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NEWS IN BRIEF

Federal Judge Approves Food Stamp Processing Settlement

The settlement of a 4-year-old lawsuit over delays in processing food stamps in New York City was approved yesterday. Southern District Judge Robert W. Sweet gave the green light to the agreement, which was reached last month between lawyers for the city and the New York Legal Assistance Group, the National Center for Law and Economic Justice and the **Urban Justice Center**. The city agreed to abide by deadlines for processing applications, including expediting applications for families most at need. The settlement also ensures that people experiencing delays are provided a mechanism to seek relief and requires the city to post signs in food stamp centers giving the time frame for processing applications. Judge Sweet will retain jurisdiction to enforce the settlement over the next four years. -- Mark Hamblett