



Barriers to Food Stamp: Findings from Data and Reports from Local Programs

Presented to OTDA

May 19, 2009

Nutrition Consortium of New York State



Agenda

- Background/Purpose
- Methodology
- Findings
 - I. Application/Access
 - II. Eligibility Process
 - III. Receiving Benefits
- Recommendations/Feedback and Discussion

Background

- Nutrition Consortium of NYS sub-contracted with Community Based Organizations (CBO) through out NYS to identify barriers to Food Stamps
- The Board of Nutrition Consortium of NYS made a request to analyzed the data over time to identify prevalent, persistent barriers across the state
- Funded by and Robert Sterling Clark (RSC) Foundation to analyze the data and articulate recommendations based on the findings

Purpose

- Gain an understanding of common barriers to receiving Food Stamp
- Understand regional similarities/differences
- Understand trends over time
- Develop recommendations based on the analyses
- Work with OTDA to eliminate barriers



Methodology



Data Sources

1. Quarterly Reports from CBO

- Identifying the types and number of barriers during a quarter
- A list of 15 barriers plus a space to indicate any other barriers
- Reports covering 4 years (2000-2001; 2001-2002; 2002-2003 and 2003-2004)

2. Annual Reports over 4 years

- To identify 1 systemic barrier and discuss what has been done to overcome this barrier.

Data Analysis

- Worked with Center for Human Services Research, School of Social Welfare at the University at Albany:
<http://www.albany.edu/chsr/>
- Data were entered into a statistical software package
- ‘Other’ was recoded into existing barriers



Data Analysis Cont.

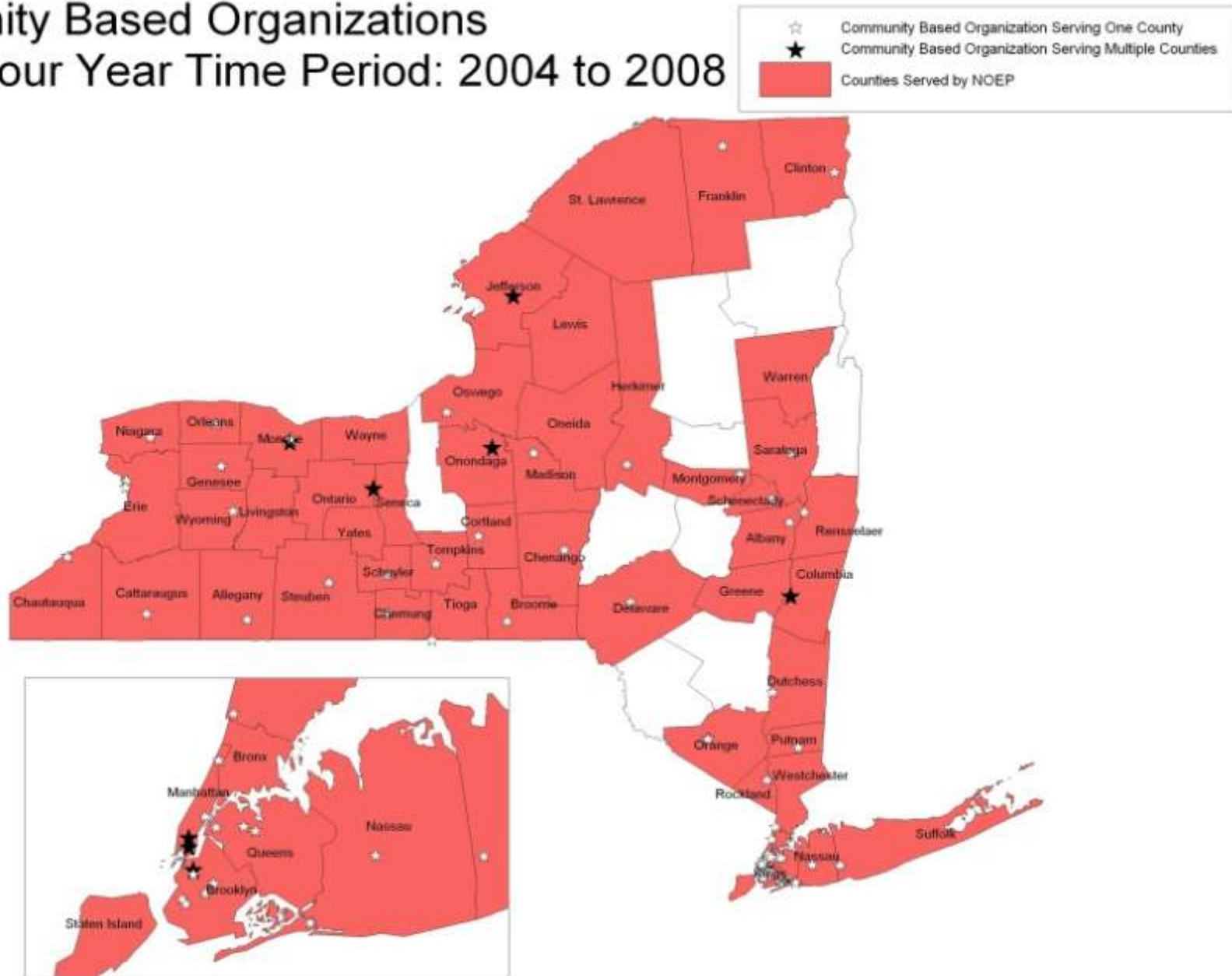
- Descriptive analysis
 - Identified key barriers
 - Developed a framework for key barriers
 - Access, Eligibility and Benefits
- Comparative analysis
 - Trends over the four years
 - Geography/Location
 - NYC, Upstate Urban and Upstate Rural



Sample

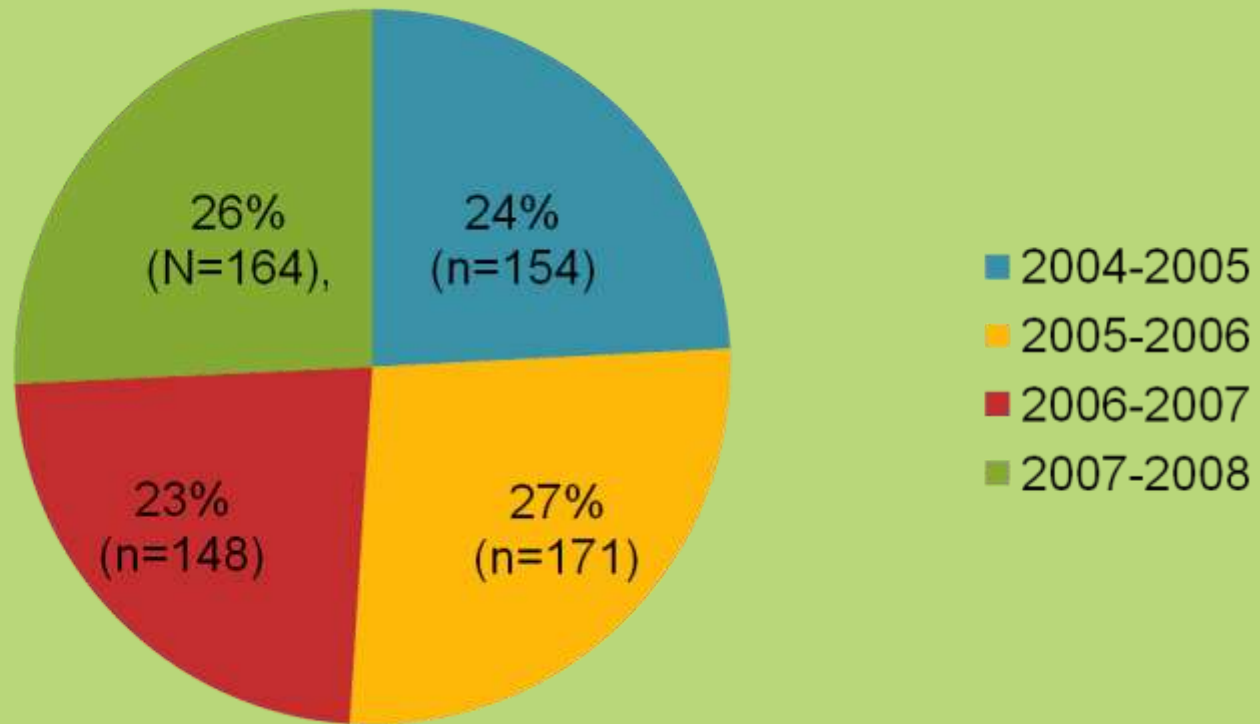
- Number of CBO represented: 73
- Number of Quarterly reports: 637
 - There were some missing reports
- Number of Annual Reports: 216
 - Of these 83 were reviewed (38%)

