

NEW MEXICO
HIGHER EDUCATION

2023-2025 STAFF BASIC NEEDS REPORT





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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




17
two-year
institutions


7
four-year
institutions


3
tribal
institutions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Basic Needs Security Definition

Equitable access to nutritious food and safe affordable housing.

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of basic needs insecurity among non-teaching staff at New Mexico's public colleges and universities. While prior research has largely focused on students, our findings reveal a critical and often overlooked issue: non-teaching staff face significant challenges in meeting essential needs such as food, housing, and healthcare.

Data were collected February - March 2023 through a statewide survey of students, faculty, and staff with responses

from 1,995 staff members across 27 of 29 public higher education institutions. The students and faculty reports can be found at basicneeds.unm.edu. **The results are stark:**

- 41% of staff were food insecure
- 51% of staff were housing insecure
- 3% of staff experienced homelessness
- 45% of staff could not afford necessary healthcare, despite having insurance
- Nearly one-third of staff reported anxiety and/or depression

Nearly half of respondents (46%) reported annual household incomes under \$55,000 - well below New Mexico's 2023 median of \$62,268 - highlighting the direct link between low wages and insecurity.

These findings underscore how basic needs insecurity impacts not only staff health and well-being but also institutional productivity and mission. Qualitative responses further illuminate how overlapping insecurities shape daily life.

Addressing Basic Needs Insecurity

Tackling basic needs insecurity among non-teaching staff in New Mexico's higher education institutions requires a coordinated, multi-level response. These staff members—who include administrative professionals, IT support, custodial workers, and many others—are essential to the daily operations and success of colleges and universities. Yet they are among the vulnerable to economic hardship.

The newly established New Mexico Basic Needs Consortium (NM BNC) will lead a statewide effort to develop and coordinate sustainable solutions. Many of these challenges require what we call a braided response: policy changes and interventions must be woven together across different levels of government, institutional leadership, and community organizations.

Key Recommendations Include:

- **Improve Wages and Employment Stability:**

Raise salaries for non-teaching staff to reflect a living wage and ensure predictable, full-time employment opportunities. This requires increased funding from the state and active support from institutional leadership.

- **Expand Affordable Housing Options**

Work in partnership with local governments, housing developers, and community organizations to increase the availability of affordable housing near campuses. Non-teaching staff should be included in campus housing initiatives and rental assistance programs.

- **Enhance Access to Nutritional Programs**

Expand awareness and eligibility for federal assistance programs like **SNAP** (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).

- **Provide On-Campus Support Services**

Ensure non-teaching staff have consistent access to on-campus resources such as food pantries, emergency funds, and housing assistance.

By implementing these recommendations, New Mexico can improve the quality of life for its non-teaching staff while strengthening the overall resilience and effectiveness of its higher education system.



INTRODUCTION

Research on food and housing insecurity among non-teaching staff in higher education is nearly nonexistent. To our knowledge, only one prior study—at the University of California in 2016—has explored this issue.¹ No state has conducted a comprehensive, system-wide assessment including staff. Yet to fully understand the landscape of basic needs security on campus, staff—who form a vital part of our academic communities—must be included. **The results were sobering.**



In food studies, the concept of “the good life” captures more than survival—it reflects a life with dignity. Dignity is also the foundation of human rights. Too many jobs at New Mexico colleges and universities do not provide the compensation or support necessary to ensure either. The prevalence of food (41%) and housing (51%) insecurity among staff, along with significant mental health challenges, demands urgent and coordinated action.

These challenges are not just personal burdens—they affect institutional capacity, morale, and the broader mission of higher education. Ensuring basic needs is therefore both a practical necessity and a moral obligation, aligning with higher education’s commitment to equity and social justice.

Solutions must come from both state and federal policymakers—through better wages and expanded employment—and from institutions, which must create environments that prioritize staff well-being. This includes direct supports such as food pantries and housing assistance, and broader cultural shifts that affirm the dignity of every individual.

The creation of the New Mexico Basic Needs Consortium (NM BNC) represents a step towards systemic change. This cross-campus collaboration will drive comprehensive strategies, from policy advocacy to institutional reform.

Data in Context

- New Mexico’s food insecurity rate is 15% (above the national average of 13.5%).²
- Median rents increased by 60%.³
- Average home prices rising by 70% since 2017, outpacing wage growth.⁴

As of 2024, New Mexico is short over 28,115 low-income housing units, meaning rental units that are affordable to household earning $\leq 60\%$ of Area Median Income (AMI).⁵

RESULTS

Survey respondents included 1,955 part-time and full-time staff from 27 institutions of higher education across New Mexico.

Table 1. Staff survey participants by type of institution.

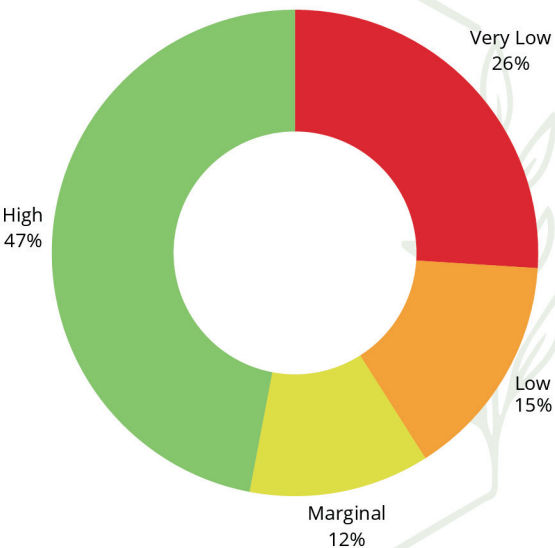
Tribal n=70	Two-Year n=825	Four-Year n=1,060
6.3%	42.2%	54.2%

Food Insecurity & Nutrition

Of the staff survey responses:

- **41.0% were considered food insecure in the past 12 months.**
- **15.2% were low food insecure.**
- **25.8% were very low food secure.**

Figure 1. Food Security (n = 1955)



Snapshot/Respondent Demographics

93%

Full-time staff

79%

Heterosexual/straight

73%

Women

54%

Employed at two-year colleges

43%

White

29%

Hispanic

25%

35-44 years of age



Food Insecurity & Nutrition

To assess food security status over the past 12 months, we used the 18-item U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module (FSSM). It has 4 levels of food security: high food security, marginal food security, low food security, and very low food security. Low food security (previously defined as food insecurity without hunger) and very low food security (previously defined as food insecure with hunger)⁶ are combined to represent individuals who are food insecure and high food security and marginal food security are combined to represent individuals who are food secure.

Nutrition Security

According to the USDA, nutrition security is defined as “consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, affordable foods essential to optimal health and well-being”. Nutrition security was assessed using a validated one-item nutrition security screener question;⁷ “In the past 12 months, I worried that the food I was able to eat would hurt my health and well-being” where “sometimes”, “often”, and “always” indicated nutrition insecurity. Nearly one-third (32%) of staff were nutrition insecure.

