NEW MEXICO
HIGHER EDUCATION

2023-2024 STUDENT BASIC NEEDS REPORT

GOVERNOR MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM
FOOD INITIATIVE
CULTIVATING A NEW FOOD SYSTEM

NEW MEXICO
HIGHER EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT
Fostering Student Success from Cradle to Career

Basic
Needs
Project

AUTHORS

SARITA CARGAS
D.PHIL, MST, MA, UNM HONORS COLLEGE

AMY NEEL
PH.D., UNM DEPARTMENT OF SPEECH & HEARING SCIENCES

TAMMY THOMAS
PH.D., MSW, MPH, UNM COLLEGE OF POPULATION HEALTH

DIANA GONZALEZ-PACHECO
DCN, RDN, FAND, UNM COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN SCIENCE

PATRICIA TRUJILLO
PH.D, MA, DEPUTY CABINET SECRETARY OF NM HIGHER EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

KATHRYN COAKLEY
PH.D, RDN, UNM COLLEGE OF POPULATION HEALTH

ADRIAN ALLOCCA
UNM HONORS COLLEGE & PRE-MED STUDENT

ADDITIONAL STATEWIDE STUDY TEAM MEMBERS

LESLIE PIMENTEL BYATT
BA, PMP (DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL TRIALS, UNMH)

ANA ANDZIC TOMLINSON
JD, ESQ. (UNM PROFESSOR OF RESEARCH)

APRIL LAND
JD, LLM (UNM PROFESSOR OF LAW)

KIANA FREDERICK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was funded by the New Mexico Higher Education Department as part of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's Food Initiative. We are also grateful for the support and funding appropriated by Senator Leo Jaramillo.

Thanks to Suzan Reagan from the UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research for additional statistical analysis, and Dr. Acadia Buro for additional qualitative analysis. We are grateful for the report's designers Vincent King and Toni Torivio.

IRB APPROVAL #2211023853

CONTACT US basicneeds@unm.edu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PARTICIPATING NEW MEXICO COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

- **OVER 13,500 PARTICIPANTS**
- **NEARLY 10,000 STUDENTS RESPONDED**
- **NEARLY 4,000 FACULTY AND STAFF RESPONDED**

Central New Mexico Community College
Clovis Community College
Diné College
Doña Ana Community College
Eastern New Mexico University, Portales
Eastern New Mexico University, Roswell
Eastern New Mexico University, Ruidoso
Institute of American Indian Arts
Luna Community College
Mesalands Community College
Navajo Technical University, Crownpoint
New Mexico Highlands University
New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology
New Mexico Junior College
Northern New Mexico College
New Mexico State University, Alamogordo
New Mexico State University, Grants
New Mexico State University, Las Cruces
San Juan College
Santa Fe Community College
Southeast New Mexico College
University of New Mexico, Albuquerque
University of New Mexico, Gallup
University of New Mexico, Los Alamos
University of New Mexico, Taos
University of New Mexico, Valencia
Western New Mexico University

II **17** two-year institutions

IV **7** four-year institutions

TCU **3** tribal institutions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Basic Needs Security **Definition**

Equitable access to nutritious food and safe affordable housing.

In the spring of 2023, the University of New Mexico's Basic Needs Project, in partnership with the New Mexico Higher Education Department and the Governor's Food Initiative, conducted a statewide survey of basic needs insecurity among students, faculty, and staff currently enrolled or employed in the state's public institutions of higher education. Twenty-seven of the state's twenty-nine institutions participated in the study, all of which are federally designation Minority-Serving Institutions. This report presents student data and will be followed by a report on faculty and staff by fall of 2024.

The survey was administered via an online Qualtrics survey to collect data for four weeks in February-March 2023, overall:

- **58% were food insecure**
- **39% had very low food security, the most severe category of food insecurity**
- **62% were housing insecure**
- **14% were homeless in the past 12 months**

Other findings of the survey show that students experiencing basic needs insecurity had more symptoms of anxiety and depression than needs secure students. LGBTQ+ and students of color had higher prevalence of insecurities. The majority of students reported part-time or full-time employment (63%) yet these students experienced needs insecurities.

basicneeds@unm.edu

The survey also included open-ended questions and preliminary qualitative data analysis revealed that students work low-wage jobs, and that their work-study jobs or graduate assistantships do not provide enough income to meet basic needs. Finally, many students experience multiple basic needs insecurities; for example, food insecure students are also housing insecure. Over 50% of food insecure students report living with a disability, over 55% provide for someone financially, and many do not have consistent reliable transportation.

The basic needs crisis in higher education is clear based on findings of this survey and across the literature. The research reveals that students who are needs insecure are more likely to withdraw from classes. Thus, there is an exigency in understanding the problem of basic needs insecurity as well as create evidence-based interventions at the institutional level and policies at the state and federal level. This is particularly important in New Mexico where the Opportunity Scholarship has led to record enrollments in New Mexico's colleges and universities. The challenge facing our higher education institutions is to ensure students graduate. Currently, only about 40% of students who start a college degree complete one in New Mexico.

What can be done? The most common responses to needs insecurity across the U.S. and at New Mexico institutions are campus food pantries that provide emergency food response.

However, some campuses do not have a pantry, many of those that do lack sustainable funding, and therefore often have empty shelves. In this survey, only 29% of food insecure students report using a food pantry. Student services staff undertake a variety of other responses to needs insecurity but they require more resources.

Based on results of this survey and the current literature on insecurities in higher education, our recommendations include funding and staffing for basic needs offices on every campus across the New Mexico, funding emergency grants, and significantly increasing funding and capacity for outreach and assistance for federal benefits applications. Investing in the basic needs of students has the potential for a significant return on investment. Improving student health and academic outcomes could lead to higher graduation rates and therefore contribute to a more prepared workforce.

A corollary positive impact of this research is that it brought state government and the public higher education institutions of New Mexico together to dialogue and create actionable next steps to support the state's most vulnerable students. Along with the policy recommendations at the end of this report, the Basic Needs Survey led to the formation of a New Mexico Basic Needs Consortium which will continue to use survey data to improve the lives of our students.

INTRODUCTION

The Statewide Basic Needs Survey project began in 2023 with the intent to examine basic needs insecurities among students, faculty, and staff at public colleges and universities in New Mexico. Basic needs among college students have primarily been defined in terms of food and housing. (To date very little research on faculty and staff has been undertaken.) The definition is being expanded by researchers and institutions as we know a more holistic understanding of what is required for student success is needed. Our study assessed access to transportation and health care, for example.

The Statewide Basic Needs Survey project was led by the University of New Mexico Basic Needs Project (UNM BNP) team. This team consists of faculty with expertise in human rights, nutrition, data analysis, and public health. This study builds on the work of previous basic needs research conducted with students at the University of New Mexico (UNM) in 2020 and 2021. In previous studies, significant levels of food and housing insecurity were found among undergraduate and graduate students across demographic groups at UNM.[i,ii] These studies came to the attention of the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) and resonated with their initiatives to support college and university students. NMHED approached the UNM BNP team to undertake a statewide study to understand the impacts of basic needs in all New Mexico public higher education institutions and this report presents the results of that study.

Twenty-seven of the twenty-nine public institutions of higher education in New Mexico agreed to participate in the Statewide Basic Needs Survey.

The NMHED and the UNM BNP team collaborated with representatives from all participating public institutions of higher education to establish connections with those committed to basic needs provision on campus.

A statewide study kick-off event was held on September 30, 2022 to provide an overview of the survey, request feedback, answer questions, and encourage institutions to develop a survey dissemination plan, as well as build a community of dedicated basic needs advocates. This event included representation from nearly all of the higher education institutions across the state. After the event, monthly Zoom meetings were held with university representatives to discuss the study, implementing the survey, next steps, and planning for sustainable change to support basic needs in higher education in New Mexico. The statewide survey included a broad array of topics associated with basic needs insecurity and expanded previous studies focused on students to include faculty and staff.

This report documents the results of the 2023 Statewide Basic Needs Survey for students who attended one of the 27 public colleges and universities in New Mexico. In total, 9,995 students from three tribal colleges, seventeen two-year community colleges and branch campuses, and seven four-year institutions responded. The findings for staff and faculty will be presented in a separate report.

Key Findings [iii.]

Snapshot of **Food Insecurity** among Students in the past year

58%	70%	68%	64%	58%	55%	53%
All Students	Native American	Black	LGBTQ+	Hispanic	Asian	White

Snapshot of **Housing Insecurity** among Students in the past year

62%	76%	69%	65%	64%	59%	58%
All Students	Black	Native American	Hispanic	LGBTQ+	White	Asian

Snapshot of **Homelessness** among Students in the past year

14%	22%	19%	16%	15%	14%	10%
All Students	Black	LGBTQ+	Native American	White	Asian	Hispanic

Data in Context

The high prevalence of needs insecurity found among students that participated in the Statewide Basic Needs Survey in spring 2023 is consistent with the fact that New Mexico has high poverty rates.[iv]

Other relevant research puts the Statewide Basic Needs Survey results in the national context:

- **A 2020 "scoping review" of more than 50 studies concluded that 41% of college students were food insecure. In studies with representative samples, food insecurity ranged from 11% - 57% depending on the geographic location and type of school.**[v]
- **62% of tribal students were food insecure and 69% were housing insecure in a 2019 study.**[vi]
- **73% of students at some Historically Black College and Universities were food insecure.**[vii]
- **Tuition at four-year public colleges has more than doubled since 1992.**[viii]
- **"The synthesis of extant research indicates approximately 1 in 10 college students are homeless and 45% are housing insecure."**[ix]

Thus, our findings that BILPOC (Black, Indigenous, Latinx and people of color) and New Mexico students from all backgrounds have a high prevalence of needs insecurity can be framed in the context of these other facts to demonstrate that college basic needs are a systemic issue. Fortunately, policy steps are being taken at the federal level and in several states to combat needs insecurity. The Pell Grant has been expanded and the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) has been revised and was released on December 31, 2023.

