



CCBC

Community College
of Baltimore County

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CCBC Catonsville

800 South Rolling Road
Baltimore, Maryland
21228

CCBC Dundalk

7200 Sollers Point Road
Baltimore, Maryland
21222

CCBC Essex

7201 Rossville Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland
21237

CCBC Hunt Valley

11101 McCormick Road
Suite 100
Hunt Valley, Maryland
21031

CCBC Owings Mills

10300 Grand Central Avenue
Owings Mills, Maryland
21117

**CCBC Randallstown
at The Liberty Center**

3637 Offutt Road
Randallstown, Maryland
21133

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February 17, 2023

HB452 –Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility (SNAP for Students)
Act

Heather Griner, Ph.D., LCPC – Director, College and Community Outreach
Services

Community College of Baltimore County

My name is Heather Griner and I am providing this written testimony in support of HB 452 –Food Supplement Benefits - Students - Eligibility (SNAP for Students) Act . I have worked at the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) for 22 years in student services. For the past eight years, I have been the Director of College and Community Outreach Services, a student support program focusing on basic needs security (food, housing insecurity, etc.) for the students of CCBC.

CCBC is the largest provider of higher education, workforce development, technology training and lifelong learning in the Baltimore metropolitan area. Its mission is to provide an accessible, affordable, and high-quality education that prepares students for transfer and career success, strengthens the regional workforce and enriches the community.

Rooted in the community since 1957, CCBC’s three main campuses -- Catonsville, Dundalk, and Essex -- each started as its own college. In 1998, the campuses merged to form the Community College of Baltimore County, which now includes three extension centers, further expanding the college’s geographical reach. CCBC educates nearly 50,000 students each year offering more than 50 associate degrees and more than 100 certificate programs. Approximately 95 % of CCBC graduates remain in the Baltimore region, contributing to the local workforce. CCBC is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges (MSAC) and Schools, and by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). CCBC is a public two-year college system with three main campuses (Essex, Catonsville and Dundalk) and three extension centers (Owings Mills, Randallstown, and Hunt Valley) serving the greater Baltimore metropolitan area. CCBC is formally recognized as a minority-serving institution (MSI) by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Hope Center for College, Community and Justice surveyed 195,000 students from all over the country during the fall 2020 semester and found that food insecurity affected 39% of two-year community college students and 29% of students at four year institutions. CCBC actually participated in this study and found at our own campus 38% had experienced food insecurity within the past 30 days. This survey was



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taken during a time when people, who may not have been familiar with SNAP eligibility requirements, now found themselves in a financial situation due to the COVID -19 pandemic impact on the economy and job security. Interestingly, 50% of the student who experienced food insecurity at CCBC did not know where to receive assistance. Information concerning these reports can be accessed at www.hope4college.com.

In my experience, many students are unaware that they potentially qualify for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) based on household size and income. Since fall 2017, CCBC has been pro-actively reaching out to these students based on information self-reported on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and offering to assist them with applying for SNAP, and other federal/state benefits they may be eligible for.

The permanent change in eligibility requirements for students enrolled in at least 15 credits per year and in the federal/state work study program to receive SNAP benefits is life changing for the students of CCBC. Access to food is a right, not a privilege. Access to nutritional food is also a right, not a privilege.

Shakiba Zare is a CCBC work study student who has completed 58 credits, 3.0 grade point average, Computer Science Management major. Shakiba plans to transfer to Salisbury University to obtain her bachelor degree. When asked about her experience as a work study student she said “It’s great because you get to work and go to school on campus.” When I told her about the SNAP eligibility for work study students she was very excited. “This is a great opportunity because of the price of groceries. Not everyone can afford them. Now work-study students could use their pay check on things they need instead of food.” When this bill passes, Shakiba will be eligible for SNAP benefits while attending Salisbury University, making it easier for her to complete her degree and have enough food while employed as a work-study student.

Supporting work-study student with access to SNAP benefits enrolled in higher education will close the gap with their more financially secure classmates, in turn creating a more equitable learning environment. The additional support for this population through access to SNAP benefits allows them to focus on their education, not how to pay for their next meal, which increases graduation rates, building the work force and ultimately improving Maryland.



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