



Dear Senators and Assemblymembers of the Joint Budget Hearing on Health,

My name is Alyson Rosenthal, and I am writing you on behalf of my organization, The West Side Campaign Against Hunger, to ask for your support in addressing food and nutrition insecurity in New York State in the upcoming budget. Specifically, we are asking for your support in ensuring that the Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) is funded at \$75 million, Nourish New York is funded at \$75 million, and that you work to secure the 40-yearlong precedent of supporting food pantries, food rescues, meals programs, in addition to food banks with any increases to these programs.

The West Side Campaign Against Hunger's mission is to alleviate hunger by ensuring all New Yorkers have access with dignity to a choice of healthy food and supportive services.

New York State is experiencing an increase in food insecurity. This year the USDA ERS report released that 1 in 8 New York households are experiencing food insecurity. That is an increase from 1 in 10 in the year prior.

In conjunction with the dramatic 25% rise of food inflation from 2019, the pressure on direct providers to meet these needs is immense. Not only is it more expensive for families to shop at the grocery store, but it's also more expensive to keep pantry shelves stocked with healthy, nutritious food.

Our team of 30 staff and over 2,000 volunteers is working day in and day out, no matter how cold it is outside, serving families across Bronx, Kings, New York, and Queens counties, that join our growing lines. This past year alone we served over 110,000 New Yorkers in need at over 30 community distribution points and via over 2,000 home-based deliveries each month. The demand for food at WSCAH is 3 times pre-pandemic levels and 50% more than during the peak of the pandemic. We've never seen numbers like this in our 46 years of service.

No matter the need, we stay focused on our community, making sure they have access to healthy, culturally relevant foods. This year, we will give out over 2.5 million pounds of fresh produce. We buy the best product possible, and we can only do that when we have the funds to do so.

We've never run out of food, and we never will run out of food. Part of that is thanks to the support from the state. Getting HPNAP and Nourish NY allows us to buy amazing New York State products, culturally relevant, healthy, and fresh food that our customers want and need.

263 West 86th St • New York, NY 10024 • 212-362-3662 • info@wscah.org



www.wscah.org



[/wscah](https://www.facebook.com/wscah)



[@wscah](https://twitter.com/wscah)



[@wscah_](https://www.instagram.com/wscah)

DIGNITY. COMMUNITY. CHOICE.

Food pantries need direct support to provide culturally appropriate, nutritious food with proper staffing and operations. Putting the funding directly into local communities' better addresses needs and builds a stronger, more reliable food supply chain.

Frontline providers, like the West Side Campaign Against Hunger, work directly, day in and day out with our community. No matter the circumstance, we find a way to support our community. From transforming efforts during the pandemic to make sure customers could more safely access food in their homes or neighborhoods instead of lengthy subway or bus rides, to working with food insecure seniors with limited mobility and new moms, we have innovated to bring more food directly to our customers' homes. We live in a changing world, and the emergency feeding sector must change as well. We are here to help test, innovate, and transform our work to best honor the dignity and needs of our community. As frontline emergency food providers, we understand the specific food needs of our friends and neighbors. Direct service focused emergency feeding organizations need to see increases to HPNAP and Nourish NY and we need to see that increase directly to the frontlines across New York State.

Additionally, we do not do this work alone. We're asking for this funding because we are part of a coalition of frontline community food providers (food pantries, community meals programs, etc.). We participate in The Alliance for a Hunger Free New York because we know that we can do more together than any one of us can do alone.

We appreciate your leadership and are grateful for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alyson Rosenthal', with a stylized, flowing script.

Submitted by:
Alyson Rosenthal, MS, RD, Chief Program Officer of The West Side Campaign Against Hunger