



THE CITY OF NEW YORK INDEPENDENT BUDGET OFFICE

110 WILLIAM STREET, 14TH FLOOR NEW YORK, NY 10038

(212) 442-0632 • EMAIL: press@ibo.nyc.ny.us

<http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us>

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Press Contact

Malek Al-Shammary: press@ibo.nyc.ny.us

(917) 513-7488

Cash Assistance and SNAP Cases Grow, While HRA Processing Delays Persist

October 21, 2024, – Over the last several years, the City has struggled to deliver essential benefits by its legally-mandated deadlines. Last month, the City published the 2024 Mayor Management Report (MMR), which included updated timeliness rates for both SNAP and Cash Assistance programs. While the MMR indicates that the City has made improvements in meeting deadlines, the Department of Social Services (DSS) rates remain significantly below their stated timeliness goals, with only 42% of Cash Assistance applications processed on time.

The New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO) is publishing a report that examines benefit processing times and staff shortages at the Human Resources Administration (HRA) within DSS over the last ten years. Since the end of the pandemic, these issues have become significant concerns for advocates, the City Council, and low-income New Yorkers. This analysis aims to explain some of the reasons why processing benefits within legally-mandated deadlines remains a challenge for the City, and to provide New Yorkers with an independent, non-partisan overview of the factors impacting HRA's ability to meet their stated goals.

This report examines the City's management of benefits for essential programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Cash Assistance (CA). For clarity, Cash Assistance encompasses both Family Assistance (FA) and Safety Net Assistance (SN).

Read IBO's report [here](#).

- Applications for SNAP and Cash Assistance have surged since the onset of the pandemic, accelerated by the end of pandemic-era safety net programs.
- Between 2020 and 2022 Cash Assistance cases grew by 17%, while relevant staffers decreased by 10%. Following the hiring of more HRA staff, CA cases continued to grow by 32% from 2022 to 2024. The ratio of cases per employee for CA was 34% higher in 2024 than in 2020.
- SNAP cases increased 12% from 2020 to 2022, while relevant staff decreased by 7%. Since 2022, SNAP cases have fallen by 3% and more closely resemble pre-pandemic levels.
- There is a disproportionately high level of new staff in SNAP and Cash Assistance, who are navigating numerous technological changes as well as pandemic-related process changes. At the end of 2024, 31% of all HRA staff have less than 3 years of experience, but that figure rises to 41% for SNAP staff and 53% for Cash Assistance staff.

- Timeliness rates for SNAP and Cash Assistance have improved since record-lows in 2022 and 2023. However, the City continues to struggle with Cash Assistance timeliness, processing 42% of applications on time in 2024.



New York City Independent Budget Office

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