State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

On-Campus Food Insecurity in Virginia

Results from a Survey Pursuant to HB 827

November 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its first major assessment of hunger among United States college students, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found in 2018 that federal agencies were failing not only to accurately measure the prevalence of student food insecurity, but they were also failing to provide adequate information for students to find help. In response, the 2020 U.S. Department of Education's National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:20) added new questions to its student survey, marking the nation's first comprehensive data set specifically focused on the postsecondary population. The results indicated a critical level of need: An estimated 23% of all postsecondary students, or 3.8 million, experienced food insecurity in 2020. Yet four years later, in an update to its original report, the GAO found little change in the percentage of food-insecure students who received public help via the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

House Bill 827 from the 2024 Session of the General Assembly directs the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to survey each public institution of higher education to identify how each addresses food insecurity, then use its findings to provide guidance and recommendations to institutions and the General Assembly. SCHEV convened an advisory group to aid in creating a survey questionnaire, which was subsequently released in July 2024. The survey data, in addition to a review of current literature and guidance resources targeting postsecondary institutions, informed this report and the recommendations herein.

Summary of Recommendations: Recent legislation in Virginia has significantly grown the menu of resources available to public institutions as they work to mitigate food insecurity among their students. However, a silo effect within institutions combined with an overwhelming number of changes – some temporary, some permanent – at both the state and federal level have stymied institutions from taking advantage of all available opportunities. Both institutions and state policymakers should work to increase the quality and frequency of collaboration with state and local agencies to provide more Virginia students with access to much-needed resources.

This report includes more detailed recommendations for consideration by both postsecondary institutions and lawmakers. Appendices include additional resources for institutional reference, as well as a more detailed description of survey data.

BACKGROUND

Food security refers to the level of access an individual has to a quantity of food sufficient to support healthy, everyday life. Food security is measured nationwide by the Economic Research Service within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which breaks household and individual experience into four categories:

> **High food security**, or no problems or concerns about accessing food;
>
> **Marginal food security**, or occasional trouble or concern about accessing adequate food, but generally do not experience a reduction in the quality, variety or quantity of food one can access;
>
> **Low food security,** or reduced quality, variety and desirability of the food one can access, but no significant change in overall quantity; and
>
> **Very low food security**, or a disruption in both the quality and quantity of overall food intake resulting from lack of resources with which to access food.

The USDA describes households or individuals with either high or marginal food security as "food secure" and those with low or very low food insecurity as "food insecure." For 2023, the USDA reports that 13.5% of households experienced food insecurity, an increase of 0.8% or roughly 1.2 million households from 2022.

Over the same period, preliminary data from The Hope Center at Temple University indicates that 41% of all college students – three times the proportion of the broader population, and 18 percentage points more than found by the NPSAS:20 – experienced food insecurity. Studies conducted over the past decade have reported similar trends, ranging between 11% and 54% depending on student and institutional demographics. Overall, data consistently indicates higher rates of food insecurity among students of color, first-generation students, international students and LGBTQ+ students. Two-year students experience food insecurity at an average of twice the rate of four-year students. Among low-income students, rates of food insecurity increase considerably with the co-occurrence of other potential risk factors, such as housing insecurity and single parenthood. Students experiencing food insecurity are more likely to struggle academically and are less likely to graduate.

Notably, college students are less likely to qualify for public benefits like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, than are other members of the population – by design. When the Food and Agriculture Act of 1974 codified the Food Stamp Program (the predecessor to SNAP), Congress intentionally restricted program eligibility for college

students based on the common perception that this population generally came from middle-class families with ample resources to support the costs of full-time study and its associated living expenses. As a result, with limited exceptions, students pursuing postsecondary education on a half-time schedule or greater must work a minimum of 20 hours per week outside of class to qualify for SNAP.

While both the cost of higher education and the demographic portrait of the average college student have changed considerably over time, federal eligibility restrictions for SNAP remain largely the same and largely complicated to navigate. Students who do not meet the work requirement must qualify for at least one of several exemptions, many of which are unclear and contradictory for students who may qualify for more than one public benefit. Students who meet all other eligibility requirements but receive as few as 50% of their weekly meals through a campus meal plan are ineligible for SNAP. Because SNAP is administered at the state and local level, each state may have different exemptions and programs that differ from the federal baseline. More recently, the USDA offered temporary exemptions that expanded SNAP eligibility for students during the COVID-19 pandemic, but these exemptions expired in 2023. While those exemptions no longer apply, many online resources still cite them, adding still more confusion. In Virginia, individual institutions design and post their own resources about SNAP for students, leaving wide gaps in the reliability and utility of available guidance. Between all of these factors, both students and administrators face significant hurdles to learning more about, let alone successfully accessing, SNAP.

Since 2020, Virginia has taken more extensive steps to address food insecurity by making SNAP more accessible, both for the Commonwealth's population at large and specifically for postsecondary students. [HB 1410](#) from the 2020 Session of the General Assembly introduced the SNAP Restaurant Meals Program, providing an additional resource for SNAP recipients who may have limited access to grocery stores or the tools to prepare meals. A [larger overhaul in 2021](#) directed the Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) to adopt a broader basis for categorical eligibility for SNAP benefits. With two- and four-year students in mind, the same legislation broadened the scope of higher education programs that qualify for exemption from SNAP's 20-hour work week requirement. The current DSS SNAP Manual now identifies the Virginia Community College System's FastForward, Great Expectations and Chancellors Merit programs as examples of qualifying postsecondary education programs. Later legislation codifies the relationships between [DSS and Virginia's public school districts](#) and between DSS and the [Commonwealth's food banks](#), and ensures that [SNAP applicants no longer have to appear](#) in-person either for their initial application or to renew participation.

It was within this context that SCHEV conducted a survey of public institutions regarding on-campus food insecurity. The results of this survey are summarized in the following section. More details about the survey as well as recommendations for the institutions can be found in the appendices to this report.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESULTS

SCHEV received 35 completed surveys, 89.7% of the 39 sought. Community colleges were surveyed as individual institutions. The responses represent large and small, urban and rural, HBCU, flagship and newer institutions. The combined enrollment of the responding institutions – 343,797 students – represents 91% of the total enrollment (376,809) at the 39 institutions in the study population. The median time to complete the survey was 14.6 minutes.

The following summarizes key findings from the survey.

Awareness of the Issue

The survey results show that almost all of the institutions surveyed are aware of on-campus food insecurity, see it as being at least somewhat problematic at their institutions, and are actively engaged in efforts to address it.

- 80% said student food insecurity at their institution was either "somewhat problematic" (51%) or "very problematic" (29%).

- 74% said their institution is "very aware" of campus food insecurity as an issue in general.

- 92% said their institution is either "very active" in addressing student food insecurity (63%) or is "somewhat active" (29%).

- 85% said their institution in the past year took explicit action to address food insecurity on campus.

Estimated Prevalence of Food Insecurity

When asked for an estimate of the percentage of their students who experienced food insecurity in the most recent semester, 59% provided an estimate between 25% and 49%, and 32% provided an estimate between 1% and 24%. Most of these estimates (53%) were based partly on estimates or best guesses, and partly on data collected, monitored or maintained by the institution and/or other organization(s).

Methods and Programs

Identifying students experiencing food insecurity. Institutions were asked how they identify students experiencing food insecurity. One institution said they do not identify such students. The most frequently used methods for identifying students experiencing food

insecurity are students self-identifying (94%), contact with faculty (86%) and contact with staff or administrators (86%). Financial aid applications (e.g., FAFSA, need-based scholarships, Pell grants) are used by 34% of the institutions.

Using FAFSA to determine SNAP eligibility. In January 2022, the federal government permitted institutions to use FAFSA data to determine SNAP eligibility of students. Forty percent of institutions said they had done this, 26% said they had not, and 34% did not know if they had.

