

GENERAL INFORMATION SYSTEM**DIVISION: Temporary Assistance****February 2, 2005**

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TO: Commissioners; Food Stamp, MA, TA and HEAP Directors; WMS/EBT Coordinators

FROM: Russell Sykes/rs, Deputy Commissioner, Division of Temporary Assistance

SUBJECT: NYSNIP Non-Redeemer Reminder GIS & Attachments

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 2, 2005

CONTACT PERSON: Tom Hedderman, Food Stamp Bureau at 1-800-343-8859, ext. 6-6939

The purpose of this GIS is to inform local DSS workers that the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) has begun the printing and mailing of reminder letters to New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP) participants who had food stamp cases opened for them automatically as part of the recently completed phased mass openings. The reminder letters will be sent **only to those participants who, thus far, have failed to use any of the food stamp benefits that have been authorized for them.** The letters remind the NYSNIP participants of the availability of their food stamp benefits and the need to redeem at least some of the benefits soon in order to continue to receive the benefits and not have their NYSNIP food stamp case closed.

Enclosed with the reminder letters are a flyer prepared by the Nutrition Consortium of New York State and a listing of Nutrition Outreach and Education Programs (NOEPs). For your information, we have attached samples of the documents. Please note that there are separate upstate and New York City versions of both the reminder letter and the NOEP listings attached. The letters and the Nutrition Consortium flyer are being printed in both English and Spanish on one sheet of paper. The NOEP listings are printed only in English.

As with the recently completed mass openings of NYSNIP cases, the sending of these reminder letters and the subsequent closing of cases will be phased in over several months. A complete schedule of mailing dates and related case closings will be provided in a subsequent GIS.

This first batch of reminder letters will be sent only to those non-redeeming NYSNIP participants whose food stamp cases were opened automatically, effective July 1, 2004. Recipients of these letters who still have not redeemed any benefits by Friday, March 11, 2005, will be subject to having all benefits in their EBT food stamp accounts recovered on or about March 12, 2005, and their food stamp cases will be closed immediately following completion of the benefit recovery process.

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The sending of the reminder letters, recovery of benefits and closing of non-redeeming cases will be done automatically. No local district worker action is required. Food Stamp Case Level Reason Code 'Y96 – Auto Close NYSNIP Shelter Type 98 Case: Failure to Redeem FS' will be used in auto-closing these cases. Code Y96 does not generate a notice. No closing notices are required and none will be sent.

Reports have been sent to the upstate local districts notifying them of non-redeeming Shelter Type 98 NYSNIP participants to whom the reminder letters have been sent. Upstate districts will have received (and will receive with each subsequent mailing of the reminder letters) report '**NYSNIPNR0000 – NYSNIP Cases after 60 Days of Inactivity.**' The report file is broken out by Office/Unit/Worker and has the Case Number and Case Name of each individual to whom a reminder letter has been sent. As stated above, the local district does not need to take any action on these cases. The reports are informational only, and are being provided, at the request of several local districts, to facilitate outreach and redemption rate tracking efforts.

New York City HRA will receive a similar file, **PRNRNM0704**, listing the Case Numbers and Case Names of New York City non-redeeming NYSNIP participants whose cases opened in July, 2004.

Dear NYSNIP Participant:

A few months ago, you received a notice from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (NYSOTDA) about the New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP). Governor George Pataki sought and received approval from the federal government to provide you with additional resources to purchase food. As a result, a food stamp case has been opened automatically for you because you receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits and according to the Social Security Administration, you live alone.

Our records show that, as of the date on this letter, you have not used any of the food stamp benefits that have been issued to you. **In order to continue to receive benefits under NYSNIP, you must use at least some of the benefits that have been put into an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) account for you.**

We are sending this letter to remind you to use some of the benefits soon so that we can keep your food stamp case open and you can continue to get food stamp benefits. The account can be accessed by using your New York State Benefit Card to purchase food.

You will not receive any additional notification about your case if you do not use any of your benefits within three months of the opening date of your case. However, even if your case is closed, you may apply for food stamps again at any time by contacting the NYC Human Resources Administration Food Stamp Center that serves your neighborhood. To find the Food Stamp Center for your neighborhood call 1 - 800 - 342 - 3009.

If you have not yet used any of your food stamp benefits because you do not know how, or because you have other questions about NYSNIP, the flyer that is enclosed with this letter may help answer some of your questions. The flyer was prepared by the Nutrition Consortium of New York State. The Nutrition Consortium is not a government agency. It is an independent organization that believes that NYSNIP is a very important nutrition program. That is why they have prepared the enclosed flyer, and why they are working with us to encourage you to use your NYSNIP food stamp benefits soon.

