



Testimony of Lisa Fitzpatrick, Chief Program Officer, New York City Human Resources Administration

Oversight: Hunger and Food Insecurity Hearing New York City Council's Committees on General Welfare and Aging

January 25, 2017

Good morning. Thank you Chairpersons Levin and Chin and members of the City Council's General Welfare and Aging Committees for giving us this opportunity to testify and respond to committee questions today.

My name is Lisa Fitzpatrick and I am the Chief Program Officer for the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA). I am pleased to be here today to discuss many of the initiatives and programs that the de Blasio administration is undertaking to address hunger and food insecurity. I will focus on HRA's role in ensuring that food assistance continues to be a vital, easily accessible, support for low-income individuals and families. Additionally, I will provide updates on programs within the Department for the Aging (DFTA), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) that address hunger and food insecurity. I am joined today by Barbara Turk, Director of Food Policy for the Mayor's Office, Marie Philip, Deputy Commissioner HRA Emergency Intervention Services and Caryn Resnick, Deputy Commissioner from the Department for the Aging (DFTA).

In one of the most expensive cities in the world, HRA works to ensure that no New Yorker is in the position of having to choose between paying for expenses such as rent or purchasing nutritious food. HRA accomplishes this by providing a wide range of supports, including eviction prevention and rental assistance, among other benefits and services. However, despite our efforts, and a comprehensive outreach strategy, hunger and food insecurity continue to be a persistent problem in New York City. According to the City's 2016 Food Metrics Report, 1.37 million New Yorkers or 16.4 percent of New York's population, were food insecure at some point during 2014, including nearly one in five children.

As we have testified in the past and as advocates and the Council are aware, food insecurity is one result of unemployment, underemployment, declining wages, and the increasing costs of rent, food, and other commodities - all of which culminate in income inequality. Chronic food insecurity has devastating effects on individuals, children, and families. Adults who experience food insecurity have higher rates of cardiovascular disease, other chronic diseases, and maternal depression. Children are more likely to display poor academic performance, declining social skills, and are more likely to be clinically obese when dealing with food insecurity. And seniors facing

food insecurity are often unable to meet their nutritional needs, which accelerates the onset and severity of conditions such as cardiovascular disease, vision problems, diabetes, and increases the rate of falls. In response to these devastating effects, the de Blasio Administration supported the campaign to raise the minimum wage and continues to expand and preserve not only our stock of affordable housing but also supportive housing – both necessary tools to address and reduce homelessness. And finally, it is why HRA expanded its rental assistance, emergency grants, and anti-eviction legal services programs.

At HRA we address income inequality and poverty by providing essential services and supports not only through increased access to benefits and programs to reduce hunger and food insecurity, but also work to disrupt their social and economic determinants. According to a report by the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development, almost 60% of New Yorkers do not have enough savings to cover a minimum of three months' worth of household expenses, meaning these households are only one paycheck away from the threat of eviction and entry into shelter. We believe having higher wage jobs not only greatly improves food security but minimizes homelessness by moving families towards financial and ultimately housing stability. As an example of HRA's commitment to housing stability, in December 2016 HRA awarded contracts to 11 organizations to provide 550 units of supportive housing. Additionally, HRA continued efforts to expand and improve Employment Services, with new RFP awards announced this past November. Evidence-based research supports these approaches. When clients are able to secure living wage jobs and move up the career ladder, families have the resources and the means to avoid homelessness and permanently move off the caseload and out of poverty.

SNAP is the nation's most important anti-hunger program, assisting more than 45 million low-income Americans, 70 percent of whom are families with children and more than 1 in 4 are households with seniors or individuals with disabilities. Currently, nearly 1.7 million New Yorkers receive SNAP, including more than 650,000 children. Compared to one year ago, the SNAP caseload increased by 8,371 cases (0.9%) and 11,192 recipients (0.7%). Of these nearly 1.7 million New Yorkers, more than 410,000 of them also receive Cash Assistance (CA), an important safety net for children and adults. Many SNAP recipients are employed, but their incomes are so low that they still qualify for SNAP benefits. This is why the increase in the minimum wage is essential to lifting New Yorkers out of poverty and thereby minimizing the risk of its collateral consequences: hunger, poor health and homelessness. From the very beginning of the de Blasio Administration, we worked to implement both immediate and long-term measures to combat social and economic inequality and to ensure that each New Yorker has access to, as well as, the resources they need to succeed.

Over the past three years, HRA has reformed, streamlined, and eliminated bureaucratic barriers to enrollment and recertification not only for SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, but for other programs administered by the Agency. Furthermore, in recognizing that perceived stigma can act

as a barrier for some in applying for and utilizing benefits, HRA continues our outreach to SNAP-eligible families and individuals, especially vulnerable populations that are particularly susceptible to food insecurity. We are implementing reforms so that eligible New Yorkers can more easily apply, enroll, and recertify for SNAP benefits. And we continue to work to optimize our systems, allowing clients to apply and recertify for certain benefits and programs in a more efficient and accessible means online. It is our goal to ensure that every New Yorker who is eligible for SNAP has unencumbered access to this crucial work support.

Now I would like to discuss in more detail the benefits reengineering, technology improvements, and other efforts aimed at reducing barriers to access.

Continued Improvements to Enroll In and Stay on SNAP

Additional Staffing

615 positions, which were slated for elimination in the out budget years, have been restored for FY17. By restoring the headcount reduction instituted under the prior Administration, we are able to improve service in HRA SNAP centers and significantly improve the SNAP error rate to its lowest point in years. In fact, New York State recently received a commendation from the United States Department of Agriculture, praising its system of quality control and having the most improved payment error rate in the country for Federal FY15 (October 1 – September 30). Our error rate in New York City is one of the lowest nationwide.

New and Improved Technology

The goal of our reforms is to remove real barriers to access thereby making it easier for clients not only to apply for benefits, but to recertify for benefits, which we know from national studies is a point where some eligible clients across the country often lose their benefits.

- **Enhancements to ACCESS NYC:** ACCESS NYC is a website that screens eligibility for over 30 City, State and federal benefit programs. As we've previously testified, this website allows city residents to not only apply for SNAP online, but to submit SNAP recertification applications.

We continue to make enhancements to the system, which now allows clients to access more information. Two new features, *My Cases* and *My Documents* were recently added. *My Cases* displays a 12-month case history, EBT balance, case status, case members, recent payments, appointments, eligibility documents needed to be submitted to HRA, and an online budget letter request, among other case information. *My Documents* also records when eligibility documents a client submitted are added to the client's electronic file.

As of January 4, 2017 there are 126,363 HRA online accounts for SNAP and CA households. ACCESS NYC is accessible in English and the six Local Law 73 languages (Arabic, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian and Spanish).

- **Launching the HRA mobile app** which allows clients to upload relevant documents instead of visiting a SNAP Center or a partnering community-based organization, or faxing or sending documents by postal mail. The expansion to Cash Assistance (CA) cases for mobile document upload occurred in July 2016. Since the launch of the app in November 2015, more than 103,000 SNAP and CA households have used it to submit documents. The expansion to Cash Assistance cases for mobile document upload occurred in July 2016.

This year, HRA plans to build out a full HRA mobile app with additional features that provide SNAP and CA clients access to their HRA cases online. Rather than using a computer, this will give clients the ability to use their smartphones or tablets to view case status and benefits issued, read electronic notices, see upcoming appointments and receive text messages or email alerts about their case. Clients who need to submit documents will be able to see which have been requested from them, take pictures and upload the documents, and then view when they are added to their case file.

- **Expanding self-service document scanning areas** at SNAP centers and community-based organizations. There are currently 15 SNAP centers and 92 community-based organizations where clients can quickly and easily submit documents electronically. Clients are also able to use the self-service areas to submit documentation in support of case changes such as the addition or removal of a family member, change in rent or address. 12 Job Centers now have scanners and 10 Job centers have self-service kiosks. This expansion again means that clients are able to submit documents at locations convenient to them, not only our SNAP centers.
- **Providing self-service PC terminals** at all but one of HRA's SNAP Centers. These terminals allow clients to use the ACCESS NYC portal to complete and submit SNAP applications and recertifications. The last SNAP center is scheduled to be outfitted with this technology by the end of the year.
- **Implementing On-demand interviews citywide.** We also rolled-out On-demand interviews citywide, which allow clients to conduct their recertification applications at their convenience, rather than wait for a call during a four hour window, or come into a center and wait for an interview. The clearest success of On-Demand has been the shift from interviews taking place in-person at centers, to interviews held over the telephone at the clients' convenience. In October 2015, before the introduction of On-Demand, only 52% of completed SNAP recertification interviews were held by telephone. However, by October 2016, 76% were held by telephone – a 24% increase. As an additional enhancement, we plan to introduce on-demand telephone interviews for new SNAP applicants by this Spring.

Each of these technological improvements alone represents a significant barrier being lessened or eliminated for SNAP clients. Together they represent a wholesale change to the ways in which clients apply for and recertify for benefits – ultimately reducing the number of clients who do not receive this vital benefit because it is too hard or the investment of their time is too great. By mitigating the barriers to access we can ensure clients maintain their benefits and reduce the churn of clients at recertification, which can tax resources across the system.

New York City SNAP Participation Rate

Economic improvement generally correlates to a SNAP participation rate reduction. Not surprisingly, as the local economy improved in 2014 and 2015, the SNAP participation rate in New York City declined from 77% in 2013 to 74% in 2014 and 73% in 2015. We believe HRA's SNAP participation rates should not be compared to the state and national participation rates released by USDA which this committee is familiar with. The best metric for comparisons across geographic areas is the Program Access Index (PAI), calculated by dividing the SNAP caseload by the number of people below 125 percent of the poverty line. Based on the PAI metric, SNAP coverage is higher in NYC than it is in the country and in the rest of New York State. Specifically, the NYC PAI is 80% (for both 2014 and 2015), compared to 74% in the US and 79% in NYS overall.

As I just summarized, over the past year, we took significant steps to address and improve the processes we control to handle issues unrelated to the economy that have an impact as to whether or not clients are applying for and recertifying for a benefit. And recent data show positive trends. The caseload is increasing, rejections are down, and successful recertifications are up. We cannot see the impact of these efforts as reported through the participation rate yet because there is a lag in when this can be analyzed. The estimate of the SNAP-eligible population, necessary to determine the participation rate, relies on Census Bureau data that are not released until the following year. We will look at the 2016 participation rate at the end of this year and look forward to sharing with the Committees the progress on our engagement efforts.

SNAP Outreach

HRA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Support Services (SNAP Support Services) seeks to educate the public about SNAP benefits and eligibility guidelines. In addition, this unit prescreens clients to determine eligibility, and assists applicants with the application process. In FY16, the unit provided outreach services at more than 1,676 individual community events.

Among its many responsibilities, this group is charged with ensuring that immigrants with legal status and/or qualified family members are enrolled in the SNAP program and receive SNAP benefits. This Administration significantly expanded our outreach services to immigrants as well as New Yorkers with low literacy and limited English proficiency by partnering with over 100 community-based, human services, and government organizations with proven track records of

providing services to these groups. In addition, the unit manages out-stationed HRA staff at three community-based "Paperless Office System" sites that provide on-line access to benefits with an 88% approval rate. SNAP Support Services also provides technical assistance to 103 community-based organizations that provide SNAP facilitated enrollment and recertification services. Over the past year, the SNAP Support Services prescreened more than 9,526 potentially eligible applicants.

Since the inception of the SNAP Helps campaign in April 2015, FoodHelp.nyc has seen approximately 117,000 lifetime users with roughly 75% being new users. The SNAP Helps campaign encourages New Yorkers struggling to afford food to seek help, targeting low-income seniors and immigrants. Additionally, there were approximately 53,000 click-throughs from FoodHelp.nyc to ACCESS NYC, representing 45% of site visitors, up from 25% last year.

FoodHelp.nyc redirects potential clients to ACCESS NYC where they are able to determine if they qualify for more than 30 different City, State, and federal benefits. In addition to the FoodHelp.nyc website, various marketing materials are routinely distributed to community partners by the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), the Department for the Aging (DFTA), and the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence (OCDV). Multi-lingual marketing material is also distributed by HRA's Community Affairs and Emergency Intervention Services/SNAP support teams, the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU), and at Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) sign-up events and Deferred Action citizenship events.

Partnering with the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA)

The Mayor's Action Plan (MAP) for Neighborhood Safety is a collaborative effort among NYCHA, eleven City agencies, community groups, and non-profits aimed at making New York City's neighborhoods and housing developments safer and stronger.

As part of the Mayor's Action Plan for Neighborhood Safety, HRA launched an outreach initiative to assist NYCHA residents with information about benefits eligibility and how to access benefits for which they may be eligible. In the spring of 2016, the HRA MAP Outreach Team partnered with New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) and the Benefits Data Trust (BDT) on a targeted SNAP outreach campaign to target residents in the 15 MAP developments who may be eligible for SNAP but weren't receiving the benefit.

Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)

The City supports the wide-range of services provided by food pantries and soup kitchens through HRA. In FY17, HRA's Emergency Food Assistance Program's total funding for food and administrative expenses is \$16.3 million, with a baseline of \$11.4 million, which includes \$775,000 added from the New York City Council budget.

While food distribution to those in need remains paramount, EFAP has also focused on setting a higher nutritional standard for all foods that are provided to and distributed by the emergency food network. Since 2008, EFAP has required all foods purchased with City funding to be compliant with the NYC Food Standards requirements and meet nutritional standards, including, but not limited to standards for sodium, sugar, and trans-fat. We aim to ensure that every New Yorker has a hot and healthy meal while also working to reduce the prevalence of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. In addition, HRA requires that all 499 emergency food programs funded by EFAP provide SNAP outreach services. These services include SNAP eligibility prescreening, assistance with the SNAP application process, and guidance on making healthy food choices.

In 2015, HRA, the Helmsley Charitable Trust, Redstone Strategy Group, New York State HPNAP, the Director of Food Policy in the Mayor's Office, and key NYC emergency food distributors formed the NYC Food Assistance Collaborative. Over two years, the collaborative came together to enhance coordination among emergency food suppliers and bring new resources to support the important work of over 1,000 community-based food providers, and distribution of \$130 million of food annually.

This Collaborative is working to build capacity and increase food supply to the City's neighborhoods most underserved by emergency food providers. This includes inventory management, client choice, and program capacity through infrastructure improvements like on-site storage and refrigeration/cooling systems and mobile food delivery. Through collaboration, coordinated site visits, training, and technical assistance this Collaborative seeks to improve data sharing and food distribution throughout the entire emergency food network.

We are thankful to the Council for the joint effort with the Mayor's Office to fund an additional \$4.9 million to provide additional food and other resources to community-based groups. The Helmsley Charitable Trust's investment of \$9.8 million for infrastructure improvements and supports includes the development of a new shared data and mobile app system. And finally the receipt of \$4.5 million pooled support from the United Way of NYC and City Harvest in food resources has further increased the investment.

Through this combined effort, 10 million pounds of new food will be distributed to over 44 local food programs in 12 underserved neighborhoods in FY17. New data and new technology will help food providers better serve clients and address unmet needs through a more efficient and resourced system.

ABAWD Waiver

In May 2014, New York City accepted a waiver which allowed single able-bodied adults, also known as Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs), who are unemployed or underemployed to receive SNAP when they could not find more than 80 hours of work per month.

Such waivers are permitted for areas with high unemployment, and as such New York State had been covered. However, the improved economy means some areas no longer qualify. At last year's hunger hearing, we reported that the borough of Manhattan below West 110th Street and below East 96th Street was the only part of the City impacted by ABAWD requirements because it did not meet the federal standard for a waiver. And we are pleased to report that through the coordinated efforts at HRA, in partnership with the State and FNS, we were able to defer any impact to our SNAP clients in 2016.

For 2017, we are working with the State to address potential ABAWD waiver issues beyond these areas of Manhattan due to improving economic conditions. We expect to provide additional information about the extent of the ABAWD waiver that we will have in 2017 when we appear before the Council at our preliminary budget hearing.

I will now discuss efforts from our partners at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the Department for the Aging (DFTA) and their work contributing to the Administration's efforts to address food insecurity and hunger.

Partnering with DOHMH

In an effort to help clients close the gap in their food budgets, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene distributes Health Bucks coupons which can be used to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at all NYC farmers markets. Health Bucks are distributed several ways, including as a SNAP incentive where for every five dollars customers spend using their EBT card at the market, they receive a two-dollar Health Buck—representing a 40% increase in their purchasing power. This initiative allows SNAP recipients to buy high quality nutritious produce while supporting regional and local farms. In 2015, more than 423,400 Health Bucks were distributed at farmer's markets through the SNAP incentive and by community-based organizations as part of their nutrition and health programming. NYC DOHMH recently expanded this innovative program from a five-month season to a 12-month program so that SNAP participants can stretch their purchasing power year-round.

Outreach to Older New Yorkers

Through a partnership, started in September 2014, HRA, the Robin Hood Foundation, Benefits Data Trust (BDT) and DFTA committed to reaching and enrolling eligible seniors in the SNAP program. In 2015, about 68% of seniors who are eligible for SNAP participate in the program. While higher than the national average, we believe that the City's participation rate could be even higher among seniors were it not for several barriers, including limited mobility, lack of knowledge, and perceived stigma associated with accepting government assistance.

Employing BDT's proven model of targeted outreach and application assistance, using enrollment data for the five boroughs and working with HRA to complement our outreach, the New York

Benefits Center implemented a phone and direct mail campaign for seniors who are not receiving SNAP. When seniors respond to this targeted outreach, highly-trained staff from the New York Benefits Center guide them through the process from beginning to end, offering application assistance, document support, and follow-up services.

Since its inception, this program has successfully:

- Mailed 214,668 outreach letters;
- Conducted robo-calls with a recorded message from Commissioner Banks to 130,448 households in conjunction with the mailing;
- Screened via telephone 46,628 households for SNAP;
- Began SNAP applications for 19,352 households; and
- Submitted 17,186 SNAP applications on ACCESS NYC.

In early 2017, The Robin Hood Foundation and the City are planning to roll out a joint campaign to increase participation in targeted benefit programs including SNAP, WIC, and the Earned Income Tax Credit – all proven anti-poverty programs. A major component of this two-year campaign will be an expansion of the collaborative and targeted outreach among HRA, BDT, and the Robin Hood Foundation. The campaign will include mass media and grassroots outreach and service delivery for potentially eligible individuals.

DFTA Initiatives to Address Hunger and Food Insecurity

According to the City's 2016 Food Metrics Report, one in ten senior citizens lives in a household with insufficient food, in addition, one in four recipients of emergency food in New York City is 65 years of age or older, twice their percentage of the overall population. Many seniors who are living on fixed incomes are forced to make the decision between paying for housing, medications or food – resulting in housing insecurity, increased health risk and hunger.

The New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) offers several programs to address hunger and nutritional needs among older New Yorkers.

Home-Delivered Meals

Each weekday DFTA's home delivered meals program provides nutritious meals to about 18,000 older New Yorkers who have difficulty regularly leaving their homes, lack formal or informal supports that can regularly provide meals, or are unable to prepare meals themselves. Clients who call the local case management agency are assessed by telephone to determine eligibility for meals as well as their nutrition risk. Clients with a high nutrition risk are immediately referred for in-home nutrition counseling. An in-home assessment follows, and those capable of reheating meals are given the choice and flexibility of choosing between twice weekly delivery of frozen meals, and

daily delivery of a hot meal each weekday. The selection of frozen meal delivery provides the senior with the option of deciding when they want to eat, and which meal they prefer.

At the time of the in-home assessment, clients are screened for eligibility for public benefits including SNAP; those eligible are assisted in applying.

The number of meals delivered to homes each year has been steadily increasing, from 4.36 million in FY15, to 4.46 million in FY16, and a projected 4.54 million in FY17, an increase of 180,000 meals or 4% over two years.

In addition to these weekday meals, DFTA works in partnership with Citymeals on Wheels, which coordinates with the non-profit network to deliver weekend, holiday and emergency meals to these recipients. In FY16, they delivered 1.55 million additional meals.

Congregate Meals

DFTA funds 250 senior centers that provide hot, nutritious meals to nearly 30,000 older adults each day. The centers are located in all 59 Community Districts in the City and they welcome all individuals age 60 and over. Each center offers at least one daily meal with some offering more, at no charge to the senior (although voluntary contributions are accepted). Senior center programs offer an array of services, such as information, assistance, and health and wellness programming; a 2016 Fordham University study of DFTA-funded centers found that meals, health and wellness programming, and the opportunity to socialize with others were among the most frequently cited reasons to attend a center. Working in concert, these centers help to promote seniors' health and well-being overall. Meals are provided according to City, State, and Federal nutrition guidelines, and menus are created reflecting the cultural diversity in the communities they serve. In FY16 a total of 7.44 million congregate meals were served.

Grand Total Meals Served, FY16: 11.90 Million DFTA + 1.55 Million Citymeals = 13.45 Million Meals

Special Initiative: Food Forums

The Aging in New York Fund (ANYF), the not-for-profit arm of DFTA, hosts a series of educational forums to increase communities' awareness of food insecurity among seniors and to generate ideas for helping to meet the nutritional needs of older New Yorkers. Events have been held in three neighborhoods identified through data analysis to be of especially great need: Harlem, Bedford Stuyvesant, and the South Bronx. Additional forums are planned, with the next to take place in a Queens neighborhood of high need, to be determined shortly.

In these forums, leaders representing a cross section of a particular community brief those in attendance. This includes community leaders, interfaith lay leaders, academics and students, and seniors who are community ambassadors for change in their neighborhoods. The forums

culminate in an open networking hour with resource tables to further develop new initiatives to address this crisis.

Conclusion

SNAP and the Emergency Food Assistance Program, as well as other initiatives detailed in this testimony, will continue to provide necessary nutrition assistance to New Yorkers in need. But more remains to be done to ensure that every New Yorker has the resources they need to purchase healthy food for themselves and their families.

The Administration will continue to work to expand access and remove barriers to these essential benefits and services. We are also working to protect against any proposed federal cuts to the SNAP program or the nation's safety net programs, as well as policies that may harm our immigrant communities across the City.

This Administration is laser-focused on addressing hunger, homelessness, and income inequality – which is why we are implementing our plan to create or preserve 200,000 units of affordable housing and 15,000 units of supportive housing, why we reinstated the City's rental assistance programs and expanded the City's eviction prevention initiatives, and why we called on Albany to raise the State's minimum wage.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the Council and advocates. I welcome your questions.

Thank you



**Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City
General Welfare jointly with the Committee on Aging**

January 25, 2017

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My name is Rachel Sherrow and I am the Associate Executive Director at Citymeals on Wheels. I would like to begin by thanking the Council for their continued support of aging services and Citymeals on Wheels which will help to deliver over 2 million meals to nearly 18,400 homebound elderly citywide this year.

As most of you know, Citymeals is a not-for-profit agency working in a public/private partnership with the New York City Department for the Aging. The Department funds the meals that homebound elderly receive Mondays through Fridays, and Citymeals funds the same network of providers to deliver weekend and holiday meals. On the days the city does not provide a meal, Citymeals steps in to prevent our aging neighbors from being without food or human company. In fact, Citymeals, as an added benefit generates revenue for New York City through the federal government's cash in lieu of commodities program which reimburses DFTA approximately 67

cents for every meal funded by Citymeals. All of this money goes toward the city-funded weekday meals program, bringing in over \$1.4 million last fiscal year and an additional 180,000 home delivered meals for those who need it. In-home services like meals on wheels are incredibly vital to those who are frail and vulnerable and often can help prevent them from slipping into deeper poverty.

Throughout our nation and right here in NYC, our population is aging, with 17% of our city over the age of 60 and by 2050 the number of older adults will double, and will outnumber children. Living longer on fixed incomes means more struggle over access to food.

Because income for older adults remains fixed, or worse, declines, many experience increased difficulty affording healthy food.

In addition, since 2012, New York City's older adults experienced an increase in poverty from 16.5% to 19.1%. According to the NYC Center for Economic Opportunity, 1 in 3 New Yorkers over the age of 65 live in poverty.

Therefore it is not surprising that the Nutrition Screening Initiative estimates that one in four senior citizens living in our communities is malnourished.¹ It has also been estimated that up to 55% of seniors admitted to hospitals are suffering from malnutrition.² In addition, an inability to resist disease as people age may be related to hunger and malnutrition which can exacerbate cardiovascular disease,

hypertension, osteoporosis, cancer, diverticulitis, and diabetes, which many of our meal recipients suffer from. According to Hunger Free America's most recent hunger survey, there has been a 25% increase in food insecurity in the senior population.³ A Hunger Study conducted by LiveOn NY shows this to mean 35% of older adults in NYC are living with food insecurity, or hunger.

