



General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

Transmittal:	23DC085 Upstate Only
Date:	December 14, 2023
To:	Subscribers
Suggested Distribution:	Commissioners Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Directors Temporary Assistance (TA) Directors Welfare Management Systems (WMS) Coordinators
From:	Valerie Figueroa, Deputy Commissioner of Employment, and Income Support Programs
Subject:	Preliminary Guidance Regarding the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) Pilot
Effective Date:	January 1, 2024
Contact Information:	SNAP Bureau: (518) 473-1469 or SNAPBureau@otda.ny.gov or NYSRMP@otda.ny.gov
Attachments:	Attachment 1 – Monroe Laser Letter to Households RMP Attachment 2 – LDSS-5230 Restaurant Meals Program Notice of Eligibility Decision

Section 2

The purpose of this GIS is to announce the launch of the New York State Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) Pilot and to provide interim guidance to social services districts (districts). An Administrative Directive Memorandum (ADM) with more comprehensive guidance will be issued upon the completion of the pilot phase.

The RMP will begin as a pilot program starting with Monroe County in December 2023 and gradually expand to other districts on a timeline to be determined. A list of participating restaurants will be posted on the OTDA website at [Restaurant Meals Program \(RMP\)](#).

BACKGROUND

Governor Hochul signed legislation directing the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to establish an RMP. The RMP allows certain households, who may not have access to what they need to properly store and prepare food or who may not be able to prepare meals themselves, to use their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to purchase prepared meals at participating restaurants at a discounted rate. OTDA submitted a proposal to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and received approval to implement an RMP consistent with the applicable federal requirements.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to purchase prepared meals at restaurants participating in the RMP, **all members** of the SNAP household must be either:

- elderly (age 60 or older);
- disabled (receives disability or blindness payments or receives disability retirement benefits from a governmental agency because of a disability considered permanent);
- homeless; or
- a spouse of a SNAP recipient who is eligible for the RMP.

There is no separate application process for SNAP households to participate in the RMP, and RMP eligibility will be determined by districts on a case-by-case basis. The district must review households' eligibility for the RMP at contact points such as application, recertification, interim contact, or at the household's request. If the household is determined to be eligible, the district must update the RMP field in the Welfare Management System (WMS) as described below. For the purposes of the pilot however, the RMP in WMS will be populated automatically for certain eligible households as described below.

SYSTEMS UPDATES

As explained in [WCL101723-2 - WMS-CNS Coordinator Guidance - Release 23.3 – Explanation of WMS/CNS Enhancements Effective October 22, 2023 \(ny.gov\)](#), a new RMP field, "RMP", has been created in WMS on Screen 1 to identify SNAP households who are RMP-eligible which will enable them to use their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards at participating restaurants. SNAP households who are eligible for the RMP will have an "X" in the "RMP" field, and the field should remain blank for those households who are not eligible.

There was a one-time mass update in October 2023 for all households outside of New York City to automatically enroll certain eligible SNAP households in the RMP. The mass update populated an "X" in the "RMP" field for SNAP households that meet the following criteria:

- Households that contain only one person **and** that person is elderly and/or disabled as identified by the "A/D" field; or,
- Households that are homeless as identified by shelter type, regardless of household size.

For the purpose of RMP, homeless households are identified by the following Shelter Types:

- 06 Hotel/Motel Temporary
- 19 Tier II Family Shelter (3 Meals/Day)
- 21 Shelter for Homeless (3 Meals/Day)
- 22 Residential Program for Victims of Domestic Violence (3 Meals/Day)
- 23 Undomiciled
- 33 Homeless Shelter Tier II (Less than 3 Meals/Day)
- 36 Shelter for Homeless (Less than 3 Meals/Day)
- 37 Residential Program for Victims of Domestic Violence (Less than 3 Meals/Day)

SNAP households in Monroe County that were automatically enrolled into the RMP during the one-time mass update in October 2023 will receive a general letter notifying them about their RMP eligibility (Attachment 1). While only SNAP households in Monroe County will receive the general letter, the one-time mass update ran for all households outside of New York City.

