

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, October 29, 2025

CONTACTS

Mariah McGough, mariah@vocal-ny.org

Ayanna Williams, press@citizenactionny.org

Nearly 260 Organizations, Service Providers, Churches, and Unions Representing Millions of New Yorkers Urge Immediate State Action to Prevent SNAP Benefit Pause

3 Million New Yorkers Could Lose Food Assistance in Just Days

Individuals Impacted by Cuts to SNAP Available for Interviews

NEW YORK – Today, 250+ organizations, service providers and unions [sent an urgent letter](#) to Governor Kathy Hochul, Speaker Carl Heastie, and Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, calling on the state to fund SNAP benefits during the ongoing federal government shutdown to prevent a lapse of food access.

NOTABLE SIGNATORIES: Hunger Free America, United Way of New York State, Legal Aid Society, Community Service Society of New York, Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU), Women in Need (WIN), CWA District 1, UFT, and the Children's Agenda

“Over 3 million New Yorkers—including 1 million children, or 15% of the state’s population—depend on SNAP to feed themselves and their families. Even a brief interruption in food assistance places New Yorkers—particularly young children—at risk of long-term nutritional harm. Similarly, a pause in SNAP benefits could put financial strain on 16,000 New York SNAP retailers—including grocery stores, bodegas, and restaurants—potentially resulting in layoffs,” the signatories write.

“We urge you to allocate up to \$700 million in state funds to enable the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) to issue full SNAP benefits in November,” the signatories continue. “The State currently has a surplus of over \$4 billion in the current fiscal year and nearly \$30 billion in fiscal reserves. New York stands on the precipice of a hunger crisis, and now is the moment to deploy fiscal resources to protect essential services for vulnerable residents.”

[The full letter can be read here](#)

“I’ve been on SNAP for a number of years now. It helps me keep food in my refrigerator and fuels me so I can go out and help my community,” said **Pamela Stephens, Leader in VOCAL-NY’s Homelessness Union**. “If my SNAP benefits are cut from my budget, everything

would change for me in my life. That's why Governor Hochul must continue to lead and fund SNAP through November. She must help us put food on the table without sacrificing the other services and support we need."

"While Congressional Republicans directly threaten our health and well-being, New York State has the power and responsibility to step in and protect its people from losing their SNAP benefits," said **Carolyn Martinez-Class and Rebecca Garrard, Co-Executive Directors at Citizen Action of New York**. "Hungry families can't afford to wait for Washington to fix this. We need Governor Hochul and New York leadership to act boldly and act now to prevent a hunger crisis in our state."

"New York State can and must front the cost of food assistance — just as other states like Louisiana, Vermont, and Virginia have done amid the federal shutdown," said **Judith Goldiner, Attorney-In-Charge of the Civil Law Reform Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. "With billions in surplus and reserves, we urge the Governor to allocate up to \$700 million so full SNAP benefits can be issued in November. Now is the time to use our fiscal strength to protect vulnerable New Yorkers from hunger."

"Our members are scared and counting on New York State to step up while Washington turns its back on hungry families," said **Juanita O. Lewis, Executive Director of Community Voices Heard**. "This is a deliberate attack on Black and brown families who depend on SNAP to survive. With over 3 million New Yorkers — including 1 million children — at risk of losing food assistance, Governor Hochul and our legislative leaders have the power and the resources to make sure no one goes hungry this month."

"Nearly 3 million New Yorkers will face hunger, if SNAP benefits aren't continued despite the shutdown. Food pantries and other organizations are already feeling the pressure of the cuts as the numbers of people needing food rise. There is no way they can meet the demand of 3 million people not getting their SNAP benefits," said **Diana Ramos from Safety Net Project at the Urban Justice Center, who is SNAP recipient and will be impacted if the government (federal or state) won't issue November SNAP benefits payments**. "The devastation just from the shutdown will be felt hard. Governor Hochul needs to step up and help all New Yorkers who depend on SNAP to feed themselves and their families."

As the holiday season approaches and the weather gets colder, crucial support for 1.8 million New Yorkers will be cut off, leading to heartache, confusion, and chaos — and forcing more people to choose between food and rent. This will result in more people becoming evicted, homeless, and hungry." said **Darius Khalil Gordon, Executive Director, Met Council on Housing**.

"Food should never be a casualty of politics. Millions of New Yorkers—children, seniors, working families—depend on SNAP to put meals on the table, said Therese Daly, President United Way of New York State and 211 New York Inc. "We urge federal leaders to act immediately to prevent an avoidable hunger crisis. United Way of New York State and 211 New York Inc. stand

ready to support our communities, but no nonprofit network can fill the gap left by the loss of SNAP benefits. Immediate action is essential."

