

Benefits Outline

Goal: to make an education at the New York Academy more attainable to low-income students by directing them to ways they can lower the cost of living in New York City.

1. New York City benefits current and prospective students may qualify for:

- a. Medicaid (free health insurance)
- b. SNAP (food stamps)
- c. Cash Assistance (regular cash assistance, rent/housing payments, HEAP - utility payment)
- d. Fair Fares (half-priced MetroCard)
- e. \$5/month Citi Bike membership

i. Medicaid

1. What it is: free health insurance through a “Medicaid managed plan.”

Recipients who qualify will first be provided with “straight Medicaid” - this is temporary until the recipient is prompted to select a Medicaid managed plan (ex. Healthfirst, WellCare of New York, MetroPlus)

- a. Once a recipient has a Medicaid managed plan, they can receive medical care at any facility that accepts their specific plan free of cost and obtain free prescription medications they are prescribed.

ii. SNAP (food stamps)

1. What it is: money on a card that can be spent at stores that accept EBT. Food must be “not hot.” Liquor and nonfood items are ineligible SNAP purchases, even if the store accepts EBT.
2. A fixed amount is paid to the recipient every 2 weeks.

iii. Cash Assistance

1. Regular Cash Assistance Benefit

- a. What it is: money on a card that can be spent on any nonfood items at a store that accepts EBT. Nonfood items can include: over-the-counter medications, toiletries, appliances, furniture, clothing, school supplies, etc.)

iii. Cash Assistance (cont.)

- b. Money can be withdrawn from the card for physical cash in addition to a purchase. Limits on quantities that can be withdrawn vary from store to store.
- c. Money is paid to the recipient every 2 weeks.

2. Rent/Housing Payment

- a. What it is: money paid directly to your landlord. Records of monies sent are available on your benefits account.
- b. A fixed amount is paid to the landlord every 2 weeks.

3. HEAP – Utility Payment

- a. What it is: money paid to your EBT card. It is labeled as money for a utility payment but can be used at the recipient's discretion.
- b. No clear pattern for benefit distribution.

iv. Fair Fares

- 1. What it is: a half-priced MetroCard for the subway and eligible bus fares.
- 2. Available for pay-per-ride, weekly unlimited and monthly unlimited. A specific Fair Fares card must be used to get the discount, not available through OMNY pay or a MetroCard purchased from a machine on a train platform.

v. \$5/month Citi Bike membership

- 1. What it is: a no-commitment monthly membership for a key to use Citi Bikes in Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, and Jersey City for less than 45 minutes per ride for \$5/month.
- 2. Eligibility for this membership is available to SNAP recipients.

2. New Eligibility Criteria & Steps to Obtain Benefits

- a. As of the time this outline has been written (6/2022), the income and asset limit to receive Medicaid in New York City is \$16,800/year for an individual and \$24,600/year for a couple.
- b. To begin the process to obtain benefits, candidates should go to Access HRA at <https://a069-access.nyc.gov/accesshra/>
 - i. Candidates can apply for all these benefits on this website
 - ii. Information to have on hand can include but is not limited to: New York City housing lease, ID, birth certificate, social security card, recent tax returns, recent bank statements, recent rent invoices, recent utility bills (electric, internet, other, etc.), letter of employment, recent paystubs, and proof of academic enrollment.
 - iii. Required documents are uploaded through the “Access HRA” app
 - iv. Post-Covid 19, no eligibility interviews are conducted in-person. A telephone call will be scheduled for some of these benefits.
 - v. Once benefits are obtained, periodic recertification (of an unclear pattern) is mandatory to retain benefits.
 1. Recertification includes sending updated requested documents, also uploaded through the “Access HRA” app.