FOOD INSECURITY ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES IN ARKANSAS

A STUDY BY HONORS ARKANSAS
In Fall 2021, Honors Arkansas (an alliance of honors programs and honors colleges from Arkansas institutions of higher education) collaborated with the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance to study instances and impacts of food insecurity on eight two- and four-year higher education institutions in the state.

- University of Arkansas Fayetteville (lead institution)
- University of Arkansas Fort Smith
- Arkansas State University Mountain Home
- University of Arkansas Pine Bluff
- John Brown University
- University of Central Arkansas
- National Park College
- Williams Baptist University

Online surveys were conducted in October and November
3973 usable responses
WHO WERE THE RESPONDENTS?

70.3% Arkansan
51.2% held jobs – 23.22% of these held 2+ jobs
29.0% Pell eligible
23.4% First gen
26.2% qualified for work-study
12.7% participated in work-study
4.4% enrolled in SNAP
24.66% suffer from physical/psychological disability
HOW OFTEN IN 12 MONTHS COULD YOU NOT AFFORD TO EAT BALANCED MEALS?

- 41.0% sometimes or often couldn’t afford
- More likely to state “often”
  - Arkansans
  - Work 20+ hours a week
  - Have disabilities
IN PAST 12 MONTHS DID YOU EVER SKIP A MEAL FOR LACK OF MONEY FOR FOOD?

- 31.0% skipped a meal
- More likely to state “yes”
  - Arkansans
  - First gen
  - Work 20+ hours a week
  - Have a disability

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IN PAST 12 MONTHS HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED BODILY WEAKNESS DUE TO LIMITED FOOD INTAKE?

- 35.9% experienced it at least some months
- 8.4% experienced it at least once a month
- More likely to state “every week” and least likely to state “never”
  - First gen
  - Work 20+ hours a week
  - Have a disability

Image credit https://ayurvedasofia.bg/en/blog/body-weakness/
IN PAST 12 MONTHS HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU BEEN UNABLE TO FOCUS IN CLASS DUE TO LIMITED FOOD INTAKE?

- 40.6% experienced it at least some months
- 12.29% experienced it at least once a month

More likely to state “every week” and least likely to state “never”
- First gen
- Work 20+ hours a week
- Have a disability
WHY NOT USE CAMPUS OR OTHER FOOD PANTRY?

Less than 7% of students have used a pantry.

- 53.6% don’t know how to access one
- 42.3% wouldn’t want people to know they use one
- 21.5% wouldn’t want to have to show income
- 38.7% wouldn’t want to deal with other paperwork
NO TYPE OF STUDENT IS IMMUNE TO CAMPUS HUNGER

Hunger on Arkansas’ campuses impacts:
- Men and women
- Students of all ethnicities
- First gen and non first gen students
- Students with and without disabilities

May disproportionately impact:
- Arkansans
- Students who work 20+ hours a week
- First gen students
- Students with disabilities
CAMPUS HUNGER HURTS THE WHOLE STATE

Hungry students are 43% less likely to graduate (Wolfson et al., 2022)

An example of the losses to the state:

- AR median annual earnings: $26,200 (HS), $30,100 (some college) $44,700 (college degree)
- Income gap of $14,600 to $18,500 for those who graduate and those who don’t
- UAF 6-yr grad rate 69.7% (3388 of 4860 incoming 2015 freshmen); 1492 did not graduate
- If 40% of those who left UA never graduate, state loses $9.36M to $11.96M Equivalence of current SNAP benefits for thousands of AR households

- Represents one campus and only one year

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RECOMMENDATIONS

• **Improve awareness of and access to pantries** on campus with regular educational campaigns that help negate any stigma associated with using a pantry.

• **Reduce barriers to access at campus pantries** by minimizing needed paperwork or aiding in completing any required documents.

• **Launch SNAP signup campaigns** (partnering with the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance and others) to improve SNAP access to eligible college students.

• **Collaborate with their state representatives** to help expand SNAP access and increase resources available to campus to combat hunger.
THANK YOU
For more information on Honors Arkansas Visit
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