Basic Foundations Training for Advocates

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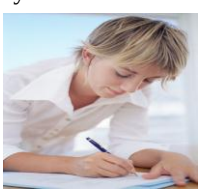
WHO CAN APPLY?

- The applicant
- Any adult member of the family
- Authorized representative
- Agency acting on the client's behalf



HOW TO APPLY?

- Obtain an application package
  - IN-PERSON
  - TELEPHONE
  - BY MAIL
  - ONLINE (SNAP and HEAP)
  - Every DSS Center accepts applications for all TA, SNAP & MA programs

My benefits.gov

- Suffolk County accepts electronic SNAP and HEAP applications/recertifications online through the website:

  mybenefits.ny.gov

Mybenefits.ny.gov

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE TO APPLY?

<u>THREE ZIP CODE LISTS</u>

1. Temporary Assistance & SNAP
2. Medicaid
3. Fuel Sites

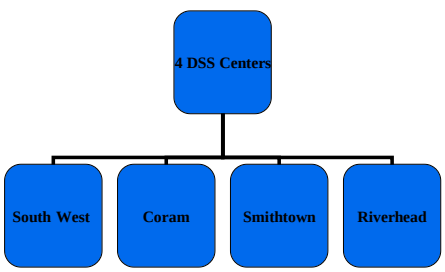
All Lists are included in the DSS Directory

SUFFOLK COUNTY WEBSITE

http://suffolkcountyny.gov/departments/socialservices.

The DSS homepage has the most recent Directory for Public Access to Social Service Program which includes the zip code lists.

WHERE ARE THE CENTERS?



What to Expect at the DSS Ctr

- **Expect to Wait**
  - Bring a book, drink or a snack.
  - Applications are reviewed and handed out to examiners in the order they are received.
  - Some intakes take longer than others.
  - Someone may be called in before you even if you arrived first for many different reasons.

What to Expect at the DSS Ctr

- Applications are available in the lobby, however, it's best to have your application completed before your arrival at the Center.
- The TA/SNAP packages contain many forms besides the "common application".
- The State booklets in these packages are a good way for clients to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities.

Read the booklets

- The state booklets provided in the application package provide a lot of valuable information:
  - **BOOK 1 – LDSS 4148 -Blue Book**

  "What you should know about Social Services Programs"
    - Application Rights
    - Personal Privacy Rights
    - Conferences and Fair Hearings
    - Your Responsibilities
    - Intentional Program Violation (IPV)

Read the booklets

- BOOK 2 – LDSS 4148 - **Purple Book**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

- What kinds of expense will TA help me pay?
- Can I get help if I'm not a US citizen?
- Who in my household has to apply with me?
- Can I get help with an expense, which if not paid, may cause me to lose my job?

Read the booklets

- BOOK 3 – LDSS 4148 - **Red Book**
- What you should know if you have an emergency:
  - **Questions and Answer**
    - What is an emergency?
    - What if I'm homeless?
    - What if I have an emergency heating or utility need?
    - What happens if my request for one time emergency help is denied?

What is Temporary Assistance?

- Cash Assistance – on going
  Rent, utilities and personal needs
- Emergency one time payments
  Diversion payments

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications are date stamped when received
  - Eligibility Appointment given
- Upon receipt, every application is screened for:
  - Expedited SNAP benefits
  - Emergencies

If Emergency exists, client is seen same day by the ENU unit.

EMERGENCIES

- FOOD
- SHELTER
- FUEL/UTILITY
- MORTGAGE/TAX ARREARS
- HOUSE REPAIRS
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- All applicants are asked to complete a DV screening form.
  - Clients are **not** required to complete the screening form to be eligible for TA.
- Voluntary and Confidential
- DV Liaison: Assesses for services. They also issues waivers for TA requirements.

