



General Information System (GIS) Message

Section 1

Transmittal:	25DC012 Upstate and NYC
Date:	February 03, 2025
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:	Statewide Guidance on the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP)
Effective Date:	Immediately
Contact Information:	SNAP Bureau: (518) 473-1469 or SNAPBureau@otda.ny.gov or NYSRMP@otda.ny.gov
Attachments:	N/A

Section 2

The purpose of this GIS is to announce that the New York State Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) has expanded from a Pilot to a Statewide program, and to remind districts about program requirements for eligible households. This GIS also reminds districts about how SNAP households can check their RMP eligibility status in the new Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) portal, ebtEDGE, following the EBT system conversion.

The RMP began as a pilot program in Monroe County in December 2023 and was then expanded to all five boroughs of New York City in 2024. Program information and a list of participating restaurants is available on the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) RMP website at <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/rmp/>.

BACKGROUND

Governor Hochul signed legislation on October 4, 2021, directing the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to establish the Restaurant Meals Program. 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 SNAP benefits to purchase

prepared meals at participating restaurants at a discounted rate. As outlined in [23DC085 - Preliminary Guidance Regarding the Restaurant Meals Program \(RMP\) Pilot](#), the RMP began as a pilot program in Monroe County in December 2023 and was then expanded to New York City in 2024 as outlined in [24DC037 -NYC Guidance Regarding the Restaurant Meals Program \(RMP\) Pilot](#).

RESTAURANT PARTICIPATION

Restaurants must be approved by USDA and New York State to become an authorized SNAP retailer and participate in RMP. The requirements for restaurants to participate in RMP, along with a geographical listing of all approved restaurants in NYC and ROS is available online at [Restaurant Meals Program – Participating Restaurants | OTDA \(ny.gov\)](#). Any questions and concerns regarding restaurant enrollment should be directed to NYSRMP@otda.ny.gov.

Please note, not all counties will have a participating restaurant initially as the RMP begins to expand Statewide. As new restaurants are onboarded, they will be added to the website.

SNAP HOUSEHOLD 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. In October 2023 when the RMP pilot began, household eligibility was automatically determined in ROS for most households through a Mass Rebudgeting (MRB). After the initial MRB, districts were instructed in 23DC085 that RMP eligibility must 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). In New York City, once a household is determined eligible and the WMS case includes the RMP indicator, the household's Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card will be accepted to purchase meals at participating restaurants.

SNAP households using SNAP benefits to purchase meals through RMP receive a 10% discount on the cost of their meal. When purchasing prepared meals at participating restaurants, they will be responsible for covering the entire, discounted cost of their meals. Therefore, they should be encouraged to check their food benefit balance by calling 1-888-328-6399 or visiting <https://www.ebtEDGE.com> to ensure that they have sufficient funds in their SNAP EBT account prior to purchasing a meal at a participating restaurant. They should also be encouraged to check their RMP-eligibility status in their ebtEDGE account to confirm that their EBT card is enabled to work at participating restaurants.

If a SNAP recipient 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, they will be responsible for covering any remaining balance with funds other than SNAP benefits.

If a SNAP recipient 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 transaction will be denied, they will not be eligible for the RMP discounted rate, and they will be responsible for covering the full cost of their meal with funds other than SNAP benefits.

SYSTEMS INFORMATION

Rest-Of-State:

As explained in [WCL101723-2 - WMS-CNS Coordinator Guidance - Release 23.3 – Explanation of WMS/CNS Enhancements Effective October 22, 2023 \(ny.gov\)](#) (Section 4), the RMP field, “RMP”, appears in WMS on Screen 1 to identify SNAP households who are RMP-eligible which will enable eligible households 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 met 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.

Going forward, ROS workers must determine RMP eligibility and add (and remove) the “X” in the “RMP” field whenever households are determined eligible, or no longer eligible, for participation in the RMP. Workers should review RMP eligibility whenever they process a case action, including at application, recertification, interim contact, or at the household’s request. The “RMP” field should be left blank for households ineligible for the RMP.

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)

Case types eligible for RMP include the following:

- 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)

NYC:

WMS will automatically evaluate cases for RMP eligibility whenever the budget is updated, and a case action processed. The system will automatically populate or remove the “X” in the “RMP” field, based on whether the household is eligible to participate.

