New York State
Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

DECEMBER 15, 2020

New York State Announces More Than $100 Million in Additional Food Assistance for December

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Nearly 2.8 million New Yorkers Now Relying on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

More than $900 Million in Emergency Benefits Distributed Statewide Since April

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) today announced more than $100 million in additional emergency food assistance to help New Yorkers avoid food insecurity during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. For a tenth consecutive month, about 700,000 low-income individuals and families enrolled in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will receive additional food benefits to bring them up to the maximum allowable amount for December.

“The economic uncertainty resulting from this unprecedented public health emergency is causing untold hardship throughout New York State,” **said OTDA Commissioner Mike Hein**. “This continued assistance is helping hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers to feed themselves and their families as we collectively navigate the turmoil caused by the global pandemic.”

Administered by OTDA, the emergency assistance is issued to any SNAP household that does not ordinarily receive the maximum allowable benefit per month, which varies by household size, and is $204 for an individual and $680 for a family of four. OTDA will begin distributing these benefits to households this week and will continue the distribution through the remainder of the month. About half of all households receiving SNAP will receive additional benefits for December.

Under the direction of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo last spring, OTDA submitted a plan to the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide emergency supplemental payments to any SNAP household getting less than the maximum monthly benefit. Since that time, approximately $900 million in additional benefits have been distributed, bringing much needed federal dollars to local retailers throughout the state.

The supplement has brought an average additional food benefit of about $145 per household each month. As with the prior months, the payments will be delivered directly to recipients' existing Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) account and can be accessed with their existing EBT card. Like regular SNAP benefits, the supplemental benefits can be used to purchase food at authorized retail food stores. Any unused SNAP benefits will be automatically carried over to the following month.

Struggling New Yorkers continue to rely heavily on SNAP as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. As of October, there were nearly 2.8 million SNAP recipients throughout the state, an 8 percent increase from the same month in 2019.

For more information on the emergency supplemental SNAP benefits, including answers to frequently asked questions, visit otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19. New Yorkers can check their eligibility for SNAP and apply online by visiting mybenefits.ny.gov.