

How to Access Nutritious Food for New York City Emergency Food Programs



**HEALTHY FOOD
RESOURCE GUIDE**

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Our guests are in vulnerable health to begin with and are hungry for nutrients. It's not just calories that we are looking for. We need to ensure that families can be healthy and productive so that they can move beyond the pantry line. We have to be a little more thoughtful about the food we are providing. Empty calories with insufficient nutrients are not the solution; in fact, it adds to the problem.



Daniel Reyes,
Director of Programs and Operations,
New York Common Pantry (NYCP)

Introduction

The hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers visiting food pantries and soup kitchens each month face a twofold challenge: gaining access to an adequate supply of food and ensuring that those foods are healthful. Diet-related chronic conditions, including diabetes, heart disease and obesity, especially affect low-income communities, in part because residents of these neighborhoods have less access to healthy food.

Having enough food to fill pantry bags every week can be difficult, let alone filling them with healthy products. This guide provides resources to help with this challenge. It also contains information about nutrition classes to help your clients make informed decisions for their health and well-being. Plus, each section highlights practical peer advice from New York City emergency food programs and anti-hunger advocates.

Legend

-  Fresh/perishable foods
-  Frozen foods
-  Shelf-stable foods
-  Delivery
-  Pick up
-  As available

These symbols appear next to food/funding resources to indicate food types and delivery options.



Through Grow NYC's Fresh Pantry Project, staff from Housing Services, Inc. pick up fresh produce for their pantry from the Tribeca Greenmarket.

New York City Healthy Food and Nutrition Education Resources

GOVERNMENT AND NONPROFIT SOURCES FOR FOOD FUNDING AND DONATIONS

The organizations listed in this section are the main sources for New York City emergency food programs. They can provide grants to purchase food and regularly deliver donated or low-cost food. To be eligible for food/funding from these organizations, you must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Operate a food program located within the five boroughs of New York City;
- Have federal 501(c)(3) status (or officially be part of a 501(c)(3) organization that takes fiscal responsibility for your program);
- Have been in operation for at least six consecutive months (Food Bank For New York City requires three months);
- Provide food free of charge;
- Meet New York City Health Department requirements (only applies to soup kitchens). Visit nyc.gov and search “[Food Service Establishment Permit](#).”
- Additional requirements may be required by individual funding sources.

Peer advice: Write a persuasive funding application

These organizations require you to submit an application in order to receive food or funds to purchase food. Your application should demonstrate the need in your specific community through data, stories and pictures. Grant writing workshops or trainings are available from several organizations listed in this guide if you need assistance.



When we write our applications we let them know the need in our community: the number of people that are turned away each day and that we aren't always able to give a decent amount of food to really be a meal. Vegetables are one of the main things that we run out of, especially fresh produce, so we emphasize that too. We touch base with staff, invite them to our site, and get the trainings we need to apply successfully.



Reverend Marilyn Oliver, Gethsemane Baptist Church

New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA)

Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)

Provides shelf-stable commodities (and frozen foods when available).
To request an application and be prescreened, call EFAP, 929-221-7679.
Visit nyc.gov and search "Emergency Food Assistance Program."



United Way of New York City (UWNYC)

Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA)

Emergency Food & Shelter Program (EFSP)

Provides cash awards to order food directly from a vendor of choice.
Applications available at feednyc.org (deadlines vary by year).

212-251-4118



New York State Department of Health's Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP)

Provides line of credit with wholesale food distributor.
HPNAP application available every April at feednyc.org.
Agencies can apply to receive HPNAP funding from UWNYC or FBNYC.

212-251-2419 or hpnap@uwnyc.org



Local Produce Link, partnership with Just Food

Provides seasonal produce from New York farms.
Application by invitation only due to limited farmer availability.

212-251-2419 or hpnap@uwnyc.org

unitedwaynyc.org



Food Bank For New York City (FBNYC)

Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Emergency Food & Shelter Program (EFSP)

Line of credit with FBNYC to order a variety of foods.
Applications available at feednyc.org (deadlines vary by year).

718-991-4708 or memberhelp@foodbanknyc.org



Food Bank For New York City continued

Food Bank For New York City Member Program

Offers members free, discounted and donated food, as well as fresh produce donations and wholesale food purchases. To apply for membership, visit foodbanknyc.org or e-mail memberhelp@foodbanknyc.org.



