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# RELIEVING HUNGER TOGETHER

A WESTCHESTER TOWN HALL

THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 9 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.

# Who We Are



The Yonkers Family YMCA is committed to diversity and inclusion for all. We are focused on uplifting our community through the positive development of youth, promotion of healthy living, and fulfilling our social responsibility.



Our mission is to nourish our neighbors in the fight against hunger. We envision a community where all people have access to the food they need today, and the fundamental resources to build a better tomorrow. We source and distribute food across Westchester, working alongside 300 partners and programs.



Our mission is to enhance the lives of City of Yonkers residents aged 60 and over by providing support services.

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# Agenda

Working together toward a hunger-free future for all

- Discuss the current state of hunger in Westchester County
- Share insights from groundbreaking research
- Amplify the voices of our community
- Present ways to take action



Moderator – Lucria Ortiz, President & CEO, Yonkers Family YMCA  
 Kelly Chiarella, Assistant to the Mayor for Constituent Services, Office for the Aging, City of Yonkers  
 Karen C. Erren, President & CEO, Feeding Westchester  
 MaryAnn Watkins, Housing Advocate, Westchester Disabled on the Move

# **Westchester County: Current State of Hunger**





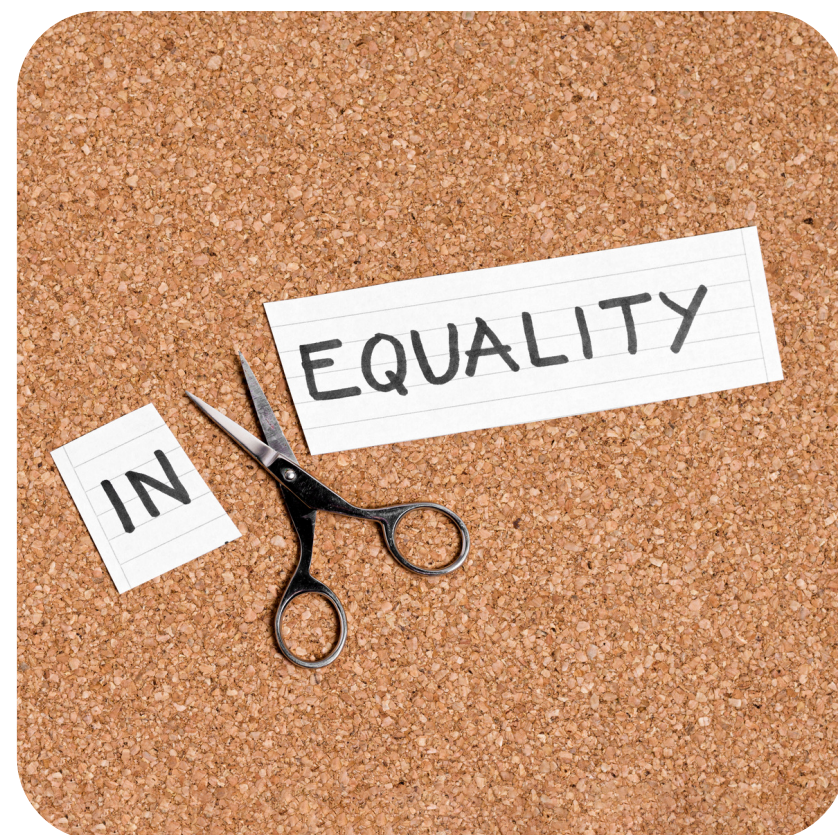
# 2 in 5 HOUSEHOLDS ARE AT RISK OF HUNGER\*

\*Includes HHs living below the Federal Poverty Level and Westchester households considered ALICE; both at risk of experiencing hunger.

- 2 in 5 households at risk of hunger in Westchester, one of the most affluent counties in the US
- The need for food assistance from our network more than doubled as a result of the pandemic
- We, alongside our partners, maintained that increased distribution volume, further exacerbated by cuts to SNAP and inflation
- Limited government food support expected to continue



# Facing a Supply and a Demand Crisis in Westchester



Systemic inequalities disproportionately affecting marginalized communities



Exorbitant cost of living made worse by inflation



Scarce affordable housing and transportation



Lack of access to nutritious foods





- What we are hearing from our community:
  - 66% said a food pantry is their main source of food
  - 44% skipped a meal because of not enough food
  - 50% are worried they and their family won't have enough to eat



Note: Community Needs Assessment findings were gathered over Summer 2021; we believe that these percentages would be higher if we polled the community today

# **Hunger Relief Systems Analysis Overview**



# FEEDING WESTCHESTER VISION

A community where all people have access to the food they need today, and the fundamental resources to build a better tomorrow.

