

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL SERVICES

CARL E. HEASTIE
SPEAKER

ANDREW D. HEVESI
CHAIR



ANDREW HEVESI
Assemblyman 28th District
Queens County

THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

CHAIRMAN
Social Services Committee

COMMITTEES
Energy
Health
Labor
Insurance

December 15, 2020

The Honorable Carl Heastie
Speaker of the Assembly
Room 932
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Speaker Heastie:

On behalf of the Assembly Committee on Social Services, I respectfully submit to you the Committee's 2020 Annual Report. This year presented us all with unfathomable challenges as the Coronavirus pandemic hit. New Yorkers proved, as always, to be resilient and strong in the face of despair. However that strength cannot diminish the losses we suffered and continue to experience. With unprecedented challenges comes unprecedented opportunity for change. In light of budget shortfalls, the Committee secured enactment of policies and continued investments in programs that will help low-income individuals and families achieve greater economic security, thereby providing enhanced opportunities for them to escape poverty. At the same time, as we continue to grapple with the pandemic, it has never been clearer that more needs to be done to assist New Yorkers.

The New York State Assembly Social Services committee's agenda for the 2021 legislative session will consist of legislation and budget actions focused on COVID-19 economic and social relief, solutions to reduce poverty and homelessness in New York State, as well as improvements in opportunities for the disabled, survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and human trafficking, and those effected by childhood trauma.

The pandemic has made the need for rent relief all the more clear. Beyond just immediate relief for those facing rent burdens, some for the first time, New York needs long-term solutions for affordable and supportive housing as well as rent supplements. In 2016 Home Stability Support (HSS) (A.1620) was introduced, a statewide rental supplement for families and individuals who are eligible for public assistance benefits and are facing eviction and homelessness. This program would be 100% state funded and would provide mandate relief to financially strained counties. HSS was drafted with input from the experts at the Coalition for the Homeless, Empire Justice Center, VOCAL, and the Legal Aid Society.

Since its introduction in 2016, I alongside my colleagues in government, the aforementioned groups and hundreds of advocacy organizations have been pushing for its implementation. In 2021, the Social Services Committee will again focus on passing HSS. There are now over 250,000 homeless people in New York State each year, and 3 out of 5 homeless New Yorkers are school-aged children. Last year in New York, 23,000 more people became homeless than escaped homelessness. To combat this epidemic, which has only gotten worse since the Coronavirus hit, the committee will reaffirm the need for HSS. This year, a record number of 20,000 single adults were in the NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter system. Across the state, 143,500 students were homeless in the 2019-2020 school year. This staggering number is not unique to the pandemic as this marks the fifth year in a row that student homelessness has topped 100,000. The pandemic has only exacerbated the crisis levels of homelessness that have been continually rising upward. Enacting HSS would help alleviate this crisis and provide a lifeline for thousands of struggling New Yorkers.

In 2020, as the legislature shifted to remote session, virtual conference, and made additional adjustments to comply with new COVID-19 safety protocols, we were nevertheless successful in passing legislation. A.10673 will allow SNAP recipients to use their benefits to purchase groceries online and expands the SNAP outreach pilot program across the state. COVID-19 has exacerbated the issue of food insecurity, this legislation is a step forward to ensuring that all New Yorkers, especially those who are elderly, disabled, or low-income (the vast majority of SNAP recipients) will be able to feed themselves and their families. Allowing SNAP to be used to purchase groceries online removes an arbitrary and paternalistic barrier. This legislation was signed into law, Chapter 342.

The Coronavirus has been particularly devastating for homeless New Yorkers due to a lack of safe, private, and clean living spaces. They are at higher risk for transmission, hospitalization, and even death. The COVID-19 death rate is twice as high in congregate care settings. Yet still the information about the condition of shelters and impact of the pandemic on homeless New Yorkers has been opaque, which is why A.10566 was introduced. This legislation requires a report on the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Having relevant information about the effects of COVID-19 on this vulnerable population will allow our state to provide adequate care and protections and better meet their needs going forward. This bill was signed into law, Chapter 331.

