



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND FOOD BANK FOR NEW YORK CITY LAUNCH FIRST-EVER EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY FOR FAMILIES**

*Full-Scale Food Pantry available in the Bronx for families served by the ACS Division of Child Protection*

**New York, NY** –The NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS), in partnership with Food Bank For New York City (Food Bank), today announced the launch of ACS' first-ever client-centered emergency food pantry for families in the Bronx who are involved with ACS. The full-scale food pantry is located in the ACS Division of Child Protection Bronx South Borough Office, where there is a high concentration of families struggling with food insecurity.

The primary mission of ACS is to ensure the safety and well-being of children and families. In September, ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell announced the creation of the [Division of Child and Family Well-Being](#), led by Deputy Commissioner Lorelei Vargas. The Division of Child and Family Well-Being is a dedicated ACS office that is part of an ongoing effort to make resources more accessible to children and families citywide.

Food insecurity is associated with a range of negative health, mental health and behavioral outcomes among children, including asthma, anemia, anxiety, depression, cognitive impairments, behavioral disorders, and more. Food-insecure children also are more likely to be hospitalized, putting greater strain on caregivers.

Food Bank is the city's largest major hunger relief organization and provides 62.5 million free meals each year for New City's most vulnerable communities. Through food distribution services, Food Bank helps fill a significant need for the most basic of necessities throughout New York City's most vulnerable communities—including many served by ACS. Partnering with ACS, the Food Bank will be able to provide high-quality food, as well as on-site educational and social service programming.

The pilot food pantry opened at the end of June to a limited number of families on a limited scale. ACS and Food Bank worked closely to assess usage of the pantry and to determine what items families needed the most. After months of Food Bank training ACS on how to order food for the pantry, the pantry is now operating on a much larger scale.

The ACS food pantry supports children and families served by ACS's Division of Child Protection in the Bronx. Child Protective Specialists assess homes for safety and wellbeing, which includes ensuring that there is adequate food in the home. Child Protective Specialist are able to refer families struggling with food insecurity or short on financial resource to the pantry. The families primarily served by the pantry are underserved and struggling to provide adequate food for their children.

To date, 32,287 pounds of food, which equals 26,906 meals, have been distributed and 950 families and 2,400 children have been served.

"Our primary vision is the care and well-being of our city's children and families," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. "We know food insecurity in the home is often a barrier to child well-being, and that's why we're making sure that our Child Protective staff can connect families in the Bronx to this pantry when they are short on food items. With the holidays around the corner, we want our families to know that they can visit our pantry and select the food items they need to prepare meals."

"This partnership between ACS and Food Bank For New York City is creating a new type of pantry to serve some of our City's most vulnerable residents," **said Lisa Hines-Johnson, the Chief Operating Officer for Food Bank For New York City**. The Bronx has the second highest meal gap in NYC, and many of the local families served by ACS struggle to afford everyday necessities, including food. By opening a pantry within ACS, we are able to better meet need where it is, provide children with nutritious food, and help keep families together.

"Too many Bronx families, especially in my district, continue to struggle from hunger and food insecurity," **said State Senator Gustavo Rivera**. "This partnership between ACS and the Food Bank of New York City will allow Bronx parents and children who are struggling to have critical regular access to nutritious food, which will help them improve their general well-being."

Today, nearly 42 percent of food pantries in New York are struggling to meet the demand of their customers. Roughly 30 percent of facilities have had to turn people away due to lack of food. At the same time, the federal government has proposed cutting SNAP, known commonly as food stamps, by \$192 billion over the next decade. Ensuring food security for vulnerable families remains a big concern in social services, and there is a need to look at innovative ways to extend services for families in need.

The Bronx has the second-highest food insecurity rate in the city, at 16%, and the rate is even higher in the pantry's immediate neighborhood, where 18% of all residents are food insecure. In addition, the Meal Gap, which represents the meals missing from the homes of those struggling to put food on the table, is approximately 3,388,593 for this community and 41,207,200 for the entire borough.

The food pantry provides healthy and nutritious food resources to families who are served by ACS. These include packaged, non-perishable food items, as well as refrigerated and frozen food items that families will be able to select and take home. Food options include fresh vegetables and fruit, meat, fish, grains, pasta, juice and canned goods. In early 2018, parents will also receive educational resources and cooking demonstrations so that they can prepare meals for their children at home.

Two part-time staff from the City's ReServe (retired seniors) program staff the pantry and are supported by Master of Social Work (MSW) interns.

**About the New York City Administration for Children's Services:**

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) protects and promotes safety and well-being of New York City's children and families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services. In child welfare, ACS contracts with private nonprofit organizations to support and stabilize families at risk of a crisis through preventive services, and provides foster care services for children not able to safely remain at home. For more information about NYC ACS, please visit [www.nyc.gov/acs](http://www.nyc.gov/acs)

**About Food Bank For New York City**

Food Bank For New York City has been the city's major hunger-relief organization working to end hunger throughout the five boroughs for more than 30 years. Nearly one in five New Yorkers relies on Food Bank for food and other resources. Food Bank takes a strategic, multifaceted approach that provides meals and builds capacity in the neediest communities, while raising awareness and engagement among all New Yorkers. Through its network of more than 1,000 charities and schools citywide, Food Bank provides food for more than 62.5 million free meals for New Yorkers in need. Food Bank For New York City's income support services, including food stamps (also known as SNAP) and free tax assistance for the working poor, put more than \$100 million each year into the pockets of New Yorkers, helping them to afford food and achieve greater dignity and independence. In addition, Food Bank's nutrition education programs and services empower more than 50,000 children, teens and adults to sustain a healthy diet on a low budget. To learn more about how you can help, please visit [foodbanknyc.org](http://foodbanknyc.org). Follow us on [Facebook](#) (FoodBank4NYC), [Twitter](#) (@FoodBank4NYC)

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**\*Photos available upon request. Please email: [MediaInquiry@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:MediaInquiry@acs.nyc.gov)\***