Community Based Organizations Over a Four Year Time Period: 2004 to 2008



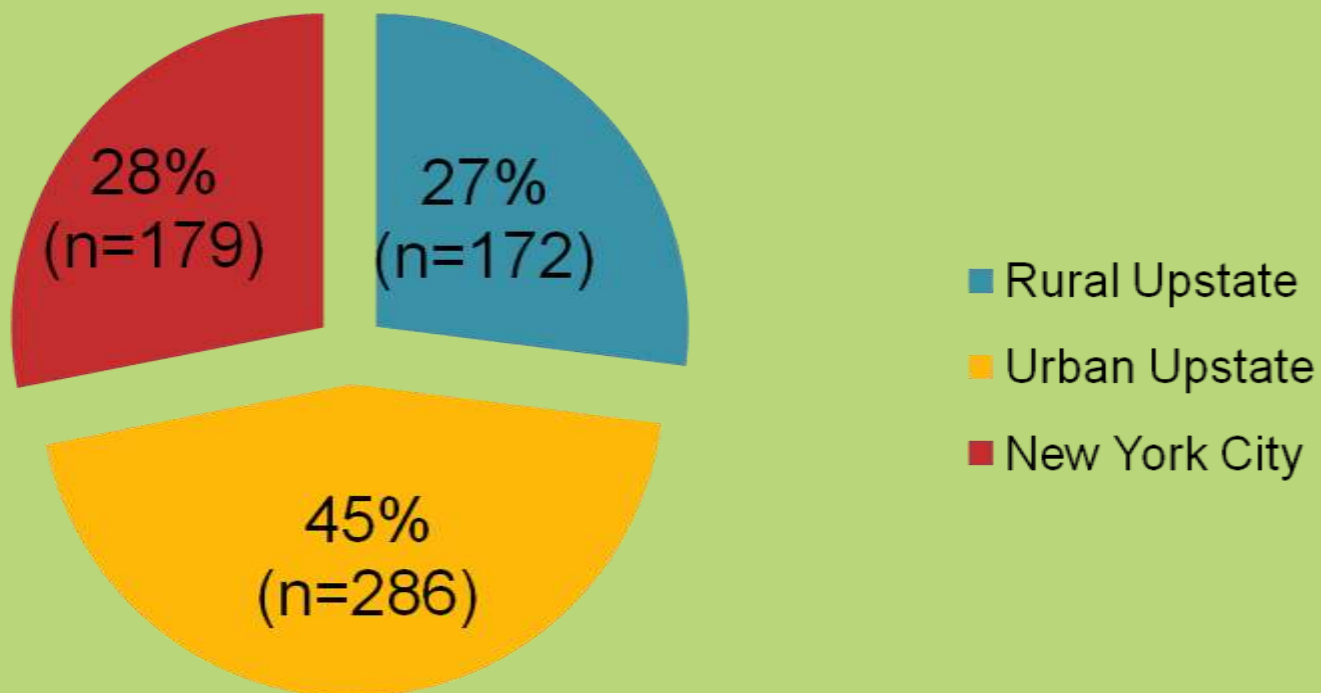
Sample Characteristics

Breakdown of Quarterly Reports by Year



Sample characteristics

Breakdown of Quarterly Reports by Region



Findings:

Access

Eligibility

Benefits

I. Findings on Access Barriers

Access Barrier is anything that interrupts process of obtaining and submitting an application for the Food Stamp Program