Meals on wheels is a vital service for our homebound elderly to prevent hunger, decrease isolation and ensure our older neighbors can remain in their homes and live within their communities and neighborhoods. As the population increases, we added nearly 1,000 new recipients to the rolls last fiscal year. However, with a wait list for case management services, the gatekeepers for meals on wheels, which is over a thousand people, we are concerned many who are in need will not receive essential services and we will end up having more older adults fill our emergency rooms, become severely isolated and depressed, unable to pay their bills, and even perhaps end up homeless. SNAP benefits which help combat hunger by allowing people to purchase additional food can be obtained through case management services. However if there are wait lists, we will be faced with the larger costs of the burden of poor diets which result in chronic disease and end up costing more in Medicaid dollars.⁴

The city's budget for Aging services has not kept up with the increasing need and growth in population. We must adequately fund core services including case management as it is crucial to ensure we are able to have a safety net for these most vulnerable New Yorkers.

Bringing a meal to the door is one less struggle for the homebound to worry about financially. In addition, this food delivery is one way to prevent them from slipping into more expensive kinds of care.

Evidence does support the fact that programs like meals on wheels which allows older adults to age in place, may help save costs for families, government and our health systems.⁵ This is a savings in Medicaid costs that the city would bear if these economically disadvantaged and elderly neighbors of ours were institutionalized instead. It is in their interest and ours to keep them with us, right here in the communities where they have lived for so long. Meals on wheels is also a benefit to the growing population of caregivers whose emotional, physical and financial efforts can be unburdened by knowing a meal is being delivered to their loved ones allowing for respite and relief on so many levels.

Citymeals on Wheels is the city's lifeline for food not only on weekends and holidays but also in times of emergency for our homebound elderly. As a part of the FALT (Food Access Lead Team of the NYCEM), with our current warehouse in Brooklyn we are able

to prepare and maintain emergency shelf stable meal packages for any and all issues that arise locally and on a city-wide scale as has been demonstrated time again with major storms and hurricanes and localized power and gas outages.

Together with the Department for the Aging, and The New York City Council, Citymeals is determined to keep 18,400 elderly New Yorkers and growing, fed 365 days a year plus some extra. We hope you, our partners in city government, will help us to continue to advocate on behalf of those who are often forgotten and marginalized.

As we celebrate our 35th year, we thank you for consistently working with us and I hope we can count on all of your support once again this year as we seek increased funding to keep up with the need and ensure our elderly neighbors have access to nutritious food.

¹ 2000 to 2010 Census, as reported in NYC Department for the Aging's "Census 2000: Changes in the elderly population of NYC 2000-2010. ²Ibid. ³ Hunger Free America's 2015 Hunger Report. ⁴ American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Building on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's Success: Conquering Hunger, Improving Health Neal D. Barnard, MD, David L. Katz, MD, MPH. ⁵ Measuring the costs and savings of aging in place. 2013. (Accessed December 3, 2014, at http://www.huduser.org/portal/periodicals/em/em_archive.html).

Washington Monthly

(<http://washingtonmonthly.com>)

U.S. Poverty Policy Is Outdated and Inefficient. Here's a Better Approach.

All low-income Americans should be equipped with an Online HOPE (Health, Opportunity, and Personal Empowerment) account.

by Joel Berg (<http://washingtonmonthly.com/people/joel-berg/>)

January 10, 2017

REPUBLIC 3.0 (<http://washingtonmonthly.com/government/republic-3-0/>)

U.S. poverty policy is stuck in a rut. In 2015, 43 million people in America were living in poverty – more than the combined populations of Texas, Pennsylvania, and Nebraska and 11 million more than in 2000.

Slow growth and inequality are the main culprits. But the outdated way we deliver social services – through ponderous, top-down bureaucracies and siloed programs – also hinders efforts by low-income Americans to rise out of poverty.

Economists often apply the term “opportunity costs” to high and middle-income people, meaning that the time they spend on one task is time not available to perform other, potentially more valuable tasks. But society rarely applies the concept to low-income people, acting as if their time is essentially worthless.

To verify your identity

- Driver's license
- School or work identification
- Medical insurance identification
- Voter's registration card
- Birth certificate

To verify your address

- Library card showing address
- Voter's registration card
- Utility bills
- Rent or mortgage receipts showing address
- Correspondence sent to stated address

To verify your income

(Present Document For Each Income Source)

- Check stubs *(Confirm number required with local office)*
- Employer statement *(if you get paid in cash or if you do not have your check stubs)*
- Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, or Veteran's Benefits
- Other Retirement or Disability Benefits
- Alimony
- Child support agreement
- Unemployment compensation
- Self-employment income *(Includes rental income and freelance work; check to see what form local office is using or provide tax returns)*
- Other, please specify.

To verify your immigration status

- Immigration and Naturalization Documents *(These are not required if you are not eligible for SNAP and you are only applying for your children who were born in the United States.)*

SNAP Document Verification Checklist

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap_specpop_docchecklist.pdf

A selection of the documents needed to quality for SNAP.

While government safety net programs help tens of million Americans avoid starvation, homelessness, and other outcomes even more dreadful than everyday poverty, government anti-poverty aid is generally a major hassle to obtain and keep, supposedly to ensure that only “deserving” people get them. Congress, which creates the laws governing the programs, and most

states and localities, which implement those laws, purposely make it extremely difficult to advertise these programs and enable families to access them. That's why many low-income people are actually unaware of all the government benefits for which they are eligible, thereby reducing the amount of help going to Americans in need by tens of billions of dollars every year. For instance, 17 percent of all people – and 28 percent of working people – eligible for SNAP benefits (formerly called food stamps) fail to receive them.

Even if low-income people do know about available aid, the journey to receive it is usually long, onerous, and time-consuming. They must travel to a bewildering array of government and nonprofit agencies to get different kinds of help. Even when people initially apply for benefits online, they often have to physically go to one or more government offices to follow up. They need to bring piles of paperwork to each office (for instance, you need to repeatedly prove your place of birth, even though that obviously never changes) usually with slightly different combinations of documents every time, and that paperwork is often lost by the agency, and then the applicants have to spend more time (and money) to make new copies. It's no wonder that low-income Americans are often drained of hope.

It's time for policymakers to discard the notion that “hassle” is the right way to ensure that only those people truly in need are the ones who access benefits. There is a better approach to poverty policy – one that is efficient and reaches everyone in need while at the same time encouraging personal responsibility. This approach is to equip all low-income individuals in need with an Online HOPE (Health, Opportunity, and Personal Empowerment) account and action plan that can help individuals both receive the benefits they need and build a long-term plan to lift themselves out of poverty in the long term.

Here's how these accounts would work: The President and Congress would first authorize the federal Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development, (HUD), Treasury, and Agriculture (USDA), working together, to form public/private partnerships with banks, credit unions, and technology companies to create HOPE accounts and action plans for low-income individuals applying for aid. These accounts would combine improved technology, streamlined case management, and coordinated access to multiple to federal, state,

city, and nonprofit programs that already exist. States and localities would initially be asked to participate in pilot projects implementing the accounts and plans, and, if they work, would be required over time to implement them universally.

Once the accounts and plans are in place, families would be able to use any smart phone, tablet, or computer to learn about the public and philanthropic programs for which they are eligible – including aid to improve health, nutrition, job training and placement, housing, income, etc. – and then apply for all of these programs at once from the convenience of their device. If supporting documents need to be submitted with the application, then families could take pictures of those documents and submit the pictures with the application. Such accounts would also be able to include any private savings that people are able to accrue. A surprising number of low-income people already have smart phones and/or home computers, not because they are luxuries, but because they are essential tools of learning and work in modern America.

Such accounts could slash the number of government employees required to shuffle paperwork in social service offices, thereby freeing up such employees for much higher priority work, such as aiding shut-in seniors, staffing job training centers, or boosting pre-K classes.

Enabling struggling families to save time and money is a good start, but that's not enough. Low-income families still need clear aspirations for the future. That's why families should be given the option of partnering in more depth with government and nonprofit organizations by voluntarily agreeing to long-term HOPE action plans that will provide more aid to each family and then specify exactly how all parties will work together to help the families earn, learn, and save better in order to ensure greater economic opportunity for themselves and their children. The idea behind the action plans is to ensure that all the programs and people involved are working together in a long-term, positive relationship for the purpose of ensuing upward mobility. Key to this idea is that the overall aid to each participating family would be increased; this concept should never be used by conservatives as an excuse to cut support.

For example, a single mother of two young children could voluntarily enter into a 10-year plan jointly with her city government's social service agency and with a local United Way. The plan would include yearly benchmarks for how the mother would use increased resources provided to her family by the plan to boost her job skills, increase her earnings, improve the housing situation for her family, obtain more nutritious food, and begin to put money aside to help her children pay for college. Once the specific goals are set, the specific actions each entity would be required to

take in order for the mother to meet her goals — as well as the money and other resources that will need to be allocated for these actions from the family, the government, and the nonprofit partners — would all be spelled out in the plan. Yes, the mother would need to work hard and sacrifice by saving more. But knowing that government and charities also had a stake and belief in her success, and knowing that she would ultimately advance herself and her family, she would likely be glad to do it.

Surely even in these divided times — a plan that slashes government bureaucracy, boosts long-term independence, and helps families escape poverty should be embraced by the right and the left.

Let's use HOPE to both increase the bang-for-the-buck for taxpayers and reduce poverty. Tangible hope is the world's most powerful motivator. Let's make it work for *all* of us.

*This op-ed is excerpted both from a paper for the Progressive Policy Institute and from Joel Berg's forthcoming book, *America, We Need to Talk: A Self-Help Book for the Nation*, to be published by Seven Stories Press in February 2017.*

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for the

**Committees on General Welfare and
Aging**

on

Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City

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on behalf of

Food Bank For New York City

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon Chairman Levin, Chairwoman Chin, and members of the General Welfare and Aging Committees. My name is Rachel Sabella and I am the Director of Government Relations at Food Bank For New York City. Food Bank appreciates the opportunity to present testimony today to the City Council for the committees' oversight hearing on Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City.

First, Food Bank For New York City thanks the City Council for your continued commitment to addressing the issue of hunger and ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to affordable, nutritious food. We are grateful for the City Council's longstanding leadership on this issue, and pleased to see continued progress on anti-hunger initiatives this past year. The Council's instrumental role in securing this past year's historic increases to emergency food funding, through both the City's Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) and the Council's Food

Pantries Initiative – including the creation of 16 new school pantries – has been especially appreciated, alongside other robust efforts to support food-insecure New Yorkers.

For more than 30 years, Food Bank For New York City has been the city's major hunger-relief organization, working to end food poverty throughout the five boroughs. Nearly one in five New York City residents relies on our programs and services. Through our network of 1,000 charities and schools citywide, Food Bank's food distribution provides approximately 63 million free meals for New Yorkers in need. Food Bank For New York City's income support services, including SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) enrollment and free tax assistance for the working poor, put more than \$150 million each year into the pockets of New Yorkers, helping them to afford food and achieve greater dignity and independence. In addition, Food Bank's nutrition education programs and services empower more than 45,000 children, teens and adults to sustain a healthy diet on a low budget. Working toward long-term solutions to food poverty, Food Bank develops policy and conducts research to inform community and government efforts.

My testimony today will focus on hunger in New York City and strategic funding and policy recommendations to work towards ending hunger.

NEW YORK CITY'S MEAL GAP: 242 MILLION

SNAP is our nation's first line of defense against hunger. A federal entitlement program, SNAP now provides food assistance to 43.2 million Americans.¹ SNAP is effective and efficient, and it is countercyclical, meaning it has the flexibility to grow to meet rising economic need.

Nearly 1.7 million New York City residents (almost one in five) currently rely on SNAP to keep food on the table,² with a monthly household benefit that has been averaging approximately \$260 since November of 2013's SNAP cut – a reduction of approximately \$18 per month, or \$200 per year.³

Food Bank For New York City analysis finds that, to date, the cuts have cost New York City residents more than \$540 million in lost benefits that could have been used to purchase food for more than 161 million meals.⁴

Despite SNAP and other nutrition assistance programs (like school meals, and the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants and Children, or WIC), **nearly 1.4 million New Yorkers rely on emergency food⁵ – evidence that a meal gap remains.** The Meal Gap is the most sophisticated food insecurity metric available, representing the translation into meals of the financial resources needed by food-insecure households to secure an adequate diet year-round.⁶

¹ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) National Monthly Data, October 2016 (latest available month). United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Data as of January 6, 2017.

² New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) as of November 2016.

³ *Still Scaling the Hunger Cliff: Need at NYC Food Pantries & Soup Kitchens.* Food Bank For New York City. November 2016.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Hunger's New Normal: Redefining Emergency in Post-Recession New York City.* Food Bank For New York City. October 2013.

⁶ The meal gap was developed for *Feeding America* by food insecurity expert Dr. Craig Gundersen of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. When the City Council legislated that the Administration report food insecurity

New York City's meal gap (as of 2014, the most recent year for which data is available) is 242 million meals.⁷ Disaggregated by borough, the Meal Gap for:

- the Bronx is 46.7 million;
- Brooklyn is 90 million;
- Manhattan is 43 million;
- Queens is 52.6 million; and
- Staten Island is 8.5 million.

As an attachment to my testimony, you will find a visual representation of the Meal Gap by City Council district. I look forward to meeting with individual Council Members to discuss the Meal Gap in your district and ways we can work together to ultimately eliminate it.

NEW RISK OF HUNGER FOR JOBLESS NEW YORKERS

As these Committees may know, in recent years, a provision of welfare law from the mid-1990s requiring states to cut off certain SNAP recipients from their food benefits after three consecutive jobless months has taken effect in parts of our state and city. Called the ABAWD (Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents) provision, it targets nondisabled adult SNAP recipients between the ages of 18 and 49 who do not have minor children or other dependents in their home. Upon the loss of a job, individuals receiving SNAP who meet the ABAWD criteria are subject to a time limit of three months to find a new job of at least 20 hours per week – or, if available, participate in a state-approved employment and training program or volunteer (workfare) program – in order to preserve their benefits.

Federal law gives states the option to request a waiver from the ABAWD time limit during times of high and sustained unemployment. New York is among the states that have requested and received partial waivers for the counties and cities that continue to experience high and sustained unemployment. We appreciate that HRA and the State's Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance have worked collaboratively to develop the broadest possible waiver from this time limit for New York. Nevertheless, the borough of Queens (with the exception of Community District 12) is newly subject to enforcement of this time limit, joining Manhattan south of 110th Street on the West Side and 96th Street on the East Side (which became subject to the time limit last year).

For individuals who live in these areas, three consecutive months without a job or other qualifying activity will result in a loss of SNAP for three years – irrespective of their need for food, or their ability to afford it, in that time. For those who lose their SNAP benefits, a food pantry or soup kitchen might be their only place to turn.

OUR EMERGENCY FOOD SYSTEM

When cash, benefits and the generosity of family and friends have been exhausted, the emergency food network is the resource of last resort for those struggling to keep food on the

annually as part of its food metrics report, the Meal Gap was adopted by the City of New York as its official food insecurity metric

⁷ Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, A. Crumbaugh, M. Kato & E. Engelhard. Map the Meal Gap 2016: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level. Feeding America, 2016.

table. Yet the emergency food supply, our last line of defense against hunger, is not sufficient to meet the need.

As referenced earlier, in November of 2013, sweeping cuts were made to the federal SNAP program. Three years after the cuts, four out of five (79 percent) food pantries and soup kitchens continue to see increased visitor traffic, while many continue to experience food shortages.⁸ In September 2016:

- **Approximately half (49 percent) of food pantries and soup kitchens reported running out of food**, or particular types of food needed for complete pantry bags or meals;
- **Nearly one third (29 percent) of food pantries and soup kitchens reported having to turn people away** due to food shortages; and
- **More than two in five (42 percent) food pantries reported reducing the number of meals provided in their pantry bags.**⁹

These statistics speak to a profound insufficiency in the emergency food supply, and the acute operational stress under which food pantries and soup kitchens have been functioning since the cuts. The November 2013 SNAP cuts continue to represent the biggest systemic factor reducing the food purchasing power of low-income people.¹⁰

It is critical to know who relies on emergency food programs:

- An estimated 1.4 million New York City **residents** rely on emergency food programs, including soup kitchens and food pantries, each year.
- Approximately 339,000 New York City **children** or approximately one out of every five, rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.
- Approximately 604,770 New York City adult **women**, or approximately one out of every six, rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.
- Approximately 204,000 New York City **seniors**, or approximately one out of every five, rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.
- Approximately 70,000 New York City **veterans**, or approximately three out of every ten, rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.¹¹

SENIOR HUNGER

Approximately 20% of New York City residents 65 and older rely on emergency food programs.¹² In a city where the cost of basic necessities – from food to rent to health care costs – increases relentlessly but the incomes of many seniors are fixed, one's golden years can become a time of unanticipated hardship and struggle. Elderly New Yorkers can be forced to

⁸ *Still Scaling the Hunger Cliff: Need at NYC Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens*. Food Bank For New York City. November 2016

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ For example, local unemployment, a highly influential factor in seeking food assistance, has been in steady decline in New York City since then.

¹¹ *Hunger's New Normal: Redefining Emergency in Post-Recession New York City*. Food Bank For New York City. October 2013.

¹² *Ibid.*

choose between food and medicine every month, and often food loses out to life-sustaining medications and visits to their doctors.

In addition, many misconceptions exist about food support programs like SNAP for seniors. We have found that many seniors assume these programs are for “someone else,” or that their Social Security income automatically renders them ineligible. Even among seniors who qualify, many do not apply because of the stigma associated with need-based supports like SNAP. Others do not apply because they find application process daunting, and for those with disabilities or mobility issues, the physical demands of the process (eg., getting to an office, possibly waiting for long periods, etc.) may pose additional challenges.

In reality, many SNAP rules are simplified for seniors to ensure they receive the food support they need. In addition, HRA has worked streamline and simplify the application and recertification processes for seniors. For example, many seniors can apply or recertify their SNAP application without having to visit an HRA office. In addition, HRA has worked to improve the authorized representative system, making it easier for senior SNAP applicants to work with a trusted relative or aide to apply for benefits. These changes have addressed some common obstacles to participation for seniors, especially those who are homebound and those with language barriers.

Since 2010, HRA and the Department for the Aging (DFTA) have worked together to engage in targeted efforts to identify and reach out to SCRIE (Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption) recipients who may be SNAP-eligible. In partnership with organizations like Food Bank and LiveOn, these efforts have produced highly focused outreach to seniors likely to be eligible and have need for SNAP. We are grateful for HRA and DFTA’s commitment and collaboration, and urge them to continue to work closely to develop innovative methods for expanding seniors’ access to SNAP.

Education campaigns to reach out to seniors are also necessary to dispel the myths about SNAP. Concentrated outreach programs at senior centers and emergency food programs can work in harmony with public education efforts to ensure no senior goes without the benefits they need for basic survival.

We encourage the City Council to continue to work closely with HRA and DFTA to continue to find ways for New York City to set the example for supporting our food insecure neighbors.

POLICY PRIORITIES TO ENSURE NO NEW YORKER GOES HUNGRY

No New Yorker should go hungry: access to adequate, nutritious food is a fundamental human right. Thankfully, the policies and programs to realize this core principle are already in existence, and with the collective commitment of leaders across sectors, we can make this happen. While cuts to SNAP have intensified the challenge, policy and budget options well within the authority and discretion of City government can considerably improve the lives of New Yorkers who struggle to afford food.

New York City’s anti-hunger resources – primarily those that bolster SNAP enrollment and fortify our emergency food system – are more vital than ever. Food Bank For New York City offers these recommendations on behalf of the emergency food network in a spirit of partnership. It is our hope this spirit will be met by constructive engagement by the City Council and the

Administration as we take on hunger together. (Attached to the testimony you will also find a complete copy of Food Bank For New York City's 2017 Policy Priorities.)

Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)

New York City's Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) is a major source of food for our city's emergency food network. EFAP plays an especially important role because it provides a steady year-round supply of nutritious food for the approximately 500 food pantries and soup kitchens that participate. EFAP provides food from all five food groups, and all EFAP food meets the City's rigorous nutrition standards. In addition, EFAP is an important source of kosher food.

We are grateful that during the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 New York City budget process, the City Council made EFAP funding one of its top priorities and helped ensure a significant increase to the program. We are extremely disappointed that the Mayor's FY 2018 Preliminary Budget *cuts* EFAP food funding by \$4.9 million (reducing the baseline amount to \$8.2 million for emergency food).

Due to the ABAWD time limit, thousands of jobless New Yorkers are at risk of losing their SNAP benefits as early as April 1, 2017 – at which point they will be without income and without SNAP's dedicated food resources. Our city's food pantries and soup kitchens, already struggling with insufficient food, are ill-equipped to meet this additional need.

We urge the City Council to support increasing baseline food funding for EFAP to \$22 million, which would take into account rising poverty and food costs since the start of the Great Recession. It would allow pantries to adjust for the current inadequacy of the food supply, which only allows food pantries to provide 5.8 meals in a typical pantry bag – far short of New York State's nine-meal standard. It would also allow food pantries and soup kitchens better fill the meal gap left by the punitive federal ABAWD policy.

SNAP

While the November 2013 SNAP cuts have reduced the benefit amounts of those already participating, it remains of utmost importance to ensure that eligible New Yorkers who are not enrolled in the program avail themselves of the benefit – particularly emergency food participants. Even at the currently reduced benefit amounts, SNAP benefits provide our city about as many meals in *two months* as the entire emergency food system distributes in a year.

SNAP is our first line of defense against hunger, and we are extremely appreciative for the energy and resources that HRA has put into improving access to SNAP for all eligible New Yorkers. We have enthusiastically partnered in promoting HRA's #SNAPHelps campaign to spread the word about the availability of SNAP. We are also pleased that HRA is working to lower barriers to benefits, and taking advantage of technology in new ways to expand access to SNAP.

We also encourage HRA to coordinate SNAP outreach and application with other benefits and services that reach low-income populations, like senior programs, emergency food programs and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites.

We applaud HRA for its work in partnership with organizations that provide SNAP assistance to ensure as many New Yorkers who meet the ABAWD definition as possible are aware of the criteria for exemption from the time limit. For those who are subject to the time limit and unable to find work, we encourage HRA to prioritize their placement in appropriate workforce

development, training and education programs in order to preserve their food benefits,

School Meals

Maximizing participation in school meals will not only provide hundreds of thousands of New York City children with access to a nutritious breakfast and lunch, it will also help close New York City's meal gap. Food Bank For New York City applauds the City Council for continuing to prioritize school meals each year – expansion would not have occurred without your support and leadership.

Over the last two years, thanks to the leadership of the City Council, New York City implemented free lunch for all public school students in stand-alone middle schools and the gradual implementation of Breakfast in the Classroom in stand-alone elementary school. Both programs have shown positive results. Participation among middle school students increased as students had equal access to school lunches – the stigma was reduced. Breakfast in the Classroom has helped reduce the stigma associated with participation and allows students to start the day with a healthy meal – not with an empty stomach.

We urge the city to expand Universal School Meals to all students in all grades in all schools.

Income Support & Poverty Reduction Programs

Approximately one in five adults on food pantry and soup kitchen lines is employed - that's almost 200,000 New Yorkers who are working but not earning enough to provide for themselves and their families. Recognizing that there is no surer way off a food pantry or soup kitchen line than a living wage job, there is much our city can do to support working New Yorkers who are earning too little to afford needed food.

We urge the City Council to work closely with the Department of Consumer Affairs to expand free tax preparation services available to low-income New Yorkers throughout our city. Approximately 20 percent of tax filers eligible for the EITC in New York fail to claim it, and the high-quality free tax assistance services available throughout our city can ensure low-income New Yorkers receive every refund and credit to which they are entitled.

We encourage New York City to develop job creation, training and education strategies that are geared toward poverty reduction and to invest in economic development that both enhances the nutrition landscape and provides opportunities for employment in low-income communities.

WHAT FOOD BANK FOR NEW YORK CITY IS DOING IN THE BATTLE AGAINST HUNGER

Emergency Food Network

Food Bank For New York City procures, stores and distributes more than 70 million pounds of healthy food every year, including nearly 20 million pounds of fresh produce this past year. The core of our food storage and distribution operation is our 90,000-square-foot warehouse in the Hunts Point Market in the Bronx. A full-service delivery operation, Food Bank dispatches tractor-trailers from the warehouse five days a week to our citywide network of approximately 1,000 schools and charities, including food pantries, soup kitchens, senior centers, after-school programs, daycare centers and more. Since our founding in 1983, Food Bank has supplied enough food for more than one billion meals for New Yorkers in need.

Nutrition and Health Education

Food Bank's nutrition education program in New York City public schools reaches more than 45,000 children, teens and adults. The curriculum for students ages 5 to 12 includes interactive cooking activities to foster children's enjoyment of healthy foods, and fun exercises to promote an active lifestyle. Teenagers take what they learn one step further, serving as good health ambassadors at their high schools by conducting nutrition education workshops for their peers. Through free workshops held at our network of food pantries and soup kitchens, we encourage thousands more people to make wiser nutrition choices with limited food dollars.

Campus Pantry

Food Bank For New York City's dual-track Campus Pantry program helps bridge the meal gap experienced at both ends of the student spectrum, enabling children and young adults to access emergency food that can be used to make balanced, nutritious meals at home. Hunger doesn't discriminate; it affects students of all ages — from kindergarteners to college students.

