# FACT SHEET
## *NYC Hunger Experience 2011: Sacrifice and Support*

Food Bank For New York City contracts with the Marist Institute for Public Opinion to conduct telephone interviews on food affordability and other hunger-related issues with a random and representative sample of city residents. To identify those populations that report the greatest difficulty affording food during the year, socio-demographic data is also collected. The research results contained in this report are based on an analysis of trend data from 2003 (the earliest year the poll was conducted) through 2011, trend data from 2008 through 2011, and information gleaned from questions asked in 2011 for the first time.

## HUNGER EXPERIENCE POLL

### NEW YORK CITY RESIDENTS

- In 2011, more than one in three New York City residents (35 percent) experienced difficulty affording needed food. This percentage represents approximately 2.9 million people.
- Although the percentage of New York City residents having difficulty affording food has dropped since the height of the recession in 2008, when it stood at 48 percent, it has yet to decrease to the level at the start of the poll in 2003 (25 percent).
- Almost two in five New York City residents (38 percent) purchased less food in order to save food or money.
- In order to stretch their grocery dollar, more than one in three residents (35 percent) reported buying less meat, poultry, or fish; more than one in four (27 percent) reported buying less dairy; and more than one in four (27 percent) reported buying less fresh fruits and vegetables.
- One in five New York City residents (20 percent) would not be able to afford food immediately after losing their annual household income. In other words, they would not have savings or other resources on which they could fall back to purchase food. More than one in five New York City residents (42 percent) would be in this same precarious position within three months.
- Although one in three New York City residents (33 percent) were concerned about needing food assistance, including food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) or emergency food (soup kitchens and food pantries), in the next 12 months, the percentage of New York City residents reporting this concern decreased by 21 percent since 2008 (42 percent).

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME

- In 2011, New York City residents with annual household incomes of less than $25,000 had difficulty affording needed food more often than New York City residents in other income groups. Half of New York City residents with annual household incomes of less than $25,000 (50 percent) reported difficulty.

- However, higher-income groups also had difficulty affording needed food. For instance, almost one in three New York City residents with annual household incomes between $50,000 and $74,999 (32 percent) reported difficulty. Moreover, all higher-income groups showed dramatic increases in the percentage reporting difficulty since 2003. For instance, the percentage of New York City residents in the $50,000 to $74,999 bracket reporting difficulty increased 129 percent between 2003 (14 percent) and 2011 (32 percent).

- Almost half of New York City residents with an annual household income of less than $25,000 (48 percent) purchased less food in order to save food or money.

- In order to stretch their grocery dollar, almost half of New York City residents with an annual household income of less than $25,000 (47 percent) reported buying less meat, poultry, or fish; more than two in five (42 percent) reported buying less fresh fruits and vegetables; and two in five (40 percent) reported buying less dairy.

- More than one in three New York City residents with annual household incomes of less than $25,000 (35 percent) would not be able to afford food immediately after losing their income. Almost two in three New York City residents in this income bracket (63 percent) would be in this same precarious position within three months.

- All higher-income groups saw increases in the percentage of residents who would not be able to afford food immediately after losing their annual household income. Percent increases were as follows: 29 percent for New York City residents with annual household incomes between $25,000 and $49,999 (from 21 percent in 2010 to 27 percent in 2011); 40 percent for residents with annual household incomes between $50,000 and $74,999 (from 10 percent in 2010 to 14 percent in 2011); and 17 percent for residents with annual household incomes of $75,000 or more (from 6 percent in 2010 to 7 percent in 2011).

- Almost half of New York City residents with annual household incomes of less than $25,000 (49 percent) were concerned about needing food assistance, including food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) or emergency food (soup kitchens and food pantries), in the next 12 months,.

- All higher-income groups saw increases in the percentage of residents concerned about needing food assistance in the next 12 months. Percent increases were as follows: 32 percent for residents with annual household incomes between $25,000 and $49,999 (from 34 percent in 2010 to 45 percent in 2011); 13 percent for residents with annual household incomes between $50,000 and $74,999 (from 24 percent in 2010 to 27 percent in 2011); and 22 percent for residents with annual household incomes of $75,000 or more (from 9 percent in 2010 to 11 percent in 2011).

**HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN**

- In 2011, more than two in five New York City households with children (43 percent) had difficulty affording needed food.

