

## Send a Message to Support Ending Finger Imaging for Food Stamps!

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by *Triada Stampas*

Last month, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that [New York State will be putting an end to finger imaging for the Food Stamp Program](#) (also known as SNAP). Abandoned by most other states in favor of more cost-effective and less stigmatizing fraud detection methods, finger imaging for food stamps currently exists only in New York and Arizona. In anticipation of dropping the finger imaging requirement, New York State has already put a new system in place that analyzes client data to detect duplicate cases and protect the integrity of the Food Stamp Program.

Not only does finger imaging add a layer of shame and stigma to the application process, it adds to the time and inconvenience applicants must endure to receive needed food assistance. In addition, finger imaging has been another step in the process where errors can deny applicants the benefits to which they are entitled. A recent [report](#) by the Empire Justice Center found 97 percent of fair hearing cases related to finger imaging were resolved in favor of the applicants – that's right: fair hearings upheld denial of benefits in only three percent of cases where households allegedly failed to comply with finger imaging requirements.

The state's proposed regulation to end finger imaging has been released, and as with any proposed change in regulations, New Yorkers can submit their opinions to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (the state agency that administers the Food Stamp Program) during the open public comment period. Comments in favor of ending finger imaging will create a public record of the broad support that exists for making this change. **The deadline for comments is July 16, 2012.**

Take Action Today : [Send a message today in support of ending finger imaging!](#)

*Triada Stampas works to inform government officials, policy makers and the general public about the needs of the city's network of emergency food organizations and the more than 1.3 million people who rely on them; and to advance public policy that meets those needs.*

