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CONTACT: Lourdes Centeno

[centenolo@hra.nyc.gov](mailto:centenolo@hra.nyc.gov)

929-221-5131

## **CITY Launches ACCESS HRA Website and Mobile App To Allow New Yorkers to Manage their Benefits without Having to Visit an HRA Center**

Department of Social Services Commissioner Steven Banks and HRA Administrator Grace Bonilla announced the launch of the Access HRA website and mobile app, two powerful tools that allows New Yorkers receiving public assistance to manage their benefits without having to visit a Human Resources Administration (HRA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Center or Job Center. With the Access HRA website and the mobile app New Yorkers can apply for SNAP, submit required documents digitally, manage their benefits, and keep track of important dates like the deadline for recertifying their case. These new tools give clients more freedom to interact with HRA in the way that works best for them, and help HRA ensure that clients do not miss important deadlines and continue to receive the benefits they qualify for.

“Our new ACCESS HRA mobile app, and the web tools on the ACCESS HRA website really make it possible to work with HRA your way,” said **DSS Commissioner Steven Banks**. “On the ACCESS HRA website you can apply or recertify for SNAP benefits without coming to an HRA center, which means not taking time from work or family. And you can manage your case and submit documents on the go with the ACCESS HRA app. If you need in-person help, our centers are still there to help you. We want to make it as easy as possible for eligible New Yorkers to get help.”

“Smartphones are increasingly a major way we interact with the world, across all income levels,” said **HRA Administrator Grace Bonilla**. “With the ACCESS HRA mobile app and website, we’re bringing that flexibility, convenience, and ease-of-use to benefits low-income New Yorkers depend on to make ends meet.”

### **ACCESS HRA Website:**

New Yorkers in need can apply for SNAP, or recertify for SNAP and Cash Assistance (CA), by going to [nyc.gov/accesshra](http://nyc.gov/accesshra), creating an account, and filling out an application. With their account, they can check their application status on the website or the mobile app, along with what documents HRA needs and what documents have already been submitted. Applicants can choose to complete the interview portion of their application by phone or in person.

Once they receive SNAP or CA, clients can log in to the site to check their monthly benefit balance, case status, sign up to receive text or email alerts about upcoming appointments,

request a budget letter, and more. The ACCESS HRA website also lets users update their contact information and request a budget letter. If clients already receive SNAP but don't have an ACCESS HRA account, they can link their case with an account on the ACCESS HRA site and app to use these features. Clients with an active CA case can also use the app and website to manage their CA case.

### **ACCESS HRA Mobile App:**

Once clients have applied for SNAP or to recertify SNAP or CA on the ACCESS HRA website, they can submit documents required for their application electronically using the ACCESS HRA mobile app. The app uses the same login and password as the website, and includes many of the same case management features. Clients can track their application and case status, check their EBT balance and recent payments, keep track of upcoming appointments, review documents on file, and more. The app also offers the convenience of receiving alerts and updates directly on their smartphone. The launch of the mobile app builds on the success of mobile document upload technology, through which HRA has now received 1,000,000 document uploads.

Americans of all income levels do more online and via smartphones than ever before, and SNAP clients are no exception. In a 2015 survey, an estimated 67.6 percent of NYC households receiving SNAP used a smartphone. That number has likely grown in 2017. Smartphones offer an unprecedented opportunity to stay in touch with clients. Through alerts and push notifications, HRA can help remind clients of upcoming recertification deadlines, so that fewer clients miss their deadlines, lose benefits they depend on, and are forced to reapply. The NYC ACCESS HRA mobile app was designed using a human-centric, iterative approach to ensure it is as easy to use as possible. HRA went through multiple stages of testing the app with real SNAP clients, listening to their feedback and incorporating their comments into subsequent designs.

The SNAP application and other web-based features were previously available on ACCESS NYC, but the City has since separated the two sites. ACCESS HRA is the destination to apply for, recertify, and manage SNAP benefits, and manage and recertify Cash Assistance benefits, while ACCESS NYC lets users screen their eligibility for a number of public benefits.

The website and mobile app are part of a broader effort by HRA and the Department of Social Services aimed at improving service and flexibility for clients and freeing HRA center staff to focus on the neediest cases. Other changes include self-service computers and scanners at HRA centers, improvements to HRA's internal processing of applications, improved telephone interviews, and increased community engagement.

For more information on the ACCESS HRA app visit:

<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/accesshramobile.page>

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