

**Testimony of Grace Bonilla, Administrator**  
**New York City Human Resources Administration**

**Oversight Hearing: Reducing Food Insecurity in New York City**  
**New York City Council's Committee on General Welfare & Committee on Higher Education**  
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Good Morning Chairperson Levin, Chairperson Barron and members of the General Welfare and Higher Education Committees. Thank you for this opportunity to testify and offer updates on our efforts to address food insecurity among New Yorkers and respond to questions you may have today. My name is Grace Bonilla, and I am the Administrator of the New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA). I am joined today by Executive Deputy Commissioner Jill Berry and Chief Special Services Officer Annette Holm.

HRA provides a variety of essential programs and supports to low-income New Yorkers, including various initiatives focused on reducing hunger and tackling underlying socioeconomic factors that lead to food insecurity. We work closely with agencies such as the Department for the Aging (DFTA), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), and the Mayor's Office of Food Policy to work towards a future where all New Yorkers have access to nutritious food.

The ever-increasing cost of living is a major contributor to food insecurity; as housing, food, and transportation costs rise, it is increasingly more difficult for low-income New Yorkers to feed themselves and their families. Moreover, nutritious food is often more expensive and disproportionately concentrated in higher-income neighborhoods, creating even more obstacles for vulnerable New Yorkers to access quality food. Not only do these circumstances often result in hunger, but they can also have drastic effects on health and productivity; in children, food insecurity is linked to poor academic performance, low school attendance, and behavioral and physical health challenges. For adults, it is associated with poor health outcomes, particularly for the elderly, including premature mortality, depression, diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic diseases.

**HRA Anti-Poverty Interventions**

Too many New Yorkers are regularly forced to choose between paying rent or paying for groceries. At HRA, we work every day to disrupt the structural obstacles low-income New Yorkers face to live healthy lives. HRA's anti-poverty programs and initiatives, including rental assistance, universal access to counsel, employment services, and, more recently, Fair Fares, are meant to lessen the financial burden that low-income households face and alleviate the food insecurity they may be experiencing. Coupled with other initiatives - including the increase in the minimum wage, recently reaching \$15.00 for employers with more than 10 employees, and the recent enhancement to paid sick leave by allowing employees to use their paid leave if they are victims of

sexual assault, domestic violence or human trafficking - the goal is to continue lifting New Yorkers out of poverty and minimize hunger, poor health and homelessness.

Food insecurity results from insufficient funds to maintain a regular, healthy diet. SNAP benefits are a central component in addressing food insecurity. Currently, 1.57 million New Yorkers receive SNAP, including 532,000 children and 338,000 seniors aged 65 and over. Of these 1.57 million New Yorkers, 379,336 of them also receive Cash Assistance, an important safety net for children and adults. Many SNAP recipients work, but their wages are insufficient to handle modern-day living expenses and qualify them for benefits. And in addition to providing important dietary support, SNAP also generates business for local bodegas, farmers markets, and retailers and can put individuals and families in a position where they can also purchase other essential items, like baby products or medication.

According to a report by the Citizens Budget Commission, 462,000 New York City renter households are severely rent burdened - paying more than 50 percent of their income on rent— an unaffordable amount that drastically limits their ability to feed themselves well.

To address this major driver of poverty and hunger, HRA offers rental assistance and emergency grants to keep families and individuals housed. We have successfully helped more than 104,000 New Yorkers move out of shelter into permanent housing or avert entry into shelter altogether. While we know there is more work that we need to do to address the challenge of housing insecurity that has built up over years, this permanent housing assistance for these 104,000 children and adults shows the progress that we are making. In October of last year, we streamlined seven of the City rental assistance programs we administer into a single program, called CityFHEPS. This change will reduce the need to check a client's eligibility for multiple programs; make it easier to see if clients qualify for assistance; and ultimately make it much easier for clients, providers, and staff to navigate our rental assistance program. It also makes it easier for landlords to participate in the program, and better aligns our program with State and Federal rental assistance programs.

