

FACT SHEET

College Hunger

Hunger Hampers Education for Many NJ College Students

Hunger is an unwelcome staple at college campuses across New Jersey.

More than a third of college students don't always have enough to eat and they lack stable housing, according to a survey published in 2018 by researchers at Temple University and the Wisconsin HOPE Lab

Student hunger was cited as the third most important issue affecting college campuses, according to another survey conducted by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA).

These hungry students are unlikely to receive help from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, (SNAP, commonly known as food stamps). According to the December 2018 survey by University of Wisconsin researchers, just one quarter of hungry college students received food stamps.

Researchers have found that there are generally two types of college students who face hunger – those who come from low-income families where the cost of education means little is left for meals and the growing number of non-traditional students who work, have families of their own and are trying to earn a degree to lift their salaries.

Recommendation

Ensure successful implementation of the Hunger Free Campus Act to make SNAP available to more students and enact other changes that will address college hunger.

New Jersey is taking significant steps to reduce hunger on its college campuses.

In November 2018, the New Jersey Department of Human Services changed state rules to allow more college students to qualify for SNAP without having to meet strict work requirements.

Students enrolled in career and technical education programs who meet income guidelines will now be eligible for this critical food assistance.

In 2017, 67,000 students were enrolled in these types of programs, with an estimated 45 percent considered low-income based on financial aid records, according to the Council on County Colleges. This change, then, has the potential to expand assistance to tens of thousands of needy college students.

Signed into law in 2019, the [Hunger-Free Campus Act](#) appropriates \$1 million to address hunger among college students.

College and universities can apply for grants to help more students enroll in SNAP and allow them to use benefits to buy food at campus stores.

Funds can also be used to establish food pantries and develop a “Swipe Out Hunger” student meal credit sharing program or designate a certain amount of funds for free meal vouchers.

[Learn more about applying for funds.](#)

In addition, a growing number of New Jersey colleges and universities are opening on-campus food pantries. For example, in 2014, at the request of Bergen Community College, the Center for Food Action, Hunger Free New Jersey’s parent organization, opened a site on the college’s Paramus campus to serve low-income students and their families. Since then, more colleges are using pantries as one way to respond to campus hunger.

Hungry college students, like younger students, struggle to concentrate and succeed in school. And, they may be forced to delay their education to make ends meet – setting them up for a cycle of poverty that will be increasingly difficult to break.

Hunger Free New Jersey, in partnership with the New College and University Food Bank Alliance and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, continues to spearhead a statewide effort to address campus hunger.

Colleges and universities can join in this effort by taking a comprehensive approach to alleviating student hunger, including:

- Provide consistent information to all students about the availability of food

assistance, including NJ SNAP and campus or community food pantries.

- Help students apply for NJ SNAP and compile the necessary paperwork.
- Ask questions about food and housing on admission forms and have a response mechanism in place for students who indicate need.
- Open an on-campus food pantry. [The College and University Food Bank Alliance](#) provides assistance with creating and operating campus pantries.



Hunger Free New Jersey changes policy and practice to ensure every New Jersey resident has healthy food to eat, every single day.

For more information, contact Adele LaTourette at (201) 569-1804, x23, alatourette@cfanj.org.

Learn more at hungerfreenj.org



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