



March 8, 2022

**2022 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY**  
**HB 1027: Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility**  
**(SNAP for Students)**

**BILL:** HB1027: Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility (SNAP for Students)  
**COMMITTEE:** Appropriations  
**POSITION:** Testimony of Support of House Bill 1027  
**BILL ANALYSIS:** This bill will provide food supplement benefits to students enrolled in higher education institutions that have an expected FAFSA family contribution of \$0 or are eligible for a state or federal work study program. Students who qualify must also be a resident of the state of Maryland, be enrolled for at least fifteen (15) credit hours per year, and meet the income threshold requirements.

Dear Chair McIntosh and Members of the House Appropriations Committee,

The Montgomery County Food Council strongly urges you to support HB 1027: Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility (SNAP for Students), which will expand nutrition assistance support to students enrolled in higher education institutions and also demonstrate need via meeting the stringent criteria outlined above.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, students enrolled full time in higher education institutions were not eligible for federal nutrition assistance. Covid- 19 has been a disaster in every way; a health disaster, an economic disaster, and a personal disaster for tens of thousands of Marylanders. At the state and federal level, we have made policy changes, system improvements and learned important lessons that have helped us move forward. One of the policy changes that was made was to ensure that eligible college students can access SNAP, regardless of full time status. The USDA waived the ban on student participation in SNAP and stated that it does not apply to students eligible to participate in federal or state work-study programs, or students with an expected family contribution of \$0 – the exact criteria applied in this proposed legislation.

The 2020 #RealCollege Survey, which is the nation’s largest, most well-established assessment of students’ basic needs, includes data from two Maryland community colleges and one Maryland four-year institution. It found that among survey respondents at two-year colleges, 38% experienced



food insecurity in the 30 days prior to the survey, with just over 16% experiencing low food security and a little more than 22% experiencing very low food security. At four-year colleges, 29% of students reported experiencing food insecurity<sup>1</sup>.

College students are not just 17 – 21 years old. They are parents, veterans, and can be of any age. This is especially true at our local community colleges, where many students begin their studies, return to their studies, or are working to improve their skills and education to increase their opportunities in the workplace. Locally in Montgomery County, one of our higher education institutions has recognized food insecurity on campus and implemented *Grover Essentials*, an on-site resource to increase food access and promote wellness at Universities of Shady Grove (USG). Grover Essentials started in August 2018 to provide supplemental food and basic necessities that contribute to the well-being and success of the campus community and typically stocks quick snacks, cereal, cooking staples (salt, sugar, beans), peanut butter, jelly, cereal, dry pasta, canned vegetables, fruits and a rotating supply of baby and toiletry items.

Although food assistance is a noble and important way to support students in need, more equitable and widespread nutrition benefits for students who meet the robust criteria of this legislation allows qualified students to acquire food that meets their specific dietary needs and preferences while also providing economic benefit to local food retail outlets across the state.

As an official SNAP community based outreach partner, we provide SNAP outreach and application assistance to hundreds in our community. We know that the important changes that were made during the pandemic are helpful to college students, and we believe that they should be continued. That is why the Food Council is in strong support of **HB1027** and urges a favorable report **FOR** this bill.

*The Montgomery County Food Council is a nonprofit organization that serves as the primary connection point for businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and residents around food system issues in our County. We bring together over 2,000 local and regional partners in community-wide education, advocacy, and capacity building initiatives. Our work cultivates a more resilient, sustainable, and equitable local food system by enhancing food access for the over 100,000 at risk for hunger, expanding food education opportunities for all residents, supporting our County's farms and food and beverage businesses, and addressing the impact of local food production, distribution, consumption and recycling on our natural resources.*

For more information, please contact: Heather Bruskin, MCFC Executive Director at the email and phone number below.

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<sup>1</sup> Temple University, The Hope Center, [2020 Real College Survey Report](#)