Without stable housing, it is difficult for families to escape poverty. Evictions can drive people into poverty where they are more susceptible to struggle with hunger and poor health. New York City is committed to making legal services available to all tenants facing eviction in housing court and public housing authority termination of tenancy proceedings. The Universal Access to Counsel program has been an extraordinary success. Residential evictions by marshals declined 37 percent since 2013, with approximately 18,000 evictions in 2018 compared to nearly 29,000 evictions in 2013. In 2018 alone, evictions decreased 14 percent, with 3,000 households and more than 8,000 New Yorkers across the five boroughs are able to remain in their homes as a result. Since 2013, more than 100,000 New Yorkers who might otherwise have faced evictions have been able to stay in their homes. This decline in evictions follows a milestone in the Administration's efforts to combat homelessness and protect housing stability through its commitment to providing legal services for tenants facing eviction and displacement: as of June 2018, the City has provided nearly a quarter million New Yorkers with legal representation, advice, or assistance in eviction and other housing-related matters through tenant legal services programs administered by HRA.

All of this is part of a broader effort to address income inequality and food insecurity – because when we are able to intervene to keep families and individuals stably housed we are also addressing hunger.

### **The Federal Landscape**

The positive impact SNAP has for our City makes recent federal actions that challenge our work in providing SNAP benefits to those in need all the more chilling in their effect. Last year, the U.S. Office of Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued a proposed rule change to the definition of public charge by including more non-cash benefits, such as SNAP, in the proposal. As Commissioner Banks previously testified before the Immigration Committee, we are working with the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs to inform New Yorkers that this rule has not gone into effect and that our office is open for business and that there have been no changes to eligibility. Comments in opposition to the drastic proposed changes were submitted by the de Blasio Administration, other elected officials, advocacy groups, and individuals highlighting the adverse impact on poverty levels and health in communities across the City. Earlier this month, in an effort to circumvent Congressional authority and the intent of the recently reauthorized Farm Bill, the Trump Administration issued a proposed rule to strictly enforce punitive work requirements associated with SNAP, and virtually do away with our ability to waive work requirements for single able-bodied adult SNAP recipients in areas with high unemployment in New York City. We are currently reviewing the proposed rule and will be submitting comments prior to the April 2nd deadline. We encourage others here today to submit comments as well.

Most recently, we endured a 35-day federal shutdown – the longest federal government shutdown in history. Under the direction of the US Department of Agriculture and working in concert with New York State’s Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), we processed pending applications and recertifications early and issued February benefits for most clients in January to ensure the issuance of benefits before the USDA determined that there were no longer funds available to pay February benefits. We conducted a communications campaign to inform SNAP recipients of the unusual early issuance of February benefits so they could budget their food expenses appropriately, and reassure them that nothing else about SNAP had changed due to the shutdown. We expanded our reach of this important news by notifying elected officials, community boards, CBOs, service delivery organizations, and city agencies to share or post this critical information. I want to take this opportunity to thank the HRA employees who successfully handled the coordination and distribution of those SNAP benefits in this unconventional circumstance to so many New Yorkers that are entitled to this assistance to feed their families.

For March, OTDA has approved the distribution of SNAP benefits on a compressed schedule – from March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 7<sup>th</sup> – to limit the gap between the early February benefits and the March benefits. As of yesterday, we have initiated a communications campaign to inform New York City SNAP recipients and service providers of this important change.

The shutdown also directly impacted 18,000 federal employees in New York City who were furloughed and did not receive a paycheck during the shutdown. These were New Yorkers who did not have anticipated income to pay for housing costs, as well as food and other commodities. Understanding the gravity of the emergency they were facing, NYC set up a website so that these employees knew what resources they could access.

Additionally, many New York businesses, churches, and nonprofits stepped up and offered meals to federal employees impacted by the shutdown.

Notwithstanding these challenges, HRA proceeds in its mandate to address food insecurity by increasing access to SNAP and helping those New Yorkers retain those benefits.

### **NYC SNAP Participation Rate**

As studies regularly conclude, improvements in the economy generally correlates to a reduction in participation in the SNAP program. Not surprisingly, as the local economy continues to improve, the SNAP participation rate in New York City declines - it decreased from 77% in 2013 to 72% in 2016 to 70.9% in 2017. In line with our prior testimonies, we believe HRA's SNAP participation rates should not be compared to the state and national participation rates released by the federal government. The best metric for comparisons across geographic areas is the Program Access Index (PAI), calculated by dividing the SNAP caseload by the number of people below 125 percent of the federal poverty line. Based on the PAI metric, SNAP coverage is higher in NYC than it is in the country and in the rest of New York State. Specifically, reported in 2017, the NYC PAI was 85%, compared to 73% in the U.S., and 81% in NYS overall.

