

**TESTIMONY**

**Presented by**

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**Oversight: Local Food Procurement  
New York City Council's Committee on Contracts**

**before the**

**New York City Council**

**New York City Council's Committee on Contracts**

**on**

**Tuesday, January 14, 2020**

**1:00 P.M.**

**at**

**Council Committee Room, City Hall**

**New York, NY 10007**

## **Introduction**

Good afternoon Chairperson Kallos, and members of the Committees on Contracts. My name is Kate MacKenzie, and I am the Director of The Mayor's Office of Food Policy. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the Administration's commitment to good food procurement and the plans in place to create a values-based food system that reflects the Administration's values of equity, health, and sustainability.

Before I begin, I would like to thank Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer for her steadfast commitment to improving food access, food quality, and local food economies. I also appreciate the Council's efforts to improve access to healthy food for all New York City communities.

During my testimony, I will outline the commitment we have made to implement a Good Food Purchasing Policy across key constituent food serving agencies, providing a transparent metrics-based, flexible framework that encourages large institutions to direct their buying power toward five core values: local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare, and nutrition. Applying these principles in the work to purchase food through agencies will help increase consumption of high-quality nutritious food and increase knowledge of the desirability of healthy food.

## **New York City Food Procurement**

New York City provides 238 million meals a year<sup>1</sup> to some of New York's most vulnerable populations. The food budgets to support these meals are more than \$400 M dollars.

The non-mayoral agencies of the Department of Education (DOE) and Health and Hospitals (H+H) procure food directly. The Department of Citywide Administrative Services

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<sup>1</sup> 2019 Food Metrics Report

(DCAS) procures food on behalf of Human Resources Administration (HRA), Administration for Children's Services (ACS), Department of Correction (DOC) and the New York City Police Department (NYPD). And, Department for the Aging (DFTA) and the Department for Homeless Services (DHS) each procure food through their own agencies. Regardless of the mechanism of food procurement used, each of these agencies is participating in the Good Food Purchasing Program.

### **National Leadership**

New York City was the first major city in the country to set nutrition standards for all foods purchased or served by the City. The Food Standards were created with the goal of improving the health of all New Yorkers served by City agencies by decreasing the risk of chronic disease related to poor nutritional intake. The standards have been strengthened through investments by this administration and today, the standards apply to each of those 238 meals I described above.

Building on that legacy, the administration is committed to implementing a Good Food Purchasing Policy to ensure that whether it's a meal served in a homeless shelter, a prison, or a school, New Yorkers are receiving the highest quality food possible. Furthermore, we want to examine the larger supply chain to make sure that the city is doing business with vendors and suppliers that support the local economy and are responsible when it comes to their workforce and the environment. Food production is among the largest drivers of global environmental change, and as the country's second largest buyer of food, we have a leadership role to play by setting norms that can signal to the market place the types of products and conditions we want to support. We have opportunities to promote both healthy diets and more sustainable food choices through procurement. This commitment was made in the last April's release of One NYC.

## **Good Food Purchasing Program**

The Center for Good Food Purchasing provides planning, implementation and evaluation support for institutions involved with the Good Food Purchasing Program. The program itself helps institutional food buyers shift their food purchases to reflect five core values: local economies, environmental sustainability, valued workforce, animal welfare, and nutrition.

As a collaborative citywide initiative managed by the Mayor's Office of Food Policy, New York City is developing its own approach to integrate the GFP principles, ensuring that money spent on food serves both the people and the planet. With support from a private foundation, we have contracted with The Center for Good Food Purchasing to support our efforts.

## **Vendor Information Requested of Each Agency**

Each agency that I mentioned above is currently involved in a rigorous and robust data collection process to examine current food purchasing practices. This information will determine existing alignment with the Good Food Purchasing Program Standards in the five value categories.

The type of data gathered includes the following:

- A Food Service Operations Overview form that captures the total annual dollar amount of food and beverage purchases by product category and average number of daily meals served.
- A Nutrition Self-Assessment that examines healthful practices in procurement, food preparation, and the food service environment.

- Review of an inventory of suppliers with serious, repeat and/or willful health and safety and/or wage and hour labor violations over the last three years, generated by the Center.
- A report of all line item records of actual food purchases made during the FY that details the
  - Product description, including city and state if in the US
  - Vendor/supplier/brand name
  - True manufacturer (if available)
  - Pack size
  - Qty
  - Price per quantity
  - Total spend on item
  - Production location

### **View towards the Future**

Capturing this information is essential to build a deep understanding of the opportunities and responsibilities we have to shift procurements. This is an incredibly complex ask of vendors who are currently under no obligation to provide the information. We do know, however, that food industry trends are pointing to great transparency, traceability, and social responsibility. The private sector has been providing this level of detail based on consumer demand, and as a City, New York believes that it's time to do the same. Together with Mayor's Office of Contract Services, DCAS, the Office of Management and Budget, and our legal counsel, we will be looking to change the language in our contracts to request this information. By making these contractual changes, we will be able to require vendors to report on product that is coming in from New York State. We can also be in a better position to set goals for these procurements. We are also exploring innovative contracts that may allow smaller farmers who may not produce quantities needed by the scale of our city to aggregate their products with intermediaries. It is

our intention to use the public contracting process to create greater accountability along our supply chains by asking companies with whom we do business with for strong commitments to transparency and the Administration's values.

With information from each agency, we will complete an aggregate analysis of what the city's purchasing looks like and make strategic decisions on areas to prioritize. This information, when analyzed, will give us a comprehensive overview of our current food sourcing so that we can set Good Food purchasing goals in the future. As a result, we will create a values-based food system that reflects the values of equity, health, and sustainability of this Administration. This deepens our commitment to the Green New Deal outlined in One NYC.

## **Conclusion**

New York City is, and will continue to be, a national and international leader in how resources can be brought to bear in order to transform the food system and serve as a model to other jurisdictions looking to create greater equity through the food system for residents, communities, and the environment. While other jurisdictions have implemented the Good Food Purchasing program, no city has done so as comprehensively as New York, truly working from the inside to transform not just the way we procure food, but to inspire dramatic shifts in our nation's food supply.

With the shared goal of greater food equity, we look forward to working with Council to strengthen Local Law 50 and share progress on our Good Food Purchasing Program efforts. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to answer any questions.

**Testimony of Ryan A. Murray,  
Before the New York City Council Committee on Contracts  
Oversight Hearing – Local Food Procurement  
January 14, 2020**

Good afternoon Chair Kallos, Borough President Brewer and members of the Contracts Committee. Thank you for inviting us to discuss local food procurement. I am Ryan Murray, First Deputy Director for the Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS). MOCS functions as both an oversight and service agency, with a goal to ensure transparency, fairness, timeliness and efficiency in New York City procurement. In the execution of our duties, we collaborate with policy leaders with expertise in various subject areas, and coordinate across agencies to facilitate responsiveness to procedural and reporting requirements. To increase the effectiveness of citywide procurement, MOCS is also leading a multi-year initiative to overhaul and modernize our approach to agency-vendor relationship management. This project leverages technology to make it easier to do business for all stakeholders, reduces administrative burdens historically experienced in a heavily paper-based practice, and makes data more readily available and understandable to inform policy-making.

MOCS understands and takes seriously the city's effort to procure food that is fresh, nutritious, and sourced locally. Under New York General Municipal Law §103, City agencies have procurement tools at their disposal to enable sourcing of New York State-produced food. For example, agencies may utilize a "price preference" for bids that provide food grown or produced in New York and come within 10% of the lowest responsive and responsible bidder. MOCS provided guidance on these regulations to agencies to help increase their purchase of New York State food products.

As part of Local Law 50 of 2011, MOCS publishes an annual report detailing the city's performance with regards to local food procurements in the preceding fiscal year. To fulfill this requirement, MOCS conducts a review to determine the number of contracts which exceed the

small purchase limit of \$100,000. MOCS works with agencies to identify those contracts with a food component exceeding \$100,000, along with corresponding vendors for these contracts. MOCS subsequently sends a voluntary survey to the relevant vendors. The survey focuses on vendor food sourcing for each month of the past fiscal year across 91 individual food items. Vendors are asked whether they purchased this food during the reporting period, and data are collected on the total value of purchases, as well as a monthly breakdown. Vendors must also account for information related to each individual item and the source of its purchase either from within or outside of New York State.

Next, vendors compare these itemized monthly purchases against New York State availability periods that are provided in the survey for each food item. These columns flag instances where the vendor sourced outside of New York State when that product was available in state and this serves to encourage identification of additional opportunities for local sourcing. Because the law requires purchasing information for 91 individual food items on a monthly basis for in-state and out of state purchases, this can ultimately lead vendors to fill out several thousand fields of data points. The FY19 report shows nine vendors completed responses that were returned to MOCS. This low response rate is consistent with our experience over many years administering the survey with our agency partners.

We have identified several challenges to administering the survey. First, vendors are not required to complete the survey as a part of Local Law 50. The voluntary nature of the survey means that few vendors feel compelled to go through the extra work of collecting this information from their own suppliers in addition to other core service delivery priorities. Second, the perceived burden of completing the survey discourages potentially engaged vendors from

participating. Pulling data for this many fields in situations where it is not always readily available burdens providers who do not consistently track this information. Many vendors do not anticipate filling out this survey at the beginning of a new contract, so they do not track the appropriate data throughout the year, requiring them to do so retroactively at the end of the reporting period. Additionally, this process entails an extra layer of complexity for human service providers who are rarely contracted to provide food directly and typically procure food from external parties themselves. They lack complete information on the sourcing patterns of their subcontractors/suppliers and may have few tools at their disposal to encourage information provision. As a result, they are unable to quickly or reliably complete the survey.

We share the City Council's goals of increasing transparency into sourcing decisions by vendors and increasing the city's procurement from local producers. We furthermore acknowledge that MOCS can take some internal steps to improve the response rate and quality of information provided in this report. In the long run, the transition to a digitized environment will enable consistent tracking of contracts subject to Local Law 50 and allow us to link these contracts to invoicing, which gives a clear view into how much was budgeted and what was ultimately spent. In the meantime, we recognize the pressing need to increase transparency into New York food sourcing and have identified several steps to improve collection of this data in the short term.

One immediate change we can make is to administer the survey more frequently. This would give vendors a clearer signal of what information we will consistently request while making it easier for them to complete the survey on a shorter reporting period. Additionally, we have greatly improved our capacity to engage with vendors and foster ongoing conversations in

recent years. We can utilize collaborative working groups, such as the Nonprofit Resiliency Committee, to find ways to better tailor the survey to vendors' ongoing operations and spur greater participation. Finally, we can enhance the suite of food policy resources we offer to give vendors a clearer picture of the information we require and what steps they can take to support this reporting. In partnership with the Mayor's Office of Food Policy, we can also offer guidance on how vendors can better track food production locations and sourcing patterns of their suppliers.

While we are open to discussing new ways to improve data quality on citywide food sourcing, we also believe these efforts should be informed by the full context of initiatives underway, such as the implementation of PASSPort (the Procurement and Sourcing Solutions Portal) by MOCS and several local food programs the Mayor's Office of Food Policy is currently undertaking. PASSPort will allow MOCS and other agencies to have a far greater degree of transparency into procurement processes than we have been able to achieve previously. This will give us a fuller view into specific types of procurement, vendors' historical performance, and potentially what sourcing decisions they are making. It will also make data collection substantially easier by allowing us to capture relevant information from the outset, rather than manually gathering it from vendors, and gives us a view into real-time activity. For example, Release 2 of PASSPort, which was launched in April 2019 in partnership with the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), allows us to track food purchases and payment for those goods. A quick glance at the data indicated that since launch, approximately 19 agencies have spent roughly \$4 million on food across 85 DCAS requirements contracts held by 31 vendors. We are already seeing the benefits from investment in digital transformation as

our data collection process is more efficient and information is more readily available in greater levels of detail than before.

Over time, if we take steps to enhance records for these items and those purchased by vendors with service contracts, we will eliminate the need to survey vendors because data will be captured as part of the regular course of business. As we launch our next major phase for PASSPort, which enables sourcing activity by agencies and enhances our capacity for data analysis, we will be better positioned to share global and nuanced insights around food purchasing.

We are also seeing positive signs from several agencies who are pushing to increase local food procurement. DCAS includes the price preference for locally sourced foods in all food-related solicitations they release. As the agency responsible for goods purchasing for all mayoral agencies, this has a significant impact on food sourcing by the city. They implement a robust quality assurance check to validate the accuracy of sourcing information provided by their vendors, a practice which could become a model for other food-procuring agencies, and are looking at ways to require source reporting by vendors in their next wave of food-related contracts. Between FY16 and FY19 DCAS awarded nearly \$44 million in contracts for New York-sourced food items, which amounts to 22% of all food items procured by DCAS.

The Department of Education (DOE) has also made great strides in delivering an increasing share of healthy, locally produced foods to students. As the largest food purchaser in the city, DOE has implemented several practices to provide locally grown food to students and staff, including New York Thursdays, the Garden to Café program that introduces students to

raising their own produce, and the inclusion of local preference language in all new bids. There is more work to be done, but current efforts underway at agencies like DOE are actively improving the city's local food procurement efforts. I am joined by both DCAS and DOE today.

We all share the same goal of verifying and the increasing the sourcing of New York State food. At this time, the best mechanism we have seen for collecting and ensuring the integrity of this data is through the direct inspection of goods, as DCAS has shown us. We will do our best to devise appropriate measures to improve the response rate for the Local Law 50 report, but we ultimately believe the transition to a digital environment will provide new mechanisms for tracking this data more closely to the point of origin, while reducing the administrative burden for agencies and vendors. We are also encouraged by efforts to partner with food policy experts who have led similar discussions in other jurisdictions and are happy to support our Food Policy director in convening agencies to align our efforts. Ultimately, these efforts pave the way for healthier, more sustainable, and locally grown food sourcing for the city government.

We look forward to continuing this discussion with the Committee and Borough President Brewer. I will now turn it over to Mayor's Office of Food Policy Director Kate MacKenzie who will elaborate further on some of the key initiatives underway to help achieve our shared goals.



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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

**January 14, 2020**

**Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President  
Testimony before the New York City Council Committees on Contracts  
Oversight: Local Food Procurement**

My name is Gale A. Brewer and I am the Manhattan Borough President. Thank you to Chair Kallos and the members of the Contracts Committees for the opportunity to testify today. I am here to support more New York State food purchasing by city agencies as promoted by Local Law 50 of 2011.

In 2011, 2014, 2015 and 2018, my office co-sponsored several upstate farm tours for agencies and nonprofits with Cornell University Cooperative Extension and GrowNYC. In addition, last October my office co-sponsored the Catskill Watershed Farm-to-Chef Forum with National Resources Defense Council, the Watershed Agricultural Council, and Fulton Market Association at Pace University.

The most important takeaway from these tours and the forum is the critical relationship between upstate and downstate and its effect on our access to healthy (and delicious) foods as well as economic development for our City (there are "green" environmental and "green" economic benefits to gain.) New Yorkers should be proud, knowledgeable and supportive of our City's watershed. One of the best ways to support the health of the watershed - and stave off immensely expensive filtration - is supporting the sustainability of local farms in the region and we could do that by purchasing from them.

Over the years, I have also learned that in order to really see an impact with our considerable contracting funds, we need a three pronged approach:

- 1) We need better data collection and tracking on what agencies and nonprofits are buying and how it is being prepared;
- 2) Agencies and vendors need information on what and how New York State products can be integrated into their meal programs; and
- 3) The Administration needs to clearly prioritize New York State purchasing to City agencies and vendors.

During one of my farm tours, a conversation between staff from New York State Ag and Markets and GrowNYC's Greenmarket Co. revealed that New York State Corrections facilities onion contract was being filled with a California state onion, even though New York grows an onion that fits the same requirements. The contract was amended and New York State farms

were able to compete and fill the bid. In the City we need a similar approach that involves a deep dive into contracts so that New York State farms can compete - or at the very least, not be ruled out.

As we know, in 2011 the Council passed a package of bills aimed at expanding local food purchasing, including Local Laws 50 and 52. The bill I introduced, Local Law 50 of 2011, encourages City agencies and vendors to purchase food grown or produced in New York State by establishing tools of procurement including a price preference within 10% of the lowest responsible bidder, a mandate that particular products come from New York State, and "best value" provisions that ensure freshness by limiting the length of time between harvest and delivery.

Credit is due to agencies like the Department of Citywide Administrative Services, the New York City Department of Education as well as nonprofits like Lenox Hill Neighborhood House for their attention to buying New York State products. But much more can be done. Local Law 50 requires the City's Chief Procurement Officer to provide an annual report of the efforts during the preceding fiscal year to implement the City guidelines for the purchase of New York State food. The goal is to gather and make data available to better understand the City's purchase practices.

According to the Fiscal Year 2017 Local Law 50 report, only 59 vendors from across the five boroughs were sent surveys, of which only 11 responded. As per the Fiscal Year 2018 report, 66 vendors were sent surveys and only 3 responded. And as noted in the Fiscal Year 2019 report, 97 vendors were sent surveys and 9 responded. The limited pool of vendors surveyed along with the abysmal response rate creates an immense information gap that contributes to an incomplete understanding of the successes, opportunities and challenges that persist in increasing procurement of locally grown and produced products.

It should be noted that the data issues may be further complicated by vendors not being required to respond to the survey. I'm encouraged by conversations between MOCS and the other agencies to integrate the survey questions into PASSPORT, making it part of the standardized contracting process. Beyond the current requested sourcing data, it would also be invaluable to have a deeper understanding of how each agency or nonprofit vendor prepares and serves meals, the equipment used, staff hours spent per meal and portion on a daily/weekly basis, and its needs for raw, as well as partially and super processed foods. Agencies that have the infrastructure to prepare scratch cooked meals have different needs than agencies that require specifications like identical chicken portions for the City Department of Correction. More information would help procurement officers find flexibility within bids and identify New York State farms that are able to meet the contract needs. This information will also be helpful to identify gaps in processing jobs and facilities.

The report response rate also begs the question if nonprofit vendors have enough information to identify their locally sourced items. GrowNYC's Greenmarket Co. can easily demonstrate where their products come from, but is this information as readily available from some of the larger companies from which so many vendors order? City agencies should develop resources to help vendors identify New York State products. For example, New York State dairy farms produce quality, standardized, consistent items including butter, yogurt, milk, cottage cheese and many

popular cheeses (perhaps with the exception of brie). A helpful resource would include a list of these items produced by New York State, identified by company name and the product sizes that are commonly ordered.

From early childhood and homeless programs to schools and senior centers, we are spending millions of dollars on food purchases but not enough is being invested in our local farms and communities. New York State is a leading producer of products including dairy, beef, apples, cabbage, onions, squash and potatoes. So why shouldn't our money be spent here?

Last October, I participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) Food Expo which seeks to engage food vendors, prospective food vendors, agencies that purchase food, non-profit vendors, and pseudo-City agencies that play a role in food purchasing. I was excited to learn from DCAS that every apple and onion they purchase is from New York State and I'm encouraged by their procurement team's dedication to identifying the availability and market of additional New York State items to be mandated for procurement beyond the 10% price difference.

At the Expo I met Wendy Oakes Wilson and her teenage son from LynOaken Farms in Medina, New York. We order her terrific apple varieties for our Fresh Food for Seniors local fruit and vegetable program.

I tasted New York State yogurts (including some from a tub fitted with a pump for easy serving), grab-and-go baked goods, and delicious sweet potato pie from G&K Sweet Food, an MWBE bakery. I also sampled flake or rather fake potatoes that I was assured were real (once). According to New York State Ag and Markets, potatoes are one of New York State's top 10 agricultural products, plus they are available all year round and don't require refrigeration. Yet why are agencies and vendors requesting "just add water" potatoes? Does it seem easier or is it that they can't be cooked on site? This goes back to the need for more information and also a plan on how to do better together.

