

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HB 1555 Hunger-Free Campus Pilot Program
SPONSOR(S): Postsecondary Education & Workforce Subcommittee, Valdés
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1172

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Postsecondary Education & Workforce Subcommittee	17 Y, 0 N, As CS	Kiner	Kiner
2) Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee			
3) 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.

Subject to legislative appropriation, the bill establishes a one year Hunger-Free Campus Pilot Program within the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS).

The bill requires the Commissioner of Agriculture to select the three state universities or Florida College System institutions with the highest percentage of students receiving the Pell Grant to participate in the pilot program. The bill establishes participation requirements, 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 in the area surrounding the campus;
- hosting an activity or event during Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week to promote awareness of hunger on the nation's campuses;
- providing at least one physical food pantry on campus or enabling students to receive food at no cost through a separate, stigma-free process;
- developing a student meal credit donation program or designating a certain amount of funds for free food vouchers; and
- conducting a student survey on hunger and submitting the results to the FDACS.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Agriculture to submit a report on the Hunger-Free Campus Pilot Program to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2025.

The bill also requires the Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to conduct a study to evaluate food insecurity on Florida College System institution and state university campuses. OPPAGA must submit its findings to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House by December 1, 2023.

The bill may have an indeterminate fiscal impact on Florida College System institutions and state universities that participate in the pilot program.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2023.

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 or 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

Subject to legislative appropriation, the bill establishes a one year Hunger-Free Campus Pilot Program within the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS).

The bill requires the Commissioner of Agriculture to select the three state universities or Florida College System institutions with the highest percentage of students receiving the Pell Grant to participate in the pilot program. The bill establishes participation requirements, including:

- establishing a hunger task force;

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).

- 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 in the area surrounding the campus;
- hosting an activity or event during Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week to promote awareness of hunger on the nation's campuses;
- providing at least one physical food pantry on campus or enabling students to receive food at no cost through a separate, stigma-free process;
- developing a student meal credit donation program or designating a certain amount of funds for free food vouchers; and
- conducting a student survey on hunger and submitting the results to the FDACS.

The bill requires the Commissioner of Agriculture to submit a report on the Hunger-Free Campus Pilot Program to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2025.

The bill authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to adopt rules to implement the program.

The bill also requires the Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) to conduct a study to evaluate food insecurity on Florida College System institution and state university campuses. The study must include recommendations for any changes to general law, Board of Governor regulations, or State Board of Education rules needed to address food insecurity on the campuses of Florida College System institutions and state universities. In conducting the study, OPPAGA must consult with the Board of Governors of the State University System, the Florida College System, the Department of Education, and any other relevant stakeholders. The bill requires OPPAGA to submit a report on its findings to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House by December 1, 2023.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Provides a short title.

Section 2: Establishing the Hunger-Free Campus Pilot Program within the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; providing the purpose of the program; providing definitions; requiring the Commissioner of Agriculture to select three state universities or Florida College System institutions for participation in the program; providing criteria for the selection of such universities or institutions; providing requirements for participating universities and institutions; requiring participating universities and institutions to submit a report to the department; requiring the commissioner to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by a specified date; specifying requirements for the reports; authorizing the department to adopt rules

Section 3: Requires OPPAGA to conduct a study to evaluate food insecurity on Florida College System institution and state university campuses.

Section 4: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2023.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

See fiscal comments.

2. Expenditures:

See fiscal comments.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

See fiscal comments.

2. Expenditures:

See fiscal comments.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

See fiscal comments.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The bill may have an indeterminate fiscal impact on Florida College System institutions and state universities that participate in the pilot program. 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:

The bill authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to adopt rules to implement the program.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

On March 29, 2023, the Postsecondary Education & Workforce Subcommittee adopted one amendment to HB 1555 and subsequently reported the bill favorably as a committee substitute. The amendment revised the bill by requiring the Commissioner of Agriculture to select the three state universities or Florida College System institutions with the highest percentage of students receiving the Pell Grant to participate in the pilot program instead of the institutions with the highest number of Pell Grant-eligible students.

The bill analysis is drafted to the committee substitute adopted by the Postsecondary Education & Workforce Subcommittee.