

Governor Cuomo Ends Finger Imaging for Food Stamps

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by *Triada Stampas*

Making good on his pledge to work to ensure that no child in New York goes hungry , Governor Cuomo yesterday announced that New York State will be putting an end to finger imaging for the Food Stamp Program (also known as SNAP). A practice 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.

As the Food Bank For New York City helps more than 40,000 New Yorkers with the complicated food stamp application process every year, we have seen our share of seniors, working parents and young adults frustrated and humiliated by having to be finger-imaged just to access needed food assistance. For many food stamp applicants, finger imaging has added a layer of shame and stigma to an already difficult experience.

Our President and CEO Margarett Purvis voiced our position best:

"We enthusiastically applaud Governor Cuomo for ending a practice that for too long has kept eligible low-income New Yorkers from the food resources they need. People should never be ashamed to seek out help. Ending this stigmatizing practice will take a barrier away from getting people the food they need for themselves and their families."

The state will issue a new regulation at the end of this month to eliminate finger imaging from the Food Stamp Program in New York. Once the regulation is released, the state will begin a 45-day public comment period – if you are interested in submitting your comments in support of ending finger imaging, stay tuned to this blog for information about how you can provide your input.

Finger imaging will officially end in New York State in mid-July, when the new regulation goes into effect. At that point, our team of food stamp specialists will be more than happy to inform the New Yorkers they assist that getting finger-printed is no longer a necessary step toward receiving the help they need.



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.