In 2023, the state of Washington passed the Basic Needs Act requiring colleges and universities to form basic needs task forces and produce strategic plans for addressing basic needs. Additionally, during the pandemic, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits were expanded for college students but unfortunately were discontinued in March 2023. Policy change is a starting point for addressing basic needs insecurity in higher education and efforts must continue, particularly in New Mexico in light of Statewide Basic Needs Survey results.

METHODS

The UNM BNP team led the conceptualization, administration, and analysis of the Statewide Basic Needs Survey. The BNP team and NMHED recruited 27 of the 29 public institutions of higher education in New Mexico to participate in the survey. UNM Main Campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved the study (IRB # 2211023853), as did IRB's at participating Tribal colleges.

The BNP and NMHED identified contacts at each participating institution to lead recruitment of students, faculty, and staff to participate in the survey. Institutional contacts distributed the online Qualtrics[x] survey link and QR code, recruitment flyers, and paper copies of the survey with return envelopes for four weeks in February-March 2023. Eligibility criteria included: 16 years of age and older and currently enrolled as a student (part-time or full-time) or employed as faculty or staff (part-time, full-time, or adjunct) at one of the 27 participating institutions. Participants first read the study consent form and indicated consent to participate by starting the survey. Eligibility criteria were then assessed in the first three questions of the survey and ineligible participants did not complete the rest of the survey. At the end of the survey, participants could enter their email address to enter a drawing to receive a $40 electronic Amazon or Walmart gift card; $30,000 in gift card incentives were distributed based on the size of participating institutions.

Data Analysis

All responses were downloaded from Qualtrics as an excel sheet after the survey closed in mid-March 2023.

Paper surveys were then entered into the excel sheet. Ineligible participants, duplicate responses, and participants that did not complete at least the USDA Adult Food Security Survey Module were excluded. All responses with a Qualtrics-generated reCAPTCHA score <0.50 indicating likely bots were excluded per Qualtrics recommendations. Finally, free-text responses were reviewed by two members of the study team to exclude suspicious responses. This is standard process for scrubbing data prior to analysis.

Participants in the final dataset were categorized as students (full-time or part-time undergraduate, graduate, or professional student) or faculty or staff (full-time, part-time or adjunct, including administrators). This report presents data for students only; a report on faculty and staff is forthcoming. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage) were calculated for each basic need by institution type (four-year, two-year, or tribal college). A description of how basic needs were assessed is included in Appendix A.

Free-text responses to open-ended questions are currently being analyzed by the BNP qualitative team and results will be published when complete. (See Appendix A for additional details on the methods)

RESULTS

Demographics

Survey respondents included 9,995 students from 27 institutions of higher education throughout New Mexico. There were 346 students from the three tribal institutions, 6,146 students from the seventeen two-year institutions, and 3,503 students from the seven four-year institutions. The majority of respondents identified as New Mexico residents (88.9%), female (65.7%), heterosexual/straight (72%), and either Hispanic (31.0%) or White (29.4%). Undergraduate students made up 92.2% of the sample, and graduate students accounted for 7.8% of respondents.

Most students were enrolled in associate (34.2%) or bachelor (27.5%) degree programs and 11.9% were enrolled in high school equivalency or General Education Development (GED) programs. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 34 years (46.2% were 18-24 and 24.3% were 25-34). More than 60% of students were employed either full time (33.8%) or part time (29.0%).

Although the majority of students did not have child dependents (73.1%), many respondents reported making financial contributions to someone else, such as parents, siblings, or spouses (51.9%). Half of the respondents stated they are living with some type of disability: the most commonly reported disabilities were mental health conditions (27.6%) and learning disability (10.2%). Military veterans made up 4.9% of the sample, and active duty military status was reported by 1.6% of respondents. A complete table of the demographic characteristics of participants in the study is shown in Appendix B.

Snapshot of **Respondents**.

65.7% Female

72% Heterosexual / Straight

60.4% Hispanic or White

92.2% Undergraduate Students

62.8% Employed

51.9% Financially Contributing to Others

"I'm a single mother of 4. I go to school full-time and work part-time as well. 20 hours a week. I live on a fixed income and the cost of tuition and rent is high."

- Student Respondent

> ***"It was always a battle between paying a bill or having 2 meals a day that month. There has not been a single month where I had enough money to have multiple meals, and the meals themselves weren't healthy."***
>
> ***- Student Respondent***

Food Insecurity **Definition**

Food Insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the inability to acquire those foods in a socially acceptable manner.

Food Insecurity

To determine food security status, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module (FSSM) was used. This survey assesses food security status in the past 12 months and consists of 18 questions. The first 10 questions are the USDA adult FSSM, followed by 8 additional questions for individuals with children. The number of affirmative responses to FSSM items are summed and scores are used to assign individuals into four categories of food security: high food security, marginal food security, low food security, and very low food security (Figure 1). Low and very low food security are combined to represent students who are food insecure while high and marginal food security are combined to represent students who are food secure. [xi.]

According to responses to the USDA questions, 58.1% of all students who completed a survey were considered food insecure in the past 12 months. Of those, 38.7% of students classified as having very low food security and 19.3% experienced low food security. The percentage of food insecurity was similar for undergraduate (58.1%) and graduate (56.5%) students.

Food security was compared for students at tribal, two-year, and four-year institutions. Figure 2 shows food insecurity was over 50% for students at all types of institutions. Food insecurity was very common for students at tribal institutions (84.1%) compared to 57.6% for students at two-year institutions and 56.4% for those at four-year institutions.

Low Food Security

Reduced quality, variety, and desirability of their diets, but the quantity of food intake and normal eating pattens were not substantially disrupted.

Very Low Food Security

At times during the year, eating patterns were disrupted and food health intake reduced because the household lacked money or other resources for food.

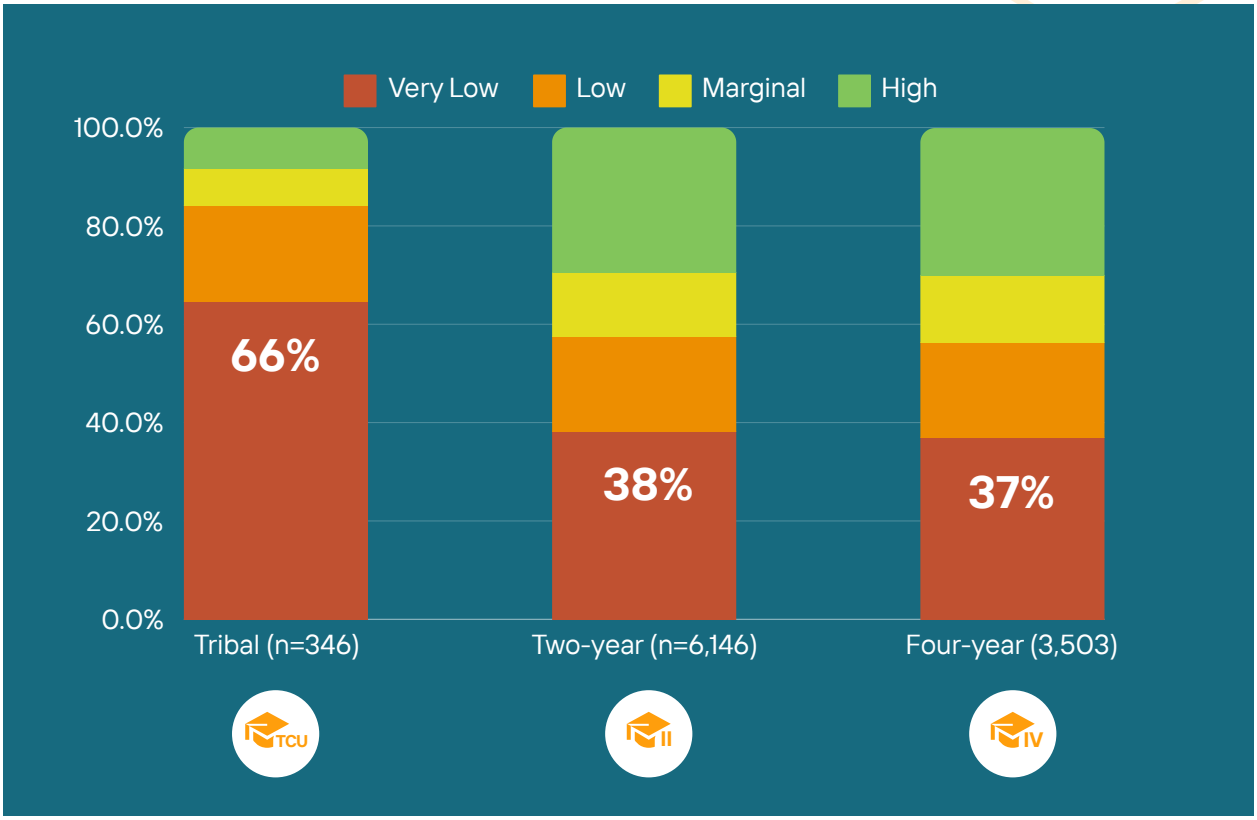
Source: Adapted from the USDA Economic Research Service

When broken down into the four levels of food security, at all three types of institutions very low food security was far more common than any other level. At tribal institutions, 65.9% of students had very low food security, 19.4% had low food security, 7.5% were marginally food secure and only 8.4% reported high food security.

Students at two-year colleges had a prevalence of 38.2% very low food security, 19.4% had low food security, 13.0% were marginally food secure and 29.5% had high food security.

At four-year colleges and universities 36.9% had very low food security, 19.4% had low food security, 13.6% were marginally food secure and 30.0% had high food security. Response rates to each USDA question can be found in Appendix C.

Figure 1. Food Security by Type of Institution



Use of Food Assistance Programs

Respondents were asked if they or their children had received food assistance resources in the past 12 months such as community food banks and federal and state programs, such as SNAP. Overall, 44.3% of students reported receiving assistance from at least one of the support programs or resources listed in Table 1 in the last 12 months. Receipt of assistance was more common for undergraduate (44.8%) than graduate students (39.0%). SNAP was the most widely reported program, with 28.3% of students reporting receiving SNAP assistance. Higher percentages of food insecure students received food assistance compared to those who were food secure. For example, 35.1% of food insecure students reported receiving SNAP benefits compared to 18.9% of students classified as food secure. Community food banks were visited by 17.1% of food insecure students but only 4.7% of food secure students.