New York State Department of Health's Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP)

Provides line of credit to order a variety of foods from FBNYC. Application available every April at feednyc.org. Agencies can apply to receive HPNAP funding from UWNYC or FBNYC.

718-991-4708 or memberhelp@foodbanknyc.org



United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Provides a variety of commodity foods, free to eligible programs. TEFAP is available to members that meet specific federal eligibility criteria. Food Bank notifies new members of TEFAP eligibility upon application. To apply for membership, visit foodbanknyc.org or e-mail memberhelp@foodbanknyc.org.



City Harvest

City Harvest Membership

Provides a variety of donated foods in each category, as available. To apply for membership, call [646-412-0704](tel:646-412-0704). Eligible organizations will then be visited by a City Harvest representative.

cityharvest.org



Community sources for food donations

You can reach out to members of your community, including nearby businesses, farmers' markets, gardeners, schools and faith-based organizations for healthy food donations. Building local relationships can also increase neighborhood support for and awareness of your program.

GrowNYC

Fresh Pantry Project

Emergency food programs partner with local Greenmarkets and pick up leftover seasonal produce from regional farms at the end of market days. Agencies can also participate in fresh food drives to collect extra produce from market customers.

212-341-2326

gownyc.org/greenmarket/freshpantry

Note: City Harvest may be available to pick up and deliver produce.



OTHER FOOD/FUNDING IDEAS

Peer advice: Ask your local grocery store/supermarket for donations

While some companies will only donate through the Food Bank For New York City or City Harvest, your local grocery store or supermarket may want a more direct relationship when donating food. Persistence, good communication and dependability are key for successful ongoing donations. To address donors' liability concerns, you can cite "Good Samaritan Laws" and promote your food safety training and procedures.



When talking to a grocery store, the most important thing is communicating properly about what your needs are – not just feeding the hungry but feeding them healthier food. Find the right people and let them know the good that their donation is doing. They can be your champion and broach donation with upper management. We have also invited store employees to volunteer at the Mission to see exactly where their hard work and donations are going. When picking up food, it is very important to be organized. At the end of the day, they are donating goods to you for free, so you need to respect that and be prompt, have a system going. If you are going to be late you have to call. They expect even more from you than their other vendors.

TJ Hadley, Gift In Kind Corporate Relations Manager,
New York City Rescue Mission



Peer advice: Start a garden at your feeding program

Programs that have some open land at or near their site may consider starting a garden. Gardens can provide fresh, seasonal and culturally-appropriate produce, and can be sites for nutrition education and building community self-sufficiency. Home, school and community gardens in your neighborhood can also be sources of donated fresh, seasonal produce for your clients.



In the garden, little by little, we're changing peoples' relationship to food. We'll start giving cooking classes so people understand what they can do with bok choy, with spinach. This is a process that takes time. If we never start growing a garden, we can't start stimulating people to protect their health, stretch their food stamps. You can't move people out of the pantry line without giving any more solutions. The person running our garden is an older senior – she knows a lot about gardening. We try to work intergenerationally, with adults and youth.



Sandra Reyes, Volunteer Food Pantry Director,
Caldwell Temple AME Zion Church Food Pantry

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Consumers purchase a share of the harvest from a farmer, and in return receive a box of seasonal produce each week throughout the farming season. Some CSAs will donate leftover produce to emergency food programs. To find your local CSA, see Just Food's list of CSAs at justfood.org/csaloc.



Farmers' markets

Farmers often have fruit and vegetables to donate at the end of the market. GrowNYC's Fresh Pantry Project connects emergency food programs with local Greenmarkets (see p.9). There are also many non-Greenmarket farmers' markets in New York City that you can reach out to directly. To see the list of markets, visit nyc.gov and search "Farmers' Markets."



Grocery stores/supermarkets

Your local grocery store or supermarket can be a source of donated foods, including produce, meat and dairy items. Keep in mind that some companies only donate through the Food Bank For New York City or City Harvest.