"In the face of federal inaction, New York must use all available resources to protect food security for nearly 3 million of our neighbors—primarily children, seniors, and people with disabilities—who rely on SNAP to put food on the table," said **Andrés Vives, Chief Executive Officer, Hunger Solutions New York**. "We urge USDA to immediately release its contingency funds for November benefits; however, in the event the federal administration allows benefits to lapse, New York must step in. The human and economic cost of doing nothing would be catastrophic."

"For three decades, I ran the Hunger Action Network of New York State. SNAP is critical in the effort to reduce hunger in our state. Our emergency food programs are already overwhelmed with people - many on whom are the working poor, children, and seniors - and could not handle the tidal wave of need that the loss of SNAP funds would cause," said **Mark Dunlea of the Green Education and Legal Fund**.

"Our residents at Senator Robert A. Taft Houses are already struggling with rising costs and limited access to healthy food. SNAP is not a luxury—it's a lifeline. We're calling on New York State to protect these benefits and ensure no family is left hungry because of government inaction," said **Stephanie Thompson, First Vice President, Senator Robert A. Taft Houses Tenant Association**.

"If the Trump administration withholds SNAP and blocks the USDA contingency funds, nursing moms will skip meals. Moms of toddlers will also miss meals so they can feed their kids. Children and seniors will have less to eat... if they eat at all. What's at stake here is the health of our children and families," said **Monifa Bandele, MomsRising, COO/SVP**. "The Trump administration has billions of dollars to cover SNAP benefits in November. But they are refusing to use them. We need New York elected leaders to take action to protect New York families!"

"While Congressional Republicans directly threaten our health and well-being, New York State has the power and responsibility to step in and protect its people from losing their SNAP benefits," said **Carolyn Martinez-Class and Rebecca Garrard, Co-Executive Directors at Citizen Action of New York**. "Hungry families can't afford to wait for Washington to fix this. We need Governor Hochul and New York leadership to act boldly and act now to prevent a hunger crisis in our state."

"At a time when families are already struggling with rising costs, allowing a lapse in SNAP benefits would push countless New Yorkers into crisis. Food is a basic right, not a privilege. We urge the State to act swiftly to protect every household's access to the meals they depend on," said **Husein Yatabarry, Executive Director, Muslim Community Network**.

“Protecting SNAP is protecting equity. Families living in public housing and working-class communities depend on these benefits to bridge the gap between surviving and thriving—and that’s a commitment we must uphold for every New Yorker,” said **Dr. Anju J. Rupchandani, Executive Director of Zone 126**. “At Zone 126, we know that when children have consistent access to nutritious food, they are more likely to attend school regularly, stay engaged, and build stronger pathways to success.”

“Nearly one out of every three SNAP recipients in New York are children, the largest segment of the 2.9 million New Yorkers who rely on it for food. Children are particularly vulnerable,” said **Larry Marx, Chief Executive Officer at the Children’s Agenda**. “When programs such as SNAP, school meals, and WIC are unfunded, underfunded or cut, the risk of food insecurity and the risks of hunger increase significantly, along with lasting negative impacts on children’s long-term health and educational outcomes.”

“While often not thought of as an AAPI issue, food insecurity remains a hidden yet persistent problem for families across the state in our community. Three million New Yorkers, including vulnerable AAPI children and families, risk going hungry if SNAP disbursements stop in November. We’ve seen how our community members go to extreme measures to ensure that they can feed their families in ways that include changing their food habits, rationing or skipping meals and relying on food pantries and food banks and community-based organizations to put food on their tables,” said **Anita Gundanna and Vanessa Leung, Co-Executive Directors of Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF)**. “We implore Governor Hochul, Speaker Heastie, and Majority Leader Stewart Cousins to commit to covering the entire \$700 million funding gap next month for SNAP to ensure that no New Yorker goes hungry.”

“SNAP benefits are a critical lifeline, and we urge state leaders to act now to protect these benefits and ensure that no New Yorker is left hungry,” said **Sharen I. Duke, Executive Director and CEO, Alliance for Positive Change**. “Access to nutritious food is vital for New Yorkers living with chronic health conditions, and even a brief loss of access would have devastating consequences for individuals and families already struggling to make ends meet.”