LANGUAGE/LITERACY BARRIERS

- Language Interpretations
  - Clients are shown a language card at the reception window asking them to identify their language.
  - Phone Interpretation is available for over 200 languages
- Interpretation for the Deaf
- Literacy - staff available to assist

LANGUAGE/LITERACY BARRIERS

- TA Applications (LDSS 2921) are available in 8 different languages at all centers:
  - English
  - Arabic
  - Chinese
  - Haitian-Creole
  - Italian
  - Korean
  - Russian
  - Spanish
- SNAP applications (LDSS 4826) are also available at each center in 7 different languages:
  - English
  - Arabic
  - Chinese
  - Haitian-Creole
  - Korean
  - Russian
  - Spanish

LANGUAGE/LITERACY BARRIERS

- Mybenefits.ny.gov on line is now available in 8 different languages:
  - English
  - Arabic
  - Chinese
  - Haitian-Creole
  - Italian
  - Korean
  - Russian
  - Spanish

SUBMITTING DOCUMENTATION

- To ensure your documents get to your worker, please be sure to:
  - Write case name and case number on the paper work being submitted.

•Without this information, it becomes very time consuming trying to figure out what unit the paperwork belongs to.

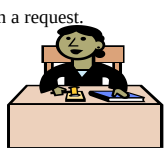
SUBMITTING DOCUMENTATION

- Never mail or drop off originals- we will make copies in the Center
- Clients can obtain a receipt for copies dropped off at DSS Center

- Attach a copy of the pend letter (LDSS 2642) to the requested documentation.

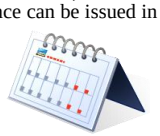
ELIGIBILITY INTERVIEW

- Appointments can be re-scheduled prior to the appointment date or on the same day by placing a phone call to the Eligibility Unit.
- Applicants are pended for documentation needed to determine eligibility.
  - Usually more time can be allowed with a request.
- TA Processing Time Frames:
  - 30 days for FA cases
  - 45 days for SN cases



TIME FRAMES

- Appointment within 7 business days
- **FA**: Benefits are effective from date all required documentation is received or the 30th day, whichever is earlier.
- **SN**: Benefits are effective **45 days** from application date or when all required documentation is received, whichever is later (emergency assistance can be issued in the interim).



DOCUMENATION REQUIREMENTS

- ID
- HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION
- ALIEN/CITIZENSHIP STATUS
- INCOME
- RESOURCES
- SHELTER COSTS

Document Requirement Form

- The "pend letter"
- The Document Requirement Sheet - LDSS 2642
- Lists everything needed to get a case open
- Distinguishes between TA and SNAP program
- Lists acceptable verification for each TA/SNAP requirement
  - This document is an important part of the case record and is used as a guide for the examiner in the interview process.
  - Clients should understand what we are asking them to bring in for verification and why. It they don't understand something, they should ask to have it explained.

Temporary Assistance

- Income eligibility:
  - 1st – Gross income can not exceed 185% of FPL
    - FPL depends on size of family (See chart on next slide)
  - 2nd – Countable income can not exceed standard of need. Standard of need is set by NYS dependent upon household size. (chart)
- Resources
  - Liquid and Non-liquid: $2000 per household or $3000 if household has a member over age 60
    - Vehicles - $4650.00 may increase to $9300.00 if vehicle is used for employment

Federal Poverty Levels - FPL

Size of Family Unit	Federal Poverty Guideline 100%		125% Federal Poverty Guideline ESN**		130% Federal Poverty Guideline Maximum Gross Monthly Income (SNAP Six –Month Reporters)		200% Federal Poverty Guideline EAF***	
	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly	Annual	Monthly
1	$11,490	$958	$14,363	$1,197	$14,940	$1,245	$22,980	$1,915
2	$15,510	$1,293	$19,388	$1,616	$20,172	$1,681	$31,020	$2,585
3	$19,530	$1,628	$24,413	$2,034	$25,932	$2,116	$39,060	$3,255
4	$23,550	$1,963	$29,438	$2,453	$30,624	$2,552	$47,100	$3,925
5	$27,570	$2,298	$34,643	$2,872	$35,844	$2,987	$55,140	$4,595
6	$31,590	$2,633	$39,488	$3,291	$41,076	$3,423	$63,180	$5,265
7	$35,610	$2,968	$44,513	$3,709	$46,926	$3,858	$71,220	$5,935
8	$39,630	$3,303	$49,538	$4,128	$51,528	$4,294	$79,260	$6,605
Each Additional +	+ $4,020	+ $335	+ $5,025	+ $419	+ $5,232	+ $436	+ $8,040	+ $670