Children from low-income families who receive two meals a day at school may then go home hungry, unsure if there will be enough to eat for dinner or to last the weekend. And many college students—an underserved segment of New Yorkers in need — often find themselves cash-strapped and struggling to afford food. Now both have a place to turn.

In partnership with the City Council, Food Bank For New York City has been able to open 16 new campus pantries in public schools across the five boroughs. The campus pantries will provide food but also products families desperately need, such as soap and menstrual products.

Benefits Access

Access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps, is an essential issue for low-income New Yorkers who struggle to afford food. Food Bank For New York City's Food Stamp Direct Service & Outreach program works to educate and connect directly with low-income New Yorkers to ensure access to this key piece of the hunger safety net.

CONCLUSIONS

Over the last several years, the Administration and the City Council have continued to express a deep commitment to helping New Yorkers in need. This is a time of great uncertainty regarding the federal policies and programs that make up the most significant components of our nation's anti-hunger safety net: SNAP, school meals, summer meals, WIC, the federal Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). This moment calls on us to come together as a city to show a commitment to the principle that no New Yorker should lack access to an affordable, nutritious diet. Let us set a goal of closing New York City's widening Meal Gap and becoming the first city in the country to end food poverty. Food Bank For New York City looks forward to working with together with the City Council and the Administration to develop a plan to ensure no New Yorker goes to bed hungry.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

New York City

Leverage and Fortify the Emergency Food System

- Increase NYC's Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) baseline food funding to a Fiscal Year 2018 funding level of \$22 million.
- Continue improvements to food quality by giving programs choice over food selection and by offering more minimally processed, fresh and frozen food.
- Enact a policy of cost-neutral preferencing of kosher and halal products.
- Increase funding for administrative and operational support.

Strengthen, Streamline and Simplify SNAP

- Maximize all federal options and waivers that lower barriers to participation and simplify program administration.
- Ensure employment and training opportunities for all Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) subject to work-related benefit termination.
- Develop a citywide SNAP outreach plan that utilizes all available sources of federal matching funds.
- Continue efforts to simplify and fully implement online SNAP application and recertification processes.
- Continue expansion of community-based sites for outreach and application submission, including emergency food programs and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites.
- Continue improvements in SNAP administration, placing priority on the customer service experience.
- Use clear language for SNAP notices, avoiding messages that discourage participation.

Expand Access to School and Summer Meals

- Implement universal school meals (USM) in all schools, using available options to maximize federal reimbursements.
- Make Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) an opt-out program for middle and high schools.
- Fund capital improvements to school cafeterias to ensure infrastructure and capacity for full implementation of USM and BIC.
- Increase the number of Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sites open for the entire summer.
- Ensure neighborhood access to open SFSP sites in all high-need areas of the city.
- Ensure that the Department of Education publicizes the SFSP program before the end of the school year.
- Engage the reach and capacity of the emergency food network in promoting school and summer meals.

Tackle Poverty to End Hunger

- Enhance the City's Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).
- Expand funding for free tax service programs for low-income New Yorkers.
- Adopt policies that support a living wage with access to medical benefits and paid time off, and that make living-wage jobs more accessible to low-income people.
- Develop job creation, training and education strategies that are geared toward poverty reduction.
- Invest in economic development that both enhances the nutrition landscape and provides opportunities for employment in low-income communities.
- Expand initiatives to increase access to needed non-food items, such as menstrual hygiene products.

New York State

Leverage and Fortify the Emergency Food System

- Increase baseline funding for the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) in the Fiscal Year 2017-2018 State budget to \$51 million to adjust for rising food costs and increased need.
- Increase funding for administrative and operational support.

Strengthen, Streamline and Simplify SNAP

- Maximize all federal options and waivers that lower barriers to participation and simplify program administration.
- Allot annual Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) funding to "Heat & Eat" households to maintain SNAP benefits at higher levels.
- Ensure employment and training opportunities for all Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) subject to work-related benefit termination.
- Restore eligibility for all documented immigrants.
- Develop a statewide SNAP outreach plan that utilizes all available sources of federal matching funds.
- Coordinate among multiple benefits so that New Yorkers can apply for several programs and services simultaneously.
- Leverage the health insurance exchange platform to enable screening for SNAP and other programs.
- Expand educational programs and job readiness opportunities covered under SNAP Education and Training.

Expand Access to School and Summer Meals

- Provide funding to help offset any startup costs associated with schools undertaking or expanding USM and/or BIC.

- Provide incentives for schools to increase the number of nutritious meals prepared on-site.
- Ensure that the Education Department publicizes SFSP before the end of the school year.
- Encourage participation in SFSP by New York State park sites.

Protect and Strengthen WIC

- Ensure access to a WIC site in every low-income neighborhood in New York.
- Reject any cuts to State WIC funds, and any proposals that would require WIC to compete with other nutrition assistance programs for funding.
- Promote referrals of eligible WIC participants to SNAP.
- Expedite the transition from WIC coupons to EBT.
- Promote deeper collaboration between the New York State Department of Health and county/municipal social service agencies to provide SNAP outreach and enrollment opportunities at all WIC sites.

Expand Access to Nutritious Food

- Enact the Farm to Food Bank bill (Senate Bill 7833/Assembly Bill 10584) to increase donations of fresh local produce, dairy and other farm products.
- Increase farmers' markets and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects in low-income communities.
- Adopt transportation policies that would facilitate access to local food and make nutritious local food more affordable.

Tackle Poverty to End Hunger

- Enhance the State's EITC.
- Eliminate the use of discriminatory auditing practices for low-income, cash-earning EITC claimants, and implement transparent documentation requirements and auditing practices for EITC claimants.
- Allow New Yorkers to designate all or part of their tax refunds to directly open and fund a 529 college savings account.
- Index scheduled State minimum wage increases to inflation.
- Adopt policies that support a living wage with access to medical benefits and paid time off, and that make living-wage jobs more accessible to low-income people.
- Develop job creation, training and education strategies that are geared toward poverty reduction.
- Invest in economic development that both enhances the nutrition landscape and provides opportunities for employment in low-income communities.

Leverage and Fortify the Emergency Food System

- Appropriate the full authorized amount of funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), including for Storage & Distribution expenses.
- Introduce a need-based trigger for federal commodities purchases.
- Reverse sequestration cuts to the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP).

Strengthen, Streamline and Simplify SNAP

- Reject any cuts to SNAP, or any changes to its entitlement status.
- Restore the ARRA benefit reduction that took effect in November 2013.
- Restore eligibility to all documented immigrants.
- Coordinate among multiple federal benefits to allow individuals to apply for all simultaneously.

Expand Access to School and Summer Meals

- Reject any effort to pay for enhancements to child nutrition programs by cutting funding to SNAP or other anti-hunger/-poverty programs
- Promote federal incentives to provide universal, free school lunch in schools.
- Expand area eligibility requirements for open SFSP sites.
- Provide increased funding for meal reimbursements.

Protect and Strengthen WIC

- Reverse sequestration cuts to WIC.
- Provide USDA with more funding for WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program coupons.





Tackle Poverty to End Hunger

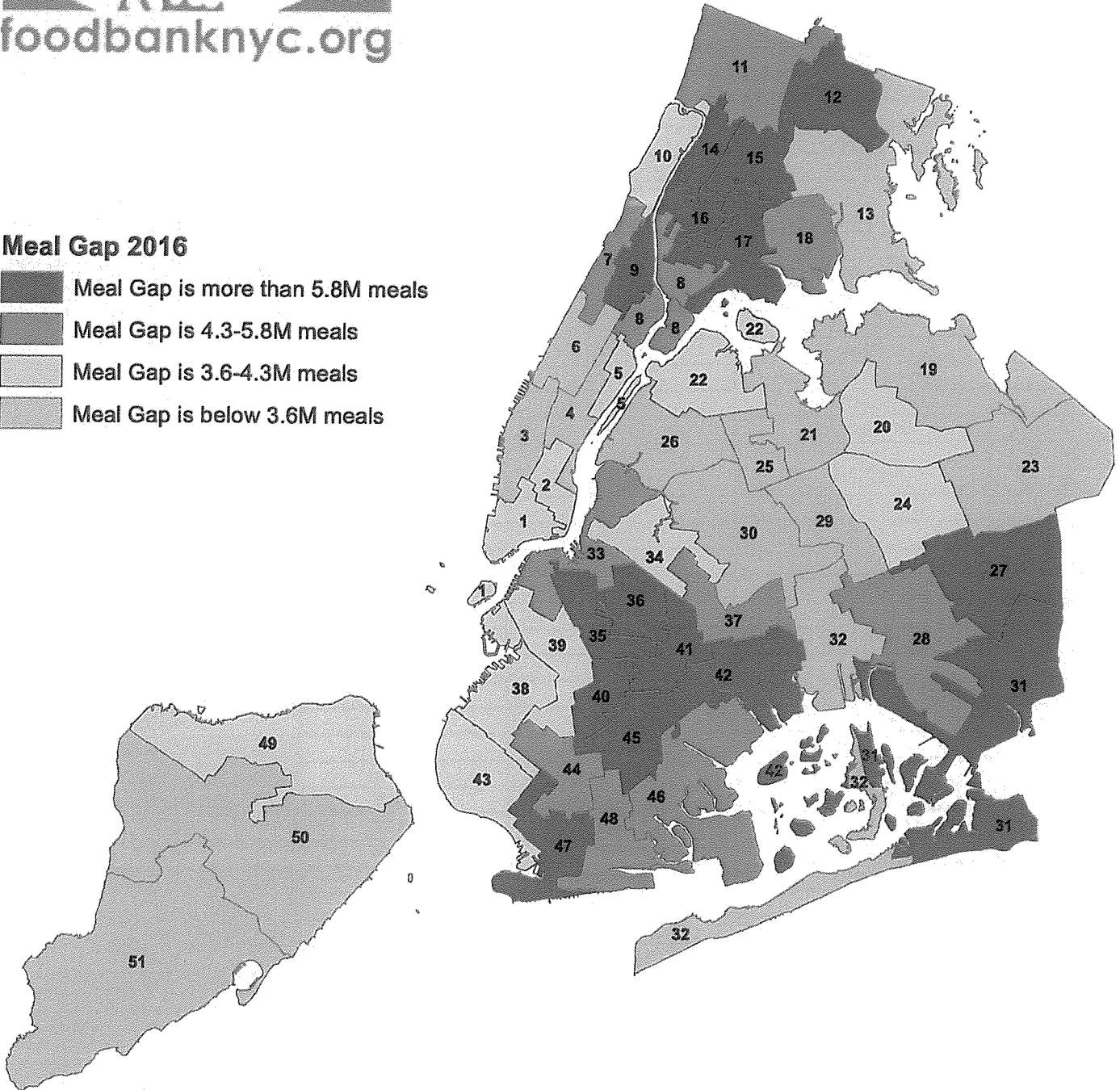
- Enhance the federal EITC.
- Expand funding of the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.
- Reject proposals to increase filing requirements for VITA preparers and self-preparers claiming an EITC and/or Child Tax Credit.
- Raise the federal minimum wage, and index it to inflation.
- Adopt policies that support a living wage with access to medical benefits and paid time off, and that make living wage jobs more accessible to low-income people.
- Develop job creation, training and education strategies that are geared toward poverty reduction.



Meal Gap by City Council District

Meal Gap 2016

-  Meal Gap is more than 5.8M meals
-  Meal Gap is 4.3-5.8M meals
-  Meal Gap is 3.6-4.3M meals
-  Meal Gap is below 3.6M meals



The Meal Gap, New York City's official measure of food insecurity, represents the meals missing from the homes of families and individuals struggling with food insecurity - that is, when household food budgets fall too short to secure adequate, nutritious food year-round.

Food Bank For New York City analysis based on Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, A. Crumbaugh, M. Kato & E. Engelhard. Map the Meal Gap 2016: Food Insecurity and Child Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level. Feeding America, 2016.

District	Council Member	Borough	Food Insecurity Rate	2016 Meal Gap	Rank
1	Chin	Manhattan	15.40%	3,967,682	32
2	Mendez	Manhattan	14.40%	3,710,041	36
3	Johnson	Manhattan	13.80%	3,555,455	38
4	Garodnick	Manhattan	11.00%	2,834,059	45
5	Kallos	Manhattan	14.60%	3,761,569	35
6	Rosenthal	Manhattan	10.90%	2,808,295	46
7	Levine	Manhattan	19.50%	5,024,013	18
8	Mark-Viverito	Manhattan/Bronx	22.20%	5,719,646	16
9	Dickens	Manhattan	29.50%	7,600,430	5
10	Rodriguez	Manhattan	15.60%	4,019,211	31
11	Cohen	Bronx	18.30%	5,013,771	19
12	King	Bronx	25.00%	6,849,414	8
13	Vacca	Bronx	11.70%	3,205,526	42
14	Cabrera	Bronx	23.10%	6,328,859	11
15	Torres	Bronx	23.60%	6,465,847	10
16	Gibson	Bronx	25.40%	6,959,005	7
17	Salamanca	Bronx	23.70%	6,493,245	9
18	Palma	Bronx	19.90%	5,452,134	17
19	Vallone	Queens	9.40%	2,421,452	50
20	Koo	Queens	15.10%	3,889,779	33
21	Ferreras-Copeland	Queens	10.00%	2,576,013	48
22	Constantinides	Queens	15.70%	4,044,340	29
23	Grodenschik	Queens	10.00%	2,576,013	48
24	Lancman	Queens	15.70%	4,044,340	29
25	Dromm	Queens	12.50%	3,220,016	41
26	Van Bramer	Queens	13.80%	3,554,898	39
27	Miller	Queens	24.20%	6,233,951	12
28	Wills	Queens	19.00%	4,894,424	20
29	Koslowitz	Queens	11.90%	3,065,455	43
30	Crowley	Queens	11.40%	2,936,655	44
31	Richards	Queens	22.70%	5,847,549	15
32	Ulrich	Queens	13.00%	3,348,817	40
33	Levin	Brooklyn	17.90%	4,586,821	22
34	Reynoso	Brooklyn	16.60%	4,253,700	26
35	Cumbo	Brooklyn	27.90%	7,149,291	6
36	Cornegy	Brooklyn	32.60%	8,353,651	1
37	Espinal	Brooklyn	17.00%	4,356,199	24
38	Menchaca	Brooklyn	16.20%	4,151,201	28
39	Lander	Brooklyn	16.60%	4,253,700	26
40	Eugene	Brooklyn	31.00%	7,943,656	4
41	Mealy	Brooklyn	31.50%	8,071,780	3
42	Barron	Brooklyn	31.60%	8,097,404	2
43	Gentile	Brooklyn	15.00%	3,843,705	34
44	Greenfield	Brooklyn	17.90%	4,586,821	22
45	Williams	Brooklyn	23.90%	6,124,303	13
46	Maisel	Brooklyn	18.50%	4,740,569	21
47	Treyger	Brooklyn	23.90%	6,124,303	13
48	Deutch	Brooklyn	17.00%	4,356,199	24
49	Rose	Staten Island	13.20%	3,636,855	37
50	Matteo	Staten Island	10.10%	2,782,745	47
51	Borelli	Staten Island	7.70%	2,121,499	51



Real Possibilities

AARP New York State Office

Testimony Before the New York City Council

Joint Meeting of the

Committee on General Welfare and the

Committee on Aging

January 25, 2017

New York City, New York

Introduction

Good morning Chairpersons Margaret Chin and Stephen T. Levin, and Council Members of the General Welfare Committee and the Aging Committee. My name is Beth Finkel, State Director for AARP in New York.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of more than 38 million that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities, and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. Here in New York, AARP has 2.6 million members – with over 800,000 in the New York City. AARP's work toward ending hunger is often supported by the work of the AARP Foundation.

The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity of AARP that is working to win back opportunities for struggling Americans age 50+ by being a force for change on the most serious issues they face today: housing, hunger, income and isolation. And currently AARP NY and the AARP Foundation are pleased to be working in conjunction with the Robin Hood Foundation to promote SNAP enrollment in New York City, particularly amongst the older adult population.

I would like to thank you for allowing us to speak today about the important issue of older adult hunger.

Background

Hunger is a key issue for AARP and is one of the AARP Foundation's top four priority areas nationwide. Of the 50 million Americans who face the threat of hunger, nearly nine million are over the age of 50. According to the AARP Foundation, more than 7% of these older Americans who are at risk of hunger reside in New York State. In New York State, one in 4 people over age 60 are considered nutritionally at-risk. Many low-income older adults have to make the difficult choice between paying for medications and housing costs or putting nutritious food on the table. Approximately half of older New Yorkers who may be eligible do not receive SNAP benefits.

Recent federal data shows that African American households are more than twice as likely to be food insecure as white, non-Hispanic households. Counties with majority African American populations are disproportionately represented among the top 10 percent of counties with the highest rates of food insecurity.

One in five (22%) African American households is food insecure as compared with one in 10 (10%) Caucasian households and one in eight (13%) households overall.

A NY State Profile of Food Insecurity for Seniors revealed similar disparities among older New Yorkers: food insecurity rates for older African American New Yorkers and older

Hispanic adults were 12.7% and 14.3%, respectively, while the food insecurity rate for the general population of older New York adults was 3.7%.

In these economic times, making ends meet has become harder and harder for so many families and older adults in New York, with the effects of the recession still lingering and older workers facing a weak job market. AARP has made it a priority that it be easier and more acceptable for people to apply for food assistance when they are in need. In particular AARP has focused on increasing participation in SNAP which also brings an economic boost to our local economy. For every five dollars that a SNAP recipient spends, nine dollars are added to the economy.

Many older adults are on fixed incomes and rely on Social Security benefits as the main source of their monthly income. Older African Americans and Hispanics across the country are more likely than older whites to depend on Social Security for 90 percent or more of their family income. The average Social Security retiree in NYS receives \$15,580. In New York State, 22.6% of Social Security recipients rely on Social Security for 90% or more of their income and 47.6% rely on Social Security for 50% or more of their income. Seniors use their limited dollars to pay for housing expenses, health care, utility bills, groceries, and other daily needs. Many low-income older adults have to make the difficult choice between paying for Medications and housing costs or putting nutritious food on the table. Research from the Food Bank for New York City finds that more than 15% of New York City residents aged 50 and over paid for rent instead of

food; and more than 15% also reported paying for medications and health care costs instead of food.

In AARP NY's recent research on NYC's "Vanishing Middle Class" we found that 51% of Baby Boomers and Gen-Xers said that affording food is causing a serious financial impact on them. From the report of the AARP Hunger Summit policy makers from across our state recommended the following barriers be addressed relative to Older Adults and Hunger:

- 1) Stigma and Myths Surrounding SNAP;
- 2) Difficulty Navigating the SNAP Application;
- 3) Inadequate Benefit Amounts;
- 4) Cultural and Language Barriers; and
- 5) Lack of Access Due to Transportation and Geographic Location

New York City has made great strides to overcome these barriers, yet there is much work still to be done and AARP NY and the AARP Foundation would like to continue to be part of the solution.

Conclusion

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify here today on this important issue which AARP is in strong support of trying to solve. I would like to close by recognizing you Chairperson Chin and Levin for making New York City a place where older people can age with independence and dignity.



Testimony of:

Ariel Savransky
Policy and Advocacy Associate for Child and Adolescent Health and Mental Health
Citizens' Committee for Children

Before the
New York City Council
Committee on General Welfare and Committee on Aging

Oversight – Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City

January 25, 2017

Good morning. My name is Ariel Savransky and I am the Policy and Advocacy Associate for Child and Adolescent Health and Mental Health at Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC). CCC is a 73-year-old independent, multi-issue child advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that every New York child is healthy, housed, educated and safe. I would like to thank Chairs Levin and Chin and the members of the City Council Committees on General Welfare and Aging for holding today's hearing about food insecurity in New York City. While today's hearing is focusing on seniors, children and families face many of the same issues with regard to benefits and access to food.

CCC is grateful to the entire City Council, Mayor de Blasio, and the City Administration for their work to fight poverty and increase New Yorkers' access to healthy, affordable food. We are confident that these efforts will improve health and overall well-being outcomes for New Yorkers.

It bears noting that the City Council has long been committed to enhancing the food security of New Yorkers. In fact, today's hearing continues the Council's tradition of holding a hunger oversight hearing each year. The annual hunger hearing is a testament to the Council's dedication to tackling hunger and food insecurity throughout the City.

Sadly, the need to address food insecurity has not decreased since the last hunger oversight hearing in January of 2016. Recent data show that a staggering number of New Yorkers continue to struggle with poverty, food insecurity and hunger. According to the most recent U.S. Census data, New York City's overall poverty rate is 20 percent, which means that one in every five New Yorkers lives in poverty.¹ Even more sobering is the child poverty rate in New York City, which now stands at 28.6 percent.² This translates into about one in three New York City children living in poverty. We also know that 9.2% of New York City children are living with their grandparents.³

In addition, citywide, almost 1.4 million people live in food insecure households, and this number has been steadily increasing since 2006.⁴ This number includes about 400,000 – or one in four – New York City children who is living in a food insecure home. Furthermore, about 1.7 million individuals received SNAP (Food Stamps) benefits in August of 2016.⁵

Poverty and hunger are a tragic combination as a poor diet can have lifelong health consequences, and can exacerbate health conditions with which an individual may currently be living. We are confident that the City will continue to make the fight against poverty, hunger and food insecurity a top priority. We respectfully ask Mayor de Blasio

¹ Citizens' Committee for Children. *Keeping Track Online: The Status of New York City Children*. <http://data.cccnewyork.org/>

² Id.

³ United States Census Bureau. *American Fact Finder Table B09018*. <https://factfinder.census.gov>

⁴ New York City Food Bank. *New York City's Meal Gap: 2016 Trends Report*. <http://www.foodbanknyc.org/files//dmfile/MealGapTrendsReport20162.pdf>

⁵ New York City Department of Social Services Human Resources Administration. *HRA Facts*. http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/facts/hra_facts/2016/hra_facts_2016_08.pdf

and the City Council to support and expand those programs that have been proven to assist food insecure seniors, families and children. In order to achieve these goals, CCC submits the following recommendations to make healthy food more affordable and accessible to all New Yorkers.

1. Strengthen the anti-hunger safety net

Safety net programs are absolutely vital resources to the large number of New Yorkers who struggle with hunger and food insecurity. Programs such as SNAP and WIC are critical supports that help New Yorkers feed their families and access the nutritious foods that children need for healthy growth and development.

Moreover, these programs function as economic engines, bringing federal resources to local supermarkets, corner stores, farmers' markets, and even Green Carts. Research shows that there is \$1.80 of economic activity resulting from every \$1 of SNAP spent. Further, SNAP receipt has been proven to lift a significant number of Americans above the poverty level.⁶ According to the most recent data available, in 2013, only about 77% of eligible individuals in NYC were receiving the SNAP benefits for which they qualified.⁷

We know that the City administration and the City Council have been taking steps to address this. For example, the Medicaid data match has helped identify thousands of New Yorkers who qualify for SNAP. The Council has also provided support to non-profits so that they could conduct SNAP outreach. Mayor de Blasio and HRA have also employed a number of initiatives to increase enrollment in SNAP, including allowing applicants to submit necessary documents using their smartphones as well as allowing clients to re-certify for benefits over the phone in specific neighborhoods. Furthermore, in 2015, a citywide outreach campaign was launched in the form of a website – foodhelp.nyc – to spread the word about SNAP to New Yorkers who qualify for SNAP benefits but are not receiving them. This outreach is extremely important this year due to eligibility guideline changes. In the summer of 2016, the state expanded eligibility from 130 percent to 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

We are grateful that the Council has recognized the beneficial role that farmers' markets and federally-funded food programs play in helping New Yorkers access healthy, local foods. This recognition is evident in the Council's historic support for the use of SNAP at the City's farmers' markets.⁸ As you are aware, the number of New Yorkers who

⁶ United States Department of Agriculture Office of Research and Analysis, *Trends in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation Rates: Fiscal Year 2002 to Fiscal Year 2009, August 2011*. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ORA/menu/Published/SNAP/FILES/Participation/Trends2002-09.pdf>

⁷ New York City Human Resources Administration. *SNAP Program Access Index and Participation Rates: 2002-2013*.

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/hra/downloads/pdf/facts/snap/2002.2013NYCSNAPParticipation.pdf>

⁸ Data from our 2013 report *From Farm to Table: The Use of Federally-Funded Food Programs at New York City Farmers' Markets* show, use of SNAP, the WIC Fruit & Vegetable check, and the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) in our City's farmers' markets positively impacts both the food security of low-income families and the incomes of regional farmers

make SNAP purchases at farmers' markets grows substantially each year, as a result of the DOHMH Health Bucks program and the repeated Council distribution of one-year funds to support EBT technology at the markets.

