



Hunger-Free Campus Bill Q & A

The **Hunger-Free Campus Bill** provides a designation and support to public colleges that address student hunger on campus. Any college is eligible to access these funds if they:

- Establish a hunger task force that meets a minimum of three times per academic year to set at least two goals with action plans and includes representatives from the current student body.
- Designate a staff member responsible for assisting students with enrollment in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- Provide options for students to utilize SNAP benefits at campus stores OR provide students with information on establishments in the surrounding area of campus where they can utilize SNAP EBT benefits.
- Participate in an awareness day campaign activity and plan a campus awareness event during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week.
- Provide at least one physical food pantry on campus OR enable students to receive food through a separate, stigma-free arrangement with an outside emergency food provider.
- Develop a student meal credit donation program OR designate a certain amount of money for free meal vouchers for students.
- Bi-annually conduct a student survey on hunger.

How many states have passed a Hunger-Free Campus Bill?

Ten states have formally passed a Hunger-Free Campus Bill: California in 2017; New Jersey and Washington in 2019; Maryland, Minnesota, and Massachusetts in 2021; Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, and Louisiana in 2022; Illinois in 2023. States have funded the designation award at varying levels.

9 other states have introduced the bill, including Texas, North Carolina, New York, West Virginia, Florida, Oregon, Michigan, Tennessee, and Virginia.

How have colleges used this funding in other states to date?

- Staffed basic needs positions.
- Trained student wellness advocates in basic needs best practices.
- Strengthened communication and outreach through investment in a text messaging app to alert students to leftover food at campus events.
- Upgraded existing basic needs resources by renovating a student pantry with improved food storage and refrigeration capacity.



- Expanded universities' SNAP outreach and enrollment.
- Developed creative partnerships with local retailers and farmers markets for improved food access.

Additionally, funding can be used for low-cost but high impact purposes like:

- Hosting SNAP enrollment and outreach events.
- Establishing or expanding food pantries.
- Paying for student leader stipends.
- Providing grocery gift cards to students in need.
- Creating resources to connect students to on and off-campus resources.

Does the Hunger-Free Campus Bill create additional burdens on the university?

This bill is not a requirement. Any campus can choose to become eligible for the incentive funding to bolster their anti-hunger programs. Built into the Hunger Free Campus Bill is the flexibility for schools with few resources to qualify for programmatic funding and receive the designation without large investments.

How is the funding dispersed and who makes that decision?

The Commission for Higher Education would distribute Hunger Free Campus Bill funding to the chancellor's office for each respective university. Each university then decides how to allocate funds.

Why is SNAP outreach a requirement?

SNAP—the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, is the federal nutrition program that forms the first line of defense against Hunger in the U.S.-- but many college students don't know about this benefit. And if they do, students have reported immense barriers to entry.

Colleges can play a significant role in helping their students access this benefit by understanding their state-specific eligibility criteria, the application process, and reporting requirements-- demystifying an otherwise draconian process.

How is the Task Force helpful to address hunger on campus?

Task forces allow campuses to invite diverse stakeholders with the goal of amplifying reach and impact. By assembling a task force with Dining Services, the Dean of Student life, student leaders, and campus social workers and case managers, this group brings together a wealth of resources and wisdom from a wide array of stakeholders. These task forces can be instrumental in holding colleges accountable to their students, ensuring the money reaches students most beneficially.