

## ISSUE BRIEF Basic Needs

### REQUEST FOR STATE FUNDING

Maintain funding for anti-hunger and utility assistance programs, including:

- HPNAP (Hunger Prevention Nutrition Assistance Program - \$33.3 million, the amount funded in 2007-08. Last year's funding was \$31 million.
- The NYS share of WIC (Supplemental Food Program for Pregnant Women and Infant Children) - \$28.6 million. Additional funding may be needed dependent on the costs for the new WIC food package.
- NOEP, or Nutrition Outreach and Education Program (Food Stamp outreach and facilitated enrollment) - \$3.3 million, and
- HEAP or Home Energy Assistance Program - \$400 million.

### CASE STATEMENT

The ongoing economic crisis continues to compromise not only the State's fiscal health, but the health and well-being of its most vulnerable residents. These individuals and families, who rely on New York's safety net, are in no position to shoulder any share of the deficit reduction plan. For example, in 2009 2-1-1 information and referral centers in NYS handled over 330,000 calls seeking help with basic needs, a 43% increase over 2008.

The steady increase in requests for food and utility assistances only underscores the need to, at a minimum, hold the programs harmless. For example:

- The average monthly participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (better known as the food stamp program) rose 22% or 354,848 persons between 2004 and 2008, reaching a high of 1,952,991. For 2009 food stamp recipients increased by 12% or 266,669 just between January and August, reaching a high of 2,508,884.<sup>1</sup>
- The average daily attendance at the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which provides meals to children and adults in day programs, rose 21% or 48,026 between 2004 and 2008, reaching a high of 276,876.<sup>2</sup>
- Participation in the School Breakfast Program at NYS schools rose 12.5% between 2004 and 2008 or 61,952, reaching a high of 555,570.<sup>3</sup>
- When school is not in session the numbers are almost as strong. The average daily attendance at Summer Food Programs rose 8.4% or 34,422 between 2004 and 2008 reaching a high of 441,500 in 2008.<sup>4</sup>
- Recipients of the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) benefits jumped 33% or by 378,677 between 2006 and 2009, to a high of 1,525,812 in 2009.<sup>5</sup>

While the need is increasing, state funding has been cut for HPNAP a major source of help for food pantries and soup kitchens. Philanthropy is also depressed due to the economy. As just one example, United Way campaigns across the state declined 8.3% or \$14 million from 2007-2008.

Given this context, we urge the state to, at a minimum, maintain state funding for safety net programs and not subject them to mid-year cuts or reductions in the 2010-11 budget.

*Approved – December 1, 2009 Revised and updated 1/7/10*

<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from NYS OTDA Monthly Caseload Statistics at <http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/bdma/>

<sup>2</sup> Retrieved from USDA at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/12ccfypart.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from USDA at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/08sbfypart.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Retrieved from USDA at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/04sffypart.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Retrieved from NYS OTDA Monthly Caseload Statistics September 2009, pg. 26, Table 25 <http://www.otda.state.ny.us/main/bdma/2009/2009-09-stats.pdf> Revised 12/24/09