Stimulus Is Coming Our Way

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Starting this month, more than 1.3 million New York City residents will see their buying power increase at supermarkets, grocery stores, farmers' markets and anywhere else food stamp benefits are accepted. Perhaps the most immediate and tangible impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 – more commonly known as the economic stimulus package – is a boost to food stamp benefits across the board, from a 13.6 percent increase in maximum levels, to even minimum monthly allotments going up from $14 to $16. With more New Yorkers than ever having difficulty affording food, this couldn't come at a better time.

Not only is this a tremendous help to households that use food stamps, it's a boon to the local businesses that accept them. And because food stamp dollars come from the federal government but are spent quickly and locally, they do an incredible job of stimulating local economies. According to theUSDA, every dollar in food stamp benefits generates $1.84 in additional economic activity. Here's how this translates for New York City: in December 2008, New York City residents received more than $182 million in food stamp benefits; the food purchases made with that money are fueling over $334 million in additional economic activity. So today's benefit increases will go a long way to support our communities.

Check out other highlights of the stimulus package on our Federal Stimulus Fact Sheet, and please join us in thanking our Congressional delegation for making sure food stamp benefit increases made it into the stimulus package.