

SNAP Enrollment and Recertification for Seniors

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 2018 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 in a rigid four-hour window under the old system, or clients can choose to come into a center for an in-person interview. On-demand interviews for SNAP recertification have been fully in place for more than two years, and as of September 2018 on-demand interviews for new SNAP applicants are available citywide.

SNAP Campaign Advertising in 2018

In 2018, SNAP 123 ads ran in the interiors of subway cars and buses, on bus shelters, and in check-cashing stores, bodegas, barber shops, and hair and nail salons in SNAP target neighborhoods around the five boroughs. We expanded our reach in community papers, posting ads in 33 community and ethnic newspapers and in 10 different languages. Ads were published in English, the six local law languages (Spanish, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Arabic, Russian, Korean), and the Agency's expanded access languages (Bengali, Polish, and Urdu). Social media ads were released in English, Spanish, Russian, and Chinese.

As of December 31, 2018, the SNAP Helps campaign website, FoodHelp.nyc, has seen approximately 251,017 lifetime users (since campaign inception in April 2015), roughly 88% of whom were new users. There were also approximately 73,846 total click-throughs to ACCESS NYC.

Advertising Campaign:

The SNAP Helps campaign in calendar year 2018 consisted of:

- a much-expanded reach in ethnic and community papers, i.e. ads in almost 7.3 million aggregate copies of 33 different New York ethnic and community papers, in all local law languages;

- a month of ads on Google and Facebook for geographically targeted areas; and
- ads on Spanish-language radio for 10 weeks.

| <u>Advertising Campaign Summary</u> | total circ. in CY18 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| TOTAL | 7,275,815 |

Looking ahead to 2019

In December of 2018 we submitted a Creative Brief to DOHMH to begin the process of developing a SNAP advertising campaign focusing on ACCESS HRA for calendar year 2019. We will also use the campaign to begin to rebrand HRA from outdated and bureaucratic to modern, technologically advanced, and accessible to our clients. The centerpiece of the campaign will be transit ads supported by print, social media, radio, and OOH posters. The campaign launched in March and run through June of 2019. All collateral, web, and social media will be updated to reflect the new messaging. All deliverables will be translated into Spanish with select elements translated into multiple languages.

SNAP Outreach Events

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

SNAP Outreach Senior Center Engagement

A total of 108 provider organizations operated 249 DFTA senior centers and 38 affiliated sites in 2018. Of these 108 providers, 27 organizations participated in the ACCESS HRA Provider Portal, which enables organizations to provide ongoing SNAP case management for their clients. Thirty-eight percent of DFTA senior centers were operated by a Provider Portal partner organization in 2018 (94 of 249 senior centers).

DSS SNAP Outreach Services also provided on-site, recurring SNAP assistance for seniors at 37 community sites in 2018, including both DFTA sites and unaffiliated senior centers. Through the Mayor’s Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety (MAP), DSS MAP Outreach 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 249 DFTA senior centers citywide, 121 senior centers received enhanced support services on an on-going basis. This represents 39% of senior centers in the Bronx; 57% in Brooklyn; 38% in Manhattan; 57% in Queens; and 45% in Staten Island. In 2018, on-going SNAP support services were provided in 49% of senior centers citywide, up from 36% in 2017.

DFTA Senior Centers

| | DFTA Senior Centers | Provider Partner | % Partnered |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Bronx | 44 | 17 | 39% |
| Brooklyn | 79 | 45 | 57% |
| Manhattan | 61 | 23 | 38% |
| Queens | 54 | 31 | 57% |
| Staten Island | 11 | 5 | 45% |
| Total | 249 | 121 | 49% |

DFTA Affiliated Sites

| | Affiliated Sites | Provider Partner | % Partnered |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Bronx | 9 | 5 | 56% |
| Brooklyn | 13 | 6 | 55% |
| Manhattan | 10 | 4 | 40% |
| Queens | 5 | 3 | 60% |
| Staten Island | 1 | - | - |
| Total | 38 | 15 | 39% |

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

150,460 seniors were recertified for SNAP during 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% |

LAST YEAR'S NUMBERS: 159,190 seniors were recertified for SNAP during 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 compares 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 between the years of 2016 and 2017 instead of 2017 and 2018. This is because HRA/DSS researchers estimate the City's SNAP participation rate for operational use; data for 2018

won't be available until late 2019. There is a lag because we rely on Census Bureau survey data for the calculations.

The 2017 senior (age 60+) SNAP participation rate was 73.0% (419,097 enrolled/573,880 estimated eligible for SNAP), an increase over the 2016 senior SNAP participation rate of 70.9% (406,510 enrolled/573,301 estimated eligible for SNAP). (We use age 60+ as the senior cutoff because SNAP eligibility rules define seniors as age 60+.)

This calculation 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 1 percent between 2016 and 2017, from an average monthly number of 1.69 million to 1.67 million in 2017. This reflects the recognized correlation between an improved economy and a reduction in SNAP cases.
- As a result of larger declines in poverty compared to 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 **83.6% in 2016 to 84.8% in 2017**.
- The estimated SNAP **participation rate in 2017**—that is, the proportion of NYC SNAP eligibles who received SNAP each month—**was 70.9%, compared to 72.4 in 2016**.
- Note that the 70.9% estimate for 2017 reflects the first full year of NYS’s July 2016 expansion of SNAP eligibility to working households with income up to 150% of poverty (vs. 130%); this important policy reform put downward pressure on our participation rate by expanding SNAP eligibility to a sizable population with a low expected SNAP benefit level (and low participation).

Table 1. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Access and Participation Rates for 2010–2017*

| Program Access Index (PAI) | | | | Participation Rate | |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Year | United States | New York State | New York City | Year | New York City |
| 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 2010-2017 because HRA/DSS researchers estimate the City’s SNAP participation rate for operational use, but unfortunately 2018 data won’t be available until late 2019. 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, 2013–2017*

| Year | NYC Seniors (age 60+) |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| 2017 | 73.0% |
| 2016 | 70.9%** |
| 2015 | 68.2% |
| 2014 | 69.5% |
| 2013 | 68.4% |

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