Types of programs on campus. Institutions were asked to describe in general the types of programs found on campus to address food insecurity. They reported having:

- programs managed by the institution (89% of institutions have these);

- formal partnerships between the institution and outside actors (54%);

- informal partnerships between the institution and outside actors (49%);

- outside programs not run or supported by the institution (37%); and

- programs managed by students (26%).

More specifically, all or nearly all institutions provide access to emergency funding (100%), food donation programs (100%) and food pantries on their campuses (91%). About two-thirds of institutions (66%) have SNAP enrollment services. Many institutions have non-tuition dollar grants/scholarships (77%) and centralized or one-stop offices (74%). About 17% have a meal swipe donation program, 14% have free or reduced-price meal plans, and 12% have on-campus Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) for SNAP participants to pay for food.

Table 1. Types of Programs on Campus
Percent Presence

Access to emergency funding	100.0
Food donation program	100.0
Food pantry on campus	91.4
Non-tuition dollar grants/scholarships	77.2
Centralized services/office for benefits and assistance (e.g. Single Stop)	74.3
SNAP enrollment services	65.7
First-year workshops/seminars	62.9
Campus educational programs to increase food insecurity awareness	54.3
Cooking, nutrition, and budgeting classes (for-credit or non-credit)	44.1
Food bank/soup kitchen	34.3
Community garden	28.6
Anti-hunger student organizations	25.7

Meal swipe donation program	17.2
Food Recovery Network	14.3
Free/reduced meal plan	14.3
On-campus Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) for SNAP participants to pay for food	11.8
Online Free Food Exchange (Facebook or other group)	11.8
Meals on Wheels	11.4
Other	37.1

Research conducted about food insecurity on campus. Eight institutions (23%) said they had done research on food insecurity affecting their students, while 19 (54%) had not, and eight (23%) did not know or preferred not to say.

Sources and Amounts of Funding

Allocated budget. Forty percent of respondents said there is a budget allocated by their institution for food insecurity programs, 49% said there was no allocated budget, and 11% did not know or preferred not to say.

Funding by source. By far the most common source of funding for campus food insecurity is private donations, with 22 institutions (63%) providing non-zero dollar amounts in the survey, and three others (9%) saying they received donations, but they vary or the amounts are not known. One institution reported a private gift of $1.85 million, which is an endowment gift from 2020. Excluding that outlying amount, the average private donation is $12,418.

State grants (23%) and non-general fund university revenues (20%) were also somewhat frequently used, averaging $7,978 and $51,767, respectively. Support from the state general fund (6%) and federal grants (3%) is rarely obtained. Various other funding sources were mentioned by nine institutions (26%), averaging $10,710.

Emergency funds. The questionnaire informed respondents that Virginia's 2024-26 biennial budget allows public institutions to use up to 1% of undergraduate need-based financial aid for students facing a financial emergency that puts them at risk of dropping out. Three institutions (9%) said they plan on using these funds to address campus food insecurity, three (9%) said they did not plan to do so, 17 (49%) said they might once they learn about details and 12 (34%) said they did not know or preferred not to answer.

Communications Strategies

Almost all institutions surveyed (94%) said they reach out proactively to students about food insecurity resources available to them. The most common methods were email (85%),

orientation (82%), and non-electronic outreach such as tables, flyers, and pamphlets (79%). Twelve institutions (36%) said they include information about food insecurity resources in class syllabi.

Staffing

Units addressing food insecurity. The vast majority of respondents (86%) said there are specific departments, offices, units or other entities at their institution tasked with addressing student food insecurity; 11% said there were not, and 3% did not know or preferred not to say. These units were predominantly found within departments or offices focused on student services.

Paid full-time equivalents (FTEs). When asked for the number of paid FTEs dedicated to addressing campus food insecurity at their institution, seven institutions (20%) said no such positions exist, while 11 (31%) said they have less than one FTE, 11 more (31%) have more than one but less than two, and five institutions (14%) have more than three such FTEs. One institution (3%) did not know or preferred not to say. Due to an error in setting up the survey online, the answer category for "More than 2 but less than 3" FTEs was omitted.

Volunteer FTE positions. When asked for the number of volunteer FTEs dedicated to addressing campus food insecurity at their institution, the majority of institutions (69%) said no such positions exist, while one (3%) said they have less than one FTE, one more (3%) has more than one but less than two, and six institutions (17%) have more than three such FTEs. Three institutions did not know or preferred not to say. Due to an error in setting up the survey online, the answer choice for "More than 2 but less than 3" was omitted.

Key Takeaways

Response to the survey was strong – 35 of 39 institutions (90%) provided a response. The 35 responding institutions contain 91% of the total student body found at all 39 institutions asked to participate in the survey. Therefore, the survey covers the study population well.

There are high levels of awareness and activity reported by institutions regarding food insecurity, and almost all institutions have at least some portion of a paid FTE tasked with addressing food insecurity. Most programs to address food insecurity found on campuses are managed by the institutions, with student involvement being somewhat uncommon. When asked for an estimate of the percentage of their students who experienced food insecurity in the most recent semester, a majority of institutions said between 25% and 49% and another one-third provided an estimate between 1% and 24%. A slim majority of these figures were

based partly on estimates or best guesses and partly on data collected, monitored or maintained by the institution and/or other organization(s).

The three most frequently reported methods of identifying students experiencing food insecurity involve institutional faculty and staff being able to detect food-insecure students or having students disclose their status to them, or relying on students to self-identify more directly. It is less common for institutions to use financial aid data to identify potentially food-insecure students. Because of the potential stigma associated with self-identifying as being food insecure, methods relying on self-identification may overlook some students experiencing food insecurity.

Private donations are the most frequently mentioned source of funding to address food insecurity. Federal grants and state general fund dollars are almost never obtained. Very few institutions use the student emergency funds permitted under the 2024-26 biennial budget to address food insecurity.

The two most frequently mentioned additional resources that could help address food insecurity are allocated funds and increased education about food insecurity among the campus and greater community.

This survey was a first attempt to assess a set of complex topics. Surveys are subject to various types of error, some of which may be difficult to detect or quantify. Further discussion, clarification and investigation of this issue may be needed in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations offer considerations for both institutional and policy leaders as they review new approaches to addressing campus food insecurity. Many of these should overlap across intended audiences, underscoring the need for collaboration spanning across levels of administration to offer more effective and efficient benefits to Virginia students.

For Institutions

Recommendation: Normalize asking for and accepting help.

Students may not reach out directly to their institutions for help with food insecurity for any number of reasons. Perceived or overt stigma associated with accepting help or with traditional resources, like food pantries, may exacerbate existing stress students have around asking for food. Many students may not realize that they qualify for public assistance, or they may assume that their needs are outweighed by those of others. A 2021 report on basic needs insecurity among VCCS students found that, among students who did not seek out help during the pandemic, 71% believed they were ineligible, while 67% assumed other students needed the help more. Ensuring that students are not only aware of available resources, but also comfortable using them removes a consistent hurdle to addressing need on campus.

> **Frame resources as available to all, regardless of need.** Evidence suggests that students are more likely to use resources that do not overtly call out basic need insecurity. Placing healthy snacks in open spaces, rebranding food pantries as open resources available to everyone on or around campus, providing to-go boxes in dining halls or at student events where food is served or utilizing social media and apps to alert students when campus events with food have leftovers are a few examples of strategies frequently highlighted as best practice for student services.

> **Increase the depth and frequency of conversations about food insecurity.** HB 582 from the 2022 Session of the General Assembly introduced a new baseline for contact from higher education institutions to students around the availability of and application process for SNAP. Institutions can grow the impact of these efforts by increasing the number of touchpoints, not only for new students but for everyone on campus. Many states have adopted requirements for all course syllabi at public institutions to include information about campus resources. Other university systems have adopted policies for posting information in public spaces and at campus events.

