

# Food Heaven,



# HUNGER HELL



## BROOKLYN FOOD ATLAS 2011

Produced by the New York City Coalition Against Hunger with  
Generous Support from the Brooklyn Community Foundation

# LETTER FROM JOEL BERG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEW YORK CITY COALITION AGAINST HUNGER



I love living in Brooklyn, especially when it comes to food. I live at the edge of Park Slope and Prospect Heights, just blocks away from the Grand Army Plaza Greenmarket, one of the best in the country. In season, my household shops there for heirloom tomatoes, squash blossoms, and garlic scapes just harvested from Upstate and New Jersey farms; wild-caught Long Island scallops; crisper than crisp Hudson Valley apples; and, on occasion, baked goods to die for.

Elsewhere in Brooklyn, I can go to a weekly food festival and gorge on home-made sausages, artisanal grilled cheese sandwiches, hand-crafted cold sesame noodles, and neighborhood-fermented kombucha. I can get Polish pirogues in Greenpoint, Salvadorean papusas in Red Hook, Bosnian burgers in Bushwick, or Chinese dumplings in Sunset Park – all of which are world class in quality. Today’s Brooklyn is indeed “Foodie Heaven.”

I – and many other middle and upper income Brooklynites – can obtain all those things because we have enough money and time to do so. Yet many our Brooklyn neighbors aren’t so fortunate. Approximately 467,340 Brooklyn residents – more than one in five people who live in the borough – suffer from hunger or live at the brink of hunger, unable to afford enough food, sometime during the year. For them, the borough is a food hell.

Hundreds of thousands of Brooklynites are forced to rely on more than 340 food pantries and soup kitchens in the borough to feed their families. In 2010, 91% of those agencies faced an increased demand for food and fully 40 percent of those programs were forced to reduce portion size, reduce hours of operation, and/or turn people away because they lacked enough resources to meet the growing demand. That’s right, in a city and a borough with incredible wealth, four in ten feeding charities couldn’t properly feed everyone who came to their door.

Many of these food insecure Brooklynites, and numerous others of meager incomes, live in food deserts, neighborhoods in which nutritious food isn’t commonly available. Furthermore, many low-income Brooklynites (working multiple jobs, traveling by public transportation, and lacking domestic help) are often the most strapped for time, making it more difficult for them to shop for and prepare healthy food. It is no wonder that the neighborhoods in Brooklyn with the highest rates of poverty, hunger, and food insecurity also tend to have the highest rates of obesity, as is the case in most of New York and America.

We are surely living through a “Tale of Two Brooklyns.” Poverty and wealth divide Brooklyn thoroughly, and that division plays itself out thoroughly in the vast differentiations regarding access to food. The charts and graphs in this atlas powerfully demonstrate that divide.

Fully 685,291 borough residents, about half of whom are children, receive food stamp benefits, which are usually far too paltry to enable families to purchase nutritious foods. Some non-poor New Yorkers believe that anyone can eat healthily if they just work harder, shop more, or cook better. That's just not true.

A few years ago, I took the Food Stamps Challenge, spending a week purchasing and eating the amount and types of food I could afford if I had to rely on food stamps. That allowed me only \$28.30 worth of food for a whole week, equaling only \$1.30 per meal. That week I couldn't afford juice, milk, or any beverages other than tap water. I couldn't afford red meat, seafood, whole grain breads, or anything organic. I had to rely on a very limited range of food choices. The cheapest, most filling foods I could afford were sometimes the least nutritious. As much as I once loved ramen noodles (in college!), I never want to see them again. While I was able to eat ramen noodles on sale for 12 for \$1.33 at a grocery store several bus stops away from home, they are very high in sodium and saturated fat.

While the USDA recommends two cups of orange vegetables per week, I had none that week. USDA recommends two fruits daily, but I was only able to have one. And that one was an old, mealy, non-organic apple, bought at a mid-size food store down the block from my house, that wasn't very tasty. But it was the best I could get for 30 cents. Wonderful-tasting, crisp, organic apples, available just a few blocks away at the Greenmarket, cost 50 cents a piece and were out of my price range that week.

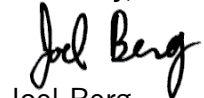
Still, I don't want to exaggerate my very small sacrifice. After all, I neither had to go through the often-taxing process of applying for the benefits nor did I have to face judgmental stares from checkout counter clerks when using them. Perhaps most importantly, I knew that, at the end of the week, I could go back to eating almost anything I wanted. Given that worrying about where you were going to get your next meal is one of the most debilitating aspects of food insecurity, the fact that I was confident that I would be able to afford whatever meals I desired after just one week was likely the biggest difference between taking the challenge and actually facing hunger.

Decades worth of research proves that hungry children can not properly learn or grow, hungry adults can't effectively obtain and keep employment, and hungry senior citizens can't stay independent. Thus, when one in five of our Brooklyn neighbors lack the ability to obtain a full supply of nutritious foods, that not only leaves a dark, immoral stain on our civic fabric, it significantly hampers our local economy.

I hope you react to the data in this atlas not only with compassion and outrage, but with concrete actions to redress these problems. Donate. Advocate. Organize. Volunteer. In short, join us in fighting back.

Working together, we can someday ensure that all Brooklynites can enjoy the pleasures and health benefits of living in "Foodie Heaven."

Sincerely,



Joel Berg

Executive Director

New York City Coalition Against Hunger

# LETTER FROM MARILYN GELBER, PRESIDENT, BROOKLYN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



The motto of the Brooklyn Community Foundation is “Do Good Right Here” and by providing Brooklynites with knowledge about the critical issues facing our borough we hope to mobilize people to take action through giving and service. That is why we are pleased to have funded the creation of the Brooklyn Food Atlas, which graphically illustrates one of Brooklyn most daunting challenges: the unequal distribution of food resources.

Too often when we think of hunger the image that is evoked is of a developing country. Yet the truth is that hunger is a serious and widespread problem here in Brooklyn too. The Atlas’ wealth of data shows us that over 400,000 Brooklyn residents – that’s one in five of us – are in homes that are unable to purchase sufficient amounts of food at some point during the year. The Atlas also highlights vast “food deserts” throughout our borough, where fresh, nutritious, affordable food is scarce.

The Brooklyn Food Atlas vividly shows us the extent and location of Brooklyn’s most severe food-related problems, but it also shows the extraordinary network of community based non-profit organizations working hard to address the issues. Organizations such as St. John’s Bread and Life, Neighbors Together, Reaching Out Community Services, B’nai Raphael Chesed, Added Value, East New York Community Farm, Bed-Stuy Campaign Against Hunger, to name but a few – need our on-going support. Their work is vital if we want to live in a Brooklyn where no one goes hungry.