Further, federal government cuts to SNAP, which occurred in November 2013, decreased the amount of SNAP benefits that New Yorkers received.⁹ The average SNAP benefit in New York City declined from \$162 per person per month in December 2012 to about \$138 per person per month in October 2016.¹⁰ This benefit reduction, known as the Hunger Cliff, has resulted in a loss of over 161 million meals in New York City since November 2013, and although Emergency Food Programs (EFPs) are working to fill that meal gap, resources are not adequate and the gap continues to exist at about 100 million meals.¹¹ In addition, EFPs also saw a substantial growth in visitors preceding the SNAP cuts, as a result of both the recession and Hurricane Sandy. However, it is encouraging to note that fewer food pantries and soup kitchens reported running out of food, reducing the number of meals in their pantry bags and turning people away as compared to September of 2015.¹²

Recommendations

- a) Continue to engage in efforts to expand participation in SNAP to reach more eligible New Yorkers, as well as efforts to ensure New Yorkers can use their benefits more widely

We urge the City to continue to build upon the current efforts to increase participation in the SNAP program, including through continuing to use the Medicaid data match to help identify New Yorkers who qualify for SNAP as well as through allowing applicants to submit documents using their smartphones.

Other efforts by individuals are also aimed at increasing participation in these programs, such as the recent development of an app that allows New Yorkers to see what benefits, programs and tax credits they may be eligible for.¹³ We urge the City to promote the use of these tools to enroll more New Yorkers in these programs.

We are extremely excited about the recent announcement that New Yorkers will soon be able to use their SNAP benefits to purchase food online. This option will increase access to fresh, affordable food, especially for those individuals living in neighborhoods with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as for those individuals who may have trouble traveling to stores to purchase food. We urge the City to invest in efforts to

⁹ A household of three lost approximately \$29 per month – more than 20 meals.

¹⁰ New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Statistics, October 2016. <https://otda.ny.gov/resources/caseload/2016/2016-10-stats.pdf>

¹¹ Food Bank for New York City. Still Scaling the Hunger Cliff: Need at NYC Food Pantries & Soup Kitchens. http://www.foodbanknyc.org/files/dmfile/2016_LegislativeBreakfast_ResearchBrief_11_19.pdf

¹² Id.

¹³ NY1. *Benefit Kitchen App Helps Low Income Households*. <http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/money-matters/2017/01/18/benefit-kitchen-app-helps-low-income-households-.html>

publicize this program so that SNAP recipients are aware that they will be able to use their benefits online.

Given the positive impact the ability to use SNAP at farmers' markets has on the food security of New Yorkers and the local economy, we urge the City to ensure all New York City farmers' markets and Green Carts are equipped with EBT technology, and we will be urging the Administration to baseline this funding. We are also urging the City to continue to explore ways to use Health Bucks as an incentive to participate in community-based organization's nutrition and health programming, especially with the new award from the United States Department of Agriculture which expands the Health Bucks season from five months to year-round.¹⁴ In addition to being awarded Health Bucks for spending EBT benefits at farmer's markets, community organizations may also distribute Health Bucks to their clients as an incentive to support nutrition education and other health-related activities.

- b) Continue to engage in efforts to expand participation in the WIC program

We urge the City to explore the creation of outreach programs similar to those being employed for SNAP eligible New Yorkers to increase participation in the WIC program such as through using the Medicaid data match and allowing individuals to submit documents over the phone. Furthermore, we believe that there is more that New York can do to increase the take-up rate for the WIC fruit and vegetable voucher at farmers' markets or on green carts, such as working with the state to ensure WIC is added to the EBT benefits' card before 2020 (when it is federally required) and making it easier for farmers and green carts to enroll in WIC by making WIC, FMNP and SNAP all on one application form.¹⁵ Additionally, we urge the Administration to explore ways to make it easier for WIC Fruit and Vegetable voucher recipients to use these vouchers by giving them easily accessible opportunities, such as by placing Green Carts outside WIC centers or providing WIC centers with information on local farmers' markets.

- c) Baseline and add funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program to account for increased need

We will be urging the administration to baseline the \$4.9 million the City Council added last year and to add additional needed funding. We once again look forward to partnering with the City Council in our efforts to increase funding for emergency food programs.

- d) Ensure that new SNAP guidelines imposed on retailers do not limit access to the food New Yorkers need

¹⁴ The City of New York. *Food Metrics Report 2015*.

<http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/foodpolicy/downloads/pdf/2016-Food-Metrics-Report.pdf>

¹⁵ Citizens' Committee for Children, *From Farm to Table: The Use of Federally-Funded Food Programs at New York City Farmers' Markets, May 2013*. <http://www.cccnewyork.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CCCFarmersMarketReport.May-2013.pdf>

This year, new SNAP guidelines were imposed on SNAP retailers, increasing the number of food items a retailer must stock in order to accept SNAP benefits.¹⁶ In order to ensure that SNAP recipients have access to staple foods, the USDA requires that retailers accepting SNAP benefits stock a variety and a minimum amount of items in certain food categories. This new rule change requires a minimum stock of 84 items within four staple categories of vegetables or fruits; dairy products; meat, poultry, or fish; and bread or cereals. Each category must have a minimum of seven different varieties with three units of each variety (for a total of 84 varieties). Furthermore, if more than 50 percent of a store's business comes from prepared foods, including those heated after purchase, that retailer will no longer be eligible to accept SNAP benefits. Although these rules will not impact larger retailers, such as grocery stores, these changes could potentially affect the smaller bodegas and grocery stores currently accepting SNAP benefits. We urge the City to monitor the effect of these new guidelines on smaller retail outlets to ensure that New Yorkers are still able to conveniently access the food they need. It is possible that the City might need to take steps to ensure bodegas and other small grocers are able to maintain their ability to accept SNAP.

2. Expand existing efforts to bring fresh, healthy foods into all New York City neighborhoods, and establish new programming that brings foods into underserved areas

New York City has many communities where residents have limited access to healthy, affordable food. We support initiatives that aim to increase the presence of healthy and fresh food retail outlets in these communities, often referred to as food deserts.

We are pleased that the City has undertaken a number of initiatives in recent years with the aim of achieving this goal. For example, CCC has long supported the Green Carts program, advocating for its establishment and then producing a report about the first year of its implementation. We are pleased that the City is continuing to work to expand the presence of these Green Carts as well as to expand the capacity of Green Cart vendors to accept EBT. CCC also advocated for FRESH financing at its inception, and we are so pleased that since 2009, 24 projects have been approved, including twelve that have been completed and are now open to the public.¹⁷

Additionally, we are very pleased to see progress being made with the Building Healthy Communities initiative, which seeks to improve the health of New Yorkers in 12 high-poverty neighborhoods by improving opportunities for physical activity, increasing access to nutritious and affordable food and promoting public safety. This past year, three new farms were established on NYCHA developments in partnership with Green City Force, bringing fresh fruits and vegetables to NYCHA residents as well as dynamic programming including opportunities for workforce and leadership development for

¹⁶ United States Department of Agriculture. *Enhancing Retailer Standards in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/snap/Retailer-Enhancing-Retailer-Standards-SNAP.pdf>

¹⁷ The City of New York. *Food Metrics Report 2015*. <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/foodpolicy/downloads/pdf/2016-Food-Metrics-Report.pdf>

youth. By redesigning neighborhoods and bringing programming to the people who need it, this public private partnership can potentially help to alleviate the high rates of crime, as well as the high rates of obesity and diabetes often disproportionately present in these neighborhoods.

Along the same lines, we applaud the creation of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Center for Health Equity, which will work to reduce health disparities and promote health equity by directing resources to high-need neighborhoods that continue to be disproportionately affected by food insecurity. This past year, three Neighborhood Action Centers – formerly called DPHOs – were launched and four more are expected to be opened this year.¹⁸ These centers will be important places for community-based organizations and Health Department staff to work together to advance neighborhood health.

CCC respectfully submits the following recommendations to improve access to healthy, affordable food in food deserts:

- a) Explore ways to strengthen and expand the Green Carts initiative

We believe that the administration should consider additional ways to strengthen¹⁹ the Green Carts initiative through more efficiently moving potential vendors off wait lists and expanding this initiative so that the program can operate at full capacity. Currently, there are 320 active Green Carts with 161 Green Cart operators on the waiting list.²⁰ At full capacity, this program can license up to 1000 Green Carts. We also hope that the City will explore ways to help Green Cart vendors serve New Yorkers year-round, including through partnerships with CBOs and other agencies, so that vendors can receive more technical assistance in order to acquire food; be housed in sheltered spaces so that they continue to work and serve their communities during inclement winter months; and find more targeted placements, especially near NYCHA facilities.

As the City Council explores ways to improve street vending laws, we once again remind you to ensure that there are no negative unintended consequences to Green Carts.²¹

- b) Increase investment in the FRESH program to bring fresh, healthy foods into all New York City neighborhoods

We believe that more investment is needed to bring fresh, healthy foods into all New York City neighborhoods. We suggest that the City should build upon and learn from the successes of the FRESH program, and continue to use it to upgrade outdated

¹⁸ Id.

¹⁹ Citizens' Committee for Children. *Green Cart Implementation: Year One. 2010.* <http://www.cccnewyork.org/wp-content/publications/CCCReport.GreenCarts.Sept2010.pdf>

²⁰ The City of New York. *Food Metrics Report 2015.* <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/foodpolicy/downloads/pdf/2016-Food-Metrics-Report.pdf>

²¹ Citizens' Committee for Children. *Food Vendor Modernization Act.* <http://www.cccnewyork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/CCC-testimony-Food-Vendor-Modernization-Act-.pdf>

infrastructure at grocery stores in neighborhoods that lack sufficient fresh food retailers. Such upgrades should include efforts to ensure that these retailers, including and especially smaller stores and bodegas, have the capacity to obtain and refrigerate fresh produce, fish, and meats. We also hope that the City will consider additional grants or incentives that would encourage food retailers to improve or further develop their outlets in underserved neighborhoods. We also urge the City to explore how to leverage FRESH in relation to the new affordable housing plans so that those individuals living in these developments have access to food retail outlets.

- c) Continue to invest in programs and explore ways to achieve the goals of the Center for Health Equity to reduce health disparities and promote health equity

We urge the City to continue to invest in the Building Healthy Communities initiative to ensure all 12 neighborhoods have programs promoting physical activity, consumption of and access to nutritious and affordable food and public safety.

We also urge the Administration to explore ways to reach more residents of the communities that have or will eventually have a Neighborhood Action Center through initiatives targeting nutrition education, cooking classes, and the development of farmers markets. Additionally, the work being done at these centers could focus on exploring ways to ensure the residents in these communities are taking advantage of the fresh food options available as well as ways to bring fresh food to communities in need.

In conclusion, New Yorkers continue to face significant hardship in accessing the nutritious and affordable food they need. Federal programs administered in New York City, as well as local innovations, assist these individuals in their efforts but barriers still remain. We ask that the City consider how to further support and grow the use of programs, so that more New Yorkers across the five boroughs can benefit.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



GOD'S LOVE WE DELIVER
TESTIMONY FOR NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE
STEPHEN T. LEVIN, CHAIR
JANUARY 25, 2017

God's Love We Deliver is New York City's leading not-for-profit provider of medically tailored home-delivered meals and nutritional counseling for people living with life-threatening illnesses. Over 30 years ago God's Love began with one person's simple, compassionate response to hunger. From the humble beginning of delivering one meal to one dying man, we have now delivered over 19 million meals to one of the most underserved and isolated populations in our City: those who are sick and unable to take care of their most basic need – the need for food and nutrition. God's Love is an integral part of the City's safety net. As a key service agency within the local care continuum, we maintain relationships with over 200 community organizations to reach those in need. **In 2016, we cooked and delivered 1.6 million meals to 6,800 people.** God's Love has a network, a reach and a program that greatly benefits coordination of care for those with chronic illnesses.

We ask that the NYC Council recognize the threat of malnutrition in addition to food insecurity and provide hunger based funding to organizations, like God's Love We Deliver, that addresses a specific kind of hunger faced by the chronically ill population.

Every day in New York City, tens of thousands of people struggle to feed themselves and their families. According to a Food Bank for New York City report, almost one in three New York City residents (32%) experience difficulty affording food. This percentage represents approximately 2.6 million people. According to the U. S. Census, the 2015 NYC poverty rate stood at 20.6%. This number is far higher than the national poverty rate of 13.5 percent¹.

People living in poverty often struggle to afford the things they truly need. Choices often have to be made between survival needs like housing, food, and medicine. 13% of New York City residents were unable to pay for food in the last 12 months because they had to pay for medicine or medical care – it is 16% in the elderly.¹¹

Against this background of extreme need, our clients stand out in sharp relief. Their need is even greater. 90% of our clients live at or below the poverty line. In addition to their burden of poverty, our clients are equally burdened by their chronic and severe illnesses and lack of mobility. 90% of our clients are living with more than one severe diagnosis, and almost half are also living with behavioral health co-morbidities. For our clients, the normal activities of daily living are wholly exacerbated by illness. They are unable to shop or cook. So many of the clients who come to us for help are unable to eat food and meals from food banks, pantry programs and congregate meal programs. Clients are unemployed due to illness and most are unable to ambulate for all but the shortest distance. For many, isolation is a fact of existence, and our meal deliverer -- a God's Love driver or volunteer -- may be the only friendly face they see each week.

God's Love is the only answer for people in this extreme condition. Reaching medically underserved populations has always been an organizational priority. Our program serves communities that experience the greatest health care disparities, namely low-income households, immigrants and communities of color, as is borne out by our demographics. Through a combination of individually tailored meals and nutrition counseling, our program provides a therapy that effectively addresses food insecurity, improves clients' well-being, enhances medication effectiveness, addresses treatment side effects, manages symptoms, maintains a healthy body weight, and reduces health care costs and re-hospitalizations.

In addition to solving food insecurity for our clients, we also address the detrimental effects of malnutrition. Nutrition is our signature difference. We recognize chronic illness can lead to a variety of complications that require a specialized diet. We are able to meet this need as part of our commitment to food as

medicine. God's Love clients receive services from our 7 Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) who tailor each meal to meet each client's specific medical needs. All of our meals are well-balanced: low in sodium, free of highly allergenic foods such as nuts and shellfish, and immune supporting. Our menu allows for individualization of meals according to dietary needs, including texture restrictions such as minced and pureed diets, and renal diets. Based on a client's nutrition assessment with an RDN, additional restrictions may be added to the client's diet for medical, nutritional, or cultural reasons.

We believe that being sick and hungry is a crisis that demands an urgent response. When someone calls us for help, we deliver their first meal on the next delivery day, we never charge clients for their meals and we have never had a waiting list. Staying true to these principles has led to tremendous growth in our program. Our growth rate has been a steady 10%+ per year and rising. **In just the last 10 years, we have seen an increase of over 100% in demand for our services.** With incidences of chronic illnesses, like cardiovascular disease, COPD and severe diabetes, not to mention kidney failure, on the rise, we know there are more clients in our future.

We are thrilled that Council is dedicated to reducing food insecurity in New York City. Benefits like SNAP, Health bucks, and emergency food assistance have had a positive effect on those facing hunger and food insecurity in the city. **However, not every population can access these services.** Our clients are too sick to shop or cook for themselves. Therefore, providing our clients with SNAP benefits is not sufficient. Our clients need more.

We ask that the NYC Council recognize the threat of malnutrition in addition to food insecurity and provide hunger based funding to organizations, like God's Love We Deliver, that addresses a specific kind of hunger faced by the chronically ill population.

Currently, the burden to address the need for medically tailored food falls mainly on the private, non-profit sector. Unless a client has HIV/AIDS, there is no dedicated federal funding stream which provides for medically tailored food for people living with any other illnesses. **City funding is critical,** if we want to tackle the entire hunger spectrum. Without medically tailored meals, addressing hunger in our diverse community will be difficult.

Every day our clients struggle with malnutrition, hunger, illness and isolation. When they contact God's Love, they find a community of volunteers, staff and Board members, who care deeply about them. Together, we are dedicated to cooking and delivering the individually-tailored meals and nutrition counseling our clients require at a time in their lives when they need it most. We do this - free of charge - with dignity, respect and compassion. With the support of the City, we will be able to manage our growth, while helping our clients to be as healthy as they can be for as long as they are able.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

For further information please contact:

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ⁱ "Income and Poverty in the United States: 2015," Proctor et al., 2016. <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/p60-256.pdf>

ⁱⁱ "NYC Hunger Experience 2012." Food Bank for New York City, 2012.
http://www.foodbanknyc.org/files//dmfile/NYCHungerExperience2012_FINAL2.PDF

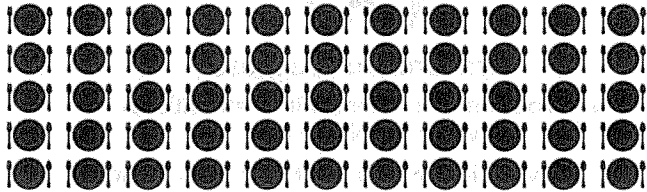


**GOD'S LOVE
WE DELIVER®**

FOOD IS MEDICINE FOOD IS LOVE

We are dedicated to cooking and delivering the specific, nutritious meals a client's severe illness and treatment so urgently require. Serving the greater New York City metropolitan area since 1985.

Mission in Action



1,500,000
Meals per year

5,800
Meals per day



10,000

Volunteers adding \$2M in service



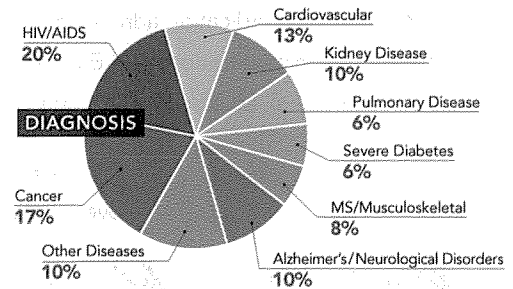
100%+

Growth in meals in 9 years

People Served



90% Clients at or below federal poverty level



6,252 People

91% are clients 5% are caregivers 4% are children

Home-Delivered Meals

We provide medically-tailored meals by addressing a combination of restrictions, resulting in almost infinite meal variety.

- ✓ Some restrictions include: Pork, Beef, Fish, Vegetarian, Sugar, Fat, Dairy, Renal, Minced, Pureed, Acid/Bland and Fiber/Gas

RDNs 7 Registered Dietitian Nutritionists



All meals are low in sodium



No starters, fillers or preservatives



21 nutrition publications; 14,000 per year distributed nationally and internationally

SPECIAL TOUCHES

- ♥ Support families by feeding the children and senior caregivers of clients
- ♥ Special holiday meals and gifts
- ♥ Personalized birthday cakes and cards
- ♥ Emergency meal kits for blizzards and blackouts

Geography



godslowedeliver



godslovenyc



godslovenyc



godslowedeliver



godslowedeliver




godslovenyc


Research

The Need

 **3X**
Higher healthcare costs for malnourished patients compared to nourished patients¹

 **2X**
The initial hospitalizations for malnourished patients compared to nourished patients²

 **3X**
Longer hospital stay for malnourished patients compared to nourished patients¹

 **2X**
More likely malnourished patients will be discharged to a facility rather than their home¹



Access To Medically Tailored Meals

- ♥ Improves medication adherence³
- ♥ Reduces hospitalizations and ER visits⁴
- ♥ Can reduce overall healthcare costs up to 62%⁵



Research in Progress

- ♥ Health outcomes for clients with metastatic cancer with a hospital in NYC
- ♥ Cost savings in a mainstream Medicaid population with an NYC managed care organization

The Outcomes – Client Survey

Clients overwhelmingly report that our program helps them



Live more independently



Manage medical treatment better



Learn to eat nutritionally



Decrease stress

Partners with New York State in Healthcare Innovation

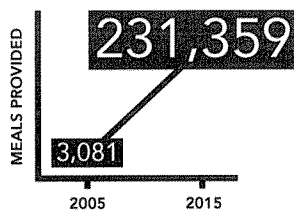
Medicaid: Community Partners Program

- ♥ Medicaid 1115 Waiver (MLTC)
- ♥ Duals Demonstration Project (FIDA)
- ♥ 34 Contracts

Balancing Incentives Program

- ♥ Expansion of Community Partners to Westchester and Nassau Counties
- ♥ Creation of a Referral Tool for Care Coordinators

Community Partner Growth Since 2005



Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP)

Goal: **25%**
Reduction in hospitalizations

12
Partnerships with hospitals

Ending the HIV Epidemic

God's Love We Deliver is a leadership partner with



Footnotes: ¹Corkins MR et al., J. Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (2013); ²Su Li Lim et al., 31 Clinical Nutr. 345-250 (2012); ³Singer, A et al. AIDS Behav (2015) 19:1510–1526; ⁴Adaila A et al., New York State Department of Health: Resources for Ending the Epidemic, 2014; ⁵Gurvey J, Rand K, Daugherty S, Dinger C, Schmeling J, and Laverty N. 4(4):311-7 (June 3, 2013)

FOOD IS MEDICINE



Lowering Healthcare Costs with Medically Tailored Nutrition

Did you know?

1 in 3 hospitalized patients is malnourished on admission*

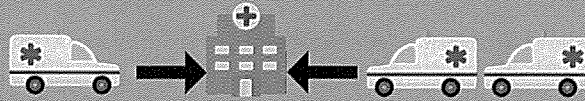


Nourished

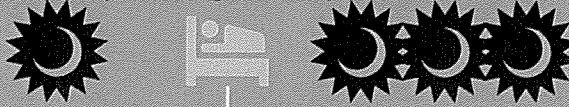
Malnourished



of Hospitalizations **



Hospital Length of Stay ****



93%
to home



Post-Hospital Discharge ***

28%
to home



Likelihood of Readmission in 15 Days **



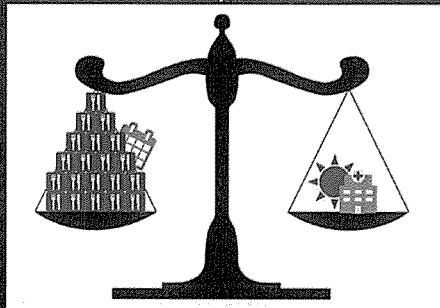
38%



Overall Healthcare Costs ***



Nutrition is an Inexpensive Intervention



Feed someone for 1/2 a year
for the same cost as 1 day in the hospital

* Gordon CE, et al. "Recognizing Malnutrition in Adults: Guidelines and Clinical Implications for Dietitians, Registered Dietitians, and Other Professionals." J. Parent Sci and Technol 2013.
** Lee H, et al. "Post-Hospital Length of Stay in the Elderly: The Impact of Malnutrition." J. Parent Sci and Technol 2013.
*** Lee H, et al. "The Impact of Malnutrition on Hospital Length of Stay and Post-Hospital Discharge." J. Parent Sci and Technol 2013.
**** Gordon CE, et al. "Malnutrition Outcomes in Hospitalized Patients." J. Parent Sci and Technol 2013.



Nutrition
is our
signature
difference.
Here's how we do it.

CONTACT

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nutrition@glwd.org / 212.294.8103
godslowewedeliver.org

COUNSEL

NOURISH

EDUCATE

RDN*

Continuously assesses the nutritional needs of clients, dependents and caregivers



Works hand in hand with culinary team to create culturally diverse, nutritionally balanced menus



Writes and publishes nutrition education materials for clients and for global distribution

16 → 67,192 → 3
Fact sheets Downloads Languages

14 → 6,300 → 2
Books Distributed Languages

CLIENT

Receives culturally competent nutrition counseling



Benefits from robust menu tailored to individual needs



Provides nutrition education to clients, caregivers and families

Conducts community workshops & teleconferences in multiple languages

IN 2014 WE:

- ♥ Worked with people with over 200 diagnoses in multiple languages
- ♥ Provided nutritional counseling to 5,322 individuals
- ♥ Distributed 12,295 nutrition publications
- ♥ Led 61 nutrition workshops for 3,722 people

Delicious meals safely delivered from our kitchen to clients' homes



RESULTS

FOR THE CLIENT:

- Able to remain at home
- Well-nourished with fewer complications
- Increased nutrition knowledge
- Improved quality of life

FOR THE COMMUNITY:

- Improved community health – fewer hospitalizations and reduced health care costs
- Enhanced cooking & food skills
- Increased nutrition knowledge

* Registered Dietitian Nutritionist

Connect with us



Council of Jewish Organizations of Staten Island
382 Jersey Street
Staten Island, NY 10301



Testimony Prepared by Stuart Cohen

For the General Welfare Committee and Committee on Aging

On Oversight Hearing: *Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City*, January 25, 2017

On behalf of Council of Jewish Organizations of Staten Island

Hello, my name is Stuart Cohen and I am the Director of the COJO Food Pantry and Social Services at the Council of Jewish Organizations of Staten Island. Our food service program is a member of the Food Bank For New York City and City Harvest. We are also a member of the Staten Island Hunger Task Force, an alliance of emergency providers organized to address food insecurity on Staten Island.

I would like to thank Council Members Levin and the General Welfare Committee and Council Member Chin and the Committee Aging for your time today.

COJO has been providing kosher food to Staten Islanders for 37 years. While we serve people of all faiths and all ages, I am here today to discuss what is going on within emergency food services for seniors in my community.

There are many seniors who come to our food program both for bags of food to take home, and also to eat prepared meals together as part of our community dinner, which we serve twice per month. At COJO we also provide other services to help seniors live more comfortably, including clothes and access to public benefits. One of the seniors we serve is Ellen, who came to the US from Israel. She now lives with her son, who recently lost his job. They are really struggling and have come to COJO for food, clothes, and particularly winter coats. Ellen and her family keep kosher, and I am proud that COJO can provide food for her family.

