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College and University Basic Needs Insecurity: A National #RealCollege Survey Report

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Executive Summary

The #RealCollege survey is the nation's largest annual assessment of basic needs security among college students. The survey, created by the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice (Hope Center), specifically evaluates access to affordable food and housing. This report describes the results of the #RealCollege survey administered in the fall of 2018 at 123 two- and four-year institutions across the United States.

Rates of basic needs insecurity are higher for students attending two-year colleges compared to those attending four-year colleges. Rates of basic needs insecurity are higher for marginalized students, including African Americans, students identifying as LGBTQ, and students who are independent from their parents or guardians for financial aid purposes. Students who have served in the military, former foster youth, and students who were formerly convicted of a crime are all at greater risk of basic needs insecurity. Working during college is not associated with a lower risk of basic needs insecurity, and neither is receiving the federal Pell Grant; the latter is in fact associated with higher rates of basic needs insecurity.

If your institution is interested in participating in the 2019 survey, please contact the Hope Center at hopesrvy@temple.edu.

NEARLY 86,000 STUDENTS PARTICIPATED. THE RESULTS INDICATE:

- 45% of respondents were food insecure in the prior 30 days
- 56% of respondents were housing insecure in the previous year
- 17% of respondents were homeless in the previous year

The Hope Center thanks the Lumina Foundation, the Jewish Foundation for Education of Women, the City University of New York, the Chicago City Colleges, the Institute for College Access and Success, and the California Community College Chancellor's Office for making this report possible.

Introduction

According to the federal government's 2018 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, insufficient food and housing undermines postsecondary educational experiences and credential attainment for many of today's college students.[1]

Data describing the scope and dimensions of this problem, particularly at the college level, remain sparse. The GAO report noted that there are only 31 quality studies of campus food insecurity, very few of which involve multiple colleges. Among existing multi-institutional studies, four draw on data from the #RealCollege survey. The #RealCollege survey fills a void by providing needed information for campus leaders and policymakers who are seeking to support students better.

Food and housing insecurity undermine academic success.[2] Housing insecurity and homelessness have a particularly strong, statistically significant relationship with college completion rates, persistence, and credit attainment.[3] Researchers also associate basic needs insecurity with self-reports of poor physical health, symptoms of depression, and higher perceived stress.[4]

While campus food pantries are increasingly common, usage of other supports to promote economic security are not. In particular, use of public benefits programs remains low among students in higher education, with many students missing out on the opportunity to receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also called food stamps).[5] The GAO estimates that 57% of students at risk of food insecurity and eligible for SNAP did not collect those benefits.

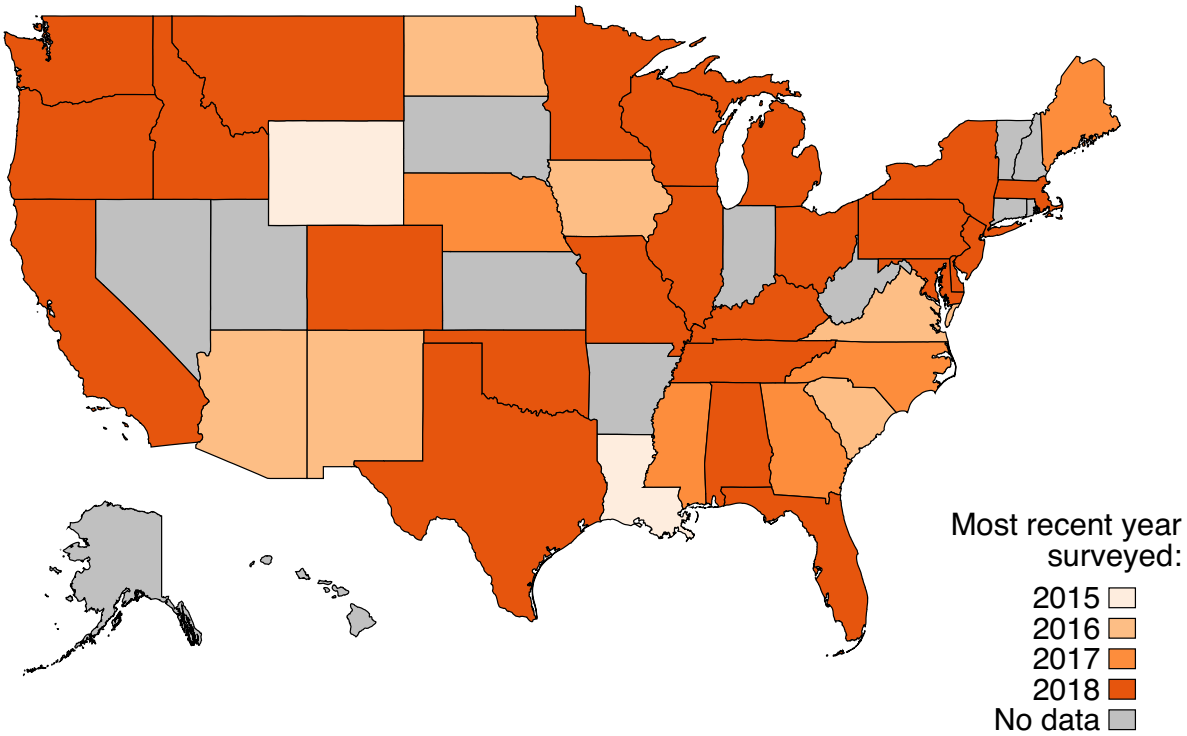
Designing effective practices and policies that can address the challenges of food and housing insecurity at scale requires understanding how students experience and cope with basic needs insecurity. Since 2013, the Hope Center (previously the Wisconsin HOPE Lab) has helped lead the effort in collecting and sharing information on college students' basic needs insecurity. The Wisconsin HOPE Lab initially focused on assessing the prevalence of basic needs challenges of student in Wisconsin. However, by 2015, the Wisconsin HOPE Lab expanded to consider these challenges at colleges around the nation through student surveys.

Over the last four years, we have surveyed approximately 167,000 students across 101 community colleges and 68 4-year colleges and universities. In 2015, the Wisconsin HOPE Lab worked with the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) and invited all 1,200 of its members to participate in the survey. In total, 10 community colleges in seven states accepted, and just over 4,000 students completed the questions. In 2016, they again partnered with ACCT, and 70 of its members responded from 24 states, with more than 33,000 respondents. By 2017, the Wisconsin HOPE Lab invited any college or university to participate in the #RealCollege survey and offered to support participants' efforts to address students' basic needs by sharing data to inform their

practices. In 2017, 31 two-year colleges and 35 four-year colleges, from 20 states and Washington, DC, participated, totaling 43,566 respondents. Figure 1 highlights survey participation by state since 2015.

The Hope Center builds on this prior work by collecting and sharing information from a fourth national survey. This year, 90 two-year colleges and 33 four-year colleges from 24 states participated and nearly 86,000 college students responded.

FIGURE 1. Map of #RealCollege Survey Participation over Time



Source: 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 #RealCollege surveys

Notes: One public university asked not to be named in 2017 and is not represented in the figure above.

REPORT OVERVIEW

The following report presents findings from the Hope Center's 2018 #RealCollege survey on basic needs of students in college. **Section 1** of this report describes the overall rates of basic needs insecurity across all survey respondents. **Section 2** describes rates of basic needs insecurity by specific groups of students. **Section 3** describes the work and academic experiences of students with basic needs insecurity. **Section 4** describes the utilization of public assistance by students who need support. **Section 5** contains concluding remarks.

For more on the research methodology and additional tables with information on survey participants, please refer to the appendices.

SECTION 1:

Prevalence of Basic Needs Insecurity

What fraction of students are affected by basic needs insecurity? This section examines the prevalence of food insecurity during the month prior to the survey, and the prevalence of housing insecurity and homelessness during the previous year.

FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food, or the ability to acquire such food in a socially acceptable manner. The most extreme form is often accompanied by physiological sensations of hunger. We assessed food security among students using the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) 18-item set of questions.[6]

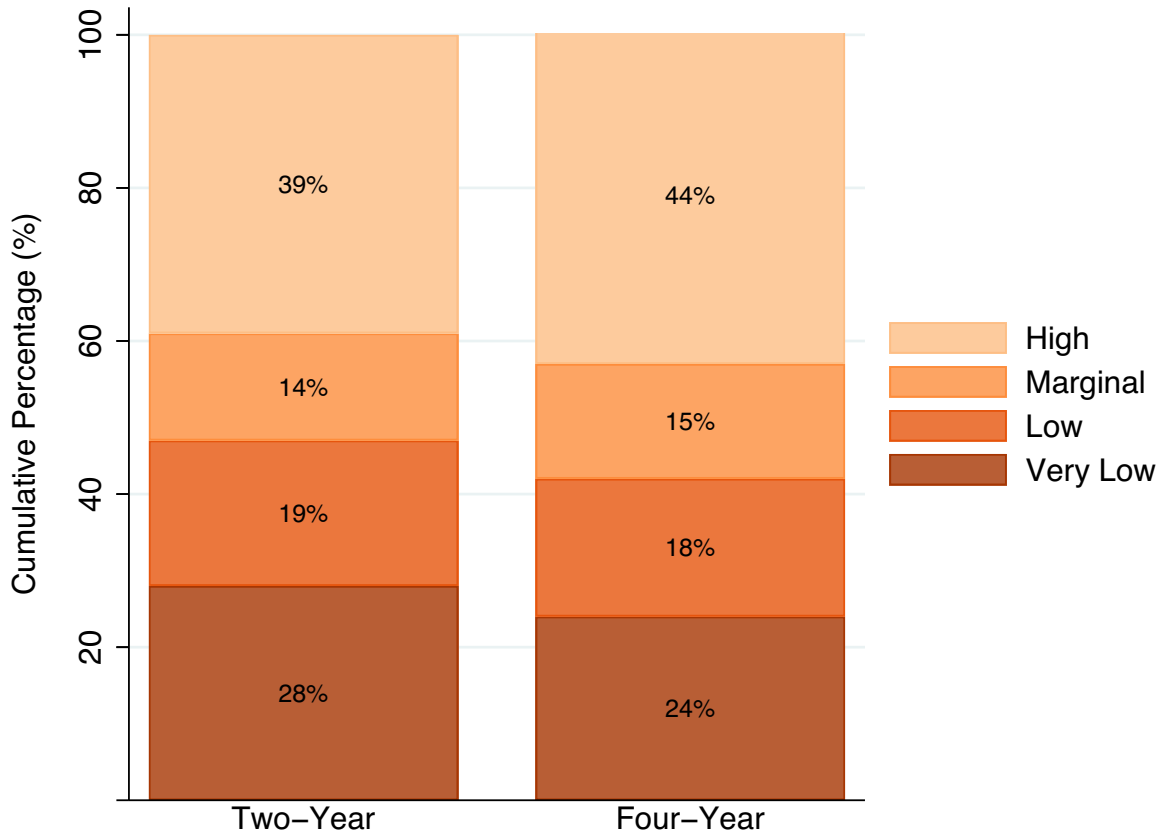
During the 30 days preceding the survey, approximately 48% of students in two-year institutions who responded to the survey experienced food insecurity, with slightly more than 19% assessed at the low level and slightly more than 28% at the very low level of food security (Figure 2). Approximately 41% of students at four-year institutions who responded to the survey experienced food insecurity, with slightly less than 18% assessed at the low level and slightly less than 24% at the very low level of food security.

More than half of survey respondents from two-year institutions and 44% of students from four-year institutions worried about running out of food (Figure 3). Nearly half of students could not afford to eat balanced meals.

THE DATA

The data in this report come from an electronic survey fielded to college students. This system-wide report includes data from 123 colleges across the United States. Colleges distributed the electronic survey to more than 1,478,935 enrolled students, yielding an estimated response rate of 5.8%, or nearly 86,000 total student participants. For more information on how the survey was fielded and discussion of how representative the results are, please see the appendices.

