



ISLAND HARVEST
MEMBER OF FEEDING AMERICA
 Nourishing Long Island's Future

2025

Advocacy **PLATFORM**

NOW MORE THAN EVER

Island Harvest Food Bank is a leading regional human services organization whose mission is to end hunger and reduce food waste on Long Island. Through direct services, mobile outreach programs, and food distribution, we provide critical support to seniors, children, families, and veterans facing crisis. Our work also empowers a network of more than 300 community-based and emergency feeding programs across Long Island.

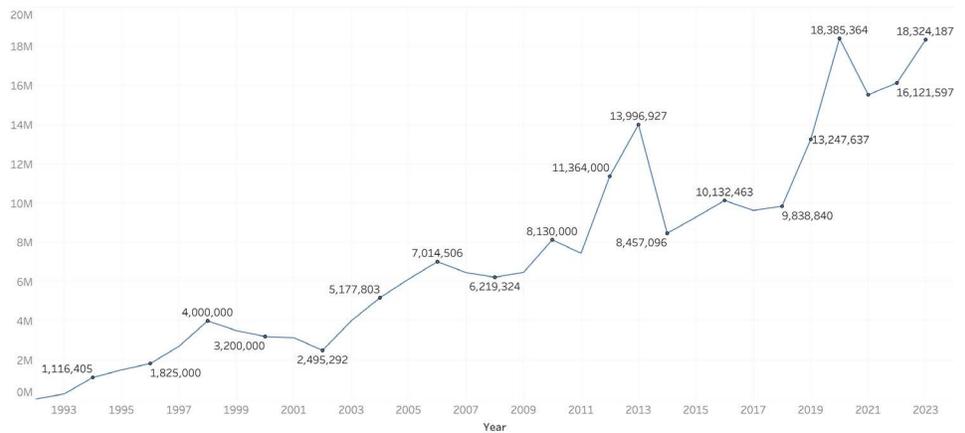
FOOD INSECURITY AN ALARMING REALITY

In 2023/2024, Island Harvest distributed an unprecedented 18,324,187 pounds of food—a 27% increase from the prior fiscal year. If this were a for-profit milestone, it would be cause for celebration. Instead, it's a stark reminder of **a growing crisis**.

The COVID-19 pandemic magnified food insecurity, creating a "new normal" far beyond pre-pandemic levels. Feeding America estimates that in 2022, **more than 221,000 Long Islanders faced food insecurity, a staggering 58% increase from 2021**.

And the need continues to grow. By June 2025, we forecast distributing nearly **20 million pounds of food**, further underscoring an urgent call to action.

Pounds of Food Distributed by Year



Note: pounds increased in 2012-2013 as a result of Superstorm Sandy response and in 2020 from COVID-19 response.

LONG ISLAND NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT NOW MORE THAN EVER.

Elected officials at every level can help craft policy changes that will have lasting impacts on your constituents in need.



COMMODITY SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD PROGRAM (CSFP)

Island Harvest Food Bank is the sole partner for the federal government and New York State on Long Island, administering the **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)**. This amazing program provides federal funds to the state for the purchase of food which is then shipped to Island Harvest and packaged into 32-pound boxes for our seniors who are low-income.

We are contracted to serve 8,000 seniors per month. To give you some perspective, out of the 61 states and Indian Tribal Organizations participating in CSFP, Island Harvest ranks 25th. We service more seniors than every other state (except New York) under the USDA's Northeast Regional Office (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont).¹ The 26th spot is held by Georgia and New Jersey stands at 32nd.

This is a challenging program, and we need help at both the federal and state levels.

From our **federal leaders**, we need a version of **The Delivering for Rural Seniors Act (H.R. 4745)**: Piloting home delivery of CSFP meal packages for low-income seniors, originally introduced by Rep. Marc Molinaro (NY-19). This bill provides for a pilot program and funding to support home deliveries to seniors, sorely needed financial support for Island Harvest. While the original text focused on rural communities, modified language should be introduced allowing suburban communities to pilot the program as well.