To the credit of Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez, the impending redesign of the Department for the Aging's (DFTA) Home Delivered Meal and Senior Center Nutrition Programs is another excellent opportunity to increase older adult access to fresh, locally sourced, and sustainable foods. This past May, my office convened a meeting of Manhattan senior center food services staff with DFTA, GrowNYC and Lenox Hill Neighborhood House to discuss the various possibilities and challenges to integrating local produce into their congregate meal programs. Despite my office working with DFTA and GrowNYC over six years ago to ensure that senior centers could swap local, seasonally available produce into their pre-submitted menus, senior center food service staff said that they still encountered difficulty implementing healthier menu changes or obtaining produce swapping approval from DFTA nutritional staff. Additional barriers, like insufficient funding for kitchen equipment and food service workers should also be addressed in the upcoming RFP in consultation with staff from Lenox Hill, whose *Teaching Kitchen* has significantly transformed food programs at over 100 participating nonprofits to include more fresh, healthy and local food through their daylong training and invaluable technical assistance.

Transportation from the New York State farms is also a critical issue. We are all waiting for the GrowNYC Food Hub at Hunt's Point to be completed in the next two years.

Finally, Local Law 50 is only as helpful as the Administration's directive to agencies and vendors that buying from New York State farms is a New York City priority. To her credit and the Administration's, Kate MacKenzie, new head of the Mayor's Office of Food Policy, is partnering with city agencies on implementing the good food purchasing program standards starting with a baseline assessment. This information will provide a valuable tool in shaping the path forward, but more is needed on product mandates, education, regional planning, contract scrutiny and investment across all agencies to expand New Yorkers' access to healthy, fresh, and locally sourced foods that also deliver environmental and economic benefits to those living both downstate and upstate.

Thank you for your time.



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Testimony prepared for the  
**Committee on Contracts**

**Oversight Hearing - Food Procurement**  
January 14, 2020

On behalf of  
**Food Bank For New York City**

Good afternoon, Chair Kallos and members of the Contracts Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding Local Food Procurement. My name is Lauren Phillips and I am Government Relations Manager for the Food Bank For New York City.

Food Bank For New York City serves 58 million free meals to roughly 1.6 million food insecure New Yorkers each year. Food Bank relies on the generous support and partnerships with City, State and Federal government to make this service possible. As the recipient of donated food and a critical food distribution partner to New York City, the emergency food network works to serve community need in the face of limited resources and available capacity.

We are proud to work closely with the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) to help provide meals across the City. Our partnership with DYCD provides resources for more than 200 food pantries supported by members of the New York City Council through the Food Pantries Initiative. Thanks to the vocal support and leadership of this Council, DYCD is also our chief partner in supporting 25 pantries on campus at public K-12 schools across all five boroughs. Our partnership with HRA makes it possible for Food Bank to distribute shelf stable and frozen food items through New York City Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), which is a cornerstone of supply for more than 500 emergency food programs across New York. We are grateful for those relationships and the ongoing support for these initiatives from the members of the City Council.



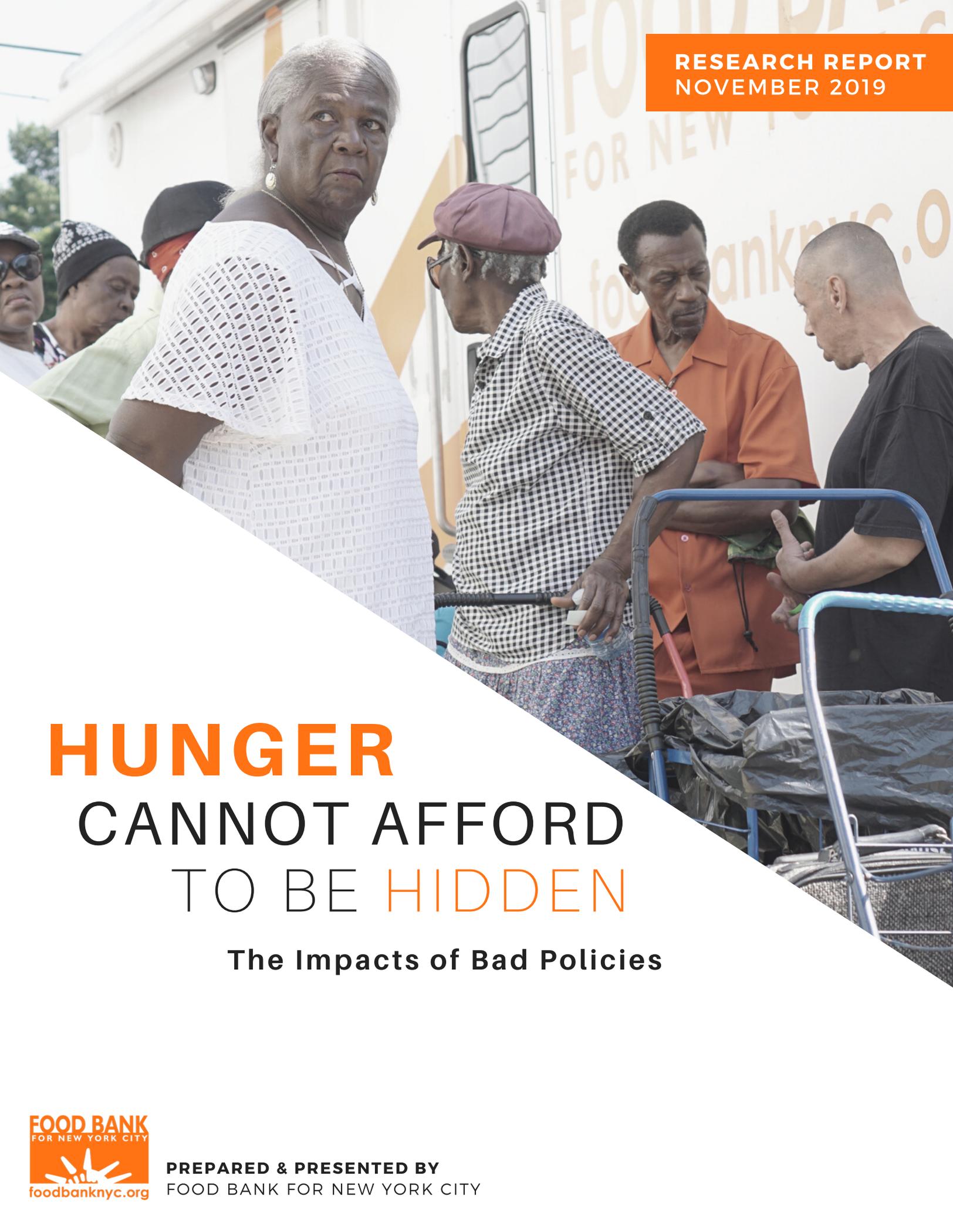
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For low income New Yorkers, the need for food resource is persistent. For many, the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the most flexible and efficient resource for food assistance, as it provides benefit that can be used a grocery stores across the city. However, recent federal policy changes to SNAP threaten to cut or strip away this assistance, in turn threatening the food security of more of our neighbors. When SNAP is insufficient or unavailable, households turn to emergency food providers. Food Bank's most recent survey of our network shows that with current supply, 60% of our member food pantries and soup kitchens report running out of food at least once per month. 36% of our network report they are forced to ration food; and nearly 75% of members report needing more fresh produce, meat, poultry, and fish in order to serve those on their lines. Emergency food providers are running out of the types of food that their clients need the most. These items - including perishable food like produce and protein - are also often the most expensive for households to purchase with available resources.

Many food pantries utilize the "client choice" food distribution model that both maximizes resource efficiency and provides dignity for community members who are able to choose items most appropriate for themselves and their family. Expanding choice allows for more culturally competent food distribution and accommodates nutritional needs and individual preferences of families that visit food pantries. For emergency food providers and for Food Bank For New York City, expanding choice also requires flexibility for procurement and investment of resources and technology to facilitate safe storage, transportation and distribution.

We are grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with the City in our efforts to end hunger. We encourage the City to continue to invest in emergency food partners to support choice for healthful, culturally relevant, and tasty food items. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.



RESEARCH REPORT  
NOVEMBER 2019

# HUNGER CANNOT AFFORD TO BE HIDDEN

The Impacts of Bad Policies

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## Acknowledgements

Food Bank For New York City thanks its members for the time and effort they devoted to participating in this research, and for the work they do every day to meet their neighbors' needs.

## Prepared By

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## OVERVIEW

In the past 12 months, New Yorkers have witnessed uncertainty in our nation such as few have experienced in their lifetimes. This uncertainty is far-reaching, but **too often, the experience of low- income people is overshadowed by political headlines** that miss the impact policies can have in exacerbating or alleviating hunger in our country.

The year 2019 began in the midst of the longest government shutdown in U.S. history. In an attempt to mitigate the disruption, low-income individuals and families who rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – including more than 1.5 million New Yorkers – received their February benefits early, in mid-January. Because monthly SNAP benefits supply, on average, only about two weeks' worth of food for most households, in New York City, the consequence of this early disbursement was a **"SNAP Gap"** – where recipients were forced to stretch this early disbursement over a much longer four-to-six-week time period.<sup>1</sup> Of the 800,000 federal workers and contractors left without income, 18,000 furloughed New Yorkers found themselves exposed to new vulnerabilities. Many were introduced to the city's emergency food network of food pantries and soup kitchens, some for the first time.

For New Yorkers already struggling to make ends meet, the shutdown put a spotlight on what being **financially vulnerable** means in America. When the shutdown began, New Yorkers who rely on SNAP to purchase groceries had already lost **\$1 billion in SNAP benefits**, equivalent to more than 283 million meals, due to the Hunger Cliff – an unprecedented across-the-board SNAP reduction that took effect in November 2013.<sup>2</sup> Over the same time period, even as unemployment rates have fallen, wage growth has not kept pace with cost of living. Recent research indicates that most economic growth is only felt among top earners, and in fact, the reduction in buying power caused by inflation amplifies economic inequity for low income households – pushing an additional 3 million people into poverty.<sup>3</sup> **Dollars for food simply are not going as far at the grocery store**, and when household resources and public benefits are not enough, 1.4 million New Yorkers rely on local food pantries and soup kitchens as the last line of defense against hunger.

As 2019 draws to a close, uncertainty for the *next* 12 months has grown, as low-income people face not only renewed threats of government shutdowns, but a **coordinated attack on SNAP, the core of our national food security net**. The charitable network has continued to serve in the face of these attacks, but this most recent survey of our network of emergency food providers sheds light on how the current economic and political climate is impacting New Yorkers in need and **illuminates hunger as a core issue that cannot afford to be hidden**.

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<sup>1</sup> Food Bank For New York City analysis of [NYS OTDA Caseload Statistics](#).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> [The Costs of Being Poor](#), Center on Poverty & Social Policy, 2018.

## New Threats to SNAP Emerge

SNAP is the first line of defense against hunger for more than 36 million (36,029,506) low-income U.S. residents.<sup>4</sup> As a federal entitlement program, SNAP helps put food on the table for nearly one in five of all New York City residents – 1.5 million (1,523,502).<sup>5</sup> New York City residents make up more than half (58 percent) of all New Yorkers participating in SNAP.<sup>6</sup> SNAP is effective and efficient, and it is counter-cyclical, meaning it has the flexibility to grow to meet rising economic need.

Despite SNAP's effectiveness, the current Administration in Washington D.C. has set forth a concerted strategy to unravel the safety net that works to prevent hunger in America. These tactics to dismantle public assistance programs hide behind bureaucratic rule changes that hinder public attention and discourse. The proposed rule changes explicitly contradict the values and priorities set out by Congress when a bi-partisan Farm Bill was passed in late 2018. Furthermore, the proposals interfere with the structure, eligibility and benefit levels for SNAP, and would make it more difficult for those trying to become self-sufficient by denying them food, housing and other assistance when they need it most. Some of these proposals include:

- **Stripping assistance from unemployed people:** A proposal to strip states' flexibility to allow for continued benefits for **Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD)** who are struggling to find consistent work at times of high unemployment and low job availability. Imposing harsh time limits would jeopardize the food stability of more than 755,000 low-income households nationally – cutting SNAP benefits by \$15 billion over 10 years – and disproportionately impact people of color.<sup>7</sup> Targeted households already have very few resources, averaging an income of \$557 per month. In fact, 88% of households that would be subject to this rule have incomes at or below just 50% of the federal poverty limit.<sup>8</sup>
- **Changing the federal definition of poverty:** A proposal to recalculate the federal poverty threshold by changing the measure of increasing cost of living (the consumer price index, or CPI). Eligibility for many public assistance programs, including SNAP, is established by this threshold – but research indicates that the current federal poverty line (\$20,780 for a family of three) is already far less than what a family needs to make end meet.<sup>9</sup> This proposal would cause millions to experience a reduction or loss in public benefits over time.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [United States Department of Agriculture](#), September 2019.

<sup>5</sup> [New York City Human Resources Administration](#), June 2019.

<sup>6</sup> [New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance](#), August 2019.

<sup>7</sup> [Comments in Opposition to Proposed Rule Change to ABAWD Time Limits](#), Empire Justice Center, April 2019.

<sup>8</sup> [Proposed Change to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#), Mathematica, May 2019.

<sup>9</sup> [Overlooked & Undercounted](#) 2018.

<sup>10</sup> [Poverty Line Proposal Would Cut Medicaid, Medicare, and Premium Tax Credits, Causing Millions to Lose or See Reduced Benefits Over Time](#), The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, May 2019.

- **Eliminating SNAP eligibility for 3.1 million people:** Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (Cat-El) streamlines enrollment in federal need-based programs by conferring eligibility in one (for example, SNAP) when one qualifies for the other (such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). This simplifies complex enrollment processes for both recipients and administrative agencies. The Trump Administration has proposed to remove much of this streamlining, resulting in the loss of SNAP benefits for an estimated 3.1 million people across the U.S., **including more than 200,000 participants in New York City alone.**<sup>11</sup> The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates also show that 982,000 children across the US would lose automatic eligibility for free school meals.<sup>12</sup> In New York City, this change would undermine the Department of Education’s ability to continue offering universal free school meals, since it would reduce the amount of federal funding available for the school lunch program.
- **Removing regional price variations in utility cost calculations for benefits:** A proposal to eliminate Standard Utility Allowance flexibility, which lets states assess regional utility costs when establishing a household’s expenses. The amount that a household receives in monthly SNAP benefits is based on a calculation that accounts for how much is spent on basic needs, like shelter and medical care. This proposal would impose a "one-size-fits-all" allowance for utilities across the country, and have harmful consequences in states like New York where costs of living are particularly high. In New York, this proposed rule would result in approximately 450,000 SNAP households, or one in three, losing an average of \$63 per month in benefits – or **a loss of about 9 million meals across the state every month.**<sup>13</sup>

### Public Charge: A Case Study in Targeted Intimidation

Unfortunately, these proposals are not the only attempts under the current Administration to undermine SNAP assistance for people in America. In early 2017, media began reporting on leaked copies of a draft proposed rule by the Trump Administration to make it easier for officials to deny entry to immigrants who are not wealthy. This rule would add the use of SNAP, Medicaid, and other public benefits to the list of programs that would injure an immigrant’s application for legal permanent residence, or a “green card”.

By December 2018, the proposal garnered more than 250,000 public comments. Despite the public outcry, the rule was formally published, and was immediately challenged in court by multiple states, including New York. In mid-October 2019, in response to these lawsuits, an

<sup>11</sup> [State-by-State Impact of Proposed Changes to "Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility" in SNAP](#), Mathematica.

<sup>12</sup> [Proposed Rule: Revision of Categorical Eligibility in the SNAP](#), USDA, July 2019.

<sup>13</sup> [Impact Analysis Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Standardization of State Heating and Cooling Standard Utility Allowances](#), USDA. The calculation of meals lost is based on the average cost of a meal in New York State (\$3.14), from [Map the Meal Gap](#), Feeding America, 2019.

order issued by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York blocked the regulation from taking effect nationwide. Similar temporary injunctions came down in California and Washington.

Despite this temporary stoppage, **the chilling impact of this rule is already being felt.** New York City's Human Resources Administration (HRA) has indicated that immigrant New Yorkers are already avoiding SNAP.<sup>14</sup> HRA has estimated 304,000 New York City residents, including U.S. citizens and green card holders who would *not* be subject to a public charge test, could be discouraged from participation in crucial public benefits.<sup>15</sup> A new study from the Kaiser Family Foundation has found that nearly half of community health centers report that immigrant patients declined to enroll themselves in Medicaid in the past year.<sup>16</sup> Urban Institute research indicates that 1 in 7 adults in immigrant families avoided public benefits in 2018.<sup>17</sup> While the public charge rule change is not being implemented – and may never be – **it succeeded in instilling enough fear among people to avoid assistance for which they were eligible, and set off a ripple effect that has significantly impacted how the emergency food network serves New Yorkers in need.**

## METHODOLOGY

To generate survey findings, an online survey was sent to all active food pantries and soup kitchens for which Food Bank For New York City had an email contact (a total of 700), followed by a phone call interview to non-respondents. The survey responses were collected during the first two weeks of October 2019 to account for timeliness of the responses. After rejection of duplicated, outlying, and incomplete responses, a total of 259 completed surveys from 210 food pantries and 49 soup kitchens (proportionate to the composition of Food Bank's current active membership) made up the sample for analysis. The confidence level for all top-line survey results is at 95 percent, with a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points. Findings for subsets of the data have a wider margin of error and should not be assumed to have the same significance.

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<sup>14</sup> [Expanding Public Charge Inadmissibility: The Impact on Immigrants, Households, and the City of New York](#), New York City Department of Social Services, December 2018.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> [Impact of Shifting Immigration Policy on Medicaid Enrollment and Utilization of Care among Health Center Patients](#), KFF, October 2019.

<sup>17</sup> [With Public Charge Rule Looming, One in Seven Adults in Immigrant Families Reported Avoiding Public Benefit Programs in 2018](#), Urban Institute, May 2019.

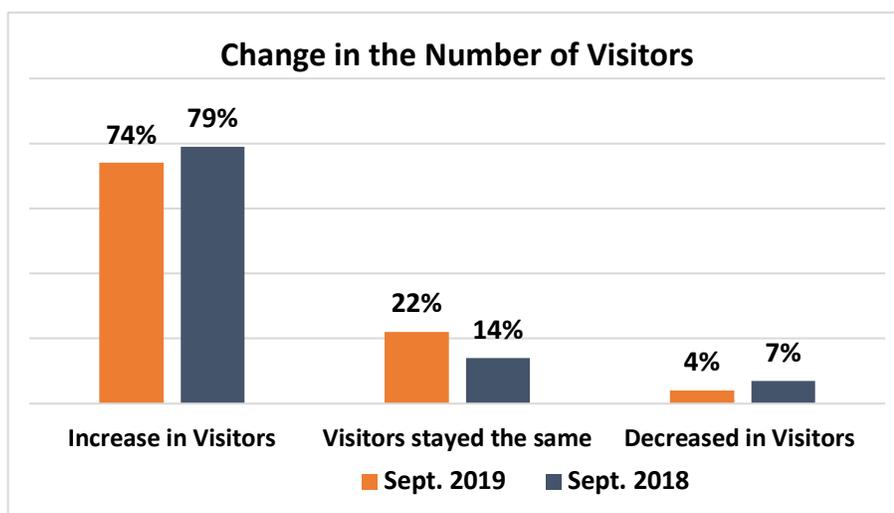
## KEY FINDINGS: EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS AS SAFETY NET

Food Bank For New York City's most recent survey of the emergency network paints a clearer picture of hunger being fought at the frontlines at community-based organizations. Through the lens of this service, our network of **community-based food pantries and soup kitchens is raising significant concerns about policy proposals that undermine public assistance programs.** This research shows that charities are already serving under stress and that **visitors of emergency food programs are increasingly anxious** about the future of their food security.

