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  - Q&A will take place in the middle and at the end of the presentation.
  - Learning Center staff will ask on behalf of attendees.

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Community Service Society of NY (CSS)

- Agency’s COVID-19 Resources:
  https://www.cssny.org/news/c/covid-19-resources

- Benefits Plus Learning Center, a program of CSS
  - COVID-19 Comprehensive Guides:
    https://bplc.cssny.org/benefit_tools/15
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Group: Benefits Plus Learning Center
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Presenter

Leslie Bailey
Assistant Director, Benefits Plus Learning Center
The Basics of Cash Assistance

• Description of Cash Assistance (CA)
  o Provides a bi-monthly cash benefit to qualifying families and individuals.
  o Includes an allowance for shelter, food & other and a utility allowance
  o The shelter allowance amount is different for households with dependent children vs. households without dependent children and it varies by county.

• Qualifying for Cash Assistance:
  o Immigration Criteria
    ▪ [https://bplc.cssny.org/benefit_tools/11](https://bplc.cssny.org/benefit_tools/11)
  o Resources
    ▪ Must be under $2,000, $3,000 for households with a member 60 or over
  o Income
    ▪ Must be below the standard of need [https://bplc.cssny.org/benefit_tools/8](https://bplc.cssny.org/benefit_tools/8)
The Basics of Cash Assistance

Note:

• Eligibility requirements have not changed.

• Families and individuals applying for Cash Assistance must meet the program’s qualifying factors.

CA Program Requirements

• As part of maintaining eligibility for CA benefits there are program requirements which include:
  
  o Work Requirements, for those who are not exempt
  o Drug and Alcohol Mandatory Screenings
  o Child Support, unless there is good cause
  o Eligibly Verification Review (EVR)
Changes Under COVID 19 - Program Requirements

• These program requirements have not been eliminated, but certain procedures have been suspended
  o All in-person appointments have been deferred until May 15th.
  o There are no adverse case actions for clients who do not keep previously scheduled appointments during the pandemic.

Changes Under COVID 19 – Work Requirements

• Compliance with Work Activities
  o Any Cash Assistance recipient unable to comply with a work activity, through May 15, 2020, must be granted good cause if their inability to comply is due to COVID-19.
  o The COVID-19 pandemic may result in the inability of individuals to attend agency employment appointments, including work activity assignments, due to factors such as lack of transportation, lack of child-care, worksite closures, or legitimate concerns about using public transportation or other factors regarding work participation.
Changes Under COVID 19 – Work Requirements

• Sanctioned Households
  o Households that have been sanctioned, HRA has lifted employment sanctions for CA recipients who contacted the agency and stated a willingness to comply.
  
  o Demonstrated compliance is suspended until further notice.

• Waiver Pending: NYS has requested the ability to grant blanket good cause and lift employment related sanctions

Changes Under COVID 19 - Work Requirements

• Employment Assessments
  o Households with dependent children will continue to be conducted within 90 days of their date of eligibility.
  
  o This is a federal requirement and therefore cannot be waived.
Changes Under COVID 19 - Drug and Alcohol Screenings

- Applicants/recipients are now able to complete drug and alcohol screenings over the phone with HRA staff through May 7, 2020.
  - Applicants/recipients (A/R) can be sanctioned for failure to comply, if they do not have good cause for completing a telephone screening.

- A/R should not be sanctioned for non-compliance with drug and alcohol treatment, if these require in-person contact with providers.

Changes Under COVID 19 - Child Support Requirements

- Child Support Sanctions
  - If a recipient has a child support sanction, CA benefits can be restored (sanction lifted) by informing the NY City Office of Child Support Services that they are willing to comply with the child support program via
    - Phone: 929-221-7676
    - Email: dcse.csweb@dfa.state.ny.us, or
    - Mail: By writing to the New York City Office of Child Support Services, PO Box 830, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013.
  - Recipients should provide their name, case number, and contact information, and state that they are willing to comply with the child support program.
Changes Under COVID 19 - Child Support Requirements

• Missed Appointments
  o No negative case actions are being taken for missing appointments with the Office of Child Support Services.
  o Child Support appointments are being rescheduled beginning June 1st.

The following offices will be closed until further notice:
  o New York City Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) Borough Offices and Customer Service Walk-In Center will be closed.
  o The New York City Family Courts are also closed for child support matters.