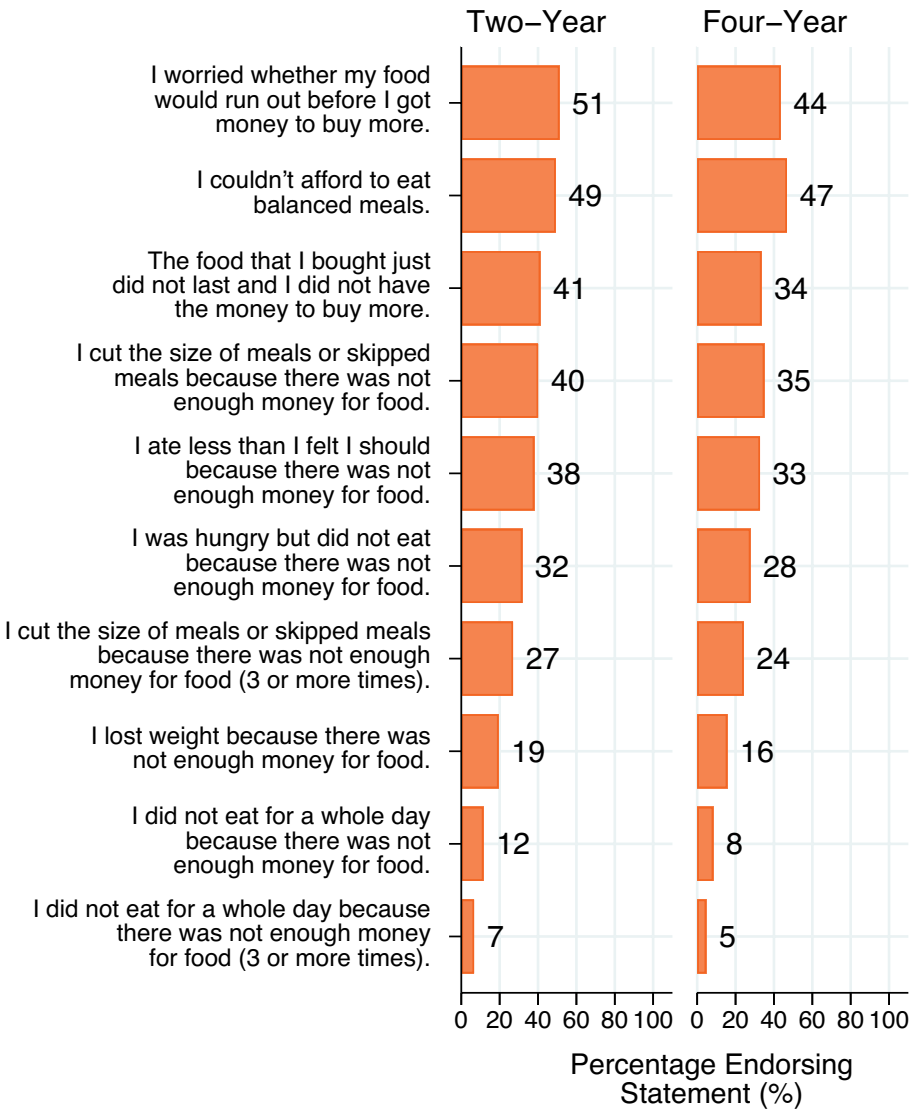
FIGURE 2. Food Security Among Survey Respondents by Sector



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: According to the USDA, students at either low or very low food security are termed "food insecure." For more details on the food security module used in this report, see Appendix C. Cumulative percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

FIGURE 3. Food Insecurity Items Among Survey Respondents by Sector



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

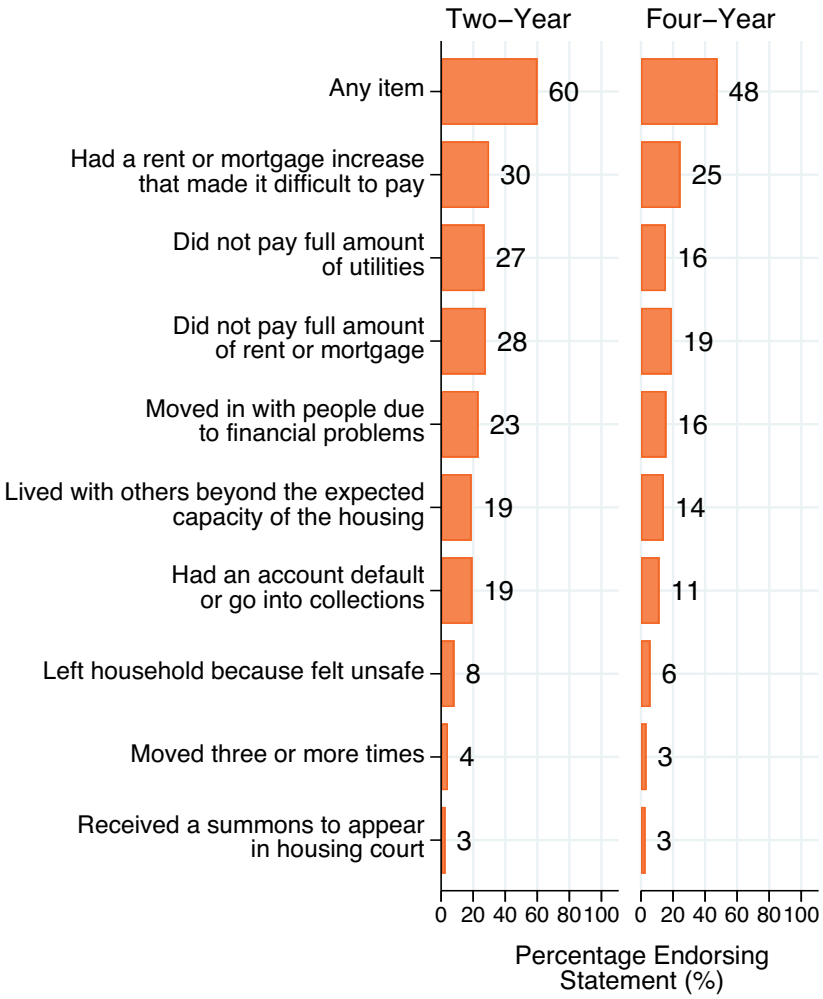
Notes: For more details on the food security module used in this report, see Appendix C.

HOUSING INSECURITY AND HOMELESSNESS

Housing insecurity includes a broad set of challenges such as the inability to pay rent or utilities, or the need to move frequently. All of these challenges affect students, and results suggest that they are more likely to suffer some form of housing insecurity than to have all their needs met during college. Housing insecurity among students was assessed with a nine-item set of questions developed by the Hope Center.

Sixty percent of survey respondents at two-year institutions and 48% at four-year institutions experience housing insecurity (Figure 4). The most commonly reported challenge is experiencing a rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay (30% of students at two-year institutions and 25% at four-year institutions). Eight percent of survey respondents at two-year institutions and 6% at four-year institutions left their household because they felt unsafe.

FIGURE 4. Housing Insecurity Among Survey Respondents by Sector



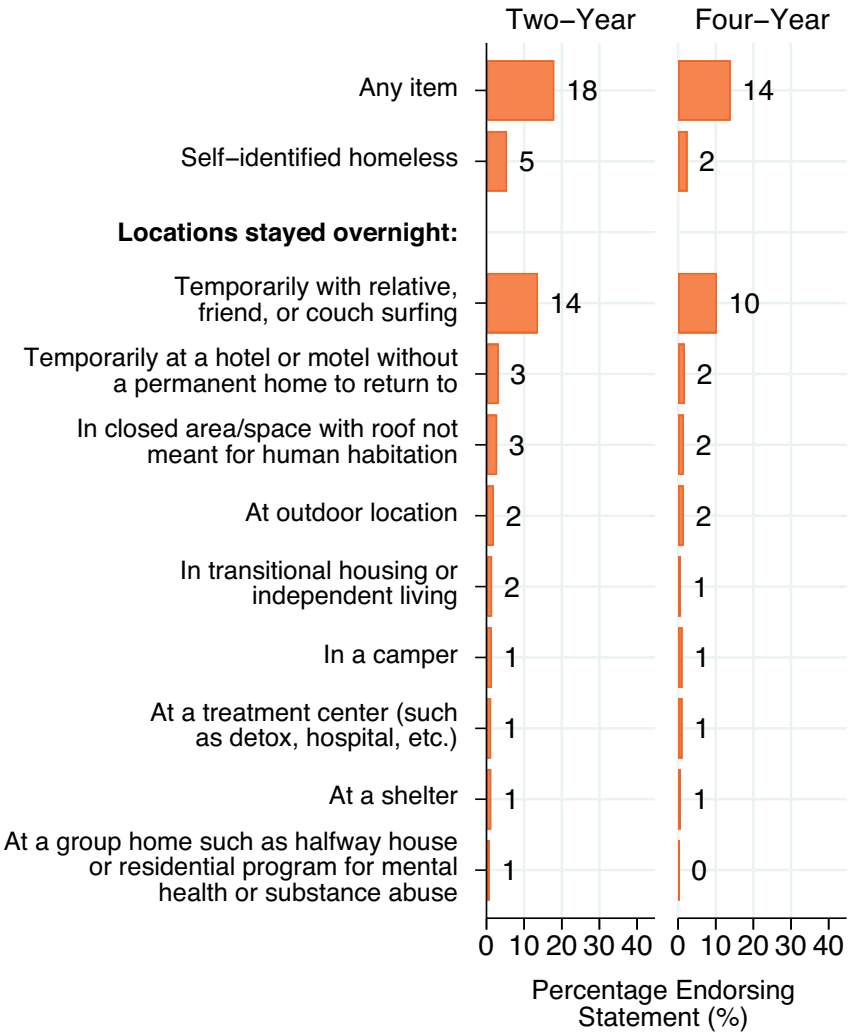
Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on the housing insecurity module used in this report, see Appendix C.

Homelessness means that a person does not have a stable place to live. Students were identified as homeless if they responded affirmatively to a question asking if they had been homeless or they identified living conditions that are considered signs of homelessness. Homelessness was assessed with a tool development by California State University researchers.

Homelessness affects 18% of survey respondents at two-year institutions and 14% at four-year institutions (Figure 5). Five percent of respondents at two-year institutions self-identify as homeless; 13% experience homelessness but do not self-identify as homeless. Two percent of respondents at four-year institutions self-identify as homeless; 12% experience homelessness but do not self-identify as homeless. The vast majority of students who experience homelessness temporarily stayed with a relative or friend, or couch surfed.

FIGURE 5. Homelessness Among Survey Respondents by Sector



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

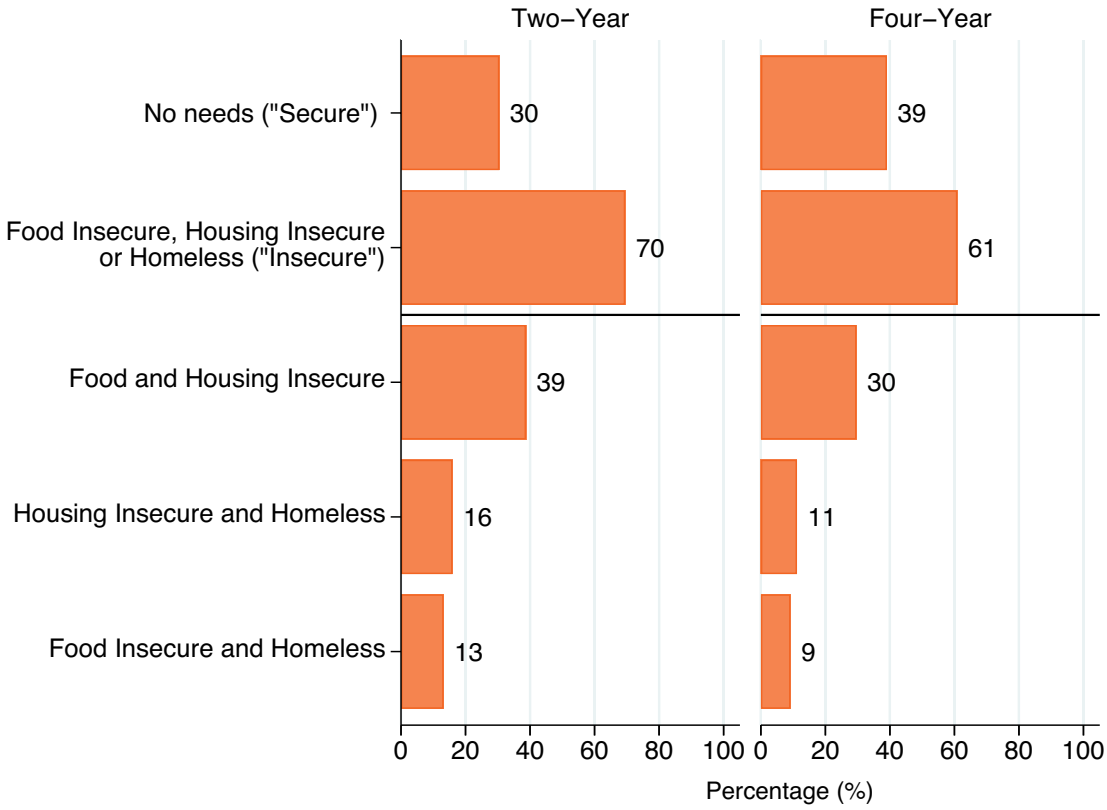
Note: For more details on the homelessness module used in this report, see Appendix C.