Staff shared many reasons for not having access to healthy food in an open-ended question.⁸ Two of the most common comments were around the lack of access to healthy food on campus and off campus.

High Food Security

Households have reliable access to sufficient food for a healthy lifestyle, allowing for a variety of choices and affordable balanced meals.

Marginal Food Security

Households face food access issues but generally manage to obtain enough food. They may need to reduce quality or variety or choose low-cost options.

Low Food Security

Reduced quality, variety, and desirability of their diets, but the quantity of food intake and normal eating patterns 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

Staff said things such as: "not enough healthy choices available", "many of the options are unhealthy tempting but unhealthy", "we have very limited options and most are unhealthy", "it is too expensive and unhealthy", "need more grab on the go healthy options", "need more healthy options and also options for people with food allergies."

On several campuses, the only food comes from vending machines. Staff reported "we only have a couple of crappy vending machines that do not work a lot of the time" and "we only have candies, chips, energy drinks, and cokes - nothing nutritious."

Living in rural areas also presented challenges: "I live in a rural area, and the nearest grocery store is miles away, making it hard to access healthy food."

Another shared, "There's only one grocery store in town, and it doesn't always carry fresh produce."

Food Assistance Programs

Survey respondents were asked if they or their children had received food assistance in the past 12 months. Nearly 42% of food insecure staff received assistance from any program; 8.2% received assistance from a food bank or pantry and 10.8% received SNAP. See Table 2.



Table 2. Food Assistance Receipt, %

Program	All Respondents n = 1898	Food Secure n = 1126	Food Insecure n = 772
Any program	26.1	15.5	41.7
SNAP (Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program)	10.8	6.5	17.1
NSLP (National School Lunch Program)	9.0	5.1	14.8
Food bank or food pantry	8.2	2.5	16.6
SBP (School Breakfast Program)	7.0	3.9	11.5
SFSP (Summer Food Service Program)	3.5	1.3	6.7
WIC (Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children)	2.6	1.3	4.4
TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)	1.5	0.1	3.6
FDPIR (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations)	0.7	0.1	1.6



We assessed the “SNAP Gap” which is the gap between an individuals’ food insecurity and receipt of SNAP benefits. Of the food insecure survey respondents, 82.9% reported not receiving SNAP benefits indicating the vast majority of food insecure staff are not receiving SNAP.⁹

Many campuses have a food pantry, but some limit access to students only. Of all staff survey respondents, 4.6% reported no food pantry on their campus, 80.7% reported never using the campus food pantry, and 14.8% reported using the campus food pantry.

Housing Insecurity & Homelessness

Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity was assessed using a nine-item measure. See Table 3.

Overall, 51.4% of staff were housing insecure in the previous 12 months. The most common indicator of housing insecurity was having an increase in rent or mortgage that made it difficult to pay, followed by not paying the full amount of gas, oil, or electricity bill.

Table 3. Housing insecurity indicators in the past 12 months, %

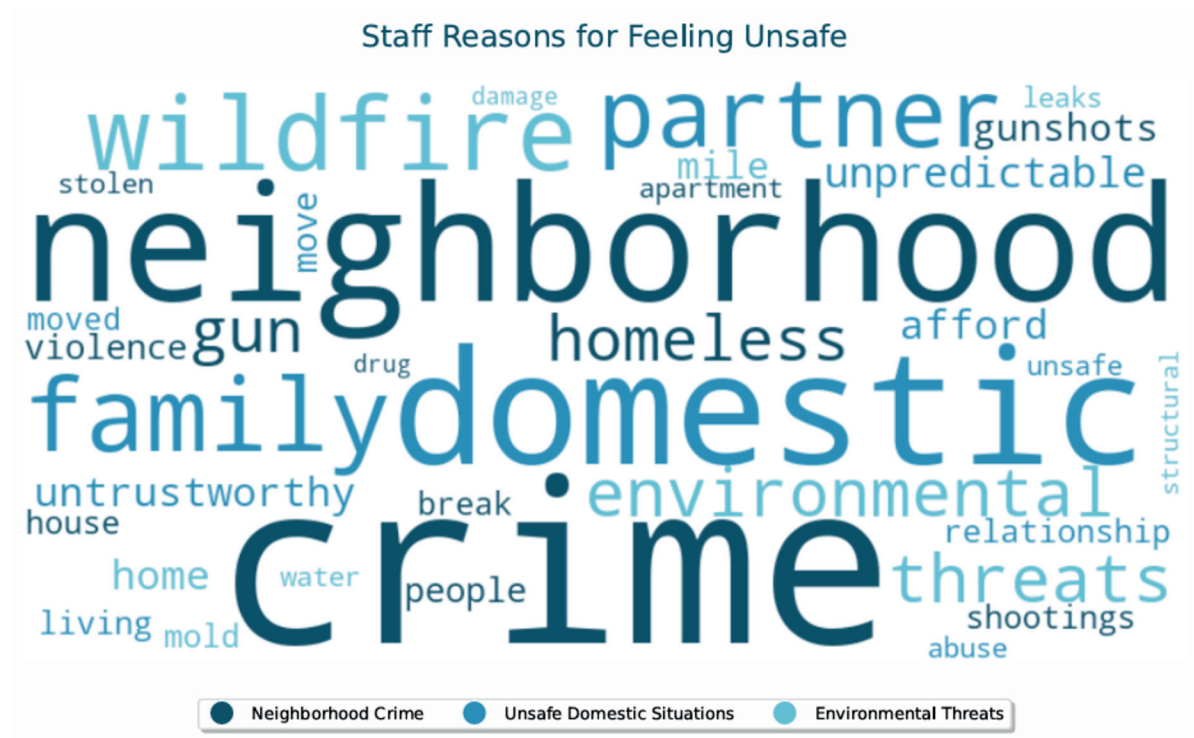
Housing Security Indicators	Total (n=1858)
Rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay	33.2
Not paid the full amount of gas, oil, electricity bill	28.1
Account default or go into collections	17.5
Unable to pay or did you underpay your rent or mortgage	15.3
Moved in with other people, even for a little while, because of financial problems	12.7
Lived with others beyond the expected capacity of the house or apartment	8.7
Left household because felt unsafe	5.6
Received a summons to appear in housing court or been evicted	2.4
Moved three or more times	2.1
Housing insecure (responded) “yes” to one or more indicators above)	51.4



Safety

Participants were asked how safe they “felt inside their homes” and 95.9% responded that they felt moderately or very safe and 4.1% responded that they did not feel safe.

In response to an open ended question about why they did not feel safe, there were three themes: 1) Neighborhood crime: “My neighborhood has a lot of crime and homeless people.”, and “I have been woken up by gunshots and screaming.” 2) Unsafe domestic situations: “I was living with a family member who is unpredictable and untrustworthy.” and “Felt unsafe with partner; could not afford to move out alone.” 3) Environmental threats: “Wildfire came within a half mile of my home.”



