



A SPECIAL REPORT FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

from Assemblymember

2015 Edition

LINDA B. ROSENTHAL

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Dear Neighbor:

I am pleased to present you with this newsletter containing helpful information on programs and benefits available to seniors. I hope you find it useful as you navigate various services in New York State, but if you have questions about any of the programs listed here, please do not hesitate to contact me at 212.873.6368 or Rosenthal@assembly.state.ny.us.

Over the course of the last nine years, I have had the distinct pleasure of meeting many of you in person at events that I have sponsored and around the neighborhood. It is part of my job as your full-time representative in Albany to provide these services and information to you to help ease the increased financial strain on all families, but particularly on senior citizens living on fixed incomes.

As always, I will continue to work to ensure that programs for seniors remain robust, well-funded and easily accessible. I will also work to provide you with access to as many free and/or low-cost services and programs as I can. Each Friday, my office offers free notary services from 1-4 p.m. In addition, I also host regular SCRIE/DRIE & Homeowner's Exemption Clinics in my district office with the New York City Department of Finance.

In the future, I hope you will contact me or my staff with any questions, concerns or problems. We are always here to help. As usual, I will be hosting the West Side Seniors Day at the American Museum of Natural History on Friday, June 12, 2015. For more information and to RSVP (required), please see the invitation located on the back of this newsletter. I encourage you to RSVP as soon as possible, as space is limited and the event fills up quickly! I look forward to seeing you on Seniors Day!

Sincerely,

Linda B. Rosenthal
Member of Assembly

Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE)

Benefits

Relief from obligation to pay rent increases; landlord is compensated by reduction in real estate taxes.

Eligibility

Persons aged 62 or older, who live in rent-controlled, Mitchell-Lama, rent-stabilized apartments, and whose rent is one-third of their monthly household income or more—not including air conditioning, auxiliary services and utility charges.

Income Limits

Combined total household income from all sources must be \$50,000 or less, including Social Security income.

Resource Limits

None.

Government Agency

New York City Department of Finance: 311

nyc.gov/rentfreeze

For Mitchell-Lama, contact the Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development: 212-863-8494

Senior Citizens Homeowners Exemption (SCHE)

Benefits

Sliding scale real estate tax exemption of 5% to 50%.

Eligibility

Owners of one-, two-, three-family houses, condominiums or cooperative apartments, who are or turn 65 the same calendar year they apply, and who use the property as their primary residence. Applicants can apply by March 15th to qualify for benefits for the following July 1st billing period. Those who are eligible for SCRIE are not eligible for SCHE. Those who qualify for SCHE automatically receive the Enhanced STAR exemption.

Income Limits

Combined total income for all owners from all sources must be less than \$37,400. Individuals can deduct documented un-reimbursed medical and prescription expenses.

Resource Limits

None.

Government Agency

New York City Department of Finance: 311

<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/finance/benefits/landlords-sche.page>

Temporary Assistance (TA)

Benefits

Cash payments for low-income individuals and families in emergencies to help cover expenses.

Eligibility

Must be in an emergency situation or receiving SSI. Examples of emergencies include homelessness, lack of food or hot water, imminent eviction or utility shut off, or if you or someone in your family was a victim of a crime.

Income Limits/Resource Limits

Same as SSI.

Government Agency

OTDA: 311; New York State Temporary Assistance Hotline: 800-342-3009

<http://otda.ny.gov/programs/temporary-assistance/>

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

Benefits

Yearly grant or energy credit, depending on income, household type and size, and type of fuel used.

Renters: \$30 or \$35 if heat is included in rent.

Homeowners: up to \$600 based on gross income and type of fuel used.

Eligible individuals living in government subsidized housing or a group home if heat is included in rent: \$21

Eligibility

Low-income homeowners and renters, people who receive SNAP benefits, temporary assistance, Code A SSI or live in government subsidized housing.

Income Limits

Monthly Income: Individuals: \$2,194; Couples: \$2,869.

Resource Limits

None for regular benefit. Emergency Benefit: if your heat has been or is about to be shut off. Must meet income and resource limits of less than \$2,000 if no member of household is 60+, or less than \$3,000 if any member of of household is 60+.

Government Agency

OTDA: NYS HEAP Hotline at 800-342-3009

<http://www.otda.state.ny.us/programs/heap/program.asp#income>

Medicare Part A Hospital Insurance Program

Benefits

Coverage for acute hospital care and limited coverage for skilled nursing facility, home health care and hospice. \$1,260 deductible for 1st through 60th day of hospitalization. Escalating co-insurance payments thereafter.