• For help with child support issues:
  o Email dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us, include the Child Support account number or
  o Call the New York State Child Support Helpline call 888-208-4485.
Changes Under COVID 19 - Application Procedures

- The application is found at [LDSS-2921](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/locations/job-locations-and-service-centers.page)
- Where to File an Application
  - NYC applicants are strongly encouraged to use ACCESS HRA to apply for Cash Assistance.
  - Home Bound clients and individuals with disabilities who cannot or do not want to use ACCESS HRA can request a Home Visit
  - Call Constituent Services 212-331-4640 or 311 or email Ctr90HVNRequests@hra.nyc.gov

NYC ACCESS HRA
- Creating an ACCESS HRA account
- Email address is not needed
Cash Assistance and Medicaid

- CA Applicants Submitting an Application for Medicaid
  - Typically when CA applicants complete the paper LDSS-2921, they can also apply for Medicaid simultaneously.
  - However, CA applicants who apply on ACCESS HRA are unable to submit an application for Medicaid simultaneously.
    - In this case, CA applicants with dependent children or individuals who are under 65 or who are not disabled, or blind should apply through NYS of Health Marketplace, the link is provided in ACCESS HRA.

Documentation

- Required Documents
  - Use the HRA Mobile App to upload documents
    - [https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/accesshramobile.page](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/accesshramobile.page)
Changes Under COVID 19 - Application Interview

- Once the application has been submitted, an interview is required.

- Typically this interview is done in person however, face to face interviews are waived until May 7th (https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2020/20DC028.pdf)

- Interviews will now take place via phone. An HRA worker will initiate contact with the client
  - “Due to a significant increase in online applications for CA, there may be a delay in clients receiving a call for their eligibility interview. Cases will not be closed or denied in the meantime. The agency is working diligently on this matter and will be following up with every applicant.” -HRA

Pending Waivers

- Cash Assistance eligibility interview waived (same as SNAP interview requirements, see below)

- 45-day wait period for Safety Net Cash Assistance applications

- Modifications to certain aspects of the Cash Assistance resource policy

- Need to provide proof of application for Unemployment Insurance Benefits

- Authority to permit Providers/Agency Staff to sign applications on behalf of clients unable to use ACCESS HRA
  - Update: A signature waiver has been approved for HRA staff only who speak directly to clients over the phone, not providers (non-HRA staff).
HRA Provider Portal

- HRA has given organizations the ability to view a client’s Cash Assistance and SNAP case via a Provider Portal.
  - To join the Provider Portal, each organization or agency must enter into a data-sharing and privacy agreement with the NYC Department of Social Services (HRA).
    - This is a binding legal agreement and must be executed by an Officer of the company or organization, or other individual having the legal authority to bind the organization. The MOU must be signed by the Officer and notarized.
  - The agency must designate an Administrator. The Administrator will be the point person with HRA, as well as for agency staff who need access to the portal. Agencies can have more than one Administrator.
    - All Administrators must attend a training for the provider portal.
This page is where the client indicates which agencies can have access to their case file.

ACCESS HRA - Webinar

- To learn more about the Provider Portal [click here](#) to register for a webinar training.
  - To enroll in the Provider Portal please send an email to DSSOutreach@dss.nyc.gov
- For an overview of ACCESS HRA [click here](#).
  - This includes the client facing website; the Provider Portal; and ACCESS HRA Mobile App.
    - Held on Fridays from 10am-12pm,
ACCESS HRA - Webinars

- ACCESS HRA is now offering webinars to demonstrate the effective use of their tool.
  - To register for a simulation of a CA application click here.  
    - Held on Mondays from 3-4pm, to register for a webinar
  - To register for a simulation of a SNAP application click here.  
    - Held on Wednesdays from 3-4pm,

Replacing a Lost EBT Card

- Call 888-328-6399, and a replacement card will be mailed within 7 to 10 business days; or
- Visit an Over the Counter (OTC) site to get a replacement card the same day
  - Manhattan, 109 East 16th Street - Ground Floor
  - Brooklyn, 227 Schermerhorn Street - Ground Floor
  - Need a valid photo ID to receive a same day replacement card.
The Basics of SNAP Benefits

- Description of SNAP
  
  - SNAP provides a monthly benefit amount to low income households to purchase food items at participating grocery stores and supermarkets.
The Basics of SNAP Benefits

• Qualifying for SNAP
  o Immigration Criteria: https://bplc.cssny.org/benefit_tools/11
  o Resources: There is no asset/resource test for most SNAP households.
    ▪ Households that do remain subject to a resource test include:
      • Households with a member who is either elderly or disabled AND the household’s income is 200% or more of the poverty level (FPL).
      • Households with a sanctioned or Intentional Program Violation (IPV) member.

