



FOOD FORWARD NYC: 2-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT, FY 2024-25



NYC
Food Policy

July 2025



Dear fellow New Yorkers,

As we approach the halfway mark of Food Forward NYC, the City's ten-year food policy plan, I am pleased to share the notable strides we have made to ensure a healthier, more equitable, and sustainable food system.

In the two years since our last report, City agencies have scaled up food education, culinary training, and recipe development. By changing traditions of our food procurements to encourage innovation, our strategies are yielding tangible results—resulting in healthier, culturally diverse, and more climate-friendly public meals for New Yorkers. And with our updated NYC Food Standards, we're poised to raise the bar even higher.

We've made historic investments in the infrastructure that will keep our food system running—planning the redevelopment of the Hunts Point wholesale produce market, expanding opportunities to better utilize our waterways for transport, strengthening supply chains, and improving access to nutritious food. And in a major milestone for sustainability, we've expanded curbside composting citywide, enabling more residents than ever to reduce waste and create a greener, cleaner New York.

Yet we face very real challenges. Food insecurity is rising. Federal nutrition programs face mounting threats. Food prices continue to climb, placing strain on families and communities already under pressure. These realities demand action, and New York City is not standing still. We are actively working with local, state, and federal partners to defend and strengthen the programs New Yorkers count on every day.

Looking ahead, our goals remain ambitious—and so too does our momentum. The newly adopted City of Yes is reshaping our city to increase economic opportunities and food access. In the two years since PlaNYC was published, food has played a growing part in both climate action and public health solutions. There is still much to do, and thanks to the strong foundation we've built, we are well-positioned to bring the vision of Food Forward NYC within sight.

Thank you to everyone who has helped move this work forward. Your passion and perseverance are what make this work possible. Let's keep pushing forward—together.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Mackenzie".

**KATE MACKENZIE, MS, RD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
NYC MAYOR'S OFFICE
OF FOOD POLICY**

2 Letter from the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Food Policy

4 **GOAL 1**

All New Yorkers have multiple ways to access healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food

Expanding healthy food access

States programs extend SNAP to summers and restaurants

From policy to plate: NYC's Food Standards reshape public meals

Progress on implementing the Food Education Roadmap

NYC expands its legislative advocacy for food policy and access

9 **GOAL 2**

NYC's food economy drives economic opportunity and provides good jobs

Providing culinary training and education at correctional facilities

Paving the path for the next generation of food entrepreneurs

Beyond the lowest bid: advancing new models of food procurement

13 **GOAL 3**

The supply chains that feed NYC are modern, efficient, and resilient

Modernizing NYC's food economy and promoting local resiliency

Strengthening food infrastructure in NYC

17 **GOAL 4**

NYC's food is produced, distributed, and disposed of sustainably

Feeding change: NYC's plant-forward policies are delivering big results

Stepping up to the plate: mobilizing a plant-powered private sector transformation

NYC's trash revolution: bold steps toward a zero waste future

Investing in the NYC watershed

20 **GOAL 5**

Support systems and knowledge to implement the 10-year food policy plan

Setting an agenda to prioritize food affordability and access

Improving data transparency and public reporting

GOAL

1 All New Yorkers have multiple ways to access healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate food

■ Expanding healthy food access

Over the past two years, New York City (NYC) has risen to meet unprecedented challenges. When the City welcomed an influx of asylum seekers, we stepped up and provided meals to our new neighbors and helped them get their footing. As we now work to build stability in the face of another challenge—rising food prices and food insecurity—we're focused on ensuring New Yorkers have consistent access to food resources they need to thrive. The City has continued to expand its nutrition security programs, reaching more New Yorkers and enabling greater access to fresh produce and other healthy foods:

SNAP Benefit Recovery

Between August 2023 and January 2025, the City helped nearly 95,000 low-income households recover close to \$48 million dollars in electronically stolen benefits, reconnecting families with critical Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Cash Assistance (CA) benefits. Updates to the SNAP benefit financial hosting platform were also completed to support expedited payouts, faster responses for replenishing stolen CA benefits, and streamlining the benefit distribution process in the future.

Community Food Connection

As of June 2025, over 700 food pantries and soup kitchens were participating in the Community Food Connection (CFC) program. In FY24, CFC providers saw more than 35 million visits, up from 32.5 million in FY23, and allocated funds to help purchase more than 84 million pounds of fruits, vegetables, beans, and other staple foods over two years. FY25 data will be published in the upcoming CFC Impact Report in the fall.

Groceries to Go

As of June 2025, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (Health Department) had enrolled over 4,075 New Yorkers in the Groceries to Go program, nearly doubling the program's reach from 2,228 in June 2023. Between June 2023 and June 2025, participants purchased over \$15 million worth of groceries and saved an additional \$1.5 million on purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Get the Good Stuff

Get the Good Stuff expanded from six to 25 supermarkets between June 2023 and June 2025. New Yorkers enrolled in the \$1-for-\$1 match program redeemed over \$1.4 million in fruits, vegetables, and beans in FY24 and over \$1.9 million in FY25.



2025 Health Bucks coupon

NYC Health Department

The NYC Health Department strengthened the [Health Bucks](#) program—\$2 coupons redeemable for fresh produce at NYC farmers markets—by streamlining the farmer reimbursement process. The Health Department partners with the [Farmers Market Federation of NY \(FMFNY\)](#) to process redeemed Health Bucks coupons and reimburse farmers. In 2024, the Health Department issued an advance payment to the FMFNY, which allowed farmers to be reimbursed for redeemed Health Bucks immediately upon receipt of the coupons. The FMFNY issued payments electronically, further speeding up reimbursements. Together the changes decreased the time farmers waited to be reimbursed for redeemed Health Bucks. This collaborative effort with FMFNY highlights the power of partnerships in strengthening our local food system.

