



NJ Human Services Delivers Extra Food Assistance Benefits to 231,000 Households



Human Services in April delivered extra benefits to 231,000 households who receive food assistance through the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (NJ SNAP).

Human Services has been providing NJ SNAP households with the maximum benefits since March 2020, but those who were already receiving the maximum benefit could not receive extra help under a Trump Administration decision.

Under a recent change under President Biden, 137,000 New Jersey households that were already receiving that maximum available SNAP benefit became eligible for and received a \$95 supplement for April.

Meanwhile, 94,000 New Jersey households that were receiving less than \$95 in supplemental benefits also became eligible for extra help. Those households received what was needed for their benefit to equal \$95 for April.

Benefit levels remained unchanged for households that have been receiving increased payments of at least \$95 per month.

With the new April extra payments included, Human Services has distributed \$620.2 million in supplemental monthly SNAP payments since March 2020 to New Jersey residents.

"We remain committed to providing as much additional food security as possible to New Jersey families, and are pleased to provide this extra assistance," Human Services Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. "We welcome this change by the USDA, and appreciate the continued support from our Congressional delegation. These additional food assistance benefits will prove vital to many New Jerseyans as we continue through this public health crisis."

“We are dedicated to helping as many families as we can during this continued difficult period for as long as possible,” Deputy Commissioner Elisa Neira said. “We are also pleased that the Biden administration is no longer considering SNAP benefits in a public charge test. It is crucial that eligible families access these critical benefits without fear of immigration consequences.”

[Read more](#)

American Sign Language Interpreters Available at COVID-19 Vaccine Megasites



American Sign Language Interpreters Available at COVID-19 Vaccine Megasites

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals Can Access Interpreters During Vaccination at the Six Megasites

Available 7 days a week, 7am - 7pm

For more information, visit covid19.nj.gov/vaccine

Deaf and hard of hearing individuals are able to ask for an American Sign Language interpreter when receiving a COVID-19 vaccine at the state’s six vaccine megasites to assist with communication access during the vaccination process.

In a partnership with the state Office of Emergency Management and the Department of Health, the Department of Human Services’ Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is providing American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters daily from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at each megasite. Interpreters are available in-person or remotely to individuals who ask for an ASL interpreter.

“We want to make sure all New Jerseyans feel as comfortable as possible with the vaccination process,”

Acting Commissioner Adelman said. “Our Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing is committed to helping individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing have adequate communication access when getting a vaccine at the state-run megasites.”

“We are pleased to be able provide ASL communication access for Deaf and hard of hearing New Jerseyans as they get vaccinated for COVID-19,” Deputy Commissioner Neira said. “We know how critical it is for people to get accurate and helpful information about the vaccine process, pre-vaccine questions and information about side effects and care post-vaccine. This effort will ensure that deaf and hard of hearing individuals get this information in their primary language.”

“Interpreters can ease the concern and uncertainty people often feel in medical settings when they are not able to fully communicate in ASL,” Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Executive Director Elizabeth Hill said. “We want to do everything we can to serve people who are deaf or hard of hearing and make them comfortable and knowledgeable.”

To make an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine, visit covid19.nj.gov/vaccine or call 855-568-0545.

[Read more](#)

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Providing \$10 Million in Relief to Child Care Providers



 **NEED HELP WITH CHILD CARE?**

New Jersey's child care assistance program helps eligible families pay for child care costs, find available child care options and more.

Visit www.childcaresnj.gov to learn more.

Governor Phil Murphy signed legislation into law that provides \$10 million in federal COVID-19 relief aid for child care providers throughout New Jersey.

The bill – sponsored by Senators M. Teresa Ruiz and Joseph Lagana and Assembly Members Lisa Swain, Gabriela Mosquera, and Adam Taliaferro – will provide grants to child care providers in need.

“Even when faced with unprecedented difficult challenges, child care providers have played a crucial role in the state’s COVID-19 response and have showed steadfast resiliency and dedication to supporting New Jersey’s working families,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said. “Without the commitment of child care providers so many of our frontline essential workers would have been unable to go to work filling so many important needs. I thank Governor Murphy for signing this bill and the Legislature for moving this forward. These grants will prove vital to child care providers that need support as a result of this public health crisis, and along with the efforts by the Murphy Administration, will help child care providers continue to support New Jersey families and help our state’s economy and workforce move forward.”