> ***"My jobs does not pay enough for me to live on my own with my daughter. I have SNAP but because I have a job, I get very little. Just enough to get a few things and pay for the rest with my own money. In between paychecks I have to make something from nothing, but I always make sure my child eats."***
>
> ***- Student Respondent***

Table 1. Receiving Food Assistance by Type of Institution (Percentage of Respondents)

Program	Food Secure (n=4,073)	Food Insecure (n=5,583)	All Students (n=9,656)
Received assistance from at lease one program	27.5	56.6	44.3
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	18.9	35.1	28.3
Community Food Bank	4.7	17.1	11.9
National School Lunch Program (NSLP)	5.5	13.1	9.9
School Breakfast Program (SBP)	4.4	11.0	8.2
Special Supplemental Assistance Program for Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC)	3.1	7.5	5.6
Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)	2.8	7.0	5.3
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)	1.0	5.3	3.5
Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)	0.4	2.3	1.5

Campus Food Pantries

Campus food pantries have been established at most New Mexico higher education institutions. Across all schools, 22.7% of students reported using their campus food pantry. A small percentage of students (5.7%) indicated their campus did not have a pantry. Campus food pantry use was reported by a higher percentage of undergraduate students (29.1%) than graduate students (22.2%). The percentage of food insecure students who reported using their campus pantry (29.1%) was higher than that of food secure students (14.0%).

Respondents were asked to select reasons why they do not use their campus food pantry. Table 2 compares percentages from food secure and food insecure students. The most frequent response from both groups of respondents (42.2% for food insecure and 29.7% for food secure) was "other students need this help more than I do." Other frequent responses from students experiencing food insecurity included "I am not sure I am eligible to use the campus food pantry" (35.8%), "the hours of operation for the campus food pantry do not work for me" (21.2%), and "I don't want other people to see me and know that I am food insecure" (21.0%).

Table 2. Reasons Why Food Secure and Food Insecure Students Do Not Use Campus Food Pantries (Percentage of Respondents)

	Food Secure (n=3,080)	Food Insecure (n=3,051)	All Students (n=6,131)
I do not need assistance with obtaining food and household supplies	73.4	10.2	42.0
Other students need this help more than I do	29.7	42.2	35.9
I am not sure I am eligible to use the campus food pantry	12.9	35.8	24.3
I don't want other people to see me and know that I am food insecure	2.1	21.0	13.0
The hours of operation for the campus food pantry do not work for me	5.0	21.2	11.5
The location is inconvenient	5.0	16.7	10.8
I visit another food pantry/food bank in my community	1.8	5.2	3.5
The items available at the campus food pantry do not align with my dietary needs (vegetarian, vegan, halal, kosher, etc.)	0.6	3.6	2.1

> ***"My rent is behind so sometimes I get overwhelmed and think it would be best I stop school and find another full time job, and just work two full time jobs."***
> ***- Student Respondent***

Housing Insecurity and Homelessness

For the purpose of this study, housing insecurity and homelessness in the past 12 months were assessed based on guidance in #REALCOLLEGE Guide to Assessing Campus Basic Needs Security (2018). These measures drew from the Survey of Income and Program Participation Adult Well Being Module and the definitions of homelessness developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Education.

Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity was assessed using a nine-item measure. A single affirmative response to any of the nine indicators in Table 3 indicated housing insecurity.

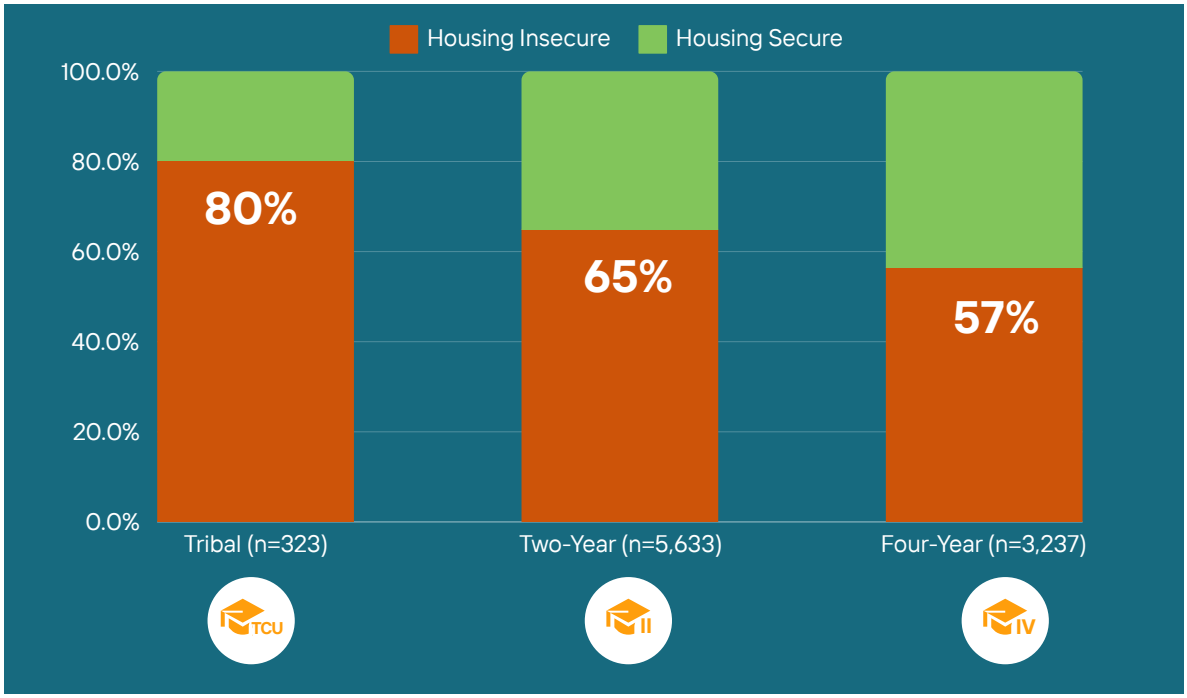
As shown in Table 3, 62.4% of survey respondents experienced housing insecurity in the previous 12 months.

For graduate students, the percentage of those classified as housing insecure was slightly higher (66.6%) than for undergraduate students (62.0%)

Shown in Table 3, the most common indicator of housing insecurity among the nine items was having a rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay (39.4%), followed by not paying the full amount of a gas, oil, or electricity bill (32.8%).

Figure 3 shows students at all three types of institutions experienced a pronounced degree of housing insecurity. However, a greater percentage of students at tribal institutions reported housing insecurity (80.2%) compared to those at two-year (64.8%) or four-year (56.5%) institutions. Tribal college students were also more likely to report that rent or mortgage increases made it difficult for them to pay for housing: 48.9% of them reported increased housing costs compared to 41.4% of two-year and 35.0% of four-year students.

Figure 2. Housing Security for All Students by Type of Institution



> ***Rent and utilities eat up my checks from my job so I'm having to work more hours making my education suffer.***
>
> ***- Student Respondent***

Most students (84.8%) reported they lived off-campus, with about 10% of students indicating that on-campus housing was not available at their institution. More students at two-year institution reported living off-campus (93%). compared to 72.6% of four-year students and 69% of tribal institution students. A smaller percentage of students living on-campus were housing insecure (53.2%) than those living off-campus (64.5%).

Table 3. Housing Insecurity Indicators (Percentage of Respondents)

Indicators	(%)
Housing Insecure	62.4
Had rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay	39.4
Did not pay the full amount of a gas, oil, or electricity bill	32.8
Unable to pay or underpaid rent or mortgage	25.0
Moved in with other people, even for a little while, because of financial problems	23.2
Had an account default or go into collections	21.0
Lived with others beyond the expected capacity of the house or apartment	16.7
Left household because you felt unsafe	11.7
Received a summons to appeal in housing court or been evicted	6.0
Moved three or more times	5.1

> ***6 months ago, we had to move out of where we were living because the lease was up, and they would not renew it. We had no place to go so we're staying in motels with the help of family to pay for it.***
>
> ***- Student Respondent***

Homelessness

Homelessness was calculated based on students' responses to the following question: "In the past 12 months, have you slept in any of the following places? Please check all that apply." The list of places slept is shown in Table 4. Overall, 14.4% of students selected one or more location that indicated homelessness in the past year. Prevalence of homelessness was higher for tribal college students (27.2%) than for two-year (14.6%) and four-year (12.8%) students. Among graduate students, 16% had experienced homelessness compared to 14.3% of undergraduates.

As shown in Table 4, the most common alternative living situation reported by students was temporarily staying with friends or family (8.6%). A small percentage of students also reported staying in motels or hotels (2.5%), campers (2.4%), housing shelters (1.4%), and outdoor locations (1.4%). The largest percentage of students with housing insecurity reported living alone or with roommates or friends (41.3%), whereas the greatest percentage of housing secure students lived with family (39.2%). Temporarily staying with others, or "couch surfing" was reported by a larger percentage of housing insecure students (13.0%) compared to housing secure respondents (1.1%). Living in campus or university housing was more common among housing secure students (20.6%) than those with housing insecurity (14.3%).