For seniors who might have a harder time traveling, having services nearby or close to transit is very important. COJO is close enough to a bus to make this possible – and the need is so great that when seniors come to our food pantry, they come in bus loads.

The food provided by Food Bank For New York City, City Harvest and New York City's Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) is essential to helping out seniors in our community. We are asking today for more resources for EFAP so more seniors can have access to needed food.

COJO supports increasing resources for EFAP to \$22 million dollars in the City Budget. We are currently serving over 500 seniors a week, but could serve more people if we had food and operational resources to support our program.

Thank you again for your time and continued support for New York's seniors.



**JITA Community Outreach Center
89-17 139th Street, Jamaica NY 11435**

Testimony Prepared by **Danette Rivera**

For the **General Welfare Committee and Committee on Aging**

On Oversight Hearing: *Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City*, January 25, 2017

On behalf of **JITA Community Outreach Center**

Hello, my name is **Danette Rivera**, and I run a nonprofit organization called JITA Community Service Center in Jamaica, Queens. We are a member of the Food Bank For New York City and provide services to the community including a twice-weekly food pantry.

Thank you for giving us your attention regarding impactful anti-hunger programs especially the Emergency Food Assistance Program, known as EFAP.

I would like to give my insight on why it is imperative that EFAP funding be raised to \$22 million in order to meet not only the hunger deficit that is going on in NYC today, but also how EFAP provides relief to many *individuals* from the burden of financial crisis.

One of those individuals is Ms. Myriam Rios. Myriam is one of my clients at the food pantry. She is a retired senior citizen, single mother and grandmother of her 42yr old daughter, 22yr old granddaughter, and 12yr grandson.

Myriam's family, like many families in my community, is struggling to make ends meet. EFAP helps my organization provide her whole family with wholesome and nutritious food. Access to this food eases the burden of a mother and grandmother who would otherwise choose between paying their rent and going to bed hungry.

Myriam's grandson also eats lunch in school as part of the free middle school program, and also during summer meals. Meals in school and during the summer are another essential way that families like Myriam's have relief from hunger. While free lunch in middle school is a step in the right direction, I urge the City to expand free school lunch for all students. No mother should have to choose between one child eating and the other going hungry.

Myriam comes to our Community Center to access food, but soon we will be able to provide her, her daughter and granddaughter with free Tax preparation. The food EFAP provides to our community center allows us to be trusted space to offer a variety of resources that reach people at the core of there need. To put it simply ensuring food for struggling families makes sense for *ALL* New Yorkers.

Thank you again for your time today. Please continue to support programs that help New Yorkers, like Myriam and her family.



A division of HUNGER FREE AMERICA



ENDING HUNGER LIFTS US ALL

Testimony of Joel Berg, Chief Executive Officer

Hunger Free America

Hearing before The New York City Council General Welfare Committee

Oversight: Hunger in New York City

January 25, 2017

I, Joel Berg, Chief Executive Officer of Hunger Free America, am testifying on behalf of the approximately 1.4 million New Yorkers who live in households that can't afford enough food. Formerly called the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, Hunger Free America changed its name in 2016 to better reflect the broad scope of our national work. This was also accompanied with intensifying our local efforts under the new name, Hunger Free New York City. I want to first thank Chairman Levin and the whole committee for your work on behalf of struggling New Yorkers.

Hunger in New York City

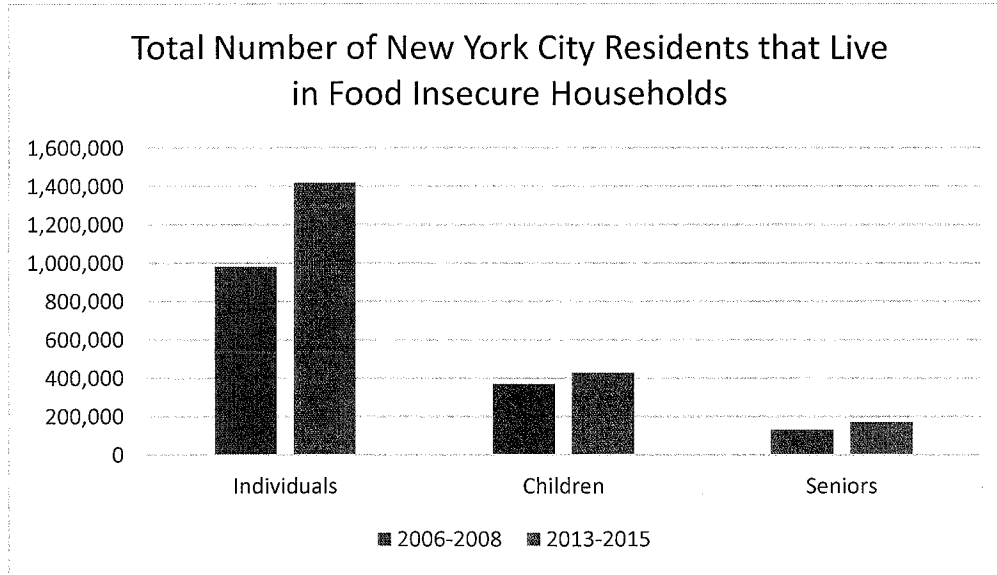
While food insecurity nationwide dropped in 2015 due to the improving economy, and there are some initial signs that it may be starting to decline in New York City, it will not be clear as to whether or not hunger has significantly decreased until the 2016 data is released by the federal government later this year. However, 2013-2015 average levels of hunger and food insecurity were at virtually the same levels as they were at the height of the recession seven years ago.

An average of 1.4 million New York City residents lived in food insecure homes between 2013 and 2015; a number 45% greater than the level of food insecurity from 2006-2008 (980,000 residents). Additionally, approximately one in five children and one in eight seniors were food insecure between 2013 and 2015.

To add to this, the reality is that nearly half of all food insecure New York State and New York City residents live in households with at least one person working. In 2013-2015, 45 percent of all food insecure New York City residents, lived in such households that included at least one working person.

Total Number of New York City Residents Living in Food Insecure Households

	Individuals	Children	Seniors
2006-2008	981,884	369,415	132,113
2013-2015	1,418,297	429,357	171,197

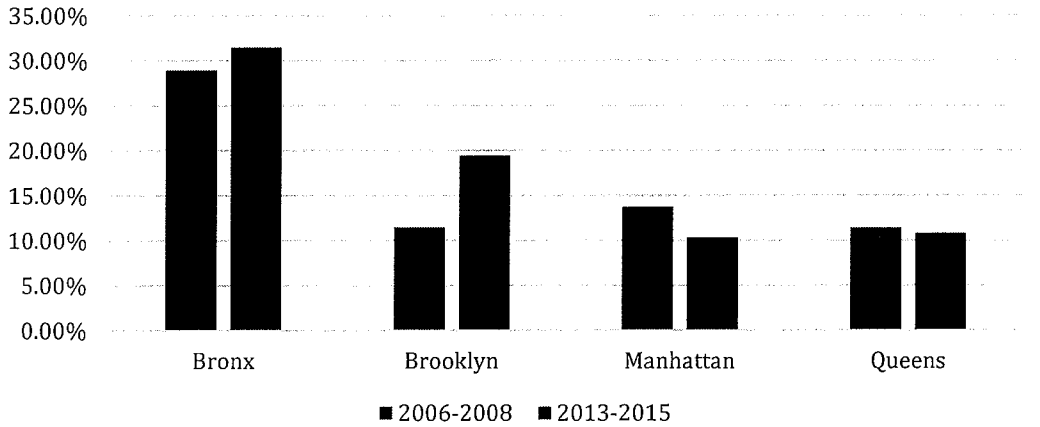


Bronx continued to be the hungriest borough, with 31 percent of its residents overall, and 37 percent of its children, living in food insecure homes in 2013-2015.

Percentage of New York City Residents Living in Food Insecure Households by Borough

	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens
2006-2008	28.93%	11.46%	13.75%	11.38%
2013-2015	31.46%	19.44%	10.32%	10.78%

Percent of NYC Residents that Live in Food Insecure Households by Borough



Unfortunately, these sustained levels were compounded by significant participation decreases in the city’s main federal nutrition programs, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – formerly called the Food Stamp Program. New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) data indicates roughly an 11 percent drop in SNAP participation from 1,898,028 in December 2012 to 1,698,133 in November 2016. In addition, according to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, the average monthly SNAP benefit declined from \$162 in December of 2012 to \$146 in October of 2016. That means, as a result of federal cuts, the average SNAP benefit in NYC declined from a paltry \$1.80 per meal to an even paltrier \$1.62 per meal.

Combining the declining SNAP caseload with even lower average benefit allotments means that overall federal SNAP spending in New York City declined from an estimated \$3.6 billion in 2012 to an estimated \$2.9 billion in 2016, a \$700 million drop. Furthermore, it is estimated that over 500,000 eligible low income New Yorkers are currently not receiving valuable benefits that would help them and to which they are entitled. The main barriers to claiming include stigma, confusion, concerns about the process, bureaucratic snafus, administrative delays, lack of awareness, and misinformation.

It is no surprise, then, that the plight of hunger and poverty are still felt on the ground at emergency food programs, as shown by Hunger Free NYC’s Annual Hunger Survey report. It found that New York City’s food pantries and soup kitchens faced an increased demand of nine percent in 2016, on top of an increased demand of five percent in 2015, seven percent in 2014, 10 percent in 2013, five percent in 2012, 12 percent in 2011, seven percent in 2010, and 20 percent in 2009.

Over One in Five New York City Children – Nearly Half a Million – Are Food Insecure

Citywide in 2013-2015, about 429,000 children – or one in five – struggled against hunger. A total 16% greater than the 369,000 NYC children that lived in food insecure homes between 2006 and 2008.

To be well read, children must first be well fed. To be schooled, they must be fueled. The United States suffers from high rates of childhood food insecurity and lags behind in educational performance, two highly interconnected problems. Food deprivation in the world's wealthiest nation is not only morally unacceptable, but it also severely hampers children's emotional, intellectual, and physical development. Child hunger costs the U.S. economy at least \$28 billion per year because poorly nourished kids perform less well in school and require far more long-term health care spending. Solving this problem will cost far less than not solving it.

School meals are a critical component to fighting child hunger. In the spring of 2015, New York City's Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the introduction of "breakfast after the bell" – or serving breakfast to all kids in their classrooms or via "grab and go" – for all stand-alone elementary schools, which serve about 339,000 students. The new policy is a great opportunity for the largest school district in the nation, to increase the number of students who begin the day with a nutritious breakfast, where previously, only about 30 percent of students financially eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches were participating in the school breakfast program.

Likewise, instituting other universal meal programs, such as the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program, can increase the number of children receiving nutritious, affordable school meals each day. Because of Community Eligibility, during the 2015-16 school year more than 18,000 high-poverty schools served free breakfast and lunch to more than 8.6 million low-income students across the country. Expanding the service of universal lunch, which was introduced by the City Council in 2014, to all stand-alone middle schools, should be on the agenda.

It's not difficult to connect the dots – with kids out of school and missing out on the healthy, affordable meals provided there, family expenditures increase. And for many homes, this means cutting back on other necessities. Summer meals programs can make a huge difference, but only if children are able to access them. However, of the children who depend on free or reduced-price lunch during the school year, only a fraction are participating in the summer meals program.

Nationally, only about 16.7 percent of students who received free or reduced-price lunches also participated in the Summer Food Service Program (or Summer Meals) during the summer of 2015. According to the Food Research Action Center (FRAC), while amongst one of the top performing, this number was only a little over a quarter of students in New York State. The City, however, is unique in the some of the challenges it faces with gaps in the SFSP service provision.

Whereas, outside of New York City, lack of access to transportation is often stated as the greatest barrier to participation in summer meals; this is not where we face hurdles. Based on a 2015 survey we did, convenience and not knowing hours, locations, and additional key information about programs were the top factors in determining whether parents and caregivers do or do not

take their children to Summer Meals sites. The City can redouble its efforts to spread the word about this important program and expand the number of locations where the meals are served in order to ensure that children do not go hungry when school is out.

One of the most effective programs that helps feed millions of impoverished children – including about six million in 2015 alone, according to USDA – is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or commonly known as WIC. Women enrolled in WIC purchase the healthy food that they need for themselves while they are pregnant and for their young children in their formative years. The program also provides other tools, such as nutrition counseling and assistance with lactation and/or formula. These benefits can ensure families that their kids are guaranteed the proper nutrients so that they can meet all of their developmental milestones.

Percent of New York City Children that Live in Food Insecure Households by Borough

	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens
2006-2008	36.47%	14.54%	23.75%	12.45%
2013-2015	36.98%	25.41%	10.85%	16.04%

Over One in Eight New York Seniors (Over The Age of 60) Are Food Insecure

In New York City, roughly 171,197 senior residents lived in food insecure households between 2013 and 2015. These numbers, are still at higher levels than they were prior to the recession between 2006-2008, where an average of 132,113 NYC seniors were living in food insecure households, representing a 30 percent difference.

Living in an urban environment presents unique challenges for seniors. Though slightly below the national levels of food insecurity and poverty, the struggles that New York City and State seniors face should not be taken lightly.

The alarming number of struggling seniors should alarm us all. Hunger and poverty for older Americans presents a unique set of challenges with decreased mobility, physical disability, possible dietary restrictions/needs, and the frequent reliance on additional outside support. Living even adequately may be quite difficult for an older individual who may be alone, homebound, and retired or unable to work (for whatever reason). And, just like other federal benefit recipients, senior citizens must comply with the arduous paperwork and bureaucratic requirements to apply/recertify for each individual assistance program. There are some jurisdictions, like New York City, that have implemented administrative processes to ease this burden (e.g. allowing the elderly and disabled to recertify every other year, rather than annually and providing applications that can be completed by telephone, rather than in person). And this should be the norm, not the exception.

Some benefits that seniors receive also face the very real threats of federal budgetary cuts or of funding even running completely dry. In as prosperous a location as New York, and, for that matter, in one of the wealthiest countries in the world, no senior citizen who worked hard his or her entire life should have to live in poverty and fight to survive.

Percent of New York City Seniors that Live in Food Insecure Households by Borough

	Bronx	Brooklyn	Manhattan	Queens
2006-2008	20.03%	9.34%	11.25%	6.26%
2013-2015	22.48%	17.13%	10.81%	10.21%

Mitigated Changes – Calm before the Impending Storm

The drop in US hunger was likely caused by a variety of factors, including a decrease in unemployment and increase in wages (some of which was caused by minimum wage hikes in key states, such as California and New York), as well as increasing participation of low-income children in the federal school breakfast and summer meals programs – all of which were a result of deliberate and effective government policies. This is the most recent proof that public policy matters – big time.

In contrast to these progressive advances in New York, the federal government may soon make changes that will throw us all backwards, dramatically *increasing* hunger. We all need to fight back on the national front. That’s why the New York City Coalition Against Hunger expanded its policy and program work nationwide, and changed our name earlier in 2016 to Hunger Free America.

After the 2016 general election, we analyzed USDA caseload data for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly called the Food Stamps Program. Disproving the stereotype that SNAP recipients are all in ‘inner cities’ or blue states, we found that, out of the top ten SNAP-utilizing states, eight voted for Trump in the general election. This proves that large numbers of citizens who rely on federal nutrition assistance programs live in rural, mostly white, areas. With 44 million Americans – living in suburban, rural, and urban areas of every state – relying on SNAP, the ‘they’ is really ‘us.’ America can only be truly great if it feeds all its own residents, which is why we hope that President-elect Donald Trump commits to ending US hunger by creating jobs, raising wages, and bolstering the federal food safety net. At a bare minimum, we hope President-elect Trump pledges to stop House Speaker Paul Ryan’s misguided plans to again slash food aid to vulnerable Americans in order to pay for more tax cuts for the mega-rich.

One major danger lurking in the shadows of the new presidential administration is the threat of block-granting federal nutrition assistance programs. Block-granting these programs would not only restrict and limit funding to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers that rely on them, but would also undercut the efforts this City has made towards increasing access to benefits and nutrition programs. These are proven methods to enable healthy growth in children and provide a solid economic return to our local communities. Any cuts made rejects the conservative imperatives of protecting families and promoting local economic growth.

The soaring hunger levels in New York and throughout our country harm health, hamper education, trap families in poverty, fuel obesity, eviscerate hope, and thus drags down our entire economy and places our national security at risk. Hunger harms us all. But, ending hunger *lifts* us

all. We must build a grassroots movement and force our political system to enact the economic policies and social programs necessary to end US hunger once and for all.

Partnership with the Robin Hood Foundation

In January 2017, The Robin Hood Foundation, along with a coalition of public, corporate and non-profit organizations launched a bold poverty-fighting effort. Hunger Free America is honored to be a partner in that effort.

The initiative aims to unlock as much as \$500 million in mostly federal funds for struggling New Yorkers. This campaign aims to help our fellow New Yorkers who are entitled to these benefits, but have not yet claimed them. The funds come from four federal programs – EITC, SNAP, CTC and WIC. EITC: a tax credit that could be worth over \$4,000 a year. CTC: a tax credit for parents that could be worth \$1,000 per child a year. WIC: a program for new moms and children that could be worth over \$1,800 annually. SNAP: a food program that could be worth over \$5,580 annually.

Robin Hood, the largest poverty-fighting organization in New York, is the catalyst and coordinator of this effort –bringing together partners across public and private sectors – to help New Yorkers find a way out of poverty. All of these institutions are receiving the full cooperation of the City and State of New York during this two year campaign running through 2017 and 2018.

New Yorkers can receive very helpful benefits worth thousands of extra dollars. It can be as easy as calling 311 and asking for SNAP, EITC or WIC. A single, part-time worker making \$10K might receive a 5% year-end bonus by filing their taxes, and might receive \$140/month from SNAP to pay for food. A family of four could receive upwards of \$10K or more across these benefits. A new mother could receive \$200/month for her baby’s food and formula

It’s worth noting that many well-known, accomplished people have received benefits that helped them when they needed it. Here are some examples:

Viola Davis, Oscar-winning actress; Taraji P. Henson, actress in Empire; Mike McCue, CEO of Flipboard; Jan

Koum, CEO of WhatsApp; Bruce Springsteen, musician; Moby, performer; Oprah Winfrey; Whoopi Goldberg;

Iyanla Vanzant, life coach and best-selling author; Scarlett Johansson, actress; Carmelo Anthony and Shaquille

O’Neal, NBA stars; Lloyd Blankfein, CEO of Goldman Sachs; Howard Schultz, CEO and chairman of Starbucks;

Andy Grove, who was the founder and CEO of Intel; and Tom Hanks, the actor (community college).

Coalition partners and individual volunteers are participating in this significant movement that aims to lift hundreds of thousands of our neighbors out of poverty. Learn more about how to help

at robinhood.org. This campaign will be unprecedented in scale and ambition. The coalition is using four key strategies to provide more people the benefits they've earned.

1. Tapping technology

We're using data analytics and behavioral economics to find those who need help and to assist them in securing it.

2. Building the largest coalition of its kind

Capitalizing on the City's efforts to expand benefits access, the coalition galvanizes resources, both citywide and neighborhood-based. With Interpublic Group's help, we're launching a major mass media campaign focused on increasing awareness about these benefits and catalyzing action. With support from dozens of corporations, foundations, membership organizations, and leading citizens we aim to reach hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. With community based organizations, we're expanding service capacity to ensure that anyone who wants help receives it.

3. Simplifying the process

We're transforming the experience. We recognize navigating the process to access benefits can be difficult, so we're working hand-in-hand with the City and CBOs to make it as simple as possible. Specifically, we're:

- Expanding phone-based step-by-step enrollment assistance to those who need it
- Encouraging the city's adoption of mobile-ready applications
- Simplifying screening to move eligible people through the application process more quickly
- Using new techniques to ensure people who start the application finish it

4. Taking it to scale

The campaign will create a poverty-fighting initiative that can serve as a playbook for cities across the nation. There's \$40 billion nationwide of unclaimed funds related to these four programs available to help Americans in need.

Other Changes and Solutions

As a nation, state, and city, we must create more living wage jobs and raise minimum wages. We must also ensure adequate nutrition assistance safety net and boost upward mobility through strengthening the benefits of and expanding access to SNAP, school breakfast, school lunch, WIC, and summer meals, We must make these robust and effective programs available, free of stigma and hassle, for everyone in need.

We commend Commissioner Steven Banks and his staff at the Human Resources Administration on their efforts for not only treating low-income New Yorkers, and the advocates who represent them, as trusted partners, but for significantly improving technical and service provision standards. The introduction and implementation of various outreach efforts, application

processing units, and internal procedures have significantly increased access to and the retention of benefits, thus decreasing bureaucratic inefficiencies. Requesting waivers from the State to eliminate application and recertification barriers, streamlining methods of communication for claimants for phone interviews, and eliminating redundancies on both application and retention sides not only assists claimants but saves the city and state time and money. Their willingness to ensure quality assurance is also displayed through their direct discourse with community based efforts and efforts to analytically evaluate what barriers to benefits may or may not exist.

We must ensure that these efforts on HRA's behalf continue. While the implementation of the on-demand phone interviewing process for recertification has rolled out in all five boroughs, many of our clients report having to wait up to 2 hours on hold, sometimes more, to complete their interview. Senior staff at HRA have acknowledged this as a serious issue that is being internally address, we would just like to encourage that this process be expedited as soon as possible. Technological improvements can only be beneficial if they are being accessed and utilized in an effective and efficient manner

Unfortunately, while there are 1.69 million recipients of SNAP in New York City, there are still approximately 500,000 eligible New Yorkers not receiving SNAP. The public, corporate and non-profit sectors could strategically work together to unlock as much as \$500 million in mostly federal funds for struggling New Yorkers who are entitled to these benefits, but have not yet claimed them. Efforts could additionally be made to find administrative waivers to enable better access to SNAP for students pursuing higher education full time.

We also commend the Department of Education and School Food on their efforts in improving nutrition standards and the utilization of meals served to New York City school children. Access to in-classroom breakfast and universal school lunches at standalone elementary and middle school, respectively, has certainly improved the educational experience afforded to these children. Though many efforts have been made to increase access and strengthen outreach, there are still some actions that could be taken to make further improvements. Mayor de Blasio could expand universal school lunches into other schools throughout the City in his upcoming Executive Budget. Moreover, School Food could also work strategically with community based organizations, such as ourselves, to monitor and assess where improvements could be made to the Summer Food Service Program.

Hunger Free New York City/America recognizes that change does not happen overnight, especially with city bureaucracies the size of the Department of Education, and HRA, but with the number of people who need assistance, we are keenly aware that with each day that passes, people in need are waiting for benefits that could make the difference between feeding their family or going hungry.

Conclusion

Over the last few years under the de Blasio administration, New York City has made progress in the fight against hunger because we have made a concerted effort to do so. We acknowledge those efforts, as it is society's duty to care for its most vulnerable. Through continued effort New York City can continue to be more effective at assisting those in need.

FOR THE RECORD

Testimony Before New York City Council Hearing on Hunger Issues

Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of New York

Feeding Our Neighbors Programs

Helene Lauffer

Associate Director

January 25, 2017

Catholic Charities Community Services seeks to provide high quality human services to all New Yorkers who are in need throughout the boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx, Staten Island and seven counties upstate.

The mission of Catholic Charities' Feeding Our Neighbors program is to meet immediate needs for nutritious food for hungry individuals and families and provide support services to help people gain the tools and resources to become more self-sufficient. Feeding Our Neighbors relies on multiple partnerships to achieve our goals, including government funders as well as corporate and private foundations. We coordinate with parishes, Catholic Charities affiliate agencies, and a host of other community-based non-profits. In keeping with our model of providing holistic support to each individual we serve, we make case management support available to clients of emergency food programs throughout the network – in particular in parish-based programs in high-need neighborhoods. Case management services include SNAP enrollment assistance and advocacy, and connecting clients to community resources to move them toward self-sufficiency.

In New York City, the Feeding Our Neighbors Programs encompass 7 food pantries located within community centers, 21 parish-based food pantries and community kitchens, a mobile food pantry serving 3 Staten Island sites, and 2 senior centers with meal programs. Less than a year ago, Catholic Charities opened a new program in our South Bronx office - our Bronx Food Hub and Food Pantry. The pantry is a large, open space configured to encourage clients to select their own products. The Food Hub is a generous storage space augmented with workers and a box truck, making it possible to supply free fresh produce and other donated food to approximately 25 programs with limited staffing and storage in the Bronx. Last year, the FON programs served over 4.2 million meals through the combined resources of government grants, donated food, and private donations. Over 200 volunteers of all ages make it possible to receive the deliveries, stock the shelves, and cook the home-style meals to nurture some of the poorest neighborhoods in the city.

I would like to join our partners at the Food Bank and City Harvest in thanking the City Council for voting to increase funding to New York City's Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) in the 2017 budget, thereby acknowledging both the growing need and the strategic importance of this program. The most heavily-trafficked community food programs in the city benefit greatly from EFAP. The larger programs Catholic Charities operates would have to reduce their services by 25% if they were to lose their annual EFAP grants. Grants and donations cover only a portion of the thousands of pounds of food distributed weekly by these programs. Support from EFAP helps close the gap efficiently and effectively, since the food provided is selected by HRA and Food Bank to match the specific needs of the programs, and delivered on a reliable schedule.