### Emergency Food Providers Are Seeing a Growing Number of Guests from Vulnerable Populations

Investigating the experience of community-based providers and assessing community need through the emergency food lens clarifies the impact proposals that threaten SNAP will have on those who are economically vulnerable. The visitors to emergency food programs include SNAP recipients whose benefits are often exhausted before the end of the month – particularly in New York City, where food costs are 26 percent higher than the national average.<sup>18</sup> SNAP provides an average benefit of only \$146 per person, equivalent to just one meal per day for individuals.<sup>19</sup> Even before benefits were reduced due to the Hunger Cliff, 57 percent of SNAP recipient households in New York City were utilizing food pantries and soup kitchens to help keep food on the table.<sup>20</sup> The emergency food network continues to report increasing community demand.

**The demand for food is high:** Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of food pantries and soup kitchens reported an increase in the number of visitors during the last 12 months, compared to 79 percent for last year. This 5-percentage point drop from last year is not significant.

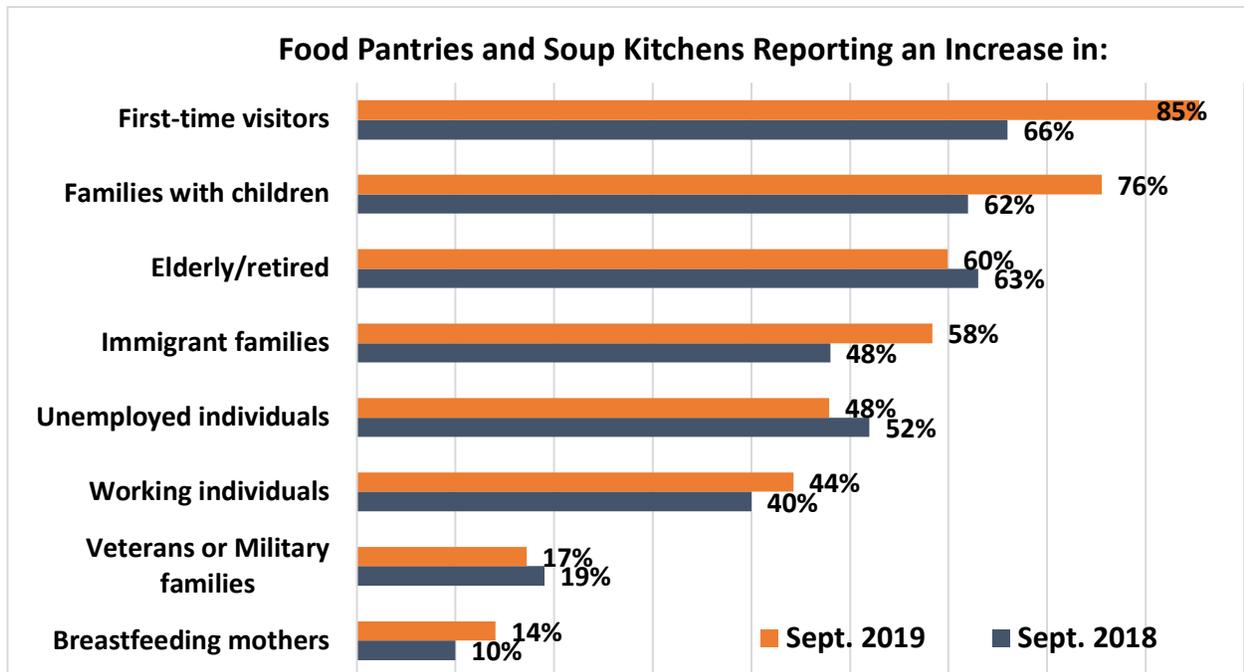


<sup>18</sup> [Map the Meal Gap](#), Feeding America, 2019.

<sup>19</sup> Food Bank For New York City analysis based on [NYS OTDA Caseload Statistics](#).

<sup>20</sup> [Hunger's New Normal](#), Food Bank For New York City, 2013.

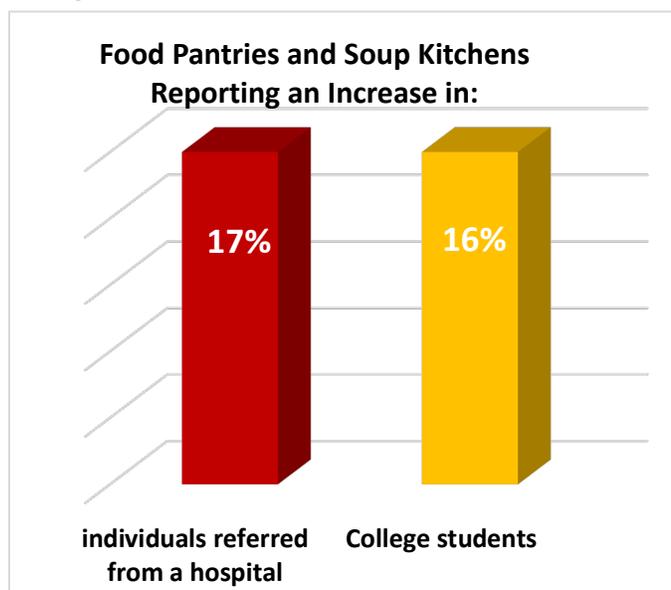
**Increased visitor snapshot:** The need for food at food pantries and soup kitchens appears to be driven by increases in specific populations seeking assistance – including families with children, the elderly, and immigrant families.



**A number of food pantries and soup kitchens also reported increases in college students and visitors referred from a hospital.** This newly collected data shows:

- Approximately one in six (17 percent) emergency food providers reported an increase in visitors referred from a hospital.
- Approximately one in six (16 percent) emergency food providers reported an increase in college students.

*(Because this is the first survey to collect this data, no comparison to 2018 is available.)*

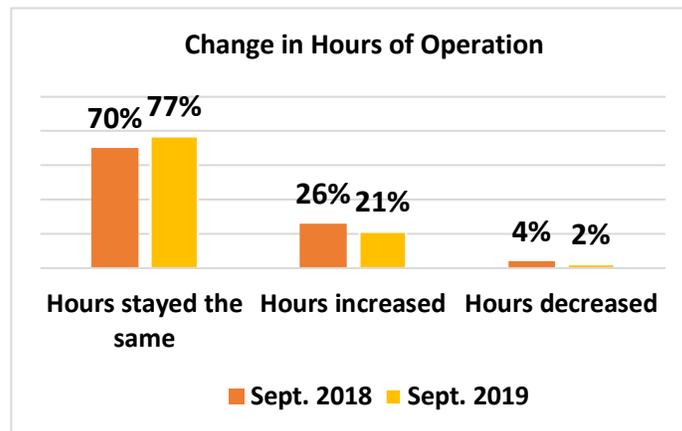


## Emergency Food Providers Are Serving in the Face of High Need

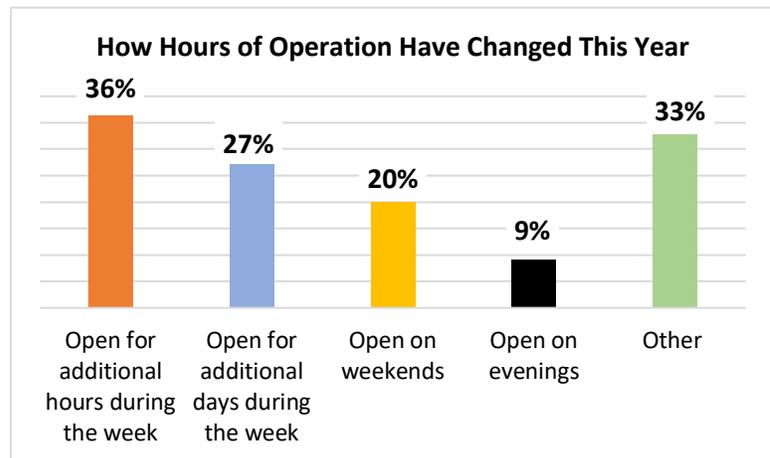
When SNAP is insufficient or unavailable, emergency food providers are the last resource to prevent hunger. Ongoing non-negotiable expenses like rent, healthcare, transportation, and school costs shortchange food budgets – forcing families to attempt the impossible math of prioritizing essential needs.

Emergency food providers – frequently hosted at faith-based organizations – may offer food as only one of a variety of services. Food need is ongoing, which allows food service organizations regular community connection and facilitates providing access and referrals to additional services. For those guests unable to access public benefits, the services from community organizations are the **only** social safety net. Community need has necessitated that charities develop strategies to cope with both the variety and volume of needs they are facing.

**Emergency Food Programs are still stretching their hours of operation to cope with the increase in visitors:** More than one in five (21 percent) emergency food programs reported increasing their total hours of operation during the last 12 months, compared to 26 percent the previous year.

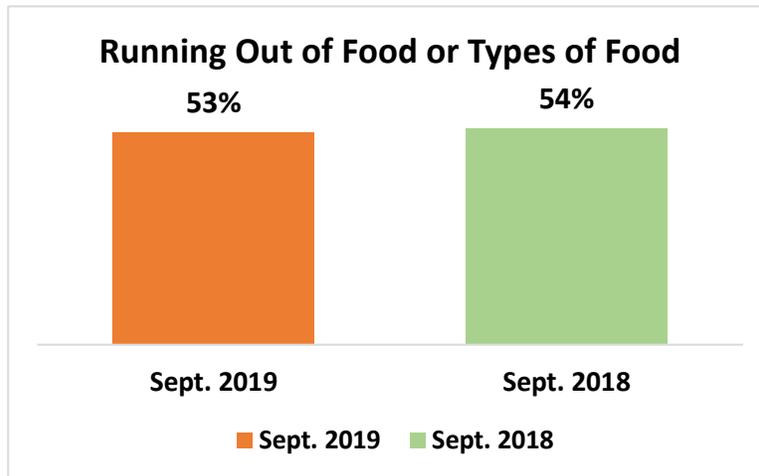


The graph to the right shows the most common changes food pantries and soup kitchens have made to their hours of operation over the past year. Note that percentages total more than 100 percent because respondents were allowed to select all applicable choices.



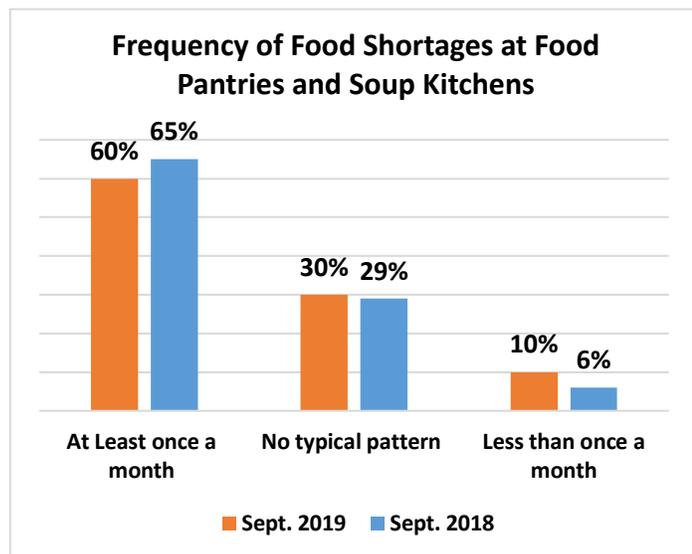
## Emergency Food Service Is Strained by Supply and Capacity

Many food pantries and soup kitchens report the need for additional food and non-food resources to serve people already visiting their doors. More than half (53 percent) of emergency food programs reported running out of food, or particular types of food, required to make adequate pantry bags or meals during the last 12 months – virtually unchanged from the 54 percent reporting food shortages last year. Among those, nearly half report experiencing food shortages several times per month or more frequently.



### Of the emergency food programs reporting running out of food:

- Nearly two-thirds (60 percent) reported experiencing food shortages at least once a month, compared to 65 percent last year.
- 30 percent reported experiencing shortages of food in no typical pattern, essentially unchanged from last year's 29 percent.
- 10 percent reported experiencing food shortages less than once a month, compared to 6 percent last year.

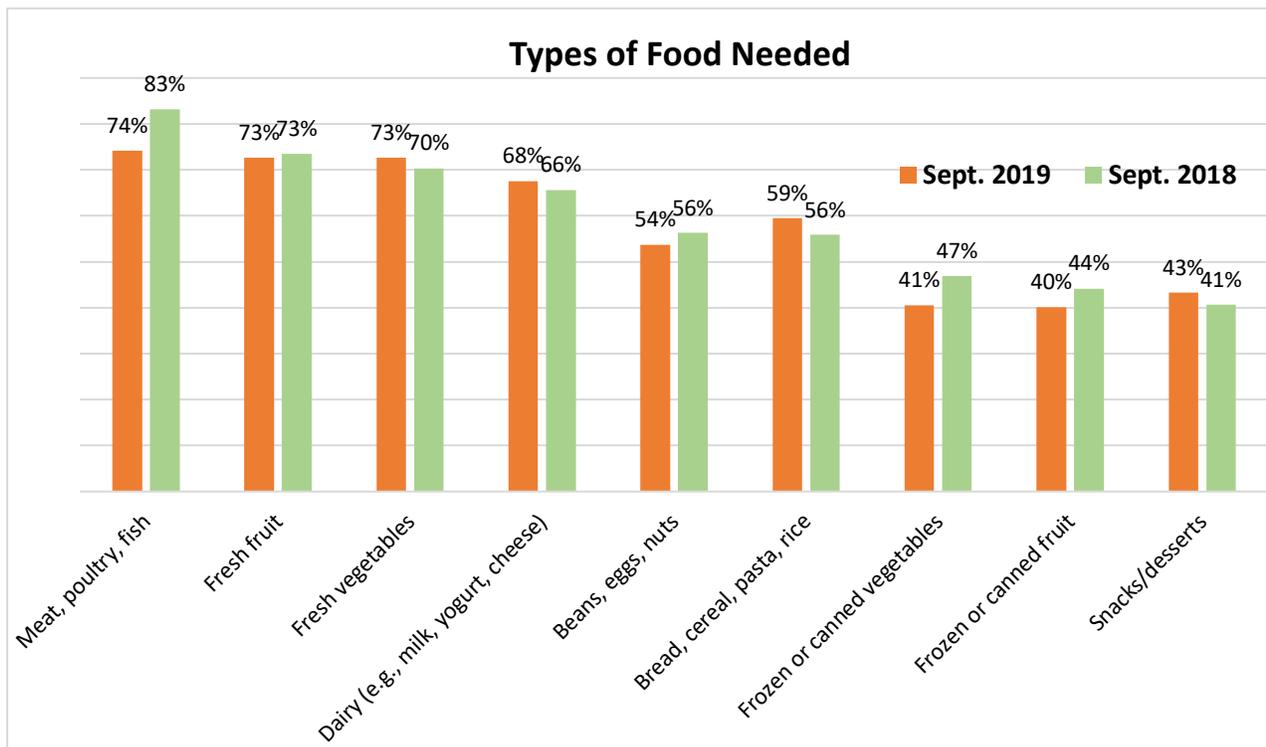


## Types of Food Needed

- 74 percent of emergency food programs reported wanting more meat, poultry and fish, compared to 83 percent reported last year – a 10.8 percent decrease.
- 41 percent of emergency food programs reported wanting more frozen or canned vegetables, compared to 47 percent that reported last year.

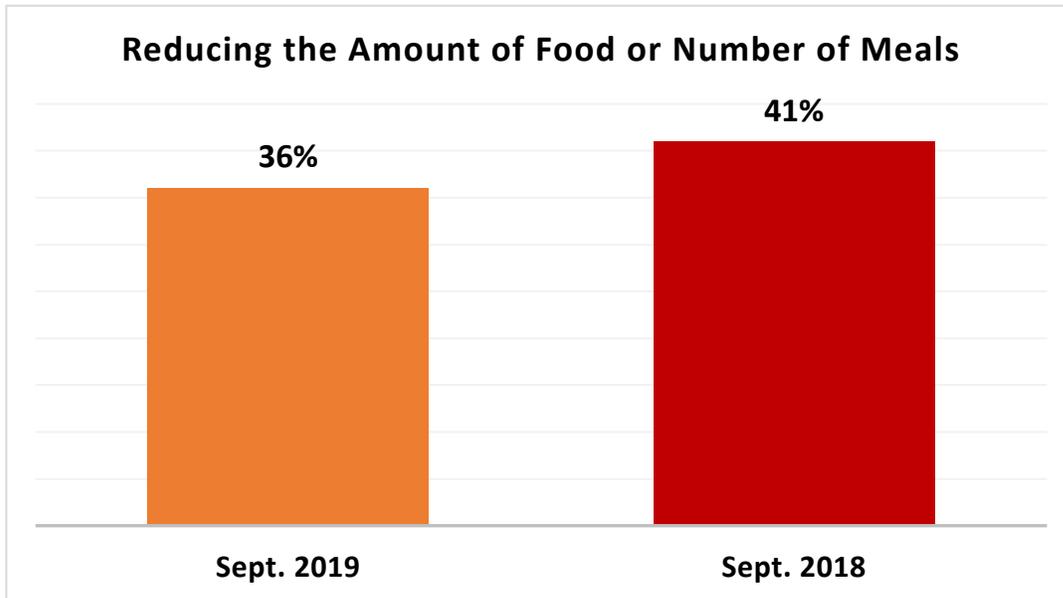
Regarding demand from emergency food programs for other types of food, survey responses this year were consistent with last year's, as follow:

- 73 percent reported wanting more fresh fruit, which was identical to last year's percentage (73 percent).
- 73 reported wanting more fresh vegetables, compared to 70 percent that reported last year – a 4.3 percent increase.
- 68 percent reported wanting more dairy (e.g., milk, yogurt, cheese), compared to 66 percent that reported last year – a 3 percent increase.
- 59 percent reported wanting more bread, cereal, pasta, rice, compared to 56 percent that reported last year – a 5 percent increase.
- 54 percent reported wanting more beans, eggs, and nuts, compared to 56 percent that reported last year – a 10.8 percent decrease.
- 40 percent reported wanting more frozen or canned fruit, compared to 44 percent that reported last year.



## More Food Resources Reduce Food Shortages

While many charities continue to report food shortages, fewer emergency food programs than last year reported reducing the amount of food they provide. More than a third (36 percent) of food pantries reported reducing the amount of food or number of meals their pantry bag provides due to food shortages, compared to 41 percent that reported this kind of rationing last year.

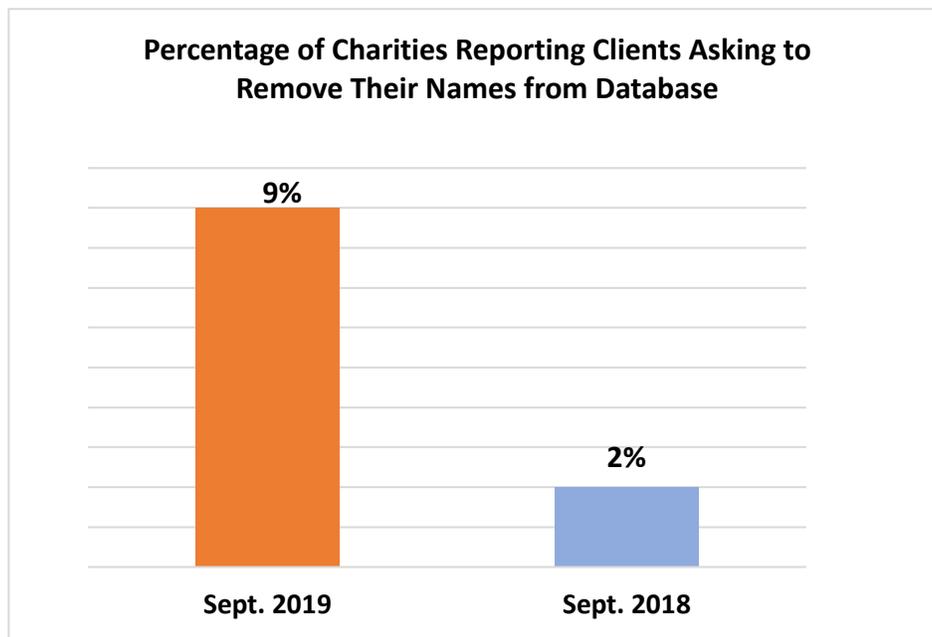


***The decrease in the number of food pantries and soup kitchens reporting reducing the amount of food may be attributable to the increases in the emergency food supply over the past year, most notably the considerable increase in federal commodities through trade mitigation.***

When food supply is available, the emergency food network is able to serve more people in need. However, untimely product supplied by trade mitigation is an unpredictable source of food.