- Although the percentage of New York City households with children having difficulty affording needed food has dropped since the height of the recession in 2008, when it stood at 56 percent, it has yet to decline to the level at the start of the poll in 2003 (32 percent).

- More than two in five New York City households with children (41 percent) purchased less food in order to save food or money.

- In order to stretch their grocery dollar, more than one in three New York City households with children (35 percent) reported buying less meat, poultry, or fish; more than one in four (27 percent) reported buying less dairy; and more than one in four (26 percent) reported buying less fresh fruits and vegetables.

- One in four New York City households with children (25 percent) would not be able to afford food immediately after losing their annual household income. Approximately half of households with children (46 percent) would be in this same precarious position within three months.

- Almost one in three New York City households with children (32 percent) were concerned about needing food assistance, including food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) or emergency food (soup kitchens and food pantries), in the next 12 months.

**LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN**

- In 2011, low-income households with children were more likely than households with children to have difficulty affording needed food, to not be able to afford food after losing their household income, and to be concerned about needing food assistance in the next twelve months.

- In 2011, more than half of New York City households with children with annual incomes of less than $25,000 (54 percent) had difficulty affording needed food.

- Although the percentage of New York City households with children with annual incomes of less than $25,000 having difficulty affording food has dropped since the height of the recession in 2008, when it stood at 77 percent, it has yet to decline to the level at the start of the poll in 2003 (58 percent).

- Almost half of New York households with children with an annual income of less than $25,000 (48 percent) purchased less food in order to save food or money.

- In order to stretch their grocery dollar, more than two in five New York City households with children with annual incomes of less than $25,000 (41 percent) reported buying less meat, poultry, or fish; almost two in five (38 percent) reported buying less dairy; and more than one in three (36 percent) reported buying less fresh fruits and vegetables.

- Almost two in five New York City households with children with annual incomes of less than $25,000 (39 percent) would not be able to afford food immediately after losing their household income. More than three in five households (65 percent) would be in this same precarious position within three months.

- More than half of New York City households with children with annual incomes of less than $25,000 (51 percent) were concerned about needing food assistance, including food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) or emergency food (soup kitchens and food pantries), in the next 12 months.

## EMPLOYMENT

- In 2011, two in five unemployed New York City residents (41 percent) had difficulty affording needed food.

- Almost half of unemployed New York City residents (46 percent) purchased less food in order to save food or money.

- In order to stretch their grocery dollar, two in five unemployed New York City residents (40 percent) reported buying less fresh fruits and vegetables; more than one in three (35 percent) reported buying less meat, poultry, or fish; and more than one in three (34 percent) reported buying less dairy.

- More than one in four unemployed New York City residents (28 percent) would not be able to afford food immediately after losing their annual household income, and more than half of unemployed New York City residents (51 percent) would be in this same precarious position within three months.

- Almost half of unemployed New York City residents (46 percent) were concerned about needing food assistance, including food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) or emergency food (soup kitchens and food pantries), in the next 12 months.

## GENDER

- Female New York City residents are consistently more vulnerable to food affordability issues than male residents. In 2011, there was a six percentage point difference in the proportions of male residents (32 percent) and female residents (38 percent) having difficulty affording food. In 2008, at the height of the recession, there was a ten percentage point difference (men, 43 percent; women, 53 percent).

- Two in five female New York City residents (40 percent) purchased less food in order to save food or money.

- In order to stretch their grocery dollar, more than one in three female New York City residents (36 percent) reported buying less meat, poultry, or fish; more than one in four (27 percent) reported buying less fresh fruits and vegetables; and one in four (25 percent) reported buying less dairy.

- In 2011, more female residents than male residents reported that they would not be able to afford food immediately after losing their annual household income, and within three months of losing their annual household income (women, 25 percent and 48 percent respectively; men, 15 percent and 36 percent respectively).

- Approximately one in three female residents (33 percent) and male residents (32 percent) were concerned about needing food assistance, including food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) or emergency food (soup kitchens and food pantries), in the next 12 months.

## AGE

- New York City residents ages 50 to 64 reported the most difficulty affording needed food in 2011. Among New York City residents ages 50 to 64, two in five (40 percent) experienced difficulty affording food. This represents a 60 percent increase from 2003 (25 percent).

- New York City residents ages 36 to 49 and New York City residents ages 50 to 64 were more likely to purchase less food to save food or money than New York City residents in other age groups. Almost half of residents ages 36 to 49 (46 percent), and two in five residents ages 50 to 64 (40 percent) reported buying less food to save food or money.

