
MARYLAND ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS



Date: March 11, 2021

Bill: HB891– Higher Education – Hunger Free Campus Grant Program - Established

Committee: House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND), is an organization representing approximately 1,200 licensed dietitians and nutritionists, dietetic interns, and students within the state of Maryland.

House Bill 891, the Hunger Free Campus Grant Program aims to create a state-funded matching grant program to provide campuses with the resources to become a “Hunger-Free Campus.” This would entail the following actions: Establish a Hunger-Free Task Force; connect eligible students with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); provide on-campus food resources, raise awareness for food insecurity through campus events to reduce food insecurity stigma; and create a meal plan swipe-sharing program.

Food insecurity among college students has become an emerging public health and educational concern among colleges and universities across the country. Recent studies report between 30-50% of college students experience some level of food insecurity that is nearly two-fold higher than the general public. Food insecurity in the past has disproportionately affected students of color, older students, parenting students, former foster youth, and first-generation college students.

A research study was done at the University of Maryland to measure the prevalence of food insecurity among its students (4,901 students). About 20% of UMD students surveyed were food insecure at some point in the 12 months preceding the survey, with 13% experiencing low levels of food security and 7% experiencing very low levels of food security. An additional 21% of the respondents reported marginal food insecurity levels. Consequently, marginal food insecurity and food insecure added up to 41%.(4)

The statistics are even more pronounced at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). For example, a 2018 survey of students, faculty, staff and administrators was conducted by Morgan State University’s Division of Student Affairs, 68 percent of the students who were surveyed said they were food insecure. The survey also found that 71 percent of students reported skipping meals because they had a limited supply of food, and 67 percent said they borrowed food or money due to a lack of food.(5) Nutrition professionals who are affiliated with

colleges and universities across the country have the potential to lead efforts to improve food security status of college students.

MAND stands ready as a resource and partner in this important undertaking. Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We respectfully ask for a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 891.

Dr. Glenda L. Lindsey, Dr. PH, MS, RDN, LDN
Public Policy Coordinator

Helene Fletcher RDN, LDN
MAND President

Public Policy Panel

References:

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2. US Government Accountability Office. Food insecurity: Better information could help eligible college students access federal food assistance benefits. Published January 9, 2019. <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-95>. Accessed February 21, 2019.

3. Knol LL, Robb CA, McKinley EM, Wood M. Very low food security status is related to lower cooking self-efficacy and less frequent food preparation behaviors among college students. *J Nutr Educ Behav.* 2019;51:357–363.

4. https://studentaffairs.umd.edu/sites/studentaffairs.umd.edu/files/food_access_student_well-being_study_report_september2019.pdf . Accessed March 2, 2021

5. https://news.morgan.edu/food_resource_center/ . Accessed March 2, 2021.