

**Attendance and Minutes of
The SNAP Task Force Meeting of November 16th, 2017**

ATTENDANCE SHEET

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| 1) Derek Singh – NYC HRA-FIA | 15) Long Ho – LiveOn NY |
| 2) Brenda Williams – HRA SNAP Outreach Services | 16) Tom Furstenberg-Carroll – Met Council |
| 3) Milagros Rodriguez – HRA SNAP Outreach Services | 17) Marta Mychak – New York Legal Assistance Group |
| 4) Ellen Vollinger – Food Research and Action Center (<i>via teleconference</i>) | 18) Juana Almonte – Part of the Solution |
| 5) Dawn Secor – Hunger Solutions NY | 19) Ailin Liu – Public Health Solutions |
| 6) Katherine Dabrowski – APICHA | 20) Evelina Lipin – Shorefront Y |
| 7) Kiana Davis – Bronx Defenders | 21) Ana Sarabia – Single Stop |
| 8) Cecilia Riera – Bronx Defenders | 22) Vanessa Mendez – Single Stop |
| 9) Lisa Joseph – Caribbean Women's Health Association | 23) Ana Chen – United Way of NYC |
| 10) Gia Mui – Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC) | 24) Ariel Savransky – Urban Justice Center |
| 11) Suyin Mui – CPC | 25) Emanuel Negron – FBNYC |
| 12) Nicholas Posada – Fortune Society | 26) Mark Herreros – FBNYC |
| 13) Ying Zhang – Hunger Free NYC | |
| 14) Katie Kelleher – Legal Aid Society | |

The meeting began at 1:10PM

Mark Herreros (Food Bank For NYC) opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and introducing all attendees. After giving an overview of the meeting's agenda, Mark introduced Ellen Vollinger from the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) to present national updates.

I. Outlook in Congress on SNAP and National Updates

- Ellen said that the tax reform bill proposed by the House would disadvantage New York and other states with higher tax rates by removing state and local tax deductions. The Senate has a separate tax bill that includes a partial repeal of the Affordable Care Act
- There is a lot of pressure on Congressional Republicans to fund their proposals by making cuts to benefit programs. Ellen highlighted efforts by Hunger Solutions NY to protect SNAP
- Because Congress has invested so much energy into the tax bill, there has been no vote on a long-term spending bill to fund the federal government for the remainder of the fiscal year
- Democrats are arguing that increases to defense spending should be matched with equal investment in domestic spending, including SNAP
- Another disaster relief bill is pending that would allow Puerto Rico to operate a D-SNAP. However, the island is still in recovery operations, and its government is not equipped to run D-SNAP
- Ellen commented that the block grant structure of Puerto Rico's nutrition benefit shows that it cannot respond as well to disasters, while Texas and Florida have robust D-SNAP operations with supplement and replacement benefits available to affected households
- Legislators hope to move the Farm Bill out of committee to debate in the Fall. There is also chatter from House leadership to develop a welfare reform package, and most observers expect SNAP would be in the mix. Ellen said it is not a favorable context for SNAP to be taken up in,
- Ellen encouraged Task Force members to build coalition around a positive direction for SNAP. She advised participants to seek co-sponsors for Rep. Alma Adams' bill (H.R. 1276) that would strengthen SNAP

II. New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA)

Mark summarized policy items released by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Full summaries of each of these items are available on pages 5-6 the November 2017 Research Packet (RP).

- GIS 17 TA/DC044: Home Energy Assistance Program Regular Benefit Component Opening
- GIS 17 TA/DC043: Excessive Replacement Card Notices to Clients

III. Mediation

Mediation Analysis Report for October 2017

Emanuel Negrón (FBNYC) reviewed highlights¹ from the October 2017 Mediation Analysis Report. The report is based on a total of 121 mediation requests submitted by Mediation Model participants in the month of October 2017. Emanuel thanked the organizations represented in the report for submitting their issue logs, and opened the floor to discussion for Task Force participants.

Kiana Davis (Bronx Defenders) noted continuing issues with TIPS 42 for her organization's recertification cases. In particular, she said there was a rise in the number of budget related issues related to employment and income. She added that it can be frustrating to explain to clients which jobs appear in POS. Tom Furstenberg-Carroll (Met Council) said he encountered similar issues with cases budgeted with income from a job from several years ago.

Kiana also said that it is difficult to reach HRA to reschedule her clients' phone interviews, either through contacting the rescheduling unit or the HRA Infoline. Katie Kelleher (Legal Aid Society) said she has asked for stats from HRA about the capacity of the HRA Infoline. She added that clients who can't reach the Info line run the risk of losing their SNAP, particularly ABAWDs who need to call HRA to update their ABAWD status. Emanuel Negrón (FBNYC) advised Task Force members to utilize the Mediation Model and report their cases as part of the analysis to lend evidence to challenges with the HRA Infoline. This type of ongoing feedback was helpful to HRA as it launched ACCESS HRA, as well as the On-Demand system.

Long Ho (LiveOn NY) said that many of his clients had their applications denied because the incorrect income guideline was applied. He also spoke about several clients who was approved for expedited benefits, but waited for more than 30 days for ongoing benefits.

Several Task Force members described issues with ACCESS HRA and the On-Demand system, as well as issues connecting clients' existing SNAP cases to preview pending documents and appointments. Emanuel Negrón (FBNYC) advised Task Force members to provide a buffer of time between submitting a POS/ACCESS HRA application and reviewing the case on ACCESS HRA.

¹ See pg. 3, November '17 Mediation Analysis Report, for full highlights

Dawn Secor (Hunger Solutions NY) said that a recent NOEP conference, Tom Hedderman from OTDA commented that the ABAWD waivers for 2018 do not appear much different compared to 2017. Hunger Solutions NY will share additional information as soon as it becomes available. She also said Task Force participants could access the latest version of her organization's pre-screening guide is available on Hunger Solutions' website at: <http://hungersolutionsny.org/hunger-resource/snap-prescreening-guide/>

IV. Human Resources Administration (HRA)

Mark Herreros summarized the following policy bulletins released by HRA in the months of October and November 2017. Full summaries are available on page 7 of the November 2017 Research Packet (RP).

- PB #17-94-OPE: Functions of Staff at the Hurricane Relief center
- PB #17-95-SYS: Introduction of the New Express Site Queue in the Paperless Office System (POS)
- PB #17-96-OPE: Monthly Updates (FIA-1152F, FIA-1152G)

V. Reports and Notable Items from Other Sources

Mark Herreros (FBNYC) summarized the following reports included in the November 2017 RP on pages 8-10:

- SNAP Helps Almost 1.5 Million Low-Income Veterans, Including Thousands in Every State – Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- The World is Off Track to End Hunger, So What's the Solution? – Brookings Institution
- The Role of SCSEP in Workforce Training for Low-Income Older Workers – Urban Institute

The Meeting Adjourned at 2:50PM