Table 4. Places Slept in the Last 12 Months (Percentage of Respondents)

	Food Secure (n=3,345)	Food Insecure (n=5,616)	All Students (n=8,961)
In a rented or owned house, mobile home, or apartment with family	39.2	35.8	37.1
In a rented or owned house, mobile home, or apartment (alone or with roommate/friends)	29.7	41.3	34.9
Campus or university housing	20.6	14.3	16.6
Prefer not to say	15.4	15.3	15.3
Temporarily staying with a relative. friend, or couch-surfing until I found other housing*	1.1	13.0	8.6
Sorority or fraternity house*	1.6	3.7	2.9
Temporarily at a hotel or motel without permanent home to return to (not on vacation or business travel)*	0.2	3.8	2.5
In a camper (not camping)*	0.5	3.5	2.4
In a closed area/space with a roof not intended for human habitation (abandoned building; car/truck/van/RV/camper; encampment or tent; unfinished garage, attic, or basement; etc.)*	0.5	2.8	2.0
At a shelter*	0.2	2.2	1.4
Outdoor location (street, sidewalk, alley; bus or train station; campground or woods, park, bench, or riverbed; under a bridge or overpass*	0.3	2.1	1.4
In a transitional housing or an independent living program*	0.5	1.3	1.0
At a treatment center (detox center, hospital, etc.)*	0.3	1.2	0.9
At a group home such as a halfway house or residential program for mental health or substance abuse*	0.1	1.1	0.7

Mental Health

Two brief screening questionnaires were used to assess symptoms of anxiety and depression, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-2 (GAD-2)[xii] and the Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2).[xiii] For both assessments, respondents were asked how often they have been bothered by symptoms over the last two weeks using a scale from "not at all" (0 points) to "nearly every day" (3 points). The two anxiety symptoms on the GAD-2 are "feeling nervous, anxious or on edge" and "not being able to stop or control worrying." For the PHQ-2, the two depression symptoms are "little interest or pleasure in doing things" and "feeling down, depressed or hopeless." Respondents who received three or more points on the GAD-2 were scored as having symptoms of anxiety and those who received three or more points on the PHQ-2 were scored as having symptoms of depression.

Overall, 43.9% of students had scores indicating the presence of anxiety, and 34.5% had scores signifying the presence of depression. The percentage of graduate and undergraduate students reporting anxiety did not differ (43.9% for both groups), but the percentage of graduate students who screened positive for depression (28.8%) was lower than that for undergraduate students (34.9%). The percentage of respondents with anxiety was higher for students at four-year institutions (47.8%) compared to 41.7% of two-year students and 36.2% of tribal institution students. The prevalence of depression varied little across the three institution types (ranging from 33.2% for students at tribal institutions to 34.5% to those at four-year institutions).

Students were also asked if they have social supports in their lives, defined as "people who care about you and you can count on." Most students (91.1%) answered affirmatively with percentages differing little across the three types of institutions (from 87.2% for students at tribal institutions to 92.2% for those at four-year universities). Similar levels of social support were expressed by graduate (90.1%) and undergraduate (91.1%) students.

> ***"The stress and hunger pains made it hard to focus in class and do well. I am always worried about money and how I need to spend it because I can not save due to the amount I get. I live paycheck to paycheck."***
>
> ***- Student Respondent***

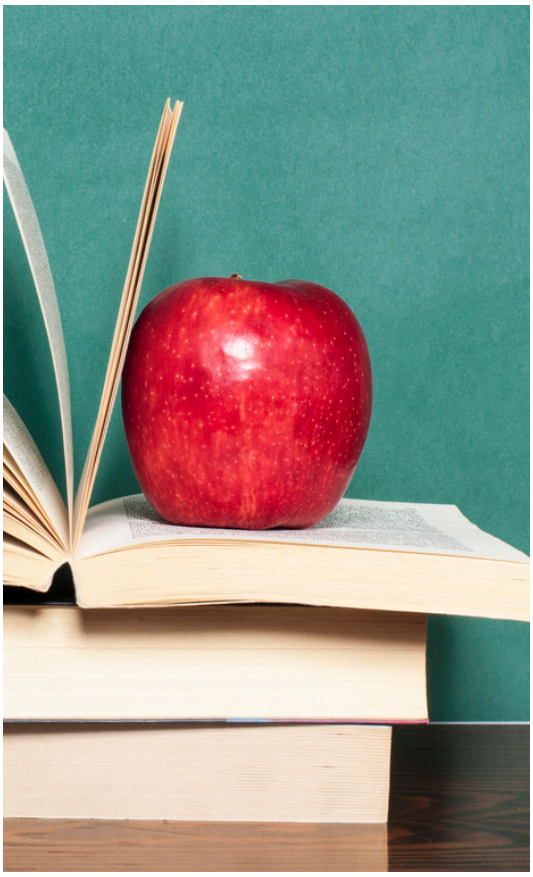
Financial Strategies for Basic Needs and Educational Expenses

Students were asked to indicate, "Which of the following ways do you afford the expenses associated with attending college?" As shown in Table 5, half of the respondents reported using jobs to afford college: 34.8% had jobs off-campus, 10.2% had work-study jobs on campus, and 5.8% were employed as teaching or research assistants on campus.

> ***"I cannot afford to pay for food AND my bills/tuition. So I choose the latter."***
>
> ***- Student Respondent***

Table 5. Approaches for Affording Educational Expenses (Percentage or Respondents)

Indicators	Total (n=8,055)
Job off campus	34.8
Grant/Scholarship from federal or state government	29.9
Pell Grant	29.0
Grant/Scholarship from my institution	27.7
Savings	27.2
Help from family/friends	26.2
Credit cards	17.9
Student loans	16.4
Work-study job on campus	10.2
Other	8.5
Teaching/research assistant job on campus	5.8
Varsity athletic scholarship	1.5
Employer pays	0.0



Grants and scholarships were also widely used: 29.9% reported having grants or scholarships from federal or state government sources, 29.0% had Pell grants, 27.7% were awarded grants or scholarships from their institutions, and 1.5% had varsity athletic scholarships.

More than one-quarter of students reported using savings (27.2%) and help from family or friends (26.2%) to cope with college expenses. Students also reported using credit cards (17.9%) and student loans (16.4%) to fund their educations.

Student responses to the question, "In the past 12 months, have you done any of the following to meet your basic food or housing needs?" are shown in Table 6. More than one-third of students (35.8%) reported that they had borrowed money from family or friends, and 18.0% stated that they sought out events with free food.

Table 6. Strategies for Meeting Basic Food or Housing Needs (Percentage of Respondents)

Indicators	Total (n=9,995)
I haven't done any of these things	39.3
Borrowing money from family or friends	35.8
Seeking out events with free food	18.0
Taking food that has been discarded or left behind	5.1
Taking food without paying	4.5
Going in a date in exchange for food or housing	4.4
Sleeping in a location other than a home	4.0
I prefer not to answer	3.7
Sleeping in a car	3.6
Engaging in sexual activity for food or housing	2.7

> ***"The constant worry I put myself through to find events for food takes time away from my homework so while I'm scrolling looking at ads for cheap fruit or seeing when the next event was so I can go get food in between classes is insane."***
>
> ***- Student Respondent***

Responses to a question about employment status (Table 7) revealed that 62.8% of students were employed (33.8% part-time and 29.0% full-time). Of students who were not working at the time of the survey, 17.7% were seeking employment, 13.5% were not seeking jobs, and 5.1% responded that their academic program prohibits them from working.

Table 7. Employment Status (Percentage of Respondents)

Indicators	Total (n=8,399)
Employed, part-time	33.8
Employed, full-time	29.0
Not employed but looking for work	17.7
Not employed and not looking for work	13.5
My academic program does not allow me to work	5.1
I do not have status to work in the U.S.	0.9

> ***"I am constantly under financial stress and have occasionally picked up shifts on days I have a lecture. Whenever bills are due, I prioritize work over school."***
>
> ***- Student Respondent***

Vulnerable Groups

Survey data were analyzed to examine differences in prevalence of food and housing insecurity among groups of students (by race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and living with disability).

Race and Ethnicity

Figures 4 and 5 show food security and housing security across race and ethnicity groups. Black and Native American students had higher percentages of food insecurity, very low food security, housing insecurity, and homelessness than other racial and ethnic groups surveyed. Low food security was reported by 69.9% of Native American students and 68.4% of Black students, compared to a range of 53.4% to 58.4% for other groups. Housing insecurity was found for 75.9% of Black students and 69.4% of Native American students compared to a range of 57.5% to 64.7% for other groups. Homelessness was experienced by 21.9% of Black students and 16.2% of Native American students compared to a range of 10.3 to 18.1% for other racial or ethnic groups.

Figure 3. Food Security Level by Race/Ethnicity

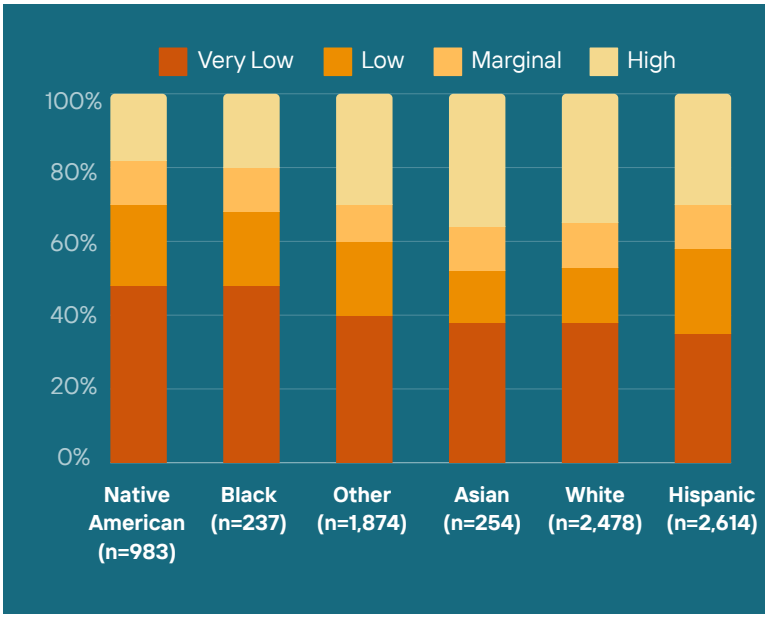
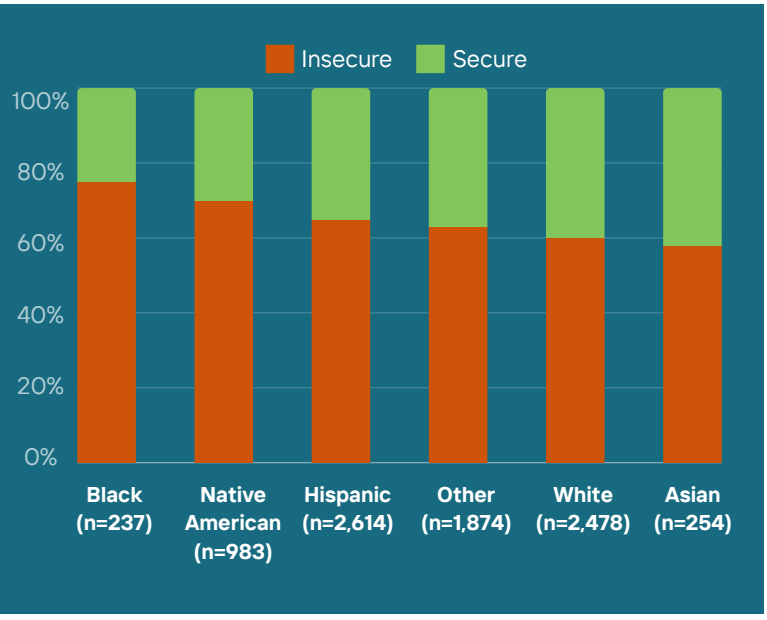


Figure 4. Housing Security by Race/Ethnicity



Gender

Table 8 shows percentages of food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness for men, women, and gender variant students. Students who identified as neither man or woman were grouped together under "gender variant."