Eligibility

Persons 65+, who:

- Are eligible for Social Security or Railroad Retirement benefits; or
- Those who wish to purchase coverage, although they are not eligible for the above benefits; or
- Disabled workers after entitlement to disability for 24 months; or
- Persons with End-Stage Renal Disease.

Income Limits/Resource Limits None.

Government Agency

Social Security Administration: 800-772-1213

HIICAP 212-341-3978

www.medicare.gov

Medicare Part B Supplemental Medical Insurance

Benefits

Optional; partial coverage (80% of approved fee) for physician, out-patient clinic, skilled nursing care and durable medical equipment; \$104.90 (\$146.90 or more for those with higher incomes or first filing in 2013) premium per month; \$147 yearly deductible.

Eligibility/Income Limits/Resource Limits/

Government Agency

Same as Medicare Part A.

Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Coverage

Benefits

Covers both brand name and generic prescription drugs at participating pharmacies in your area. Medicare prescription drug coverage provides protection for people who have very high drug costs. There are also extra help programs available for people who need assistance paying plan costs.

Eligibility

Everyone with Medicare is eligible for this coverage, regardless of income and resources, health status, or current prescription expenses. **Note:** You may enroll when you first become eligible for Medicare (three months before the month you turn age 65 until three months after you turn age 65). If you receive Medicare due to a disability, you can join from three months before to three months after the 25th month of cash disability payments. If you don't sign up when you first become eligible, you may be charged a penalty. Open enrollment periods for those who did not enroll upon becoming eligible are from October 15, 2015 to December 7, 2015.

Income Limits/Resource Limits/Government Agency

Same as Medicare Part A.

Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB)

Benefits

Pays for Medicare premiums. It may also pay for coinsurance, copayments and deductibles if provider also accepts Medicaid.

Eligibility

Persons age 65+ or disabled, who have low income and low resources. You must be eligible for Part A to qualify. Enrollment in Part A is not required.

Income Limits

Individuals: \$1,001/month; Couples: \$1,348/month

Resource Limits

Individuals: \$7,280; Couples: \$10,930

Government Agency

Same as Medicare Part A.

Medicaid Full Coverage

Benefits

Comprehensive health care benefits, including coverage for hospitals, physicians, skilled nursing facility, health-related facility and home care.

Eligibility

Persons 65+, blind, disabled children under 21 or the caretaker relative of a dependent child who is experiencing deprivation of parental support.

Income Limits/Resource Limits

Income and resource limits depend on number of family members living in household.

For low income, without children:

Individuals: \$1,354/month; Couples: \$1,832/month

For families, blind, disabled or age 65+:

Individuals: \$825/month; Couples: \$1,209/month

Subject to Annual Resource Limits:

Individuals: \$14,850; Couples: \$21,750

Note: exempt from calculation are primary residence, car and some personal property.

Government Agency

Human Resources Admin.: 718-557-1399 or 877-472-8411

www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/#income

Medicaid Excess Income Program

Benefits

Medicaid coverage as described above, but on a month-to-month basis after the use of excess income to cover medical costs.

Eligibility

If you are eligible for Medicaid except for having excess income, and you can show that you have medical bills equal to your excess income in a particular month, Medicaid will pay your additional medical bills beyond that for the rest of that month. Must first apply for Medicaid, and be:

- 65+; or
- A child under 21 years old; or
- A parent living with child under 21 years old; or
- Pregnant; or
- Certified blind or disabled.

Income Limits

Individuals: Above \$825/month; Couples: Above \$1,209/month

Resource Limits

Individuals: \$14,850; Couples: \$21,750

Government Agency

Same as Medicaid.

Note: Anyone interested in Medicaid is encouraged to apply through NY State of Health, the official health plan marketplace. Call 855-355-5777 or visit <https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/>

Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB)

Benefits

Pays for Part B premiums only.

Eligibility

Persons aged 65+ or disabled who have lower income and resources. Must be eligible for Medicare Part A, but enrollment is not required. **Note:** If you have income from working, you may qualify for SLMB benefits even if your income is higher than the limits below.

Income Limits

Individuals: \$1,197/month; Couples: \$1,613/month

Resource Limits

Individuals: \$7,280; Couples: \$10,930

Note: Income may not be more than 20% above the federal income poverty level. There are other programs that may help pay for all or some of the Medicare Part B premium: QI and QDWI.