Grow a garden

There are several organizations you can contact for advice on how to start a garden for your site:



- *New York City Department of Parks & Recreation's GreenThumb program:*
greenthumbnyc.org/start_a_garden.html
- *GrowNYC's Open Space Greening Program:*
212-788-7900 or gownyc.org/openspace
- If your program is located in the Bronx, contact
The New York Botanical Garden's Bronx Green-Up program:
718-817-8026 or bronxgreenup@nybg.org
nybg.org/green_up/
- To find land that could be suitable for gardening in your neighborhood, visit <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/City-owned-and-Leased-Property/4e2n-s75z> and filter by "Potential Urban Ag."
- United Way of New York City offers seed grants for urban farming projects. Applications are available every September at uwnyc.org.
212-251-2419 or hpnap@uwnyc.org

Healthy food drives

Ask local businesses, schools or faith-based organizations to organize a "healthy food drive" for your program, or run one yourself. You can use the "Healthy Food Drive Checklist" to suggest nutritious foods to donate. The Food Bank For New York City and City Harvest can help you with the logistics. Or, organize a "virtual fund drive" and ask for funds to purchase the foods your clients need.

Food Bank For New York City:

212-566-7855 ext. 2250 or foodsourcing@foodbanknyc.org

City Harvest: 646-412-0758 or fooddonations@cityharvest.org



Local gardens

Ample Harvest

Connects gardeners with excess produce to their local emergency food program. You can register at ampleharvest.org or reach out directly to community and school gardens in your neighborhood. GrowNYC has created a searchable map of New York City gardens.

To find your nearest garden, enter your address at

oasisnyc.net/garden/gardensearch.aspx or

greenthumbnyc.org/gardensearch.html.



Wholesale food purchasing options

If you have funding to purchase food, one cost-effective strategy is to buy food from a wholesale vendor instead of from a supermarket. The organizations listed in this section can help you develop relationships with wholesale distributors or regional farmers.

Peer advice: Buy your fruit and vegetables directly from regional farms

Buying seasonal produce directly from New York farms can save money and help you find culturally-appropriate fruits and vegetables for your clients. At the same time, you will be supporting the regional economy, helping the environment and getting the freshest food available.



Since one out of our six core values is 'we value healthy families' our congregation wanted to get good quality fresh produce for our people. Buying it from the corner store does not guarantee the freshest of produce. Therefore, buying in bulk directly from the farmers significantly reduces costs and ensures freshness. We also get the produce dropped off directly to us. So, we have some savings from bulk purchasing, the produce lasts longer and we are able to donate overages to the pantry.



Linette Cockfield, Administrator,
God's Battalion of Prayer Church

Cornell University Cooperative Extension New York City

Faith-based Food Hubs

Connects faith-based groups interested in buying produce directly from farms.

Note: farms sometimes donate excess produce.

212-340-2900 or cenyc@cornell.edu

<http://nyc.cce.cornell.edu>



Just Food

Direct purchasing from New York farms

Help for organizations interested in purchasing locally grown food for clients.

212-645-9880 ext. 227 or info@justfood.org

justfood.org/fresh-food-all



GrowNYC

Greenmarket Co.

A wholesale distribution service offered by GrowNYC, providing delivery of regionally produced foods.

917-838-2309

gownyc.org/greenmarketco



Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies

Group Purchasing Service (GPS)

GPS is available to interview prospective wholesale food vendors for you, set up buying arrangements and provide tips for buying.

212-801-1349

fpwa.org/cgi-bin/iowa/group/index.html



OTHER FOOD/FUNDING IDEAS

Fundraise

In most cases, if you want to purchase food for your program, you will need to secure monetary as well as food donations. New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCAH) provides information on raising funds for food and other needs in its "Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry Best Practices Guide." nyccah.org/files/NYCCAH_bestpracticesguide_2010.pdf or hungervolunteer.org/agencies/fundraise

In addition, many organizations in this guide offer workshops and trainings on fundraising and writing persuasive grant applications. See Food Bank For New York City (p.3-4), City Harvest (p.4), United Way (p.3) and WhyHunger (p.11-12). The Foundation Center is also a good resource for grant writing and grant seeking support: foundationcenter.org/newyork.



Volunteers at the Bronx Citadel Salvation Army food pantry distribute fresh vegetables from Stoneledge Farms to clients. The produce was purchased through Local Produce Link, a collaboration of United Way of New York City and Just Food.

Photo credit: Diana Liao.

