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# HRA/DSS

HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION/  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

## A GUIDE TO SERVICES



# Reaching the Maximum Level of *Self-Sufficiency*



The New York City Human Resources

Administration/Department of Social Services (HRA/DSS) provides temporary help to eligible individuals and families with social service and economic needs in order to assist them in reaching their maximum level of self-sufficiency. With its 16,000 employees, HRA serves more than 3 million people through the effective administration of essential and diverse programs and services including: temporary public assistance, public health insurance, food stamps, home care for seniors and the disabled, child care, adult protective services, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS support services, work support programs, and child support enforcement.



At HRA welfare reform is always in motion and HRA's committed staff continually monitors operations for effectiveness, devises plans for improved customer service, and evolves its services to meet changing needs of clients. As of January 2007, New York City saw its welfare rolls drop to the lowest point in more than 40 years to 377,896.



HRA has taken a unique approach to providing individualized services leading to self-sufficiency and to providing sustainable employment and self-sufficiency plans to overcome barriers to unemployment. Since the beginning of Mayor Bloomberg's administration, HRA has become a national and international model for the implementation of welfare reform.



I am so thankful on behalf of my six year-old son, Charles, and ten year-old daughter, Trisha.

“Because of the food stamps we receive every month, they are able to get the proper nourishment that they deserve. My son has autism and will be disabled for life. But having this helps to ease his frustration of daily living.

“We live with many challenges every day of our lives and money is scarce, but knowing my son will not go without food is absolutely priceless.



## Step Up to the Plate

Today, there are more than 1 million New Yorkers receiving food stamps in New York City. You do not need to be destitute to qualify for food stamps.

You may be able to get Expedited Processing, if you are eligible for Food Stamp Benefits and:  
1) Your household has less than \$100 in cash or other available resources and will have less than \$150 in gross income during the month that you apply; or, 2) Your income and available resources are less than your rent or mortgage plus heat, utilities and phone; or, 3) You are a migrant or seasonal farm worker.

You do not need to be out of food to get expedited processing for Food Stamp Benefits. For more information on food stamps call 1-800-342-3009.



### FOOD AND HUNGER HOTLINE:

For help in finding a meal, the Food and Hunger Hotline provides information about the more than 600 soup kitchens and food pantries throughout the city. This automated hotline will provide you with the hours of operation and directions to the emergency food program nearest you. This past year, over 14 million pounds of food were distributed to these programs.

**Call HRA's Hunger Hotline at 1-866-888-8777 (Toll Free)**

# Helping Our Most Vulnerable Adults

We seek to resolve the risks faced by APS clients by arranging for services and support that will allow individuals to live independently and safely in their homes.

Adult Protective Services (APS) are available to persons 18 years of age or older without regard to income who are mentally and/or physically impaired, have no one available to responsibly assist them and, due to the impairment, are unable to manage their own resources, or protect themselves from abuse, neglect and exploitation. APS clients typically lack the ability to meet their essential needs for food, shelter, clothing or health care.

An APS caseworker will develop a plan that can include a referral for psychiatric and/or medical exams and ongoing care; assistance in obtaining Medicaid & Home Care; assistance in obtaining public assistance benefits, SSI, or disability; identification of alternative living arrangements; financial management of social security benefits; referrals to the NYPD and District Attorney to address abuse; heavy-duty cleaning services.



