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GOVERNOR ANDREW M. CUOMO

**GOVERNOR CUOMO ANNOUNCES EXTENSION OF PARTNERSHIP
WITH HELLOFRESH TO COMBAT FOOD INSECURITY AMONG VETERANS**

***Collaboration Has Already Provided More Than 200,000 Meals to Veterans and
Military Families Facing Food Shortages in New York City During 2020***

Program Builds on Governor Cuomo's Successful Nourish New York Initiative

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the extension of a partnership between the State of New York and leading meal kit company, HelloFresh, focused on delivering free meal kits to Veterans and military families in New York City who are presently confronting food insecurity. Since establishing this partnership in July 2020, HelloFresh has provided more than 200,000 nutritious meals to Veterans and military families in New York City who are facing food insecurity due to COVID-19. Now, New York and HelloFresh are extending this collaboration through the second quarter of 2021, ensuring that Veterans and military families in New York City will continue to receive these nourishing meals throughout the challenging months ahead. This partnership was made possible through collaboration with The Campaign Against Hunger, the New York City Department of Veterans' Services, and Black Veterans for Social Justice to provide this high-quality food in weekly distributions.

"Far too many service members in our communities have been forced to endure obstacles during the COVID-19 pandemic, and, sadly, one of those has been a lack of food," **Governor Cuomo said.** "Especially during these uncertain times, it's critical we ensure the brave men and women who served our nation have access to nutritious food and the continuation of this successful collaboration with HelloFresh will help ensure these heroes do not go hungry."

The Campaign Against Hunger, Black Veterans for Social Justice, and the New York City Department of Veterans' Services will continue to serve as collaborators in this initiative, gathering weekly at The Campaign Against Hunger's headquarters in Brooklyn to receive the food delivery from HelloFresh, sort and pack the food into meal kits, and distribute the food to Veterans and military families confronting food insecurity throughout the city.

"We repay the debt we owe our veterans by ensuring they have good jobs, decent homes and fresh food," **said Lieutenant Governor Kathy Hochul.** "I'm proud to

see New York companies like HelloFresh step up and partner with New York State to make sure our veterans do not go hungry as a result of COVID-19."

This unique model that engages Veterans volunteering in service to other Veterans has seeded three more Veteran Food Programs in the Bronx, Buffalo and the North Country. Similar efforts from the summer of 2020 onward provided tens of thousands of Nourish New York food boxes and United States Department of Agriculture Farmers To Families food boxes for Veterans in Western New York, distributed weekly through a collaboration among Western New York Heroes and FeedMore WNY. A new branch of this initiative, focusing on providing nourishing food to Veterans and military families in the North Country region, will begin this month, with the Joint Council for Economic Opportunity of Clinton and Franklin Counties and the Clinton County Veterans Service Agency taking the lead in the on-the-ground coordination of this effort.

Food insecurity is shockingly prevalent among Veterans, Service Members, and their families. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs reports that Veterans who served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are twice as likely to be food insecure compared with the general population.

A 2018 study showed that 1.5 million Veterans in the United States lived in a household that relied completely on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to supplement their food intake. A Center on Budget & Policy Priorities report published in January 2020 showed that in New York State alone, 59,000 Veterans rely on SNAP benefits to feed themselves and their families — a number that only worsened due to the adverse impacts of COVID-19.

State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball said, "I want to thank HelloFresh for its partnership to get fresh food to New York's Veterans and military families during this stressful time. This program builds on Nourish New York's successful effort to link farmers who lost markets for their products to families struggling with food insecurity during the pandemic. As part of that, Nourish New York continues its focus on getting healthy New York food to our Veteran communities."

New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance Commissioner Mike Hein said, "Food insecurity sadly impacts so many individuals and families throughout New York, including veterans who honorably served our nation and their families. We can begin to repay our debt of gratitude to these New Yorkers by ensuring they have healthy nutritious food amid the evolving challenges of this ongoing public health crisis. We are pleased to see this program build upon the resounding successes of Nourish New York and proud to support a partnership that will ensure our state's veterans will have food to feed their families during their time in need."

Joel Evans, Executive Deputy Director of the New York State Division of Veterans' Services said, "No Veteran should ever confront a lack of food for themselves or for their family members. We unfortunately know that too many Veterans and military families are confronting this hardship, and we are committed to doing everything that we

can to address this issue. We know that the COVID-19 crisis is still not over, and we cannot thank HelloFresh enough for devoting their time and resources to continuing this life-changing partnership. We also continue to give our thanks to The Campaign Against Hunger, Black Veterans for Social Justice, and the New York City Department of Veterans' Services for their boots on the ground efforts that make this mission a success every week."

Commissioner James Hendon, New York City Department of Veterans' Services said, "Every day, we see COVID-19's impact and encounter food-insecure Veterans who have transitioned from combating those who would do harm to America to combating the perils associated with hunger. Through our partnership with HelloFresh, The Campaign Against Hunger, Black Veterans for Social Justice, and the New York State Division of Veterans' Services, we are providing healthy meals to those who have faithfully served our nation and their families. We are grateful that this collaboration has been extended and we look forward to continuing our efforts to ensure that no Veteran household in New York City goes hungry during these challenging times."

CEO of HelloFresh U.S. Uwe Voss said, "Ensuring that everyone has access to fresh, healthy food is central to our mission at HelloFresh. As food insecurity continues to intensify with the ongoing pandemic, we are proud to extend this important partnership with Governor Cuomo and the State of New York to bring deserving veterans and military families nourishing meals each week."

Wendy McClinton, CEO, Black Veterans for Social Justice said: "Black Veterans for Social Justice, Inc. is honored and counts it as a privilege to service our nation's Veterans with the same commitment, loyalty and valor these many men and women served our country. We will continue to join forces with NYC Department of Veterans Services, the Campaign Against Hunger and HelloFresh to end the epidemic that results in the "Lack of food" amongst Veterans and the communities in which they reside."

Dr. Melony Samuels, Founder, and CEO of the Campaign Against Hunger said, "We are delighted that efforts to provide nutritious meals for veterans facing food insecurity will continue through this partnership with Governor Cuomo, The State of New York, and HelloFresh. This initiative has meant so much to veterans who are struggling, and it has been inspiring to work with the New York City Department of Veterans' Services and watch Black Veterans for Social Justice pack meals for their fellow service members. We are honored to provide the space and logistical support necessary to bridge this devastating meal gap. Together, we are combatting hunger for those who once fought for us. I can't think of a greater mission!

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