We have taken significant steps to ensure that all eligible New Yorkers have unencumbered access to HRA benefits and services. Our data show positive trends – application rejections are down, and successful case recertifications are up.

With 1.57 million New Yorkers currently depending on timely and proper delivery of benefits unburdened with bureaucratic barriers, HRA is devoted to continuously improving and streamlining the benefits delivery processes.

### **ABAWD**

In May 2014, New York City accepted the State's ABAWD waiver which allowed able-bodied adults without children, also known as Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs), who are unemployed or underemployed to receive SNAP when they could not find at least 80 hours of work per month. Otherwise, they would be limited to receiving SNAP benefits for only three full months in any three-year period unless they qualify for an exemption or are meeting work requirements.

Such waivers are permitted for areas with high unemployment. ABAWDs who live in the Bronx, Brooklyn, or Staten Island continue to have a waiver for 2019. In Manhattan, the strong economy means the areas below West 110th Street and below East 96th Street do not qualify for a waiver. The Borough of Queens is also impacted by the ABAWD requirements, with the exception of residents of Community District 12, which means the area that is south of Hillside Avenue and north of the Belt Parkway and between the Van Wyck Expressway on the west and Francis Lewis Boulevard and Springfield Boulevard on the east, and, effective January 1st, Community District 10, which is the area by the Van Wyck Expressway on the east, Liberty Avenue/103<sup>rd</sup> Avenue on the north, 165<sup>th</sup> Avenue and JFK International Airport on the south, and the Brooklyn/Queens Line on the west.

As I previously mentioned, the Trump Administration is using the regulatory process as an end run around the compromise reached by Congress in their reauthorization of the 2018 Farm Bill. The new rule would restrict waivers to areas where the unemployment rate is higher than 7 percent compared to the current unemployment rate threshold of 10 percent. This attack on low-income single adults will exacerbate food insecurity, forcing many New Yorkers to lose their SNAP benefits by not meeting the proposed ABAWD work requirement rules.

### **HRA Reforms to Improve the Delivery of Vital Services**

In January of 2012, a Council hearing was held to focus on long lines, overcrowding, and long wait times at HRA Job Centers and SNAP Centers. And in 2014, this Administration began to build on prior efforts to address this problem through investing in significant reforms to modernize our technology systems, optimize operational efficiency, and improve the overall client experience. With federal and State approval, by removing real barriers to access and creating a self-directed service model for clients, we are now able to permit SNAP applicants and clients to conduct a broad range of transactions with the Agency without the burden of having to physically come to an HRA office.

Thus far, we have seen real results that reflect a changed client experience at HRA SNAP centers. For example, the percent of SNAP applications submitted online increased from 23 percent in 2013 to 87 percent in 2018 and the percent of SNAP application interviews conducted by phone increased from 29 percent in 2013 to 93 percent in 2018. As a result, SNAP in-center foot traffic has declined 30 percent since 2014 because applications and recertifications can now be submitted online and eligibility interviews can be conducted by phone.

At the core of our modernization efforts is the ACCESS HRA portal – an online tool that has remarkably improved the ways in which clients receive services:

- As of January 2019, there were more than 2 million ACCESS HRA online accounts for SNAP/food stamps households.
- We now receive over 20,000 online applications each month.
- Today, all SNAP eligibility interviews can be conducted at a client's convenience by phone, rather than in a rigid four-hour window under the old system, or clients can choose to come into a center for an in-person interview. On-demand interviews for SNAP recertification have been fully in-place for more than two years, and as of September 2018, on-demand interviews for new SNAP applicants are available citywide.

The portal allows clients to create an ACCESS HRA account to gain access to over 100 case-specific points of information in real-time, including application and case statuses, upcoming appointments, account balances, and documents requested for eligibility determinations. Additionally, clients can make changes to contact information, view eligibility notices electronically, request a budget letter, and opt into text message and email alerts. We continue to improve this tool to add new functionality and now clients can submit their SNAP Periodic Report online using ACCESS HRA. This new feature allows clients to report changes in household composition, income and other circumstances.

