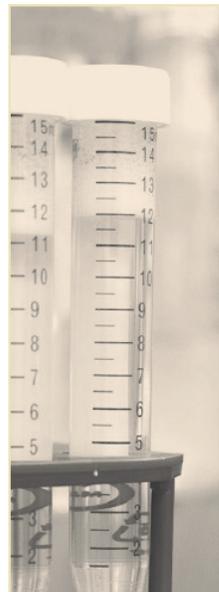


Food and the New York City Budget

A Review & Analysis of Municipal Budget Allocations in Fiscal Years 2019 & 2020

OCTOBER 2019



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Executive Summary

How New York City government spends its tax dollars affects every aspect of the food New Yorkers produce, sell, buy, prepare, eat and dispose. Budget decisions shape who is hungry and who not, how many New Yorkers suffer from diet-related disease, how easy it is to find healthy affordable food in all the city's neighborhoods, and the extent to which labor laws protect low-wage food workers.

Yet the complex process of approving and spending the city's budget and allocating funding to various food-related programs and policies remains obscure for many New Yorkers, including even those who are committed to creating healthier and more equitable and sustainable food systems. In this report, the staff of the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute seeks to illuminate this process. Our goal is to enable New Yorkers, including community residents, advocates, and policy makers to participate more fully in budget decisions. By describing how New York City government allocates its budget, makes capital investments, distributes grant funding, expands or eliminates established food programs, and considers the budget requests put forward by local communities, this report sets the stage for ensuring that New York City's food-related budget is spent widely and effectively.

More broadly, the report contributes to the creation of ongoing platforms where food-specific items in the city budget can be tracked, monitored, and summarized across multiple agencies and organizations throughout the budget planning cycle.

The creation of a dedicated platform for monitoring municipal food spending is a critical step towards encouraging the city to take a whole system approach to planning for New York City's complex food system. The development of this approach was one of the key recommendations of the recently released *Growing Food Equity in New York City* report by the New York City Council. A systems approach may help overcome one of the limitations of the first wave of food activism in New York City, which proposed many competing goals, did not set priorities, and allocated insufficient new resources to achieve key goals.

By critically analyzing how New York City spends money on food and ensuring stronger coordination of multiple programs and policies, city government and residents can better achieve their goals of creating a healthier, more equitable and sustainable food system. As we show in this report, a systematic scan of three key components* of the city budget for fiscal years 2019 (FY19) and 2020 (FY20):

- 1) the Adopted Expense, Contract, and Revenue Budgets;
- 2) Discretionary Funding; and
- 3) the listing of Community Board Budget Requests

* For the purposes of this report, the Capital Budget was not included in the food systems spending analysis.

shows that a more holistic view of food systems and public spending in the city is achievable.

This report summarizes information on the budgeting process and current funding for some key food programs supported by the New York City government. While not all publicly available datasets enable detailed analyses of all categories of the food budget, they do offer a wealth of information that New Yorkers can use to learn more about the ways in which different food system goals are advanced or delayed as a result of the budget decisions every year.

The report seeks to answer these questions:

- 1. Who makes food decisions in the city budget? What are the roles of various city agencies and officials in the budget process?*
- 2. What is the breakdown of city spending on food in FY20? What domains of food policies and programs are the most and least funded? Which city agencies currently distribute the largest share of municipal food-system funding?*
- 3. How do food-system budget allocations and requests for FY20 compare to FY19? Has food-system related funding changed significantly or remained the same?*

Our main findings are:

- Several city bodies including the Mayor’s Office, City Council, Borough Presidents, the Public Advocate, and the Comptroller play key roles in the city’s budget process and in making decisions about how to spend city dollars on food. Thus, citizens and nongovernmental organizations have many opportunities to participate throughout the year in influencing budget decisions. They can testify at public hearings, make budget requests to community boards, and submit participatory budgeting projects in their council district.
- Our analysis of the City’s adopted budget found that in FY20, the food system-related allocations total more than \$970 million. However, this represents only 1% of the overall city budget. Discretionary allocations to nonprofit organizations through the City Council Schedule C funds add about \$16 million for food system-related programs – from urban farming, to emergency food assistance, healthy food access, nutrition education, and food waste management, to mention a few.
- In the adopted FY20 City budget, the top 5 city agencies that currently distribute municipal food-system funding are the Department of Education (DOE), the Department for the Aging (DFTA), the Department of Social Services (DSS) /Human Resources Administration (HRA), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and the Department of Correction (DOC).
- Through its Office of Food & Nutrition Services, and its food procurement for about 940 thousand meals per day, DOE oversees about 60% (\$579M) of the all food-system related funds in the FY20 city budget. Contracts for Congregate Meals and Kitchen Staff salaries at senior

centers (est. \$88.1M[†]), Home Delivered Meals for seniors (\$41.9M), and City Meals on Wheels administration (\$2.6M) are key food-related programs in the city budget for DFTA. Other large programs are DSS's Food Stamps/SNAP operations (\$76.7M) and its Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) (\$20.9M[‡]). The largest share of DOHMH's food related spending goes to its Food Safety programs (\$16.5M). Among the key food access and healthy nutrition is the Eat Well Play Hard in childcare settings (\$1.5M). Lastly, the Department of Correction's total budget allocation for food supply and nutritional services (\$24.5M) places it among the top 5 city agencies in food-system related expenses.

- Our analysis of discretionary funding provided by City Council to community organizations for FY20 for food system related programs and services shows that the largest share of this \$16 million in food systems spending is allocated to programs that support a variety of local, food and senior initiatives as well as Speaker's initiatives to address citywide needs.
- Overall, in FY20, more than 200 community board budget requests addressed food system matters, which represents about 6% of all community board budget requests included in the register for the current fiscal year. Of these, the largest share focused on health and nutrition, food security, and environmental sustainability with an emphasis on waste management and pest control. Local food economies and improving the conditions of food workers were the food policy areas least addressed in FY20's requests.
- Compared to FY19, total funding for food-system spending increased by \$41.4 million in the FY20 budget. Largest departmental increases in for FY20 year are +\$16.1M for DOE, of which +\$13M was for School Food Service, +\$10.4M for DFTA, of which \$10M are in baselined funding for congregate meals and kitchen staff, the +\$7.8M[§] for Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) for GreenThumb, and DSS/HRA's Food stamps budget allocation (+\$2.7M) and SNAP Bonus Award (+\$2.4M). The additional funding for DPR, reflects the data included in the modified FY20 budget, where it is explicitly allocated to GreenThumb for the maintenance of the city's 500+ community gardens. Actual spending throughout the rest of the fiscal year may differ based on changes in projected needs and other factors.

[†] This is an estimated amount based on the analysis of the DFTA Spending data for FY19, available through Checkbook NYC. Spending data for FY19 shows that there are about \$78,101,132 spent for congregate meals/lunches and social services for older adults. These funds are not directly identifiable in the publicly available datasets on the adopted budgets as they are included under an aggregate budget line. As spending for FY20 is still ongoing, to estimate the FY20 budget amount for this program, the additional \$10 million in baselined funding negotiated by the City Council for the program were added to the FY19 spending amount (see New York City Council, Schedule C, June 19, 2019).

[‡] This amount reflects adopted FY20 budget items with Budget Code Name "Emergency Food Assistance" and Unit of Appropriation name "Adult Services – OTPS." The actual amount toward the program might differ (e.g., see New York City Council Growing Food Equity in NYC Report, 2019).

[§] This amount reflects the information provided in the most recent modified FY20 budget where a new "Greenthumb Proj" budget line, with budget codes 6893 and 2821, includes a projected spending for about \$7,789,014.00 for Maintenance & Operations (OTPS and PS).