- In order to stretch their grocery dollar, 41 percent of residents ages 36 to 49 and 39 percent of residents ages 50 to 64 reported buying less meat, poultry, or fish; 31 percent of residents ages 36 to 49 and 34 percent of residents ages 50 to 64 reported buying less fresh fruits and vegetables; and 27 percent of residents ages 36 to 49 and 31 percent of residents ages 50 to 64 reported buying less dairy.

- New York City residents age 65 or older (21 percent) were almost as likely as New York City residents ages 50 to 64 (20 percent) to not be able to afford food immediately after losing their annual household income, and to be in this same precarious position within three months (40 percent and 39 percent, respectively).

- New York City residents ages 50 to 64 were more likely than residents in other age groups to be concerned about needing food assistance. Almost two in five residents ages 50 to 64 (38 percent) were concerned about needing food assistance, including food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) or emergency food (soup kitchens and food pantries), in the next 12 months.

## EDUCATION

- In 2011, New York City residents with a high school degree or below were more likely to have difficulty affording needed food than residents with higher levels of educational attainment. More than two in five New York City residents with a high school degree or below (43 percent) reported difficulty.

- In 2011, the percentage of New York City residents with a high school degree or below who had difficulty affording needed food (43 percent) was lower than it was at the height of the recession (60 percent), but has yet to decline to the level at the start of the poll in 2003 (39 percent).

- New York City residents with higher levels of educational attainment also had difficulty affording food. The percentage of residents with a college degree reporting difficulty affording food increased 25 percent from 24 percent in 2010 to 30 percent in 2011. In all higher level education categories, the percentage of residents reporting difficulty increased considerably. For example, there was a 68 percent increase in difficulty for residents with some college or an Associate's degree between 2003 (22 percent) and 2011 (37 percent); a 173 percent increase for residents with a college degree between 2003 (11 percent) and 2011 (30 percent); and a 110 percent increase for residents with a graduate/professional degree from 2003 (10 percent) to 2011 (21 percent).

- New York City residents with a high school degree or below (45 percent) and some college or an associate's degree (43 percent) were more likely than residents with a

college degree (33 percent) or a graduate/professional degree (25 percent) to report buying less food to save food or money.

- In order to stretch their grocery dollar, more than two in five New York City residents with a high school degree or below (43 percent) reported buying less meat, poultry, or fish; two in five (40 percent) reported buying less fresh fruits and vegetables; and almost two in five (37 percent) reported buying less dairy.

- More than one in four New York City residents with a high school degree or below (28 percent) would not be able to afford food immediately after losing their annual household income. More than half of residents with a high school degree or below (55 percent) would not be able to afford food within three months.

**RACE/ETHNICITY**

- In 2011, Black/African-American and Latino/Hispanic residents in New York City had the most difficulty affording needed food. More than two in five Black/African-American residents (44 percent) had difficulty, compared to two in five Latino/Hispanic residents (40 percent).

- Between 2010 and 2011, the percentage of Black/African American residents having difficulty affording food decreased from 49 percent to 44 percent; the percentage of Latino/Hispanic residents having difficulty affording food decreased from 43 percent to 40 percent; and the percentage of White/Caucasian residents having difficulty increased, from 23 percent to 27 percent.

- Almost half of Latino/Hispanic residents (45 percent) reported purchasing less food to save food or money, compared to 39 percent of Black/African-American residents and 31 percent of White/Caucasian residents.

- Almost one in three Black/African-American residents (32 percent) would not be able to afford food immediately after losing their annual household income, compared to one in five Latino/Hispanic residents (20 percent).

- Half of Black/African-American residents (50 percent) were concerned about needing food assistance, including food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) or emergency food (soup kitchens and food pantries), in the next 12 months, compared to two in five (42 percent) Latino/Hispanic residents.

**BOROUGH**

- With the exception of Queens, paying for utilities instead of food was the financial trade-off most frequently made by residents of all boroughs, followed by paying for rent instead of food.

- Across all boroughs, buying less food to save food or money was the most frequently utilized method of dealing with food affordability issues.

- In 2011, Bronx residents were more likely than other groups to report that they would not be able to afford food immediately after losing household income (29 percent). They were also more likely to be concerned about needing food assistance including food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) or emergency food (soup kitchens and food pantries) in the next 12 months (38 percent).