OVERLAPPING CHALLENGES

Students who lack resources for housing often also lack resources for food. In addition, basic needs insecurity varies over time, such that a student might experience housing insecurity during one semester and food insecurity the next. Some students are housing insecure during the summer and homeless during the winter.

Seven in 10 community college students responding to the survey experienced food insecurity, housing insecurity, or homelessness during the previous year, whereas about six in 10 four-year students did (Figure 6). Thirty-nine percent of respondents from two-year institutions and 30% from four-year institutions were both food and housing insecure in the past year.

FIGURE 6. Intersections of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness Among Survey Respondents by Sector



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

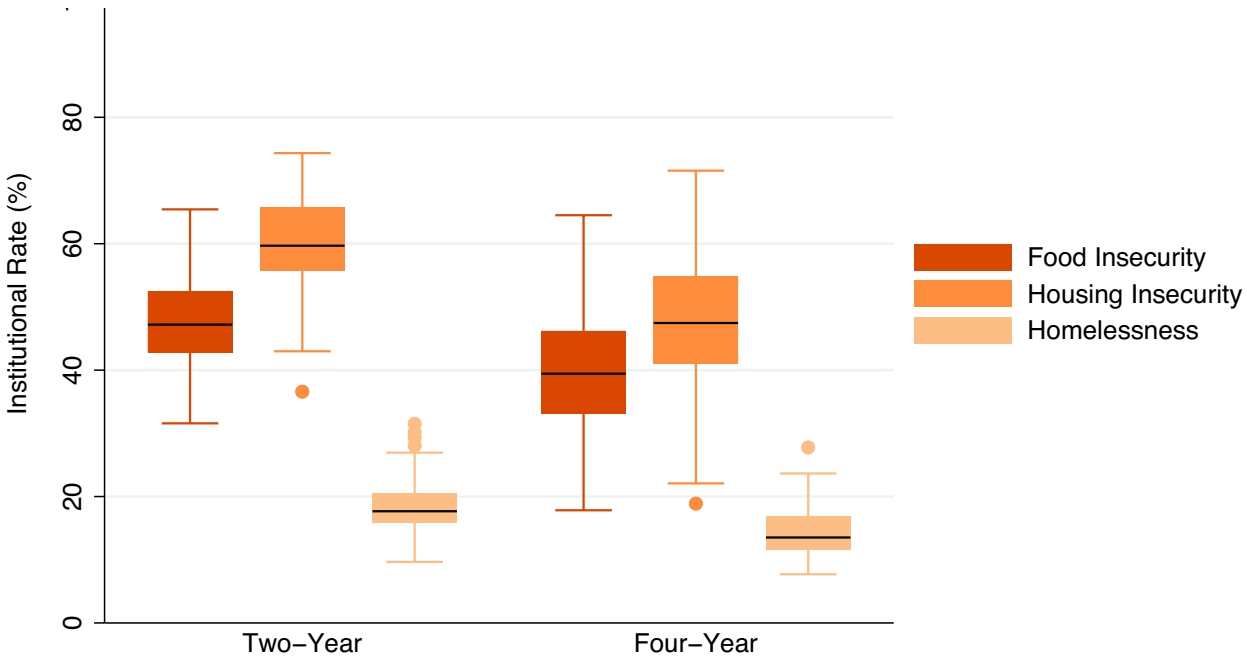
Notes: For more details on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C.

VARIATION BY INSTITUTION

Rates of basic needs insecurity vary across institutions as well (Figure 7). There is wide variation in rates of food insecurity across institutions, from 32% to 65% across two-year institutions and from 19% to 65% across four-year institutions. Rates of housing insecurity across all participating

institutions range from a low of 19% of students experiencing housing insecurity to a high of 74%. Rates of student homelessness range from 10% to 32% at two-year institutions and 8% to 28% at four-year institutions, with most participating institutions in the range of 12% to 21%.

FIGURE 7. Variation in Institutional Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness Among Survey Respondents by Sector



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: The horizontal line within each box represents the median institutional rate. Institutional-level rates were not available for the San Mateo Community College District; however, district-level rates are used in compiling the figure above.

SECTION 2:

Disparities in Basic Needs Insecurity

Some college students are at higher risk of basic needs insecurity than others. This section of the report examines basic needs insecurity according to students' demographic, academic, and economic characteristics, as well as their life circumstances.

DEMOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES IN BASIC NEEDS INSECURITY

Generally, students who are heterosexual, male, or female have lower rates of basic needs insecurity as compared to their peers (Table 1). Students who are transgender and students who do not identify as female, male, or transgender have the highest rates of homelessness compared to their male and female peers. Gay or lesbian students have higher rates of housing insecurity than their heterosexual and bisexual peers. Gay or lesbian students also have rates of homelessness about seven percentage points higher than their heterosexual peers.

There are also sizable racial/ethnic disparities in basic needs insecurity among students. For example, the overall rate of food insecurity among students identifying as African American or Black is 58%, which is approximately eight percentage points higher than the overall rate for Hispanic or Latinx students, and 19 percentage points higher than the overall rate for students identifying as White or Caucasian. American Indian or Alaskan Native students experience the highest rates of housing insecurity (67%) compared to their peers. Students who are not U.S. citizens are more likely than students who are U.S. citizens to experience housing insecurity and homelessness.

Higher levels of parental education are associated with lower risk of food or housing insecurity, with the clearest disparities evident based on whether or not a student's parent possesses a bachelor's degree. Students who experience the highest rates of housing insecurity are those whose parent(s) have no high school diploma, with 64% of students experiencing housing insecurity. Nonetheless, about 32% of students with college-educated parents experience food insecurity, 43% experience housing insecurity, and 14% experience homelessness.

Basic needs insecurity is more pronounced among older students, particularly students ages 26 and older. Overall, 74% of students surveyed ages 26 to 30 experience housing insecurity (compared with 40% for 18–20 year olds).

TABLE 1. Demographic Disparities in Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness^

	Two-Year				Four-Year				All Institutions			
	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)
GENDER ORIENTATION												
Male	12,758	44	55	20	6,772	39	45	16	19,530	42	51	19
Female	32,637	49	63	17	17,969	42	49	13	50,606	47	58	16
Transgender	393	55	63	35	182	57	57	27	575	55	61	33
Does not identify as female, male, or transgender	841	58	68	31	357	55	57	27	1,198	57	65	30
SEXUAL ORIENTATION												
Heterosexual or straight	36,935	47	60	17	20,446	40	47	13	57,381	44	55	16
Gay or lesbian	1,765	55	67	25	880	47	56	20	2,645	52	63	23
Bisexual	4,048	56	66	25	2,285	51	54	19	6,333	54	61	23
Is not sure or neither heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual	2,546	49	59	20	1,320	49	50	19	3,866	49	56	20
RACIAL OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND												
White or Caucasian	14,703	43	57	19	9,864	33	41	15	24,567	39	51	17
African American or Black	5,375	59	69	24	3,661	56	60	16	9,036	58	65	21
Hispanic or Latinx	19,111	51	63	16	6,598	50	55	13	25,709	50	61	15
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1,002	62	72	30	431	53	55	21	1,433	59	67	27
Middle Eastern or North African or Arab or Arab American	784	45	63	20	573	39	47	14	1,357	43	56	17
Southeast Asian	2,572	42	54	17	1,738	38	44	12	4,310	40	50	15
Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	785	56	62	24	243	46	48	19	1,028	54	59	23

TABLE 1. Demographic Disparities in Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness^ (continued)

	Two-Year				Four-Year				All Institutions			
	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)
Other Asian or Asian American	4,006	39	50	16	2,991	35	38	12	6,997	37	45	15
Other	1,673	54	65	23	895	47	59	19	2,568	52	63	22
Prefers not to answer	1,520	50	64	22	856	46	54	15	2,376	49	61	20
STUDENT IS A U.S. CITIZEN OR PERMANENT RESIDENT												
Yes	41,971	48	60	18	23,211	41	47	14	65,182	46	56	16
No	2,454	46	64	23	1,381	42	56	21	3,835	45	61	22
Prefers not to answer	1,251	47	61	17	409	46	58	17	1,660	47	60	17
HIGHEST LEVEL OF PARENTAL EDUCATION												
No high school diploma	8,521	53	67	18	3,553	49	56	13	12,074	52	64	16
High school diploma	9,944	49	60	19	4,224	45	48	13	14,168	48	56	18
Some college	16,817	52	65	19	7,873	47	54	16	24,690	51	61	18
Bachelor's degree or greater	8,707	34	47	15	8,607	30	39	13	17,314	32	43	14
Does not know	2,018	47	57	19	910	44	48	14	2,928	46	54	18
AGE												
18 to 20	16,490	39	44	15	10,295	34	33	11	26,785	37	40	13
21 to 25	12,642	53	66	22	9,086	46	52	16	21,728	50	60	19
26 to 30	6,621	56	76	22	2,665	52	71	20	9,286	55	74	21
Older than 30	9,984	51	70	17	3,020	46	66	14	13,004	50	69	16

^Among survey respondents

**FI stands for the rate of food insecurity; HI stands for the rate of housing insecurity; and HM stands for the rate of homelessness.*

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: The Number of Students column indicates the number of survey respondents to our measure of homelessness. The number of survey respondents for our measures of food insecurity and housing insecurity may vary slightly. For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C. Classifications of gender orientation and racial/ethnic background are not mutually exclusive. Students could self-identify with multiple classifications.

BASIC NEEDS INSECURITY BY ACADEMIC, ECONOMIC, AND LIFE EXPERIENCES

Rates of basic needs insecurity vary as well by students' academic, economic, and life experiences (Table 2). Food insecurity and homelessness vary minimally with respect to part-time or full-time academic status, though full-time students experience less housing insecurity than their part-time peers, at 53% versus 62%. Students who spend three or more years in college have higher rates of housing insecurity than students still in their first year, at 62% compared with 47%. Forty percent of students in their first year of college are food insecure, while half of students with more than three years in college are food insecure. Rates of homelessness do not differ by number of years in college. Among those attending four-year institutions, undergraduate students experience higher rates of food insecurity than graduate students but lower rates of housing insecurity and homelessness.

Students who are considered independent from their families for the purposes of filing a FAFSA are more likely to experience food insecurity, homelessness, and housing insecurity than those claimed as a dependent by their parents. We also find disparities in basic needs insecurity by financial need (measured using Pell Grant status). Pell Grant recipients experience greater basic needs insecurity compared with students who do not receive the Pell.

In addition, students with children experience higher rates of food insecurity (53%) and housing insecurity (66%) as compared with those who do not have children; rates of homelessness varied less. Students who are married or in a domestic partnership have lower rates of homelessness than their peers. While the total number of students who reported being divorced (n=1,260) is relatively small, the rates of food insecurity (63%), housing insecurity (81%), and homelessness (23%) are worth noting, as these rates are higher than those for any other relationship category.

