



**Testimony to the
Joint Fiscal Committees on the SFY 2026-2027 Executive Budget
Health**

**Submitted by:
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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the FY2027 Executive Budget proposal for Health and its impact on efforts to end hunger in New York.

Hunger Solutions New York is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to alleviating hunger by maximizing access to and participation in 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.

Our testimony will focus on opportunities to protect the health and wellbeing of New York families amid unprecedented federal cuts. Specifically, we call for:

- **\$30M to support WIC agencies** so they can serve all eligible families seeking services.
- **\$8.5M to sustain statewide access to SNAP navigators** through the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP).
- Additional investments to expand SNAP access and benefit adequacy, protect benefits from theft, and support other complementary anti-hunger programs.

WIC

For more than fifty years, WIC has been one of our nation's most effective public health and food security programs. Decades of research support WIC's many benefits, including [healthier births](#), [improved maternal health](#), [reduced disparities in infant health](#), [improved child development](#), and [more nutritious diets](#) for participating families. WIC is also an important economic driver, drawing down federal funds into New York's local economies as families use their benefits to buy healthy food at WIC-approved retailers such as grocery stores, pharmacies, and farmers' markets. In FY2025, participating families in New York spent more than \$540M on

WIC-approved foods, including dairy, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, eggs, beans, and baby food. services.

Over the last five years, **WIC participation in New York has increased by nearly 25%**, with the program now serving over 462,000 infants, children, and pregnant and postpartum New Yorkers. However, **funding for local WIC agencies has been insufficient to support this growth**. The 85 local WIC agencies operating through hospitals, local health departments, and community health centers across the state have remained nearly flat-funded for a decade. Now, many of these agencies are operating over their contracted caseloads and struggling to serve all eligible families seeking services.

This fall, the WIC Association of New York State surveyed local agencies to understand how budget shortfalls are impacting the vital services that families depend on. **93%** of responding WIC agencies reported that budget shortfalls are affecting their operations, with many reporting **reduced access to services**, including nutrition and breastfeeding support; **staff reductions**; and **long wait times for appointments**—all major concerns when providing nutrition to infants, young children, and perinatal patients during time-sensitive periods of development.

Meanwhile, an estimated **200,000 New Yorkers are eligible for WIC but not enrolled**—a missed opportunity to fully leverage federally-funded food assistance amid an affordability crisis—but because of capacity concerns at local WIC agencies, New York State ended a successful outreach project that was closing the gap.

\$30 million in the FY2027 budget will:

- **Stabilize operations** so local WIC agencies can serve all eligible families who are seeking services without long wait times for appointments or reduced access to nutrition and breastfeeding support.
- **Fund and maintain modernizations** that make the program more accessible and efficient, including online nutrition education, New York's WIC2Go app, and other participant-friendly tools.
- **Support statewide outreach** to the 200,000 eligible but unenrolled New Yorkers, building on the progress in recent years and drawing down more federal dollars into local economies across our state.

Research shows that every \$1 invested in WIC yields \$2.48 in savings in medical, educational, and productivity costs. To ensure all eligible families in New York State have full access to WIC services, we respectfully request **\$30M in supplemental funding** in the FY2027 Enacted State Budget.

The Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (NOEP)

While NOEP is part of the Human Services budget, the program has an important role to play in supporting the health of New York families. NOEP supports eighty-six local SNAP navigators across the state who provide outreach, prescreenings, and application assistance to help low-income New Yorkers access SNAP and other federal nutrition programs. Last year alone, the program reached more than 158,000 potentially eligible New Yorkers with information about SNAP, and more than **30,000 households received SNAP benefits as a direct result of NOEP services**. By drawing down additional federally funded food benefits into New York's economies, NOEP generates an estimated 25-to-1 return on investment for the state.

Not only is SNAP our nation's largest anti-hunger program, helping nearly [3 million](#) New Yorkers supplement their monthly food costs, the program is also a vital public health intervention. [Research](#) shows that food insecurity is associated with higher rates of diet-related diseases including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and certain forms of cancer; meanwhile, SNAP participation is linked with [improved health outcomes](#) and [lower health care costs](#).

