



Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

BARBARA C. GUINN
Commissioner

RAJNI CHAWLA
Executive Deputy Commissioner

Informational Letter

Section 1

Transmittal:	25-INF-09
To:	Social Services District Commissioners
Issuing Division/Office:	Employment and Income Support Programs
Date:	December 30, 2025
Subject:	2026 State Minimum Wage Increase and the Effect on Public Assistance and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs
Suggested Distribution:	Public Assistance Directors, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Directors, Employment Coordinators, Staff Development Coordinators
Contact Person(s):	Public Assistance Bureau @ (518) 474-9344 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Bureau @ (518) 473-1469 Employment and Advancement Services Bureau @ (518) 486-6106

Filing References

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.
24-INF-08 01-ADM-13		18 NYCRR 351.26 352.17(e) 385.3 385.9	336 336-c Section 652 of the Labor Law	Temporary Assistance and SNAP Employment Policy Manual Section 385.3 and 385.9	TASB Chapter 13 Section A Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2023

Section 2

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Informational Letter (INF) is to inform social services districts (districts) of an increase in the State minimum wage resulting from changes to New York State Labor Law section 652 authorized by Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2023. This INF also provides guidance to districts on how an increase in the State minimum wage affects Public Assistance (PA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) budgeting and employment program requirements.

II. Background

Districts were informed via [24-INF-08](#) of the previous increase in the State minimum wage authorized by Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2023 that became effective January 1, 2025.

The next increase in the State minimum wage will be effective January 1, 2026. The state minimum wage is scheduled to increase on January 1, 2026, to \$17.00 per hour for New York City and the counties of Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester, and to \$16.00 per hour for the rest of the state. The scheduled increases by region are summarized on the New York State Department of Labor website at: [Minimum Wage | Department of Labor](#).

Future Scheduled Increases to the State Minimum Wage

Beginning in 2027, the minimum wage will annually increase by the three-year moving average of the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for the Northeast Region.

Employers must post a Minimum Wage Information poster in their establishment.

The federal minimum wage, currently \$7.25 per hour, will not change as a result of this enacted State legislation.

III. Program Implications

The increase in the State minimum wage varies by region. The increase will result in additional income for some households receiving PA and/or SNAP benefits and may be an incentive for individuals to enter the workforce or to increase their hours. It will also affect the number of hours a PA and/or SNAP recipient may be required to participate in a work experience program (or a community service activity assigned by the district as described in section 336(g) of the Social Services Law) effective January 2026, as described below.

Change in the Maximum Number of Hours in Work Experience and Community Service

Section 336-c of the Social Services Law specifies that the maximum number of hours that an individual may be required to participate in a work experience program (or a community service activity assigned by the district authorized under section 336(g) of the Social Services Law) is equal to the sum of the participant household's PA grant plus SNAP allotment, if any, divided by the higher of the federal or State minimum wage. The resulting hours for the month are then divided by 4.333 and rounded down to the nearest whole number to calculate the maximum number of hours that an individual can be assigned to a work experience program or a community service activity per week. However, in no instance may an individual be required to participate in a work experience program or other work activities for more than 40 hours per week combined. Additionally, as indicated in [17 LCM-10](#), individuals who work and/or participate in work activities approved by the district

for at least 30 hours per week (totaling 120 hours per month) are not subject to a SNAP work sanction. Such individuals may still be subject to a PA work sanction if the individual has applied for or is receiving PA and does not participate for the weekly number of hours assigned by the district.

Required Action

As a result of the increase in the State minimum wage, districts must review the cases of all individuals engaged in a work experience program or a community service activity assigned by the district. Districts must use the increased State minimum wage per hour in effect for their corresponding region to calculate the maximum hours that a PA or SNAP recipient may be assigned to a work experience program and/or community service activity effective January 2026. Districts must ensure that the hours an individual is required to participate in work experience program or community service activity do not exceed the maximum hours permitted under State law. Districts may adjust the hours assigned to other work activities as needed but cannot exceed 40 hours per week. Districts should continue to engage individuals in a combination of work activities consistent with their assessments and employment plans.

Example: A PA recipient residing in Central New York who is currently assigned to a work experience activity with a maximum of 24 hours per week (rounded down) based on the hours derived by dividing the household's PA grant plus SNAP monthly allotment by \$15.50 could only be required as of January 2026, to participate in a work experience program for 23 hours per week based on the hours derived by dividing the PA grant plus SNAP allotment by \$16.00 per hour.