Further, the committee will continue to introduce legislation focused on helping survivors of human trafficking. In 2018, Chapter 238 was enacted into law. This legislation, which establishes "culturally competent" short-term safe house residential facilities and long-term safe house residential facilities and services operated by not-for-profit agencies for survivors of human trafficking. As such, the 2018-19 budget included a \$2 million allocation to achieve these goals. In order to assure the proper administration and creation of these facilities and compliance with this new law, A.8645 (2019) was introduced. This legislation, which unanimously passed the Senate and Assembly, and was signed into law Chapter 257, requires the Commissioner of Social Services to submit a report on the services provided to human trafficking survivors. This legislation will assess the availability, utilization, necessity, and appropriate funding levels for services and housing provided to survivors of human trafficking. This new legislation is in ordinance with the Legislature's oversight and budget responsibilities, and will ensure that they receive accurate and timely data regarding the scope of the problem, in order to adequately provide the necessary and mandated services to survivors of human trafficking and cover the subsequent costs.

We will also look to pass legislation providing temporary housing assistance to a single trafficking survivor, while allowing the program provider to be reimbursed by New York State for any payment

differential for housing a single individual in a room intended for double occupancy, in order to address the system-wide lack of shelter for single adults.

In 2018 our federal government traumatized thousands of children through the “zero tolerance,” family separation. While that policy is no longer in effect, the impacts remain and will continue to harm those if left unaddressed. For this reason, we introduced A.7815 (2019) to offer a range of supports and services to unaccompanied minor children who have been placed with a sponsor in New York State. These services will include health and behavioral health services under Child Health Plus (CHP), counseling sessions with social workers, legal services, language services, employment assistance, bilingual support groups, and enrollment in public school. Providers that administer these supports will receive trauma informed training to assist unaccompanied minors who may have experienced adverse childhood experiences. We will continue to fight for its passage in the 2021 session.

As we all know, 2020 presented New York with unprecedented financial challenges and unique budget shortfalls. While we will continue to advocate for increased federal aid, state revenue raisers such as taxing the rich, are also an important component in bridging these budget gaps. Equally crucial to receiving and generating more funds is ensuring that the state act responsibly and spend existing funds where they are needed most.

In the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 outbreak, New York received \$5.1 billion for its Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) in the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) stimulus package to help essential nonprofit human services providers survive the pandemic. \$163 million of those funds were specifically earmarked to sustain childcare and after school programs, as well as additional CARES funds to stem food insecurity and hunger.

Three months after funds were transferred to the authority of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the State of New York from the federal government, childcare providers reported that nearly \$90 million of their \$163 million appropriation had not been released. At the same time, these providers continued to lose money and reduce services as the state withheld payment for regular work going back to 2019. Many of these childcare providers were forced to close permanently because they had not received these funds.

After identifying this problem, Assemblyman Hevesi organized the Chairpersons of multiple Senate and Assembly Committees into a coalition to call on the state to release this funding. On 8/4/2020, Assemblyman Hevesi and the coalition of Senate and Assembly Chairs sent a letter co-signed by 81 members of the New York State legislature to Governor Cuomo, requesting immediate executive action. As a result of this letter - and multiple subsequent events with elected officials' and advocates coordinated by Hevesi's office - the state released \$88.6 million in remaining funds from the CARES appropriation to our childcare providers in New York State.

As previously stated, the (CARES) Act was passed by Congress in March and established the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), which is designed to assist states and local governments in funding COVID-19-related expenses. These funds must be spent by the end of the year and New York is still sitting on unspent funds. The Governor has not yet released all of this funding, as such, in my role as Social Services Chair, the committee led the charge alongside fellow Assembly and Senate human services committee chairs including health, children and families, aging, alcoholism and substance abuse, and agriculture, formed a coalition to urge the Governor to release the remaining CRF money and spend it on our nonprofits who desperately need it to survive. The pandemic has forced many of these providers to close permanently while demand for their services has skyrocketed. We were joined by 185

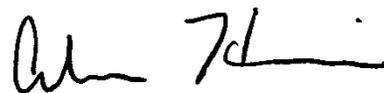
elected officials and advocacy organizations in calling on the Governor to use the CRF in this way and have continued this push for months. It is entirely permissible under the established federal guidelines to use CRF dollars to assist nonprofit service providers during the pandemic. States across the country have been using their CRF money to keep their nonprofit service providers from going out of business and to help those who have been hardest hit by the pandemic, particularly Black and Brown communities.

Communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Due to vast structural inequities in our society, people of color are more likely to live in multigenerational housing, use public transit, and work in high-contact occupations, all of which have resulted in higher death rates for Black and Brown people in New York. Black and Hispanic children experience parental/caregiver deaths from COVID-19 at twice the rate of Asian and white children. Black and Hispanic New Yorkers experience household food scarcity during COVID at three to four times the rate of white New Yorkers. COVID-19-related job losses are heavily concentrated among low-wage workers, hitting persons of color the hardest. The nonprofit work force largely employs women of color. We will continue to fight for our nonprofits, the communities they serve, and workers they employ.

With the advocacy of this coalition we were successful in getting the Governor to allocate an additional \$10 million to the Nourish NY Program which provides money for food banks and providers most impacted by COVID-19. Connecting food banks to NY's food manufacturers and NY farmers directly, Nourish NY provides a benefit to our families who are food insecure, while also providing an economic benefit for the communities this food is coming from. The committee held a hearing on food insecurity in September where we learned that over 2 million New Yorkers are food insecure. Food insecurity rates are higher for children. Before the pandemic, 1 in 5 children in New York City faced food insecurity and with record jobs and wages lost, we estimate this number is now much higher. When kids don't get the consistent nutrition they need each day and throughout the year, it's harder for them to grow up healthy, happy, and strong. Consistent access to nutrition is linked to cognitive and physical development, test scores and long-term health and education outcomes. With the economic impacts of the coronavirus reverberating across the state, an entire generation is at stake. We will be pursuing legislation to address this issue as well as budgetary proposals to combat food insecurity.

Overall, the Social Services committee has a wide net of policy initiatives which we plan to implement and support this upcoming session with special attention and consideration to matters addressing the devastation experienced due to the Coronavirus pandemic. These programs will greatly help some of New York State's most vulnerable individuals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Hevesi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a distinct loop at the end.

Andrew Hevesi, Chair
Committee on Social Services

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES**

**Andrew D. Hevesi
Chair**

Committee Members

Majority

Jeffrion L. Aubry
Charles Barron
Maritza Davila
Simcha Eichenstein
Nathalia Fernandez
Pamela Hunter
Ron Kim
Victor Pichardo
Karines Reyes
Daniel Rosenthal
Michaëlle Solages

Minority

Mark Walczyk (Ranker)
Andrew Goodell
Michael LiPetri
John Salka
Daniel G. Stec

Committee Staff

Rebecca Rasmussen, Committee Clerk

Program and Counsel Staff

Jennifer Sacco, Assistant Secretary for Program and Policy
Jennifer Marrero, Principal Analyst
Jennifer Sacco, Counsel
Lauren Ryan Committee Assistant
Sarah Conklin, Executive Secretary

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Assembly Social Services Committee has jurisdiction over legislation affecting programs providing financial and support services to indigent households in New York State. The work of the Committee also affects the aged, blind, and disabled residing in the community and in residential care facilities. The statutory basis for these programs is contained in the State Social Services Law.

The Committee works with the Committees on Health, Children and Families, Aging, Labor, and Housing. The Committee has legislative oversight responsibilities for programs administered by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA).

OTDA is responsible for supervising programs that provide assistance and support to eligible families and individuals in the state. Some of OTDA's functions include: providing temporary cash assistance; providing assistance in paying for food; providing heating assistance; overseeing New York State's child support enforcement program; determining certain aspects of eligibility for Social Security Disability benefits; supervising homeless housing and services programs; and providing assistance to certain immigrant populations.

The Legislature enacted the Social Services Law to authorize the administration of basic temporary assistance and emergency support programs statewide. The local Departments of Social Services (DSS), or Human Resource Administration (HRA) in New York City, implement the Social Service Law to provide temporary help to individuals and families with their economic and social services needs to assist them in reaching self-sufficiency. These programs include Family Assistance, Safety Net Assistance, Emergency Assistance to Needy Families with Children, Emergency Assistance for Adults, and certain parts of the Supplemental Security Income Program.