TABLE 2. Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness by Student Life Experiences^

	Two-Year				Four-Year				All Institutions			
	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)
COLLEGE ENROLLMENT STATUS												
Full-time (at least 12 credits)	29,313	48	58	19	22,164	41	46	14	51,477	45	53	17
Part-time (fewer than 12 credits)	19,585	48	63	17	3,860	44	60	14	23,445	47	62	17
YEARS IN COLLEGE												
Less than 1	14,170	43	53	19	5,375	33	33	11	19,545	40	47	17
1 to 2	17,568	48	60	18	6,793	40	44	14	24,361	46	55	17
3 or more	14,474	52	67	18	11,915	48	56	15	26,389	50	62	17
DEPENDENCY STATUS												
Dependent	15,434	41	48	15	13,029	38	39	12	28,463	39	44	13
Independent	30,114	52	67	20	11,937	46	58	16	42,051	50	64	19

TABLE 2. Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness by Student Life Experiences^ (continued)

	Two-Year				Four-Year				All Institutions			
	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)
LEVEL OF ENROLLMENT												
Undergraduate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	24,116	42	48	14	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Graduate	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,911	31	50	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
STUDENT RECEIVES THE PELL GRANT												
Yes	20,868	56	67	20	12,088	49	54	15	32,956	54	62	18
No	28,002	41	55	16	13,942	35	43	13	41,944	39	51	15
STUDENT HAS CHILDREN												
Yes	11,150	55	68	17	3,943	49	58	14	15,093	53	66	16
No	37,882	45	58	18	22,033	40	46	14	59,915	43	53	17
RELATIONSHIP STATUS												
Single	24,435	47	57	20	14,932	40	45	14	39,367	45	52	18
In a relationship	13,377	51	63	19	7,394	44	50	15	20,771	48	58	17
Married or domestic partnership	6,958	42	63	12	2,513	38	59	11	9,471	41	62	11
Divorced	1,002	64	82	24	258	56	75	18	1,260	63	81	23
Widowed	178	56	67	22	27	52	63	22	205	55	66	22
STUDENT HAS BEEN IN FOSTER CARE												
Yes	1,588	67	80	41	391	63	67	27	1,979	66	77	38
No	44,337	47	60	18	24,731	41	48	14	69,068	45	55	16
STUDENT SERVED IN THE MILITARY												
Yes	1,535	47	63	23	538	42	57	25	2,073	46	61	23
No	44,389	48	60	18	24,594	41	48	14	68,983	46	56	17
EMPLOYMENT STATUS~												
Employed	26,581	52	66	20	16,133	46	55	16	42,714	50	62	18
Not employed, looking for work	8,389	50	57	20	4,389	42	42	12	12,778	47	52	17
Not employed, not looking for work	9,480	34	45	12	4,748	24	29	8	14,228	31	40	11

TABLE 2. Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness by Student Life Experiences^ (continued)

	Two-Year				Four-Year				All Institutions			
	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)	Number of Students	FI* (%)	HI* (%)	HM* (%)
STUDENT HAS BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIME												
Yes	1,622	65	81	41	272	58	76	39	1,894	64	81	40
No	45,576	47	59	17	25,077	41	47	14	70,653	45	55	16
DISABILITY OR MEDICAL CONDITION												
Learning disability (dyslexia, etc.)	3,502	60	69	28	992	52	59	24	4,494	58	67	27
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	3,870	60	70	30	1,531	51	56	24	5,401	58	66	28
Autism spectrum disorder	629	47	52	29	223	54	53	28	852	49	52	28
Physical disability (speech, sight, mobility, hearing, etc.)	2,490	60	70	28	988	52	59	22	3,478	58	66	26
Chronic illness (asthma, diabetes, autoimmune disorder, cancer, etc.)	5,650	57	70	24	2,787	49	56	18	8,437	54	65	22
Psychological disorder (depression, anxiety, etc.)	13,510	58	69	26	6,608	51	56	20	20,118	56	65	24
Other	1,369	57	69	27	571	53	60	26	1,940	56	67	27
No disability or medical condition	26,476	42	56	15	15,676	37	44	11	42,152	40	51	13

^Among survey respondents

**FI stands for the rate of food insecurity; HI stands for the rate of housing insecurity; and HM stands for the rate of homelessness.*

¨Employment circumstances does not include students attending City Colleges of Chicago. For more information on their employment behavior, see City Colleges of Chicago #RealCollege Survey report.

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: The Number of Students column indicates the number of survey respondents to our measure of homelessness. The number of survey respondents for our measures of food insecurity and housing insecurity may vary slightly. For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C. Classifications of disability or medical conditions are not mutually exclusive. Students could self-identify with multiple disabilities or medical conditions.

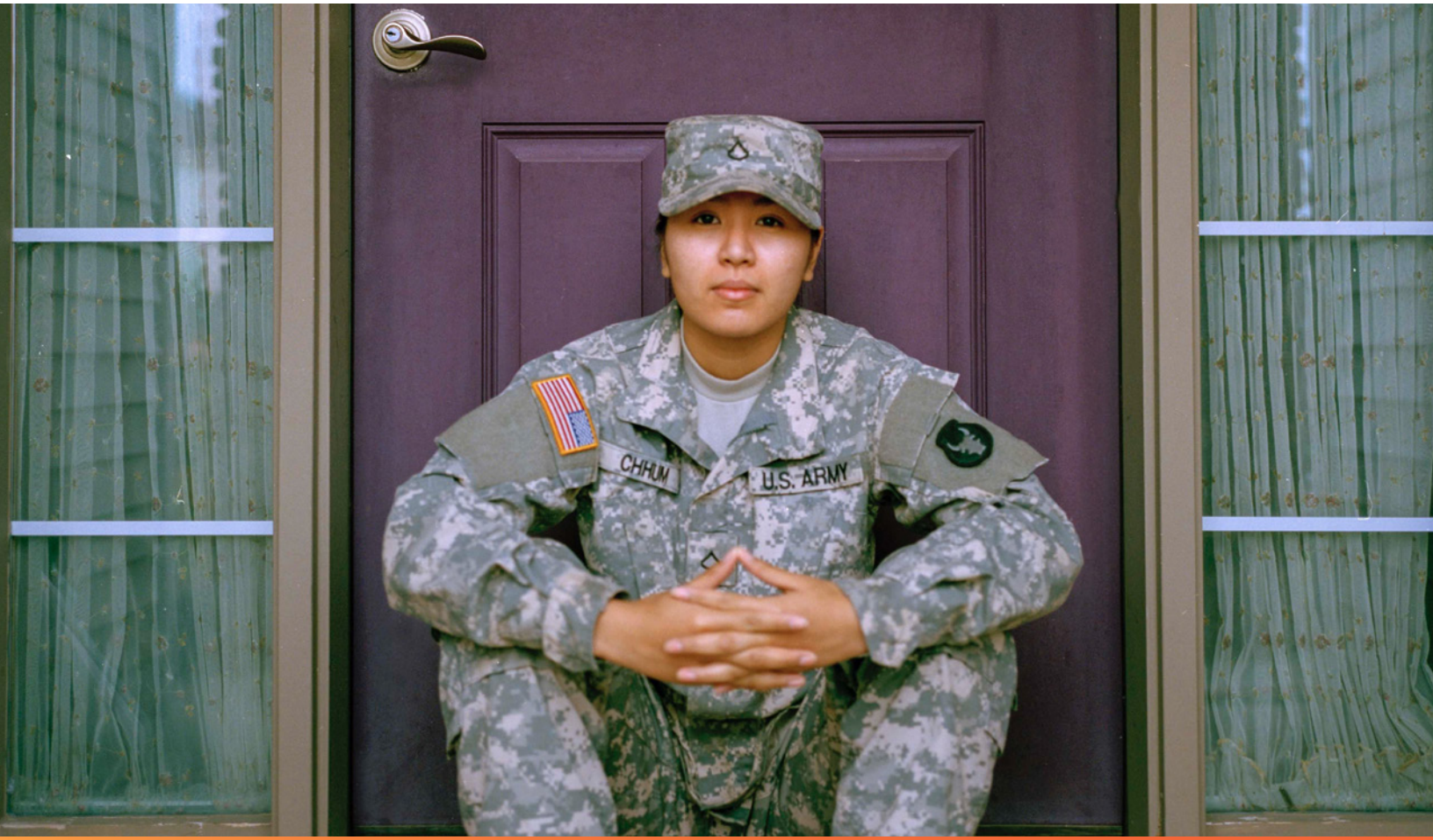
Table 2 also illustrates variations in basic needs insecurity by student life circumstances. Students who have been in the foster care system are much more likely to report basic needs insecurity than their peers. Sixty-six percent of these students experience food insecurity and 77% experience housing insecurity. Thirty-eight percent of students who were in foster care experience homelessness.

Students who served in the military are more likely to experience both housing insecurity (61%) and homelessness (23%) than students who did not. Rates of food insecurity do not vary.

Within employment categories, students who were not employed and not looking for work experience the least amount of basic needs insecurity compared to their peers. However, employed students experience higher rates of basic needs insecurity in all three categories compared to their peers. For more detailed information about employment and basic needs insecurity, refer to Section 3.

Among students who reported that they had been convicted of a crime in the past, many encounter food and housing challenges while attending college. Sixty-four percent of respondents convicted of a crime experience food insecurity, while 81% experience housing insecurity. Forty percent of students who had been convicted of a crime experience homelessness.

Basic needs insecurity varies widely by disability or medical condition. Students who reported having a learning disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, physical disability, chronic illness, or psychological disorder struggle the most with basic needs insecurity.



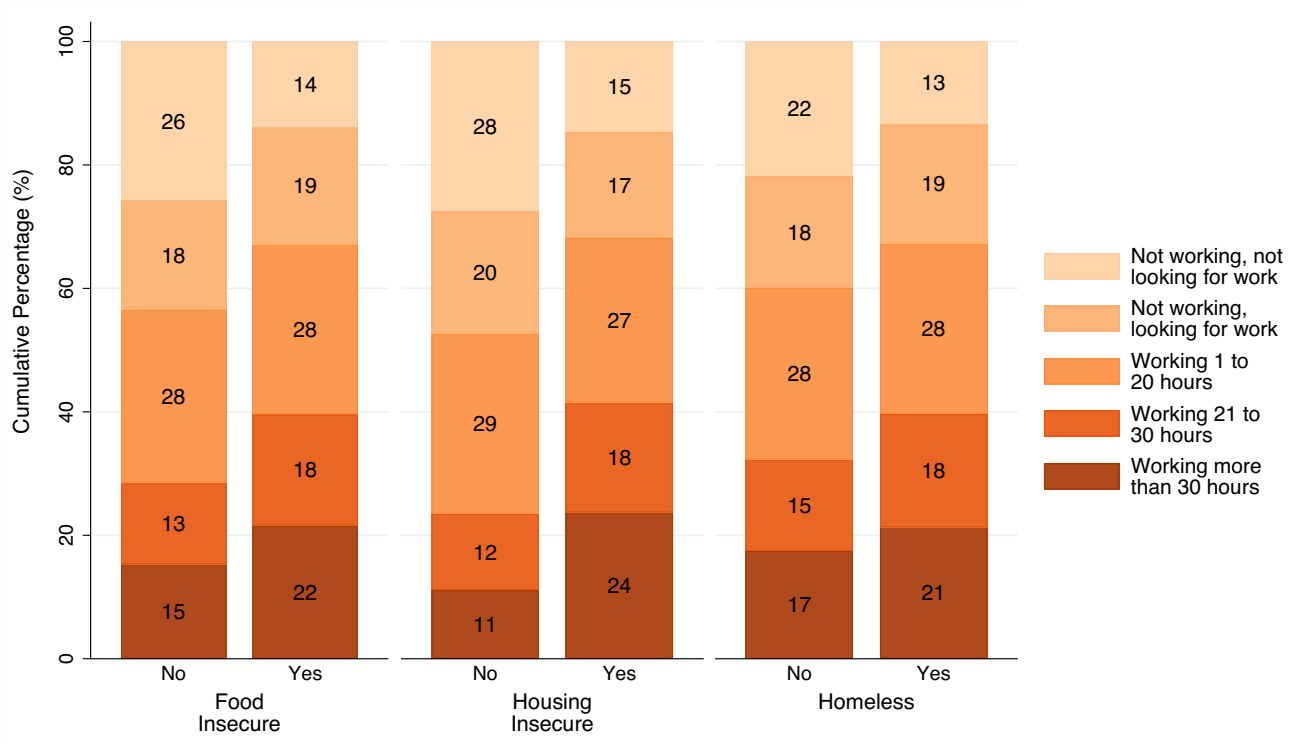


SECTION 3:

Employment and Academic Performance

Students who experience basic needs insecurity are overwhelmingly part of the labor force. For example, the majority of students who experience food insecurity (68%), housing insecurity (69%), and homelessness (67%) are employed (Figure 8).[7] Also, among working students, those who experience basic needs insecurity work more hours than other students.

