

NEWS



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MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Room 216 - City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

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www.phila.gov

Tuesday, September 16, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAYOR NUTTER, STATE AGENCIES ANNOUNCE BENEPHILLY INITIATIVE

Philadelphia, September 16 — This afternoon Mayor Michael A. Nutter and officials from the Pennsylvania Departments of Aging and Public Welfare announced BenePhilly, a joint initiative to enroll the thousands of low-income Philadelphians eligible for, but not receiving, valuable Federal and State benefits. BenePhilly will initially focus on the more than 60,000 older Philadelphians who are eligible for but not enrolled in benefits including the PACE prescription drug program, Food Stamps and the State property tax and rent rebates. All together older Philadelphians are missing out on more than \$134 million in Federal and State benefits each year.

"BenePhilly's goal is to sign Philadelphians up for more than \$15 million in annual Federal and State benefits by December 31, 2008," said Mayor Nutter. "Getting this money would have a huge benefit not only for the seniors living on a fixed income but also for the economy of our City."

"I am proud to stand with Mayor Nutter and work with City, State and Federal programs to insure that benefits get to the people of Philadelphia. BenePhilly is an example of government working together, the way it should," said Pennsylvania Secretary of Aging Nora Dowd Eisenhower.

BenePhilly will assist seniors in enrolling through innovative and unprecedented outreach efforts. BenePhilly has begun sending letters from the Mayor to seniors who are unenrolled but believed to be eligible. These letters are followed by a recorded phone call from the Mayor informing them of an 800 number to call for assistance from someone in Philadelphia. If the senior does not respond, they will receive a live follow-up call. Much of the funding for this initiative comes from the State in coordination with the City.

“I am pleased that the changes that the Department of Public Welfare is making will enable more Philadelphians to benefit from needed nutrition and other assistance,” said Secretary Estelle Richman. “BenePhilly comes at just the right time.”

“AARP is pleased that the State and City governments are working together to ensure a greater number of low-income Philadelphia residents will receive much needed benefits,” said Dick Chevrefils, AARP Pennsylvania State Director. “BenePhilly will offer great assistance to the thousands of low income residents who will now get real access to benefits.”

To learn more about BenePhilly or how to enroll in benefit programs, please contact the City or call one of the numbers below.

Key Phone Numbers

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| BenePhilly assistance: | 800-236-2194 M-F 9am-5pm |
| Food Stamps assistance: | 215-430-0556 (Coalition Against Hunger Hotline) |
| Economic Stimulus checks: | 866-234-2942 (Deadline is October 15; IRS Hotline) |
| Energy Assistance (LIHEAP): | 800-692-7462 |