> Beyond these strategies, evidence supports the use of more targeted, personal student outreach to maximize student impact. A growing body of research suggests that direct outreach, particularly via text, using language attuned to students' level of need helps

recipients feel more empowered and makes a more lasting impression than impersonal or broad contact. Administrators can either use existing subscriptions to messaging services or free outreach software to reach specific groups of students identified as more likely to experience food insecurity.

Consider working with on-campus vendors to offer SNAP-eligible services. The survey results indicate that only three four-year institutions and one two-year institution in Virginia offer on-campus EBT for SNAP participants to pay for food. Most institutions do not currently meet federal eligibility requirements to accept SNAP, but third-party vendors with on-campus locations may be better suited to bring EBT-friendly services closer to students. Institutions can collaborate with current and potential vendors to determine what may be needed to bring current on-campus stores up to federal standards to accept EBT.

Expand community-building efforts beyond campus through local partnerships. By working with outside partners like local social service agencies, food banks and nonprofit organizations, institutions can build on existing resources to bring a more holistic support system directly to students. Bringing information sessions or SNAP application events, low-cost meal or grocery delivery programs, free transportation between campus and nearby grocery stores, and other resources directly to campus reduces the number of barriers students face to access while increasing awareness of available services. At the same time, by partnering more intentionally with local colleges and universities, community organizations can tap into new groups of potential volunteers to help grow their impact more broadly.

Recommendation: Involve students in the development and implementation of campus services.

An extensive body of research indicates that peer-to-peer support offers some of the greatest benefit for both academic and nonacademic outcomes. Engaging students, whether individually or at an organizational level, can help inform institution's strategies while increasing their overall effectiveness.

Work with student organizations to regularly assess services and needs around food insecurity. When determining whether an institution's approach to food insecurity is meeting students' needs effectively, direct input from the student body is vital. Yet recent efforts both in Virginia and elsewhere have highlighted the challenges in collecting detailed student survey data in large enough numbers to inform decision making. Student groups bring an engaged, incentivized and organized body to the process of reviewing current strategies, developing modifications or new programs and supporting their implementation. The Student Government Resource Center offers a [toolkit](#) for student organizations looking to start and run campus food pantries. Developed with contributions from George Mason University and Virginia Commonwealth University, among other partner student governments, the document offers guidance that can inform both student and administrative strategy.

Hire students to provide direct services on campus. Standard practice in higher education already includes hiring students to provide out-of-class academic supports like tutoring and writing services. Institutions can likewise supplement existing student affairs operations by employing students to provide services like SNAP application assistance, campus transportation to and from local grocery stores or managing social media campaigns. Such positions help spread out institutional burdens on administrative staff while making support services more approachable for students who need them.

Recommendation: Leverage existing legislation and funding to grow on-campus supports.

Given the extent to which policy change around food insecurity happens at different levels and in different agencies of government, administrators may be unaware of the extent to which public resources are available not only to students, but also to institutions. The following are among the most significant regulatory changes at the federal and state level making it easier to help institutions assess and meet student needs.

Use FAFSA data to identify potentially SNAP-eligible students. The U.S. Department of Education released [updated guidelines in July 2024](#) advising institutions and state grant agencies to use data collected through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to identify students who most likely qualify for public benefits. Early identification allows institutions to work with students before they arrive for a new semester to maximize available resources: For instance, students living off-campus could combine a low-cost meal plan for up to 10 meals per week with SNAP benefits to enhance their access to food. More broadly, using existing records removes the administrative burden of collecting additional information from students while reducing the burden of self-identification with food insecurity for students who may not otherwise seek out help.

Take advantage of flexibility in state funding. The 2024-26 biennial budget adds new language allowing institutions to use up to 1% of state-funded need-based financial aid for emergency grants for students. While emergency grants only offer a temporary stopgap and may not resolve longstanding challenges, studies indicate that their availability can be a deciding factor in whether students stay enrolled in a degree program or have to drop out. Every institution surveyed reported offering emergency assistance to students, but only three indicated they were aware of the new budget language and had plans to use it this year to support on-campus efforts. With 69.4% of Virginia institutions reporting private donations as their primary source of food insecurity funding, all could benefit from applying at least some general fund dollars to support non-tuition needs.

Become a third-party provider under SNAPET. Virginia's SNAP Education and Training (SNAPET) program allows SNAP participants to pursue degrees, certifications and other credentials without having to meet the standard work requirement. SNAPET also provides participants with employment and financial services that may not necessarily be available to SNAP-eligible college students. Currently, DSS supports 34 SNAPET local agencies across the state, including all 23 colleges under VCCS, but existing language in the *Code of Virginia* allows other institutions to apply.

For Policymakers

Virginia is among a growing number of states that have adopted legislation over the past five years to better address student food insecurity, but hurdles to connecting students with newly expanded services remain. The following recommendations highlight opportunities for state leaders to connect more of Virginia's students to current resources.

Recommendation: Increase state support for direct partnerships between public institutions of higher education and the Department of Social Services.

Recent legislative efforts have focused on connecting DSS more intentionally with other state agencies to increase the number of touchpoints through which Virginians can access SNAP, but in many ways, two- and four-year institutions have been left out of the conversation. Expanding those efforts to include public institutions will further the Commonwealth's efforts to make access equally available to all Virginians.

Standardize SNAP eligibility guidance documents from DSS. HB 2025 from the 2023 Session of the General Assembly created a formal mechanism for DSS to share an up-to-date fact sheet on SNAP eligibility and the application process with each public school district for distribution to caregivers before the start of each school year. Policymakers can consider new legislation to provide a similar resource to each public postsecondary institution to ensure that every student has a consistent source of guidance. Any such guidance should include a breakout of how participation in different campus dining plans impacts SNAP eligibility.

Standardize training for administrators and students from DSS and local agencies. HB 2380 from the 2023 Session of the General Assembly formalizes the relationship between DSS and the state's network of food banks, outlining the information and resources DSS will provide to individual food banks, including training to become a third-party direct service provider on the agency's behalf. The General Assembly can consider establishing a similar process for local DSS offices to work with higher education administrators, particularly at institutions that do not already have programs like Single Stop to provide these services.

Increase funding for DSS to add SNAPET providers. HB 1820 from the 2021 General Assembly, Special Session I has made significant strides in growing opportunities for students to pursue career-oriented education and training without losing eligibility for SNAP. Unfortunately, as demand for SNAPET continues to rise, DSS has maxed out its funding to support SNAPET-equivalent programs like those currently included on VCCS campuses. Policymakers can consider adding resources to the program, potentially allowing four-year institutions and Richard Bland College to participate.

Recommendation: Invest in growing access to tested, effective services for students across institutions.

The 2024 Adopted Budget made a significant first step in creating flexibility for public institutions to use up to 1% of state-supported financial aid for nonacademic emergency grants. Additional flexibility and new funding sources would give the Commonwealth's colleges and universities more means to support food insecure students both in and out of the classroom.

Invest in demonstrably effective programs across public institutions. Virginia's public institutions have varying degrees of ability to support food security programs on campus using nongeneral funds. Policymakers can make new general funds available to responsibly invest in supports that have already impacted food insecurity rates at some of the state's institutions, like free and reduced-price meal plans or additional FTEs dedicated to connecting students with public benefit programs.

Consider economic incentives for local businesses and on-campus vendors to become approved EBT retailers. While public institutions are in many ways uniquely positioned to increase student access to basic needs, they cannot singlehandedly meet every need a student may face. Incentivizing independent businesses both on and near campuses to become federally authorized SNAP retailers can increase the number of resources available to students and other local residents at no additional cost to public institutions.