## Emergency Food Visitors Cope with Fear and Threats to Nutrition Assistance: Immigrant Community at Risk of Hunger

Food pantries and soup kitchens continue to serve immigrant families, but fear stoked by anti-immigrant policies are deterring some from seeking needed assistance. Nearly one in ten (9 percent) emergency food providers reported that their visitors asked to remove their names from their contact list or database, compared to 2 percent that reported last year. This is a significant increase from last year.

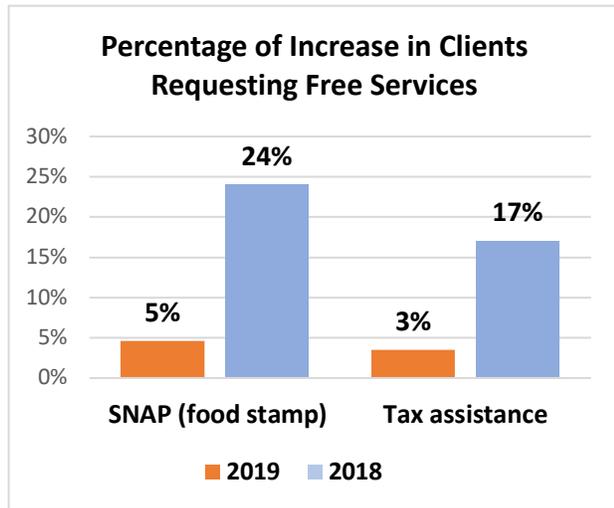


The most common reasons emergency food providers reported that clients asked for their names to be removed were **fear of affecting immigration status, fear of deportation, or more general privacy concerns**. Clients who have requested to be removed from the records expressed that they would rather go without food than risk a path to citizenship in the future and/or possible deportation.

Not only have charities experienced clients requesting to be removed from their emergency food program membership, they have also seen an increase in clients who have given up their public benefits.

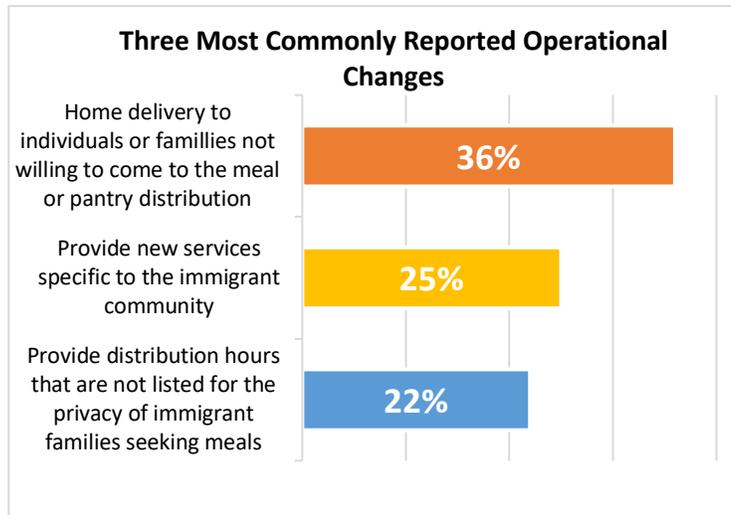
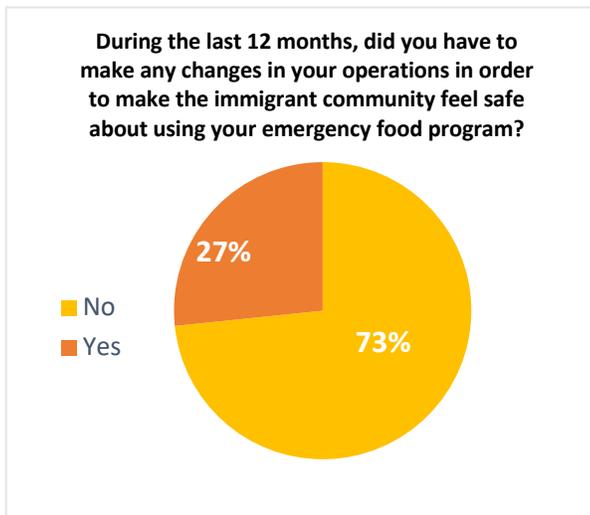
**Fewer food pantries and soup kitchens are reporting increases in requests for public benefits or other free services from immigrants.**

- 5 percent of emergency food programs reported an increase in the number of immigrants requesting SNAP (food Stamps) assistance from October 2018 to October 2019. This is significantly lower than the 24 percent of programs that reported an increase in the number of immigrants requesting the same service between this year and last.
- 3 percent of emergency food programs reported an increase in immigrants requesting free tax assistance from this year. This is significantly lower than the 17 percent of programs that reported an increase in the number of immigrants requesting free tax assistance last year.



We have heard from food pantries and soup kitchens that undocumented parents who are receiving SNAP benefits on behalf of their U.S. citizen children are now requesting to disenroll from SNAP because they fear it will increase their chances of being identified by Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE). **Even more significant and heartbreaking, food pantries and soup kitchens have received requests to help clients develop a plan for guardianship of their children in the event of their deportation.**

**Response of the emergency food programs:** More than one in four (27 percent) emergency food programs reported making some changes in their operations in order to make the immigrant community feel safe about using their services during the last 12 months:



## SERVICE ON THE FRONTLINES

Bethania Perkins was 12 years old when she and her family left their hometown of Cienfuegos, Dominican Republic, for New York City to seek the American Dream. Leaving family and friends was difficult, but for her parents, who were low-income, struggling to make ends meet was doubly hard – they had to be creative. Bethania remembers being sent to summer camp just so that she could eat the meals they served, helping relieve some of the pressure of putting food on the table for her family.

Years later, Bethania would become the first in her family to graduate from college. Wanting to give back to the Dominican Republic, she founded a social service organization in her childhood home of Cienfuegos. By 2014, Bethania was struck by the stark reality that although the need of her neighbors looked different in her Queens community, it was still as pervasive as in Cienfuegos. So, she expanded her social services organization to her own backyard in Astoria and named it in honor of her hometown, **Cienfuegos Foundation**. “I saw people in my community juggling challenges,” said Bethania. “If someone drops one of those balls, it’s hard to pick it back up – unless someone is there to help you.”

Today, **Cienfuegos Foundation** works to make sure people can manage competing priorities – from rent and childcare, to education and immigration. In addition to the food pantry, their services include providing winter clothes, financial empowerment, and workshops on mental health, domestic violence, and recently, immigrant rights.

“One of our food pantry guests who has a green card told me he didn’t want to seek food stamps,” Bethania shared with us earlier this fall. “He was afraid how it might impact his status.” This experience is part of an alarming trend that has Bethania worried: some community members are avoiding public assistance out of fear from reported arrests and detentions by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Further, growing misinformation about the public charge rule was making people forego benefits for which they already qualify.

**Cienfuegos** took action, developing an **Advisory Program** to help community members understand their rights and better navigate the complexity of immigration policy and process. “People initially come to us for food, but we all need more than a meal. More than ever, we have to educate people about their rights so they’re less afraid,” said Bethania.

Food Bank For New York City is proud to work with many partners like the **Cienfuegos Foundation**. Food pantries and soup kitchens often serve as hubs for community engagement across New York City and become trusted places, where food, information and stories are shared. As Bethania looks to the future, she says “I want to help provide comprehensive immigration assistance – I want people to experience the support that got me here today.”

## NEW YORK CITY IMMIGRANTS PROFILE<sup>21</sup>

Approximately 3.2 million, or more than a third, of all New York City residents are foreign-born. Nearly one in five New Yorkers (over 1.4 million) are non-U.S. Citizen.<sup>22</sup> This does not include the U.S.-born children of immigrants who share in the struggles experienced disproportionately by immigrant families.

**Contrary to common beliefs, nearly half of immigrant New Yorkers age 25 years or older have graduated from college or have attended some college.** More than 42 percent of non-U.S. Citizens New Yorkers have some higher education:

- More than 1 in 4 (27.8 percent) have a bachelor's degree or higher and,
- 14.6 percent have some college education.

**Foreign-born workers make up 45% of New York City's labor force and contribute significantly to the city's economic health and vitality. Immigrants own 52 percent of New York City's businesses.** In 2017, immigrants contributed \$195 billion, or about 22 percent, to the city's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

**Despite their contribution, the immigrant community is also vulnerable.** Half of all immigrant workers are making minimum wage. The median earnings for all foreign-born New Yorkers is \$30,253. This is comparable to New York City's full-time minimum wage annual income.

- More than half non-U.S. citizen are making less than minimum wage. The median income among non-U.S. citizens is estimated at \$25,190, which is less than the total annual income of New York City minimum wage earners of \$31,200.

55.3 percent of all foreign-born residents are rent burdened, which is defined by the Census Bureau as spending 30% or more of household income on rent:

- 57.5 percent of non-U.S. citizens living in New York City are rent burdened.

About 22 percent of immigrant New Yorkers reside in over-crowded households, defined as more than one person per room:

- 28 percent of non-U.S. citizens living in New York City live in over-crowded households.

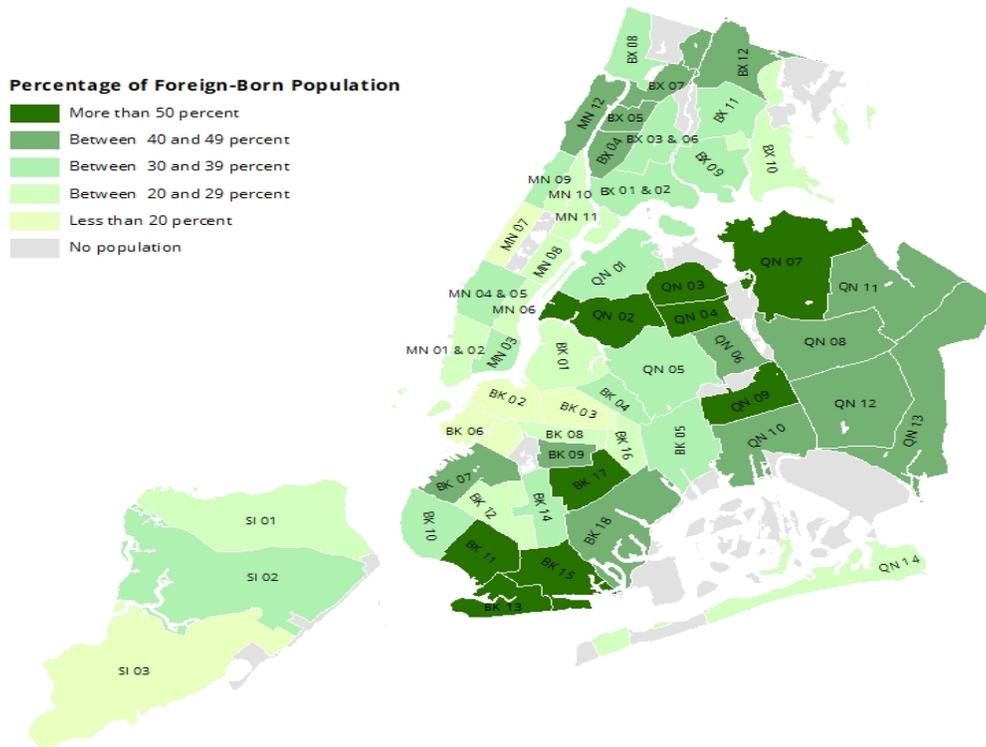
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<sup>21</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all data on immigrants profile is based on [State of Our Immigrant City](#), NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrants Affairs, March 2018

<sup>22</sup> 2017 American Community Survey. U.S. Census Bureau. 2018.

Maps provided below detail immigrants by community districts.

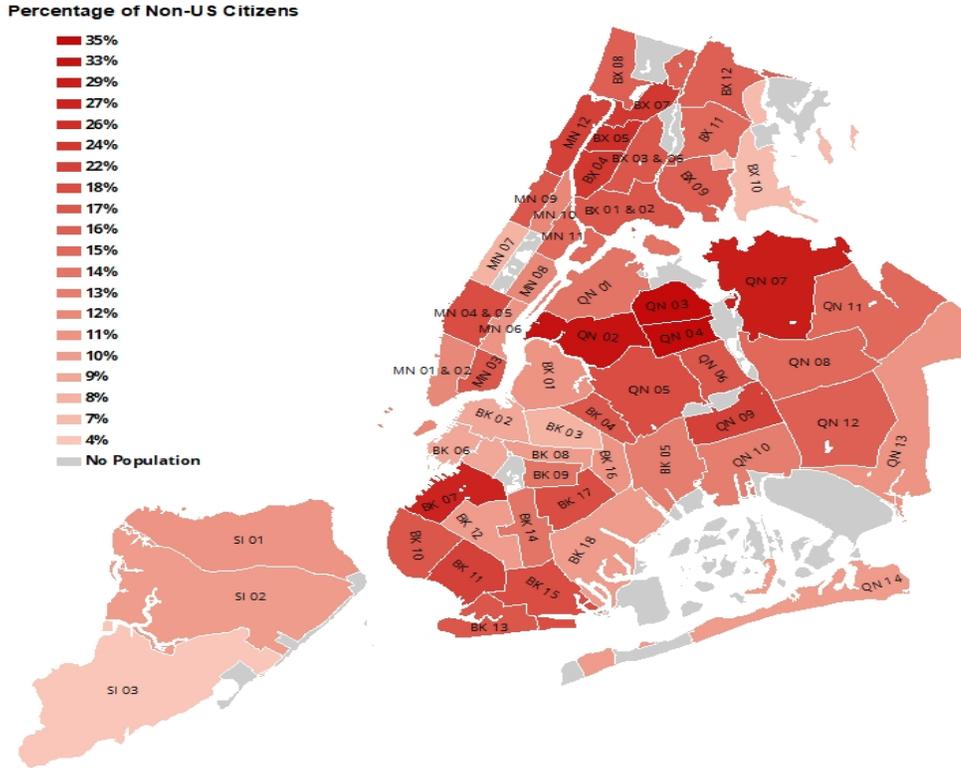
## Concentration of Foreign-born Population by Community Districts



### Top 10 Communities with Highest Concentration of Foreign-Born Population

Ranking	Community Districts	Neighborhoods	% Foreign-Born
1	QN 04	Elmhurst & South Corona	64%
2	QN 03	Jackson Heights & North Corona	60%
3	QN 07	Flushing, Murray Hill & Whitestone	59%
4	BK 11	Bensonhurst & Bath Beach	56%
5	QN 02	Flushing, Murray Hill & Whitestone	54%
6	QN 09	Richmond Hill & Woodhaven	54%
7	BK 13	Brighton Beach & Coney Island	52%
8	BK 17	East Flatbush, Farragut & Rugby	51%
9	BK 15	Sheepshead Bay, Gerritsen Beach & Homecrest	51%
10	QN 06	Forest Hills & Rego Park	48%

## Concentration of Non U.S. Citizen Population by Community Districts



### Top 10 Communities with Highest Concentration of Non-U.S. Citizens

Ranking	Community District	Neighborhoods	% Non-U.S. Citizen
1	QN 03	Jackson Heights & North Corona	35%
2	QN 04	Elmhurst & South Corona	35%
3	QN 02	Flushing, Murray Hill & Whitestone	33%
4	QN 07	Flushing, Murray Hill & Whitestone	29%
5	BK 07	Sunset Park & Windsor Terrace	27%
6	BX 05	Morris Heights, Fordham South & Mount Hope	26%
7	BX 04	Concourse, Highbridge & Mount Eden	24%
8	BX 07	Bedford Park, Fordham North & Norwood	24%
9	MN 12	Washington Heights, Inwood & Marble Hill	22%
10	QN 09	Richmond Hill & Woodhaven	22%

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS & OPPORTUNITIES

For people struggling with hunger, every meal counts. In New York City, where the cost of food is especially high, many families that receive assistance from federal nutrition assistance programs, like SNAP and school meals, also rely on meals provided by the emergency food network. **The charitable response to hunger cannot be a replacement for the national cornerstones of our anti-hunger policy.** Community organizations are empowering their visitors not only with nutrition, but also education and advocacy. Today, protecting community members from hunger means fighting against proposals that would make more people in our country hungrier, sicker and poorer. At the same time, policymakers have the opportunity to protect and strengthen policies that alleviate hunger. These policy priorities include:

### Stop Federal Policies That Attack SNAP

**One month of SNAP benefits provides more meals to New Yorkers in needs than the entire annual food distribution of Food Bank For New York City.** Policymakers must remain vigilant against continued administrative attacks on SNAP, and use every resource available to prevent harmful changes, including those outlined in this report.

### Ensure New York City and State Continue to Lead on Anti-Hunger Policy

Thanks to champions in New York City and Albany, New York has achieved important successes in the fight against hunger.

In January 2016, Governor Andrew Cuomo called on State government to implement the recommendations of the **NYS Anti-Hunger Task Force**, charged with identifying opportunities for New York State government to maximize its response to hunger. State officials should complete the implementation of the recommendations, while ensuring New Yorkers are protected from Federal Administrative actions that directly threaten New York's advancements. Current federal proposals to eliminate Broad Based Categorical Eligibility undermine NYS's progress that increased the gross income test and jeopardize child eligibility for school meals. Additional federal proposals that eliminate state's ability to assign Standard Utility Allowances undermine NYS's progress that raised the utility allowance.

In New York City, the current Administration has achieved notable gains, including investments in the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), implementation of Universal Free School Meals, and removing barriers to access SNAP.

City officials should also continue to advance initiatives within the NYC Council's **Food Equity Platform**, including improving food resources for seniors, raising awareness about Summer Meals, and calling on Albany to go further in expanding access to SNAP.

## Support a Strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization

Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) is the federal legislation that controls the national school meals program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), and other national nutrition programs for younger people. Congress should pass a CNR that improves on these programs without compromising other national hunger-fighting programs

While emergency food is certainly not a replacement for national anti-hunger programs, it must be strengthened to protect people from hunger when assistance is not sufficient to meet household nutrition needs. **It is essential that policymakers continue to invest in the direct service of the emergency food network**, including:

- **Investment in Food Resources**
  - Support the supply of produce and protein including meat, poultry and fish, fresh fruit and vegetables, and dairy (e.g., milk, yogurt, cheese).
  - To serve these more nutrition-dense foods, financial investment is needed for cold storage and safe distribution, as well as support for utility expenses to keep cold storage running.
- **Investment in Operational Resources**
  - Charities operating on limited budget need unrestricted funds to support to expanded service days, hours and home delivery.
  - As charities shift to alternative service models including home delivery, the need vehicles for transporting food given is growing.
  - As the number of soup kitchens across the city has declined, invest in mobile kitchens that can reach more people with hot meals.
- **Invest in Partnerships to Protect food security for immigrant families**
  - Proposed policies are creating fear and chilling participation in needed services. Trusted community-based organizations play a central role in educating community members to dispel misinformation through workshops and empowerment.
  - Leveraging this connection to expand the current work of community organizations that connect people to available resources, including SNAP. As participation in SNAP declines among eligible immigrant populations, providers must redouble efforts to ensure access to SNAP.
  - Community organizations need funds to support skilled staff that can address the varying needs of immigrant families seeking assistance.

