



# COVID-19: ITS IMPACT ON PUBLIC BENEFITS

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## APPEALS

### *Fair Hearings*

The NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). Below are Fair Hearing procedures during this emergency period.

- No Defaults for Hearing No-shows:
  - If an appellant fails to show up to a hearing scheduled during the state of emergency, there will be no default, that is, no negative action will be taken. OAH will administratively adjourn (reschedule) the hearings and preserve aid to continue pending the outcome of the hearing for cases in which aid continuing is in place.
- Current and New Requests for Fair Hearings & Hearings on the Calendar:
  - All previously scheduled in-person hearings will be conducted by primarily by written, telephonic, video, or other electronic means.
  - Individuals who make new requests for a hearing during the state of emergency are given the option of a hearing by telephone.
    - If an Appellant does not have access to a telephone or wishes to submit written evidence and does not have access to a fax or other means of submitting such documentation, to the extent that OAH knows of the issue, it will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
    - Regardless, Appellants will not be defaulted for failure to submit evidence or for failing to answer the Hearing Officer's call to commence their hearing while Executive Order 202.5 is in effect.
- OTDA is in the process of adjourning and rescheduling 9,000 fair hearings by hand. They will re-schedule as telephone hearings if the appellant or the appellant's representative consents.
  - No word as of yet as of the time for the adjourned dates.
  - OTDA will notify appellants of the new date by mail, NOT by e-mail.
- If you need assistance with a hearing, please contact a legal service agency. See below, [Get Help](#).

### *NYS Courts*

- Beginning Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, virtual court operations will commence in NYC Criminal Court. All parties will participate in court proceedings by videoconferencing using Skype for Business.
- Beginning Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, NYC Family Court will hear by remote video appearances and/or by telephone the following matters: child-protective intake cases involving removal applications, newly-filed juvenile delinquency intake cases involving remand applications, emergency family offense petitions, applications where there is a court order of custody or parenting time.
- For more information visit: [http://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/press/PDFs/PR20\\_07.pdf](http://www.nycourts.gov/LegacyPDFS/press/PDFs/PR20_07.pdf).



- If conditions warrant court closure or any change in operations, notice will be posted on the court system's web site at [www.nycourts.gov](http://www.nycourts.gov) or call 800-268-7869.
  - Notifications will also be sent out via the New York Courts Alert Emergency Portal.
  - To sign up to receive alerts, visit: <http://www.nycourts.gov/notice/emergency-alerts.shtml>.
  - For more information go to <https://www.nycourts.gov/whatsnew/covid.shtml>.

## ACCESS HRA – ONLINE APPLICATION PORTAL

### **Online Applications**

ACCESS HRA is an online portal where applications may be completed and submitted for Cash Assistance, SNAP, and Emergency Assistance. During this time, NYC applicants are strongly encouraged to use ACCESS HRA to apply for these benefits. In addition, all requests for special grants and emergency assistance (one shot deals), can be made online via ACCESS HRA.

For help with creating an account, [click here](#). User guides are available [here](#).

### **ACCESS HRA Training Webinars**

HRA is offering training webinars that will provide information on use of ACCESS HRA for SNAP and Cash Assistance application. These trainings are open to everyone including CBOs and elected officials' offices.

- For a general overview of ACCESS HRA and the provider portal case management tool, visit: [https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/9z3xxln8/?&service\\_id=39119](https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/9z3xxln8/?&service_id=39119).
- To enroll in a Cash Assistance simulation application, visit: [https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/9z3xxln8/?&service\\_id=39105](https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/9z3xxln8/?&service_id=39105).
- To enroll in a SNAP simulation application, go to [https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/9z3xxln8/?&service\\_id=39117](https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/9z3xxln8/?&service_id=39117)

### **ACCESS HRA Provider Portal**

- The ACCESS HRA Provider Portal is a way for organizations to view real-time benefit information for their clients.
- For an in-depth presentation of the Provider Portal visit: [https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/9z3xxln8/?&service\\_id=39185](https://booknow.appointment-plus.com/9z3xxln8/?&service_id=39185).

## CASH BENEFITS

### **Cash Assistance (NYC Human Resources Administration – HRA)**

- Eligibility requirements for Cash Assistance remains the same. However, the application process and program requirements have been modified.
- All Cash Assistance and SNAP applicants who have been approved for benefits will receive an EBT card in the mail.
  - There is no need to come in to the Over the Counter (OTC) service center at 227 Schermerhorn Street in Brooklyn.



- If an applicant's EBT card does not arrive, they can go to one of seven open center locations for a temporary card that will have all benefits available until the EBT card arrives.
- If necessary, applicants can go to the Brooklyn OTC for their permanent card.
  - Brooklyn: 227 Schermerhorn Street - Ground Floor  
(929) 221-0922 or (929) 221-2809  
Open from 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
- If you have lost your EBT card, call the EBT Customer Services at 888-328-6399 to request a replacement EBT card for SNAP or Cash Assistance be mailed to them.
  - Individuals may also visit the Over the Counter (OTC) site to pick up a replacement card.
  - A valid photo ID is required to receive a same day replacement card at an OTC site.
- Cash Assistance Applications
  - Not all HRA Job Centers are open, go to <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/locations/job-locations-and-service-centers.page> for available locations.
  - NYC applicants are strongly encouraged to use ACCESS HRA to apply for Cash Assistance, see above [ACCESS HRA](#), on how to create an account.
  - Required documentation can be uploaded using the [HRA mobile app](#) found on Apple Store or Google Play.
  - All eligibility interviews, drug/alcohol screenings and domestic violence screenings will take place over the phone through June 6, 2020. A Job Center worker will call the client to complete these requirements.
  - Home Bound clients and individuals with disabilities who cannot or do not want to use ACCESS HRA can request a Home Visit, which is still available by calling Constituent Services: 212-331-4640, 311 or emailing [Ctr90HVNRequests@hra.nyc.gov](mailto:Ctr90HVNRequests@hra.nyc.gov).
    - Staff conducting these home visits will adhere to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's guidelines and protocols for such visits.
- Cash Assistance Recipients
  - CA cases that had recertifications expiring in March, April or May 2020 were automatically extended for three months.
- CA Program Requirements
  - Missed Appointments
    - All in-person appointments have been deferred until May 15th.
    - No negative action will be taken for recipients who miss a scheduled appointment at a Job Center, as well as other HRA offices, which includes the Office of Child Support Services and Career Service providers.
  - Work requirements are temporarily suspended.
  - Office of Child Support Services: Referrals have been rescheduled for after June 1, 2020.