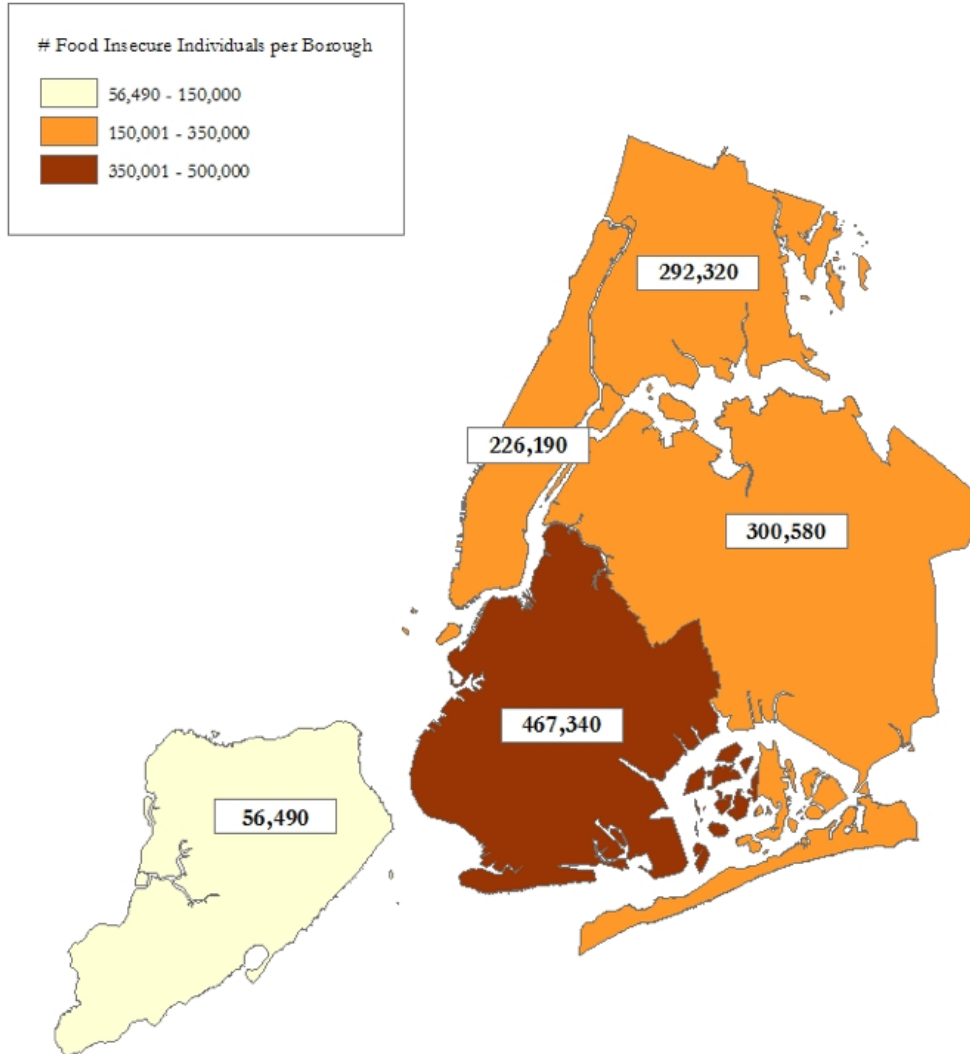
Brooklyn has its collective work cut out for us. However, we will not rest until all of our neighbors – at every income level and in every community – have access to affordable, nutritious food.

*Marilyn Gelber*  
President  
Brooklyn Community Foundation

# HOW BROOKLYN COMPARES TO THE OTHER BOROUGHS

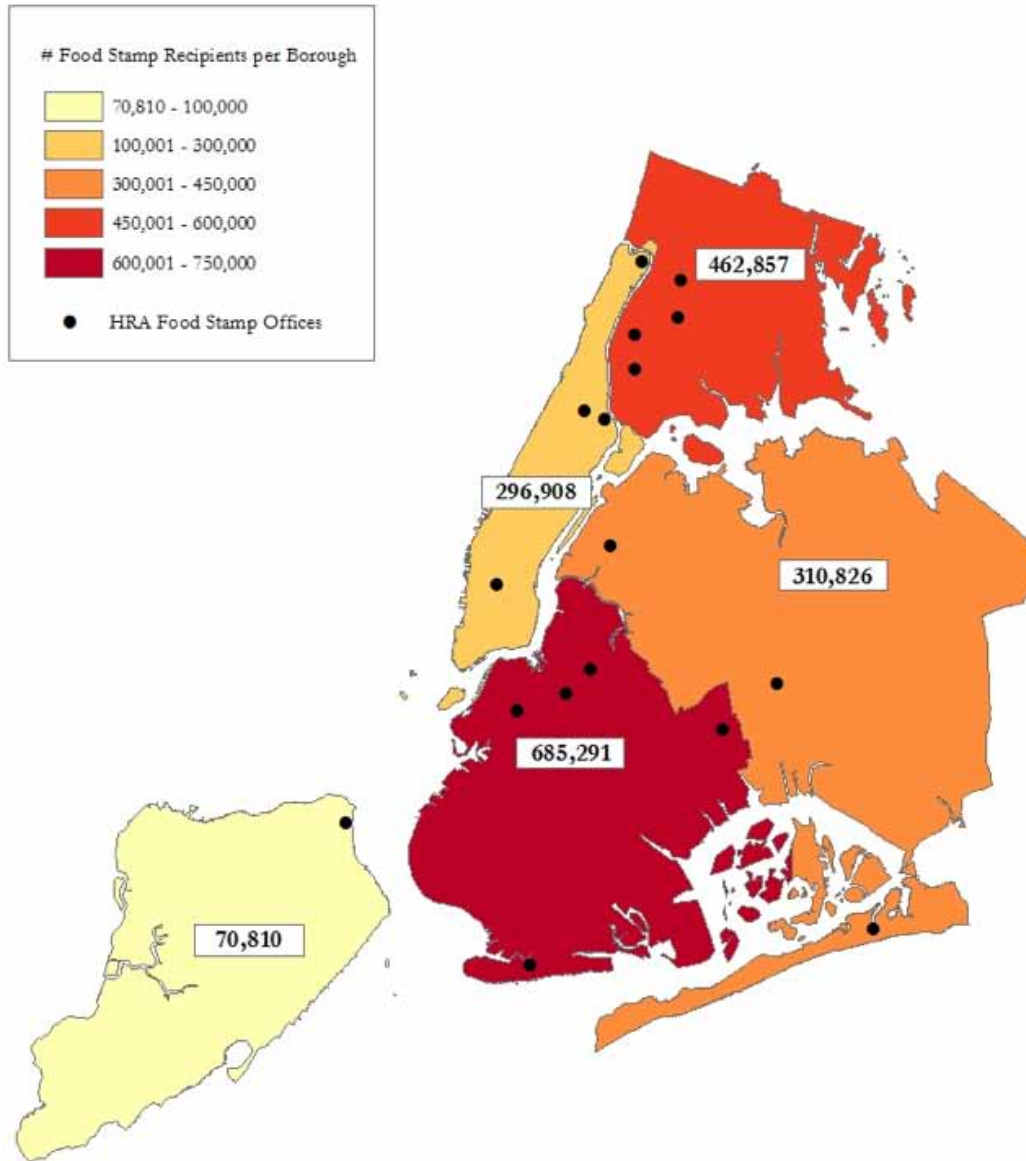
Brooklyn has **467,000** people living in food insecure households (unable to afford an adequate supply of food at least some time during a year), far more than any other borough

## FOOD INSECURE POPULATION BY NEW YORK CITY BOROUGH



Source: Feeding America, "Map the Meal Gap," 2009

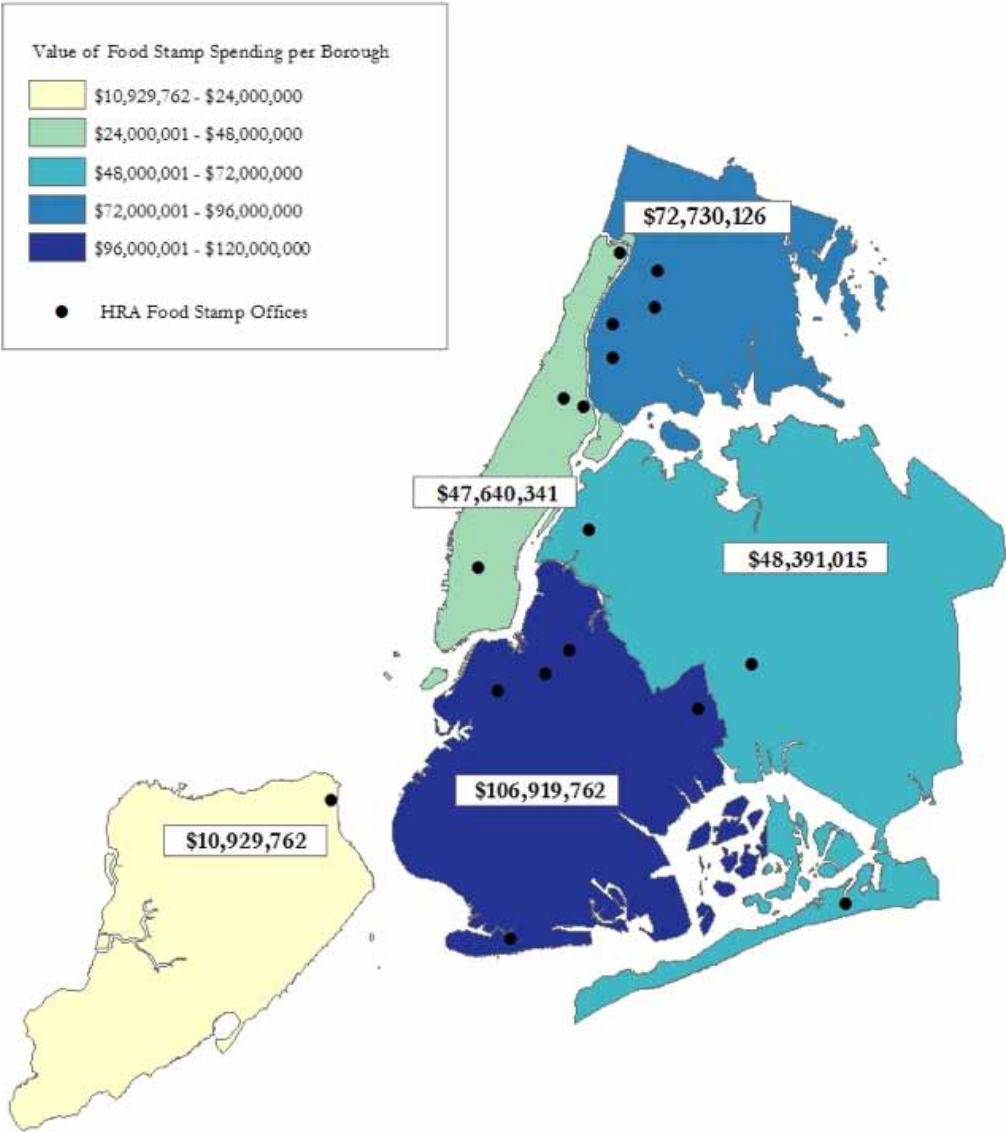
## FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS BY NEW YORK CITY BOROUGH