## CONCLUSION

**The results of this survey raise alarm bells about the vulnerability of low-income New Yorkers when policies designed to deny participation in public assistance programs are advanced.** The current Administration in Washington D.C. is waging an attack on survival benefits that would take needed meals away from people lacking other means. As benefits become unavailable or insufficient, people quickly turn to emergency food providers. In turn, providers are forced not only to make up the difference in meals, but also adapt nimbly, and expand their services to meet the need where it lives.

As we have seen from proposals to change the public charge test for inadmissibility, exploiting the fears of vulnerable people by merely threatening a harmful policy can be enough to force people into the shadows – and put new demands on the emergency food network to adapt its services. When people aren't able to access food and other benefits, the damage is immediate: more families go hungry.

The pain of that hunger may be hidden in lunchrooms and dinner tables across the country. The findings in this report illuminate the urgent need to fight policies that target the poor and underscore the need to double-down on investments that strengthen our charitable network – those working tirelessly on the frontlines to prevent the poor from being pushed even deeper into the margins of our society.

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## Appendix

This section provides a look at some of the survey responses regarding changing visitor demographics, by community district. Note that because of sample size limitations, these findings do not meet the levels of statistical significance or representativeness that the survey findings elsewhere in the report do; readers should therefore take care not to draw broader inferences about community need from this data.

## Appendix A: Total Number of Survey Responses by Community District

Community Districts	Neighborhoods	Number of Survey Respondents
BK 01	Greenpoint & Williamsburg	4
BK 02	Brooklyn Heights & Fort Greene	1
BK 03	Bedford-Stuyvesant	18
BK 04	Bushwick	4
BK 05	East New York & Starrett City	12
BK 06	Park Slope, Carroll Gardens & Red Hook	1
BK 07	Sunset Park & Windsor Terrace	1
BK 08	Crown Heights North & Prospect Heights	7
BK 09	Crown Heights South, Prospect Lefferts & Wingate	2
BK 10	Bay Ridge & Dyker Heights	1
BK 11	Bensonhurst & Bath Beach	1
BK 12	Borough Park, Kensington & Ocean Parkway	1
BK 13	Brighton Beach & Coney Island	0
BK 14	Flatbush & Midwood	3
BK 15	Sheepshead Bay, Gerritsen Beach & Homecrest	1
BK 16	Brownsville & Ocean Hill	15
BK 17	East Flatbush, Farragut & Rugby	11
BK 18	Canarsie & Flatlands	4
<b>Brooklyn</b>		<b>87</b>
BX 01 & 02	Hunts Point, Longwood & Melrose	10
BX 03 & 06	Belmont, Crotona Park East & East Tremont	12
BX 04	Concourse, Highbridge & Mount Eden	7
BX 05	Morris Heights, Fordham South & Mount Hope	4
BX 07	Bedford Park, Fordham North & Norwood	4
BX 09	Castle Hill, Clason Point & Parkchester	3
BX 10	Co-op City, Pelham Bay & Schuylerville	1
BX 11	Pelham Parkway, Morris Park & Laconia	11
<b>Bronx</b>		<b>52</b>
MN 01 & 02	Battery Park City, Greenwich Village & Soho	4
MN 03	Chinatown & Lower East Side	8
MN 04 & 05	Chelsea, Clinton & Midtown Business District	7
MN 06	Murray Hill, Gramercy & Stuyvesant Town	0
MN 07	Upper West Side & West Side	5
MN 08	Upper East Side	2
MN 09	Hamilton Heights, Manhattanville & West Harlem	5
MN 10	Central Harlem	14
MN 11	East Harlem	5
MN 12	Washington Heights, Inwood & Marble Hill	3
<b>Manhattan</b>		<b>53</b>
QN 01	Astoria & Long Island City	3
QN 02	Sunnyside & Woodside	5
QN 03	Jackson Heights & North Corona	5
QN 04	Elmhurst & South Corona	1
QN 05	Ridgewood, Glendale & Middle Village	3
QN 06	Forest Hills & Rego Park	1
QN 07	Flushing, Murray Hill & Whitestone	2
QN 08	Briarwood, Fresh Meadows & Hillcrest	4
QN 09	Richmond Hill & Woodhaven	1
QN 10	Howard Beach & Ozone Park	2
QN 12	Jamaica, Hollis & St. Albans	16
QN 13	Queens Village, Cambria Heights & Rosedale	5
QN 14	Far Rockaway, Breezy Point & Broad Channel	7
<b>Queens</b>		<b>55</b>
SI 01	Port Richmond, Stapleton & Mariner's Harbor	10
SI 02	New Springville & South Beach	1
SI 03	Tottenville, Great Kills & Annadale	1
<b>Staten Island</b>		<b>12</b>

**Appendix B. Community Districts with the Highest Number of Survey Respondents Reporting an Increase in First-Time Visitors**

Community District	Neighborhood
BX 03 & 06	Belmont, Crotona Park East & East Tremont
BK 03	Bedford-Stuyvesant
BK 16	Brownsville & Ocean Hill
QN 12	Jamaica, Hollis & St. Albans
BK 05	East New York & Starrett City
MN 10	Central Harlem
BK 17	East Flatbush, Farragut & Rugby
BX 01 & 02	Hunts Point, Longwood & Melrose
BX 11	Pelham Parkway, Morris Park & Laconia
MN 09	Hamilton Heights, Manhattanville & West Harlem

**Appendix C. Community Districts with the Highest Number of Survey Respondents Reporting an Increase in Families with Children**

Community District	Neighborhood
BX 03 & 06	Belmont, Crotona Park East & East Tremont
BK 16	Brownsville & Ocean Hill
MN 10	Central Harlem
BK 03	Bedford-Stuyvesant
QN 12	Jamaica, Hollis & St. Albans
BX 11	Pelham Parkway, Morris Park & Laconia
BK 05	East New York & Starrett City
BK 17	East Flatbush, Farragut & Rugby
BX 01 & 02	Hunts Point, Longwood & Melrose
SI 01	Port Richmond, Stapleton & Mariner's Harbor

**Appendix D. Community Districts with the Highest Number of Survey Respondents Reporting an Increase in Immigrant Families**

Community District	Neighborhood
BX 03 & 06	Belmont, Crotona Park East & East Tremont
BX 11	Pelham Parkway, Morris Park & Laconia
BK 03	Bedford-Stuyvesant
QN 12	Jamaica, Hollis & St. Albans
BK 16	Brownsville & Ocean Hill
BK 05	East New York & Starrett City
BK 17	East Flatbush, Farragut & Rugby
BX 01 & 02	Hunts Point, Longwood & Melrose
BX 04	Concourse, Highbridge & Mount Eden
SI 01	Port Richmond, Stapleton & Mariner's Harbor

**Appendix E. Community districts with the highest number of survey respondents reporting an increase in Elderly/Retired visitors**

Community District	Neighborhood
MN 10	Central Harlem
BK 03	Bedford-Stuyvesant
BX 03 & 06	Belmont, Crotona Park East & East Tremont
QN 12	Jamaica, Hollis & St. Albans
BX 11	Pelham Parkway, Morris Park & Laconia
BK 17	East Flatbush, Farragut & Rugby
BK 16	Brownsville & Ocean Hill
BX 01 & 02	Hunts Point, Longwood & Melrose
MN 03	Chinatown & Lower East Side
BK 05	East New York & Starrett City

## About Food Bank For New York City

**Food Bank For New York City** has been the city's major hunger-relief organization working to end hunger throughout the five boroughs for more than 35 years. Nearly one in five New Yorkers relies on Food Bank for food and other resources. Food Bank takes a strategic, multifaceted approach that provides meals and builds capacity in the neediest communities, while raising awareness and engagement among all New Yorkers. Through its network of more than 1,000 charities and schools citywide, Food Bank provides food for more than 61 million free meals for New Yorkers in need. Food Bank For New York City's income support services, including food stamps (also known as SNAP) and free tax assistance for the working poor, put more than \$110 million each year into the pockets of New Yorkers, helping them to afford food and achieve greater dignity and independence. Food Bank's nutrition education programs and services empower more than 50,000 children, teens and adults to sustain a healthy diet on a limited budget. Working toward long-term solutions to food poverty, Food Bank develops policy and conducts research to inform community and government efforts.



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STATEMENT OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL  
BEFORE THE  
NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS  
RE: LOCAL FOOD PROCUREMENT OVERSIGHT

Mark Izeman and Margaret Brown

January 14, 2020

Good afternoon, my name is Mark Izeman and I am a Senior Attorney and the New York Regional Director at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC).

NRDC is a not-for-profit legal and scientific organization active on a wide range of public health, environmental, and quality of life issues across the country, around the world and in New York City -- where our headquarters has been located since our founding in 1970. One of our top goals over the past decade has been to create a healthy, sustainable and just food system here in the New York region.

We commend Manhattan Borough President Brewer and Councilman Kallos for holding this hearing and recognizing that food is a critical health, environmental, and social justice issue for this city.

As you know, food is also a critical issue for our planet. Worldwide, food and agriculture, broadly defined, is responsible for as much as 25% or more of greenhouse gas emissions. Thus, what we choose to buy, and how it is grown, distributed, and disposed of, has huge climate implications.

Indeed, a recent international scientific report concluded that: “Food is the single strongest lever to optimize human health and environmental sustainability on Earth.” (LANCET, 2019).

So how do the local laws that are the subject of this hearing play a role in addressing this challenge?

Well, as nerdy as it sounds, procurement has historically been a critical part of making NYC healthier and more sustainable.

There is long history of New York City using its enormous purchasing power to drive environmental and public health progress.

In the 1980s, for example, NYC passed a law that led to the increased purchasing of paper with recycled content – which led to less trees being cut down, less energy and other pollution generated and also, critically, helped stimulate the overall market for buying products with recycled content.

In the mid 1990s, this Council also passed a set of procurement bills focusing on energy efficiency products, greener cleaning supplies, and other goods using recycled plastic.

And in 2011 – with health, environment and local economy in mind -- the New York City passed Local Law 50 and 52 to push for more regionally sourced food purchasing.

**NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL**

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NRDC was engaged in, and supported, passage of all of these New York City laws, and like you, we have a strong interest in ensuring that they are in fact being implemented.

Although in a slightly different context, the late US Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, once said “Ultimately, enforcement of the laws is what really counts.” Evans v. Jeff D., 475 U.S. 717, 743 (1986)

To be sure, New York City has made progress in implementing these local food purchasing laws. It also has also put in place important nutritional standards for city food purchasing. And we commend the City for its work in buying more sustainable school food through its leadership in the national Urban School Food Alliance – as well as for its innovative “New York Thursdays” Program.

But the bottom line is that the dictates and promise of these 2011 laws still remains unfulfilled.

We offer three overlapping suggestions for moving forward:

- First, the city should build on the good reporting requirements of Local Laws 50 and 52 to pass new legislation that would: (a) establish concrete purchasing targets under local law; and (b) tie these targets to standards for healthy, sustainable and equitably produced food. We are happy to help the city to develop these targets and standards. And we believe the “Good Food Purchasing Program” offers one compelling framework doing just this. As you know, this past summer, legislation advancing Good Food Purchasing was introduced (Int. 1660) – and we testified in support of this legislation at a City Council hearing in September. More broadly, the City Council should look for ways to provide economic incentives for all business and institutions to buy more regional, sustainable produced food from the City’s “foodshed” – which encompasses farms in the NYC Watershed, the Hudson Valley and other key farming regions.
- Second, in advancing new legislation the City Council should focus any new procurement commitment on harnessing the power of food to reinvest, and build wealth, in low income communities and communities of color. So many of the public health challenges we face today are the result of longstanding structural racism and disinvestment in communities of color. And to solve these issues, we must work to address the underlying causes -- and not just the symptoms. More specifically, the city should engage with residents as not just consumers of food, but owners and entrepreneurs in the food system. Thus, whether as farmers, small food businesses, or city contractors, the city should prioritize contacts with disadvantaged New Yorkers and help chart a path to build greater wealth and keep more money in their communities.
- And third, the City Council should consider creating a NYC Food Purchasing “Czar” – someone who can focus all of their time on connecting agency purchasing officers with regional farmers and distribution hubs. Our experience from talking to regional food experts over the past decade is that having such a person serve a “match-making” role is invaluable if New York City wants to ramp up its local, sustainable sourcing.

We thank the Council and the Borough President’s Office for their leadership and commitment on these critical issues – and for the opportunity to testify today. And we stand ready to work with the Council and the many amazing groups here today to move closer to a healthy, sustainable and just food system for all New Yorkers.



# HUNTER COLLEGE NEW YORK CITY FOOD POLICY CENTER

## Testimony to the New York City Council: New York City Council Committee on Contracts

### Testimony of Charles Platkin, Ph.D., J.D., M.P.H., Executive Director, Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center, Distinguished Lecturer, Hunter College, CUNY

#### Title of Hearing: Oversight - Local Food Procurement

January 14, 2020. Good afternoon and thank you to Chairperson Kallos, and the members of the Committee on Contracts for the opportunity to submit written and oral testimony regarding local food procurement in New York City.

My name is Charles Platkin, and I am providing this testimony on behalf of the Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center, of which I am the executive director. The Center works with policymakers, community organizations, advocates and the public to create healthier, more sustainable food environments. We thank the City Council for their support.

New York State has a thriving farm community and is a leading producer of numerous products, ranking first nationally in cottage cheese, second in apples and cabbage, and third in milk, grapes, wine, maple syrup, and cauliflower, according to the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets.<sup>1</sup> As stated in the 2018 Agricultural Census, New York State has a total of 33,400 farms equalling 6,00,000 acres of production.<sup>2</sup> In 2017, New York State's agricultural industry brought in \$5.75 billion in revenue and created nearly 200,000 jobs state-wide.<sup>3</sup> Local agriculture is key to New York's economy and the health of New Yorkers.

The Center applauds the members of the City Council for their continued efforts to improve local food procurement. Local Law 50 and Local Law 52 strive to support New York State farmers while increasing and facilitating access to local food for New York City residents. Additionally, these laws create awareness of the importance of local food procurement. It should be noted that often times advancing food policy and healthy eating behaviors begins with creating awareness. Given that New York City Agencies purchase millions of dollars of food each year and serve more than 260 million meals, the benefits of purchasing and consuming local food are far-reaching.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Association of State Departments of Agriculture & Markets. NASDA. <https://www.nasda.org/organizations/new-york-state-department-of-agriculture-markets>.

<sup>2</sup> New York Agriculture. New York Farm Bureau. <https://www.nyfb.org/about/about-ny-ag>.

<sup>3</sup> New York Agriculture. New York Farm Bureau. <https://www.nyfb.org/about/about-ny-ag>.

<sup>4</sup> New York City Food Policy Center. 2013. "The Public Plate in New York City: A Guide to Institutional Meals." <https://nycfoodpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/PUBLICPLATEREPORT.pdf>.

Supporting local farmers contributes to local and regional economies, reduces transportation costs and greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change, cuts down on the paper and plastic packaging used to keep fresh food from spoiling as it travels long distances, keeps farming land in agricultural use, preserves natural habitats by maintaining forest and wetlands, promotes a safer food supply by reducing the chances of contamination and provides less processed and more nutritious food.<sup>5 6 7 8</sup> The Center recognizes the efforts currently underway and is eager to support the City Council in seeking additional ways to expand and improve local food procurement, specifically with regard to Local Law 50 and Local Law 52.

### **The Benefits of Local Food**

In the United States, fresh produce travels an average of 1,500 miles from farm to plate--about the equivalent of driving from New York City to Dallas, Texas.<sup>9</sup> Purchasing locally grown food means that the food travels shorter distances, thereby decreasing fossil fuel consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Typical food distribution in the United States results in 5 to 17 times more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions than locally purchased food.<sup>10</sup>

A local food system reduces the risk of food safety issues, as longer distances provide more opportunities for contamination.<sup>11</sup> Local farms commonly use more environmentally-friendly practices to preserve their soil by planting cover crops, creating border areas for wildlife, spraying fewer pesticides, and promoting insect diversity.<sup>12 13 14</sup> Additionally, local farms are more likely to preserve the genetic diversity of plant varieties by planting a wide range of crops.<sup>15 16</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> New York City Council. 2011. "Purchase of New York State Food." Committee Report 2/28/11. <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=828460&GUID=8B484573-3BE2-4A2D-8C13-425453936D04&Options=ID%7CText%7C&Search=452>.

<sup>6</sup> Klavinski R. 7 Benefits of Eating Local Foods. Michigan State University Extension.

[https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/7\\_benefits\\_of\\_eating\\_local\\_foods](https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/7_benefits_of_eating_local_foods). Published April 13, 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Martinez S, Hand M, Da Pra M, et al. Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts, and Issues, ERR 97, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

[https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/46393/7054\\_err97\\_1\\_.pdf?v=0](https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/46393/7054_err97_1_.pdf?v=0) Published May 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Shideler D, Bauman A, Thilmany D, Jablonski B.R. Putting Local Food Dollars to Work: The Economic Benefits of Local Food Dollars to Workers, Farms and Communities. Choices, A Publication of the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association. 2018;33(3). Shideler, Dave, et al. "Putting Local Food Dollars to Work: The Economic Benefits of Local Food Dollars to Workers, Farms and Communities." Choices, vol. 33, no. 3, 2018, pp. 1-8. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/26583606](http://www.jstor.org/stable/26583606). Accessed 8 Jan. 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Weber CL, Matthews HS. Food-Miles and the Relative Climate Impacts of Food Choices in the United States. *Environmental Science and Technology*. 2008;42(10):3508-3513. <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1021/es702969f>.

<sup>10</sup> Cho, R. How Green is Local Food? The Columbia University Earth Institute.

<https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2012/09/04/how-green-is-local-food/>. Published Sept 4, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> Why Buy Local? GrowNYC. <https://www.grownyc.org/greenmarket/ourmarkets/whylocal>.

<sup>12</sup> Cho, R. How Green is Local Food? The Columbia University Earth Institute.

<https://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2012/09/04/how-green-is-local-food/>. Published Sept 4, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> D'Souza, G and Ikerd, J. Small Farms and Sustainable Development; Is Small More Sustainable? *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*, 1196;28(1):73-83., <https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/15243/1/28010073.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Dunning, R. Research-Based Support and Extension Outreach for Local Food Systems. Center for Environmental Farming Systems, North Carolina.

<https://cefs.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/research-based-support-for-local-food-systems.pdf?x47549>. Published November 2010.

<sup>15</sup> Why Buy Local? GrowNYC. <https://www.grownyc.org/greenmarket/ourmarkets/whylocal>.

