

# New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance



## *Frequently Asked Questions about the Back-to-School Supplement*

### Who is receiving this supplement?

Families who received public assistance or food stamps in July 2009 are getting a one-time payment of \$200 per child (age 3-17) to help with back-to-school costs. This payment will help families cope with these tough economic times and help their children start the school year off on the right foot. Additionally, these payments will help stimulate local economies throughout New York State as families purchase school supplies.

### Where did this money come from?

The Open Society Institute and the Foundation to Promote Open Society have given \$35 million to New York State, enabling the State to get federal matching funds of up to \$140 million as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to make these payments.

### What can I use the money for?

Back-to-School money can be used to buy items such as books, pencils, pens, notebooks, calculators, backpacks, shoes, school uniforms, pants, shirts, skirts, dresses, and other essential school items.

### How will I be paid the money?

Your money has been paid directly into your Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cash account. If you receive food stamp benefits only, you can get the money from your EBT cash account using the same EBT card and PIN that you use for your food stamp benefits. This payment can be withdrawn through an ATM or, it can be spent at retail locations where EBT cards are accepted.

### How long do I have to spend the money?

This payment may expire if your cash account is not accessed within 90 days. You should check your cash balance so you can use this benefit before it expires. You may check your cash balance free of charge at an ATM, on the Internet at [www.ebtaccount.jpmorgan.com](http://www.ebtaccount.jpmorgan.com), or by calling the EBT Helpline at 1-888-328-6399.

### Is this just a one-time payment?

Yes. The Back-to-School money for your household is a one-time payment.

### Will this money affect my Food Stamp Benefits, Medical Assistance, Public Assistance or other benefits?

No. This one-time Back to School money will not affect your eligibility for the benefits you are currently receiving.

### Are there any shopping discounts I can receive?

Certain retailers may be offering discounts in the weeks before school starts, so please ask when you make your purchases. Also please check the New York State Consumer Protection Board's "Stretch Your Dollar" tips at [www.consumer.state.ny.us/syde\\_page.htm](http://www.consumer.state.ny.us/syde_page.htm).

### How can I find out about other benefits I might be eligible for – like cash assistance or help with emergency needs?

If you only receive food stamp benefits, please go to [www.mybenefits.ny.gov](http://www.mybenefits.ny.gov), the website to check your eligibility for other benefits such as cash assistance, help with rent arrears, Home Energy Assistance and various tax credits that might help you make ends meet during these difficult economic times.