Another component of our modernization efforts was the rollout of the HRA Mobile App, a self-service mobile app to give clients the ability to use their mobile device to better manage their cases by having immediate access to case details and the ability to submit required documents from their smartphones. Using ACCESS HRA is now as user-friendly on a mobile device as it is on a PC. This redesign will make transactions such as recertifying for SNAP even easier for clients who access the site from a mobile device because of the seamless integration between the ACCESS HRA mobile app to the ACCESS HRA Client Portal. Since the application's launch in March 2017, clients have uploaded nearly four million images and the app has scored a 4.6 App Store user rating.

In addition, we've modernized our SNAP centers by providing on-site self-services. For clients who prefer to access our services inside one of our centers, we now have a suite of self-service tools, which includes self-service check-in kiosks and PC Banks to utilize ACCESS HRA and self-service scanning of documents.

Overall, by providing an enhanced client experience in SNAP centers, these lower-touch service models free up our eligibility workers' time so they can focus on those clients who need more support and assistance.

These successes in integrating technological improvements to modernize our SNAP systems are only one part of the equation. We are also actively continuing our efforts to enroll low-income New Yorkers by reaching out to New York City's universe of direct service providers to familiarize them with the user-friendly features of ACCESS HRA, and develop partnerships with many sites that utilize the ACCESS HRA Provider Portal – an online tool designed for CBOs to connect with the clients they serve. Through the ACCESS HRA Provider Portal, organizations can view real-time benefit information for their clients and help them manage their cases – a service that reduces the possibility of benefits being lost due to a lapse in recertification, for example. Since the launch of the Provider Portal tool in September 2017, 230 organizations have signed up to utilize this tool. Our Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO) provides ACCESS HRA trainings for community-based organization staff who provide SNAP enrollment and case management services to their constituents. Specifically designed for CBO staff and case workers, these trainings provide in-depth instruction in the use and benefits of the ACCESS HRA Client Portal, Provider Portal, and the mobile app. Since July 2017, OAO has conducted 170 ACCESS HRA trainings.

In spite of HRA's technology improvements and progress in benefits reengineering, we recognize that many vulnerable New Yorkers are not receiving help and are susceptible to food insecurity.

### **SNAP Outreach**

HRA's SNAP Support Services Unit dedicates itself to educating the public about SNAP benefits and eligibility guidelines. In addition, the staff prescreens clients to determine eligibility, and assists applicants with the application process. In FY18, SNAP Support Services provided services at 1,758 individual events at 380 individual community sites/locations and provided services at 132 sites on a recurring basis. HRA also partnered with 117 community-based organizations to provide SNAP outreach throughout NYC.

Among its many responsibilities, this group is charged with ensuring that eligible immigrants and/or qualified family members are enrolled in the SNAP program and receive SNAP benefits. This Administration significantly expanded our outreach services to immigrants as well as New Yorkers with low literacy and limited English

proficiency by partnering with over 100 community-based, human services, and government agency organizations with proven track records of providing services to these groups.

HRA also has outreach staff onsite and readily available in housing developments and community sites, which include nine DFTA senior centers, that assist local residents with SNAP prescreening and application help. The HRA outreach staff regularly attend resource fairs, farmers' markets, and other community events, as well as speak to inmates at Rikers, and state and federal correctional facilities about how to apply for SNAP.

One of our most significant outreach efforts is the SNAP Helps campaign that utilizes a special website called FoodHelp.nyc with mirroring sites in local law languages (Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Korean, Haitian Creole, Korean, and Arabic). The SNAP Helps campaign encourages New Yorkers struggling to afford food, particularly low-income seniors and immigrants, to seek help.

The site features:

- Past and current HRA clients in video testimonials, sharing their stories about how SNAP benefits have helped them;
- A searchable map of sites to either apply or get help applying for SNAP in person within the five boroughs, and for locating more immediate food help such as local pantries and soup kitchens;
- Prominently displayed links to the ACCESS NYC site to screen and/or to apply for SNAP and 30 plus additional City, State and federal health and human service benefit programs.

### **Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP)**

In FY19, the HRA Emergency Food Assistance Program's (EFAP) total funding for food and administrative expenses is \$20.2 million and includes \$8.7 million in additional funding baselined by the Administration at the time of adoption for FY19. This funding is being used to provide additional non-perishable and frozen food; provide additional administrative grants for non-food related expenses; and cover increased cost for warehousing and transportation.

