

# SENATE BILL 789

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By: **Senator M. Washington**

Introduced and read first time: January 28, 2025

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Higher Education – Hunger–Free Campus Grant Program – Alterations**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Higher Education Commission to designate  
4 certain private institutions of higher education as hunger–free campuses;  
5 prohibiting certain private institutions of higher education from being eligible to  
6 receive grant funding under the Hunger–Free Campus Grant Program; altering the  
7 requirement of the Governor, beginning in a certain fiscal year, to include in the  
8 annual budget bill a certain appropriation for the Program; and generally relating  
9 to alterations to the Hunger–Free Campus Grant Program.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
11 Article – Education  
12 Section 11–1701 and 11–1703 through 11–1706  
13 Annotated Code of Maryland  
14 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

15 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,  
16 Article – Education  
17 Section 11–1702  
18 Annotated Code of Maryland  
19 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

20 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
21 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

22 **Article – Education**

23 11–1701.

24 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (b) "Emergency assistance" means immediate direct assistance provided by a  
2 hunger-free campus to any student facing an unanticipated financial crisis or hardship.

3 (c) "Hunger-free campus" means a campus of any 4-year [public] institution of  
4 higher education or regional higher education center that meets the requirements of §  
5 11-1703(a) of this subtitle or any 2-year [public] institution of higher education that meets  
6 the requirements of § 11-1703(b) of this subtitle.

7 (d) "Program" means the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program.

8 11-1702.

9 (a) There is a Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program.

10 (b) The purpose of the Program is to:

11 (1) Address student hunger;

12 (2) Leverage more sustainable solutions to address basic food needs on  
13 campus;

14 (3) Raise awareness of services currently offered on campus that address  
15 basic food needs; and

16 (4) Build strategic partnerships at the local, State, and national levels to  
17 address food insecurity among students.

18 (c) (1) The Commission shall administer the Program.

19 (2) The Commission shall develop the form to be used for the annual  
20 student survey required under § 11-1703 of this subtitle.

21 11-1703.

22 (a) The Commission shall designate as a hunger-free campus any campus of a  
23 4-year [public] institution of higher education or regional higher education center that:

24 (1) Has established a hunger task force that:

25 (i) Meets at least three times per academic year; and

26 (ii) Sets at least two goals with action plans;

27 (2) Has designated a staff member responsible for:

28 (i) Assisting students in enrolling in the Supplemental Nutrition  
29 Assistance Program; or

1 (ii) Connecting students with available Supplemental Nutrition  
2 Assistance Program outreach partners that can assist students in enrolling in the  
3 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program;

4 (3) Has designated a staff member responsible for informing students  
5 participating in federal work–study programs that they are eligible for the Supplemental  
6 Nutrition Assistance Program;

7 (4) (i) Provides options for students to utilize Supplemental Nutrition  
8 Assistance Program benefits at campus retailers; or

9 (ii) Provides students with information on the names and locations  
10 of off–campus retailers that accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits;

11 (5) Participates in an awareness day campaign activity and plans at least  
12 one campus awareness event during the National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness  
13 Week;

14 (6) Provides at least one food pantry on campus, or enables students in  
15 need to receive food through a separate, stigma–free arrangement;

16 (7) Develops and maintains a meal–sharing program that allows students  
17 to donate their unused meal plan credits to be distributed to students in need for use in  
18 campus dining halls or at an on–campus food pantry, if applicable;

19 (8) Conducts a standardized annual student survey on hunger and submits  
20 the results to the Commission; and

21 (9) Submits an annual report detailing its efforts to address student  
22 hunger to the Commission.

23 (b) The Commission shall designate as a hunger–free campus any campus of a  
24 2–year [public] institution of higher education that meets all of the requirements for  
25 4–year [public] institutions of higher education or regional higher education centers  
26 identified in subsection (a) of this section, with the exception of the requirements in  
27 subsection (a)(4) and (7) of this section.

28 (c) (1) Each 4–year [public] institution of higher education may develop its  
29 own procedures for a meal–sharing program.

30 (2) The 4–year [public] institutions of higher education shall make  
31 information about the meal–sharing program publicly available, including:

32 (i) How a student may donate unused meal plan credits;

1 (ii) How a student in need may apply to receive donated meal plan  
2 credits; and

3 (iii) The methodology that a 4-year [public] institution of higher  
4 education uses to ensure that unused donated meal plan credits are used to purchase food  
5 to support an on-campus food pantry, if applicable.

6 11-1704.

7 (A) For fiscal [year 2023 and each fiscal year thereafter] **YEARS 2023 THROUGH**  
8 **2026**, the Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$150,000  
9 for the Program.

10 (B) **FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER, THE**  
11 **GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF**  
12 **\$250,000 FOR THE PROGRAM.**

13 11-1705.

14 (a) (1) The Commission shall allocate grant funding to any 4-year or 2-year  
15 public institution of higher education or regional higher education center that:

16 [(1)] (I) Pledges a matching contribution to be used to implement the  
17 goals of the Program; and

18 [(2)] (II) Is designated as a hunger-free campus.

19 (2) **NOTWITHSTANDING DESIGNATION AS A HUNGER-FREE CAMPUS**  
20 **UNDER THIS SUBTITLE, A 4-YEAR OR 2-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER**  
21 **EDUCATION OR A REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER OPERATED BY A PRIVATE**  
22 **NONPROFIT INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE**  
23 **GRANT FUNDING UNDER THE PROGRAM.**

24 (b) The Commission shall determine the amount of each grant.

25 (c) The Commission shall incorporate into the 2026-2030 State Plan for Higher  
26 Education a plan for addressing any basic needs insecurity of higher education students.

27 (d) (1) The Commission shall adopt regulations necessary to carry out the  
28 requirements of this subtitle.

29 (2) The regulations adopted under this subsection shall allow grant  
30 recipients to use grant funds flexibly to implement the goals of the Program, including  
31 giving recipients the ability to:

32 (i) Support emergency assistance;

- 1 (ii) Hire staff to manage initiatives related to the Program; and  
2 (iii) Use grant funds for operational activities related to the Program.

3 11–1706.

4 (a) Not later than 2 years after establishing the Program, the Commission shall  
5 report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article,  
6 the General Assembly on the implementation of this subtitle.

7 (b) The report shall include:

8 (1) The number and amounts of grants awarded;

9 (2) The impact of the Program on establishing hunger-free campuses at  
10 [public] institutions of higher education and regional higher education centers;

11 (3) The impact of awarded grants on reducing the number of students  
12 experiencing food insecurity; and

13 (4) Recommendations on expanding the Program.

14 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
15 1, 2025.