FIGURE 8. Employment Behavior by Basic Need Insecurity Status Among Survey Respondents

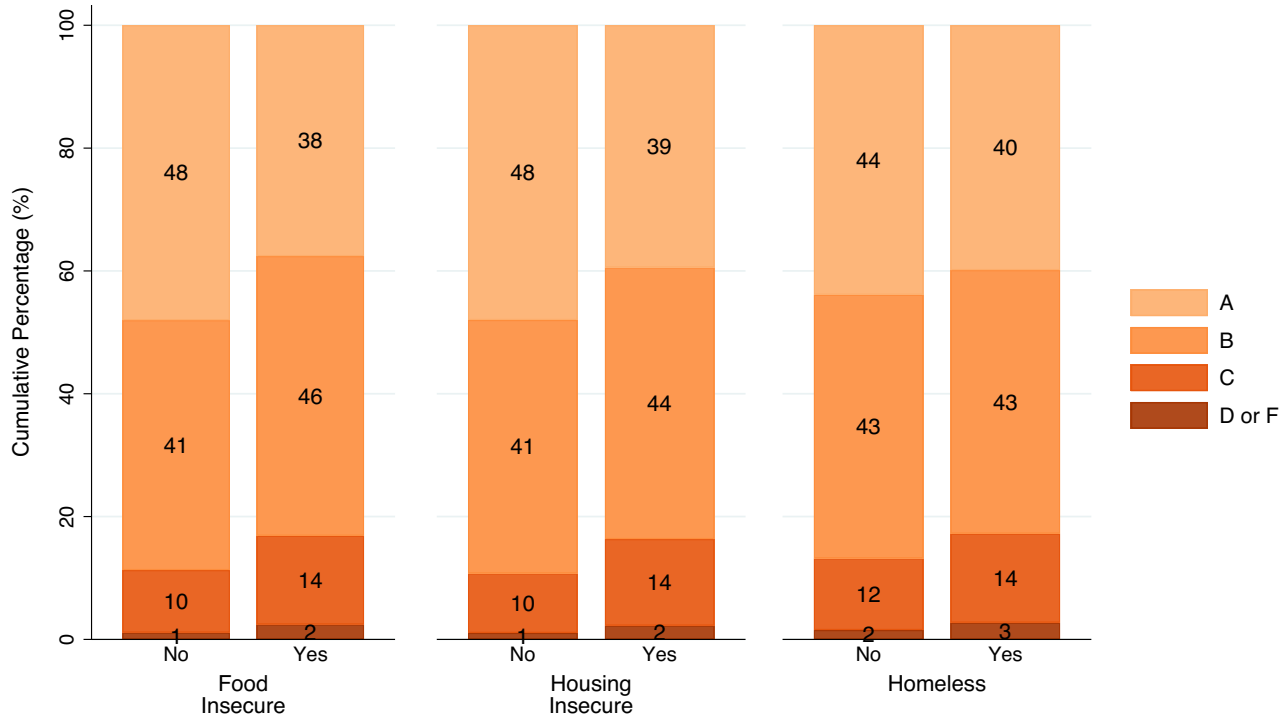


Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C. Cumulative percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

Figure 9 illustrates that while most students report receiving A's and B's, students who experience food insecurity or homelessness report grades of C or below at slightly higher rates than students who do not have these experiences.

FIGURE 9. Self-Reported Grades by Basic Need Insecurity Status Among Survey Respondents



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C. Cumulative percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

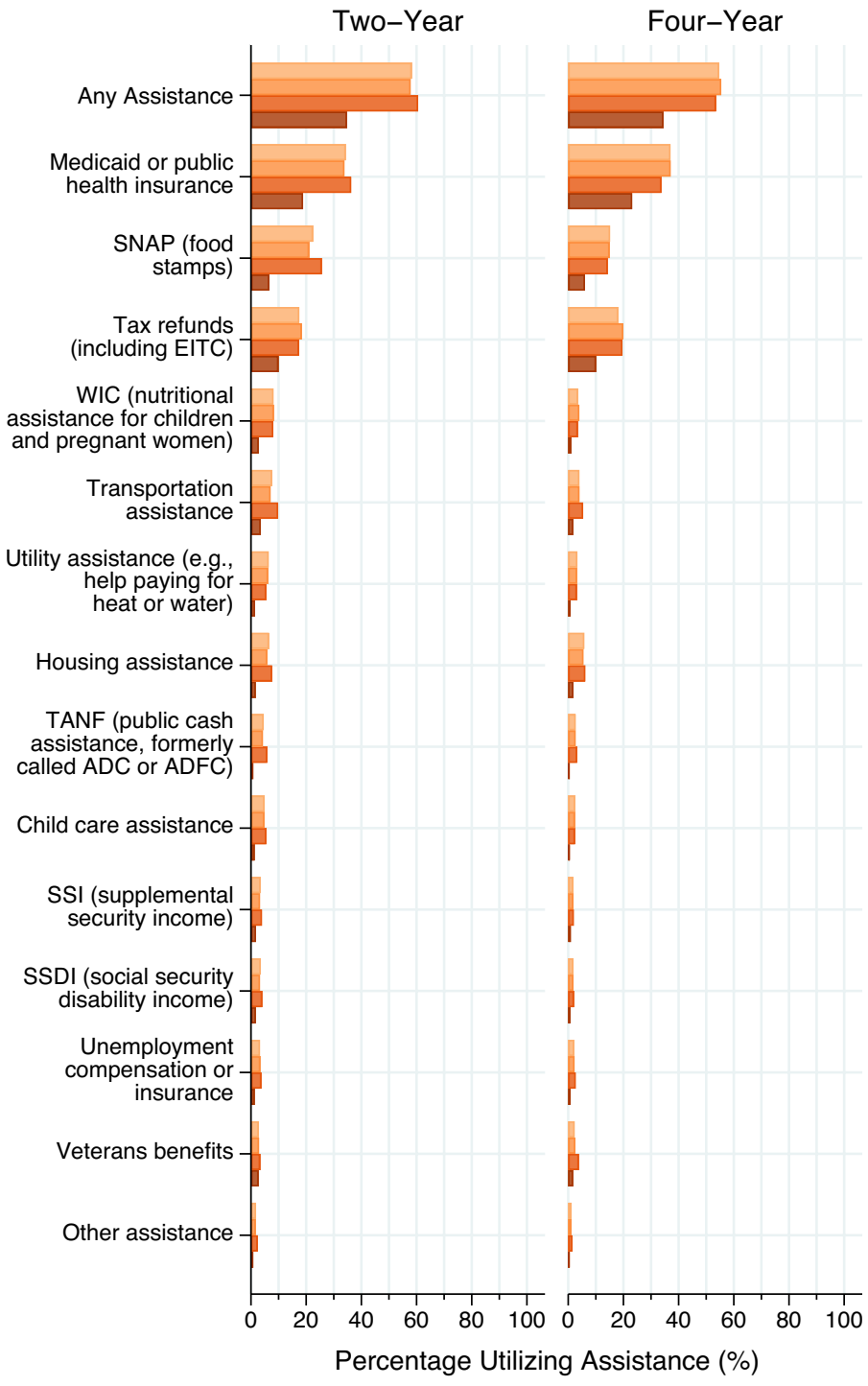
SECTION 4:

Utilization of Supports

Many students who experience basic needs insecurity do not access public assistance (Figure 10).[8] About 20% of food insecure students receive SNAP. Likewise, only 7% of students who experience homelessness receive housing assistance. Nine percent of students who experience homelessness utilized transportation assistance. Medicaid or public health insurance, SNAP, and tax refunds are the supports used most often, though they remain quite low given the rates of students experiencing basic needs insecurity.

Figure 10 highlights that students with basic needs insecurity are not accessing all of the public benefits that they could. Overall, students with basic needs insecurity at two-year colleges access public assistance at higher rates than students with basic needs insecurity at four-year colleges. It is also worth noting that students who are secure in their basic needs are still accessing public benefits, albeit at lower rates (35%) than students with food insecurity (57%), housing insecurity (57%), and homelessness (58%).

FIGURE 10. Use of Assistance Among Survey Respondents According to Basic Needs Security



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C. For more detail on the percentages for each bar, see Appendix E, Table E-10.

SECTION 5:

Conclusion and Recommendations

The #RealCollege survey affirms what administrators, faculty, staff, and students have known for many years: basic needs insecurity is a condition challenging many undergraduates trying to pursue credentials. The scope of the problem described here is substantial and should be cause for a systemic response.

It is especially important for colleges and universities to move beyond food pantries as they respond to basic needs insecurity on campus. For resources and ideas, please join the Hope Center at our annual #RealCollege conference (visit the **#RealCollege website** for more information). In addition, we recommend the following five action steps to support students' basic needs on campus:

1. **Appoint a Director of Student Wellness and Basic Needs.** This person should have a team that includes both staff members with case management skills and one individual who serves as the single point of contact for homeless students.
2. **Evolve programmatic work to advance cultural changes on campus.** Isolating basic needs into a single office, without broad campus support for a "culture of caring," limits efficacy. Consider the example of **Amarillo College**, where cultural change starts at the top, and faculty and staff are engaged along with students.
3. **Engage community organizations and the private sector in proactive, rather than reactive, support.** A referral to a food pantry or a shelter is a crisis response. The goal should be to refer students to support before they need it, in order to prevent a crisis. Take a look at the **Houston Food Scholarship** model as an alternative to simply hosting pantries, or the **Tacoma** program offering Section 8 housing vouchers to college students, or the **Chicago** program where the city's public housing authority pays tuition for its residents who lost access to financial aid. Employers who want to hire college graduates need to be involved in creating graduates. Could your college develop a network of preferred landlords who offer deeply discounted, time-limited rates on vacant apartments to students at risk of homelessness? It is also important to engage the food service vendors on your campuses to reduce prices wherever possible and utilize **Swipe Out Hunger** programs.
4. **Develop and expand an emergency aid program.** There is no substitute for a quick influx of cash assistance right when students need it. Information about how to distribute emergency aid can be found on **our website**.
5. **Ensure that basic needs are central to your government relations work at all levels.** Access to public assistance needs to be further expanded for college students. In particular, we must extend the opportunity to enroll in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to college students who work less than 20 hours a week or go to school part-time, and allow college enrollment and work-study hours to fulfill job-training requirements.

Appendices

Appendix A. Participating Colleges

TWO-YEAR COLLEGES

Austin Community College District (TX)
Barstow Community College (CA)
Bellevue College (WA)
Berkeley City College (CA)
Butte College (CA)
Cañada College (CA)
CUNY Borough of Manhattan Community College (NY)
CUNY Bronx Community College (NY)
CUNY Guttman Community College (NY)
CUNY Hostos Community College (NY)
CUNY Kingsborough Community College (NY)
CUNY LaGuardia Community College (NY)
CUNY Queensborough Community College (NY)
Cabrillo College (CA)
Cascadia College (WA)
Chaffey College (CA)
Citrus College (CA)
City Colleges of Chicago-Harold Washington College (IL)
City Colleges of Chicago-Harry S. Truman College (IL)
City Colleges of Chicago-Kennedy-King College (IL)
City Colleges of Chicago-Malcolm X College (IL)
City Colleges of Chicago-Olive-Harvey College (IL)
City Colleges of Chicago-Richard J. Daley College (IL)
City Colleges of Chicago-Wilbur Wright College (IL)
Clovis Community College (CA)
Coastline Community College (CA)
College of San Mateo (CA)
College of the Redwoods (CA)
College of the Siskiyous (CA)
Columbus State Community College (OH)
Community College of Denver (CO)
Compton College (CA)
Contra Costa College (CA)
Copper Mountain College (CA)
Cypress College (CA)
Dakota County Technical College (MN)
Daytona State College (FL)
De Anza College (CA)
Diablo Valley College (CA)
El Paso Community College (TX)
Evergreen Valley College (CA)