## HEALTHY COMMUNITY

### 1. Understand Hunger

Achieve a more complete and confident understanding of hunger in Westchester County that allows us to focus on greatest needs, set ambitious goals, and track and report impact, while respecting our neighbors' interests and priorities.

### 2. Address Hunger

Meet our neighbors' food needs at the greatest possible scale, while developing innovative solutions to address challenges that have historically compromised dignity, accessibility, convenience, and quality.

### 3. Create Paths Out of Hunger

Strengthen and establish new connections to wraparound services — both in-house and at partner organizations — to combat systemic disadvantages and create pathways out of hunger.

## HEALTHY ORGANIZATION

### 4. Strengthen Culture

Invest in the knowledge and practices needed to include and support all staff, deepen collaboration, and pursue equity across the organization.

### 5. Strengthen Capacity

Develop the space, staffing, resources, and practices needed to achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan and operate sustainably at a larger scale.

# FEEDING WESTCHESTER EQUITY COMMITMENTS



# Hunger Relief Systems Analysis

- A groundbreaking, sophisticated initiative in collaboration with BCG that will **help make us stronger** in tackling the hunger crisis within our community
- Our exhaustive research **thoroughly analyzes the need, supply, and capacity** of the complex hunger relief system in Westchester
- **Empower our neighbors** by amplifying the perspectives of people with lived experiences and collaborate with them to drive meaningful change
- The outcome is a **comprehensive plan** to increase food access, decrease duplication of efforts, identify unmet needs and supply gaps, and uncover obstacles and opportunities to accessing food



# Quantitative and Qualitative Methods Used



- Partner Forum
- 2 Town Halls
- Working Sessions with Feeding Westchester Staff
- Interviews with other Food Banks
- Benchmarks and case studies from other Food Banks



# Key Questions to Answer for HRSA

## WHAT AND WHERE IS THE UNMET NEED?

- How is the at-risk population distributed across Westchester?
- What are the notable demographics and geographies?
- Where are the greatest gaps between supply and demand by neighborhood?
- What are the perspectives and experiences of our neighbors in need?

## WHERE IS THE SUPPLY?

- What is the current mix of food types and sources?
- What are the uncaptured sources of food?
- Are there feeding partners located near potential donors? How much space do they have and how many people could they serve?

