



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Squadron, Nycha Announce Initiative to Close Snap Gap

DANIEL L. SQUADRON December 19, 2013

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Squadron Urged SNAP Be Included With NYCHA Application; Site Now Allows Public Housing Applicants to Jointly Apply for Food Stamps

NEW YORK -- Today, State Senator Daniel Squadron and New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) Chairman John Rhea announced that public housing applicants will now be able to concurrently apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, the program formerly known as food stamps), in an effort to increase food stamp access for New Yorkers who qualify.

As of 2010, over two million individuals in New York City qualified for SNAP. However, nearly a quarter of those who qualify for SNAP don't take advantage of the program.

Squadron has been working with NYCHA to integrate the SNAP application into its housing application process, as many applicants are dual-eligible. Now, when New Yorkers fill out a public housing application, they will be prompted to also apply for SNAP benefits. The integrated applications are now live on the NYCHA website at www.nyc.gov/nycha.

Over the summer, Squadron also proposed providing qualified not-for-profit organizations access to low-wage work sites where the non-profits could enroll workers in SNAP benefits.

"With too many families worrying about where their next meal will come from, we can't leave good solutions on the table. Now, by integrating NYCHA and SNAP applications, many more New Yorkers in need will gain access to their eligible benefits. Thank you to NYCHA for working with me to implement this important change," said **Senator Daniel Squadron**.

"Working with Senator Squadron to add the link to the SNAP program to our public housing application process helps fulfill two of our imperatives outlined in Plan NYCHA—to link our residents to critical services; and to overall improve NYCHA's customer service," said **NYCHA Chairman John Rhea**. "We appreciate input from elected officials like State Senator Squadron that help us better serve New Yorkers."

"This is a big advance. Even though more than 1.3 million New Yorkers live in homes that can't afford enough food, hundreds of thousands of low-income working parents, children, and seniors in New York City who are eligible for SNAP benefits fail to receive them," said **Joel Berg, executive director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger**. "We are extraordinarily thankful to Senator Squadron for breaking down the red tape to enable more eligible families to obtain the nutrition assistance they need."

"Working to increase SNAP participation among eligible residents is one of Food Bank For New York City's top priorities, and this initiative is a clear step in the right direction. We applaud Senator Squadron and NYCHA for taking action at a time when

hunger in New York City is truly at crisis level, and look forward to working in partnership to reach as many New Yorkers as possible," said **Margarette Purvis, President & CEO of Food Bank For New York City.**

"According to our annual Unheard Third survey, 30 percent of poor families with children went hungry last year because there was not enough money to buy food," said **David R. Jones, president and CEO of the Community Service Society.** "With a quarter of a million people on the waiting list for public housing, most of whom are poor, we must do all we can to ensure that these benefits find their way to needy families."

"So many people who are eligible for SNAP benefits are not receiving them. At a time of record hunger in New York City, we applaud this new initiative which will bring needed benefits to hungry New Yorkers," said **Steven Banks, Attorney in Chief, The Legal Aid Society.**

"We applaud Senator Squadron and NYCHA's leadership in helping to make it easier for public housing residents to receive food stamps. Food stamps (SNAP) is our first line of defense against hunger. Unfortunately, Congress is poised to reduce SNAP benefits for public housing residents by \$90 a month as part of the Farm Bill negotiations. We hope they change their minds," said **Mark Dunlea, Executive Director of the Hunger Action Network of New York State**

"City Harvest is working hard to help meet the increasing need for emergency food across the city and this initiative will raise awareness about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program which is available to qualified low-income residents," said **Jilly Stephens, City Harvest Executive Director.** "We appreciate the efforts of Senator Squadron and the New York City Housing Authority to develop an initiative that will help our neighbors in need put food on the table for themselves and their families."

"Too many New Yorkers face hunger. Enrolling in food stamps could provide much needed assistance for them and their families. State Senator Daniel Squadron and the New York City Housing Authority have now made it possible for New Yorkers to apply concurrently for public housing and food stamps. This is an innovative solution that will remove unnecessary barriers for those in need of nutrition assistance," said **Nancy Wackstein, Executive Director of United Neighborhood Houses.**

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