- 1) Face to Face Interview Not Waived
- 2) Same Day Application Not Accepted



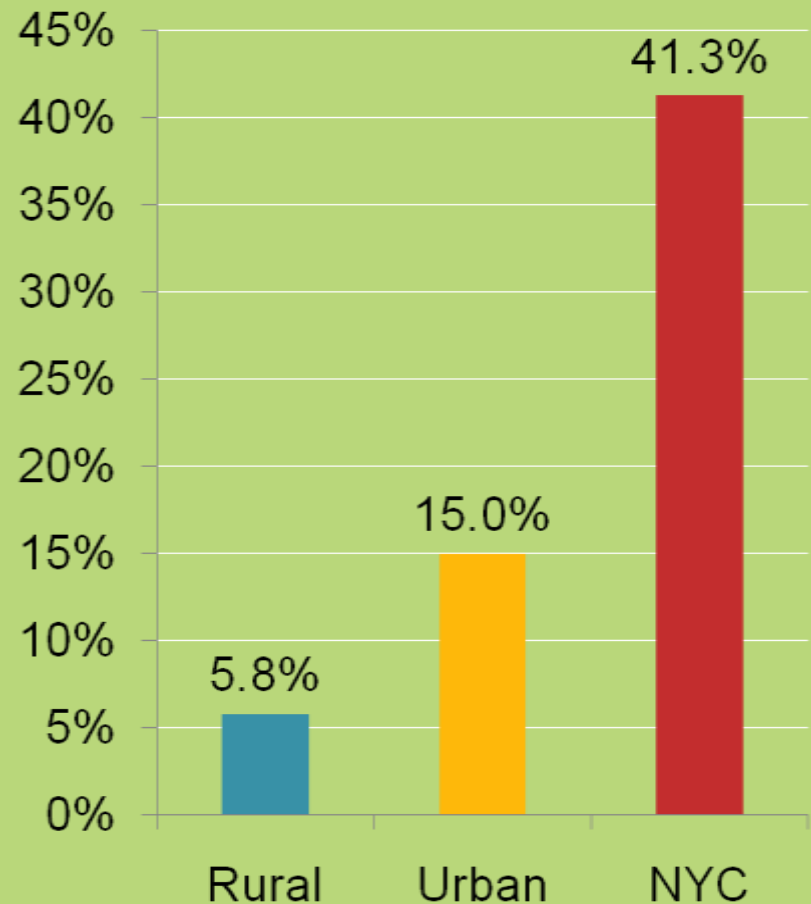
Face to Face Interview Not Waived



- DSS refuses to waive in-office interview for transportation issues. Clients were expected to find a ride or appoint a representative
- Interview was not waived for a working single mom with 4 kids.

Same Day Application Not Accepted

- Clients were told to return the next day since the office was not open that afternoon and all interview times were taken with earlier applicants.



II. Findings on Eligibility Barriers

Eligibility Processing Barrier is anything that negatively affects process of determining eligibility for Food Stamp or any incorrect determination process

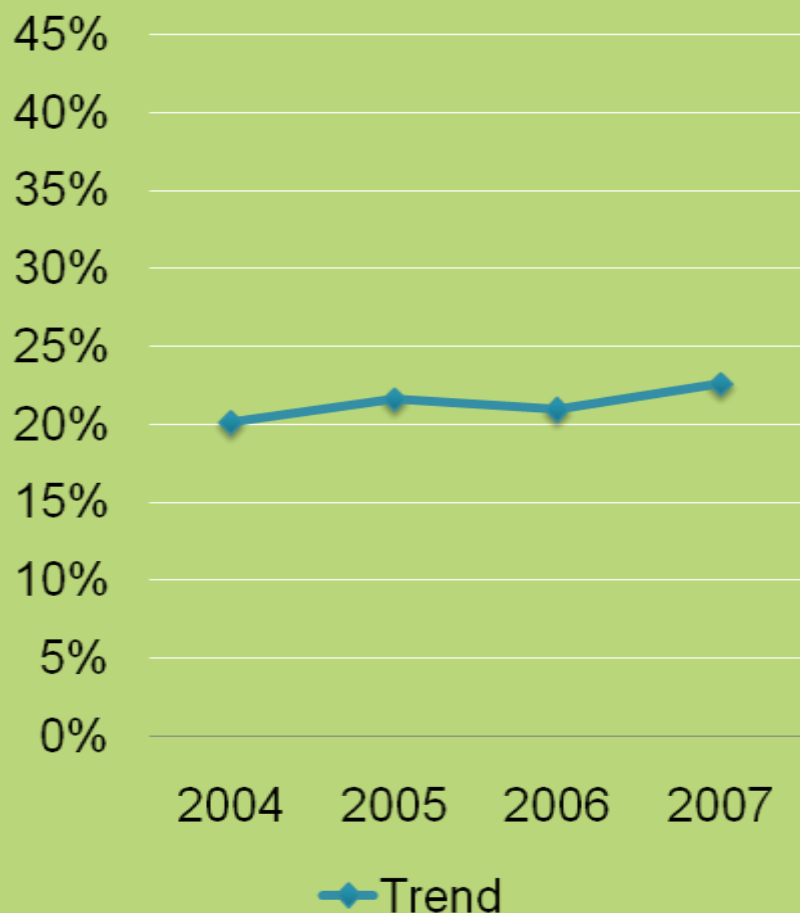
- 1) Excessive Documentation required
- 2) Failed to Assist with documentation
- 3) Special population
 - Elderly and disabled
 - Immigrants

