



## **Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program 2024 Annual Assessment Report**

### **Introduction**

Pursuant to the Chapter 101 of the laws of 2022, on or before the first day of December each year, the Commissioner of Health shall annually assess changing economic indicators impacting service levels within the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) in all regions of the state. Such assessment may include, but not be limited to, the average cost per meal, personnel costs, transportation costs, fuel costs and storage capacity. The commissioner shall provide a summary of findings to the governor and the legislature to inform funding levels for the HPNAP. This report, based on 2024 information, is the third report following the passage of the legislation.

### **Report Background**

The HPNAP provides emergency food relief and nutrition services to food insecure populations in New York State. Approximately 400 million emergency meals are now provided annually through a network of more than 2,700 NYS Emergency Food Providers (e.g., food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters). The HPNAP directly funds 44 organizations that include the 10 Regional Food Banks and 34 direct service providers that support the 2,700 Emergency Food Programs. Since 2019, New York State has experienced a significant increase in the demand for emergency food, which has resulted in RFBs needing to increase the amount of emergency food being made available to the entire emergency food network.

### **Survey Methods**

In August 2024, the HPNAP deployed an electronic survey to the ten Regional Food Banks to assess the economic impact on food assistance costs to inform the State on funding needs for the HPNAP. Regional Food Banks staff completing the survey were senior-level executives within their organization, with most having responsibilities directly related to the organization's financial decisions. Nine out of the ten responses are based on estimated or actual expenditure records and calculations.

### **Findings**

Cost increases of up to 10% annually are generally anticipated and considered within normal operation parameters considering Costs of Living Adjustments (COLA) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) information associated with known expenses that these emergency food providers maintain each year. Cost increase findings that exceed 10% are generally considered more

remarkable and outside of normal operation parameters and are highlighted below for this report.

Important to note is that the expenses outlined in the chart below differ by each food bank. Therefore, we include “not applicable” as an answer choice.

Below is a series of tables outlining survey responses. Table 1 includes individual expenses that are necessary to meet the needs of the food pantries, emergency shelters, and soup kitchens they support across the state. Expense increases most likely to exceed 10% include food transportation vehicle maintenance cost (50%), personnel cost (50%), food transportation contract cost (44%), consultant services cost (44%), and warehouse and office space cost (43%). The majority (80%) of responses were within 10% of last years’ report, indicating a reliable repeat survey.

**Table 1: Specific program cost needs of the ten regional foodbanks.**

	N/A	0%	>0 - 5%	6- 10%	11- 20%	21- 30%	31- 40%	41- 50%	> 51%	% Reporting Cost Increase (>10%) 2024
<b>Food Cost</b>	-	-	2	4	2	1	-	-	1	<b>40%</b>
<b>Personnel Cost</b>	-	-	2	3	3	1	-	1	-	<b>50%</b>
<b>Consultant Services Cost</b>	1	1	3	1	1	1	-	-	2	<b>44%</b>
<b>Truck or Vehicle Purchases Cost</b>	2	1	3	1	1	1	-	-	1	<b>38%</b>
<b>Food Transportation Fuel Cost</b>	-	1	5	2	2		-	-	-	<b>20%</b>
<b>Food Transportation Contract Cost</b>	1	3	-	2	2	1	-	1	-	<b>44%</b>
<b>Food Transportation Vehicle Maintenance and Repair Cost</b>	-	-	4	1	2	2	-	-	1	<b>50%</b>
<b>Food Cold Storage, Shelving and Handling Equipment Cost</b>	2	1	3	1	-	2	-	-	1	<b>38%</b>
<b>Food Cold Storage, Shelving and Handling Equipment Maintenance and Repair Cost</b>	-	-	3	4	2	-	-	-	1	<b>30%</b>
<b>Warehouse and Office Space Cost</b>	3	1	1	2	-	2	-	-	1	<b>43%</b>
<b>Operation's Materials and Supplies Cost</b>	-	1	4	4	-	-	-	-	1	<b>10%</b>
<b>Facilities Maintenance Cost</b>	-	-	5	1	2	1	-	-	1	<b>40%</b>

In addition to specific costs, we asked the Regional Food Banks to report any expected increases in their overall cost and requests for food assistance. The survey asked about changes in the needs of regional food banks to address new and unmet need, including amount of food (pounds), increase in demand for services, maintenance of current serves, and new and unmet needs for services.

All 10 food banks (100%) indicated they would need more than a 10% increase in funding to address new and unmet need. Of note, last year, only 22% of food banks anticipated more than a 10% increase in pounds of emergency food needed. This year, that increased to 90%.

**Table 2: Current, new, and unmet needs in 2025.**

	N/A	0%	>0-5%	6-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	41-50%	>51%	% Reporting Needs increase (>10%) 2024
Anticipated increase in <b>POUNDS OF EMERGENCY FOOD</b> or the number of meals your organization provides	-	-	-	1	5	2	2	-	-	90%
Anticipated <b>INCREASE IN DEMAND</b> for emergency food	-	-	2	-	2	3	3	-	-	80%
Increase in funding needed to <b>MAINTAIN</b> the same services established in 2023	-	-	-	-	5	4	1	-	-	100%
Increase in funding needed to address <b>NEW</b> and <b>UNMET</b> need in 2024	-	-	-	-	1	4	2	1	2	100%

The responses outlined in Table 2 align with the immediate and annual funding increase proposed by the food banks.

Current HPNAP funding levels are approximately \$35.5 million. Food banks were asked to estimate the total HPNAP funding that would be needed to address current and unmet need in 2025.

Ten (10) of 10 foodbanks (100%) indicated an increased level of funding would be needed for 2025. Their responses are found in table 3. This was an increase from last years' report where only eight (8) of 10 foodbanks (80%) indicated an increased level of funding would be needed.

**Table 3: Food bank report of funding needs**

Funding amount	Frequency	Percent
\$45.1 - \$55 million.	1	10%
\$55.1-65 million.	2	20%
\$65.1 - \$75 million.	4	40%
More than \$75 million.	3	30%

Nine (9) out of 10 foodbanks (90%) propose an annual increase to HPNAP funding of 5.1% - > 20% to ensure they can adequately address increasing costs. Four (4) of the nine (9) report needing more than an 11.1% annual increase to HPNAP funding. This finding is highlighted because its upper range exceeds the expected cost increase of around 10% annually. This is an increase compared to 2023 when all 10 foodbanks indicated an annual increase of 5.1-15%.

**Table 4: Food bank report of annual funding increase needs**

Funding amount	Frequency	Percent
N/A	1	10%
5.1-7%	2	20%
7.1-9%	1	10%
9.1-11%	2	20%
11.1-13%	1	10%
>20%	3	30%

These findings are notable for the following reasons:

- In August 2024, the US inflation rate was 2.9%, which was lower than in 2023 (3.2%). Yet, foodbanks requested a greater need for funding.
- The proposed increased funding rate is 1.8-6.9 times the current rate of inflation.
- The proposed increased funding rate is above the high 2021 and 2022 inflation rates of 7% and 6.5%, respectively.

**Limitations**

Needs and cost estimates represent a point-in-time assessment and may not reflect the actual and unforeseen needs experienced in calendar year 2024. Actual costs may reflect unanticipated changes in the cost of food, fuel, or operations; unexpected equipment repair or replacement; or an unexpected increase in demand.

If you have any questions, please contact the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program at 518-402-7333 or [HPNAP@health.ny.gov](mailto:HPNAP@health.ny.gov). Thank you.