

BECAUSE IT TAKES MORE THAN FOOD TO FEED THE HUNGRY



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Joint Legislative Hearing – Health/Medicaid

Testimony of Long Island Cares, Inc.—The Harry Chapin Food Bank

Michael W. Haynes, Vice President for Government Relations, Advocacy, & Social Policy

February 10, 2026

In our role as the Regional Food Bank for Long Island, we distributed 15,414,563 million pounds of emergency nutrition and supply assistance in 2025. Despite economic and supply chain improvements since the onset of COVID-19, demand for our services has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Support from New York State continues to provide food banks, like Long Island Cares, with the resources required to combat prolonged increases in need. We commend the State Legislature for prioritizing programs which strengthen the State's emergency food network. It is a privilege to partner with New York State Government in the fight to rid the Empire State of this societal ill plaguing far too many New Yorkers.

In 2025, Governor Hochul and the State Legislature funded the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) budget at \$57.8M. In our role as the appointed regional food bank, we administer HPNAP on behalf of the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) for Long Island (Suffolk and Nassau Counties). **This level of support made it possible for Long Island Cares to purchase and distribute 2.7 million pounds of HPNAP foods to our 340 network members (i.e. soup kitchens and food pantries).**

In 2025, Governor Hochul and the State Legislature funded Nourish New York (NNY) at \$55M. **This level of funding made it possible for Long Island Cares to distribute 2.1 million pounds of locally sourced produce, dairy, meats, and fish.** We are extremely grateful for NNY funds as this program has strengthened relationships with local producers and helped us to provide our network with highly nutritious, locally sourced produce and proteins.

The proposed Executive Budget increases HPNAP funding to \$72.8M and maintains NNY funding at \$55M. Food banks across the state are serving around 70% more households and individuals compared to 2019 levels. This serious spike in demand has coincided with the expiration of pandemic-era support measures, higher grocery prices, and increased levels of homelessness due to rising housing costs. We are doing our best, but we need more support to keep pace.

Long Island Cares stands with Feeding NYS in calling for HPNAP funding to be set at \$75M and NNY to be funded at \$75M. This additional funding would provide food banks with



"To know is to care. To care is to act. To act is to make a difference."
- Harry Chapin, Founder, Long Island Cares

the resources needed to do a better job feeding 3 million food insecure New Yorkers and keep pace with prolonged increases in demand for our services.

New York State Government has consistently stepped up in the fight to end hunger. We wish the hunger crisis was subsiding, but that sadly is not the case. These recommendations would go a long way in combatting the food insecurity 3 million New Yorkers, and 313,000 Long Islanders face on a daily basis.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests and for your longstanding commitment in the fight against hunger.

Respectfully submitted by,



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Vice President for Government Relations & Advocacy

Member of:
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