



# Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

KATHY HOCHUL  
Governor

DANIEL W. TIETZ  
Commissioner

BARBARA C. GUINN  
Executive Deputy Commissioner

## General Information System (GIS) Message

### Section 1

<b>Transmittal:</b>	22 TA/DC073 Upstate and New York City
<b>Date:</b>	July 27, 2022
<b>To:</b>	Subscribers
<b>Suggested Distribution:</b>	Commissioners, SNAP Directors, TA Directors, Employment Coordinators, Staff Development Coordinators
<b>From:</b>	Valerie Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner Employment and Income Support Programs
<b>Subject:</b>	Reminder: Treatment of Meal Plans at Institutions of Higher Education
<b>Effective Date:</b>	Immediately
<b>Contact Information:</b>	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Questions – SNAP Bureau 518-473-1469 or <a href="mailto:otda.sm.cees.snap@otda.ny.gov">otda.sm.cees.snap@otda.ny.gov</a>

### Section 2

The purpose of this GIS message is to remind social service districts (districts) of the guidance outlined in [95 INF-22: Students on Meal Programs and Eligibility of Students in Campus Housing](#). This reminder is being issued in response to policy clarification from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) on June 2, 2022, regarding SNAP eligibility for residents of institutions of higher education with meal plans.

An institution of higher education is a college or university degree program; or a business, technical, trade, or vocational school that normally requires a high school diploma or high school equivalent (HSE). Section 3(m) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (the Act) states that an individual is an ineligible household member if they reside in an institution, boarding house, or else live with others and pay compensation to others for meals. The provisions of 7 CFR 273.1(b)(7)(vi) define individuals as residents of institutions if they receive a majority of their meals (more than 50 percent of three meals daily) as part of the institution’s normal services. Individuals who attend one of these institutions but do not receive the majority of their meals through a meal plan are not residents of an institution and may be eligible for SNAP, if they meet other eligibility criteria.

Applicants must not be determined ineligible for SNAP simply because the applicant participates in a meal plan at an institute of higher education. Districts should screen SNAP applicants on a case-by-case basis to determine the scope of the applicant’s meal plan. As an example, an eligibility worker may ask an applicant the number of meals they receive through a meal plan. The applicant may respond that they receive breakfast and lunch every weekday through their meal plan, which is equivalent to 10 meals per week. Though the applicant will receive two of three daily meals through the meal plan on weekdays, Districts would not consider the applicant to be a resident of an institution because 10 meals per week is less than the majority of 21 total weekly meals (3 meals daily for 7 days).

The Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) recognizes that while meal plan structure may vary from institution to institution; the value of a meal plan may be counted by the number of meals, points, or dollars included. Districts should fully explore a student's circumstances to determine how to treat such plans and eligibility workers may need to ask students for clarification if it is unclear how many meals, they receive from a meal plan. Districts should make every attempt to screen students of institutions of higher education for all currently allowable exemptions by ensuring that staff evaluate the student's qualification for each of the criteria outlined in 7 CFR 273.5 and the temporary exemptions in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021.