

**NLWJC - Kagan**

**DPC - Box 063 - Folder-009**

**Welfare-New York City Issue**



permitted to file a food stamp application the first day they contact the food stamp office. The application need only have the applicant's name, address, and signature to be filed that first day. Those requirements were enacted to ensure that families can access much-needed food assistance in a timely manner.

Like Medicaid, the Food Stamp Program is critical to the prevention and alleviation of hunger and poverty, and essential to helping families on welfare transition to work. Your administration has repeatedly pointed to food stamps as essential to lift families with low wages above the poverty line. It is in part because of our belief in food stamps as a work-support program that we are so concerned about the steep caseload declines, and barriers to eligibility.

Due to the strong economy, some families are no longer receiving food stamps because they no longer need them. There is, however, a widespread pattern of reports nationwide that people are being discouraged from seeking benefits, or are being removed from food stamps (and Medicaid) when their cash assistance is terminated. In the last two years, the number of people receiving food stamps has dropped several times faster than the number of poor people. At the same time, volunteers at soup kitchens and food pantries continue to see long lines of people at their doors. These numbers clearly suggest that administrative barriers are having a detrimental effect on the ability of the Food Stamp Program to reach those in need.

We urge your continued vigilance to ensure compliance with federal Food Stamp law--including the city of New York --and protect the safety net for families in need.

Sincerely,

*Margie Waters*

*James E. Clyburn*

*Ira M. Clayton*

*Robert R. Byrd*

NY - New York City issue



Cynthia A. Rice

11/19/98 02:48:15 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP, Laura Emmett/WHO/EOP

cc: Christopher C. Jennings/OPD/EOP, Jeanne Lambrew/OPD/EOP, Devorah R. Adler/OPD/EOP

Subject: NYC Council Hearing on Medicaid and Food Stamps

The New York City Council is planning a hearing on the Mayor's Medicaid and Food Stamp application policies, planned for this Monday the 23rd (with some rumours that it will be postponed until 12/3).

The Council has invited USDA and HHS to testify. I don't think they should testify (the agencies agree) but I think they should submit short statements for the record (USDA is prepared to do this and I understand from Devorah that HCFA is trying to figure out if it can). Do you think this is the right strategy?

Wp - New York City / Issue



Cynthia A. Rice

11/11/98 06:31:45 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Bruce N. Reed/OPD/EOP, Elena Kagan/OPD/EOP, Laura Emmett/WHO/EOP, Andrea Kane/OPD/EOP  
cc: Christopher C. Jennings/OPD/EOP, Jeanne Lambrew/OPD/EOP, Devorah R. Adler/OPD/EOP  
Subject: NYC Update: Conflict bet Jason Turner and Mayor Guiliani

Unfortunately, as this Times story indicates, the conflict between Jason Turner and Mayor Guiliani over the Food Stamp/Medicaid application policy has heated up (there have also been stories in the Daily News and Newsday).

We're right on the policy: PRWORA amended Food Stamp law to say "a State agency... shall permit an applicant household to apply to participate in the program on the same day that the household first contacts a food stamp office in person during office hours." NYC is resting its argument that it can force applicants to wait until their second visit to get a Food Stamp application on the fact that USDA has not promulgated regs yet.

Devorah or Jeanne -- could you verify the basis for the Medicaid policy (i.e., statute or reg) and get a copy of it?

I've gotten USDA out of the limelight -- they are only talking to reporters on background to correct factual errors, and they are not engaged in any discussions with the city (regional office staff are still on site checking records). What worries me is that Guiliani is way out there, and views this issue as a challenge to his work first welfare strategy. I'm trying to figure out what if anything we can do. Any thoughts?

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November 11, 1998, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final  
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HEADLINE: Mayor Backs City Policy On Welfare  
BYLINE: By RACHEL L. SWARNS  
BODY:

Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani yesterday defended his policy of delaying the distribution of food stamp and Medicaid applications to the poor and denied that his Welfare Commissioner had ever said the policy would change.

Mr. Giuliani's remarks came as Federal officials from the Department of Agriculture and the Health Care Financing Administration continued their inquiry into the city's welfare policies. The Federal officials have said the city appeared to be violating the law by delaying applications in an effort to discourage the needy from applying for welfare.

On Sunday, the Welfare Commissioner, Jason A. Turner, told The New York Times that he planned to speed up the distribution of applications as an "extra precaution" to mollify Federal officials. "Our new policy is just to hand them a food stamp application," Mr. Turner said in the telephone interview, calling the change "an improvement."

But yesterday, Mr. Giuliani denied that Mr. Turner had ever made that statement. The Mayor did not explain why he did not dispute those comments on Monday, the day when Mr. Turner's comments appeared, and Colleen Roche, a spokeswoman for Mr. Giuliani, declined to elaborate yesterday. Mr. Turner was not available for comment yesterday, according to his press secretary, Debra Sproles.

"The Commissioner didn't say that," Mr. Giuliani said during a news conference yesterday, referring to the comments published in The Times. "Sometimes, things aren't reported exactly the way somebody says something because there is an emotional or ideological bias that drives the way something is reported."

Joyce Purnick, the metropolitan editor of The Times, dismissed Mr. Giuliani's accusations.

"Our reporter had two extensive conversations with Mr. Turner on Sunday, took detailed notes, and never got a subsequent complaint from him saying he was quoted incorrectly," Ms. Purnick said. "We do not make things up, nor are our reporters politically motivated."

Mr. Giuliani's remarks were the city's latest response to questions about the Federal inquiry into his welfare policies. The topic is sensitive for the Giuliani administration since the Mayor has repeatedly described his tough welfare policy as one of his primary accomplishments.

The Mayor is particularly proud of his decision to convert welfare offices into "job centers," where the needy are encouraged to rely on jobs, relatives and food pantries instead of on government checks.

In the job centers, the vast majority of people receive applications only on their second visit, the practice that touched off the Federal inquiry. Federal law requires city officials to give food stamp and Medicaid applications upon an applicant's first visit.

Mr. Turner said on Sunday that the city would expedite the distribution of applications. On Monday, city officials appeared to reverse themselves, saying they would not speed the process after all. Anthony P. Coles, a senior adviser

to Mr. Giuliani, said the Agriculture Department had decided to judge the city's programs based on the 1996 Federal welfare law, which allows states and cities to delay welfare applications.

The current law governing food stamps and Medicaid, however, requires city officials to distribute applications without delay. And officials from the Department of Agriculture and Health Care Financing Administration said those existing laws still applied.

On Friday, Medicaid officials are to meet with state health officials, who are responsible for monitoring the city's Medicaid program. The Federal officials, who have requested copies of the city's application and referral procedures, hope to determine whether the city's program complies with Federal law.