Food distribution to those in need remains our most important objective. In FY18, EFAP distributed more than 17.5 million pounds of food, including over 1.3 million pounds of frozen food. In the same period, EFAP programs reported serving more than 13.6 million people (this is a self-reported, duplicated statistic).

EFAP provides over 40 food items and purchases the most nutritious food items that also meet the dietary and cooking needs of special populations, such as homeless New Yorkers; those with HIV/AIDS, and those who need a Kosher or Halal diet. In addition, many of these food items are packaged differently (e.g., pop-tops or pouches). The actual purchase of these items is based on an analysis of the needs and trends of the emergency food network.

While working to ensure that New Yorkers have a hot, healthy meal, we are also working to reduce the prevalence of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Since 2008, EFAP has required all foods purchased with City funding to be compliant with the NYC Food Standards requirements and meet nutritional standards, including, but not limited to, standards for sodium, sugar, and trans-fat.

In addition, HRA requires that all 558 emergency food programs funded by EFAP provide SNAP outreach services. These services include SNAP eligibility prescreening, assistance with the SNAP application process, and distributing SNAP materials that promote this nutritional benefit.

As in previous testimonies, the Administration continues to recognize the work of the NYC Food Assistance Collaborative which formed in 2015 with an investment from the Helmsley Charitable Trust. The Director of Food Policy in the Mayor's Office, HRA-EFAP, New York State Department of Health - HPNAP, and key NYC emergency food funders formed this group in order to further the goal of enhancing coordination among emergency food suppliers and bringing new resources to support the important work of over 900 community-based food providers.

The Collaborative's work continues to focus on building pantry capacity and increasing the food supply to the City's most underserved neighborhoods. By establishing a common metric (the Supply Gap) and an information-sharing system to better match supply with need, the Collaborative was able to:

- Identify priority neighborhoods for additional investment;
- Increase food supply from public and private sources;
- Strengthen pantry capacity to distribute safe, nutritious food, including:
  - Starting new pantries where there were none;
  - Upgrading storage, especially for fresh food; and
  - Adding more distribution hours; and using alternative distribution methods (e.g., mobile vehicles) for hard-to-reach areas.

The Collaborative also leveraged technology to enhance pantries' ability to better serve clients. This included:

- Enhancing FeedNYC.org to share crucial information like detailed information about individual programs, food supply, and monitoring visits.
- Building and implementing Plentiful, a simple mobile application that enables better customer service at pantries. Plentiful allows pantry clients to reserve their place in line and allows pantries to understand their service statistics. Pantries have loved Plentiful, and we see rapid adoption. We have 232 registered pantries, compared to 100 last year; and over 160,000 individuals were served in FY18.

### **Partnering with DOHMH**

In our efforts to combat food insecurity and hunger, we are grateful to partner with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and complement their work. In an effort to help clients close the gap in their food budgets, DOHMH distributes Health Bucks coupons which can provide New Yorkers who receive SNAP benefits with additional purchasing power to buy fresh, locally grown produce at all NYC farmers markets year-round. For every \$5 spent in SNAP benefits at farmers markets, shoppers get \$2 in Health Bucks representing a 40% increase in purchasing power. This benefits SNAP recipients by enabling them to buy high-quality nutritious produce and allowing them to support regional and local farms – which strengthens the rural economy in New York and in neighboring states. In 2018, more than 450,000 Health Bucks were distributed at farmer's markets through the SNAP incentive and by community-based organizations as part of their nutrition

and health programming and by elected officials and organizations that purchased Health Bucks to hand out through their programs. The result is exciting and we are pleased to report customers spent over \$1M in SNAP benefits at GrowNYC farmer's markets and other food program sites in 2018. We are happy to report that EBT cards are now accepted at more than 125 farmer's markets across the City.

### **College Students**

We welcome the discussion on the prevalence of food insecurity among college students – a vulnerable population normally overlooked. In a time where real wages are steadily declining and the costs of rent, and food are increasingly rising, the additional burden of an expensive tuition makes it difficult for students to make ends meet. This difficulty is exacerbated for students coming from low-income families. Many college students find themselves food insecure and having to make the difficult decisions between affording food or other integral aspects of their college experience, such as textbooks or tuition. According to a study from The Urban Institute, 11 percent of students at four-year institutions and 13 percent of community college students experience food insecurity. The severity of this issue is clear to see in New York City. Approximately 15% of students in the CUNY school system have reported going hungry because they lacked resources to buy food and one-quarter of students had to skip a meal because they could not afford food.