FRESH Program

The Food Retail Expansion to Support Health ([FRESH](#)) program helps property owners renovate, expand, or develop full-service grocery stores in neighborhoods with limited access to fresh food. The program continues to expand—45 projects are currently active, with 34 more in development across the city. As a result, over 1.7 million New Yorkers live within a half mile of active FRESH projects.

Shop Healthy NYC!

[Shop Healthy NYC!](#) continues to expand, working with over 2,000 food retailers, suppliers, community residents and community-based organizations to increase equitable access to healthy foods in neighborhoods with high rates of diet-related diseases in the South Bronx, Central Brooklyn, and Harlem. Since July 2023, the Health Department has re-engaged more than 110 stores in the Bronx while adding approximately 95 new participating retailers in Harlem.

Green Carts

[Green Cart permits](#) are now available for mobile food vendors interested in selling fresh fruits and vegetables in the Bronx, Brooklyn, or Staten Island. In the first month after the waiting list reopened in March 2025, 412 vendors requested and received Green Cart permit applications.



NYC Greenmarket | NYC Health Department

▪ State programs extend SNAP to summers and restaurants

As food insecurity persists and the cost of living continues to rise, New York State (NYS) has introduced two new initiatives that complement NYC's programs to enhance access to food benefits for vulnerable populations. The Mayor's Office of Food Policy (MOFP) coordinated with NYS to facilitate the rollout and promotion of these programs in NYC. Together, they expand SNAP's reach and impact, closing long-standing gaps in food access.

In 2024, the state launched [Summer EBT](#), a federally-funded program that provides eligible families with \$120 per child to help cover grocery costs during the summer months, when children may not have access to school meals. MOFP worked with NYC Public Schools (NYCPS) and the Department of Social Services (DSS) to promote the program and increase utilization within diverse communities. In 2024, Summer EBT delivered \$139 million in benefits to more than 1.1 million children. The program will operate again in 2025 and prioritize engagement in communities that showed high eligibility but low utilization in previous years.

In late 2023, the [Restaurant Meals Program \(RMP\)](#) pilot was launched in NYS. This pilot allows eligible seniors, individuals with disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness to use their SNAP benefits to purchase prepared meals at participating restaurants. In June 2024, MOFP, alongside the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), convened over 200 local restaurant owners through partner restaurant associations to provide an overview of the program and application process, including Rethink Food, Queens Together, NYS Latino Restaurant Association, NYC EDC Public Markets, and the Mayor's Office of Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises. Thus far, the program includes 80 participating restaurants citywide, with more onboarded weekly. Together, these programs strengthen the purchasing power of SNAP, helping households navigate high costs of living while increasing access to nutritious food year-round.

▪ From policy to plate: NYC's Food Standards reshape public meals

The over 219 million meals and snacks provided annually by NYC are designed to support the health of all New Yorkers served at City facilities and programs. In summer 2025, the NYC Health Department will release its update to the [NYC Food Standards](#), evidence-based nutrition guidelines for all foods purchased and served by NYC agencies and their sub-contractors. First established by [Executive Order 122 of 2008](#) and reaffirmed by [Executive Order 8 of 2022](#), these standards aim to reduce the prevalence of diet-related chronic disease and are updated every three years based on the latest nutrition research.

The Health Department released a new [implementation guide](#) to accompany the 2023 updates to the [NYC Food Standards for Cafeterias and Cafés](#), which are voluntary for public and private sector retail venues. This guide provides examples and tools to support implementing and maintaining these Standard's food and nutrient guidelines to foster a healthier food environment at private businesses, hospitals, higher education campuses, and other organizations.

To support agency compliance with the NYC Food Standards, MOFP secured a citywide contract for nutrition analysis software. The software enables accurate nutrition analysis and recipe management through a comprehensive food and nutrition database and simplified reporting. Participating agencies include the Health Department, Department for Homeless Services (DHS), Administration for Children's Services (ACS), and Department of Correction (DOC).

■ Progress in implementing the Food Education Roadmap

Since launching the [Food Education Roadmap](#) in June 2023, MOFP and NYCPS have [worked together](#) to advance the administration's vision to expand food education across all NYC public schools. In 2023, NYCPS established its first-ever dedicated Food Education team and Food Education Grant Program. Sixty schools received funding to partner with nonprofit organizations to deliver a range of programming—from nutrition education lessons and gardening to hydroponics and family cooking classes. By the 2024-2025 school year, this program had more than tripled in size, awarding \$6,000 grants to 190 schools.

Simultaneously, NYCPS has prioritized serving healthy, delicious food in cafeterias. Over the past two years, the [Chefs in the Schools](#) program has rolled out more than 50 plant-forward recipes onto citywide menus, including a Chickpea Shawarma, Arugula Pesto Pasta, and Fajita Veggie Burger, while also training culinary staff at nearly 1200 schools.

To help garner student feedback and build relationships between students and culinary staff, NYCPS launched “Nutrition Collaboratives” across 200 schools, allocating \$14,500 per school to host a series of meetings where students sample plant-forward menu items, provide feedback, and engage in nutrition education. This year, over 300 meetings have helped reinforce the benefits of healthy eating to nearly 6,000 students, staff, and family members. The initiative will continue over a five-year period, with new schools participating each year.

The next phase of this work is focused on institutionalizing food education. To this end, the Food Education team is developing citywide pre-K-12 food education standards across multiple subjects, including health, science, physical education, and social studies. They are gathering feedback from school community members throughout the development of the standards, laying the groundwork for lasting change.



