



**ISLAND
HARVEST**
Nourishing Long Island's Future

MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

2024

Advocacy **PLATFORM**



OUR NEW “NORMAL”

Island Harvest Food Bank is a leading regional human services organization whose mission is to end hunger and reduce food waste on Long Island. Our work directly supports seniors, children, families, and veterans who turn to us in times of crisis through our direct service, mobile outreach program, and food distribution work. We also support a network of more than 300 community-based nonprofit organizations and emergency feeding programs across Long Island.

Recent history can be divided into three eras:

PRE-PANDEMIC

PANDEMIC

POST-PANDEMIC



Although we all want to move on from pandemic-era thinking and, in some ways, to forget it ever happened, the effects and aftermath of the pandemic continue to shape our lives. At **Island Harvest Food Bank**, we have established 2019 as the base year of comparison for our statistics and analysis of programming. What have we found?

The new “normal” of food insecurity on Long Island is worse in the post-pandemic era than it was during the pre-pandemic era.



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FEDERAL SUPPORT

The Federal Government provides the foundation of support for emergency food programs. Programs you're familiar with, such as The Emergency Food Assistance Program (**TEFAP**), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAP**, formerly Food Stamps), the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (**CSFP**), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (**WIC**), and the Summer Food Service Program (**SFSP**), are all federally funded programs.

This foundation is in danger of crumbling. The annual Agriculture Appropriations bill was subject to a Continuing Resolution through March 1, 2024. If the Resolution is allowed to lapse, there will be a partial government shutdown jeopardizing every food banks' ability to maintain these vital programs.

The Farm Bill, which authorizes many of these programs, expired in September 2023, but was reauthorized through September 2024. The Farm Bill has historically enjoyed bipartisan support; we are troubled that Congress has not been able to make meaningful progress on this vital legislation.



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Island Harvest recommends:

- ***Support the Hot Foods Act (H.R.3519/S.2258)*** which modernizes SNAP, allowing recipients to purchase hot foods, such as a rotisserie chicken, from their grocer. The Hot Foods Act was introduced by **Reps. Grace Meng (NY-06)** and **Andrew Garbarino (NY-02)** in the House of Representatives and co-sponsored by **Reps. Nick LaLota (NY-01)** and **Anthony D'Esposito (NY-04)**. **Senator Kirsten Gillibrand** is a Senate co-sponsor.
- ***Support the Farmers Feeding America Act of 2023 (H.R.6203/S.2713)*** which will enact Feeding America's recommendations to double mandatory funding for TEFAP from \$250 million to \$500 million per year through 2028.
- ***Support the Delivering for Rural Seniors Act of 2023 (H.R.4745)*** introduced by **Rep. Marc Molinaro (NY-19)** which creates a pilot program for home delivery of CSFP meal packages for low-income seniors.
- ***Support the GusNIP Expansion Act of 2023 (S.2577)*** co-sponsored by **Senator Kirsten Gillibrand** which provides \$150 million for the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) to increase access to fresh, healthy produce for people with SNAP benefits.
- ***Support the Food Date Labeling Act of 2023 (H.R.3159/S.1484)*** co-sponsored by **Rep. Mike Lawler (NY-17)** which standardizes food labeling to create and ensure the public discerns and understands "Quality Date" and "Discard Date" to help reduce food waste and increase donations to food banks and emergency food providers.





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STATE SUPPORT

Support from the State of New York is vital to ensuring Federal programs reach our neighbors in need. New York administers the distribution of food through TEFAP and provides the products needed to build the senior meal packages for the CSFP.

New York has become a vital partner in its own right, providing direct support to food banks through the Hunger Prevention & Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) and Nourish New York (NNY).

Gov. Kathy Hochul and the entire **State Legislature** have made historic investments addressing food insecurity in the 2023-2024 budget: more than \$56 million for HPNAP, \$50 million for NNY, and \$130 million added to the Community Eligibility Provision widely expanding student's access to free breakfast and lunch at school.

However the 2024-2025 budget year shows deficits that must be managed, as funding for these programs is in jeopardy. We know that for families struggling with food insecurity, the issue is their budget: what can be stretched, what can be pushed? Oftentimes food, by sheer necessity, takes a back seat to the mortgage, rent,

medicine, and transportation. ***New York State must not shuffle support for emergency food assistance to the bottom of the budgetary priorities list.***

Island Harvest supports:

- **Island Harvest Food Bank** stands with **Feeding New York State** and our membership of ten regional food banks calling for **\$64 million to fund HPNAP**. Inflation affects all budgets and our ability to purchase food is diminished by flat funding.