Invest in more Virginia-focused research and pilot programs. While data continues to show that students experience considerably higher rates of food insecurity than the rest of the population, research around effective interventions is still relatively limited. Policymakers can support institutional efforts to grow the body of evidence, like recent studies out of [Virginia Tech](#) and [Virginia Commonwealth University](#), by funding pilot programs and additional research efforts.

Recommendation: Work with federal partners and policymakers to increase state flexibility for SNAP. The Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 introduced an unprecedented level of flexibility for states to make decisions about how best to meet the needs of their own postsecondary students within the broader federal guidelines around food aid. In the decades since, Virginia and other states have found innovative ways to grow SNAP, but additional change needs to happen at the federal level for states to do more. The following options represent a sampling of options policymakers may want to discuss on a national framework.

Permanently restore pandemic-era SNAP eligibility waivers for postsecondary students. From January 16, 2021, through June 9, 2023, the USDA temporarily revised eligibility requirements for postsecondary students to reach a higher proportion of students facing food insecurity. First, the USDA expanded income eligibility requirements to include students with an estimated family contribution (EFC) toward the cost of college attendance of $0, growing the number of SNAP-eligible postsecondary students nationwide from 3.3 million to 4.4 million over the length of the federal health emergency.

Second, the USDA allowed any student approved for participation in a state or federally funded work-study program to bypass the standard work requirement – regardless of whether they were actually assigned to a work-study position. With an estimated 3.8 million students having experienced food insecurity in 2020 and roughly 600,000 federal work-study positions offered nationwide each year, this exemption briefly removed a major hurdle to SNAP eligibility by allowing institutions to approve

more applications than funded positions. By permanently restoring these two student exemptions, the USDA can secure food access for up to 33% more students throughout the United States.

Expand eligibility for the SNAP Restaurant Meals Program to include college students. Federal guidelines limit eligibility for the SNAP Restaurant Meals Program to SNAP participants who are aged 60 and above, receive government disability benefits, are homeless or have a spouse who meets any of the above qualifications. Yet other people struggling with food insecurity may also face significant barriers to preparing their own meals, even after securing food through SNAP.

While many college students have secure housing, many – particularly those who live on-campus – may have limited or no access to a kitchen. Virginia adopted the SNAP Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) in 2020 and, so far, has approved 24 participating restaurants, 23 of which have at least one postsecondary institution within a 10-mile radius. Expanding eligibility for the Restaurant Meals Program to include students would add one more consistent source of food for SNAP-eligible students and would incentivize more restaurants operating on or near postsecondary campuses to participate in SNAP RMP.

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APPENDIX A: RESOURCES FOR INSTITUTIONS

Toolkits for Administrators and Students

The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice: [Resources for Students, College Leaders, Faculty, and Staff](#)

Every Texan: [College Food Access Toolkit](#)

Federation of Virginia Food Banks: [Virginia SNAP Outreach Toolkit](#)

Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon: [SNAP College Toolkit](#)

Student Government Resource Center: [Running a Campus Food Pantry: Student Government Toolkit](#)

University of New Mexico Basic Needs Project: [Solutions](#)

Sample Forms for Administrators and State Agencies

East Central College: [Amazon Wishlist for a Campus Food Pantry](#)

Massachusetts Department of Transition Assistance SNAP Eligibility: [Community College Verification Form](#)

New Jersey Department of Human Services SNAP Eligibility: [Community College Verification Form](#)

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services SNAP Eligibility: [Community College Verification Form](#)

Virginia SNAP Resources – Quick Links (from DSS)

[SNAP Learning Modules](#)

[VRMP Locations](#)

[SNAP Manual](#)

Relevent Legislation in Virginia

[Chapter 2 of the 2024 General Assembly, Special Session I](#): Enabling budget language for emergency funds for students

[HB 150 (2024)](#): Removes in-person application requirement for SNAP participants

[HB 2380 (2023)](#): DSS informational resources for Virginia public school districts

[HB 2025 (2023)](#): DSS informational and training resources for Virginia food banks

HB 1820 (2021, Special Session I): Expansion of SNAP eligibility and definition of "employment and training" for SNAP

HB 1410 (2020): Introduction of the SNAP Restaurant Meals Program in Virginia

SB 547 (2004): SNAP eligibility for AmeriCorps volunteers

Key Federal Resources

U.S. Code: Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act, U.S. Code 7, § 2015

U.S. Department of Agriculture: Food Stamp Program Student Eligibility Final Rule

U.S. Department of Education: Use of FAFSA Data to Administer Federal Programs

U.S. Department of Education: Guidance on Means-Tested Benefits Outreach for Institutions and State Grant Agencies

Recent Reports on Virginia Campuses

The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice: *#RealCollege 2021: Basic Needs Insecurity Among Virginia Community College System Students During the Ongoing Pandemic*

Sara Goldrick-Rab et al.: "Guide to Assessing Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education"

John Jones et al.: "Smart Little Campus Food Pantries: Addressing Food Insecurity at Virginia Commonwealth University"

Virginia Tech Office of Student Affairs: Food Security Task Force Recommendation Report

Ralph P. Hall et al.: "Virginia Tech Food Access and Security Study"

Ralph P. Hall et al.: "Systematic Investigation of Inadequate Food Access at a Large Southeastern Land Grant University"

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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APPENDIX C: SURVEY METHODS

Following the directions outlined in HB 827 during the 2024 Session of the General Assembly, SCHEV convened an advisory group to assist in creating a survey questionnaire (full list of members included in Acknowledgements). Panel members informed a preliminary review of recent efforts by neighboring states, including a survey questionnaire used in Tennessee, before developing a draft surgery for the Virginia project. The initial draft questionnaire was shared with members of the advisory group on June 25, 2024 for review and comment.

The final version of the survey, outlined in detail in Appendix D, reflects input from members of the advisory panel and further incorporation of questions from the Tennessee example. Specific edits expanded questioning around the extent to which institutions have taken explicit action to address food or basic needs insecurity among students, the extent to which efforts may be siloed within individual departments and means of communication to students regarding food insecurity. After considering the inclusion of more specific questions about program budgets across institutional programs, group members ultimately refrained out of concern that increasing the length of the survey could negative impact completion rates.

SCHEV staff entered the final questionnaire into Microsoft Forms for review and testing by colleagues before distribution. The survey was then emailed by SCHEV staff to multiple contacts across the Commonwealth's 15 public four-year institutions, the Virginia Community College System Office and Richard Bland College on July 16, 2024. VCCS managed survey distribution to each of its 23 two-year colleges. In all, SCHEV sought a total of 39 survey responses. The original deadline for completion was August 16, but this was later extended to September 6, 2024 to increase the overall response rate.

SCHEV received 35 complete surveys, 89.7% of the original 39 responses sought. Responses included representation of large, small, urban, rural, HBCU, flagship and newer institutions. The combined enrollment of the responding institutions – 343,797 students – represents 91% of total public two- and four-year institutional enrollment in Virginia, as indicated by fall 2023-24 headcount data previously collected by the agency.

Median survey completion time was 14.6 minutes.

SCHEV extends its thanks and appreciation to all survey respondents.

Survey Timeline

Date	Activity
5/9/2024	Advisory group formed
6/25/2024	Draft questionnaire distributed to advisory group
7/16/2024	Survey launched
End of July 2024	First reminder email
Early August 2024	Second reminder email
9/6/2024	Survey closed

SCHEV acknowledges several known issues with the survey. In a small number of instances, respondents had difficulty finalizing their completed surveys within Microsoft Forms. SCHEV staff successfully addressed these issues.

In one multi-factor question about specific programs on campus to address food insecurity, one program – "Non-tuition dollar grants/scholarships" – appeared twice in the list of available answer choices, reflected in review of Q23 and Q26 of Appendix D. The answers to Q23 contained more complete information, so these were included in this report.