From our **state leaders**, we need support amending guidelines set by the Department of Health.

Eligible seniors, until recently, could participate in the program only if they earn less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), about \$1,623 a month. Rules changes by the United States Department

of Agriculture (USDA) allow states to adjust income eligibility to 150% of the FPL, about \$1,880 per month.

We need your support in **Albany** to change the eligibility guidelines from 120% of the FPL to 150%, greatly expanding the number of eligible seniors in the program. This simple change would guarantee we can support all deserving and eligible seniors in our program to match our contract.



Member of Assembly Chuck Levine delivering CSFP boxes in Glen Cove.

THE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TEFAP)



Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine, State Senator Alexis Weik, Member of Assembly Michael Durso, Randi Shubin Dresner, Member of Assembly Keith Brown, State Senator Patricia Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, and State Senator Mario Mattera.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is the main federal support program for food banks across the country. TEFAP provides millions of dollars to each food bank for the direct purchase of food which is then distributed to its member agencies. In addition, participating food banks in TEFAP are eligible to receive "bonus" commodities and funding, as available throughout the year.

Island Harvest did not exist when TEFAP was introduced in the 1980s. At the time, there were only 8 regional food banks servicing New Yorkers, and that fact was reflected in the State's required plan with the USDA. As a result, we are excluded from receiving bonus commodities and funding that other organizations receive on a regular basis. Under the first Trump Administration's Trade Mitigation Programs, \$1.2 billion was made available to food banks participating in TEFAP, funding we were almost totally excluded from receiving.²

We need support in **Albany** for the Office of General Services to recognize Island Harvest in its TEFAP Plan with the federal government. This recognition should allow Island Harvest to access bonus commodities and funding without impacting the operation of any other emergency food provider in the state.

¹ <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/2024CSFPCaseloadAssignmentMemorandum-Revised5.30.34.pdf>

FEDERAL SUPPORT

Federal programs like CSFP and TEFAP, along with key programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAP**), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (**WIC**), and the Summer Food Service Program (**SFSP**), form the backbone of emergency food assistance. Authorized every five years for five years each, funding has remained constant and reliable allowing food banks and emergency food providers to assist our neighbors in need with minimal financial disruption.

However, there are improvements that can be made, and we call on our **federal partners** to consider advocating and supporting the following bills:

- **The Hot Foods Act (H.R. 3519/S. 2258):** Modernizing SNAP to allow recipients to purchase prepared hot foods, such as rotisserie chicken. 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.
- **The Food Date Labeling Act (H.R. 3159/S. 1484):** Standardizes food labels to reduce waste and increase food bank donations. Co-sponsored by **Rep. Mike Lawler (NY-17)**, it ensures 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.
- **The Farmers Feeding America Act (H.R. 6203/S. 2713):** Doubling mandatory TEFAP funding from \$250 million to \$500 million annually through 2028, based on **Feeding America's** recommendations.



Gregory May, State Senator Michelle Hinchey, Member of Assembly Jessica González-Rojas, and Randi Shubin Dresner attend Governor Kathy Hochul's 2025 State of the State Address announcing Universal School Meals for all students.

STATE SUPPORT

New York State is essential in delivering federal aid and addressing budgetary gaps for families facing impossible financial choices. Food often takes a backseat to rent, medicine, or transportation, making robust support non-negotiable.