Gender variant students had higher percentages of food insecurity (71.8%), housing insecurity (74.0%), and homelessness (23.5%) than those who identified as man or woman. Compared to food insecurity prevalence of 55.9% for men and 57.9% for women, 71.8% of gender variant students were classified as food insecure.

Housing insecurity was experienced by 74.0% of gender variant students compared to 59.1% to 63.4% for men and women. A higher percentage of men (19.5%) and gender variant students (19.5%) reported being homeless compared to women (11.6%).

Table 8. Basic Needs Security by Gender (Percentage of Respondents)

	Men (n=2,312)	Women (n=5,521)	Gender Variant (n=439)
Food Insecure	55.9	57.9	71.8
Housing Insecure	59.1	63.4	74.0
Homelessness	19.5	11.6	23.5

Sexual Orientation

Basic needs insecurities were also examined by sexual orientation, including students who identified as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, multiple, or other (students who identified as something other than straight, gay, lesbian, or bisexual). As seen in Table 9, students who reported sexual orientation other than straight had higher percentages of food insecurity, ranging from 60.7% for students in the multiple or other group to 68.0% for gay or lesbian students, compared to straight students (55.7%).

Housing insecurity prevalence was also higher among gay or lesbian students (70.7%) and bisexual students (66.6%) than students who identified as straight (61.8%).

The percentage of homelessness was somewhat higher for gay or lesbian (19.1%), bisexual (18.8%), or multiple or other student groups (18.7%) than for those identifying as straight (13.0%).

Table 9. Basic Needs Security by Sexual Orientation (Percentage of Respondents)

	Straight (n=6,049)	Gay or Lesbian (n=423)	Bisexual (n=1000)	Multiple/ Other (n=438)
Food Insecure	55.7	68.0	65.2	60.7
Housing Insecure	61.8	70.7	66.6	50.0
Homelessness	13.0	19.1	18.8	18.7

Age

Basic needs insecurities differed across age groups as shown in Table 10. Food insecurity was highest among students in the age groups 25 to 34 years (65.7%) and 35 to 44 years (65.7%) and lowest for students 16 to 17 years of age (31.5%). Similarly, housing insecurity was highest for students 25 to 34 years (74.2%) and 35 to 44 years (72.6%) and lowest for those 16 to 17 years of age (34.8%). The experience of homelessness was highest for students 25 to 34 years (16.1%), 18 to 24 years (14.7%) and 35 to 44 years of age (14.5%). Homelessness was reported by lower percentages of students who were 65 years and older (9.5%) and between 16 and 17 years of age (10.6%).

Table 10. Basic Needs Insecurities by Age Group (Percentage of Respondents)

	16-17 yrs (n=656)	18-24 yrs (n=4,617)	25-34 yrs (n=2,426)	35-44 yrs (n=1,398)	45-54 yrs (n=627)	55-64 yrs (n=525)	65+ (n=110)
Food Insecure	31.5	55.9	65.7	65.7	58.5	47.2	39.1
Housing Insecure	34.8	54.7	74.2	72.6	72.9	64.2	47.6
Homelessness	10.6	14.7	16.1	14.5	11.0	11.3	9.5

Living with a Disability

Nearly 50% of students reported living with one or more disabilities, such as mental health conditions, chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, and learning disabilities. Students who reported living with one or more disabilities had a higher prevalence of low food security (59.3%) than students who did not report any disabilities (40.7%). Students living with disabilities also had a higher prevalence of housing insecurity (72.2%) than students with no reported disabilities (52.6%). Similarly, the experience of homelessness affected a higher percentage of students living with disabilities (22.2%) than students without disabilities (10.4%).

> ***"Being a father to small children makes me feel unworthy not having enough money to ensure healthy meals for my family even though I have a full-time job and attend school full-time. The rising prices for utilities, housing, and food make it almost impossible to sustain life."***
>
> ***- Student respondent***

Cumulative Burdens

Students often experience multiple basic needs challenges which can lead to poor academic and life outcomes. Because most of the USDA food security questions relate to the ability to consistently afford sufficient quantities of food, we used the four food security categories as indicators of financial status. In this section, relationships between food security status and other aspects of basic needs security as well as academic and health outcomes are shown.

As shown in Figure 6, food insecurity and housing insecurity are related: 86.7% of students with very low food security experienced housing insecurity, whereas only 27.8% of students with high food security were housing insecure.

Figure 5. Housing Security by Food Security Level

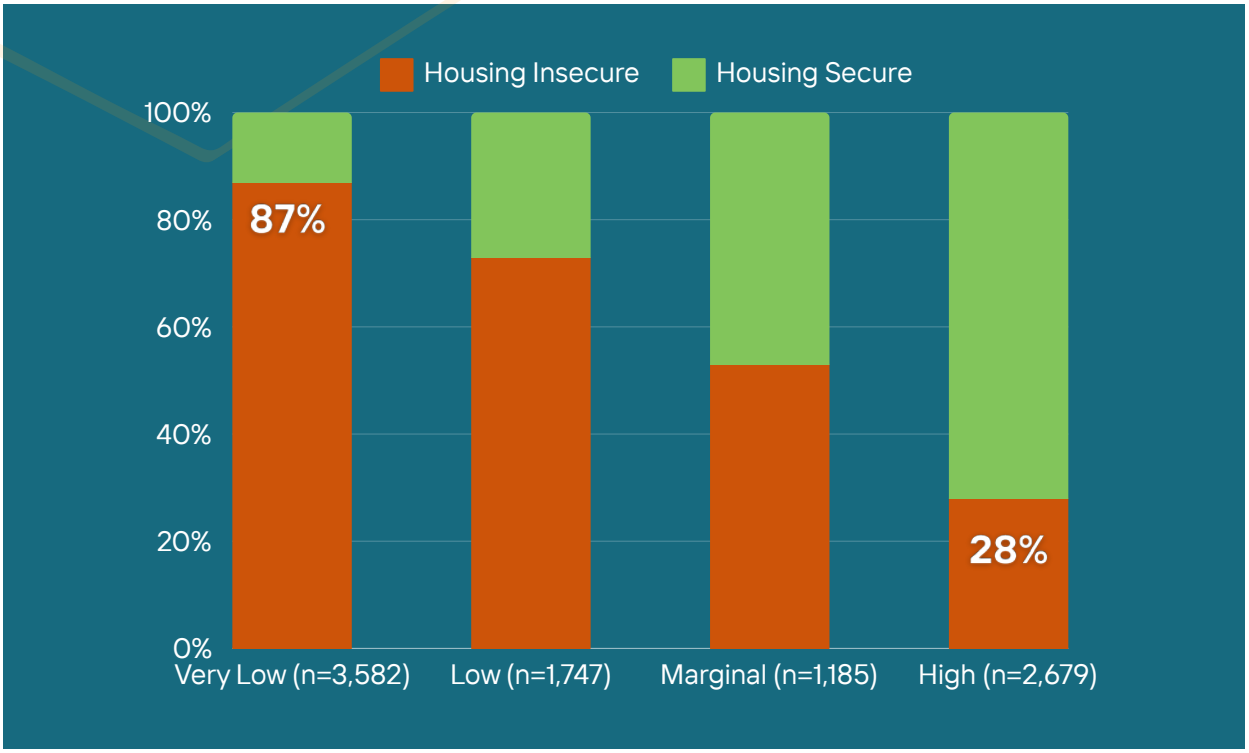


Table 11 shows the prevalence of other financial, academic, and health factors by food security category. Students that experienced low and very low food security had higher percentages in the following areas: being worried that the food they were able to eat would hurt health and well-being, a measure of nutrition insecurity (41.6 - 61.8%); inability to pay full rent or mortgage (22.7 - 46.1%); homelessness (11.9 - 5.2%); lack of reliable transportation to campus (32.0 – 46.); inability to access health services due to lack of money (14.2 - 30.2%); lack of health insurance (15.5 - 20.2%); living with a disability (49.9 – 63.8%); and lack of social supports in their lives (7.3 – 14.2%). The presence of anxiety and depression was more frequent in students with low and very low food security (40.5 to 57.4% for anxiety and 31.0 to 49.8% for depression). A greater percentage of students with low and very low food security had grade point averages lower than 2.0 (8.0 to 10.7%) compared to food secure students (4.2 to 5.9%).

It is worth noting that a large percentage of students support others financially (e.g., children under the age of 18, siblings, parents, spouses) and that supporting others was associated with food insecurity. Nearly 60% of students with very low food security reported that they support others financially, whereas only 39.2% of students with high food security did so. It is also worth noting that food insecure and food secure students did not differ in employment status:62.1% of food secure and 63.3% of food insecure students were employed part-time or full-time.