- Sanctioned Households

Households with a child support sanction can restore Cash Assistance and Medicaid benefits by informing the NY City Office of Child Support Services that they are willing to comply with the child support program.

Clients can call 929-221-7676 or email [dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us), or write to the NYC Office of Child Support Services, PO Box 830, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. Clients should provide their name, case number and contact information.

Letters have been mailed to clients with a child support sanction informing them of this.

- CA/Medicaid: Discontinued Cash Assistance/Medicaid cases that require a separate Medicaid eligibility determination will have Medicaid coverage extended.
- For additional information go to <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/index.page>.
- A summary of the changes can be found at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/important-information-about-covid-19-and-your-hra-benefits.page>.
- How Additional COVID-19 Assistance Impacts Cash Assistance
  - One Time Stimulus Economic Impact Payments
    - The CARES Act economic impact payments (up to \$1,200 per individual, \$500 per qualifying child) are not countable for Cash Assistance (CA)
    - For more information on the *Economic Impact Payments*, refer to the Learning Center's resource guide, [COVID-19: Navigating Essential Services](#).
  - Pandemic Unemployment Compensation
    - The \$600 per week in Pandemic Unemployment Compensation will count as unearned income when determining eligibility for CA and SNAP. (<https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2020/20DC035.pdf>)
    - Retroactive UIB
      - For CA: Retroactive payments will be subject to CA lump sum rules.

### ***Emergency Assistance (One-Shot Deals)***

- Applications for emergency assistance can be made online via ACCESS HRA [nyc.gov/accesshra](https://nyc.gov/accesshra).
  - For help with creating an ACCESS HRA account go to see above, [ACCESS HRA](#), on how to create an account.
- Required documentation can be uploaded using the [HRA mobile app](#) found on Apple Store or Google Play.
- All in-person interviews for emergency assistance are waived and replaced with a telephone interview. A Job Center worker will call the client to complete the interview.

### ***Social Security Benefits***

- Social Security Payments
  - Both Social Security retirement, survivors, disability insurance benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefit payments will continue to be paid on time during this pandemic.



- Local Social Security Offices
  - All local Social Security offices are closed to the public for most in-person services as of Tuesday March 17, 2020 until further notice.
  - SSA field offices may offer assistance via phone call for certain crucial services.
    - Crucial services include reinstatement of benefits in dire circumstances, assistance to people with severe disabilities, blindness or terminal illnesses, and people in dire need of eligibility decisions for Supplemental Security Income or the associated ongoing eligibility for Medicaid when returning to work.
    - Individuals should check SSA's online field office locator for specific information about how to directly contact a local office.
    - To locate the nearest local Social Security office go to <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>, click on "Other Services" to find the address and phone number.
- Online services remain available
  - Individuals can apply for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits online, check the status of an application or appeal, request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas), print a benefit verification letter, and much more.
  - Individuals who cannot complete their Social Security business online, should call SSA's National 800 Number at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).
    - The agency is experiencing longer than normal wait times on the 800 Number and asks the public to remain patient, use its online services at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov), or call their local office.
    - SSA is temporarily changing the national 800 number hours starting on Tuesday, March 31, 2020.
    - The hours will change from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. local time to 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. local time.
  - For additional information visit: <https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/2020/#3-2020-2>.
  - Visit SSA's *Frequently Asked Questions* at <https://faq.ssa.gov/en-US>.
- Scheduled Appointments
  - SSA is not requiring applicants to appear in-person for consultative examinations during the national COVID 19 pandemic. SSA has instructed the Disability Determination Services to hold any case where a consultative exam has been canceled, to reschedule it once the COVID 19 pandemic subsides.
  - If an individual has a scheduled appointment during this emergency state, SSA will call the individual to conduct business over the phone where possible.
  - If an individual has a hearing scheduled, SSA will call the individual to discuss alternatives, including offering a telephonic hearing.



- Please note that SSA calls may come from a PRIVATE number and not from a U.S. government phone.
- Suspended Activities
  - Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs), both initiating new ones or completing current ones,
  - Processing and collection of overpayments,
  - Monitoring of and requiring accountings from representative payees,
  - Processing requests for information from third parties, although the site notes exceptions for appointed representatives and third parties.
- Former SSI recipients that require a separate Medicaid eligibility determination will have Medicaid coverage extended. No renewals or redeterminations will be required at this time.
- Scammers
  - Be on the alert for scammers who will attempt to trick people into providing personal information or payment via retail gift cards, wire transfers, or by mailing cash to maintain Social Security benefit payments or to receive the economic impact payments from the Department of Treasury.
  - The agency reminds everyone to be aware of scammers who try to take advantage of the pandemic to trick people into providing personal information or payment via retail gift cards, wire transfers, internet currency, or by mailing cash, to maintain Social Security benefit payments or receive economic impact payments from the Department of the Treasury.
- Economic Impact Payment (One Time Stimulus Payment) for Social Security Beneficiaries
  - Social Security beneficiaries (retirement, survivors, or disability) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients will receive the Economic Impact (EI) payment automatically.
  - The payment will be sent directly to their bank accounts through direct deposit, Direct Express debit card, or by paper check, just as they would normally receive their benefits.
  - SSDI beneficiaries who began receiving SSDI benefits as of Jan. 1, 2020, and who did not file a tax return in either 2018 or 2019 will need to file a request for EI payment at <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here>.
  - Claiming the \$500 for Qualifying Children: The \$500 payment per child is not automatic for Social Security & SSI beneficiaries, as well Railroad retirement beneficiaries and those with non-taxable VA benefits who have qualifying children under age 17 who have not filed a tax return.
    - The IRS released information that these households should use the *Non-Filers: Enter Your Payment Info Here* application, available at <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here> to claim the \$500 payment per child.
    - However, SSI and eligible VA beneficiaries must have applied by Tuesday, May 5th and Social Security Disability and Railroad Retirement beneficiaries must have applied by Wednesday, April 22 to receive to additional payments for their eligible children.
    - This group can no longer use the Non-Filers tool to add eligible children. However, they will still receive their automatic \$1,200 per adult payment.