The inability to have consistent, healthy meals results in more than discomfort: It can lead to a higher predisposition to serious disease; it makes it difficult for students to concentrate during or complete their classes, and can lead to higher levels of stress. To alleviate this serious issue, New York State launched an initiative for all SUNY and CUNY campuses to have a food pantry on site – a great step in ensuring affordable access to healthy food for many college students. The Excelsior Scholarship Program launched in 2017 will also greatly assist many college students with the availability of free tuition for CUNY and SUNY schools. By eliminating this substantial expense for low- and middle-income families and individuals, students can pursue and aim to complete their college education and free up cash to purchase food, medication, and other essential items.

The City has also introduced several initiatives that make a variety of nutritious food widely available to everyone in the City and assist HRA in making SNAP a more effective and widely used program. One of these initiatives is NYC Green Cart, which is a mobile food cart program that offers fresh fruits and vegetables in neighborhoods with limited access to healthy foods.

While much has been done to make food more accessible and affordable to New Yorkers, including college students, there is much more that needs to be done. Much of the inability to utilize SNAP as a tool to end food insecurity for college students in New York City is due to SNAP being federally regulated. According to the federal rules dictating SNAP eligibility, most college students are not eligible for SNAP unless they work twenty hours per week or receive a federal work study grant. They may also be eligible if they take care of young children, or they are in college as part of a workforce training program. HRA will continue to advocate for changes to federal policies covering the eligibility rules by employment status that limit our ability to provide SNAP to vulnerable groups in need, such as college students.

## **Targeted Outreach to Older New Yorkers**

Since 2014, HRA has employed Benefits Data Trust's (BDT) proven model of targeted outreach and application assistance – using available enrollment data and working with HRA to complement our own outreach, the BDT's New York Benefits Center implemented a phone and direct mail campaign for seniors who are not receiving SNAP. When seniors respond to this targeted outreach, highly-trained staff from the New York Benefits Center guide them through the process from beginning to end, offering application assistance, document support, and follow-up services.

More than 31,719 applications were submitted on behalf of 38,245 seniors, resulting in more than 21,800 seniors enrolled in SNAP. A recent MIT study found that BDT's targeted outreach and application assistance triples SNAP enrollment among people ages 60 and over, and that providing information alone increased SNAP participation by 81 percent. We are currently reviewing NYC SNAP enrollment outcomes for households that received outreach from BDT but who did not respond or receive application assistance.

A development of our collaboration with BDT is the institution of the "Guardrails Strategy". This initiative uses technology to send timely, automated text messages and robo-calls to remind individuals to complete their SNAP application and recertification process. Initial evaluations of the project outcomes have shown a higher likelihood of enrollment interviews being completed and recertification forms being submitted, resulting from the guardrails approach.

The Medicaid SNAP Connect (MSC) pilot, launched in November 2017, works to connect Medicaid recipients of all ages to SNAP. HRA is currently evaluating outcomes, and initial data analysis shows a 75-80 percent enrollment rate for MSC submitted applications.

## **Conclusion**

SNAP and the Emergency Food Assistance Program, as well as other initiatives detailed in this testimony, will continue to provide necessary nutrition assistance to New Yorkers in need. But more remains to be done to ensure that no New Yorker goes hungry as a result of an inability to afford and purchase food.

We are proud of our work to expand access and remove barriers to these essential benefits and services. For clients, it has resulted in shorter wait times and a better client experience.

We are also working to protect against any proposed federal cut that threatens the SNAP program or the nation's other safety net programs, as well as policies that may harm our immigrant community. Not only would cuts to SNAP be devastating to those New Yorkers who rely on this crucial benefit, they would also harm the local economy.

We look forward to continued collaboration as we work with this Council and advocates to protect the enormous gains we have made in recent years under the de Blasio Administration and to fight back against any proposed budget cuts or policies and regulations that harm low-income New Yorkers. I welcome your questions. Thank you.