



Childhood Hunger in New York



Dear New York Official,

Children in every corner of New York State are growing up facing hunger, a number that has grown due to the coronavirus pandemic, especially within Black, Latino, and rural communities. Hunger takes a profound toll on children's health, happiness, and their ability to build successful futures and break the cycle of poverty.

Childhood hunger is, however, a solvable problem. As an elected leader in New York, you have the power to help and, together, we can ensure that all children get the nutrition they need to grow up healthy, educated and strong.

With your leadership, we can:

- ☐ develop, share and implement a replicable "blueprint" for ending childhood hunger;
- ☐ enact bold strategies that provide better access to meal programs;
- ☐ promote innovative solutions to remove barriers so that children in low-income families can access nutrition programs, and;
- ☐ advocate for critical policy changes to ensure thousands more children in need across the state are receiving healthy meals every day.

As a leader in New York, you are on the front lines of this crisis. You can transform an issue into a movement. With collaborative guidance, you can use your role to raise awareness about childhood hunger, advance proven solutions and institute policies that bring about lasting changes to increase access to child nutrition programs and end childhood hunger.

No Kid Hungry New York is focused on relief and solutions during this crisis. This year, 1 in 5 kids may face hunger in New York. We are working to end childhood hunger by helping launch and improve programs that give all the kids the healthy food they need to thrive.

We look forward to being your partner throughout this journey,



Rachel Sabella
Director, No Kid Hungry New York
Share Our Strength

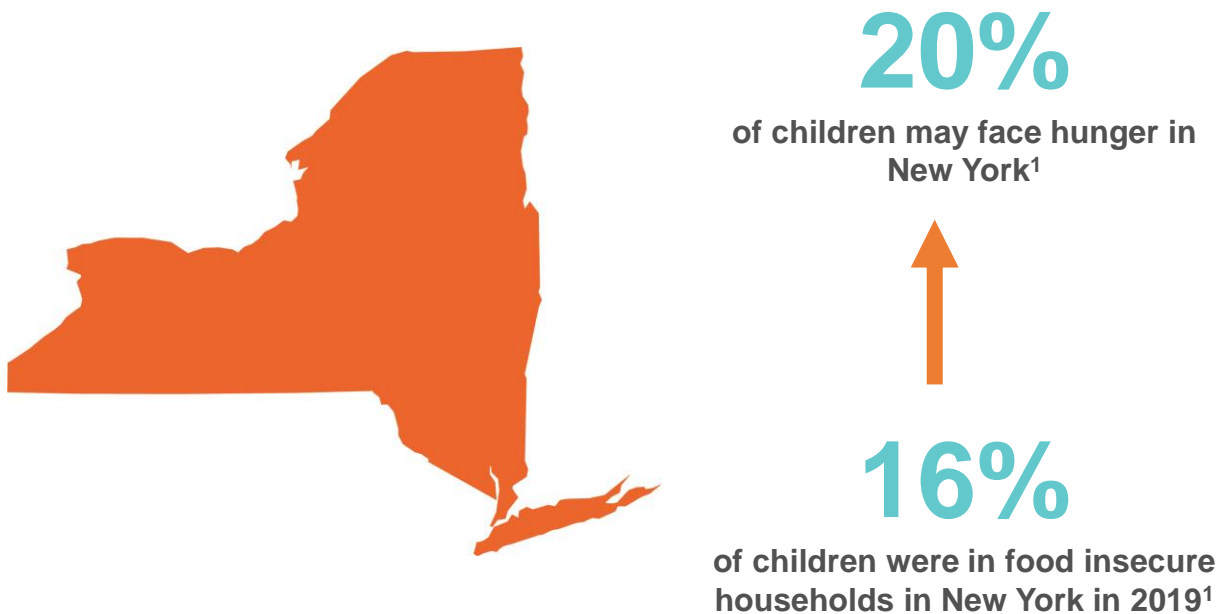
The Problem: Childhood Hunger in New York



Food insecurity looks different in every household. For some families, the pantry is completely empty. In others, parents skip dinner a few nights a week so their kids can have something to eat in the evening. No matter how food insecurity manifests, a lot is at stake for these children, families and the communities where they live. When kids don't get the consistent nutrition they need each day throughout the year, it's harder for them to grow up healthy, educated and strong. Consistent access to nutrition is linked to cognitive and physical development, better long-term health, higher test scores and better education outcomes.

