

Federal Shutdown Briefing



October 29, 2025

How We Got Here



Timeline:

October 1, 2025: The federal government shutdown began

October 10, 2025: The U.S. Department of Agriculture directs to NOT to issue federally-funded SNAP benefits for November.

October 23, 2025: NYSAC issued an urgent call to action to all county leaders, urging advocacy.

October 24, 2025:

- Governor Hochul formally calls on USDA to use emergency contingency funds to ensure SNAP benefits are issued.
- Governor Hochul asserts that NYS cannot backfill the program.

How We Got Here



October 24, 2025: NYS OTDA issues guidance to all social services districts confirming that:

- Payment files for November SNAP benefits have been paused as required by USDA
- Districts must continue processing applications and recertifications
- No action is required at the local level—any pause in benefits is being handled at the state level
- Households will be notified by November 1st about the status of their benefits
- USDA released a memo blaming Congressional Democrats and stating that contingency funds are "not legally available" to cover regular monthly benefits

How We Got Here



October 27, 2025: Governor Hochul announced \$30 million in emergency state funds to support over 16 million meals through food banks and emergency food providers.

- The Governor launches website—ny.gov/federalcuts—where New Yorkers can share their stories and access resources.
- OTDA publishes webpage to maintain current information on the status of ongoing SNAP benefits: otda.ny.gov/shutdown

October 28, 2025: Attorney General Letitia James joins 24 states and the District of Columbia in filing a lawsuit against the USDA for unlawfully suspending SNAP benefits during the shutdown.

The lawsuit emphasizes that USDA has access to at least \$6 billion in contingency funds that Congress specifically appropriated to keep benefits flowing during funding lapses.

Where We Stand Today



As of October 29th:

SNAP:

- Nearly 3 million New Yorkers are enrolled in SNAP
- Absent the shutdown, November benefits would be issued starting November 1st
- As of now, USDA has NOT authorized states to release those benefits
- If nothing changes, millions of New Yorkers will not receive food assistance starting this Friday

HEAP:

- HEAP typically opens in early November to help over 1.5 million New Yorkers pay heating bills
- Federal funding for HEAP is currently frozen due to the shutdown
- The program opening has been delayed indefinitely
- This comes as temperatures are dropping and heating season is beginning

What NYSAC Has Been Doing



Since this crisis began, NYSAC has engaged in:

1. **Direct Engagement with New York's Congressional Delegation**, urging them to reach a bipartisan agreement.
2. **Daily communication with Governor Hochul's Office.**
3. **Partnership with the National Association of Counties (NACo)** to ensure that NY county voices are heard in Washington.
4. **Support for Counties**, through advocacy tools and FAQs.
5. **Public Advocacy** – speaking to media outlets to ensure the public understands that counties are not responsible for this crisis and do not have the ability to solve it.

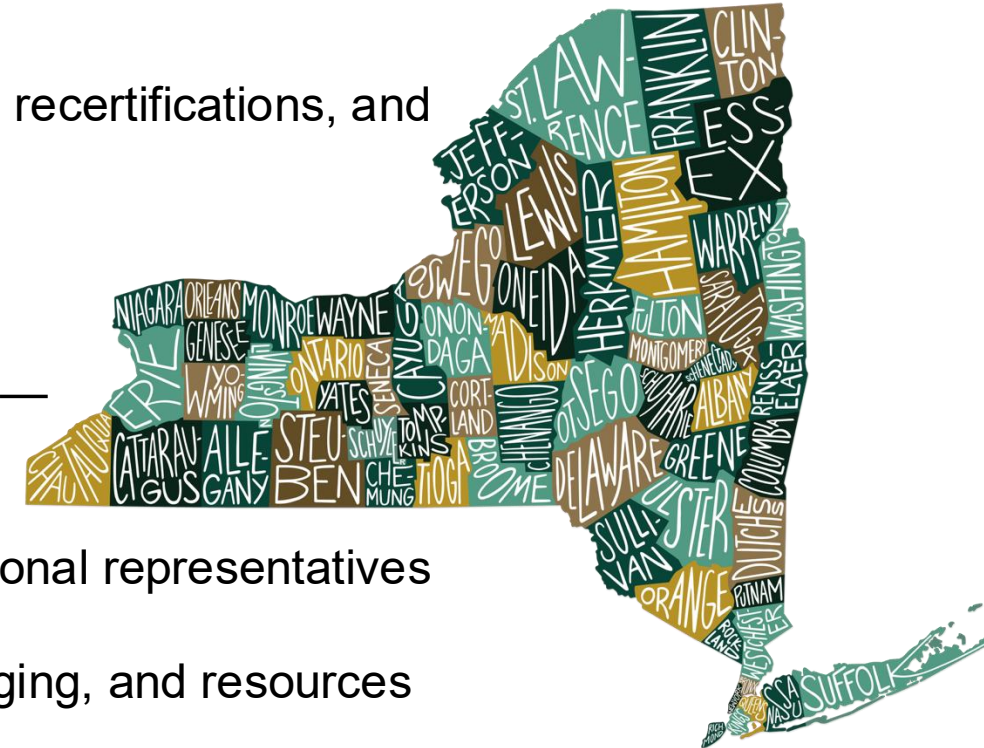


What Counties Can Do



There are important roles counties can and should play:

1. **Continue Normal Operations** – processing SNAP applications, recertifications, and case changes as directed by state guidance.
2. **Support Emergency Food Networks.**
3. **Communicate Clearly with Residents.** Use the state's website—otda.ny.gov/shutdown—as your primary source of information.
4. **Amplify Advocacy Efforts.** Continue contacting your congressional representatives
5. **Support Your Staff.** Make sure they have support, clear messaging, and resources to direct people toward help.



County Discussion



Questions:

1. What are you seeing in your counties?

- What are you hearing from residents?
- What's the call volume like?
- Are you seeing increased demand at food pantries?
- How are your DSS staff holding up?

2. What actions are you taking locally?

- Have you issued public statements or reached out to congressional representatives?
- Coordinated with local food banks or community organizations?
- What's working?

3. What do you need from NYSAC?

- What additional support, information, or resources would help you manage this crisis in your community?



Key Points



Remember:

- This is a federal crisis requiring a federal solution.
- Counties cannot backfill SNAP or HEAP.
- Continue normal operations and prepare for when federal funding resumes.
- Support your staff—they're on the front lines of this crisis.
- Communicate clearly with residents using OTDA's resources.

Key Points



Immediate Priorities:

- Monitor otda.ny.gov/shutdown for updates.
- Strengthen connections with emergency food providers.
- Continue advocacy to congressional representatives.
- Support your DSS teams and prepare for increased demand.

Key Points



NYSAC's Commitment:

- We will continue daily engagement with state and federal partners.
- We will provide updates as soon as we have information.
- We will amplify county voices in Albany and Washington.
- We will support you with resources, talking points, and coordination.

Next Steps:

- We will continue monitoring developments through the weekend.
- We will schedule another briefing early next week if the crisis continues.



Call to Action!



The next 72 hours are critical.

If you have not already contacted your congressional representatives, please do so today.

- Use the letter template we provided.
- Make phone calls.
- Share constituent stories.

Congressional offices need to hear from county leaders.

You represent real communities, real people, and real impacts.
Your voice matters.



Final Thoughts



Operation Green Light

Amid all the divisiveness of this current situation, let's remember that we have an opportunity to do something that unites us.

- 5th year of **Operation Green Light**
- Illuminate county buildings and assets green to create symbol of support for our nation's heroes.
- Started in NY, is now a nationwide program.
- Let's lead the way!
- Learn more at www.nysac.org/operationgreenlight

