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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 8, 2017

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Hunger Solutions New York Releases Annual Report on Statewide School Breakfast Participation

ALBANY, NY – Hunger Solutions New York today released its annual statewide report on school breakfast participation, [*School Breakfast: Reducing Child Hunger, Bolstering Student Success.*](#)

Hunger is a constant reality for nearly one million children throughout the state. Mounting evidence shows that school breakfast plays a key role in supporting the well-being of children by alleviating food insecurity, and improving health and educational outcomes.

Each year, Hunger Solutions New York releases its report to raise awareness about the need for increased school breakfast access and to provide legislators, school administrators and food service directors with methods to achieve that goal.

The report, which includes participation statistics for New York State’s public schools, is based on data provided by the New York State Education Department. **Findings reveal that school breakfast continues to be underutilized across New York State. While there has been growth in the program, it has been offset by the increasing number of students who qualify to eat school breakfast for free or at a reduced price. In the 2015-2016 school year, fewer than one in three students who qualified to eat free or reduced-price breakfast participated in the School Breakfast Program.**

The School Breakfast Program is a federally-funded meal program for students in public, private, and residential child-care institutions. On the federal level, it is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service, and on the state level, by the New York State Education Department. The program enables schools to offer meals at free and reduced-price rates to children from low-income households and requires them to meet federal nutrition requirements.

Hunger Solutions New York’s school breakfast report includes state-level analysis of school breakfast participation as well as school district-level participation data. It identifies best practices for increasing breakfast participation, highlights successful school districts, and outlines action steps to broaden the reach of the School Breakfast Program, especially among low-income students.

New York State is among the lowest-performing states in reaching low-income National School Lunch Program participants with the School Breakfast Program. The state was ranked 42nd in the Food Research and Action Center’s [*School Breakfast Scorecard*](#) for the 2015-2016 school year.

A significant amount of federal funding is left on the table due to low school breakfast participation. In the 2015-2016 school year, only 45.88% of free and reduced-price lunch participants also ate school breakfast. **Low breakfast participation in New York State resulted in the forfeiture of more than \$71 million in federal reimbursements in the 2015-2016 school year alone.**

Interview opportunities: Jessica Pino-Goodspeed, lead report author, will speak about the report’s findings at 10 a.m. Thursday, March 9, at the American Dairy Association Northeast’s National School Breakfast Week celebration at The Cornerstone at the Plaza, Empire State Plaza, Albany. Pino-Goodspeed is also available for phone interviews.

Read Hunger Solutions New York's full report and see state- and district-level breakfast participation data [here](#).
Read the executive summary [here](#).

About Hunger Solutions New York, Inc. *Hunger Solutions New York is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to alleviating hunger. We promote awareness of hunger in communities across the state, awareness about programs that address hunger, full participation in hunger assistance programs for all who are eligible, public policies that contribute to ending hunger, and public awareness of the economic benefit of anti-hunger programs. For more information, visit www.HungerSolutionsNY.org.*