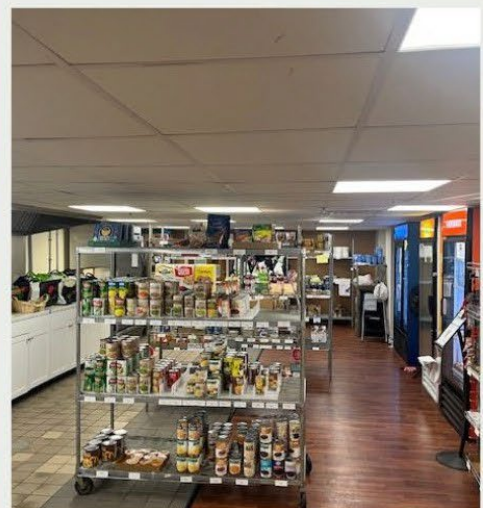


# 2025 CSCU Report on Student Food Insecurity



**CSCU**



## ***Overview***

Food insecurity has become a persistent and well-documented challenge on college campuses nationwide, affecting students' health, well-being, and academic success. National studies estimate that one in three to one in four college students experience some level of food insecurity, with even higher rates among first-generation students, low-income learners, and students of color. As colleges increasingly recognize that basic needs are foundational to persistence and completion, institutions, and systems across the country, including ours, have begun implementing coordinated strategies to reduce barriers and expand access to reliable, nutritious food. Within our system, institutions are taking proactive steps, such as expanding campus food pantries; offering meal-share and emergency meal programs; connecting students to federal supports like SNAP; integrating basic-needs screening into advising and case-management workflows; partnering with community organizations; and developing data-informed approaches to track usage and close service gaps. Collectively, these efforts reflect a growing commitment to addressing food insecurity not only as a student-life concern, but as a core component of our enrollment, retention, and student-success mission.

## ***Food Insecurity on U.S. College Campuses***

Food insecurity, defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as limited or uncertain access to adequate food, remains a significant concern for college students across the United States. Nationally representative data from the 2020 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study indicate that approximately 23% of college students, or nearly 4 million individuals, experienced food insecurity early in the COVID-19 pandemic, including 23% of undergraduates and 12% of graduate students. Campus-level studies suggest even higher prevalence rates: a large meta-analysis of 51 samples found that 41–43% of surveyed students experienced food insecurity, with community and two-year colleges reporting rates approaching 50%, compared to the high-30% range at four-year institutions. Research consistently shows disproportionate impacts on Black, Indigenous, Pacific Islander, Latinx, first-generation, low-income, and parenting students, many of whom experience food insecurity at rates exceeding 30–50%.

These inequities are deeply connected to academic and well-being outcomes, including lower GPAs, academic distress, and elevated levels of anxiety and depression. Collectively, the national evidence underscores that food access is central to student success, persistence, and equity, not a peripheral student service.

## ***CSCU System-Wide Response***

The Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) system has made significant, system-wide progress in addressing food insecurity and supporting students' basic needs. Across our four universities, CT State Community College, and Charter Oak State College, campuses have expanded access to on-site food pantries, emergency meal programs, and community partnerships that connect students with fresh, culturally responsive food resources. These efforts are bolstered by cross-campus collaboration, shared learning networks, and intentional coordination between Student Services, basic needs teams, community organizations, and state partners. Through these integrated and equity-minded strategies, CSCU continues to emerge as a statewide leader in reducing basic-needs barriers, promoting student well-being, and ensuring that no student's academic success is disrupted by hunger or a lack of access to healthy food. Below is a report outlining the efforts of our six institutions, beginning with CT State Community College campuses.

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## CT State Asnuntuck – Pantry & Wellness Center

**Contacts:** sherry.paquette@ctstate.edu; hope.gove@ctstate.edu

**Website:** <https://ctstate.edu/food-pantries#asnuntuck>

**Summary:** Asnuntuck's Pantry & Wellness Center offers canned goods, produce, dairy, soy products, and frozen meats, supported by strong community partnerships. The pantry provides a private, stigma-free environment and offers membership-based access that includes family-size tracking for planning. Signature programs include an Order Ahead online system (piloted with CT Foodshare), healthy snack stations, and holiday baskets. The pantry emphasizes dignity, abundance, and retention-focused support.