Brooklyn has **685,000 food stamp recipients**, far more than any borough.

Source: New York City Human Resources Administration, as of August 2011

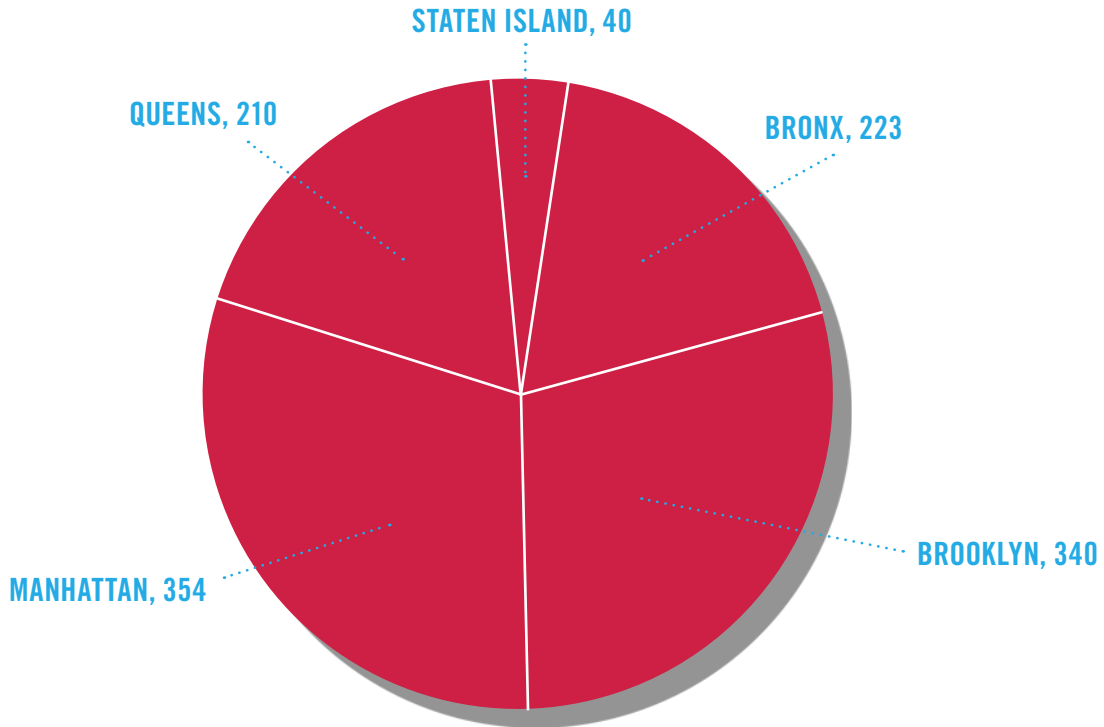
# VALUE OF FOOD STAMP SPENDING BY NEW YORK CITY BOROUGH



Brooklyn residents received **\$107 million in food stamps benefits in August 2011**, all of which is redeemed through private sector food retailers. This spending both significantly reduces hunger and greatly boosts local economic activity.

Source: New York City Human Resources Administration

## NUMBER OF FOOD PANTRIES AND SOUP KITCHENS



Brooklyn has 340 soup kitchens and food pantries, slightly less than Manhattan.

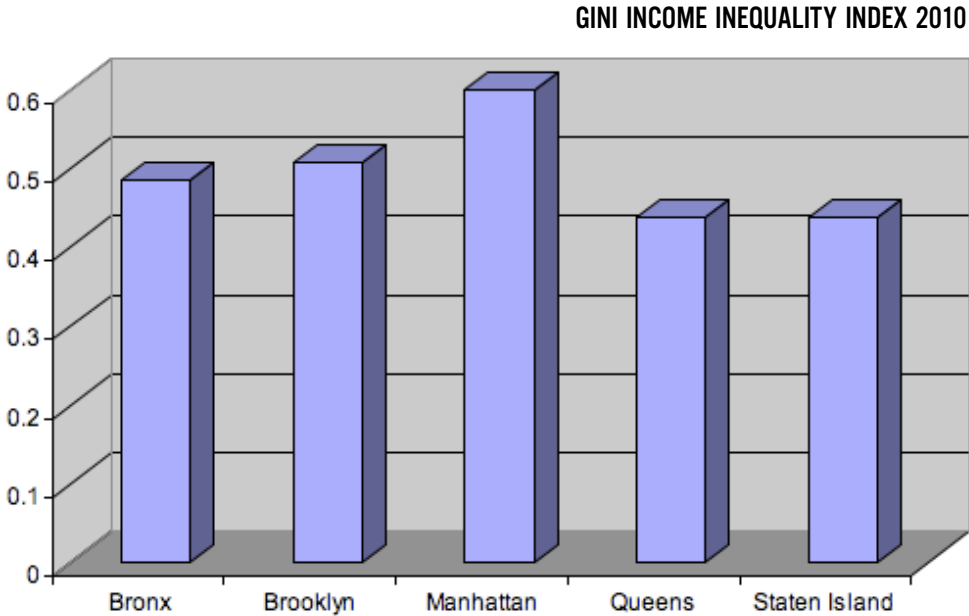
Source: New York City Coalition Against Hunger Annual Hunger Survey, "Hungry New Yorkers Barely Hang On," November 2010

## BROOKLYN FEEDING PROGRAMS LACK RESOURCES TO MEETING GROWING DEMAND

Borough	% of food pantries and soup kitchens at which demand for food increased (2010)	% of food pantries and soup kitchens at which the amount of food was not enough to meet growing demand (2010)	% of food pantries and soup kitchens forced to ration food by limiting portion size, reducing hours of operation, and/or turning people away (2010)
The Bronx	74.0%	46.2%	50.2%
Brooklyn	90.9%	64.4%	40.0%
Manhattan	84.8%	36.7%	34.6%
Queens	89.4%	57.5%	45.0%
Staten Island	100%	100%	66.7%

Source: New York City Coalition Against Hunger Annual Hunger Survey, "Hungry New Yorkers Barely Hang On," November 2010