Foothill College (CA)
Fresno City College (CA)
Fullerton College (CA)
Golden West College (CA)
Grayson College (TX)
Hennepin Technical College (MN)
Inver Hills Community College (MN)
Jefferson College (MO)
Jefferson Community and Technical College (KY)
Lake Tahoe Community College (CA)
Laney College (CA)
Long Beach City College (CA)
Los Angeles Trade Technical College (CA)
Los Medanos College (CA)
Marion Technical College (OH)
Minnesota State Community and Technical College (MN)
Monterey Peninsula College (CA)
Montgomery County Community College (PA)
Moorpark College (CA)
Mt. Hood Community College (OR)
Mt. San Antonio College (CA)
Normandale Community College (MN)
North Hennepin Community College (MN)
North Orange Continuing Education (CA)
Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (WI)
Northwest Vista College (TX)
Orange Coast College (CA)
Palo Alto College (TX)
Palomar College (CA)
Pellissippi State Community College (TN)
Porterville College (CA)
Reedley College (CA)
Rio Hondo College (CA)
San Antonio College (TX)
San Diego City College (CA)
San Diego Continuing Education (CA)
San Diego Mesa College (CA)
San Diego Miramar College (CA)
San Joaquin Delta College (CA)
San Jose City College (CA)
Santa Monica College (CA)
Santa Rosa Junior College (CA)
Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital School of Nursing (MA)
Skyline College (CA)
South Seattle College (WA)

St. Cloud Technical and Community College (MN)
St. Philip's College (TX)
West Los Angeles College (CA)
Woodland Community College (CA)

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Boise State University (ID)
CUNY Bernard M Baruch College (NY)
CUNY Brooklyn College (NY)
CUNY City College (NY)
CUNY Hunter College (NY)
CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice (NY)
CUNY Lehman College (NY)
CUNY Medgar Evers College (NY)
CUNY New York City College of Technology (NY)
CUNY Professional Studies (NY)
CUNY Queens College (NY)
CUNY York College (NY)
California State University, East Bay (CA)
College of Staten Island CUNY (NY)
Colorado State University-Pueblo (CO)
Felician University (NJ)
Frostburg State University (MD)
Gwynedd Mercy University (PA)
Jefferson (Philadelphia University + Thomas Jefferson University) (PA)
Kalamazoo College (MI)
La Salle University (PA)
Metropolitan State University (MN)
Metropolitan State University of Denver (CO)
The College of New Jersey (NJ)
The University of Montana (MT)
University of California, Riverside (CA)
University of Colorado, Denver (CO)
University of Delaware (DE)
University of Denver (CO)
University of Montevallo (AL)
University of Oregon (OR)
University of Tulsa (OK)
University of Washington Bothell (WA)

Appendix B. Survey Methodology

SURVEY ELIGIBILITY AND PARTICIPATING COLLEGES

Together with administrators, the Hope Center fielded this survey to all participating institutions. Participating institutions agreed to administer an online survey in the fall and offer ten $100 prizes to their students in order to boost response rates. Institutions sent a series of invitations and follow-up reminders to all enrolled students encouraging them to participate. The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice provided the email invitation language as well as hosted the survey as shown below. Upon opening the survey, students were presented with a consent form in compliance with Institutional Review Board standards. To actually take the survey, the student must have clicked continue as a record of consent and completed a minimum of the first page of the survey. Participating institutions were asked to use only the provided invitation language to ensure consistency across institutions.

> ***Subject: #RealCollege: Speak out – chance to win $100!***
>
> *Making it in college these days can be tough. We want to help.*
>
> *Colleges and universities need to know about the lives of real students like you so that they can offer more support. After you complete the survey, you can enter a drawing to receive a $100 award.*
>
> *This survey we call "#RealCollege" is all about you and your college experience. You're getting it because you attend [COLLEGE NAME] and people there want to help you succeed.*
>
> Click here to share your story!
>
> *Everything will be kept confidential so, tell the truth. Share your challenges. Help us find solutions.*

COLLEGE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

In 2018, 123 postsecondary institutions fielded the survey early in fall term, as students enduring basic needs insecurity are at greater risk for dropping out of school later in the year.[9]

TABLE B-1. Characteristics of Participating Institutions

	Two-Year Colleges (n=88) Percentage	Four-Year Colleges (n=32) Percentage	Overall (n=120) Percentage
SECTOR			
Public	99	78	93
Private, not-for-profit	1	22	7
Private, for-profit	<1	<1	<1
REGION			
West	58	31	51
Midwest	20	6	17
South	11	13	12
Northeast	10	50	21
URBANIZATION			
City	53	78	60
Suburb	33	22	30
Town	6	<1	4
Rural	8	<1	6
SIZE			
Under 5,000	20	19	20
5,000–9,999	27	25	27
10,000–19,999	35	34	35
20,000 or more	17	22	18
UNDERGRADUATES AWARDED PELL GRANTS			
Below 25%	35	16	30
25%–49%	57	59	58
50%–74%	8	25	13
75% or more	<1	<1	<1
TUITION AND FEES			
Below $5,000	82	<1	60
$5,000–$9,999	17	56	28

TABLE B-1. Characteristics of Participating Institutions (continued)

	Two-Year Colleges (n=88) Percentage	Four-Year Colleges (n=32) Percentage	Overall (n=120) Percentage
$10,000–$19,999	<1	22	6
$20,000 or more	<1	22	6

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (2018). Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/

Notes: The information above reflects the characteristics of 120 institutions as of the fall of 2017, with the exception of the information on Pell awardees, which was collected in the fall of 2016. In addition, Signature Healthcare Brockton Hospital School of Nursing is missing information on Tuition and Fees. North Orange Continuing Education, San Diego Continuing Education, and CUNY Professional Studies were missing all IPEDS information and are not included in the above table. Cumulative percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

STUDENT SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Most students who were sent the #RealCollege survey did not answer it. Institutions sent survey invitations to an estimated 1,478,935 students and 85,837 students participated, yielding an estimated response rate of 5.8%.[10] In this report, we exclude students who did not identify a college they attend.

We surveyed all students rather than drawing a subsample due to legal and financial restrictions. The results may be biased—overstating or understating the problem—depending on who answered and who did not. As readers ponder this issue, consider that the survey was emailed to students, and thus they had to have electronic access to respond. The incentives provided were negligible and did not include help with their challenges. Finally, the survey was framed as being about college life, not about hunger or homelessness.

TABLE B-2. Characteristics of Survey Respondents

	Two-Year Colleges Percentage	Four-Year Colleges Percentage	Overall Percentage
GENDER ORIENTATION			
Male	28	27	27
Female	71	71	71
Transgender	1	1	1
Does not identify as female, male, or transgender	2	1	2
SEXUAL ORIENTATION			
Heterosexual or straight	82	82	82
Gay or lesbian	4	4	4

TABLE B-2. Characteristics of Survey Respondents (continued)

	Two-Year Colleges Percentage	Four-Year Colleges Percentage	Overall Percentage
Bisexual	9	9	9
Is not sure or neither heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual	6	5	6
RACIAL OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND			
White or Caucasian	32	39	35
African American or Black	12	15	13
Hispanic or Latinx	42	26	36
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2	2	2
Middle Eastern or North African or Arab or Arab American	2	2	2
Southeast Asian	6	7	6
Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	2	1	1
Other Asian or Asian American	9	12	10
Other	4	4	4
Prefers not to answer	3	3	3
STUDENT IS A U.S. CITIZEN OR PERMANENT RESIDENT			
Yes	92	93	92
No	5	6	5
Prefers not to answer	3	2	2
HIGHEST LEVEL OF PARENTAL EDUCATION			
No high school diploma	19	14	17
High school	22	17	20
Some college	37	31	35
Bachelor's degree or greater	19	34	24
Does not know	4	4	4
AGE			
18 to 20	36	41	38
21 to 25	28	36	31

TABLE B-2. Characteristics of Survey Respondents (continued)

	Two-Year Colleges Percentage	Four-Year Colleges Percentage	Overall Percentage
26 to 30	14	11	13
Older than 30	22	12	18
COLLEGE ENROLLMENT STATUS			
Full-time (at least 12 credits)	59	86	68
Part-time (fewer than 12 credits)	41	14	32
YEARS IN COLLEGE			
Less than 1	31	23	28
1 to 2	38	28	35
3 or more	31	49	37
DEPENDENCY STATUS			
Dependent	34	52	40
Independent	66	48	60
STUDENT RECEIVES THE PELL GRANT			
Yes	42	46	44
No	58	54	56
LEVEL OF ENROLLMENT			
Undergraduate	n/a	92	n/a
Graduate	n/a	8	n/a
STUDENT HAS CHILDREN			
Yes	23	15	20
No	77	85	80
RELATIONSHIP STATUS			
Single	53	59	55
In a relationship	29	29	29
Married or domestic partnership	15	10	13
Divorced	2	1	2
Widowed	<1	<1	<1

TABLE B-2. Characteristics of Survey Respondents (continued)

	Two-year Colleges Percentage	Four-Year Colleges Percentage	Overall Percentage
STUDENT HAS BEEN IN FOSTER CARE			
Yes	3	2	3
No	97	98	97
STUDENT SERVED IN THE MILITARY			
Yes	3	2	3
No	97	98	97
EMPLOYMENT STATUS*			
Employed	59	64	61
Not employed, looking	19	17	18
Not employed, not looking	22	19	21
STUDENT HAS BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIME			
Yes	3	1	3
No	97	99	97
DISABILITY OR MEDICAL CONDITION			
Learning disability (dyslexia, etc.)	8	4	6
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	8	6	8
Autism spectrum disorder	1	1	1
Physical disability (speech, sight, mobility, hearing, etc.)	5	4	5
Chronic illness (asthma, diabetes, autoimmune disorders, cancer, etc.)	12	11	12
Psychological disorder (depression, anxiety, etc.)	29	26	28
Other	3	2	3
No disability or medical condition	46	56	49

**Employment status does not include students attending City Colleges of Chicago.*

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: Classifications of gender orientation, racial or ethnic background, and disability or medical condition are not mutually exclusive. Students could self-identify with multiple classifications. Percentages of mutually exclusive groups may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

Appendix C. Three Survey Measures of Basic Needs Insecurity

1. Food Security

To assess food *security* in 2018, we used questions from the 18-item Household Food Security Survey Module (shown below) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It is important to note that while we mainly discuss *insecurity*, the standard is to measure the level of *security*, referring to those with low or very low security as "food insecure."

FOOD SECURITY MODULE

Adult Stage 1

1. "In the last 30 days, I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more." (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)
2. "In the last 30 days, the food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more." (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)
3. "In the last 30 days, I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals." (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)

If the respondent answers "often true" or "sometimes true" to any of the three questions in Adult Stage 1, then proceed to Adult Stage 2.

Adult Stage 2

4. "In the last 30 days, did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?" (Yes/No)
5. [*If yes to question 4, ask*] "In the last 30 days, how many days did this happen?" (Once, Twice, Three times, Four times, Five times, More than five times)
6. "In the last 30 days, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?" (Yes/No)
7. "In the last 30 days, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?" (Yes/No)
8. "In the last 30 days, did you lose weight because there wasn't enough money for food?" (Yes/No)

If the respondent answers "yes" to any of the questions in Adult Stage 2, then proceed to Adult Stage 3.

Adult Stage 3

9. "In the last 30 days, did you ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?" (Yes/No)
10. [*If yes to question 9, ask*] "In the last 30 days, how many days did this happen?" (Once, Twice, Three times, Four times, Five times, More than five times)

If the respondent has indicated that children under 18 are present in the household, then proceed to Child Stage 1.

Child Stage 1

11. "In the last 30 days, I relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed my children because I was running out of money to buy food." (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)
12. "In the last 30 days, I couldn't feed my children a balanced meal, because I couldn't afford that." (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)
13. "In the last 30 days, my child was not eating enough because I just couldn't afford enough food." (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)

If the respondent answers "often true" or "sometimes true" to any of the three questions in Child Stage 1, then proceed to Child Stage 2.

