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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

JENN HYDE
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Dear Senators and Assembly members of the Joint Budget Hearing on Health,

I am writing you on behalf of my organization, Catholic Charities Tri-County Services, 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, and meals programs**, in addition to food banks with any increases to these programs.

The Alliance for a Hunger Free New York is a member-driven coalition of frontline emergency food providers across New York State. Our work is to amplify the collective voices and build a supportive network of frontline community food providers, like food pantries and community meals programs, as well community members experiencing food insecurity. Our vision is a hunger free New York.

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, it's more expensive to keep pantry shelves stocked with healthy, nutritious food.

We are past of point of hunger being a short-term emergency, not having enough nutritious food to eat is crippling people through chronic health conditions, not being able to focus at work, impacting school performance, and having to make difficult decisions between paying for food, medications, gas for the car, household bills, and more.

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.

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 on this critical issue and are grateful for your support. All New Yorkers deserve to have nutritious food on the table.

Submitted by:

Elisabeth Espinosa, Director of Outreach Programs, Catholic Charities Tri-County Services