

Many families are eligible for food stamps and don't even know it

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More than 200,000 [Brooklyn](#) families are eligible for food stamps - but don't know it and aren't getting the aid, city officials have found.

The families are part of a citywide population of 600,000 families who could get federal money for food stamps if they applied, a City Council study found.

Sunset Park is the most underserved neighborhood in the borough, with about 17,000 families who receive [Medicaid](#) but have not applied for food stamps.

"We are leaving money on the table in [Washington](#)," said [City Council Speaker Christine Quinn](#) at a press conference yesterday at the food pantry of [Hanson Place Central United Methodist Church](#).

"With skyrocketing food prices adding to the burden of rising rents, gas prices and other costs, hard working New Yorkers are forced to stretch their dollar further," she said.

The application process for Medicaid and food stamps are similar - but an estimated 635,819 [New York](#) households are not taking advantage of both forms of federal aid.

The City Council found that more than 2 million New Yorkers were enrolled in Medicaid, but only about 1 million had applied for food stamps.

Advocates have charged the city hasn't done enough to reach out to food stamp-eligible families or to apply for the aid.

While Brooklyn has the highest number of families who could get food stamps, there are 197,844 families in [Queens](#), 111,869 in the [Bronx](#), 91,370 in [Manhattan](#) and 21,287 on [Staten Island](#) who are also eligible.

"More Brooklyn residents who are trying to survive day by day didn't think or know they were eligible for food stamps," said City Council Member Letitia James (D-[Fort Greene](#)). "But these families do qualify."

Council officials said they would reach out to those Brooklyn residents who are receiving Medicaid but not food stamps to let them know they're eligible.

"There's a growing problem of hunger in our city," Quinn said. "Now we have a road map to reduce hunger in New York by connecting New Yorkers to a federal program that is their right."

Council staff said they would send letters and contact people at local supermarkets and nursing homes.

The federal government has allotted \$200 per family per month for food stamps, according to [Joel Berg](#), Executive Director of [New York City](#) Coalition Against Hunger.

Berg said more needs to be done to end hunger in the city, but this "is one huge step."