One answer choice in a question soliciting ideas about additional resources that could help alleviate barriers to addressing food insecurity was entered incorrectly into Microsoft Forms. The intended answer choice was, "Increased institutional buy-in," but the question appeared in the survey as, "Increased instructional buy-in." This may have affected responses to the question, which is outlined in Q54.

For the two questions about paid versus volunteer full-time employees (FTEs), outlined in discussion of Q8 and Q9, the answer category for "More than 2 but less than 3" was inadvertently omitted. This may have affected responses to the question.

One respondent submitted feedback that many of the questions were difficult to answer due to lack of more detailed description or information about the intent of the questions.

APPENDIX D: FULL SURVEY RESULTS

How much of a problem is student food insecurity at your institution? (Q1)

Food insecurity was recognized broadly as a problem, with 29% of respondents saying it is very problematic, and 51% saying it is somewhat problematic.

Q1. How much of a problem is student food insecurity at your institution?	Frequency	Percent
Don't know/Prefer not to say	1	2.9
Not problematic at all	2	5.7
Slightly problematic	4	11.4
Somewhat problematic	18	51.4
Very problematic	10	28.6
Total	**35**	**2.9**

How aware is your institution? (Q2)

Respondents were asked "How aware is your institution's leadership of student food insecurity as an issue in general?" All institutions were either very aware (74%) or somewhat aware (27%).

Q2. How aware is your institution's leadership of student food insecurity as an issue in general?	Frequency	Percent
Somewhat aware	9	26.5
Very aware	25	73.5
Total	**34**	**100.0**

How active is your institution? (Q3)

Respondents were asked "How active is your institution in addressing student food insecurity at your institution?" Only 9% self-described as slightly active, with 29% saying somewhat active and 63% saying they are very active.

Q3. How active is your institution in addressing student food insecurity at your institution?	Frequency	Percent
Slightly active	3	8.6
Somewhat active	10	28.6
Very active	22	62.9
Total	**35**	**100.0**

Has your institution taken explicit action? (Q4)

Respondents were asked, "In the past year, has your institution taken explicit action to address food insecurity or basic needs on your campus? (E.g., establishment of a food insecurity task force, food insecurity strategic action plan, institutional priority designation)." Almost all respondents (85%) said they had done so, 12% said they had not and 3% did not know or preferred not to say.

Q4. In the past year, has your institution taken explicit action to address food in insecurity or basic needs on your campus? (E.g., establishment of a food insecurity task force, food insecurity strategic action plan, institutional priority designation).	Frequency	Percent
Don't know/Prefer not to say	1	2.9
No	4	11.8
Yes	29	85.3
Total	**34**	**100.0**

Units addressing student food insecurity (Q5)

Respondents were asked, "Are there specific departments, offices, units or other entities at your institution tasked with addressing student food insecurity?" The vast majority (86%) said there are, 11% said there are not, and 3% did not know or preferred not to say.

Q5. Are there specific departments, offices, units or other entities at your institution tasked with addressing student food insecurity?	Frequency	Percent
Don't know/Prefer not to say	1	2.9
No	4	11.4
Yes	30	85.7
Total	**35**	**100.0**

What units are tasked with addressing campus food insecurity? (Q6)

The 30 institutions that said in question 5 that they had such units were then asked, "If yes to Question 5, please list the name(s) of the department(s), office(s) or other unit(s) or entities tasked with addressing campus food insecurity." These open-ended responses are listed verbatim below. A scan of this list shows that units dedicated to student services were most frequently named as being tasked with addressing campus food insecurity.

Q6. If yes to Question 5, please list the name(s) of the department(s), office(s) or other unit(s) or entities tasked with addressing campus food insecurity.	Frequency	Percent
Care and Support Services, Food Insecurity Resource Group, Satellite Pantry leaders	1	3.1
Community Connections (under student services)	1	3.1
Counseling Department oversees the Germanna Cares Initiative	1	3.1
Counseling Services; Residence Life; Student Success.	1	3.1
Dean of Students Office	1	3.1
Dean of Students Office, Dining Services, Gwen Hale Resource Closet	1	3.1
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and the Division of Student Affairs	1	3.1
Financial Stability and Advocacy office/Student Affairs Department	1	3.1
Food Insecurity Committee	1	3.1
No department/office has been tasked specifically to address food insecurity. However, the staff within the TRiO in Middletown, Financial Aid in Fauquier, and Luray-Page location have seen the growing issue and collaborated with the Foundation to build and supply a campus food pantry at all 3 of our locations. As well as connect students to community support to address food insecurity.	1	3.1
Off-Campus Life within Student Life; Basic Need Advisory Board	1	3.1
Office of Student Advocacy; Business Services; faculty working group (Sustainable Food Access); VCU Sustainability; Office of Health Equity	1	3.1
Office of Student Engagement	1	3.1
Single Stop/Care Team	1	3.1
Student Affairs	1	3.1
Student Affairs, Student Life, Foundation, Great Expectations, Single Stop	1	3.1
Student Outreach and Resource Center	1	3.1
Student Resource and Empowerment Center	1	3.1
Student Resource Center	1	3.1
Student Services	1	3.1
Student Services and the Educational Foundation	1	3.1
Student Services Connections Coach (Single Stop)	1	3.1
Student Services Department; Student Resources Office	1	3.1
Student Services, Workforce Solutions, Educational Foundation, Academic Affairs	1	3.1
Student Services/Single Stop/SOS Center	1	3.1
Student Success Center	1	3.1
Student Success Coach Program (College Success Coach Initiative); Student Services; DCC Educational Foundation	1	3.1
Student Support and Advocacy Center	1	3.1
Student Support Services	1	3.1
The Department of Auxiliary Services is responsible for providing comprehensive food services, including 21 meals per week to all cadets when the Corps of Cadets is in session.	1	3.1
The Office of the Dean of Students	1	3.1
VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning and the Dean of Students Office	1	3.1

Entities exclusively dedicated to campus food insecurity (Q7)

Respondents were then asked, "Are any of the entities mentioned exclusively dedicated to campus food insecurity?" Six institutions (17%) said yes, 77% said no and 6% did not know or preferred not to say.

Q7. Are any of the entities mentioned exclusively dedicated to campus food insecurity?	Frequency	Percent
Don't know/Prefer not to say	2	5.7
No	27	77.1
Yes	6	17.1
Total	**35**	**100.0**

The six institutions responding in the affirmative had said previously in question 6 that the units tasked with addressing campus food insecurity were:

- The Office of the Dean of Students;

- Student Services/Single Stop/SOS Center;

- Student Services, Workforce Solutions;

- Educational Foundation, Academic Affairs;

- Student Resource Center, Food Insecurity Committee; and

- Financial Stability and Advocacy office/Student Affairs Department.

The intent of the question was to identify units whose only task was campus food insecurity, but some of the responses above indicate that either the intended meaning of the question was not clear, or there are sub-units within the ones listed above that are exclusively focused on campus food insecurity. For example, it seems unlikely that an Office of the Dean of Students would be exclusively tasked with food insecurity, but more likely that campus food insecurity at that institution is only handled within the Office of the Dean of Students and not within any other units on campus.

Paid full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) (Q8)

In order to assess staffing levels dedicated to addressing campus food insecurity, respondents were asked two questions about staffing levels, one focusing on paid positions and one focusing on volunteer positions. First, respondents were asked, "How many **paid** full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) are dedicated to addressing campus food insecurity at

your institution?" For simplicity, categorical answer choices were presented. Seven institutions (20%) said no such positions exist, while 11 (31%) said they have less than one FTE, 11 more (31%) have more than one but less than two, and five institutions (14%) have more than three paid FTEs dedicated to addressing campus food insecurity. One institution (3%) did not know or preferred not to say. Due to an error in setting up the survey online, the answer choice for "More than 2 but less than 3" was omitted.