Excessive Documentation Required



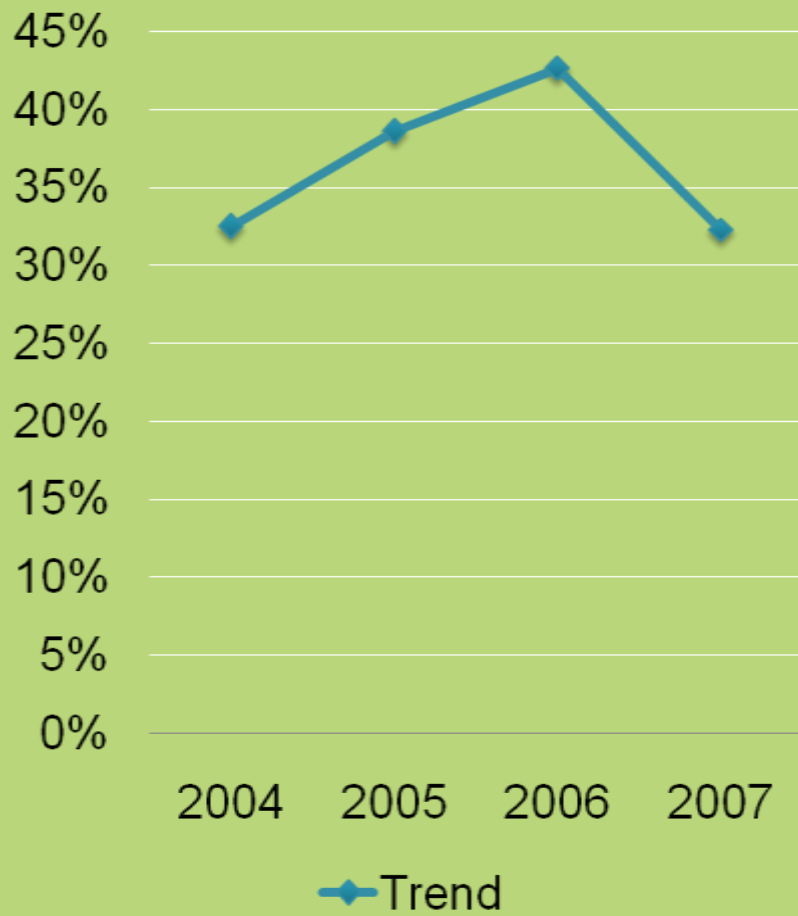
- Requiring third party statement to establish residency
- Requiring birth certificate when driver's license and SS card have been provided
- Asking 'Categorically Eligible' applicants for documents proving resources

Fails to Assist with Application Documents



- A client wasn't able to get a statement from his landlord and LDSS didn't offer information on collateral proof.
- LDSS worker could have pulled needed missing documents (such as SS card) from relatives case but did not.

