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**Diane Wenzler, Director of the Benefits Plus Learning Center**

We want you, our partners, to know that the Benefits Plus Learning Center is committed to providing you with assistance on accessing government benefits for your clients during this national crisis. As many of you are aware, the rules and procedures for public benefits and housing programs are in a state of flux as the various government entities respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Information changes daily.

In response to the pandemic, the Learning Center has published a resource guide available on our Benefits Tools page of the Benefits Plus Learning Center website ([https://bplc.cssny.org/benefit\\_tools](https://bplc.cssny.org/benefit_tools)). We will update this guide periodically to provide you with the latest information on these changes. The guide also contains valuable information that may be useful to your clients, including mental health resources.

In addition, staff continues to work remotely, and hopefully we can help you navigate the system as your clients face various challenges in accessing benefits at this time. You can reach us as follows:

- Diane Wenzler, Director of Benefits Plus Learning Center: [dwenzler@cssny.org](mailto:dwenzler@cssny.org), 212-614-5473
- Leslie Bailey, Assistant Director of Benefits Plus Learning Center: [lbailey@cssny.org](mailto:lbailey@cssny.org), 212-614-5444
- Yvonne Peña, Project Director (housing related challenges): [ypena@cssny.org](mailto:ypena@cssny.org), 212-614-5408
- Rachael Molina, Information Coordinator (issues related to Training and *Benefits Plus Online*): [rmolina@cssny.org](mailto:rmolina@cssny.org), 212-614-5338

We do wish you and your families well and that you keep safe.

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**Coronavirus & Its Impact on Public Benefits**

We have created [A Resource Guide: Coronavirus & Its Impact on Public Benefits](#). The Guide lists public benefit and housing programs and services that are impacted as a result of the voluntary and mandatory quarantine resulting from COVID-19, Coronavirus.

*Highlights*

- NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA)
  - Most HRA Job Center and SNAP Home Centers are now closed, although HRA is keeping 7 Job Centers operational and one SNAP Home Center in each borough. See [Job Centers that are open](#), [SNAP Home Centers](#). However, all applicants/recipients are strongly encouraged to use ACCESS HRA, <https://www.nyc.gov/accesshra>.
  - All requests for special grants and emergency assistance (one shot deals), can be made online via ACCESS HRA.
  - Work requirements and recertifications for SNAP and Cash Assistance are suspended at this time.
- Social Security Administration (SSA)
  - All local Social Security offices will be closed to the public for in-person service until further notice.
  - Online services remain available at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).
  - 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).

- Eviction and Foreclosure Moratoriums in NYS
  - All eviction cases and pending warrants of eviction for nonpayment or any other reason are suspended statewide until further notice. For more information, go to the NYC Housing Court site at <https://www.nycourts.gov/courts/nyc/housing/>.
  - Properties with mortgages owned by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac or secured by FHA-insured Single-Family mortgages are subject to a moratorium on foreclosure for a period of 60 days (until May 17<sup>th</sup>). For more information, go to:
    - <https://www.fanniemae.com/portal/media/corporate-news/2020/covid-homeowner-assistance-options-7000.html>
    - <https://freddiemac.gcs-web.com/node/19426/pdf>
    - <https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/OCHCO/documents/20-04hsgml.pdf>

## Community Resources/Events

### Coping with Stress of Coronavirus

- NYS Covid-19 emotional support helpline 1-844-863-9314
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://emergency.cdc.gov/coping/selfcare.asp>
- New York City Department of Health: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/coping-with-stress-disease-outbreak.pdf>
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Hotline:
  - 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746.
- People with deafness or hearing loss can use their preferred relay service to call 1-800-985-5990.