



February 23, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

We are writing to request that frontline workers at food pantries, food banks and grab-and-go-sites statewide be added to Phase 1B of the COVID-19 vaccine priority list. As COVID-19 continues to ravage our communities, food insecurity has continued to soar in our communities. Before COVID-19, New York was facing an unprecedented hunger and homelessness crisis; now, the crisis has exploded in vulnerable communities in every corner of the State.

According to City Harvest, more than 1.5 million New Yorkers are struggling to feed themselves and their families, a 38% increase over pre-COVID-19 figures. And one in four children or more are experiencing food insecurity, a staggering 49% increase over pre-COVID-19 times.

In recognition of the vital and lifesaving work they perform, food pantry and food bank staff and volunteers were deemed essential during the height of the pandemic. And to their credit, despite the risk to themselves and their families, these dedicated and brave New Yorkers showed up for work each day to ensure that food-insecure New Yorkers could eat and feed their families. They have not, however, been deemed essential for the vaccine. This should be changed.

As a result of the around-the-clock nature of the need, food pantry and food bank workers have been hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. When a staffer or volunteer at a food pantry or food bank tests positive for COVID-19, the entire facility must be closed for cleaning, to allow for the proper quarantine protocols to be followed and to ensure adequate staffing levels.

When grab-and-go sites or food pantries are forced to close, New Yorkers and their families will go hungry. That's why food pantry, food bank and grab-and-go site staff and volunteers must be added to Phase 1B of the vaccine priority list.

We look forward to your immediate attention to this issue of vital importance for vulnerable New Yorkers. Should you require anything further, please do not hesitate to reach out. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Linda B. Rosenthal
Member of Assembly – 67 AD



Jessica González-Rojas
Member of Assembly - 34 AD

Khaleel Anderson
Member of Assembly - 31 AD

Chris Burdick
Member of Assembly - 93 AD

Kenny Burgos
Member of Assembly - 85 AD

Marianne Buttenschon
Member of Assembly - 119 AD

Robert Carroll
Member of Assembly - 44 AD

Sarah Clark
Member of Assembly - 136 AD

Catalina Cruz
Member of Assembly - 39 AD

Carmen De La Rosa
Member of Assembly - 72 AD

Steve Englebright
Member of Assembly - 4 AD

Harvey Epstein
Member of Assembly - 74 AD

Nathalia Fernandez
Member of Assembly - 80 AD

Phara Souffrant Forrest
Member of Assembly - 57 AD

Emily Gallagher
Member of Assembly - 50 AD

Richard Gottfried
Member of Assembly - 75 AD

Andrew Hevesi
Member of Assembly - 28 AD

Chantel Jackson
Member of Assembly - 79 AD

Jonathan Jacobson
Member of Assembly - 104 AD

Anna Kelles
Member of Assembly - 125 AD

Ron Kim

Zohran Mamdani

Member of Assembly - 40 AD

Demond Meeks

Member of Assembly - 137 AD

Catherine Nolan

Member of Assembly - 37 AD

Robert Rodriguez

Member of Assembly - 68 AD

Nily Rozic

Member of Assembly - 25 AD

Amanda Septimo

Member of Assembly - 84 AD

Steve Stern

Member of Assembly - 10 AD

Stefani Zinerman

Member of Assembly - 56 AD

Member of Assembly - 36 AD

Yuh-Line Niou

Member of Assembly - 65 AD

Karines Reyes

Member of Assembly - 87 AD

Daniel Rosenthal

Member of Assembly - 27 AD

Rebecca Seawright

Member of Assembly - 76 AD

Gina Sillitti

Member of Assembly - 16 AD

Fred Thiele

Member of Assembly - 1 AD