- Among the programs that saw the most dramatic decreases in budget allocations are the Department of Sanitation DSNY (-\$1.7M) for its composting and organics processing program and the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) (-\$1.5M) for the Head Start health and safety compliance (PS/staff expenses), which includes food safety for the spaces where food is handled on site. The decrease in DSNY funding is likely related to the \$5M savings in FY19 and the limited participation in the pilot organics collection program, whereas the decrease in ACS's Head Start funding can be attributed to the transfer of oversight of Head Start from ACS to DOE.
- Programs whose budgets have remained the same for FY20 include the food procurement allocation of the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) (\$13.2M), three of DOHMH/DPR Obesity Task Force Programs (I/C, Kids in Motion, Shape Up) (\$1M), the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Food Business Pathways Program (\$130k), the DSS/HRA Mayor's Office of Food Policy (\$75k), and DPR's compost facility (\$19k).

As the New York City Council and the Mayor consider how to revitalize New York City's food policy for the next decade, making informed decisions on spending public money on food policies and programs will have a decisive impact on the city's success in achieving its goals. This report enables key constituencies to make more informed decisions.

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Note to Readers: This report is based on information available through October 25, 2019. Since the process for budget allocation and spending is dynamic and since this report relies on a variety of not always consistent public sources of evidence, we ask readers to send additions, corrections or suggestions to this report to UrbanFoodPolicy@sph.cuny.edu by December 1, 2019. In early 2020, we will release an update to this report including an analysis of the Mayor's Preliminary 2021 Fiscal Year Budget as well as additions or corrections to this report.



The CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute is an academic research and action center at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy located in Harlem, NYC. The Institute provides evidence to inform municipal policies that promote equitable access to healthy, affordable food.

1. Budget matters as food matters: key city roles in the budget process

1.1 *The Mayor's Office***

The Mayor's role in the city's budget process can be a powerful tool for changing policy. Each January, the Mayor presents a preliminary budget—an outline of priorities and goals for the city. The council then modifies this budget to reflect its priorities. By convincing the Mayor to allocate funds for creating new health department food initiatives or increasing city support for school food programs, advocates can secure funding for policy changes. It is also important to note that the Mayor's Office estimates the City's revenue, and so determines the size of the overall budget. This, perhaps, is one of the most important powers in the city's budget process.

1.2 *The City Council*

The City Council is the legislative body for New York City. The City Council reviews, amends and approves the Mayor's budget. For instance, in 2017, the City Council played a key role in pressing for a budgetary allocation to expand free lunches in city schools. Each year, City Council allocates funds directly to non-profit organizations, including many that address food security, healthy food access, and other food policy topics. City Council members can also join Participatory Budgeting New York City (PBNYC) by making a minimum of \$1 million from their budget available for community-chosen projects. (See Box 1).

1.3 *The Borough Presidents*

The Borough Presidents work with the mayor on annual executive budgets, propose borough budget priorities directly to the City Council, review and comment on major land use decisions, and propose sites for city facilities within their respective boroughs. Borough Presidents also allocate funding to support policy goals and have their own budgets to address borough needs. For example, in 2017 Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams allocated \$1 million from his budget to fund an urban agriculture incubator.

1.4 *The Public Advocate & the Comptroller*

Along with the Mayor, the Public Advocate and Comptroller can influence food budget decisions and food policy from the executive branch. For instance, during the FY18 city budget negotiation process, the Public Advocate's advocacy and support helped to build a coalition that won City

** Parts of this section are taken from Willingham C, Rafalow A, Lindstrom L, Freudenberg N. *The CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute Guide to Food Governance in New York City*. CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy, 2017.

Council and mayoral support for expanding universal free school lunch. The Comptroller of New York City is the chief fiscal and auditing officer of the city. In 2015, Comptroller Scott Stringer released a report analyzing the economic impact of raising the minimum wage for fast food and other food service workers to \$15 an hour, providing policy makers and advocates with evidence to inform the debate on that proposed policy change.

BOX 1. Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting (PB) is a process by which constituents directly choose how to allocate part of a public budget. PB provides community members with the power to make choices over how their tax dollars are spent. City Council members can join Participatory Budgeting New York City (PBNYC) by making a minimum of \$1 million from their budget available for community-chosen projects. The concept was first established in Brazil in 1989 and now more than 1,500 jurisdictions around the world use some form of participatory budgeting.

In 2017, 102,800 New Yorkers voted for participatory budget projects in 31 council districts, allocating more than \$40 million to the winning projects. One recent example of successful utilization of participatory budgeting for a food-related policy or program is SMART University's Mobile Cooking Classroom (MCC). Based in East Harlem, SMART (Sisterhood Mobilized for AIDS/HIV Research and Treatment) University is an organization run by and for women with HIV/AIDS. SMART's MCC, serving the greater East Harlem community, provides access to food as well as nutrition education, including cooking, shopping, and preparing healthy food. Hester Street, an urban planning, design, and development non-profit that provides technical and capacity-building assistance to community-serving organizations, partnered with SMART to lead an inclusive visioning process with residents that helped shape the Capital Campaigns Package used by SMART to advocate for funding the MCC. Submitted as a proposal during the 2013 participatory budgeting process, the project received more than 500 votes from community residents, ranking it fourth among 21 projects, and was awarded \$180,000 in capital funding.

PB projects that are successfully funded are usually driven by the most motivated or the most engaged constituents who can attract large blocks of voters (students, community organizations, etc.). This often means that funds end up directed away from projects that are more universally beneficial towards those focused on more niche concerns. In addition, only a very small portion of city funds are allocated through PB. In 2017, 102,800 New Yorkers voted for participatory budget projects in 31 council districts, allocating more than \$40 million to the winning projects.¹

2. Main components, timeline, and negotiations of the city budget

2.1 Budget Components

The City's Adopted Budget includes several components that take stock of the previous fiscal year and chart the direction of public spending for the subsequent fiscal year. Among these are the Expense Budget, Revenue Budget, Contract Budget, Financial Plan, Capital Budget, Capital Program, and Ten-Year Capital Strategy.²

The Expense Budget finances government services, employees, pensions, debt services, routine and operating expenses, as well as the Contract Budget.³ The Contract Budget funds city services that are

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delivered by other organizations or services used in city agencies for operation.⁴ The Revenue Budget estimates city income for the fiscal year, which includes tax collection, grants from the state and federal government, and revenue from government agency services.⁵ The Capital Budget funds city infrastructure for government operations and public use (schools, fire stations, parks, road, etc.).⁶

The Expense, Revenue, and Contract Budgets, key drivers of food policy, include baseline budgeting for programs and staff that provide: school food services, food assistance programs, SNAP operations, organic waste collection, public assistance, community programs, senior meals, and more. Some of these programs (e.g., SNAP) are largely funded by State and Federal budgets, city funding supports SNAP enrollment and operations.

Additional budget documents that provide useful information on public spending as well as food system-priorities advanced by elected officials and community organizations are the City Council's Schedule C Discretionary Funding (Adopted Expense Budget Adjustment Summary) and the Register of Community Board Budget Requests for the Executive Budget. Schedule C outlines discretionary funding from the City Council (See Box 2. *What is Discretionary Funding?*), which is allocated to not-for-profit organizations that provide city services.⁷ This city funding contributes to realizing food system goals by supporting organizations that focus on food access, urban agriculture, nutrition education, and community health across the City's 51 Council Districts.

The Community Board budget request documents report on the City's 59 Community District responses to the preliminary budget, the gaps that their constituents ask to be filled, and the response by The Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) (See Box 3. *What are Community Board Budget Requests?*). In brief, the register of Community Board Budget Requests outlines the specific needs for neighborhoods across the city as identified by these bodies. The document also tracks whether requests reoccur for multiple fiscal years, why funds are denied, and the districts that frequently voice concerns. This information can be used to identify communities that need support from government agencies and non-governmental organizations, as well as districts where advocates could mobilize to make food policy change.

