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Survey Shows Hunger Crisis in Queens: **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.

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 New York City Councilman Eric Gioia (District 26), “New Yorkers in all five boroughs have felt the alarming rise in the cost of food in both their stomachs and wallets. Eradicating hunger in New York City is a moral issue. The problem of hunger in New York City is a problem that all New Yorkers should care about – and one that we have the obligation to eliminate.”

Commented 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 Queens, 84.2% of responding agencies reported feeding an increased number of people in the last 12 months and 76.8% of respondents reported being unable to distribute enough food to meet current demand.

Both of these responses were above the city's average for responding emergency food providers.

Hour Children Community Outreach and Food Pantry in Long Island City hosted the Queens press event in their new "customer choice" food pantry which allows food pantry customers to choose foods from the pantry based on their families' needs.

Hour Children reported that the overall number of people "greatly increased" at the same time as their overall funding and food supplies "greatly decreased."

Said Christy Robb, Director of Community Outreach and Food Pantry at Hour Children: "Funding has been dwindling for years but I've never seen it this bad. In general to deal with higher demand, higher costs, and decreasing resources we have been steadily decreasing the amounts given and request that participants, except elderly and disabled, limit their participation to three times a month."

Robb continued, "It's a matter of priorities and if we decided that food pantries and soup kitchens were important then they would be fully funded. Hunger is a man-made crisis and that's what's frustrating about the current situation."

As Bishop Mitchell Taylor, President & CEO of East River Development Alliance and Senior Pastor at the Center of Hope International, stated: "We are experiencing a food crisis in this City that is reaching devastating proportions. Food demand is up and food donations are down. With this economic crisis continuing to loom, the dependency on food pantries has grown tremendously. At the COHI Bread of Life Food Pantry we have already seen a 63% increase in the number of bags of food handed out over the past 6 months. We expect this problem to get worse before getting better given the current fiscal climate and the continued loss of jobs."

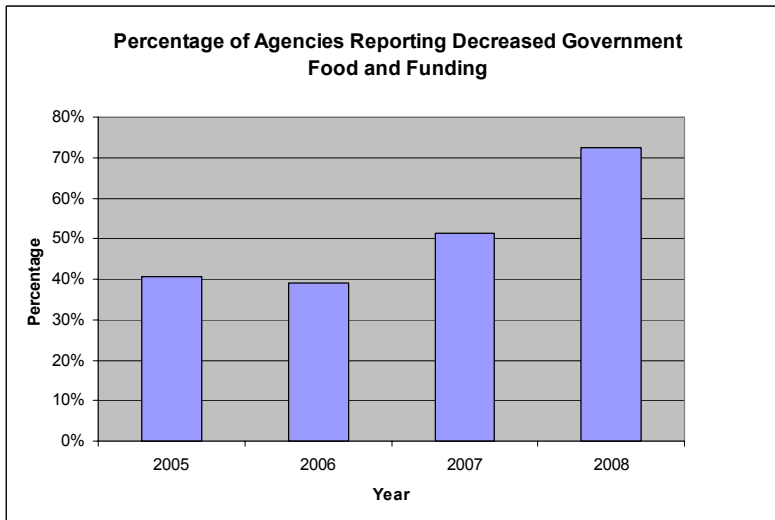
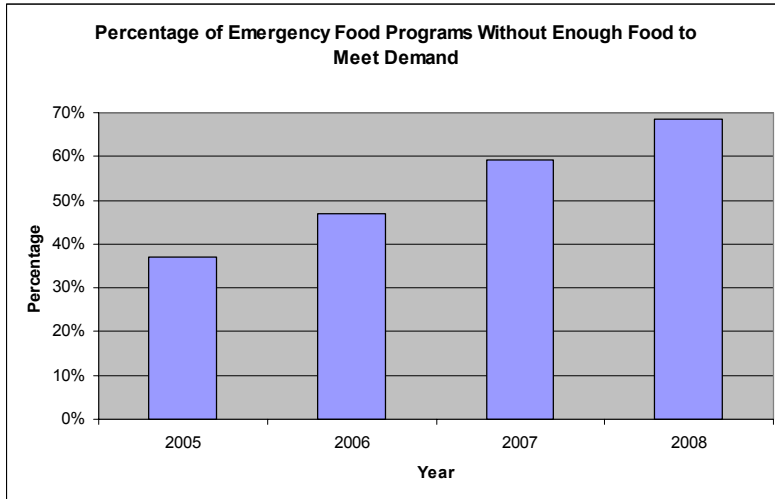
Among Queens respondents to our survey:

- 84.2% of responding agencies reported feeding an increased number of people in the last 12 months. 50.9% 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.
- 85.7% of responding agencies believe that their need will continue to increase in the next six months. 62.5% of responding agencies believe it will increase "greatly."
- 72% of responding agencies reported receiving less *government* food and money in the last 12 months (and 8% reported no change).
- 77.7% of responding agencies reported receiving less *overall* food and money in the last 12 months (and 11.1% reported no change).
- 76.8% of respondents reported being unable to distribute enough food to meet current demand.

- 64.2% of responding agencies reported having to turn away hungry New Yorkers, cut portion sizes and/or cut hours of operation in 2008.
- 18.2% of respondents reported using their own personal money “often” or “always” to support their feeding programs (56.4% do this “sometimes,” “often” or “always”).

2008 Borough Survey Results

Borough	% of agencies at which demand for food increased	% of agencies at which the amount of food was not enough to meet growing demand	% of agencies forced to ration food by limiting portion size, reducing hours of operation, and/or turning people away
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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