After the one-time mass update, workers will need to manually identify households that meet the requirements to participate in the RMP by placing an "X" in the "RMP" field. This can be applied to any of the following Case Types:

- 11 Family Assistance (FA)

- 12 Safety Net Non-Cash Assistance (SN-FP)
- 16 Safety Net Cash Assistance (SN-CSH)
- 17 Safety Net Non-Cash Assistance (SN-FNP)
- 31 Non-Public Assistance Food Stamps (NPA-FS)
- 32 Public Assistance and Non-Public Assistance Mixed Household (FS-Mix)

The “RMP” field should be left blank for households ineligible for the RMP.

The LDSS-5230: *Restaurant Meals Program Notice of Eligibility Decision* notice has been created to notify households who request to participate in the RMP whether or not they meet the criteria to participate (Attachment 2). Beginning December 1, 2023, Client Notification System (CNS) notices to SNAP households will include language explaining that the household may participate in the RMP whenever the “RMP” field is populated with an “X”. As long as the “X” is present, the RMP eligibility language will be included in all CNS notices to the household. Conversely, when a household who previously participated in the RMP no longer meets the criteria to participate due to a change in circumstances, and the “X” in the “RMP” field is removed, the CNS notice will include language explaining that the household is not eligible for the RMP. The CNS language that a household is not eligible for the RMP is only included when the “X” in the “RMP” field is removed.

The RMP is beginning as a pilot program in Monroe County only. While the “RMP” field may be populated in WMS for all SNAP households, only restaurants in Monroe County will participate and be onboarded initially. OTDA will notify districts as the RMP Pilot expands to restaurants in other districts. Additional guidance will be issued separately when the RMP Pilot expands to New York City.

Checking RMP Eligibility Status

Workers can check a household’s RMP eligibility status on the WIDICH-WMS ID card Individual Screen. To view this screen, the worker should go to WMS screen 27 - “CBIC Menu” and select 07 - “Individual PAFS Payee Inquiry Screen”.

Workers can also use EPPIC to check a client’s eligibility for the RMP. Once logged into EPPIC, select the “Client Account” button to locate the household’s account. Once the household’s account is selected, select the “Client” button at the bottom of the page. If the household is eligible for the RMP, the “Restaurant” field will display a “Y”. If the household is not eligible for the RMP, the “Restaurant” field will display an “N”.

Households can check their own RMP eligibility status by visiting <https://www.ConnectEBT.com/> and create or log into their account. If the household is creating a new ConnectEBT account, they will need their EBT card number, PIN, and an email address. Once logged into the home page, the user will see “Restaurant Meal Program Eligible” in the “Cardholder Info” section if the household is eligible for the RMP. If the household is not eligible for the RMP, the “Restaurant Meal Program Eligible” message will not appear in the “Cardholder Info” section.

Note: Only <https://www.ConnectEBT.com/> displays the program eligibility message. The ConnectEBT Mobile App is not capable of displaying the message.

Section 3

When purchasing prepared meals at participating restaurants, households will be responsible for covering the entire, discounted cost of their meals. Therefore, households should be encouraged to check their food benefit balance by calling 1-888-328-6399 or visiting www.ConnectEBT.com to ensure that they have sufficient funds in their SNAP EBT account prior to purchasing a meal at a participating restaurant. Households should also be encouraged to check their RMP-eligibility status in their ConnectEBT account to confirm that their EBT card is enabled to work at participating restaurants.

If a household meets the criteria to participate in the RMP and attempts to purchase a prepared meal but does not have sufficient funds to cover the entire, discounted cost of their meal, the household will be responsible for covering any remaining balance with funds other than SNAP benefits.

If a household does not meet the criteria to participate in the RMP and attempts to use their SNAP benefits to purchase a prepared meal at a participating restaurant, the household will not be eligible for the RMP discounted rate and will still be responsible for covering the full cost of their meal with funds other than SNAP benefits.

OTDA will provide a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document and maintain a current list of participating restaurants where eligible SNAP households can use their benefits to purchase prepared meals at <https://otda.ny.gov/rmp>.

RESTAURANT ENROLLMENT

Any questions and concerns regarding restaurant enrollment should be directed to NYSRMP@otda.ny.gov.