

Food Insecurity in NYC Fact Sheet

Even before COVID-19, New York City was facing a profound hunger crisis—particularly in the marginalized communities. More than 2.5 million working-age New Yorkers were struggling to make ends meet before COVID-19. **Nearly 1.2 million New Yorkers were experiencing food insecurity, including one in five New York City children.**

Someone experiencing food insecurity may not know when or where their next meal will come from. Often, this may be a reflection of a household's ability to afford basic necessities—such as rent, utilities, insurance, or medical bills—before adding in their grocery budget. A family or household may experience food insecurity for a brief period of time (for example, while a parent is between jobs) or for much longer (for example, a senior living on a fixed income).

The COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crash that followed have made New York City's hunger crisis even worse. Food insecurity is expected to rise 38 percent citywide in 2020—and 49 percent among children, according to Feeding America. But hunger doesn't fall equally across the city. It hits particularly hard in the communities of color that have been disproportionately harmed by decades of policy inequities and systemic failures. *Source: City Harvest Website*

Emergency Food

- An estimated 1.4 million NYC residents rely on emergency food programs, including soup kitchens and food pantries, each year.
- Approximately 339,000 NYC children, or approximately one out of every five (19 percent), rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.
- Approximately 604,770 NYC adult women, or approximately one out of every six (17 percent), rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.
- Approximately 204,000 NYC seniors, or approximately one out of every five (20 percent), rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.
- Approximately 70,000 NYC veterans, or approximately three out of every ten (30 percent), rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.

Source: Hunger's New Normal: Redefining Emergency in Post-Recession New York City. Food Bank For New York City

Food Insecurity

- Food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. While the data presented below reflects the pre-COVID period, it is projected that the increase in the number of food insecure individuals due to COVID-19 could be comparable to the increase in the unemployment rate.
- More than 37.2 million US residents, or 11.5 percent, are food insecure.
- Nearly 2.2 million NYS residents, or 11.1 percent, are food insecure.
- Nearly 1.1 million NYC residents, or 12.9 percent, are food insecure.
- NYC residents are half of all food insecure people living in the state.
- NYC's food insecurity rate is 12 percent higher than the national rate, and 16 percent higher than the New York State rate.

Source: US: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2020; NYS & NYC: Map the Meals Gap (2020); Feeding America (2020). Note that this data is released one year after it is collected.

The Meal Gap

The Meal Gap represents the meals missing from the homes of those struggling to put food on the table.

- The meal gap for the **United States** was **6.8 billion** before the COVID-19 pandemic; that is, US residents who experience food insecurity fall short of an adequate diet by 6.8 billion meals in a single year.
- The meal gap for **New York State** was approximately **367 million** before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The meal gap for **New York City** was nearly 185 million before the COVID-19 pandemic. New York City's meal gap makes up over **half (51.7 percent)** of New York State's meal gap.

Source: Map the Meals Gap (2018); Feeding America (2020). Note that this data is released two years after it is collected.