[Read more](#)

Governor Highlights Cover All Kids Proposal



Governor Phil Murphy recently visited the North Hudson Community Action Corporation in Passaic to highlight the \$20 million investment in the budget proposal for first phase of the Cover All Kids campaign.

“Governor Murphy is committed to supporting New Jerseyans through every stage of life, which is why he’s proposing a new Cover All Kids initiative to provide health care coverage for every New Jersey child,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said. “New Jersey has been leading the way on health care access for years, and with this plan we will achieve something monumental and fundamental: health care for every child. This is a compassionate and fiscally responsible plan - and it’s realistic. It’s also – most importantly – crucial for our children and our future.”

The campaign further builds on the Governor’s progress in making critical strides in improving access to more affordable health care coverage for New Jersey residents.

The launch of the Cover All Kids campaign provides the opportunity to extend coverage to those most in need. This initiative will improve accessibility and remove barriers to cover nearly 90,000 uninsured children in our state.

The first phase will remove barriers and support connections to coverage for nearly 53,000 children through FY2022 by doing the following:

- Eliminating the 90-day waiting period for coverage to children newly enrolling into the Children Health’s Insurance Program (CHIP);
- Removing premiums families would pay for their children enrolled in CHIP; and
- Developing targeted outreach efforts to boost enrollment for currently eligible children who are unenrolled.

[Read more](#)

All Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Aged 16+ Eligible for Vaccination

All individuals ages 16 and up with intellectual and developmental disabilities became eligible for vaccination as of April 5. Acting Commissioner Adelman hailed the decision and again encouraged all eligible individuals to register to get vaccinated.

“The strength and resilience of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout this public health emergency has been amazing,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said. “We’re very pleased to be able to make vaccination more accessible so individuals can return to their normal lives in the community. In partnership with the Department of Health, we have been working since January to help vaccinate individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in congregate settings, and have been encouraging individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who met other criteria to sign up for vaccination. We’re now thrilled to be able to include all individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities over the age of 16, who, along with their families and caregivers, have persevered through so much in the past year.”

For more information about eligibility, statewide vaccination site locations, and to preregister for a vaccination, visit <https://covid19.nj.gov/vaccine>.

Human Services Seeks to Reduce Use of Opioids in Emergency Rooms



As part of its continued commitment to fight the opioid epidemic, Human Services is seeking to expand the Opioid Reduction Option program that aims to reduce the amount of opioids provided to patients in emergency rooms and prescribed when they're discharged.

Human Services [announced](#) a total of \$1,125,000 in grants will be available to approximately 12 health care facilities to help develop and implement practices to reduce unnecessary opioid use. DHS awarded 11 hospitals a total of \$1.79 million in April 2019.

"The Murphy Administration is committed to saving lives and taking every step we can to combat addiction," Acting Commissioner Adelman said. "Finding ways to reduce unnecessary opioid use will save lives, which will mean a better future for individuals and families across New Jersey. Promoting alternatives to opioids while effectively addressing pain can benefit everyone."

[Read more](#)

Black Maternal Health Week



It's Black Maternal Health Week. First Lady Tammy Murphy [recognized](#) the week with events to "amplify the voices of Black moms and maternal health champions, and let us recommit to ending New Jersey's maternal health crisis once and for all."

Human Services is fully committed to the First Lady's [Nurture NJ](#) effort. As of [January](#), the state Medicaid program now covers doula care, while also no longer paying for non-medical early elective deliveries. Also, the Medicaid program requires obstetrical providers, nurse midwives, or other licensed health care professionals to complete a perinatal risk assessment form during a beneficiary's first prenatal visit to help identify trends in risk factors.

"We continue making strides toward improving maternal and infant health in New Jersey," Acting Commissioner Sarah Adelman said. "This is about positive outcomes for mothers and babies – and a healthier New Jersey for everyone."