Government Agency

Same as Medicare Part A.

Social Security Retirement Benefits

Benefits

Monthly cash benefits based on years of employment and amount withheld from earnings.

Eligibility

If you were born in 1944 or earlier, you are already eligible for your full Social Security benefit. If you were born between 1943 and 1960, the age at which full retirement benefits are payable increases gradually to age 67.

Year of Birth	Full Retirement Age	Year of Birth	Full Retirement Age
1943-1954	66	1959	66 and 10 months
1955	66 and 2 months	1960 and later	67
1956	66 and 4 months	Note:	
1957	66 and 6 months	People born on Jan. 1 of any year	
1958	66 and 8 months	should refer to previous year.	

Income Limits

- No limit for persons who have reached full retirement age (FRA).
- For persons who have not reached FRA: \$15,720.
- For persons under FRA for the entire year, for every \$2 earned over the limit, \$1 will be withheld from benefits.
- In the year persons reach FRA, \$1 will be deducted in benefits for every \$3 earned over the limit of \$41,880, but only counting earnings before the month a person reaches FRA.

Resource Limits

None.

Government Agency

Social Security Administration: 800-772-1213; www.ssa.gov

Disability Benefits

Benefits

Payments based upon sufficient work prior to onset of disability.

Eligibility

Disabled individual of any age, with an impairment that is expected to keep him/her out of a customary occupation for a minimum of one year. Must have worked at least five out of the last ten years.

Income Limits/Resource Limits

None.

Benefit Limits

For individuals: \$1,090; For blind individuals: \$1,820

Government Agency

Same as SS Retirement Benefits.

Survivor Benefits

Benefits

Payments based upon work record of deceased.

Eligibility

Widow/widower aged 60+, widow/widower of any age caring for disabled child, or minor children under the age of 18 or a dependent of the deceased or divorced spouses.

Income Limits/Resource Limits/Government Agency

Same as SS Retirement Benefits.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Benefits

Monthly cash benefits to meet food, clothing, and shelter needs. Financed through general tax revenues, not the Social Security Trust Fund.

Eligibility

Persons over the age of 65, blind or disabled of any age who have low income and resources. Must be a U.S. citizen or lawfully admitted permanent resident prior to August 22, 1996.

Income Limits

Individuals living alone: \$733 + \$20*; Couples: \$1,100 + \$20*.

*First \$20 unearned income is excluded.

Resource Limits

Individuals: \$2,000. Couples: \$3,000. Exemptions: \$1,500 per individual for burial fund, a car per household, home primary residence, life insurance policies with face value of \$1,500 or less, personal and household goods, burial spaces for self and immediate family.

Government Agency

Same as SS Retirement Benefits.

Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage (EPIC)

Benefits

Expands Medicare Part D premium assistance for prescription drug coverage. EPIC covers all prescription drug coverage costs, and enrollees pay no more than a \$20 copayment for each prescription. Enrollees need not reach their coverage limit, or “doughnut hole,” in order to be eligible for this coverage.

Eligibility

NYS residents, 65+, who meet income limits. Must be enrolled in Medicare Part D, and cannot be receiving full Medicaid.

Income Limits

Fee Plan: Single: \$20,000 or less; Married: joint income \$26,000 or less.

Deductible Plan: Single: \$20,001-75,000; Married: joint income \$26,001-100,000

Resource Limits

None.

Government Agency

EPIC Helpline: 800-332-3742

www.health.ny.gov/health_care/epic/

New York Physician Profile

Benefits

Website created by the NYS Department of Health to provide information about practicing physicians. To perform a general search, type the full name of the doctor where indicated. You may access information on educational background, legal actions, health plans, hospital affiliation and more. If you prefer to speak to a customer service representative, a toll-free phone number is listed below.

Eligibility/Income Limits/Resource Limits

None.

Government Agency

NYS Department of Health: 888-338-6999, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.; www.nydoctorprofile.com

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (Formerly Food Stamps)

Benefits

Monthly allotment of benefits through a debit card system for purchasing nutritious food items; dollar value depends on household size and income.

Eligibility

Based on income, family size and household composition.

Income Limits

Monthly Gross Income for Individuals: \$1,265.

