

REFLECTIONS OF HUNGER FROM THE FRONT LINES



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Summary

Earlier this year, Food Bank For New York City asked its network of soup kitchens and pantries to share insights that may only be provided from hunger's front lines. This analysis is New York City's only set of reflections from the men and women most intimately involved in ending hunger one New Yorker at a time.

The community response to hunger in New York City is both emergency food - providing meals directly to people in need - and connecting people to public benefits to which they are entitled, like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program).

SNAP is a very real solution available to our city. Each approved SNAP application in New York City is equal to a full pallet of food. 1.6 million people in New York City and nearly 2.8 million people in our state depend on it. But they aren't alone.

Countless numbers of businesses in every neighborhood also rely on SNAP. It is a powerful generator of economic activity and development. SNAP dollars go directly into local economies because in a cash register, it functions as cash. Every dollar spent in SNAP benefits adds \$1.79 to the local economy. Last year in New York City alone, that equaled over \$5 billion of economic activity in the neighborhoods you represent.

The 2013 SNAP cuts has resulted in a loss of over one billion dollars intended for food for our city's most vulnerable citizens. That amounts to 283 million breakfasts, lunches and dinners that should have been on the plates of our friends and neighbors.

These reflections provide a new perspective on the response to the daily emergency of serving people who are struggling to make ends meet in New York.

Eighty percent of the leaders of soup kitchens and pantries are seeing more visitors today than before the 2013 cuts to SNAP. The majority of the network also report seeing longer lines with more first-time visitors, senior citizens, and families with children.

While charities are already stretched in serving their community, they are doubling down by serving New Yorkers from across the city. In fact, nearly 70% of the food pantries and soup

kitchens report serving New Yorkers from more than one borough – and incredibly, nearly half serve community New Yorkers from more than two boroughs outside their own. Yet, the average emergency food program has a budget of less than \$25,000 and five full time volunteers their operations regularly rely on.

Five years later, SNAP is again under attack in Washington, D.C. Some proposals for the future of the Farm Bill threaten to take food benefits away from people including seniors, working families with children, and those struggling to find consistent work. Taking SNAP benefits away from food insecure people is not only morally wrong, it doesn't make economic sense to any of the communities you represent.

The emergency food network is not – and cannot be – the replacement for harmful policy and legislation. As advocates, community leaders, government and elected officials, we must recommit to invest in the total emergency food network, reject any policy proposal that keeps food away from hungry people and ignore anything that distracts us from citywide solutions.

Fighting hunger in New York City requires the support of our entire community, from our elected leaders and nonprofit organizations, to advocates and direct service providers.

We must elevate SNAP by articulating its powerful impact for households and businesses. We must protect eligibility for all low-income people understanding that good nutrition is a right, not a bargaining chip; and we must intentionally expand the poorest community's access to the resources they need in the places they regularly and most comfortably attend. Hunger is solvable, and everyday our focus as New Yorkers and Americans should be to get it solved.

VISITOR TRAFFIC AT FOOD PANTRIES AND SOUP KITCHENS REMAINS HIGHER

Of those, nearly 40% of food pantries and soup kitchens reported the number of visitors increased by more than half

80%

of food pantries & soup kitchens
across NYC have seen elevated traffic

40%

of food pantries and soup kitchens
reported the number of visitors
increased by more than half

CONSISTENT THREATS TO THE NATION'S SAFETY NET



Need for emergency food has increased since 2013 SNAP cuts



SNAP provides an average benefit of \$146 per person – enough for
39 MEALS EVERY MONTH