With notably uncertain times ahead, we hope that we can count on the continued support of Council members in keeping this program strong. Last year, when we established a special service day for frail seniors and the disabled at our Washington Heights Ecumenical Food Pantry, we registered 400 households in the space of one month. Combine that vulnerable population with the working families and those with very young children who fill out the rest of a typical food pantry line, and you get a sense of the urgency of our work.

We ask that in FY2018, EFAP baseline funding be increased to \$22 million, to ensure that the City's most productive and busiest programs can find dependable and substantive support at a time when many of their key government resources face unprecedented uncertainty.

Let me close by once again acknowledging the Council members who continue to fight along with us against hunger that impacts so many New York City residents, including one in five children. We value your partnership and thank you for your support for the work of Catholic Charities.



Testimony of

**Amy Blumsack, Community Action Program Director, Neighbors Together
Delivered Before the General Welfare Committee and Committee on Aging,
New York City Council Oversight Hearing on Reducing Food Insecurity**

January 25, 2017

My name is Amy Blumsack, and I am the Community Action Program Director at Neighbors Together, a large soup kitchen and community based organization located in central Brooklyn. Our mission is to end hunger and poverty in the surrounding neighborhoods of Ocean Hill, Brownsville, and Bedford-Stuyvesant. We serve over 10,000 unique individuals per year, and assist people who are struggling with poverty, insufficient income, lack of affordable housing, histories of incarceration and addiction, among other pressing issues. Neighbors Together is a member agency of the Food Bank for the New York City, and in the course of one year, we serve over 80,000 meals to people in need. Part of my role at Neighbors Together is to work with our members to effect policy changes that will bring greater stability to their lives and the surrounding community at large.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and thank you for prioritizing anti-hunger programs in the Fiscal Year 2017 budget. Now, more than ever, we need your continued leadership to protect the anti-hunger safety net, particularly in these uncertain times of political change. Despite New York City's reputation as a one of the wealthiest cities in the United States, deep poverty persists, and hunger remains as pertinent an issue as ever.

Over the last 4 years, Neighbors Together has seen the number of children and families utilizing our community café increase by over 5%. Seniors make up 10% of the people utilizing our soup kitchen, and we continue to see working people come to us for the income support that free hot meals provide. One such example is our member Deborah. Her husband works full time, but because they recently lost their Section 8 voucher, a significant chunk of their monthly income is now being diverted to cover rent. Deborah is looking for work, and her family receives food stamps, but their benefits are not enough to cover their monthly food expenses. So Deborah and her family rely on Neighbors Together's soup kitchen to make ends meet. And Neighbors To-

gether relies on emergency food program funding such as EFAP in order to be able to continue to provide hot, nutritious meals to our neighbors in need, like Deborah and so many others who come through our door.

I urge you to increase funding for New York City's Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) to \$22 million in baseline food funding in Fiscal Year 2018. I know that with strong support from the City Council for the anti-hunger safety net, government and community based organizations can partner to ensure that New Yorkers get the lifeline they need to stay afloat during these difficult and uncertain times.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

If you have any further questions or would like more information related to the above testimony, please contact Amy Blumsack at Neighbors Together: 718-498-7256, or amy@neighborstogether.org.



Testimony prepared by Mandy Culbreath

For the Committee on General Welfare and Committee on Aging

Oversight: Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City, January 25, 2017

On behalf of Trinity Church Wall Street

Good afternoon Chairwoman Chin, Chairman Levin and members of the City Council's Committees on General Welfare and Aging. My name is Mandy Culbreath, and I am the Coordinator for Justice and Reconciliation at Trinity Church Wall Street, where I direct the Brown Bag Lunch Ministry, which is a member of the Food Bank For New York City.

Trinity Church appreciates the opportunity to present testimony today, and would like to thank the City Council for your continued commitment to addressing the issue of hunger. Through dedicated funding, the City Council has long played a leadership role in this arena, and we are pleased to see continued strong leadership on anti-hunger initiatives this past year.

For more than 300 years, Trinity Church has been one of our city's major religious voices, where George Washington first prayed, to a hub for 9/11 relief workers during a time of tragedy. But recently, in response to problems facing our neighbors, Trinity Church has worked to expand our feeding ministry. Over the past two years, we went from serving lunch two days per week to seven days per week. We have introduced more of our constituents and members – who come from all five boroughs – to food service volunteer opportunities. Today, Battery Park City families and their children meet to pack lunches at St. Paul's Chapel, that are served to working people, families and seniors at Trinity Church on Wall Street by Lower Manhattan college students as well as our other dedicated volunteers.

One of our volunteers is Angie. She is also one of our clients. Angie participates in a Time Bank program that allows her to receive support she needs while volunteering to serve others in our community with dignity. Dignified service, while quiet, shouts to us – as I wrote in the Episcopal New Yorker - "...even on Wall Street, the truth is our food line is a silent rebellion, calling attention and addressing a problem that every Wall Streeter should notice on their lunch break. Hunger hurts."

As we have expanded our feeding ministry, our church congregation, vestry and staff have witnessed an alarming truth: **Hunger can no longer sit in the back pew.** A growing disparity in income and resources among New Yorkers is a question of justice, and justice will only occur when there are stronger policies from government that address community needs as they change.

This is why it is essential that City Council continue its leadership to increase funding for New York City's Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) to \$22 million in baseline food funding in Fiscal Year 2018, as well as making school lunch universally free for *ALL* New York City school children. We believe that justice and reconciliation must include a stronger anti-hunger safety net – from brown bag lunches on Wall Street, to free school lunches on *every street*, and to food pantry and soup kitchen in all corners of our great city.

Thank you again for your time and work for justice.

Brown Bag Lunch Ministry

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**Testimony prepared by Gregory Bruce, Community Kitchen of West Harlem
for the Committees on General Welfare and Aging
on Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City
January 25, 2017**

My name is Gregory Bruce and I am a participant and ambassador at the Community Kitchen of West Harlem's senior program.

I worked for many years as a writer in the advertising industry. A terrible car accident took my wife and left me in the hospital for 18 months. When I recovered, I found the medical costs had completely depleted my savings, I was out of work and there was no job to be had. I was on the street for two and a half years before a gentleman coming out of the Community Kitchen stopped me and said, "You can eat lunch here."

Ever since that day in the summer of 2014, I have been a member of this Community Kitchen, typically getting two meals a day Monday through Friday at the program. I come here for hot meals because I live on a fixed income, renting a room with no access to cooking facilities. The menu for the senior program is created based on our input and cycles every six weeks. As it does for many of the seniors in our program, being able to have meals at the Community Kitchen helps to alleviate some of the costs of living on my fixed income from Social Security.

For the past year, I have also served as an ambassador for the program. I guide volunteers and clients, and provide information about the Community Kitchen activities, rules, programs, and events. It is a personal pride. It gives me a purpose when I get up in the morning, to give back in some way to this program and my neighbors. I help make people feel welcome.

The Community Kitchen provides more than hot meals to seniors. There is also a pantry that provides nutritious food and promotes consumption of produce. In addition, there are nutrition workshops and exercise classes, Health Bucks to expand seniors' produce purchases, as well as the invaluable service of on-site access to benefit programs.

I believe we have a responsibility to help one another. I can't tell you how much I love New York City and I know this program helps my community in Harlem, but there are corners of this city where a pantry or kitchen is harder to find, where there isn't a welcoming place like the Community Kitchen on the corner. For the people who find themselves at these programs, it is so important to be able to meet the great and growing need, particularly in neighborhoods with high populations of older adults living on fixed incomes who may have particular health requirements or have trouble getting around.

Emergency food programs are lifelines for seniors in New York City. When we support places like the Community Kitchen of West Harlem, we are supporting and protecting our older communities. I urge the City Council to continue to support anti-hunger programs, especially ones that help seniors.



Testimony: General Welfare Committee and Committee on Aging
Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City
January 25, 2017

West Side Campaign Against Hunger would like to thank the **General Welfare Committee** and the chair Council Member Stephen Levin and **Committee on Aging** and its chair Council Member Margaret Chin for the opportunity to submit testimony at the hearing on *Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City*. My name is Chef Greg Silverman, and I am the new executive director of WSCAH. I'm proud to join the WSCAH team of dedicated service providers, and look forward to working with the City Council to further reduce hunger for our neighbors in need.

Founded in 1979, West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH) is an innovative, supermarket-style food pantry that combines access to healthy food with support services, job training and policy advocacy to help stabilize clients and put them on a path to self-sufficiency. **In the last year, and in partnership with Food Bank For New York City and City Harvest we have provided 1.7 million pounds of healthy food for more than 1.1 million meals for 33,373 people.** Through our outreach we have helped 520 families enroll in SNAP, 324 families enroll in health insurance, and 154 people obtain employment. In all, our counselors helped our clients secure \$4.2 million in public benefits.

West Side Campaign Against Hunger serves a diverse population of low-income New York City residents. Most of our clients live in Northern Manhattan and the South Bronx, though WSCAH is open to individuals and families across the city. Our clients include children, youth, adults and older adults. In FY2016, 26% were 17 years old or under, 47% ranged from 18 to 54 years old, and 27% were 55 and older. Sixty nine percent of our clients were Hispanic, and 20% were African American. Fifty-eight percent of our clients were female and 42%, male. While WSCAH's customers have diverse backgrounds, they have much in common: they all are struggling to make ends meet and need an emergency allotment of food. Our customers face significant barriers to self-sufficiency, which include housing, health insurance, unemployment, behavioral health issues, poor credit, criminal histories, lack of educational credentials, lack of marketable job skills, and limited work experience.

In second half of 2016, WSCAH, via funding from Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, commissioned a study of senior hunger. After surveying over 300 WSCAH customers we learned that 37% of the participants regularly choose between buying food and paying for

medical care, utilities, or other expenses. WSCAH and other Emergency Food Providers must be able to support these seniors with healthy, affordable, and delicious foods. To that end, WSCAH urges the City of New York to increase EFAP funding to \$22 million in baseline food funding in FY2018.

Last year, New York City was subject to the federal ABAWD provision (Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents), which meant ABAWDs who resided in Manhattan (below 110th Street on the west side and below 96th Street on the east side) would no longer be eligible to receive SNAP benefits for a period of three years after three consecutive months of unemployment. This year, in addition to those areas in Manhattan, the ABAWD provision will also impact the entire borough of Queens, with the exception of Community District 12. This federal provision will cause New York City's food insecure population to grow. Unemployed ABAWDs who previously qualified for SNAP who may have no other resources for food will be forced to rely solely on emergency food providers, such as WSCAH, to supplement their lack of access to a consistent and healthy meal. As the first responders to this impending hunger crisis, which is adversely compounded by the pre-existing gap of 241 million meals in New York City, emergency food providers face a diminished capacity to meet the increasing demands and needs of hungry New Yorkers.

WSCAH has observed an increase in customers year over year, and is deeply concerned that ABAWD clients from across the city will have to rely even more on our services. Food insecure families fight hunger with a combination of SNAP, emergency food and the likelihood that their child will receive a nutritious meal in school. But ABAWDs, and emergency food providers alike, will have to rely on EFAP to mitigate hunger not only in food deserts, but in communities like the Upper West Side, where pockets of poverty are under-recognized. As an emergency food provider, it is incumbent upon us to make the correlation between SNAP and EFAP salient, as there is no other system or alternative in place to meet the needs of City's food insecure population.

West Side Campaign Against Hunger and our anti-hunger allies strongly urge you to move to push forward to **increase the baseline EFAP food funding to \$22 million in FY 2018**. EFAP is extremely important to WSCAH, other emergency food providers throughout the city, and the City's growing population of hungry people.

Once again, West Side Campaign Against Hunger would like to thank the City Council's General Welfare Committee and Committee on Aging for the opportunity to testify about the importance of increased funding for the Emergency Food Assistance Program.



January 25, 2017

Council Member Stephen Levin
Chair, Committee on General Welfare
New York City Council

Council Member Margaret Chin
Chair, Committee on Aging
New York City Council

Re: Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City – Single Stop Comments

Dear Chair Levin, Chair Chin and Committee Members,

On behalf of Single Stop, I wish to thank you and the Committees for the opportunity to submit comments on the issue of pervasive hunger in New York City. We know that you and your committees, together with the Human Resources Administration (HRA), have worked diligently on this issue and we respectfully offer our observations and recommendations for consideration, with a particular focus on the issue of food insecurity among seniors.

The Single Stop Model

Single Stop is a national nonprofit organization that harnesses America's most effective anti-poverty tools to create economic mobility for low-income families and individuals. Our "one-stop-shop" model is designed to help low-income families and individuals reach financial stability and lift them out of poverty by providing them access to the full spectrum of resources available to them, including free tax preparation, legal services, financial counseling, and public benefits counseling and application assistance, all at once. Since 2007, Single Stop has partnered with community-based organizations and colleges to operate 70 sites in all five boroughs throughout New York, serving over 1 million low-income households. Seven of those sites are located in the city's largest food pantries.

In 2009, Single Stop launched the College Initiative to increase completion rates of low-income college students. Single Stop college sites enable students to tap into existing federal and local resources that can prevent students from being forced to choose between a degree and basic necessities such as buying groceries. Currently, we have college sites in 8 states, including all the community colleges in the CUNY system and John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Single Stop is also proud to be the city's largest single network of Paperless Office System sites, which allows Single Stop caseworkers in 51 locations to assist eligible people with applying directly for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We also partner with HRA to provide training to

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caseworkers throughout New York City on *ACCESS NYC*, the city's online portal to apply for SNAP. In addition to SNAP, Single Stop also connects people with other food assistance programs such as food pantry referrals, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and school meals.

As you know, food pantries do a tremendous job providing for thousands of hungry New Yorkers each day, but the bottom line is that there are a host of other issues that need to be addressed to complement benefits like SNAP and services like food pantries. To begin with, low-income individuals and families must be given the opportunity to access all of the benefits and services that exist to help them.

As such, Single Stop also provides the following—free of charge—in order to address the full spectrum of need:

- Eligibility screenings for public benefit programs and tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and the Child Tax Credit, child care subsidies, and rental assistance;
- Legal, tax, and financial counseling;
- Screenings for college students who may be eligible for federal grants such as the Pell grant;
- Assistance with enrollment into public benefit programs like the NYC Rent Freeze Program (SCRIE and DRIE), Health Exchanges, and Cash Assistance; and
- Follow-up to ensure receipt of benefit and/or service.

The premise of the Single Stop model is straightforward: accessed individually, these resources can serve as “Band-Aids”, but accessed in concert, they can begin to address the underlying causes of intergenerational poverty, inoculate against future setbacks that might otherwise be catastrophic—medical expenses, car trouble, temporary job loss—and constitute a bridge towards self-sufficiency and economic mobility.

While many are aware of Single Stop and its individual community partners, they often overlook the impact of the entire network and its potential to connect low-income New Yorkers to economic opportunity in even greater numbers. In many ways, the Single Stop network has just begun to tap its potential in a city where almost half of all residents live in low-income households. For instance, Single Stop, alongside a coalition of public, corporate and community-based organizations across New York City, has recently partnered with the Robin Hood Foundation's *Start by Asking* campaign to help eligible New Yorkers access several poverty-fighting benefits, including the EITC, SNAP, and WIC. The *Start by Asking* initiative aims to bridge the gap between the two million New Yorkers eligible for one or more key federal assistance programs and those enrolled in them through partnerships with community organizations across all five boroughs. In cooperation with the campaign, several of sites will join the efforts to screen and connect more New Yorkers to EITC, WIC, and SNAP in high-need areas with low numbers of individuals and families enrolling for benefits.

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Single Stop and The Department for The Aging

In 2015, Single Stop, The Department for the Aging (DFTA) and HRA partnered and supported DFTA's Integrated Benefits Pilot for seniors. The Pilot was meant to connect eligible seniors to government benefits and address the under-enrollment of seniors in benefits. DFTA's solution was to bring the benefits screening and enrollment into senior centers. DFTA and Single Stop managed the project at 14 centers across the center in areas identified as under-served. The pilot successfully screened 300 seniors, and enrolled at least 125 of them to benefits worth \$320,000. For many seniors, the pilot made their application process easier, and they were happy to apply for benefits at the comfort of their senior center rather than the sometimes inconvenient and less familiar HRA offices. With inter-agency support of the project, combined with Single Stop's proprietary screening technology, we were able to help facilitate a culture change at participating senior centers—traditionally viewed as a place for senior support and recreation—and enhance access to benefits information while considering the client's needs and comfort.

Hunger in New York City

New York City is facing a growing crisis of poverty, inequality, and associated hunger. In 2014, 45.2% of the New York City population was living below 150% of the CEO poverty line, or \$31,581 for a household with two adults and two children.¹ This percentage of the population living in poverty or near poverty was statistically unchanged from the previous year. The result is that 3.8 million New Yorkers—more than the combined populations of Manhattan, the Bronx, and Staten Island—continue to struggle with making ends meet.²

This poverty translates directly to hunger and food insecurity. According to Hunger Free New York City, between 2013-2015, approximately 1.4 million New Yorkers, including one in five children, lived in food insecure households. Year after year, New York City food pantries and soup kitchens face an increased need for their services but cannot meet the current demand.³

Faced with these challenges, low-income households often turn to government resources and local services. Consequently, the number of New Yorkers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a main source of food aid, rose to 1.8 million from 1.3 million—or 36.2%—from late 2008 to 2013.⁴ By one count, this program alone lowered the number of New Yorkers who

¹ New York City Center for Economic Opportunity. *The CEO Poverty Measure, 2005-2014*.

² U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program, 2014.

³ Hunger Free America. *New York City and State Hunger Report, 2016*.

⁴ New York City Department of Social Services (2013). *HRA/DSS Fact Sheet: December 2013*.

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would have been poor in 2013 by 296,000 persons.⁵ Though trends reversed themselves in 2014 and 2015, reaching a low in January 2016 with 1.68 million SNAP recipients, the number of people utilizing assistance has risen again in the last year.⁶ As of November 2016, 1.7 million New Yorkers in 954,209 households were receiving SNAP.⁷

While SNAP participation increased in 2016, New York City shelters also housed a record high number of individuals, surpassing 62,000 individuals for the first time.⁸ In this same time period, emergency food providers like soup kitchens and pantries saw an increase in demand, with 35% of providers reporting that they were unable to distribute enough food to meet demand.⁹ These data demonstrate that across New York City, many individuals and families continue to struggle with the ramifications of poverty and are unable to access basic necessities, including food.

Hunger among Seniors

Single Stop applauds the Committee on General Welfare and the Committee on Aging for coming together to put a spotlight on the issue of hunger among seniors, an often-overlooked population. Seniors have a high rate of food insecurity and struggle with health issues, mobility, technology prowess, and a number of other factors that contribute to difficulties with accessing help to connect with food benefits and emergency food.

A recent report released by the National Federation to End Senior Hunger (NFESH) found that 10.2 million seniors—or one in six seniors ages 60 or over—faced the threat of hunger in the United States in 2014. Since the Great Recession, food insecurity among seniors has remained high, with an alarming 47% increase of the population facing food insecurity between 2001 and 2014.¹⁰ New York City is home to many of these seniors. According to Hunger Free New York City, between 2013-2015, an average of 171,197 seniors in New York City—13.58%—lived in food insecure households. This represents a 30% increase over the period from 2006-2008.¹¹ With the number of older adults projected to increase over the next decade, the city should expect this issue to continue to need attention and an increase in demand and need for appropriate nutritional and social services among seniors.

The high rates of food insecurity among seniors have many contributing factors. One study found that the certain subgroups of seniors were more likely to experience food insecurity. These groups include

⁵ South by North Strategies, Ltd. (2015). Analysis of New York City Center for Economic Opportunity, *The CEO Poverty Measure*, 20 and 56.

⁶ New York City Department of Social Services (2016). [HRA/DSS Fact Sheet: January 2016](#).

⁷ New York City Department of Social Services (2016). [HRA/DSS Fact Sheet: November 2016](#).

⁸ Coalition for the Homeless (2016). [Number of Homeless People in NYC Shelters Each Night](#).

⁹ Hunger Free America. [New York City and State Hunger Report, 2016](#).

¹⁰ National Foundation to End Senior Hunger (2016). [The State of Senior Hunger in 2014: Annual Report](#)

¹¹ Hunger Free America. [New York City and State Hunger Report, 2016](#).

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seniors between the ages 60 and 64, seniors living at or below the poverty line, high school dropouts, seniors who are divorced, separated or living with a grandchild, and renters.¹² In addition to demographic factors, other issues come into play that are beyond the senior's control that makes it more difficult to protect oneself from food insecurity and hunger. For example, simple tasks like going to the grocery store become a challenge for many seniors who are no longer capable of driving or taking public transportation due to either physical disability or illness. Seniors also need to deal with the financial strain of paying out-of-pocket medical expenses, which increase with age, with money that could be used for appropriate and nutritional groceries.

Poor nutrition, while a general social problem among the general food insecure population, poses a significant health threat for many seniors who experience malnutrition as they age. Malnourished seniors lose weight quickly, experience loss of appetite and tiredness, and become anemic when not eating a proper diet. In addition, seniors living on their own can experience isolation and depression, and may not view cooking meals often for oneself as a priority thus leading to "hidden malnutrition".¹³

SNAP, which exists as a safety net program for millions of needy individuals, is one of the most important programs to curtail hunger in the United States. Participation in SNAP has been shown to reduce food insecurity and improve health.¹⁴ However, according to the National Council on Aging, in Fiscal Years 2002 to 2012, just 60.3% of eligible seniors in New York State were enrolled in SNAP.¹⁵ This is well below the participation rate for New York State as a whole—76%.¹⁶

Anecdotally, Single Stop sites also report the need for benefits among this population and that they see seniors wait in line in the cold outside food pantries for assistance. However, Single Stop sites have reported that seniors are less willing to apply because of their pride and the associated stigma of asking for help from the government. They have also reported that seniors are often confused by the process for applying for benefits, and need more clarification about what they need to do and what decisions are being made about their cases.

One of the largest barriers that the Single Stop network has seen with connecting seniors with SNAP is a lack of understanding of the program's complicated eligibility rules, which result in many seniors mistakenly believing that they either do not qualify for SNAP or that they only qualify for the minimum amount. The myth among many seniors that they will only qualify for the minimum of \$16 per month may be rooted in a misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about the medical deduction.

¹² Ziliak and Gundersen, (Released March 5, 2008). [The Causes, Consequences, and Future of Senior Hunger in America.](#)

¹³ Tufts Now (January 12, 2017). [Nutrition Challenges as We Age.](#)

¹⁴ Coalition on Human Needs (2016). [Outcomes: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.](#)

¹⁵ National Council on the Aging (Accessed January, 23, 2017). [Senior SNAP Participation Visualization.](#)

¹⁶ USDA (2016). [Reaching Those in Need: Estimates of State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation Rates in 2013.](#)

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The medical deduction is a part of the SNAP calculation that allows SNAP applicants to deduct most of their monthly medical expenses from their income during the budgeting process that determines the household's monthly benefit amount. The more medical expenses that a senior has, the higher their benefit amount can be. Many seniors are unaware that reporting a various range of medical expenses that can help increase their benefit amount. As a result, much of the time seniors underreport their expenses or do not report their expenses at all. In fiscal year 2016, the average SNAP household received about \$255 a month, while the average recipient received about \$126 a month.¹⁷ For seniors, they receive on average a lower benefit amount of about \$108 per month.

The medical expense deduction can have a significant impact on SNAP benefits. For a typical senior living alone, claiming \$50-\$200 in medical expenses can result in an additional \$7-\$69 in SNAP benefits per month.¹⁸ Consider a senior with \$1,800 in income. Without reporting medical expenses, that senior may only qualify for \$16 in SNAP benefits. If that same senior submitted \$300 in doctor's bills, she would qualify for over \$100 per month. Allowable medical expenses include not only payments to doctors and hospitals, but also things such as prescription drug costs, the cost of transportation to obtain medical treatment, and payments to a home health aide or attendant, which is often not well understood. If the same senior also submitted bills for \$150 in prescriptions and \$40 in receipts for transportation to go to her doctor's visits, she would qualify for the maximum monthly benefit of \$194 per month. Therefore, we believe that SNAP eligibility outreach efforts should be enhanced to help seniors understand their unique circumstances and corresponding SNAP eligibility.

Single Stop sites also report that senior applicants often confuse the income limit and are misled to believe that they cannot apply for benefits because they do not meet income guidelines. In New York, the SNAP program has multiple income tests. The lowest gross income limit is 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), and it applies to households that do not have a senior or a disabled household member, that do not pay child care expenses, and that do not have earned income. At this level, an individual living alone would only qualify for SNAP if he or she had \$1,287 per month or less in income. However, households with seniors may qualify if they have income at or below 200% FPL—or \$1,980 per month for an individual—and in fact, may still receive benefits at higher incomes if they have a certain amount of expenses and assets. Many seniors do not understand that they have more generous eligibility requirements than other types of households.

