Hunger Likely To Increase In Post-Sandy NYC

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A new report brings the problem of food insecurity back to the table, citing new record highs even before Hurricane Sandy.

The number of New Yorkers living in households without enough food has hit an all time high of 1.4 million, or one in six, according to the report released earlier today by the New York City Coalition Against Hunger .

In the Bronx alone, 533,825 people, or 40 percent of the borough's residents, struggle against hunger, the report said. One in five over the age of 60, and over half of all Bronx children live in food insecure homes. Meanwhile, 90 percent of food pantries and soup kitchens throughout the Bronx reported an increase in the number of people served before the storm. Advocates believe that number has likely risen since Sandy.

"The devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy has had a tremendous impact on New York residents, especially those who are low-income," said Annabel Palma, chair of the New York City Council's general welfare committee, in a statement. "While we as a city will continue to rebuild after the storm and volunteer to assist storm victims, it is important to remember those for whom food insecurity and hunger were issues long before the hurricane."

From 2009 to 2011, nearly 474,000, or one in four children in New York, did not get enough food, the report said. That number is up 31 percent from 2006 to 2008, when 363,000, or one in five children struggled.

Even though Sandy brought these growing numbers into the public spotlight, pantries and kitchens still face dwindling funding.

â€śIt should be considered a national scandal that, before the storm, one in four of our children and one in ten of our seniors, struggled against hunger," said Joel Berg, the executive director of the Coalition, in a statement. "If we can agree that no American should go hungry due to a natural disaster, surely we should agree that no American should go hungry due to human-made disasters such as recessions and program cut-backs."

Many volunteers and staff have admitted to using their own personal money to help fund these feeding programs, and the Coalition has asked President Obama to re-commit to his pledge to end U.S. child hunger by 2015
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For more information or to become a volunteer to help feed the hungry, visit HungerVolunteer.org .

The New York Daily News has a list of places to get free meals .

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