



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Bronx *Still* One of Nation's Hungriest Counties,  
With One in Four Residents Unable to Afford Sufficient Food**

**Nearly 76 Percent of Bronx Emergency Food Programs Report Increase in  
People Served in 2019**

**Despite Economic Boom, 1 Million NYC Residents  
Still Struggle Against Hunger Due to High Rents**

The Bronx remains New York City's hungriest borough in every category, with nearly one in four (23 percent) Bronx residents experiencing food insecurity. This includes more than 30 percent of all children, nearly 15 percent of working adults, and more than 20 percent of older residents (60+ years old), according to federal data analyzed by Hunger Free America. The total number of Bronx residents who can't always afford enough food totaled 263,550 during the 2016-2018 time period. The Bronx is still one of the lowest-income and most hungry counties in the United States.

Hunger Free America's report found that in all of New York City, the number of people living in food insecure households — unable to afford an adequate supply of food — decreased by nearly 27 percent during the past six years, declining from 1.42 million people in 2013-2015 to 1.04 million in 2016-2018. However, one in eight city residents still struggled against hunger.

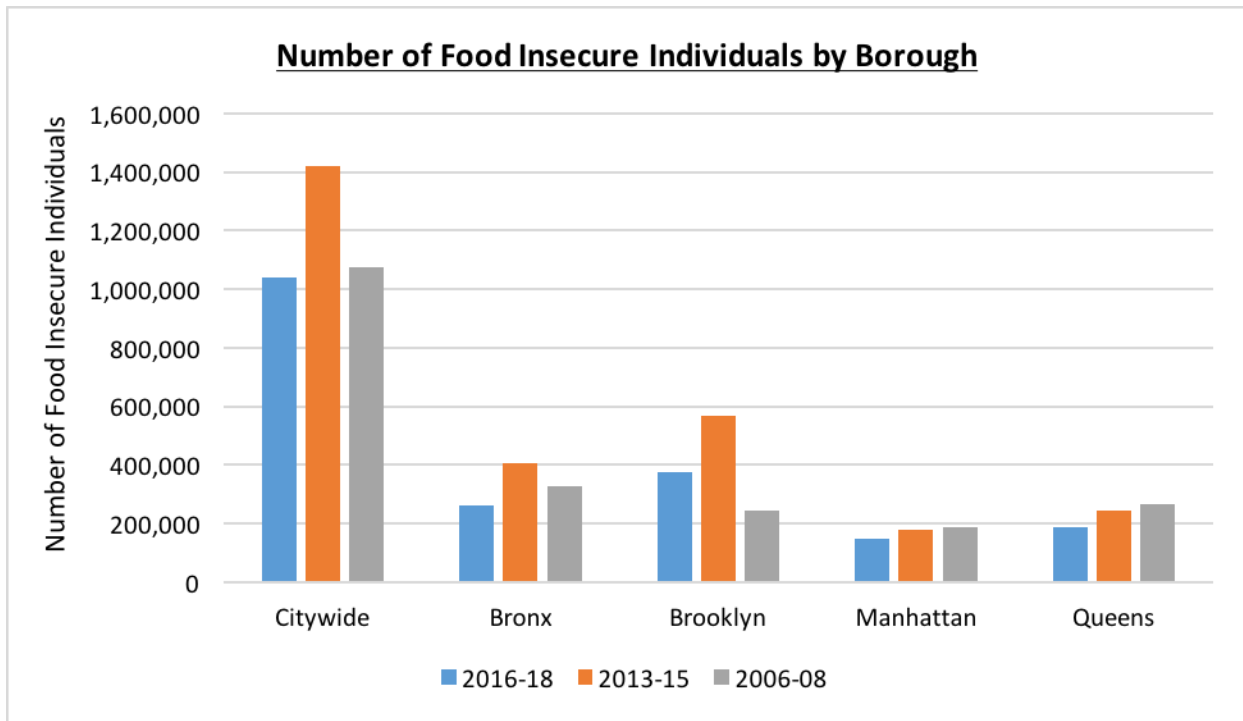
“Because so many New Yorkers earn too little to keep up with soaring costs for housing, health care, child care, and other basic costs of living, a million of them struggled against hunger,” said Joel Berg, CEO of Hunger Free America. “Between 2005-2008 and 2015-2017, the cost of living in New York City went from an average of under \$4,000 per month to more than \$5,000 per month. During that time, food insecurity levels soared as the recession took its toll. It is only in the last three years that we have seen food insecurity rates return to pre-recession levels, which

are still sky-high. While we stress that these are citywide — and, indeed, nationwide — problems, they are particularly pronounced in the Bronx. While we acknowledge that the Bronx has made very significant progress on a number of fronts over the last few decades, we can't sugar coat the reality that very severe challenges remain.”

According to Hunger Free America’s annual survey of emergency food programs, more than 33 percent of Bronx food pantries and soup kitchens reported not being able to keep up with demand during the last year. Additionally, nearly 43 percent of respondents reported having to turn people away, reduce the amount of food distributed per person, or limit their hours of operation in 2019 due to a lack of resources.

New York City Council Member Vanessa Gibson — who represents the city’s 16<sup>th</sup> District in the Bronx — said in a statement, “We stand with Hunger Free America and my other colleagues in government as we continue to fight hunger and food insecurity throughout the City of New York. Let us use the information from this report to create comprehensive ways to eradicate hunger, as we aspire to one day be a hunger free NYC.”

Berg added: “The only way to end U.S. hunger is to help Americans better afford food, both by raising wages and ensuring a federal nutrition assistance safety net that is adequately-funded and easy-to-access, including benefits such as: SNAP (formerly known as food stamps); meals on wheels and senior center meals for older Americans; WIC for pregnant women and infants; and school breakfasts, lunches, and summer meals for children. Americans also need to be able to easily access affordable childcare, housing, and health care.”



The study, “The Affordability Crisis and Hunger: Soaring Costs of Housing and Other Basics of Living Leave Less for Food,” is available on Hunger Free America’s website:  
[hungerfreeamerica.org/media-research/research](http://hungerfreeamerica.org/media-research/research)

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