Unfortunately, because policies and practices entrenched in our laws and society leave millions of children behind, especially in rural, tribal and communities of color, the promise of opportunity remains unfairly out of reach for far too many children. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these existing deep-rooted disparities, increasing the severity of a myriad health and economic crises, pushing millions more families into poverty and hunger throughout the country. In New York, the new reality created by the pandemic has made it harder for children to access no-cost meals provided by schools and community organizations. **As a result, 1 in 5 kids may face hunger in New York.¹**

COVID-19: Impact on Child Food Insecurity



The Solution: Strengthening Nutrition Programs



Our nation's federal nutrition programs work together to connect children to the food they need. Many of these programs, however, are underutilized or can be difficult to access, especially during the pandemic. Eliminating barriers and maximizing participation in these programs will help combat rising child food insecurity in New York. While strengthening these programs often requires federal action, state level policy changes and innovations can play a major role. This section describes the various nutrition programs followed by an action list on how New York can help these programs operate more effectively and reach more children facing economic insecurity.

School Meals

For many children, school meals are their only source of consistent nutrition. Prior to the pandemic, children had access to school breakfast and lunch in a more predictable manner which lead to calmer, more focused classrooms where students are better able to learn. The importance of school meals has never been more apparent than when schools closed classroom learning due to the pandemic. While learning models have varied, school cafeterias have been operating continuously since March 2020, providing critical nutrition to students across New York.

Meals look different now, and school nutrition staff are coming up with innovative ways to keep kids fed through delivery, pick up, and in person models. This has put considerable strain on school nutrition budgets, threatening to cause layoffs and cuts across these important departments.

2,077,711

The number of New York students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals in 2019²

Summer Meals

Summer is the hungriest time of year for many kids from families facing economic hardship because school breakfast and lunch are unavailable. Summer meal programs—which are operated by schools and community organizations and provide free meals at congregate sites to children 18 and under—can help kids get the nutrition they need during these difficult months. But, transportation challenges, bureaucratic hurdles and even extreme weather can become barriers to participation. As a result, summer meals only reached 27.5% of eligible children in New York in 2019.³

In 2019, summer meals reached

27.5%

of eligible children³

Afterschool Meals

Too many kids don't get enough to eat between lunch and breakfast the next morning. Afterschool meals help kids get the nutrition they need once the school day ends. Having these meals reimbursed by the USDA also helps schools and community organizations save money and redirect funds into additional programming or staffing.

In FY 2019, the number of afterschool meals and snacks served in New York was just

21.4%

of free or reduced-price school lunches⁷

In Times of Crisis: Addressing Hunger



SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a powerful tool for ending childhood hunger in the United States. SNAP provides eligible households with a grocery store benefit, that allows families to purchase healthy food and ingredients. It helps decrease food insecurity, lifts kids out of poverty and is linked to better physical health and stronger academic success in children.

New York, more than
54%
of SNAP participants
are in families with
children⁵

Now, as many families struggle with economic impacts of COVID-19, the program is more important than ever. In FY 2019, SNAP reached 2,661,000 New York residents.⁵ During the pandemic, program flexibilities have been allowed to ensure those hardest hit by the pandemic have better access to needed food and nutrition through SNAP. These include flexibilities related to benefit application, processing and recertification, and the availability of the maximum benefit level for current program participants. SNAP is also one of the most effective ways to boost the local economy, money spent at grocery stores and markets leads to more jobs, wages and local economic activity in the community. In fact, every SNAP dollar that households spend expands the local economy by about \$1.50 to \$1.80.

WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) assists low-income pregnant and post-partum women, infants and children up to age five with food, nutrition education, breastfeeding support and health care referrals.

During the pandemic, USDA is maximizing the use of existing program flexibilities and the waiver authority provided by Congress to ensure children and families who need it can participate in WIC. Despite the benefits, many women, infants, and children are not participating in the program due to the administrative burden. In addition, many women leave the program after their child turns one as infant formula benefits end. State officials can eliminate red tape to ensure that eligible women, infants, and children can continue to participate in the program.