Another issue that the Single Stop network reports as a barrier to connecting seniors to SNAP is that seniors have a greater difficulty utilizing technology than other demographic groups. Single Stop supports HRA's effort to increase the use of technology to access benefits and is a proud partner on training caseworkers to use *ACCESS NYC*. However, seniors who are not tech-savvy and shy away from

¹⁷ Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (2017). [Chart Book: SNAP helps struggling families put food on the table.](#)

¹⁸ Center for Budget and Policy Priorities (2014). [SNAP's Excess Medical Expenses Deduction.](#)

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using the online application without assistance from a caseworker are in danger of being left behind as technology alters the way people access benefits and multiple alternate avenues must remain available to them. This need for options arises because seniors vary in their comfort level with each application method. Phone applications are critical for homebound seniors, but many seniors are wary of answering the phone or do not have one. In-person applications are critical for those seniors who are skeptical of anything but a face-to-face interaction, but many seniors have mobility limitations and cannot travel to apply in-person. Other communication issues include difficulty in getting in touch with seniors through mail, as clients may have difficulty with comprehending the verification letters. Overall, many seniors are most comfortable with the process if they are strongly supported through it by a caseworker.

In addition to SNAP, there are other resources that are designed to curb food insecurity. To attempt to address the issue of senior hunger, community-based organizations have worked to develop senior support programs. For instance, our site at Grand Street Settlement offers free breakfast and lunch for their senior clients that come in for legal assistance for SNAP recertifications. Nutrition programs like congregate meals are served in group settings up to five days per week at more than 1,000 sites across New York State. The meals are available to adults age 60 and older and their spouses, who can be of any age and are located at senior centers, senior housing complexes, and town halls. Homebound seniors or seniors that cannot prepare meals for themselves may be eligible to participate in home-delivered meals programs. Additionally, some organizations that have food pantries have designated certain hours as "senior hours" so that seniors can take their time to shop for food and will not have to wait on a long line.

Food pantries, Meals on Wheels programs, and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program are other important resources for seniors who are not eligible for SNAP or for those seniors whose benefits cannot sustain them throughout the month. Feeding America found that three out of four client households with at least one senior report planning to use a food program on a regular basis to assist with their monthly food budgets.¹⁹ We will not solve the problem of hunger overnight, but ensuring seniors have access to the resources they need can give them immediate relief from food insecurity.

Recommendations and Broader Policy Issues

Single Stop offers five specific policy recommendations. The first two—provide targeted SNAP outreach to seniors and provide more clarification to seniors about their SNAP eligibility and about how decisions are made—relate to specific insights about barriers to SNAP access identified by Single Stop sites. The others three are broader recommendations that can help reduce food insecurity and poverty among other populations other than seniors. The recommendation to make K-12 school lunch universal and free recognizes that for students to be successful enough to make it to college and a career that can help break the cycle of poverty, adequate nutrition is a crucial prerequisite. The fourth

¹⁹ Feeding America (Accessed January 23, 2017). [Senior Hunger Fact Sheet](#).



recommendation—increased access to food pantries—has the potential to give low-income individuals immediate relief from food insecurity during the day. The last recommendation is more comprehensive, recognizing that finding more efficient and effective ways to link low-income individuals and families to social safety net programs increase the chances that we alleviate poverty in this country.

1. Provide targeted SNAP outreach for seniors.

Seniors often learn about programs by word-of-mouth, but increased advertising and outreach to the population in places where they gather can help spur more accurate information to be shared about the SNAP program. Greater outreach is needed at community events for seniors, at senior centers, in churches, and other places where seniors can be reached. This outreach should use the predominant languages of the communities and take into account physical limitations of some seniors, for example, by using large-print notices.

2. Provide more clarification to seniors about their SNAP eligibility and about how decisions are made.

Seniors hear a lot of myths about the SNAP program, including that they are not eligible or are only eligible for a minimal amount. Greater transparency about the program's income limit for seniors and about the importance of recording and submitting all medical expenses with a SNAP application could encourage more seniors to apply, qualify for a greater benefit amount, and to recertify. Moreover, some seniors are automatically enrolled in NYSNIP and so not understand why. Greater clarity about what the program is, why the senior was enrolled, and what they can do to get a higher benefit amount would greatly reduce confusion and make seniors more comfortable with SNAP. Finally, seniors need greater clarity about how they opt in or out of types of communication. For example, it is critical that homebound seniors are not asked to go to the SNAP Center in person.

3. Make K-12 school meals universal and free

Hunger prevents children from reaching their full potential in school and otherwise. Simply put, when children do not have enough to eat, they cannot come to school ready to learn. They are more likely to fall ill. They are less likely to graduate from high school and go on to college in order to build a foundation for economic security and provide for their children down the line.²⁰ This is what is at stake; an unfair trajectory of continued poverty.

²⁰No Kid Hungry (2014). [Hungry Kids Aren't Getting the Resources They Need.](#)



In the 2014-15 school year, the New York City Department of Education approved free lunches for most public middle school students. This was a significant victory for anti-hunger advocates but this work needs to be better publicized to families with middle school students. Further, this program needs to be made available to public elementary and high school students.

Universal school meals means students will be encouraged to eat school lunch without the fear of bullying or harassment. By ending the poverty stigma around school lunch and putting all students on equal footing, more students can eat school lunch and benefit from this important meal. We must advocate for universal school meals for all K-12 students.

4. **The City Council should support the expansion and long-term sustainability of food pantries and other hunger relief programs.**

As the need for food pantries in New York City begins to rise, we recommend that funding is increased. Programs like congregated meals for frail and homebound seniors also need adequate funding.

In addition to services for seniors, Single Stop also supports food pantries on college campuses. If colleges can support their students through periods of tough economic conditions, they will have a greater chance of graduating and pursuing careers that build the foundation for economic security. Therefore, as the number of food pantries on college campuses in New York City increases, traditionally through the work of private partnerships, we recommend that additional partnerships are formed or strengthened, including between CUNY and the city, to continue to expand this important program model.

5. **Maximize participation in all federal programs to address the full spectrum of difficulties faced by low-income individuals and families**

For all of their power and promise, government resource programs fail to reach as many New Yorkers as they could, as effectively as they could. Fragmented delivery mechanisms, conflicting eligibility rules, and complex renewal processes are just some of the factors that prevent sizable numbers of households from receiving all of the resources for which they are potentially eligible or from receiving any resources at all. In New York City, for example, only 77% of eligible New York City households participated in SNAP in 2013.²¹ Further, almost 20% of New York tax filers eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) fail to claim it.²²

We know that too often vulnerable and hungry New Yorkers face a maze of city offices and complex rules when they seek aid. We aim to transform these systems to take a “client first” approach,

²¹ City of New York, Human Resources Administration (2014). SNAP Program Access Index and Participation Rates: 2002-2013.

²² IRS (2015). EITC Participation Rates by State.



reimagining a city in which those seeking help with hunger are treated with dignity, transparency and respect. Advances in technology and a robust network of human service partners and a committed administration make this transformation possible. We encourage the city to continue to improve its processes.

We also encourage the city to continue using data collected from a wide array of programs to pinpoint populations that are underutilizing services. Using this data, we would recommend that outreach materials for multiple programs be presented to likely eligible populations, at once.

With our work with DFTA and HRA, we were able to learn that identifying those high-need areas before rolling out our pilot program was key to ensuring that we are targeting the under-enrollment issue with seniors. Additionally, the approach to bring the screening services to the seniors, rather than have them come to the agency, proved an effective form of outreach for this population and we encourage DFTA to continue its efforts in educating and enrolling seniors with their comfort and convenience kept in mind.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Single Stop believes that hunger is one symptom of the larger issue of poverty, and that resources to fight hunger such as SNAP, WIC, and food pantries, must be accessed in concert with other resources proven to alleviate poverty such as free tax preparation, health insurance, and financial counseling. Our recommendations to tap into the country's underutilized resources designed to help low-income individuals and families have the potential to help thousands of New Yorkers out of poverty.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Emily Marano
Manager, Policy & Research

Victoria Ennab
AmeriCorps VISTA Policy and Research Associate



Testimony of Jerome Nathaniel, Manager, Community Engagement, Queens
New York City Council Hearing of the
Committee on General Welfare and Aging
January 25, 2017

T2017-5420

Oversight: Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City

Good morning Chairperson Levin, Chairperson Chin and members of the Committee on General Welfare and the Committee on Aging. My name is Jerome Nathaniel and I am the Community Engagement Manager at City Harvest for Northwest Queens, which includes the neighborhoods of Astoria, Long Island City, and parts of Woodside.

Firstly, I want to thank you for holding this timely hearing on food insecurity in New York City. Particularly, during a time of major transitions in our nation; one that has many of the communities that we serve and the people that organize and provide services to our community uncertain about what direction food insecurity, health, housing and other areas that are critical for low income New Yorkers may take in the upcoming years. Despite a recent report from the USDA that food insecurity rates have declined from 14% to 12.7% this past year---its lowest since the Recession---we know all too well that 12.7% is still 48 million Americans, 15 million children, 5.4 million seniors, 1.4 million New Yorkers, and nearly 200,000 seniors in New York City too many.

In my testimony, I primarily highlight my observations in City Harvest's Healthy Neighborhoods; both in terms of what has worked in our mission and collaborations to help hungry New Yorkers and in terms of what challenges still remain. In addition to sharing an overhead view of City Harvest's programs and operations through this past year, I will touch on our senior demographic and how paramount access to healthy and affordable foods are from food distribution sites, farmers' markets and local stores in their immediate communities. Finally, given the longstanding climate in Northwest Queens, I will also underline how transportation initiatives, ongoing development, NYCHA programming and child nutrition programs are not tangential, but have a direct impact on the general well-being of senior households and, in many instances, the children that they care for.

Background

With the help of committed volunteers and charitable food businesses, **City Harvest** pioneered food rescue in 1982. Thirty-five years later, we just recognized the delivery of our 600 millionth pound of food to the Westside Campaign Against Hunger in December. City Harvest is primarily known across New York City, and even nationally, for our food rescue operations. We're on pace to close out our fiscal year this June having rescued over 55 million pounds of food. Of the 55 million pounds we'll rescue this year, at least half of the product will be produce. The food that we rescue are perfectly edible products from retailers like Fresh Direct, farmers' markets, the Hunts Point terminal, can drives out of City schools, and fire departments, corporates like CBRE and even high-end restaurants like Le Bernardin and the Capital Grille. All 55 million pounds are food products that would have otherwise been wasted if it weren't for a throughput to rescue and redistribute it to the 1.4 million New Yorkers that rely on our network of 500

agencies (which includes emergency food programs and early childhood programs) and 13 NYCHA developments.

But with every pound that City Harvest rescues and delivers, we also recognize how much more work is needed and achievable through collaboration, strategic programs, partnerships with both grassroots and grass-top groups/initiatives, and support from City government. At the nexus of these opportunities for growth is City Harvest Healthy Neighborhood Initiative.

Our Healthy Neighborhood initiatives offer strategic programming, community organizing and innovative food distribution models in designated neighborhoods that demand a unique focus to alleviate stubborn food insecurity rates. Food insecurity is especially high in Bed Stuy, Brooklyn, at 27%, meaning that more than one in four residents does not always know where or when their next meal will come. Our Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative also includes the food insecure areas of the South Bronx (over 23%), Washington Heights/Inwood (19%), the North Shore of Staten Island (nearly 14%) and Northwest Queens (16%). To buttress the community impact of our general rescue and delivery operation, our Healthy Neighborhood Initiative offers business support for nearly 100 grocers and bodegas through our Healthy Retail Department, cooking and nutrition education courses to over 60,000 New Yorkers, and builds neighborhood based coalitions with residents and community programs through five Community Action Networks (one in each borough's *Healthy Neighborhood*).

One of the hallmark programs of our Healthy Neighborhood Initiative is the Mobile Market, which has operated out of a growing number of NYCHA developments since 2004. For my community of Northwest Queens, we see some of the longest lines in New York---hail, sleet or snow---in the Queensbridge houses. Many of the people that rely on our Mobile Market are seniors. Many of them subsist almost entirely on social security income, averaging \$1,300 per month. After paying rent, many face tough decisions such as balancing their medical expenses with the ability to stock their cabinets and refrigerators. Seniors made 3.1 million visits to the more than 400 soup kitchens and food pantries in City Harvest's network last year. By the end of our fiscal year this June 2017, 9,000 seniors will have accessed 900,000 pounds of produce through our Mobile Markets.

Coalitions & Initiatives

Queens Action Council

As the convener of City Harvest's Northwest Queens Community Action Network, otherwise known as the Queens Action Council, we are able to directly hear concerns from locals that go beyond the traditional feedback we collect from emergency food programs. Our boots-on-the ground approach to hunger relief is

especially vital for organizing in Northwest Queens; a neighborhood that continues to expand as a Businesses Improvement District, and yet has a vastly conflicting quality of life from census district to census district. Through our Queen Action Council (QuAC), we have gleaned community feedback on presumably peripheral challenges and opportunities that actually directly impact our clients' food access and food insecurity rates, especially for seniors.

Aside from the four days of the month that our Mobile Market operates out of Northwest Queensbridge and Astoria NYCHA developments, seniors still need to secure healthy foods throughout the month from other sources. This is especially challenging in the Northwest Queens community, not just because of mobility constraints for our seniors, but because Northwest Queens is recognized as both a food desert and a transit desert. In order to get to the closest train and main bus route on 21st st, or other train lines down 30th Avenue, NYCHA residents in the Astoria Houses have to walk anywhere from .3 to .8 miles east from Vernon boulevard. **Henceforth, I also wish to lend a crucial voice to our local QuAC participants who don't dismiss the potentiality of a project like the Brooklyn Queens Connector (BQX), but ask that if it is truly built to address transportation barriers for longtime residents who face barriers, that it will be reflected in the pending project and its route.** NYCHA residents that participate in QuAC are well aware of the void new transportation projects can fill for improving food access, but a BQX route that does not leverage the opportunity to connect low income residents to food access points, resources and other transportation hubs may lose a golden moment to address food insecurity through transportation designs.

QuAC members are also incredibly encouraged by opportunities that the City provides for NYCHA residents to be directly involved in their local food economy. Employment opportunities and community involvement in their local food system are pillars of hunger relief that members of QuAC (nearly a quarter of which are NYCHA residents and/or attend or volunteer at our Mobile Markets) are strong advocates for. In Particular, REES offers a free 10-week intensive business course tailored specifically to meet the needs of NYCHApreneurs (NYCHA Entrepreneurs) with a passion for the food business, which culminates with certifications and the chance to receive 1 of 4 free incubator spaces for five months as they work to operationalize their education. Naturally, there's more talent and interest in the food business in NYCHA than four incubator spaces can handle. **Can the committees reach out to their colleagues in the Committee on Public Housing to take a closer look at how these talents can be leveraged locally so that it supports access to healthy food while also empowering locals through economic and educational incentives?** For those who don't access the four incubator spaces, the Council should solidify other opportunities for these agents of hunger relief to directly benefit their

neighbors and the local economy. This would not only benefit our seniors, but the general welfare and economic outlook of the entire community.

As Long Island City continues to expand as a BID, there have been many promising opportunities to improve food access for the people we serve in the Astoria houses. For one, the Durst Organization is putting final touches on an affordable supermarket through FRESH at the Halletts Cove development near 8th St. in conjunction with a mixed income housing development they're building. We also anticipate the Ferry docking off of Vernon boulevard at MTA pricing and the impending expansion of Citibike in Astoria, offering even more transportation alternatives to low income residents who have lived in Astoria for decades. But all of this progress shows us that we have the ability to do more for food insecure families when we are mindful of food insecurity all throughout development, planning and transportation initiatives.

Healthy Food Retail Action Network

City Harvest is a founding member and co-chair of the Healthy Food Retail Action Network (HFRAN), which is a citywide collaboration of over 40 organizations working to coordinate efforts of healthy food retail practitioners and advocates to improve the food landscape in brick and mortar retail venues across NYC. Former City Harvest employee Sheilah Crowley was instrumental in starting this group and the annual Fresh Food Retail Summit. One significant observation that our Healthy Retail team, Christa Perfit particularly, has noted that while there are many great resources available through EDCNYC and SBS that support local grocers and corner stores, many retailers are not taking advantage of them. Some grocers may have technological barriers for resources like the Common Mistakes page on the NYC.gov Business Portal and online webinars, while others are outright skeptical or unaware of City support for them to adopt a business model that enables them to successfully provide healthy and affordable food while also experiencing economic success. **I echo my colleague's testimony to the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises and the Committee on Small Business from September 2016 in her asks for the City to expand its direct outreach to grocers in low income neighborhoods and/or help lend capacity and incentives for community-based group to do so effectively.**

Lunch 4 Learning

City Harvest is proud to be a partner of the Lunch 4 Learning campaign. Spearheaded by Community Food Advocates, the campaign is a broad, diverse coalition-based campaign working towards making free and healthy school meals available to all New York City public school students, regardless of income. Currently, 250,000 of the 780,000 students who are eligible for free or reduced priced meals do not participate. The Lunch 4 Learning campaign is mobilizing organizations and individuals citywide to elevate universal free and healthy school meals and focus the attention of the Mayor, Chancellor and City Council Members to make this a food policy and educational priority. We commend the City for

expanding Universal Free School Lunch to stand-alone middle schools in 2014. The measure saw an average of roughly 7,500 more students eating school lunch per day, or 1,322,000 additional meals over the course of the 2014-2015 academic year. The City also gained \$6.9 million in federal reimbursements through the Community Eligibility Provision.

City Harvest stands with our partners in the Lunch for Learning Campaign when **we request for the Mayor to build on the successes and learnings of Universal School Lunch expansions in 2014 by making it truly universal for all NYC students.** The measure would cost \$20 million, but could bring \$59 million in State and Federal funds into the city and potentially 1000 additional food worker jobs. This is a rather small investment for the insurmountable returns we'll have from a well-fed youth; the same youth that are our future and may very well rely on a grandparent who feeds them by shopping with their SNAP benefits. City efforts to provide proper nutrition to our youth is especially crucial, given the incoming political climate which has already foreshadowed a stalemate on the Child Nutrition and Reauthorization Act.

Human Resource Administration – Emergency Food Assistance Program

New York City is one of few local municipalities in the country that directs funds to emergency food. In the Mayor's FY 18 Preliminary Budget released yesterday, The Human Resource Administration (HRA) budget shows a baseline of \$8.2 million to EFAP in FY 18, which serves about 500 soup kitchens and food pantries. These providers are commonly referred to as "EFAP agencies." There was successful advocacy last year for a one-time addition of \$4.9 million in FY 17 through City and money through the Council to reach \$15.9 million. Due to consistently high demand, **we request the baseline funding level be increased from \$8.2 to \$13.1 million to scale up for food inflation, poverty, and insufficiency of the emergency food supply.**

City Harvest is eager to work with the Administration and support its genuine efforts to alleviate hunger for all New Yorkers in our truly sanctuary City. Thank you so much for lending an attentive set of eyes, ears, and thoughtful minds to address the urgency of hunger in the City.

Jerome Nathaniel

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**New York City Council Oversight Hearing:
Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City
January 25, 2017
Council Chambers, City Hall, NY**

Thank you, Chair Levin and the Committee on General Welfare and Chair Chin and the Committee for the Aging for inviting us to speak today.

My name is Jessica Hughson-Andrade and I am the Director of Benefits Access at Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty.

For more than four decades, Met Council has supported and championed families, seniors and adults living in poverty and near-poverty. Met Council provides immediate assistance to New Yorkers in crisis and creates pathways to self sufficiency through the following programs: America's largest kosher food pantry system, emergency social services, family violence services, home repairs, benefits enrollment, Holocaust Survivors services and outreach, in addition to our affordable housing portfolio. Our grassroots Jewish Community Council network provides support to families in their neighborhoods—right where they live.

In the fight against poverty, we serve immigrants, seniors living on fixed incomes, the un- and underemployed, and all others in need. As an organization founded on Jewish values, we serve everyone with dignity and empathy, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion.

We leverage government contracts with privately raised funds from individuals and foundations to increase the impact of our services.

Our culturally sensitive professionals provide an array of services to insular and immigrant clients utilizing a nuanced understanding of the clients' community norms to move them from crisis to stability.

As many people in this room know, there are approximately 1.3 million (16.4%) food insecure New Yorkers, of which more than 300,000 people live in poor and near-poor Jewish households that observe kosher dietary laws. 87,000 Jewish households have an unmet food need.

For many of our clients, the high cost of kosher food presents a unique challenge. While, Statewide, most families run out of SNAP benefits by the last week each month, an average family that keeps kosher runs out by the second week.

Allow me to share with you a story of one of these food-insecure New Yorkers. For many years, David owned a kosher butcher shop in Boro Park. Every Friday, David would put aside some of the meat to

provide free of charge to poor families in his neighborhood so that they could celebrate the Sabbath with dignity. As a senior, David no longer works at the store. Without his income that he earned at the store, he struggled every month to pay his rent and utilities. To save money, David stopped purchasing kosher protein until he walked into the Boro Park JCC and a caseworker enrolled him into SNAP. Now, with the assistance of SNAP David is able to add kosher protein in his diet to ensure that he is able have a nutritious diet.

David is one of the tens of thousands of poor and near-poor New Yorkers whom we serve through our food programs, which are designed to aid, sustain and empower hungry New Yorkers. They include the country's largest kosher food pantry system, emergency food cards, home delivered meals, food rescue and SNAP enrollment assistance.

Last year FY 16, we provided:

- Pantry items for 4.5 million meals to over 15,000 families each month at over 30 sites
- 5,513 families enrolled into SNAP.
- \$559,042 in emergency food cards

We understand the unique challenges of affording kosher food and the importance of food for rituals. That is why all of the food throughout our system is kosher. That said, our services are available to anyone who is hungry—regardless as to whether or not they keep kosher.

In order to help more New Yorkers in their fight against hunger, we have expanded our SNAP outreach efforts to focus on Holocaust survivors and seniors. Many seniors work their entire lives, but do not have a deep safety net and are unaware that they are qualified for SNAP.

Through the City Council Holocaust Survivor Initiative funds, Met Council created the “Fourth Week Initiative for Holocaust Survivors,” which bought and delivered groceries for survivors, who are SNAP recipients, during the fourth week of each month. Our Coordinator of Emergency Food Program ensured that clients received supplemental groceries delivered to their homes and each month checked in on the clients to evaluate for additional services and provide case management. With our partners at the local Jewish Community Councils we expect to continue to grow this much needed service.

Additionally, through private funding from the Robin Hood Foundation, which Met Council thanks immensely, we were able to expand many of its programs targeting the thousands who are food insecure.

We applaud the Administration's and HRA's redesign and increased accessibility of ACCESS NYC to aid hard-to-reach families and seniors with benefits assistance.

In conclusion, Met Council could not continue providing critical social services to thousands of needy New Yorkers each year without the vital partnership of New York City Council. We deeply value your leadership and partnership and look forward to working together to help the needy throughout the New York area.

Thank you. I would be happy to take any questions you have at this time.



January 25, 2017

Committee on General Welfare jointly with the Committee on Aging
Oversight: Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City
Remarks on behalf of JASA by Molly Krakowski, Director of Legislative Affairs

Good morning. I'd like to thank the members of the New York City Council Committees on General Welfare and Aging for hosting today's important hearing on reducing food insecurity in New York City. JASA welcomes the opportunity to testify today on this important issue.

JASA is a not-for-profit agency serving the needs of older adults in the greater New York area. JASA programs and services promote independence, safety, wellness, community participation, and an enhanced quality of life for New York City's older adults. JASA reaches over 43,000 older adults and programs include home care, case management services, senior centers, congregate and home delivered meals, NORC supportive services, caregiver support, continuing education, licensed mental health, housing, advocacy, legal services, adult protective services, and guardianship services.

According to a survey conducted in 2015 by Feeding America, more than 1.3 million New York City residents, or 16.4%, are food insecure. They do not have enough food for an active, healthy life. In addition, a 2016 study found "the meal gap for New York City is nearly 242 million; that is, New York City residents who experience food insecurity fall short of an adequate diet by 242 million meals in a single year." According to Food Bank for New York, approximately 204,000 New York City seniors, or approximately one out of every five (20 percent), rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.

These statistics are startling, and speak to the urgency to reassess how we best assist people in accessing basic nutrition, particularly, vulnerable older adults. There are gaps in our understanding of daily living circumstances. For example, does the individual participating in a congregate lunch program or receiving home delivered meals have adequate food for other meals? Are there barriers related to mobility, cost, specific health conditions, and social isolation? What other obstacles prevent our neighbors from maintaining nutritional health?

Older adults face special challenges around nutrition, and are prone to inadequate food and nutrient intake. Improper nutrition may result in deficiencies that impact overall well-



being. Decreases in body fat and muscle, for example, can translate into weakness, mobility issues, and less "padding." Older adults then become more at risk for infections, pneumonia, falls and fractures, digestive disorders, skin breakdown and pressure sores, and confusion.