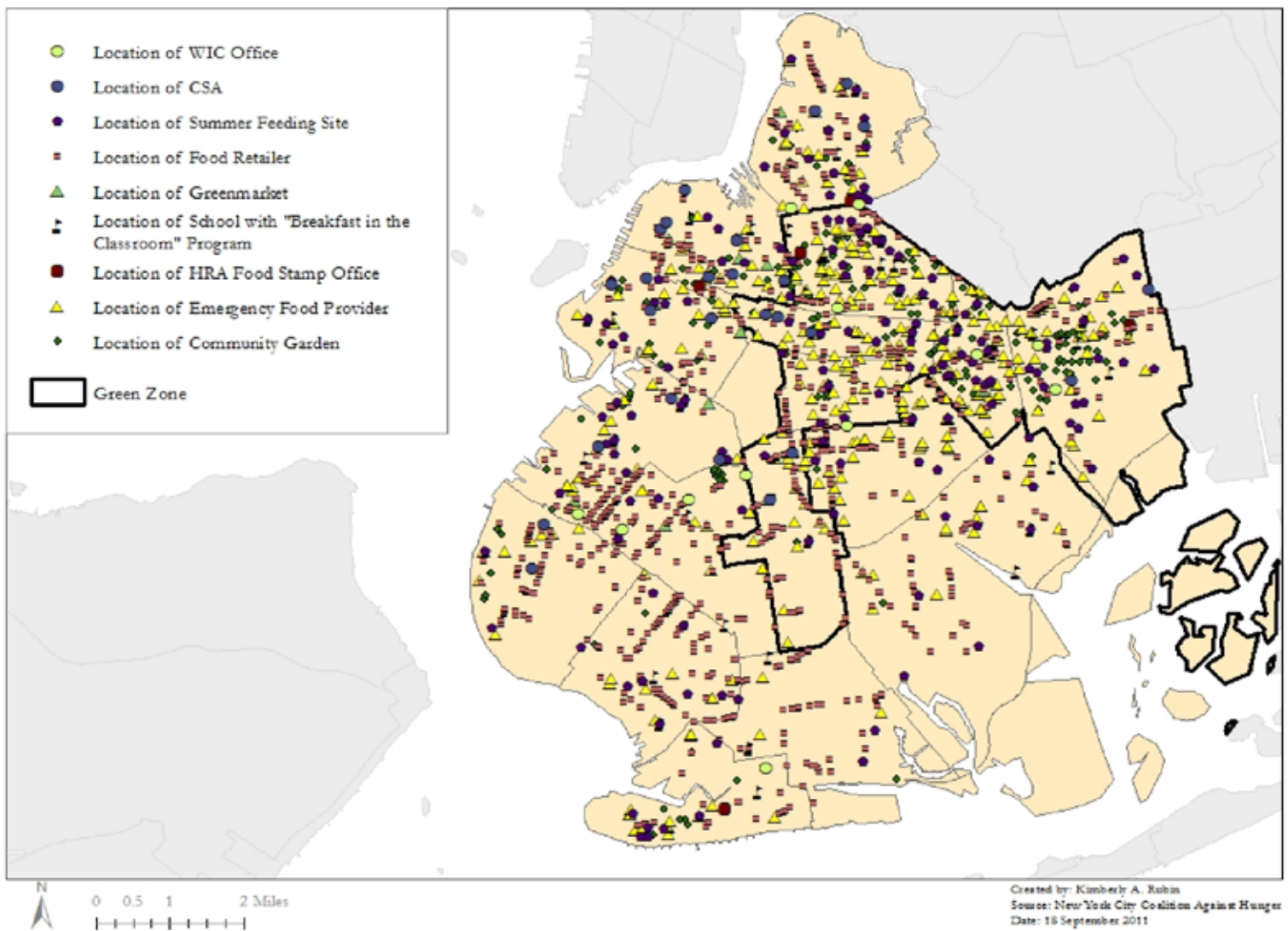
# INEQUALITY OF WEALTH IN BROOKLYN IS SECOND ONLY TO MANHATTAN



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010

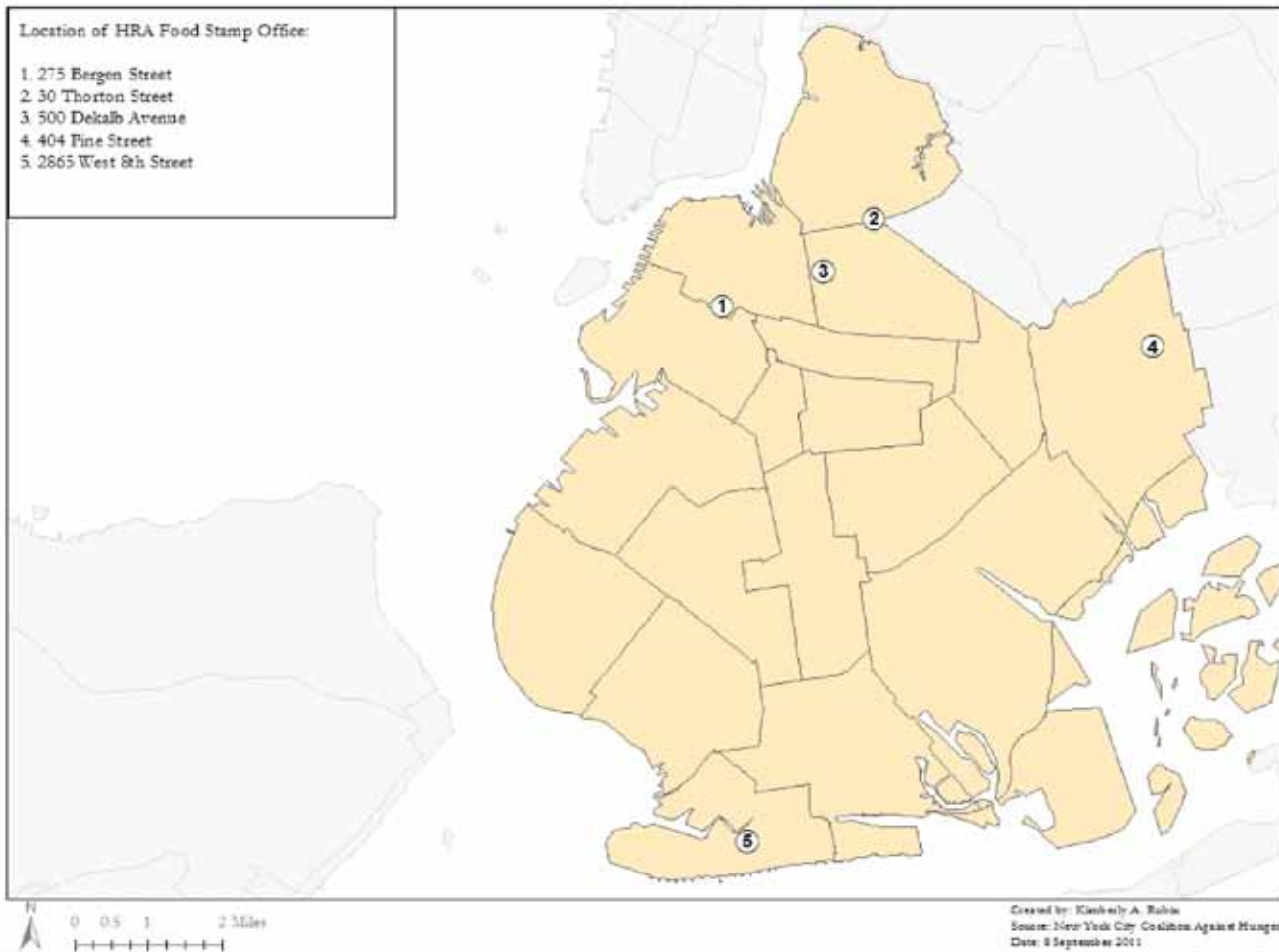
# LOCATION OF FOOD RESOURCES IN BROOKLYN

## BROOKLYN FOOD AND HUNGER RESOURCES



This map aggregates the data points of the individual maps that follow, providing a wide variety of food resources.

