

APPENDIX: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

PLAN TO END HUNGER IN NEW YORK CITY AND IN THE UNITED STATES

In response to these findings, the Coalition recommends a plan with government actions at the federal, state, and city level to end hunger in New York City and in the nation:

Federal Policy Recommendations

1. End Child Hunger, outlined in our petition at www.nyccah.org/endchildhunger

- a. 2009 Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill that will:
 - i. Make universal, in-classroom school breakfasts standard in public schools;
 - ii. Fund universal school lunches;
 - iii. Allow the expansion of direct certification for school meal eligibility (currently available for families receiving SNAP benefits) to additional human services benefits programs such as WIC and Medicaid;
 - iv. Make WIC an entitlement and fund nutritional improvements in the WIC package;
 - v. Extend the child certification period for WIC to one year;
 - vi. Reduce paperwork and increase reimbursements for both government and non-profit agencies that sponsor after-school and summer meals for kids.

- b. In addition, President Obama should support legislation that:
 - i. Funds WIC at a level that allows the program to be fully implemented with out a reduction of services;
 - ii. Changes WIC into an entitlement program with an independent source of funding;
 - iii. Creates new funding sources to increase the amount of fruit and vegetables offered on the menu; and,
 - iv. Increases funding for Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

2. Major increase in the federal minimum wage, with future increases indexed to inflation.

3. Further improve the Food Stamp Program by:

- a. Simplifying applications;
- b. Increasing the average benefits amount;
- c. Eliminating additional work requirements on able bodied adults without dependents;
- d. Removing special restrictions on legal immigrants;
- e. Prohibiting the ability of states to require finger-imaging in order to receive benefits;
- f. Eliminating the face-to-face interview in favor of alternative methods of gathering and verifying information;
- g. Increasing the resource limit and the list of exempt saving categories; and,
- h. Combining the application for food stamps and other public benefits.

4. Improve the following programs that fund emergency food providers (EFPs) by fully funding these programs:

- a. Increase funding to the Federal Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) by 46 percent over the next five years to a FY 2012 funding level of \$276.60 million.
- b. Increase funding to the Federal Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) by 42 percent over the next five years, to a FY 2012 funding level of \$214.59 million.

New York State Policy Recommendations

1. Urgent matter: Remove proposed budget cuts in Governor Paterson's Fall 2009 Executive Proposed Deficit Reduction Plan to the following programs:

- a. \$1,102,000 from the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program
- b. \$958,000 from the funding of food pantries, soup kitchens, and food banks
- c. \$1.583 million out of school breakfasts and lunches
- d. \$106,000 from SNAP/food stamp outreach
- e. \$1.096 million from the Office of Aging SNAP/food stamp benefits
- f. \$126,000 from summer food programs

2. Fully fund the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) which provides NY State funds to improve the nutritional quality of food at food pantries and soup kitchens.

- a. Restore all funding cut since April 2008 (\$5 million reimbursement and \$1.2 million to cover the cost of the 6% cut in August).
- b. Provide additional funds to offset the increased cost of food (4% in the last year) and the increased number of meals served in food pantries and soup kitchens (9% increase since 2007).

3. Bring more Federal dollars into New York State by increasing access to the Food Stamp and other Federal nutrition programs to working families, unemployed people, children, seniors, and legal immigrants.

- a. End the special exemption under which New York City is the only part of the state that still engages in the wasteful and punitive practice of requiring finger images from food stamps applicants in working families.
- b. Extend Paperless Office System (POS) sites which allow food stamps applicants to be screened for food stamps in a social service site in their neighborhood rather than at a government office.
- c. Require all municipalities, including New York City, to accept a waiver to enable able bodied adults without dependents (know as ABAWDs) to continue to obtain food stamps while looking for work for up to 12 months.

4. Improve Welfare Reform

- a. Ensure that people leaving welfare – as well as people who previously left – have long-term, living-wage jobs which will give them an increased ability to support their family off welfare than on welfare;
- b. Make policies that reduce poverty for adults and children a priority; and
- c. Further reducing welfare rolls.

5. Promote Increased Supermarket Access

- a. Provide tax breaks, loans, and other incentives to bring new supermarkets into – or upgrade existing supermarkets in – low-income neighborhoods; and,
- b. Promote the start-up of food-related micro-enterprises and small businesses such as food cooperatives.

6. Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

- a. Ensure access to a WIC site in every low-income neighborhood.
- b. Increase state funding for outreach, breast-feeding promotion and peer counseling.

7. Focus on the link between hunger and obesity.

- a. Further promote farmers' markets, community gardens, and Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects and increase their interaction with Federal nutrition assistance programs.
- b. Maintain strong support for the New York City Wholesale Farmer's Market.
- c. Bolster nutrition education and obesity-prevention activities.

New York City Policy Recommendations**1. Increase funding for Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) by 38 percent over the next five years, to a FY 2012 funding level of \$20.34 million.**

- a. Create an advisory council consisting of representatives of emergency food providers from all five boroughs, including nutritionists to advise HRA on all EFAP food purchases.
- b. Improve the quality of food by offering more minimally processed and fresh food, and by giving programs choice over food selection.

2. Improve the Food Stamp Program (FSP) in New York City

- a. Increase the New York City food stamp participation rate to 90 percent by the end of 2011.
- b. Eliminate finger-imaging. (NYC is still the only area in the state that continues this practice).
- c. Shorten the amount of time that households must wait to receive their food stamps benefits after filing an application.
- d. Simplify household access to food stamps by: minimizing face-to-face interviews; expanding food stamp office hours; and opening satellite offices for food stamp interviews.
- e. Coordinate benefits programs so that clients can apply for several programs and services simultaneously (for example: public health insurance, childcare subsidies, and nutrition programs).

3. Fight Child Hunger.

- a. Expand pilot projects for universal, in-classroom breakfasts in to all New York City public schools.
- b. Expand outreach on Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and summer meals.

4. Improve Access to Nutritious Food

- a. Require standards for good food and good jobs within the proposed Food Retail Expansion to Support Health Create initiative. These standards include FRESH supermarkets accepting EBT/WIC, paying living wages, getting community feedback on FRESH proposals, allowing workers to organize, participating in the Pride of New York program in order to receive financial incentives to develop in low-income neighborhoods.
- b. Increase farmers' markets and community supported agriculture (CSA) projects in low-income communities; and,
- c. Work with the State to provide incentives to keep supermarkets in New York City, especially in low-income areas where supermarket closings have decreased the availability of fresh food.