

## Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Update

On June 18, 2020 the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision that the termination of DACA did not comply with federal law, finding that the termination of DACA was done in an “arbitrary and capricious” way that violated federal law. The Court vacated the September 5, 2017 memorandum terminating DACA and sent the matter back to U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to reconsider.

The status of DACA currently is as follows:

- USCIS will continue to accept DACA renewal applications from anyone who had DACA previously.
- USCIS should now begin to accept first-time DACA applications, that is, applications from people who have not already had DACA as well as advance parole applications from DACA recipients. (Although it is unknown how USCIS will process applications or requests for advance parole and the Trump Administration may take action to limit these options.)

Please note that the U.S. Supreme Court did not decide that the DACA program itself was legal or that it was impossible for DHS to terminate DACA. This leaves the possibility that DHS could terminate DACA again, this time addressing the issues identified by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Because of the uncertainty surrounding initial requests for DACA or for DACA recipients seeking to travel on advance parole, it is important they consult with an attorney or accredited representative before filing an application to identify any red flags that could put the applicant at risk for being denied DACA or even deported as well as to determine whether they are eligible for another more permanent form of status.



For legal and community resources for immigrants visit *Benefits Plus'* *Benefit Tools, Resources for Immigrants* at [https://cssny.s3.amazonaws.com/system/files/uploads/Resources\\_for\\_Immigrants.pdf](https://cssny.s3.amazonaws.com/system/files/uploads/Resources_for_Immigrants.pdf)

## New USCIS Website

The USCIS has updated their website [uscis.gov](https://uscis.gov). New website features include:

- A new user-centered design, which allows visitors to easily find immigration information and options on any device;
- A link to the USCIS online account sign-in at the top of all pages on [uscis.gov](https://uscis.gov), which allows visitors to easily access their existing account or create a new one;
- Increased access to and availability of Spanish and multilingual resources through enhancements made to the Spanish website ([uscis.gov/es](https://uscis.gov/es)) and the Multilingual Resource Center.

For additional details on these improvements go to <https://www.uscis.gov/news/alerts/uscis-launches-updated-website>.

## New York State's Extended Benefits Program Unemployment Insurance Beneficiaries

The Extended Benefit (EB) became available in NYS the benefit week ending July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and currently provides up to 20 weeks of additional UI benefits in NYS. Extended Benefits are available when the state's total unemployment rate, based on a 3-month average of unemployment rates, is at least 10% of the average for any of the corresponding three-month periods ending in the three preceding calendar years.

Depending on NYS's unemployment rate, EB offers either 13 or 20 weeks of additional benefits on top of the weeks of [Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation \(PEUC\)](#) available through the CARES Act. As of July 2020, New Yorkers qualify for EB under federal rules for up to 20 weeks, due to the state's high rate of unemployment. As the unemployment rate changes, this may also change. EB, like PEUC, is only available to regular UI claimants, not those who receive benefits under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefit.

EB is different from the PEUC, which became available through the federal CARES Act. The PEUC benefit increases by 13 the number of weeks a regular UI claimant is entitled to benefits for a total of 39 weeks. Regular UI claimants who continue to be unemployed at the end of these 39 weeks become entitled to EB. This means that New Yorkers may be eligible for a total of 59 weeks of UI benefits.

The NYS Department of Labor will send letters with instructions to claimants who may be eligible for Extended Benefits.



For more information on both EB and the PEUC, visit *Benefits Plus* at <https://bplc.cssny.org/pbm/covid-19-resources/expansion-of-unemployment-insurance/unemployment-insurance-expansion>. The *COVID-19 Resources* section within *Benefits Plus* is available at no cost to all providers and individuals seeking assistance on how COVID-19 has impacted different benefit and housing programs.

### NYS Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) Payment Update

The NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) has issued P-EBT food benefits to approximately 710,000 children in over 400,000 Temporary Assistance and SNAP households that were active (received benefits) for the month of March 2020. OTDA calls this Group 1.

Group 2 includes children and young adults active in Medicaid-only cases who were directly certified for National School Lunch Program (NSLP) based on receipt of Medicaid.

- Children and young adults with an active Medicaid with the local Medicaid office (via WMS) were issued a payment on June 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>.
  - [Letters were previously sent](#) to households informing them of the availability of these benefits and providing them with information about how to access this benefit.
- Beginning the week of July 10th, OTDA will begin issuing P-EBT benefits to the approximately 532,000 children who receive Medicaid through the New York State of Health (NYSOH) Marketplace.
  - Letters were sent to households about the availability of these benefits.
  - The issuance of benefits and the mailing of letters to all of Group 2 should be completed by the end of July.

### SNAP Emergency Allotment Available for July

A July supplement, via the SNAP Emergency Allotment (EA), will be available to SNAP households who did not receive the maximum benefit amount for their household size, see [April/May E-Newsletter](#) for details on the program.

For additional information go to <https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2020/20DC074.pdf>

### Summer Meal Site Finder

Use the interactive map on [SummerMealsNY.org](http://SummerMealsNY.org) to find and refer to sites near you. Site information is also available by phone:

- Call: 2-1-1 (statewide) or 3-1-1 (NYC); or 1-866-3-HUNGRY
- Text: "Food" or "Comida" to 877-877

### NY State of Health: Special Enrollment Will Remain Open Through August 15, 2020

Uninsured New Yorkers can still enroll for coverage through the NY State of Health. The Special Enrollment Period for uninsured New Yorkers has been extended for another 30 days, through August 15, 2020.

New Yorkers can apply for coverage through [NY State of Health](#) or directly through insurers.

For help with enrollment call 1-888-614-5400.

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## HOUSING NEWS

### NYS COVID Rent Relief Program

NYS Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) is accepting applications for the new COVID Rent Relief Program (RRP). RRP provides up to 4 months of rental assistance for NYS renters with the greatest rent burden.

The application period opened on Thursday, July 16 and will close on Thursday, July 30. Applications will be accepted throughout the two-week application period.

HCR will prioritize eligible households with “greatest economic and social need” accounting for income, rent burden, percent of income lost and risk of homelessness.

To learn about eligibility criteria and to apply, visit <https://hcr.ny.gov/RRP>. For questions, individuals can call the COVID Rent Relief Program Call Center at 1-833-499-0318 (Monday through Saturday, 8AM-7PM) or email them at [covidrentrelief@hcr.ny.gov](mailto:covidrentrelief@hcr.ny.gov)

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### New Citywide Landlord-Tenant Mediation Project

On July 21, 2020, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the Citywide Landlord-Tenant Mediation Project to address rent-related issues for tenants, regardless of immigration status, in a mediation setting outside of the housing court system, with a focus on [hardest hit communities facing hardship due to the COVID-19](#).

Starting immediately, tenants can call the 311 Tenant Helpline to talk to NYC Mayor's Public Engagement Unit's housing specialists. Eligible tenants will be referred to non-profit Community Dispute Resolution

Centers (CDRCs) in each borough. Each CDRC will manage case intake, provide mediation sessions, and monitor case follow up for tenants.

The CDRCs will assist tenants and small landlords in finding solutions to rental issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic before they reach litigation in housing court.

The Mediation Project will handle cases in a setting where both parties feel safe, and priority will be given to tenants and small landlords who do not have legal representation. For more information, [view the Mayor's press release](#).

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### NYS Evictions: New Protection for Renters

The New York State Tenant Safe Harbor Act, signed into law on June 30, 2020, protects eligible tenants from evictions due to financial hardship during COVID-19.

The law applies to NYS residential tenants with unpaid rent that has accrued between March 7<sup>th</sup> and the date when all COVID-related restrictions on nonessential gatherings and businesses are lifted in the tenant's county.

While the protection from eviction applies to these tenants, landlords can still sue in court for rent arrears and housing court judges can rule that tenants owe the arrears to landlords. The law does not cancel rent and tenants remain responsible for paying their rent. For more information on the Tenant Safe Harbor Act, [click here](#).

To stay up-to-date on relief for renters and other COVID-19 related resources, visit <https://bplc.cssny.org/pbm/covid-19-resources/housing-programs-services/eviction-moratoriums>.

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### Redesign of NYC Housing Connect: NYC's Portal to Affordable Housing Lotteries

NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) has redesigned their NYC Housing Connect website, where households apply for affordable housing lotteries across NYC. Beginning this month, all new affordable housing opportunities will be available on the new NYC Housing Connect, <https://housingconnect.nyc.gov/PublicWeb/>.