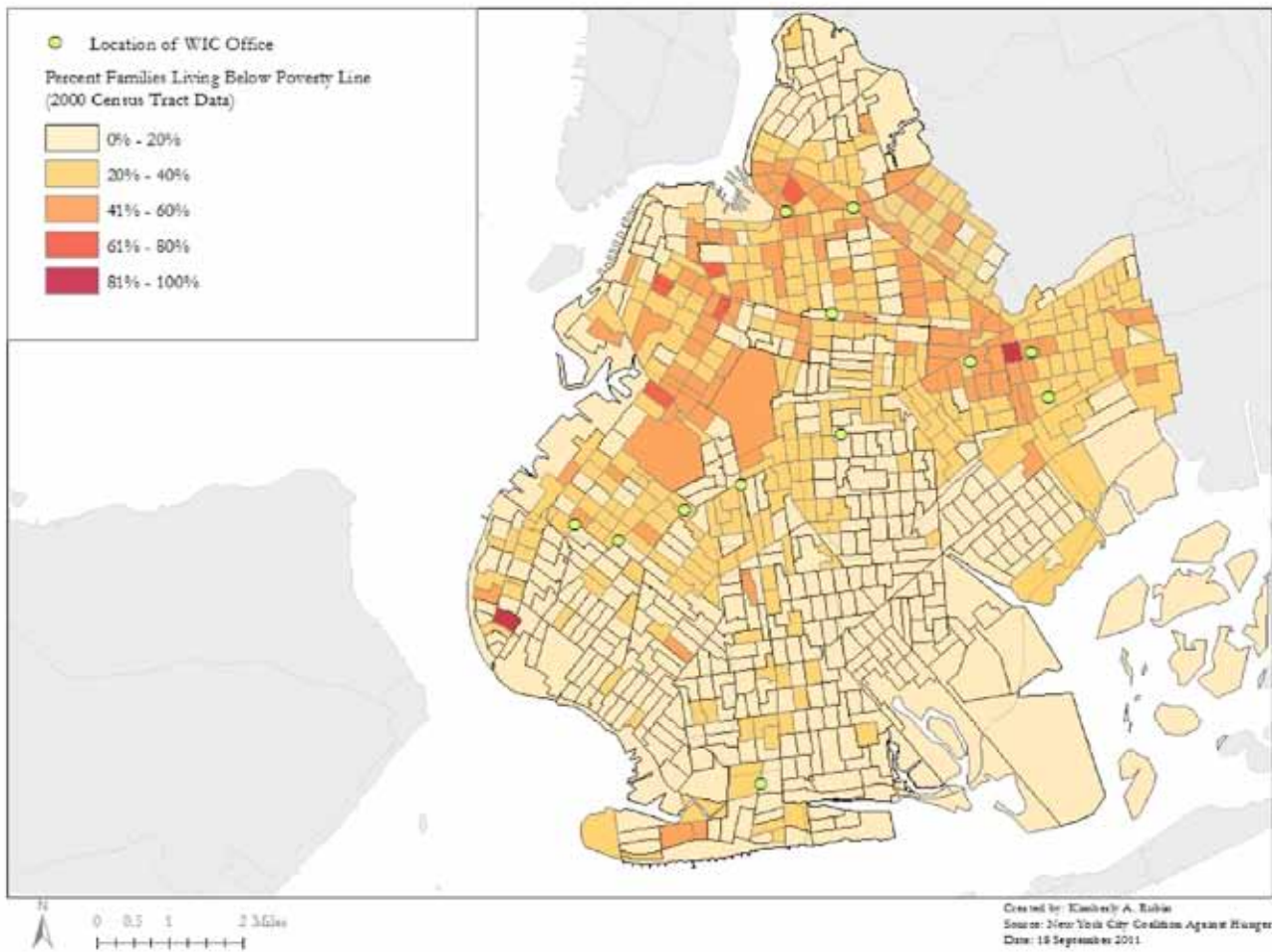
## BROOKLYN HRA FOOD STAMP OFFICES



These are the five current NYC Human Resource Administration Offices where Brooklynites can apply for federal food stamps (also know as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP) benefits. People can also apply by mail, by fax, online, and at a number of community-based organizations (which are not listed on this map, but are listed in the appendix). Federal food stamp benefits can be redeemed at a wide variety of thousands of retail stores and a handful of farmers’ markets in Brooklyn.

*Source: New York City’s Human Resources Administration*

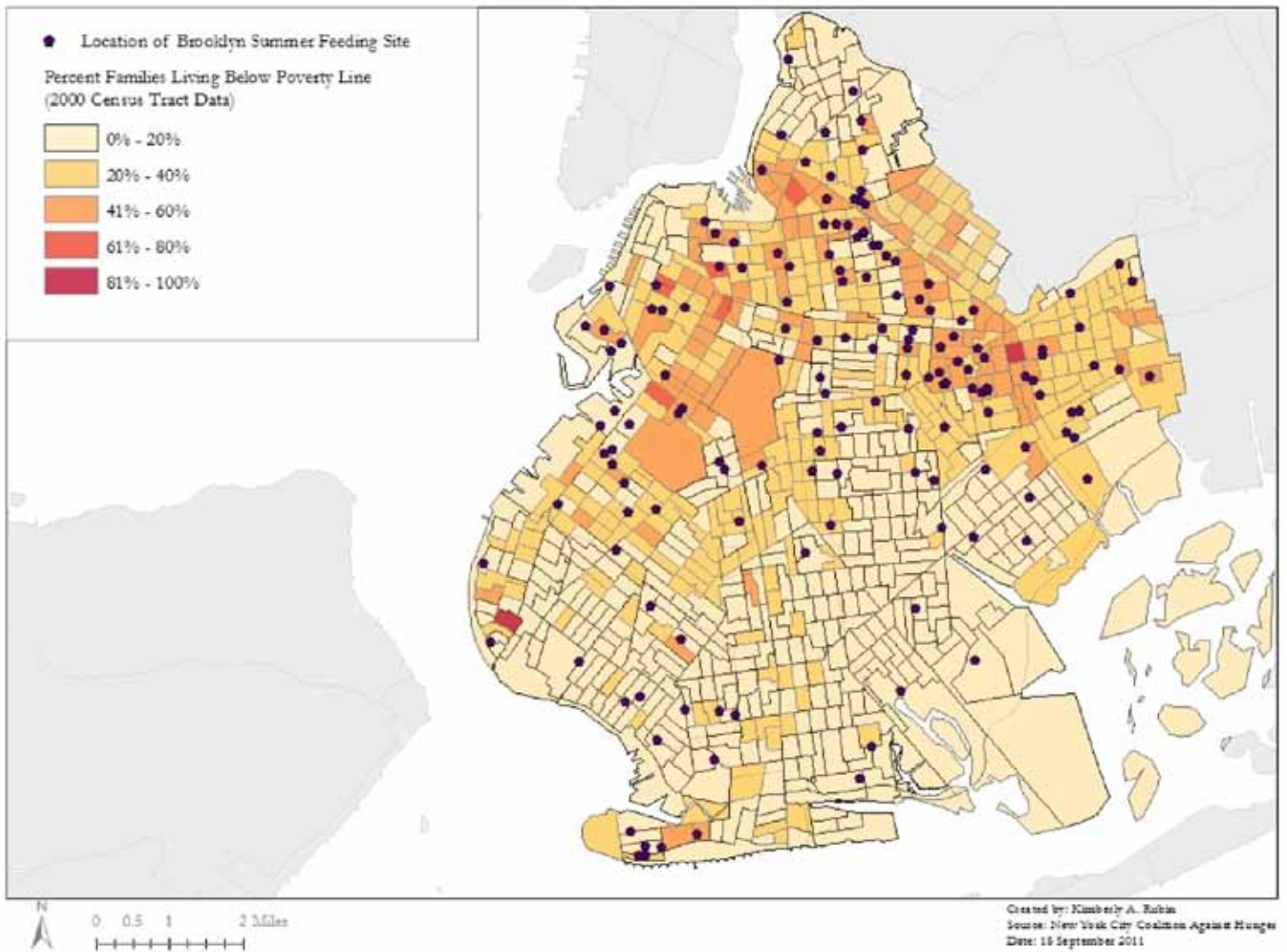
## BROOKLYN WIC OFFICES



The Federal WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Program) provides supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.