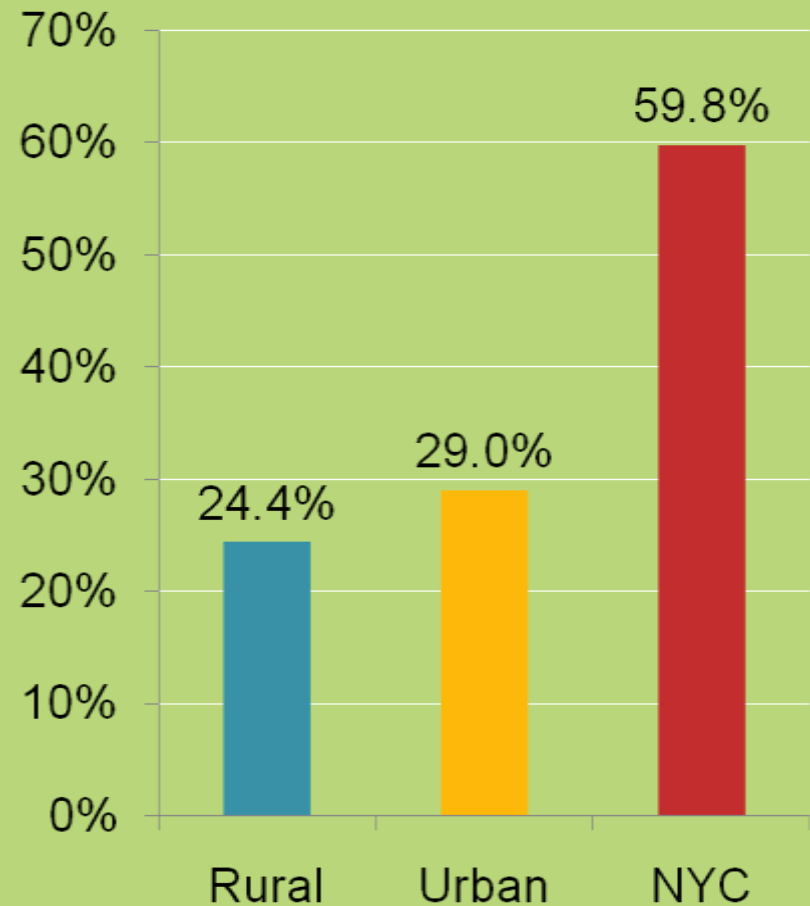
Special Population: Elderly, Disabled, and Immigrants



- Medicaid spend down was not counted as medical expense.
- Senior clients being denied for being over resourced when money in bank is being used for living expenses and/or for burial funds.
- LDSS improperly applied medication deductions for one senior and improperly capped the medical expense deduction for another senior.

Special Population: Elderly, Disabled, and Immigrants

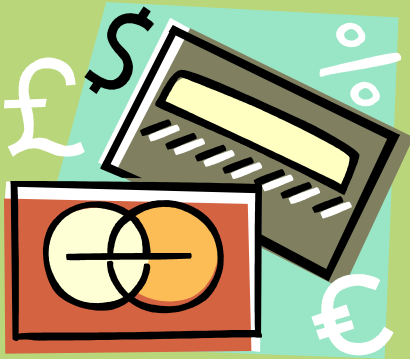
- Need for case workers who speak the same language as those in community served
- Ineligible immigrants were improperly discouraged from applying on behalf of eligible household members



III. Findings on Receiving Benefits

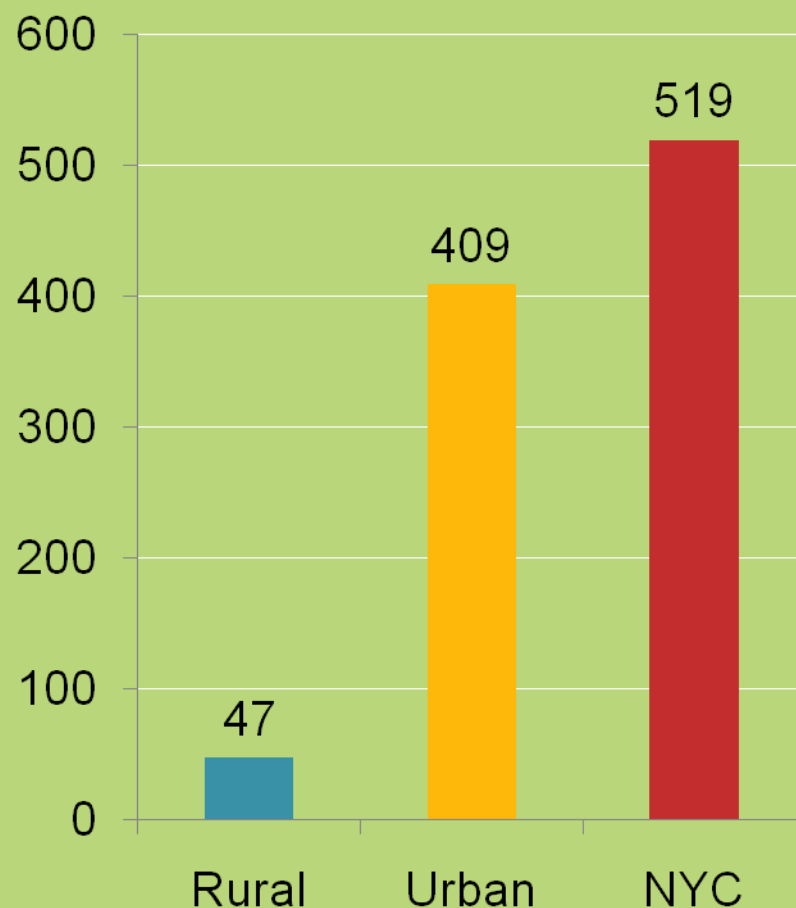
Benefit Barrier is anything that negatively affects food stamp recipients from receiving their monthly benefit allotment.

