



New Jersey Expands Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program to Combat Food Insecurity on Campuses

November 14, 2022

As part of the State's commitment to accessibility and student success in higher education, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) is pleased to offer \$1.5 million in Hunger-Free Campus grants to both public and private institutions of higher education. The Hunger-Free Campus Act (P.L. 2019, C.89) established a grant program for public institutions of higher education that have one or more hunger-free-designated campuses to help support students on their paths to success.

For the first time since its inception, New Jersey has expanded the grant program eligibility to include independent public-mission institutions of higher education that receive State operating aid. This expansion recognizes that food insecurity is not unique to students attending public institutions. Additionally, this round of grants is funded through an appropriation of State dollars. The use of State dollars for this round of grant funding clearly communicates the State's bipartisan commitment to eradicating hunger on college and university campuses.

In a fall 2021 questionnaire focused on the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on students' mental and physical health and financial well-being, over 70 percent of surveyed students indicated they were feeling more stressed and impacted than in 2020 when the pandemic first hit. Approximately 13 percent stated they were concerned that they would not have enough food to eat in the next 30 days.

"Students experiencing food insecurity often struggle academically and face both physical and mental health challenges," **said Governor Phil Murphy**. "If we want to enable the success of our students, providing holistic support that extends beyond the classroom is critical. This grant program is an important part of our ongoing efforts to eradicate hunger on college campuses on behalf of students throughout New Jersey."

"When students struggle with food and housing insecurity, their focus shifts to survival and away from academic progress and degree completion. No student should go hungry, but this continues to be the reality for many of them and COVID-19 only exacerbated these concerns," **said Dr. Brian K. Bridges, Secretary of Higher Education**. "We look forward to learning from the innovative strategies that our institutions employ to combat food insecurity and the development of long-term solutions to ensure every student is equitably supported."

The grant funding will be used to address student hunger, leverage more sustainable solutions to address basic food needs on campuses, raise awareness of currently-offered campus services that address basic food needs, and continue to build strategic partnerships at the local, state, and

national levels to address food insecurity among students.

Last year, OSHE awarded \$1 million in federal funding to 11 institutions to support the goals of the Hunger-Free Campus Act in its inaugural year, signed into law by Governor Murphy in 2019.

Applications will be due on December 2, 2022, with an anticipated release of grant dollars early next year.

To read the Notice of Funding for the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program, please visit [here](#).