



**DIVISION OF
STUDENT AFFAIRS**
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

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HB 1027 – Food Supplement Benefit – Students – Eligibility (SNAP Benefits)
House Appropriations Committee
March 10, 2022
Favorable

Chair McIntosh, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support of HB 1027, sponsored by Delegate Solomon, to extend SNAP benefits for eligible students.

At the University of Maryland, our [Food Access and Student Wellbeing Study](#) made us aware that as many as 20% of our students may experience food insecurity at some point during a semester. An estimated 8,000 UMD students not only experience hunger but also related vulnerabilities and barriers to their health and well-being.

The pandemic brought into sharp focus the widespread and urgent need to address this issue. We witnessed an unprecedented number of visits to our Campus Pantry. Since its opening in 2014, the University has worked steadily to assess and alleviate student hunger through the Campus Pantry Program, serving over 23,000 visitors, with more than 50% of those visits occurring since March 2020.

We have immovably transformed the conversation about food insecurity in our community from disbelief to awareness. This effort includes faculty, staff, students, parents and alumni, as well as partners with local and statewide non-profit organizations. We offer student crisis funding and emergency meals, address housing insecurity through the Fostering Terp Success Program, and convene a Coalition for Terps Essential Needs to ensure coordination across efforts.

In addition, we aligned with partners across campus and the state to raise awareness for the temporary expansion of SNAP eligibility enacted by Congress in December 2020. However, this important support available to our students in need is set to expire 30 days after the federally-declared COVID-19 health emergency ends. I urge you to pass the SNAP for Students Act introduced by Delegate Jared Solomon to permanently allow students to be eligible for SNAP benefits if they are eligible for work study, or have a zero dollar expected family contribution, or if they are receiving the maximum Pell Grant possible.

We wanted to include the impact of SNAP benefits from a student's perspective, so I hope you'll read UMD Senior Elliott Shepherd's note which we've included below.



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Our team will continue to lead the University of Maryland in creating a hunger-free campus, but our students need your help to expand existing programs that work to support food security to vulnerable Maryland students. Thank you for your consideration and I urge a favorable report on HB 1027.

Sincerely,

Patricia Perillo, PhD
Vice President for Student Affairs

Allison Tjaden
Assistant Director, Dining Services

Student perspective:

"My name is Elliott Shepherd and I'm a senior at the University of Maryland, College Park. I am homeless and don't have a consistent source of income. I attend school with the help of financial aid, but I am responsible for buying food for myself. Without the extension of SNAP benefits, I would be unable to properly care for my health and nutrition and would be forced to limit my food intake and cut out the healthiest parts of my diet, such as fresh produce from the grocery store. Student status often comes with certain expectations of external support from family, but students are in a variety of situations and it is just as necessary to eat as a full-time student without the ability to work as it is for anyone else. Extending SNAP benefits permanently would benefit so many people who really need it, and it should have been done long before this."