Monthly Gross Income for Households with Elderly or Disabled Member and Households with Dependent Care Expenses: \$1,945

Resource Limits

None, unless anyone in the household has been sanctioned or disqualified from SNAP, then resources may not exceed \$2,000.

Note: clients may own one vehicle of any value.

Government Agency

NYS Office of Temporary Disability Assistance: 311

1-800-342-3009 and press “1” for SNAP

Human Resources Administration, 718-557-1399

otda.ny.gov/programs/snap/#eligibility

Lifeline Telephone Service

Benefits

Reduces cost of basic telephone service to as little as \$1 a month.

Eligibility

Persons with an income at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or who are eligible to receive assistance benefits from at least one of these programs: Medicaid, SNAP, SSI, HEAP, Section 8, Veterans’ non-service related Disability Pension and Veterans’ Surviving Spouse Pension, TANF or Head Start.

Income Limits/Resource Limits

See eligibility.

Government Agency

Federal Communications Commission: www.fcc.gov/lifeline

Visit www.lifelinesupport.org or call the customer service line for your local phone company.

Reduced Fare MetroCard

Benefits

Reduced fare privileges on MTA NYC Transit-owned local route buses and subways, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Privileges on all local buses are available at all times, and on express buses anytime except weekday rush hours: Monday through Friday,

ASSEMBLYMEMBER LINDA B. ROSENTHAL

Invites you to attend *West Side Seniors Day* at the
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 2015 • 9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

Please join Assemblymember Rosenthal and the American Museum of Natural History for our annual West Side Seniors Day at the Museum where you will enjoy a presentation from a member of the Museum staff, a self-guided tour of the Museum's latest exhibition *Life at the Limits: Stories of Amazing Species*, the IMAX movie *Tiny Giants*, and access to 46 halls of the Museum. Boxed lunch will be served.

ATTENDANCE IS LIMITED, PLEASE RSVP TO 212-873-6368 TO ATTEND

Special Guest: Scott M. Stringer, New York City Comptroller

USE WESTON PAVILION ENTRANCE AT 79th STREET AND COLUMBUS AVE.

Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal secured a state grant for the American Museum of Natural History to help sponsor this event.

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**FREE NOTARY SERVICE AT MY DISTRICT
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 This newsletter was printed on recycled paper.

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6-10 a.m. and 3-7 p.m. Two of the following forms of identification are required: Valid New York State Driver's License, Medicare Card, Birth Certificate, Valid New York State Identification Card or Passport. At least one must contain a picture. Reduced fare Metro-Card automatically deducts correct reduced fare, and allows you to transfer for free between MTA NYC Transit subways and buses. 2015 Regular fare is \$2.75; 2015 Reduced Fare is \$1.35.

Eligibility Persons 65+ and disabled riders.

Income Limits/Resource Limits None.

Government Agency

MTA NYC Transit: 718-330-1234 or 511

<http://web.mta.info/nyct/fare/rfindex.htm>

Access-A-Ride (AAR)

Benefits

Provides transportation for people with disabilities who are unable to use public bus or subway service for some or all of their trips. It offers shared ride, door-to-door paratransit service. Provides "feeder service" – trips to and from fixed-route MTA NYC Transit bus stops – for people able to walk or wheel between 1 and 5 blocks. MTA NYC Transit administers AAR; private carriers under contract to NYC Transit provide service.

Eligibility Disabled riders. Eligibility is determined on a periodic basis, after review by independent medical professionals in consultation with disabled riders' medical provider.

Income Limits/Resource Limits None.

Government Agency

MTA NYC Transit: 877-337-2017, 718-393-4999 or 511

http://www.nyc.gov/html/mopd/html/resources/trans_aar.shtml

<http://web.mta.info/nyct/paratran/guide.htm>

School Tax Relief Exemption (STAR)

Note for Basic STAR only: All homeowners receiving a Basic STAR exemption must register with the New York State Tax Department in order to receive STAR exemptions.

Benefits

Provides property tax exemption (also known as the homestead exemption) for all NYS homeowners.

Eligibility Must own home (includes one-, two- and three-family homes and condominium and cooperative apartments) and home must be primary residence.

Enhanced STAR: Persons who are 65+ by December 31 of the year in which the exemption will begin.

Income Limits

Basic STAR: \$500,000 or less combined household income.

Enhanced STAR: \$83,300 or less for all owners, and owner's spouse residing at property.

Resource Limits None.

Government Agency New York City Department of Finance: 311

<http://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/property/star/index.htm>