Child Stage 2

14. "In the last 30 days, did you ever cut the size of your children's meals because there wasn't enough money for food?" (Yes/No)
15. "In the last 30 days, did your children ever skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?" (Yes/No)
16. *[If yes to question 15, ask]* "In the last 30 days, how often did this happen?" (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 or more times)
17. "In the last 30 days, were your children ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food?" (Yes/No)
18. "In the last 30 days, did any of your children ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?" (Yes/No)

To calculate a raw score for food security, we counted the number of questions to which a student answered affirmatively.

a. "Often true" and "sometimes true" were counted as affirmative answers.
b. Answers of "Three times" or more were counted as a "yes." We translated the raw score into food security levels as follows:

	RAW SCORE	
	18-item (children present)	**18-item (no children present)**
FOOD SECURITY LEVEL		
High	0	0
Marginal	1–2	1–2
Low	3–7	3–5
Very Low	8–18	6–10

2. Housing Insecurity

To assess housing insecurity, we used a series of survey questions adapted from the national Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) Adult Well-Being Module to measure students' access to and ability to pay for safe and reliable housing.[11] In 2018, we asked students the following questions:

HOUSING INSECURITY MODULE

1. "In the past 12 months, was there a rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay?" (Yes/No)
2. "In the past 12 months, have you been unable to pay or underpaid your rent or mortgage?" (Yes/No)
3. "In the past 12 months, have you received a summons to appear in housing court?" (Yes/No)
4. "In the past 12 months, have you not paid the full amount of a gas, oil, or electricity bill?" (Yes/No)
5. "In the past 12 months, did you have an account default or go into collections?" (Yes/No)
6. "In the past 12 months, have you moved in with other people, even for a little while, because of financial problems?" (Yes/No)
7. "In the past 12 months, have you lived with others beyond the expected capacity of the house or apartment?" (Yes/No)
8. "In the past 12 months, did you leave your household because you felt unsafe?" (Yes/No)
9. "In the past 12 months, how many times have you moved?" (None, Once, Twice, 3 times, 4 times, 5 times, 6 times, 7 times, 8 times, 9 times, 10 or more times)

In 2018, students were considered housing insecure if they answered "yes" to any of the first eight questions or said they moved at least *three* times (question #9).

3. Homelessness

To measure homelessness, we asked a series of survey questions that align with the definition of homelessness dictated by the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Please refer to pp. 31–32 in Crutchfield and Maguire (2017) for further discussion of this measure.[12] In 2018, students were considered homeless if they answered affirmatively to question #1 OR any part of question #2 (parts e through m) in the Homelessness Module (below).

HOMELESSNESS MODULE

1. "In the past 12 months, have you ever been homeless?"
2. "In the past 12 months, have you slept in any of the following places? Please check all that apply."
    a. Campus or university housing
    b. Sorority/fraternity house
    c. In a rented or owned house, mobile home, or apartment (alone or with roommates or friends)

d. In a rented or owned house, mobile home, or apartment with my family (parent, guardian, or relative)

e. At a shelter

f. In a camper

g. Temporarily staying with a relative, friend, or couch surfing until I find other housing

h. Temporarily at a hotel or motel without a permanent home to return to (not on vacation or business travel)

i. In transitional housing or independent living program

j. At a group home such as halfway house or residential program for mental health or substance abuse

k. At a treatment center (such as detox, hospital, etc.)

l. Outdoor location (such as street, sidewalk, or alley; bus or train stop; campground or woods, park, beach, or riverbed; under bridge or overpass; or other)

m. In a closed area/space with a roof not meant for human habitation (such as abandoned building; car, truck, van, RV, or camper; encampment or tent; unconverted garage, attic, or basement; etc.)

Appendix D. Comparing Measures of Homelessness

One key challenge to supporting homeless students is that they often do not identify as homeless. In this survey, we posed direct questions about students' homelessness status and compared those results with the indirect measures assessing their actual experiences (described in Appendix C).

As shown in Table D, when asked if they ever experienced homelessness in the past year, the majority of students who said "yes" also reported couch surfing (75%) or sleeping in a location used to classify students as homeless (90%). However, among students who reported couch surfing in the past year—a somewhat greater number of students than those who said they had been homeless (5,308 versus 3,282)—only 46% self-identified as experiencing homelessness. Similarly, only 25% who reported sleeping in a location used to classify students as homeless also self-identified as experiencing homelessness.

TABLE D. Comparisons of Homelessness Measures

	Number of Students	Percentage self-identified homeless	Percentage also ever couch surfed	Percentage also experienced location-based homelessness
AMONG RESPONDENTS WHO:				
Self-identified as homeless	3,282	100	75	90
Ever couch surfed	5,308	46	100	89
Experienced location-based homelessness	11,962	25	39	100

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: The first row refers to students who responded "Yes" to the following question: "In the past 12 months have you been homeless?" The second row refers to students who responded "Yes" to the following question: "In the past 12 months, did you couch surf—that is moved from one temporary housing arrangement to another because you had no other place to live?" The last row, experienced location-based homelessness, reflects the students who reported sleeping in any of the following locations in the past 12 months: at a shelter; in a camper; temporarily staying with a relative, friend, or couch surfing; temporarily at a hotel or motel; in transitional housing or independent living program; at a group home; at a treatment center; outdoor location; in a closed area/space with a roof not meant for human habitation.

Appendix E. Tables on Data Used in Figures

TABLE E-1. Number of Postsecondary Participants by Sector, State, and Year (Figure 1)

	2015		2016		2017		2018	
	Two-Year	Four-Year	Two-Year	Four-Year	Two-Year	Four-Year	Two-Year	Four-Year
STATE								
Alabama								1
Alaska								
Arizona			11					
Arkansas								
California	4		14		4		48	2
Colorado					1		1	4
Connecticut								
Delaware					1			1
Florida			1				1	
Georgia						11		
Hawaii								
Idaho			1					1
Illinois			2		1	2	7	
Indiana								
Iowa			1					
Kansas								
Kentucky							1	
Louisiana	1							
Maine						1		
Maryland								1
Massachusetts			1		13	7	1	
Michigan			3			2		1
Minnesota			3		1		7	1
Mississippi						1		
Missouri			4			1	1	
Montana			1					1

TABLE E-1. Number of Postsecondary Participants by Sector, State, and Year (Figure 1) (continued)

	2015		2016		2017		2018	
	Two-Year	Four-Year	Two-Year	Four-Year	Two-Year	Four-Year	Two-Year	Four-Year
Nebraska					1	1		
Nevada								
New Hampshire								
New Jersey	1		1		2	1		2
New Mexico			1					
New York	1		1		3	1	7	12
North Carolina			1		1			
North Dakota			1					
Ohio			1			1	2	
Oklahoma								1
Oregon			1				1	1
Pennsylvania	1		1		1	2	1	3
Rhode Island								
South Carolina			2					
South Dakota								
Tennessee							1	
Texas			10		1	1	7	
Utah								
Vermont								
Virginia			1					
Washington			3		1		3	1
Washington, DC						1		
West Virginia								
Wisconsin	1		4			1	1	
Wyoming	1							

Source: 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 #RealCollege surveys

Notes: One public university asked not to be named in 2017 and is not represented in the table above.

TABLE E-2. Food Security Among Survey Respondents (Figure 2)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
High	18,851	39	11,302	44	30,153	41
Marginal	6,569	14	3,804	15	10,373	14
Low	9,330	19	4,538	18	13,868	19
Very Low	13,692	28	6,142	24	19,834	27

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: According to the USDA, students at either low or very low food security were considered "food insecure." For more details on the food security module used in this report, see Appendix C. Cumulative percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

Table E-3. Food Insecurity Among Survey Respondents (Figure 3)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.	24,810	51	11,225	44	36,035	49
I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.	23,871	49	12,068	47	35,939	48
The food that I bought just didn't last and I didn't have the money to buy more.	19,962	41	8,654	34	28,616	39
I cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food.	19,414	40	9,025	35	28,439	38
I ate less than I felt I should because there wasn't enough money for food.	18,309	38	8,411	33	26,720	36
I was hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food.	15,325	32	7,137	28	22,462	30
I cut the size of meals or skipped because there wasn't enough money for food. (3 or more times)	12,852	27	6,201	24	19,053	26
I lost weight because there wasn't enough money for food.	9,367	19	4,045	16	13,412	18

Table E-3. Food Insecurity Among Survey Respondents (Figure 3) (continued)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
I did not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food.	5,565	12	2,164	8	7,729	10
I did not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food. (3 or more times)	3,225	7	1,212	5	4,437	6

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on the food security module used in this report, see Appendix C.

TABLE E-4. Housing Insecurity Among Survey Respondents (Figure 4)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
Any item	29,436	60	12,415	48	41,851	56
Had a rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay	14,611	30	6,373	25	20,984	28
Did not pay full utilities	13,114	27	4,020	16	17,134	23
Did not pay full amount of rent or mortgage	13,576	28	4,978	19	18,554	25
Moved in with people due to financial problems	11,338	23	4,063	16	15,401	21
Lived with others beyond the expected capacity of the housing	9,254	19	3,685	14	12,939	17
Had an account default or go into collections	9,408	19	2,962	11	12,370	17
Left household because felt unsafe	3,899	8	1,479	6	5,378	7
Moved three or more times	2,051	4	863	3	2,914	4
Received a summons to appear in housing court	1,284	3	688	3	1,972	3

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on the housing insecurity module used in this report, see Appendix C.

TABLE E-5. Homelessness Among Survey Respondents (Figure 5)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
Any item	8,854	18	3,635	14	12,489	17
Self-identified homeless	2,679	5	642	2	3,321	4
LOCATIONS STAYED OVERNIGHT:						
Temporarily with relative, friend or couch surfing	6,702	14	2,677	10	9,379	13
Temporarily at a hotel or motel without a permanent home to return to	1,588	3	469	2	2,057	3
In closed area/space with roof not meant for human habitation (such as abandoned building; car, truck, van, RV, or camper; encampment or tent; unconverted garage, attic, or basement; etc.)	1,401	3	400	2	1,801	2
At outdoor location (such as street, sidewalk or alley; bus or train stop; campground or woods, park, beach, or riverbed; under bridge or overpass; or other)	959	2	392	2	1,351	2
In transitional housing or independent living	735	2	196	1	931	1
In a camper	702	1	286	1	988	1
At a treatment center (such as detox, hospital, etc.)	618	1	284	1	902	1
At a shelter	640	1	197	1	837	1
At a group home such as halfway house or residential program for mental health or substance abuse	431	1	106	<1	537	1

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on the homelessness module used in this report, see Appendix C.

TABLE E-6. Intersections of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness Among Survey Respondents (Figure 6)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
No needs ("Secure")	14,965	30	10,179	39	25,144	33
Food insecure, housing insecure, or homeless ("Insecure")	34,111	70	15,861	61	49,972	67
Food and housing insecure	19,021	39	7,723	30	26,744	36
Housing insecure and homeless	7,846	16	2,917	11	10,763	14
Food insecure and housing	6,485	13	2,394	9	8,879	12

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C.

TABLE E-7. Variation in Institutional Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness Among Survey Respondents by Level of Institution (Figure 7)

	Number of Colleges	Mean	Standard Deviation	P25	P50 (Median)	P75
TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS						
Food insecurity rate	88	47	7	43	47	53
Housing insecurity rate	88	60	8	56	60	66
Homelessness rate	88	18	4	16	18	21
FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS						
Food insecurity rate	33	39	10	33	39	46
Housing insecurity rate	33	47	13	41	47	55
Homelessness rate	33	14	4	12	14	17

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C. Institutional-level rates were not available for institutions that are part of the San Mateo Community College District; however, district-level rates for this district are used.

TABLE E-8. Employment Behavior by Basic Need Insecurity Status* (Figure 8)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
EXPERIENCED FOOD INSECURITY—NO						
Not employed, not looking for work	6,136	27	3,569	24	9,705	26
Not employed, looking for work	4,154	18	2,539	17	6,693	18
Working 1 to 20 hours	5,508	24	5,017	34	10,525	28
Working 21 to 30 hours	3,266	14	1,751	12	5,017	13
Working more than 30 hours	3,976	17	1,797	12	5,773	15
EXPERIENCED FOOD INSECURITY—YES						
Not employed, not looking for work	3,227	15	1,117	11	4,344	14
Not employed, looking for work	4,115	20	1,817	18	5,932	19
Working 1 to 20 hours	5,072	24	3,527	34	8,599	28
Working 21 to 30 hours	3,648	17	1,975	19	5,623	18
Working more than 30 hours	4,823	23	1,927	19	6,750	22
EXPERIENCED HOUSING INSECURITY—NO						
Not employed, not looking for work	5,167	29	3,385	26	8,552	28
Not employed, looking for work	3,584	20	2,562	19	6,146	20
Working 1 to 20 hours	4,363	25	4,700	35	9,063	29
Working 21 to 30 hours	2,370	13	1,482	11	3,852	12
Working more than 30 hours	2,305	13	1,143	9	3,448	11
EXPERIENCED HOUSING INSECURITY—YES						
Not employed, not looking for work	4,308	16	1,362	11	5,670	15
Not employed, looking for work	4,802	18	1,828	15	6,630	17
Working 1 to 20 hours	6,341	24	3,936	33	10,277	27
Working 21 to 30 hours	4,635	17	2,274	19	6,909	18
Working more than 30 hours	6,563	25	2,597	22	9,160	24

TABLE E-8. Employment Behavior by Basic Need Insecurity Status* (Figure 8) (continued)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS—NO						
Not employed, not looking for work	8,328	23	4,354	20	12,682	22
Not employed, looking for work	6,700	18	3,850	18	10,550	18
Working 1 to 20 hours	8,738	24	7,420	34	16,158	28
Working 21 to 30 hours	5,604	15	3,044	14	8,648	15
Working more than 30 hours	7,053	19	3,099	14	10,152	17
EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS—YES						
Not employed, not looking for work	1,152	14	394	11	1,546	13
Not employed, looking for work	1,689	21	539	15	2,228	19
Working 1 to 20 hours	1,967	25	1,218	35	3,185	28
Working 21 to 30 hours	1,403	17	709	20	2,112	18
Working more than 30 hours	1,816	23	643	18	2,459	21

**Among survey respondents*

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C.

