

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 1407 Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program

SPONSOR(S): Valdés and others

TIED BILLS: None **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1916

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Post-Secondary Education & Lifelong Learning Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N	Aaronson	Kiner
2) Environment, Agriculture & Flooding Subcommittee			
3) Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee			
4) Education & Employment Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

College students throughout Florida suffer from food insecurity and despite available resources, often do not receive needed assistance due to the stigma associated with resources or ineligibility. States across the country are working towards hunger-free campuses by passing hunger-free campus legislation to support students in need.

The bill creates s. 1004.092, F.S., establishing the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program within the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS).

The bill requires the Commissioner of Agriculture to designate public postsecondary educational institution campuses meeting applicable eligibility requirements as Hunger-Free Campuses. The bill establishes eligibility requirements for postsecondary institutions, including:

- establishing a hunger task force;
- designating a staff member responsible for assisting students with enrollment in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- providing options for students to use SNAP benefits at campus stores, or providing students with information on where SNAP benefits may be used;
- providing at least one physical food pantry on campus or providing a similar option;
- developing a student meal credit donation program or designating a certain amount of funds for free food vouchers; and
- annually conducting a student survey on hunger and submitting the results to the FDACS.

The bill authorizes the Commissioner of Agriculture to award grants on a competitive basis to institutions with one or more Hunger-Free Campuses, subject to the appropriation of funds by the Legislature. The bill specifies prioritizing grants made to institutions with the highest percentages of eligible Pell Grant recipients. Additionally, the bill requires grant recipients to submit a report to FDACS describing how grant awards were used.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Agriculture to submit a report on the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2024.

The bill has no fiscal impact, see fiscal comments *infra*.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2022.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Postsecondary Student Nutrition Services

Present Situation

Approximately one-third of college students in the United States are food insecure,¹ and more than half of the students enrolled in the Florida College System are low income and first-generation.² Food insecurity is associated with poor mental and physical health, as well as lower rates of academic success among students. Prior to the coronavirus crisis, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers identified food insecurity as a top barrier to student non-completion, and as a result of the pandemic 5.8 out of every 10 students have experienced basic needs insecurity.³

While forms of assistance such as local food pantries and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) exist, many students do not take advantage of them due to the stigma associated, or because they do not qualify.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SNAP is the United States Department of Agriculture's food assistance program to provide food benefits, access to a healthy diet, and education on food preparation and nutrition to low-income households.⁴ SNAP assists students by allowing them to purchase food for the household, including fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products, breads, cereals, and snack foods.⁵

In 2019, over 2.9 million Florida residents received SNAP benefits.⁶ Students attending a college or university are generally not eligible for SNAP benefits, but some enrolled at least half-time in an institution of higher education may be eligible if initial SNAP eligibility requirements, as well as one of the following requirements, is met by the student:

- is under age 18 or over age 50;
- has a physical or mental disability;
- works at least 20 hours a week in paid employment;
- participates in a state or federally financed work study program;
- participates in an on-the-job training program;
- cares for a child under the age of 6;
- cares for a child age 6 to 11 and lacks necessary child care enabling the student to attend school and work 20 hours a week or participate in work study;
- is a single parent enrolled full-time in college and is taking care of a child under 12;
- receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) assistance;
- is enrolled in a TANF Job Opportunities and Basic Skills program;

¹ DeBate et al., *Food Insecurity, Well-being, and Academic Success among College Students: Implications for Post COVID-19 Pandemic Programming*, Ecology of Food and Nutrition, October 7, 2021, available at <https://www.usf.edu/arts-sciences/centers/cafsbc/documents/food-insecurity-wellbeing-and-academic-success.pdf>.

² Florida Department of Education, *Affordability in the Florida College System* (December 2018), available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7724/urlt/FCS18-Affordability.pdf>.

³ Florida College Access Network, *Nearly 3 in 5 College Students Struggle with Food, Housing Insecurity Due to Covid-19* (July 1, 2020), available at <https://floridacollegeaccess.org/research-and-data/nearly-3-in-5-college-students-struggle-with-food-housing-insecurity-due-to-covid-19/>.

⁴ Benefits.gov, Florida Food Assistance Program (SNAP), *What is Florida Food Assistance Program (SNAP)?*, <https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1244#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20Department%20of,nutrition%20to%20low%20income%20households> (last visited Jan. 31, 2022).

⁵ United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – What Can SNAP Buy?*, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items> (last visited Jan. 31, 2022).

⁶ United States Census Bureau, *SNAP Benefits Recipients in Florida*, <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/BR12000FLA647NCEN> (last visited Jan. 31, 2022).