## WHAT AND WHERE IS THE DISTRIBUTION CAPACITY?

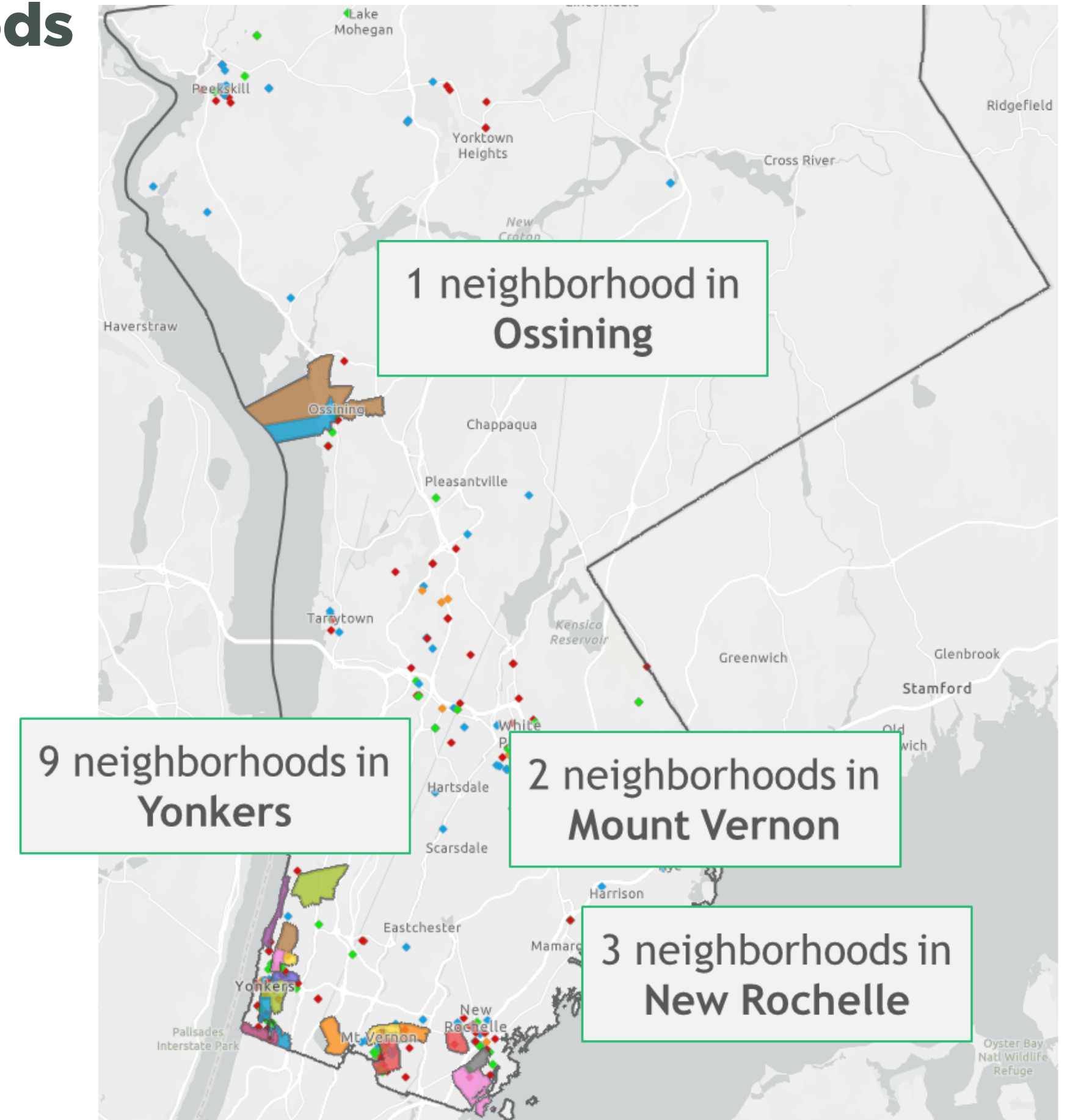
- How many feeding partners do we have and where?
- What is the capacity of our feeding partners?
- Are there neighborhoods where feeding partners overlap in coverage (day/time) or where coverage is insufficient?



