



Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program Annual Assessment Report

Findings

In December 2021, Nine (9) New York State Regional Food Banks were surveyed to assess economic impacts on food assistance service costs to inform the State on funding needs for the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP). All 9 food banks indicated they experienced increases in various food assistance economic indicator costs such as food. The funding increases needed to address costs to maintain 2021 service levels in 2022 or respond to an anticipated greater service demand in 2022, ranged from 5% to more than 65% among Regional Food Banks for the cost categories surveyed.

These findings represent food bank responses from all regions of the state as follows: Western New York, Rochester Area, Southern Tier, Central New York, Eastern New York (including the North Country, the Capital Region and the Hudson Valley), Westchester, New York City, and Long Island.

One representative from each food bank submitted the survey. These representatives tended to be senior-level executives within their organization including Chief Financial Operators (n=4), Chief Operating Officers (n=3), an Executive Director (n=1), and a Chief Products and Services Officer (n=1).

Introduction

Pursuant to the Chapter 101 of the laws of 2022, on or before the first day of December each year, the commissioner (of Health) shall annually assess changing economic indicators impacting service levels within the hunger prevention nutrition assistance program in all regions of the state. Such assessment may include, but not be limited to, the average cost per meal, personnel costs, transportation costs, fuel costs and storage capacity. The commissioner shall provide a summary of findings to the governor and the legislature to inform funding levels for the HPNAP.

In anticipation of this act and to prepare this report, the Department's HPNAP working with the Evaluation, Research, and Surveillance Unit within the Division of Nutrition established this first HPNAP Annual Assessment Survey report for 2022. The Report Summary section below presents background on HPNAP and the survey result findings from regional food banks

regarding necessity for increase in funds to meet the increase in the demand of food and related costs including cold storage equipment.

Report Background

The HPNAP provides emergency food relief and nutrition services to food insecure populations in New York State. Approximately 400 million emergency meals are now provided annually through a network of about 2,600 NYS Emergency Food Program (EFP) organizations (e.g., food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters). Currently, HPNAP funds 45 contracts that include nine Regional Food Banks (RFBs) statewide and 36 Direct Service providers that support these 2,600 EFPs. The State has experienced an increase in the demand for emergency food, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in RFBs needing to increase the amount of emergency food being provided. A survey of RFBs was conducted in December of 2021 to assess cost increases to provide services and the need to increase program funding that would support these contractors. This report is designed to meet the charge of the legislative act referenced.

Survey Methods

Nine surveys were submitted electronically via Survey Monkey from 12/17/21 through 12/28/21 from nine individual food banks. There were no duplicate submissions, missing responses, or multiple responses that warranted data cleaning. Data were summarized for each question using Microsoft Excel.

Conclusion Highlights

RFB Surveys

- Five (5) out of 9 food banks indicated an increase in pounds of HPNAP emergency food provided in 2021 compared with 2020 and this increase ranged from 5% to 35%.
- All 9 food banks identified an increase in HPNAP-related food costs in calendar year 2021 compared with 2020. This was the only cost category where all food banks indicated a cost increase.
- Three (3) food banks indicated needing a 10-25% funding increase, two (2) indicated needing a 35-45% funding increase, and three (3) indicated needing a funding increase of more than 65% in calendar 2022 in order to address anticipated demand or unmet needs.
- 8 of 9 food banks indicated an increase in HPNAP-related personnel costs in calendar year 2021 compared with 2020.

- 7 of 9 food banks indicated an increase in HPNAP-related fuel costs in calendar year 2021 compared with 2020. Two-thirds (6 out of 9) food banks indicated an increase in other HPNAP-related transportation costs.
- All other categories, including other HPNAP cost increases, increase in HPNAP food poundage distributed and increased demand for HPNAP-related services, were indicated by about half of the food banks.
- Over half of food banks (5 out of 9) based their responses on actual expenditure records; calculations ranged from 5% to 45% for funding increases needed in most cost areas.
- Only a third of food banks (3 out of 9) reported an increase in HPNAP cold storage equipment costs. Increases in HPNAP cold storage equipment costs ranged from 5% to more than 65%.
- All 9 food banks indicated they would need funding increases in calendar year 2022 (ranging from 5% to 45%) to maintain current 2021 service levels. Eight (8) of 9 food banks indicated they would need funding increases in calendar year 2022 (ranging from 10% to more than 65% in increased funding) in order to address anticipated additional demand or unmet need in their service areas.

Limitations

- Needs and cost estimates represent a point-in-time assessment and may not reflect the actual and unforeseen needs experienced in calendar year 2022 due, for example, to the dynamic macroeconomic climate (e.g., food, fuel, and wage cost increases), equipment failures, or increased demand due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have any questions, please contact the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program at 518-402-7333 or HPNAP@health.ny.gov.

Thank you.