

December 4, 2024

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to prioritize statewide food security programs and initiatives in your upcoming Executive Budget. With poverty and food insecurity on the rise, our state must step up to ensure all New Yorkers have consistent access to healthy, locally grown, and culturally appropriate foods in their communities.

A [report](#) from the New York State Comptroller's Office released in May determined that food insecurity rates rose significantly in 2022. This spike coincided with the expiration of SNAP Emergency Allotments; child nutrition waivers which allowed schools to provide universal free school meals; and the temporary Child Tax Credit expansion in 2021, which was credited with bringing the child poverty rate to its lowest point on record. More [recent data](#) from the U.S. Census Bureau finds that, despite strong job and wage growth, poverty remains significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. To underscore how this translates to our state: New York's network of food banks, pantries, and community-based organizations reported serving nearly 70% more households and individuals between 2023-2024 compared to 2019.

Thankfully, New York has tools at its disposal to address the immediate reality of hunger while also enacting policies to reduce poverty and food hardship more broadly. Together, we urge New York State to:

1. **Establish Healthy School Meals for *All* New York Kids.** Providing universal school meals alleviates food insecurity, supports learning, and bolsters children's mental and physical health, all while saving families an estimated \$165 per month per child in food costs. Despite progress in recent years, hundreds of thousands of New York students still lack access to free school meals, primarily in high-cost-of-living areas like Long Island where families are struggling to make ends meet. Expanding universal free school meals statewide is the best way to ensure equitable access for all students while making New York more affordable for families. New Yorkers overwhelmingly agree; polls show 77% of registered voters support state funding for Healthy School Meals for All.
2. **Guarantee that all New Yorkers participating in SNAP receive a more adequate benefit of at least \$100 per month.** Following the end of SNAP Emergency Allotments, some New Yorkers saw their monthly benefits drop to just \$23 per month. Over 107,000 New Yorkers would benefit from this initiative—in particular older adults making around \$16,000 per year, including roughly a quarter of whom are actively participating in SSI. This proposal would benefit an extremely vulnerable population currently receiving less than \$1 per day. That is why a bipartisan coalition of legislators and 66% of New York

voters support the idea. We urge you to appropriate \$70 million to ensure all New Yorkers have a monthly SNAP benefit of at least \$100 per month.

3. **Create a state-funded SNAP program that ensures all income-eligible New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, receive a monthly food assistance benefit.** Despite contributing over \$3 billion per year in state and local taxes, federal law currently excludes over 800,000 New Yorkers solely due to their immigration status, with many others subjected to an arbitrary five-year waiting period. SNAP access is a proven tool for reducing hunger and poverty, which is why New York's Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council (CPRAC) is considering a state-funded food benefit. We urge you to support CPRAC's proposal and appropriate \$141 million to extend food assistance benefits for noncitizen households with children.
4. **Maintain full funding for the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) at \$5.503 million plus a cost-of-living adjustment, sustaining previous years' \$2 million add-on for expanded services.** NOEP is the state's flagship program to ensure all who are eligible receive federally-funded SNAP benefits. NOEP's network of skilled SNAP navigators conduct outreach and provide free and confidential application assistance to food-insecure New Yorkers. Last year, NOEP helped an additional 34,000 households connect with SNAP. Participating in SNAP also connects households to other federally-funded nutrition programs, including Summer EBT, free school meals, and WIC. Every state dollar invested in SNAP outreach is federally matched, drawing down additional funds to support New York's efforts to alleviate hunger. We urge you to maintain this investment to sustain access to SNAP navigators statewide.
5. **Fully fund statewide hunger relief programs, Nourish New York and the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP).** In each of the last three enacted budgets, thanks in large part to your administration's support, our state has invested over \$22 million in additional funding for HPNAP. This supplemental funding enables New York food banks to distribute an extra 30 million pounds of food, while also helping nonprofit organizations afford the higher costs of food and transportation. Another program that deserves more support is Nourish New York, which was established in response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. This program enables food providers to purchase directly from New York-based farmers and producers, increasing New Yorkers' access to nutritious, locally sourced, and culturally relevant food grown right here in the Empire State. We urge you to build on this success and recognize a new HPNAP baseline of at least \$56.5 million and fund Nourish New York at \$75 million in your Executive Budget.
6. **Maintain funding of \$2 million for the nutrition incentive program, Double Up Food Bucks NY (DUFBNY), run by Field & Fork Network.** DUFBNY matches SNAP purchases dollar for dollar, up to \$20 per day, to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables, with an emphasis on local produce. The program is a win-win-win, increasing accessibility and affordability of local, fresh fruits and vegetables for families, increasing economic opportunities for farmers, and supporting local economies. Field & Fork Network has also successfully secured federal funding via the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program grant for DUFBNY since 2016. To date, \$4 million has been matched with New York State funds, totaling \$8

million in funds to be spent on DUFBNY. We strongly encourage you to include \$2 million in funding in your SFY 2026 Executive Budget for DUFBNY which will unlock already funded federal dollars.

Our organizations recognize that these initiatives alone will not end hunger and poverty in New York State. It is without question that more is needed to strengthen wages; ensure access to affordable housing, childcare, and health care; and address systemic injustices that perpetuate inequality. However, through these investments, we can meet urgent food security needs and help affirm healthy food as a basic human right for all New Yorkers.

Thank you for your work on behalf of New York families.

Respectfully,

**Statewide Organizations**

American Civic Association  
Citizens' Committee for Children of New York  
Coalition For Asian American Children and Families  
Community Action Planning Council  
Community Food Advocates  
Community Service Society of New York  
Equity Advocates  
FarmOn! Foundation  
Feeding New York State  
Feed Our Vets  
Field & Fork Network  
Food Systems Collaborative  
FPWA  
Hunger Free America  
Hunger Solutions New York  
Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS  
National Association of Social Workers  
New York Immigration Coalition  
New York School Nutrition Association  
New York State Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
No Kid Hungry New York  
NY StateWide Senior Action Council  
Schuyler Center for Analysis & Advocacy  
Teens for Food Justice, Inc.  
The Alliance for a Hunger Free New York  
The Skyline Charitable Foundation  
United Neighborhood Houses  
Wellness in the Schools

### **Local or Regional Organizations**

Afton FFA Food Pantry  
Alexandria Community Food Pantry  
Alianza Agrícola  
ALIGN  
All Faith's Food Pantry  
All Saints School  
Arab-American Family Support Center  
Bethany Hospitality Kitchen  
BFUMC Pack Program  
Brewerton Community Food Pantry  
Broadway Community  
Bronx Defenders  
Broome County Council of Churches  
Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus  
Buffalo Public Schools  
Cabrini Immigrant Services of NYC  
Calvary Chapel Island of Grace Food Pantry  
CAMBA, Inc.  
Camillus First United Methodist Free Bag Lunch  
Cape Vincent Community Food Pantry  
Catholic Charities Family and Community Services  
Catholic Charities of Chemung/Schuylers - Diocese of Rochester, NY  
Cattaraugus Community Action, Inc.  
Central Islip Civic Council  
Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)  
City Harvest  
Columbia Opportunities Head Start  
Community Access Service  
Community Action Southold Town (CAST), DBA Center for Advocacy, Support & Transformation  
Community Food Coalition- Tompkins  
Community Food Pantry  
Community Housing Innovations  
Community Lunch Program for Kids  
Compassion Connection Food Pantry  
Comsewogue UFSD  
Cooperstown Food Pantry, Inc.  
Croghan Food Pantry  
Deeper Life Fellowship and Deliverance Church  
Dolgeville Area Food Pantry  
Dunbar Association  
Dutchess Outreach

East Hampton Food Pantry, Inc.  
East New York Farms!  
East Rochester Community Resource Center  
ECLI-VIBES  
Edible Schoolyard NYC.org  
Edna Moran INN  
Eileen's Free Bodega  
EJOY  
Fabius Pompey Outreach  
Faith Mission INC  
Family Service League  
Farm School NYC  
Farmingdale State College  
Feeding Westchester  
FeedMore WNY  
Fellowship Baptist Church of Wyandanch  
First Christian Church of Brentwood  
Food Access Healthy Neighborhoods Now (FAHNN)  
Food Bank for New York City  
Food Bank of Central New York  
Food Bank of the Southern Tier  
Frankfort/Ilion Food Pantry Catholic Charities of Herk. Co.  
Friendship kitchen  
GardenShare  
Gerald J. Ryan Outreach Center  
God's Bread Smyrna  
Gwen's Food Pantry  
Hamptons Church Food Pantry  
Hannibal Backpack Program  
Hannibal Resource Center  
Harmony Helping Hands Food Pantry  
Hatzilu Rescue Organization  
Heart of the Hamptons  
Helping Hands Food Pantry - Boonville M.C.  
Hempstead Assembly of God:Open Arms Food Pantry  
Hicksville Boys & Girls Club  
Hispanic Brotherhood, Inc.  
Holy Church of Christ  
Holy Family Food Pantry  
Hope for Long Island Food Pantry  
Hope For Youth  
Hopkinton Food Pantry  
Horeb Food Pantry  
House of Hope Pantry

Hudson Valley Food Systems Coalition  
Human Concerns, Inc  
Iglesia Long Island Para Cristo INC  
Interfaith Community Coalition at University United Methodist Church  
Islamic Center of Long Island  
Island Harvest Food Bank  
Islip Methodist Emergency Food Pantry  
JCTOD Outreach, Inc dba Johnson Park Center  
Jericho Road Community Health Center  
Jewish Family Services - Rochester  
Joseph's Storehouse at Gloria Dei  
Karing Kitchen  
King Ferry Food Pantry, Inc.  
Kingston Emergency Food Collaborative  
Kuyahoor Valley Food Pantry  
L.I. Against Domestic Violence  
Little Falls Area Food Pantry  
Live Well Kingston Commission  
Living Water for Women, Inc.  
Lodi Food 4 All Pantry  
Long Beach Soup Kitchen  
Long Island Cares, Inc.-The Harry Chapin Food Bank  
Long Table Harvest  
Lutheran Social Services of NY New LIFE Center  
Manna Ministries  
Massachusetts Avenue Project  
McDonough Ecumenical Food Pantry  
McGray Community Food Pantry  
Mercy Soup Kitchen of Wyandanch, Inc.  
Messiah Lutheran Church and the Rotterdam Community Center  
Mexico Food Pantry  
Middle Island United Church of Christ  
Ministerio Jesucristo Vive  
Montauk Food Pantry  
Morrisville Community Church Food Pantry  
Most Holy Rosary Food Pantry  
New Life Ministries  
Norfolk Raymondville Food Pantry  
North Fork Parish Outreach  
Northminster Early Childhood Center  
Nourish Babylon at Christ Episcopal Church  
NSCC Food Pantry  
Open Arms Care Center  
Our Daily Bread

Our Lady of Fatima Outreach  
P.E.A.C.E. Afterschool Program, Inc.  
Parish Ecumenical Food Pantry  
Partners in Nutrition LLC  
Partnership for the Public Good  
Penfield Hope  
People's Place  
Poospatuck Food Service  
Presbyterian Church of the Moriches Community Food Pantry  
Project Hospitality Inc  
Pronto of Long Island  
Proyecto Faro  
Pulaski Community Cupboard  
Redfield Food Pantry  
Regional Food Bank of NENY  
Repairers Of The Broken Inc (dba) The Manna Project of Long Island  
Resurrection House, Inc.  
Rethink Food  
Rise Life Services-The Main Street Market  
Rock Steady Farm  
S. Patrick's Food Pantry  
Sacred Heart of Island Park, NY Food Pantry  
Safety Net Project at the Urban Justice Center  
Saint Francis Bridgeport Food pantry  
Saint Vincent de Paul  
Sakhi for South Asian Survivors  
Sauti Yetu Center for African Women  
Schenectady County Food Council  
Shepherd's Food Pantry  
Sid Jacobson Jewish Community Center  
Southern Missionary Baptist Church  
Southside United-Los Sures  
St Francis of Assisi SVDP  
St Nicholas Food Pantry  
St Patrick's Food Pantry  
St Vincent de Paul Society  
St. Aloysius Interfaith Food Pantry  
St. Alphonsus Food Pantry  
St. Anne Parish Outreach  
St. Bernard's Church  
St. Brigid R.C. Church  
St. Edward Church  
St. Gerard Majella Food Pantry  
St. Ignatius Human Services - food pantry

St. John Nepomucene PSM, The Bob Walther Food Pantry  
St. John's evangelical Lutheran church  
St. John's Lutheran church  
St. John's Outreach Food Pantry  
St. Joseph's Outreach  
St. Jude Parish Outreach  
St. Luke's RC Church, Brentwood  
St. Mary's food pantry  
St. Sylvester Parish Social Ministry  
Suffolk Y JCC  
SUNY Old Westbury Panther Food Pantry  
Syracuse Community Connections  
Syracuse-Onondaga Food Systems Alliance  
Tenants Association  
The Campaign Against Hunger  
The Community Program Centers of LI  
The Generals Cupboard  
The Greater Syracuse South Side Neighborhood Association  
The INN( Donald Axinn INN)  
The Westbury Divine Church Of God  
Tompkins County Workers' Center  
Town of Verona Food Pantry  
Tri-Town Food Pantry  
Trinity's Services And Food for the Homeless, Inc.  
United Talmudical Academy of Boro Park  
United Way of Mid Rural New York  
United Way of New York City  
United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region  
United Way of the Greater Capital Region  
United Way of Westchester and Putnam  
Urban Jobs Task Force of Syracuse  
Valley Worship Center Church of the Nazarene  
Venture Compassionate Ministries, Inc.  
Watertown Urban Mission  
Waterville Area Food Pantry  
West Side Campaign Against Hunger  
West Winfield Food Pantry  
Westbury United Methodist Church Food Pantry  
Westcott Community Center  
Westminster United Presbyterian Chuy  
Whelen  
Womankind  
Word of Life IACLE  
Zion Hill Missionary Baptist Church