- Households that do not file by the above listed dates, can receive the \$500 payment per child when filing a tax return for the 2020 tax year.
- SSA has published the following fact sheet to answer questions:  
<https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/assets/materials/economic-impact-payments-for-social-security-and-ssi-recipients.pdf>
- For more information on this payment, refer to the Learning Center's [COVID-19: What Workers Need to Know](#) or [COVID-19: Navigating Essential Services](#).
- Visit the agency's COVID-19 web page at <https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus> for other important information and updates.

### ***Impact of the Coronavirus Economic Impact Payment***

- Economic Impact Payments are not taxable.
- Payments received by the individual will not count as income for SSI, Cash Assistance, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, Medicare Savings Plan, or HUD subsidies neither will it have an impact on Social Security Retirement, Disability, Survivor or Dependent benefits.
- Resource Rules
  - For all Cash Assistance cases: These payments must be excluded as a lump sum for the month of receipt and the following two months.
    - For 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 must count the remaining funds as a non-exempt resource.
  - SNAP
    - For new SNAP applicants, the 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. *However, please note that most households do not have a resource requirement for SNAP.*
    - For households already receiving SNAP benefits, when they receive the Payment(s), the 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.
  - SSI and Non-MAGI Medicaid recipients: The payment will not count as resources for a 12-month period following the receipt of the funds.
- Question via phone, contact the IRS Stimulus Check phone number at 800-919-9835.
- For more information on the *Economic Impact Payments*, refer to the Learning Center's resource guide, [COVID-19: Navigating Essential Services](#).



### ***Unemployment Insurance Benefits (UIB)***

- NYS has waived the 7-day waiting period for application of UIB.
- For information on the expansion of Unemployment Insurance, including the \$600 per week additional benefits, UI benefits for those not typically eligible, and how to file for UI visit our [COVID-19: What Workers Need to Know](#) resource guide.

## **FOOD ACCESS**

### **SNAP**

- Eligibility requirements for SNAP benefits remain the same. However, the application process and program rules have been modified.
- If you have lost your EBT card, call 888-328-6399 or visit an Over the Counter (OTC) site (open from 8:30 am - 5:00 pm) to pick up a replacement card at:
  - Brooklyn: 227 Schermerhorn Street - Ground Floor (929) 221-0922 or (929) 221-2809
  - The Manhattan location has permanently closed.
  - A valid photo ID is required to receive a same day replacement card at an OTC site.
- SNAP Applications
  - Not all SNAP Home Centers are open, go to <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/locations/snap-locations.page> for available locations.
  - NYC applicants are strongly encouraged to use ACCESS HRA, [nyc.gov/accesshra](https://nyc.gov/accesshra). See above, [ACCESS HRA](#), on how to create an account.
    - Required documentation can be uploaded using the [HRA mobile app](#) found on Apple Store or Google Play.
    - SNAP applications can also be faxed to the SNAP Mail Application & Referral Unit (MARU) at 917-639-1111.
  - Home Bound clients and individuals with disabilities who cannot or do not want to use ACCESS HRA can request a Home Visit, which is still available by calling Constituent Services: 212-331-4640, 311 or emailing [Ctr90HVNRequests@hra.nyc.gov](mailto:Ctr90HVNRequests@hra.nyc.gov).
    - Staff conducting these home visits will adhere to the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's guidelines and protocols for such visits.
  - Application Interview
    - Effective April 1, 2020 until May 31, 2020, new SNAP applicants will not be required to be interviewed, as long as the applicant's identity has been verified and all other mandatory information and verification has been provided.
    - If either of these conditions are not met, then an interview will be required.
    - Such interviews will be conducted by phone.



- SNAP Recipients
  - SNAP recipients that had a recertification due in March, April, May or June will be given a six-month extension.
  - SNAP work requirements are suspended at this time.
  - Time Limits for ABAWDs
    - SNAP offices in all NYS counties will not impose the Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) 3-month time limit rule beginning April 1, 2020 and until otherwise instructed by OTDA.
- Emergency Allotments (EA) for SNAP Recipients
  - As authorized by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020, EA benefits will be issued as supplements to those SNAP households that did not receive the maximum benefit amount for their household size for March, April and May 2020.
    - The supplement for each month will be the difference between the amount of SNAP benefits the household received for the month and the maximum benefit amount for the household's size.
  - Only households whose SNAP benefits for these months was less than the maximum benefit amount for their household's size will receive the supplement.
    - SNAP households that received the maximum benefit, are **not** eligible for an EA supplement.
  - For additional details visit: <https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/>
- How Additional COVID-19 Cash Assistance Impacts SNAP
  - Economic Impact Payments
    - The CARES Act economic impact payments (up to \$1,200 per individual, \$500 per qualifying child) are not countable for SNAP
    - For more information on the *Economic Impact Payments*, refer to the Learning Center's resource guide, [COVID-19: Navigating Essential Services](#).
  - Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC)
    - The \$600 per week in Pandemic Unemployment Compensation will count as unearned income in determining eligibility for CA and SNAP (<https://otda.ny.gov/policy/gis/2020/20DC035.pdf>)
    - Retroactive UIB
      - SNAP: 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.
    - For more information on PUC and Unemployment benefits visit our [COVID-19: What Workers Need to Know](#) resource guide.



