

## December, 2020 District Manager's Report

### HRA Reported:

Applications are available for Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance **Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** is available to help people with low-income pay the cost of heating their homes.

Households may also be eligible for an emergency benefit if they are in danger of running out of heating fuel or having their utility service shut off. Emergency HEAP benefits and eligibility are based on income, available resources, and the type of emergency. Households facing an energy emergency should call their local Department of Social Services' HEAP office for assistance.

The 2020-2021 Regular HEAP benefit opened on November 2, 2020. Eligibility and benefits are based on income, household size, the primary heating source, and the presence of a household member who is under six years old, ages 60 years or older, or permanently disabled.

**The 2020-2021 Emergency HEAP benefit will open on January 4, 2021.** For more information on eligibility and applying for HEAP benefits, visit the [HEAP website](#).

### Grab and Go Meals

Despite the temporary closing of in-person school, the grab-and-go meal locations in schools will remain open. All of the over 1,100 Department of Education schools that have been open for children learning in person or remotely will continue to distribute meals from **9AM - 12PM** daily.

All of the over 260 Department of Education schools that have been community hubs distributing meals for the general public, including those serving kosher and expanded halal options, will continue to distribute meals from **3PM - 5PM** daily.

During the holidays when schools are not in session, there will be grab-and-go meal service available on the following dates from 12pm to 3pm:

- o December 24th (Christmas Eve)
- o December 28th-31st (Including New Year's Eve)

There will be no meal service available on the following dates: December 25th (Christmas Day) and January 1st (New Year's Day).

For more information please visit [www.schools.nyc.gov/freemeals](http://www.schools.nyc.gov/freemeals).

## **COVID 19 Testing Sites**

Free testing continues to be available throughout the five boroughs. A schedule of mobile testing locations throughout the City as well as detailed information on locations and types of testing offered at regular testing sites (including rapid testing and antibody tests) can be found at <https://www.nyhealthandhospitals.org/covid-19-testing-sites/#mobile>. These are no cost testing sites open to all New Yorkers.

## **Burial Claims**

The HRA Office of Burial Services (OBS) assists individuals in need of financial assistance to meet funeral expenses for deceased low-income New York City residents. The burial allowance is available to low-income decedents who do not have resources or assets available to pay for their funeral. Proof of low-income status may include, receipt of social services benefits or public assistance from HRA such as Cash Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, or social security benefits including supplemental security income (SSI). The HRA OBS can pay up to a maximum amount of \$1,700 under the current emergency rule towards the cost of a funeral bill for a decedent's final disposition (which includes burial, cremation or burying of cremation ashes) to the decedent's relative, friend, Organizational Friend or authorized representative.

In the event, the funeral bill exceeds the current \$3,400 cap under the emergency rule, the cost of the burial plot, grave opening or cremation will be deducted from the total bill and where the remaining bill amount is less than the above \$3,400 cap a burial allowance will be approved. The applicant who is responsible for the funeral arrangements or their representative must file an application with the Office of Burial Services within one hundred-twenty (120) days under the emergency rule, from the date of the decedent's death. To determine eligibility, an application must be submitted and OBS will assess the individual circumstances of each case. OBS will accept a photo or scanned image of a document via email and we may require a hard copy if the image or photo is not legible. OBS requires the following documentation:

- A Burial Allowance Application Form M-860W completed and signed by the applicant or authorized representative. See application for details.
- One original certified copy of the Death Certificate (it will be returned to the applicant).
- A copy of the Funeral Contract also known as the Statement of Goods and Services Selected. The contract must be signed by the Funeral Director and by the person who made the funeral arrangements.
- A copy of the cemetery or crematory bill, itemizing all charges.
- The original itemized funeral bill signed by the Funeral Director and notarized in the presence of a Notary Public or Commissioner of Deeds. The funeral bill must be stamped "Paid-in-Full" if the charges have been paid and the applicant is seeking reimbursement.

**Note:** During the pandemic an electronic signature can be used by a person in lieu of a signature affixed by hand in executing documents and forms authorizing or accepting funeral services. NYS Governor's Executive Order 202.11 March 27, 2020.

### Health Bucks - [Pharmacy to Farm Prescriptions](#)

The Pharmacy to Farm Prescriptions program provides New Yorkers who receive SNAP benefits, and who also have high blood pressure, with \$30 in Health Bucks each month.

Patients filling a prescription for high blood pressure medication at select pharmacies can receive a fruit and vegetable “prescription” that can be exchanged at a nearby farmers market for Health Bucks.

Health Bucks are \$2 coupons that can be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at all NYC farmers markets.

For more information or questions about the program, please email [farmersmarkets@health.nyc.gov](mailto:farmersmarkets@health.nyc.gov).

Please find a list of [participating pharmacies](#) online.