In order to qualify for units found in the NYC Housing Connect lotteries, households will still have to meet size and income requirements.

**NOTE:** Profiles from the original NYC Housing Connect (<https://a806-housingconnect.nyc.gov/nyclottery/lottery.html#home>), will not be carried over to the new website. A new account must be created.

**Credit Reporting Relief for New Yorkers During COVID-19**

An agreement with the New York State Department of Financial Services (DFS) and the credit reporting industry will provide relief for New Yorkers who face difficulties caused by COVID-19 and prevent unwarranted negative impacts on credit reports.

DFS advises financial institutions governed by New York to provide credit information in ways that reduce negative impacts on consumers.

Under this agreement credit reporting agencies will:

- Provide one free credit report each month through November 2020;
- Inform financial institutions about procedures requiring institutions to disclose missing or overdue payments in ways that reduce the effect on credit history and credit scores of consumers;
- Inform financial institutions of their credit reporting obligations under the Federal Coronavirus Act on Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES), which provides for consumer relief; and,
- Communicate with financial institutions about credit reporting that may not meet CARES Act requirements.

For help, go to <https://www.cssny.org/news/entry/covid-19-financial-tips>.

**Regular HEAP and Emergency HEAP Extended**

The dates of operation for the Regular and Emergency benefit components will be extended from June 30, 2020 through August 31, 2020 or until the funds allocated to these components are exhausted, whichever occurs first.

Apply for HEAP in NYC by calling 212-331-3126.

**Benefits Plus Online****Updated Benefit Tool: [NYC Housing Resources Guide](#)**

This year's edition of the free Housing Resources Guide includes updates in the following sections:

- New Section on Real Estate Apps and Websites
- Resources for Affordable Housing
- Resources for the Homeless or At-Risk of Homelessness
- Resources for Homeowners
- Resources for Individuals with HIV/AIDS
- Resources for Seniors
- Resources for Youth
- Tenants' Rights & Resources

**Manual Chapter Updated: [Immigration Statuses/Naturalization](#)**

- Subscribers can access DACA updates which reflect a recent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court.

**Free COVID-19 Resources**

Recent Updates include:

- [Housing Programs & Services:](#)
  - Eviction Moratoriums, NYS Eviction Moratorium, Tenant Safe Harbor Act
  - Rent, COVID Rent Relief Program (RRP)
- [Cash Assistance: Changes under COVID-19](#)

- Updated Cash Assistance Recertification Procedures for NYC and Upstate NY
- Updated time frame for conducting eligibility interviews via phone, as well as telephone screenings for drug and alcohol and extending domestic violence waivers, and signature waiver for applications taken over the phone by HRA staff.

Not a Benefits Plus Subscriber? [Request a free demo here.](#)

## Community Resources/Events

### NYC Cooling Centers Are Available

Anyone who needs to escape the heat can visit a cooling center which is available Monday through Friday, from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. To find a cooling center go to <https://maps.nyc.gov/cooling-center/> or call 311. Attendees must wear face coverings inside all NYC cooling centers and adhere to social distancing guidelines. For more information go to <http://NYC.gov/beattheheat>.

### Housing Rights Town Hall: August 3rd

Goddard Riverside Law Project will host a virtual town hall on Monday, August 3rd at 6pm about tenants' rights during the COVID crisis. The event will feature presentations from Housing Court Answers, the Law Project, and the Housing Justice for All and Right to Counsel NYC coalitions.

Join via Zoom, Facebook Live, or Telephone Conference. [Register here](#) or by sending an email with your name, address, and telephone number to [organizer@goddard.org](mailto:organizer@goddard.org).

### We Speak NYC: Free Online English Conversation Classes

We Speak NYC is offering free, online English conversation classes this summer. See updated schedule of classes and drop in at a time that works to practice your English skills, learn about City resources for immigrant communities, and make new friends. Learn more at [wespeaknyc.cityofnewyork.us/wsnyc-online-classes](http://wespeaknyc.cityofnewyork.us/wsnyc-online-classes).

### Worker Protection Hotline

Call 311 or 1-212-436-0381 with questions about reopening, health and safety guidelines for the workplace, or to report an employer that is not following reopening requirements.