Notifying Households

The [LDSS-5230: Restaurant Meals Program Notice of Eligibility Decision](#) was created as a manual notice to inform households who request to participate in the RMP whether or not they meet the criteria to participate. However, CNS notices will include RMP information whenever the “X” is present in the RMP field in WMS as described below.

CNS Notice Language

Once the RMP indicator is present on a case, the following CNS Notice language will auto-populate in any SNAP notice the household receives. This is the primary way that eligible households will be notified of their eligibility for RMP. Once a household is no longer eligible for RMP and the indicator is removed through a system update or worker entry, the “RMP Removal” language below will auto-populate on the next generated notice, but not after that. The applicable CNS Notice language below for RMP (approval and removal) was activated and included in all CNS notices for all cases beginning February 1, 2025.

RMP Approval

“Your SNAP household is eligible to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP). The RMP allows households where all members are either elderly (age 60 or older) or disabled (receives disability or blindness payments or receives disability retirement benefits from a governmental agency because of a disability considered permanent), or the spouse of someone who is elderly or disabled, and for households that are homeless, to use their SNAP benefits to purchase prepared meals at certain restaurants. Since your household meets the eligibility criteria to participate, your household has been included in the RMP. If there is a change in your household’s circumstances and a member of your SNAP household is no longer considered elderly or disabled, your household is no longer homeless, or your SNAP case closes, your household will no longer be included in the RMP and you will not be able to use your SNAP benefits to purchase prepared meals at restaurants participating in the RMP.

Please check your household’s food benefit balance by calling 1-888-328-6399 or visiting www.ebtEDGE.com to ensure you have sufficient funds in your SNAP EBT account prior to purchasing prepared meals at participating restaurants. Once logged into your ebtEDGE account, check the “Cardholder Info” section which must display “Restaurant Meal Program Eligible” to confirm that your EBT card can be used at participating restaurants. If you attempt to purchase a prepared meal and do not have sufficient funds, you will still be responsible for covering the cost of your meal with funds other than SNAP benefits. For a current list of participating restaurants where you may use your SNAP benefits to purchase prepared meals, visit <https://otda.ny.gov/rmp>. This decision is based on regulation 18 NYCRR 387.16.”

RMP Removal

“Your SNAP household is no longer eligible to participate in the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP). This is because there was a change in your household’s circumstances and your household no longer meets the eligibility criteria to participate in the RMP. To be eligible for the RMP, all members of your household must be either elderly (age 60 or older) or disabled, the spouse of someone who is elderly or disabled (receives disability or blindness payments or receives disability retirement benefits from a governmental agency because of a disability considered permanent), or your household must be homeless. This does not mean that you cannot use your SNAP benefits. You may continue to use your SNAP benefits, but you are no longer eligible to use them at participating restaurants. If you attempt to purchase a meal at a restaurant, you will be responsible for covering the cost of your meal with funds other than SNAP benefits. This decision is based on regulation 18 NYCRR 387.16.”

Checking RMP Eligibility Status

In NYC only

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 “CBIC Menu” and select 07 - “Individual PA/FS Payee Inquiry Screen” which includes the RMP IND field.

In both NYC and ROS

Workers can also use ebtEDGE to check a client’s eligibility for the RMP. Once logged into ebtEDGE, select the “Client” button to locate the household’s account. If the household is eligible for the RMP, the “Restaurant Meals” field will display a “Yes”. If the household is not eligible for the RMP, the “Restaurant” field will display an “No”.

All SNAP households Statewide can check their own RMP eligibility status by visiting <https://www.ebtEDGE.com/> and create or log into their account. If the household is creating a new ebtEDGE account, they will need their EBT card number, PIN, and an email address. Once logged into the home page, in the “Account Information” section, the cardholder will see a thumbs up icon with “Account is Restaurant Meal Program Eligible” if the household is eligible for the RMP. If the household is not eligible for the RMP, the “Account is Restaurant Meal Program Eligible” message will not be present in the “Account Information” section. This information is also available through the ebtEDGE mobile app.

Section 3 – Required Action

Workers in ROS counties must evaluate RMP eligibility whenever processing a case action and update WMS accordingly. This should be done at application, recertification, interim contact, or at the household’s request.

All workers should become familiar with the program, including reminding households to check their EBT account to make sure they are eligible for RMP, and have enough funds to make their purchase, before attempting to make a purchase. Households with questions about RMP and participating restaurants should be directed to the OTDA RMP webpage at [Restaurant Meals Program \(RMP\) | OTDA](#).