



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT:**

Nicole Aber, (646) 627-7741,  
Naber@hungerfreeamerica.org

**More Than 189,000 Queens Residents Can't Afford Enough Food**

**68 Percent of Queens Emergency Food Programs Report Increase in  
Number of People Served in 2019**

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

Nearly eight percent of Queens residents were food insecure in 2016-2018, according to federal data analyzed by Hunger Free America. This includes more than 12 percent of children, nearly four percent of working adults, and nearly six percent of older residents (60+ years old) in the borough. While the number of people in New York City who are food insecure decreased by nearly 27 percent over the last six years, one in eight city residents still struggled against hunger.

The number of Queens residents who experienced food insecurity in 2016-2018 totals 189,178, according to the Hunger Free America report. This is down from 244,863 Queens residents in 2013-2015 and 268,796 in 2006-2008. However, 68 percent of food pantries and soup kitchens in the borough reported serving more people in 2019 than in 2018, according to Hunger Free America's annual survey of emergency food programs.

Joel Berg, CEO of Hunger Free America, announced the data Tuesday morning at the Hour Children Food Pantry in Long Island City.

"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," Berg said. "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. Queens has long been a bedrock middle-class borough. When places like Queens have a significant hunger and poverty problem, that speaks volumes about the extent of this crisis citywide and nationwide.”

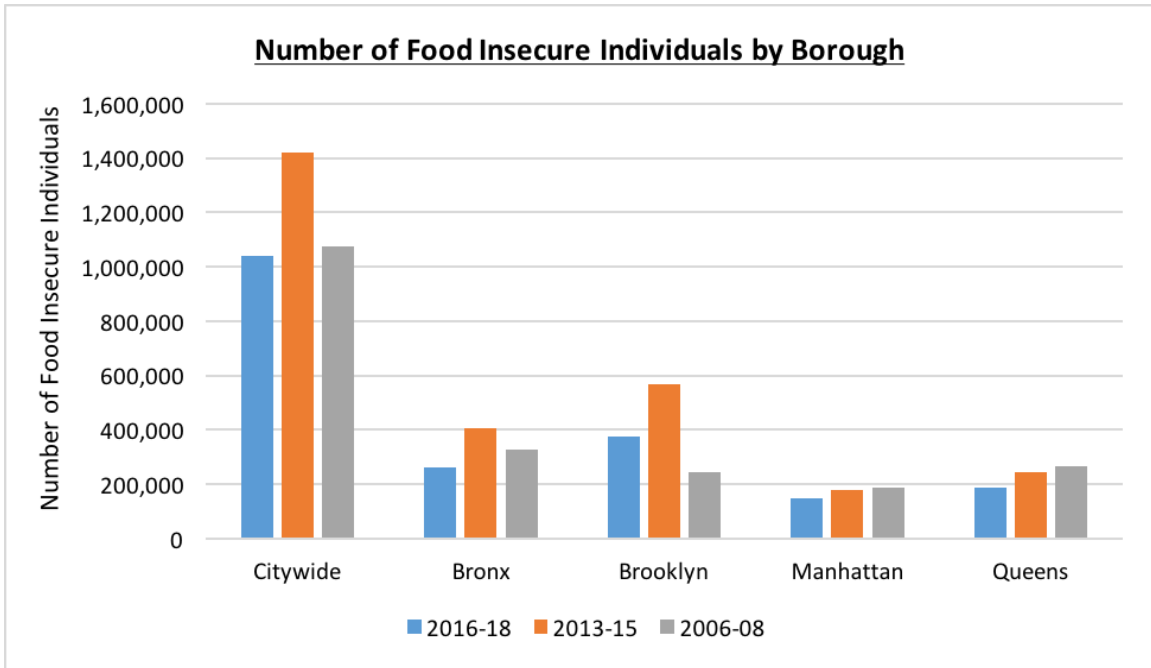
Forty-five percent of emergency food programs in Queens also reported, in the Hunger Free America survey, that they had to turn people away or limit their hours of operation during the last year due to a lack of resources.

“Our pantry distributes nearly 10,000 food allotments each year,” said Sister Tesa Fitzgerald, Executive Director of Hour Children — a nonprofit that provides support to formerly incarcerated women in addition to community health programs. “Our ‘supermarket style’ system allows our clients to choose for themselves what they and their family need. There is dignity in that choice, and it also probably leads to less waste.”

New York State Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, whose district includes Long Island City, said, “We must continue to support governmental policies that provide dignified support to families. I am also grateful to so many in our community who donate and support Hour Children and all the food pantries in our district.”

New York City Council Member Francisco Moya, whose district includes several neighborhoods in Queens, said in a statement, “Access to nutritious and healthy food is a fundamental necessity and a natural right. As Thanksgiving approaches, we must remember that food insecurity affects one million people in communities across this city. That figure is sobering but there is reason to be hopeful: The number of food-insecure households declined over the past year, which suggests that when we come together to fight hunger in this city, we can have a real effect on the lives of vulnerable New Yorkers.”

Fitzgerald added: “This time of year, people are incredibly generous, especially with food drives. But hunger of course is year-round, and donations are what keeps us going. We're grateful for people who remember us and their neighbors in need even when the holidays are over!”



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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