

## What the Federal Budget Talks Mean for NYC

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by *Triada Stampas*

With the ongoing budget and deficit reduction talks in Washington, a lot is unclear. However, **budget negotiations that began this spring have broadcast loud-and-clear that the federal safety net for low-income Americans could be slashed to ribbons.**

In late April, the House of Representatives passed a federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Budget Resolution that brutally cut funding for programs like Medicaid, [Food Stamps](#) (SNAP), the [Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants and Children](#) (WIC) and [low-income housing](#). At the same time, significant reductions in commodity purchases for the federal [Emergency Food Assistance Program](#) (TEFAP) mean that [food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters](#) — the resource of last resort for [those struggling to afford food](#) — would be unable to maintain existing levels of service, let alone meet the additional need that reductions in SNAP, WIC and other benefits would clearly create.

### TAKE ACTION

Tell President Obama & our Congressional leaders:  
Don't balance the budget on the backs of America's poor and hungry!

With a broad blueprint for overall expenditures in its Budget Resolution, the House then passed a detailed spending plan in an [Agriculture Appropriations bill](#) that would make further cuts to TEFAP and other [nutrition assistance](#) programs. **The combined impact of these cuts on the emergency food supply in New York City would be a loss of 10 million meals for New Yorkers in need, or approximately one sixth of the Food Bank's food supply.**

The current budget negotiations are occurring in a political environment dominated by concerns about the size of the federal budget deficit and spending. And pressure to limit federal spending and reduce the budget may come at the expense of safety net programs, as the House Budget Resolution and Agriculture Appropriations bill demonstrate.

Current negotiations between the White House and Congressional leaders will determine whether deficit reduction goals can be reached while protecting [the most vulnerable among us](#), such as the poor, the [sick, children](#) and the [elderly](#).

TEFAP and SNAP are the United State's two major supports for [low-income](#), food-poor Americans. Last year in New York City alone, TEFAP helped supply more than 28 million meals for New Yorkers in need, and SNAP provided low-income New Yorkers more than \$3 billion for food purchases.

The ongoing negotiations carry even greater import as it is widely recognized that they will set the stage for next year's reauthorization of the [Farm Bill](#), which will set spending levels for TEFAP and SNAP for the following five years.

We hope that you will [stay tuned](#) for updates and [opportunities to take action](#) on this historic round of budget negotiations and their potential affect on low-income New Yorkers by continuing to read this blog, subscribing to Food Bank [e-newsletters](#) or joining us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#). Please consider taking action now — visit our [Advocacy page](#) to see how you can make a difference!

*Triada Stampas works to inform government officials, policy makers and the general public about the needs of the city's network of emergency food organizations and the more than 1.3 million people who rely on them; and to advance public policy that meets those needs.*