Homelessness

Homelessness was assessed in two ways. Self-reported homelessness was measured using the yes-no question “In the past 12 months, have you ever been homeless?” The calculated homelessness measure was determined by responses to the “prevalence of places slept” indicator questions in Appendix C. Calculated homelessness was included in this study because an individual with a roof over their head may not consider themselves homeless. For example, people who move frequently or “couch surf” with friends can be considered homeless. Homelessness rates for the 1842 staff respondents ranged from 2.5% for the self-reported question and 8.5% for the calculated measure.

Health Related Topics

Survey respondents were asked about health status, social support, and health insurance. Health status questions asked about anxiety and depression, and living with chronic medical conditions or a learning or physical disability.

Mental Health

Two brief screening questionnaires, the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-2 (GAD-2) and the Patient Health Questionnaire-2 (PHQ-2) were used to assess symptoms of anxiety and depression over the last two weeks.

Among staff, the prevalence of screening positive for anxiety (30.4%) was higher than a positive screen for depression (22.6%). As shown in Table 4, the prevalence of anxiety and

depression were much higher among staff with at least one basic needs insecurity compared to those with no basic needs insecurities. Anxiety and depression were a common theme in the open-ended question “How is food or housing insecurity affecting your work?” and a full analysis follows the quantitative results.

Table 4. Mental Health Symptoms, %

Anxiety screen (GAD-2) n=1792		Depression screen (PHQ-2) n=1791	
Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
69.9	30.4	77.4	22.6

Health Insurance and Health Services

The majority of staff (93.9%) had health insurance, yet 44.5% reported “sometimes” or “often” not being able to afford needed health services.

Transportation

Transportation reliability was assessed by asking “In the last 12 months, did you have reliable transportation to and from campus?” More than 15% of staff reported that they sometimes or never have reliable transportation. Additionally, survey respondents reported if they use public transportation (yes or no): just 12.7% reported using public transportation.

Multiple Burdens

Many survey respondents experienced more than one basic need insecurity, referred to as “multiple burdens.” For example, the prevalence of housing insecurity was strongly associated with food security severity (Figure 2). Among those with very low food security, 90.7% were housing insecure compared to 23.3% housing insecurity for those with high food security.

Figure 2. Housing security by food security level, %

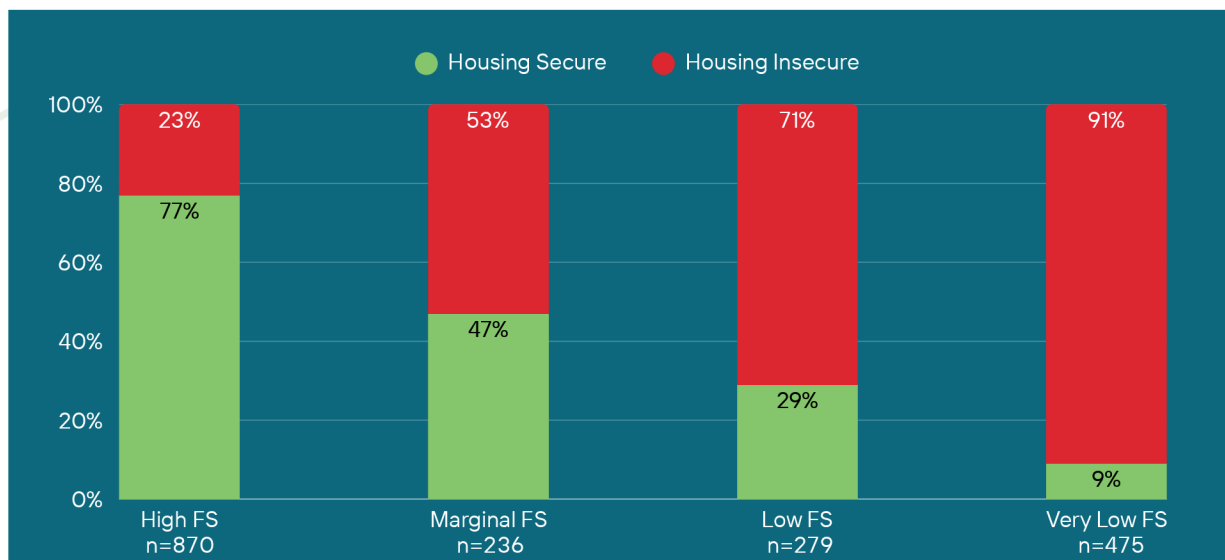


Table 5 shows the prevalence of basic needs insecurities by food security status. Food insecure staff had a higher prevalence of all other needs examined compared to their food secure counterparts.

Table 5. Prevalence of other burdens by food security category, %

Other burdens indicators	Food secure	Food Insecure
Nutrition insecurity	15.0	56.9
Homelessness	0.3	5.8
Never or only sometimes having reliable transportation	7.0	26.9
Sometimes or often prevented from accessing health services due to lack of money	24.2	74.1
No health insurance	2.9	10.7
Positive anxiety screen	19.8	45.9
Positive depression screen	11.8	38.4
Lack of social supports (someone who cares about you and you can count on)	3.3	9.3
Living with one or more disabilities	49.9	69.4
Supporting children under the age of 18 years	26.2	42.0
Providing financial contribution to others	67.3	71.4

Shown in Table 6 are strategies used by survey respondents to meet basic food or housing needs. The most prevalent coping strategies reported by staff were borrowing money from family or friends (23.2%) and seeking out events with free food (15.0%).

Table 6. Strategies to Meet Basic Needs, %

Strategy	Total (n=1805)
Borrowing money from family or friends	23.2
Seeking out events with free food	15.0
Taking food that has been discarded or left behind	4.6
Sleeping in a location other than a home	1.9
Taking food without paying	2.4
Sleeping in a car	1.8
Going on a date in exchange for food or housing	1.8
Dumpster-diving	1.0
Engaging in sexual activity for food or housing	0.5

Impact of Annual Household Income

To determine the association between reported annual household income and basic needs security, we analyzed food security and housing security status, health insurance status and ability to afford health services, and mental health status for staff in five income ranges.

Nearly half (46%) of the 1,766 staff respondents to the annual household income question had less than \$55,000 per year which is well below the 2023 New Mexico median household income of \$62,268.¹⁰

As shown in Table 7, tribal institutions had the highest percentage of respondents with household incomes below \$55,000 (69%) followed by two-year institutions (48%) and four-year institutions (41%).

Table 7. Annual household income range for the three institution types, %

Annual Household Income	Tribal (n=65)	Two Year (n=951)	Four Year (n=759)	Total (n=1766)
Less than \$24,999	9.2	9.0	3.3	6.6
Between \$25,000 and \$39,999	33.8	19.0	17.7	19.0
Between \$40,000 and \$54,999	26.2	20.3	20.1	20.4
Between \$55,000 and \$69,999	15.4	15.0	16.9	15.9
More than \$70,000	7.7	28.3	36.1	30.9
Prefer not to answer	7.7	7.8	5.2	6.7



Table 8 shows the association between annual household income and negative outcomes. Respondents with lower income levels were more likely to experience very low and low food security. More than two-thirds of the 453 respondents with household incomes below \$40,000 were classified as food insecure, and nearly half of them fell into the very low food security category. On the other hand, only 12 of the 545 respondents with more than \$70,000 in annual household income were classified as food insecure.