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Island Harvest supports:

- **Island Harvest Food Bank** stands with **Feeding New York State** calling for **\$75 million to fund NNY**, an amazing pandemic-era program made permanent, that provides funds for all eligible emergency food providers, not just food banks, to purchase New York-produced food to distribute to our neighbors in need. The program is a win for local farms, for emergency food providers, and for all New Yorkers. Recent changes to the program highlights the need for more funding to ensure all emergency food providers can take full advantage of the program.
- **Island Harvest Food Bank** and the **Healthy School Meals for All Coalition** led by **Community Food Advocates** is continuing our push for universal school meals. Although the State has made an historic investment in school meals, too many communities on Long Island have been left behind. We support **Universal School Meals (A1941/S1678-A)**, introduced by **Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas** and **State Senator Michelle Hinchey**, co-sponsored by **Members of Assembly Fred Thiele (1st District), Joe DeStefano (3rd District), Ed Flood (4th District), Doug Smith (5th District), Phil Ramos (6th District), Jarrett Gandolfo (7th District) Michael Durso (9th District), Steve Stern (10th District), Kimberly Jean-Pierre (11th District), Keith Brown (12th District), Chuck Lavine (13th District), David McDonough (14th District), Gina Sillitti (16th District), Taylor Darling (18th District) and Michaëlle Solages (22nd District)**, alongside **State Senators Dean Murray (3rd District), Monica Martinez (4th District) and Kevin Thomas (6th District)**.





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Island Harvest supports (con't):

- **Island Harvest Food Bank** joins with **Hunger Solutions New York** supporting the **SNAP Minimum Benefits bill (A6214-A/S7663-A)**, introduced by **Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas** and **State Senator Rachel May**, co-sponsored by **Members of Assembly Fred Thiele (1st District), Doug Smith (5th District), Keith Brown (12th District), Chuck Lavine (13th District), David McDonough (14th District), Gina Sillitti (16th District), John Mikulin (17th District), and Michaelle Solages (22nd District)** along with **State Senator Kevin Thomas (6th District)**. This bill will provide all New Yorkers who receive SNAP benefits a minimum of \$100 per month. *The current federal minimum SNAP benefit is \$23, which is wholly inadequate to address their emergency food needs.*
- **Island Harvest Food Bank** and the **Good Food NY Coalition** led by **Community Food Advocates** supports the **Good Food NY Bill (A7264/S6955)** introduced by **Assembly Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes** and **State Senator Michelle Hinchey**, co-sponsored by **Members of Assembly Fred Thiele (1st District)** and **Michaelle Solages (22nd District)**. This bill updates NY State's antiquated procurement laws by allowing municipalities the option of selecting food vendors who prioritize responsible business practices. Vendors must be within 10% of the lowest-responsible bidder to qualify.

LOCAL SUPPORT

Nassau and Suffolk Counties are at the frontline against food insecurity and hunger. Island Harvest enjoys strong support from **Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman** and **Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine** as well as both the **Nassau and Suffolk County Legislatures**.

Island Harvest Food Bank receives support from **Nassau County**, which was recently supplemented with generous funds from the American Rescue Plan. This financial support is vital to our operations, helping fund our general **Food Collection & Distribution Program**; the **Nutrition Pathways Program**, **Operation HOPE**, and the **Community Empowerment Program**.

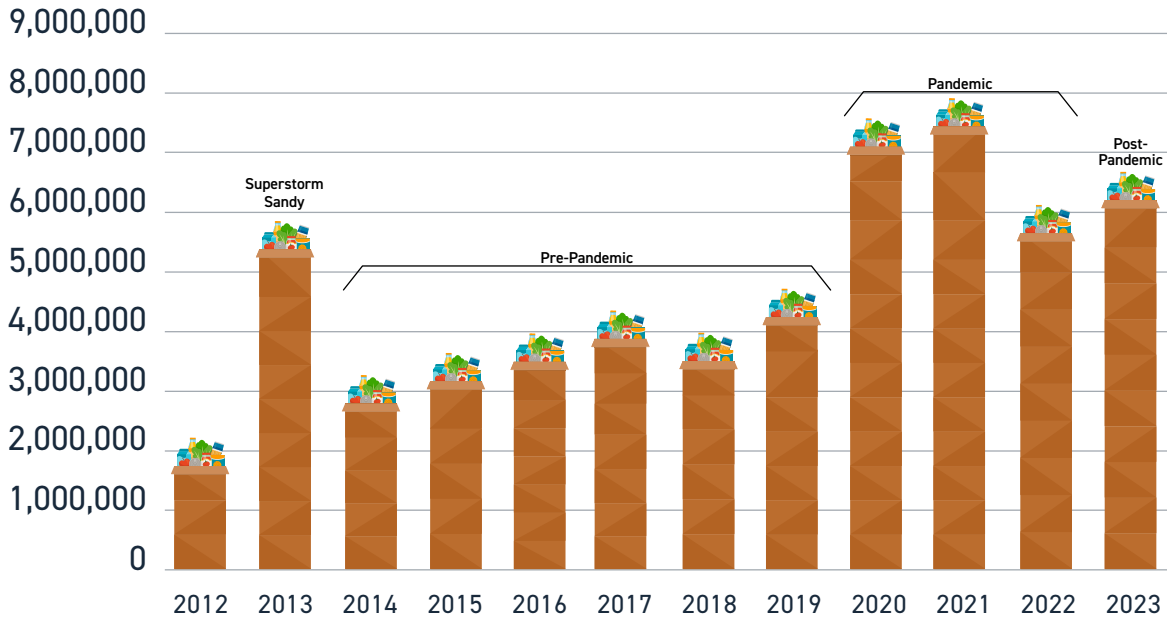
Suffolk County recently increased its support for **Island Harvest**, which is used to increase capacity at our **Healthy Harvest Farm** on the **Sisters of St. Joseph Campus in Brentwood**, our **Summer Food Service Program** and operations at our Melville headquarters.