> ***"General lack of nutritious meals effects my ability to focus and study. Recently been diagnosed borderline diabetic with extremely high triglycerides and high cholesterol."***
>
> ***- Student Respondent***

Table 11. Prevalence of Other Basic Needs Insecurities, Health, and Academic Outcomes by Food Security Category (Percentage of Respondents)

	Food Security Catagory			
	Food Insecure		Food Secure	
	Very Low	Low	Marginal	High
Always, often, or sometimes worried that the food I was able to eat would hurt my health and well-being	61.8	41.6	30.2	16.9
Inability to pay full rent or mortgage	46.1	22.7	12.1	3.8
Homelessness	25.2	11.9	8.5	4.1
Never or only sometimes having reliable transportation to campus	46.1	32.0	22.0	12.4
Often prevented from accessing health services due to lack of money	30.2	14.2	7.9	3.3
No health insurance	20.2	15.5	13.3	9.6
Presence of anxiety	57.4	40.5	32.7	29.6
Presence of depression	49.8	31.0	26.4	19.7
Don't have social supports (someone who care about you and you can count on)	14.2	7.3	6.3	4.0
Living with one or more diabilities	63.8	49.9	41.6	36.4
GPA below 2.0	10.7	8.0	5.9	4.2
Supporting children under the age of 18	31.7	34.3	21.9	17.6
Providing financial contribution to others (e.g., siblings, parents, spouse)	59.5	56.2	50.6	39.2
Employed part-time or full-time	62.7	64.5	63.4	63.3

CONCLUSIONS

The survey revealed that many students at public institutions of higher education in New Mexico struggle with basic needs insecurity. Of the nearly 10,000 respondents, 5,802 were considered food insecure. Most alarming, 3,868 of students had very low food security, the most severe category characterized by hunger and potential weight loss according to the USDA. More than 5,700 students were classified as housing insecure, and nearly 1,300 students had experienced homelessness during the past 12 months. Anxiety and depression affected at least one-third of respondents, despite most students reporting that they have social supports in their lives. One-half of students reported living with a disability, such as mental health conditions, learning disability, or chronic medical conditions.

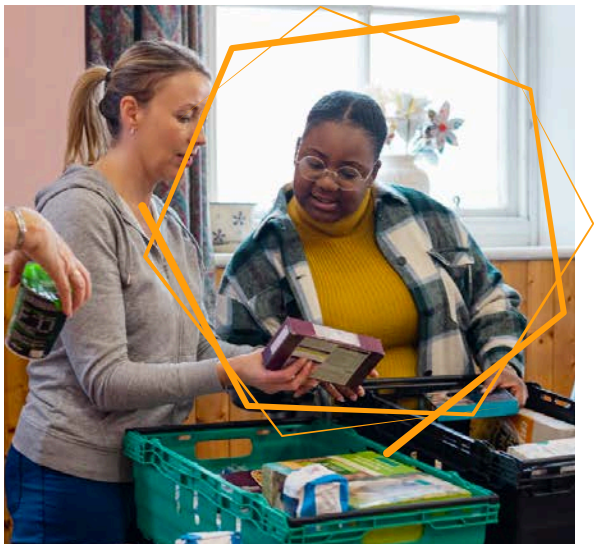
Some groups of students had higher prevalence of basic needs insecurity than others. Higher percentages of food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness were found among students from tribal institutions compared to students at two-year or four-year institutions. Black and Native American students had the highest percentages of basic needs insecurity among the race and ethnicity groups. Students who identified as gender-variant had higher basic needs insecurity than students who were men or women. A higher percentage of students who reported their sexual orientation as gay, lesbian, bisexual, multiple, or other experienced basic needs insecurity compared to those who identified as straight.

Basic needs insecurity also differed by age group: students who were between 24 and 44 years of age had the highest percentages of food and housing insecurity. Students who reported living with a disability were more likely to experience basic needs insecurity than those without disabilities. Colleges and universities can use this information about vulnerable groups to direct or re-direct resources to those most in need at their institutions. We recommend that Deans of Students or Vice Presidents of Student Affairs do an assessment of programs that already exist, and identify institutional gaps where resources need to be allocated.

The relationships between basic needs insecurity and poorer academic and life outcomes found in the survey show how important it is for institutions of higher education to deal with students' financial challenges to support academic success and improve retention and graduation rates. Using the four food security categories as indicators of financial status, we found that students with very low food insecurity (the lowest category) had the highest percentages of housing insecurity and homelessness as well as being more likely to support children under the age of 18 and provide financial contributions to others such as siblings, parents, or spouses. Students with very low food insecurity were also the most likely to experience other challenges that affect academic success such as lack of reliable transportation to campus, inability to afford health care, having anxiety or depression, living with a disability, and having a GPA below 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.

Students with high food security, and presumably better financial well-being, were least likely to experience all of these difficulties. Identifying individuals with basic needs challenges as early as possible, perhaps through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms submitted at the time of admission, and providing them with comprehensive financial, academic, and social support may lead to improved retention and graduation rates for many New Mexican students. We need to move away from the trope about living on ramen and the stereotype of scarcity of resources being part of the learning curve of higher education.

Responses to questions about how students cope with expenses, strategies, and resources they use to satisfy basic needs also provide useful information for institutions. For example, the high reported rates of employment indicate that students experience basic needs insecurity despite having jobs. The State of New Mexico is the model of success in supporting higher education students from diverse economic backgrounds through the Lottery and Opportunity Scholarships, funding tuition and fees. Yet graduation rates lag behind those of other states, and it highlights that the true cost of college must be calculated to include student basic needs. Many students who participated in the survey reported they received grants and scholarships from federal or state governments or from their institutions as well as Pell Grants, but these often do not cover all academic and living expenses. High employment rates for students suggest the need for additional financial resources to support academic success.



Students reported multiple ways of addressing basic food and housing needs, such as borrowing money from family or friends and seeking out events with free food. Others resorted to what are perceived as less socially acceptable strategies, including taking food without paying or going on a date in exchange for food or housing. These findings highlight the dire financial situations of many New Mexico students. The fact that many food insecure students do not use federal benefits or make use of food pantries suggests that significant barriers in accessing these resources exist. Programs aimed at de-stigmatizing such basic needs supports may address student reticence to use these programs. Regarding campus food pantries, our data revealed that students lacked knowledge about eligibility, perceived stigma associated with getting assistance, and indicated that inconvenient hours or locations prevented their use of this resource. Forthcoming qualitative data from our study may illuminate the experiences students have with affordable and safe housing, mental health, and other basic needs challenges.

During the survey period, professional staff members from higher education institutions across the state met regularly to address the survey rollout, and during this time, the group also built bonds across their shared work with vulnerable students across the state. At the May 5, 2023 gathering, all colleges and universities present agreed to continue to gather as the New Mexico Basic Needs Consortium. This collective group is the next step in the statewide collaboration that began with this study. All New Mexico campuses are invited to be members and provide their expertise to the Consortium.

The New Mexico Higher Education Department has been providing food security and mental and behavioral health grants for three years as part of the foundational work in addressing basic needs for college students. Over $2 million dollars have provided funding for emergency food pantries, campus kitchens, updates of campus farms and greenhouses to provide produce to campus, purpose of cold storage and other equipment, and other projects at over 20 higher education institutions across the state. An additional $2 million dollars has been awarded to mental and behavioral health projects across the state, including an online mental health phone application that will be available to all college students across the state.*

Ongoing efforts on our campuses include: the majority of campuses including Doña Ana Community College, Eastern New Mexico University Roswell, and New Mexico State University have a food pantry, Santa Fe Community College & Western New Mexico University have greenhouses. University of New Mexico has an Associate Dean of Student Wellness. Mesalands Community College and University of New Mexico Valencia have emergency loan programs. Luna Community College and Navajo Tech have child care centers. New Mexico Junior College is opening a free health clinic.

Because of the decentralized nature of the New Mexico higher education system, every campus can provide basic needs infrastructure to various degrees. Often, basic needs services are an addendum to other student service departments such as Student Affairs, Dean of Students Office, and Ethnic and LGBTQ+ student centers. This approach can often strain traditional programming or budgets allocated for the student support areas. Other campuses are coordinating more direct basic needs resources, such as Central New Mexico Community College has recently created a Campus Wellness Coordinator and the University of New Mexico main campus an Associate Dean of Student Wellness. Clovis Community College and others have a designated staff person help students with federal benefit applications. Students in the UNM Basic Needs Project worked closely with the New Mexico Human Services Department creating SNAP outreach flyers. With campus directed funding, along with the Basic Needs grants funded by the State of New Mexico, New Mexico higher education institutions are taking substantial steps to help students with basic needs insecurities. As these changes take place, a continued issue is that student service departments are often understaffed and lack resources themselves, such as a dedicated basic needs coordinator for each campus.

Because so many students in New Mexico have basic needs insecurity, more expansive and coordinated campus support is certainly warranted. Some current basic needs initiatives at New Mexico institutions consist of campus food pantries and small emergency loan programs. As helpful as they are, barriers such as perceived stigma, questions about eligibility, meeting the dietary and cultural needs of students, hours of operation, and lack of reliable funding can prevent these initiatives from serving all students in need.

Existing emergency loan programs are helpful but rapid response emergency grant programs, where loan repayment is not required, may be more useful for students with basic need insecurity.

Campuses can start by focusing resources on the most at-risk cohorts as early as possible in their college careers. The institutions who participated in the survey have access to the UNM Basic Needs Tableau website to explore survey responses from their students. https://rb.gy/8xhzir

As New Mexico works to provide more financial aid resources to graduate students through such efforts as a $10 million dollar scholarship fund for STEM students and $15 million dollars in scholarships for social work students, directed outreach to graduate students about food assistance and other basic needs programs should be undertaken by the institutions who serve a graduate student population. Increased support for graduate students will be necessary to increase New Mexico's ability to increase diversity in advanced degree programs.

