

DESIGNING A STRONG AND HEALTHY NYC: Food Insecurity, Health and the U.S. Farm Bill in NYC

What is food insecurity?

Food insecurity is defined as “a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life.”¹ People who are food insecure struggle to afford nutritious meals and are often forced to skip meals or rely on cheaper, less nutritious, and processed foods.²

1 out of 7 New Yorkers are food insecure

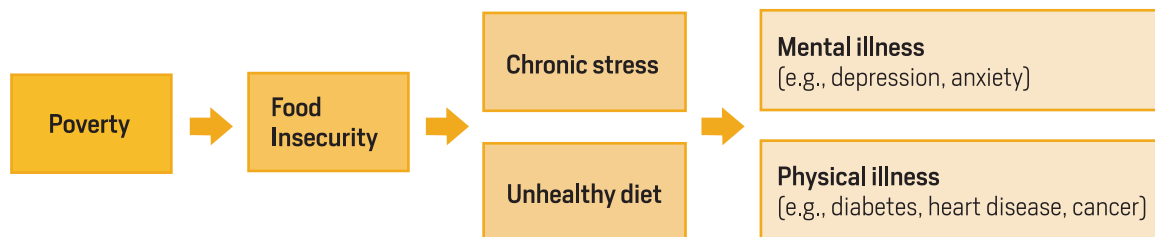


... including **1 out of 5** NYC children.^{2,4}



How does food insecurity impact health?

Food insecurity makes it hard to be healthy. Lack of regular access to nutritious food leads to chronic stress and poor diet – since high calorie and processed foods tends to be cheaper – which increase risk for chronic illnesses like depression, diabetes, and heart disease.⁴ Food insecurity disproportionately affects low-income communities and people of color, directly leading to disparities in health and life expectancy.²



What is the U.S. Farm Bill?

Every five years, the U.S. Congress renews the Farm Bill – a piece of legislation that encompasses a wide range of policies and programs related to food, nutrition, agriculture, sustainability and more. Passed in 2014, the most recent Farm Bill covered \$489 billion in mandatory government spending; the next Farm Bill will be negotiated in 2018 and will take effect in 2019.⁵

How does the Farm Bill reduce food insecurity?

1. Reducing hunger.
2. Improving access to healthy foods.
3. Boosting economic opportunity and activity.

The Farm Bill funds programs that reduce food insecurity and improve health in NYC by:

REDUCING HUNGER:

The Farm Bill provides low income New Yorkers with funds to buy food, supporting the food budgets of 1.7 million NYC residents.^{2, 6}

Farm Bill programs purchase and distribute food that agencies and community organizations provide directly to New Yorkers in need. Food pantries, soup kitchens, senior centers, and other organizations rely on these programs to serve New Yorkers across all five boroughs.^{7, 8}

IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS:

The Farm Bill increases access to fruits and vegetables in NYC by supporting small farms and local farmers who sell produce at farmers markets. Over half of NYC farmers markets are located in low-income communities. Some Farm Bill programs directly support farmers, while others (e.g., SNAP) increase the revenue local farmers can generate at markets, enabling them to continue producing healthy foods for New Yorkers.^{9, 10}

Programs funded by the Farm Bill reduce the cost of healthy food for low-income New Yorkers, making healthy food more accessible. They enable local organizations to provide those in need with coupons or other incentives (e.g., Health Bucks) that make fruits and vegetables easier to afford.^{11, 12}

Farm Bill programs increase the number of retail outlets that sell fresh produce in NYC. These programs provide funding for the development of farmers markets, supermarkets, CSAs, and other places where New Yorkers buy fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods.^{13, 14, 15}

The Farm Bill funds education programs that help low-income New Yorkers eat healthy diets. Programs focus on nutrition education, preparing healthy meals and grocery shopping on a budget, and creating environments that make the healthy choice the easy choice.¹⁶

BOOSTING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND ACTIVITY:

Farm Bill programs offer job training, mentorship, and loans for people interested in a career in farming. The Bill funds programs that aim to expand opportunities to people of color, immigrants and women.¹⁷

In general, Farm Bill programs described above invest in the local economy and create jobs. For instance, one national study indicates that every \$5 invested in SNAP generates \$9 in economic activity. SNAP and other Farm Bill programs increase sales of fresh food in NYC, supporting many small businesses and creating jobs for New Yorkers.^{18, 19}

PROGRAMS:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), aka "Food Stamps."