- Shopping Online
  - SNAP recipients can now shop online, visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/snap-online-shopping.page>

### ***Pandemic EBT (P-EBT)***

- Families First Coronavirus Response Act created the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program.
- The program issues a supplement, on an EBT card, to eligible households with school-aged children (ages 5 – 18) who would otherwise receive free or reduced-price meals. Benefit amounts will be for each day that school is closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic—equivalent to USDA’s daily reimbursement for free breakfast and lunch.
  - The amount of benefits is as follows:
    - March: \$68
    - April: \$125
    - May: \$119
    - June \$108
- There is no application process for P-EBT. Benefits will be issued automatically on existing EBT cards for households already receiving SNAP, Cash Assistance or Medicaid. For household who do not have an EBT card, information will be mailed to these households beginning mid-June.
- Pandemic-EBT does not replace or affect eligibility for other nutrition programs; families can continue receiving emergency meals distributed by schools, SNAP, WIC, summer meals and/or meals in childcare in addition to Pandemic-EBT.
- Additional details are forthcoming. For more information go to <https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/Frequently-Asked-Questions-Pandemic-EBT.asp> and <https://frac.org/research/resource-library/pandemic-ebt>

### ***WIC***

- Participants can visit a WIC clinic, if they are well and their WIC clinic is open, [click here for locations](#) (call to confirm they are open).
- All appointments, including applications and recertifications may be completed by phone.
- WIC cards for new participants can be mailed or offered as a “drive up” option.
- New York State WIC is not suspending any WIC cards.
  - Scams informing families that cards are being suspended are not true.
  - Once a family receives their benefits, they have the 30-day date range to use those benefits.
- Additional details can be found [here](#).

### ***Additional Food Resources***

- Refer to the Learning Center’s resource guide, [COVID-19: Navigating Essential Services](#), for additional food resources including:



- Grab and Go – School Lunch/Meal Hubs
- Food Pantries
- Home-Delivered Meals Programs
- Greenmarkets
- Hunger Free America

## HEALTH INSURANCE

### *Medicaid*

- Medicaid Alerts: [New York State Medicaid Program Modifications COVID-19 Emergency](#).
- For a comprehensive overview of changes to Medicaid as a result of COVID-19 visit: <http://www.wnylc.com/health/news/86/>.
- Medicaid Recipients
  - In New York City, all active cases will be extended.
  - No Medicaid case will be closed for failure to renew or failure to provide documentation.
  - Any case that is closed for failure to renew or failure to provide documentation that had Medicaid coverage on or after March 18, 2020 will be re-opened and coverage restored to ensure no gap in coverage.
  - Renewals will be extended for 12 months.
- Former SSI recipients and discontinued Cash Assistance/Medicaid cases that require a separate Medicaid eligibility determination will have Medicaid coverage extended. No renewals or redeterminations will be required at this time.
- MAGI Medicaid Applicants
  - For individuals who are not aged, blind or disabled who need Medicaid:
    - Apply for Medicaid on the NY State of Health Marketplace at <https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov>.
    - Individuals who are eligible for Medicaid, Essential Plan and Child Health Plus can enroll year-round, as usual. Go to [https://www.dfs.ny.gov/reports\\_and\\_publications/press\\_releases/pr202003161](https://www.dfs.ny.gov/reports_and_publications/press_releases/pr202003161) for more information.
    - For assistance with applying on the Marketplace, contact the Community Service Society of New York, which is a Navigator agency, at 888-614-5400.
- Aged, Blind, Disabled Applicants
  - During the COVID-19 Emergency, New York City residents who are age 65 or over; living with a disability or blindness; in receipt of Medicare and are not a parent or caretaker relative of minor



children; or are young adults under age 26 who were formerly in foster care are able to submit a Medicaid application via fax to 917-639-0732.

- All other applicants not in the categories listed above may submit an application via the NY State of Health at [www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov](http://www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov) or by calling 1-855-355-5777.
- Aged, Blind and Disabled applicants may also contact a facilitated enroller to apply for Medicaid.
  - NYSDOH will allow the Facilitated Enrollers for the Aged, Blind and Disabled (FE ABD) agencies to conduct telephone enrollments and renewals.
  - The FE ABD must send the applicant a copy of the Medicaid application to use during the telephone interview. This can be sent by standard mail or by email, if acceptable to the client.
  - The FE ABD agency must the applicant a copy of [DOH Form 5147](#), "*Submission of Application on Behalf of Applicant*." This form allows the FE ABD to sign the application on the applicant's behalf. This form can be sent by either standard mail or by email, if acceptable to the applicant.
  - The applicant must return *DOH Form 5147* to the FE ABD agency prior to conducting the interview/completing the application. The form can be scanned and emailed back to the FE ABD agency.
  - Applicants can attest to all elements of eligibility except *Immigration Status* and *Identity*, if the immigration document does not also prove identity.
  - Applicants do not need to provide proof of their Medicare application; this requirement is waived for the period of the COVID-19 emergency.
- Listing of Facilitated Enrollers
  - Community Service Society – 888- 614-5400  
<https://www.cssny.org/programs/entry/facilitated-enrollment-for-the-aged-blind-and-disabled-program-fe-abd>
  - Public Health Solutions – 646-619-6759  
<https://www.healthsolutions.org/community-work/health-insurance/aged-blind-disabled>
  - Nassau/Suffolk Hospital Council – 631-656-9783  
[http://coverage4healthcare.org/insurance\\_over\\_65](http://coverage4healthcare.org/insurance_over_65)
  - Western New York Independent Living – 716-836-0822  
<http://wnyil.org/Services/Medicaid-Application-Assistance-Program-MAAP>
- Many local Medicaid offices are closed for in-person assistance.
  - However, one office will remain open in each borough for in-person emergencies.
  - To find open locations, visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/locations/medicaid-locations.page>.