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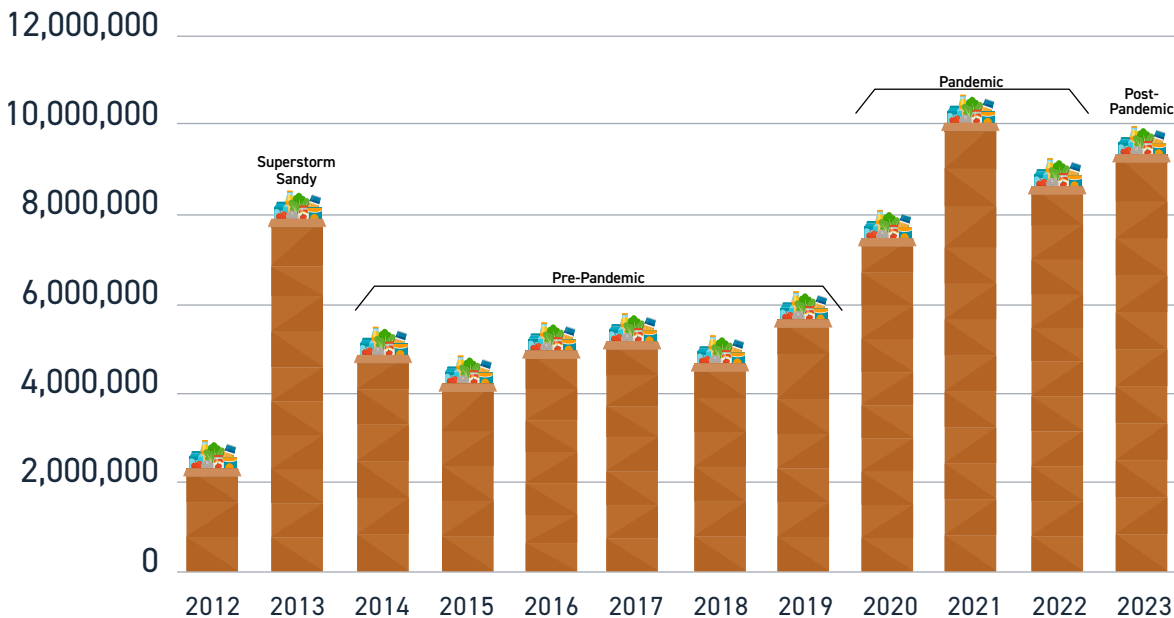
Nassau County Food Distributions

Sum of Pounds Distributed



Suffolk County Food Distributions

Sum of Pounds Distributed





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There are many opportunities for Island Harvest to work more closely with Nassau and Suffolk Counties in the work against food insecurity and hunger:

- The Nourish New York program has allowed Island Harvest to purchase more than \$2 million worth of produce from Suffolk County farms. ***Suffolk County should create its own version of Nourish New York to provide funds to food banks and other emergency food providers to purchase produce from Suffolk-sourced farms to distribute to our neighbors in need.***
- ***Nassau County should create a Food Policy Council, modeled on other successful councils, to promote County-wide access to fresh, nutritious food,*** including at municipal buildings, and sourcing of local, New York-grown products when possible.
- ***Both Nassau and Suffolk Counties should pilot home deliveries of food, beyond any existing service for ready-to-eat meals.*** Island Harvest Food Bank is the local state contractor for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, providing 35-pound meal packages monthly to seniors who are low income. ***By funding a program for home deliveries, Island Harvest and other emergency food providers could better meet the needs of our older residents.***

In 2023, Island Harvest distributed nearly 17 million pounds of food.

Action is needed at every level of government to address hunger, food insecurity and food waste. The problems we face cannot fix themselves.

We need you to lend your voice and strength to this work.



Melville | Uniondale | Brentwood | Calverton

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