STATE OF NEW YORK

6976

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

March 18, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. RAGA -- read once and referred to the Committee on Corporations, Authorities and Commissions

AN ACT to amend the public authorities law, in relation to extending the metropolitan transportation authority's half fare rate program to persons receiving benefits from the supplemental nutrition assistance program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "reduced fares for SNAP enrollees act".

§ 2. Legislative findings and intent. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is an essential government program that provides low-income individuals and families financial support to purchase groceries. This nutrition assistance is imperative for the health and well-being of the over one million New York recipients of SNAP. Those who receive SNAP are arguably one of the most vulnerable groups in the state, with a majority of their money being allocated to necessary household expenses. Importantly, SNAP recipients operate between tight fiscal margins: a nationwide Brookings study found that 33% of SNAP recipients with incomes less than $25,000 a year would not be able to pay for an unexpected $400 expense. SNAP recipients often live paycheck to paycheck, thus their reception of the 50% reduced fare will allow them to save money and help alleviate their public transportation costs. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) currently offers Reduced Fares- which offers up to a 50% discount on buses, subways and the LIRR- for those who are 65 or older or have qualifying disabilities. In New York City, low income individuals between the ages of 18 - 64 are able to receive a 50% discount on MTA fare through the Fair Fares program.

This act targets low-income families that do not qualify either for the MTA reduced fare or Fair Fare programs income guidelines, but will

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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add them using SNAP income guidelines. Currently, the SNAP benefits are extended to those at 145 percent of the federal poverty line (FPL) while Fair Fares benefits extended to those at 120 of the FPL. This means that an individual household at 145 percent of the FPL would miss qualifying for Fair Fare benefits by making a paltry six-thousand more dollars. In other words, with SNAP income guidelines being slightly higher than Fair Fare's guidelines, there could be households that do receive SNAP benefits, based solely on income and number of family members in their household, but are ineligible for MTA reduced fares due to restrictive Fair Fare income guidelines. Therefore, by implementing the new expanded reduced fare program that takes into account SNAP income guidelines, this adjustment would allow people who work and receive SNAP benefits to receive the reduced fare 50% benefit that live within the MTA region and would benefit and provide a transportation equity solution to assist with their costs of transportation.

§ 3. Subdivision 16 of section 1266 of the public authorities law, as amended by chapter 25 of the laws of 2000, is amended to read as follows:

16. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the authority and any of its subsidiary corporations shall establish and implement a half fare rate program for**:**

(a) persons enrolled in the supplemental nutrition assistance program; and

(b) persons with serious mental illness who are eligible to receive supplemental security income benefits as defined pursuant to title sixteen of the federal social security act and section two hundred nine of the social services law.

§ 4. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or before such effective date.