Chefs in the Schools



Students preparing fresh pasta

■ NYC expands its legislative advocacy for food policy and access

While NYC operationalizes bold local initiatives, many of the most consequential food and nutrition programs, policies, and laws are governed at the state and federal levels. That's why the City has expanded its legislative advocacy, building on citywide efforts to increase healthy food access.

Protecting SNAP and Strengthening the Farm Bill

After gathering input from a diverse range of stakeholders, MOFP worked with DSS and other City agencies to develop [Farm Bill priorities](#). The City engaged with Congressional Offices, including those on the Agriculture Committees, focusing on protecting SNAP, promoting climate-smart agriculture, and opposing dangerous marker bills, like the [EATS Act](#). MOFP continues to work extensively with other agencies to [oppose SNAP cuts](#), particularly in light of the budget reconciliation bill, in which changes to eligibility and work requirements significantly slash benefits.

Federal Advocacy for Expanding Access to Plant-Based Foods

While ambitious food policies are often started at the local level, federal leadership and buy-in is critical to advancing healthier and more sustainable food policies at a large scale. Recognizing this, in 2024, MOFP mobilized dozens of federal representatives to sign letters urging the Biden-Harris Administration to expand plant-based food options in various public settings, including to fulfill its commitment to increasing the availability of plant-based food options in federal facilities. MOFP also advocated for the passage of the [ADD SOY Act](#), successfully securing a Congressional cosponsor for the bill, which aims to increase access to nutritionally-equivalent plant-based milks in schools—an important step toward promoting equity in school nutrition.

Pushing For Changes in State Procurement Law

To build on the City's [Good Food Purchasing initiative](#), MOFP, along with SLA, MOCS, DCAS, and Law—as well as legislative offices and advocacy partners including [Community Food Advocates](#), [National Resources Defense Council](#), and the NYS Good Food Purchasing Coalition—pushed to advance the [Good Food New York \(GFNY\) bill](#), which would have allowed municipalities to consider certain values-based procurement standards when awarding food contracts. Although the bill [passed](#) in the NYS Legislature during the 2023-2024 session, it was ultimately vetoed by the Governor.

During the 2025-2026 session, GFNY was reintroduced with a key improvement, which expanded its scope to include contracts awarded on the basis of “best value,” not just those awarded to the “lowest responsible bidder.” This new language, which NYC and several advocates pushed for, gives cities greater flexibility to buy better food. While the bill did not pass this session, the updated language will carry over, and NYC will continue working to strengthen the language and advocate for its passage next year.

Championing State Legislation for Food Security

NYC advocated for the expansion of universal school meals statewide during both the 2023-2024 and current session—which was successfully included in Governor Hochul's FY26 Budget. Free school meals across the state build on NYC's work to expand children's food security and put money back in families' pockets, making healthy eating more affordable. The City also issued memos in support for legislation that would establish a [SNAP minimum benefit program](#), [create an EBT card replacement program](#), and [prevent advertising of unhealthy foods to children](#).

ADVOCATING FOR HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE DIETARY GUIDELINES

Healthy diets are intimately linked to the environmental sustainability of our food system. NYC's public health initiatives to increase consumption of nutrient-dense, plant-based foods and reduce meat consumption also have positive impacts on the planet.

In September 2023, the Health Department and MOFP submitted a [public comment](#) to the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC), encouraging them to consider environmental sustainability when establishing recommendations. Then, in February 2025, the Health Department and MOFP published a [public comment](#) on the

[DGAC Scientific Report](#), emphasizing its recommendations to prioritize plant-forward dietary patterns, reduce meat consumption, limit the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, and prioritize water as the primary beverage of choice for Americans to consume.

The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) have a direct and significant impact on public health in NYC, informing the Food Standards and public-facing nutrition education materials, including the [Guide to Healthy Eating and Active Living in NYC](#), [My Plate planner](#), and [Healthy Eating Information](#) poster for all NYC restaurants.

GOAL 2 NYC'S food economy drives economic opportunity and provides good jobs



Tasting of plant-based meals at Rikers Island
Mayor's Office of Photography

■ Providing culinary training and education at correctional facilities

Each year, City staff serve over seven million meals at Rikers Island and juvenile justice centers across NYC. Recognizing that improving service at this scale requires investment in our workforce, MOFP partnered with Hot Bread Kitchen (HBK) to empower kitchen staff and transform food in detention facilities through a culinary training program for the staff at Rikers Island and two juvenile justice centers. The training developed cooks' ability to create tasty, nourishing plant-based meals—investing in professional development, health outcomes, and environmental sustainability.

In the first phase of the program, HBK developed 12 recipes, adapted to reflect input from incarcerated youth and adults and rigorously taste-tested across multiple city agencies. To bring these recipes to life, 90 culinary staff from the DOC and ACS completed the 20-hour training, focusing on large-scale cooking methods, vegetable integrity, recipe development and adaptation, and the creative use of existing equipment. Additionally, seven staff members completed a five-hour "Train the Trainer" module, developing their leadership skills and ensuring ongoing training for future nutrition service staff.



Hot Bread Kitchen culinary training at Rikers Island
Mayor's Office of Photography

Beginning in early 2025, the recipes were integrated into menu offerings monthly, including favorites like Chana Masala, Curry Cauliflower, Bean Chili, and Rasta Pasta. Both staff members and people in custody have shared very positive feedback on these changes.

“

The training was really helpful. So many things we eat are already plant-based. The training taught me how to really pull those things together for a wholesome meal.”

- Participating Cook,
Crossroads Juvenile Center

The Crossroads Cook developed a chickpea shawarma recipe, which quickly became a building favorite, leading to the launch of a dedicated Chickpea Shawarma Day that is in rotation twice a month due to its high demand.

