



MA HUNGER FREE CAMPUS COALITION

END HUNGER ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Let's help our students graduate and succeed.

An Act establishing the Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Initiative

[S.822/H.1368]

Sponsors:



Sen. Harriette Chandler



Rep. Andy Vargas.



Rep. Mindy Domb

Legislation Overview:

1. Capacity Building

- The Department of Higher Education will establish the Hunger-Free Campus Initiative, which will be available to all public higher education institutions and certain not-for-profit campuses that disproportionately serve low-income students.
- DHE will establish an Office of Capacity Building services to support public higher education institutions in understanding and addressing existing gaps in addressing food insecurity on their campuses.
- This office will provide technical assistance, administer and advise the Commissioner on the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program, and submit reports to the Commissioner and legislature.

2. Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program

The Office of Capacity Building will work with institutions to implement the following anti-hunger initiatives, and once these are implemented, the institution will be designated as a Hunger-Free Campus:

- Designate a college staff person to be the point of contact for the office.
- Establish a hunger-free campus task force.
- Notify students who receive need-based financial aid of their potential eligibility to receive SNAP, WIC, and other federal and state nutrition benefits.
- Host or participate in at least one hunger awareness event per year.
- Assess the need for on-campus food distribution, access to an off-campus food pantry, or partner with an on-campus food pantry.



In recent months the **high costs of food (8% increase)**, gas and other utilities caused by inflation is further choking the budgets of those who are struggling most. Investments in nutrition basic needs security has never been more essential to student success.

Institutions that have been designated as **Hunger-Free Campuses** and can demonstrate progress or commitment to instituting the following anti-hunger initiatives will be considered for grants.

How Campuses Can Demonstrate Progress:

- Develop a student meal credit sharing program.
- Create an emergency fund to support students in crisis with expenses including food, shelter, utilities, and childcare.
- Designate one or more staff persons whose responsibility is to assist food insecure students access basic needs resources.
- Conduct a campus-wide survey about food security and related topics once per year.
- Urge on-campus meal vendors to apply, through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to become EBT vendors under the Restaurant Meal Program.
- Establish an on-campus food pantry.



The Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Coalition was formed in the fall of 2019 to address food insecurity among high-need populations enrolled in Massachusetts public colleges and universities. Collectively, the coalition is working to leverage and expand existing resources and services including maximizing student enrollment in federal nutrition programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), supporting meal swipe options with campus food vendors, ensuring that campuses work with Massachusetts food banks to expand food pantries, and other initiatives designed to address food insecurity among the student population. Our goal is to ensure equity and incorporate student voices as we work to make Massachusetts college campuses hunger free.



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As our state prepares to lose essential federal pandemic nutrition benefits, it is critical to make investments now to ensure we maximize enrollment in programs like SNAP and create hunger free campuses with wraparound services that will support students when these various benefits expire.



College student hunger was a problem before the COVID-19 pandemic, and it will continue to be an issue unless systemic changes are made.

While the pandemic has granted students some temporary relief, such as expanded SNAP eligibility, there are still challenges for students accessing resources while institutions are not fully operational. Our students need help - they cannot afford to go back to a system that left them hungry.



37% of public university students in Massachusetts are food insecure.

Because of historic and contemporary divestment and discrimination, Black, Latinx, and LGBTQ+ students disproportionately experience food insecurity – at rates of 52%, 47%, and 46% respectively. Student parents also experience higher rates of food insecurity at 53%.



Colleges and universities do not have the capacity or resources to adequately address food insecurity on their campuses.

- All public Massachusetts community colleges and universities have a single point of contact for students to access basic needs resources. However, most can only afford very few dedicated staff members.
- Only 20% of food insecure students utilize SNAP benefits.
- Only four public institutions have a meal swipe donation program that allows students to donate unused meals in their meal plan to other students.
- While many public campuses have an on-site grocery store, most of them are not approved EBT vendors, meaning students cannot use their SNAP benefits on campus.
- With coordination and targeted resources, Massachusetts colleges and universities can help students complete college by expanding successful anti-hunger initiatives on their campuses.

Contact:



hungerfreecampusma.org



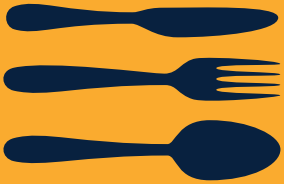
@CollegeHungerMA

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To join the Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Coalition:

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**The following organizations are represented in the
Massachusetts Hunger-Free Campus Coalition:**

Action for Boston Community Development
Amherst Survival Center
Boston Food Access Council
Boston Mayor's Office of Food Access
Bridgewater State University
Bristol Community College
Bunker Hill Community College
Central West Justice Center
College of the Holy Cross
Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
Framingham State University
Holyoke Community College
Junior League of Boston
Massachusetts College of Art and Design
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Massasoit Community College
Merrimack Valley Food Bank

Middlesex Community College
North Shore Community College
One Family, Inc.
Project Bread
Roxbury Community College
Salem State University
Springfield College
Springfield Technical Community College
The Greater Boston Food Bank
The Open Door
uAspire
UMass Extension Nutrition Education Program
University of Massachusetts, Amherst
University of Massachusetts, Lowell
Worcester County Food Bank
Worcester State University
YMCA of Greater Boston