



How Do I Recertify for Public Assistance?

WHAT IS RECERTIFICATION?

Every person who receives public assistance benefits must renew these benefits at least once a year. The government calls this process “recertification” and it must be done promptly in order to continue to receive benefits.

For some benefits, including cash assistance, you will need to recertify your eligibility every six months. NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) will send a mail-in Recertification/Eligibility Questionnaire in the fifth month. Households **must** return the form by the 10th day of the sixth month. The form may be returned in the reply envelope provided by HRA, or bring the completed form to your local job center.

If you do not complete recertification, you will lose your public assistance benefits. If you fail to return the form, HRA will give you 10-day notice that you will lose your benefits. If you do not respond to that notice, you will lose your benefits.

You will also be given notice if the recertification results in a negative action for any of the programs. This notice must be postmarked at least 10 days prior to the effective date of the action.

Once a year you will be required to come in for a face-to-face interview. If you get such a recertification notice in the mail you **must go** to the appointment, even if it’s been less than a year since your last one.

The **recertification notice** must tell you the place, date, and time of your appointment, how to get there, what documents to bring, and what will happen if you miss your appointment. Sometimes the notice will also tell you who to report to once you get there. If you have previously provided the HRA with documents that never change, like your birth certificate or social security card, you do **not** have to keep bringing them in to each appointment.

DO NOT MISS YOUR
RECERTIFICATION APPOINTMENT
OR YOU **WILL** LOSE YOUR
BENEFITS!

When you receive your appointment notice for the face-to-face interview you will also receive your “recertification application”. This application is how you will recertify your public assistance benefits. Fill out the application, noting **any changes** in your household--for example, changes in income, gaining or losing a household member, and owing back rent--and **any special needs** you may have, including any language issues you may have. Be sure to **SIGN AND DATE** the application and bring it to your interview. Make a copy for yourself.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW?

Report to your interview at the specified time and place. You will meet with your caseworker or another HRA person. **Write down the name of the person who meets with you** if his/her name wasn't on your recertification notice.

The caseworker should make **copies** of your documents and **return the originals to you**. Bring a list of every document you bring to your interview so that you can make sure you get them all back. Make sure that **BOTH SIDES** of each document are copied.

If you are unable to get any of the documents or any of the information that HRA has requested, HRA must give you ten days to obtain it. If you aren't going to be able to get this information (for example, because you don't have money to pay the fee for a birth certificate), be sure to say so, both on your application and at your interview, and ask for help. **HRA must help you** obtain documents that you are having difficulty obtaining on your own.

HOW DO I FIND OUT IF I AM RECERTIFIED FOR PUBLIC BENEFITS?

You will receive a notice of the HRA's decision in your case. If the recertification results in a negative action for any of the programs, this notice must be postmarked at least 10 days prior to the effective date of the action. Read the notice carefully. If you disagree with the decision, you must ask for a fair hearing immediately.

HOW DO I GET A FAIR HEARING?

You should request a fair hearing immediately. You have **60 days** to request a fair hearing from the date you receive the Notice of Intent for your public assistance case. You should also request "Aid Continuing." Aid Continuing is your right to continue to receive benefits until a decision is made after the fair hearing. However, **you must request Aid Continuing within 10 days of the notice.**

You can request a fair hearing and aid to continue in the following ways:

- Going to 14 Boerum Place, 1st Floor Brooklyn, New York 11201
- Calling 800-342-3334
- Visiting: <http://otda.ny.gov/hearings/request/#online>
- Faxing a fair hearing request to 518-473-6735
- Writing to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Office of Administrative Hearings, P.O. Box 1930, Albany, NY 12201-1930

Be sure to have the notice on hand with you when you request a fair hearing and/or aid to continue. **Keep copies of everything you send.** If you have already been sanctioned, but you have a good cause for failing to comply, you should still request a fair hearing.

WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

You may call Mobilization for Justice, Inc.'s Government Benefits Project at 212-417-3732 on Mondays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**DISCLAIMER: This fact sheet gives general information
for NYC residents; it is NOT legal advice.**