During the discussion, shelter directors identified the most pressing needs for residents of shelter and discussed the proper format for the resource fairs to be suitable for the senior residents.

Starting in September, four resource fairs were conducted in 2019, and have been well received by residents and shelter staff. In 2020, we plan to conduct resource fairs in seven additional DHS shelters that serve older adults.

These resource fairs bring information about all the services provided by the NYC Human Resources Administration. They include tabling with informational resources, assistance with Medicaid and health insurance enrollment, IDNYC information and enrollment, and presentations on ACCESS HRA as well as, a hands-on tutorial in using the ACCESS HRA app.

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

199,185 seniors were recertified for SNAP during 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.

**2019 SNAP Recertification Rate**

All SNAP	NCA SNAP
All Individuals	
79.5%	78.1%
Seniors Only	
90.2%	89.9%

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 between the years 2017 and 2018. The 2019 rate of senior enrollment is estimated because the actual enrollment rate will not be made available by the Census Bureau until late 2020.

The 2018 senior (age 60+) SNAP participation rate was 72.88% (427,712 enrolled/586,852 estimated eligible for SNAP), consistent with the 2017 senior SNAP participation rate of 73.0% (419,097 enrolled/573,880 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 decreased 4 percent between 2017 and 2018, from a monthly average of 1.7 million to 1.6 million in 2017. This primarily reflects the recognized correlation between an improved economy and a reduction in SNAP cases. It also includes the chilling effect of the Trump Administration’s public charge rule process.
- As a result of declines in poverty larger than the declines in the SNAP caseload, NYC’s Program Access Index (PAI; see definition below) shows that **the reach of SNAP expanded**, relative to the number of poor and near-poor New Yorkers, from **84.8% in 2017 to 88.3% in 2018**.
- The estimated SNAP **participation rate in 2018**—that is, the proportion of NYC SNAP-eligible individuals who received SNAP each month—**was 72.6%, compared to 70.9 in 2017**.

**Table 1.** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Access and Participation Rates for 2010–2018\*

Program Access Index (PAI)				Participation Rate	
Year	United States	New York State	New York City	Year	New York City
<b>2018</b>	<b>Not Yet Published</b>	<b>Not Yet Published</b>	<b>88.3%</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>72.6%</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>73.2%</b>	<b>81.1%</b>	<b>84.8%</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>70.9%</b>
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 2010-2018 because HRA/DSS researchers estimate the City's SNAP participation rate for operational use, but unfortunately 2019 data won't be available until late 2020. There is a lag because we rely on Census Bureau survey data for the calculations.

\*\* 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, American FactFinder for number of residents below 125% of the official poverty level, and 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, 2013–2018\*

<b>Year</b>	<b>NYC Seniors (age 60+)</b>
<b>2018</b>	<b>72.9%</b>
<b>2017</b>	<b>73.0%</b>
2016	70.9%**
2015	68.2%
2014	69.5%
2013	68.4%

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