



HUNGER SOLUTIONS
NEW YORK UNITING POLICIES AND
PROGRAMS TO END HUNGER

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**Testimony to the
Joint Fiscal Committees on the SFY 2018–19 Executive Budget
Human Services**

**Submitted by:
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Executive Budget proposal for Human Services, and specifically, the initiatives proposed to address hunger in New York.

Hunger Solutions New York is a statewide anti-hunger organization dedicated to alleviating hunger for all New Yorkers. Our organization's primary approach to addressing hunger is to maximize participation in the federally-funded nutrition assistance programs, namely, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

We base our perspective on our 30 years of experience managing the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP). NOEP is one of the largest SNAP outreach, education and application assistance programs in the country. Full-time coordinators assist clients in 56 of 62 counties, providing SNAP application assistance, home visits, translation services and referrals to other nutrition assistance programs and to www.mybenefits.ny.gov. In FY16-17, NEOP Coordinators assisted more than 33,000 households with receiving SNAP benefits.

In addition, our organization consults with and provides resources to non-profit organizations, schools and other agencies to improve access to nutrition assistance programs across the state, and to help make their anti-hunger efforts more efficient and effective.

In 2016, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, 12.5% of New York households faced food insecurity, meaning they lacked enough food to meet their family's nutritional needs. Nationally, only 59 percent of food insecure people report receiving assistance from our nation's fundamental nutrition assistance programs. Approximately 1.6 million children living in this state qualify for free or reduced price school meals, and the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC)'s 2016 *Food Hardship in America: Households with Children Especially Hard Hit* report reveals that 21.4 percent of households with children suffer from food hardship in New York State. Clearly, hunger is a persistent and pervasive reality for many New Yorkers.

Governor Cuomo has proposed level funding in his 2018-19 Executive Budget Proposal to support New York's core anti-hunger efforts. We support the following funding proposals and urge the legislature to adopt them in its final budget.

- **Level funding of \$3,024,000 for the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program**
 - This funding will enable NOEP to continue to connect low-income New Yorkers with SNAP. However, this marks the 5th year of level funding for this program. This reality, coupled with the need to increase funding levels to community-based subcontractors to continue to provide NOEP services, has resulted in a decrease in the number of counties/service areas. In the year beginning July 1, 2018 there will be 71 service areas, down from 76 service areas throughout 2014-2018.

- **Level funding of \$250,000 for CACFP outreach and assistance**
 - CACFP is a federally funded nutrition assistance program that provides healthy meals and snacks to low-income children in child care centers, family day care and after-school programs. These funds are budgeted through the Office of Children and Family Services and allow for outreach and technical support to eligible child care providers. Currently, only 50% of eligible licensed day care and afterschool providers participate in CACFP, which highlights the need for these efforts.

- **Level funding of \$34.5M for the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP)**
 - These funds provide a critical resource for the state's food banks, pantries and other emergency food relief organizations.

Hunger Solutions New York strongly urges the legislature to adopt these proposals in its final budget. These investments will allow New York to continue to support low income families and individuals, and help make further progress in its efforts to reduce hunger across the state.