

Food Spending and Government Budgets: Prospects for 2024



About the Guest Speakers and Moderator

Guest Speakers



Cassandra Stewart is a Budget and Policy Analyst at the New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO), where she analyzes and reports on NYC's healthcare spending to make the City budget more accessible and transparent. Cassandra believes part of what constitutes a healthy life is an

environment that offers the resources necessary for an individual's physical and mental well-being to thrive. As such, she is happy to contribute to policy conversations regarding the health and welfare of New Yorkers. Prior to joining IBO, Cassandra earned master's degrees in public health and business administration from Drexel University. She also holds a bachelor's degree in biology from Rutgers University. Cassandra previously worked in the public health space, specifically in the areas of epidemiologic research, environmental research, and clinical research.



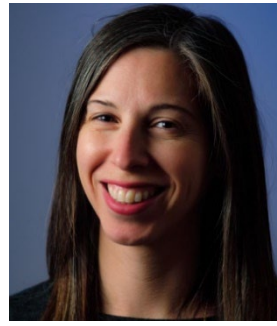
Kelly Quintero is a first-generation American, born to Colombian immigrants. She is the Policy Director on the Government Relations team. She oversees state policy engagement with a focus on SNAP and other nutrition assistance programs at a state

level, working closely with Feeding America network members. Prior to Feeding America, she was the Director of Advocacy & Government Relations for Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida and has also previously worked at all levels of government. Kelly received her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Central Florida and a Public Policy Analysis Certificate from the London School of Economics & Political Science. She is a 2018 recipient of the Orlando Business Journal's 40 Under 40 Award and was recognized as one of 2021 University of Central Florida's 30 Under 30. She is based in Washington, D.C., alongside her husband and two cats.



Jacob Berman is the Assistant Director for the Social and Community Services team at the New York City Independent Budget Office. Previously, Jacob was an analyst in the Mayor's Office Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI).

At CIDI, Jacob conducted big data research and policy projects spanning New York City's health and human services agencies. Jacob also has previous experience at Everytown for Gun Safety and the Police Executive Research Forum in Washington DC. Jacob earned a master's in public administration from New York University and a B.A. from the University of Maryland, College Park.



Leah Kabran Eden is the Executive Director of Equity Advocates, a New York-based nonprofit she co-founded in 2019 with a mission to fight the root causes of food inequity through policy and systems change. Leah uses her decade of experience as an organizer and policy analyst in

New York to advance policy and systems change within the food system as a key mechanism to address the underlying causes of poverty and inequality. Prior to Equity Advocates, she served as a Policy Specialist at the United Way of New York City, building a policy portfolio around food security, asset building, and educational equity. Leah also led UWNYP's 2018 Self-Sufficiency Standard for New York City research, documenting what it takes to make ends meet in NYC using a more accurate alternative to the official poverty measure. As the Director of Food Policy for NYC Council Member Ben Kallos, she developed and advanced a progressive food policy agenda including increased access to healthy food, school meals, and nutrition. While completing her master's, Leah worked at Wholesome Wave, a national food access nonprofit, where she educated and mobilized 60+ partners on food policy issues and helped to secure a \$3.77 million Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grant from the USDA. Leah holds an MA in Food Systems with an emphasis on food and agriculture policy from New York University and a BA in Cultural Anthropology from Boston University.



James Parrott is the Director of Economic and Fiscal Policies at the Center for NYC Affairs at The New School. He is a labor economist who has focused on labor standards and pay equity and has written extensively on New York's social insurance programs and the effects of

higher minimum wages. For the past two decades, Parrott has consistently touted the importance of the nonprofit sector and his analyses made the case for the urgent need to raise pay for human services workers. As part of his work on gig workers, he worked with the cities of New York and Seattle to establish minimum compensation standards for well over 100,000 Uber and Lyft drivers, the first government-authorized pay standards for independent contractor gig workers in the U.S. In previous positions, he worked for the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the City and State of New York, and the independent Fiscal Policy Institute. Parrott was a member of the Advisory Commission on New York City Property Tax Reform and issued recommendations for far-reaching reforms to address long-standing tax inequities. He has a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His recent reports can be found at: <http://www.centrernyc.org/reports>



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Moderator



Nicholas Freudenberg is a Founding Director and Senior Faculty Fellow with the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, and Distinguished Professor of Public Health at the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health & Health Policy. His research and scholarship focus on diet-related chronic diseases, urban health, the evaluation of complex urban interventions, and the role of the food industry in health and disease. For 30 years he has assisted NYC organizations to plan, implement, and evaluate policies, programs, and advocacy campaigns to improve community health and reduce health inequities, and he was the co-founder, with Janet Poppendieck, of the NYC Food Policy Center at Hunter College.

About the forum:

In the coming weeks, the city, and federal governments will be formulating, debating, and voting on their budgets for the next fiscal year. The budget decisions that legislators, Mayors, Governors, and the President make will influence many aspects of our lives, including spending on public food benefits, food security, nutrition programs, institutional food, and regulation of the food industry. This forum provides an overview of the food-related decisions and the opportunities for advocacy. After a panel discussion, participants will have an opportunity for Q and A with panelists.

Additional Resources:

NYC Independent Budget Office (IBO), *The Road to Adopting New York City's Budget*, <https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/IBORoadmap.pdf>

NYC Independent Budget Office (IBO), *Understanding New York City's Budget: A Guide*, <https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/understandingthebudget.pdf>

NYC Independent Budget Office (IBO), *A Guide to the Capital Budget*, <https://ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/capital-budget-guide-2018.pdf>

Cassandra Stuart (2023). *Food for Thought: Recent Trends in City Council-funded Allocations for Food for New Yorkers*, New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO), <https://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/food-for-thought-recent-trends-in-city-council-funded-allocations-for-food-for-new-yorkers-november-2023.html>

James A. Parrott and **George Sweeting** (2024), *New York's 2024 Economic and Budget Outlook: Post-Pandemic Reckoning for the City and the State*, Center for New York City Affairs, The New School, <https://www.centernyc.org/reports-briefs/new-yorks-2024-economic-and-budget-outlook-post-pandemic-reckoning-for-the-city-and-the-state>

Make the 2023 Farm Bill a Racial Justice Bill, A New York State Farm Bill Campaign led by **Black Farmers United, Equity Advocates, and Food for the Spirit**, https://drive.google.com/file/d/10IT_cvc57FLoW8V_gbbPjVI3_y_oPmlB/view

Equity Advocates, *Increase the SNAP Minimum Benefit in the FY25 State Budget*, <https://www.nyequityadvocates.org/snapminbenefit>

Feeding America (2023) *Elevating Voices: Insights Report*, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/2023ElevatingVoices.pdf>

Feeding America (2023) *Fact Sheet: 2023 Farm Bill*, https://feedingamericaaction.org/wp-content/uploads/Resource_2023-Farm-Bill-Fact-Sheet.pdf

Feeding America, *Take Action*, <https://feedingamericaaction.org/>

Ilieva R, Willingham C, Cohen N, Morgan A, Freudenberg N. (2019) *Food and the New York City Budget: A Review and Analysis of Municipal Budget Allocations in Fiscal Years 2019 and 2020*. CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute, <https://cunyurbanfoodpolicy.org/resources/report/food-and-the-new-york-city-budget/>