Q8. How many paid full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) are dedicated to addressing campus food insecurity at your institution?	Frequency	Percent
Don't know/Prefer not to say	1	2.9
More than 0 but less than 1	11	31.4
More than 1 but less than 2	11	31.4
More than 3	5	14.3
None	7	20.0
Total	**35**	**100.0**

Volunteer full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) (Q9)

Following the question about paid positions, respondents were asked, "How many **volunteer** full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) are dedicated to addressing campus food insecurity at your institution?" For simplicity, categorical answer choices were presented. The majority of institutions (69%) said no such positions exist, while one (3%) said they have less than one FTE, one more (3%) has more than one but less than two, and six institutions (17%) have more than three volunteer FTEs dedicated to addressing campus food insecurity. Three institutions (9%) did not know or preferred not to say. Due to an error in setting up the survey online, the answer choice for "More than 2 but less than 3" was omitted.

Q9. How many volunteer full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) are dedicated to addressing campus food insecurity at your institution?	Frequency	Percent
Don't know/Prefer not to say	3	8.6
More than 0 but less than 1	1	2.9
More than 1 but less than 2	1	2.9
More than 3	6	17.1
None	24	68.6
Total	**35**	**100.0**

Identifying students experiencing food insecurity (Q10)

Respondents were asked, "How does your institution identify students experiencing food insecurity? (Select all that apply)" As indicated in the question wording, multiple responses

were permitted, therefore the percentages in the following table sum to more than 100. Large majorities of the institutions said students self-identify (94%) and they also rely on contact with faculty (86%) and contact with staff or administrators (86%). Smaller majorities identify students experiencing food insecurity through outreach or special programs that provide assistance (71%), existing food pantry data collection (69%), contact with other students (66%) and referral from Counseling and Psychological Services (51%). A minority of institutions (34%) use financial aid applications such as FAFSA, need-based scholarships and Pell grants to identify students experiencing food insecurity. Only one institution (6%) said they do not identify such students, and two (6%) use other means.

Q10. How does your institution identify students experiencing food insecurity? (Select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
Students self-identify	33	94.3
Contact with faculty	30	85.7
Contact with staff or administrators	30	85.7
Outreach or special programs that provide assistance	25	71.4
Existing food pantry data collection	24	68.6
Contact with other students	23	65.7
Referral from Counseling and Psychological Services	18	51.4
Financial Aid Applications (e.g., FAFSA, need-based scholarships, Pell grants)	12	34.3
Other (please specify) _____	2	5.7
Our institution does not identify students experiencing food insecurity	1	2.9

Percentage of students experiencing food insecurity (Q11)

Respondents were asked, "About what percentage of students at your institution experienced food insecurity in the most recent semester? Your best guess is fine." The majority of institutions (59%) said that between 25 and 49% of their students experienced food insecurity in the most recent semester. Two institutions (6%) said this figure was between 50 and 74%, while six said it was between 10 and 24%, and five (14%) said it was between 1 and 9%. One institution – Virginia Military Institute – said that no students experienced food insecurity in the most recent semester, explaining that "Food insecurity while on Post is not believed to be an issue since all meals are provided to all cadets."

Q11. About what percentage of students at your institution experienced food insecurity in the most recent semester? Your best guess is fine.	Frequency	Percent
50 to <75	2	5.9
25 to <50	20	58.8
10 to <25	6	17.6
1 to <10	5	14.7
0	1	2.9
Total	**34**	**100.0**

Basis for this percentage (Q12)

Following the responses about the percentage of students experiencing food insecurity, respondents were asked, "How would you describe the percentage you gave in Q11?" The majority (53%) said the percentage in question 11 was based partly on estimates or best guesses and partly on data collected, monitored or maintained by the institution and/or other organization(s).

Q12. How would you describe the percentage you gave in Q11?	Frequency	Percent
Based entirely on data collected, monitored or maintained by the institution and/or other organization(s)	6	17.7
Based entirely on estimates or best guesses	10	29.4
Based partly on estimates or best guesses, and partly on data collected, monitored or maintained by the institution and/or other organization(s)	18	52.9
Total	**34**	**100.0**

Programs to address student food insecurity (Q13)

Respondents were asked a general question, "What types of programs to address student food insecurity are available at your institution? (Select all that apply)." The question was primarily intended to draw a general overview of management structures present on campuses, and secondarily to prime the respondents to start thinking about programs in preparation for more specific questions to follow.

The most frequently used programs are those managed by the institutions, found at 89% of institutions; programs managed by students were least common (26% of institutions).

Q13. What types of programs to address student food insecurity are available at your institution? (Select all that apply).	Frequency	Percent
Programs managed by the institution	31	88.6
Formal partnerships between the institution and outside actors	19	54.3
Informal partnerships between the institution and outside actors	17	48.6
Outside programs not run or supported by the institution	13	37.1
Programs managed by students	9	25.7

Program management (Q14-36)

For this section of the questionnaire, a grid was displayed listing 19 examples of programs to address food insecurity, with four additional opportunities to name other programs not explicitly listed. The wording of the question was: "For each program listed below, if it exists at your institution please indicate whether it is managed by the institution, by students, and/or by external organization(s). You can check multiple answers for each program to indicate programs that are managed in collaborations. If the program does not exist at your institution, please check that response."

The following table shows how many institutions have each type of program, which was determined by counting all programs for which any type of management structure was indicated by the respondent.

All institutions have access to emergency funding and food donation programs and almost all (91%) have a food pantry on campus. Majorities of institutions have non-tuition dollar grants/scholarships (77%), centralized services/office for benefits and assistance (e.g., Single Stop) (74%), SNAP enrollment services (66%), first-year workshops/seminars (63%) and campus educational programs to increase food insecurity awareness (54%). Minorities of the institutions have varying numbers of the 11 additional types of programs.

Q14-36. What types of programs to address student food insecurity are available at your institution?	Frequency	Percent
Access to emergency funding	35	100.0
Food donation program	35	100.0
Food pantry on campus	32	91.4
Non-tuition dollar grants/scholarships	27	77.1
Centralized services/office for benefits and assistance (e.g. Single Stop)	26	74.3
SNAP enrollment services	23	65.7
First-year workshops/seminars	22	62.9
Campus educational programs to increase food insecurity awareness	19	54.3
Cooking, nutrition, and budgeting classes (for-credit or non-credit)	15	42.9

Food bank/soup kitchen	12	34.3
Community garden	10	28.6
Anti-hunger student organizations	9	25.7
Meal swipe donation program	6	17.1
Food Recovery Network	5	14.3
Free/reduced meal plan	5	14.3
On-campus Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) for SNAP participants to pay for food	4	11.4
Online Free Food Exchange (Facebook or other group)	4	11.4
Meals on Wheels	4	11.4
Other	13	37.1

A review of the information about management structures showed that 29 of 31 instances of food pantries on campus are managed entirely by the institution, while 16 of 23 instances of SNAP enrollment services are managed by the institution alone (n=12) or in collaboration with an outside organization (n=4). Food donation programs, found at all 35 institutions, are managed exclusively by the institution in 21 instances, exclusively by external organizations in two cases (Virginia Western Community College and Tidewater Community College) and exclusively by students in one case (the College of William and Mary). In one case the food donation program is managed by a collaboration of students and an external organization (Longwood University). The remaining 13 food donation programs are collaborations among the institutions and a mix of external organizations and/or students.

Sources of funding (Q37-46)

The first question in this section of the questionnaire asked generally, "Is there a budget allocated by your institution for food insecurity programs at your institution?" There were 14 institutions (40%) who said they did have a budget allocated by the institution while 17 (49%) said they did not, and four (11%) said they did not know or preferred not to say.