The majority of respondents with household incomes below \$40,000 experienced housing insecurity, whereas only 25% of those bringing in more than \$70,000 per year were considered housing insecure. Although the vast majority (94%) of staff reported having health insurance, at least 10% of respondents with household income under \$40,000 did not have health insurance and more than half of them reported having difficulty affording needed health services. Nearly one-third of respondents in the lowest income range expressed that they experienced lack of reliable transportation to campus at least sometimes.

Mental health status differed by income groups as well. The presence of anxiety symptoms ranged from 20% for those with more than \$70,000 in income to nearly 40% for those with less than \$24,999 in household income per year. Similarly, the presence of depression symptoms ranged from 12% for those with more than \$70,000 to 32% for those in the lowest household income category.

Table 8. Factors Associated with Annual Household Income Ranges, %

	Less than \$24,999	Between \$25,000 and \$39,000	Between \$40,000 and \$69,999	Between \$55,000 and \$69,999	More than \$70,000
Food insecure	74%	66%	50%	40%	12%
Housing insecure	82%	74%	62%	50%	25%
No health insurance	15%	10%	5%	4%	3%
Lack of money sometimes or often prevented obtaining health services	69%	59%	59%	47%	23%
Never or sometimes had reliable transportation to campus	32%	19%	19%	15%	6%
Living with disability	53%	56%	54%	57%	49%
Presence of anxiety symptoms on GAD	38%	43%	35%	26%	20%
Presence of depression symptoms on PHQ	32%	34%	25%	20%	13%

From this brief analysis, it is clear that basic needs security and associated factors is strongly associated with annual household income level. To gain deeper insight into the effects of low income the qualitative data is essential.

QUALITATIVE DATA

Below, we present some key themes identified for two open-ended questions 1) how is food and housing insecurity affecting your work, and another about 2) solutions recommended by staff. Representative quotations are presented to provide a clear illustration of the broader trends in this data.



Affecting work

Participants were asked "How is food/housing insecurity affecting your work?" Staff spoke specifically about the ways in which their work was impacted by food insecurity, housing insecurity, financial instability, physical health, and mental and cognitive health.

Food Insecurity

Staff reported being "hungry," not being able to "eat enough," "skipping meals," "and only eating once a day" because they were unable to afford an adequate amount of food for themselves and their families. One staff shared, "I sometimes skip meals during the day due to not having the budget for meals/groceries." Many felt their performance suffered, discussing the difficulties of focusing "on an empty stomach" and getting "headaches" and feeling "faint", as well as their "work and attitude" suffering when they are "hungry and cannot afford to eat." One person explained "the lacking nutritional density I experience can create difficulties with energy levels, focus, and accuracy." Another staff employee stated, "I work better when I have a balanced meal before work. Some days I do not have one and others I do."

Some staff have been able to utilize food assistance programs to address their hunger. One staff was able to secure "SNAP" benefits and shared, "I am finally able to provide food for myself with SNAP." Another discussed utilizing the food pantry. "I sometimes have to leave work to go to a food pantry, which is an embarrassing excuse to leave."

Housing Insecurity

Key challenges around housing shared by staff included commuting and affordability.

Commuting

One staff reported needing to live in a particular community with limited housing options, so they can "get to work". Others discussed living some distance from their place of employment, and the toll it takes on them to travel "longer distance[s]." One staff reported how moving out of an "unsafe apartment" has significantly increased their commute. Another shared, "Housing insecurity is no longer an issue for me,

but the compromise I reached of living far from the city takes a toll in terms of my time (and gas money)."

Affordability

Housing affordability was a highly discussed topic. The cost of rent is impacting staff and their work life. "It is hard to want to work hard/enjoy work when one out of two paychecks each month goes completely to rent."

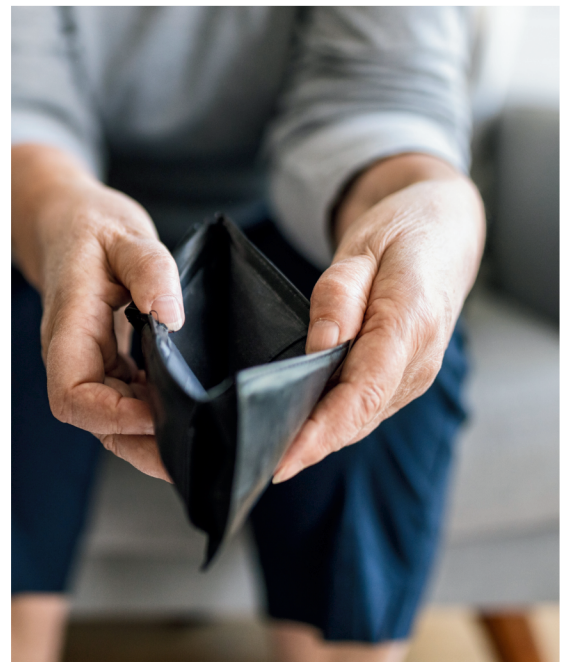
Another shared, "Housing security affects my work because I can barely afford to live in the city of my place of work." One staff explained, "If the rent goes up again after my lease is up, I probably won't be able to keep working at [name of institution] ." Another is considering an earlier retirement:

When I thought I was going to have to move, I found that my income did not measure up to current rental prices in Santa Fe. I wondered if retiring from the school and getting a new job would give me better total income to help me get by, but I am still here. The idea was not a higher-paid position; it was that I would have retirement income plus another job.

Housing costs make it challenging for people to have both safe and secure housing and the ability to afford their other basic needs. This experience was shared: "I just moved to a new apartment in Santa Fe. Rent is double what I was paying. [I] needed to cut back expenses on food/etc." Another shared, "I worry about my next meal, or if I will have enough money to pay my rent and additional bills as well as gas."

Some staff who have housing continue to live in sub-par arrangements, because they are unable to afford to move. The following document two such experiences: "I cannot afford to move out of my current household, and it has unreliable heating/cooling and water."

My [apartment] building is falling down and [the] owner makes no changes. When [he/she] does do updates, [they] raise [the] rent. I have a fridge that consistently stops cooling, so I loose my food. I have an oven that jumps to 500 degrees randomly, so I ruin/burn food. These worries make it hard to plan, prep, and save to find somewhere new. All open listings of apartments are double or more what I pay now, so I cannot afford to move somewhere better or safer. [I] do not want to move neighborhoods, even if it is unsafe, because if my car breaks I can still walk to work.





For staff needing to move housing, there is concern about cost as well as the availability. "I need to move, and there is a housing shortage, and [I don't know] if I can afford rent for me and my children."

