

Feeding New York State

Statement on Racial Justice

The United States of America, unlike most countries, was not created around a piece of geography or a single national group. We were created by a set of ideas. Among them were the ideas that all of us are equal, that all of us should have the same opportunities, and that government exists to serve the people.

There has always been a gap between the promises made by our founders and the daily realities of our country. While that gap impacts many Americans, nowhere is that gap greater than for black Americans. And nothing is more basic than the need for food.

We in the anti-hunger community use the term “food deserts” to describe the phenomenon of communities without access to nutritious, economically accessible food supplies. In recent decades, communities of color have disproportionately lost access to healthy, nutritious food sources. Hunger is a social determinant of health. The effects of food deserts can be seen in public health statistics: black Americans’ outcomes in child mortality, diabetes, heart disease and lifespan are all impacted by the lack of access to quality food.

But what causes this hunger? Let us be clear that the public policies and private decisions that created food deserts are linked to racism. This injustice, created and maintained by many institutions over a long period of time, creates food deserts in the very same places that it creates safety deserts, opportunity deserts, and educational deserts. Hunger, like racism, has become normalized, but it is a violation of our foundational values and must end.

We at Feeding New York State recommit to our own work and our relationship with other organizations to advocate for policies that eliminate the effects of racism in America. Without that we cannot solve the problem of hunger.