### **DHMH Reported:**

No matter how you celebrate, **NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene** wants you to always practice these four key actions:

- **Stay home:** Celebrate at home, especially if you aren't feeling well, tested positive for COVID-19, have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, or were recently traveling;
- **Stay apart:** Keep at least 6 feet from others. Do not attend holiday parties or other gatherings, especially indoors;
- **Keep your hands clean:** Wash your hands often or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands and cover your coughs and sneezes;
- **Wear a face covering:** Protect those around you. You can have COVID-19 and not know it.

### **Department of Finance Reported (DOF) Reported:**

**SCHE/DHE Renewal** - The law requires that the [Senior Citizen Homeowners' Exemption](#) (SCHE) must be renewed every two years and the [Disabled Homeowners' Exemption](#) (DHE) must be renewed every year.

DOF has mailed a total of 38,620 renewal reminder notices to these populations, comprising 35,836 SCHE notices and 2,784 DHE notices.

- **Homeowners can [renew online \(e-file\)](#) and should be encouraged to do so.**
- Blank, fillable [SCHE](#) and [DHE](#) renewal applications are available on DOF's website, but DOF recommends using the pre-populated forms sent by mail, if possible.
- Homeowners must estimate their total combined income, enter the amount in Section 3 of the renewal application, and submit all required income documentation. Homeowners can use the [income calculation worksheet](#) to estimate their total combined income.
- SCHE and DHE [frequently asked questions](#) are available online.

### **Clergy Renewal**

The clergy exemption must be renewed annually. Clergy property tax exemption renewal applications have been mailed to 1,321 clergy exemption recipients. Completed applications must be returned to DOF by March 15, 2021.

- **Homeowners can [renew online \(e-file\)](#) and should be encouraged to do so.**
- Blank, fillable [Clergy Exemption Renewal Application](#) forms are available on our website.
- In addition to completing the application, owners also need to [submit information documenting eligibility](#) for the benefit.

Please contact Jennifer Brown at (718) 431-5785 or [brownjennifer@finance.nyc.gov](mailto:brownjennifer@finance.nyc.gov) if you have questions and/or need further information. Also, please visit DOF's webpage at <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/benefits/landlords.page> for additional information as well.

More information about the various programs and applications is available on DOF's [Benefits for Property Owners](#) webpage.

**Department for the Aging Reported** Older Adult Centers have played a tremendous role in helping older New Yorkers during COVID-19. They pivoted from their regular programming and developed creative solutions to provide safe meal provisions and deliver services remotely, as well as offering virtual programming, which continues to keep older New Yorkers socially connected and engaged.

Prior to the pandemic, DFTA offered lunch, dinner, and a wide range of social activities and outings. In the early days of the pandemic, the staff performed wellness calls to Seniors and later transitioned to offering virtual classes. In order to keep the members engaged and active, DFTA also provides virtual cooking, technology, language, yoga and fitness classes. For Seniors DFTA played a pivotal role during a time when social isolation would have added to the mental and physical stresses of the pandemic.

**DSNY Reported:**

[PlowNYC](#) is to allow the public to: (1) track the progress of DSNY spreader/plow vehicles; and (2) confirm the snow designation of City streets (i.e., Critical, Sector, Haulster, or non-DSNY) (collectively, "Data").

- **Critical Routes:** These routes are comprised of highways (main beds, entrances, exits interchanges), arterial roadways, main travel thoroughfares (single lane and multi-lane), bus routes, that contain emergency services & first responder facilities (Hospitals, EMS, FDNY, NYPD) and schools.
- **Sector Routes:** Designed to encompass all streets that are not classified as Critical Streets and are wide enough to accommodate a full size DSNY collection truck with a plow attached.
- **Haulster Routes:** Designed to service dead ends and streets that cannot be serviced with a collection truck or salt spreader with a plow attached due to narrow street width or tight turning radius (either entering or exiting the street).

**NYC Comptroller's Office Reported:** "Work and Family Survey" New Yorkers' relationships to work and family have changed due to the pandemic and to identify policy recommendations to advance moving forward, the New York City Comptroller's Office, in partnership with A Better Balance, are conducting a survey on workplace flexibility.

Please note this Survey is available in both Spanish and English. To select the language of your choice, use the drop-down menu (located at the top right corner of Survey Page).

**Please register and take Survey at**

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=IR6rXUbP8k2dwPFRCt-I2Vef8zjAjEZAvnekjVVh3qhUMEtIWDJaQjNLU0EySjRQTjlHMEM5RUQxSS4u>

**Con Edison Reported: "Get Help Paying Your Bills"** a program geared at assisting residential Con Edison Customers who have experienced a change in their financial circumstances as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and may be eligible for special protections to avoid terminations in the future.