- is assigned to, placed in, or self-placed in a college or other institution of higher education through a SNAP Employment and Training program, certain other programs for low-income households, a program under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, or a Trade Adjustment Assistance Program; or
- meets one of the temporary exemptions due to COVID-19.⁷

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, instigated by COVID-19, enabled 3 million new students to qualify for SNAP⁸ by allowing students eligible to participate in state or federally financed work study programs, or having an Expected Family Contribution of 0 in the academic year.⁹

Campus Food Pantries

Nearly one third (29 percent) of college students have missed a meal at least once a week since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and more than half of all students have used off-campus food banks.¹⁰

Campus food pantries are often run by campus student support services, student government, or the administrative department, and are for enrolled students facing food insecurity. Pantries may partner with organizations in the community to keep the shelves and freezers stocked and raise donations. Mobile pantries may also directly serve students in high need of hunger-relief.¹¹

Hunger-Free Campuses

The first Hunger-Free Campus bill was originally introduced in California in 2017 by then Assemblywoman Monique Limón. The Hunger-Free Campus policy provided funding to public colleges addressing student hunger on campus. Since its passage in California,¹² four additional states have formally passed Hunger-Free Campus legislation, including New Jersey,¹³ Maryland,¹⁴ Minnesota,¹⁵ and Massachusetts.¹⁶ Seven additional states, including Florida, have now introduced the bill, including Pennsylvania, Washington, Illinois, North Carolina, New York, and West Virginia.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill creates the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program, established within the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, to support efforts to fight hunger on the campuses of public postsecondary educational institutions.

⁷ United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Students*, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/students#:~:text=Generally%2C%20students%20attending%20an%20institution,unless%20they%20meet%20an%20exemption.&text=You%20are%20considered%20a%20student,an%20institution%20of%20higher%20education> (last visited Jan. 31, 2022).

⁸ The Century Foundation, *Congress Made 3 Million College Students Newly Eligible for SNAP Food Aid. Here's What Must Come Next* (Feb. 2, 2021), <https://tcf.org/content/commentary/congress-made-3-million-college-students-newly-eligible-snap-food-aid-heres-must-come-next/> (Jan. 31, 2022).

⁹ Pub. L. No. 116-260, 133 Stat. 2093 (Dec. 27, 2020).

¹⁰ Swipe Out Hunger, *Swipe Out Hunger Acquires the College and University Food Bank Alliance* (Oct. 21, 2021), <https://www.swipehunger.org/cufba/#:~:text=During%20the%20pandemic%2C%20more%20than,since%20it%20began%20in%202012.> (Jan 31, 2022).

¹¹ Feeding Florida, *Mobile Pantries*, <https://www.feedingflorida.org/food-access/mobile-pantries.> (Jan. 31, 2022). Feeding Florida consists of 12-member food banks within its mobile pantry program.

¹² Cal. Educ. Code § 66027.8 (2017)

¹³ N.J. Stat. Ann. § 18A:62-60 (2019)

¹⁴ Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 11-1703 (2021)

¹⁵ Minn. Stat. Ann. § 135A.137 (2021)

¹⁶ Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 15A, § 2 (2021)

The bill requires the Commissioner of Agriculture to designate public postsecondary educational institution campuses meeting applicable eligibility requirements as Hunger-Free Campuses. Eligibility requirements include:

- establishing a hunger task force, including representatives from the student body and meeting a minimum of three times each academic year, and setting a minimum of two annual goals addressing hunger on campus;
- designating a staff member responsible for assisting students with enrollment in SNAP;
- providing options for students to use SNAP benefits at campus stores, or providing students with information on where SNAP benefits may be used;
- providing at least one physical food pantry on campus or providing a similar option;
- developing a student meal credit donation program or designating a certain amount of funds for free food vouchers; and
- annually conducting a student survey on hunger and submitting the results to the FDACS.

The bill establishes identical eligibility requirements for public postsecondary institutions awarding degrees no higher than an associate degree, with the exception of developing a student meal credit donation program or designating funds for free food vouchers.

The bill authorizes the Commissioner of Agriculture to award grants on a competitive basis to institutions with one or more Hunger-Free Campuses, subject to the appropriation of funds by the Legislature. The bill specifies prioritizing grants made to institutions with the highest percentages of eligible Pell Grant recipients enrolled in the student body.

The bill specifies that grants must be used to:

- address student hunger;
- promote sustainable solutions to address basic food needs on campus;
- raise awareness of services on campus addressing food needs; and
- build partnerships to address food insecurity among students.

Additionally, the bill requires grant recipients to submit a report to FDACS describing how grant awards were used.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Agriculture to submit a report on the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2024. The report must include the number and amounts of grants awarded, the impact of the program, and recommendations regarding funding for the program.

The bill requires the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules to implement the program.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Provides a short title.

Section 2: Creates s. 1004.092, F.S.; defining terms; establishing the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; providing the purpose of the grant program; requiring the Commissioner of Agriculture to annually designate eligible public postsecondary educational institution campuses as Hunger-Free Campuses; providing that the designation remains in place until the commissioner makes a determination that a campus is no longer eligible and revokes the designation; providing eligibility requirements for a public postsecondary educational institution to participate in the program; providing modified requirements for certain institutions; requiring the commissioner, subject to the appropriation of funds, to award grants to public postsecondary educational institutions that have one or more campuses designated as a Hunger-Free Campus; requiring the commissioner to determine grant amounts; requiring the commissioner to prioritize grants to public postsecondary educational institutions with the highest percentages of eligible Pell Grant recipients enrolled in the student body; specifying the purposes for which grants must be used;

requiring grant recipients to submit reports to the department on how grant awards were used; requiring the commissioner to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by a specified date; specifying requirements for the report; requiring the department to adopt rules.

Section 3: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2022.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The bill is subject to appropriation by the Legislature.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

None.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

None.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

None.