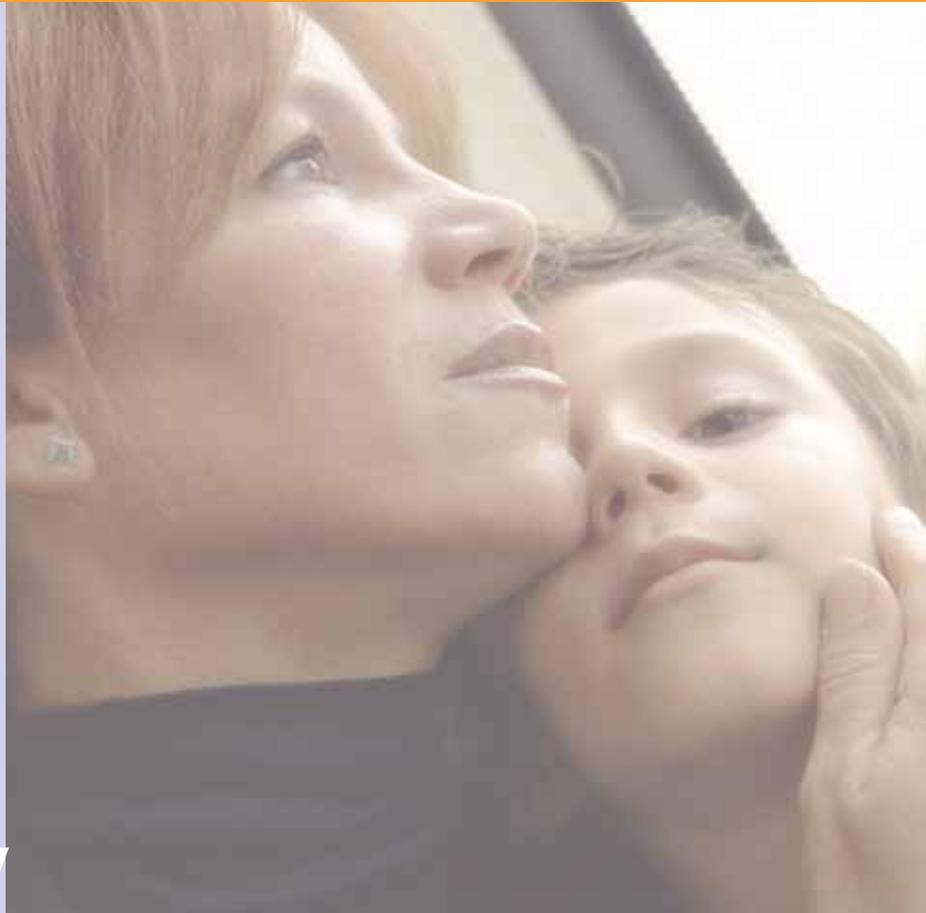
When her mental illness got increasingly out of control, Mom and I became estranged. But I had no idea she was being physically abused and financially exploited by a distant family member.

Fortunately, a neighbor contacted Adult Protective Services. Within 24 hours a case manager helped my mom receive support to pay her past due rent and bills, assist her with Medicaid, and refer her to a doctor for medication.

"Mom lives with me now, and she's living a higher quality of life than she had in a very long time."

My nephew spent several months in a youth facility.

When he was released, he had no health insurance. He has a health condition and needs medication but it's very expensive and I could not afford to pay for it. The pharmacist would not fill the prescription, unless my nephew had insurance. As his guardian, I tried for more than 3 months to get him coverage, but was unsuccessful. It was very frustrating. I went to HRA and the representative helped us fill out the forms to apply for public health insurance. My nephew was approved in two days for Child Health Plus B and now gets the healthcare he needs."



## Insurance Can Put Your Mind (and Health) At Ease

New York State offers free and low-cost public health insurance programs for low-income New Yorkers. These plans provide medical care through a fee-for-service or a managed care plan. HRA/DSS, through its Medical Assistance Program division (MAP), is responsible for the administration of public health insurance. MAP determines and maintains eligibility, based upon income and/or resource levels, for each of the available health insurance programs and their related services.

Individuals and families can qualify for public health insurance even if they have income, own a house, own a car, have a bank account or receive private health insurance. Persons and families who are low-income, or receiving SSI or public assistance, are automatically eligible. Pregnant

women, children, persons over 65 and people with disabilities are also eligible.

Plans include: Medicaid; Child Health Plus A or Child Health Plus B; Family Health Plus; Medicare Savings Plan (also known as Medicare Buy-In); Medicaid Buy-In Program for Working People with Disabilities; and the Family Planning Benefit Program.

For more information, please contact HRA's Infoline at 1-877-472-8411.



# You Need to Make it Public

**Signs of Domestic Violence: Your spouse or partner is physically hurting you, forcing you to have sex when you don't want to, threatening to hurt you or your children, constantly putting you down, stalking or checking up on you, making you afraid.**

"How can I explain how bad it was? My daughter and I were victims of domestic violence. We felt trapped, unable to move out, fearful of what my husband would do if he found out.