Faculty can also play a role by developing and adopting a syllabus statement with comprehensive information on resources available for students struggling with basic needs insecurities.

The establishment of an Office of Basic Needs on every college and university campus would further reduce needs insecurity. These offices could be within existing student services departments providing students with a single location for receiving assistance. At a minimum, offices should include a full-time staff person, preferably with a social work degree, who can work as a case manager with at least two student employees who can be trained as peer advocates.Financial Aid offices should use the FAFSA to provide early identification of needs insecure students. They could then pass students' information on to Basic Needs staff who can reach out and offer assistance.

As this report concludes, it is offered as a collective tool to provide the State of New Mexico and higher education institutions a place to begin addressing the critical needs of our most vulnerable students. The basic needs data points to a crisis in higher education that cannot be ignored, and collectively the State of New Mexico and higher education institutions are already beginning to face the reality that obstacles to retention on graduation may look differently than imagined: too many skipped meals, unplanned car repairs, living in a car, or not being able to get needed healthcare.

You might be asking why highlight this issue now? This data report is offered as a flashlight to illuminate issues so we can address them. As New Mexico invests in higher education at historic rates in other critically needed areas such as financial aid and student support services, the basic needs data provided here demonstrates that we must leverage investments to address students' social determinants of health. This report describes findings and identifies first steps in addressing insecurities; however, coordinated, multi-level policy and service provision interventions must be developed and implemented as statewide priorities. Addressing this level of need will take a constellation of policies, coordination of efforts, and a dedication to serving students, families, and communities throughout the state.

APPENDIX A - EXPANDED METHODS AND LIMITATIONS METHODS

Research Sites

The University of New Mexico (UNM) Basic Needs Project (BNP) team, based on UNM Main Campus in Albuquerque, led the conceptualization, administration, and analysis of the statewide survey. The BNP team and the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) recruited 27 of the 29 public institutions of higher education in New Mexico to participate in the survey including three (3) tribal, seven (7) four-year, and 17 two-year colleges and universities. The UNM Main Campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and approved the study (IRB # 2211023853), as did IRBs at participating tribal institutions.

Data Collection

The BNP and NMHED identified contacts at each participating institution to lead recruitment of students, faculty, and staff to participate in the survey. Institutional contacts agreed to distribute the online Qualtrics survey link and QR code, recruitment flyers, and physical copies of the survey with return envelopes for the four (4) weeks the survey was open. Efforts were made to ensure institutional contacts distributed the survey to students, faculty, and staff. All recruitment materials and the survey consent form detailed participant eligibility criteria including: 16 years of age and older and currently enrolled as a student (part-time or full-time) or employed as faculty or staff (part-time, full-time, or adjunct) at one of the 27 participating institutions. Participants first read the study consent form and indicated consent to participate by starting the survey. Eligibility criteria were then assessed in the first three questions of the survey and ineligible participants did not complete the rest of the survey.

Recruitment materials noted that randomly selected participants from each institution would receive a $40 electronic gift card to Amazon or Walmart as a token of appreciation for their time; $30,000 in gift card incentives were distributed based on the size of participating institutions. Participants interested in entering the drawing provided their institution and institutional email address in a separate survey; identifying information was not linked to survey responses. The survey remained open for four weeks in February-March 2023 and institution contacts were encouraged to send periodic reminders through listservs during the survey period. The BNP randomly selected participants from each institution (according to each institution's size) and emailed gift cards in May 2023. Qualtrics' "anonymize responses" setting was enabled, preventing the collection of personal information like location and IP address.

Survey Measures

The survey included validated measures of basic needs, questions developed and refined by the study team, self-reported sociodemographic information, and seven open-ended questions with free text responses. No identifying information was collected in the survey. Responses to socio demographic questions, open-ended questions, and certain basic needs were not required. Responses to eligibility criteria, a bot detection question, and food security, housing security and homelessness measures were required, and participants could not proceed without answering.

Survey Measures (cont.)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module (FSSM) was utilized to assess food security status in the past 12 months. This 18-item module first includes the 10-item adult FSSM and then eight (8) additional questions for households with children. Thus, respondents with children answered up to 18 questions while respondents without children answered up to 10 questions. The first three questions in the 10-item adult FSSM and the first three questions in the child-specific section are required. If an affirmative response is provided to any one of these three required questions, the participant completes the rest of the questions in that section. An affirmative response ("yes", "sometimes true", "often true", "some months but not every month", and "almost every month") to a question is coded as "1" and the sum of affirmative responses is calculated to generate a food security score (0-10 for respondents without children; 0-18 for respondents with children). Food security status (food secure or food insecurity) and food security severity (high, marginal, low, or very low food security) are also calculated. See scoring information in Table 1.

Table 12. Scoring of the USDA 18-item Household FSSM for survey respondents with and without children

	Respondents with no children	Respondents with 1 or more child
Food security status	Score	Score
Food security	0-2	0-2
Food insecure	3-10	3-18
Food security severity	Score	Score
High food security	0	0
Marginal food security	1-2	1-2
Low food security	3-5	3-7
Very low food security	6-10	8-18

APPENDIX A

Housing insecurity and homelessness in the past 12 months were assessed based on guidance in the Hope Center's most recent report (citation), which drew from the Survey of Income and Program Participation Adult WellBeing Module and the definitions of homelessness developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Education. A single affirmative response to any of the nine indicators included in the housing security measure indicated housing insecurity. Homelessness was indicated if any one of nine options was selected in response to a question assessing places slept in the past 12 months (e.g., in a camper, in an outdoor location, in a shelter, etc.). Participants also self-reported homelessness (yes/no) in the past 12 months. Both questions allowed participants to select "Prefer not to answer".

Other basic needs questions included in the survey were optional for participants. Anxiety and depression were assessed using the two-item GAD-2 (score of >3 indicates anxiety) and PHQ-2 (score of >3 indicates depression). Participants self-reported other basic needs including social support ("Do you have social supports in your life (people who care about you and you can count on" where "no" indicated insecurity), transportation security ("In the last 12 months, did you have reliable transportation to and from campus?" where "sometimes" or "never" indicated insecurity), and ability to afford health services ("In the last 12 months, has a lack of money prevented you from getting any health services that you needed" where "yes" indicated insecurity). The full survey instrument is available upon request from the UNM BNP team.

The survey was administered via Qualtrics, and branching capabilities allowed for respondents to only see relevant questions based on whether they were a student or a staff or faculty member, and if they had children.

Paper surveys and all supplies to mail completed surveys back to the BNP team were also available at institutions that requested this option.

Data Analysis

The final dataset was downloaded as an excel sheet from Qualtrics after the survey closed in mid-March 2023. Paper surveys were then entered into the excel sheet. Exclusion criteria were applied to remove ineligible participants, duplicate responses, and participants that did not complete at least the USDA Adult FSSM. A Qualtrics-generated reCAPTCHA score was used to exclude likely bots; all responses with reCAPTCHA scores <0.50 were removed from the dataset per Qualtrics recommendations. Finally, free-text responses were reviewed by two members of the study team to exclude suspicious responses.

Participants in the final analytic sample were categorized as students (full-time or part-time undergraduate, graduate, or professional student) or faculty or staff (full-time, part-time or adjunct, including administrators). The 27 participating institutions were categorized as four-year (n=7), two-year (n=17), or tribal colleges (n=3). Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage) were calculated for basic needs by participant type (student or faculty or staff) and by institution type (four-year, two-year, or tribal college). Additionally, 95% confidence intervals (CI) for percentages were calculated and are included in this report.

Free-text responses to open-ended questions are currently being analyzed by the BNP qualitative team and results will be published when complete.

APPENDIX A

Limitations

Collecting anonymized data via online survey distributed through multiple channels including social media can pose challenges. Every effort was made to identify and remove bots and suspicious responses to the online Qualtrics survey. Including a bot detection question and excluding responses with reCAPTCHA score <0.50 was invaluable to remove suspected bots; however, the BNP team acknowledges the final dataset may include multiple responses from a single participant, fake or false responses, and/or responses from potentially ineligible participants. Qualtrics' anonymize responses setting was selected to promote participant confidentiality, but the setting did not allow collection of IP addresses or participant location to further aid in removing fraudulent, ineligible, and/or duplicate responses. To address potential data quality issues, 95% confidence levels (CI) were calculated and included in this report, and we encourage findings to be interpreted with limitations of online survey data collection in mind.

Every attempt was made to distribute the survey to all eligible participants currently enrolled or employed by each institution; however, the study team was not able to individually email every student, faculty, and staff at all 27 institutions. Institutional contacts did an excellent job of distributing recruitment materials, demonstrated by response rates, but we cannot guarantee all eligible participants knew about the survey.

Additionally, non-response bias may be present as participants who took the survey may have been more or less likely to struggle with basic needs compared to those who elected not to complete the survey. Some optional survey questions also included more missing responses than others, potentially biasing responses received. Overall, we recommend interpreting results of this statewide survey as a reflection of the basic needs crisis among the sample that participated, not necessarily all New Mexico institutions of higher education and certainly not all institutions of higher education across the United States.

