



2018 Public Policy Agenda for New York State

Mission:

To lead a unified effort for a hunger-free New York State

Board Membership

Natasha Thompson, Chair
Food Bank of the Southern Tier

Kathleen Stress, Vice Chair
Food Bank of Central NY

Mark Quandt, Treasurer
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Throughout New York State, food insecurity inflicts a heavy toll on the lives of our children, seniors, veterans, disabled and those who work more than one job to make ends meet.

While some who are food insecure can access public assistance, Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap* reported the sad reality is, there are still 449 million meals needed to feed the 2.5 million hungry in NYS. Shocking in its own right, this figure is more alarming considering it is trending in the wrong direction. 2017 saw the need for meals by those who did not qualify for government aid increase by 3% over 2016.

In 2017, members of the Food Bank Association of New York State provided 150 million meals through the entire state, in partnership with 2,500 food pantries and 2,500 community institutions. Our members are committed to continue working with partners to close this imposing "meal gap," but doing so will require assistance through policy and funding initiatives to facilitate our member organizations' abilities to identify, retrieve, accept, sort and distribute prospective food donations and cultivate new donation sources.

Initiatives supported by the Food Bank Association of New York State include:

- **Enact the Food Rescue and Recycling Act:** (Executive Budget) Passage would spur an *additional 25 Million Meals to be actualized*. The Act strengthens an already established food donation channel, supports sustainable business practices, reduces atmospheric methane emissions and returns rich compost to NYS soil. The Food Bank Association of New York State will be involved in the training of food generators and the adoption of standardized guidelines for wholesome and edible food donations to be made.
- **Utilize Safe and Appropriate "Past-Date" Foods:** Our members oppose a ban or ill-advised restrictions on the donation and use of past-date foods (A2272). We seek to work with State officials to develop standards and clarifications regarding expiration date labels. The use of safe and appropriate "past date" foods is vital to advancing food security.
- **Protect Children and Expand Food Security to All New York Students.** Double to \$1.5 million the State's investment to fully implement No Student Goes Hungry, advance an end to lunch shaming, establish Breakfast after the Bell in 1400 schools, expand Farm-to-School programs, increase the reimbursement rate from 5.9 cents to 25 cents per meal for districts who buy 25% -30% of their lunch ingredients from New York farms, and establish food pantries on SUNY and CUNY campuses.
- **Establish a Feed NYS Tax Check-Off Program.** Several states utilize tax check-off programs granting tax filers the ability to donate a portion of their state return to the food banks in their state. Including a Food Bank Association of New York State option among New York State's existing tax check-off alternatives (A4572/No Same As) would generate vital funds to fuel cooperative statewide opportunities to **Feed NYS**. Each dollar donated would yield four meals.



- **Feed NYS with Fresh, Locally-Grown Agricultural Products.** Provide funding under the umbrella of ***Taste NY*** to incorporate a ***Feed NYS*** component. This would allow the Food Bank Association of New York State to partner with the State's agricultural community to ensure local food banks are accessing fresh, locally grown agricultural products for distribution to New Yorkers in need to the greatest extent possible.
- **Fund Empire State After-School Grants.** Increase program funding to \$100 million to assist high need communities in every region of the State. Students and working families benefit when children are in a safe, engaged environment with extended learning and youth development opportunities. **Also, many after-school programs provide meals to participants which can be a relief for low-income, food insecure families.**
- **\$1 Million Innovation Grant to Food Banks.** These grants would be funded through the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA) and administered by the Food Bank Association of New York State. An innovation grant would allow food banks to develop new community-based approaches to address the food security needs of our most vulnerable residents.
- **Reinstate COLA to Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP):** This funding allows our members to do great work, however, funding is not adequate and the Executive budget does not include COLA in 2019. **The Food Bank Association of NYS members request the 2019 COLA to be added to the NYS Budget.**

For More Information:

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