Q37. Is there a budget allocated by your institution for food insecurity programs at your institution?"	Frequency	Percent
Don't know/ Prefer not to say	4	11.4
No	17	48.6
Yes	14	40.0
Total	**35**	**100.0**

The following five questions asked for specific funding amounts from the state general fund, non-general university revenues, state grants, federal grants and private donors. One

additional question asked if there were other sources of funding besides these and, if so, allowed for up to three additional funding amounts. Note that it may be possible that institutions could have no budget allocated by the institution for food insecurity programs yet may still report funding in some of these categories.

The table below shows the number of institutions providing non-zero dollar amounts for each source of funding, followed by the minimum and maximum values given (the range), and the average of the non-zero dollar amounts (the mean). By far the most common source of funding for campus food insecurity is private donations, with 22 institutions (63%) providing non-zero dollar amounts and three others (9%) saying they received donations but they vary or the amounts are not known. One institution reported a private gift of $1.85 million, which is an endowment gift from 2020. Excluding that outlying amount, the average private donation is $12,418. Various other funding sources were mentioned by nine institutions (26%), averaging $10,710. State grants (23%) and non-general fund university revenues (20%) were also somewhat frequently used, averaging $7,978 and $51,767, respectively. Support from the state general fund (6%) and federal grants (3%) is rarely obtained.

Type of funding	Frequency	Percent	Range	Mean
State general fund	2	5.7	$10,000 to $71,531	$40,766
Non-general university revenues	7	20.0	$35,00 to $196,869	$51,767
State grants	8	22.9	$1,000 to $25,000	$7,978
Federal grants	1	2.9	na	$13,520
Private donors	22	62.9	$500 to $1,850,000	$96,054 ($12,418)[a]
Others	9	25.7	$350 to $10,710	$10,710

Percentages based on 35 institutions – not all institutions provided answers to these questions.
[a] – Excluding the outlier of $1.85 million, the mean is $12,418.

Proactive communication about food insecurity resources (Q47)

Respondents were asked, "Does your institution proactively reach out to students about food insecurity resources available to them?" Almost all institutions (33 of 35, 94%) said they do so.

Q47. Does your institution proactively reach out to students about food insecurity resources available to them?	Frequency	Percent
No	2	5.7
Yes	33	94.3
Total	**35**	**100.0**

Channels of proactive communication (Q48)

Next, respondents were asked. "If Yes for Question 47, how does your institution proactively reach out to students about the food insecurity resources available to them? (Select all that apply)" Respondents were presented with a list of eight channels of communication. Because respondents could select multiple channels, the percentages in the table below can add to more than 100.

The most frequently used channel was email (85%), followed closely by orientation (82%) and non-electronic outreach such as information tables, flyers and pamphlets (79%). Majorities also used social media (70%) and centralized office services (61%). Text messaging (36%), information included in class syllabi (36%) and other methods (12%) are less frequently used.

Q48. If Yes for Question 47, how does your institution proactively reach out to students about the food insecurity resources available to them? (Select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
Email	28	84.9
Orientation	27	81.8
Non-electronic outreach (tables, flyers, and pamphlets)	26	78.8
Social media	23	69.7
Centralized office services	20	60.6
Text messaging	12	36.4
Information is included in class syllabi	12	36.4
Other	4	12.1

Communication about eligibility for SNAP (Q49)

Respondents were then asked specifically, "How does your institution make students aware of their potential eligibility for SNAP? (Select all that apply)" The same list of communication channels as in the previous question was available here, with the addition of a choice indicating that the institution does not make students aware of their potential eligibility for SNAP. Two institutions indicated that they do not make students aware of their potential eligibility for SNAP. Majorities used non-electronic outreach such as information tables, flyers and pamphlets (54%), email (51%) and orientation (51%). Centralized office services were used by 46%, social media by 29%, other methods by 29%, text messaging by 26% and information included in class syllabi by 20%.

Q49. How does your institution make students aware of their potential eligibility for SNAP? (Select all that apply)	Frequency	Percent
Non-electronic outreach (tables, flyers, and pamphlets)	19	54.3
Email	18	51.4
Orientation	18	51.4
Centralized office services	16	45.7
Social media	10	28.6
Other (please specify)	10	28.6
Text messaging	9	25.7
Information is included in class syllabi	7	20.0
We do not make students aware of their potential eligibility for SNAP	2	5.7

Using FAFSA data to determine SNAP eligibility (Q50)

Respondents were informed in question 50 of the survey that "In January 2022, the federal government permitted institutions to use FAFSA data to determine SNAP eligibility of students. Has your institution done this? (See https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2022-01-20/use-fafsa-data-administer-federal-programs)."

Fourteen institutions (40%) said they do use FAFSA data to determine SNAP eligibility, none (26%) said they did not do so and 12 (34%) did not know or preferred not to say.

Q50. In January 2022, the federal government permitted institutions to use FAFSA data to determine SNAP eligibility of students. Has your institution done this? (See https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2022-01-20/use-fafsa-data-administer-federal-programs).	Frequency	Percent
Don't know/Prefer not to say	12	34.3
No	9	25.7
Yes	14	40.0
Total	**35**	**100.0**

Using student financial emergency funds (Q51)

Question 51 on the survey informed respondents that "Virginia's 2024-26 biennial budget allows public institutions to use up to one% of undergraduate need-based financial aid for students facing a financial emergency that puts them at risk of dropping out. Does your institution plan on using these funds to address campus food insecurity?"

Three institutions (9%) said they plan to use these funds to address campus food insecurity, three more (9%) said they did not plan to do so, 17 (49%) said they might once they learn details, and 12 (34%) said they did not know or preferred not to say.

Q51. Virginia's 2024-26 biennial budget allows public institutions to use up to one% of undergraduate need-based financial aid for students facing a financial emergency that puts them at risk of dropping out. Does your institution plan on using these funds to address campus food insecurity?	Frequency	Percent
Don't know/Prefer not to say	12	34.3
Maybe, once we learn details	17	48.6
No	3	8.6
Yes	3	8.6
Total	**35**	**100.0**

Research about food insecurity (Q52)

Respondents were asked, "Has your institution done research about food insecurity affecting its students?" Eight (23%) said they had, 19 (54%) said they had not and eight (23%) did not know or preferred not to say.

Q52. Has your institution done research about food insecurity affecting its students?	Frequency	Percent
Don't know/Prefer not to say	8	22.9
No	19	54.3
Yes	8	22.9
Total	**35**	**100.0**

Examples of research about food insecurity (Q53)

As a follow-up to the previous question, respondents were asked in question 53, "If Yes for Question 52, please insert a link to that research or send it separately to Tom Allison at SCHEV." The table below shows the responses for the seven institutions that offered substantive information here.

Institution	Q53. If Yes for Question 52, please insert a link to that research or send it separately to Tom Allison at SCHEV.
Virginia Commonwealth University	https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2024.133.016; https://doi.org/10.1093/hsw/hlad006; https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2022.2064714
Reynolds Community College	https://saragoldrickrab.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/basic-needs-insecurity-virginia.pdf

Virginia Tech	https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/items/af1afbdf-6280-4eb0-9783-6b679a49dd97 https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0298041 https://students.vt.edu/content/students_vt_edu/en/about/reports/_jcr_content/content/vtcontainer_16086614/vtcontainer-content/download/file.res/Food%20Security%20Task%20Force%20Recommendation%20Report.pdf
Mountain Gateway Community College	MGCC participated in the Hopelab Survey from the University of Minnesota, POC Sarah Goldrich-Rab, https://saragoldrickrab.com/
Virginia Military Institute	The Office of Assessment and Institutional Research conducts cadet surveys and results are used to inform Institute leadership in decision-making regarding mess hall operations and offerings. Additionally, there are monthly dining service committee meetings, where cadets are invited to provide input on the offerings and overall operations of the dining hall based on the needs of their training regimen.
James Madison University	We will share via email the most recent research that we have completed on campus food insecurity.
Virginia Western Community College	Will send email

Additional resources needed (Q54)

Respondents were then asked, "What additional resources could help alleviate barriers to addressing food insecurity at your institution?" A list of five possible needs was presented along with a sixth option for something else not in the list. The most frequent requests are allocated funds (79%) and increased education about food insecurity among the campus and greater community (68%).

