



OFFICE OF THE --- BROOKLYN BOROUGH PRESIDENT

Dear Commissioner Guinn (OTDA) and Commissioner Dalton (DSS/HRA),

I am writing to propose actionable steps that the administration can take to protect New Yorkers amidst the rampant increase of SNAP fraud across Brooklyn and the City. According to reports from State Comptroller DiNapoli, New York State reported approximately [85,000 cases of SNAP skimming](#), totaling nearly \$40 million in stolen benefits, between 2023-2024. Every day, constituents tell me how their community is constantly experiencing loss of benefits, affecting their ability to put food on the table. With nearly 3 million SNAP recipients statewide, [millions remain at risk due to outdated EBT card technology](#). In New York City, a significant number of residents have already been affected. This matter requires prompt attention in light of rising costs and more families facing food insecurity.

The December 2024 expiration of the federal reimbursement program for stolen SNAP benefits has intensified the need for State and local action. Due to the expiration of the federal program, victims are now left without recourse to recover essential food assistance. At the same time, SNAP recipients are navigating increased federal restrictions, including expanded work requirements and reduced exemptions. As access to benefits tightens, and the cost of food continues to rise, already vulnerable communities face deepening food insecurity. An April 2025 report from the State Comptroller's office found that "food prices in the New York City metropolitan area have risen 25.2% since 2019" with low-income households in particular "paying substantially more toward food than before the pandemic." As a result of the changes and increased cost of food, the emergency food system in New York City is under increased stress. Food Bank for NYC reports that demand for emergency food is as high or higher than what was seen before the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of these factors, it is critical that agencies clearly outline how they will protect New Yorkers whose benefits are stolen and prevent further harm.

The rise in SNAP skimming coupled with lack of recourse has real and devastating consequences. Families lose access to food overnight, with zero remedy or reimbursement, and these impacts typically fall on communities already facing structural barriers to food access. Current responses remain largely reactive—there are limited awareness campaigns, and a no centralized infrastructure exists to prevent, track, and respond to fraud comprehensively.

To address these challenges, I urge HRA, DSS, and OTDA to take the following steps:

1. First, I urge the establishment of a dedicated "Office of SNAP Fraud" within HRA/DSS. This office would investigate fraud patterns, coordinate enforcement efforts, and centralize reporting and data collection. A specialized unit would enable faster response times, strengthen fraud detection, and improve institutional accountability which in turn can build public trust.
2. At the State level, I urge the agencies to accelerate and prioritize the transition from magnetic stripe EBT cards to chip-enabled cards. New York State has committed to replacing all EBT cards with chip-and-PIN technology to replace magnetic-strip cards. The goal of this change is to reduce skimming, a practice that resulted in more than \$48.6 million in stolen benefits being replaced for New York City residents

between August 2023 and March 2025. In recent years, New York City SNAP users report almost 170,000 claims of skimming. Though Governor Kathy Hochul announced this change in January in her 2026 State of the State address, and the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance stated that New Yorkers would be using the improved cards by February 2027, [there must be more transparency on the rollout timeline and other benchmarks of success](#). Accelerating this process is an investment in protecting vulnerable communities.

3. Additional actions include increasing reporting mechanisms for constituents and strengthening interagency coordination to address instances of fraud. SNAP recipients must have access to clear, accessible reporting channels, including online platforms, hotlines, and in-person support. Systems can be anonymous to prevent fear of intimidation. Agencies such as DCWP and DSS/HRA can utilize the information to enhance enforcement.
4. A robust public education campaign on skimming prevention in multiple languages requires necessary investment. Communities need clear information on how skimming occurs, how to protect their EBT cards, and what steps to take if benefits are stolen. Partnering with community-based organizations, schools, and food pantries to disseminate this information ensures accuracy and trust.
5. Finally, I call on New York State to establish a dedicated victim reimbursement fund for SNAP theft. With federal protections no longer in place, the State must step in to provide timely and reliable reimbursement. A streamlined claims process, clear eligibility standards, and rapid disbursement timelines are essential to ensuring that victims are not left without food assistance. This is a matter of justice and food security.

Coupling prevention with enforcement offers a comprehensive path forward. These investments will not only protect access to food but also strengthen public trust in critical safety net programs.

I urge HRA, DSS, and OTDA to invest in safeguarding benefits that millions of New Yorkers rely on. I look forward to your response and to working together on solutions that ensure equitable and secure access to food assistance.

Sincerely,



Antonio Reynoso
Brooklyn Borough President

CC: Senator Chuck Schumer; Senator Kirsten Gillibrand; Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries; Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez; Congressman Daniel Goldman; Congresswoman Yvette Clarke; Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis