

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**June 16, 2008**



**DEPUTY MAYOR LINDA GIBBS, HRA COMMISSIONER  
ROBERT DOAR AND CITY COUNCIL SPEAKER CHRISTINE  
QUINN ANNOUNCE COMPLETION OF MEDICAID FOOD  
STAMP DATA MATCH**

*City will outreach to over 600,000 households who may  
qualify for food stamps*

*New York, June 16, 2008* – Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda Gibbs, Human Resources Administration Commissioner Robert Doar, and Food Policy Coordinator Benjamin Thomases, together with City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, today announced the completion of the food stamp data match, an initiative that identifies current Medicaid recipients who may be qualified for food stamps but are not enrolled. The data match, which was completed last week by the Human Resources Administration (HRA, identified over 600,000 households who may qualify. Speaker Quinn announced the initiative in her 2008 State of the City address. The City Council and the Administration will now begin a targeted outreach campaign aimed at these 600,000 households.

The eligibility requirements for Medicaid and food stamp enrollment have similar criteria. HRA, in partnership with the City Council and community based organizations, have launched outreach campaigns designed to increase the number of New Yorkers enrolled in the federal food stamp program.

“Food assistance is a key component in the Bloomberg administration’s aggressive and innovative strategy to combat poverty. A particular area of our focus is on the working poor population -- those New Yorkers who work hard each day but still have trouble making ends meet,” said Deputy Mayor Gibbs. “Two years ago, in partnership with Speaker Quinn, we created the Mayor’s Food Policy Task Force. An important part of our work together is to increase enrollment in food support programs. We are seeing tremendous progress, and in fact, New York is among the most successful states in the country and a model for others. We look forward to our continuing collaboration with the Speaker, community partners and the entire New York City Council.”

In the past few years, the food stamp program has become significantly more accessible to all New Yorkers. The City’s efforts to improve access to the Food Stamp Program have included shortening both the application itself, and the time frame for applying; translating the material into nine languages; automatically enrolling SSI recipients into the program; expanding hours of operation in the evenings and Saturdays; providing up-to-date informational materials online for recipients and community based organizations; telephone recertification for working families; mail-in recertification for SSI recipients and eligible seniors; and creating technology to enable community based organizations to pre-screen applicants, and submit applications and required documents online to local food stamp offices. These changes have led to a 43% increase in total food stamp recipients in the last six years.

“The Human Resources Administration has made remarkable progress in ensuring that this important support for working families is more accessible,” said Commissioner Doar. “I’m proud of the thousands of HRA employees who have worked hard to make the process of applying for food stamp benefits easier and more convenient for low-income New Yorkers. We are always looking for ways to improve as demonstrated in our continued record of success.”

“With skyrocketing food prices adding to the burden of rising rents, gas prices, and other costs, hard working New Yorkers are forced to stretch their dollar further,” said Speaker Christine Quinn. “The food stamp data match initiative has allowed us to identify over 600,000 households that may be eligible for food stamps but don’t receive them, and will enable us to target our outreach to specific areas and neighborhoods in need. The food stamp data match initiative is a simple and cost effective way to use technology to bring much needed food support to low-income New Yorkers.”

HRA ran the data match during the week of June 2, 2008. Approximately 635,819 households matched - 111,869 in the Bronx, 211,801 in Brooklyn, 91,370 in Manhattan, 197,844 in Queens and 21,287 in Staten Island.

Beginning in July, households will receive a letter explaining that due to their enrollment in the Medicaid or Family Health Plus program, that they may be eligible for the food stamp program as well. In addition to this letter, households will receive a brochure detailing the food stamp program and providing information on the application process.

"Access to healthy foods is critical to the future health of all New Yorkers," said the City's Food Policy Coordinator Ben Thomases. "By increasing food stamp enrollment, launching the Healthy Bodegas and Green Cart initiatives and making the meals the city itself serves healthier; we show that New York City is committed to innovative new strategies that will make all five boroughs healthier places to live and raise families."

“In the present down-turned economy, more and more New Yorkers are having difficulty affording food and other costs of daily life, said Lucy Cabrera, President and CEO of Food Bank for New York City. “I commend Speaker Quinn and the administration for conducting this Medicaid/Food Stamp data match and look forward to working with them as they continue their efforts to enroll these New York families that may qualify for the food stamp program.”

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