Q54. What additional resources could help alleviate barriers to addressing food insecurity at your institution? (Select all that apply).	Frequency	Percent
Allocated funds	27	79.4
Increased education about food insecurity among the campus and greater community	23	67.7
Increased community support	15	44.1
Committed space on campus	12	35.3
Increased instructional buy-in	11	32.4
Other (specify)	3	8.8

Additional comments (Q55)

The final substantive question in the survey invited respondents to "Please use the space below to share any other comments you have about campus food insecurity or the survey itself." Those comments are shown verbatim below.

Institution	Q55. Please use the space below to share any other comments you have about campus food insecurity or the survey itself.
Brightpoint Community College	Brightpoint Community College is currently addressing food insecurity by providing food pantries on both campuses. Food is donated from faculty, staff, students, local churches, and the general public. The Chesterfield Food Pantry has added Brightpoint Community College to their school pilot program beginning the Fall 2024 semester. The Chesterfield Food Pantry will supply and deliver a rack of food to our pantries as needed throughout the school year. Also, beginning the Fall 2024 semester, Brightpoint will be added as an agency for FeedMore which allows Brightpoint to purchase food from FeedMore at a significantly reduced cost. Grant funding mentioned in our survey above will help with this cost. Brightpoint is trying to do our part to help break the stigma of students suffering in silence, embarrassed to ask for help, or simply unaware that help is being offered. We are doing this by adding signage and welcoming spaces for our food pantries that allow students to freely gain access to food with little to no barriers. We are educating our staff on the locations and availability of food so they can also help navigate/educate our students on the resources available to them on campus.
Christopher Newport University	CNU takes food insecurity very seriously and our leadership is very aware of food insecurity as a problem facing students. When faculty, students or staff make us aware of an individual in our community experiencing food insecurity, we have the resources to respond. There are various resources on campus to support students including our Lighthouse Fund, which supports a wide variety of financial insecurities. One aspect of CNU that reduces food insecurity is our 3-year residency requirement. Generally, students living on campus are required to participate in the University's meal plan offerings. Also, freshman are required to purchase a meal plan that provides most of their weekly meals. 84% of CNU students live on campus and 86% have a meal plan. In addition, 80 of the off-campus students also subscribe to meal plans. It is worth noting that one of our student organizations partnered with a faculty member to conduct a survey sent out to students regarding food insecurity. Based on the results of that survey, the student organization worked with Student Affairs and two local community organizations to offer grocery items to students who self-selected to pick up a bag of non-perishable items. There were low participation rates. There are plans to continue this program to help inform the overall level of need and the necessary resources. Comments about the survey: We found it difficult to answer many of the questions because of their highly subjective nature. Also, "Don't know / Prefer not to say" is a single option that represents two very different answers. One suggested response could have been "we do not have data to answer this question."
Virginia Tech	Currently, Virginia Tech has a robust food access program dedicated to supporting students experiencing food insecurity. The Market of Virginia Tech was established in 2020 with seed funding and endowed support from a generous alum donation. This program was established in response to a Food Security Taskforce recommendation report written by key stakeholders at the institution. The Market is a donation-based program that offers a range of support initiatives, including a grocery store model that provides produce, protein items, dairy, non-perishables, and more. Due to capacity and funding limitations, this model can only support 115 students at a time. To address this limitation, The Market recently launched Open Market Hours, allowing any student to walk in and utilize the non-perishable pantry. Importantly, none of The Market's programs screen students or require proof of need. During the most recent academic year, The Market supported 732 unique students through 4,116 individual visits, distributing an average of over 1,500 lbs of food per week. Learn more at foodaccess.vt.edu. Note on FASFA/SNAP eligibility (question 50): The financial aid office sent out a notification to students directly in 2021-2022 and in 2022-2023 that advised students on the temporary allowance, the eligibility criteria as well as how the student could apply. The letter they sent also served as verification of their eligibility that they could use as documentation. Since it was temporary, they only sent it out for those two years.

Note on question 12 (research methods):
This estimate is based on preliminary data collected in 2023 that has not been published yet.

Virginia Highlands Community College	Food Pantries are difficult to operate due to limited funding, space, and personnel.
Germanna Community College	Funding for staff
Mountain Empire Community College	Having to go through Shared Services, using Micro-vendors, and eVA, is a barrier to getting the students what is needed. It also costs more and takes money away from students.
UVA Wise	In fall 2023 54% of our students were eligible U.S. citizens or residents meeting the residency requirements for Federal student financial aid. Among this number it is our guess that more than 30% experience some type of food insecurity.
VA Western Community College	Increased funding and resources are essential to support not only students but their entire families. While food insecurity is a significant challenge, it often coincides with other barriers that hinder students' ability to achieve their educational goals. To address these issues effectively, both colleges and the families of students require comprehensive and proactive support.
Central Virginia Community College	it would be great if the VCCS could implement the use of financial aid funds loaded onto a card so that the students can use it at the cafeteria on campus.
University of Virginia	Many of the questions on this survey were difficult to answer because of survey design (lack of description or additional information about the intent of the question).
Mountain Gateway Community College	MGCC no longer operates a food pantry on campus. Due to the underutilization of the types of foods provided and other food bank resources that are available in the community, we expanded our café to meet students with their needs while on campuses. The Roadrunner Café is in Scott Hall and provides quick meals and snacks that can be made in the café. There is also a coffee maker and water in a mini fridge. The café is stocked when classes are in session. The Roadrunner Café began with a grant from the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education to help support student emergency funding. The Mountain Gateway Community College Educational Foundation used a portion of the funding to update the concept of the Cubby Closet to establish the Roadrunner Café. The Roadrunner Café served to help meet the needs of students facing food insecurity, as no food was being served on campus. The budget from this grant from the VFCCE ended in 2023. With the success of the Roadrunner Café, we have been able to continue the effort through sponsorship of organizations, individuals, and food drives.
William & Mary	One of the biggest challenges is not having a singular person or office to coordinate efforts.
Wytheville Community College	Our institution makes funds available for food insecurity concerns on the main campus and at off-site locations. A dedicated space has been discussed once a space become available in the future.
Longwood University	We have recently identified members for an Essential Needs Working Group that will look at a variety of issues/concerns, including campus food insecurity. Additional college/university-specific information from Virginia DSS about available resources and eligibility.

Virginia Military Institute

Within VMI's unique educational system, all cadets live on Post in barracks, possess the same meal plan and eat their meals in the dining hall. The board fee is part of the mandatory fees charged to all cadets and many receive financial aid, need-based and/or merit, which covers its cost. Food services are available from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM and the singular VMI meal plan provides 21 meals per week to all cadets while school is in session. Between regularly scheduled meals, additional food is provided through snacks and drinks, and for cadets to make salads and sandwiches. During official Institute travel, cadets are provided per diem or group meals.

Additional comments:
1) VMI's military system provides significant structure and oversight, allowing both peers and mentors to monitor the physical health (nutrition) of cadets.
2) Attendance is taken via a Check Formation before Breakfast and Supper.
3) VMI's Cadet Counseling Center, there is a full-time Health and Wellness Coordinator.
4) A 0.5 credit hour course covering topics such as choosing a nutritious diet and maintaining healthy body composition and body weight is required for all cadets during their first year at VMI