



## **Food Bank For New York City's FY25 New York City Budget Priorities**

### **Executive Summary**

As the City Council and Mayor's Office negotiate the FY25 City budget, Food Bank For New York City will work with partners to advocate to our city leaders to protect and enhance funding for direct food assistance, benefits outreach and access, city-wide food initiatives, and other programs New Yorkers rely on.

**The work of Food Bank For New York City and our member organizations would not be possible without support from the City Council and City funding.** The FY25 NYC budget must invest resources to help mitigate the continuing increased demand for food assistance in New York City and provide support to the community-based organization on the ground at the frontlines of the fight against hunger.

**Our network of community partners is being asked to do more with less, including serving migrants and asylum seekers.** As the high cost of food and sunset of pandemic resources strain household budgets, the food assistance network is rising to meet the increased need for food and other necessities. While our network of food assistance providers serve people without questioning immigration status, many partners report serving an increased number of migrants and asylum seekers.

The New York City budget should support and strengthen safety net and food assistance programs to help communities and families thrive.

### **Key Messages**

**Increase investments for New York City's food assistance programs:** We urge the City Council to work with Mayor Adams to ensure food assistance programs are fully funded.

- **Visits to the food assistance network have increased 80% since pre-pandemic levels, with nearly 1.2 million New Yorkers experiencing food insecurity.** According to the [2023 NYC True Cost of Living Report](#), 50% of NYC households do not have sufficient resources to meet their needs, as food prices and cost of living continue to outpace wages and resources. The food assistance network fills the gap where household resources and government assistance fall short.

**Invest in programs and technology to connect New Yorkers to SNAP and other resources.** New York can be a leader in food security by strengthening the safety net and investing in programs and technology that help people connect to resources they qualify for.

- **SNAP is our nation's most effective anti-hunger program, providing nearly 3 million low-income New Yorkers with needed assistance** to buy nutritious groceries. These federal dollars generate over \$11.3 billion annually statewide in economic activity. Connecting more New Yorkers to this impactful resource helps



**Support New York women and families by investing in early childhood education:** New York City must restore budget cuts to protect universal free Pre-K and make 3K seats available to all who need them.

- According to a recent report by [Citizens' Committee for Children](#), more than 80% of NYC families with young children cannot afford adequate childcare. Access to programs like 3K are vital supports for families struggling to stay in New York City, and provide access to foundational learning and free school meals to families in need.

## **Budget Priorities**

### **Increase Investments for New York City's food assistance programs**

**ASK: \$60M for Community Food Connection (CFC) - formerly EFAP**

The Community Food Connection (CFC), formerly known as the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), is administered by the NYC Department of Social Services (DSS/HRA) and provides food and administrative support to cover utilities, equipment, food service products, office supplies, and personnel to NYC food assistance providers. This ask amount is based on the previous allocation with an additional amount to meet rising fresh food costs and the needs of asylum seekers.

#### **Impact Numbers**

- CFC provides food to over 500 food pantries and soup kitchens across New York City, including Food Bank's West Harlem Community Kitchen and Food Pantry.
- Increasing funding for this program to \$60M will ensure a diverse and healthy supply of food in the face of rising food costs, provide more fresh produce, and meet continued elevated community need.

**ASK: \$65.3M for meals for older adults**

Administered by the NYC Department For the Aging (DFTA), home delivered meals and congregate meal programs at older adult centers support older New Yorkers facing food insecurity who are unable to prepare meals, provide opportunities for socialization, and allow staff to do wellness checks and connect older New Yorkers to available resources. We urge the City to reverse PEG cuts to older adult centers, focused on home delivered meals program and congregate meals at older adult centers. This increase will account for inflation and higher cost of food, and reinvest in the system by allowing centers the flexibility to spend on meals, capital, and other needs. We also recommend allowing grab and go meals at older adult centers.

#### **Impact Numbers**

- In our most recent survey, 88% of member agencies reported serving a high number of older New Yorkers and an estimated 1 in 5 NYC adults over 60 live in poverty.



- An estimated 1 in 4 older adults who qualify for SNAP do not receive it and those that do are more likely to receive the minimum benefit of \$23/month.

ASK: \$10M to fully fund Groceries to Go Program

Begun in response to the pandemic, Groceries to Go is administered by the NYC Dept of Health and has evolved into a prescription meal delivery program providing a grocery benefit to uninsured New Yorkers with health conditions that have a proven link to diet, such as hypertension and diabetes. By maintaining the program's current \$10 million funding, the program can ensure ongoing service to current participants, and make possible the ability to expand and meet this growing need.

Impact Numbers

- 8000 New Yorkers are currently enrolled in Groceries to Go, receiving medically prescribed, home delivered groceries.
- Innovative programs like Groceries to Go help the food assistance network reach vulnerable and high needs neighbors.

**Invest in programs and technology to connect New Yorkers to SNAP and other resources**

ASK: Continue to Invest in MyCity Portal

The MyCity Portal is a planned one-stop shop where New Yorkers will be able to go online and easily search, apply for, and track city services and benefits. Food Bank joins the Mayor and Council in their belief that New York City must improve the administration of critical food benefits and anti-poverty programs by funding community non-profit assistance, cross-agency collaboration, continue implementing Mayor Adams' goal to create a comprehensive MyCity applications portal.

- Phase one rollout was in Spring 2023 with the introduction of the *MyCity* portal to connect NYC families to childcare resources and apply for assistance. Phase two will assist job seekers with resources and training to get hired, and help small business owners start, operate, and grow their business in NYC. We continue to advocate that the city develop and expand this tool to provide access to other resources and benefits New Yorkers rely on, including SNAP.

**Support New York women and families by fully funding early childhood education**

ASK: Restore \$170M in cuts and fully fund Pre-K and 3-K programs and prioritize rollout of universal 3-K

Access to programs like Universal PreK and 3K is a vital support for families struggling to stay in New York City, and these programs provide access to foundational learning and free school meals to families in need. New York City must restore budget cuts to protect universal free Pre-K and make 3K seats available to all who need them.

- According to a recent report by [Citizens' Committee for Children](#), more than 80% of NYC families with young children cannot afford adequate childcare.



- In Food Bank's most recent member survey, 67% of agencies reported serving high numbers of households with children.
- According to the [NYC True Cost of Living Report](#), 65% of New York City households with children under 5 years old do not have the resources to meet their basic needs.
- In 2022 alone, the city is estimated to have lost \$23 billion dollars in economic activity due to parents leaving the workforce or downshifting careers to meet childcare needs, as reported by the [5Boro Foundation](#).

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