- Family Assistance (FA) - FA is a federally funded temporary assistance (TA) program for families. FA can only be provided to a family that includes a minor child living with a parent or caretaker relative, or to a pregnant woman. As a TANF-funded program, FA is subject to the state 60-month lifetime limit on assistance.
- Safety Net Assistance (SNA) - established by the Welfare Reform Act (WRA) of 1997 to provide assistance to individuals and families who are ineligible for Family Assistance (FA) or other federal temporary assistance programs. The SNA program is comprised of cash and non-cash components.
- Emergency Assistance to Needy Families with Children (EAF) - is a federally funded program which provides assistance to deal with crisis situations threatening a family with a child under the age of 18, or under 19 and attending full-time secondary school or the equivalent level of vocational or technical training. EAF is designed to meet needs resulting from a sudden occurrence or a set of circumstances that was unforeseen and beyond the applicant's control that demand immediate attention.
- Emergency Assistance for Adults (EAA)- are grants to assist aged, blind or disabled individuals and couples who have been determined eligible for or are receiving Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits or additional state payments and applied for such assistance to meet emergency needs that cannot be met by the regular monthly benefits of SSI and additional state payments.

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program- established by Congress in 1974 under Title XVI of the Social Security Act. The Social Security Administration (SSA) administers the program which provides a federal grant to individuals and couples who are aged, blind, or disabled.

Homeless Services

Local social services districts also have a responsibility to provide services and assistance to individuals in an effort to prevent homelessness, to meet the temporary housing and other immediate needs of eligible homeless persons, and to assist homeless persons in securing permanent housing. Individuals eligible for such assistance are those who are both homeless and eligible for TA.

Domestic Violence

The federal Wellstone-Murray Family Violence Option allows states to address the safety needs of domestic violence victims and their children within the state's TANF plan. The Family Violence Option includes procedures for screening for domestic violence, assessment, and service referrals.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

New York administers the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which issues monthly benefits that can be used to purchase food at authorized retail food stores. Benefits are provided through an electronic benefit card, similar to a debit or credit card. Eligibility and benefit levels are based on household size, income, expenses and other factors.

Any person has the right to file an application for a type of temporary assistance or care with the local social services district at any time. Each applicant for services is required to meet all eligibility requirements in order to receive benefits. OTDA has created a website, mybenefits.ny.gov, where individuals are able to learn about available benefits and the requirements to receive such benefits.

II. SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATION – 2020

A. REPORTS

Human Trafficking Services Report A.8645 (Hevesi)/ S.8743 (Liu)

This bill requires the commissioners of OTDA and Division of Criminal Justice to jointly submit a report annually, with detailed information of services provided to survivors of human trafficking.

This bill was signed into law; Chapter 257.

Report on Publicly Funded Homeless Shelters during a State of Emergency A.10566A (Hevesi)/S.8643A (Liu)

This bill would required OTDA in consultation with the local health departments, commissioners of Department of Health, Department of Homeless Services, and NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to collect and publish a report regarding the effects on sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals and families during a state disaster emergency. The report will be posted on each respective agency website.

This bill was signed into law; Chapter 331.

B. INCOME MAINTENANCE

Health Care Practitioners and Disability Determinations A.4236 (Hevesi)/S.4641 (Persaud)

The federal government recognizes the importance of giving sufficient consideration to a physician's medical opinion, and follows this practice in SSI determinations, detailed in 20 CFR 416.927. Under New York State law, currently, there is little to no consideration given to the treating health care practitioner's opinion when an individual applying for PA has work limitations, disabilities or health issues that have been identified by their treating health care practitioner. This bill would require the recipient/applicant's treating health care practitioner's diagnosis to be controlling, assuming certain factors are met.

This bill passed the Assembly.

C. SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

Statewide SNAP Restaurant Meal Program

A.8764A (Reyes)/ S.7290A (Persaud)

This bill would require OTDA to create a statewide restaurant meal program as a part of SNAP. This program would allow SNAP households with an elderly or disabled individual and their spouse, and homeless individuals the option to access food through the restaurant program.

This bill passed the Assembly.