Monthly Standard of Need Chart

Number in Case	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Each Add'l Add
Basic	$158.00	$252.00	$336.00	$433.00	$534.00	$617.00	$702.00	$787.00	$85.00
Energy	$14.10	$22.50	$30.00	$ 38.70	$47.70	$55.20	$62.70	$70.00	$7.50
Suplmt	$11.00	$17.00	$23.00	$ 30.00	$37.00	$42.00	$47.00	$52.00	$5.00
Shelter With Children*	$310.00	$358.00	$447.00	$503.00	$560.00	$586.00	$611.00	$611.00	+
Shelter Without Children	$309.00	$358.00	$412.00	$449.00	$486.00	$503.00	$523.00	$573.00	
Heat Allowance #									Medically verified pregnancy allows "With Children" standards
Fuel oil	$70.00	$70.00	$70.00	$73.00	$77.00	$82.00	$88.00	$93.00	
Electric heat	$90.00	$90.00	$90.00	$94.00	$99.00	$106.00	$113.00	$120.00	
Other heat	$56.00	$56.00	$56.00	$58.00	$61.00	$65.00	$69.00	$74.00	
Max. Grant With Children ***									Presence of child in HH allows "with Children Standards"
Heat Included	$493.00	$649.00	$836.00	$1004.00	$1,178.00	$1,300.00	$1,422.00	$1,520.00	
Oil heat	$563.00	$719.00	$906.00	$1077.00	$1,255.00	$1,382.00	$1,510.00	$1,613.00	
Electric heat	$583.00	$739.00	$926.00	$1098.00	$1,277.00	$1,406.00	$1,535.00	$1,640.00	
Other heat	$549.00	$705.00	$892.00	$1062.00	$1,239.00	$1,365.00	$1,491.00	$1,594.00	
Max. Grant W/O Children***									Increase in HH count when child is born.
Heat Included	$492.00	$649.00	$801.00	$950.00	$1,104.00	$1,217.00	$1,334.00	$1,482.00	
Oil heat	$562.00	$719.00	$871.00	$1023.00	$1,181.00	$1,299.00	$1,422.00	$1,575.00	Child must be under 18 or under 19 & a full time student.
Electric heat	$582.00	$739.00	$891.00	$1044.00	$1,203.00	$1,323.00	$1,447.00	$1,602.00	
Other heat	$548.00	$705.00	$857.00	$1008.00	$1,165.00	$1,282.00	$1,403.00	$1,556.00	

Room and Board Allowances Shelter Code 04 (all based on W/O children shelter standard)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Personal Allowance	$45.00	$90.00	$135.00	$180.00	$225.00	$270.00	$315.00	$360.00
Maximum Payment to Landlord	$492.00	$649.00	$801.00	$950.00	$1,104.00	$1,217.00	$1,334.00	$1,482.00
Maximum Grant Total	$537.00	$739.00	$936.00	$1,130.00	$1,329.00	$1,487.00	$1,649.00	$1,842.00

SAMPLE BUDGET-FAMILY OF 4

Basic allowance	$433.00
• Energy	38.70
• Energy Supplement	30.00
• Shelter (w/children)	503.00
• Heat (oil)	73.00
Total Needs	$1,077.70