Local food procurement directly benefits the local economy by keeping about 65 percent of each dollar spent on food in the community.<sup>17</sup> In a 2016 report, the New York Academy of Medicine found that spending 25 percent of publicly-funded institutions' food dollars on foods grown within the state would create almost \$208 million of new economic output.<sup>18</sup> Farmers who sell directly to the consumer retain a larger amount of the profit, allowing them to stay on their land, which in turn preserves farmland.<sup>19</sup> According to the American Farmland Trust Guide to Local Planning for Agriculture in New York, studies have shown that local food keeps taxes down because farms contribute more in taxes than they require in services.<sup>20</sup>

Local food also benefits the consumer's health because produce that is picked when ripe and travels shorter distances could result in more nutritious food, according to research.<sup>21</sup> Evidence from the Proceedings of the Nutrition Society in the UK suggests that the nutritional quality of produce is highest right after harvest, and declines as time passes (often during the time of transport).<sup>22</sup>

Consuming local food is also associated with an increased likelihood of making healthier food choices, and a lower risk of diet-related chronic diseases, such as diabetes.<sup>23</sup> According to the USDA's Local Food Systems Report, this is primarily because food available locally is fresher and less processed.<sup>24</sup>

According to PolicyLink, the benefits of local purchasing--from system-wide environmental impacts to the health of the consumer--impact many individuals who rely on public institutions for some or all of their meals. These institutions include but are not limited to public schools, public hospitals, child-care

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<sup>16</sup>D'Souza, G and Ikerd, J. Small Farms and Sustainable Development; Is Small More Sustainable? *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*, 1196;28(1):73-83., <https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/15243/1/28010073.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Brain, R. The Local Food Movement: Definitions, Benefits & Resources. Utah State University Sustainability Extension. [https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2693&context=extension\\_curall](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2693&context=extension_curall). Published September 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Libman, K, Li A, and Grace C. The Public Plate in New York State: Growing Health, Farms and Jobs with Local Food. The New York Academy of Medicine. [https://finys.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pol\\_publicplatefinal11\\_1\\_17.pdf](https://finys.org/sites/default/files/uploads/pol_publicplatefinal11_1_17.pdf). Published 2016.

<sup>19</sup>D'Souza, G and Ikerd, J. Small Farms and Sustainable Development; Is Small More Sustainable? *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*, 1196;28(1):73-83., <https://ageconsearch.umn.edu/bitstream/15243/1/28010073.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup>Haight D, Cosgrove J, and Ferguson K. Guide to Local Planning for Agriculture in New York. American Farmland Trust. [http://www.townofaurora.com/files/7213/6199/1911/Guide\\_to\\_Local\\_Planning\\_for\\_Agriculture\\_NY.pdf](http://www.townofaurora.com/files/7213/6199/1911/Guide_to_Local_Planning_for_Agriculture_NY.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> Why Buy Local? GrowNYC. <https://www.grownyc.org/greenmarket/ourmarkets/whylocal>.

<sup>22</sup>Does Eating Local Food Reduce the Environmental Impact of Food Production and Enhance Consumer Health? *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 2010;69:582-591. [https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/C264A576782D7B79B95A47D50515B02A/S0029665110002004a.pdf/does\\_eating\\_local\\_food\\_reduce\\_the\\_environmental\\_impact\\_of\\_food\\_production\\_and\\_enhance\\_consumer\\_health.pdf](https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/C264A576782D7B79B95A47D50515B02A/S0029665110002004a.pdf/does_eating_local_food_reduce_the_environmental_impact_of_food_production_and_enhance_consumer_health.pdf). Published August 10, 2010.

<sup>23</sup> Brain, R. The Local Food Movement: Definitions, Benefits & Resources. Utah State University Sustainability Extension. [https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2693&context=extension\\_curall](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2693&context=extension_curall). Published September 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Martinez S, Hand M, Da Pra M, et al. Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts, and Issues, ERR 97, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. [https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/46393/7054\\_err97\\_1\\_.pdf?v=0](https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/46393/7054_err97_1_.pdf?v=0) Published May 2010.

centers, senior centers and programs, state prisons, civil and municipal service facilities, state colleges and universities, and nonprofit contracts that provide food for federal programs.<sup>25</sup>

### **Local Law 50**

As the City Council is aware, in 2011, then City Council Member Gale Brewer introduced Local Law 50 as a way to promote New York State's local agriculture by encouraging 11 City Agencies to purchase local food. The law requires New York City's Chief Procurement Officer to establish purchasing guidelines and a price incentive to encourage these City Agencies to make best efforts to procure local food.<sup>26</sup> It allowed for a "price preference" for New York State food, which encouraged buying food from local suppliers if their prices were within 10 percent of the lowest non-local bid.<sup>27</sup> Agency implementation is monitored and requires the Mayor's Office of Contract Services (MOCS) to publish an annual report with data about how much local food was procured by City Agencies in the previous year.

Many organizations and institutions (hereafter referred to as Food Service Contractors) are contracted by City Agencies to prepare and serve food, and the law required the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) to request that those Food Service Contractors report various pieces of information to the City Agency they are contracted with. Those City Agencies then collect and report the information they receive.

However, in the past few years, the annual reports from MOCS contained data about only a fraction of the food procured by New York City, with only a small number of Food Service Contractors providing the requested information. In 2017, out of 59 Food Service Contractors with a total contract value of \$615 million, only 11, with a value of \$66.5 million, responded.<sup>28</sup> In 2018, only 3 out of 66 Food Service Contractors, accounting for only \$15 million out of a total \$3.1 billion, provided information.<sup>29</sup>

Local Law 50 has good intentions for local food procurement, however, the law needs to provide an incentive for City Agencies and Food Service Contractors to disclose information as it currently has no consequences for those who do not. Reporting is also complicated by the fact that most Food Suppliers do not provide sourcing information to Food Service Contractors, leaving these Food Service Contractors unable to share information to MOCS.

### **Local Law 52**

Local Law 52, passed in July 2011, established reporting requirements for the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food in and for the City. The law requires the office of long-term planning and sustainability to create a report annually on such reporting requirements to the mayor and city council. The report includes the number, size, location, production type and annual dollar amount of

<sup>25</sup> Equitable Development Toolkit: Local Food Procurement.. PolicyLink.

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/edtk\\_local-food-procurement.pdf](https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/edtk_local-food-procurement.pdf). Published March 2015.

<sup>26</sup> Purchase of New York State Food. New York City Council.

<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=828460&GUID=8B484573-3BE2-4A2D-8C13-425453936D04&Options=ID%7CText%7C&Search=452>. Published 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Purchase of New York State Food. New York City Council.

<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=828460&GUID=8B484573-3BE2-4A2D-8C13-425453936D04&Options=ID%7CText%7C&Search=452>. Published 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Food Policy Standards. 2017. Mayor's Office of Contract Services.

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cardio/cardio-meals-snacks-standards.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Report to the City Council pursuant to LL50 of 2011. Mayor's Office of Contract Services.

[https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mocs/downloads/pdf/LL50\\_NYSFood\\_FY18.pdf](https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/mocs/downloads/pdf/LL50_NYSFood_FY18.pdf). Published 2018.

city financial support received by farms participating in the watershed agricultural program. The report includes additional data such as the total dollar amount of expenditures by the Department of Education on milk and other food products that are subject to the USDA country of origin labeling requirements; the location and size of community gardens on city-owned property; the number of food manufacturers receiving monetary benefits from the Economic Development Corporation or the Industrial Development Agency; and the daily number of food delivery truck and rail trips to or through Hunts Point Market.<sup>30</sup>

The current 2019 Food Metrics Report provides an overview of production, processing, distribution, and consumption of food within the City's, and notes that within the coming year, the Mayor's Office of Food Policy aims to expand data and thereby increase its ability to assess and gain insight from the Food Metrics Reports moving forward.<sup>31</sup> The ability to obtain data about food metrics on a yearly basis is what makes it possible to track the improvements in local food initiatives across the City's food system.

According to the Office of Food Policy, the report continues to expand each year to include more of the programs and initiatives within the City that address food insecurity, improve food procurement and food service, increase access to healthy food, and support a sustainable food system.<sup>32</sup> However, the annual report is lacking valuable local food procurement data. Requiring the food metrics report to include local food procurement information from all City Agencies and not just the Department of Education would yield baseline data that could allow for further encouragement of local food procurement moving forward.

A City Council Agenda from August 2019 included a summary for fiscal year 2020 that recommended updating Local Law 52 to include additional data. The additional information would provide further context to the existing data, such as the total number of children enrolled in public schools in addition to the number of children participating in school lunch. Additionally requiring all City Agencies to report local food procurement data could guide future policy. Implementing these recommendations are necessary in order to improve the Local Law 52's efficacy in tracking food metrics among the work of City Agencies.

For reasons previously mentioned and to build upon the progress of Local Laws 50 and 52, the Center recommends the following:

## **Recommendations**

- 1. *Expand Local Law 52 to require that all City Agencies provide information on local food procurement for inclusion in the annual Food Metrics Report.*** The City's 11 Agencies serve roughly 260 million meals annually. All of these 11 Agencies--not just the Department of Education should be required to publicly report all local food procurement dealings. All City Agencies should be required to provide the total dollar amount spent locally on milk and other food products that are subject to the USDA country of origin labeling requirements.

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<sup>30</sup>Growing Food Equity in New York City: A City Council Agenda. New York City Council, <http://council.nyc.gov/data/wp-content/uploads/sites/73/2019/08/growing-food-equity-1.pdf>. Published August 2019.

<sup>31</sup> Food Metrics Report 2019. NYC Food Policy, The City of New York. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/foodpolicy/about/food-metrics-report.page>.

<sup>32</sup> Food Metrics Report 2019. NYC Food Policy, The City of New York. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/foodpolicy/about/food-metrics-report.page>.

2. ***Mandate Food Suppliers to provide sourcing information.*** Food Service Contractors often have difficulty sharing information about local food procurement because few Food Suppliers consistently provide sourcing information. Food Suppliers who provide food to City Agencies and their Food Service Contractors should be required to be transparent about the origin of the food, which would allow Food Service Contractors and City Agencies to track local food procurement more accurately.
3. ***Create a “Supply Local” awareness campaign for Food Suppliers.*** Encourage and educate Food Suppliers who work with Food Service Contractors and City Agencies about food transparency and the importance of local food procurement. Food Suppliers will learn which City Agencies and Food Service Contractors require information on the origin of their food in order to improve data about local food procurement.
4. ***Incentivize Food Service Contractors to provide local food procurement data.*** While Local Law 50 requires MOCS to publish an annual report with data about how much local food was procured by City Agencies the previous year, the law does not require Food Service Contractors to report local food procurement to City Agencies, which leaves the MOCS report lacking a significant amount of information. Incentives and penalties need to be instituted to motivate Food Service Contractors to disclose local food procurement information as the current voluntary system does not encourage participation.
5. ***Implement a monetary penalty in the form of a budget reduction for City Agencies and Food Service Providers that fail to report local food procurement.*** Monetary penalties should begin after 1.5 years of non-reporting compliance and increase in severity in each year that follows.
6. ***Increase the price preference/percentage for New York State food under Local Law 50.*** Local Law 50 currently allows for a 10 percent differential on bids from local food producers, meaning that contractors can accept a bid that is local if it falls within 10 percent of non-local bids. Increasing the price preference above 10 percent could increase local food procurement significantly. More research is needed to see if a number of local food procurement bids have historically been rejected because they exceeded the 10 percent price differential. Additionally, a question should be added to the reporting forms that asks if any local food bids that were rejected and why.
7. ***Streamline the reporting process to make it simple and straightforward for Food Service Contractors and City Agencies to report local food procurement.*** A user-friendly form similar to SurveyMonkey or Formstack with dropdown menus that automatically populates and aggregates data into an Excel form (or other software). The data collected via these forms should be open and available to the City and the public. The Center is available to help the City Council develop this form at no cost. Additionally the reporting period for local food procurement, which is currently annually, should be researched to determine if more frequent reporting can simplify the process for Food Service Vendors and City Agencies.

We at the Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center recognize the importance of expanding local procurement and improving data collection on its metrics, and we stand ready to help in any way we can.

For more information about the Hunter College NYC Food Policy Center, visit our website at [www.nycfoodpolicy.org](http://www.nycfoodpolicy.org) or email Dr. Charles Platkin at [info@nycfoodpolicy.org](mailto:info@nycfoodpolicy.org).

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide oral and written testimony.

Local Law 50 of 2011

Slate Foods, Inc.

Slate Foods, Inc.

Julia Van Loon, President

PO Box 93 New York NY 10028

January 14, 2020

Testimony regarding Local Law 50 of 2011

I was only made aware of this hearing in the last few days and read what I could to learn about why this local law deserves more attention. I apologize in advance for making any claims which may be inaccurate due to my not having read everything available. I believe that this law is a crucial component for taking city food procurement into the year 2020. I don't see that it hasn't gained the traction it deserves - and I'm not very clear what has transpired since being signed back in 2011.

I believe the law has three important facets. The first is about benefit to the local economies which will provide product - the second is about benefit to the recipients of wholesome products and lastly, establishing a solid motivation for encouraging or even mandating that city agencies procure from New York's farms and producers. I don't know much about the last aspect and I would like to learn what support, if any, has been provided to city procurement agencies to practice and implement this law.

As you are aware, New York State has been working hard developing a relationship between state agencies (SFA's School Food Authorities) and New York grown and processed foods with the massive developments in Farm to School and the governor's authorization of the 30% initiative. What was once a grassroots movement has moved into a system complete with policy, advocacy and systems for implementation.

I don't believe you can focus on NYC without embracing its relationship to New York State and the interconnected web of farmers, producers, logistics and warehousing partners. There are program quite in line with this local law and I hope that this conversation will expand to include partners across the state who can both share and give testimony to why this law and its implementation is so vital.

Introduction and more about Julia Van Loon (verbal)

Slate Foods, Inc.

- Largest local beef producer serving NYS schools outside of Cargill/NYC

Schools

- Present in the local NYS procurement world since 2002
- Advocate and Expert on 30% initiative for procurement of local foods in

schools

- NY Grown and Certified - WBE



**Ribka Getachew**

***Title: Director of the New York City Good Food Purchasing Policy Campaign***

***Organization: Community Food Advocates***

**Local Laws 50 & 52 – Compliance Oversight**

**Joint Hearing held by the NYC Council Contracts Committee**

***January 14, 2020***

Hello all, and good afternoon. First and foremost, I would like to thank the Chair of the Contracts Committee, Councilmember Ben Kallos, and all members of the Committee for providing the opportunity to lend my testimony today on this very important matter.

My name is Ribka Getachew and I work with Community Food Advocates as the Director of the New York City Good Food Purchasing Policy (GFPP) Campaign. Working in close partnership with the Food Chain Workers Alliance, CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, and the Center for Good Food Purchasing, we have been building a robust coalition of local and national food system experts that work in the 5 value areas that serve as the pillars of the Good Food Purchasing Program: Local Economies, Valued Workforce, Animal Welfare, Nutrition, and Environmental Sustainability. Due to this coalition's and the City's work and commitment, NYC has begun implementing the Good Food Purchasing Program and action planning and is also currently on track to formally codifying Good Food Purchasing Program legislation – Introduction #1660. Our coalition is currently working with bill sponsor, Councilmember Andrew Cohen, and the Committee on Economic Development to ensure the bill language is as robust & useful as possible.

Our City serves approximately 240 million meals/year across its public food-serving agencies. These agencies serve some of our most vulnerable and food insecure populations, including but not limited to, senior citizens, students, the homeless, incarcerated individuals, and those under medical care. That said, our purchasing power, as I'm sure those of us in this room are all well aware, is astronomically tremendous. However, to even be able to assess the reach of this purchasing power, we've needed to have commitments made, coupled with required follow through, on the part of not only our City but also the vendors with whom our agencies contract. There is still significant work to be done, however, to ensure the intended purposes of Local Laws 50 and 52 are met.

Local Laws 50 and 52 of 2011 are both rooted in strengthening the economic vitality of our City. ‘Studies have suggested that increased production by local food producers helps to generate additional jobs (Christensen et al. 2017; Roche et al. 2016; Pesch 2014; Gunter 2011; Kane et al. 2010). Research also shows that every dollar that schools spend on local foods adds between \$1.60 and \$3.12 to the local economy in the form of business profits, employee wages, investor dividends, interests/rents, and government revenue from sales and excise taxes (Christensen et al. 2017; Roche et al. 2016; Kane et al. 2010).’<sup>1</sup> Simply said, there are clear and positive correlations between local procurement and the jobs and money that are infused into local communities and regions.

As the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health & Health Policy’s report entitled ‘*Bringing the Good Food Purchasing Program to NYC*’ shows, there is significant precedence here in NYC for the adoption and implementation of the Good Food Purchasing, including Local Laws 50 and 52. A strong foundation exists here in New York City which has helped to elucidate that GFPP would not be able to achieve its full potential without a commitment to thorough transparency and regular tracking of the vendors that City agencies work with. This includes, but is not limited to, exactly where these vendors are sourcing, producing, and processing their food products, the names and addresses of subcontractors and suppliers, the environmental & labor violations of these entities, etc.

Our assessment has shown that a strong bedrock – robust and meaningful policies and practices that are followed through on – ensures the successful implementation of the Good Food Purchasing Program. Local Laws 50 and 52 are complementary to the goals of the Good Food Purchasing Program and are necessary pillars that make up said foundation. Ensuring its success means also supporting a pathway by which accessible good (and local) food is a reality for all members of our City, state, and region.

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<sup>1</sup> Reinhardt, S., & Mulik, K. (2017). Purchasing Power: How Institutional “Good Food” Procurement Policies Can Shape a Food System That’s Better for People and Our Planet. *Union of Concerned Scientists*. Retrieved from <https://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2017/11/purchasing-power-report-ucs-2017.pdf>



Testimony Submitted by

Chef Gregory Silverman, Executive Director  
West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH)

Testimony at oversight hearing on agency procurement in compliance with Local Laws 50  
(Brewer) and 52 (Dickens) of 2011

January 14, 2020

My name is Chef Gregory Silverman and I am the Executive Director of the West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH). Thank you for inviting WSCAH to testify at this oversight hearing on agency procurement of items that are locally grown or produced in New York state in compliance with Local Laws 50 (Brewer) and 52 (Dickens) of 2011 Welfare.

I am here today, representing West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH) and our **community** of almost 12,000 families who come to us from across NYC to gain access to healthy food and supportive services. Founded in 1979, West Side Campaign Against Hunger is the country's first supermarket-style, multi-service food pantry, and one of the largest emergency food providers in New York City. The West Side Campaign Against Hunger alleviates hunger by ensuring that all New Yorkers have access with **dignity** to a **choice** of healthy food and supportive services.

In the last year, we provided over 1.6 million pounds of food, which included over 600 thousand pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables, to nearly 12,000 households. Our customers are overjoyed that we serve 41% fresh produce, this is unheard of anywhere else in NYC, let alone the United States. Fresh, healthy, appetizing produce helps us battle not only short term food insecurity but support the health and well being of families in need. As the speaker has said, "**Access to adequate nutritious food is a human right...**"

Over the last year, WSCAH along with several other large emergency food providers in NYC created a collective purchase initiative to help get better, healthier products at better prices for our communities. WSCAH along with Project Hospitality, New York Common Pantry, and St. Johns Bread and Life, with support from Robinhood, Sea Change Capital and NY Health Foundation and with consultants, Karen Karp and Partners created this initiative as our customers and agencies demand better food for themselves, their families and their communities.

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**DIGNITY. COMMUNITY. CHOICE.**



Emergency Food Providers such as WSCAH pushed a collective purchase program partly because programs such as the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) are not providing the necessary choice of products agencies and communities want or need. At WSCAH we survey our customers, they demand healthy food, fresh food, local food, organic food, all the same foods that any New Yorker wants and needs. Our job is to provide our customers access with dignity to a choice of healthy food and supportive services.

EFAP has been touted as a huge win in NYC with its 22 million dollar baseline in the budget. But let us be clear that this 41% fresh, healthy, nutritious, produce we distribute at WSCAH does not come from EFAP. EFAP distributes 22 million dollars of processed foods to New Yorkers in need. There is no ability within EFAP to give any choice of fresh product or any incentive to purchase New York State product to any New Yorkers and this is a tragedy for the health and dignity of our NYC community!

Altering EFAP to perform its efforts more like HPNAP (The New York State Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program), with greater choice of products and incentive for more local purchasing will help increase health of not only our customers, but the economic health of our city and region. Procurement of items, in our case via EFAP, that are locally grown or produced in New York state is not only helpful for our community but should be viewed as necessary and in compliance with Local Laws 50 (Brewer) and 52 (Dickens) of 2011. These laws allow for incentivizing local purchasing and tracking of those purchases.

