



**Joint Legislative Hearing on the Fiscal Year 2027 Executive Budget Proposal:  
Human Services**  
Thursday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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

New York Common Pantry has grown into one of the largest emergency food providers in New York City, serving more than 11.7 million meals in FY25 to low-income and unhoused guests throughout New York City. For 45 years we have championed the cause of hungry New Yorkers holistically, addressing food insecurity with food pantry and meal distribution programs, and the underlying causes of poverty with social services concentrated on public benefits acquisition. In the past few months, we've been seeing double- and triple-digit spikes in guest visits and growing pressure on staff, volunteers, and supply chains due to the food security crisis here in New York.

With 1 in 3 New Yorkers having used a food pantry in the past three years<sup>1</sup>, and 1.8 million New York City residents relying on SNAP<sup>2</sup> to buy groceries for their families, put simply, we have a cost of living problem. According to the most recent Robin Hood Poverty Tracker, "more than 40% of New York City families cannot afford weekly food costs, falling short \$205 per week."<sup>3</sup> Struggling to pay for food and other necessities has driven more families -- including middle income families -- to come to our doors seeking food assistance.

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.

**We ask you to support two priorities for the communities we serve:**

**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.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Annual State of Poverty and Disadvantage," Robin Hood and the Poverty Tracker Research Group at Columbia University, Volume 6, Winter 2024

<sup>2</sup> Office of the Mayor, [Announcement regarding SNAP](#), October 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Robin Hood Poverty Tracker, November 2025

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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> 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.

New York Common Pantry's SNAP-Ed program, Live Healthy! (LH), provides nutrition education classes, Recipe Club cooking classes and a Farm Share program to educate the community about the nutrients in foods, how to eat healthier and how to shop on a limited food budget and to stretch their food dollars. The program runs year-round and is very well received among the families we serve across the city. This past year, we had nearly 20,400 visits to this programming and we served the equivalent of 33,000 meals through our Farm Share Program.

The Live Healthy! Food MD Program is a fresh fruit and vegetable prescription program designed to increase access to healthy, fresh produce and decrease the risk for developing chronic diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol disorders and obesity. This program includes: complete health screenings, nutrition workshops, fresh fruit and vegetables, free biweekly Pantry distribution, and social services.

As an example, during the Greenmarket Season (July-October), our Live Healthy! team reached nearly 2,900 participants through Nutrition Education, Farmers' Market Cooking Demonstrations, and Farmers' Market Tours. The Live Healthy! nutrition education materials also are distributed through our other service programs, reaching an additional 22,000+ individuals with this important information.

Unfortunately, without further State investments, this program would **completely cease operations by September 2026.**

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<sup>4</sup> USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Available at: [SNAP-Ed-NY-FFY25-Impact-Report.pdf](#)

<sup>5</sup> University of Illinois Extension. (2023, June 13). Available at: [Creating healthier Illinoisans: SNAP-Ed generates up, and UIUC](#)

## 2. TSNAP/SNAP Enrollment

The Targeted Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (T-SNAP) Outreach Program provides targeted outreach to ensure that communities with the highest rates of poverty and geographic barriers have access to healthy food. New York Common Pantry regularly partners with 70 sites, such as WIC offices, healthcare providers, elected officials' offices, and other community-based organizations to reach into these areas where there is high SNAP eligibility and low SNAP participation to encourage families who qualify to enroll, and we assist them with the enrollment process. Last year, NYCP's team processed more than 2,000 SNAP applications and 600 recertifications, and accessed more than \$3.7 million in benefits for our guests. Prior to last year, the Federal government and NY State funded TSNAP as part of SNAP administrative budgeting and split the costs 50-50. The new budget allocations designate that the Federal government will pick up 25% and NY State will pick up 75%. **NY State is asking nonprofits to pick up the 75%, which is untenable and unsustainable, rendering this program ineffective.**

### 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.
- **We are asking the legislature to pick up 25% of the TSNAP administrative costs, matching the Federal government coverage and asking nonprofits to cover half (50%) of the expenses.** This will enable this effective program to run smoothly and to be able to continue helping families at the levels it has been.

### Closing

New York Common Pantry sincerely thanks the New York State Legislature for its ongoing commitment to New York's families. Providing them with the resources and opportunities they need to feed their families so they can work, go to school and thrive -- 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. Supporting SNAP enrollment with covering 25% of the administrative costs of the TSNAP program will enable organizations to continue helping hungry NY State residents access the resources they need to feed their families.

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