# **Hunger Relief Systems Analysis Findings**

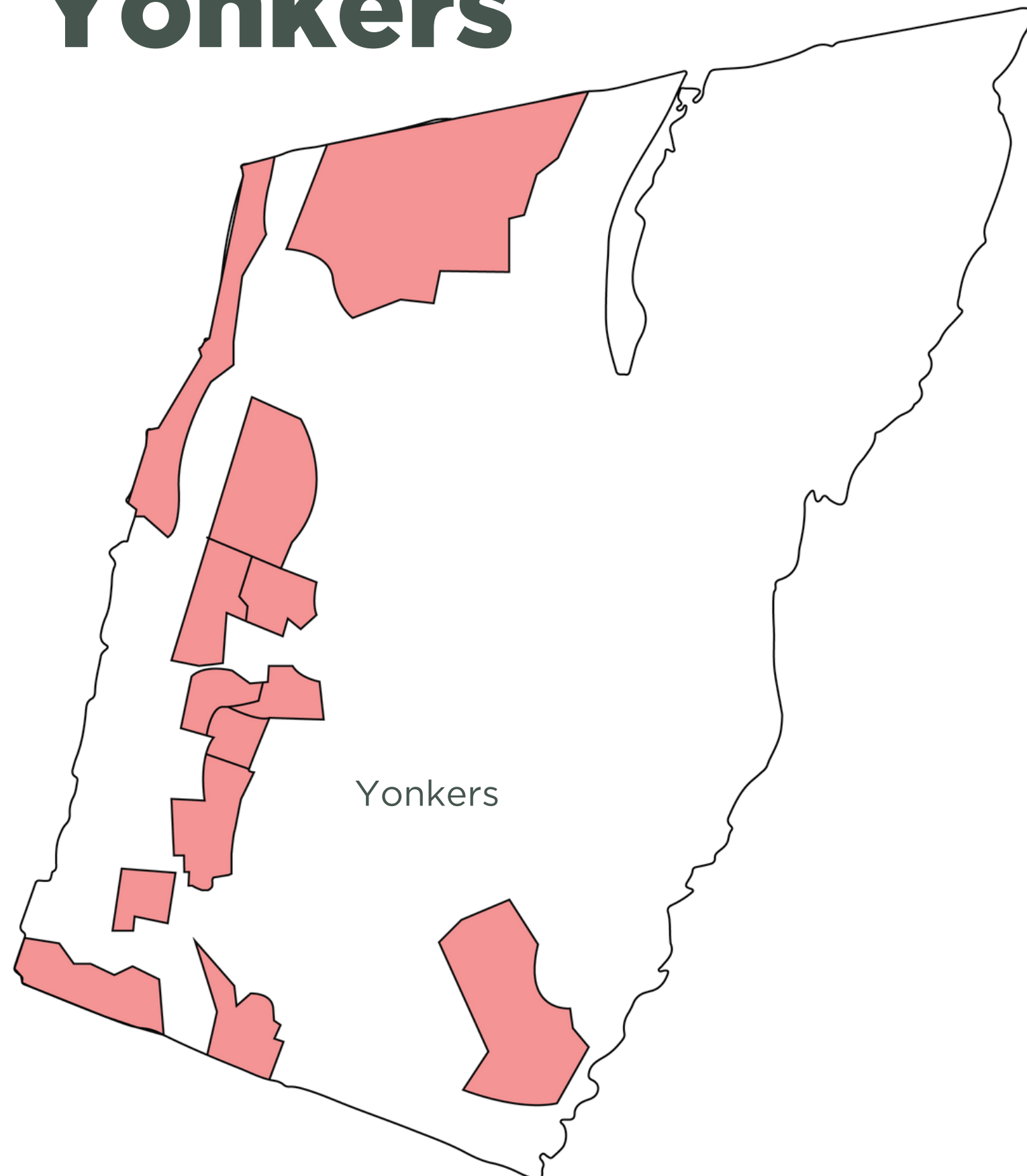
# 15 Highest Unmet Need Neighborhoods Concentrated in 4 Areas

- Threshold
  - Below poverty level
  - ALICE households
  - Social Vulnerability Index - the potential negative effects on communities caused by external stresses on human health
- Demographics/Health/Housing
  - Age
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Housing instability
  - Veterans
  - Rates of chronic health conditions
- Food Potential
  - Untapped food donation potential
  - Current and potential retail donors
  - Public transportation





# Highest Unmet Need Areas In Yonkers



## High Social Vulnerability:

- 0.77 (0.70 average)

## Low Meals per ALICE HH:

- 17.8 (120 average)

## Demographic Makeup:

- White 24%
- Hispanic: 51%
- Black: 19%

## \*Health Disparities:

- 7.6% w/o health insurance
- 6.1% heart disease
- 11.7% diabetes
- 28.5% high blood pressure

### \*Westchester County Statistics:

5.5% w/o health insurance, 5.4% heart disease, 9.3% diabetes, 27.3% high blood pressure





# 4 Prioritized Initiatives



## Listening Sessions

Conduct regular listening sessions with prospective and existing clients to understand their lived experiences and barriers to access

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To understand the needs of people in Westchester who need food



## Client Experience

Identify and assist partners in high-need areas most in need of a client experience upgrade, incorporating direct feedback from guests

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To improve the convenience and experience of existing services



## Partner Capacity

Identify and assist feeding partners in high-need areas expand their distribution capacity



## Agency Enablement

Expand agency enablement in high-need neighborhoods to pickup/store/ distribute fresh food from local retailers

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To make more fresh, nutritious food available to clients in high-need areas





# We interviewed a mix of neighbors from across the county

20

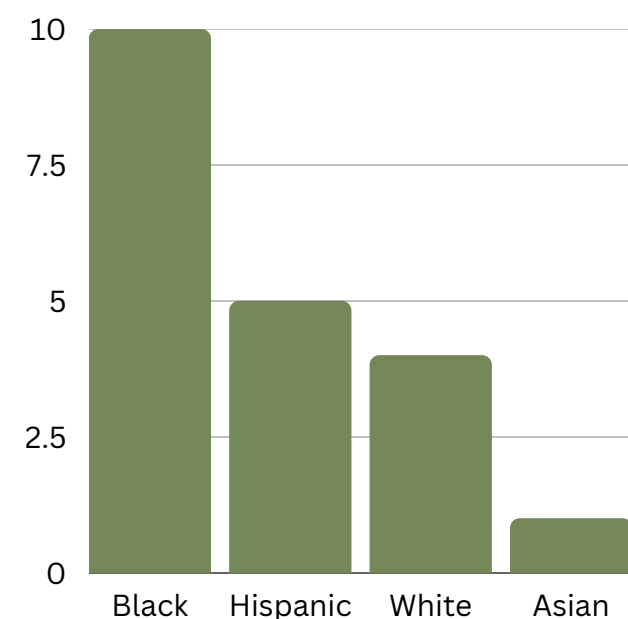
1:1, 30-min Interviews

1

health clinic Rx pantry

5

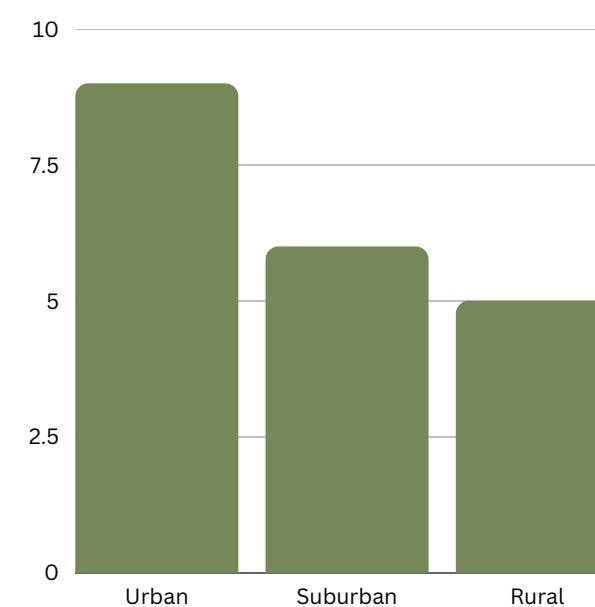
other pantries



Race Breakdown



Employment status Breakdown



Geography Breakdown

Listening sessions showed diversity of clients and diversity of experiences within Westchester's hunger relief system

- 65% of interviewees were raising or raised children
- 15% of clients needed translation
- 45% mentioned having a chronic health condition
- 85% of clients were female

# Listening Session Takeaways

1

Clients shared a desire for and health reasons to need more fresh fruits and vegetables

2

Clients want to be treated with dignity and respect by staff and the hunger relief system

3

Clients should have more chances to share input with pantry staff and other stakeholders

4

A single negative experience with—expired food or staff—can lead clients to have long-lasting negative attitudes about pantries

5

Clients expressed necessity of and thankfulness for pantries

- "Food pantries and volunteers are a blessing... It's a blessing to know there are people out there looking out for me."



# Improving our Neighbors' Experiences

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## Potential Barriers or Pain Points

Always consider: What life circumstances led to this person needing food assistance?

Misperceptions

"That's not for someone like me"

Lack of Choice

"They don't offer the foods I want" "I can't choose the foods I want"

Lack of Access

"I cannot make it there"

Lack of Choice

"I had to wait a long time" "They were slow"

Lack of Dignity

"I don't like how it makes me feel" "People there make me feel ashamed or unwelcome"

Lack of Equity

"Not everyone is given a fair chance" "I'm at a disadvantage because of [where I live / who I am]" "How things are done isn't fair"





# Partner Capacity

1

Focus on pantries in high-need neighborhoods/communities

2

Prioritize pantries missing core items with lowest cost to implement

3

Assess their current state (using surveys, prior site visits, and other sources)