Truth be told, our WSCAH community of 22,000 customers care less about plans and bills. Our community care firstly about getting healthy food for their family and feeling safe and supported. Our city, state and federal government are not taking care of this. Over 73% of our customers who are part of WSCAH are LatinX, many first generation immigrants and in a sanctuary city such as New York, they do not feel safe or supported. Every week customers ask to get taken off SNAP and Medicaid due to fear about immigration issues. In NYC these friends, neighbors, colleagues are refusing public sector benefits and prefer to be supported by charity. Charity can not and will never take the place of a strong public sector safety net.

Creating offices and policies is important but today in America, our community demands protection and support. Elected officials must stand up, not with words, but with actions to gather funds and support for all the people living, working, and surviving in NYC. Using Local

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Laws 50 (Brewer) and Local Law 52 (Dickens) in conjunction with making strong adjustments to programs such as EFAP will do much to support our communities.

The West Side Campaign Against Hunger would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify today. WSCAH and our community look forward to helping continue to strengthen our food system as a core piece of helping make sure we provide all New Yorkers access with dignity to a choice of healthy food and supportive services.

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**DIGNITY. COMMUNITY. CHOICE.**



January 14, 2020

Wellness in the Schools' testimony for the Oversight Hearing on Local Food Procurement Local Law 50 and 52 presented to Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and New York City Council Member Ben Kallos, based on environment, local economy, and nutrition.

### **Environment**

Locally grown food protects farmlands which are small scale over foods that are grown or produced in factory farms. These local farms attract biodiversity, giving animals, insects and birds a place to live and thrive. Local farmed food compared to imported foods have to travel a far distance from the place it was produced, accumulating what is called "food miles," which consumes fossil fuels and valuable non-renewable resources. Reducing food miles helps alleviate our dependence on fossil fuels, reduce air pollution and cut back on greenhouse gas emissions. When food is raised and grown locally, the consumer better understands how and where their food is being produced.

### **Local Economy**

Local farmers, especially those in NYS, will benefit from economic opportunities of local farming and food production. Because local farmers don't have the same transportation and distribution costs as large agricultural businesses, they can retain more of the profits from their sales. This helps small farming businesses become more successful as more people purchase from them. Small local farms create jobs, providing sustainable employment in their community. Local farm operations contribute more to the economy in tax revenue. Local farming helps the bottom line.

### **Nutrition**

Many people feel that local food tastes better and lasts longer. Local food has increased freshness and nutrients, which has the potential of increasing NYC lunch participation and building the healthy bodies of NYC's school age children. The more time that passes between farm and institution, the more nutrients fresh produce will lose. Locally grown fruits and vegetables contain more nutrients because they are picked at their peak freshness, and are transported shorter distances. In over 140 NYC schools, our WITS Chefs have an impact on the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables daily. Seeing the excitement of school children when they cut a fresh apple in a WITS lab or try kale salad for the first time is a strong indicator that fresh, local foods can have an impact on children for a lifetime. 26% of NYS's public plate goes to K-12 schools impacting mostly fruits, vegetables, dairy products, eggs and locally raised meats, most of which we know kids need to build a healthy body. For the reasons above, Wellness in the Schools supports an increase of local foods in NYC city schools and on the plates of children.



LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE  
SINCE 1894

**Testimony of Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Before  
The New York City Council Committee on Contracts**

**Presented by David French  
Director of Philanthropy and Healthy Food Initiatives**

**January 14, 2019**

Good afternoon, Council Members. My name is David French and I am the Director of Philanthropy and Healthy Food Initiatives at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today at this hearing regarding local food procurement for City-funded meals.

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House supports local food procurement for government-funded meals, and we are here today to share our experience operating a model farm-to-institution program serving 400,000 government-funded meals annually. We will also share some takeaways from our experience over the last four years running a farm-to-institution training and technical assistance program called *The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House* that works to help other nonprofit organizations to serve more fresh, healthy and local food. To date, we have trained 117 nonprofit programs in all five boroughs serving 10 million government-funded meals annually.

To reduce the takeaways of our experience as a meals provider and a training and technical assistance provider to two bullet points:

- It is possible for government-funded food service providers to serve locally procured food – *and to do it without raising costs*. Lenox Hill Neighborhood House sources more than 30% of our food locally, including more than 50% of our produce, and we have done this without raising costs.
- City-funded food service providers want to serve more local food, and more fresh and healthy food, but they face a wide range of barriers. Getting most of these organizations to source locally will require training, technical assistance, infrastructure investment and other supports.

**Background and Relevant Experience**

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House is a 126-year-old settlement house that provides an extensive array of effective and integrated human services—social, educational, legal, health, housing, mental health, nutritional and fitness—which significantly improve the lives of 15,000 people in

need each year, ages 3 to 103, on the East Side of Manhattan.

We operate a model farm-to-institution food program serving 400,000 meals annually through two senior centers, a homeless shelter, Head Start program, after school, summer camp and an Alzheimer's day program. Funding supporting these meals is provided by the Department for the Aging, the Department for Homeless Services and the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

### **Local Sourcing at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House**

In 2011, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House hired a new Executive Chef with the mandate to serve more fresh, healthy food to better support the health of our clients and to also source locally whenever possible. With a focus on plant-based food and scratch cooking, we now serve more than 90% fresh produce, local eggs, dairy and meat, and local grains and flour. Overall, 30-40% of Lenox Hill Neighborhood House's food procurement is now local or regional, and more than 50% of our produce is local. We typically only serve meat once a day, so 66% of our meals are vegetarian. But our meals are not just healthy and local – they are delicious. I have attached the current menu from our Innovative Senior Center.

The single most effective means we have found to successfully serve more healthy and local food to our clients has been the development of creative and delicious menus that our cooks are excited to make, and that our clients enjoy eating. That's why we have created a 110-page *Farm-to-Institution Cookbook*, available for free download on our website:

<https://www.lenoxhill.org/recipes>

A partnership with GrowNYC/Greenmarket Co. has been essential to our ability to source so much food locally. We are Greenmarket Co.'s largest institutional customer and also host one of GrowNYC's largest Food Box Program sites. Each year we serve or distribute more than 61 tons of fresh, local food.

### ***The Teaching Kitchen* Farm-to-Institution Training**

We launched *The Teaching Kitchen* in 2015 in response to the enormous interest in our success in transforming to a farm-to-institution model and the many requests for information and assistance from nonprofit peers. *The Teaching Kitchen* is a food business course for nonprofit food service program directors, nutritionists and lead kitchen staff who design menus, order food, provide nutrition oversight and prepare food. After an initial training in our kitchen and conference rooms, the program provides a full year of technical assistance and support to nonprofits to help them implement change through ongoing goal setting. We train approximately 50 nonprofit programs annually and are now developing an eLearning English/Spanish version of the program to provide increased access to the program and significantly expand our impact in the city and beyond. A program brochure is attached.

### **Cost Should Not Be a Barrier**

Most organizations think that they cannot afford to serve local food. We have demonstrated in our own program that this is not true. Yes, some specialty local items are more expensive than what is available from broadline vendors. But if organizations plan seasonal menus and choose

which products they use selectively, it is possible to source many items locally without raising costs. Cutting costs in other areas can also free up funds for more healthy and local foods that are worth extra expense.

Purchasing food in season ensures the best price and flavor and greatest nutrient density. Items Lenox Hill Neighborhood House buys in season include: arugula, asparagus, corn, zucchini, eggplant, peas, spinach, radishes, winter squash, kohlrabi, peaches and pears. At the same time, a wide range of local storage crops are able at competitive prices and can be used year round: apples, onions, beets, sweet potatoes, carrots, garlic, cabbage and more. We also use (and strongly encourage our trainees to serve) a number of local whole grains that provide variety and exceptional health benefits, without significant cost increase. These include: oats, barley, farro, polenta and wheat berries, as well as locally or regionally milled flour.

One key to our success – and a major focus of *The Teaching Kitchen* – is to make strategic decisions that cut costs and make meals healthier. Examples include:

- **Eliminate juice:** Juice is expensive and contains an enormous amount of sugar. It is better to spend the money on leafy greens and citrus fruits, which will provide as much Vitamin C as juice.
- **Serve less meat:** Meat is the most expensive item in most public plate meals, can contribute to diet-related disease, and is one of the leading contributors to global warming. Serving more plant-based food (more vegetarian meals and more stews and other dishes that contain less meat and more vegetables) enables providers to save money, support client health and reduce environmental impact.
- **Reduce processed food:** Fresh food is cheaper and healthier than processed food. Fresh vegetables are more nutrient dense and cheaper than processed, frozen vegetables. Granola made with local oats is delicious, healthier and cheaper than boxed cereal. Scratch-made salad dressings and sauces are significantly cheaper than processed dressings and sauces, which contain sugar, salt, preservatives and food coloring.

One organization we trained cooks about 400 meals daily and served red meat multiple times a week before attending *The Teaching Kitchen*. Switching from red meat to a vegetarian meal saved them \$1 off each plate served. By serving one more vegetarian meal every week, they were able to save \$1,600 a month, redirecting those funds to purchase more local food and investing in affordable kitchen equipment such as knives, cutting boards, hand mixers and food processors that reduce the added prep work for staff.

### **Beyond Cost – Potential Barriers to Implementation**

Serving more local food – which really means serving more fresh food – requires an organization to make changes to every area of their operations, including menus, vendors, facilities and staffing. Each small change – serving one more fresh vegetable or whole grain – can impact the entire program. Examples are diverse: serving more fresh food will perhaps require an organization to rethink their facilities, with more refrigerators (instead of freezers); more storage space for produce and grains; more prep tools (knives, sinks, counters, cutting boards, food processors); and more space dedicated to compost and waste resulting from

processing cases of fresh food. They might have to rethink staffing, as well, adding staff or interns or rearranging schedules to manage increased food prep. Program and administrative changes might follow, adding or changing vendors, redesigning menus, and engaging clients to help them adjust to new foods and new dishes. Many kitchen staff, used to simply opening bags of frozen food, will need training to learn how to prep and cook fresh food.

Most organizations will require significant supports to help them serve more local food. They will need vendors like GrowNYC who are able to deliver affordable local food to their programs. They will need training and technical assistance such as *The Teaching Kitchen* provides to implement change at a sustainable level. They will need funding to buy equipment and make facilities improvements. Ideally, they will need a wide range of additional resources – menus and recipes, support from registered dietitians for menu design and client engagement, and more.

### **Incremental Change is Sustainable**

*The Teaching Kitchen* works with organizations for a full year to help them serve more fresh healthy and local food. We have organizations set three goals at a time (e.g., add a fresh vegetable, add a whole grain, make salad dressing, add a vegetarian meal), help them meet these goals over an initial three months, trouble-shooting as needed, and then work to set new ones. We help organizations implement change the same way we did it in our own kitchens – small, incremental change over a long period of time.

After working with 117 programs to get them to serve more healthy, fresh and local food, we can tell you that sourcing locally is the last goal most organizations reach and the hardest for them to achieve organizationally. It almost always requires top-down organizational will to take on significant organizational change – to not just add a few things to the menu, but to begin to reimagine their food program and to accept that there will be impacts across the organization.

### **Conclusion**

Local sourcing for government-funded meals is not prohibitively expensive and carries enormous benefits. Lenox Hill Neighborhood House serves 400,000 government-funded meals annually and sources more than 30% of our food locally, including more than 50% of our produce. To date, we have helped 117 other nonprofit food service programs to serve more fresh, healthy and local food.

We believe all City-funded meals should include a mandate for local sourcing. Sourcing food locally:

- Benefits public health,
- Strengthens local farms and the local economy,
- Protects New York City's watershed, and
- Increases our environmental sustainability and regional resiliency.

Thank you for consideration of this testimony and for your efforts to increase local procurement in New York's public plate meals.

**Enclosures:**

*The Teaching Kitchen* brochure

List of *Teaching Kitchen* trainees

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House Innovative Senior Center Menu



LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

### Lenox Hill Neighborhood House

Founded in 1894, Lenox Hill Neighborhood House is a settlement house on the East Side of Manhattan that is the frontrunner in the local farm-to-institution movement. We serve 390,000 fresh and healthy meals to low-income New Yorkers annually, with a focus on scratch cooking and plant-based meals. We serve more than 60% vegetarian meals and use more than 90% fresh produce (30-40% locally sourced), regionally grown and milled whole grains and sustainable fish.



### Farm-to-Institution Goals

- Improve the health of low-income New Yorkers by making government-funded meals healthier
- Localize New York’s institutional food systems and strengthen the region’s farms, economy and sustainability
- Provide the next generation of institutional cooks and program staff with the knowledge and skills to build a healthier, more sustainable and more equitable food system

*The Teaching Kitchen* helps organizations serve more healthy and local food through a focus on serving plant-based meals, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and less processed food.

The New York State Health Foundation awarded *The Teaching Kitchen* their Emerging Innovator Award.

# THE TEACHING KITCHEN

AT LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE



Lenox Hill Neighborhood House’s training and technical assistance program is designed to help nonprofit organizations convert their food services to a farm-to-institution model.



THE TEACHING KITCHEN works with organizations for a full year to help them serve more fresh, healthy and local food - without raising costs.

For rates, availability and information on financial assistance, contact:

**Leah Gable, MSW/ MPH**

*Teaching Kitchen* Administration Manager

Lenox Hill Neighborhood House

(212) 218-0481

lgable@lenoxhill.org

[www.lenoxhill.org/teachingkitchen](http://www.lenoxhill.org/teachingkitchen)



LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

331 East 70th Street, New York, NY 10021

Above and inside left photo by Keith MacDonald/ [www.macdo.co](http://www.macdo.co)

## Teaching Kitchen Instructors

### Executive Chef Lynn Loflin

As the Neighborhood House's first Executive Chef, Lynn led the expansion and transformation of our food services to a farm-to-institution model. She has a Culinary Arts Degree from the New York Restaurant School and taught culinary arts at Columbia University's Institute of Human Nutrition. She owns and operates Newton Farm in the Catskills.

### Chef Evelyn Garcia

Evelyn is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park and spent several years as both a chef as well as a culinary educator at Cornell Cooperative Extension and Stony Kill Farm. She was chosen as a 40-under-40 Rising Star by the Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center.

### Chef Seema Pai

Seema left her position as an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Boston University's School of Management to pursue her passion for food and went on to work in the kitchens of James Beard and Michelin-star-awarded chefs. Seema has an MBA and a PhD in Business and Marketing from the University of Southern California.



## Program Description

*The Teaching Kitchen* is a year-long program designed to help organizations implement change at their own pace. We begin with a day-long food business course and hands-on training, followed by technical assistance, guidance in setting and meeting individualized goals, professional development workshops, recipe and information sharing and more.

Designed around a core set of goals and outcomes to transform institutional food service programs, *The Teaching Kitchen* is currently developing a distance learning model to expand our impact across New York City, New York State and beyond.



## Program Components

- One-day initial training and collaborative learning in our state-of-the-art classrooms and kitchen
- One year of technical assistance
- Themed cooking workshops every other month
- *Teaching Kitchen* chef consultation in your kitchen
- Distance learning curriculum in development

## Program Resources

- Website [www.lenoxhill.org/teachingkitchen](http://www.lenoxhill.org/teachingkitchen)
- Farm-to-Institution Cookbook
- 100+ healthy and delicious institutional recipes provided on the website
- Facebook and Instagram
- *The Teaching Kitchen* Guidebook and materials

## One-Day Training Details

- Hours: 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Location: 331 East 70th Street, New York, NY 10021; some off-site trainings available based on circumstance
- Clothing: Kitchen-appropriate attire
- Attendees: Two staff members from each organization, a Chef or Head Cook and a Program Administrator

## Who should participate in this program?

Nonprofit food service program directors, chefs, managers and nutritionists and all those who design menus, order food supplies, provide oversight and prepare food.



LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE  
SINCE 1894

**Nonprofit Organizations That Have Participated in  
The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House  
January 14, 2019**

Acacia Network (six programs), Bay Ridge Senior Center, B'Above Early Learning Center, Bedford Stuyvesant Early Childhood Development Center (two programs), Bellevue Day Care Center, Billy Martin Child Development Center, Bronx Baptist Day Care and Learning Center, BronxWorks (six programs), Brooklyn Community Services, Brooklyn Kindergarten Society (seven programs), Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens (two programs), Children of Promise, Chinese American Planning Council (two programs), Citizens Care Day Care Center, Community Access, Community Life Center, Concerned Parents of Jamaica Early Learning Center (two programs), Covenant House, Cypress Hills, East Harlem Block Nursery, Educational Alliance (two programs), Family Life Academy Charter School, Fort Greene Senior Citizens Council (two programs), Future of America Learning Center, Goddard Riverside, Grand Street Settlement, HANAC (two programs), HCHCIC Ace Integration Head Start, Henry Street Settlement, Highbridge Advisory Council, Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement, Jamaica Service Program for Older Adults (three programs), The Jewish Board (five programs), Joint Council for Economic Opportunity, Millennium Development, Mosholu Montefiore (three programs), Neighbors Together Community Café, North Bronx National Council of Negro Women, Northside Center, NYC Health + Hospitals Lincoln Towers Café, Project FIND, Odyssey House, Presbyterian Senior Services (five programs), Project Hospitality (four programs), Project Renewal, Queens Community House (three programs), Riseboro Community Partnerships (six programs), SCO Family of Services, Senior Citizens Council of Clinton County Inc. Nutrition Program, St. John's Bread and Life, St. Mark's Head Start (two programs), St. Nicks Alliance (three programs), Stanley M. Isaacs Neighborhood Center, Sunnyside Community Services, The Door, Trabajamos Community Head Start, Two Bridges, Union Settlement (three programs), United Community Centers, and YM & YWHA of Washington Heights and Inwood.