I am currently living in senior housing, but now that I'm working full-time I will have to find new housing. Rents are so high I have been searching for a house, but can't find anything in my approval range that doesn't require major repairs I can't afford. I'm very worried about finding affordable housing when I have to leave here. Anxiety/depression when condos I thought I might be able to afford fell through because of huge repair costs. I normally do not have anxiety/depression.

Financial Stability

Staff discussed their experiences of feeling financially unstable. "I worry about bills every month. [I'm] living month-to-month." Others worried about "making ends meet" and "how to stretch paychecks." Per one staff, "Even with a full-time job, I still worry about not being able to pay all my bills, which includes housing and food." Several discussed having "insufficient funds after the basic necessities are paid for" and worrying about their future. "It makes me spend from my savings, and it worries me for the future." Another staff reiterated the concern about the inability to invest for the future. "It feels like I am just working to pay for my rent and bills (student loans, cell phone, internet, gas, insurance, etc.). Not enough money is going to savings to actually buy or build a home."

Receiving "low compensation" for their work was discussed. "I'm not paid enough to provide for my family." And, "It makes it difficult to settle into my current job knowing that, even as a salaried employee with benefits, the wages do not cover all of my living expenses and I am operating at a constant deficit." Another shared, "[It] just adds to the stress. I like my job, but it doesn't pay enough to completely support all aspects of my life." "Quality of life" also suffers when staff have inadequate income. Additionally, staff discussed how their "wages [are] not in line with industry standards." It was also noted that "the cost of living in NM does not compare to the wages we get."

There were robust responses addressing difficulties related to the increased cost of living. Common statements included “everything is so expensive” and “prices on everything increased.” Some lamented the challenges around “Unexpected things & [the] rise of grocery costs, insurance, etc.”

Others discussed their concerns about the “rising costs” while their salaries remain constant.

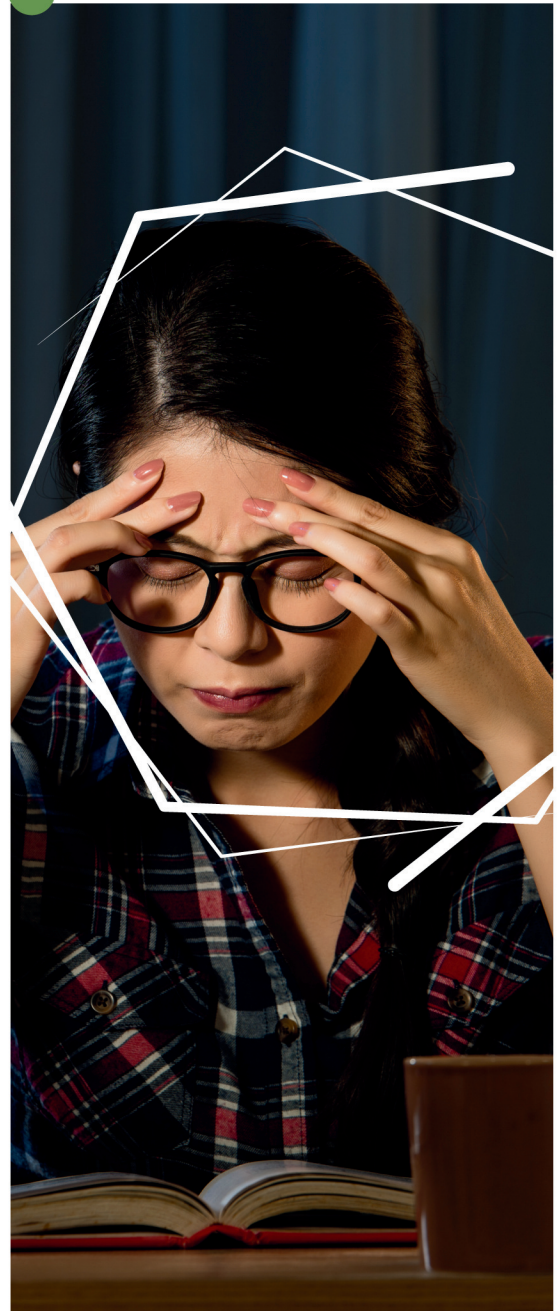
It makes me angry that it's so hard to get a raise in line with inflation. I've been with ... for over 15 years and while we get good benefits, those are also extremely expensive. Even as a single mom, I shouldn't have to struggle this much after this many years.

Staff discussed the myriad ways in which financial instability impacts their work, including distraction and poor concentration. Additionally, they discussed not being able to meet professional expectations. A staff member shared their experience of not being able to afford “business appropriate attire.” Echoing this experience, another shared the challenges of meeting professional expectations with a lack of resources.

I am not able to put forth my best self and my best work when I am hungry and stressing about how to pay the bills. We are judged on how we “show up” and it’s hard when your clothes are old, you need a haircut, you can't contribute to an office gift or potluck, can't afford the healthcare that you need, etc.

I know that I could be doing more in my work if I wasn't carrying the weight of this stress with me all the time, and I had the money that I need to take care of myself.

“



Another way financial instability impacts employment is the feeling of separation from colleagues. "I do not eat out for lunch. I am the only person in my office who goes home to eat lunch. It is cheaper. I do not engage in that 'social' aspect of lunch hour." Another shared: "I feel isolated from my co-workers. They do not know what I deal with. They have an idea and I put on a good face about it, but I struggle much more than them."

For a number of staff, acquiring extra work is necessary for their security: "I am constantly looking for more work opportunities where I can make extra money." Another shared how the need to find extra work out of necessity impacts their current job. "[I'm] spending time I should be working on finding ways to make more money." A third, who needs additional part-time work, shared: "I am also looking for a part-time job to generate additional funds, so I would be working 12-16 hour days if I secure a part-time job." Some staff reported already working one or two part-time jobs outside of their full-time positions to

be able to cover their basic expenses. This extra work causes them to feel stressed and tired with no time to relax.

... but I do have an extra job, in addition to my full time job, which I use for groceries throughout the week to lessen my stress over affording food. I have less free time and sometimes to go bed much later than I would want, because I get stuck at my other job.

To create a more stable life, numerous staff discussed looking for new jobs. Most need a "higher paying position". Others shared, "I fear I may have to resign and take a higher paying job to support myself." And "I am considering leaving my current position to make ends meet." The lack of "a living wage" in positions creates situations where people feel they need to leave, even when they like their jobs. "...I don't want to leave/change roles, but I need to make more money to support my family." And, "I love my job, but I feel like I need to find employment outside of ..., because the pay is not enough to live on and support my kids. I can make more money elsewhere." And, "I love my job but sometimes I am tempted to find a better paying one so I may survive." For a retired but returning-to-work staff, part-time employment is needed to meet their obligations.

I am retired by am working part time. The wages I get from the part-time is bridging a gap I didn't expect to have once I retired. I will not be working during the summer, and I am concerned if I will be able to meet all my obligations without the part-time wages. If not, I will have to consider getting some other part time work.