EARNED INCOME

- FA households, SN families (FA households that reached time limits) and SN pregnant women are eligible to receive these deductions from their budgeted gross earned income:
  - $90 income exclusion, *plus*
  - 49% earned income disregard (changes every June)

- SN households (single and childless couples) receive:
  - $90 income exclusion

EXEMPT INCOME

- Education grants and loans
- Adoption subsidies
- Foster Care payments
- First $60 of room & board income
- SNAP and WIC
- Energy Assistance payments
- EITC
- HEAP

SHELTER SUPPLEMENT PLAN

- Under regulation, 352.3(a)(3) districts can request approval to operate a shelter supplement program

- Suffolk County has developed a local plan which can supplement shelter costs

EMPLOYABILITY UNIT

- Conducts initial Employability Interview for every TA applicant.
- Refers applicants for evaluations and/or treatment as appropriate:
  - Medical
  - Psychiatric
  - Alcohol and/or Substance abuse

DCAP

Disabled Client Assistance Program

An advocacy unit for the disabled Temporary Assistance population in Suffolk County.

DCAP

SSI BENEFIT LEVELS

- Individual living alone = $808
- Individual living with others = $744

SANCTIONS

- A sanction is imposed on an individual when there is a failure to comply with program requirements.
  - There is a process to show cause
- Sanctions carry financial and durational consequences.
- For active cases, the Fair Hearings # to request Aid To Continue is 1-800-342-3334

SNAP Program

- YES
  - FOOD PRODUCTS
- NO
  - ALCOHOL
  - MEDICINES
  - NON-FOOD ITEMS

Expedited SNAP Processing

Once a household is found eligible for expedited processing, we must provide an interview within 5 days.

Expedited SNAP

- Once a household is found eligible for expedited processing, we interview to determine if:
  - more information is needed, based on the fact the household has received Exp SNAP benefits in the past……or
  - if nothing else is needed, we must issue benefits and make them available within 5 calendar days

MAXIMUM INCOME FOR HH'S NOT CONTAINING AN ELDERLY/DISABLED MEMBER

HH SIZE	GROSS MONTHLY INCOME
1	$1,245
2	$1,681
3	$2,116
4	$2,552
5	$2,987

RECERTIFICATION

All SNAP recertification interviews are now done by telephone unless there is no telephone contact information provided.

NYSNIP

New York State Nutrition
Improvement Project

- Automatically generates a SNAP case when a single SSI Live Alone is approved for SSI benefits.

HOW TO ACCESS

CASH
MEDICAID
SNAP

CBIC IS A DEBIT CARD

- Amounts are debited from each account.
- Unused portions from each month can be carried over to the next month.
- Requires a PIN number
  - Chosen by client @ Ctr or
  - Via telephone

AVAILABILITY OF BENEFITS

- Recurring TA benefits are issued semi-monthly
- Issuance based on the last digit of the case number
  - EX: If case number ends with a 9, the client's benefits are available on the 9th and 24th of the month

Unused BENEFITS

SNAP

- Expunged after 365 days

Cash Benefits

- If account not accessed for 90 days
- Cash benefits that are not fully withdrawn within 180 days go back to the State

HEAP Program

- Seasonal
  - 2013/2014 HEAP season ended March 2014
  - Any heating or utility emergencies outside of the HEAP season are handled via Temporary Assistance program.
    - Application must be made in person at your local center to determine eligibility
- TA and SNAP recipients are categorically eligible
- It is one benefit to assist with Home Heating Costs
- It is a Federal program, administered by the State
- Program rules are flexible and change from year to year

Tips For the Advocate

- Plan for transportation for follow up appointments in advance. A missed appointment can result in a denial or a sanction.
- Inform DSS examiner prior to a client moving, failure to do so may result in case closing.
- Help keep the client organized. Keep important documents and appointments in a folder.
- Go over the "pend letter" with the examiner when your client signs for it. Gather documents needed for eligibility as soon as possible.