- 1) EBT Issues
- 2) Ongoing FS not issued within 30 days
- 3) Expedited Benefits Not Issued



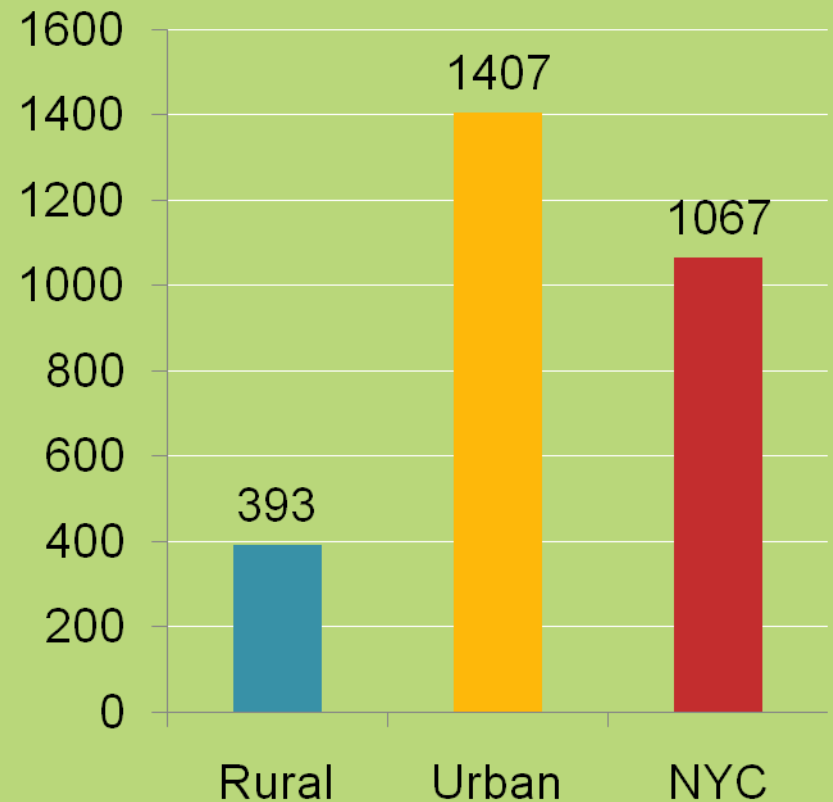
Expedited Benefits Not Issued

- LDSS failed to use the mandatory expedited screening form resulting in 5 eligible cases not receiving expedited benefits.
- LDSS reorganized the processing of Expedited Food Stamps and as a result training may be needed.



Ongoing FS Not Issued within 30 days

- Used 30 business days instead of 30 consecutive days
- Many clients (52) waited longer than 30-45 days



EBT issues



- Clients experienced EBT transaction errors when trying to purchase food at stores.
- LDSS failed to issue a temporary EBT card ensuing in client's inability to access allotment.
- Some clients didn't receive EBT card and case had already been opened

Barriers by Region



Rural Upstate New York

- #1 Ongoing FS Not Issued (28%)
- #2 Excessive Documentation (27%)
- #3 Special Population (24%)
- #4 Face to Face interview not waived (23%)

