



Legislation Text

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Int. No. 1382

By Council Members Rosenthal, Levin, Lander, Adams, Richards, the Public Advocate (Mr. Williams), Reynoso, Ayala, Salamanca, Gibson and Kallos

A Local Law in relation to auditing department of social services/human resources administration job and SNAP centers

Be it enacted by the Council as follows:

Section 1. Audit of job centers and SNAP centers. a. Definitions. For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

Additional wait time. The term “additional wait time” means the time between when a visitor has completed one appointment and is waiting to be called for another appointment regarding a different type of public assistance. Additional wait time begins at the end of one appointment and ends when the visitor is called to begin another appointment.

Checked-in. The term “checked-in” means that a visitor has made initial contact with the department at a job center or a SNAP center, either through a self-service kiosk or with a staff member responsible for keeping track of visitors, and has made such contact so that the department has a record, either written or electronic, of such visitor’s time of arrival at such center and the reason for their visit.

Department. The term “department” means the department of social services.

Job center. The term “job center” means any location designated by the department as a job center where individuals can complete an application for cash assistance in person.

SNAP center. The term “SNAP center” means any location designated by the department as a SNAP center where individuals can complete an application for the supplemental nutrition assistance program in person.

Total time. The term “total time” means the amount of time a visitor spends at a job center or SNAP center. Total time begins at the start of the visitor’s check-in time and ends when a visitor leaves the job center or SNAP center.

Visitor. The term “visitor” means any individual who, by prior appointment or walk-in, enters a job center or SNAP center to apply for public assistance, to receive assistance for an open public assistance case, or to receive assistance for a closed public assistance case.

Wait time. The term “wait time” means the amount of time a visitor spends waiting to be called for assistance after such visitor has checked-in to a job center or a SNAP center. Wait time begins at the start of the visitor’s checked-in time, and ends when a visitor is called to begin an appointment.

b. The department shall conduct an audit and make recommendations regarding operations, policies, and practices at job centers and SNAP centers, with the goal of reducing wait times. The audit shall include an analysis of:

1. The current wait times at each job center and SNAP center;
2. The current total wait times at each job center and SNAP center;

3. How many visitors do not get serviced on the same day they checked-in due to long wait time or long additional wait time;
 4. How many visitors are subject to additional wait time;
 5. The current additional wait time at each job center and SNAP center;
 6. The staff-to-visitor ratios at each job center and SNAP center;
 7. Feedback from visitors, including reports provided through the reporting mechanism required by subdivision c;
 8. The efficiency and ease of use of the department's hotlines, helplines, infolines, and general phone lines;
 9. The efficiency and ease of use of the department's website; and
 10. Visitors' access to technology in job centers and SNAP centers.
- c. The department's website shall include a mechanism for individuals to report any problems and deficiencies relating to the department's operations, policies, and practices at job centers and SNAP centers. Individuals making such reports shall not be required to provide personally identifying information.
- d. No later than September 1, 2019, the department shall submit to the mayor and the speaker of the council the findings and recommendations from the audit conducted pursuant to subdivision b of this section including a plan to address complaints received pursuant to subdivision c of this section. The plan shall include recommended standards of reasonableness in job and SNAP centers for wait times, staff-to-visitor ratios, and access to technology.

§ 2. This local law takes effect immediately and expires and is deemed repealed on May 1, 2020 or the day after submission of the reports required by a local law in relation to implementation of a plan based on findings of the audit of department of social services/human resources administration job and SNAP, as proposed in an introduction for the year 2019, whichever is later.

ACK/AM
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