## **Medicare**

- During the week of May 4<sup>th</sup>, the CMS announced it is providing “equitable relief” to allow individuals who missed an enrollment period extra time to enroll in Medicare without penalty.
  - Specifically, individuals who could have enrolled between March 17th and June 17th through their initial enrollment period (IEP), the general enrollment period (GEP), or a special enrollment period (SEP) have until June 17, 2020 to enroll and not be penalized.
  - While certain individuals could be eligible for coverage immediately, many will have to wait until July or later for their coverage to become effective.
  - For a CMS FAQ visit: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/enrollment-issues-covid-ab-faqs.pdf?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=f9450e1e-c08a-411f-9be6-15181a308229>
- CMS also announced a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) for Medicare beneficiaries to make changes to their Medicare Advantage plans (MA) and Part D prescription drug plan (PDP) enrollment if they did not make a change during the MA Open Enrollment Period or another SEP due to the coronavirus emergency. This SEP is available until July 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - The Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period is only for Medicare beneficiaries who are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current calendar year and runs through March 31<sup>st</sup>. It allows the beneficiary to switch to a different Medicare Advantage plan, or disenroll from their Medicare Advantage plan and return to Original Medicare.
  - Beneficiaries who switch to Original Medicare during this period have a choice of enrolling or not enrolling in a stand-alone Part D plan, regardless of whether they had Part D coverage with their Medicare Advantage plan.
- Beneficiaries within three months of age 65 or older and not ready to start your monthly Social Security benefits yet, can use SSA’s online [retirement application](#) to sign up just for Medicare and wait to apply for retirement or spouses benefits later.
  - See “How to Apply for Medicare Online” - <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10531.pdf>
  - Applications for the [Low-Income Subsidy \(Extra Help\)](#) can also be completed online.
- Medicare has been directed to:
  - Waive cost-sharing for testing and for coronavirus treatment in doctor’s offices or emergency rooms and services delivered via telehealth;
  - Remove prior authorization requirements;
  - Waive prescription refill limits;
  - Relax restrictions on home or mail delivery of prescription drugs;
  - Expand access to certain telehealth services;
    - CMS is waiving limitations on the types of clinical practitioners that can offer Medicare telehealth services; other practitioners, such as physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech language pathologists, can now provide such services.



- Has temporarily expanded its coverage of telehealth services to respond to Coronavirus. Medicare beneficiaries can temporarily use [telehealth](#) services for common office visits, mental health counseling and preventative health screenings.
  - Go to the right-hand side of the page and indicate the state of residency.
  - A listing of various services will show with phone numbers.
- Medicare will no longer require an order from the treating practitioner for beneficiaries to receive COVID-19 testing; instead, tests may be covered when ordered by any health care professional authorized to do so under state law.
- Pharmacists can work with practitioners to provide assessment and specimen collection services, and the practitioner can bill Medicare for the services.
  - In addition, pharmacists can perform certain COVID-19 tests if the pharmacist is enrolled in Medicare as a laboratory, in accordance with a pharmacist's scope of practice and state law.
- Beneficiaries can get tested at "parking lot" test sites operated by pharmacies and other entities consistent with state requirements.
- Medicare and Medicaid are covering certain antibody tests.
- Go to <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/trump-administration-issues-second-round-sweeping-changes-support-us-healthcare-system-during-covid> for more information.
- Medicare Provisions under the CARES Act
  - Eliminates Medicare Part B's cost-sharing requirements for COVID-19 testing and any future COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Requires prescription drug plans to provide 90-day supplies of medication upon request during the public health emergency, among other provisions.

### ***Special Enrollment Period for Uninsured New Yorkers***

- Individuals who are currently uninsured have a special enrollment period from March 16<sup>th</sup> through May 15<sup>th</sup> to enroll in Qualified Health Plans on the NY State of Health Marketplace or directly with a health insurer; insurance will be effective as of April 1, 2020.
  - Individuals can apply for coverage through NY State of Health on-line at <https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/>, by phone at 855-355-5777, and by working with Navigators: <https://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/IPANavigatorSiteLocations>.
- There is no cost sharing for Covid-19 for individuals enrolled in qualified health plans.

### ***Available Help with Health Insurance***

The Community Service Society of New York provides assistance to New Yorkers who need help accessing health insurance benefits. Following are their programs:

- CSS Navigator Network at 1-888-614-5400: assists consumers apply for health insurance through the NYS of Health Marketplace, including Medicaid, Essential Plan, Child Health Plus and qualified health plans.





- CSS Community Health Advocates at 1-888-614-5400: assists consumers resolve insurance disputes, file complaints, appeal plan decisions, obtain needed medical services, and access affordable care for the under or uninsured.
- CSS Independent Consumer Advocacy Network at 1-888-614-5400: assists consumers with accessing Medicaid long-term care services, answer questions and solve problems with consumers' Medicaid managed long-term care problems.
- CSS Community Health Access to Addiction and Mental Healthcare Project at 1-888-614-5400: assist New Yorkers with mental health and substance use disorders access needed health insurance benefits and access needed care.

## **HOUSING**

**NOTE:** For additional housing related issues regarding all homeowners/tenants visit the Learning Center's resource guide, [COVID-19: Navigating Essential Services](#).