WE ADVOCATE FOR:

- **Direct Home Deliveries for Seniors:** Funding to support home delivery of **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)** meal packages, enabling aging-in-place seniors to access nutritious food. CSFP provides 32-pound meal packages to low-income seniors, with eligibility limited to a maximum income of \$1,630 per month. Our caseload supports 8,000 seniors monthly, more than many states, posing a logistical challenge. We need State Legislature support to fund *direct home deliveries* of the meal packages, ensuring our aging neighbors have access to healthy food.
- **\$75 Million for HPNAP:** Inflation has reduced the purchasing power of the **Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP)**. To address this, funding must keep pace. **Island Harvest Food Bank** stands with **Feeding New York State** and all ten regional food banks in advocating for this crucial support.
- **\$75 Million for Nourish NY:** Connects local farmers with food providers, benefiting both agriculture and communities facing food insecurity. This pandemic-era program, now permanent, funds all eligible emergency food providers to purchase New York-produced food for distribution. It's a win for local farms, emergency food providers, and all New Yorkers. Recent changes highlight the need for more funding to ensure all providers can fully benefit. **Island Harvest Food Bank** stands with **Feeding New York State** supporting this increased funding.
- **Universal School Meals (A282/S594):** Extending free school meals to all students, ensuring no child is left behind. **Island Harvest Food Bank**, along with the **Healthy School Meals for All Coalition**, led by **Community Food Advocates** and **Hunger Solutions New York**, continues to push for universal school meals. Despite historic state investments, many Long Island communities remain underserved. We support Universal School Meals (A1941/S1678-A), introduced by **Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas** and **State Senator Michelle Hinchey**.
- **SNAP Minimum Benefits Bill (A1318/S665):** Raising the minimum SNAP benefit to \$100 per month, up from the inadequate federal standard of \$23, an amount that is not sustainable to support the feeding needs of any individual or family. **Island Harvest Food Bank**, along with **Hunger Solutions New York**, supports the **SNAP Minimum Benefits** bill (A6214-A/S7663-A), introduced by **Assemblymember Jessica González-Rojas** and **State Senator Rachel May**.

LOCAL SUPPORT:

Nassau and Suffolk Counties are the frontline in the work against food insecurity and hunger. Island Harvest enjoys strong support from Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman and Suffolk County Executive Ed Romaine, and the Nassau County and Suffolk County Legislatures.

County Executive Bruce Blakeman has supported Island Harvest with hundreds of thousands of dollars from American Rescue Plan funds. His support was vital to our operations through the end of the pandemic. We applaud County Executive Blakeman for establishing the Office of Health Equity under Deputy County Executive Anissa Moore.

We are grateful to County Executive Ed Romaine, whose administration has taken a bold step against food insecurity in his latest budget. Nourish Suffolk County, modeled on the State's Nourish NY program, is providing Island Harvest \$250,000 to purchase seasonal products from 10 Suffolk County farms to assist Suffolk residents facing food insecurity—a model of innovation and impact.

WE ADVOCATE FOR:

- **Nassau Food Policy Council:** Nassau County should create a Food Policy Council, modeled after Suffolk County's Council, to promote access to fresh, nutritious food across the county, including at municipal buildings. The Council would also encourage sourcing local, New York-grown products when possible. We would be honored to work with Nassau County and community leaders to establish this important council.
- **Expanded Home Delivery Programs:** County-level funding could help deliver food packages to seniors, homebound and vulnerable residents. Both Nassau and Suffolk Counties should pilot home deliveries of food beyond existing ready-to-eat meal services. **Island Harvest Food Bank**, as the local state contractor for the **Commodity Supplemental Food Program**, provides 32-pound meal packages monthly to low-income seniors. Funding a home delivery program would enable **Island Harvest** and other emergency food providers to better meet the needs of our older residents.
- **Nourish Nassau County:** Inspired by Suffolk's program, this initiative would fund the purchase of locally produced/sourced food for Nassau residents in need. While Nassau has less farmland than Suffolk, there are many local food producers/purveyors and more. This program would provide funds for **Island Harvest** to purchase food produced in Nassau County and distribute it to residents in need.

Together, we can ensure every Long Islander has access to nutritious food.
Join us in advocating for these vital programs.

Now more than ever, your support is critical.

Melville | Uniondale | Brentwood | Calverton

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