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**COMMUNITY FOODBANK OF NEW JERSEY RESPONDS AS GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN IMPACTS PANTRY LINES
Families Face Hunger for the First Time as Government Shutdown Affects Thousands, Future of SNAP Uncertain**

HILLSIDE, NJ—January 16, 2019

Now on its twenty-sixth day, the federal government's historic partial shutdown is the longest one in American history. With hundreds of thousands of furloughed employees out of work and no resolution in sight, many families going without pay could be facing hunger for the first time in their lives, unsure if they can keep food on their tables until the government reopens.

Approximately 800,000 federal workers, 5,000 of whom reside in New Jersey, are now in financial limbo. About 420,000 essential employees have continued to work without pay, while another 380,000 stay at home waiting for the stalemate to end. As January 11 marked their first missed paychecks, paychecks that they rely on to support themselves and their families, many have turned to their local food pantries and soup kitchens to put food on the table.

"At the Community FoodBank of New Jersey, we know that hunger can strike at any time," said Carlos Rodriguez, President & CEO of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. "Sudden loss of pay is one possible emergency that can bring someone to our community partners for assistance, and those who struggle to make ends meet often face impossible choices, like deciding whether to pay for housing or food."

With the state's overall food insecurity rate at nearly 10%, the FoodBank's resources are already stretched and will become even more strained if furloughed federal employees in New Jersey continue to miss paychecks. Many of the FoodBank's community partners have already seen an influx of new clients since furloughed workers missed their first paychecks on January 11.

To make matters worse, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey will not be able to close the gap for more than 730,000 SNAP recipients statewide if the shutdown drags on and they lose their benefits. According to a Feeding America estimate, for every meal provided by food banks nationally, SNAP provides twelve. Though the New Jersey Department of Human Services will issue February SNAP benefits early, funds for monthly food assistance are provided by the federal government, so the availability of benefits for March is unknown at this time.

Families that receive supplemental food via federal programs like SNAP are often forced to visit food pantries and soup kitchens at the end of each month, once their income and benefits have run out. These families are already vulnerable to hunger and its effects, and the loss of SNAP would greatly exacerbate their need. If the government remains shutdown, the FoodBank anticipates heightened need all month long, with more people waiting on lines for a limited amount of food.

Local businesses may also feel the loss of federal assistance programs, with fewer people visiting grocery stores and other businesses that traditionally serve low-income populations.

"The FoodBank is here when our hungry neighbors need it," said Carlos Rodriguez. "We work with more than 1,000 community partners that help us get nutritious food to neighbors in need in their communities, but we can't make up for the loss of the \$80 million worth of food that SNAP provides each month to food insecure families."

Furloughed workers and SNAP recipients in need of food assistance can visit cfbnj.org/findfood to locate FoodBank community partners near them.

Anyone who would like to contribute funds to help the Community FoodBank of New Jersey respond to this growing crisis can visit cfbnj.org to donate.

The [Community FoodBank of New Jersey \(CFBNJ\)](https://cfbnj.org), a member of Feeding America®, has been delivering food, help and hope across the state for over 40 years. Last year, CFBNJ provided nutritious food for over 47 million meals through its network of more than 1,000 community partners including pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, mobile pantries, and child and senior feeding programs. For our hungry neighbors, the Community FoodBank of New Jersey is the powerful agent of change that fills the emptiness caused by hunger and provides resources that are essential to earning a sustainable living.