*Source: New York State Department of Health*

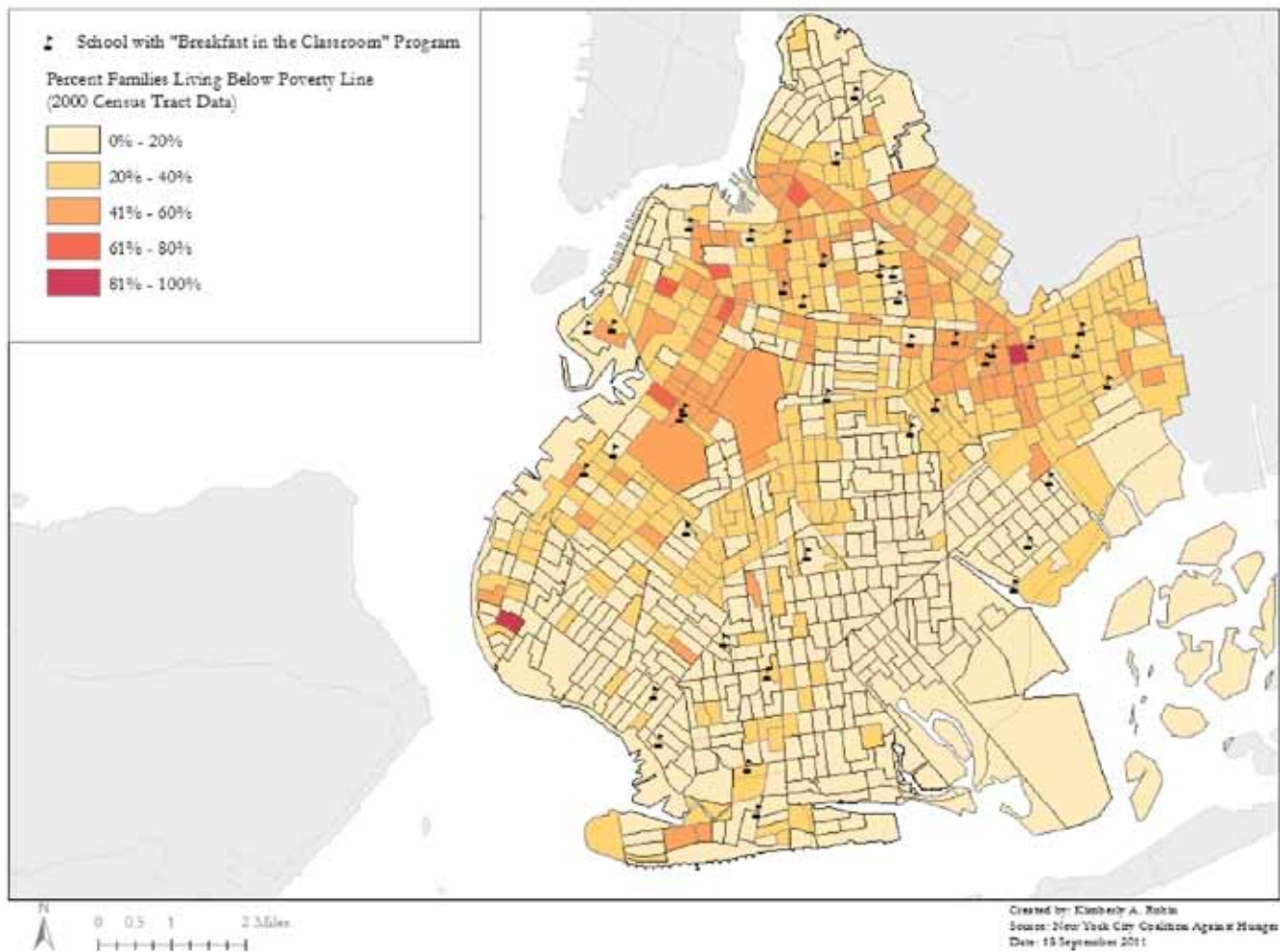
## BROOKLYN SUMMER FEEDING SITES



The Federal Summer Food Service Program, administered in the city mostly by the NYC Department of Education Office of SchoolFood, provides free lunches and breakfast to children 18 and under during the summer months, when school lunches are not available.

Source: New York City Department of Education

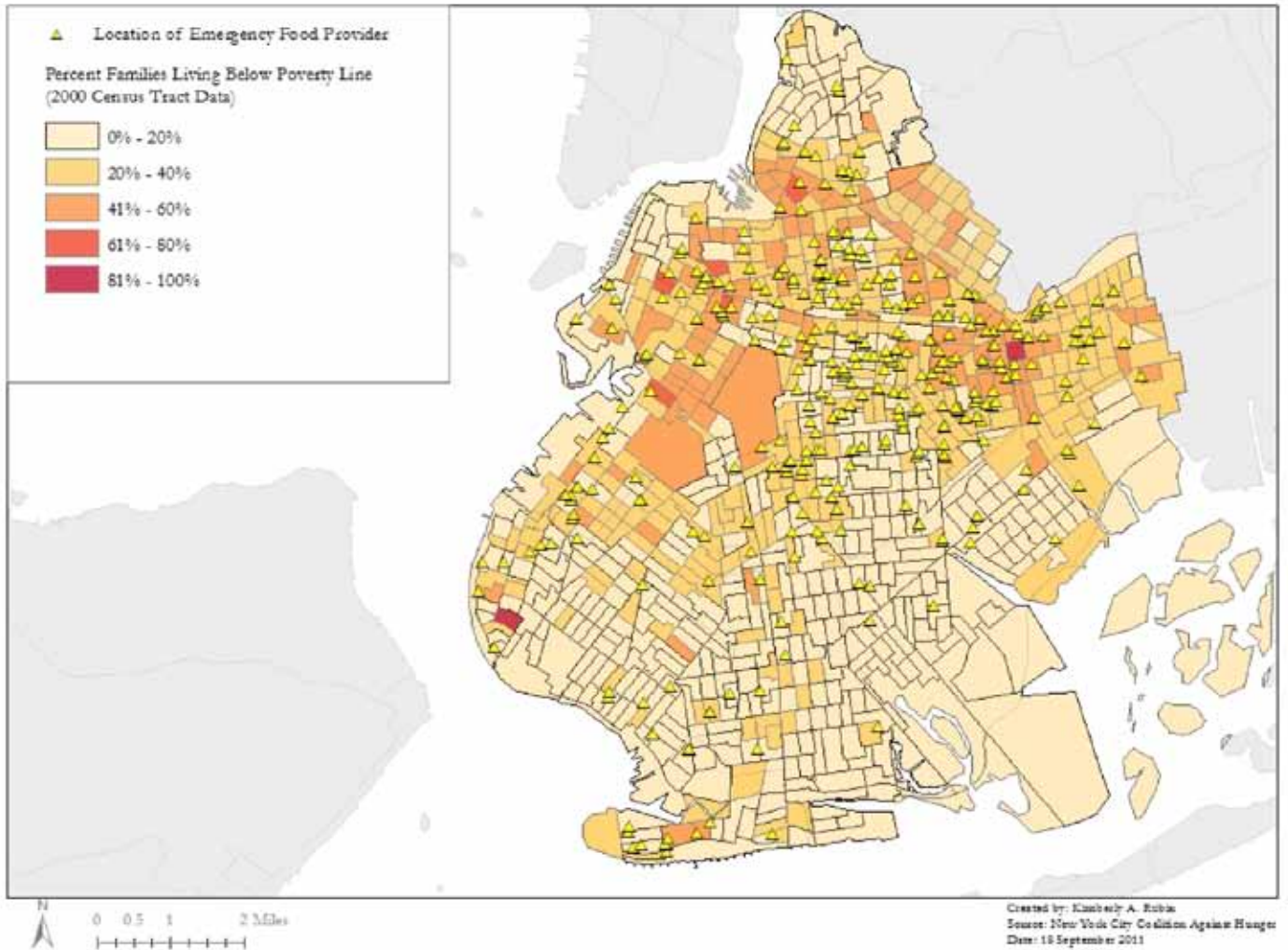
## BROOKLYN SCHOOLS WITH “BREAKFAST IN THE CLASSROOM” PROGRAMS



“Breakfast in the Classroom” schools provide free breakfasts to students in all or some first period classrooms within a school, thereby significantly increasing the number of children receiving federally-subsidized breakfasts.