Helping your clients access food and government benefits

In addition to providing a crucial, short-term source of food, emergency food programs can empower clients to move towards self-sufficiency. Staff can help clients apply for government programs and benefits or obtain referrals to local agencies and low-cost sources of food, such as farmers' markets that accept SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called Food Stamps) benefits.

Peer advice: Help clients access government programs and other services

Your clients may be eligible for a wide range of government programs like SNAP and other nutrition and income supports. Staff and volunteers can build on the trust and relationships you have with clients to help address any concerns and let them know what their options are.

“ I can summarize with the saying 'give a man a fish, you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish, you feed him for life.' We know the food we provide is only nine meals for three days. That's only a Band-Aid for our customers' situations. If we can help them find jobs, help them sign up for food stamps, it's teaching them how to fish. We keep track of what our customers usually ask for or need, and based on that, bring in those services. ”

Tamara Dawson, Program Director,
Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger

New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA) Emergency Food and Nutrition Assistance Program

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Outreach Services (SNAP OS)

Provides education about the SNAP (Food Stamp) program. HRA staff can provide eligibility information and help with the application process at emergency food programs.

929-221-7145

Visit nyc.gov and search "SNAP Outreach Services."

New York City Coalition Against Hunger (NYCCAH)

Benefits Access Program

Helps connect low-income New Yorkers with the public nutrition benefits available to them, with a particular emphasis on SNAP. NYCCAH staff conduct eligibility pre-screenings over the phone and at community organizations and events. They also submit SNAP applications and recertifications from community-based agencies throughout the city. [212-825-0028](tel:212-825-0028) ext. 218 or info@nyccah.org

Soup Kitchen and Food Pantry Best Practices Guide

Provides resources and lessons learned from experienced New York City emergency food programs. nyccah.org/files/NYCCAH_bestpracticesguide_2010.pdf

Strategic Volunteerism Program

Helps organizations and volunteers engage in high-impact activities that address the root causes of food insecurity, sustain the food safety net and support organizational capacity development. [212-825-0028](tel:212-825-0028), ext. 210 or info@nyccah.org
nyccah.org

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Health Bucks

Community organizations may apply to receive Health Bucks to distribute to their clients as an incentive to support nutrition education and other health-related activities. Health Bucks, worth \$2 each, can be used to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at all farmers' markets in New York City. Visit nyc.gov and search "Farmers' Markets" or e-mail farmersmarkets@health.nyc.gov.



WhyHunger

Nourishing Connections Program/National Hunger Hotline

Connects emergency food programs to resources and to like-minded organizations around providing healthy food and nutrition education. Call the National Hunger Hotline to access training and technical assistance, be connected with coaches and access peer to peer mentorships. Call [1-866-3HUNGRY \(1-866-348-6479\)](tel:1-866-3HUNGRY) and ask for the National Hunger Clearinghouse Capacity Building Coordinator.

Beyond Bread, a Guide to Food Sourcing

Provides examples of innovative food sourcing strategies that connect emergency food programs with local farms and sources of higher quality animal protein. It includes model program profiles, best practices and additional resources.

whyhunger.org/beyondbread

OTHER FOOD AND FUNDING IDEAS

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

Consumers purchase a share of the harvest from a farmer, and in return receive a box of seasonal produce each week throughout the farming season. If you want to connect your clients to a CSA, New York City Coalition Against Hunger has a Farm Fresh Initiative, which partners with CSAs to offer a variety of personalized payment options, including using SNAP benefits to purchase vegetables.

[212-825-0028](tel:212-825-0028) ext. 217 or info@nyccah.org

Just Food publishes a list of CSAs at justfood.org/csaloc.



Maritza Quiroz, of West Side Campaign Against Hunger, shows off the bounty donated from Cream of the Crop, a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.

Nutrition workshops and cooking classes

- for clients

Emergency food programs are great places for nutrition education. Many of the free classes and workshops offered by the organizations in this section are hands-on, and feature cooking, tasting and recipe demonstrations using foods commonly found on your shelves, as well as fruits and vegetables that clients may be unfamiliar with.

City Harvest

Nutrition workshops, cooking demonstrations and supermarket shopping tours.