• Qualifying for SNAP
  o Income
    ▪ Households with an elderly (age 60 and over) or disabled member do not have a gross income test.
    ▪ All other households will need to meet SNAP gross income guidelines

  o Benefits Plus SNAP Calculator
    https://bplc.cssny.org/benefit_tools/4
The Basics of SNAP Benefits

- Eligibility requirements have not changed.
- Households applying for SNAP must meet the program’s qualifying factors.

SNAP Work Requirements

- As part of maintaining eligibility for SNAP benefits there are work activities for those who are not exempt.
- Able-bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD):
  - This rule limits SNAP benefits to 3 months in a defined three-year period unless they live in a waived area of the state, qualify for an exemption, or meet work requirements
- Students:
  - Students enrolled in PT/FT education are required to engage in work activities for an average of 20 hours per week and paid at least minimum wage.
Changes Under COVID 19 - SNAP Work Requirements

- SNAP recipients unable to comply with a work activity due to an inability to participate or concerns with participation due to COVID-19, must be granted good cause (through May 15, 2020)
  - They must contact HRA to request good cause.
- ABAWD
  - NYS has suspended the time limit for ABAWD participants from April 1, 2020 through the end of the month after the public health emergency declaration is lifted.
  - ABAWD have been granted a waiver from work requirements.
- Students
  - Must request good cause to be exempt from work requirements.
  - The USDA did not grant a work waiver for students.
- Reminder: Recipients receiving Unemployment Insurance are considered complying with work requirements.

Emergency Allotments for SNAP Recipients

- There are NO Changes in Maximum SNAP Allotment
  - However, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act provides a supplement (the Emergency Allotment (EA)) to SNAP households who did not receive the maximum benefit amount for their household size.
  - The supplement is issued for March and April.
  - Households in receipt of the maximum SNAP allotment are not granted any additional benefits.

- The Amount of the Supplement
  - The difference between the amount of SNAP benefits the household received for the month and the maximum benefit amount for the household’s size.
Emergency Allotments for SNAP Recipients

*Example: A HH size of 3 receives $209 in SNAP benefits every month. The maximum amount of SNAP a HH size of 3 can receive is $509. Through the EA this household will receive an extra $300 for the month of March and another $300 in the month of April.*

- If the SNAP Households is already getting the maximum of $509 for a HH of 3, they *would not* be eligible for benefits via EA supplement.
- EA benefits were issued to household’s EBT card on April 14th in New York City.

What About Disaster SNAP: D-SNAP ?

- D-SNAP provides replacement benefits for SNAP households that lose food
  - It also, extends benefits to households that would not ordinarily be eligible for SNAP.
- D-SNAP benefits are triggered when the President declares a Major Disaster Declaration Individual Assistance for a state.
  - This is currently under review by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), thus not yet available in NYS.
What about Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)?

Also known as Coronavirus Pandemic EBT

- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act created the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program
- The program issues a supplement to households with children who otherwise receive free or reduced-price meals.
  - States must submit a P-EBT plan that includes information such as how the states will provide EBT benefits to families, dates of implementation, and the benefit amounts. Before households in a state can receive P-EBT benefits, the USDA must approve the state’s plan.
  - There are no details on NYS’ plan.
- For more information go to https://frac.org/research/resource-library/pandemic-ebt

SNAP Application Process

- The application if found at LDSS-4826
- Where to File an Application
  - SNAP Home Centers: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/locations/snap-locations.page
  - NYC applicants are strongly encouraged to use ACCESS HRA to apply for SNAP
  - Home Bound clients and individuals with disabilities who cannot or do not want to use ACCESS HRA can request a Home Visit by calling Constituent Services. 212-331-4640 or 311.
Filing an Application as an Authorized Representative via ACCESS HRA

Advocates can assist clients in applying for SNAP via ACCESS HRA.

