



For Immediate Release:  
November 21, 2017

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## **One in Nine Brooklyn Adults Are Working But Hungry**

### **Hunger Dips in NY City & State, But Still Higher Than Pre-Recession;**

### **Senior Hunger Increases Despite Overall Hunger Decrease**

#### **Advocates Say G.O.P. Tax, Health Care, and Spending Bills Would Increase Hunger**

While hunger in New York City and State dropped significantly over the last three years, the number of city and states residents unable to afford an adequate supply of food is still greater than a decade ago. Despite unemployment dropping and wages rising, hunger rates are still far higher before the start of the recession, according to a new report by Hunger Free America, based on an analysis of federal data.

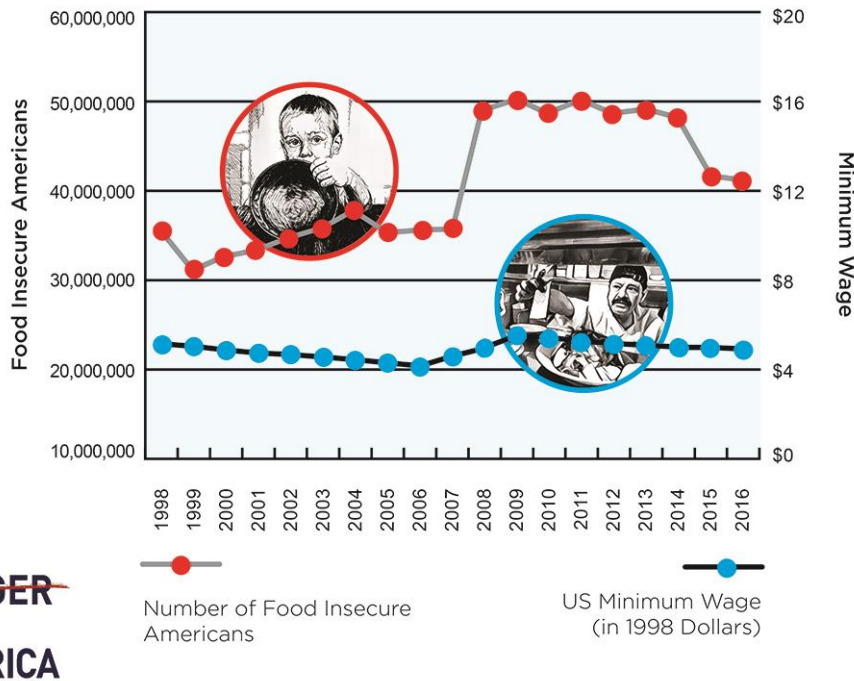
Citywide, the number of New Yorkers struggling against hunger dropped by 15 percent over the past three years, but was still 15 percent higher than a decade ago. In 2014-2016, 1.2 million New Yorkers (one in seven of the city's population) lived in food insecure homes, compared to 1.4 million in 2011-2013 and 1.0 million in 2004-2006.

One out of every nine adults in Brooklyn was working but food insecure in the years 2014-2016. Fully 387,645 adults in the city lived in households that couldn't afford enough food, the largest number of food insecure adults out of all the boroughs. These are slight reductions from last year, likely because of the increase in the minimum wage in the city.

Said, Joel Berg, CEO of Hunger Free America, "While unemployment decreased and wages rose during the last few years of the Obama Administration, it is shameful that America, New York State, and New York City all *still* have higher levels of hunger than before the great recession. We still face a nation, state, and local epidemic of the 'working hungry.' Nationwide, the abysmally low minimum wage clearly is a chief cause of hunger. Yet, just at a time when the nation needs even more jobs, even higher wages, and even more robust anti-hunger safety net programs, Republicans in Washington are scheming to cut the safety net and eviscerate health care – which would clearly make hunger soar – just to fund even more tax cuts for the mega-wealthy."

Hunger Free America, formerly called the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, announced the Brooklyn-specific data analysis at Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger, a leading food pantry, flanked by governmental and nonprofit leaders and community activists. 46 percent of the Emergency Food Providers surveyed in Brooklyn indicated they could not meet demand, and 72 percent indicated they were seeing more clients utilizing their soup kitchen and/or food pantry.