Online SNAP Program

A.10673 (Hevesi)/S.8247A (Kaminsky)

The 2014 the Federal Farm Bill mandated that a pilot program be conducted to test the possibility of allowing retail food stores to accept SNAP benefits through online transactions. Under the pilot, SNAP recipients are be able to use their benefits to purchase eligible food items online at specific retailers. New York was chosen as a pilot state and started the pilot in April 2019 in a limited number of designated zip codes.

This bill requires OTDA to seek any necessary approvals from the Federal government to make the SNAP online pilot program statewide and permanent.

This bill was signed into law; Chapter 342.

III. SFY 2020-21 STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

A. Overview of the TANF Block Grant

The nation's welfare system was dramatically reformed with the enactment of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). The federal law adopted a "work first" approach, eliminated the entitlement to cash assistance, and imposed time limits, work requirements and sanctions on recipients. The cornerstone of the law was the creation of the TANF block grant, which provides states funds for their cash assistance and welfare-to-work programs.

New York received \$2.442 billion for the Family Assistance program through the federal TANF block grant. The 2020-21 state budget included approximately \$1.5 billion to support benefit payments to low-income New Yorkers.

B. TANF Programs and Allocations

New York's TANF program has developed into the state's most critical system of support and assistance for children and families who struggle to make ends meet. In New York, programs including wage supplements, tax credits, job training and skill development, case management and counseling, child care, and transportation were developed to assist families in need during the transition from poverty to self-sufficiency through work. For several years, New York has been authorized to utilize TANF funds not only for families eligible for federal assistance through the FA program, but also for families whose income does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level.

The 2020-21 budget included a Flexible Fund for Family Services (FFFS) to provide local districts with a block grant. In order for a program to receive funding out of the TANF surplus, it must meet one of the four TANF purposes:

1. Provide assistance to needy families;
2. End the dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage;
3. Prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Below is a breakdown of state spending of the TANF dollars for the SFY 2020-21:

CHILD CARE INVESTMENTS

The child care subsidy program provided by local social services districts enables an income-eligible parent or caretaker to work or engage in other approved activities by helping parent(s)/caretaker(s) to pay some or all of the cost of child care services. A \$310 million block grant was included in the budget to provide subsidies to parents.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRANSITIONAL INITIATIVES

Rochester-Genesee Regional Transportation Authority (RGRTA): This program provides a monthly bus pass to allow eligible individuals from seven member counties to travel to and from work, or to participate in work-related activities. In Wayne County, funds are used to support the

transportation costs of individuals who use the WATS Demand Response Bus Services or TANF work participation activities. Funds are also used to extend the WATS service hours to accommodate employees at Kraft. RGRTA was awarded \$82,000 in the budget.

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP): The purpose of the TANF SYEP is to provide eligible youth with a quality employment and educational experience during the summer months. For many youth, this is their first introduction to the world of work. Valuable lessons which center on employment, including work ethic, appropriate workplace behavior, interaction with co-workers and supervisors, receiving a paycheck and money management are learned. \$45 million was allocated to fund the employment program.

Domestic Violence Screening: Domestic Violence Screening involves identifying persons who are currently victims of domestic violence and offering temporary waivers from the public assistance (PA) program requirements where compliance with such requirements would place the victim and/or victim's children at greater risk of harm or make it more difficult for them to escape from abuse. \$750,000 was budgeted to provide these services.

Wage Subsidy Program: Employers are reimbursed for wages and related benefits that the employer paid to the participant during the subsidy period. Using wage subsidies as a hiring incentive, nonprofit agencies work with employers to develop positions for individuals who have been unable to find employment through conventional means. This program was allocated \$475,000 to provide subsidies.

LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

ACCESS – Welfare to Careers: Metropolitan College's Welfare-to-Careers Consortium Program is collaboration among three major higher educational institutions in New York City (Metropolitan College, Medgar Evers College and Pace University). The Consortium affords participants the opportunity to earn their two-year degree or a baccalaureate degree, thereby greatly increasing their chances of gaining permanent, full-time employment at a sustainable salary level. \$800,000 was allocated for the ACCESS program.

Disability Advocacy Program: This program provides for the legal representation of individuals whose federal disability benefits have been denied or may be discontinued and received \$3.63 million in this year's budget.