- The advocate must obtain a signed copy of the SNAP Authorized Representative Request Form (LDSS-4942) and
- Complete the SNAP application on the individual’s behalf using ACCESS-HRA.

Filing an Application as an Authorized Representative via ACCESS HRA

- Once the Authorized Representative Request Form (LDSS-4942) is completed, the advocate should create an account for the individual at http://www.nyc.gov/accesshra.
“Have you appointed someone to be your authorized representative?”

Indicate “Yes” and enter the information requested

Filing an Application as an Authorized Representative via ACCESS HRA

• At the end of the application, the advocate will initial the application as the authorized representative, using their own initials.

• Using the same credentials used to login to ACCESS HRA, use the HRA Mobile app, to upload the completed LDSS-4942 form

  o The LDSS-4942 form must be completed, signed and dated by both parties. If this step is not completed appropriately, the application will not be able to be processed
Changes Under COVID 19 - Application Interview

Through a federal waiver, a SNAP application interview is not required (either in-person or via the phone), if BOTH of the following conditions have been met:

1. The applicant’s identity has been verified; AND
2. All other mandatory information and verification has been provided and is valid:
   - Identity
   - Social Security number
   - Residency
   - Gross non-exempt income
   - Disability
   - “Alien eligibility”

If either of these conditions has not been met, then an interview will be required.

- In addition, an interview may be required if any of the information submitted is unclear or cannot be verified through separate data matches.
- Interview will be conducted by phone.
Changes Under COVID 19 - Application Interview

- Under a federal waiver, until May 31st, an interview is not required for issuance of expedited SNAP benefits.
- For applications eligible for expedited benefits, the only information that must be verified prior to the initial expedited issuance is the applicant’s identity.

How Additional COVID-19 Assistance Impact CA & SNAP

Economic Impact Payments

- The CARES Act economic impact payments (up to $1,200 per individual, $500 per qualifying child) are not counted as income for Cash Assistance (CA) or SNAP eligibility.

- CA Resource Rule
  - For all Cash Assistance cases: These payments must be excluded as a lump sum for the month of receipt and the following two months.
How Additional COVID-19 Assistance Impact CA & SNAP

Economic Impact Payments

CA Resource Rule

- Example, if a household receives the Payment(s) in April 2020, the district must not count it as income or a resource for April and must exempt it as a countable resource for May and June.

- In July, if the household has remaining funds from the Payment(s), the district will count the remaining funds as a resource.

SNAP Resource Rules

- New SNAP Applicants: Payment(s) are excluded as a resource in the month received, and the month after. Any remaining balance would be counted as a resource in the months thereafter.

- Households in Receipt of SNAP: Payments are excluded as a resource for a period of 12 months following receipt of the payments. Any remaining balance would be counted as a resource in the months thereafter.

*Please note that most households do not have a resource requirement for SNAP.*
How Additional COVID-19 Assistance Impact CA & SNAP

Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

• The $600 per week in compensation will count as unearned income in determining eligibility for CA and SNAP ([https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2020/20DC035.pdf](https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2020/20DC035.pdf))

• Retroactive UIB
  o CA Households: Retroactive UIB payments will be subject to CA lump sum rules.
  o SNAP Households: Retroactive UIB lump sum payments will be excluded as income for SNAP eligibility purposes. The amount received as a lump sum payment would count as a resource in the month received.

Domestic Violence

• New York State has launched a new texting program and confidential service to help New Yorkers experiencing domestic violence.

• Text 844-997-2121 or visit [www.opdv.ny.gov](http://www.opdv.ny.gov) to confidentially chat with a professional at any time of day or night.
COVID – 19: Resource Guides

Created by the Community Service Society/Benefits Plus Learning Center
https://bplc.cssny.org/benefit_tools/15

- COVID-19 Impact on Public Benefits
- COVID-19: What Workers Need to Know
- COVID-19: Navigating Essential Services
- COVID-19: Navigating Every Day Activities

Handouts

- PowerPoint Slides
- *Assisting Individuals In Applying For SNAP On ACCESS HRA - detailed instructions*
- SNAP Authorized Representative Request Form (LDSS-4942)
- Get Help Handout
Q&A
Thank You

Contact Us
https://bplc.cssny.org

Evaluation
At the close of the webinar, please fill out our short survey.