Call [646-412-0600](tel:646-412-0600) and ask for "Nutrition Education."

cityharvest.org

Cornell University Cooperative Extension New York City

Making the Most of Food

One-time presentations on nutrition and health topics and 8-week cooking workshop series.

[718-363-1016](tel:718-363-1016) ext. 321/326 or cenyc@cornell.edu

nyc.cce.cornell.edu

Food Bank For New York City

Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables

Workshops and recipe demonstrations featuring fruits and vegetables and items found in food pantries.

[212-566-7855](tel:212-566-7855) ext. 6108 or foodbanknyc.org/our-programs/nutrition-and-health-education/just-say-yes-to-fruits-and-vegetables

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Stellar Farmers' Markets

Nutrition education workshops and cooking demonstrations at select farmers' markets throughout New York City. To find days, times and locations of classes at your local farmers' market, visit nyc.gov and search "Farmers' Markets" or e-mail farmersmarkets@health.nyc.gov.

Family Cook Productions - Teen Battle Chef

Trained high school students conduct cooking demonstrations and classes for community groups.

[212-867-3929](tel:212-867-3929) or info@familycookproductions.com

familycookproductions.com



Nutrition education can take place in many venues, from your pantry to a local farmers' market. Here, a Stellar Farmers' Market educator gets ready to teach a meal planning lesson at the 125th Street Farmers' Market.

Nutrition education and food safety certification trainings - for staff and volunteers

There are many workshops designed for emergency food program staff and volunteers that can help you run the safest, healthiest program possible. The organizations in this section can train you to follow food safety procedures, offer nutrition education to your clients, share recipes using ingredients supplied by your pantry and give you ideas on how to support your clients' health.

NONPROFITS

United Way of New York City

Nutrition, food safety and hands-on cooking workshops can be conducted at your site by request.

212-251-2419 or hpnap@wnyc.org
unitedwaynyc.org

Food Bank For New York City

Nutrition and food safety workshops may be available at your site if you can host other agencies.

212-566-7855 ext. 2277
foodbanknyc.org

Cornell University Cooperative Extension New York City

Making the Most of Food

Nutrition education and support during an interactive 8-week workshop series. Emergency Food Assistance Program, Nutrition and Health Programs, Cornell University Cooperative Extension – New York City

718-363-1016 ext. 321/326 or cenyc@cornell.edu
nyc.cce.cornell.edu

City Harvest

Food safety trainings.

Call 646-412-0600 and ask for "Food Safety Training."
cityharvest.org

WhyHunger

Cooking Up Community: Nutrition Education in Emergency Food Programs

Provides resources and case studies about innovative nutrition education programming from organizations around the country.

whyhunger.org/cookingupcommunity

Limiting Distribution of Less Nutritious Food

Although their intentions are good, sometimes donors will offer less nutritious foods. Here are some ideas about what to do with foods such as sugary drinks, candy and high-fat, high-calorie snacks, such as cookies and chips.

1. The most common advice from emergency food providers is: don't feel obligated to accept or distribute these foods, or other foods that do not meet your standards. Create an internal policy outlining what you will and won't purchase or accept as donations. This allows you to create a dialogue about health with all of your donors and partners, and gives you a way to say "no" to items that do not meet your guidelines.
2. Place less nutritious foods on a special shelf or in a box labeled "extras" and allow clients to choose one item per visit.
3. Make treat foods available to clients who are celebrating a birthday or other special occasion.
4. Save non-perishable treats until a holiday.

Peer advice: Donor education



Be proactive. Form relationships with your donors at all levels, from managers to truck drivers, to educate them about the types of foods your clients really want and need, along with what you won't accept. With all of your food sources, frame the conversation in terms of quality – you all have the same interest in getting high-quality food to people who need it. And remember, the first time you say no is the hardest.



Hannah Lupien, Food Policy Strategist, West Side Campaign Against Hunger (WSCAH). WSCAH focuses on distributing whole, minimally processed foods and will not accept unhealthy foods such as soda or packaged ramen noodles.



A young volunteer assists with a Cornell Cooperative Extension "Making the Most of Food" nutrition demonstration at Our Lady of Sorrows food pantry.

**For more information,
call 311 or visit nyc.gov and search
"Healthy Food Donation."**



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Department of Health
and Mental Hygiene

Human Resources
Administration

Mayor's Obesity
Task Force