4

Confirm necessity of 'upgrades' with in-person visit, prefer agencies able to apply for grants





# Agency Enablement: Great Progress Thus Far With Room to Grow

## Current Retail Recovery Program

- We have captured 3.7MM pounds of food through the Retail Recovery Program
  - 56 retail partners
- Our Agency Partners have rescued over 800K pounds through Agency Enablement
  - 11 agency partners
  - Agency Enablement makes up roughly 23% of our rescued pounds
  - This is food that would have otherwise been thrown away and sent to landfills

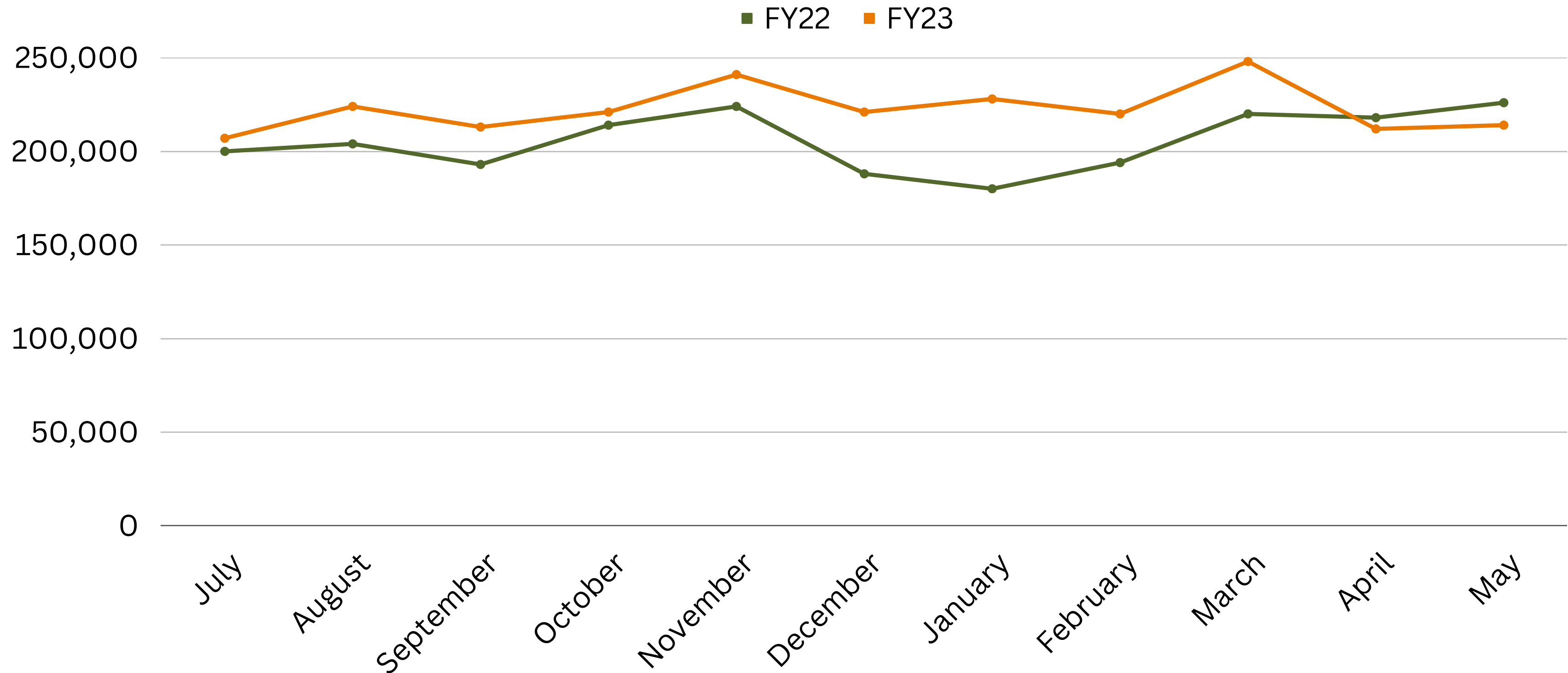


# Panel Discussion

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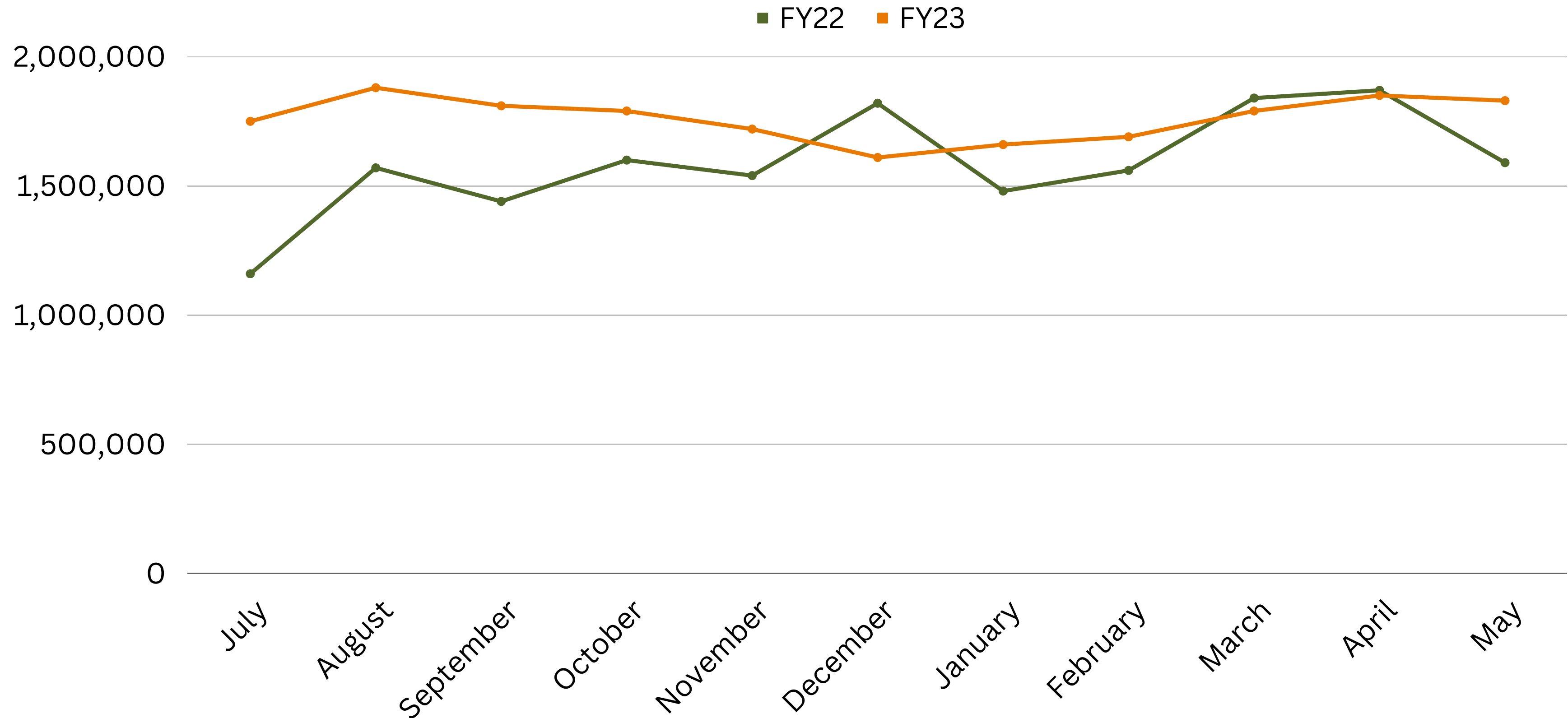


# Neighbor Visits to Partners and Programs YOY





# Pounds of Food Distributed YOY







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# Sign Our Petition to Strengthen Federal Nutrition Programs!

**TIMELY ACTION TO TAKE NOW!**

- Join us in asking Congress to strengthen federal nutrition programs in the 2023 Farm Bill legislation, including:
  - SNAP, the nation's most impactful nutrition program that nearly 3 Million NY's rely on to feed their families
  - Healthy, nutritious food for food banks to help support our neighbors in need
  - TEFAP, the nation's emergency food program which provides healthy nutritious food for food banks and pantries to help support our neighbors in need



# Thank You!