"For my daughter's sake, I couldn't stay any longer. With the help of a friend, we did find a safe haven through HRA. It was hard because I didn't have any way to provide for us. We stayed in a domestic violence shelter and I went on public assistance while trying to find a job. I received counseling and other support from a domestic violence program. I learned job and computer skills. And now I understand the signs of domestic violence.

"One year later, we have an apartment, I have a steady job, my daughter is doing well in school again, and we are free from fear. All I can say is that no one should live in fear. If you need help, it's here for you."

The HRA/DSS Office of Domestic Violence provides temporary housing, emergency shelter and supportive services for victims of domestic violence and their children. ODV directly operates one emergency domestic violence shelter, oversees the reimbursement to 35 private emergency residential programs, and oversees and provides client referrals for four transitional housing programs for victims of domestic violence. All programs provide a safe environment as well as counseling, advocacy and referral services. For immediate assistance with Domestic Violence, please call the NYC 24-Hour Hotline at 1-800-621-4673.



## Meeting You Where You Are

"Before our apartment burned down, I didn't have a steady job. I worked as a part-time security guard but when we relocated, I lost that, too.

"I searched for work and housing, knowing that public assistance was temporary. I went to an HRA job fair and spoke to an employer who gave me his card for a job in sales.

"I almost missed my interview; I was scared, and I didn't have a good suit. I felt nervous that a job in sales would be too difficult for me to make a salary. After my interview, I was told I could start the following Monday.

"I've been at my company for three years and I was just promoted as their top Account Executive. My salary has tripled. HRA helped me through the roughest times. They took a chance on me, and now, I have a career, a family and a home."

For more information about public assistance benefits, responsibilities and eligibility, call the HRA Infoline at 1-877-472-8411.

HRA/DSS provides temporary assistance to eligible individuals and families to help them reach their maximum level of self-sufficiency. Eligibility is based on factors such as income and resources, household composition, citizen/legal alien status.

### **ONGOING ASSISTANCE**

Eligible families may receive up to 60 months of federally funded cash assistance under the Temporary Aid to Needy Families Program (TANF). Additional state-funded benefits may be received under the New York State and City Safety Net Program for those who are on public assistance longer than the 60-month time limit for federal TANF benefits.

Non-exempt clients receiving temporary cash assistance must engage in work activities. HRA

provides referrals to a number of programs designed to assist clients obtain training, resume services, job placement, workshops and other support services, such as Back to Work, WeCARE, Business Link, and BEGIN.

### **EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

New York City residents may apply for a one-time emergency grant when an unforeseen circumstance prevents the applicant from meeting an expense. An applicant must meet income eligibility criteria and grant guidelines, and is subject to investigative review of the application. Emergency grants applicants may obtain include rental assistance in cases of impending evictions; assistance with home energy and utility bills; disaster assistance including moving expenses; and the purchase of personal items for health and safety.



HASA provides access to essential benefits and social services to individuals and families with AIDS, advanced HIV illness, or HIV infection. HASA is committed to service provision that is individualized, efficient, effective, and of high quality.

To obtain more information about HASA services, contact the ServiceLine at 1-212-971-0626

Monday through Friday  
9:00 am – 5:00 pm

HASA services include:

- Specialized intake and needs assessment;
- Direct linkages to public assistance, Medicaid, food stamps, the Home Care program, and homemaking;
- Ongoing intensive case management;
- Emergency and permanent housing services and placements;
- Voluntary vocational counseling/rehabilitation, job training, and placement;
- Assistance with clients' applications for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI); and
- Referrals to community-based resources for a variety of additional services.

I was a HASA volunteer for several years, serving food to clients. After a while, I got to know them, but never knew the difficulties they faced.

"During this time, I developed HIV/AIDS and was hospitalized with pneumonia. I was weak and very sick, and scared because I had no means to take care of myself.

"When I went to the HASA Center, I was treated with respect in a clean and pleasant office. My caseworker sincerely cared about my condition and helped me sort through the huge amount of information. My biggest fear was getting housing.

"Ultimately, my application for an apartment was approved. I have been reassigned to a HASA Center close to where I live. Medically, I'm doing better, and I feel I have a new lease on life.

"I couldn't have done it without the wonderful people at HASA who helped me.

