

A Food Primer for Our New Mayor

The New York City Food Forum, a gathering of New York City food-active organizations, encourages our new Mayor to lead us towards a better food future for every New Yorker.

1. Hunger remains a persistent challenge. Our Mayor must:

- Enable more New Yorkers to put ample food on their tables by seeking State legislation empowering the City to enact a living minimum wage and leveraging the City's economic power, through economic development programs, contracts, subsidies, and land use policy, to support and create living wage jobs;
- Focus the City's welfare to work programs on job creation and training and create a public works program to break the post-recession cycle of high unemployment;
- Maximize participation in food assistance programs by removing barriers and disincentives, providing leadership and ample staff to improve effectiveness and civility, expanding education and enrollment efforts, taking full advantage of federal waivers and initiatives, and simplifying application processes and extending recertification periods;
- Increase the Emergency Food Assistance Program budget to \$15 million and increase funding to expand senior center meal service and homebound meal delivery; and
- Be the nation's greatest municipal advocate for protecting and strengthening federal nutrition assistance programs, including advocating for aligning the SNAP food budget with the USDA Low Cost Food Plan.

2. Healthy Food will sustain our City's greatest natural resource, New Yorkers. Our Mayor must:

- Extend cost-effective SNAP EBT processing capabilities to more farmers' markets and other food providers, including Green Carts, increase Health Bucks funding, and supplement Farmers Market Nutrition Program funding;
- Decrease the human and financial costs of preventable, diet-related illness and death by discouraging the promotion of unhealthy – high fat, sugar, and salt – food, especially to parents and children; and
- Promote access to healthy food by supporting community gardens, farmers' and mobile markets, food vendors and other markets offering fresh and healthy choices, and CSAs and food co-ops.

3. School Food is a bulwark against student hunger, poor nutrition and health, and inattention. Our Mayor must:

- Implement free school lunch for all, mandate breakfast in every homeroom, and increase the number of sites serving summer and after-school meals;
- Continue to increase the nutritional value and quality of school meals by enhancing kitchen staff skills and increasing kitchen capital investment, so more tasty meals, that our children will want to eat, can be made from scratch, with more fresh, local ingredients; and
- Increase food literacy by continuing school garden support and mandating food and nutrition education, K to 12, developing curricula with parents, teachers, and students to start in elementary school with homeroom gardens and to continue through middle and high schools with healthy food choice, cooking, and food justice education.

4. Food Economy, in a food town like no other, can be an engine for growth. Our Mayor must:

- Support regional farms and local food hubs, public markets, food vendors, food business incubators, urban agriculture, and community kitchens that provide healthy food, entrepreneurial opportunity, and living wages;
- Use the power of the City's food budget to improve the nutritional quality of the meals it serves and support New York and other regional farms and food processors by aggressively employing regional preference and freshness criteria in food purchasing for meals served by City agencies, including the Department of Education;
- Eliminate wage theft and support safe working conditions, availability of paid sick days - in lieu of ordered shift swaps, health benefits, and the right to organize for every City food chain worker.

5. Food Governance in our City covers every segment of the food chain. While the City has a Food Policy Coordinator and an inter-agency food task force, there is no entity that clearly and openly coordinates food activities, nor is there a formal, inclusive mechanism for New Yorkers to inform City food policies. Our Mayor must:

- Establish high-level coordination of the City's food activities to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness through a Department of Food, or another empowered, adequately resourced mechanism;
- Enhance Food Metrics reporting by adding goals, integrating food purchasing source information, and adding additional information about food programs, including nutrition program participation, emergency food programs and food distribution preparedness, and urban agriculture land availability; and
- Support and fund an inclusive, participative process that engages New Yorkers from every food system intersection - public, private, not-for-profit, community/production, processing, distribution, consumption, waste - to give them a voice in shaping our City's food future.



NYC Food Forum

The New York City Food Forum supports a better food future for New York City. Each organization listed below will work to advance the issues most aligned with its own focus and mission and recognizes the necessity of working together to achieve systemic change. The New York City Food Forum was born out of the collaborative effort of 12 co-host and 76 partner organizations to sponsor the Mayoral Candidate Forum on the Future of Food in New York City in July 2013.¹ Together, these organizations reach tens of thousands of people through their outreach, education, programming, and advocacy.

‘A Food Primer for Our New Mayor’ is supported by the following organizations:²

Beth-Hark Christian Counseling Center, Inc.
Brighter Green
Brooklyn Food Coalition
City Harvest
Five Loaves and Two Fishes / Leviticus Church
Food Bank For New York City
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Food Systems Network NYC
FoodFight
Hunger Action Network of New York State
Just Food
New York City Coalition Against Hunger
New York City Food Policy Center at Hunter College
NRDC Action Fund
Public Health Solutions
Slow Food NYC
Slow Money NYC
St. Edward Food Pantry
West Side Campaign Against Hunger
WhyHunger

¹ Six mayoral candidates, an in-person audience of more than 750 people, and an on-line audience of more than 1,300 viewers

² Last updated October 7, 2013. This list will be updated on a rolling basis through October 15, 2013.