



**Joint Legislative Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget Proposal:**

**Human Services**

Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

On behalf of Common Threads, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about the Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget for Human Services.

For 20 years, Common Threads has partnered with New York City schools and community organizations to deliver hands-on nutrition and cooking education that supports health, learning, and long-term well-being. To date, Common Threads has reached more than 124,063 children, youth, and caregivers across 40+ public schools and community-based sites citywide.

In addition to direct service delivery, Common Threads engages in policy and advocacy work at all levels of government. Our policy priorities are grounded in what we know works for children and families and informed by the persistent barriers our staff encounter while serving the one in four New York City children living in poverty. Amid deep uncertainty driven by federal policy shifts and unstable funding at both the state and city levels, we urge the Legislature to take bold action and prioritize meaningful investments in human services and community-based supports. Low-income and working-class families are being pushed to the brink, struggling to afford childcare, health care, and nutritious food. New York must pass a budget that strengthens—not shrinks—our social safety net and ensures every family and every community has the resources needed to thrive.

**1. Fund SNAP-Ed New York at \$30M**

For three decades, SNAP-Ed New York has built a statewide network of trusted community partners dedicated to making healthy choices easier for New Yorkers. SNAP-Ed strengthens the impact of SNAP by helping families stretch their food dollars and make informed decisions about what they eat. Through community-based providers and State agencies, SNAP-Ed gives New Yorkers of all ages practical nutrition education and access points to fresh, affordable food that fits real budgets and real lives.

Although H.R.1 completely eliminated federal funding for SNAP-Ed, the need—and the impact—remains. Given that SNAP-Ed programming was solely funded through federal appropriations, New York is losing more than 200+ nutrition educators working in all 62 counties. Without committed funding in State Fiscal Year 2027, the State will lose infrastructure and relationships built over decades. In Federal Fiscal Year 2025, SNAP-Ed New York partnered with over 1,550 community partners and reached more than 1.845 million participants and their families throughout the State. From these partnerships, SNAP-Ed programming was able to deliver 35,706 nutrition workshops at over 900 community sites. Participants also reported significant life changes including 57% improved fruit and vegetable intake, 57% more physically active, and 58% engaged in more price comparisons while food shopping.[1] Overall, household food security improved by 25% after participating in SNAP-Ed programming.

Additionally, every \$1 invested in the program saves up to \$9.54 in future healthcare costs.[2] As the State faces difficult decisions about how to allocate resources, it must also prepare for the cascading effects of proposed reductions to SNAP benefits and anticipated cuts to Medicaid eligibility. These changes will increase demand for State and community-based services, driving more families into food

insecurity and limiting their access to essential healthcare. SNAP-Ed is one of the most effective tools the State has—providing families with the nutrition education, skills, and support needed to stretch limited food dollars and maintain healthy diets even as federal benefits decline.

SNAP-Ed also supports New York’s agricultural economy by encouraging households to spend their grocery dollars on food grown and produced in the State. Through partnerships across education, healthcare, food retail, emergency food providers, agriculture, and community institutions, SNAP-Ed reaches New Yorkers where they live, learn, eat, work, and play.

At Common Threads, SNAP-Ed supports fresh food box and nutrition education initiatives in neighborhoods like the South Bronx, Harlem, Washington Heights, and the north shore of Staten Island that have limited or no access to fresh produce or farmers markets. SNAP-Ed provides the infrastructure for organizations like Common Threads to offer steep discounts on locally grown fruits and vegetables and to deliver skills-based workshops led by qualified nutritionists for youth and families. Distributions are held at schools and after-school programs, allowing families to pick up both their children and fresh produce simultaneously. Unfortunately, without further State investments, this program would **completely cease operations by September 2026.**

#### **Recommendations:**

**To ensure the continuity of this proven and essential program, we urge the Legislature to prioritize a \$30 million investment to sustain nutrition services that help families stretch their SNAP benefits, improve health outcomes, and build long-term food security.** This funding level will fully support 17 community-based organizations and 3 State agencies responsible for delivering SNAP-Ed programming across New York State.

#### **Closing**

Common Threads sincerely thanks the New York State Legislature for its ongoing commitment to New York’s youth and families. Providing them with the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential is not only the right thing to do—it is essential for the future of our State. Investing in SNAP-Ed New York’s evidence-based nutrition support services is a proven way to enhance the food safety net and positively impact our communities’ long-term health.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony on these critical issues in the lives of children and families in New York State.

[1] USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Available at: [SNAP-Ed-NY-FFY25-Impact-Report.pdf](#)

[2] University of Illinois Extension. (2023, June 13). Available at: [Creating healthier Illinoisans: SNAP-Ed generates up to \\$135 million in future benefits |Serving Calhoun, Cass, Greene, Morgan and Scott Counties | Illinois Extension | UIUC](#)