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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

***Statement in Response to City Failing to Timely Process
Critical Benefits, Including SNAP and Cash Assistance, for
Low-Income New Yorkers***

(NEW YORK, NY) - The Legal Aid Society released the following statement in response to the [Mayor's Management Report](#) (MMR), which revealed that the City, during Fiscal Year 2023, failed to timely process critical subsistence-level benefits for low-income New Yorkers, including both the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Cash Assistance benefits:

“The City’s performance in processing critical benefits for our clients in an economy with skyrocketing inflation rates is both outrageous and cruel, especially given the fact that SNAP benefits are federally funded. No low-income household should ever be forced to forgo groceries and other critical needs due to bureaucratic failures. The City, as required by law and a recent court order, must ensure that both SNAP and Cash Assistance benefits are processed in a timely manner to ensure that the rights of the New Yorkers who depend on these lifelines are upheld.”

Background:

According to the Mayor’s Management Report, which was released late Friday afternoon, the application processing time for SNAP benefits decreased from 60.1 percent in Fiscal Year 22 to 39.7 percent in Fiscal Year 2023. Additionally, the application processing time for Cash Assistance decreased from 82.3 percent in Fiscal Year 2022 to 28.8 percent in Fiscal Year 2023.

In July, Legal Aid, New York Legal Assistance Group, and Dechert LLP [secured](#) a [preliminary injunction](#) in [Forest et. al. v. the City of New York et. al.](#) – a class action lawsuit brought against

the City for failing to process applications and recertifications for SNAP and Cash Assistance within the 30-day timeframe required by federal and state law.

These benefits are essential for low-income people to purchase food and other basic needs. The processing delays have caused tens of thousands of families to face food instability and unnecessary hardships.

The court order requires the New York City Department of Social Services (DSS) and the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) to come in full compliance with all federal and state processing requirements for SNAP and Cash Assistance applications and recertifications, and eliminate the backlog of delays by March 2024.

The court order also includes a series of benchmarks and monitoring requirements that will be used to ensure that the City comes into full compliance. Additionally, the City will be required to provide monthly reports that will be used to assess their progress.

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 145 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org