Sincerely,

Robert Doar
Commissioner

Estimado(a) participante de NYSNIP:

Unos pocos meses atrás usted recibió un aviso de la Oficina de Asistencia Temporal y Asistencia para Incapacitados del Estado de Nueva York (NYSOTDA) donde se le notificaba sobre el Proyecto de Mejora Nutricional del Estado de Nueva York (NYSNIP). El gobernador George Pataki solicitó y recibió la aprobación del gobierno federal para proporcionarle a usted recursos adicionales para comprar alimentos. Como resultado de esta gestión, y dado que usted recibe beneficios de Seguridad de Ingreso Suplementario (SSI) y que, de acuerdo a la Administración del Seguro Social, vive solo(a), se le abrió automáticamente un caso de cupones para alimentos.

Nuestros archivos indican que, a la fecha de esta carta, usted no ha usado los beneficios en forma de cupones para alimentos que se le emitieron. **Para poder seguir recibiendo beneficios a través del NYSNIP, usted debe usar, al menos, algunos de los beneficios que se le depositaron en la cuenta de Transferencia Electrónica de Beneficios (EBT, siglas en inglés).**

Le enviamos esta carta para recordarle que debe usar pronto algunos de dichos beneficios para que podamos mantener abierto su caso de cupones para alimentos y, en consecuencia, para que usted los pueda seguir recibiendo. Puede acceder a la cuenta y comprar alimentos usando su Tarjeta de Beneficios del Estado de Nueva York.

Si no usa ninguno de sus beneficios dentro de los tres meses de la fecha de apertura de su caso, no recibirá ninguna otra notificación sobre el mismo. Sin embargo, aun cuando su caso se cierre, usted puede volver a solicitar cupones para alimentos en cualquier momento poniéndose en contacto con el Centro de Cupones para Alimentos de la Administración de Recursos Humanos de la Ciudad de Nueva York que funciona en su vecindario. Para localizar el Centro de Cupones para Alimentos de su vecindario, llame al 1-800-342-3009.

Si aún no ha usado ninguno de sus cupones para alimentos porque no sabe cómo hacerlo o porque tiene preguntas sobre el NYSNIP, el volante que acompaña a esta carta puede ayudar a responder algunas de sus preguntas. Este volante fue creado por Nutrition Consortium of New York State (Consortio para la Nutrición, Estado de Nueva York). El Consortio para la Nutrición **no** es una agencia gubernamental; es una organización independiente que cree en la importancia del proyecto de nutrición de NYSNIP. Por esta razón, crearon el folleto adjunto y trabajan con nosotros con el fin de animarlo a usted a usar pronto sus cupones para alimentos.

Atentamente,

Robert Doar
Comisionado

Call your local NOEP agency for help:

BROOKLYN CHINESE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
718-438-0008 ext. 168

CAMBA (CHURCH AVENUE MERCHANTS BLOCK ASSOCIATION)
718-282-2500 ext. 228

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE FOR THE DISABLED
212-674-2300 ext 103

CHINESE-AMERICAN PLANNING COUNCIL
212-431-7800 ext. 229

COMMUNITY FOOD RESOURCE CENTER
212-894-8063

CROWN HEIGHTS JEWISH COUNCIL
718-467-0166 ext. 21

JACKSON HEIGHTS-ELMHURST KEHILLAH
718-457-4591

JEWISH COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF THE ROCKAWAY PENINSULA
718-327-7755

LEGAL SERVICES FOR NYC-MANHATTAN
646-442-3138

LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE
212-744-5022

NACHAS HEALTH & FAMILY NETWORK
718-436-7373

QUEENS LEGAL SERVICES
718-657-8611

RAICES-SPANISH SPEAKING ELDERLY COUNCIL
718-643-0232

URBAN JUSTICE CENTER
646-602-5641

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS INWOOD COALITION
212-781-6722 ext. 114

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In order to continue to receive food stamp benefits under NYSNIP, you must use at least some of the benefits that have been put into an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) benefit account for you.

We are sending this letter to remind you to use some of the benefits soon so that we can keep your food stamp case open and you can continue to get food stamp benefits. The account can be accessed by using your New York State Benefit Card to purchase food.

You will not receive any additional notification about your case if you do not use any of your benefits within three months of the opening date of your case. However, even if your case is closed, you may apply for food stamps again at any time by contacting your county Department of Social Services. To find out how to contact your county Department of Social Services call 1- 800 -342 -3009.

