

My name is Anjali Morgan and I am a policy fellow at Single Stop. I wish to first thank Chairman Levin for the opportunity to testify on the issue of hunger in New York City. I know that between the committee and the Human Resources Administration, you all have worked diligently on this issue. Today, I respectfully offer Single Stop's observations and recommendations for your consideration.

As everyone here knows, hunger does not have a face and it does not discriminate. Hunger affects children, teenagers, adults, seniors, and even college students. In addition, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, is the nation's safety net program designed for the most vulnerable and yet over hundreds of thousands of eligible New Yorkers are not enrolled. The reasons as to why this is are limitless and beyond the scope of my testimony today.

However, I am here to share with you the Single Stop model and how it exists to help low-income individuals and families access the full range of benefits and resources that are available for them. **Single Stop is a "one-stop shop" that coordinates access to resources and helps low-income New Yorkers secure public benefits, access higher education opportunities, and achieve financial self-sufficiency. We partner with community-based organizations and community colleges to operate more than 65 sites through which we served 150,000 households last year alone.** Six of those are located at the city's largest food pantries. Thus far in 2014, Single Stop has helped 12,755 households enroll in SNAP. Additionally, 5,408 were referred to food pantries, and even more accessed pantries located in the same place as a Single Stop site. Single Stop also connects people with other food assistance programs such as WIC and school meals.

What we are able to observe through our work in the community is that clients are struggling to put food on the table each month despite the fact that they are in receipt of SNAP benefits. Single Stop continues to counsel SNAP clients who are often forced to turn to food pantries to be able to provide for their families. As everyone here knows, food pantries do a tremendous job providing for the thousands of hungry New Yorkers each day, but the bottom line is that there are a host of other issues that need to be addressed to complement benefits like SNAP and services like food pantries. Far too often, we come across situations of mothers unable to afford day care services and forced to take leave without pay, exacerbating the issue of not having enough money to pay for food. And more recently, we are beginning to see the issue of food insecurity and hunger pop up on college campuses. Until we take a holistic approach to attacking poverty as the root cause of hunger, it will be very difficult to envision an end to hunger in this city. Single Stop's model aims to do just this by coordinating services all in one place.

Single Stop offers four wide ranging recommendations for the city to consider.

- (1) Single Stop recommends making K-12 school meals universal and free across the board. The fact that half of all SNAP participants are children is staggering. Hunger prevents children from reaching their full potential in school and otherwise.
- (2) Single Stop recommends that food pantries and EBT-accepting food stores should be the norm across New York college campuses. Kingsborough Community College (KCC) in Brooklyn and Hostos Community College (HCC) in the South Bronx partner with the Food Bank for New York City and have piloted campus food pantries that are available for all students. Pantries coordinate their hours of operation with class schedules so that more students can be accommodated throughout the day. In addition, some colleges offer food preparation classes, meal vouchers for students in dire need, and on-site nutritionists. Many also partner with on-campus child care centers to ensure that student-

parents and their children have access to food. As the number of food pantries continues to grow through the work of private partnerships, we recommend the city continue to promote them. We also ask that the city consider funding Single Stop as part of CUNY's 2014 budget priorities to ensure that students are getting all of the supports and coordinated services they need to graduate.

- (3) Single Stop recommends maximizing participation in all federal programs to address the full spectrum of difficulties faced by low-income individuals and families. Social safety net programs are designed to alleviate poverty in this country. Yet an overwhelming number of Americans, including New Yorkers, are not participating in federal programs that are available to them. Single Stop commends the city for its efforts to modernize its Access NYC portal to streamline access to federal programs. But we think the city cannot do this work alone. Many of the programs that clients are eligible for require application through the state (i.e. like health insurance) or the federal government (i.e. tax credits). We call on the city to continue working with Single Stop and other efforts to create a "client first" approach by integrating technology and human service platforms so that clients can easily secure the spectrum of benefits and services they need all in one place.
- (4) Single Stop recommends raising the minimum wage to a fairer level and having it indexed to inflation. Mayor de Blasio's initiative to raise the minimum hourly wage to \$13.13 for city contract workers is a huge step in the right direction. However, we recommend that the city take further steps like applying the new minimum wage \$13.13 universally, linking the wage and tip-wage to the rate of inflation as soon as possible, and encouraging city lawmakers to lobby state lawmakers for the authority to do so.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak here today.