The Emergency Food Assistance Program; Commodity Supplemental Food Program

Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, Agri-cultural Conservation Easement Program

Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program; Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Farmers Market Promotion Program; Local Food Promotion Program; Healthy Food Financing Initiative

SNAP-ED

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program; Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers; Microloans; Conservation Reserve Program –Transition Incentives Program

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the Fund for Public Health in New York, The United Hospital Fund, and The New York Academy of Medicine (the Academy) together lead the New York City Population Health Improvement Program (PHIP). With funding from the New York State Department of Health, the NYC PHIP aims to support regional and local planning related to population health and health equity. As part of the PHIP, the DOHMH and the Academy launched Designing a Strong and Healthy New York City (DASH-NYC), which aims to facilitate information sharing and partnerships across sectors to advance efforts related to the social determinants of health and promote health equity for all New Yorkers.

(September 2018)

References

1. United States Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. Food Security in the US: Measurement. Retrieved from: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/measurement.aspx>. Last Accessed: January 22, 2018.
2. NYC Food Policy. Food Metrics Report 2017. (2017) Retrieved from: <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/foodpolicy/downloads/pdf/2017-Food-Metrics-Report-Corrected.pdf>.
3. Feeding America. (2017). Map the Meal Gap 2017: Highlights of Findings for Overall and Child Food Insecurity. Retrieved from: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/2015/2015-mapthemealgap-exec-summary.pdf>.
4. Lee, J. S., Gundersen, C., Cook, J., Laraia, B., & Johnson, M. A. (2012). Food insecurity and health across the lifespan. *Advances in Nutrition: An International Review Journal*, 3(5), 744-745.
5. Johnson, R., Monke, J. 2017. What is the Farm Bill? Congressional Research Service. Retrieved from: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RS22131.pdf>.
6. NYC Human Resources Administration. SNAP Benefits and Food Program. Retrieved from: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/snap-benefits-food-program.page>.
7. New York State Department of Health. Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). Retrieved from: <https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/csfp/>.
8. New York State Office of General Services. The Emergency Food Assistance Program. Retrieved from: <https://ogs.ny.gov/BU/SS/GDF/food-TEFAP.asp>.
9. NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Farmers Market Map 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cdp/farmers-market-map.pdf>.
10. NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. New York City Health Department Farmers' Market Programs – 2012. Retrieved from: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cdp/farmers-market-report-12.pdf>.
11. Baronberg, S., Dunn, L., Nonas, C., Dannefer, R., & Sacks, R. (2013). Peer Reviewed: The Impact of New York City's Health Bucks Program on Electronic Benefit Transfer Spending at Farmers Markets, 2006–2009. *Preventing chronic disease*, 10.
12. NYC Office of the Mayor. New York City Receives Over \$3 million from US Department of Agriculture to Expand and Evaluate Health Bucks. (2016). [Press release]. Retrieved from: <http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/519-16/new-york-city-receives-3-million-u-s-department-agriculture-expand-evaluate>.
13. Healthy Food Access Portal. New York Healthy Food, Healthy Communities Fund. Retrieved from: <http://healthyfoodaccess.org/funding/available-funding/newyork-hfhc-fund>.
14. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. (2017). Transportation and Marketing: Farmers Market Promotion Program. Fiscal Year 2017 Description of Funded Projects. Retrieved from: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2017FMPPDescriptionOfFundedProjects.pdf>.
15. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. (2017). Transportation and Marketing: Local Food Promotion Program. Fiscal Year 2017 Description of Funded Projects. Retrieved from: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/2017LFPPDescriptionOfFundedProjects.pdf>.
16. Dannefer, R., Abrami, A., Rapoport, R., Sriphanlop, P., Sacks, R., & Johns, M. (2015). A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of a SNAP–Ed Farmers' Market–Based Nutrition Education Program. *Journal of nutrition education and behavior*, 47(6), 516–525.
17. United States Department of Agriculture. Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). Retrieved from: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program-bfrdp>.
18. Hanson, K. (2010). Food Assistance National Input Output Multiplier (FANIOM) Model and Stimulus Effects of SNAP (No. 103). DIANE Publishing. Retrieved from: https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/44748/7996_err103_1_.pdf?v=41056.
19. NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. New York City Health Department Farmers' Market Programs – 2012. Retrieved from: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cdp/farmers-market-report-12.pdf>.