TABLE E-9. Self-Reported Grades by Basic Need Insecurity Status* (Figure 9)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
EXPERIENCED FOOD INSECURITY—NO						
A	10,120	44	7,608	55	17,728	48
B	9,706	42	5,317	38	15,023	41
C	2,869	12	888	6	3,757	10
D or F	323	1	86	1	409	1

TABLE E-9. Self-Reported Grades by Basic Need Insecurity Status* (Figure 9) (continued)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
EXPERIENCED FOOD INSECURITY—YES						
A	7,357	35	4,129	42	11,486	38
B	9,441	45	4,472	46	13,913	46
C	3,402	16	1,014	10	4,416	14
D or F	596	3	148	2	744	2
EXPERIENCED HOUSING INSECURITY—NO						
A	7,761	44	6,721	54	14,482	48
B	7,592	43	4,855	39	12,447	41
C	2,133	12	792	6	2,925	10
D or F	252	1	67	1	319	1
EXPERIENCED HOUSING INSECURITY—YES						
A	9,881	37	5,111	45	14,992	39
B	11,787	44	5,027	44	16,814	44
C	4,222	16	1,134	10	5,356	14
D or F	685	3	169	1	854	2
EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS—NO						
A	14,723	40	10,285	50	25,008	44
B	15,982	44	8,480	41	24,462	43
C	5,054	14	1,604	8	6,658	12
D or F	683	2	184	1	867	2
EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS—YES						
A	2,922	37	1,548	47	4,470	40
B	3,407	43	1,403	42	4,810	43
C	1,303	17	322	10	1,625	14
D or F	254	3	52	2	306	3

**Among survey respondents*

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C.

TABLE E-10. Use of Assistance According to Basic Need Security* (Figure 10)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
FOOD INSECURE						
Any assistance	13,072	58	5,763	55	18,835	57
Medicaid or public health insurance	7,709	34	3,908	37	11,617	35
SNAP (food stamps)	5,051	23	1,602	15	6,653	20
Tax refunds (including EITC)	3,931	18	1,912	18	5,843	18
WIC (nutritional assistance for children and pregnant women)	1,838	8	377	4	2,215	7
Transportation assistance	1,721	8	429	4	2,150	7
Utility assistance (e.g., help paying for heat or water)	1,446	6	351	3	1,797	5
Housing assistance	1,467	7	618	6	2,085	6
TANF (public cash assistance; formerly called ADC or ADFC)	1,034	5	288	3	1,322	4
Child care assistance	1,105	5	264	3	1,369	4
SSI (supplemental security income)	783	3	195	2	978	3
SSDI (social security disability income)	797	4	196	2	993	3
Unemployment compensation or insurance	739	3	228	2	967	3
Veterans benefits	639	3	248	2	887	3
Other assistance	417	2	128	1	545	2
HOUSING INSECURE						
Any assistance	16,456	58	6,754	55	23,210	57
Medicaid or public health insurance	9,634	34	4,524	37	14,158	35
SNAP (food stamps)	5,989	21	1,827	15	7,816	19
Tax refunds (including EITC)	5,241	18	2,429	20	7,670	19
WIC (nutritional assistance for children and pregnant women)	2,359	8	492	4	2,851	7

TABLE E-10. Use of Assistance According to Basic Need Security* (Figure 10) (continued)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
Transportation assistance	2,029	7	500	4	2,529	6
Utility assistance (e.g., help paying for heat or water)	1,763	6	389	3	2,152	5
Housing assistance	1,675	6	675	6	2,350	6
TANF (public cash assistance; formerly called ADC or ADFC)	1,239	4	331	3	1,570	4
Child care assistance	1,381	5	298	2	1,679	4
SSI (supplemental security income)	940	3	228	2	1,168	3
SSDI (social security disability income)	939	3	229	2	1,168	3
Unemployment compensation or insurance	964	3	281	2	1,245	3
Veterans benefits	838	3	313	3	1,151	3
Other assistance	493	2	144	1	637	2
HOMELESS						
Any assistance	5,199	61	1,901	54	7,100	58
Medicaid or public health insurance	3,118	36	1,199	34	4,317	36
SNAP (food stamps)	2,203	26	509	14	2,712	22
Tax refunds (including EITC)	1,495	17	698	20	2,193	18
WIC (nutritional assistance for children and pregnant women)	695	8	124	3	819	7
Transportation assistance	846	10	192	5	1,038	9
Utility assistance (e.g., help paying for heat or water)	476	6	111	3	587	5
Housing assistance	657	8	221	6	878	7
TANF (public cash assistance; formerly called ADC or ADFC)	507	6	115	3	622	5
Child care assistance	477	6	87	2	564	5
SSI (supplemental security income)	345	4	73	2	418	3

TABLE E-10. Use of Assistance According to Basic Need Security* (Figure 10) (continued)

	Two-Year College		Four-Year College		Overall	
	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage	Number of Students	Percentage
SSDI (social security disability income)	349	4	74	2	423	3
Unemployment compensation or insurance	325	4	98	3	423	3
Veterans benefits	287	3	137	4	424	3
Other assistance	213	2	56	2	269	2
SECURE						
Any assistance	4,948	35	3,415	35	8,363	35
Medicaid or public health insurance	2,685	19	2,296	23	4,981	21
SNAP (food stamps)	943	7	601	6	1,544	6
Tax refunds (including EITC)	1,417	10	1,000	10	2,417	10
WIC (nutritional assistance for children and pregnant women)	401	3	107	1	508	2
Transportation assistance	503	4	176	2	679	3
Utility assistance (e.g., help paying for heat or water)	212	1	81	1	293	1
Housing assistance	244	2	184	2	428	2
TANF (public cash assistance; formerly called ADC or ADFC)	126	1	52	1	178	1
Child care assistance	186	1	60	1	246	1
SSI (supplemental security income)	260	2	101	1	361	2
SSDI (social security disability income)	254	2	73	1	327	1
Unemployment compensation or insurance	192	1	80	1	272	1
Veterans benefits	394	3	172	2	566	2
Other assistance	124	1	54	1	178	1

**Among survey respondents*

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C.

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Endnotes

1 U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2018). *Food insecurity: Better information could help eligible college students access federal food assistance benefits.* (GAO Publication No. 19–95) Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2016). *Higher education: Actions needed to improve access to federal financial assistance for homeless and foster youth.* (GAO Publication No. 16–343) Washington, D.C.

2 El Zein, A., Shelnutt, K., Colby, S., Olfert, M., Kattelmann, K., Brown, O., & Mathews, A. (2017). The prevalence of food insecurity and its association with health and academic outcomes among college freshmen. *Advances in Nutrition*, 8(1), 4; Maroto, M. E., Snelling, A., & Linck, H. (2015). Food insecurity among community college students: Prevalence and association with grade point average. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 39(6), 515–526; Morris, L. M., Smith, S., Davis, J., & Null, D. B. (2016). The prevalence of food security and insecurity among Illinois University students. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 48(6), 376–382; Patton-López, M., López-Cevallos, D. F., Cancel-Tirado, D. I., & Vazquez, L. (2014). Prevalence and correlates of food insecurity among students attending a midsize rural university in Oregon. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 46(3), 209–214; Simon, A., Goto, K., Simon, A., Breed, J., & Bianco, S. (2018). Factors associated with food insecurity and food assistance program participation among university students. *Californian Journal of Health Promotion* 16(1), 73–78.

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4 For physical health, see Bruening, M., van Woerden, I., Todd, M., & Laska, M. (2018). Hungry to learn: The prevalence and effects of food insecurity on health behaviors and outcomes over time among a diverse sample of university freshmen. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 15(9), 1–10; Bruening, M., Argo, K., Payne-Sturges, D., & Laska, M. N. (2017). The struggle is real: A systematic review of food insecurity on postsecondary education campuses. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 117(11), 1767–1791; Freudenberg, N., Manzo, L., Jones, H., Kwan, A., Tsui, E., & Gagnon, M. (2011). *Food insecurity at CUNY: Results from a survey of CUNY undergraduate students*. New York: The Campaign for a Healthy CUNY, The City University of New York; McArthur, L. H., Ball, L., Danek, A. C., & Holbert, D. (2018). A high prevalence of food insecurity among university students in Appalachia reflects a need for educational interventions and policy advocacy. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 50(6), 564–572; Payne-Sturges, D. C., Tjaden, A., Caldeira, K. M., & Arria, A. M. (2017). Student hunger on campus: Food insecurity among college students and implications for academic institutions. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 32(2), 349–354; Tsui, E., Freudenberg, N., Manzo, L., Jones, H., Kwan, A., & Gagnon, M. (2011). *Housing instability at CUNY: Results from a survey of CUNY undergraduate students*. New York: The Campaign for a Healthy CUNY, City University of New York. For symptoms of depression, see Bruening et al. (2018); Bruening et al. (2017); Payne-Sturges et al. (2017); Eisenberg, D., Goldrick-Rab, S., Lipson, S.K., & Broton, K. (2015). *Too distressed to learn?* Wisconsin HOPE Lab. Freudenberg et al. (2011). For higher perceived stress, see El Zein et al. (2017).

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6 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. (2012). *U.S. adult food security survey module: Three-stage design, with screeners*.

7 Unlike students at other institutions, students who both attended the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) and were not employed were not asked in the survey whether they were looking for employment. As a result, students from the CCC system are not included in the broader national analysis of work behavior. See our reports on the **Hope Center website**.

8 One of the many reasons students do not take advantage of available assistance is the social stigma that accompanies such aid. See King, J. A. (2017). Food insecurity among college students—Exploring the predictors of food assistance resource use (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Kent State University, Kent, Ohio; Allen, C. C. & Alleman, N. F. (2019). A private struggle at a private institution: Effects of student hunger on social and academic experiences. Journal of College Student Development, 60(1), 52–69; Henry, L. (2017). Understanding food insecurity among college students: Experience, motivation, and local solutions. Annals of Anthropological Practice, 41(1), 6–19; Ambrose, V. K. (2016). It's like a mountain: The lived experience of homeless college student (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Tennessee–Knoxville, Knoxville, Tennessee; Tierney, W. G., Gupton, J. T., & Hallett, R. E. (2008). Transitions to adulthood for homeless adolescents: Education and public policy. Los Angeles: Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis, University of Southern California.

9 Although assessments of basic needs insecurity made early in the fall semester are likely to capture more students, these assessments may also understate students' basic needs. In fact, Bruening et al. (2018) surveyed the same population at the beginning and at the end of a semester and found that rates of food insecurity were higher at the end of the semester (35%) than at the beginning (28%).

10 For most participating institutions, the estimated number of survey invitations is based on the total number of students at institutions in the fall of 2017, as reported by the National Center for Education Statistic's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. The estimated number of survey invitations for institutions in the City University of New York system is based on the total number of undergraduate students in the fall of 2017, as these were the only students sent survey invitations. Fall 2017 enrollment numbers for the North Orange Continuing Education and San Diego Continuing Education programs were gathered from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office website. In addition, fall 2017 enrollment numbers for the Professional Studies program were gathered from the CUNY Office of Institutional Research's website.

11 See the **Census website** for more information on SIPP.

12 Crutchfield, R. M. & Maguire, J. (2017). *Researching basic needs in higher education: Qualitative and quantitative instruments to explore a holistic understanding of food and housing insecurity.* Long Beach, California: Basic Needs Initiative, Office of the Chancellor, California State University.