Staff summed up the challenges of working multiple jobs when they shared, "All I do is work." And "... I can never take a day off." Another shared, "...[I] can't afford to take any vacations, so [I] get no breaks from work."

Physical Health

Insecurities were reported to be associated with health issues, which in turn impact work. As one staff shared, "It affects mental and physical health, which then can impact work." Some staff discussed how their health required them to use sick leave, and miss work due to medical appointments. Others reported that growing medical bills prevent them from accessing the other basic needs. The following is an example of how insecurities impact health and work:

For the most part, poor food options due to health issues that unfortunately make the health issues worse, which spirals it out. [The] money I make is not enough to get better options more frequently, due to living in/near poverty and using credit cards or loans to stay homed and fed. While my situation is much better, I am still catching up from issues over the last decade. The stress from all of it can cause me to be less effective, efficient, and even call out of work to manage it.

Insecurities also contribute to chronic health issues: "I mostly eat foods that I fear are contributing to my pre-diabetic condition, but are affordable."

A common health discussion centered on feeling "tired," and "lethargic," as well as experiencing "fatigue." Staff shared, "I cannot get up in the mornings. I'm always tired" and "I feel weak and tired." Others talked about the difficulty of doing work when they have "very little energy" or being able to concentrate due to being hungry. One staff shared needing to "sleep in my car" in between meetings and events as a result of their insecurities.

Mental and Cognitive Health

Specific impacts were shared about mental health (stress, depression and anxiety, worry, and fear) and cognitive health (focus and concentration). These two themes are discussed separately below.

Mental Health Impact

Staff described being food and housing insecure as "stressful." One stated "it causes stress and anxiety on a daily basis." Another, "The stress makes it hard to concentrate. I don't sleep well, so that also contributes to my anxiety and stress." And, "The instability of being able to afford to be healthy and alive is just a constant stress." Several staff shared that financial concerns were at the heart of their stress: "It is stress[ful] trying to decide whether to buy groceries or pay bills." And "General financial difficulties (i.e., living paycheck-to-paycheck) causes stress to enter into every area of my life, including work." The following further depicts how work is impacted:

It has made me feel hopeless with work, [it] seems like my paycheck is gone the same day I get paid, and I feel like all of those hours work is just a waste. I feel tired because I can't sleep and I can't sleep because I am stressed or worried. I have to push myself to get through the day sometimes.

I am unable to attend school to improve my salary in my position, because I cannot afford it. The rising cost of everything (rent, food, doctor visits, gasoline) has kept me from doing anything but working, which affects my mental state and the quality of my work, because I'm burned out.

Housing insecurity further exacerbates stress. The following is one shared experience: "It makes it stressful. Although I am not in danger of losing my home, I do not want to be late on a mortgage payment or have fear of either my electricity, water or heat be[ing] shut off because I can't afford every one of my bills." This is the opinion of other staff,

I currently live at home with my parents, special needs sibling, older brother and two nieces. Food is expensive and I do not get paid enough to contribute, which means often eating less or pulling from savings accounts to help contribute. There isn't enough housing in my community, and the housing that is provided is unsafe or

outrageously expensive, making locals move elsewhere. I would like to move out of my parents' home but things are so expensive. This all affects my work because it is added stress that I do not need.

Staff members also discussed how insecurities influence and exacerbate their depression and anxiety. Insecurities "increase anxiety, which interferes with sleep, which interferes with getting to work on time and completing all of my job duties." Another shared, "I get anxious about the cost of living, and it impacts my depression." Another echoed concerns about finances: "Anxious and regrets, [I have] such a low paying position despite having a Masters."

Expending energy worrying about paying for "rent", "mortgage", "bills," "transportation," and "food" was discussed. "Sometimes I cannot focus on work, because I am [worried] about how to pay bills and get food." and "Worrying about mortgage and home insurance is challenging." Other shared: "Food and rent have increased over the year, and it has taken a toll on me mentally because I have to worry about if I have enough money for both necessities for the month."

Cognitive Impact

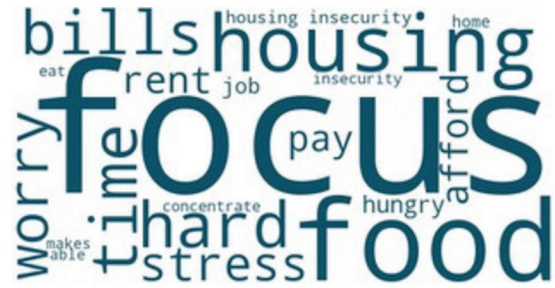
Many staff shared challenges around not being able to "focus" and "concentration" and being "distracted" at work due to insecurities. Staff shared that food and housing insecurities "preoccupies my brain and emotional power. I drag myself to work, have a hard time connecting with people and having patience since some days these insecurities are greater,

I have a lower productivity level.” Another shared “I would not focus at work, or I miss deadlines. I [often called off from] work, because mentally I am stressed. I would often make mistakes and have brain fog.”

Several staff talked about how their worries about paying bills and their living arrangements impeded their concentration. One shared, “[It] makes it hard to concentrate worrying about paying bills.” Another stated, “[It] is hard to focus on work if I’m not sure how long I will be at the place I live.”

This struggle can be pervasive. “I can’t focus on doing anything more than the bare minimum because my thoughts are always off about what I need to do, what I can afford (and can’t afford) to do, and what I could do to change my current circumstances.” Also shared, “My mind is on how I’m going to pay for bills when I am not paid well enough to survive with the job I have now. I’m not paying enough attention to my work because of these worries.”

These worries make it hard “managing workload[s], and focusing “on the daily tasks needed to be completed.” The inability to focus and concentrate at work while hungry was emphasized. “I often can’t concentrate because I don’t have enough to eat.” Another shared, “[My] lack of food makes focus difficult.” A couple of staff mentioned feeling both hungry and exhausted, which limited their ability to do their work. The lack of access to healthy food and affordable food on campus means that staff do not have the “mental stamina” or “energy” to stay focused.



Solutions

Participants were asked to share what their college or university could do to address food and housing insecurity. Four higher-level themes emerged from the qualitative data: 1) Addressing wage inequities, 2) Institutional responsibility and support, 3) Improving accessibility to food, housing, and resources, and 4) Collaborative efforts.

Addressing Wage Inequities

Staff advocated for fair wages and voiced concerns about the lack of regular raises. Many staff reported feeling overworked, underpaid, and undervalued, especially in understaffed departments where they are expected to take on additional responsibilities without the financial recognition that reflects their efforts. The following quotes illustrate the pervasive concerns around pay inequity, outdated salary structures, and the need for financial support to improve morale and productivity. “Provide regular pay raises to staff. Our salary structure is outdated and left in the past since we do not receive regular cost of living and/or merit increases annually.”

We do so much in our office, who is short staffed, and we are not getting enough pay. My office, as well as others in Student Services, have been stressed and tired, and some just don't think it is worth it to stay here.



Staff Suggested

If we were paid more, we wouldn't have to worry about not paying our rent/mortgage or bills on time, which would cut down on stress therefore increasing better productivity in all offices.