BOX 2. What is Discretionary (Schedule C) Funding? (*)

Discretionary funding is a duly appropriated sum of money in the City's expense budget allocated to an eligible not-for-profit organization by the Council or a Member of the Council under section 1-02(e) of the rules of the Procurement Policy Board (PPB). PPB Rule 1-02(e) allows certain elected officials – including Council Members and Borough Presidents (but not the Mayor or City agencies) – to designate specific not-for-profit organizations to receive funding as an alternative to funding programs through competitive procurement. Unlike competitively awarded Agency contracts, awarded discretionary funds contracts are for a single fiscal year. At budget adoption, allocations of Council discretionary funding are disclosed. Periodic updates occur to reflect any changes to the adopted budget.

There are several categories of discretionary funding used by the City Council, each serving different purposes. The following categories have developed through Council practice over the years and are subject to change in the future:

Member Local Initiatives: Each Member of the Council receives an amount each year to meet local needs in the Member's district, known as "local initiatives". Borough Delegations also allocate funding. Various factors including local needs, the Member's request, and other considerations determine the amount. Uses of local initiative funding are not limited to any particular purpose or agency, except as otherwise restricted by Council policy, PPB rules, and applicable law.

City Council Local Initiatives: Organizations may apply for funding directly to the Speaker, or Members may request that the Speaker fund an organization whose scope of services exceeds their individual ability to fund or which serves a larger geographical area. This is often referred to as the "Speaker's list."

Member Aging Discretionary Funds: Each Member receives an annual amount to fund senior services in his or her district through the Department for the Aging.

Member Youth Discretionary Funds: Each Member receives an annual amount for the provision of services for youth or community development through the Department of Youth and Community Development.

Anti-Poverty Initiative: Council Members receive additional discretionary funding based on the number of people in their districts below the Federal Poverty Line; compiled by the American Community Survey (ACS). ACS is a continuous survey that individuals respond to throughout the year. Poverty statistics presented in ACS reports and tables adhere to the standards specified by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Based on these figures, Council Members will receive additional funds ranging from \$25,000 (Lowest Poverty Figures) to \$100,000 (Highest Poverty Figures) in \$25,000 increments.

Citywide Initiatives: The Council may also initiate programs for addressing community needs that it feels are lacking by existing agency programming. To extend the reach of agency programs to underserved communities or populations. In most cases, the Council will provide funding to specific not-for-profit providers. Initiatives are usually citywide in scope, although they may focus on high-need communities or populations. The method of allocating funding varies by initiative and is at the discretion of the Council.

(*) Text from: *New York City Council Discretionary Funding Policies and Procedures* (January 2019), <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/wp-content/uploads/sites/54/2019/01/Policies-and-Procedures-Final-Draft-1.9.19.pdf>

BOX 3. What are the Community Board Budget Requests? (*)

The Register of Community Board Budget Requests for the Executive Budget reports the executive budget status of each of the projects and programs requested by the City's 59 community boards for a given fiscal year. The Register is the charter mandated product of a dynamic and cyclical budget process for the 59 community boards. The community boards consult with agencies on the capital and expense needs of the district. After consulting, each community board develops and votes separate priorities for up to 40 capital and 25 expense budget requests which the agencies review and respond to in the Register of Community Board Requests for the Preliminary Budget in January.

The Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) reviews these same budget requests and updates the responses for the Executive Budget. In May, the City Council holds public hearings on the Executive Budget. At these hearings, community boards, community groups and interested citizens may comment on the budget decisions contained in the Register.

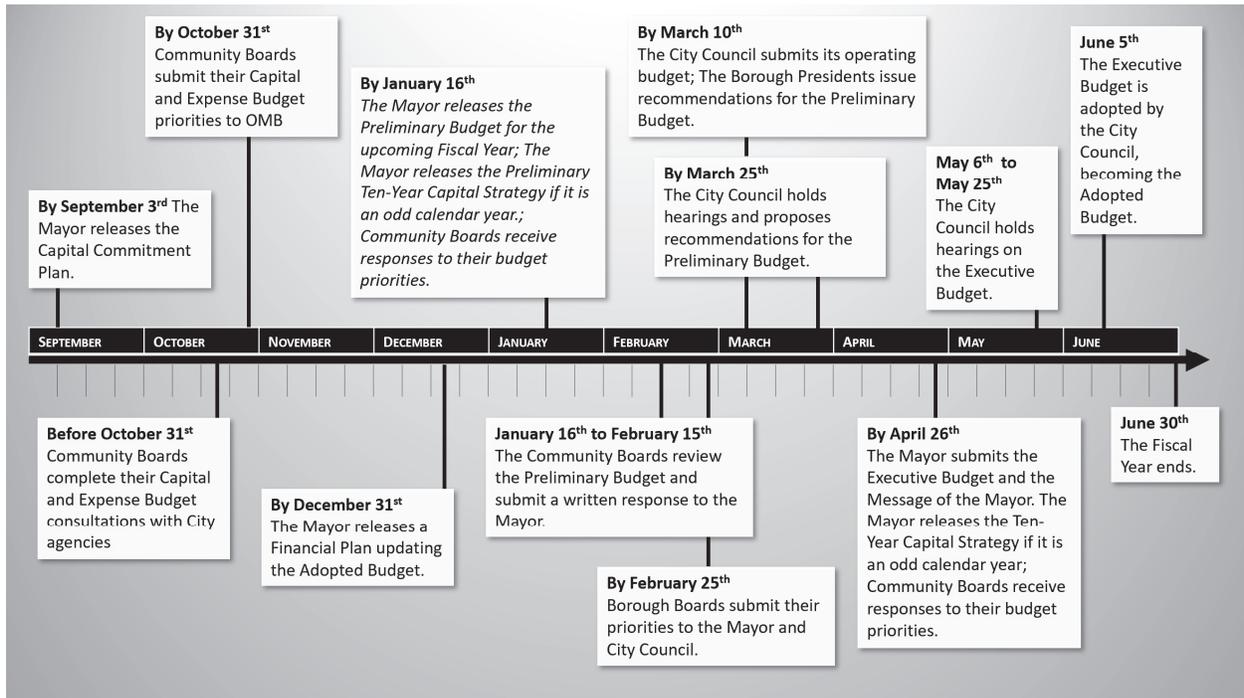
In July, OMB publishes the Register of Community Board Budget Requests for the Adopted Budget which informs the boards of the final disposition of their original budget priorities. The Adopted Register contains responses that reflect the changes made to the Executive Budget by the City Council. Capital project requests from community boards are site specific, and primarily for infrastructure or public facility improvements. For more specific information about programs important to the community boards, refer to each agency's section in the Message of the Mayor for the Executive Capital and Expense Budgets.

(*) Text adapted from: *The City of New York, Bill de Blasio, Mayor. Register of Community Board Budget Requests for the Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2020. April 2019. Accessed at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/cbrboro4-19.pdf>*

2.2 Budget Timeline

The New York City budget process follows a fiscal year period from July 1st to June 30th. The process begins with the Mayor's presentation of the preliminary budget that highlights goals and priorities for the city (see Figure 1 below). The Council analyzes the Preliminary Budget to ensure it meet the needs of constituents and organizations. Public hearings are held for concerns to be voiced and after analysis, the Council responds to the Mayor's budget summarizing concerns of the public and recommendations. Subsequently, the Mayor releases an Executive Budget which is updated based on the Council response. Once again, this budget is analyzed and reviewed by the Council and public to ensure priorities of all districts are reflected in the budget. The budget is negotiated between the Council and Mayor, and by July 1, the Adopted Budget is agreed on and implemented.⁸ Of course these negotiations are influenced both by perceived needs and other political factors.

Figure 1. The New York City Budget Timeline. Source: Elaboration based on *New York City Council. The Budget Process*. Accessed at: <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/process/>.



2.3 Budget Negotiations

The budget negotiation process starts with the release of the Mayor’s Executive Budget in *January* and ends with City Council approval of the budget before the end of June. This creates many months and multiple settings where advocates and public officials can make the case for providing new budgetary allocation for food policies. The council reviews and coordinates with the mayor on the final budget and uses feedback from city agencies, the Mayor’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and outside groups to analyze and revise proposed spending.

During the budget negotiation for fiscal year 2018, for instance, money was set aside for a substantial expansion of universal free school lunch, a longstanding policy goal of anti-hunger advocates. Under this expansion 90% of schools serving 84% of NYC school children would offer lunch free to all. Ultimately the city would achieve universal free school lunch through a change made at the New York State Education Department making it possible to more accurately identify families who are eligible for free lunch. The department’s change to the Direct Certification Matching Process allowed New York City to show an increase in the direct certification rate, enabling it to qualify for the highest level of reimbursement for meals in the federal Community Eligibility Provision program. This in turn made it possible to provide school lunch free for every student at all New York City’s public schools in the 2017-2018 school year.

Using the budget negotiation process to implement a policy action often means competing with dozens of other organizations, sometimes allies, who are also advancing their organizational policy goals. In most cases, the negotiations are about different ways of slicing the budgetary pie, rather than making a bigger pie. In addition, economic conditions (such as a recession) or changing fiscal priorities (e.g., proposed federal cuts in SNAP) may make it more difficult to win new resources.

3. Publicly available data and some ways to explore it

The City's adopted Expense, Revenue, and Contract Budget as well as the Register of Community Board Budget Requests documents are available from the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) publications,⁹ whereas the detailed documentation on the allocation of Schedule C Discretionary Funds could be retrieved through the City Council's budget publications.¹⁰ The City Council also provides copies of the reports on the Executive Budget and the Preliminary Budget by the Council and individual city agencies. Additionally, tabular data on the expense budget (through FY20 at time of writing) and discretionary funds (through FY19 at time of writing) are available from NYC Open Data.¹¹ The New York City's Office of the Comptroller, through its Checkbook NYC¹² platform, also provides a wide variety of valuable tabular data on the city's budget, revenue, spending, contracts, and payroll from FY11 through FY20.

To gain a deeper understanding of how food is featured in the city budget and how food-system related budget allocations varied between FY19 and FY20, one can explore the above-listed resources by devising a search strategy for each. For the purposes of this report, a list of relevant keywords that cover the six food policy goal categories outlined in the Institute's report *Food Policy in New York City Since 2008: Lessons for the Next Decade*¹³ were compiled and used as a guide to inform targeted searches in each document (See Appendices for complete list of the keywords used). The goals are as follows: improve nutritional well-being, promote food security, create food systems that support economic and community development, ensure a sustainable food system, support food workers, and strengthen food governance and food democracy.

Expense, Revenue, Contract Budget. The expense budget spreadsheet available through NYC Open Data can be filtered by publications data so that data for FY20 and FY19 are included. The document is especially useful for line items that are presented only in the aggregate in the adopted budget document on OMB's website and thus it is hard to discern the food systems-related component in them without it. Database searches can be run by first filtering items by "Object Code Name" and selecting "Food & Forage Supplies" and "Direct Operations." The latter is a unique object code name that applies only to School Food Services. In addition to those items, one can filter the records by "Budget Code Name" using the select food-systems related keywords, in our case based on the food

policy goals areas noted in our report on the last 10 years of food policy in NYC. Because of partial overlap between the two searches, one could create two separate tables and filter out “Food & Forage supplies” from the food-system related entries in the first based on “budget code name” and then join the two tables based on the common field “agency name.”

The final outcome of this search strategy is presented in the findings section and the Appendices (See table titled *Food-systems related items in the FY19 & FY20 NYC Expense, Revenue, Contract Budget summarized by City Agency and type of expense*). Duplicates due to typos were unified as a single record and the amounts were added up. The extraction of the food system specific items in the budget documents allows us to compare budget allocations of the adopted FY19, modified FY19, and adopted FY20 city budgets. While actual spending is available only through Checkbook NYC, the modified expense budget provides an indication of changes in approved planned allocations made based on how spending was progressing throughout the fiscal year. To obtain the actual amount spent one could perform a follow-up search in Checkbook NYC by department, then budget tab, then expense category filter (= Object Code Name from NYC Open Data Expense .csv) and then Budget Code (= Budget Code Number from NYC Open Data Expense .csv).

City Council reports on each city agency Fiscal Year 2020 Executive budgets can be used to find explanation for the funding decisions. And, then, an inductive method of analyzing data can be used to formulate further explanations of observed changes.

4. Findings: FY19 & FY20

4.1 Expense, Revenue, and Contract Budget

Overall, when compared to the total city budget, public food spending constitutes a small fraction – about 1%, of the entire city budget. This is consistent with the current food system regime whereby food systems governance is primarily left to the private sector. Nonetheless, in New York City, municipal spending on food-related activities totals more than \$980 million in FY20. Moreover, the analysis of the adopted expense, revenue, and contract budgets of the City shows that allocated funding for food systems-related initiatives, has, in the aggregate, increased by about \$25.9 million (see Table 1).

This increase is slightly higher than the FY19 modified budget amount, representing the most recent approved surplus spending in the budget for that year. Thus, the increased food funds are a positive sign of the city’s recognition of food systems as part of the public domain. It is also a signal that concrete efforts to increase food system-related budget allocations are being made to meet demand for social, health, ecological, labor, and economic services that community food systems provide.

Table 1. The share of food-systems related budget in the total Adopted City Budget for FY19 and FY20.

Budget Amount Considered	FY19 Adopted Budget Amount FY19 AB	FY19 Current Modified Budget Amount FY19 CMB	FY20 Adopted Budget FY20 AB	Difference FY19 CMB - FY19 AB	Difference FY20 AB - FY19 AB
Grand Total - City Budget	\$90,980,708,852	\$96,090,861,331	\$94,589,011,212	\$5,110,152,479	\$3,608,302,360
Grand Total - Food-system items in City Budget	\$934,977,967	\$964,277,348**	\$976,612,150	\$29,299,381	\$41,634,183
Food-system items as percent of City Budget	1.028%	1.004%	1.032%	-	-

Source: The New York City [Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2020: Expense, Revenue, and Contract](#), NYC Open Data available [Expense Budget \(FY19-20\)](#), and [Checkbook NYC](#)

Analysis of the breakdown of the food system items in the adopted FY20 City budget by city agency indicates that the top 5 city agencies that currently distribute municipal food-system funding are the Department of Education (DOE), the Department for the Ageing (DFTA), the Department of Social Services (DSS) / Human Resources Administration (HRA), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), and the Department of Correction (DOC).** These are consistent between fiscal years (see Figures 2 and 3).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, NYC Department of Education (DOE) leads by food allocations in both fiscal years with more than \$579 million, or about 60%, of the entire adopted food-related budget devoted to its food operations including food supplies (\$274 million), Office of School Food and Nutrition Services (\$7.5 million), and direct field operations related to food procurement (\$297 million) and the distribution of 940 thousand meals per day. For a detailed breakdown of each food-related expense category by agency see Table 2. For the breakdown of each specific food-system related item, please see the Appendices section of this report.

Contracts for Congregate Meals and Kitchen Staff salaries at senior centers (est. \$88.1M^{§§}), Home Delivered Meals for seniors (\$41.9M), and City Meals on Wheels administration (\$2.6M) are key food-related programs in the city budget for DFTA.

** Part of the current modified budget amount reflects also estimates based on spending data from Checkbook NYC and public documents provided by the single agencies and City Council for some of the programs that were not directly identifiable from the documentation and tabular data on the available adopted budget.

** For the purposes of this report, allocations to NYC’s Department of Sanitation were limited to compost and organic waste collection and management. Funding for citywide recycling and solid waste were excluded as it is hard to discern what portion of the funding specifically supports the management of food-related components in the city’s solid waste stream.

§§ This is an estimated amount based on the analysis of the DFTA Spending data for FY19, available through Checkbook NYC. Spending data for FY19 shows that there are about \$78,101,132 spent for congregate meals/lunches and social

Figure 2. Top 20 City Agencies by food-system related budget items in FY20 Adopted Budget. Percentages indicate each agency's share of total food-system related allocations for FY20. Source: Elaboration based on NYC Open Data – Expense Budget (FY19-20)

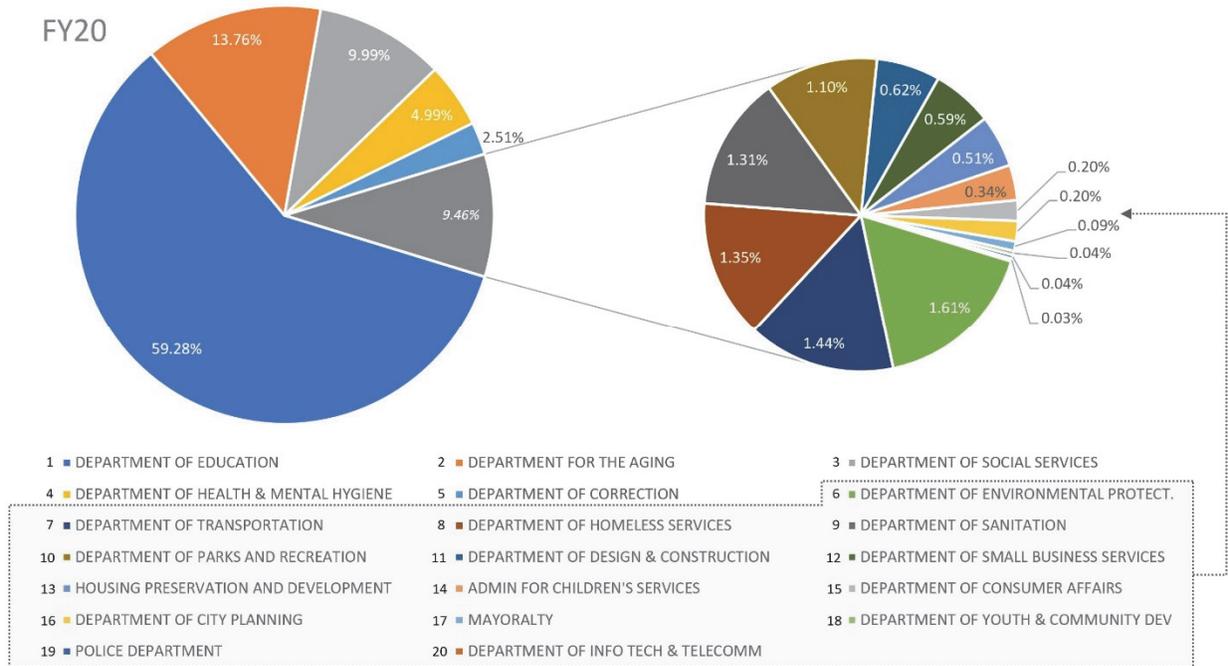
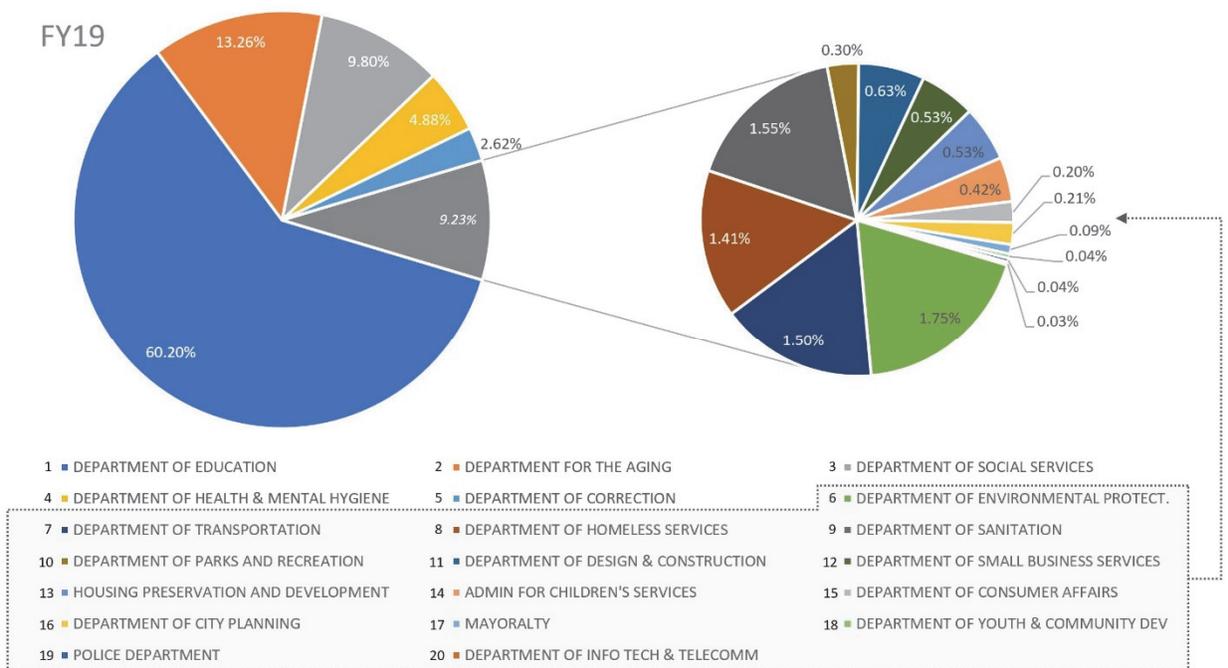


Figure 3. Top 20 City Agencies by food-system related budget items in FY19 Adopted Budget Amount. Percentages indicate each agency's share of total food-system related allocations for FY19. Data source: Elaboration based on NYC Open Data – Expense Budget (FY19-20)



services for older adults. These funds are not directly identifiable in the publicly available datasets on the adopted budgets as they are included under an aggregate budget line. As spending for FY20 is still ongoing, to estimate the FY20 budget amount for this program, the additional \$10 million in baselined funding negotiated by the City Council for the program were added to the FY19 spending amount (see New York City Council, Schedule C, June 19, 2019).

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Table 2. The share of food systems related budget of total adopted budget for FY19 and FY20 for the Top 20 city agencies by food system allocations for FY20.

Note: FY20 cells highlighted in red present instances when the difference between FY20-FY19 is a negative value; in green, when the difference is a positive value; in grey, when there is no difference.

Agency name	Food Systems in FY19 Adopted Budget	Food Systems in FY20 Adopted Budget	Total FY19 Adopted Budget	Total FY20 Adopted Budget	Food as % of FY19	Food as % of FY20
	FY19 AB	FY20 AB				
1. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	\$562,594,993	\$578,753,572	\$25,593,169,788	\$27,232,438,499	2.20%	2.13%
2. DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING	Est. \$123,940,311	Est. \$134,353,009	\$385,594,123	\$419,063,145	Est. 32.14%	Est. 32.06%
3. DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES	\$91,601,510	\$97,558,303	\$10,067,989,775	\$10,256,994,364	0.91%	0.95%
4. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & MENTAL HYGIENE	\$45,635,076	\$48,695,631	\$1,678,737,224	\$1,724,452,764	2.72%	2.82%
5. DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION	\$24,450,646	\$24,517,245	\$1,403,725,024	\$1,359,431,387	1.74%	1.80%
6. DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECT.	\$16,336,000	\$15,679,174	\$1,387,858,102	\$1,370,303,987	1.18%	1.14%
7. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION	\$14,033,139	\$14,060,911	\$1,042,719,292	\$1,104,236,297	1.35%	1.27%
8. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES	\$13,213,007	\$13,213,007	\$2,061,776,470	\$2,119,479,343	0.64%	0.62%
9. DEPARTMENT OF SANITATION	\$14,503,854	\$12,773,021	\$1,743,098,915	\$1,775,853,279	0.83%	0.72%
10. DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION	\$2,799,449	\$10,724,278	\$534,070,443	\$587,220,032	0.52%	1.83%
11. DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION	\$5,891,151	\$6,053,484	\$162,277,733	\$190,517,202	3.63%	3.18%
12. DEPARTMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES	\$4,986,128	\$5,781,779	\$284,865,754	\$236,178,076	1.75%	2.45%
13. HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT	\$4,935,166	\$4,957,610	\$1,139,828,678	\$1,018,399,521	0.43%	0.49%
14. ADMIN FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES	\$3,955,235	\$3,354,537	\$2,971,704,535	\$2,690,417,661	0.13%	0.12%
15. DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS	\$1,866,502	\$1,953,002	\$42,827,165	\$43,346,300	4.36%	4.51%
16. DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING	\$1,943,111	\$1,929,725	\$52,025,726	\$51,318,387	3.73%	3.76%
17. MAYORALTY	\$839,367	\$918,306	\$140,125,012	\$168,373,357	0.60%	0.55%
18. DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH & COMMUNITY DEV	\$375,500	\$389,464	\$872,141,197	\$955,851,872	0.04%	0.04%
19. POLICE DEPARTMENT	\$360,809	\$359,809	\$5,595,282,792	\$5,606,475,364	0.01%	0.01%
20. DEPARTMENT OF INFO TECH & TELECOMM	\$251,809	\$251,809	\$666,683,827	\$684,516,923	0.04%	0.04%

Data source: NYC Open Data – [Expense Budget \(FY19-20\)](#), [Checkbook NYC \(FY20\)](#)

Other large programs are DSS's Food Stamps/SNAP operations (\$76.7M) and its Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) (\$20.9M^{***}). The largest share of DOHMH's food related spending goes to its Food Safety programs (\$16.5M). Among the key food access and healthy nutrition initiatives is Eat Well Play Hard in childcare settings (\$1.5M). Lastly, the Department of Correction's total budget allocation for food supply and nutritional services (\$24.5M) places it among the top 5 city agencies in food-system related expenses.

It is important to note that there are revenue streams associated with some of the programs listed above. For instance, expenditures on SNAP administration are a cost, but they enable New Yorkers to receive federal benefits which have a 1.5 economic multiplier.

Compared to FY19, total funding for food-system spending increased by \$41.4 million in the FY20 budget. Largest departmental increases in for FY20 year are +\$16.1M for DOE, of which +\$13M was for School Food Service, +\$10.4M for DFTA, of which \$10M are in baselined funding for congregate meals and kitchen staff, the +\$7.8M^{†††} for DPR for GreenThumb, and DSS/HRA's Food stamps (+\$2.7M) and SNAP Bonus Award (+\$2.4M). The additional funding for DPR, reflects the data included in the modified FY20 budget, where it is explicitly allocated to GreenThumb for the maintenance of the city's 500+ community gardens. Actual spending throughout the rest of the fiscal year may differ based on changes in projected needs and other factors.

Among the programs that saw the most dramatic decreases in budget allocations are the DSNY (-\$1.7M) for its composting and organics processing program and ACS (-\$1.5M) for the Head Start health and safety compliance (PS/staff expenses), which includes food safety for the spaces where food is handled on site. The decrease in DSNY funding is likely related to the \$5M savings in FY19 and the limited participation in the pilot organics collection program, whereas the decrease in ACS's Head Start funding can be attributed to the transfer of oversight of Head Start from ACS to DOE.

Programs whose budget has remained the same for FY20 include the food procurement allocation of the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) (\$13.2M), three of DOHMH/Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) Obesity Task Force Programs (I/C, Kids in Motion, Shape Up) (\$1M), the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Food Business Pathways Program (\$130k), the DSS/HRA Mayor's Office of Food Policy (\$75k), and DPR's compost facility (\$19k).

^{***} This amount reflects adopted FY20 budget items with Budget Code Name "Emergency Food Assistance" and Unit of Appropriation name "Adult Services – OTPS." The actual amount toward the program might differ (e.g., see New York City Council Growing Food Equity in NYC Report, 2019).

^{†††} This amount reflects the information provided in the most recent modified FY20 budget where a new "Greenthumb Proj" budget line, with budget codes 6893 and 2821, includes a projected spending for about \$7,789,014.00 for Maintenance & Operations (OTPS and PS).

4.2 Schedule C Discretionary Funding and Council Districts

An analysis of the breakdown of discretionary funding (Schedule C) provided by City Council to community organizations for FY20, indicates that these funds add about \$16 million for food system-related programs to the city’s FY20 funds for food systems – from urban farming, to emergency food assistance, healthy food access, nutrition education, and food waste management (See Table 3).

While level of detail of the publicly available data between the two years varies between FY20 and FY19, with FY19 being less detailed, it is possible to compare the funding for food-systems related programs for a subset of the Schedule C initiatives. These initiatives include the Schedule C sections pertaining to food, anti-poverty, education, higher education, youth, culture, aging, local projects, boroughwide needs, and the Speaker’s initiative. With a few exceptions most food-related funding increased in FY20. Considered in the aggregate, City Council funding for those initiatives increased for FY20 by more than \$140 thousand dollars.

Table 3. Distribution of City Council Discretionary Funding for Food System Related Programs by Type, FY19 and FY20

Type of City Council Schedule C Initiative	Food-System Related Programs FY19 Schedule C Amount	Food-System Related Programs FY20 Schedule C Amount
Food Initiatives	\$7,380,000.00	\$8,642,750.00
Appendix B: Local Initiatives	\$1,782,291.00	\$2,033,000.00
Speaker's Initiative	\$2,505,000.00	\$1,185,000.00
Anti-Poverty	\$683,750.00	\$744,500.00
Appendix A: Aging Discretionary	\$1,003,325.00	\$568,125.00
Boroughwide Needs	\$241,190.00	\$267,278.00
Higher Education Initiatives	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00
Education	<i>No food-related items</i>	\$250,000.00
Appendix C: Youth Discretionary	\$54,500.00	\$80,500.00
Cultural Organizations	<i>No food-related items</i>	\$20,000.00
Total:	\$13,900,056.00	\$14,041,153.00
Senior Services	<i>Food in aggregate data: \$10,533,774.00</i>	<i>Food in aggregate data: \$12,833,444.00</i>
	<i>Food only: n/a</i>	<i>Food only: \$1,328,583.00</i>
Environmental Initiatives	<i>Funds allocated after adoption</i>	\$555,248.00
Parks and Recreation	<i>Funds allocated after adoption</i>	\$173,000.00
Grand Total	n/a	\$16,097,984.00

Data source: New York City Council. Budget – Schedule C. Accessed at: <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/schedule-c/>

The food initiatives category of the Schedule C budget increased by \$1.3 million from FY19 to FY20. A major reason for this increase is the \$1 million to support a pilot program at CUNY aimed to increase food access to food insecure students. Overall, in FY20, the food initiative funding was about 50% of the total City Council funding allocated food-related activities indicating its importance but also that food-systems related Schedule C budget is integrated across many of the other initiatives and, thus, it is important to take them into consideration when examining the state of food system support in the city’s budget.

4.3 Community Board Budget Requests

Overall, for FY20, more than 200 community board budget requests focused on food system related matters, which represent about 6% of all community board budget requests included in the register for the current fiscal year.¹⁴ Of these the largest number focused on health and nutrition, food security, and environmental sustainability with an emphasis on waste management and pest control. Local food economies and improving the conditions of food workers were the food policy areas least addressed in FY20’s requests (Table 4).

Table 4. Number of Food-system related Community Board Budget Requests.

Food system theme ^{##}	FY19 Themes Number of Requests	FY20 Themes Number of Requests	%FY19	%FY20
Improve nutritional well-being	74	75	35%	37%
Ensure sustainable food systems	73	66	35%	33%
Promote food security	45	45	21%	22%
Create food systems that support economic & community development	15	13	7%	6%
Support food workers	3	4	1%	2%
Grand Total	210	203	100%	100%

Data source: NYC Open Data. Register of Community Board Budget Requests. Updated June 27, 2019. Accessed at: <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/Register-of-Community-Board-Budget-Requests/vn4m-mk4t>

^{##} Themes based on Freudenberg N, Cohen N, Poppendieck J, Willingham C. *Food Policy in New York City Since 2008: Lessons for the Next Decade*. New York: CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy, 2018. <https://www.cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/news/2018/2/16/food-policy-in-new-york-city-since-2008-lessons-for-the-next-decade>

Table 5. Food-system related Community Board Budget Requests and Agency Responses.

Agency Response	FY19 - Number of food requests with response	FY19 - Percent of requests with this response	FY20 - Number of food requests with response	FY20 - Percent of requests with this response
Will be funded / Already funded	35	17%	37	18%
Partially funded	3	1%	10	5%
Already doing similar projects / Subject to funds availability	56	27%	46	23%
Further study needed	81	39%	70	34%
Insufficient funds / Outside jurisdiction / Discouraged	35	17%	40	20%
Grand Total	210	100%	203	100%

Figure 4. Community Board Budget Requests by food policy theme and Agency Response for FY20.

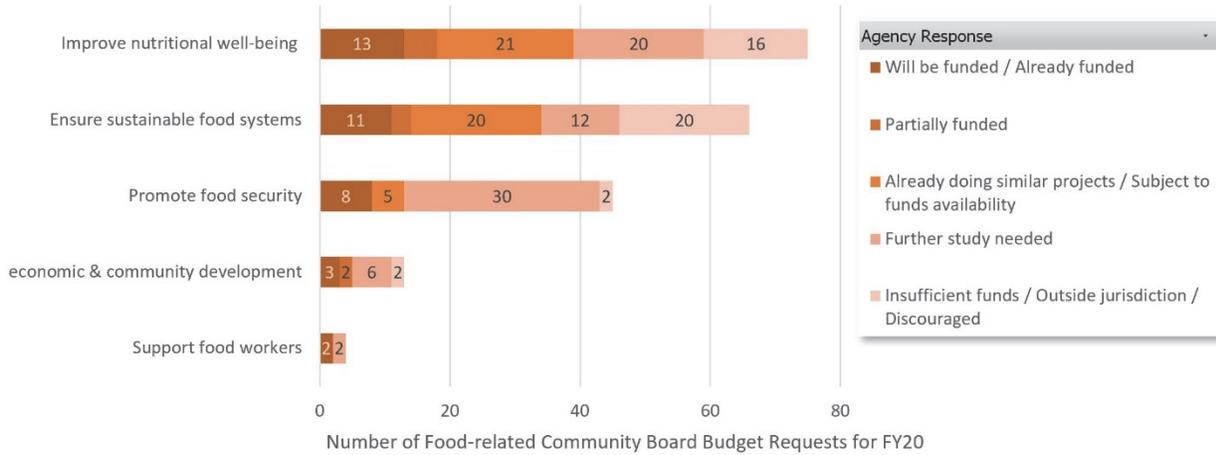


Figure 5. Community Board Budget Requests by food policy theme and Agency Response for FY19.

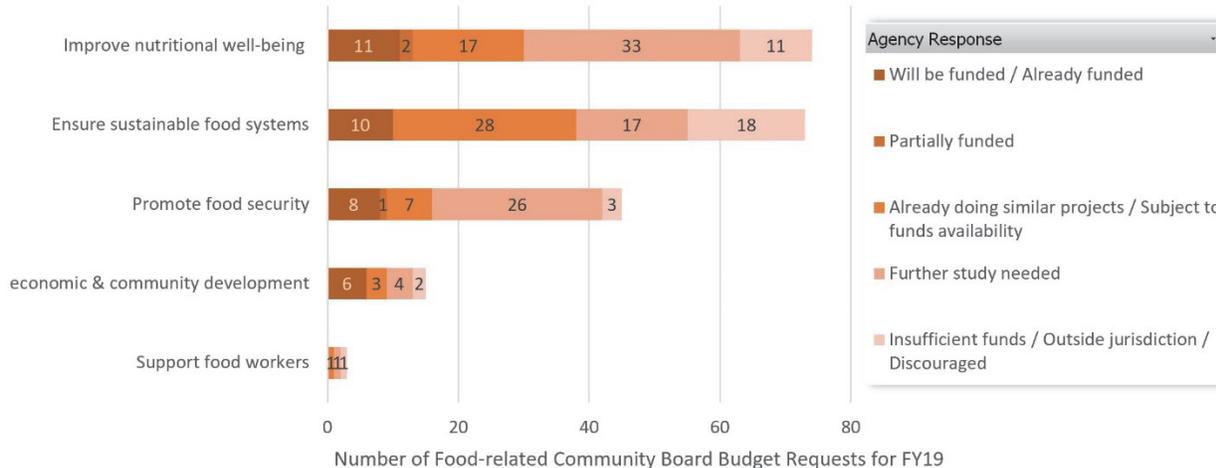


Figure 6. Community Board Budget Requests by Responsible Agency for FY20.

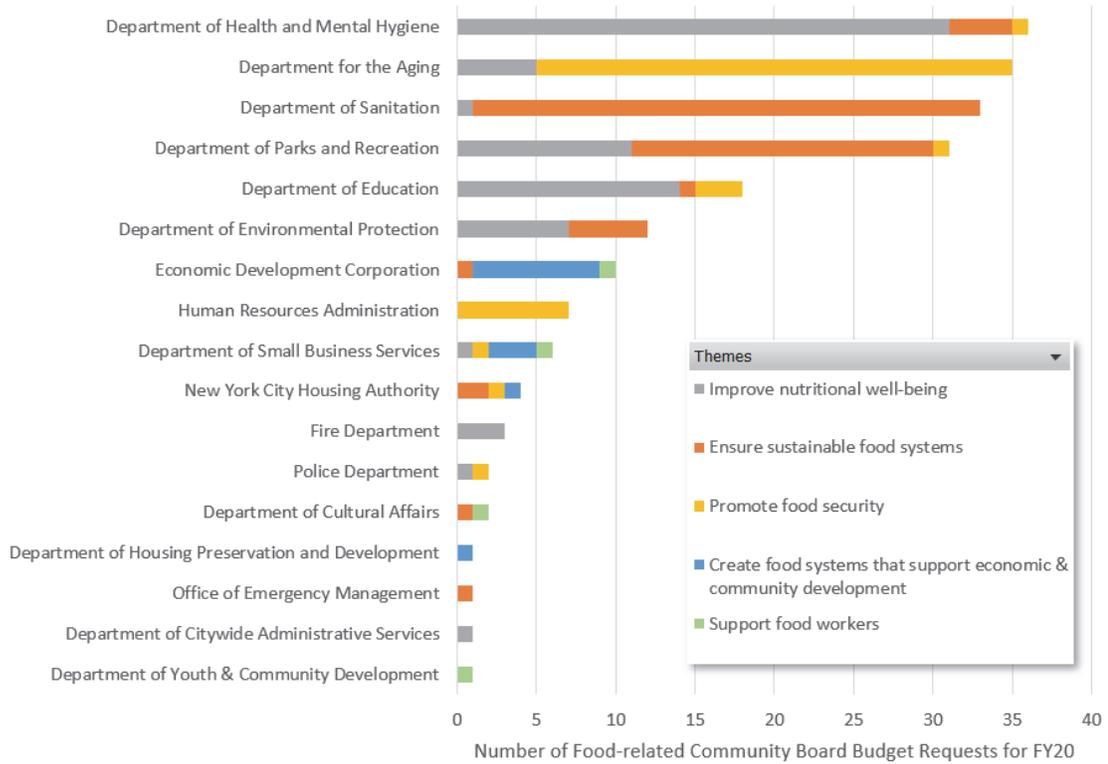
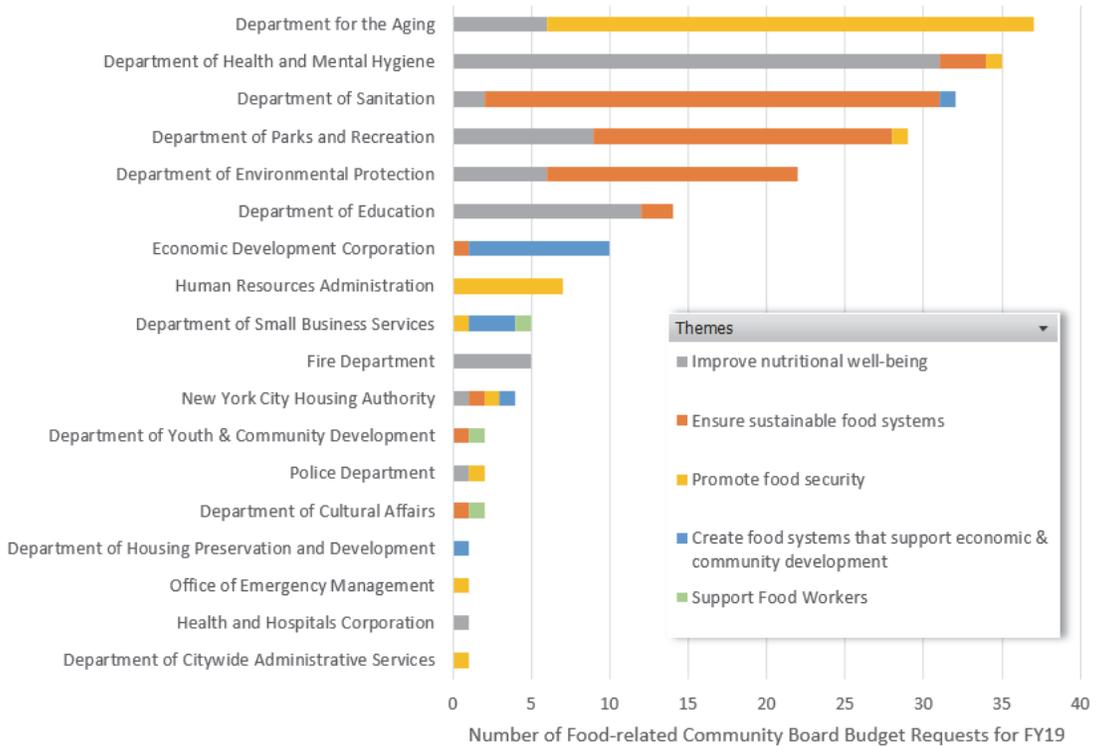


Figure 7. Community Board Budget Requests by Responsible Agency for FY19.



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Comparing community board food systems-related budget requests across districts (see Appendix for detailed data), community boards with the highest number of requests for FY20 are Brooklyn CD 13 (Coney Island), Brooklyn CD 5 (East New York and Starrett City) and Queens CD 5 (Ridgewood and Maspeth). The top 2 are consistent with FY19 ranks though in reversed order, whereas the third CD with most requests for that year was Brooklyn CD 15 (Sheepshead Bay). Among these requests pertaining to improving nutritional wellbeing and the environmental sustainability of the community food environment were the highest.

An important question is whether and to what extent the number of budget requests from a given community district reflect the actual number or magnitude of problems faced on the ground. For instance, according to the Community Health Profiles (2018),¹⁵ the three worst performing community districts in terms of obesity are Mott Haven and Melrose, Hunts Point and Longwood, and Brownsville, whereas the three worst performing community districts in terms of healthy food access (bodega/supermarkets ratio) are Bedford Stuyvesant, Sunset Park, and Belmont and East Tremont. Yet, these are not the community districts where the highest number of requests related to improving nutritional well-being were concentrated in FY19 and FY20. Top CB on this topic for FY20 was Upper East Side in Manhattan and for FY19 top community district by number of requests was Park Slope and Carroll Gardens in Brooklyn. These findings suggest that better off communities may make more requests for food-related activities than communities facing a wider variety of deeper problems.

A similar pattern can be seen from a review of poverty and food insecurity-related budget requests. According to the most recent Community Health Profiles, cited above, the poorest community districts are Fordham and University Heights, Highbridge and Concourse, Morrisania and Crotona, and Belmont and East Tremont. Yet, none of these are among the top CDs voicing the highest need for food-security related projects. The top places with the highest number of requests on this theme in FY19 were Coney Island and Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn, whereas in FY20 the top requestor was Sheepshead Bay.

These findings indicate that more can be done to ensure that those most affected by current inefficiencies and injustices in the urban food system have access to the participatory channels available to communities. Yet, it is also true that given the low rate of positive responses on the expressed requests given by the responsible agencies this channel may have been neglected by community food advocates. Schedule C discretionary funding as well as changes to baseline allocations in the city adopted budget seem to offer more ample and concrete opportunities to affect funding for food security and other key food policy issues.

5. Conclusions

The findings of this budget scan have implications for public health scholars interested in better understanding the link between health/food budget allocations, policies, and opportunities for food systems change as well as advocates, practitioners and policymakers engaged in crafting budget campaigns or proposals, and related legislation, in their communities.

Our analysis also indicates that more can be done to make the publicly available information on the city budget more detailed and amenable to thematic analyses of public spending on different vital urban systems, including the food system. For instance, devising explicit budget code names for the food programs currently present only in the aggregate as part of larger departmental allocations in the adopted budget, would be a useful step for food systems governance going forward. Additionally, it would be valuable to include budget-related analyses and monitoring in the City's annual Food Metrics Report which is key to building food systems planning capacity at the city level.

As the New York City Council and the Mayor consider how to revitalize New York City's food policy for the next decade, making informed decisions on spending public money on food policies and programs will have a decisive impact on the city's success in achieving its goals. This report enables key constituencies to make more informed decisions.

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¹⁴ NYC Open Data. *Register of Community Board Budget Requests*. Updated June 27, 2019. Accessed at: <https://data.cityofnewyork.us/City-Government/Register-of-Community-Board-Budget-Requests/vn4m-mk4t>

¹⁵ NYC DOHMH. New York City Community Health Profiles 2018 Map Atlas. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/about/press/pr2019/2018-community-health-profiles.page>