**AS PURCHASING POWER OF MINIMUM WAGE SINKS,  
US HUNGER STAYS SKY HIGH**



Other findings of the study:

- 101,214 (11.2 percent) of the children in Brooklyn lived in food insecure homes in 2014-2016.
- One out of every six seniors (15.6%) in Brooklyn are food insecure.
- 46 percent of the city’s pantries and kitchens indicated they were not distributing enough food to meet demand, and 38.8 percent indicated they had to turn people away, reduce the amount of food, or limit their hours of operation.
- Nearly a third of the emergency food providers across New York City indicated that they do not engage their clients, staff, volunteers, or board members in advocacy (32.3 percent for clients; 29.4 percent for staff, volunteers, and board members).
- President Trump has proposed slashing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - formerly called the Food Stamp Program – by \$192 billion, and House Republicans have also proposed major cuts to the program. Yet 93 percent of the people who run food pantries and soup kitchens in New York City said such cuts would cause their clients to struggle even more.

# CHILD HUNGER STILL SKY HIGH

NUMBER OF NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN LIVING IN FOOD INSECURE HOMES

Statewide, in 2014-2016, nearly three-quarters of a million children, about one in six, lived in food insecure homes. Citywide during that time period, about 341,266 – or one in five – of the city's children struggled against hunger.



**FROM 2014-2016, 1 IN 5 NYC CHILDREN LIVED IN FOOD INSECURE HOMES.**

USDA DATA ANALYZED BY HUNGER FREE AMERICA © NOVEMBER 2017

Dr. Melony Samuels, executive Director of Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger, said: “Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger (BSCAH) is one of the largest direct providers of emergency food and related services that address poverty in New York City. What sets us apart from similarly mission organizations is that we focus on dignity, empowerment and we understand the need of the community we serve. Currently, we’re experiencing an increase up to 50%, in new clients, of which 40% of them were adversely affected and displaced by Hurricane Maria. Due to this enormous influx, we are desperately in need of your support and bi-lingual volunteers”

Rafael Espinal, a City Council Member representing Brooklyn, said “No child, New Yorker, or human being anywhere, should ever go hungry. While food insecurity is an unconscionable reality for too many of us, we must continue to right this wrong. I applaud Hunger Free America for the work they do to help the hungry and for the up-to-date information they provide so that we can address the problem of hunger head-on.”

“It is unconscionable that, in the richest city in the history of the world,” continued Hunger Free America’s Berg, “one in five children still can’t always count on enough food. It is equally unacceptable that a third of our food pantries and soup kitchens lack the resources to meet the growing need. The sky-high hunger level of New York and America harms health, hampers education, traps families in poverty, fuels obesity, eviscerates hope, and thus drags down our entire economy and places our national security at risk. Hunger harms us all. In contrast, ending hunger lifts us all. We must build the movement needed and force our political system to enact the economic policies and social programs necessary to end U.S. hunger once and for all.”

The study, “Working New York Still Hungry: New York City and State Hunger Report,” is available on Hunger Free America’s website, <http://www.hungerfreeamerica.org/media-research/research>. The public can donate to, or volunteer with, Hunger Free America at [www.hungerfreeamerica.org](http://www.hungerfreeamerica.org).

Otto Starzmann, the Chief Production Officer, RIVER FUND, which serves Brooklyn and Queens, said “The problem of Hunger is simply a symptom of the real issue: Income inequality. The failure to sacrifice minimum-wage growth in furtherance of greater corporate profit is a direct driver of the widespread increase in overall poverty that our economy has experienced. We need to fix this fast: The anger level among the general population of "working poor" families who have been living in multigenerational poverty is rapidly becoming uncontrollable. We see it every day.”

Said Connie Green, Executive Director, United Grand Chapter OES – Brooklyn: “The reason people are hungry in NY and America is because after they pay high rents, there is nothing left for food or either they do not have jobs. Salaries do not compete with the economy of today's prices.”

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