In 2018, only
48.8%
of eligible children
(ages 1-4) were
participating in WIC
in New York⁶

Pandemic EBT

Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) was initially authorized by Congress in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act in March 2020. P-EBT provides grocery assistance directly to households with K-12 students eligible for free and reduced-price school meals when school buildings are closed or when schools have a hybrid attendance schedule. The amount of assistance a family receives is equal to the value of school meals that are missed. Benefits are distributed to eligible students by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). To learn more, visit OTDA's P-EBT page at otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19.

2,331,000
students were
eligible for P-EBT in
summer 2021⁴

End Childhood Hunger: An Action List for New York Leaders



Your leadership is crucial to a successful anti-hunger campaign, especially during the coronavirus pandemic. With your support, federal nutrition programs can run more effectively and efficiently, reaching more kids across New York with the food they need to grow up healthy and strong. Additional information can be found on the [No Kid Hungry New York Policy Resources Website](https://nokidhungry.org/new-york/).

Across all programs

- ☐ Support efforts to pass equitable and inclusive state policies that will improve access to school breakfast, after-school meals, summer meals programs, and SNAP.
- ☐ Ensure state agencies have the resources to efficiently administer each program and hold them accountable for reaching quantitative goals to increase program participation.
- ☐ Use your platform to celebrate the champions who are feeding kids through the child nutrition programs.
- ☐ Raise awareness by speaking publicly about the issue of childhood hunger, using social media to promote programs and program sites to constituents, and talk to school administrators and staff about how child hunger impacts their students.

P-EBT

- ☐ Ensure that all families who qualify for P-EBT for the 2022 summer break and 21 – 22 school year can access the program quickly and efficiently.
- ☐ Promote P-EBT and provide clear information to eligible families about how to participate.
- ☐ Establish a statewide or centralized database system and processes for direct certification and rapid FRP eligibility determination to more quickly distribute PEBT benefits.

Poverty Alleviation

- ☐ Support efforts to expand the New York State Child Tax Credit and ensure families are accessing all available tax credits.

School meals

- ☐ Incentivize use of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) to maximize student access to free school meals.
- ☐ Provide financial support for school meal programs in the state budget, that will cover additional costs associated with safe provision of meal services (meal delivery, transportation, and personal protective equipment).

Out of school meals

- ☐ Increase participation in the summer and afterschool meal programs by promoting PSAs and hotlines to help families find sites.
- ☐ Establish a state program modeled on the federal Summer EBT pilot to provide additional grocery assistance to low-income families with children in rural and hard-to-reach communities where summer meals programs are difficult to access.

SNAP and WIC

- ☐ Maximize all the available federal SNAP waivers and flexibilities available to states to expand program access, reduce administrative and application burden to state agencies and eligible families.
- ☐ Expand outreach and application assistance services in various areas of the state where eligibility is high and participation is low by proving funding and other resources.
- ☐ Support efforts to ensure that mothers and young children have access to WIC and child care.

The No Kid Hungry New York Strategy



In the wake of the coronavirus, millions of children in the U.S. are facing poverty and hunger. Traditionally, many kids relied on the meals they would get at school each day. But even as school staff and community leaders work to feed students, children are missing important meals.

No Kid Hungry New York has a plan to make sure those children are fed, both during this crisis and in the recovery to follow. Through a combination of emergency grants, strategic assistance, advocacy, and awareness, No Kid Hungry is helping kids, families, and communities across the state of New York get the resources they need.



BUILD CAPACITY THROUGH TARGETED INVESTMENTS

Since March 2020, No Kid Hungry has granted over \$100 million to 2,416 organizations. No Kid Hungry school and community grantees have reported serving nearly 1.5 billion meals to children and families across the country. Granting will also continue in the new year. **As of January 2022, No Kid Hungry has invested more than \$4.5 million in grants and support for solutions that work in New York as well as more than \$400,000 in Puerto Rico.**



CREATE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

No Kid Hungry works with corporate and philanthropic supporters like **Citi, Arby's Foundation, and Discovery, Inc.** and strong local partners to build relationships with schools and community leaders to provide better access to the programs that feed kids.