FLEXIBLE FUND FOR FAMILY SERVICES (FFFS)

The FFFS encompasses a number of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs administered by local departments of social services that are funded with the Federal TANF Services Block Grant. The SFY 2020-21 allocations for FFFS is \$964 million.

VI. FEDERAL CARES ACT FUNDING

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, New York State received \$1.1 billion in additional funding for SNAP contingency through the Federal CARES Act. OTDA also received additional Federal funding:

- \$28,804,000 for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP);
- \$445,732,000 for Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Local;
- \$50,522,000 to service provider of Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) State; and
- \$7,471,000 Housing Opportunities for People with AIDS (HOPWA).

APPENDIX A

2020 SUMMARY SHEET

SUMMARY OF ACTION ON ALL BILLS
REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE ON

Social Services

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD 4

<u>ASSEMBLY</u> <u>BILLS</u>	<u>SENATE</u> <u>BILLS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u> <u>BILLS</u>
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BILLS REPORTED FAVORABLE TO:

FLOOR	1	0	1
WAYS AND MEANS	11	0	11
CODES	1	0	1
RULES	1	0	1
JUDICIARY	0	0	0
TOTAL	14	0	14

COMMITTEE ACTION

HELD FOR CONSIDERATION	10	0	10
ENACTING CLAUSES STRICKEN	2	2	2
DEFEATED	0	0	0
REMAINING BILLS IN COMMITTEE	80	3	83
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD	4		

APPENDIX B

**FINAL ACTION ON BILLS REPORTED BY THE
SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

ASSEMBLY BILL # SPONSOR	SENATE BILL # SPONSOR	FINAL ACTION	DESCRIPTION
A.339A Joyner	S.5552A Persaud	Referred to Ways and Means	Would require the department of labor to conduct a study that would measure the income adequacy in New York State by determining the amount of income necessary to meet the basic needs of families.
A.4330A Hevesi	S.528A Carlucci	Referred to Ways and Means	Would expand the current income and resources exemptions that are allowable when applying for public assistance.
A.7612A Hevesi	S.6177A Myrie	Referred to Codes	Would repeal the Savings Plan Demo established in New York City for people with earned income receiving temporary housing assistance. Also prohibits publicly funded providers of temporary housing assistance from requiring individuals to participate in work activities as condition of receiving temporary housing assistance. A provider found to be collecting income; room and board or any other contribution may be subject to a civil penalty. Multiple violations may cause the provider to lose public funding for a period of time.
A.8242A Hevesi		Referred to Ways and Means	Would create a two-generational pilot program in up to 6 local social service districts throughout the state. The goal for the pilot program would be to promote family stability and increase children's school readiness. This would be a 5-year pilot program.
A.8645 Hevesi	S.8743 Liu	Chapter 257	Would require OTDA and the Division of Criminal Justice to jointly submit a report annually regarding detailed information of services provided to survivors of human trafficking.
A.8764A Reyes	S.7290A Persaud	Passed the Assembly	Would require OTDA to create a statewide restaurant meals program as part of SNAP. The program would allow SNAP households with an elderly or disabled individual and their spouse, and homeless individual the option to access food through the restaurant meals program.
A.8967 Eichenstein	S.7174 Persaud	Passed in Budget	Would exempt the earned income of a youth while participating, up to the age 24, in the Summer Youth Employment Program when determining the need for public assistance.