Source: *New York City Department of Education*

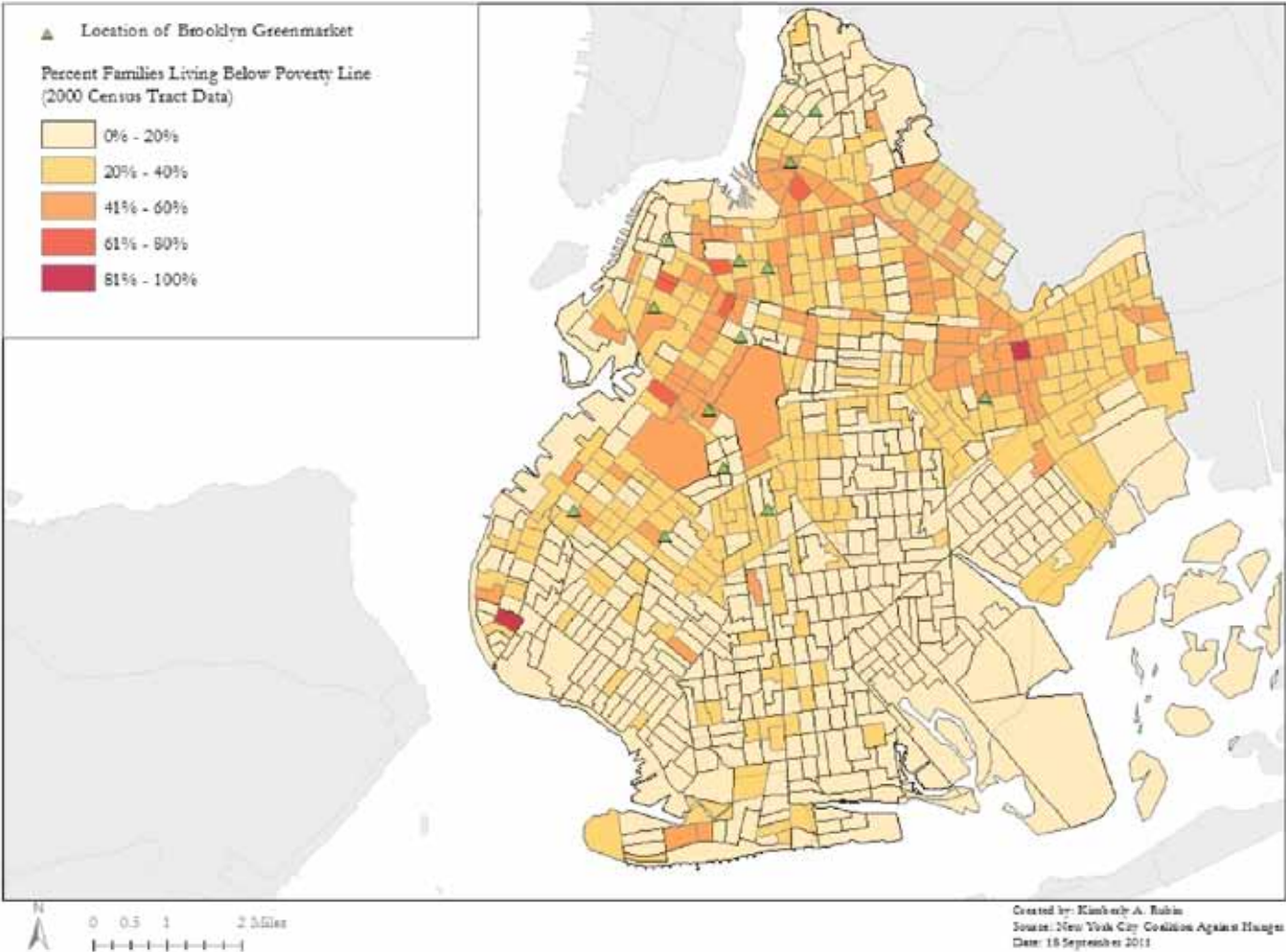
## BROOKLYN EMERGENCY FOOD PROVIDERS



This map includes food pantries, which distribute free groceries, and soup kitchens, which provide hot meals eaten on site. Most of these programs are run by nonprofit groups, many of which are faith based. Most programs distribute a mix of government provided food and privately donated food.

Source: *New York City Coalition Against Hunger*

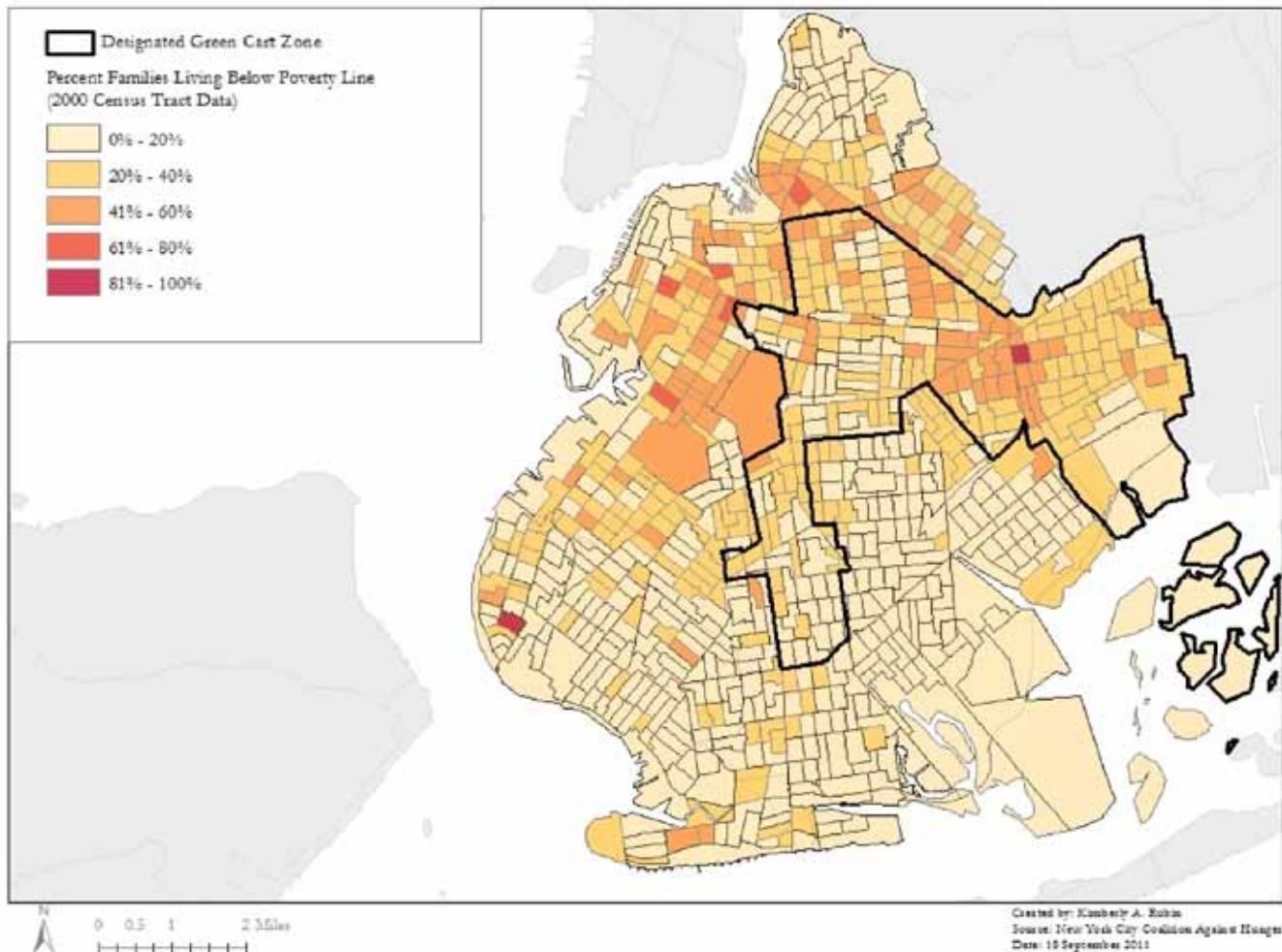
# BROOKLYN GREENMARKETS



These are farmers’ markets in the city’s Grow NYC Greenmarkets program; an increasing number of these markets accept food stamp benefits.