If you have not yet used any of your food stamp benefits because you do not know how, **or because you have other questions about NYSNIP, the flyer that is enclosed with this letter may help answer some of your questions.** The flyer was prepared by the Nutrition Consortium of New York State. The Nutrition Consortium is **not** a government agency. It is an independent organization that believes that NYSNIP is a very important nutrition program. That is why they have prepared the enclosed flyer, and why they are working with us to encourage you to use your NYSNIP food stamp benefits soon.

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Para poder seguir recibiendo beneficios a través del NYSNIP, usted debe usar, al menos, algunos de los beneficios que se le depositaron en la cuenta de Transferencia Electrónica de Beneficios (EBT, siglas en inglés).

Le enviamos esta carta para recordarle que debe usar pronto algunos de dichos beneficios para que podamos mantener abierto su caso de cupones para alimentos y, en consecuencia, para que usted los pueda seguir recibiendo. Puede acceder a la cuenta y comprar alimentos usando su Tarjeta de Beneficios del Estado de Nueva York.

Si no usa ninguno de sus beneficios dentro de los tres meses de la fecha de apertura de su caso, no recibirá ninguna otra notificación sobre el mismo. Sin embargo, aun cuando su caso se cierre, usted puede volver a solicitar cupones para alimentos en cualquier momento poniéndose en contacto con el Departamento de Servicios Sociales de su condado. Para saber cómo contactarse con un departamento local de servicios sociales, llame al 1-800-342-3009.

Si aún no ha usado ninguno de sus cupones para alimentos porque no sabe cómo hacerlo o porque tiene preguntas sobre el NYSNIP, el volante que acompaña a esta carta puede ayudar a responder algunas de sus preguntas. Este volante fue creado por Nutrition Consortium of New York State (Consortio para la Nutrición, Estado de Nueva York). El Consortio para la Nutrición **no** es una agencia gubernamental; es una organización independiente que cree que el proyecto de nutrición de NYSNIP es importante. Por esta razón, crearon el folleto adjunto y trabajan con nosotros con el fin de animarlo a usted a usar pronto sus cupones para alimentos.

Atentamente,

Robert Doar
Comisionado

Call your local NOEP agency for help if you live in one of these counties:

ALBANY

Legal Aid Society
(518) 462-6765

ALLEGANY

Community Action
585-808-3563

BROOME

Family Enrichment Network
607-723-8313

CATTARAUGUS

Community Action
716-945-1041 ext. 118

CHAUTAUQUA

Chautauqua Opportunities
716-366-3333 ext. 203

CHEMUNG

Food Bank of the Southern Tier
607-796-6061 ext. 16

CHENANGO

Catholic Charities
607-334-8244

CLINTON

Joint Council of Economic
Opportunity
518-561-6310

COLUMBIA

Healthcare Consortium
518-822-9600
1-800-980-5530

CORTLAND

Cooperative Extension
607-753-6267

DELAWARE

Delaware Opportunities
607-746-1607

DUTCHESS

Community Action
845-452-5104 ext. 112
1800-882-9479

ERIE

Neighborhood Legal Services
716-847-0650

GENESEE

Community Action
585-343-7798 ext. 45
1-888-261-0992

GREENE

Healthcare Consortium
518-822-9600
1-800-980-5530

HERKIMER

Catholic Charities
315-894-9917 ext.235

JEFFERSON

Community Action
315-782-4900 ext. 271

LIVINGSTON

FoodLink, Inc.
585-328-3380 ext. 80

MONROE

YWCA of Rochester and
Monroe County
585-325-1440

NASSAU

Health & Welfare Council
516-483-1110

NIAGARA

Niagara Community Action
716-439-1322

ONEIDA

Food Bank of Central NY
315-437-1899

ONONDAGA

Food Bank of Central NY
315-437-1899 ext. 229

ONTARIO

Catholic Charities
315-789-2686 ext. 337

ORANGE

Catholic Charities Community
Services
914-737-7338

ORLEANS

Community Action
585-343-7798 ext. 45

PUTNAM

Catholic Charities
Community Services
845-561-3452

RENSSELAER

Unity House
518-272-2352

ST. LAWRENCE

Community Action
315-782-4900 ext. 271

SCHENECTADY

Catholic Charities
518-374-2427

SCHUYLER

Catholic Charities
607-535-5133

SENECA

Catholic Charities
315-789-2686 ext. 338

STEUBEN

Catholic Charities
607-776-4202 ext. 218

SUFFOLK

Catholic Charities
631-789-9546

TIOGA

Catholic Charities
607-272-5062, ext. 11
1-866-436-2650

TOMPKINS

Catholic Charities
607-272-5062, ext. 11
1-866-436-2650

WARREN

Community Action
518-793-0636 ext. 204

WAYNE

Legal Assistance of
the Finger Lakes
315-781-1465
1-866-781-5235

WESTCHESTER

Catholic Charities Community
Services
914-737-7338

WYOMING

Community Action
585-237-2600

YATES

Legal Assistance of
the Finger Lakes
315-781-1465
1-866-781-5235

**GOOD NEWS FOR SSI RECIPIENTS
WHO LIVE ALONE !**

There is a **special new food stamp program project**
that will help you pay for food!

