

March 21, 2024

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to you in support of a \$100 minimum SNAP benefit in the FY 2025 Enacted Budget. This proposal has broad-based support in the Senate and Assembly, as well as precedent in New Jersey – who established a \$95 minimum benefit for all SNAP participants just last year. We applaud the Senate one-house budget for including an increase to the SNAP minimum benefit and urge leadership to guarantee a \$100 minimum benefit for all participating New Yorkers.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation's largest and most impactful nutrition assistance program. Over 2.8 million New Yorkers participate in SNAP, bringing over \$5 billion into our state each year. However, New Yorkers who participate saw a significant drop in their monthly benefits last year following the end of Emergency Allotments (EAs). New York households saw an average loss of \$151 per month, while some saw their monthly benefits drop to just \$23. With food insecurity on the rise, we need to ensure all New Yorkers have the purchasing power to afford healthy food in their communities.

SNAP is a proven tool for supporting jobs and grocers while stimulating local economies. Every dollar invested in SNAP generates up to \$1.80 in local economic benefits, and SNAP accounts for around 10% of grocery industry sales. With nearly 17,000 SNAP-authorized retailers and over 180 participating farmers' markets, providing an adequate monthly benefit is sound public policy for addressing both food security and economic development. Research also shows that higher SNAP benefit levels increase participation rates – meaning New York could bring in additional federal dollars with a higher minimum benefit.

According to New York State's Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, establishing a \$100 minimum SNAP benefit would benefit over 107,000 New Yorkers. Some low-income households would see their benefits more than quadruple – enhancing their annual purchasing power by nearly \$1,000. The proposal would be particularly impactful for communities in Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse – three cities that are among the [25 U.S. communities with highest percentages](#) of food stamp recipients.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, higher SNAP benefit levels were proven to reduce poverty and food insecurity rates. According to the [Urban Institute](#), the pandemic-era enhancements to SNAP benefits lifted over 400,000 New Yorkers out of poverty, while reducing unacceptable poverty disparities for Black and Hispanic families.

It is simply not feasible for low-income New Yorkers to afford groceries with just \$23 per month. Earlier this year, our neighbors in New Jersey invested a modest amount of state funding to guarantee that no SNAP participant receives less than \$95 per month. States including Massachusetts and California have used state dollars to fund supplemental SNAP benefits or a higher minimum benefit. New York should join the movement of states enhancing nutrition assistance.

SNAP is a vital support for New Yorkers struggling to afford food. The program has been proven to reduce poverty, improve health outcomes, and stimulate local economies. By investing in an adequate minimum benefit for New Yorkers, our state can take a meaningful step in affirming food security as a basic human right.

Food insecurity is on the rise and our state has an opportunity to lead the way on nutrition policy. We urge you to include \$70 million to increase the SNAP minimum benefit from \$23 to \$100 in the 2024-2025 Enacted Budget.

Respectfully,



The Business Council of New York State



Food Industry Alliance of New York State



Instacart



Tops Friendly Markets



AARP New York



New York State Public Health Association



New York State Association for Rural Health



New York State Association of Counties



Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York



Field & Fork Network

Field & Fork Network



Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies



United Neighborhood Houses



Feeding New York State



American Farmland Trust



New York Association of Convenience Stores



Price Chopper/Market 32



National Supermarket Association



Citizens' Committee for Children of New York



Acacia Network