



For Immediate Release: November 26, 2008

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## **Survey Shows Hunger Crisis in Brooklyn:**

### **No Bailout for the Hungry as Record Number of Agencies Don't Have Enough Food**

As the economy continued its precipitous decline in 2008, more New Yorkers were forced to join the lines at food pantries and soup kitchens at the same time as more emergency food programs reported being hit by funding cuts.

In the New York City Coalition Against Hunger's (NYCCAH) Annual Hunger Survey, emergency food providers reported serving 28% more people in 2008 than they had in the previous year. In the 2007 Annual Hunger Survey, agencies reported serving 20% more people than they had in 2006.

As a result of the influx of people needing emergency food, 68.8% of emergency food agencies in 2008 – up from 59% in 2007 – reported that they did not have enough food to fulfill demand. The Coalition's full survey report, entitled: *No Bailout for the Hungry: Funding Slashed to Emergency Food Providers as Hunger in NYC Continues to Soar*, is available at [www.nyccah.org](http://www.nyccah.org).

At the same time as agencies reported skyrocketing need for their programs, they experienced budget cuts on the federal, state, and city level. In 2008, 72.3% of responding agencies reported a decrease in government money and food in the past year – up from 51% in 2007 – and 70.8% of responding agencies reported an overall decrease in money and food from the past year.

Said Joel Berg, Executive Director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, “The bad news is that we have more agencies than ever running out of food. The hunger situation which was truly awful in 2007 has now reached crisis proportions. The good news is that the next President and Congress have a great opportunity to rapidly reverse these trends by strengthening the nutrition safety net and creating living wage jobs.”

In Brooklyn, 85.9% of responding agencies reported feeding an increased number of people in the last 12 months and 61.8% of respondents reported being unable to distribute enough food to meet current demand.

Masbia Soup Kitchen, a kosher soup kitchen in Borough Park, hosted the Brooklyn press event. In their survey, Masbia reported that the number of families with children had “greatly increased” over the past year while, at the same time, private donations and total food and money decreased.

Although the press event was held the day before Thanksgiving, Masbia emphasized that it is important to recognize that New Yorkers are forced to use emergency food services all year long.

As Alexander Rapaport, Masbia’s Executive Director and Co-founder, noted: “It really bothers me that people only pay attention to these issues on Thanksgiving. Hunger is not a holiday need, it is an everyday need. This should be an issue all year round. It’s not that we need more food on Thanksgiving; we need more food everyday.”

Said William Rapfogel, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty: “More middle class families and seniors are requesting emergency food assistance and food vouchers than ever before. It is not only the poor and working poor who are showing up at our forty food pantries around the city. The economic meltdown has changed the dynamic of providing food to people in need and we need government and elected leadership to work closely together with community leaders and service providers to meet this growing need.”

Elected officials joined Masbia and the New York City Coalition Against Hunger to bring attention to the rising tide of hunger in Borough Park and throughout New York.

As Borough President Marty Markowitz stated, “In one of the wealthiest nations in the world, no one should ever go hungry. But the awful truth is that many of our fellow Brooklynites and New Yorkers have difficulty getting the food they need. The NYC Coalition Against Hunger’s most recent survey, “No Bailout for the Hungry,” shows that our food pantries and soup kitchens are running out of food, with Brooklyn facing critical shortages. I want to commend Masbia, NYCCAH, and all the organizations dedicated to ensuring all New Yorkers have food on their tables every day of the year.”

Said New York State Senator Carl Kruger, Chairman of the Senate’s Social Services, Children and Families Committee: “The state of the economy has put an increasing number of New Yorkers in a desperate financial situation and has put our mission to help these many thousands of vulnerable people in crisis mode as hunger in our city rises to new heights. I am gratified to join the New York City Coalition Against Hunger in putting a needed spotlight on this issue, and in bringing attention to Masbia’s valiant efforts to give so many the food they could not otherwise receive.”

Commented Councilmember Bill de Blasio, Chair of the General Welfare Committee, “We can’t nibble around this problem. Hunger is becoming a full blown crisis for our City, and our current economic downturn is only going to make it harder for thousands of New Yorkers to feed themselves and their families.”