# BECOME A ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR KIDS

"My friends think I'm crazy because I don't mind paying my Child Support Order. I used to visit my two kids sometimes, buy them occasional presents, and give their mom some money when she needed it, but I didn't see myself in their lives full time. When I first received my order, I thought, "Oh no, how am I gonna pay this?"

"It's been seven years since my first payment, and my son Dominick just graduated from

high school with high marks. He's also getting a scholarship to help pay for college. I am so proud of him. My daughter is hoping to be an artist and I've seen her talents flourish. And, their mom and I are able to discuss their future in a realistic and positive way. My kids mean the world to me and now I realize that they are becoming responsible young people because I was a responsible dad. I guess I am their role model after all."



The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) assists parents, regardless of income and immigration status, at no cost. Once a child support order is established, it remains in effect until the child reaches age 21 or becomes self-supporting, unless the court orders otherwise. Clients applying for or receiving public assistance benefits are automatically referred to OCSE for child support services, if appropriate. Parents not receiving public assistance may apply for services by visiting the OCSE office in the family court in the borough where they live.

For additional information, call the New York State Child Support Helpline at 1-888-208-4485.

# Overcoming Barriers Through CUSTOMIZED SERVICES

Not being able to work or be the dad I wanted to be was difficult with my kind of asthma.

“When I went to WeCARE, they sent me to a doctor who examined me and gave me tests. My asthma was out of control; I was having frequent attacks and changing medications. The WeCARE doctors put me on a Wellness Plan to get me back to better health. I didn’t really have a regular doctor, so they helped connect me with one. They even made the first appointment.

“After three months of seeing the new doctor, my asthma is under control. I feel more relaxed knowing that when I am ready, the WeCARE program will help me get a job in a setting that I can manage.

“Not only have I improved my life, but now I can help around the house and play with my kids.



WeCARE is a unique initiative that addresses the needs of public assistance clients with medical and/or mental health barriers to employment by providing customized assistance and services to help clients achieve their highest levels of self-sufficiency. Based on the outcome of a comprehensive assessment, a case manager works with an individual client to develop a customized plan that connects them to a range of appropriate services.

Available by referral only, the WeCARE program has changed the lives of more than 2,500 people with barriers to employment, mostly due to medical conditions.

# Bringing Care to You



The Home Care Services Program offers Medicaid funded, non-institutional long-term care options designed to help the elderly or disabled remain at home rather than in a nursing home or other institution. The program provides medical and social needs assessments to determine the

appropriate level of care for individual clients. Services include case management and oversight, personal care and housekeeping services. Short-term medical home care, including nursing and other visiting services, can also be provided to stabilize health.

Applicants may also be eligible for: the Long Term Home Health Care Program, which provides skilled nursing home-level care at home; the Managed Long Term Care Program, which provides capped costs on medical and support services to clients aged 55 years and above, and the Assisted Living Program, which provides long-term residential board and care, supervision, and home health care services; the Care-at-Home Program provides certain medical and related services for severely disabled children who would otherwise be required to remain institutionalized.

Eligibility for these programs varies based on medical needs, household income and other circumstances. For more information on Home Care and eligibility, call HRA's Infoline at 1-877-472-8411, or 311.

"Nothing was more important for me than to stay in my own home, not in some facility. I don't know what I would have done without the help of Home Care Services Program. Thank you for giving me the care I need."

## Energy Assistance

# We Don't Want You in the Cold



### HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE (HEAP)

Federally funded HEAP helps low-income homeowners and renters pay bills for heating fuel, equipment and repairs. HEAP grants range from \$40 to \$400 a year, depending on the type of housing and energy/fuel needs. HEAP assists eligible households with grants to pay their energy and/or heating costs through regular or emergency benefits, which does not have to be paid back. The Heat Line program assists homebound individuals with HEAP. Requests and referrals can be made by calling 1-212- 331-3150.

### UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (UAP)

UAP is a state-mandated program that receives referrals from utility companies for customers faced with termination of services due to nonpayment, theft of service, or meter tampering. UAP assists families or individuals who are elderly, blind, disabled, mentally impaired or residing in a neglected or hazardous environment and require financial assistance for their energy bills. Eligibility for these programs is determined by household income.





**CITY OF NEW YORK**

Michael R. Bloomberg  
Mayor

**HUMAN RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION/  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Robert Doar  
Administrator/Commissioner