“

I find that the building, especially the residents, are responding much better to the plant-based meals on the menu. Their favorites are the pasta options like Rasta Pasta... I feel I benefitted from the training because I have little knowledge or interest in plant-based cuisine and after the training I feel like it's opened my mind to so many new options. I've recently been interested in developing new menu items for our plant-based meals.”

- Karel Barlow, Senior Cook,
Horizon Juvenile Center

Karel developed a Mexican rice bowl, which includes fresh baked tortilla chips, hand cut pico de gallo, guacamole, black beans, and yellow rice. ACS received feedback from a resident saying it was the best plant-based meal he's tasted.

▪ Paving the path for the next generation of food entrepreneurs

The future of our food system depends on cultivating the next generation of passionate and skilled professionals. NYC is investing in innovative programs that nurture talent, build career pathways, and connect youth and aspiring professionals to meaningful opportunities in foodservice.

For example, in 2024, through the [Summer Youth Employment Program \(SYEP\)](#), 200 New Yorkers ages 16-24 took on roles as culinary aides in school kitchens across the five boroughs, where they gained hands-on experience in food preparation, quality control, and collaboration. For the first time, participants took part in a new career enrichment series launched by MOFP, which included career panel discussions with the [Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) youth leaders from around the globe, a tour of Essex Market and the Staten Island Composting Facility, and interactive presentations from [New Roots Institute](#) and the [CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute](#).

For those seeking long-term careers in the culinary world, the City's [First Course NYC](#) program—run by NYC Small Business Services—continues to open doors. Since 2023, this paid, full-time professional culinary training program has trained 179 New Yorkers as restaurant cooks and placed 164 in full-time positions in respected restaurant kitchens across the city. Just 30 days into employment, graduates are earning an average wage of \$19.06 per hour—putting them on track for economic mobility and career advancement.

To guide businesses through the contracting process, in 2025, the DSS Marketplace Program Team launched a Marketplace Builder Program in partnership with MOFP and SBS. The program provides local food businesses with resources needed to scale their operations and secure larger City contracts. The program began with a “Matchmaker Event” connecting local food vendors with human service providers. The event was followed by a series of learning opportunities, including an informational webinar in March and a peer learning session in April, where certified vendors shared insights with smaller businesses interested in transitioning to large-scale food service. As part of SBS' Small Business Month Expo in May, the DSS Marketplace Program hosted a second Matchmaker Event to further foster relationships between vendors and providers. DSS will continue to regularly survey human service providers on their food subcontract needs, host events, and share lists of certified food providers to help those organizations identify and partner with qualified local vendors.



SYEP participants

NYCHA Farms and Gardens continues to expand urban agriculture across NYC.

In 2024, nine NYCHA-based farms produced and distributed 30,284 pounds of fresh produce and collected 54,909 pounds of food scraps for compost. In June 2024, NYC launched a new, nearly 10,000-square-foot [Agricultural Education Center](#) in Brooklyn, featuring a rooftop greenhouse, teaching kitchen, and multipurpose space for job training and community programs. The new greenhouse, as well as three new urban farms, will be completed in 2026.



Seed starting at NYCHA's Season of Growth Summit

DINING OUT NYC INTRODUCED AS A PERMANENT OUTDOOR DINING PROGRAM

Outdoor dining has become integral to the NYC restaurant economy. Emerging as a creative solution that enabled businesses to continue serving New Yorkers during the COVID-19 pandemic, outdoor dining saved approximately 100,000 jobs across 6,000-8,000 restaurants. Effective March 2024, NYC DOT enacted a permanent version of “Dining Out NYC,” which builds upon the success of the temporary program while addressing quality-of-life concerns. The new rules allow outdoor dining set-ups from April 1 to November 29, provide clear guidelines on construction and design, and

ensure compliance with zoning regulations. As of May 2025, DOT has authorized 94 licenses and 777 conditional approvals to food service establishments to set up outdoor dining, and an additional 1,800 sidewalk cafes are allowed to operate as DOT reviews their applications. Cleaner and safer outdoor dining is reinvigorating public spaces post-pandemic and supporting restaurants in serving more New Yorkers. As the program continues to evolve, it is essential to prioritize broad and equitable participation to ensure its success across all communities.

▪ Beyond the lowest bid: advancing new models of food procurement

Food and meal procurement provides an opportunity to improve the health of people and the planet, local economies, and drive systematic change for good—leveraging the City’s significant buying power for good. Therefore, a large body of work for MOFP focuses on evolving municipal food procurement. Historically, food contracts are awarded to the “lowest responsive bidder.” But with alternative approaches—like the “best value” procurement method, which optimizes “quality, cost, and efficiency”—City agencies can prioritize taste, nutrition, sustainability, and equity, ensuring New Yorkers receive better food at competitive prices.

At the heart of this shift is the belief that public food should be good food—healthy, sustainable, and delicious. That’s why, for the first time, the MOFP has worked with agencies to include taste tests as a formal evaluation criterion in food contracts. For example, MOFP supported DOC and ACS in updating their request for proposals (RFPs) to incorporate taste panels, ensuring vendors are selected based on the quality of their food—not just the price.

MOFP has also helped agencies pilot procurement tools such as “special audits” that assess fair labor standards. In one case, the City introduced a bid for tomatoes as a “special audit item” that prioritized vendors upholding strong protections for farmworkers, ensuring ethical practices influence purchasing decisions.

These efforts paved the way for a major milestone in January 2025. The Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS), in partnership with DOC and MOFP, launched a best value bid for items such as veggie burgers and frozen vegetables. This method allowed evaluators to consider taste, geographic origin, sustainability, and business model—in addition to price. As a result, DCAS now sources a locally-sourced, plant-based meatball and patty from a certified M/WBE—which would not have been possible under traditional bidding process.

This values-based approach is gaining traction across City government. In June 2024, the Mayor’s Office of Contract Services (MOCS) issued a directive requiring agencies to use best value for all goods, standard services, and some professional services, whenever possible. MOFP will continue supporting agencies in leveraging this approach to deliver higher-quality food to New Yorkers—at prices that make sense.

In 2023, through the advocacy of the City’s first City-Wide Chief Business Diversity Officer, Mayor Adams signed [Executive Order 34 of 2023 to encourage better accountability and outcomes for M/WBE vendors](#). This EO and efforts of city personnel and administration has resulted in city-certified M/WBEs being awarded \$469,757,620.40 in asylum seeker food-related contracts during FY24 and FY25.

GOAL 3 The supply chains that feed NYC are modern, efficient, and resilient



■ Modernizing NYC's food economy and promoting local resiliency

NYC is experiencing a reinvigoration of its storefront economy—led by food businesses. According to the Department of City Planning's (DCP) November 2024 [Storefront Activity Study](#), food businesses are filling vacant storefronts at higher rates than other types of businesses, playing a key role in revitalizing commercial corridors across the five boroughs.

Building on this momentum, the City adopted [City of Yes for Economic Opportunity](#) ("City of Yes") in June 2024—a citywide zoning text amendment designed to modernize outdated rules and unlock economic potential. City of Yes removes obsolete zoning barriers, making it easier for small businesses to open and grow while fostering vibrant, walkable streetscapes.

By expanding where food can be produced and sold, City of Yes supports local entrepreneurship, shortens supply chains, and improves food access in neighborhoods across the city—strengthening the resiliency and efficiency of NYC's food system.

Key food-related provisions include:

- **Increasing spaces for small-scale production**—such as small-batch food manufacturing and processing—to more parts of the city, creating new opportunities for local food entrepreneurs.
- **Broadening areas where indoor agriculture can be practiced** to include all storefront and office spaces, paving the way for more urban farming and innovative growing methods.
- **Encouraging the development of neighborhood delivery hubs**, which support local distribution and reduce the distance food travels from production to plate.

STRENGTHENING FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE IN NYC

NYC is undertaking a once-in-a-generation effort to modernize its vital food distribution networks. Goals outlined in Hunts Point Forward, PlaNYC, and DSNY's Commercial Waste Zone initiatives have aligned agencies' work to redesign and modernize facilities and improve the flow of food throughout the city. From redeveloping the Hunts Point Produce Market to shifting freight to marine routes and accelerating the transition to electric vehicles, these projects reflect a unified vision: cleaner, more efficient, and more equitable food infrastructure for the next century.



Container ships at Upper Bay | NYC DOT

▪ Building out the future of NYC's produce storage and distribution

The Hunts Point Produce Market (HPPM) is a cornerstone of New York City's food distribution system, moving over 2.5 billion pounds of produce annually and supplying many of the city's retailers. But the existing facility, built in 1967, is outdated—its aging infrastructure limits efficiency, raises operating costs, and contributes to environmental and health burdens in the South Bronx.

In partnership with the Hunts Point Forward initiative—a 15-year shared vision developed by NYCEDC, residents, workers, businesses, elected officials, and City agencies—NYCEDC is setting design standards for a state-of-the-art produce market that reflects the scale and importance of HPPM's operations. NYCEDC has been working tirelessly to set the basis of design for the new facility, which will:

-  **Eliminate reliance on diesel-powered Transport Refrigeration Units (TRUs)** by transitioning to fully electric cooling and heating systems.
-  **Integrate rail more effectively** to reduce truck traffic and emissions, supporting cleaner and more efficient freight movement.
-  **Optimize traffic flow** and internal logistics to reduce congestion and improve operational efficiency.
-  **Embed waste diversion strategies.**
-  **Provide electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure** to help operators transition to zero-emission delivery fleets.

At nearly 1 million square feet, the modernized market will expand refrigerated warehouse space and include updated infrastructure for offices, waste management, and maintenance. Backed by more than \$600 million in funding from city, state, and federal sources, this facility will dramatically improve working conditions, environmental outcomes, and food distribution resilience for NYC.

NYCEDC has also funded and supported [GrowNYC](#) to develop the [New York State Regional Food Hub](#). Opened in June 2025, this first-of-its-kind 60,000 square foot cold storage facility is designed to increase the volume of locally-sourced, affordable produce entering NYC by 17 million pounds by 2034. The Hub will better enable regional producers to connect with distribution partners in NYC, increasing underserved communities' access to fresh, high-quality local produce and expanding the City's capability to meet future food needs.

By replacing outdated systems with modern, sustainable infrastructure, NYCEDC is ensuring that Hunts Point continues to thrive as the beating heart of the city's food supply chain—cleaner, smarter, and ready for the future.

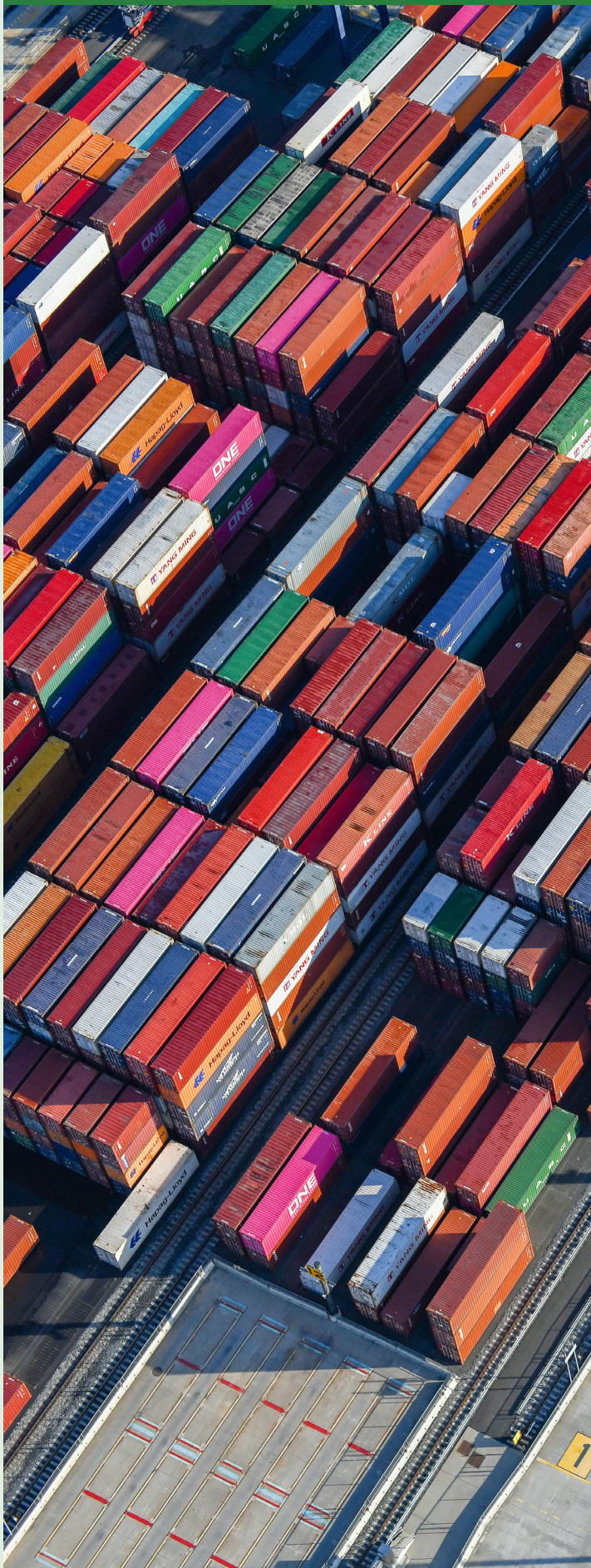
In April 2025, NYCEDC and Con Agg Global announced a proposal for a new [waterside transloading facility](#) to be located in the Hunts Point Food Distribution Center. The facility is set to begin operations this year and aims to remove approximately 1,000 truck trips per month. This vision is enabled by the upcoming permanent [removal](#) of the decommissioned Vernon C. Bain Correctional Center barge, clearing the way for vital infrastructure that will drive more sustainable freight movement in Hunts Point.

▪ Incentivizing fleet electrification at Hunt's Point

The Hunts Point Food Distribution Center ("Center")—which includes HPPM, the Hunts Point Cooperative Market, and the Fulton Fish Market—is the largest food distribution center in the country, distributing roughly 4.5 billion pounds of food annually. In July 2024, as part of NYC's [Green Economy Action Plan](#), NYCEDC issued an [RFP](#) for NYC's first freight-focused electric vehicle (EV) charging depot, a welcome center, and workforce development hub within the Center. This initiative aims to accelerate EV adoption and cut freight-related emissions by approximately 7,000 MTCO2e annually, increasing the sustainability of the City's food operations.

In early 2025, NYCEDC surveyed tenants at the Center to assess current and future EV demand, aiming to understand operational needs and barriers to electrification. The survey revealed strong interest in electric fleets but highlighted key obstacles, such as limited charging infrastructure, space constraints, and high installation costs. To help overcome these challenges, NYCEDC has issued an RFP for redeveloping a vacant site within the Center, which includes plans for a publicly accessible EV charging center, with a developer expected to be selected by summer 2025.

The forthcoming redevelopment of the HPPM will include the installation of approximately **148 EV chargers and 176 "shore power" connections** at loading docks, which will allow refrigerated trucks to plug in instead of idling, further reducing emissions in the area.



From traffic to tides: buoying NYC's food supply chains with Blue Highways

Efficient and effective distribution systems can help food reach neighborhoods throughout NYC more reliably. Building on [Freight NYC](#), the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) and NYCEDC announced the [Blue Highways initiative](#) in November 2023 to shift more freight transport from congested roadways to the city's waterways, or "Blue Highways." With nearly 90% of goods in NYC transported by truck—and roughly half of the city's food supply moving through just four major bridges and two tunnels—the City's food distribution system is vulnerable to traffic congestion and infrastructure strain. Marine transportation has the potential to reduce transportation costs, streamline delivery routes, and provide an additional method of food distribution in the face of emergencies or road closures, creating a more continuous and resilient flow of fresh, high-quality food into our city. It also generates [fewer emissions](#) than road transport, and by decreasing reliance on diesel-powered trucks, can significantly improve air quality.

The initiative focuses on two main strategies: container importation and last-mile microfreight distribution. The City plans to establish a [Hunts Point Marine Terminal \(HPMT\)](#) in the Bronx as a key connection point moving cargo from shipping containers onto additional barges and ferries for last-mile deliveries throughout NYC. Once the bulk delivery containers have been repackaged into smaller, more manageable units for transport, goods will move through a microfreight terminal adjacent to HPMT—operated by Con Agg Global in partnership with the Fulton Fish Market—using ferries and cargo bikes to deliver fresh food to local markets via new microfreight landings across the city. The first of these landings, Downtown Skyport (formerly the Downtown Manhattan Heliport), is expected to begin operations by mid-2027. It will also receive microfreight from New Jersey, offering a direct, congestion-free entry point into Lower Manhattan for food and e-commerce deliveries. HPMT's Blue Highway service is projected to remove approximately 9,000 truck trips from city streets each month.

GOAL 4 NYC's food is produced, distributed, and disposed of sustainably

■ Feeding change: NYC's plant-forward policies are delivering big results

What we put on our plates matters—for our health and for our planet. In the first few years of implementation, NYC's food policies are already driving meaningful, measurable progress to reduce our environmental impact:

-  **Citywide:** Between FY19 and FY23, reductions in purchases of ruminant meats and other animal-based foods led to a [29% reduction](#) in NYC's food-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions—or 44% less per “plate” (per 1000 calories)—and a 21% reduction in food-related land use. Additional information can be found in NYC's latest [“Climate Impact Report.”](#)
-  **Schools:** A [report](#) conducted by [WSP](#) and [Humane World for Animals](#) confirmed that NYCPS reduced their environmental footprint through plant-forward initiatives, like Plant-Powered Fridays. Between 2018 and 2022, serving fewer animal proteins reduced schools' per student emissions by 40%, water footprint by one-third, and land footprint by 50%.
-  **Hospitals:** Since March 2022, [NYC Health + Hospitals](#) has served [over two million plant-based meals](#), leading to a 36% reduction in food-related emissions in the first year of implementation. Building on this success, Sodexo and Greener by Default recently announced plans to expand daily plant-based defaults to [400 hospitals nationwide by 2026](#).
-  **Correctional Facilities:** Menus at DOC and ACS are becoming more sustainable, as recipes created from the [plant-based culinary training program](#) are being integrated into regular meal rotations.
-  **Older Adult Centers (OACs):** The Department for the Aging (Aging) has worked closely with its OACs to expand plant-forward offerings that support healthy aging. These efforts culminated in the first-ever citywide [“Plant-Based Cook-Off,”](#) a friendly competition where nine OAC chefs showcased their most creative, low carbon dishes, which were judged by celebrity chefs. The event celebrated culinary innovation and highlighted the growing enthusiasm for plant-based cuisine among older adults across all five boroughs. Additionally, Aging has been providing nutrition education on the benefits of plant-based meals, reaching nearly 850 adults through sessions held at 30 OACs as of April 2025.
-  **Emergency Food Providers:** From FY23 to FY24, the DSS-administered Community Food Connection Program provided over 27 million pounds of fruits and vegetables for New Yorkers.



Chefs preparing plant-based defaults | NYC Health + Hospitals



Jamaican oxtail stew served at the inaugural Plant-Based Cook-Off | NYC Aging

▪ Stepping up to the plate: mobilizing a plant-powered private sector

Cities cannot drive a healthier and more sustainable food system alone. That's why MOFP launched the first-of-its-kind [Plant-Powered Carbon Challenge \(PPCC\)](#), in which signatories pledge to reduce their food-related emissions by 25% by 2030 through plant-powered menus. As part of their commitment, participants submit an action plan, track carbon emissions from their food procurement, and report on their progress annually to MOFP, with support from implementation partner [Greener by Default](#) and resources like the World Resources Institute's [Food Service Playbook for Promoting Sustainable Food Choices](#).

So far, 20 leading cross-sector institutions have signed on—including Columbia University, the U.S. Open, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the New York Botanical Garden. Collectively, these signatories serve over 21 million meals each year.



Signatories participating in the PPCC two-year anniversary event
Mayor's Office of Photography

▪ NYC's trash revolution: bold steps toward a zero waste future

Tackling climate change means rethinking not just what we eat—but what we throw away. When food scraps end up in landfills, they release methane, a greenhouse gas far more potent than carbon dioxide. To divert food scraps and waste from landfills and prevent methane emissions, NYC launched an ambitious overhaul of how waste is managed.

In June 2023, the City Council passed the [Zero Waste Act](#), laying the foundation for a zero-waste future. The law established a mandatory residential organics curbside collection program, set zero waste goals for 2030, introduced community food scrap drop-off locations, and created new recycling centers across all five boroughs.

This momentum continued into 2024—a milestone year for NYC's "Trash Revolution." In May, the Department of Sanitation (DSNY) and NYCPS completed the [rollout of composting across all public schools](#). Just months later, DSNY [expanded its residential composting program citywide](#), reaching every borough. To promote responsible waste management in the private sector, the City introduced incentives for [commercial waste zones](#), lowering businesses' fees for recyclables and compostable material. Together, these efforts have kept record amounts of material out of landfills, with more than 2,000 tons diverted per week since April 2025.

In response to this growing volume, NYC expanded its [main composting facility on Staten Island](#). The facility's capacity increased by [nearly 2,000%](#), allowing it to process 209.4 million pounds of incoming material annually.

This isn't just an infrastructure upgrade—it's a down payment on a more climate-resilient city. By transforming both what we consume and what we discard, NYC is showing that the path to sustainability runs through every kitchen, cafeteria, and curb.

Across the City, 400 bright orange **Smart Composting Bins** make it easy to compost on the go. New Yorkers can access these solar-powered bins 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, using a free, simple app.

NYC Smart Composting Bin
NYC DSNY



■ Investing in the NYC watershed

Protecting the environment doesn't just start with our plates and stop at the curb. Environmental stewardship begins upstream, on farms in the NYC watershed—a 2,000-square-mile region that supplies clean drinking water to over eight million New Yorkers. To help protect this vital supply, the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has partnered with the [Watershed Agricultural Council \(WAC\)](#) to promote best management practices (BMPs) that improve watershed farms' economic and environmental sustainability.

This collaboration took a significant step forward in 2023, when DEP and WAC launched a new grant category to the [Economic Viability Micro Grants Program](#). During its inaugural year, the program awarded approximately [\\$30,000 across 11 farms](#) to expand fruit and vegetable

production. Each farm received up to \$5,000 to install new greenhouses, deer control measures, and produce wash stations. Due to its success in promoting diversified production and enhancing farm viability, this pilot has been approved to be a permanent part of the program.

Building on this progress, in January 2025, DEP announced a new [\\$228 million investment](#) in the watershed region to support on-farm BMPs, erosion control measures, buy local marketing campaigns, and new farm and forest conservation easements.

By investing in sustainability at its source, NYC is reinforcing its commitment to local farms' long-term viability—and improving agriculture's downstream effects to safeguard NYC's water and food systems.



NYC watershed area farm | NYC DEP

GOAL 5 Support systems and knowledge to implement the 10-year food policy plan

MOFP continually works to solicit and integrate feedback from our partners and stakeholders to improve our services and achieve our 10-year food policy goals. Building networks and systems that facilitate communication better engages partners and stakeholders, strengthens cross-sector collaboration, and enhances transparency and knowledge-sharing.

City Food Policy Project



Since 2023, the City Food Policy Project—a collaborative research project between Colorado State University, Cornell University, and MOFP—has brought together researchers, policy practitioners, and food system stakeholders to study the city’s food supply chains and understand the trade-offs associated with decisions made in institutional procurement. By examining the impacts of prioritizing sustainability, equity, and local sourcing, the project aims to inform smarter, more effective food policies that deliver real benefits for communities, the environment, and the regional economy.

NYC Council Convening



To build awareness of and foster better coordination across branches of government, MOFP hosted a NYC Council Convening in December 2024, inviting all Council Members and their staff to attend a briefing on the City’s food policy initiatives. The session provided an overview of MOFP’s work, highlighting efforts to increase food security, expand access to healthy foods, and advance sustainable, plant-forward procurement practices.

Food by the Numbers



Starting in late 2023, MOFP began publishing Food by the Numbers, an annual report on the City’s key food policy metrics and related initiatives, such as Get the Good Stuff, Lifestyle Medicine, FRESH, and more. The publicly available data ensures transparency and accountability as the City makes progress towards its food priorities.

Food Security Convenings



In early 2025, MOFP convened partners from the emergency food sector for a three-part series to provide insights, align priorities, and strengthen strategies to better serve New Yorkers experiencing food insecurity. As a result, representatives from DSS, City Harvest, United Way of NYC, and Food Bank NY began meeting monthly to improve allocation methodologies and resource distribution, streamline neighborhood prioritization and food donations, and share on-the-ground performance experience and challenges. This ongoing collaboration fosters stronger coordination across the emergency food network, enabling more responsive, equitable, and efficient support.

Urban Agriculture Data Explorer Hub



In January 2025, MOUA launched its [Urban Agriculture Data Explorer Hub](#). This interactive tool equips all New Yorkers with the ability to explore and contribute information about urban agriculture sites across the city.

School Wellness Policy



In February 2025, NYCPS published [Empowering Strong and Healthy Students: The NYCPS School Wellness Policy](#), developed with and for students, families, and school communities to explain what to expect from schools related to student wellness. Designed to be more accessible for students and families, the new policy provides guidance to ensure schools can inform students about the interconnectedness of physical education and activity, health education and services, food and nutrition, and sustainability. To accompany the new policy, NYCPS developed a [School Guide](#) to support schools in enabling all students to practice healthy, sustainable behaviors throughout the school day.

Open Data Week



In March 2025, MOFP led a workshop for [Open Data Week](#), exploring how data-driven insights from the Supply Gap Analysis inform the [CFC program](#) and the citywide food security network. The workshop encouraged engagement with publicly available datasets while underscoring how data can drive more targeted and effective support for communities facing food insecurity.

▪ Setting an agenda to prioritize food affordability and access

From June to December 2024, as part of NYC's [Chronic Disease Strategy](#), MOFP convened a Food Affordability and Access Workgroup with City agencies, community organizations, and academic partners. Over the course of six sessions, these stakeholders developed a set of research priorities focused on food affordability, food retail, and food choice and behaviors. The result of this collaboration, [Setting the Table: NYC's Research Framework to Enhance Food Affordability and Access](#), is part of the City's efforts to meet New Yorkers' material needs, expand nutrition security, and support healthy food access. By engaging external experts and practitioners, MOFP is fostering a comprehensive, collaborative approach to increasing New Yorkers' ability to access healthy, affordable food.



▪ Improve data transparency and public reporting

Data is the backbone of effective policy—and in recent years, MOFP has been focused on increasing transparency of the City's food purchasing data. In 2024, MOFP updated its [Good Food Purchasing dashboard](#) with its FY23 food purchasing data, detailing the City's food purchasing by weight, associated carbon emissions, and the percentage of spending on food sourced from New York State and M/WBE vendors, among other key metrics. This update marked the City's highest-ever rate of data reporting, with 71% of its food spend analyzed.

As part of ongoing efforts to improve data transparency and enhance insights into our food system, MOFP launched a data collection pilot program at DHS and Aging. The pilot is designed to reach food providers that may be too small to engage in large data collection

projects. With a new partner, MOFP is developing a complementary strategy that captures not only quantitative data but also stories about our public feeding programs that are going above and beyond to provide a positive experience for New Yorkers.

To further improve data transparency, in 2025, MOFP partnered with the [CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute](#) to modernize the city's reporting on food-related metrics through a user-friendly, interactive [public dashboard](#), which will be released by July 2026. Designed for advocates, researchers, service providers, and community members, the dashboard will make key food policy metrics more accessible, enhance data transparency, and help New Yorkers better understand NYC's food landscape.



Setting the Table research agenda launch



Food Ed Conference



NYC
Food Policy

ERIC ADAMS
MAYOR

KATE MACKENZIE, MS, RD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NYC MAYOR'S OFFICE OF FOOD POLICY

Photo credits: NYC Mayor's Office of Photography