Salaries are too low. We're told there's not enough money for staff to get an increase but then we hear about new positions that pay double what those of us who have been here for years are making. New departments with high directors salaries are created.

Stop saying my PTO/Sick leave is "salary" on my pay stubs. It prevents me from qualifying for child care assistance, medical assistance, food assistance. I don't make as much as my pay stub shows. It's unfair and this is not the case for hourly employees.

I encourage the university to consider paying their staff more. \$16.85 isn't enough anymore. That isn't generous like it once was, and I'm afraid that I'll have to move back in with my parents at 23 because the cost of living is going up faster than my salary is.

Give raises, hire staff that have commensurate skills for the job, pay people what their skills are worth in the competitive market. The State Auditor should do a salary evaluation for all State Universities and make the salaries and wages consistent.

That is why we lose so many good colleagues. We also should be able to receive a certain amount of mental health days to use to recuperate and de-stress.

Providing More Support

Staff members also underscored the need for robust support systems to combat food and housing insecurity ranging from sharing information about support services and programs to addressing systemic issues like discrimination and historical factors.

More advertising on where to access free food. Better coordination and marketing of housing availability; it feels almost impossible to find info on shared housing, low-cost housing, shelter housing, what to do if you have NO housing, etc.

Address root causes and provide resources to fix this issue long term. There are many root causes, including trauma, historical discrimination, racism, transphobia, homophobia, etc. We need institutions, like ..., to really address causes at the root level and put resources there to fund the prevention and treatment of some of the root causes.

Improving Accessibility to Food and Housing

Staff members advocated for a more inclusive approach to campus food services, emphasizing the need for fresh and culturally significant food options. They suggested expanding food pantries' hours, accessibility, and marketing and highlighted the importance of providing affordable, healthier meal choices on campus. Staff also advocated for employee housing.



Food

Provide food options on campus that aren't dependent on food trucks, vending machines and a coffee shop / junk food.

I think the food pantry is a great way to address food insecurity, but I think we need to do more at I would love to see the food pantry grow to more- become a place where students, staff and faculty can go for clothing, furniture, assistance with apply for state/government assistance, legal and mental counseling, etc.

No flyer or commercial advertisement for the food pantry is provided to everyone, only students. I am not a student.

Housing

Continue providing employee housing and do not do away with it. The last time I asked the college, they said they were doing away with employee housing. Living closer to campus would help me financially and with time. It takes me about an hour to drive to work and drive home. It gets tiring, and gas prices are high, which cost me \$160 a week for gas.

I believe in having housing open for those who commute further or having more staff housing.

Collaborative Efforts

Staff perspectives also emphasized the role of collaborative efforts with local communities in tackling the root causes of basic needs insecurity. Suggestions included working with state agencies to streamline access to the Supplemental Nutrition Access Program, SNAP, for students and reallocating funds towards initiatives that enhance campus attractiveness and support, such as improving city infrastructure and implementing anti-bullying programs.

Staff Suggested

Maybe expand the food pantry to all campuses, or collaborate with grocery stores nearby to those campuses to see if they could provide the students, faculty, and staff with healthy food options that discounted / are getting ready to go out of date.

Stronger partnerships with food pantry, working harder to be a strong voice countering the often older community that fears the local homeless shelter, their work, and the homeless population.

CONCLUSION

Working in higher education offers many advantages, including opportunities for continued learning, health insurance, and retirement benefits. Yet, our findings reveal a troubling contradiction: although 93% of survey respondents are employed full-time, many are not living what could be considered a “good life.” Through open-ended responses, we heard from staff members facing food insecurity and financial hardship that they are often compelled to seek additional employment. High housing costs, forced relocations, and difficulty paying bills contribute to chronic stress and erode any sense of stability. These conditions suggest that too many individuals on New Mexico campuses are not living lives marked by dignity.

While this study did not aim to uncover the systemic causes of needs insecurity, we hope it will serve as a catalyst for action within the higher education community. As one scholar observed, hunger is often an “orphaned issue” in political discourse—its complexity makes it difficult to assign blame, and therefore easy to ignore.¹¹ But rather than focusing solely on identifying causes, we must also ask: who has the power to respond now?

We call for a politics of responsibility—an approach that urges those connected to a problem to take meaningful steps toward addressing it. In the context of higher education, responsibility lies with multiple actors: state and federal governments, colleges and universities, and the individuals within them.¹²

Each has a role to play in ensuring that non-teaching staff can meet their basic needs.

Fortunately, Governor Luhan Grisham has invested political, social, and financial capital in addressing hunger. Further, even before this report was completed, higher education staff were among the first to join the New Mexico Basic Needs Consortium (NM BNC). These individuals, many of whom serve students facing similar struggles, are often navigating the same hardships themselves. They exemplify the Consortium’s core belief: that the solutions to our challenges can be found within our own communities. Through regular meetings and shared practices, the NM BNC is fostering collaboration and driving local, practical responses to needs insecurity.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggestions are categorized by responsible stakeholders: State & Federal Government, Colleges & Universities, and Staff Councils & Unions. Strategies include both immediate support mechanisms and long-term structural reforms.

State and Federal Government

Policy and Funding

- Minimum Wage Standards for Public Institutions – Mandate living wage minimums at publicly funded colleges and universities.
- Expand SNAP Eligibility – Remove federal restrictions that exclude part-time or low-paid higher education workers from SNAP.
- Affordable Housing Incentives – Fund the development of workforce housing near colleges and universities.
- Student Loan Forgiveness for Staff – Expand loan forgiveness programs to include full- and part-time higher education staff.

College & Universities

Compensation and Benefits

- Pay Equity and Living Wage Initiatives – Commit to a campus-wide living wage and perform regular wage audits.
- Housing Support Programs – Develop or subsidize on-campus or near-campus housing for staff.
- Food Access Initiatives – Create or expand on-campus food pantries and implement “swipe donation” programs.

- Benefits Modernization – Subsidize child care and transportation. For lower paid staff, provide greater subsidies for health insurance, health care, and parking.
- Emergency Relief Funds – Establish staff-focused emergency assistance funds for rent, utilities, groceries, or other financial difficulties.
- Flexible Scheduling and Remote Work Options – Reduce commuting and related expenses with hybrid work options.

Staff Councils

Advocacy and Support

- Resource Navigation Programs – Train peer advocates to assist colleagues with locating and accessing SNAP housing, and financial literacy resources.
- Food & Housing Security Committees – Conduct needs surveys and create basic needs task forces.
- Partnerships with Local Nonprofits – Collaborate with food banks and housing coalitions for campus workshops and services.
- Staff Mutual Aid Networks – Coordinate efforts to pool resources like ride shares, food drives, and temporary housing.

APPENDIX A - EXPANDED METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

Methods

The UNM Basic Needs Project (BNP) team led the conceptualization, administration, and analysis of the Statewide Basic Needs Survey. The BNP team and the NM Higher Education Department (NM HED) 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 IRBs at participating Tribal colleges.

