

Mayor Bloomberg Launches *NYC Service* Program to Match Volunteers with Community Kitchens

Commissioner Robert Doar joined Mayor Michael Bloomberg at the launch of the “Adopt a Food Program” initiative on November 16, 2009. “Adopt a Food Program” is part of Mayor Bloomberg’s *NYC Service* program. Its goal is to make the best use of New Yorkers’ volunteer spirit during the holidays and beyond by matching the talents of city volunteers with the programs that need them the most.

Food programs tend to receive a large amount of volunteers in the holiday season, but some sites receive more volunteers than they can use, while others don’t get enough. Most programs also have a hard time finding enough volunteers before or after the holiday season. To offset this, the program will allow groups and individuals to “adopt” a food pantry or soup kitchen – agreeing to serve for six, nine or twelve months. The city’s food programs need help with more than just preparing and serving food – talented New Yorkers can assist with grant writing, repairs, web and graphic design and a number of other skills. The New York City Food Bank is assessing the needs of NYC food programs to make sure volunteers serve where they are needed most.

HRA is already closely involved with the city’s food programs. Forty-nine of the 75 programs involved in the initiative are supported by HRA’s Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), which supports a total of 513 food programs throughout the city. “Food pantries and soup kitchens are an important part of the City’s efforts to help the most needy,” said Commissioner Doar. “We greatly appreciate the contribution made by thousands of New Yorkers who volunteer to work in these important community based organizations.”

This comes as welcome news at a time when more families need the extra help and security food programs provide. As Mayor Bloomberg said, “The city’s food programs are a critical part of our safety net, and *NYC Service* is going to make them stronger.”



Commissioner Doar with staff and volunteers from the NYC Food Bank



Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Commissioner Robert Doar and Chief Service Officer Diahann Billings