DEVELOP NONPARTISAN PARTNERSHIPS

No Kid Hungry builds **strong, bipartisan support** among elected leaders around streamlined data collection, pragmatic policy actions and collaboration to strengthen child nutrition programs. We were thrilled that this partnership led to the Restaurant Meals Program becoming law in New York State in 2021.



BRING RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

No Kid Hungry provides **expertise, best practices, collaborative planning** and **bold strategies** to maximize meal accessibility.



MAXIMIZE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIES

No Kid Hungry ensures families facing economic hardship have information about the programs that can help them have better food access through our meal finder map, texting line and outreach campaigns. Lastly, No Kid Hungry enhances public awareness of childhood hunger, creating new momentum by celebrating champions across the state through our [Hunger Heroes recognition](#).

Deep Dive: Children Facing Hunger Projections in New York by County¹



County	Child food insecurity rate - %
Albany	17%
Allegany	22%
Bronx	36%
Broome	22%
Cattaraugus	21%
Cayuga	18%
Chautauqua	23%
Chemung	21%
Chenango	19%
Clinton	20%
Columbia	17%
Cortland	18%
Delaware	23%
Dutchess	14%
Erie	20%
Essex	18%

County	Child food insecurity rate - %
Franklin	22%
Fulton	22%
Genesee	17%
Greene	18%
Hamilton	21%
Herkimer	21%
Jefferson	20%
Kings	28%
Lewis	20%
Livingston	16%
Madison	15%
Monroe	20%
Montgomery	25%
Nassau	10%
New York	20%
Niagara	20%

Deep Dive: Children Facing Hunger Projections in New York by County¹



County	Child food insecurity rate - %
Oneida	21%
Onondaga	19%
Ontario	15%
Orange	17%
Orleans	20%
Oswego	23%
Otsego	18%
Putnam	9%
Queens	22%
Rensselaer	18%
Richmond	19%
Rockland	18%
St. Lawrence	22%
Saratoga	12%
Schenectady	18%
Schoharie	18%

County	Child food insecurity rate - %
Schuyler	21%
Seneca	18%
Steuben	20%
Suffolk	11%
Sullivan	21%
Tioga	16%
Tompkins	14%
Ulster	17%
Warren	17%
Washington	18%
Wayne	18%
Westchester	13%
Wyoming	16%
Yates	17%
State Total	20%

About No Kid Hungry New York

For nearly 40 years, Share Our Strength has been a nonprofit leader, creating innovative, sustainable ways to help people out of poverty. In 2010, we launched No Kid Hungry, a national campaign to end childhood hunger in America by changing the way that schools, communities and entire cities ensure hungry children have the food they need.

This year, as many as 803,560 kids may face hunger in New York.¹ But this is a solvable problem. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, investments in nutrition programs helped protect many families from hunger and helped stave off greater rates of child food insecurity despite the severe economic hardships brought on by the pandemic. This is complicated work, but we know what strategies have been successful and today, we have the momentum and opportunity to make real progress. Throughout this crisis and its aftermath, No Kid Hungry is working to ensure that policies and nutrition programs are adapting to meet the needs of families and that schools and communities have the funding, flexibility, guidance and strategies to support children's access to three healthy meals a day—now and in the future.



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¹ Map the Meal Gap 2020, Feeding America, <https://map.feedingamerica.org/> & The Impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity, Feeding America, March 2021, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/coronavirus-hunger-research/>

² Child Nutrition Tables, Data & Research, U.S. Department of Agriculture, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/child-nutrition-tables>

³ Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation: Summer Nutrition Status Report, FRAC, <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/FRAC-Summer-Nutrition-Report-2020.pdf>

⁴ Pandemic EBT – Summer 2021 – Projected Beneficiaries and Value of Benefits, United State Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/pandemic-ebt-summer-2021-projected-beneficiaries-and-value-benefits>

⁵ A Closer Look at Who Benefits from SNAP: State-by-State Fact Sheets, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/a-closer-look-at-who-benefits-from-snap-state-by-state-fact-sheets#Alabama>

⁶ WIC Coverage Rates by State 2018, United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/WICEligibles2018-Volume2.pdf>

⁷ Celebrating Ten Years Of Afterschool Meals: Looking Back And Looking Ahead, No Kid Hungry, <http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Celebrating%2010%20Years%20of%20Afterschool%20Meals%20Full%20Report.pdf>