The BNP and NM HED 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 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.

This report presents data for staff survey participants only. A report on students and faculty are available at www.basicneeds.unm.edu. Participants that reported being a part-time or full-time student and faculty or staff were categorized as students and are not included in this report.

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 cleaning data prior to analysis.

Final Dataset

A total of 18,359 responses were received via Qualtrics and 10 paper surveys were returned to the research team for a total of 18,369 participants. Nine-hundred fifty-five did not complete all screening questions and an additional 668 were ineligible based on screening question responses. Other exclusions included reCAPTCHA score <0.50 (n=780), duplicate responses (n=252), and incomplete USDA Adult FSSM (n=1,255).

Analysis of free text responses to open-ended questions identified 772 additional participants for exclusion. Twenty-five were excluded for missing participant "type" or indicating they were retired. In total, 4,707 responses were removed (25.6%) and the final analytic sample included 13,662 unique participants (74.4%) resulting in final sample sizes of 9,995 students, 1,712 faculty and upper-level administrators, and 1,955 staff which are included in this report.

The qualitative data were analyzed using two different methods. 1) Two researchers from the UNM research team analyzed the open-ended data by question. A codebook was created for each question using relevant themes based on the data. Data were coded in NVivo in an iterative process, refining and adjusting codes as needed. Themes were developed from the codes to capture overarching patterns in the data. Quotes were then selected that illuminate the themes. The two researchers met regularly to discuss the process and ensure consistency in approach and reported back to the larger research team.

They analyzed two open-ended questions. These questions are: a) "How is food/housing insecurity affecting your work?" and b) "What more could your college or university do to address food and housing insecurity? Please share a solution(s)."

2) The qualitative data were also analyzed using advanced Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques through collaboration with the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology's Institute for Complex Additive Systems Analysis (ICASA). The analysis focused on two main components to extract themes and meaningful insights from the open-ended responses.

Topic modeling was implemented to identify and group recurring themes in the responses.

Parameters were configured to ensure meaningful topic separation while preserving important contextual language in participants' responses.

For each identified topic, the analysis extracted and ranked representative keywords based on their frequency within the topic, using the KeyBERT framework. Keywords were limited to those actually present in the responses and ranked by their occurrence, providing a quantitative measure of the most salient terms within each theme.

The results were summarized to include topic frequencies, representative examples (survey responses that exemplified each theme), and ranked keywords for each identified theme in the responses.

Both sets of qualitative analysis informed the conclusions of this report.

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 sociodemographic 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.

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 1. Strategies to Meet Basic Needs, %

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

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 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.

A single affirmative response to any of the nine indicators included in the housing security measure indicated housing insecurity. Participants 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.

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.



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.

Finally, 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.

APPENDIX B - DEMOGRAPHIC TABLE OF STAFF STUDY PARTICIPANTS (N=1,955)

Age category	n	%
18-24	96	4.9
25-34	461	23.6
35-44	498	25.5
45-54	446	22.81
55-64	359	18.4
65 and older	95	4.9
Total	1955	
Race/ethnicity		
Asian	26	1.5
Black	29	1.6
Hispanic	511	28.7
Native American	132	7.4
Other/prefer not to say	105	5.9
Two or more	215	12.1
White	764	42.9
Total	1782	
Gender		
Gender variant	43	2.4
Man	410	23.1
Other/prefer not to say	29	1.6
Woman	1295	72.9
Total	1777	
Sexuality		
Bisexual	136	7.7
Gay or lesbian	72	4.1
Multiple or other	65	3.7
Prefer not to say	95	5.3
Straight/heterosexual	1410	79.33
Total	1778	
Children under 18		
No	1317	67.4
Yes	638	32.6
Total	1955	
Contribute financially to anyone		
No	552	31.0
Yes	1227	69.0
Total	1779	

Income		
Less than \$10,000	18	1.0
\$10,000 - \$24,999	97	5.5
\$25,000 - \$39,999	336	19.1
\$40,000 - \$54,999	361	20.5
\$55,000 - \$69,000	280	15.9
More than \$70,000	545	30.9
Prefer not to say	545	30.9
Varies by semester	<10	0.5
Total	1764	
NM Resident		
No	65	3.7
Yes	1715	96.4
Total	1780	
Military Status		
Current active-duty	<10	0.2
Never served	1670	94.3
Veteran/Previously served	97	5.5
Total	1771	



APPENDIX C - "PREVALENCE AND INDIVIDUAL INDICATORS"

Prevalence of locations slept in the past 12 months

In the last 12 months, have you slept	Staff (1,955)
Temporarily staying with a relative, friend, or couch surfing until I find other housing	4.6
Hotel or motel	1.4
In a camper (not camping)	1.5
Closed area/space with a roof not meant for human habitations (e.g. abandoned building, car, truck, RV, camper, etc.)	1.4
At a shelter	0.5
Outdoor location (e.g. street, sidewalk, alley, bus or train stop, campground or woods, park, beach, etc.)	0.8
Transitional housing or independent living program	0.3
Treatment center (e.g. detox, hospital)	0.5
Group home (e.g. halfway house, residential program)	0.5

Homelessness defined as an affirmative response to one or more location.

Prevalence of affirmative responses (%) to the USDA 18-item Household Food Security Survey Module by respondent type

USDA Indicators (past 12 months)	Staff %
Worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more ^a	42.5
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals ^a	45.4
Food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more ^a	37.5
Cut the size of your meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food ^a	63.0
Cut size/skipped meals some months or almost every month	82.9
Ate less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food ^b	60.0
Hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food ^b	45.0
Lost weight because there wasn't enough money for food ^b	27.7
Didn't eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food ^b	23.4
Didn't eat for a whole day some months or almost every month	85.5
Relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed my children because I was running out of money to buy food ^a	52.4
Couldn't feed my children a balanced meal because I couldn't afford that ^a	40.1
My child was not eating enough because I just couldn't afford enough food	20.0
Cut the size of your children's meals because there wasn't enough money for food ^b	25.8
Child skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food ^b	15.0
Child skipped meals some months or every month	94.0
Child was hungry but you just couldn't afford more food ^b	22.3
Child didn't eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food ^b	9.9

Affirmative responses defined as ^a"Often true" or "Sometimes true" and ^b"Yes"

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⁶ Center for Nutrition. (n.d.). *Nutrition security*. <https://www.centerfornutrition.org/nutrition-security>

⁷ The question was, "What are your thoughts about food availability on your campus?"

⁸ More than 2 out of 5 of people facing hunger are unlikely to qualify for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)" <https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/overall-executive-summary>

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2023) *QuickFacts: New Mexico*. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/NM/INC110223>

¹⁰ Jurkovich, M. (2020) *Feeding the hungry: Advocacy and blame in the global fight against hunger*. Cornell University Press.

¹¹ Sinkink, K. (2020). *The hidden face of rights: Towards a politics of responsibilities*. Yale University Press.



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