Under the law, if you are a residential customer and contact ConEdison to affirm that you experienced a change in financial circumstances as a result of Covid-19 starting on or after March 7, 2020:

- Con Edison will not disconnect your service for non-payment before March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021;
- You will be eligible for a payment agreement or to request a new agreement that requires no down payment, late fees, or penalties.

For further info. and to receive these protections, call Con Edison: 1-800-CONED (1-800-752-6633).

**DOT Reported: Open Restaurant Program Snowfall Guidance during an active snow alert:**

- Diners may not sit in roadway setups. Please remove or secure any tables and chairs;
- All electrical heaters in roadway set ups must be removed;
- If possible, remove any overhead coverings or regularly remove the snow until the snow alert ends;

**If 12" or more of snow is forecast:**

- Remove or consolidate your roadway setups to have as small a footprint as possible along the curb;
- If you're unable to remove or consolidate your roadway setup, you are encouraged to take steps to protect your asset from damage due to snow removal operations. The Department of Sanitation (DSNY) has conducted training exercises that included simulated snow removal operations on narrow streets with roadway setups on both sides. DSNY will conduct targeted outreach to restaurants to ensure setups meet DOT siting criteria and that roads can be efficiently plowed and remain passable;
- Use your snow sticks to increase visibility of your setup components if they are moved;
- Sign up to receive snow alerts and all snow-related updates through Notify NYC. To sign up for Notify NYC, call 311, visit [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov), or follow [@NotifyNYC](https://twitter.com/NotifyNYC) on Twitter.

**FDNY Reported:** with the holiday season upon us, which means a time for celebration and cooking! Regrettably, cooking fires remain the leading cause of home fires and fire injuries – particularly unattended cooking.

The FDNY uses this opportunity to educate New Yorkers on cooking safety tips to implement throughout their holiday festivities. On November 26, the FDNY will be releasing a Thanksgiving PSA promoting safety tips for the holiday season. To view the PSA please visit [www.FDNYsmart.org/connect](http://www.FDNYsmart.org/connect)

**Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Reported:** A group of New Yorkers is gearing up to help their neighbors during the pandemic. Forty volunteers from across the city are participating in virtual training sessions in disaster preparedness and emergency response. Their goal: to become the next group of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers. The New York City Emergency Management Department kicked off this five-week virtual training on November 2 to equip volunteers with the necessary skills to support their family and friends during an emergency.

The 37th CERT basic training cycle includes 10-sessions in disaster preparedness and emergency response, equipping volunteers with lessons in basic fire safety, search and rescue, traffic management, and first aid and triage. New York City Emergency Management is hosting the

virtual training program along with instructors from the New York City Fire Department (FDNY), and New York City Police Department (NYPD) Auxiliary Unit.

During the last training cycle, NYC Emergency Management transitioned CERT basic training classes virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Sholom Lanau, a Williamsburg resident, is one of the 40 New Yorkers to participate in the remote sessions.

Since its launch, NYC CERT has responded to a host of emergencies, and local teams can quickly adapt to the City's specific emergency needs. CERT members also work year-round to ensure their communities are prepared for emergencies, providing information and resources to assist residents with creating an emergency plan for their friends and family. Lanau has encouraged his friends to continue to find ways to help their community.  
to learn more about how we can help our neighbors during these tough times."

**Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)** The New York City CERT program started in 2003 with 106 volunteers. Today, there are more than 1,200 credentialed CERT volunteers throughout the five boroughs. NYC CERT volunteers participate in a 10-session basic training program where they receive instruction from active members of the FDNY, NYPD and NYC Emergency Management. Volunteers are trained in disaster preparedness and basic emergency response skills, including fire safety, light search and rescue, disaster medical operations, and traffic management.

**MBPO Reported:** Community Board Application are now available: [Apply now](#) to join your Community Board, the most grassroots form of local government. The Boards are pivotal in shaping their communities and work to enhance and preserve the character of the city's many unique neighborhoods. [Applications](#) close Monday, 2/1/2021.  
<https://manhattancommunityboards.wufoo.com/forms/w881xp40o7uf2h/>

**PPE Supplies Distribution and [testing information](#) in COVID hotspots:**

**Thursday (12/10)** throughout the day, volunteer to distribute masks on subways and buses with the [MTA Mask Force](#). Sign up [here](#);

**Thursday (12/10) from 10 am - noon**, free PPE is available at 3332 Broadway, courtesy of State Senator Robert Jackson.;

**Friday (12/11) at 1-4 pm in West Harlem**, starting at Amsterdam Ave. and LaSalle St., sponsored by Community Board 9;

**Thursdays from 10 am - 2 pm**, free PPE is available outside the Harlem State Office Building (163 W. 125th St.), courtesy of Congressman Adriano Espaillat and Council Member Bill Perkins.

**Respectfully Submitted by,**

Eutha Prince  
District Manager