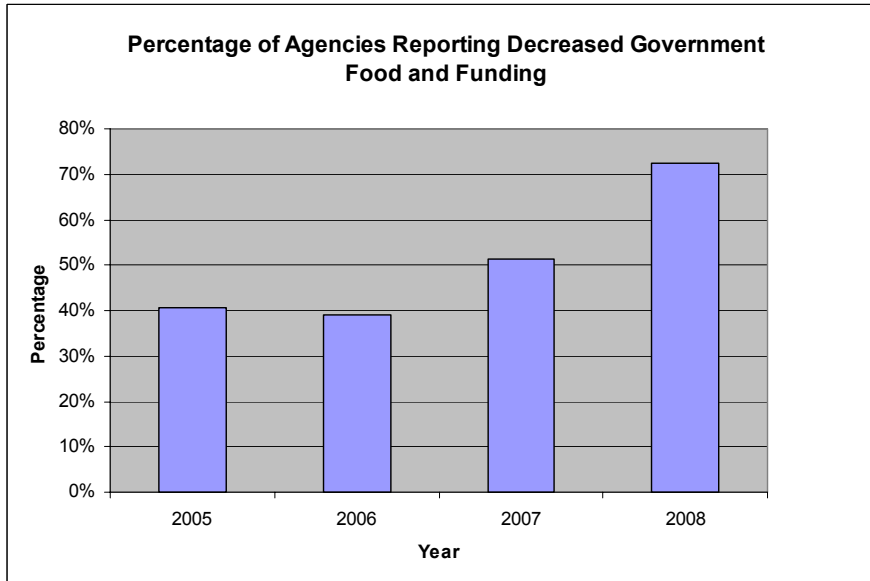
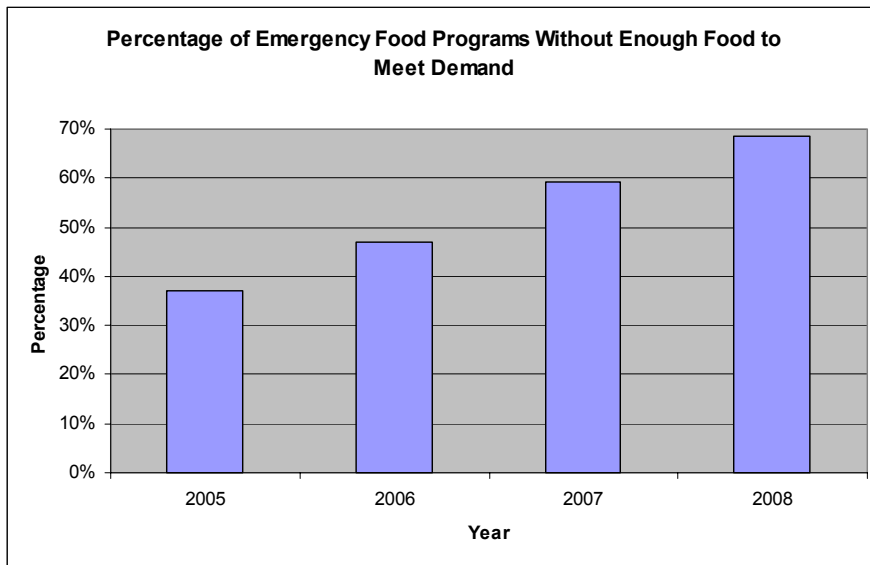
De Blasio continued, “We can and must do more to get food stamps into the hands of those who qualify. This means identifying potential applicants, removing the finger imaging requirement, and utilizing technology to ease and expedite the application process.”

**Among Brooklyn respondents to our survey:**

- 85.9% of responding agencies reported feeding an increased number of people in the last 12 months. 57.7% said this number increased “greatly.”
- Of the populations that increased “greatly” at responding agencies, the fastest growth was seen among families with children, senior citizens and immigrants.
- 89.4% of responding agencies believe that their need will continue to increase in the next six months. 58.7% of responding agencies believe it will increase “greatly.”
- 69.8% of responding agencies reported receiving less *government* food and money in the last 12 months (and 9.6% reported no change).
- 68.1% of responding agencies reported receiving less *overall* food and money in the last 12 months (and 11.6% reported no change).
- 61.8% of respondents reported being unable to distribute enough food to meet current demand.
- 50% of responding agencies reported having to turn away hungry New Yorkers, cut portion sizes and/or cut hours of operation in 2008.
- 32.1% of respondents reported using their own personal money “often” or “always” to support their feeding programs (59% do this “sometimes,” “often” or “always”).

## 2008 Borough Survey Results

<b>Borough</b>	<b>% of agencies at which demand for food increased</b>	<b>% of agencies at which the amount of food was not enough to meet growing demand</b>	<b>% of agencies forced to ration food by limiting portion size, reducing hours of operation, and/or turning people away</b>
The Bronx	88.1%	74.4%	71.8%
Brooklyn	85.9%	61.8%	50%
Manhattan	83.6%	52.2%	45.2%
Queens	84.2%	76.8%	64.2%
Staten Island	85.7%	71.4%	46.2%



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