



Unmet Need for Cold Storage Equipment Report 2022

Introduction

Pursuant legislative bills S7771/A8705 seeking to amend the Agriculture and Markets Law and the Public Health Law, in relation to the Nourish New York Program and the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP), the Commissioner of Health shall review and report to the Governor and the Legislature on the unmet need for cold storage equipment among regional food banks, food pantries and other emergency food organizations by December of each year.

In anticipation of this act and to prepare this report, the Division of Nutrition's HPNAP program and Evaluation, Research, and Surveillance Unit (ERSU) collaborated to create the 2021 Cold Storage Survey of Emergency Food Organizations. The 2021 Report Summary section below presents background on HPNAP and the survey result findings on unmet need for cold storage equipment.

2021 Report Summary

The Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) provides emergency food relief and nutrition services to food insecure populations in New York State (NYS). Approximately 400 million emergency meals are now provided annually through a network of about 2,600 Emergency Food Program organizations (EFPs: food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters). Currently, HPNAP funds 45 contracts that include nine Regional Food Banks and 36 Direct Service providers that support these 2,600 EFPs. The State has experienced an increase in the demand for emergency food during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to EFPs needing more refrigerator and freezer cold storage equipment to store an increased amount of emergency food being provided. A survey of EFPs and Regional Food Banks (RFBs) was conducted in November and December of 2021 to report the unmet need for cold storage equipment anticipated in 2022 which is described in this report.

Survey Methods

HPNAP and ERSU developed NYS EFP and RFB surveys in November and December of 2021 using two respective Survey Monkey processes. Of the 2,600 active EFPs in NYS, 2,371 implement operations that require cold storage equipment. A total of 2,371 EFPs received emailed Survey Monkey requests and 1,262 unduplicated survey responses were returned. All nine RFB HPNAP contractors also received emailed Survey Monkey requests and survey response were received from each of these contractors.

Highlights of Survey Results

EFP Surveys

- While not all HPNAP-funded EFPs were able to respond to the survey, the composition of respondents in terms of agency types was similar to the total composition of all HPNAP-funded agency types. This indicates that although not all organizations may have responded, we could conclude that the organizations represented are not disproportionately skewed toward one agency type.
- Almost all responding organizations have at least one refrigerator or freezer.
- Almost 40% of responding organizations report having at least one refrigerator or freezer that is older than 10 years. This may be an indicator of impending need to purchase new cold storage equipment.
- 67% of responding organizations indicated they would need at least one refrigerator in calendar year 2022 to maintain cold storage. Overall, responding organizations estimated \$3.2 to \$5.6 million in projected refrigeration costs in calendar year 2022. If cost estimates are extrapolated to all HPNAP-funded pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters then the projected refrigeration costs in calendar year 2022 would be \$6.1 to \$10.6 million.
- 68% of responding organizations indicated they would need at least one freezer in calendar year 2022. Overall, responding organizations estimated \$3.8 to \$6.3 million in projected freezer costs in calendar year 2022. If cost estimates are extrapolated to all HPNAP-funded pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters then the projected freezer costs in calendar year 2022 would be \$7.2 to \$11.9 million.

RFB Surveys

- Two-thirds of responding food banks report having at least one refrigerator or freezer that is older than 10 years. This may be an indicator of impending need to purchase new cold storage equipment.
- 8 out of 9 of responding food banks indicated they would need at least one refrigerator in calendar year 2022. Overall, responding food banks estimated 322,008 to \$386,002 in projected refrigeration costs in calendar year 2022.
- 7 out of 9 of responding food banks indicated they would need at least one freezer in calendar year 2022. Overall, responding food banks estimated \$309,007 to \$364,002 in projected freezer costs in calendar year 2022.
- Overall, responding food banks estimated \$631,015 to \$750,004 in overall cold storage costs in calendar year 2022.
- Needs and cost estimates represent a point-in-time assessment and may not reflect the actual and unforeseen needs experienced in calendar year 2022 due for example to equipment failures, accidents, or increased demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

These findings report unmet need for cold storage equipment among Regional Food Banks, food pantries and other emergency food organizations. Cold Storage Survey responses received from New York State (NYS) Regional Food Banks and 1,262 of NYS' 2,600 Emergency Food Programs (EFPs) in 2021 suggested that as much as \$12.7 M would be needed for refrigerators and freezers to maintain emergency food service operations in 2022 and beyond. This amount would be as much as \$22.5 M if extrapolated to consider the NYS EFP survey responses that were not received.

If you have any questions, please contact 518-402-7090 or HPNAP@health.ny.gov.

Thank you.