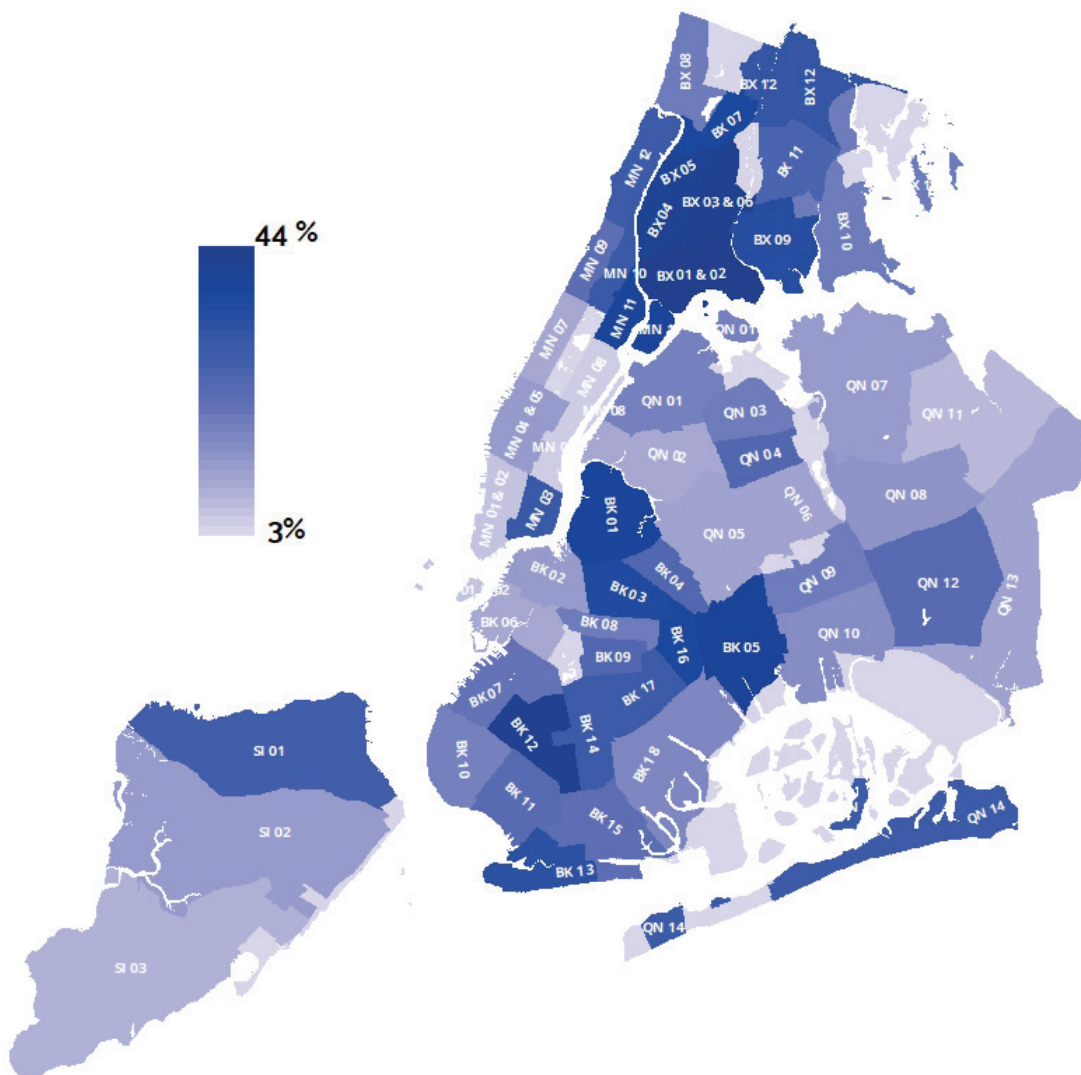
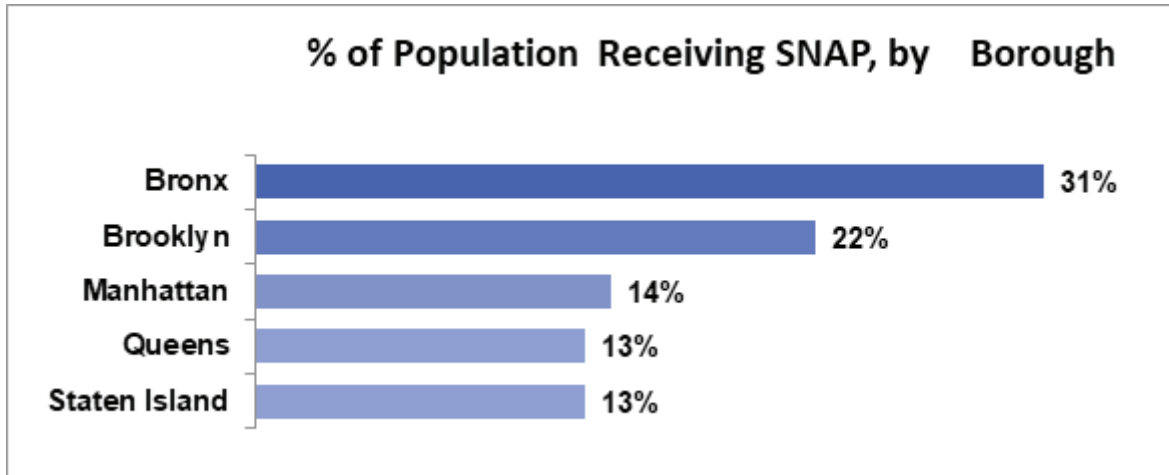
2017: **1 in 5 NYC** residents rely on SNAP



