



**TESTIMONY OF THE CIF AND MANNA FOOD CENTER, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
BEFORE THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE SUPPORTING  
HB 1027, SNAP FOR STUDENTS  
ON MARCH 10, 2022**

**FAVORABLE**

Honorable Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

The Critical Issues Forum: Advocacy for Social Justice (CIF) and The Manna Food Center (Manna) supports the “SNAP for Students” (HB 1027). CIF is a coalition of three synagogues, Temple Beth Ami, Kol Shalom, and Adat Shalom, with over 1750 households that serves as a vehicle for our congregations to speak out on issues that concern the primacy of human life. The Manna Food Center is Montgomery County’s largest food bank striving to eliminate hunger through food distribution, education, and advocacy serving more than 45,000 Marylander’s experiencing food insecurity. We urge the House of Delegates to pass HB 1027 to make college students eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) if they are eligible for work study or if they have an Expected Family Contribution of \$0, including if they are receiving the maximum Pell Grant.

Food insecurity among college students is real, pervasive, and consequential. With the right combination of programs, political will and investments, however, we can effectively eliminate it.<sup>1</sup> The basic need to have enough food to survive and function without shame is widespread and often hidden across Maryland. This includes students attending Maryland’s prestigious community colleges and universities who struggle with chronic and sometime transitory “limited or uncertain access to adequate food.”<sup>2</sup> In addition to the critical human importance of just having access to enough food for an active, healthy life for Maryland students, food security has an economic value to better secure an educated work force and Maryland’s return on its investment in higher education.

A National Institute of Health study on food insecurity and student success at Maryland’s community colleges showed that food insecurity is an issue at rural, suburban, and urban community colleges. The study represented 37% of Maryland community colleges and over 55,000 potential community college student enrollments.<sup>3</sup> Community college students include traditional 18-20 aged learners, as well as adult learners who benefit from community college education as a pathway to “establishing or maintaining a middle class status” and economic security.<sup>4</sup> Food insecurity among community college students showed a significant relationship with academic success, GPA, concentration levels, and energy levels.<sup>5, 6</sup>

According to a pre-pandemic study, an estimated 20% of students at the University of Maryland,

College Park (UMDCP), Maryland's flagship university and one of the nation's preeminent public research universities, is food-insecure. These students are at-risk for adverse wellbeing, academic performance, and professional/career development. Food insecure students reported poorer general health, and experienced higher levels of depression, anxiety, distress, anger, and loneliness than their peers. Compared to their counterparts, food insecure students had lower GPAs and were more likely to withdraw from the University before completing their degrees. Moreover, food insecurity disproportionately affected certain college students, including first-generation college students, racial/ethnic minority students, transfer students, students with a disability, as well as students who worked longer hours and/or were financially independent. Many students in need may not seek help because of stigma or difficulty accessing needed resources at off-campus pantries.<sup>7</sup>

Delegate Jared Solomon has introduced legislation to increase Maryland's efforts to address food insecurity among college students - "SNAP for Students (HB 1027)." SNAP is a federal program that provides nutrition benefits to needy families so they can purchase healthy food. Delegate Solomon's SNAP for Students Act is a critical step that would permanently allow students to be eligible for SNAP benefits if they are eligible for work study, or have a zero dollar expected family contribution including if they are receiving the maximum Pell Grant. This bill would make permanent the temporary expansion of SNAP eligibility enacted by Congress in December 2020 that is due to expire 30 days after the federally-declared COVID-19 health emergency ends.

We support Delegate Solomon's legislation as it addresses a critical issue in Maryland and throughout our country. A recent report published by the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior showed that nearly 60% of students attending a state university reported experiencing food insecurity potentially affecting college students' cognitive, academic, and psychosocial development.<sup>8</sup> Nationally, nearly one-third to one-half of college students experience high rates of food insecurity, a rate that is higher than the national average for adults.<sup>9,10</sup> The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice issued a report on March 31, 2021 that determined that food insecurity affected 39% of students at two-year institutions, and 29% of students at four-year institutions.<sup>11</sup>

While wide variation in these rates exists, as a society it is clear that food insecurity is a health, economic justice and equity issue: students of color, older students, former foster youth, parenting students, students who experienced childhood food insecurity, students receiving financial aid, working students, students experiencing housing instability or living off-campus, students lacking access to a vehicle, students with poor health status, and first-generation college students are especially at higher risk of food insecurity.<sup>12-22</sup> Food insecurity during college can be a barrier to graduation and higher-degree attainment, particularly for first-generation students, thus shaping the entire future of a student.<sup>23</sup>

***No student should deal with the additional burden of food security as they are pursuing higher education.*** Education at all levels has become more challenging as we continue to deal with the learning consequences associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>24</sup> Experiencing food insecurity among Maryland college students is something we can remediate. SNAP is a proven intervention and yet utilization is far from universal among those eligible. Existing policies and programs like SNAP that help mitigate food insecurity should be expanded and made more accessible to the college student population. Now is an opportune time to make important investments in Maryland's future as we emerge from the pandemic recession.

We urge you to support Delegate Solomon's "SNAP for Students" legislation to address the epidemic of

hunger for students attending Maryland's colleges and universities. Common sense will help support the advancement, economic security, and health of our young adults and future leaders!

**The Critical Issues Forum and the Manna Food Center requests that the Committee favorably refer HB 1027.**

---

References:

- 1 Sara Goldrick-Rab, Professor of Sociology and Medicine at Temple University and founder of the Hope Center for College, Community and Justice, at the Sept. 8, 2021 Congressional hearing on Hunger on College Campuses.]
- 2 <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/definitions-of-food-security/>
- 3 Hollis, LP; National Institute of Health Phase Two Report: Food Insecurities and Student Success Maryland's Community Colleges. ASCEND Training Model to Increase Diversity in Biomedical Research, July 2017.
- 4 Center for Community College Student Engagement. Making ends meet. University of Texas at Austin. (2017).
- 5 Maroto ME. Food insecurity among community college students: Prevalence and relationship to GPA, energy and concentration (Publication No. 3587788) [Doctoral Dissertation, Morgan State University]. (2013)
- 6 Spaid RL, Gillett-Karam R, Liburd LC, Monroe D, Thompson-Johnson T. Sustenance for Success: Connections between Community College Students and Food Insecurity. *J Appl Res Community Coll.* 2021; 28(1):63-79.
- 7 Wang, Y.-W., Cruz, T. E., & Bush, L. (2019). UMD food access & student well-being study. College Park, MD: University of Maryland Counseling Center Research Unit.]
- 8 Patton-Lopez, Lopez-Cevallos, Cancel-Tirado, & Vazquez, 2014]
- 9 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.
- 10 Nazmi, A., Martinez, S., Byrd, A., Robinson, D., Bianco, S., Maguire, J., Crutchfield, R. M., Condrón, K., & Ritchie, L. (2018).
- 11 2019 Real College Survey, Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, [https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2019\\_RealCollege\\_Survey\\_Report.pdf](https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2019_RealCollege_Survey_Report.pdf)
- 12 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.
- 13 Payne-Sturges, D. C., Tjaden, A., Caldeira, K. M., Vincent, K. B., & Arria, A. M. (2018). Student hunger on campus: food insecurity among college students and implications for academic institutions. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 32(2), 349-354.
- 14 Wood, J. L., & Harris, F., III. (2018). Experiences with "acute" food insecurity among college students. *Educational Researcher*, 47(2), 142-145.
- 15 Martinez, S. M., Webb, K., Frongillo, E. A., & Ritchie, L. D. (2018). Food insecurity in California's public university system: what are the risk factors? *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 13(1), 1-18.
- 16 Mirabatur, E., Peterson, K. E., Rathz, C., Matlen, S., & Kasper, N. (2016). Predictors of college-student food security and fruit and vegetable intake differ by housing type. *Journal of American College Health*, 64(7), 555-564.
- 17 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.
- 18 Forman, M. R., Mangini, L. D., Dong, Y., Hernandez, L. M., & Fingerman, K. L. (2018). Food insecurity and hunger: quiet public health problems on campus. *Journal of Nutrition & Food Sciences*, 8(2), 1-6.

- 19 Blagg, K., Schanzenbach, D. W., Gundersen, C., & Ziliak, J. P. (2017). *Assessing Food Insecurity on Campus: A National Look at Food Insecurity among America's College Students*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.
- 20 Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., Schneider, J., Hernandez, A., & Cady, C. (2018). *Still Hungry and Homeless in College*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin HOPE Lab.
- 21 Hagedorn, R. L., & Olfert, M. D. (2018). Food insecurity and behavioral characteristics for academic success in young adults attending an Appalachian University. *Nutrients*, 10(361), 1-12.
- 22 Patton-López, M. 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), 209-214Food insecurity disproportionately affects
- 23 Wolfson JA, Insolera N, Cohen A, Leung CW. The effect of food insecurity during college on graduation and type of degree attained: evidence from a nationally representative longitudinal survey. *Public Health Nutr.* 2021 Jul 29:1-9. doi: 10.1017/S1368980021003104. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 34321134.]
- 24 August 2021 Research Brief: Self-Reported COVID-19 Infection and Implications for Mental Health and Food Insecurity Among American College Students; Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University.]