### **State Eviction Moratorium**

- Governor Andrew Cuomo has extended the eviction moratorium, which was set to expire June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020, to August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
  - The moratorium applies to both residential tenants (in all types of housing) and commercial tenants eligible for unemployment insurance or benefits under state or federal law or otherwise facing a financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The moratorium also applies to all pre-existing orders.
  - Any court dates for eviction cases will be postponed, and the court will mail appellants a notice with the new court date.
  - Currently, cases are being adjourned for a minimum of 45 days.
  - Cases may be adjourned multiple times during the length of the crisis.
  - As of April 13<sup>th</sup>, Housing Court will begin hearing selected non-essential case types; parties and attorneys in those cases will hear directly from the court.
- In NYC, all city marshals have been notified that they cannot execute any pre-existing warrants.
  - Any NYC resident who does get an eviction notice, or who sees or experiences an eviction being executed by the City Marshals, should report it to the Bureau of City Marshals in the Department of Investigation at (212) 825-5953.
- In areas outside of NYC, individuals should call their court to confirm that their date has been adjourned.
  - If a resident does get an eviction notice, they should immediately call their local tenant organization or 833-503-0447 for assistance.
- For more information, go to the NYC Housing Court site at <https://www.nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/housing/>.



- Right to Counsel
  - [Right to Counsel NYC Coalition](#) has created a [FAQ](#) regarding the moratorium on evictions.

### ***Federal Eviction Moratorium***

- The CARES Act included a federal eviction moratorium for tenants living in “covered dwellings” in “covered properties,” which includes:
  - Public Housing
  - Section 8 Voucher and Project-Based housing
  - Section 202 housing for the elderly
  - Section 811 housing for people with disabilities
- The federal moratorium took effect on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and extends for 120 days.
- The federal moratorium also specifies that a landlord of a covered property may not evict a tenant after the moratorium expires except on 30 days’ notice, which may not be given until after the moratorium period.
- For more information, including a comprehensive list of covered properties, click [here](#).
- For a HUD fact sheet for tenants, click [here](#).
- If a renter lives in a property with five or more units that is financed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac or lives in some other multifamily housing that has a federally-backed mortgage loan, the renter may be temporarily protected from eviction due to nonpayment of rent during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - To find out if a property is financed by Fannie Mae and to access resources for renters of those properties, visit the [Fannie Mae Renters Resource Finder](#).
  - To find out if a property is financed by Freddie Mac and to access resources for renters of those properties, visit the [Freddie Mac Rental Property Lookup](#).
  - For all other multifamily housing, visit the [National Low Income Housing Coalition searchable database](#).

### ***HCR Section 8 Applicants and Recipients***

- The HCR Client Services Center at 25 Beaver Street in Manhattan is closed until at least Tuesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> in person interactions.
  - All appointments will be conducted by telephone or email.
- While the HCR office in NYC, which administers Section 8 in NYC, has not explicitly indicated the information below, NYS HCR offered the following guidance to all local administrators who administer Section 8 under HCR, which includes the HCR office in NYC:
  - HCR is temporarily suspending all terminations of voucher subsidies until further notice, unless otherwise approved by HCR.



- Until further notice, households with an active voucher should
- Interim recertifications should be accessible and timely for households who have experienced a loss of income.
- Hearings that have been scheduled through June 15, 2020 or until further notice should be postponed.
- For more information, click [here](#).
- Recipients can call their case manager or the general phone number at (212) 480-6672. Calls will be returned as soon as possible.
- Housing Quality Standard inspections are taking place for households that are new to the program or relocating, and in response to immediate health and safety complaints.
- For more details, visit: <https://hcr.ny.gov/hcr-program-notices-covid-19>.

### ***HPD Section 8 Applicants and Recipients***

- The HPD Client Services Center at 100 Gold Street in Manhattan is closed effective Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup> until further notice for in person interactions.
- HPD will be suspending any subsidy termination actions until further notice.
- All hearings for appeals are cancelled until further notice, and HPD will continue to pay the subsidy until a final determination is made.
- All scheduled tenant conferences and briefings will be postponed and rescheduled at a later date.
- Section 8 vouchers set to expire will automatically renew. Households with an active voucher will automatically receive additional time to search for housing.
- Non-emergency Housing Quality Standard inspections are suspended until further notice.
- Participants experiencing a rent hardship due to a decrease in income can fill out a [Reporting Income Decrease Form \(Spanish\)](#) and email it to [DTRIncomeDecrease@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:DTRIncomeDecrease@hpd.nyc.gov) or fax it to 212-863-5299.
- For more details go to <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/about-section-8.page>.

### ***NYCHA Section 8 Applicants and Recipients***

- As of March 16<sup>th</sup>, NYCHA's Customer Contact Walk-in Centers in Brooklyn and the Bronx are closed.
- As of March 17<sup>th</sup>, NYCHA will suspend all termination actions while the City is under a state of emergency, for at least 60 days, including termination actions related to annual recertification, inspection, and fraud.
- Applicant eligibility interviews and informal conferences will be conducted over the phone.



