



NEW YORK STATE SENATE
NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY

March 19, 2020

Hon. Andrea Stewart Cousins
Temporary President and Majority Leader
New York State Senate
The Capitol
Albany, New York 12247

Hon. Carl E. Heastie
Speaker
New York State Assembly
The Capitol
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Temporary President and Majority Leader Cousins and Speaker Heastie:

We write in urgent support for \$5 million in emergency funding for the Met Council on Jewish Poverty as part of our essential effort in this state budget to secure adequate food supply and delivery to our constituents. Without this emergency funding to Met Council and similarly situated organizations, food pantries across the state will shutter, unable to meet challenges in food supply and delivery that will grow more dire with every passing week.

Four Met Council food pantries have already shuttered because of volunteer shortages. Wholesale food prices are increasing daily. Deliveries of food staples are being delayed or cancelled.

Met Council is determined to remain open and continue serving 225,000 clients in need. But additional food supplies need to be purchased now. Additional storage space needs to be obtained now. Additional delivery staffing needs to be put in place now. There is no next month, next session or next year. We need to act now.

Met Council is the largest provider of free kosher food in America through 16 Jewish Community Councils and 40 kosher food pantries covering all five boroughs.

But Met Council will not be able to meet these needs without an immediate infusion of public support in the 2020/21 budget. Moreover, we urge you to provide additional \$5 million in appropriations to Catholic Charities, City Harvest, Long Island Cares, The Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York and other similarly situated agencies throughout the state. These emergency appropriations are the only way to preserve the food safety net for all New Yorkers.

Thank for your relentlessly advocacy for all New Yorkers during this time of crisis and challenge.