Since 2013, cuts to SNAP have cost NYC residents more than
\$1 BILLION IN LOST BENEFITS

NEW YORK CITY IN A SNAP

Nearly one in five (19%) New York City residents rely on SNAP



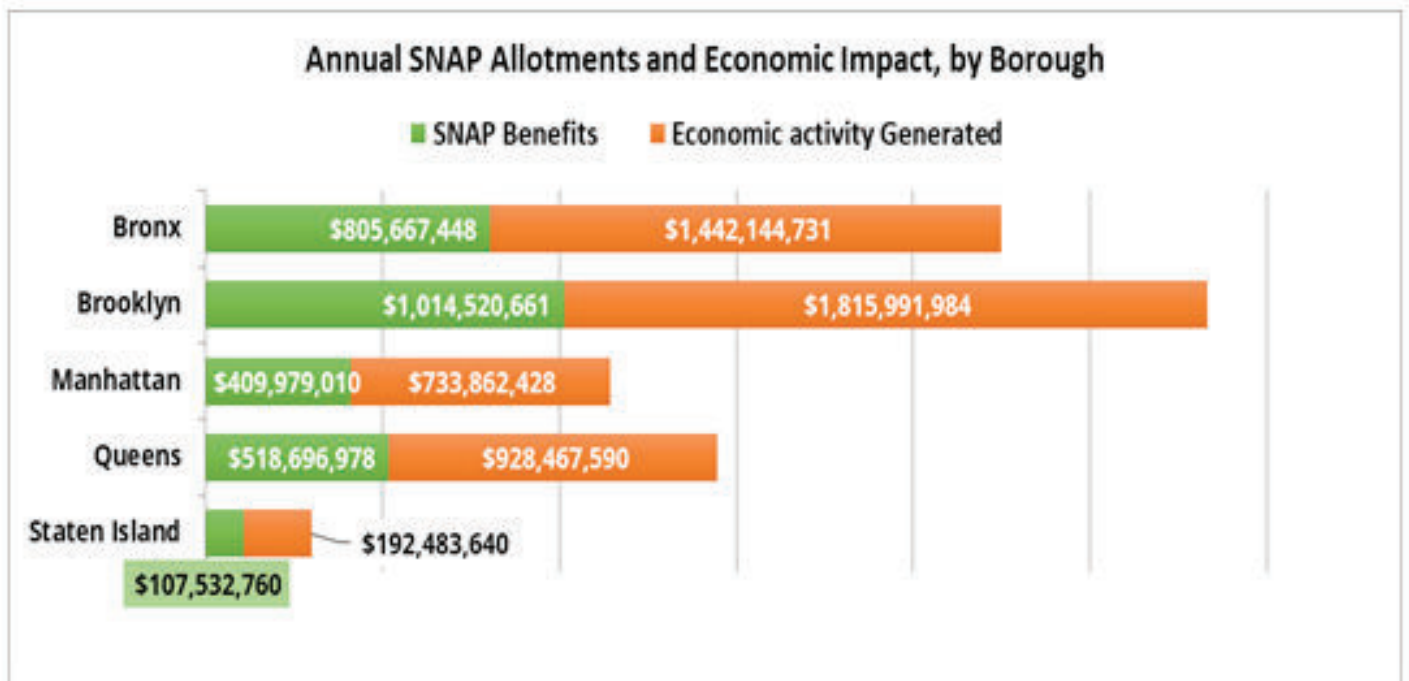
SNAP AND FOOD INSECURITY

Communities with the highest need do not always have high SNAP participation. Only 3 out of 10 communities with the greatest need are among the top 10 communities for SNAP participation.

Meal Gap - Rank	Community Districts	Neighborhoods	SNAP Participation Rate - Rank	Community Districts	Neighborhoods
1	QN 12	Jamaica, Hollis & St. Albans	1	BX 01 & 02	Hunts Point, Longwood & Melrose
2	BK 18	Canarsie & Flatlands	2	BX 03 & 06	Belmont, Crotona Park East & East Tremont
3	BK 16	Brownsville & Ocean Hill	3	BK 12	Borough Park, Kensington & Ocean Parkway
4	BK 03	Bedford-Stuyvesant	4	BX 04	Concourse, Highbridge & Mount Eden
5	BX 03 & 06	Belmont, Crotona Park East & East Tremont	5	BX 05	Morris Heights, Fordham South & Mount Hope
6	BK 17	East Flatbush, Farragut & Rugby	6	BK 05	East New York & Starrett City
7	MN 10	Central Harlem	7	BK 01	Greenpoint & Williamsburg
8	BK 05	East New York & Starrett City	8	MN 11	East Harlem
9	BK 08	Crown Heights North & Prospect Heights	9	BX 07	Bedford Park, Fordham North & Norwood
10	BK 14	Flatbush & Midwood	10	BK 16	Brownsville & Ocean Hill

SNAP'S ECONOMIC IMPACT

2017 SNAP Benefits help generated over \$5 billion economic activities in New York City. The highest impact has been felt in Brooklyn and Bronx, amounted over half of NYC's total benefits.

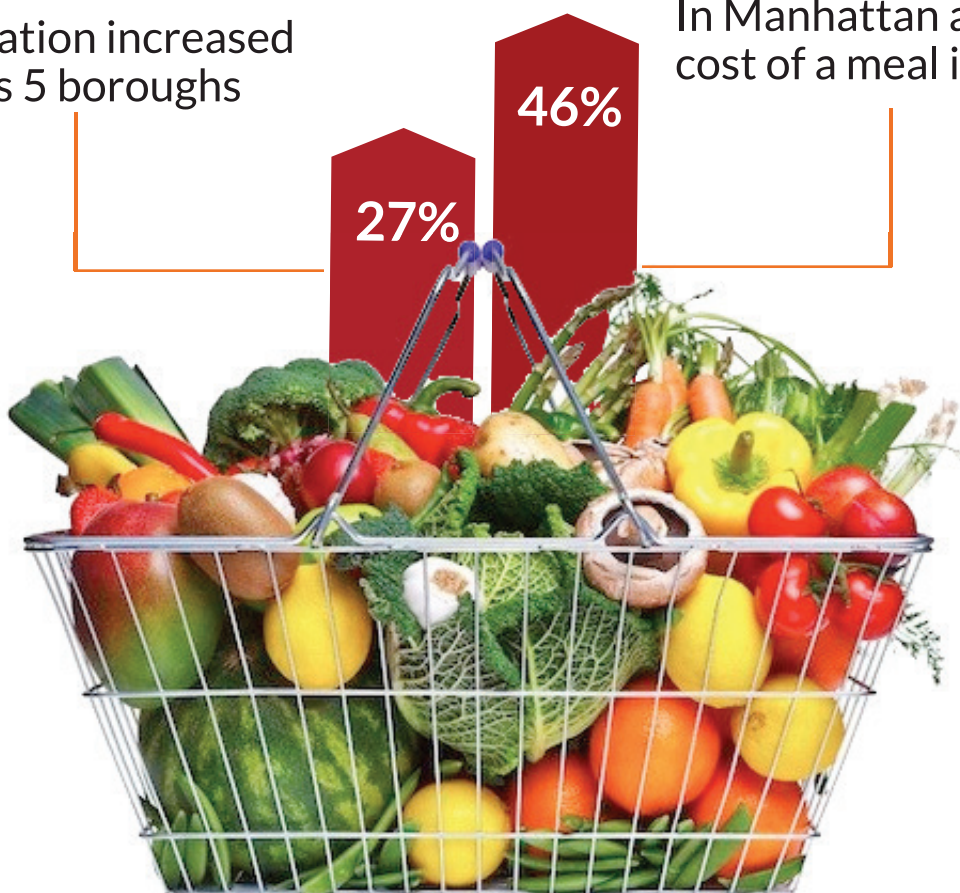


RISING COST OF FOOD

Since the 2013 SNAP Cuts

Food inflation increased
across 5 boroughs

In Manhattan alone, the average
cost of a meal increased



2018: Average cost of a
meal in NYC is \$3.73

- ▶ NYS average: \$3.09
- ▶ US average: \$3.00

IMPACT ON CHARITIES

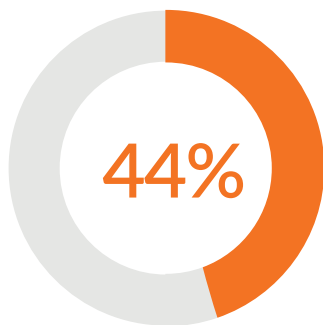
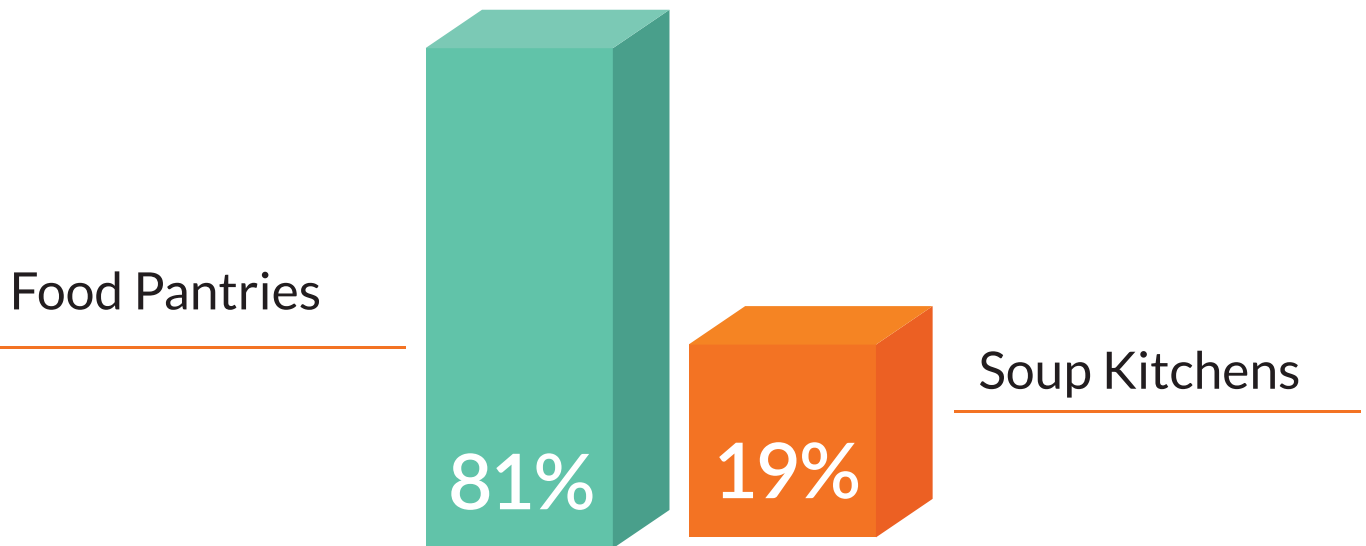
This is causing a strain on our network, and the impact is being felt on the doors of our soup kitchens and pantries citywide.

There is a greater burden on a smaller number of charities.



CHARITY SNAPSHOT

HUNGER SURVEY RESPONDENTS



Nearly half of food pantries and soup kitchens have an operating budget under **\$25K a year**



More than half of food pantries and soup kitchens operate with non-paid staff.

CHARITY SNAPSHOT



Average number of full-time paid staff at a food pantry or soup kitchen is **1**



Average number of full-time volunteers at a food pantry or soup kitchen is **5**

INCREASED VISITOR SNAPSHOT

Despite hardships on capacity, the network still finds ways to serve the most vulnerable populations. Since the SNAP cuts we have seen an increase in:

66% of food pantries and soup kitchens saw an increase in:



63% of food pantries and soup kitchens saw an increase in:



62% of food pantries and soup kitchens saw an increase in:



SERVING MORE THAN ONE BOROUGH

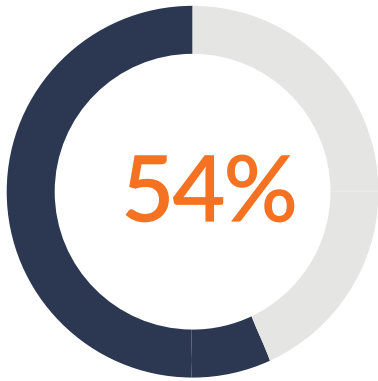
Nearly 70% of food pantries and soup kitchens report serving New Yorkers from more than one borough.



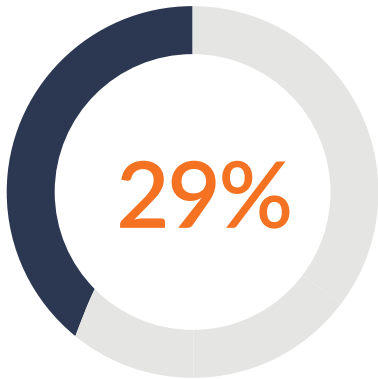
Nearly half serve New Yorkers from more than two boroughs outside their own.

FOOD SHORTAGES AND STAFF NEEDS

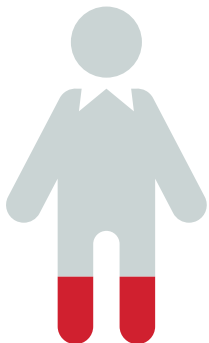
More than NYC food pantries and soup kitchens are experiencing food shortages since 2013.



More than half of soup kitchens and food pantries reported running out of food

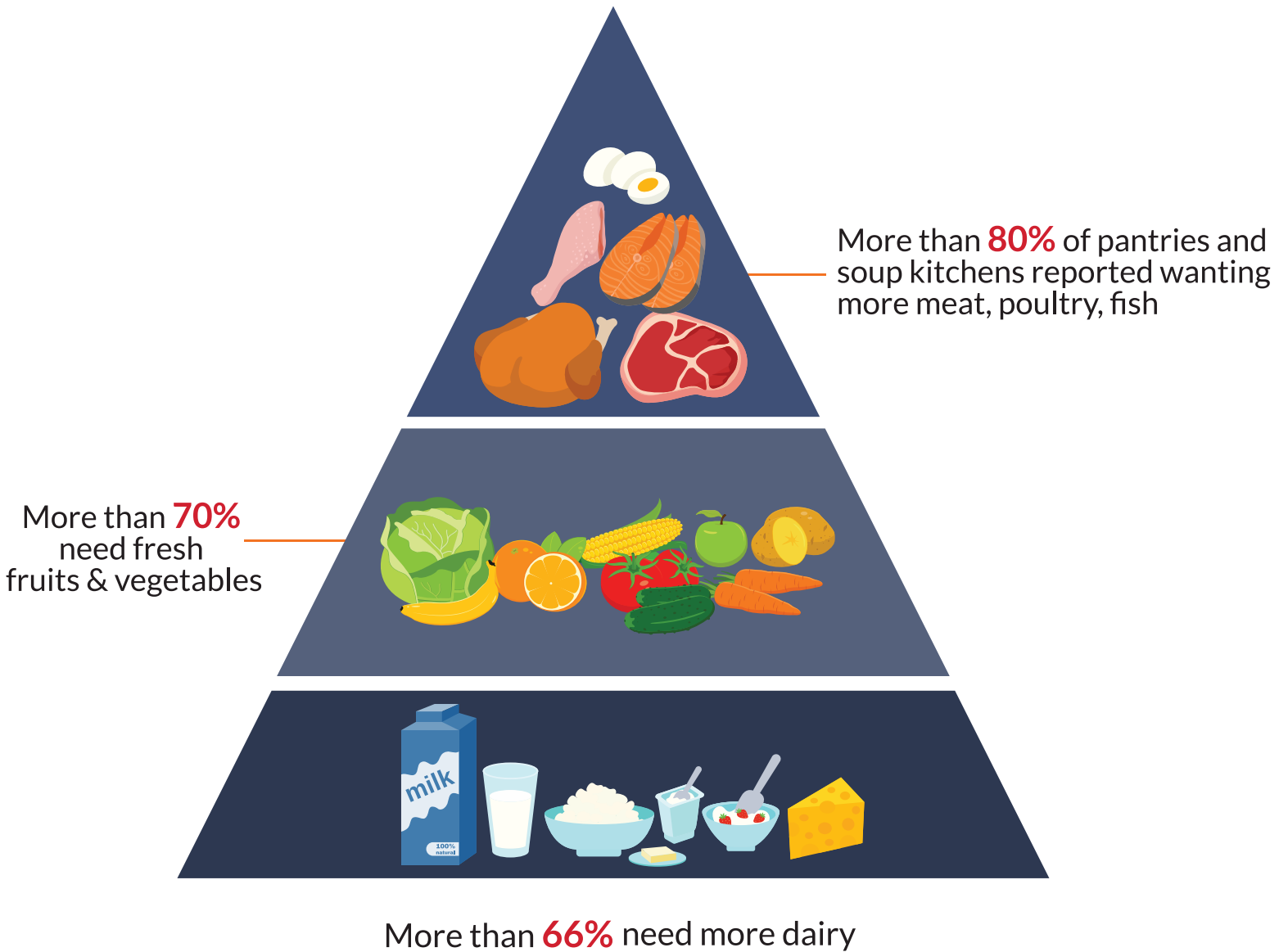


Soup kitchens and food pantries reported turning people away because of lack of food



61% of food pantries and soup kitchens viewed lack of staff and volunteers as a threat. Expressed needing more help.

SPECIFIC FOOD NEEDS



HOW NEW YORKERS CAN HELP



Recommit to investment in the emergency food network



Reject policy proposals that keep food away from vulnerable people



Protect SNAP by articulating its powerful impact for households and businesses



Protect eligibility for all low income people

FOOD BANK FOR NEW YORK CITY

Main Office

39 Broadway, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10006
t: 212.566.7855 | f: 212.566.1463

Warehouse / Distribution Center

Hunts Point Cooperative Market
355 Food Center Drive
Bronx, NY 10474
t: 718.991.4300 | f: 718.893.3442

Community Kitchen & Food Pantry

252 West 116th Street
New York, NY 10026
t: 212.566.7855 | f: 212.662.1945

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