Food Security
Among New Jersey College Students

NEW JERSEY OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FOOD SECURITY **means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.***

36%

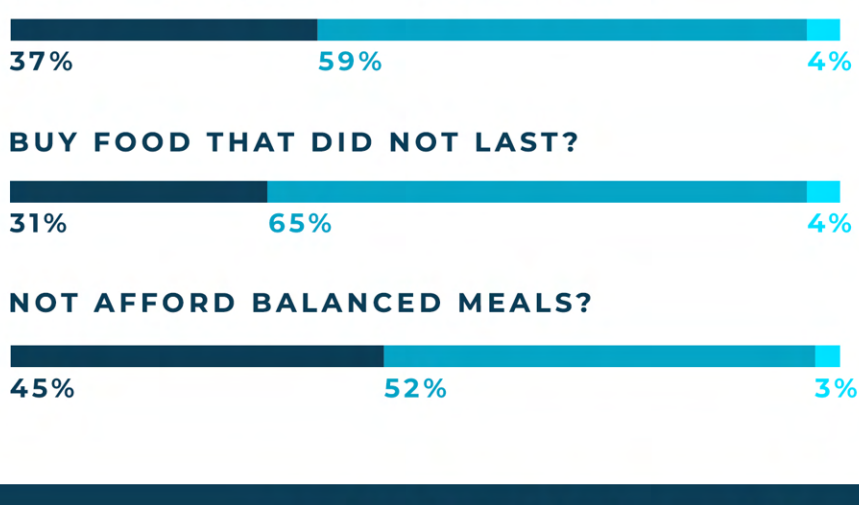
REPORT *LOW* OR *VERY LOW* FOOD SECURITY

SURVEYED STUDENTS, SPRING 2025

of SNAP, TANF, and WIC recipients were CONSIDERED FOOD INSECURE

In the last 30 days, did you...

n=11,877 — OFTEN / SOMETIMES TRUE — NEVER TRUE — DON'T KNOW



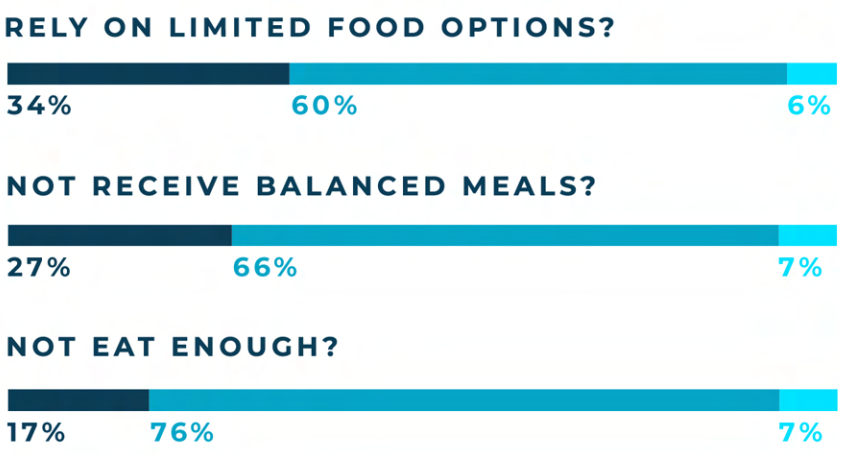
45% of surveyed New Jersey students often have difficulty affording balanced meals.

In the last 30 days, did your children...

n=1,805 — OFTEN / SOMETIMES TRUE — NEVER TRUE — DON'T KNOW

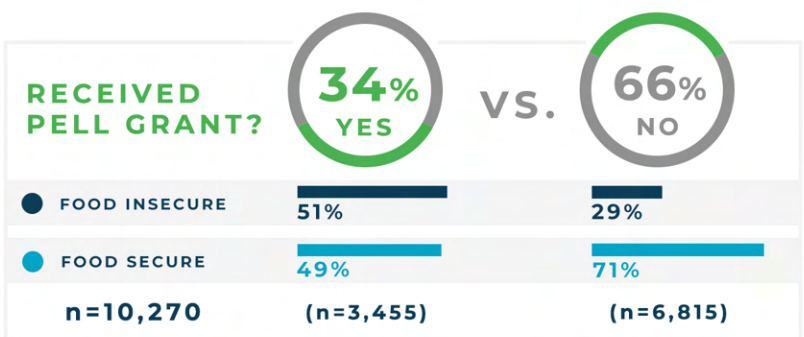
34% of surveyed student parents relied on **limited food options for their children**.

17% of the total sample indicated they have one or more child living with them.



VULNERABLE STUDENT POPULATIONS

1 in every 2 respondents receiving **Pell Grants** were **food insecure**.



For the first time in 2025, respondents were asked to indicate if they received a Pell Grant, a federal award for undergraduates demonstrating significant financial need who have not yet earned a bachelor's or higher degree.

LEAST FOOD SECURE

46%	Black or African American
52%	Hispanic or Latino
54%	American Indian or Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
56%	Gender Nonconforming

50% of first-generation students were **considered food insecure** compared to 27% of non-first-generation students.

Students who identified as Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific islander reported greater rates of food insecurity.

The same pattern occurred for respondents who identified as gender nonconforming (e.g., gender queer, nonbinary, transgender). First-generation students who were the first in their family to enroll in undergraduate studies also reported higher rates of food insecurity.

MOST FOOD SECURE

79%	Male
74%	White
70%	Asian

83% **OF SURVEYED STUDENTS WHO ARE HOUSELESS OR IN TEMPORARY RESIDENCES REPORT FOOD INSECURITY**

The total number of respondents who were houseless or living with a friend was 212 out of 11,877 survey responses.

Most students who received K-12 food assistance also reported postsecondary food insecurity.

n=10,509 — FOOD INSECURE — FOOD SECURE

Exclusive of those who relied on federal nutrition benefit programs, other indications of financial need, such as not having a fixed residence or eligibility for free/reduced price school lunches, were also associated with higher rates of food insecurity.

The populations of these vulnerable groups composed a minority of the survey responses.

***Under the Hunger-Free Campus Act (P.L. 2019, C.89), institutions must annually conduct a student survey on hunger. The NJ Office of the Secretary of Higher Education utilized a modified version of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) 19-item module. The full module, with a definition of food security, can be found at:**
ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us

A total of 11,877 valid survey responses were collected from 32 total participating New Jersey institutions of higher education (IHEs): 32 (36% of all NJ IHEs). This total sample of responses makes up 3% of all postsecondary students in NJ. As a result, the reported data makes an estimated margin of error of +/- 0.89% (95% confidence interval). NJ IHEs chose to administer this survey between January and May of 2025.