



To: Chair McIntosh, Vice-Chair Jackson, and members of the House Appropriations Committee
From: The Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland
Re: **Support for House Bill 1175 - Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program, with Amendment**
Date: March 5, 2020

The Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland advocates for policies and programs that allow all children to have reliable access to the nutritious food required to thrive throughout their lives. We know that hunger challenges our capacity for learning. Therefore, we strongly support the school meal programs as they are effective strategies to address food insecurity amongst school-aged children. However, food insecurity is also a significant issue on college campuses that yet to be adequately addressed. In fact, a recent nationwide survey found that an astounding 48% of community college students and 41% of four-year university students are food insecure.¹ Another study at the University of Maryland found that food insecurity is a pervasive concern that has adverse effects on academic performance and self-reported physical and mental health.² In addition, new analysis of the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study finds that more than one in five college students—or 22% of all undergraduates—are parents.³

The Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program will help **raise awareness** of the problem of food insecurity at our state's two and four-year academic institutions by incentivizing schools to:

- Create a "Hunger Task Force" on campus,
- Organize awareness-raising events on campus, and
- Collect annual data on the extent of hunger and food insecurity among students.

The Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program will also **connect students to resources** to address their basic food needs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). While SNAP is our nation's single best tool to address food insecurity, the Government Accountability Office recently issued a report noting the failures of many colleges to inform their students of programs like SNAP.⁴ We strongly support the provisions in House Bill 1175 that will appoint a staff person to notify students about SNAP and will also assist students in applying. College campuses will also be encouraged to better meet student's basic needs by establishing a food pantry on campus and to developing a system that allows students to share cafeteria meal credits with students in need.

Colleges that meet the aforementioned criteria will be eligible for \$310,000 in grant funding, distributed by the Maryland Higher Education Commission.

The Partnership proposes that the name of this legislation and grant program be amended, as the term 'Hunger-Free' Schools has been used to recognize schools participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). Calling both schools and college campuses 'hunger-free' may cause confusion amongst both programs. We propose the new name be 'Anti-Hunger Campus Grant' or 'Campus against Hunger Grant'.

We request a favorable report on House Bill 1175 with an amendment to rename the program.

Respectfully submitted by the Policy Committee Chair, Noora Kanfash (nkanfash@strength.org).

Members of the Policy Committee of the Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland

Advocates for Children and Youth • Capital Area Food Bank • Critical Issues Forum • Family League of Baltimore
Maryland Association for Elementary School Principals • Maryland Farmers Market Association
Maryland Food Bank • Maryland Hunger Solutions • Maryland Out of School Time Network
Maryland PTA • Share Our Strength – No Kid Hungry Maryland • St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore



¹ College and University Basic Needs Insecurity: A National Real College Report, 2019: https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HOPE_realcollege_National_report_digital.pdf

² https://studentaffairs.umd.edu/sites/studentaffairs.umd.edu/files/food_access_student_well-being_study_report_september2019.pdf

³ <https://iwpr.org/publications/parents-college-numbers/>

⁴ GAO Report 19-95, Food Insecurity: Better information could help eligible college students access federal food assistance benefits, 2018.

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