Note: While the number of hours that may be assignable to a work experience program or community service activity are limited to the calculations listed above, the district should continue to engage the individual in a combination of work activities, consistent with the individual's assessment and employment plan, up to 40 hours per week.

Public Assistance Budgetary/Eligibility Implications

The increase in the State minimum wage may have budgetary implications for those PA cases whose earnings increase following the effective date of the change. PA recipients are obligated to timely report any changes in a household's circumstances that occur, including increased earnings (i.e., ten days after receipt of increased earnings). The PA grant must be adjusted prospectively for any significant changes. A significant change is not based on a specific monetary amount, but rather is a change in income, such as a wage increase or decrease that is expected to last at least thirty days. If a PA recipient experiences significant changes in the amount of earnings, the district must obtain verification of the change including any changes in the number of hours that an individual is working and adjust the PA budget after any reasonable administrative processing period (see 18 NYCRR section 352.17[e] and [01 ADM-13](#)) and allow for timely notice.

If a PA recipient has a significant change in earned income because of the minimum wage increase and does not report the change in earnings timely, an overpayment must be calculated beginning with the actual month in which the significant change occurred. The \$150 work expense disregard and the earned income disregard (EID) are not applied in those instances when a PA recipient fails, without good cause (see 18 NYCRR 351.26), to make a timely report of new or increased earnings.

Additionally, a recipient of PA does not receive an administrative processing period for increased earnings if the recipient fails to make a timely report of the increased earnings.

Districts must also ensure that the hours of employment entered on the PA Automated Budgeting and Eligibility Logic (ABEL) input screen and/or reported through the Welfare-To-Work Caseload Management System (WTWCMS) (NYC workers should review and adjust the hours of employment reported on the form FIA3A, as appropriate) are consistent with the documentation that is maintained as part of the case record.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Budgetary Implications

SNAP recipient households subject to the simplified (“six-month”) reporting rules would not be required to report an increase in earnings due to the increased minimum wage unless this increase would put the household over the 130% of the federal poverty level gross income limit for their household size (as set at the time of their last certification). The increase in earnings due to the increase in the State minimum wage should be reviewed at the time of the next case contact, including, but not limited to, assessment of employability status, periodic report, or recertification.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Work Requirements

An increase in the State’s minimum wage does not change the standard used to document that an individual is exempt from SNAP work requirements based on receiving weekly earnings equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours (\$217.50 per week) or more. This provision relies on the federal minimum wage and is not impacted by a change in the State minimum wage. However, an increase in weekly earnings may result in a change in the SNAP employability status for a SNAP applicant or recipient whose weekly earnings increase to \$217.50 or more per week. Districts must review an employed SNAP recipient’s SNAP employability and Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) status at the next contact with the SNAP household, such as an employment appointment, periodic report, or recertification, and adjust the individual’s SNAP employability and ABAWD codes on the Welfare Management System (Upstate and Downstate) or myWorkspace as necessary. In those instances where an individual is exempt from SNAP work requirements because the individual is working 30 or more hours per week or earning \$217.50 or more per week, a SNAP employability code of “28” (Employed or self-employed 30 or more hours per week OR earning at least the equivalent of 30 times the federal minimum wage on a weekly basis - Exempt) and the ABAWD code of “N” (non-ABAWD) would be appropriate to use.

System Implications

The WTWCMS, ABAWD Tracking Logic and State Participation Rate Reporting Logic are being updated to reflect the increased State minimum wage in effect by region effective January 1, 2026. Therefore, the maximum number of weekly hours available for a work experience program assignment displayed on the client summary screen on WTWCMS as of January 2026 will be based on the increased State minimum wage in effect for that region as of January 1, 2026. Districts are reminded that only individuals who are participating in a work experience program for the maximum number of hours derived by dividing the household’s PA grant plus SNAP allotment will be deemed to have fulfilled the 20 “core” hours of participation required for participation rate purposes, even if the resulting hours of participation are less than 20 hours per week. The State minimum wage increase

may increase the number of individuals eligible for the deeming provision to the extent that individuals participate in a work experience program. Individuals who are required to participate in hours above the core requirement (a minimum of 10 additional hours weekly if the household is required to meet the 30-hour weekly participation requirement) should only be assigned additional activities that are consistent with their assessment and employment plan.

Issued By:

Name: Valerie T. Figueroa

Title: Deputy Commissioner

Division/Office: Employment and Income Support Programs / Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance