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**The City of New York Launches
COVID-19 Emergency Fresh Food Box Program
in Partnership with GrowNYC**

New York, NY – The City of New York announced today that it has partnered with non-profit GrowNYC on an Emergency Fresh Food Box program, connecting upstate farmers with downstate need and providing those New Yorkers struggling because of the COVID-19 pandemic with healthy food.

Part of the City's [Feeding New York](#) plan to put food into the hands of every New Yorker in need during the current crisis, the Emergency Fresh Food Box program will provide free boxes of farm fresh, nutrient dense, and culturally appropriate food to New Yorkers in some of the City's neighborhoods hit hardest by the pandemic.

Unemployment has increased dramatically, especially for workers who were formerly employed in service sectors, and the City estimates as many as 2 million New Yorkers may be facing food insecurity. In addition, more and more food outlets are closing, restricting hours, or reducing inventory. The lack of access to food has been intensified by social distancing requirements that make it impossible to operate many congregate meal outlets, and it requires new interventions, like the Emergency Fresh Food Box program, to be quickly deployed.

GrowNYC will deliver Emergency Fresh Food boxes to 25 community partners for distribution in high need populations, identified by the City, throughout the five boroughs. Thus far, the City is working with community partners in Melrose, Washington Heights, Howard Beach/South Ozone Park, Gravesend/Sheepshead Bay, Morris Park, North Shore Staten Island, Flushing, Jackson Heights, Eastchester, and Sunset Park. Each box will contain a variety of fruits and vegetables, two sources of protein, and two starches.

In addition to ensuring that no New Yorker goes hungry in the *Feeding New York* plan, the City is focused on building food system resilience. GrowNYC will source produce for the Emergency Fresh Food Boxes from regional farmers through their Food Hub in the Bronx, as well as tropical and other produce varieties from wholesale partners in the region.

"We're starting up an incredible operation to ensure no New Yorker goes hungry, from nearly 500 DOE Grab & Go sites to 3.5 million emergency home meal deliveries – and counting. These Emergency Fresh Food Boxes are an important addition to the City's commitment during this crisis, providing fresh, health options to neighborhoods in need," said Kathryn Garcia, New York City Department of Sanitation Commissioner and the City's COVID-19 Food Czar.

"The Emergency Fresh Food Box program is life line for my constituents, many of whom have been hit hard by the pandemic," said NYC Council Finance Chair Daniel Dromm. "Because of financial hardship, physical disabilities and other reasons, many New Yorkers lack access to fresh, healthy food. The Emergency Fresh Food Box program will help overcome the challenges these families are facing, and at the same time, will support struggling New York farmers. I commend GrowNYC and NYC COVID-19 Food Czar Kathryn Garcia for their efforts to aid the neediest of the neediest in our city."

"The significance of GrowNYC's long established work to provide every New Yorker with access to fresh and healthy local food while promoting and protecting regional agriculture has been made abundantly clear during the COVID pandemic," said GrowNYC President and CEO Marcel Van Ooyen. "We are grateful to work with city leaders like Mayor De Blasio and 'Food Czar' Katherine Garcia who recognize the inestimable importance of regional farmers in a stable and resilient food supply, and who truly care about the health and safety of residents in all corners of the City."

"Immigrant workers and families are facing an unprecedented crisis. Our community is in the epicenter of a nationwide crisis with little to no access to federal aid," said partner organization New Immigrant Community Empowerment (NICE). "These factors have made food insecurity a real and growing issue for our community and have moved NICE to launch a



rapid response effort to meet the immediate needs of our community, including our Food Access Initiative. Thankfully, we don't have to do it alone. The commitment and dedication of GrowNYC as our community partner is helping NICE provide nourishing food for our community and meet the growing demand for one of the most basic and important human needs. Through our partnership with GrowNYC, we're committed to mitigating hunger in our community in the short and long term."

GrowNYC would like to acknowledge the following for their generous support of our food access programs: The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Bank of America; FJC-A Foundation of Philanthropic Funds; NYC COVID 19 Response & Impact Fund in The New York Community Trust; Robin Hood, and the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service.