



2026 Legislative Priorities Agenda

The Chapin Center for Public Policy of Long Island Cares determines the legislative priorities for Long Island Cares, Inc. - The Harry Chapin Regional Food Bank. We support legislation designed to increase access to nutritious food for the diverse populations we serve through our agency network and array of innovative direct service programming.

Realizing that hunger in America is an extremely complex societal issue, we advocate for legislation that addresses the root causes of hunger and the social determinants of health, such as poverty and unemployment. We support legislation and programs that help families keep food on the table and allow them to have access to safe, affordable housing and meaningful employment opportunities. Furthermore, we are working to empower and mobilize people with lived experience and front-line pantry operators to share their stories and advocate alongside us.

FEDERAL

Federal nutrition programs form the foundation of the nation's hunger-relief response and play a critical role in supporting food banks, families, and local economies. Long Island Cares supports federal policies that protect access to nutrition assistance and strengthen emergency food systems. Our federal legislative priorities are as follows:

1) Strengthening TEFAP Investments.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) initiative that supplements the diets of low-income Americans by providing free, nutritious, American-grown food. In 2025, Long Island Cares distributed 3,510,237 pounds of TEFAP commodities across our network.

- We support *The Farmers Feeding America Act of 2025 (H.R. 3784)*, which would authorize \$500 million in TEFAP commodity purchases and \$200 million in storage and distribution through the fiscal years 2026 - 2030.

2) Increasing Support for Local Producers.

We support the *Local Farmers Feeding Our Communities Act (H.R. 4782)*, which would create a permanent USDA program that funds state, local, and Tribal governments to purchase locally produced food and distribute it through community food networks. It prioritizes small, mid-size, beginning, and veteran producers while strengthening regional food systems.

3) Mitigating the Impact of H.R. 1 on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

H.R. 1, passed in July 2025, made historic cuts to SNAP. Outside of funding cuts, many changes have been made to the program, such as updated work requirements, decreased eligibility, reduced

exemptions and waivers, as well as an increased administrative cost shift placed on states. In New York alone, over 300,000 households are projected to be affected in some way.

- We support *the Restoring Food Security for American Families and Farmers Act of 2025 (H.R. 6088/ S. 3281)*, which would reverse the cuts made to SNAP under H.R. 1 to protect benefits for millions of families, children, and veterans while supporting farmers and food retailers.
- We support the *Feed Our Veterans Act of 2025 (H.R. 2195)*, which exempts eligible disabled veterans from the employment training requirements contained in H.R. 1.
- We stand with Feeding America in calling for a two-year delay of the SNAP cost shift so that all states are given adequate time to stabilize operations, improve program accuracy, avoid state tax increases, and protect benefits for the millions of Americans relying on this program to make ends meet. This is especially crucial because states are still recovering from the programmatic disruptions caused by the recent government shutdown.

4) Supporting The Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

We urge Congress to fully fund WIC to meet projected caseloads and ensure all eligible participants receive the program's full, evidence-based food package, including the full fruit and vegetable benefit, as well as essential breastfeeding support.

- We support *The Keep SNAP and WIC Funded Act of 2025 (H.R. 5950/S. 3071)*, which provides necessary funding to maintain WIC operations at all times despite potential government shutdowns or funding gaps.

5) Supporting The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) is designed to help older adults access nutrition assistance through the provision of monthly food packages. We support continued federal investment in CSFP to help food-insecure seniors maintain health, independence, and dignity. For this reason, we ask that CSFP be fully funded at \$460 million.

STATE

Throughout New York State, 1 in 7 people face hunger. Food banks across New York are working to meet the needs of their respective communities by distributing hundreds of millions of pounds of food each year. Long Island Cares is working to provide hunger relief to more than 300,000 food-insecure Long Islanders through our network of 340 member agencies operating 552 programs. Our state legislative priorities are as follows:

1) Funding the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) at \$75M.

Long Island Cares administers HPNAP on behalf of the New York State Department of Health for the Long Island Region. We utilized HPNAP funds to procure and distribute 2,706,538 pounds of emergency food in 2025. This vital funding helps us to keep pace with increased need as we have yet to return to pre-pandemic levels of demand.

2) Funding Nourish NY at \$75M.

Nourish NY provides the State's food banks with funding to purchase locally grown produce, proteins, and dairy. In addition to increasing food bank capacity, this program provides economic stimulus to over

4,000 New York State farmers. Long Island Cares was able to procure and distribute more than 2,149,326 pounds of produce, dairy, meats, and fish with Nourish NY funds in 2025.

3) **Safeguarding SNAP Administration.**

In the budget reconciliation bill (H.R.1), significant federal cuts were made to SNAP. With nearly three million New Yorkers relying on SNAP, it is imperative that New York State safeguards this critical nutrition program. Effective October 2026, federal funding for SNAP administration will be cut in half. Expanded work reporting requirements, combined with new eligibility standards, will place additional strain on already overburdened local social service agencies. The FY2027 state budget must allocate sufficient funding to fill federal gaps and ensure our state and local agencies can effectively administer this vital program.

4) **Implementing EBT Chip Cards to Stop SNAP Skimming.**

Since 2023, over 150,000 New York families have filed claims for electronic SNAP benefit theft. Skimming devices have drained monthly funds from families, leaving them without the money they need to put food on the table. By upgrading New York's EBT cards to secure chip-based technology, vulnerable New Yorkers will be protected from this pervasive theft.

- For this reason, we support *A.8197*, which would require warning signs for EBT/SNAP skimming at all retail food stores. It also states that all SNAP transactions take place on chip-enabled POS systems.

5) **Bolstering Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).**

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides nutritious foods, nutrition education, and health resources to low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women and young children. Since 2020, participation has risen by 25 percent. To meet the rising need, the FY2027 budget must include \$30M for this critical nutrition program.

SUFFOLK & NASSAU COUNTIES

Long Island Cares supports county-level priorities that strengthen food security, economic mobility, and family stability. By advancing coordinated food policy, workforce opportunity, and access to affordable childcare, Nassau and Suffolk Counties can create a healthier, more equitable Long Island. Our local legislative priorities are as follows:

1) **Establishing a Food Policy Council in Nassau County.**

Launching a Food Policy Council in Nassau County is necessary to advance public health, support local agriculture, and address food insecurity on Long Island. The creation of a Nassau County Food Policy Council makes it possible for leaders in both counties to collaboratively address food insecurity and strengthen local agricultural efforts.

2) **Reinstating the Welfare to Work Commission in Suffolk County.**

For over 22 years, the Welfare to Work Commission of the Suffolk County Legislature worked to identify policy recommendations to empower County residents receiving government assistance to secure gainful employment and achieve the highest possible degree of self-sufficiency. The Commission

was not reauthorized and ceased to exist at the end of 2025. Over time, the Commission held many public hearings on topics such as affordable housing, poverty, and childcare. Commission recommendations were instrumental in Suffolk County offering Sunday bus service and the creation of a legislative commission on childcare. Low-income County residents are already struggling due to the high cost of living and significant reductions in federal government programs, such as SNAP and Medicaid. Consequently, we support the introduction of a reauthorization resolution so that the Commission can resume its critical work in 2026.

3) Supporting the Expansion of Safe, Affordable, and Equitable Childcare.

Increased federal and state investment is required to make childcare more reasonably priced. In addition to numerous positive social and academic outcomes for children, this is key in the fight to make Long Island more affordable for young families.

CONTACTS:

Michael W. Haynes, M.P.A.

Vice President of Government Relations, Advocacy, & Social Policy

Ciara O'Brien

Manager of Government Relations & Advocacy