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Selfhelp Community Services, Councilmember Sandra Ung, NYPD, and Department of Investigation Host Workshop to Combat Rising EBT Skimming Scams

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NEW YORK, NY — November 12, 2025 — In response to a dramatic increase in Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) skimming incidents across New York City, **Selfhelp Community Services**, in partnership with **New York City Councilmember Sandra Ung**, the **New York City Police Department (NYPD)**, and the **New York City Department of Investigation (DOI)**, hosted an **EBT Skimming Prevention Workshop** today for older adults at the **Latimer Gardens Older Adult Center** in Flushing.

The workshop educated participants about EBT skimming — a fast-growing form of financial fraud that has silently drained millions in food and cash benefits from vulnerable residents, particularly older adults. EBT skimming occurs when criminals secretly install devices on card readers or ATMs to capture card numbers and PINs. These criminals then replicate stolen data to create counterfeit cards or conduct unauthorized withdrawals, often before victims even realize the theft.

Between August 2023 and March 2025, New York City’s Department of Social Services processed over **142,000 SNAP reimbursement applications** for EBT theft victims, reimbursing more than **\$43.7 million** in stolen benefits, according to a recent DOI report. That funding safety net has since ended, leaving thousands exposed without recourse since federal reimbursement for post-2024 thefts expired.

During the workshop, experts from Selfhelp, NYPD 109th Precinct’s Crime Prevention Division, NYPD Financial Crimes Unit, DOI, and NYC Department of Social Services demonstrated how skimming devices operate, how to recognize them at ATMs or store checkouts, and simple protective steps to avoid becoming a victim. Participants learned how to check transaction histories, shield PIN entries, identify suspicious card readers, and freeze their card if it has been compromised.

“Skimming is a particularly insidious crime because it targets individuals who can least afford to lose their benefits — many of whom rely on these funds for groceries and essentials,” said **Stuart Kaplan, CEO of Selfhelp Community Services**. “Our mission at Selfhelp is to protect and empower older adults, ensuring they have the knowledge and tools to safeguard their financial independence. This workshop is one important way we stand shoulder to shoulder with our community in the fight against fraud.”

“My office has helped an overwhelming number of constituents who have had their SNAP benefits stolen by thieves who skimmed information from their EBT cards, and in many cases we were able to get those funds reimbursed,” said **New York City Councilmember Sandra Ung**. “But with the expiration of the federal program that provided reimbursements, it is more important than ever to learn how to prevent theft from happening in the first place. These crimes are not only upsetting, they are devastating for older adults who depend on these funds to buy groceries and meet basic needs. By staying informed and

vigilant, we can make sure fewer people fall victim to this crime. Thank you to the partners who helped organize this important workshop and for the work they do every day to support our community's older adults."

"New Yorkers who receive cash and food assistance via Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards can protect their benefits from theft via skimming with a few simple steps. This team effort to educate the public, in particular older adults, is an important initiative to empower benefit recipients to identify and avoid this type of fraud, which already has resulted in the theft of millions of dollars of critical public assistance. As DOI's recent report on skimming makes clear, until EBT cards are chip-enabled, the best defense against skimming is public awareness. I want to thank our partners involved in this event that gives the public essential tools to protect themselves," said **DOI Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber**.

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