Doula coverage is
now part of
NJ FAMILY CARE

Doula care is associated
with better birth outcomes.

For more information, visit
www.njfamilycare.org

Autism Awareness Month



Governor Murphy officially [declared](#) April to be Autism Awareness Month in New Jersey. Human Services' Office on Autism helps families with programs and services for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder. To learn more about the office, visit [here](#).

Brain Injury Awareness Month



Office of New Americans Joins Rutgers 'Women of Color Talk COVID-19' Panel



Johanna Calle, senior policy advisor for the Office of New Americans, was among those participating in Rutgers University's 'Girl Talk: Women of Color Talk Covid-19' virtual panel discussion on March 23. She discussed how the Office of New Americans is working to help immigrant communities.

A 'Big Win' for New Jersey SNAP Recipients

Acting Commissioner Adelman praised the Biden Administration's decision to keep in place a rule giving states flexibility to extend [SNAP](#) benefits beyond a three-month period for certain adults.

A coalition of attorneys general, including New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, had successfully challenged the Trump Administration's bid to eliminate the flexibility, but the Trump Administration appealed the decision. The Biden Administration told the courts it would not pursue the appeal.

"We applaud the Biden Administration for moving to end this potential change in the SNAP program that would have hurt so many New Jerseyans by putting critical SNAP benefits at risk," Acting Commissioner Adelman said. "We are pleased to hear that New Jersey will be able to continue to use the flexibility needed to ensure individuals without dependents facing challenging economic hardships have access to food assistance beyond any time limits. This is a big win, and I thank everyone who fought against this change to protect SNAP benefits."

[Read more](#)

Combatting Food Deserts

The [New Jersey Economic Development Authority \(NJEDA\)](#) issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking insight into food security challenges faced by communities across the Garden State, including specific obstacles and disparities within communities that are considered “food deserts.” Responses to the RFI are due no later than 11:59 p.m. on May 17, 2021. The RFI can be found at <https://www.njeda.com/bidding/#OET>.

“The Department of Human Services has worked hard to make it easier for residents to apply for food assistance benefits through the NJSNAP program that serves 815,000 New Jerseyans, and has for the last year provided nearly \$550 million in enhanced SNAP benefits to help address needs related to the pandemic, but food deserts pose a significant challenge,” Acting Commissioner Adelman said. “Enhanced food assistance benefits can only go so far if residents are unable to easily access healthy food in their own neighborhoods. That’s why we look forward to working with our partners in the Murphy Administration to continue addressing food insecurity and find ways to expand access to food.”

[Read more](#)

SPOTLIGHTS ON NJ HUMAN SERVICES PROGRAMS

NJ SAVE



NJ Save is the one-stop online application for older New Jerseyans and individuals with disabilities to access benefits and savings!



NJSave is the Division of Aging Services' award-winning online application that helps lower-income older adults and individuals with disabilities save money on Medicare premiums, prescription costs, and other living expenses.

Apply online [here](#).

NJSave enrolls eligible applicants into the following programs:

- [Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled \(PAAD\)](#)
- [Senior Gold Prescription Discount Program](#)
- [Lifeline Utility Assistance](#)
- [Medicare Savings Programs](#) (SLMB & QI-1)
- [Medicare Part D's Low Income Subsidy \(LIS, also known as "Extra Help"\)](#)
- [Hearing Aid Assistance to the Aged and Disabled \(HAAAD\)](#)

The application is also used to screen individuals for numerous savings and assistance programs. If it looks like they may qualify, their data is forwarded on for enrollment. These programs include:

- [Universal Service Fund \(USF\)](#)
- [Low-Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#)
- [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#)

Finally, individuals who qualify for PAAD and Lifeline Utility Assistance through NJSave may also be eligible for:

- [Property Tax Freeze](#)
- [Reduced Motor Vehicle Fees](#)
- [Low-Cost Spaying/Neutering](#)

NJ Helps



Visit njhelps.org to see if you're eligible for food assistance, cash assistance, and health insurance. From there, you can apply for services or learn about additional resources.

[NJ SNAP](#) | [NJFAMILYCARE](#) | [NJHELPS](#)

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