**ERIE COUNTY, NY—** The Erie County Department of Social Services (“ECDSS”) has developed remote service delivery options to meet community needs while reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission among clients and staff. ECDSS is now promoting remote service channels through a social media campaign entitled “We can help you from home” to highlight the many ways in which Erie County residents can access social services from the safety of their homes. In-person visits to ECDSS offices are now only necessary in very limited circumstances, such as homelessness and immediate lack of food. All visitors to county offices must wear a mask.

“The programs and services provided by our Department are vital to the residents of Erie County,” **said Social Services Commissioner Marie Cannon**. “It is essential for us to inform the public about the many ways they can access our services without having to travel to our offices during this pandemic.”

ECDSS offers the following remote service channels to ensure that social services are accessible to the most vulnerable Erie County residents without the need to travel to county offices:

**HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program)**: Apply online at [www.mybenefits.ny.gov](http://www.mybenefits.ny.gov/) , download an application at [www.erie.gov/heap](http://www.erie.gov/heap) , request an application by calling 716-858-7644, or request an application by emailing heaphotline@erie.gov .

**Temporary (Cash) Assistance:** Apply online at [www.mybenefits.ny.gov](http://www.mybenefits.ny.gov/) , download an application at [www.erie.gov/temporaryassistance](http://www.erie.gov/temporaryassistance) , request an application online at [www.erie.gov/temporaryassistance](http://www.erie.gov/temporaryassistance) , or call 716-858-8000 to request an application.

**Emergency Services**: Visit [www.erie.gov/emergencyTA](http://www.erie.gov/emergencyTA)  to learn about the types of assistance available. Eligibility interviews are conducted by telephone the same day applications are received.

**SNAP (Food Stamps):** Apply online at [www.mybenefits.ny.gov](http://www.mybenefits.ny.gov/) , download an application at [www.erie.gov/snap](http://www.erie.gov/snap) , or request an application by calling 716-858-7239.

**Day Care Assistance**: Applications for day care assistance are available online at <https://www2.erie.gov/socialservices/index.php?q=daycare> , or by calling 716-858-8953.

**Mobile Document Upload**: ECDSS accepts documentation from clients via the NYDocSubmit app. NYDocSubmit is available in the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store. The app allows users to photograph a document and upload it to the Department along with identifying case information. Documentation can be accepted on Temporary (Cash) Assistance, SNAP, Medicaid, and HEAP cases. While applications must be submitted through the usual channels, documents such as landlord statements, proof of identity, and proof of income may be submitted through NYDocSubmit.

**Adult Protective Services**: Any concerned person, family member, friend, neighbor, law enforcement officer, health professional, clergy or financial institution employee who observes an individual having difficulty in providing for their most basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or personal safety are urged to call Adult Services at [716] 858-6877 to inquire about making a referral.

**Child Welfare Services**: Concerns about the safety of any child in our community may be reported to the Statewide Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect at 1-800-342-3720. If an individual believes that a child is at imminent risk of harm, the call should be directed to 911.

For more information about the Erie County Department of Social Services, visit [www.erie.gov/socialservices](http://www.erie.gov/socialservices) .