Source: *Grow NYC*

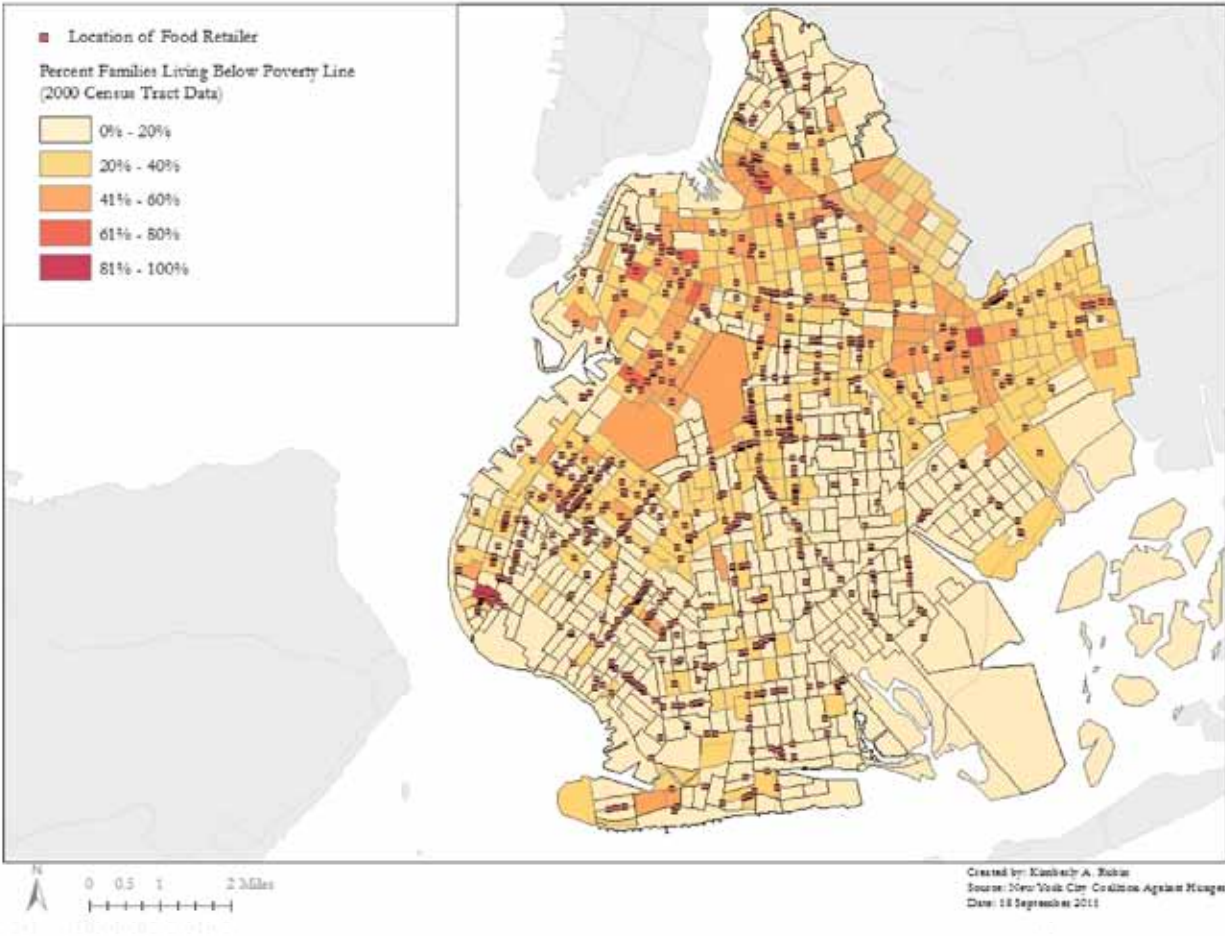
## BROOKLYN GREEN CART ZONING



A Green Cart is a mobile food cart that offers fresh produce in certain NYC areas. Green Carts can only sell fresh fruits and vegetables and can only operate in Brooklyn in the designated area above, which is both low-income and lacking in other outlets for fresh produce.

Source: NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

# BROOKLYN FOOD RETAILERS



This map includes retail stores of any size that sell any types of food. Most of these food retailers are authorized to accept food stamp benefits.

Source: New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

## **APPENDIX**

### **NONPROFIT SITES ENABLING ONLINE FOOD STAMPS APPLICATIONS**

- 1.) Groundwork Inc., 595 Sutter Avenue
- 2.) St. John's Bread and Life, 795 Lexington Avenue
- 3.) Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, 1368 Fulton Street, 4th Floor
- 4.) United Jewish Organization (UJO), 32 Penn Street
- 5.) Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council, 265 Wyckoff Avenue
- 6.) Midwood Single Stop, 1707 Avenue M
- 7.) Center for Family Life of Sunset Park, 5505 Fourth Avenue
- 8.) Neighbors Together, 2094 Fulton Avenue
- 9.) Partnership for the Homeless Family Resource Center , 100 Pennsylvania Avenue

### **WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC) OFFICES IN BROOKLYN**

- 1.) Child Development Support Center (CDSC), 352 Classon Avenue
- 2.) Family Resource Center (FRC), 100 Pennsylvania Avenue
- 3.) Ridgewood Bushwick Senior Citizens Council (RBSCC), 265 Wyckoff Avenue
- 4.) St. Nick's Alliance, 790 Broadway
- 5.) Cypress Hills LDC, 2832 Fulton Street
- 6.) Woodhull Hospital (HHC), 760 Broadway
- 7.) Sumet Tenants Association, 215 Roebling Street
- 8.) East New York Diagnostic (HHC), 2094 Pitkin Avenue
- 9.) Bedford-Stuyvesant Family Health Center, 1413 Fulton Street/20 New York Avenue
- 10.) SUNY Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center, 111 Livingston Street

## GREENMARKETS IN BROOKLYN

- 1.) Greenpoint – McCarren Park, Union-Driggs & N. 12th Street  
Year Round  
8 a – 3 p (Saturdays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps; Textiles Recycling; Compost Drop-Off; Rechargeable Battery Recycling
- 2.) Williamsburg – Havemeyer & Broadway  
Jul – November  
8 a – 4 p (Thursdays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps
- 3.) Fort Greene Park – Washington Park & DeKalb  
Year Round  
8 a – 5 p (Saturdays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps; Textiles Recycling; Compost Drop-Off; Rechargeable Battery Recycling
- 4.) Brooklyn Borough Hall – Court & Montague  
Year Round  
8 a – 6 p (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps; Compost Drop-Off; Rechargeable Battery Recycling
- 5.) Carroll Gardens – Smith & Court  
Year Round  
8 a – 3 p (Sundays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps
- 6.) Grand Army Plaza – Flatbush & Prospect  
Year Round  
8 a – 4 p (Saturdays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps; Textiles Recycling; Compost Drop-Off; Rechargeable Battery Recycling
- 7.) Windsor Terrace – Prospect Park W. & 15th Street  
May – November  
8 a – 3 p (Wednesdays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps
- 8.) Cortelyou – Cortelyou & Rugby  
Year Round  
8 a – 4 p (Sundays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps



## (GREENMARKETS IN BROOKLYN CONTINUED)

- 9.) Boro Park – 14th Avenue 49/50th Streets  
July – November  
8 a – 3 p (Thursdays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps
- 10.) Sunset Park – 4th Avenue & 59/60th Streets  
July – November  
8 a – 3 p (Saturdays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps
- 11.) Bay Ridge – 3rd Avenue an 95th Street  
June – November  
8 a – 3 p (Saturdays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps
- 12.) Lafayette Youthmarket – Washington Avenue & Lafayette/Dekalb  
July – October  
10 a – 3 p (Sundays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps
- 13.) Brownsville Youthmarket – Rockaway Avenue & Livonia/Dumont  
July – October  
1 p – 6 p (Tuesday, Friday)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps
- 14.) Kensington Youthmarket – Ft. Hamilton Parkway & E.4th/E.5th  
July – October  
9 a – 3 p (Saturdays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps
- 15.) Williamsburg Waterfront – N. 6th & Kent (on the water)  
May – November  
9 a – 5 p (Saturdays)  
Accepts EBT/Food Stamps

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Kimberly A. Rubin for creating the maps, and Liana Sterling & Theresa Hassler for carrying out the data collection and analysis. Thanks to the government agencies for providing us the necessary data.

### ABOUT THE NEW YORK CITY COALITION AGAINST HUNGER

The New York City Coalition Against Hunger represents and is the voice for the more than 1,200 nonprofit soup kitchens and food pantries in New York City and the more than 1.4 million low-income New Yorkers who live in households that can't afford enough food. The coalition works not only to meet these residents' immediate food needs but also to enact innovative solutions to help society move "beyond the soup kitchen" to ensure economic and food self-sufficiency for all Americans.



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### ABOUT THE BROOKLYN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Brooklyn Community Foundation's mission is to improve the lives of people in Brooklyn by strengthening communities through local giving, grantmaking and community service. The first and only one of its kind in Brooklyn, the Foundation was founded in 2009 to support the borough's most effective nonprofits in five Field of Interest Funds: Arts for All, Caring Neighbors, Community Development, Education and Youth Achievement, and Green Communities. Thanks to a start-up gift from the Independence Community Foundation, 100% of all donations to the Brooklyn Community Foundation are tax deductible.



The Brooklyn Community Foundation is based in DUMBO, Brooklyn.

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