- Rental packages will be accepted via email at [s8.rtu@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:s8.rtu@nycha.nyc.gov).
- The effective date for annual and interim recertifications that result in an increase to the tenant rent share will be May 1, 2020 or later.
- Households experiencing a loss of income should report the decrease by completing an Interim Recertification via NYCHA Self Service Portal (at <https://selfserve.nycha.info>) or by contacting NYCHA's Customer Contact Center (CCC) at [s8.info@nycha.nyc.gov](mailto:s8.info@nycha.nyc.gov).
  - For step by step instructions on how to complete an Interim Recertification, click [here](#).
- Households who experience a complete loss of income may qualify for NYCHA's Minimum Rent Exemption. NYCHA will automatically apply the exemption as appropriate.
- Inspections are taking place for failed, complaint, rental, and lead-based paint inspections only.
  - Recipients will be receiving confirmation of the appointment if the inspection falls into one of these categories. Staff entering apartments will take precautionary measure before entering apartments.
- Transfer requests are being processed.
  - However, there will be a delay in receiving transfer vouchers in the mail.
  - Recipients can periodically check the Self-Service Portal, where they will be able to print vouchers, if possible.
- For Section 8 participants without internet access who need to mail in documents, visit <https://nychajournal.nyc/guidance-to-section-8-participants-property-owners/> for NYCHA Section 8 addresses.
- For more details, go to <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/covid-19-resources.page> or [NYCHA's FAQ page](#).

### ***NYCHA Public Housing***

- As of March 16<sup>th</sup>, NYCHA's Customer Contact Walk-in Centers in Brooklyn and the Bronx are closed.
- As of March 17<sup>th</sup>, Property Management Offices will suspend direct-contact meetings with residents, except for scheduled appointments, which can be made by calling a residents' Property Management Office. Property Management Office staff will assist residents via telephone and email.
- NYCHA's Office of Impartial Hearings will remain closed until the NYS "Stay at Home" Order is lifted for NYC.
  - All hearings and conferences are adjourned; parties will receive letters with their new dates.
  - For any questions, call 718-218-1182 or 718-218-1184.
- NYCHA is suspending residential evictions for as long as the City is under a state of emergency.



- NYCHA will continue to perform emergency maintenance repairs, such as water leaks, gas leaks, local power issues, stoppages, hazardous conditions.
  - Staff entering apartments will take precautionary measure before entering apartments.
  - Residents can call the CCC (Customer Contact Center) at 718-707-7771 if they need to request an emergency repair. Trained representatives are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Rent Hardship Program and Zero Income Policy
  - Households experiencing loss of income may qualify for the rent hardship program for a rent reduction or the Zero Income Policy, where rent will be zero.
  - Households may qualify for the rent hardship program when:
    - There is at least a 5% reduction to gross income
    - Current rent is more than 30% of household income
    - The standard waiting period that would normally be required to request an Interim Recertification has been suspended.
  - Households may qualify for the Zero Income Policy when:
    - There is no income in the household.
  - Residents can request a rent reduction or zero rent by completing an Interim Recertification via NYCHA Self Service Portal (at <https://selfserve.nycha.info>), by contacting their Property Management Office, or calling the Customer Contact Center at 718-707-7771 and selecting option 5.
    - For step by step instructions on how to complete an Interim Recertification, click [here](#).
  - Until further notice, NYCHA residents may self-certify their income loss. Supporting documents are not required at this time.
  - Rent will be adjusted for the month following the submission of the application.
  - NYCHA will accept partial rent payments until the application is processed.
  - For more information, click [here](#) or view [NYCHA's Rent Hardship Flyer](#).
- For more details, visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/covid-19-resources.page> or [NYCHA's FAQ page](#).

### ***How Additional COVID-19 Assistance Impacts HUD Housing Programs***

- Economic Impact Payments
  - The CARES Act economic impact payments (up to \$1,200 per individual, \$500 per qualifying child) are excluded from income calculations.  
([https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/COVID19\\_Round3-FAQs\\_04-22-20.pdf](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/COVID19_Round3-FAQs_04-22-20.pdf))



- For more information on the *Economic Impact Payments*, refer to the Learning Center's resource guide, [COVID-19: Navigating Essential Services](#).
- Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC)
  - The \$600 per week in Pandemic Unemployment Compensation are excluded from income calculations. ([https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/COVID19\\_Round3-FAQs\\_04-22-20.pdf](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/COVID19_Round3-FAQs_04-22-20.pdf))
- For more information on PUC and Unemployment benefits visit our [COVID-19: What Workers Need to Know](#) resource guide.

### **CITYFHEPS**

- CITYFHEPS subsidies are being automatically renewed for all eligible households; households do not need to reapply.
- As of the week of April 13<sup>th</sup> and retroactive to March 15<sup>th</sup>, HRA is automatically reissuing CITYFHEPS shopping letters as they expire for households in shelter.
- Households with CITYFHEPS shopping letters due to employment will keep their shopping letters regardless of loss of employment or reduction in hours.
  - Additionally, households that would have been otherwise eligible for CITYFHEPS but lost their employment can submit unemployment information to HRA and DHS to demonstrate eligibility.
- HRA and DHS have created virtual apartment viewing to allow clients to view apartments and a walk-through process so that DHS can complete an apartment walk-through with brokers or landlords.

### **Department of Finance's (DOF) SCRIE/DRIE**

- Individuals should continue to apply for SCRIE/DRIE, if they qualify. However, eligibility determinations are taking longer than usual.
  - To facilitate SCRIE enrollment, DOF will accept leases not signed by the landlord, as long as the tenant signs and indicates the lease terms.
- DOF has suspended automated SCRIE revocations for failure to respond or submit SCRIE related documents.
- For a Q&A on SCRIE/DRIE, visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/rentfreeze/help/covid-19-frequently-asked-questions.page>

### **Department of Housing Preservation and Development's (HPD) SCRIE**

- HPD is processing renewals and new applications. If processing is delayed, HPD will issue retroactive SCRIE payments on behalf of seniors determined eligible for the program.
- Seniors can email their applications, documentation, and questions via email at [scrie@hpd.nyc.gov](mailto:scrie@hpd.nyc.gov) or by mail.
- For HPD's SCRIE mailing address and updates, visit: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/covid-19-updates.page>.