LENOX HILL  
NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE  
CENTER @ LENOX HILL  
NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

# DINING MENU

## JANUARY 2020

343 East 70th Street, New York, NY 10021  
(212) 218-0319  
www.lenoxhill.org | center@lenoxhill.org

### WEEK OF DECEMBER 30-JANUARY 5

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
MON 12/30	<b>Bran Muffin;</b> apple butter; and cottage cheese	<b>Chicken Stew with Pumpkin and Ginger;</b> brown rice; and sauteed string beans	<b>Spinach and Mozzarella Quiche;</b> whole wheat bread; and garden salad
TUES 12/31	<b>CLOSED</b>	<b>Black Bean and Sweet Potato Chili;</b> barley pilaf; and arugula salad	<b>CLOSED</b>
WED 1/1	<b>CLOSED</b>	<b>Chicken Gumbo;</b> brown rice; and lemony kale	<b>CLOSED</b>
THUR 1/2	<b>Buckwheat Pancakes;</b> cottage cheese; and apple butter	<b>Squash and Leek Lasagna;</b> whole wheat roll; and romaine, carrot, beet and chickpea salad	<b>Beef Stew;</b> barley pilaf; and sauteed string beans
FRI 1/3	<b>Scrambled Eggs with Cheddar;</b> bran flakes; and whole wheat bread	<b>Ginger and Lime Salmon;</b> bulgur; and cauliflower with carrots and parsley	<b>Basil Pesto Pasta with Broccoli;</b> corn, black bean, cabbage and pepper salad
SAT 1/4	<b>Oatmeal;</b> plain yogurt; and whole wheat English muffin	<b>Veggie Burger;</b> whole wheat bun; tomato; ketchup; cabbage and kidney bean salad with cumin dressing	<b>BBQ Chicken Thighs;</b> cheesy grits; and spinach, mushroom and red onion salad
SUN 1/5	<b>Spinach and Parmesan Omelette;</b> whole wheat bread; and Multigrain Cheerios	<b>Bulgur con Pollo;</b> whole wheat roll; and kale, romaine, apple, red cabbage and Parmesan Salad	<b>Chickpea Stew with Potatoes and Kale;</b> brown rice; and garden salad

#### MONTHLY NUTRITIONAL HIGHLIGHT:

##### *Buckwheat*

*This month we are adding a new breakfast item to our menus—buckwheat pancakes! Buckwheat may improve heart health, is a good source of protein and fiber, and can improve digestion. The grain has a distinctive nutty flavor that is a great addition to baked goods.*

#### Featured Local Farms

REEVES FARM  
BALDWINVILLE, NY  
Butternut Squash

DAGELE BROTHERS PRODUCE  
FLORIDA, NY  
Brussels Sprouts

BLACK HORSE FARM  
COXSACKIE, NY  
Sweet Potatoes

COUNTRY HILL PRODUCE  
KINZERS, PA  
Kohlrabi

**FRESH FRUIT SERVED WITH EVERY MEAL**

#### COOKING CLASSES AND NUTRITIONAL EVENTS:

##### Cooking Class

January 6  
3:00 pm

Center Kitchen

*Aviva Wolf-Jacobs, our Avodah Corps Member, will be making a Mediterranean salad*

### WEEK OF JANUARY 6-12

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
MON 1/6	<b>Ancient Grains Cereal;</b> whole wheat bagel; and plain yogurt	<b>Sweet and Sour Tofu;</b> brown rice; and baby spinach salad	<b>Tuna Fish Salad;</b> whole wheat bread; and romaine, kale, pepper, black olive and feta salad
TUES 1/7	<b>Blueberry Muffin;</b> plain yogurt; and cranberry coconut granola	<b>Baked Turkey Breast with Mushroom, Pepper and Onion Sauce;</b> whole wheat roll; and baked sweet potato	<b>Cauliflower Chickpea Bulgur Bake;</b> whole wheat bread; and garden salad
WED 1/8	<b>Scrambled Eggs;</b> bran flakes cereal; and multigrain bread	<b>Moroccan Chickpea Stew with Chard;</b> barley; and beet, arugula and feta salad	<b>Baked Fish Fillets with Creole Sauce;</b> quinoa and wheatberries; and roasted parsnips and turnips
THUR 1/9	<b>Banana French Toast Casserole;</b> and cottage cheese	<b>Bacalao (Stewed Codfish);</b> brown rice; cabbage and carrot slaw; and baked plantains	<b>Tofu Broccoli Curry;</b> brown rice with mushrooms; romaine, kale, pepper, black olive and feta salad
FRI 1/10	<b>Shakshuka (Baked Eggs with Tomatoes and Peppers);</b> whole wheat bread	<b>Lentil Stew with Carrots and Turnips;</b> bulgur; and arugula salad	<b>Spaghetti Carbonara with Green Peas and Turkey Bacon;</b> baby spinach salad; and roasted winter squash
SAT 1/11	<b>Bulgur and Hot Coconut Hot Porridge;</b> hard boiled egg; and whole wheat bread	<b>Chicken Chasseur;</b> polenta; and lemony kale	<b>Vegetable Frittata;</b> cornbread; and romaine, apple and beet salad
SUN 1/12	<b>Omelette with Peppers and Onions;</b> bran flakes cereal; whole wheat bread	<b>Black Bean and Sweet Potato Chili;</b> barley; and garden salad	<b>Hamburger;</b> whole wheat bun; tomato; ketchup; and wheat berry salad with dried fruit and nuts

**Breakfast: 8:15–9 AM** Check in from 8-9      **Lunch: 11:30–12:30 PM** Check in from 9:15-12:30      **Dinner: 5:30-6:30 PM** Check in from 4:30-6:30  
All meals are first come, first served until the meal end time or until all food has been served. If you would like a veggie burger in lieu of the entree, please inform the front desk at least 15 minutes prior to lunch or dinner starting, 11:15am or 5:15pm respectively. Cottage cheese in lieu of the entree can be requested until the end of lunch or dinner. Voluntary contribution: Breakfast \$1; Lunch \$1.50; Dinner \$1.50

## WEEK OF JANUARY 13-19

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
MON 1/13	<b>Hot Ancient Grains Cereal;</b> hard boiled egg; multigrain bread	<b>Italian Roasted Chicken;</b> quinoa and wheatberries; and broccoli with toasted garlic	<b>Vegetable Biryani with Chickpeas;</b> pita; garden salad; and raita yogurt
TUES 1/14	<b>Cranberry and Coconut Granola;</b> low-fat plain yogurt; and English Muffin	<b>Vegetable Lasagna;</b> whole wheat roll; and tossed salad	<b>Chicken Stew with Ginger and Pumpkin;</b> barley; and mixed greens salad
WED 1/15	<b>Buckwheat Pancakes;</b> cottage cheese; and apple butter	<b>Baked Cod with Lemon Garlic Sauce;</b> quinoa; and cabbage and carrot slaw	<b>Butternut Squash Macaroni and Cheese;</b> romaine, carrot, beet and chickpea salad
THUR 1/16	<b>Omelette with Peppers and Onions;</b> bran flakes cereal; and whole wheat bread	<b>Chana Masala;</b> bulgur; and spinach, mushroom, and red onion salad	<b>Baked Salmon with Lemon, Tarragon and Thyme;</b> brown rice; and roasted brussels sprouts
FRI 1/17	<b>Cranberry and Coconut Granola;</b> low-fat plain yogurt; and whole wheat bagel	<b>Turkey Burger;</b> whole wheat bun; tomato; ketchup; and cabbage, corn and black bean salad	<b>Quinoa, Corn, and Kidney Bean Enchilada Casserole;</b> romaine, kale, pepper, black olive and feta salad
SAT 1/18	<b>Scrambled Eggs;</b> turkey bacon; whole wheat bread	<b>Vegetarian Chili;</b> brown rice; and mixed greens salad	<b>Chicken Ragu with Whole Wheat Pasta;</b> steamed carrots and green beans
SUN 1/19	<b>Whole Wheat Bagel;</b> cottage cheese; and apple butter	<b>Tuna Fish Salad;</b> whole wheat bread; and romaine, carrot, beet and chickpea salad	<b>Spinach and Mozzarella Quiche;</b> whole wheat bread; and beet, arugula and feta salad

## WEEK OF JANUARY 20-26

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
MON 1/20	<b>Scrambled Eggs;</b> Multigrain Cheerios; and whole wheat bread	<b>Veggie Meatballs in Tomato Sauce;</b> polenta; and beet and arugula salad	<b>Teriyaki Chicken Thighs;</b> quinoa and wheatberries; and sauteed bok choy
TUES 1/21	<b>Ancient Grains Hot Cereal;</b> hard boiled egg; and multigrain bread	<b>Coconut Curried Cod;</b> brown rice; and kale with tomatoes	<b>Vegetable Baked Ziti;</b> romaine, kale, pepper, black olive and feta salad
WED 1/22	<b>Coconut Cranberry Granola;</b> plain yogurt; and whole wheat bagel	<b>Cauliflower Chickpea Bulgur Bake;</b> and spinach, mushroom and red onion salad	<b>Stuffed Peppers with Turkey;</b> whole wheat bread; and garden salad
THUR 1/23	<b>Banana French Toast Casserole;</b> and cottage cheese	<b>Beef Stew;</b> barley with parmesan; and steamed broccoli	<b>Vegetable Frittata;</b> whole wheat dinner roll; kale, romaine, apple, red cabbage and parmesan Salad
FRI 1/24	<b>Scrambled Eggs;</b> whole wheat bread; and Multigrain Cheerios	<b>Squash and Leek Lasagna;</b> whole wheat bread; and romaine, kale, pepper, black olive and feta salad	<b>Baked Salmon with Cilantro Citrus Sauce;</b> brown rice; stewed cauliflower with tomatoes
SAT 1/25	<b>Shakshuka (Baked Eggs with Onions and Peppers);</b> and whole wheat bread	<b>BBQ Chicken Breast;</b> cheesy grits; and sauteed green beans	<b>Spaghetti Carbonara with Green Peas and Turkey Bacon;</b> beet, arugula and feta salad
SUN 1/26	<b>Oatmeal;</b> plain yogurt; and whole wheat English muffin	<b>Potato and Spinach Frittata;</b> whole wheat bread; and garden salad	<b>Spanish Baked Chicken;</b> barley; roasted butternut squash

## WEEK OF JANUARY 27-FEBRUARY 3

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
MON 1/27	<b>Carrot Muffin;</b> apple butter; and cottage cheese	<b>Tuna Fish Salad;</b> whole wheat bread; and kale, romaine, apple, red cabbage and Parmesan salad	<b>Lentil Stew with Carrots and Turnips;</b> bulgur; and baby spinach salad
TUES 1/28	<b>Plain Yogurt with Tropical Meusli;</b> and whole wheat roll	<b>Butternut Squash Macaroni and Cheese;</b> whole wheat bread; romaine, carrot, beet and chickpea salad	<b>Baked Chicken Thighs with Moroccan Style Sauce;</b> brown rice; and brussels sprouts
WED 1/29	<b>Omelette with Spinach and Parmesan Cheese;</b> bran flakes cereal; and multigrain bread	<b>Turkey Meatballs with Tomato Sauce;</b> cheesy grits; and roasted cauliflower	<b>Grilled Mozzarella and Tomato Sandwich;</b> mushroom barley soup; and garden salad
THUR 1/30	<b>Bulgur and Coconut Hot Porridge;</b> hard boiled egg; and whole wheat bread	<b>Vegetable Lasagna;</b> whole wheat roll; and baby spinach salad	<b>Baked Salmon with Lemon, Tarragon and Thyme;</b> barley, corn and black bean salad; and sauteed string beans
FRI 2/1	<b>Coconut Cranberry Granola;</b> cottage cheese; and whole wheat bagel	<b>Spanish Chicken Stew with Potatoes and Garlic;</b> brown rice; and braised collard greens	<b>Moroccan Chickpea Stew with Chard;</b> bulgur; and steamed broccoli
SAT 2/2	<b>Pumpkin Muffin;</b> ancient grains hot cereal; and plain yogurt	<b>Spinach Mozzarella Quiche;</b> whole wheat bread; and beet and arugula salad	<b>Shepherd's Pie;</b> whole wheat dinner roll; kale, romaine, apple, red cabbage and Parmesan salad
SUN 2/3	<b>Scrambled Eggs;</b> whole wheat bread; and Multigrain Cheerios	<b>Baked Turkey Breast;</b> quinoa and wheatberry pilaf; and braised red cabbage with apples	<b>Vegetable Biryani with Chickpeas;</b> pita; raita yogurt; and garden salad

**Breakfast: 8:15-9 AM** Check in from 8-9 **Lunch: 11:30-12:30 PM** Check in from 9:15-12:30 **Dinner: 5:30-6:30 PM** Check in from 4:30-6:30  
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 We reserve the right to change the menu as needed, based on product availability or other circumstances. The Center @ Lenox Hill Neighborhood House is funded by the New York City Department for the Aging and private support and contributions.



Stuart Appelbaum, *President*  
Jack C. Wurm, Jr., *Secretary-Treasurer*  
Joseph Dorismond, *Recorder*

**Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union**

**New York City Council Contracts  
Contracts Committee Oversight Hearing Testimony  
In relation to for Local Law 50 of 2011 & Local Law 52 of 2011  
January 15, 2020**

The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) represents over 100,000 workers primarily in retail, food processing, and other low wage sectors, including thousands of workers in the food supply chain.

We would like to thank Council Member Kallos for holding the Contracts Committee oversight hearing on January 14, 2020. We would also like to thank Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer for her longstanding leadership and continuing interest in this important issue.

Procurement can be a complex policy area, but it deserves close attention given that our agencies spend billions of dollars each year procuring goods and services to make our city run. We commend any effort by the City to ensure that it is using its purchasing power to raise the floor for suppliers, particularly in our food procurement.

The RWDSU represents thousands of workers in the food supply chain throughout the United States. We have members who work directly in food production at meat processing, poultry and cereal plants as well as members working in the indirect food service industry that packages, delivers and supplies meals. These industries are often stricken with labor abuses and union representation makes all the difference for workers and their families. Ensuring that the food we serve to our school children, our homeless residents and other vulnerable populations is sourced from highroad employers that recognize and value workers having a union voice in the workplace should be a top priority for the City.

The RWDSU believes that creating greater levels of transparency is a critical part of reforming the City's food procurement process. The public should be informed of detailed information on who we procure food from: facility address, supplier details, history of labor violations and workplace injuries, as well as information relevant to other key areas like environmental sustainability. This information will allow procurement officers to make fully informed decisions as well as allow communities to uphold greater levels of accountability.

The RWDSU is a member of the New York City Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition and we believe that the proposed Good Food Purchasing Program will be an important measure to reform food procurement. However, we also believe that there are other measures that can be taken by the City to promote transparency, such as requiring more specific and detailed supplier information in procurement contracts, including this information in relevant city databases and introducing a workforce component in the city food metrics report required by Local Law 52 of 2011.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Hearing: Oversight - Local Food Procurement

Date: January 14, 2020

Testimony From: CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute

Author: Craig Willingham, Deputy Director

Good afternoon committee members. By scheduling this oversight hearing on local food procurement, the Contracts Committee is working to ensure that the City purchases food not only to improve the health of New Yorkers but also to support our region's economy. Local Law 50 of 2011 encourages City agencies and vendors to purchase food grown or produced in New York State and Local Law 52 of 2011 requires the annual food metrics report to account for the money spent on local or regionally-sourced food. Both laws have provided the building blocks for improving the city's local procurement practices. Now, nearly ten years after they were enacted, it's time we look for additional ways to grow our local food purchasing.

The CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute has done extensive research on how public procurement can provide healthier food for New York while requiring good, fair practices by the producers and distributors doing business with the City. We are the research lead for New York City's Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) coalition, and recently published a study showing how large cities like New York can use the GFPP to support food businesses that contribute to health and wellbeing.

Last September the Council reviewed Intro 1660, the proposal to create a good food purchasing program. This was an important step towards adopting a values based procurement approach. The GFPP's core values; local economies, health, valued workforce, animal welfare, and environmental sustainability, should be as critical to deciding which vendor is awarded a bid as price is. The council can play a vital role in supporting the adoption of a GFPP values based framework by enacting Intro 1660, which will expand upon Local Law 50 of 2011, and by ensuring that strong oversight be the cornerstone of any eventual law.

Our current procurement landscape is one where State procurement law and New York City's Procurement Policy Board (PPB) rules work together to avoid corruption and ensure that city agencies are getting the best possible product for the lowest possible price. More specifically, New York State's General Municipal Law (GML) 104 requires that contract awards go "to the lowest responsible bidder." While GML 104 does a fine job at speaking to fiscal responsibility it falls short on filtering out bad actors with poor records on issues like environmental safety, fair labor standards, and support for local economies. Similarly, the Procurement Policy Board establishes and maintains rules for soliciting bids or proposals and awarding contracts. However,



the board is guided by the restrictions laid out in GML 104, and in doing so reinforces the law's shortcomings. Although, this does not need to be the case. The council can call for a review of the City's contract specification writing process in an effort to identify opportunities for changing its approach to contracting. The City can do much more to use its procurement specifications to achieve important public goals like improved health, labor standards, environmental protection, and economic development. While GML 104 requires municipalities to procure from the lowest responsible bidder, the city has leeway to restrict its buying to responsible bidders who produce healthy products that are grown, raised and processed responsibly – for workers, animals, the environment, and the local economy. We urge the City Council to consider requiring the PPB to adopt GFPP procurement guidelines similar to those found in Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

The issues limiting the City's ability to improve local food purchasing are wide ranging. One of our recent research projects revealed the operational limitations faced by some city agencies. We investigated procurement practices at early care centers, senior centers, and emergency food assistance providers (e.g., food pantries and soup kitchens) in Central Brooklyn and identified a number of barriers to increasing local food procurement. These included delivery challenges, lack of local procurement knowledge, high prices, lack of on-site storage and equipment, quality of the food, and finding adequate suppliers. These barriers represent strategic entry points for change that the Council can and should take note of when thinking about ways to advance healthier and more equitable food environments through local food procurement practices.

Lastly, as part of a comprehensive approach toward improving local food procurement we believe New York City also needs to better understand the shortcomings of our current food system when viewed through a food and health equity lens. In August of 2019 Speaker Johnson's office released an excellent food equity report, which highlighted issues related to food governance, food insecurity, food access and a number of other related factors driving food system inequality in New York City and throughout the region. The council can begin to address these issues by enacting Intro 1664, another bill brought before the council in September 2019 that would establish a food plan for the City. With a food plan for New York City in place, we can then begin working with state and regional jurisdictions to develop a regional food equity plan, one with food procurement front and center. The City of New York with its enormous buying power can and should play a leading role in shaping food procurement policy at the regional level. Our Institute is working to identify evidence to support local and regional food planning efforts and would be happy to work with the Council on this issue.

Enacting a New York City food plan, helping to address the operational barriers of agencies looking to buy more local food, and adopting the GFFP standards are just some of the ways that





the city can improve on its local food procurement efforts. Additional recommendations for improving local procurement include:

- Requiring a percentage of food purchased using tax-levied dollars be locally grown and incorporate this mandate into the next iteration of the New York City Food Standards.
- Invest in the creation and maintenance of local food hubs in all five boroughs using city-state partnerships to enable just-in-time delivery of food and thereby reduce the need for individual organizations to have on-site storage equipment.
- Increase outreach and provide more resources to minority and women owned business enterprises (MWBES) to help expand the number of certified local food suppliers and distributors. This would build local procurement knowledge and grow a network of suppliers for city agencies, local businesses, and organizations.
- Track and consistently report on local food purchases in all future New York City Food Metrics Reports.



**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

16

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Craig Willingham

Address: 88 Green St. BK 11222

I represent: CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute

Address: 55 West 125th St, NY, NY

**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: 01/14/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: RIBKA GETACHEW

Address: 110 WALL ST. NEW YORK, NY 10005

I represent: GOOD FOOD PURCHASING CAMPAIGN (COMMUNITY FOOD ADVOCATE)

Address: 110 WALL ST. NEW YORK, NY 10005

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

(14)

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Charles Platin

Address: 2180 3rd Ave

I represent: Hunter College NYC Food Policy Center

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 50452 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chef Greg Silverman

Address: 263 W 86th NY NY 10024

I represent: West Side Campaign Against Hoax

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 50452 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: REBECCA JOHNSON

Address: 31 St 125th St NYC 10027

I represent: Rollback in the schools

Address: SAME AS ABOVE

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 50452 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mark Izerman

Address: C/O NROC 40 West 20th St

I represent: Natural Resources Defense Council

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: 1/14/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: LAUREN PHILLIPS

Address: 39 B'WAY NY, NY 10006

I represent: Food Bank For New York City

Address: 39 B'Way 10006

**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: 1/14/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: VICTOR O. OLDS

Address: 253 Broadway

I represent: Mayor's Office of Contract Services

Address: 253 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: 1/19/20

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: KATE MACKENZIE

Address: 253 BWAY

I represent: Mayor's Office of Food Policy

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: RYAN A. MOREAY

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: MCCS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 1707D 5600 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: DAVID FRENCH

Address: LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE 331 E 70TH ST NY 10021

I represent: LENOX HILL NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

Address: 331 E. 70TH ST. NY, NY 10021

**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: 1/14/80

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Mersida Ibanc

Address: 1 Centre Street, NY, NY 10007

I represent: DCAS

Address: 1 Centre Street

**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: Adam Buchanan (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: DCAS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 50/52 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 1/14/2020

Name: Manhattan Borough Pres. Gale Biewer (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1 Centre St. 19th fl.

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: 1/14/20

Name: Juha Van Loon (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: P.O. Box 93 NY NY 10028

I represent: Slate Foods, Inc

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: CHARLOTTE JAMAINGIAN

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

I represent: NYC DOE

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: 1/14/2020

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Moshe Becker

Address: 44-36 Vernon Blvd LIC

I represent: NYC DOE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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