As a provider of home delivered meals and congregate meals at 22 senior centers, JASA provides approximately 1,000,000 meals annually to New York City seniors. In addition, JASA case management assists older adults in accessing benefits and entitlements, including SNAP. JASA has worked closely with HRA, and City Council Members to educate seniors at senior centers and community events about SNAP, and encourage people to apply for the supplemental funds. However, even with meal assistance, many people experience food insecurity.

A significant challenge is the underfunding of City contracts for meals. We appreciate the increase in meal reimbursement, which passed in FY15, as well as the FY16 Cost of Living Adjustment, and a very generous \$75k from the City Council in FY17 to help offset the deficit in meals. However, JASA has yet to receive the FY 16 COLA funds, and despite the infusion of Council discretionary dollars, we are still running a deficit of \$120k this year. Government relies on the human services not-for-profit network to provide congregate and home delivered meals; yet this vital service area is representative of inadequately funded City contracts.

Home delivered meals programs have a primary objective of supporting nutritional health. They also offer opportunities to provide safety checks on homebound individuals. JASA works closely with caterers and nutrition experts to provide nutritious and culturally appropriate meals, and trains drivers to identify and report situations that are "out of the ordinary", since this may be the only outside contact that an isolated senior has in the course of a day, and is therefore essential to determining the client's well-being.

It is our concern that many individuals receiving home delivered meals may not be able to adequately provide for their other nutritional needs, including the two other meals they should be eating daily. It would be helpful to look at new opportunities within the HDML system to more effectively address nutritional health and food insecurity. This could be achieved with occasional deliveries from food pantries, improved opportunities for shopping home delivery, the provision of more than one meal daily, nutritionist visits, improved meal choice, and peer navigator support. In addition, safety checks and social connectedness opportunities may be meaningfully improved through system-wide telephone reassurance and friendly visiting programs.

Because proper nutrition can mean briefer illnesses with fewer complications, rarer and shorter hospital stays, improved functional status, and improved quality of life – all of which supports capacity for living independently longer - JASA is exploring other strategies to ensure that older adults – especially those living in poor and near-poor households – maintain good health. For example:

Peer Health Navigator Support

In May 2016, JASA rolled out a Peer Health Navigator Support program, training for older adults residing in Williamsburg/Bushwick and living with diabetes and high blood pressure to help others living with the same conditions. JASA has developed the competency to train and deploy volunteer peer navigators, implementing the Stanford University Diabetes and Chronic Disease Self-Management program. Peer-navigator support has been shown to promote individual commitment to recommended actions (diet, exercise, medication and doctor visits, etc.). When older adults get the support they need to master and sustain self-management, there are benefits for both individual health and the overall health care system.

JASA graduated four Peer Leaders who are managing their conditions successfully, and there are six additional Peer Leaders currently in training. These leaders facilitate six highly interactive weekly sessions that focus on sharing experiences and skills-building. They also offer telephonic and in-person guidance to participating older adults. To ensure on-going support for the clients, JASA is developing a sustainable structure to maintain peer health navigation as an ongoing service, which includes a stipend.

Home Care Nutritionist Screen

JASACare, JASA's home care division, serves approximately 1,000 people annually, and it is uniquely situated to provide additional nutritional support to the most vulnerable seniors. JASA recently received grant funding to add a nutritionist to our home care team. Many of the diseases that cause individuals to need home care may be positively addressed through small but crucial changes in nutritional intake or eating patterns. Individuals with congestive heart failure, diabetes, and hypertension, for instance, can benefit from nutritional counseling that a nutritionist can bring.

The new nutritionist will target 150 high-risk clients: provide education about nutrition issues, assess health needs and diet; develop meal plans, taking both cost and preferences into account; instruct home care workers to prepare therapeutic diets; and evaluate the effects of meal plans and change the plans as needed

In-home visits by the nutritionist also provide opportunities for observing the client's nutritional 'environment' (e.g., refrigerator contents) and enable more individualized nutritional guidance.

“Get Cooking with JASA”

JASA is seeking to implement a new meals preparation program, “Get Cooking with JASA” in order to provide participants with the knowledge and tools to adopt and enjoy a healthy diet on a limited budget. Led by JASA’s health-supportive chef and an additional multi-lingual chef, both supervised by JASA’s geriatric nutritionist, the program will provide multiple series of on-site cooking demonstrations. Through “Get Cooking with JASA”, we will offer a series of workshops at senior centers, NORC programs, and community based partners focused on meal preparation, options for people with dental issues, special dietary requirements to support treatment of chronic conditions, including diabetes, and other health concerns. Input from the participants will be solicited in advance so that the demonstrations can be customized to their tastes and cultural preferences. These hands-on workshops will teach nutrition and cooking skills to hundreds of older adults, fostering enthusiasm for fresh food, meal planning, shopping, and cooking healthy dishes that are low cost and delicious. “Get Cooking with JASA” will offer field trips to local markets where seniors will learn to shop for healthy ingredients.

In this new age of apps and advanced technology, we’d like the City to explore ways of connecting food banks/pantries and individuals in need of shopping assistance, a sort of food shopping service. This would be particularly helpful for individuals living in walk up apartments, or neighborhoods lacking in supermarkets. It would also provide shelf stable food to people who rely exclusively on a home delivered meal or senior center lunch. A model of such a service is Franciscans Deliver, which is part of the Breadline pantry at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Manhattan. Members of the Penn South Program for Seniors NORC participate in this opportunity.

JASA encourages the City to think about additional ways to be more flexible with nutrition programs. Participants want more choices, and senior centers want to offer more food options that better meet their needs. In order to reduce food insecurity, the City needs to make it a priority and a greater investment. We look forward to continuing to partner with the City and help older adults age in place with dignity and autonomy.

Molly Krakowski
Director of Legislative Affairs
JASA
mkrakowski@jasa.org
212 273-5260

City Council Testimony, Hearing on Food Insecurity
Dr. Maggie Dickinson
Guttman Community College, CUNY
1/25/2017

I am here today to talk about the unemployed adults in New York City who are slated to lose their SNAP benefits on April 1st and the inevitable increase in hunger and food insecurity that will follow.

The federal Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) rule restricts unemployed adults who are not disabled, elderly or caring for young children to three months of SNAP benefits in any three year period. This rule was part of the federal welfare reform legislation passed in 1996. At the time, Democrats were able to insert a provision that suspended this rule in areas where the unemployment rates were high. At the outset of the great recession, the USDA gave blanket waivers to all states in the US in the face of soaring unemployment.

Here in New York City, we have a special history in relationship to this policy. Mayor Bloomberg refused to accept the waiver, even at the height of the recession when unemployment was in the double digits. New York was the only major city in the US and the only place in New York state that continued to enforce these restrictions on SNAP.

I was conducting research in a Brooklyn soup kitchen and pantry between 2011 and 2013. As part of my research, I helped people apply for food stamp benefits. I was aware of the ABAWD restrictions, though they weren't fully enforced. In the summer of 2011, the Bloomberg administration began fully enforcing this rule. I began to see a steady stream of worried people who received letters that they were being kicked off of SNAP, unless they performed a workfare assignment or could prove they were working at least 20 hours a week.

Mayor de Blasio quickly reversed this policy when he took office in 2014, but as the unemployment rate has fallen, the federal waivers are being revoked. Last year Lower Manhattan lost its waiver and this year most of Queens as well, meaning HRA will be required by the federal government to enforce the time limits in these areas beginning in March.

What we know is that when these restrictions are enforced, people go hungry. I know this because I saw it up close right here in New York under the Bloomberg Administration. Cutting people off from SNAP because they are unemployed does not help them find jobs any faster. Losing access to SNAP benefits increases food insecurity for the people directly impacted. It also strains the already strained resources of family members and community organizations who are left to fill in the gaps.

I know the focus of today is on seniors, who are exempted from this particular SNAP restriction. But seniors, the elderly parents and relatives of the people who are cut off from benefits, also suffer when time limits are enforced. Jesus Garcia, a pantry client who in the ABAWD category in 2011, and his elderly mother are a case in point*. Jesus came to see me several months after

* Names have been changed to protect the privacy of my research participants.

being cut off of food stamps because he was unemployed. He lost his job in 2008 and had been receiving unemployment. This was at the height of the recession and finding a job was enormously challenging. When his unemployment ran out, he was re-categorized as unemployed by HRA and suddenly subjected to SNAP time limits. He got a letter saying that he had prove he was working at least 20 hours a week or perform a WEP assignment to maintain his benefits. As I'm sure this committee is aware, WEP was a deeply flawed program. Jesus was reluctant to clean the parks or subways in exchange for food assistance and ultimately lost his food stamp benefits.

He lived with is elderly mother. She had a rent controlled apartment and lived on her small social security pension. When Jesus lost his food stamp benefits, both he and his mother suddenly had less food in the house. They both became weekly clients at the Brooklyn food pantry where I was conducting my research. Jesus also began eating at local soup kitchens to relieve the burden on his mother as much as he could. He continued to look for work and to do side jobs when he could find them. He talked to me at length about how to improve his resume to help him find work and worried that no one would hire him. As he put it, "once you reach my age, nobody wants you because they want someone young they can use and abuse."

Jesus was in a better position than many of the other people I met during that time who were cut off from SNAP. Losing access to food assistance can create tensions in marginal living situations where families and friends are doubled up in apartments. Losing food assistance means people who are already unemployed can no longer even contribute food to the households where they are staying, making already difficult living situations even more difficult. Losing access to food can result in losing access to housing, putting an even greater strain on city and community resources.

Cutting people like Jesus Garcia and other unemployed adults off from food stamps does nothing to help them find jobs. It puts undo strain not only on them, but on their families and communities. I want to commend HRA, under the leadership of Commissioner Banks, for their attentiveness to this issue. As the unemployment rate continues to fall in the years ahead, more New Yorkers will be affected by these time restrictions.

There are a few things HRA and the City Council can do in response the growing need caused by these federal regulations. First, the city ought to prioritize ABAWDs for slots in appropriate workforce development or education programs that create meaningful pathways to opportunity. Second, we need to maintain funding for emergency food providers. The Mayor's Preliminary Budget for FY 2018 reduces funding for emergency food by 37%. I recommend that the Council & the Administration work together to restore the cut and raise funding to levels so that food pantries and soup kitchens are better prepared to meet the need that is created when unemployed adults lose SNAP. Ultimately, I would like to see time limits and work requirements for food stamps overturned, but with our current Congress that does not seem likely. In the meantime, it is crucially important that we maintain and increase funding for emergency food here in New York City.



AN UNCOMMON SOLUTION TO HUNGER

New York City Hearing on Hunger

January 25th, 2017

Good afternoon. I am **Stephen Grimaldi, Executive Director of New York Common Pantry (NYCP)**. Last year New York Common Pantry served close to 400,000 visitors, partnered with 185 sites across NYC, served 3 million meals, accessed over \$6 million in resources and helped thousands of low-income New Yorkers receive nutrition education. Our mobile and onsite programs served people either in, or from, 183 different New York City zip codes last year. We are open 365 days a year, and as such, we see the challenges that food insecure and poor households face on a daily basis.

I am here to testify that city supports and programs like the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), the proposed Universal Lunch Program and training and job opportunities for New Yorkers, including for the often maligned Able Bodied Adults with Dependents (ABAWDS), are important and deserve your support. They currently, and can, provide opportunity and sustenance for many, helping people to manage and overcome the daily struggle of poverty. *While life may be a struggle, struggle should not be a life.*

The backdrop of need for these programs is staggering. In New York City:

1. 420,000 children are food insecure (that's 23.6% of all children in our city).
2. 15% of people that visit emergency food programs are seniors.
3. Food and housing costs rose 59% between 2000 and 2014 and the overall income needed jumped 45%. Yet, during that time the median income only rose 17%.

In our city, there are those that suffer from poor nutrition, are paid insufficient wages to feed their families and cover their bills, and are a few, or perhaps one, paycheck away from eviction. They struggle to find good paying jobs and often live with stigma of being poor in a place where there is incredible wealth. Time limits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), financial difficulties for seniors living on fixed incomes and struggling to make ends meet due to the high cost of living, financially strapped families and the everyday challenges of the working poor are pernicious issues that impact their ability to both survive and thrive, and thus fall within the same narrow continuum of poverty. The good news? We have solutions. The bad news: we need to do more to leverage them, and we are not.



AN UNCOMMON SOLUTION TO HUNGER

A greater percentage of New York City residents live in poverty than in New York State or the United States as a whole. Just over 14% or 45.7 million people live in poverty in the United States, while 18%, or 3.5 million people, live in poverty in New York State. In New York City, 20.7% or 1.8 million people live in poverty*.

While New York City's minimum wage is higher than in many parts of the country, recently rising to \$12 (fast food) and \$11/hr. (for others except wait staff), there are still real challenges that low income working people face that this wage cannot address, forcing people to leverage other supports. In fact, 40% of NYC households can't cover basic needs, even though a majority have at least one member with a job. This is based on a study using a measure called the *Self Sufficiency Standard*, the findings of a joint effort by the Women's Center for Education and Career Advancement, New York Community Trust and other non-profit organizations (2014). The study mined data from the state Department of Labor, the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, and found the minimum wage/salary required to 'afford basic necessities' in New York City, which includes food, rent and child care (again, "The Self Sufficiency Standard"), is far higher than many previously thought.

In fact, in order for one adult and one child to afford housing, child care, food, health care, transportation, taxes, etc. a wage earner needed to make \$25 an hour (\$53K/yr./Bronx), \$26 in poorer neighborhoods of the Brooklyn (\$55K/yr.), and \$25.37 (\$54K/yr.) in Northern Manhattan. In fact, most New Yorkers with incomes below the Standard live in the boroughs with income inadequacy rates that are near the citywide average: Queens (43%), North Manhattan (45%), and Brooklyn (excluding Northwest) (49%)

When put together, the reality is that many need some sort of support or 'hand up', and they come to food pantries and soup kitchens to get both immediate meal and other services. Some come for the food initially, not knowing that a series of other potentially life changing services are available. For example, as a young man **James** served in the U.S. military—but by the time he turned 65 he was without a home or other resources. When Mr. Reynolds came to New York Common Pantry for help in August of 2013 he received a fresh meal, but was also interviewed by our Case Manager, who screened him through a resource eligibility calculator. James learned that he was eligible to receive Veterans Benefits and other resources, but he needed a stable address where he could get his mail. This service was set up for him through Project Dignity, and later he was escorted to the Social Security Office. There he learned that, like many seniors, he was eligible for Social Security, and since that time he has been approved for benefits as a



veteran of the armed services. Crucially, he has also obtained housing. With these key supports James has a chance to live with a greater level of dignity and self-sufficiency, and it all started with food, some of which was provided to NYCP by Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP).

Many people in our city need emergency food and a wage increase, but based on the cost of living in our city, some sort of subsidy to make ends meet. They may find themselves having issues feeding themselves or their families, relying on food pantries or soup kitchens, receiving free lunch for their children at school, or if they are not in the workforce, requiring vocational direction and financial supports like job training and SNAP, as well as others.

Often healthy food is the first casualty in a limited budget. A lack of healthy food options for children living in poverty has been associated with poor outcomes in school, and difficulties learning. In New York City, 23.6% (420,000) of children are food insecure, a percentage that goes up in the Bronx, where 29.6% (109,360), and in Brooklyn where 24.2% (144,640) are food insecure. Despite some misperceptions, Manhattan (22%) and Queens (20.3%) have a high rate of food insecurity as well.

Celia (with one of her children below) is a mother of two. “I live with my husband and my two children in Bronx and visit Choice Pantry twice a month. I was referred to (NYCP) by my daughter’s Head Start nutritionist. I am very happy with the food we receive. We need this food and it is nutritious. I have also taken nutrition classes here and have learned how to eat other foods –like canned foods. The process is fast, well organized and I get treated well. I like coming here,” Cecilia said.

NY
**COMMON
PANTRY** 
AN UNCOMMON SOLUTION TO HUNGER



There is **Michelle**, who receives food in our Choice Pantry, and some of that food also comes to NYCP through the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP). After working at a hospital for seventeen years, Michelle visited the Pantry due to an illness that rendered her unable to work. Feeling dejected that she was now in need of assistance to provide food for her family, Michelle did not look forward to coming to a food pantry due to what she perceived as stigma of a 'handout'. However, after she was greeted and helped by NYCP's staff, her mood changed. According to Michelle, being able to choose her own food, especially fresh fruit and vegetables, made her feel like her opinion mattered. Michelle is proof, that while life may be a struggle, ~~but~~ struggle need not be a life.

Due to stigma of being poor, and receiving financial and social supports, many do not come forward to tell their stories. Still, some do, and when they come for food they often get far more than just a meal.



“Sometimes you have the world in your hands, but at any moment, you can have the world on your shoulders.” -Karen, Jeff’s mother

Riding the 2 Train. This is the title of a book **Jeff** (pictured above with hat) is hoping to write. It is also the story of his life as a homeless man in New York City. After the death of his mother, Karen, and a business deal gone bad he found himself alone, depressed and riding the 2 train...all night long. But Jeff still had the strong work ethic his mother instilled and a determination to survive. He began getting free meals at Bravo Pizza and in return, Jeff started helping close the store at night. Owner, Kenny, saw Jeff at work and was so impressed that he created a job for him. Jeff continued to ride the 2 Train and save money for housing. He would come to the Hot Meals Program at the New York Common Pantry for breakfast. Through Project Dignity, he would shower and get his mail. NYCP Help 365 case managers helped him secure benefits and his birth certificate, which he never had before. Jeff did get an opportunity to put his Bachelor’s Degree in Horticulture to work as curator of the lawns at Bryant Park. He has a lifelong friendship with Kenny and everyone at Bravo Pizza. Both men continue to give back to the community and encourage survival, hope and success.

Jeff is an example of the potential many single men have, but due to circumstances out of their control, have not yet been able to realize that potential. Potential unrealized is a loss for us all, not just the person receiving the assistance. Single men without dependents, many of whom

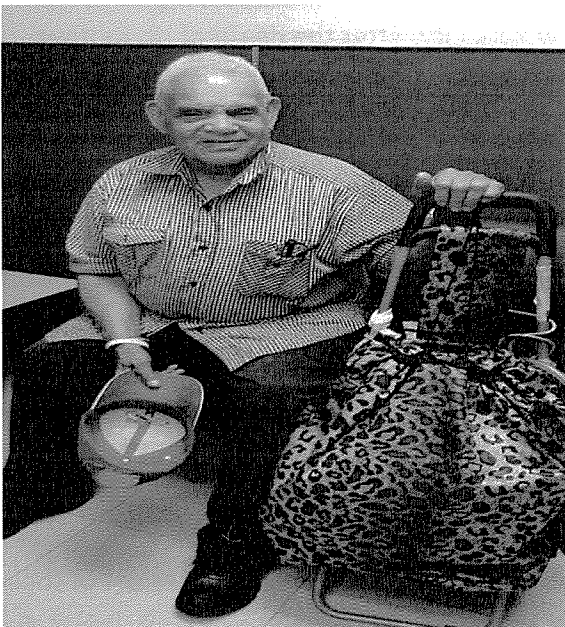


are due to be removed from the SNAP rolls due to ABAWD restrictions, have a very steep road to climb. An **ABAWD**, an able-bodied adult without dependents, is limited to any 3 months in a 36-month period (considered the 3-month time limit) unless the individual meets the **ABAWD** work requirements. The end of these supports, and a lack of training programs, mean they will experience a lack of opportunities, struggle to eat, maintain housing, and experience difficulties supporting themselves. Life may be a struggle, but struggle should not be a life.

Food Insecurity for children and seniors

According to the USDA, Food insecurity is when “access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources.” Using this measure, 1.4 million people; or 16.4% of New York City residents are considered food insecure, including 264,910 (18.7%) in the Bronx; 515,420 (20.0%) in Brooklyn; 243,570 (15.1%) in Manhattan and 298,250 (13.1%) in Queens. There is no reliable recent data for Staten Island.

Seniors and children, some of the most vulnerable of New Yorkers, are some of the most food insecure. While 2.9 million or 8.3% of seniors are food insecure nationally, that percentage goes up in New York City, where 1 in 10 seniors are food insecure. The borough with the highest percentage is Bronx, where 1 in 5 seniors are food insecure.





Rafael Reyes (pictured above with cart) is 82 years old. He lives alone on 160th Street in the Bronx and travels by himself to NYCP's main site in Manhattan. "I used to work for a lamp manufacturer and a perfume manufacturer, but the jobs became scarce. My sister told me about this program. She lives in Harlem. It takes me two buses to get here," Rafael said smiling. Rafael also goes once per month to NYCP's Nourish (CSFP, a USDA) Program for seniors in the Bronx. "This program is "cool." I enjoy coming here. They don't mistreat anyone. With this program I do not have to buy milk. I make the vegetables last and it helps me" Rafael said.

For Rafael, and hundreds of thousands of others across the city, EFAP provides important foodstuffs like oatmeal, soups, 1% milk, beans, rice and applesauce, among others.

My personal Story

I too know a little something about this struggle firsthand. When I was 15, my father was laid off, my parents worked four part-time jobs between them, and I received discounted lunch because without it I may not have eaten. I struggled with the stigma of being less-well off than my classmates, something that discount lunch card made abundantly clear.

After I graduated, I worked two jobs and 65+ hours a week, both below \$8 an hour. For a time, I received what was then called Food Stamps.

I know the fear of having no fall back, no safety net, nothing to cushion your fall. I know that people need help during difficult times and want a hand up. And while this was not easy, I know there are hundreds of thousands in New York City alone who have struggled worse than I.

In our current political climate, as New Yorkers, we need to remain a beacon of hope and support their aspirations, a place where people can still attain their dreams and get the support they need, not become a place where we shut the door and lock them out. Not only do we help them, they help us—our city helps children receive proper nutrition to be ready to learn and grow, adults receive the necessary skills and confidence to contribute to our tax base, and those at the end of their careers, or no longer working, have the resources and food to enjoy their golden years. Programs like Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), job training and employment opportunities for so called Able Bodied Adults and universal lunch do just that.

(*Poverty measured by the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), which factors in all benefits, wages, tax assistance/credits, as well as the cost of living)

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Marie Phillip, Deputy Commissioner

Address: _____

I represent: HRA

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lisa Fitzpatrick, Chief Program Officer

Address: _____

I represent: HRA

Address: _____

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THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Barbara Turk, Director of Food Policy

Address: _____

I represent: Mayor's office of food policy

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Danelle Rivera

Address: 89-17 139th Street

I represent: Jamaica NY JITA Community

Address: Outreach Center

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 in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: SUDHA ACHARYA

Address: 143-06 45th Ave, FLUSHING, NY 11355

I represent: South Asian Council for Social

Address: Services

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____
 in favor in opposition

Date: 1/25/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Beth Frankel

Address: 1070 Park Ave

I represent: AARP

Address: 250 Third Ave

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Caryn Resnick, Deputy Commissioner

Address: _____

I represent: Department for the Aging (DFTA)

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/25/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amy Blumsack

Address: 2094 Fulton St, Brooklyn NY 11233

I represent: Neighbors Together

Address: same as above

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Molly Krackowski

Address: _____

I represent: JASA

Address: _____

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**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/25/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Liz Accles

Address: _____

I represent: Community Food Advocates

Address: Lunch 4 Learning Campaign

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Helene Lauffer

Address: 1011 First Ave NY, NY 10032

I represent: Catholic Charities Community Services

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/27/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Barbara Hart

Address: _____

I represent: Hunger Free NYC

Address: 50 Broad St, Ste 1103, NY, NY

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/25/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Maggie Dickinson

Address: 50 W. 40th St., NYC

I represent: CUNY

Address:

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/25/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Joel Berg

Address:

I represent: Hunger Free NY / America

Address: 50 Broad St, Ste 1102, NY, NY 10004

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/25/17

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Ariel Savransky

Address: 14 Wall St.

I represent: Citizens' Committee for Children

Address:

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

Jan 25

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Stuart Cohen (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 382 Jersey St 1st

I represent: Coto Food Bank

Address: Broadway NYC

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/25/17

Name: Rachel Sherrow (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: City meals on wheels

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

1/25/17

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Greg Sherman (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: _____

I represent: West Side Campaign Against Hunger

Address: 263 W 86th St NY 10025

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/25/17

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Mandy Culbreath

Address: 120 Broadway 38th Fl

I represent: Trinity Church Wall Street / St. Paul's

Address: 89 Broadway

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/25/17

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: RAC Emily Maranda

Address: 173 William Street, Suite 901 New York, NY

I represent: Single Stop

Address:

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Gregory Bruce

Address:

I represent: Community Kitchen of West

Address: Harlem

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

Name: Rachel Sabella (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: Food Bank For New York City

I represent: _____

Address: _____

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/25/17

Name: Danielle Christenson (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 25-66 42nd Street Astoria, NY 1103

I represent: God's Love We Deliver

Address: 1066 Avenue of the Americas NY NY 1003

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 11/25/17

Name: Jessica Hughson - McDonald (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 120 Broadway 7th Fl NY NY 10027

I represent: Mt Council

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Stephen Grimaldi

Address: 8 East 109th St. New York Common

I represent: Pantry

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 1/25/17

(PLEASE PRINT)
Name: Jerome Nathaniel

Address: 6 E 32nd St, New York, NY

I represent: _____

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms