

RESEARCH REPORT
NOVEMBER 2019

HUNGER CANNOT AFFORD TO BE HIDDEN

The Impacts of Bad Policies

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

William-Guillaume Koible, Associate Director of Research, Evaluation and Impact

Nicholas Buess, Associate Director, Mobilization & Policy

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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.¹ 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 2013.² 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.³ **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**.

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

² Ibid.

³ [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.⁴ 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).⁵ New York City residents make up more than half (58 percent) of all New Yorkers participating in SNAP.⁶ 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.⁷ 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.⁸
- **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.⁹ This proposal would cause millions to experience a reduction or loss in public benefits over time.¹⁰

⁴ [United States Department of Agriculture](#), September 2019.

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

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

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

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

⁹ [Overlooked & Undercounted](#) 2018.

¹⁰ [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.**¹¹ 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.¹² 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.**¹³

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

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

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

¹³ [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.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ 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.¹⁶ Urban Institute research indicates that 1 in 7 adults in immigrant families avoided public benefits in 2018.¹⁷ 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.

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

¹⁵ Ibid.

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

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

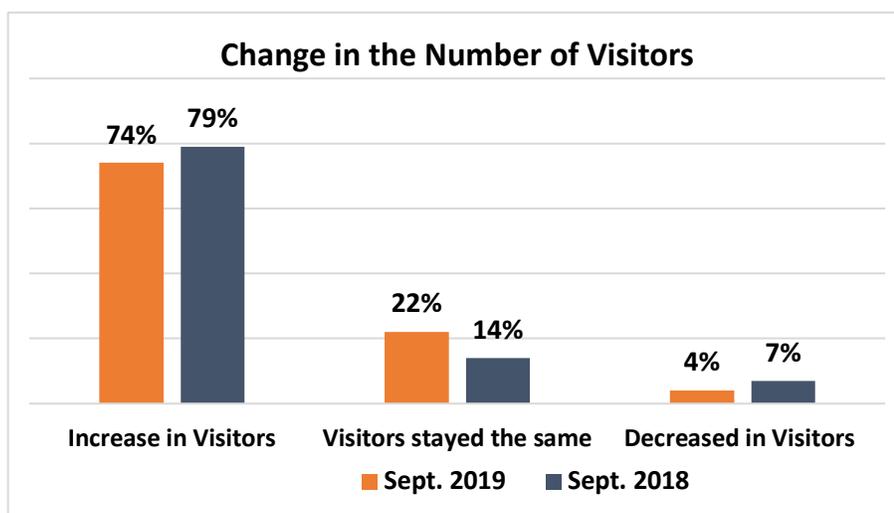
KEY FINDINGS: EMERGENCY FOOD PROGRAMS AS SAFETY NET

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.¹⁸ SNAP provides an average benefit of only \$146 per person, equivalent to just one meal per day for individuals.¹⁹ 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.²⁰ 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.

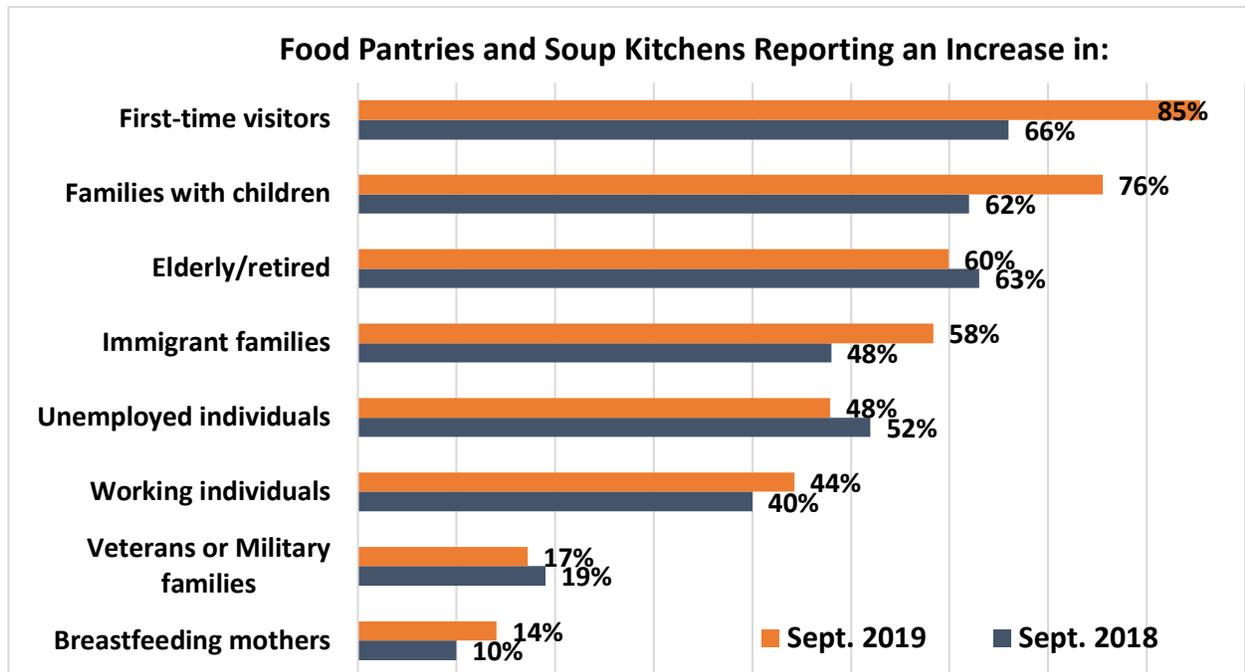


¹⁸ [Map the Meal Gap](#), Feeding America, 2019.

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

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

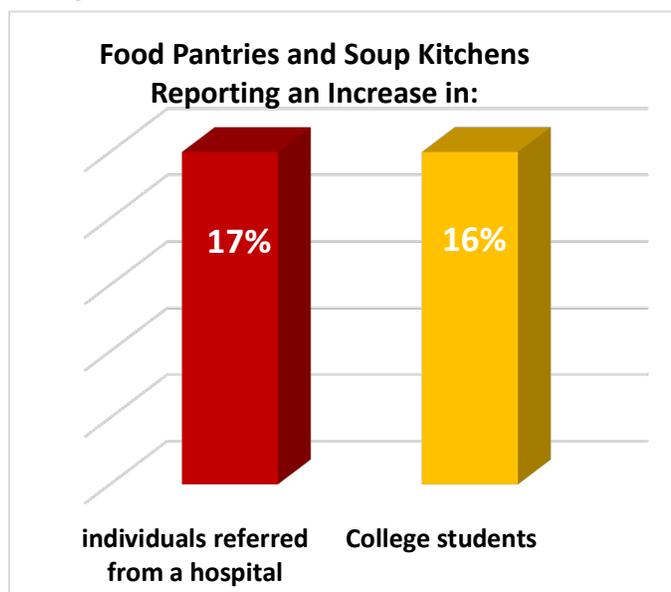
Increased visitor snapshot: The need for food at food pantries and soup kitchens appears to be driven by increases in specific populations seeking assistance – including families with children, the elderly, and immigrant families.



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.)

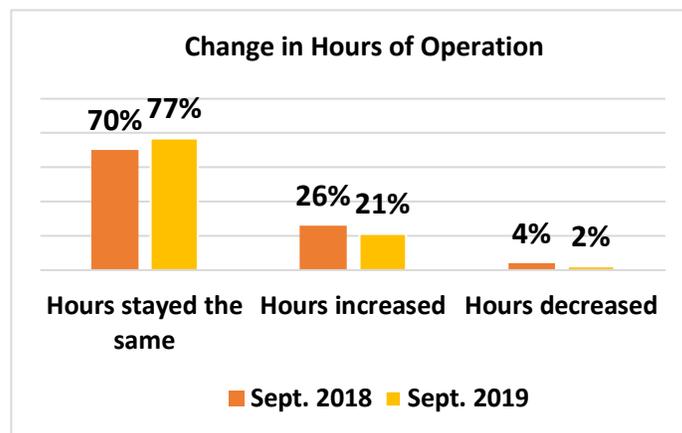


Emergency Food Providers Are Serving in the Face of High Need

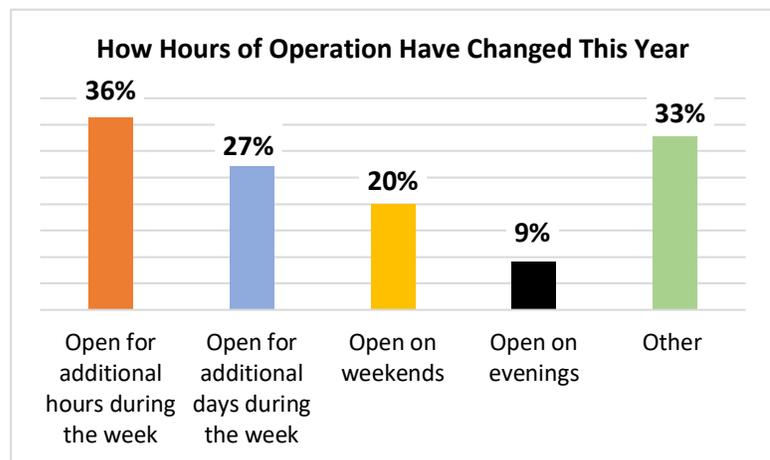
When SNAP is insufficient or unavailable, emergency food providers are the last resource to prevent hunger. Ongoing non-negotiable expenses like rent, healthcare, transportation, and school costs shortchange food budgets – forcing families to attempt the impossible math of prioritizing essential needs.

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.

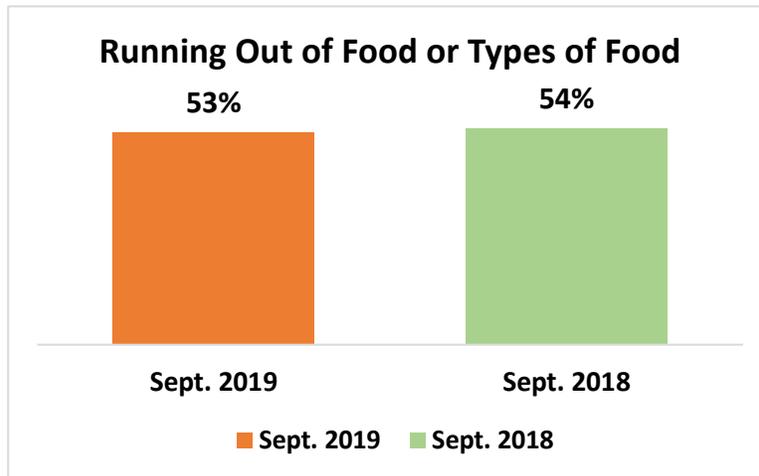


The graph to the right shows the most common changes food pantries and soup kitchens have made to their hours of operation over the past year. Note that percentages total more than 100 percent because respondents were allowed to select all applicable choices.



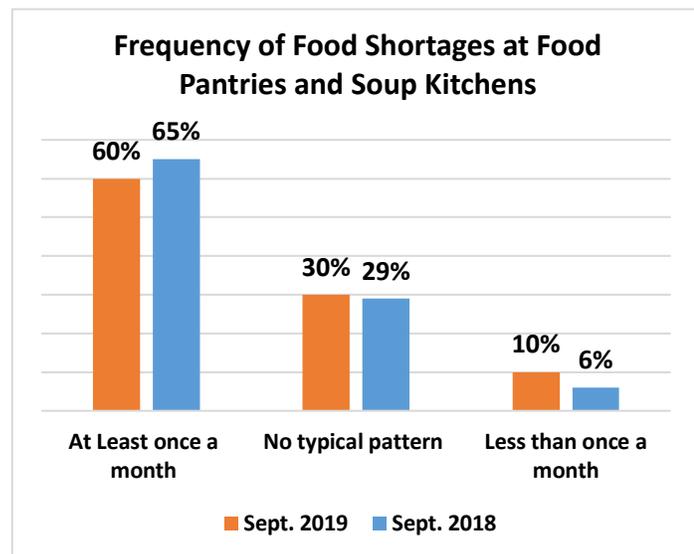
Emergency Food Service Is Strained by Supply and Capacity

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.

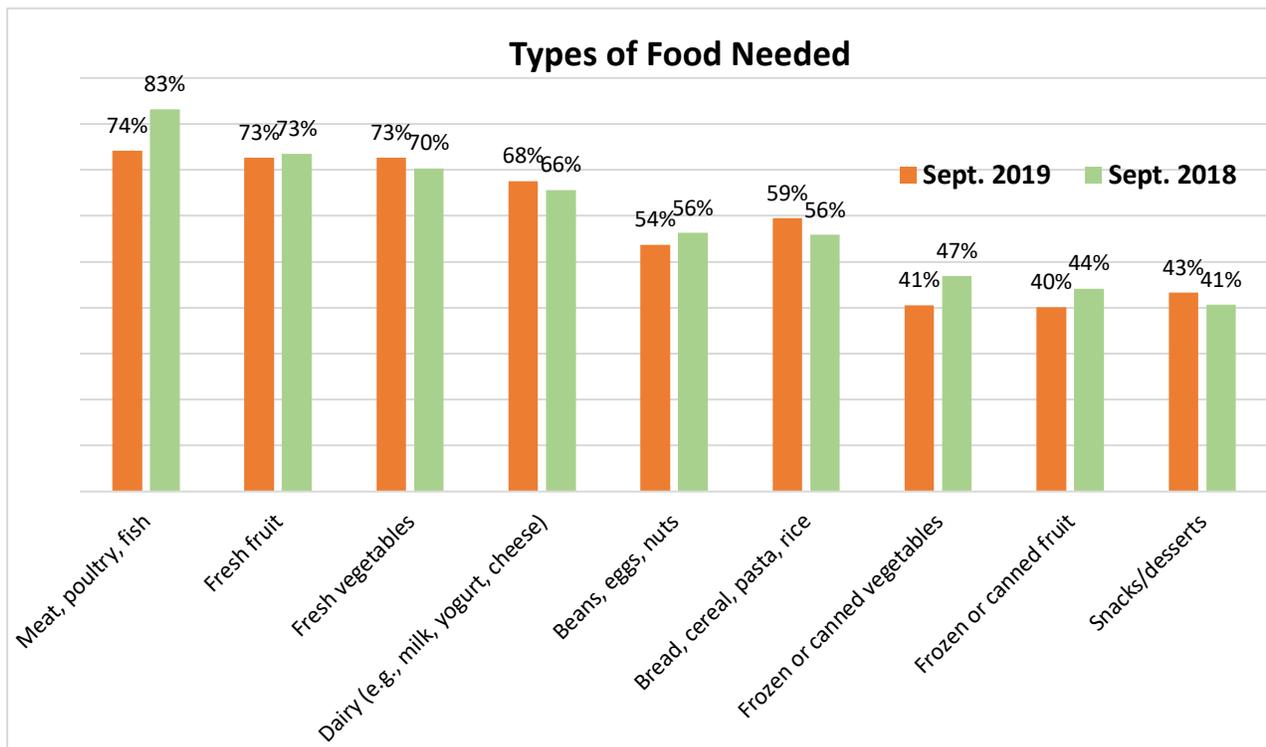


Types of Food Needed

- 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.

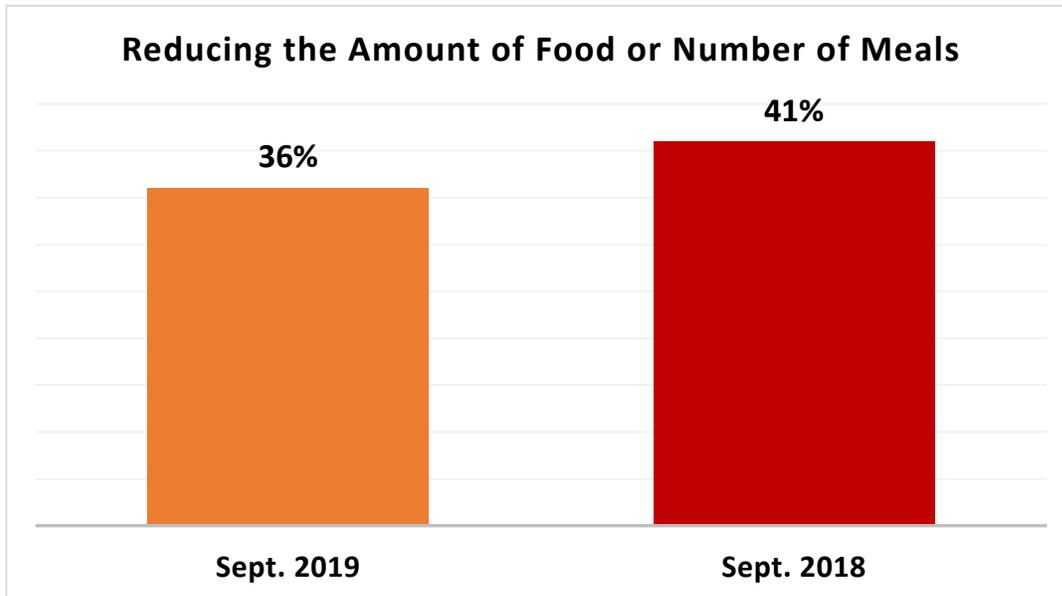
Regarding demand from emergency food programs for other types of food, survey responses this year were consistent with last year's, as follow:

- 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.

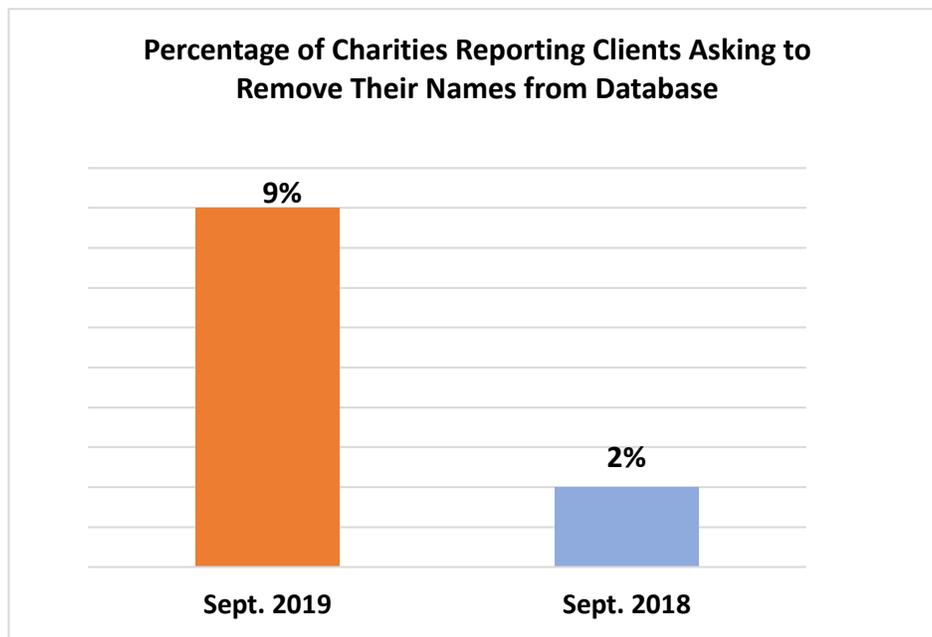


The decrease in the number of food pantries and soup kitchens reporting reducing the amount of food may be attributable to the increases in the emergency food supply over the past year, most notably the considerable increase in federal commodities through trade mitigation.

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.

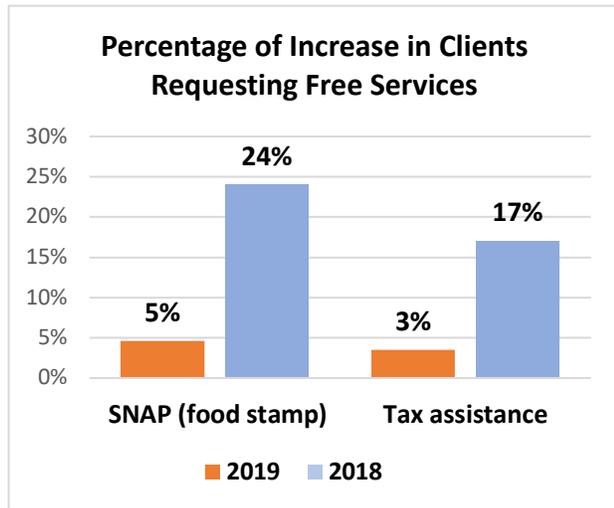


The most common reasons emergency food providers reported that clients asked for their names to be removed were **fear of affecting immigration status, fear of deportation, or more general privacy concerns**. Clients who have requested to be removed from the records expressed that they would rather go 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.

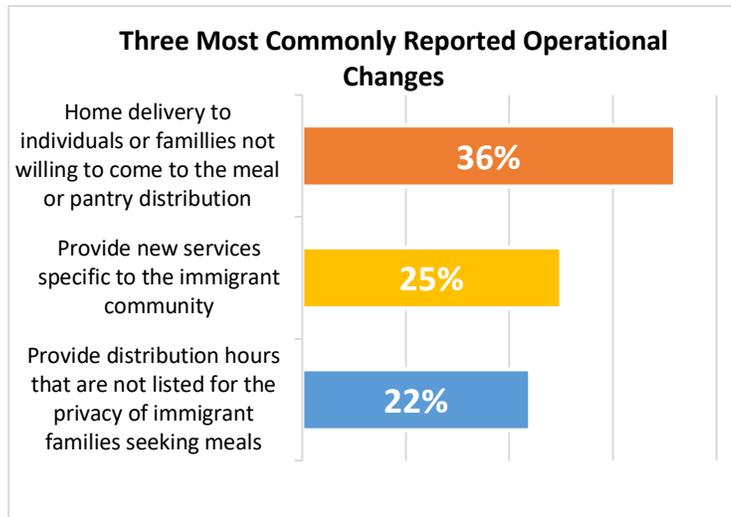
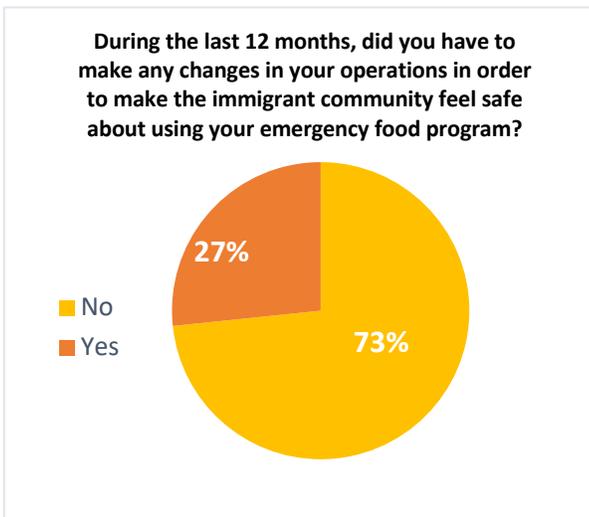
Fewer food pantries and soup kitchens are reporting increases in requests for public benefits or other free services from immigrants.

- 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 PROFILE²¹

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.²² 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:

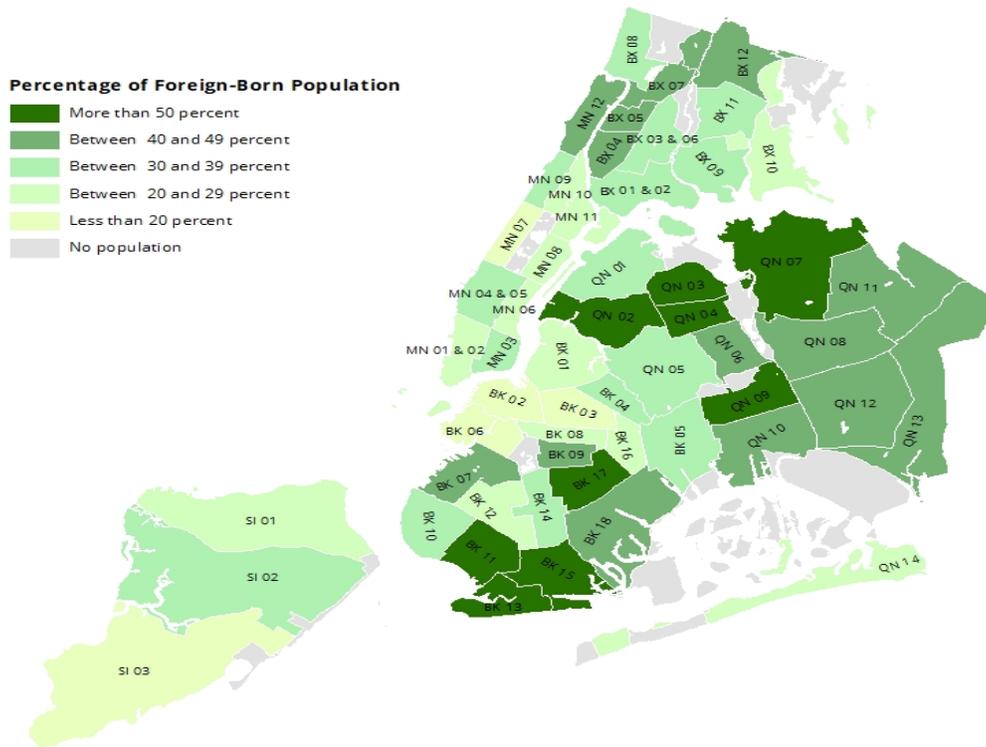
- 28 percent of non-U.S. citizens living in New York City live in over-crowded households.

²¹ 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

²² 2017 American Community Survey. U.S. Census Bureau. 2018.

Maps provided below detail immigrants by community districts.

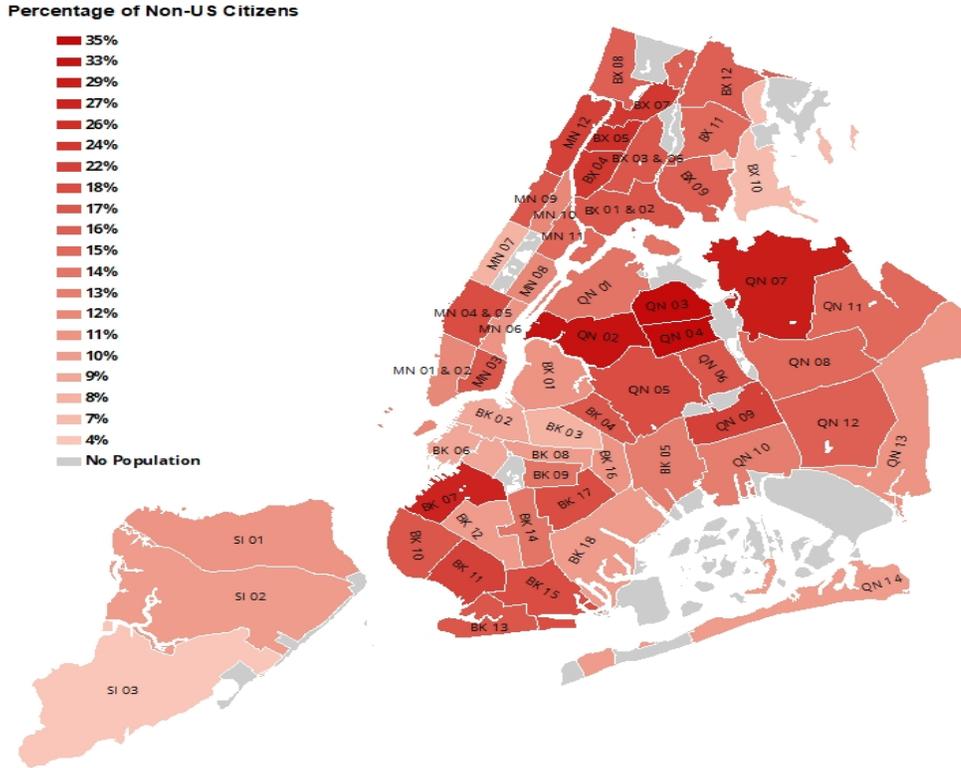
Concentration of Foreign-born Population by Community Districts



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.

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
Brooklyn		87
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
Bronx		52
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
Manhattan		53
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
Queens		55
SI 01	Port Richmond, Stapleton & Mariner's Harbor	10
SI 02	New Springville & South Beach	1
SI 03	Tottenville, Great Kills & Annadale	1
Staten Island		12

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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President & CEO

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