“With the city entering a poverty crunch and food-insecurity crisis, we will see collateral effects of increased child welfare involvement unless the city and State act to protect SNAP benefits. Research shows that exposure to child welfare involvement increases when families are struggling to meet their basic needs—policies like SNAP protect families from economic shocks and hardship and reduce maltreatment and every form of system involvement,” said **NYC Family Policy Project**. “Without targeted action, more families will face hunger, hardship and even preventable child welfare investigations and family separation rooted in poverty.”

“Downtown Women for Change is a grassroots organization dedicated to preserving and advancing women’s rights. That includes women-led families and their efforts to provide for their children and elder relatives. Supporting SNAP is key to that work,” said **Gena Bone, co-founder of Downtown Women for Change**.

New York has the wealth and the power to make sure that not one person loses food aid -- Governor Hochul and legislative leaders should use that power now, to protect our people from the cruelty of Trump and the MAGA Republicans," said **Michael Kink, Executive Director Strong Economy for All**.

"A lapse in benefits would push thousands of New Yorkers already struggling to the brink. CUCS urges the State to act quickly to protect the health and dignity of every household. Protecting SNAP during this crisis is about more than preventing hunger, it's about protecting the stability and hope of millions of New Yorkers who rely on it to survive. No human being should go hungry because of political gridlock," said **Dawn M. Pinnock, President & CEO, Center for Urban Community Services (CUCS)**.

"Our clients rely on SNAP benefits to feed their families, and they will be harmed immediately if the government fails to issue November benefits," said **Abby Biberman, Associate Director, New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)'s Public Benefits Unit**. "If emergency funds aren't used, SNAP recipients — the majority of whom are children, seniors or people with disabilities — will starve. Multi-year contingency funds exist to keep this program running, and they must be used to ensure this preventable devastation is averted."

"Families are currently facing significant challenges in meeting their nutritional needs through existing SNAP benefits," said **Tanesha Grant, Executive Director of Parents Supporting Parents NY**. "The unavailability of these services would lead to severe food insecurity for many households. It is imperative that New York State ensures the provision of SNAP benefits if the federal government's shutdown extends beyond November 1st, 2025."

"SNAP benefits are to support nourishing the bodies of those who cannot afford food," **Joyce McMillan, Executive Director at Jmac for Families**. "Stopping these benefits will wreak havoc on NY, increasing school absenteeism, illness and other avoidable conditions."

"HIV+ people have many health care concerns to deal with as we age. Proper nutrition is one of those concerns," said **John Wikiera, Chair NY Statewide Peer Network**. "SNAP benefits do help HIV+ people to maintain their physical and mental health. Which in turn keeps our health in check, and allows us to be a contributing member of our community and state. Which in turn keeps health care costs lower for everyone. This has been proven time and time again."

"The Pride Center of Staten Island stands in solidarity with community leaders across New York, and the nation, in calling on federal and state officials to act with urgency to ensure uninterrupted access to SNAP benefits. Food is a basic human right, and withholding access to it endangers the health and safety of our most vulnerable neighbors , including LGBTQIA+ individuals, seniors, and families living on fixed incomes," said **Agatha Vassallo , Executive Director, Pride Center of Staten Island**. "Together, we must demand immediate protections and lasting solutions that guarantee every person, regardless of identity or income, has access to the food and resources they need to live with dignity."

"The federal government's decision to starve low-income New Yorkers is an unprecedented act of cruelty. Accordingly, we call upon our state's leadership to invest in our communities to ensure that all New Yorkers are able to feed their families and avoid any entanglement with the family policing system," said **CFR's Executive Director Tehra Coles**.

"SNAP is a lifeline for the communities we serve. Having food on the table gives families more breathing room and keeps them from getting tied up in the systems that only serve to punish poverty," said **Piyali Basak, Managing Director, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem**. "We know that these cuts are an all-too-familiar abandonment of Black and brown Americans struggling to make ends meet, and we appreciate the Governor acting swiftly with emergency measures and call on the Trump administration to immediately ensure access to benefits."

BACKGROUND:

Roughly 42 million people nationwide—including children, seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities—could go hungry on November 1st due to the Trump administration's refusal to fund the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) during the current government shutdown. This follows the passage of the HR1 ("Big Beautiful Bill"), which implemented the largest cut to SNAP benefits in [history](#).

Two months later, the federal government announced it will no longer release the annual food insecurity report, which is used to assess national hunger, claiming it is "[overly politicized](#)." These actions demonstrate a cruel and complete disregard for the millions of people going hungry across the country.

To prevent a lapse of services, other states like [Vermont, Louisiana, and Virginia](#) have put into motion state dollars to prevent people from losing access to food.

###