

End Poverty Now: Increase Cash Assistance!
Support Crucial Bills & Help Ensure Reforms Are Included in This Year's State Budget
New York Cannot Afford to Wait!
(for more information about Cash Assistance, Campaign, & Contact Info, see reverse)

What can NYS Assemblymembers and Senators do to help end poverty and increase Cash Assistance?

Co-sponsor these bills & help make sure Cash Assistance increases for all are included in the Assembly and Senate One-House Budget Proposals and final 2025 New York State budget. The lowest-income New Yorkers will see an increase in their income and ability to afford to pay for basic needs and housing.

1. Increase Cash Benefits to Reflect Increased Cost of Living - A.5500 (Rosenthal)/S.5270 (Persaud)

- This bill would increase the basic needs allowance for Cash Assistance, which is supposed to cover necessities like clothing, diapers, hygiene products, over the counter medication, and transportation. At only \$336 per month for a household of 3, it is woefully inadequate. The basic needs allowance has not been updated since 2011, and has never kept pace with inflation
This bill increases the allowance to \$558 for a family of 3 and also indexes the benefits to inflation going forward.
- the bill also increases home energy allowances which have not been updated 1981 and 1986, respectively. For a household of two, the energy allowances are only \$39.50 per month - far below a monthly light bill.
This bill would grant a household of two \$121 a month for utilities.

2. Increase Cash Benefits for Homeless New Yorkers - A.5507 (Rosenthal)

- This legislation would ensure that homeless New Yorkers receive the same Cash Assistance benefits as New Yorkers who are housed. Cash Assistance grant levels for homeless New Yorkers in some shelters have not been increased in decades, since 1997. It is not fair for New York to penalize homeless New Yorkers with even more inadequate grant levels than everyone else.
- Currently individuals and families who reside in certain shelters only receive **\$45 per month** (or \$1.50 per day) in assistance for a single individual and **\$63 per month per household member** for families with children. These current grant levels are so abysmally low that families and individuals in these shelters cannot buy essential items like menstrual products, underwear, diapers, and laundry detergent. Although some shelters serve food, that does not mean that residents need less assistance for their basic needs.

3. Increase Rental Assistance for Cash Assistance Recipients – A.5543 (Rosenthal)/S.2982 (Kavanagh)

- This bill would increase Cash Assistance rent payments (the “shelter allowance”) up to 100% of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Fair Market Rent, just as Governor Hochul has approved for other State rental assistance programs.
- The shelter allowance amounts for families with children have not been increased in over 20 years – at the same time that rents have more than doubled. And the shelter allowances for single adults has not increased since 1988! When the State is facing increasing rates of

homelessness, the time to increase the shelter allowances is now.

- Currently, there is not a single habitable rental unit in the private market listed at or below the current shelter allowance anywhere in New York State, according to the most recent HUD Data. Because the shelter allowance is profoundly inadequate, recipients of Cash Assistance experience high rates of housing instability and homelessness. For example, a family of 3 in NYC with no other income is expected to rent an apartment for \$400 a month. A single adult is expected to rent an apartment for \$215.
- Federally subsidized housing and federal tenant-based rental assistance are not viable alternatives. Most waitlists for these programs are closed and are years long. Similarly, there are not enough state-funded rental supplements to meet the level of need.

What is “Cash Assistance”?

- Cash Assistance, also known as Public Assistance or welfare benefits, is a critical public benefit provided to low-income families and individuals across the State who have no or extremely low incomes. Cash Assistance benefits are a program of last resort, available for those who do not meet the strict eligibility criteria for programs like unemployment benefits and federal Social Security benefits for people with disabilities or elderly.
- Over 600,000 people in New York State receive Cash Assistance benefits. Many have disabilities or illnesses (and are waiting to become eligible for federal Social Security benefits, a process which can take years), are fleeing from domestic violence, or are providing caretaking for a family member and are unable to work.
- Cash Assistance benefits are funded by a combination of federal, state, and local *funding*. Benefit amounts are set by the State, not set by the federal government or the localities. New York State can and should increase Cash Assistance benefit levels now.

What is the End Poverty Now: *Increase Cash Assistance campaign*?

- *The End Poverty Now: Increase Cash Assistance campaign is a wide-ranging coalition of groups committed to increasing the meager Cash Assistance amounts that have kept New Yorkers across the State trapped in extreme poverty for decades. In January 2024, more than 84 organizations, including anti-poverty groups, legal services organizations, faith-based groups, and member-led groups of Cash Assistance recipients, signed on to our letter to Gov. Kathy Hochul outlining the urgent need to increase the grants in this year’s budget. <https://legalaidnyc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Letter-to-Governor-Hochul-Regarding-Crucial-Need-for-Increases-in-Cash-Assistance.pdf>*
- As the cost of living, inflation, and prices have risen dramatically in recent years, it is critical that New York take action to increase Cash Assistance benefit levels for our lowest income families and individuals. The maximum monthly Cash Assistance grant leaves households in extreme poverty - trying to survive on less than \$3 per day.

For more information, contact:

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