



**Testimony to the
Joint Fiscal Committees on the SFY 2025-2026 Executive Budget
Human Services**

**Submitted by:
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the FY2026 Executive Budget proposal for Human Services and its impacts on efforts to end hunger in New York.

Hunger Solutions New York is a statewide nonprofit anti-hunger organization dedicated to alleviating hunger for all New Yorkers. Our organization's primary approach to addressing hunger is maximizing participation in the federally funded nutrition assistance programs, namely, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); the School Breakfast Program; the National School Lunch Program; the Summer Food Service Program; the Child and Adult Care Food Program; and Summer EBT.

For nearly forty years, we have managed the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP) through a contract with the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). NOEP provides outreach, prescreenings, and application assistance to help low-income New Yorkers access SNAP and other federally funded nutrition programs. NOEP operates through a network of community-based organizations; eighty-four SNAP navigators across the state provide services to individuals and families in their respective counties or boroughs.

SNAP is our nation's largest anti-hunger program, helping more than [2.9 million](#) New Yorkers supplement their monthly food costs. In recent years, SNAP has served [845,000 children](#), [678,000 seniors](#), and [57,000 veterans](#) across the state. Still, many New Yorkers are eligible but not participating. NOEP helps close this gap, ensuring New York fully leverages federal resources to support food security. Last year alone, the program reached more than 163,000 potentially eligible New Yorkers with information about SNAP, and more than 34,000 households received SNAP benefits as a direct result of NOEP services.

The FY2024 and FY2025 Enacted Budgets included a \$2 million legislative add-on to support expanded NOEP services. This additional investment enabled NOEP to add 24 new SNAP navigators in high-need and rural areas and expand remote services statewide. We are grateful for the Legislature’s support and recognition of the importance of connecting New Yorkers with federally funded nutrition assistance resources.

The FY2026 Executive Budget proposal does not include the \$2 million add-on, reducing NOEP funding to \$3.624 million. If enacted as-is, NOEP will be forced to scale back at a time when more than [one in ten New York households](#) are struggling with food insecurity.

If \$2 million in funding is not restored, the following counties will lose some or all NOEP services:

- Albany, Broome, Erie, Monroe, Niagara, Onondaga, Rockland, and Ulster Counties plus all boroughs of New York City will lose SNAP navigators added over the last two years, despite continued high need. These areas will continue to have some NOEP services but at greatly reduced capacity.
- Cortland, Lewis, Schuyler, and Washington Counties will lose all local NOEP services.
- All counties will have reduced access to remote NOEP services, an especially distressing loss in rural areas where transportation barriers often inhibit access to in-person assistance.

To ensure continued access to NOEP services in all areas of the state, we ask the Legislature to fund NOEP at \$5.624 million, sustaining the previous \$2 million add-on.

NOEP has a uniquely high return on investment for New York:

- In the last year, NOEP services helped draw down more than \$130 million in federally funded SNAP benefits. Combined with a federal match for outreach funds, this drawdown provides an estimated **25-to-1 return on investment** to the state.
- **SNAP alleviates poverty.** SNAP lifts an estimated [510,000 New Yorkers](#)—including 203,000 children—from poverty each year.
- **Maximizing SNAP supports New York’s economy.** SNAP is an important revenue source for more than [17,000](#) SNAP retailers across the state. USDA estimates that every dollar in new SNAP benefits generates \$1.54 in [economic activity](#).
- SNAP provides [nine meals](#) for every one meal provided through the emergency food system of food pantries and soup kitchens. Ensuring the federally funded food security foundation is as strong as possible frees up the state’s investment in the emergency food system to meet residents’ emergency—not chronic—food needs.

- NOEP is an on-the-ground partner to OTDA, **taking administrative burdens off the LDSS/HRA** system. Thousands of phone calls and prescreenings are diverted from social service offices and handled by NOEP. Applications completed through NOEP are easier for LDSS/HRA staff to process because they are complete and accurate.
- SNAP outreach is a **natural complement to a Healthy School Meals for All program**, another critical anti-hunger proposal. Children in households participating in SNAP are automatically certified for federally funded free school meals, minimizing the state-level cost of universal school meals.
- SNAP **streamlines and maximizes the reach of Summer EBT**, a new federal program launched in summer 2024. Children who participate in SNAP automatically receive Summer EBT benefits without an additional application, minimizing administrative burdens for families, state agencies, and schools.

In addition to fully funding NOEP, we urge the Legislature to support the following anti-hunger proposals spanning the Education, Health, and Human Services budgets:

- **Establish and fund a statewide Healthy School Meals for All program, ensuring access to free school breakfast and lunch for all 2.7 million New York students.** The FY2026 Executive Budget includes full funding for universal school meals, an investment the Legislature has long championed. Now, with support from the Governor, we urge the Legislature to ensure this critical proposal is fully funded in the final budget. Universal school meals alleviate hunger, lift children out of poverty, support learning and health, and save families an estimated \$165 per month per child in food costs.
- **Increase funding for New York State WIC's nutrition services.** WIC is our nation's premier maternal and child public health program, providing invaluable nutrition education, nutritionally tailored food packages, breastfeeding support, and referrals to healthcare providers and community resources. WIC serves more than 445,000 New Yorkers and draws down over \$405 million in federal funds for food purchases. The FY2026 Executive Budget proposes \$9.5 million to support local agencies as they serve an expected 30,000 additional New Yorkers this year. We urge the Legislature to build on this proposal, providing \$20 million to more adequately fund WIC's eighty-five local agencies.
- **Increase the SNAP minimum benefit to \$100 per month.** More than 107,000 New Yorkers currently receive less than \$100 in monthly SNAP benefits, with some households receiving just \$23 per month for groceries. We encourage New York to provide a state supplement to support a more adequate minimum benefit. Doing so will bolster food security and encourage increased participation in SNAP, drawing additional federal resources into our state.

- **Support administrative funding for Summer EBT.** In its inaugural year, Summer EBT provided more than \$200M in food benefits for eligible children across the state. We ask the Legislature to support robust administrative funding for this program, including sufficient resources for outreach and customer service.
- **Provide level funding of \$250,000 for outreach and assistance for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).** 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 afterschool programs. Currently, only half of New York’s licensed or registered day care and afterschool providers participate in CACFP. The FY2026 Executive Budget maintains New York’s investment of \$250,000, budgeted through the Office of Children and Family Services, for outreach and technical support to help eligible child care providers connect with CACFP.
- **Implement the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council’s proposals** to cut child poverty by 50% by 2031, including expanded refundable child tax credits and a state-funded food assistance program for non-citizen households with children.
- **Fund Nourish New York and the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) at \$75M each** to support New York’s emergency food system of food banks, food pantries, emergency shelters, and community-based organizations.

Hunger Solutions New York strongly encourages the Legislature to adopt these proposals in the final state budget. These investments will allow New York to continue to support low-income families and individuals and further efforts to reduce hunger across the state.