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## ***Households Experiencing Homelessness***

- **DHS/HRA Shelters**
  - PATH and AFIC no longer require children to be physically present to apply for shelter. Instead, applicants are being accommodated with the use of technology, such as using FaceTime or Skype.
  - Follow-up appointments and interviews will be done by phone.
  - Clients can fax or email documents or take pictures of the documents with their phones.
  - The Income Savings Plan (ISP) requirement has been suspended.
  - For DHS COVID-19 related documents, including guidance to shelter providers, isolation plans, workflows, and more, visit: <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/covid-19/>.
- **Coalition for the Homeless**
  - Their Crisis Intervention Services is offered on a limited basis only.
  - Only for cases for those without access to shelter or who have a shelter related emergency.
  - Clients can call 212-776-2177 and leave a detailed message, no walk-ins accepted.
  - This hotline is checked hourly and if able to assist, Coalition for the Homeless will respond to the client directly.
  - Borough Resource Guides with services for homeless New Yorkers, including food, shelter addresses, public toilets and showers: [Brooklyn](#) – [Bronx](#) – [Manhattan](#) – [Queens](#) – [Staten Island](#) (Also available in Spanish at: <https://www.coalitionforthehomeless.org/covid-19/>.)
- **Covenant House**
  - Offers housing to youth (16 – 21 years old).
  - Interested individuals should call 212-613-0300, x. 5212 before visiting their location, at 555 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, New York, NY.
  - Before placement, individuals will have to be medically cleared, either with documentation or on-site by Covenant House’s medical team.
- **Listing of Youth, Adult, Family, and Domestic Violence [Shelters and Drop-in Centers in NYC](#)**
  - Note: Listing is from Summer 2019. Advocates and clients should call shelters and centers ahead of time to confirm hours and modifications as a result of COVID-19.



## GET HELP

The physical locations of these providers are closed however, many staff are working remotely to assist clients. Please visit the websites for details.

- [Her Justice](#)
  - Legal Help Line: 718-562-8181, on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to speak with a legal representative.
- [Homebase](#)
  - Homebase can help households stay out of shelter by offering assistance with obtaining public benefits, emergency rental grants, relocation services, and more.
  - All Homebase locations are closed, but services are still available by phone.
  - For phone numbers of the nearest Homebase, visit <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/homebase-locations.page>.
- [The Legal Aid Society](#)
  - Access to Benefits Helpline: 888-663-6880 open Monday through Friday from 10 am to 3 pm
  - A2B staff can assist NYC residents with employment and unemployment benefits matters, issues related to Medicaid/health law, SNAP, public assistance, disability, and other benefits and issues related to COVID-19.
- [Legal Services NYC](#)
  - Legal Assistance Hotline: 917-661-4500 open Monday through Friday from 10 am to 4pm.
  - For help applying for SNAP, Cash Assistance, and assistance with rent arrears and utilities.
  - Callers can provide their information over the phone, and we will help them complete an application via AccessHRA.
  - The program is focused on individuals without Internet access, although anyone can call and get help.
- [New York Legal Assistance Group](#)
  - Immigration Issues, Workers' Rights, Public Benefits and more: 212-613-5000
  - [NYLAG COVID-19 Legal Resource Hotline](#): 929-356-9582. Assistance with:
    - Advanced Planning (Standby Guardianship, Power of Attorney, Healthcare Proxy, Wills)
    - Consumer Debt (Debt Collection, Wage Garnishment)
    - Employees' Rights (Paid Leave, FMLA, Working Conditions)
    - Housing (Eviction, Rent Arrears, Foreclosure, Mortgage Relief Options,)





- Unemployment Benefits
- Public Benefits
- Special Education issues (K-12)
- Stimulus Payment questions
- [Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation \(NMIC\)](#)
  - NMIC established temporary COVID-19 intake hotlines for all New Yorkers -- but prioritizing residents in Upper Manhattan and Southwest Bronx -- to receive assistance on a variety of issues:
    - Accessing benefits: (919) 512-4469, Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
    - Unemployment: (929) 512-4476, Tuesday/Thursday from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
    - Housing: (929) 512-4565, Wednesdays from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm.
    - Immigration: (929) 512-4496, Mondays from 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
- [Medicare Rights Center](#): 800-333-4114.
- [Urban Justice Center](#)
  - Safety Net Project: Help with Public Assistance, SNAP, Fair Hearings for PA and SNAP, or CityFHEPS/FHEPS, please call 646-923-8358 and leave a voicemail.
    - Assistance with a legal issue in the Bronx or Brooklyn involving housing please call 646-470-9704. We will do our best to return their call within 24 hours.
  - Domestic Violence Project : For survivors of intimate partner abuse or someone in need to refer a client, please call the intake line 833-321-4DVP or send an email to [dvp@urbanjustice.org](mailto:dvp@urbanjustice.org) and your inquiry will be answered as soon as possible.
- [NY Connects](#)
  - 844-862-7930 open Monday through Friday 9 am until 5 pm
  - Assistance for people with disabilities and older adults providing access to benefits, information about city and state changes, food, toiletries, peer support resources, and more.
- [Mobilization for Justice](#)
  - Go to <http://mobilizationforjustice.org/get-help/> for phone numbers to various projects
  - Provides a wide range of legal services (housing, bankruptcy, children's rights, employment, foreclosure, government benefits, immigration, taxes).
- [Open Hands Legal Services](#)
  - 917-379-0705 open Monday through Friday 9:30am to 5:30pm. Please leave your name, number, and a brief message. an attorney will promptly return your call.



- Offer tenant advice and limited legal representation in all boroughs, family law, employment, Social Security benefits, and immigration.

## **SOURCE MATERIALS**

- <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/EPRO/Current-Emergencies/Current-Emergencies-page>
- [https://hungersolutionsny.org/covid-19/?mc\\_cid=c193092964&mc\\_eid=c26838303c](https://hungersolutionsny.org/covid-19/?mc_cid=c193092964&mc_eid=c26838303c)