Despite the value of the program, the 2025 federal budget reconciliation bill, H.R.1, imposed the largest cut to SNAP in history. The bill expands harsh work reporting requirements to more people, including older adults and families with children fourteen and older, and severely limits waivers of the requirements in areas with insufficient jobs. As a result, over the next year, hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers will be newly subject to a three-month time limit for SNAP unless they can successfully secure and document sufficient work hours or prove they are exempt. H.R.1 also restricts eligibility for humanitarian immigrants, threatening SNAP access for an estimated 41,000 refugees and asylees across our state.

NOEP can help sustain SNAP access for as many families as possible amid these changes. NOEP's SNAP navigators are experts in SNAP policy, including work reporting rules, immigrant eligibility criteria, and budgeting, and can help New Yorkers understand and navigate the changes enacted under H.R.1. A robust network of well-trained navigators also ensures more SNAP applications are accurate and complete. This will be especially important as New York works to lower its error rate in preparation for the forthcoming cost shift that will require states to cover between 5% and 15% of benefit costs.

SNAP navigators are more critical than ever, but funding gaps threaten NOEP's reach. In addition to its direct cuts to SNAP, **H.R.1 also cuts federal funding for outreach and application assistance programs—including NOEP—in half**. NOEP is currently funded through a combination of state funds—most recently, \$5.642M in the FY2026 Enacted State Budget—and a federal match. The previous dollar-for-dollar federal match will be halved starting October 2026, reducing NOEP funding by 25% overall.

Without added state investment, NOEP will be forced to scale back SNAP navigators when families need them most. To sustain statewide access to SNAP navigators, we respectfully request **\$8.5M for NOEP** in the FY2027 Enacted State Budget, including a **\$4.798M legislative add-on** to the \$3.702M included in the FY2027 Executive Budget.

Additional Investments

We urge the Legislature to support the following anti-hunger proposals spanning the Health, Education, and Human Services budgets:

- **Support the Executive Budget proposal to transition to more secure EBT chip cards.** More than 150,000 New York families have filed claims reporting electronic SNAP benefit theft since 2023, making New York the hardest-hit state in the nation. Transitioning to EBT chip cards will mitigate theft at the source, protecting taxpayer dollars and ensuring families can use their benefits to buy the food they need. The final budget must include resources to purchase and distribute EBT chip cards and make necessary technology upgrades to enable the transition.
- **Increase the SNAP minimum benefit to \$100 per month.** More than 141,000 New Yorkers currently receive less than \$100 in monthly SNAP benefits, with some households receiving just \$24 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.
- **Extend food assistance to excluded New Yorkers.** Many income-eligible New Yorkers are currently excluded from SNAP solely due to their immigration status. Federal changes included in H.R.1 further exacerbate such exclusions by removing eligibility for refugees, asylees, and other humanitarian groups. New York must step in and fill these gaps by providing food assistance for non-citizen households with children—in alignment with recommendations from the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council—and for immigrant groups recently excluded from SNAP due to H.R.1.
- **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. Amid cuts to SNAP and other basic needs programs, the emergency food system needs additional resources to meet heightened demand.
- **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 FY2027 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.

- **Sustain funding for universal school meals.** Thanks to New York's historic investment in the FY2026 budget, 2.7 million students began the school year with a new reality: free school breakfast and lunch, no questions asked. This proven policy saves families money and time, eliminates stigma, and supports learning and health. As families face cuts to other benefits and services, it will be especially critical to sustain this investment.
- **Expand access to summer nutrition programs.** Over the summer break, many children lose access to school meals. We support the Executive Budget proposals to improve access to summer nutrition programs, including through expansions of non-congregate summer meal programs and cross-agency Summer EBT outreach. We urge the Legislature to support these proposals and sustain New York's continued investment in Summer EBT administration.

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 advance a healthier New York State.