Helping Hands for People in Need

Economic and work supports available to strengthen your household and make ends meet.
Nutrition Programs

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits help eligible New Yorkers and working families purchase food. Eligibility and benefit levels are based on household size, income, certain expenses, and other factors. Anyone eligible for SNAP can receive free nutrition education to learn how to eat healthier and shop smarter. To see if you may qualify and to apply for SNAP, visit myBenefits.ny.gov. For more information, call 800-342-3009. If you have a food emergency, contact your local department of social services to locate a food pantry in your area.

School Breakfast and Lunch Programs provide nutritionally-balanced meals to New York State school children in grades pre-k through 12. To apply for free or reduced-priced school meals, families may obtain a household income application from their school and submit it to the school for processing. If you are receiving SNAP benefits, then your children are eligible to receive free school meals under the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast program. If you have not been notified by your school that your children are eligible for free meals, contact your school administrator.

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides nutrition advice, help with breastfeeding, referrals to other services, and healthy foods. WIC welcomes pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and children up to 5 years old. Caregivers of children and working families can qualify too. In 2019, a working family of four with a yearly income of up to $47,638 can qualify for services. WIC can help your family stay healthy. For more information, call the Growing Up Healthy hotline at 800-522-5006. Visit health.ny.gov/wic to see if you qualify.

Home Energy Assistance Program

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps low-income New Yorkers meet the cost of heating their home, repairing or replacing inoperable heating systems, and with the installation of medically necessary air conditioning units. HEAP benefits vary depending on household income, source of heat, and the presence of a vulnerable household member. To see if you may qualify and to apply, visit myBenefits.ny.gov or your local department of social services. For more information, call 800-342-3009, or visit otda.ny.gov/programs/heap.

Tax Credits

The Federal and State Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) are for working people with low or moderate incomes. Taxpayers may qualify to receive a combined federal and state EITC of up to $8,524 if their income is less than $55,952 (based on 2019 income levels) even if they owe no taxes. New York City residents may qualify for an additional city credit. The New York State Noncustodial Parent EITC provides a refundable tax credit to noncustodial parents who are current in their child support for the tax year.

The Federal Child Tax Credit and Additional Child Tax Credit are offered by the federal government for taxpayers raising dependent children under the age of 17. The Empire State Child Tax Credit is for full-year New York residents, even if they owe no taxes, with children between the ages of 4 and 16.

The Federal Child and Dependent Care Credit is offered by the federal government. The New York State Child and Dependent Care Credit helps more low-income families because, unlike the federal credit, they may receive it even if they owe no taxes. New York City residents may qualify for an additional refundable credit from the city.

For more information, call the U.S. Internal Revenue Service at 800-829-1040, or visit irs.gov; or call the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance at 518-457-5181, or visit tax.ny.gov or myBenefits.ny.gov.
Health Insurance Affordability Programs

NY State of Health, the Official Health Plan Marketplace, is where New Yorkers can shop for, compare and enroll in quality, affordable health insurance coverage. It’s the only place to get financial assistance to reduce the cost of coverage. You also may enroll in the Essential Plan, Medicaid or Child Health Plus through the Marketplace.

Health insurance offered through the Marketplace includes a comprehensive set of benefits. All plans provide free preventive care, such as routine office visits and recommended screenings.

In-person enrollment experts are available to guide you through the enrollment process, help you find the right health plan based on your unique needs, and work with you to determine if you can get financial assistance to reduce the cost of coverage. Support is available online, in person in your community, and by phone – you pick what works best for you. Assistance is available in multiple languages.

To learn more, visit nystateofhealth.ny.gov or call 855-355-5777.

Job Placement Services

New York State Career Centers provide services through a network of local centers and affiliate sites. To find the location nearest you, visit labor.ny.gov/career-center-locator.

Additional information about finding a job and career development can be found on the New York State Department of Labor’s home page labor.ny.gov.

In New York State, the SNAP Employment and Training Program provides work preparation and support services for recipients of SNAP benefits to help them gain the skills necessary for becoming self-sufficient. All local departments of social services offer job search help. Other services that may be available include: on-the-job training, vocational training, job skills training, and job readiness and education. Employment services are also available for all recipients of public assistance. For more information, contact your local department of social services.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence may involve physical, psychological, sexual, economic or emotional abuse. It can affect anyone. If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, help and information is available. Call the New York State Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline at 800-942-6906 or visit opdv.ny.gov. The state Office of Victim Services assists individuals with expenses resulting from being the victim of domestic violence and crimes such as stalking, strangulation and others. The agency helps eligible individuals with medical and counseling expenses, moving expenses, and lost wages, in addition to other forms of assistance – all at no cost to taxpayers. The agency also funds victim assistance programs across the state that provide direct services, including counseling, advocacy and legal assistance.
Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income
The Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs are administered by the U.S. Social Security Administration. Only people who have a disability and meet medical criteria may qualify for benefits under these programs. To apply for SSDI or SSI benefits, call 800-772-1213, or visit ssa.gov.

Child Support Services
The Child Support Program helps strengthen families by placing the responsibility for the economic support of children on both parents based upon their ability to pay. The program assists parents in establishing paternity and obtaining, modifying, or enforcing financial and medical support obligations. For more information, visit childsupport.ny.gov or call 888-208-4485.

Child Care
New York State offers child care subsidies to low-income working families and those receiving temporary assistance to make safe, quality child care accessible and affordable. Families may be eligible for financial assistance if they meet the state’s guidelines and need child care to work, look for work, or attend approved education or employment training programs. To find out if you are eligible for a child care subsidy or to apply for a subsidy for your child, contact your local department of social services. For more information about the child care subsidy program, visit ocfs.ny.gov.

Refugee Services
Assistance is available to refugees and other persons in a similar immigration status in New York State. This includes asylees, special immigrant visa holders from Afghanistan and Iraq, certified victims of human trafficking, and certain family members of a certified trafficking victim. Repatriation services for U.S. citizens is also available. To find a list of refugee service providers, visit otda.ny.gov/programs/bria.

Veterans’ Benefits
If you served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, you may be eligible for state or federal benefits. This includes tax-free monetary benefits in the form of compensation for disabilities caused by your military service or non-service-connected pension payments through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. In addition, you may be entitled to health care benefits, educational benefits, employment assistance, substance abuse and mental health services, and burial benefits. If you know someone who served who may be entitled to benefits, please have them contact the New York State Division of Veterans’ Services. To reach the State Division of Veterans’ Services for the Veterans Benefits Advisor nearest you, please call 888-838-7697, or visit veterans.ny.gov.
For more information visit

otda.ny.gov

Check your eligibility for a wide range of economic and work supports at

myBenefits.ny.gov

otda.ny.gov

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