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SNAP Policy Update #12 15-16'

DATE: June 30, 2016

RE: More Working Families Eligible for SNAP starting July 1

Starting on July 1, 2016, families and individuals with earned income will be allowed to use 150% of poverty for their gross income test (GIT) when applying for SNAP benefits. This means more working families will be eligible for SNAP, including families previously ineligible because they were just over the guidelines. This policy update highlights information provided by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) through [16-ADM-06](#).

Included in this memo is the following:

- What is Expanded Categorical Eligibility?
- Households with Earned Income Now Categorically Eligible at 150% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL)
- Households that are NOT Categorically Eligible

What is Expanded Categorical Eligibility?

Being “categorically eligible” for SNAP simply means that, by passing the assigned GIT for the household type, a SNAP household does not also have to meet a resource test, or a net income test.

Expanded categorical eligibility is already granted to many SNAP applicants in NYS, including households with the following:

- elderly and/or disabled members – 200% FPL for GIT
- dependent care costs – 200% FPL for GIT, and
- all other households - 130% FPL

An important fact to remember: one- and two-person households that are categorically eligible will receive the minimum SNAP benefit, which is currently \$16.00. There is no such minimum benefit for households of three or more, therefore the benefit calculation for these households can result in a SNAP benefit of \$0. In that case, the household will be “categorically eligible” for SNAP, but will not be eligible for a SNAP benefit.

Households with Earned Income Now Categorically Eligible at 150% of Federal Poverty Level

Starting on July 1, 2016, OTDA will raise the gross income threshold for SNAP applicants and recipients who receive earned income from 130% to 150% of the FPL.

This income must be:

- Earned income— see pgs. 36 – 38 in [SNAP guide](#), and

- The earned portion of the household’s income must be income that is included in the household’s SNAP budget for the purpose of determining SNAP eligibility and benefit amounts.

These households are determined to be categorical eligible to participate in SNAP if their total budgeted gross income (both earned and unearned) meets 150% of FPL or less, based on household size.

SNAP households with earned income that is NOT budgeted for SNAP eligibility purposes, because the income is excluded, are not categorically eligible at 150% of poverty. A common example would be a single mother who is unemployed and whose 17-year-old son attends high school and works part time. SNAP rules say that the earned income of a child under age 18 who attends high school is excluded from the SNAP budget. In this case, the household is not categorically eligible for SNAP at 150% of FPL. They would instead need to have a gross income below 130% of FPL in order to participate in SNAP.

Below is the chart reflecting the 150% FPL guidelines, which is effective from July 1, 2016, through September 30, 2016.

<u>Family Size</u>	150% of Poverty Monthly GROSS Income
1	\$1,472
2	\$1,992
3	\$2,512
4	\$3,032
5	\$3,552
6	\$4,072
7	\$4,592
8	\$5,112
Each Additional Person	+ 520

Households That Are NOT Categorically Eligible

Most households that are income eligible for SNAP are also categorically eligible. However, there are still a small number of households that cannot be considered categorically eligible and must have their resources and net income considered as part of the application process. These include:

1. Households with members who have been disqualified from SNAP due to:
 - an Intentional Program Violation (IPV), sanction or voluntary quit.
NOTE: This does NOT include able bodied adults who are ineligible to participate in SNAP due to failing to meet the work requirement.
2. Households with an elderly or disabled member whose gross income is above 200% of poverty per household size.

These households may still qualify under regular SNAP rules:

- Resources at or below \$2,250, or for elderly/disabled households, at or below \$3,250.
- Gross income at or below 130% of poverty for the household size, if no one is elderly /disabled.
- Net income at or below 100% of poverty for the household size.
- No GIT for households with an elderly/disabled member. Net income at or below 100% of poverty.

Links

- [16-ADM-06](#) – Expansion of Categorical Eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Households with Earned Income and [OTDA Desk Guide](#)
- [HSNY SNAP in NYS: An Eligibility Prescreening Guide](#)

Attachments:

- HSNY SNAP Categorical Eligibility Desk Guide
- HSNY SNAP Budget Worksheet
- HSNY SNAP Budget Estimator Tools
- HSNY Outreach Flyer for Families with Earned Income

Help for Your Clients

There are Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) Coordinators in many communities across NYS. NOEP Coordinators are available to help potentially eligible individuals and families apply for SNAP benefits by:

- conducting confidential pre-screenings to see if a family may be eligible for SNAP,
- assisting with completing the application, including the online version,
- answering any questions, and/or
- working with current recipients around recertification or other issues with their SNAP case.

NOEP Coordinators can also come to your community site to help your clients.

To find out if there is a NOEP Coordinator in your community, go to: <http://www.foodhelpny.org>.

Visit <http://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/dss.asp> for a listing of SNAP offices and contact information outside of NYC or call 1-800-342-3009.

Visit http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/html/services/snap_centers.shtml for a listing of SNAP offices in New York City or call 311.

For More Information

If you have any questions about this SNAP update or SNAP in general, please contact Dawn Secor via phone at (518) 436-8757 ext. 112, or by e-mailing dawn.secor@hungersolutionsny.org.