PETITION: Save Harlem SNAP Center

Total Signatures In-Person and Online:
383

The Safety Net Project and Safety Net Activists recently learned that the St. Nicholas SNAP (food stamp) Center in Central Harlem will close on June 28th 2019. While this information has not been posted publicly on the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) website, benefits recipients received the attached notice this past month.

With the closure of the St. Nicholas Center, there will remain only a single SNAP Center (the East End Center) for over 77,000 SNAP recipients in Harlem. SNAP recipients already face many obstacles in obtaining and maintaining benefits and closing the St. Nicholas Center will further increase the hardships recipients face. We also know from experience that the East End Center already struggles to adequately assist benefit recipients due to high-need and insufficient staffing.

As an organization that advocates for fundamental resources for underserved and marginalized communities, we are very concerned about the negative impact that this center’s closing will have on the predominantly Black and Latinx, Harlem community. The St. Nicholas closure will hit hardest those who are already most vulnerable, including seniors, people who experience homelessness, and disabled New Yorkers. It is of note that the St. Nicholas Center is just under a mile away from the East End Center, which is located in East Harlem. A distance of that length, which spans the west to the east side of Manhattan, is a major change and hardship for many individuals who face difficulties traveling.

This center’s closure follows the closure of the Fort Greene and North Brooklyn SNAP Centers in September 2018. These closures do not come in response to a decreasing need for SNAP and were also announced without advance notice or community input.

We are reaching out for your help in fighting this closure, which is part of a larger pattern of shrinkage of SNAP offices under the De Blasio administration. It is an attack on New York City’s social safety net with the ultimate goal of reducing SNAP centers to the smallest possible number through an over-reliance on technology.