ASSEMBLY BILL # SPONSOR	SENATE BILL # SPONSOR	FINAL ACTION	DESCRIPTION
A.8994 Hevesi	S.7207 Persaud	Passed the Assembly	Would require that in instances where a certified DSS practitioner is evaluating an applicant, the opinion of the applicant's treating physician be considered controlling in the determination, and that any denial must include a written explanation that presents evidence to support the certified practitioner's differing opinion.
A.9064 Hevesi	S.7260 Persaud	Referred to Ways and Means	Would allow a caregiver to exclude any unearned income of a child from the public assistance household.
A.9066 Hunter	S.7558 May	Referred to Ways and Means	Would require local social services districts outside of New York City, prior to imposing a sanction on a PA recipient for failure to comply with work rules, to confirm that the recipient is not exempt from the work requirement, and that the recipient had appropriate child care, transportation, and disability accommodations. Additionally, the bill would require sanctions to be removed once the issue has been remedied.
A.10068A Wright		Referred to Rules	Would direct local social services districts to stop taking any action to establish paternity or a child support order when the applicant or recipient for child only public assistance has established good cause to refuse to cooperate with such establishment.
A.10566A Hevesi	S.8643A Liu	Chapter 331	Would require OTDA in consultation with the local health departments, commissioners of Department of Health, Department of Homeless Services, and NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to collect and publish information regarding the effects on sheltered and unsheltered homeless individuals and families during a state disaster emergency.
A.10673 Hevesi	S.8247A Kaminsky	Chapter 342	Would require OTDA to seek waivers USDA to make the SNAP Online Pilot Programs statewide and permanent.
A.10743 Hevesi	S.8739 Persaud	Third Reading Calendar	Would disregard the temporary emergency increase in unemployment compensation benefits when determining eligibility for public assistance and SNAP.

APPENDIX C

LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS/ROUNDTABLES

Homeless Shelters Addressing the COVID-19 Pandemic

May 28, 2020 - New York City

June 4, 2020 - Buffalo

June 11, 2020 - Albany

June 18, 2020 - Rochester

June 25, 2020 – Utica

Via ZOOM

The precise impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been hard to ascertain, many advocates across the State have expressed significant concerns for homeless individuals and families due to the inability to sufficiently social distance or maintain adequate hygiene regimens in shelters or on the streets. Many advocates voiced how homeless individuals and families are a particularly vulnerable population during a pandemic, with significant health concerns for both the sheltered and unsheltered homeless.

While a majority of the homeless population is located in New York City, significant numbers of homeless can be found across the State, with approximately 5,500 in Western New York according to the Buffalo City Mission and 1,517 in the Capital region according to the Capital Region Coalition to end Homelessness. The COVID-19 pandemic has only magnified the holes in the social safety net, with its disproportionate impact on homeless New Yorkers. Advocates across the State voiced support on securing additional housing options that allow individuals and families to comply with appropriate isolation and hygiene recommendations.

Many of stakeholders agreed extra time is needed to fully measure the true effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the homeless population. Infection rates, hospitalizations, and deaths among unsheltered homeless New Yorkers in particular, may take several months to measure due to delays and incomplete reporting, as well as the understandable hesitation of many unsheltered New Yorkers to visit drop-in centers, shelters, and emergency rooms in the midst of a pandemic.

Impact of COVID-19 on Food Insecurity in New York

September 9, 2020

Via ZOOM

Food insecurity continues to be an ongoing issue for many Americans, with households across the country unable to access an adequate food supply due to limited financial resources. According to Feeding America, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity in the United States was at its lowest point since the Great Recession of 2008, and yet more than 37 million people, including 11 million children, were experiencing food insecurity. These numbers have dramatically increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, with more than 54 million people, including 18 million children, currently experiencing food insecurity. Advocates believe these numbers will continue to rise as the pandemic continues to have devastating effects on families' economic stability.

The emergency supplemental SNAP funding that was included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 expired on July 31, 2020. Households have since gone back to their pre-pandemic

SNAP benefit amount as of August 2020, again leaving many individuals without adequate resources for food. There are currently 2.2 million people across New York State struggling with food insecurity. Many advocates voiced the concerns that a lack of food has on children. As schools, childcare centers, and older adult meal sites continue to close their doors, access to free food programs is becoming limited and the need to address food insecurity has become vital.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only put an unprecedented strain on New York families but also on the organizations that support them in the community. Nationally, 80% more food was distributed by large food banks this past spring than in the spring of 2019. The increase in demand for food pantry services has been large, many stakeholders talked about the long lines of cars waiting to get food from local pantries and the increased hardship on charitable food assistance outlets.

Advocates agree there are many things that can be done to help address the issue of food insecurity in New York. Strong support was given to expanding access and outreach efforts for programs like SNAP and WIC as well as funding transportation programs that help the elderly get food. The most agreed upon solution – more funding at the federal and local levels so programs can continue to serve their communities.