



## Legislation Text

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File #: 24-0060, Version: 1

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**Dept/ Agency:** Offices of Municipal Council/City Clerk

**Action:** ( ) Ratifying (X) Authorizing ( ) Amending

**Type of Service:** Resolution of Support

**Purpose:** To support the creation of a Food Insecurity Commission.

**Sponsor(s):** Council Member, Dupré L. Kelly

**Additional Information:**

Resolution encouraging the Office of the Mayor to support and establish a Food Insecurity Commission for the City of Newark.

**WHEREAS**, in the United States food insecurity is one of the biggest threats to public health and safety at any time, but never more so than during the COVID-19 Pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, food deprivation is defined as food intake below the dietary required minimum energy level; and

**WHEREAS**, Newark is New Jersey's third largest food desert, which means at least thirty percent (30%) of residents have to travel more than a mile for healthy and affordable food; and

**WHEREAS**, food insecurity according to the USDA's measure is the lack of access to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and/or limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods; and

**WHEREAS**, food insecure households will need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods. Food insecurity has been an issue in low-income communities like Newark, and with the COVID-19 Pandemic, food resources and income became increasingly at risk; and

**WHEREAS**, a Rutgers University, GIS analysis, to measure food insecurity in Newark and mark all possible food resources compared to higher income communities of a similar size to see how pivotal small businesses such as bodegas, community gardens and delicatessens are to low-income communities that lack proper grocery stores. This information became an interactable map, it theorized that Newark lacked a large number of adequate markets such as Shoprite, Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, etc. There is census data on the amount of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and/or Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) utilized in Newark determining food insecurity; and

**WHEREAS**, inconsistent access to adequate amounts of nutritious food can have a negative impact on the health of individuals of all ages. In the United States, adults in food insecure households are much more likely than those who are not, to have hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic health problems. It is particularly devastating among children because they are more vulnerable to potential long-term consequences for their future physical and mental health and academic achievement; and

**WHEREAS**, the USDA estimates that in 2020, about 657,320 people, including 175,830 children, in New Jersey were food insecure. This means 7.4% of individuals and nine percent (9.0%) of children live in homes without consistent access to adequate food. Seventeen percent (17%) of Blacks and Hispanics in New Jersey are food insecure; and

**WHEREAS**, New Jersey had the 7<sup>th</sup> lowest overall and 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest child food insecurity rates among U.S. states in 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, the food insecurity rate in 2020, six (6) New Jersey counties had a rate above the U.S. rate (11.8%) for persons of all ages and eight (8%) New Jersey counties surpassed the national rate of 16.1% for children; and

**WHEREAS**, the COVID-19 Pandemic impacted America's lowest income and most marginalized households, causing further untold economic hardship for residents and communities, with the threat of food deprivation, foreclosures, evictions and homelessness for many families through no fault of their own; and

**WHEREAS**, by creating a Food Insecurity Commission that will be responsible for advising and making recommendations to the Mayor, Municipal Council, and Department Directors to address issues pertaining to food insecurity city-wide and working towards a solution within healthcare, agriculture, education, business, and non-profit sectors; and

**WHEREAS**, the issues to be addressed by the Food Insecurity Commission shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Reviewing and making recommendations regarding how the resources and efforts currently devoted to addressing food insecurity can be best coordinated and implemented, and how those resources and efforts can be most effectively supplemented;
2. Identifying and developing policy suggestions modeled after other municipalities that have shown to decrease food insecurity;
3. Developing public and private partnerships to tackle aspects of food insecurity such as food deserts and food waste;
4. Identifying and developing policy suggestions to help tackle the social determinants of food insecurity, such as programs that help ensure economic development, affordable housing or transportation for people facing food insecurity;
5. Identifying federal, state, and local funding opportunities; and
6. Identifying areas in which gathering information through further study would decrease food insecurity in the City of Newark.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, THAT:**

1. The Municipal Council on behalf of the City of Newark encourages the Office of the Mayor to establish a Food Insecurity Commission to address food instability city-wide through policy, resources, programs, and public and private partnerships with an aim to significantly impact food deprivation.
2. Copies of this Resolution shall be sent to the Office of the Mayor and the Office of the Business Administrator and the affiliated City Department Directors.

### **STATEMENT**

Resolution encouraging the Office of the Mayor to establish a Food Insecurity Commission for the City of Newark to address food insecurity and food deserts city-wide and provide resources, programs, and public and private partnerships that will impact food deprivation in every ward throughout the City.