Because you live by yourself and receive SSI,
you are getting benefits each month from the
"New York State Nutrition Improvement Project" (or "NYSNIP").

NYSNIP doesn't cost you anything,
and it will help pay for food at most grocery stores.
NYSNIP will not change your monthly SSI benefit check!

NYSNIP gives food stamp benefits on the same plastic card you use for Medicaid.
You get a PIN number for your NYSNIP account. To buy food with NYSNIP,
you pass your Medicaid card through the machine at the store checkout counter
and enter your PIN number.

**NYSNIP will help you buy the good food you need
to stay healthy!**

You have already received a letter from the New York State
Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA)
telling you all about NYSNIP. **Be sure to read that letter carefully!**
That letter from OTDA has a lot of important information
about how NYSNIP works.

Since you are getting NYSNIP for the first time, your food stamp benefits start at
either \$16 or \$20 every month. **However, you may be able to get much more -
as much as \$149** every month . Simply fill out the form included with your NYSNIP
letter from OTDA and send it back to your local department of social services.

Please go shopping and use your NYSNIP food stamp benefits right away
(after you get your new PIN number) , so that you can keep getting your NYSNIP
food stamp benefits each month. You can even get a special benefit card that can be used
by someone you trust, so this person can shop for you using your NYSNIP benefits.

If you have questions about NYSNIP, or the OTDA letter, call one of the Nutrition
Outreach & Education Programs (NOEPs) on the enclosed list.
If your county does not have a NOEP, you can call your local
department of social services or office for the aging.

**¡BUENAS NOTICIAS PARA LOS BENEFICIARIOS DE SSI
QUE VIVEN SOLOS!**

¡Existe un nuevo proyecto especial de **Cupones para Alimentos** que le ayudará a cubrir sus gastos de alimentos!

Dado que usted vive solo(a) y recibe SSI, **se le autoriza recibir beneficios mensuales** provenientes del "Proyecto de Mejora Nutricional del Estado de Nueva York (NYSNIP)".

El NYSNIP no le cuesta dinero, y lo puede utilizar en al mayoría de los supermercados para ayudar a cubrir los gastos de alimentos

¡El NYSNIP no afectará su cheque mensual de SSI!

El NYSNIP le proporciona cupones para alimentos a través de la misma tarjeta plastica que usted usa para Medicaid. Usted recibirá un número personal de identificación (PIN) para su cuenta de NYSNIP. Para comprar alimentos a través del NYSNIP, usted deslizará su tarjeta de Medicaid por la máquina ubicada en el mostrador de la caja registradora e ingresará su PIN.

¡El NYSNIP le ayudará a adquirir los alimentos apropiados que usted necesita para gozar de buena salud!

Usted ya recibió una carta proveniente de la Oficina de Asistencia Temporal y Asistencia para Incapacitados del Estado de Nueva York (OTDA) donde se le informaba acerca del NYSNIP. **¡Asegúrese de leerla cuidadosamente!** Dicha carta de la OTDA contiene información importante acerca de la manera en que funciona el NYSNIP.

Cuando se recibe por primera vez beneficios del NYSNIP, el monto de cupones para alimentos es de \$16 ó \$20 por mes.

Sin embargo, es posible que reciba mucho más – hasta \$149 por mes. Simplemente, complete el formulario que la OTDA el envío junto con su carta del NYSNIP y envíelo a su departamento local de servicios sociales.

Vaya de compras y use sus cupones para alimentos del NYSNIP inmediatamente

(una vez que tenga su nuevo PIN), de esta manera seguirá recibiendo mensualmente los beneficios de cupones para alimentos de NYSNIP.

Incluso puede obtener una tarjeta especial de beneficios para que una persona de su confianza, haga las compras por usted usando sus beneficios NYSNIP.

Si tiene preguntas sobre el NYSNIP o sobre la carta de la OTDA, llame a uno de los Programas de Extensión y Educación Nutricional (NOEP- Nutrition Outreach and Education Program) que aparece en la lista adjunta. Si en su condado no hay un NOEP, puede llamar a su departamento local de servicios sociales u oficina para asuntos de tercera edad.