Urban Upstate New York

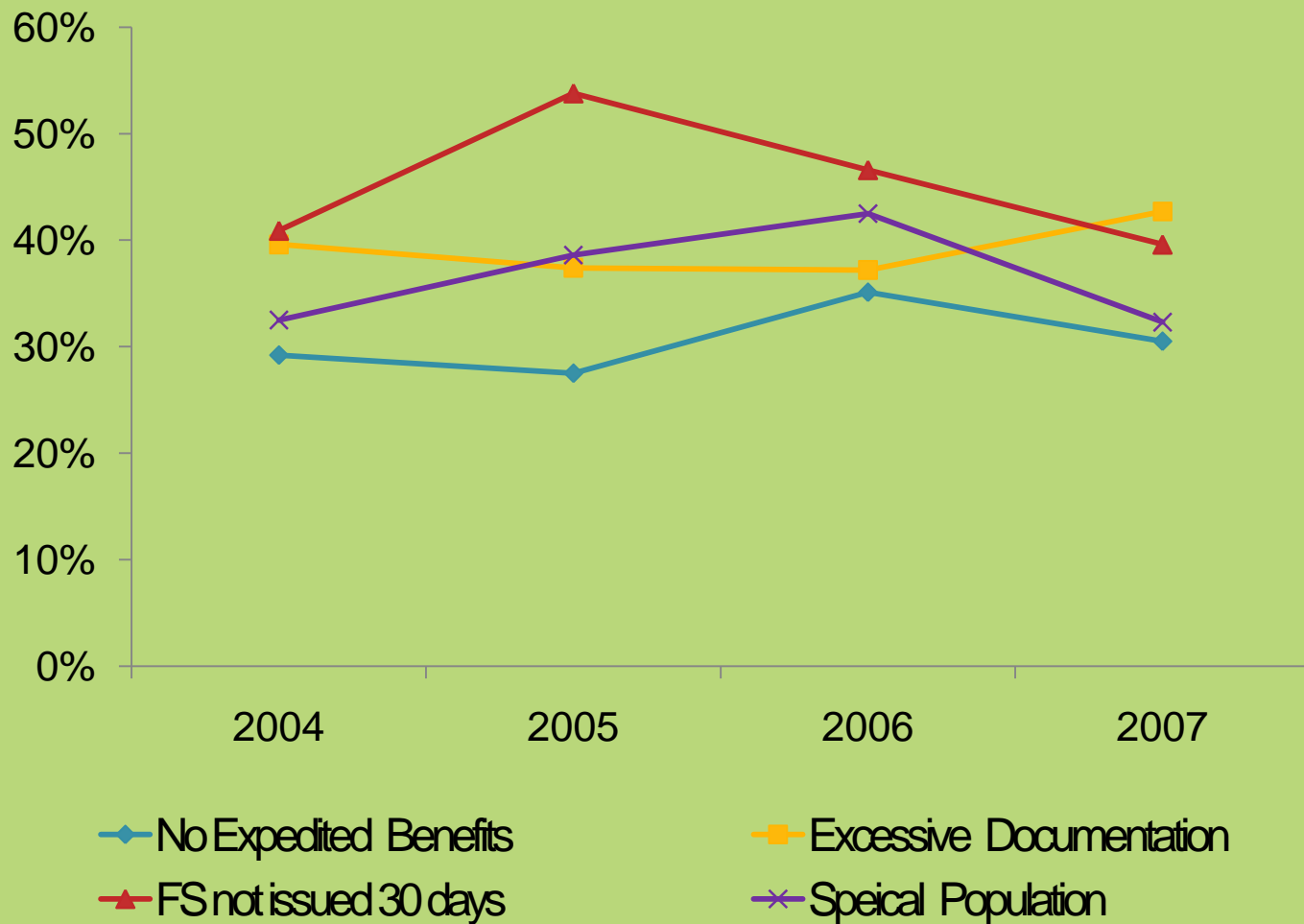
- #1 Ongoing FS Not Issued (49%)
- #2 Excessive Documentation (32%)
- #3 Expedited Benefits not issued (32%)
- #4 Special Population (29%)



New York City

- #1 Excessive Documentation (62%)
- #2 Special population (60%)
- #3 EBT issues (58%)
- #4 Ongoing FS Not Issued (56%)

Persistent Challenges



Recommendations, Feedback and Discussion

Contact Information

- Nutrition Consortium of NYS, Inc.
 - Linda Bopp, Executive Director
 - Dawn Secor, Food Stamp Specialist
 - Casey Dinkin, Manager of Communications and Advocacy
 - 518-436-8757
- Center for Human Services Research
 - Eunju Lee, Ph. D
 - Lara Kaye, Ph. D
 - Yi Yi Chen, MS
 - 518 -442-5773 or elee@uamail.albany.edu