Final Dataset

A total of 18,369 survey responses were received (18,359 via Qualtrics and 10 paper surveys). A total of 4,532 (24.7%) responses were excluded based on the following criteria: 1,623 (8.8%) did not complete screening questions or meet eligibility criteria, 252 (1.4%) duplicate responses were identified, 780 (4.2%) had a Qualtrics-calculated reCAPTCHA score <0.50, 1,255 (6.8%) did not complete the USDA 10-item Adult FSSM, and 622 (3.4%) were excluded based on a review of free text responses to open-ended survey questions. After exclusions, 13,837 (75.3%) responses were included in the final dataset.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B - DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Demographics	n				%			
	Tribal	Two-year	Four-year	All	Tribal	Two-year	Four-year	All
Age (years)								
• 16 – 17	< 15	520	40	565	1.4	8.5	1.1	5.7
• 18 – 24	114	2313	2190	4617	32.9	37.6	62.5	46.2
• 25 – 34	95	1624	707	2426	27.5	26.4	20.2	24.3
• 35 – 44	81	961	356	1398	23.4	15.6	10.2	14.0
• 45 – 54	37	445	145	627	10.7	7.2	4.1	6.3
• 55 – 64	< 15	192	49	252	3.2	3.1	1.4	2.5
• 65 and older	< 15	91	16	110	0.9	1.5	0.5	1.1
• ***Total***	**346**	**6146**	**3503**	**9995**				
Student status								
• Undergraduate	309	6146	2756	9211	89.3	0	78.7	92.2
• Graduate	37		747	784	10.7	100	21.3	7.8
• ***Total***	**346**	**6146**	**3503**	**9995**				
Level of study								
• Dual-enrollment	16	288	29	333	5.4	6.0	1.0	4.1
• High school	37	687	250	974	12.4	14.2	8.5	12.1
○ Equivalency/GED								
• Associate's degree	87	2461	251	2799	29.2	51.0	8.5	34.7
• Bachelor's degree	81	455	1716	2252	27.2	9.4	58.3	27.9
• Master's degree	17		350	367	5.7	0	11.9	4.5
• Doctoral degree (Ph.D.,			189	189	0	0	6.4	2.3
• Ed.D., J.D., M.D.,								
• Pharm.D., etc.)								
• Certificate or license	37	650	82	769	12.4	13.5	2.8	9.5
• Non-degree	23		75	381	7.7	5.9	2.5	4.7
• ***Total***	**298**	**4824**	**2945**	**8067**				
Race/ethnicity								
• Asian	< 15	121	126	254	2.3	2.3	4.2	3.0
• Black	< 15	149	81	237	2.3	2.9	2.7	2.8
• Hispanic	< 15	1648	957	2614	3.0	31.9	32.2	31.0
• Native American	197	657	129	98	65.0	12.7	4.3	11.6
• White	40	1508	930	2478	13.2	29.2	31.3	29.4
• Two or more	32	858	642	1532	10.6	16.6	21.6	18.2
• Other/prefer not to say	< 15	228	103	103	3.6	4.4	3.5	4.1
• ***Total***	**303**	**5169**	**2968**	**8440**				
Gender								
• Female	183	3384	1954	5521	60.8	65.7	66.2	65.7
• Male	99	1438	775	2312	32.9	27.9	26.2	27.5
• Gender variant	< 15	244	184	439	6.7	4.7	6.2	5.2
• Other/prefer not to say	< 15	82	40	130	2.7	1.6	1.4	1.5
• ***Total***	**301**	**5148**	**2953**	**8402**				
Sexuality								
• Straight	229	3807	2013	6049	76.1	73.9	68.1	72.0
• Gay or lesbian	< 15	255	151	423	5.6	5.0	5.1	5.0
• Bisexual	18	530	452	1000	6.0	10.3	15.3	11.9
• Multiple or other	< 15	239	187	438	4.0	4.6	6.3	5.2
• Prefer not to say	25	320	151	496	8.3	6.2	5.1	5.9
• ***Total***	**301**	**5151**	**2954**	**8406**				
Living with a disability								
• None	113	2075	1195	3383	37.8	40.8	41.2	40.8
• Mental health condition	40	1315	929	2284	13.4	25.9	32.0	27.6
• Chronic medical condition	68	945	430	1443	22.7	18.6	14.8	17.4
• Learning disability	28	528	289	845	9.4	10.4	10.0	10.2
• Eating disorder	21	450	320	791	7.0	8.8	11.0	9.5
• ***Total***	**270**	**5313**	**3163**	**8746**				
Financially responsible for children under 18								
• No	191	4179	2940	7310	55.2	68.0	83.9	73.1
• Yes	155	1967	563	2685	44.8	32.0	16.1	26.9
• ***Total***	**346**	**6146**	**3503**	**9995**				
Contribute financially to anyone else								
• No	110	2277	1639	4026	36.7	44.6	55.5	48.1
• Yes	190	2832	1315	4337	63.3	55.4	44.5	51.9
• ***Total***	**300**	**5109**	**2954**	**8363**				

Appendix B - Demographic characteristics of study participants (cont.)

Demographics	n				%			
	Tribal	Two-year	Four-year	All	Tribal	Two-year	Four-year	All
Employment status								
• Employed, part time	70	1446	1322	2838	23.1	28.2	44.7	33.8
• Employed, full time	75	1725	638	2438	24.8	33.6	21.6	29.0
• Not employed, looking for work	96	919	474	1489	31.7	17.9	16.0	17.7
• No employed, not looking for work	36	751	344	1131	11.9	14.6	11.6	13.5
• Academic program doesn't allow work	26	241	163	430	8.6	4.7	5.5	5.1
• Don't have legal status to work in U.S.	0	54	19	73	0	1.1	0.6	0.9
• ***Total***	303	5136	2960	8399				
New Mexico resident								
• No	108	350	473	931	36.0	6.8	16.0	11.1
• Yes	192	4801	2486	7479	64.0	93.2	84.0	88.9
• ***Total***	**300**	**5151**	**2959**	**8410**				
Military status								
• Never served	258	4767	2813	7838	86.0	92.7	95.5	93.5
• Current active-duty	< 15	94	30	137	4.3	1.8	1.0	1.6
• Veteran/previously served	29	279	104	412	9.7	5.5	3.6	4.9
• ***Total***	300	5140	2947	8357				

APPENDIX C - PREVALENCE AND INDIVIDUAL INDICATORS

Calculated homelessness

In the last 12 months, have you slept:	n (%)
At a shelter	129 (1.4)
In a camper	214 (2.4)
Temporarily staying with a relative, friend, or couch surfing until I find other housing	770 (8.6)
Transitional housing or independent living program	91 (1.0)
Group home (e.g. halfway house, residential program)	63 (0.7)
Treatment center (e.g. detox, hospital)	78 (0.9)
Outdoor location (e.g. street, sidewalk, alley, bus or train stop, campground or woods, park, beach, etc.)	125 (1.4)
Closed area/space with a roof not meant for human habitations (e.g. abandoned building, car, truck, RV, camper, etc.)	178 (2.0)
Other location	1024 (11.4)
Homeless (calculated)*	1291 (14.4)

*Affirmative response to one or more location

Food insecurity indicators (past 12 months): all students

	n (%)*
Worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more	6002 (60.1)
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	6086 (60.9)
Food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more	5271 (52.7)
Cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food	4682 (66.6)
Cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food some months or almost every month	3890 (83.1)
Ate less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food	4522 (64.3)
Hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food	3767 (54.7)
Lost weight because there wasn't enough money for food	2684 (38.2)
Didn’t eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food	1826 (33.7)
Didn’t eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food some months or almost every month	1559 (85.5)

*Note: n (%) calculated based on students eligible to answer each question

Food insecurity indicators (past 12 months): students with children

	n (%)
Relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed my children because I was running out of money to buy food	1776 (66.9)
Couldn't feed my children a balanced meal because I couldn't afford that	1367 (51.5)
Child was not eating enough because I just couldn't afford enough food	804 (30.3)
Cut the size of children's meals because there wasn't enough money for food	533 (29.0)
Children skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food	367 (20.0)
Children skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food some months or almost every month	333 (91.0)
Child was hungry but just couldn't afford more food	487 (26.6)
Children didn't eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food	258 (14.1)

*Note: n (%) calculated based on students eligible to answer each question

WORKS CITED

i. Cargas S, Walsh-Dilley M, Mechler H, Coakley K, Jaffe S, Murphey A. Basic Needs Insecurity at UNM: 2020 Research Report. Published online 2020. Accessed 2023. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://basicneeds.unm.edu/basic-needs-2020-report.pdf

ii. Cargas S, Walsh-Dilley M, Mechler H, Coakley K. Food and Housing Insecurity among Students at the University of New Mexico. Published online 2021. Accessed 2023. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://basicneeds.unm.edu/basic-needs-2021-report.pdf

iii. The 12-month timeframe was from mid-February – mid-March, 2022 to Feb 15 – March 15, 2023 depending on the exact date the student filled out the survey.

iv. Our institutions have more economic diversity than in other states. For example, University of New Mexico and New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology ranked 9th and 28th in economic diversity respectively in a recent New York Times nationwide analysis of colleges and universities. In fact, UNM ranks number one for the state flagship with the most economic diversity. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/09/07/magazine/college-access-index.html?searchResultPosition=6

v. Nikolaus CJ, An R, Ellison B, Nickols-Richardson SM. Food Insecurity among College Students in the United States: A Scoping Review. Advances in Nutrition. 2019;11(2). doi:https://doi.org/10.1093/advances/nmz111

vi. The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice. Tribal Colleges and Universities #Real College Survey. Published online 2020. Accessed 2023. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://rb.gy/v0zi06

vii. Duke NN, Campbell SD, Sauls DL, et al. Prevalence of food insecurity among students attending four Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Journal of American College Health. Published online March 24, 2021:1-7. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2021.1877144

viii. Tough P. Americans Are Losing Faith in the Value of College. Whose Fault Is That? The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/magazine/college-worth-price.html. Published September 5, 2023. Accessed 2023.

ix. Broton KM. A review of estimates of housing insecurity and homelessness among students in U.S. higher education. Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness. 2019;29(1):25-38. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/10530789.2020.1677009

x. Qualtrics is a secure experience management platform commonly used for surveys, including for large-scale survey-based research. UNM's Office for Vice President of Research manages the University-wide license, and alongside Academic Technologies, supported the Basic Needs Project team in the development and administration of the statewide survey.

xi. USDA ERS - Survey Tools. www.ers.usda.gov. https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-u-s/survey-tools/#household

xii. Generalized Anxiety Disorder 2-item (GAD-2) - Mental Disorders Screening - National HIV Curriculum. Uw.edu. Published 2015. https://www.hiv.uw.edu/page/mental-health-screening/gad-2

xiii. National HIV Curriculum. Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2) - Mental Disorders Screening - National HIV Curriculum. Uw.edu. Published 2015. https://www.hiv.uw.edu/page/mental-health-screening/phq-2

basicneeds@unm.edu