**Special Resources:** Order-Ahead online system, Resource Hub, snack stations, holiday baskets

**Sponsors:** CT Foodshare, Stop & Shop, SGA, Enfield Food Shelf, and Enfield Loaves & Fishes

**Top Needs:** Meat, produce, dairy

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## CT State Capital – Capital Cares Food Pantry

**Contacts:** Randall.Ward@ctstate.edu; CA\_FoodPantry@ctstate.edu

**Website:** <https://ctstate.edu/food-pantries#capital>

**Summary:** Capital Cares provides fresh produce, canned goods, frozen meats, oils, juice, and expanded personal care items. The pantry distinguishes itself by offering ethnic and culturally familiar foods, nursing uniforms, and seasonal clothing. It supports both students and community members and relies heavily on donor contributions and the Student Activity Fund.

**Special Resources:** Ethnic foods, hygiene products, nursing uniforms, winter gear

**Sponsors:** Stop & Shop, local donors, Student Activity Fund

**Top Needs:** Non-perishables, personal care products, produce

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## CT State Gateway – Campus Cupboard

**Contacts:** melissa.lopez@ctstate.edu; samantha.rosa3@ctstate.edu

**Website:** <https://ctstate.edu/food-pantries#gateway>

**Summary:** Gateway's Campus Cupboard provides extensive resources, including shelf-stable products, frozen meats, fresh produce, hygiene products, baby supplies, and a daily snack bar. PantrySoft enables online appointments, with walk-ins welcome. The pantry hosts Holiday Basket programs and supports household food security through 4-for-1 bulk items.

**Special Resources:** Baby formula & diapers, gluten-free/vegan options, 4-for-1 household items

**Sponsors:** Gateway Foundation, Stop & Shop, individual donors

**Top Needs:** Frozen meats, canned goods, pasta/rice

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## CT State Housatonic

**Contacts:** Assunta.franco@ctstate.edu; Mario.pierce@ctstate.edu

**Website:** <https://ctstate.edu/food-pantries#housatonic>

**Summary:** Housatonic's pantry serves students twice per month with self-selected units of non-perishables, fresh produce, and frozen meats, with no student turned away. A robust Grab-n-Go snack counter serves over 430 students weekly. The pantry receives substantial support through Stop & Shop grants, CT Foodshare programs, and Dignity Grows hygiene kits.

**Special Resources:** Grab-n-Go snack counter, hygiene totes, TEFAP & GPP food programs, monthly mobile pantry

**Sponsors:** Stop & Shop grant, CT Foodshare, Student Senate

**Top Needs:** Cereal, oatmeal, pasta sauce

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## CT State Manchester – Cougar Pantry & Career Closet

**Contacts:** lbruno@manchestercc.edu; tbarber@manchestercc.edu

**Website:** <https://ctstate.edu/food-pantries#manchester>

**Summary:** Manchester's Cougar Pantry offers food, casual and career clothing, diapers, toiletries, and SNAP application assistance. Students can access the pantry anytime via campus police. The pantry partners extensively with community groups and donors, while also maintaining a Career Clothing Closet and wellness referral network.

**Special Resources:** Career clothing closet, baby supplies, SNAP application support

**Sponsors:** Foodshare, SBM Foundation, Manchester Women's Club, Midwest Foodbank

**Top Needs:** Snacks, pasta, frozen meats, hygiene supplies

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## CT State Middlesex – Pegasus Free Market

**Contacts:** sara.hanson@ctstate.edu; amy.lagerstrom@ctstate.edu

**Website:** <https://ctstate.edu/food-pantries#middlesex>

**Summary:** The Pegasus Free Market provides perishable and shelf-stable foods, school and hygiene supplies, pet items, and gluten-free options. Unique campus assets include a 7,000 sq. ft. produce garden supplying fresh vegetables and a satellite pantry at Platt High School. The pantry has secured over \$85,000 in grants and donations since its inception.

**Special Resources:** On-campus produce garden, high-school satellite pantry

**Sponsors:** CT Foodshare, CUNO Foundation, Stop & Shop, and multiple community foundations

**Top Needs:** Grab-and-go foods, pasta, frozen meat, cleaning products

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## CT State Naugatuck Valley – Waterbury & Danbury

**Contacts:** angela.chapman@ctstate.edu; Omayra.Vasquez@ctstate.edu; elizabeth.catuccio@ctstate.edu

**Website:** <https://nvccfoundation.org/student-resources/student-food-pantry>

**Summary:** Serving both campuses, NVCC recorded ~5,000 pantry visits in 2024–25. Services include grocery programs, home delivery (Danbury), grab-and-go snacks, diaper support, and emergency grocery gift cards. The NVCC Foundation allocated \$28,856 this year to sustain operations.

**Special Resources:** Home delivery, diaper program, grocery gift cards, Thanksgiving baskets

**Sponsors:** NVCC Foundation, CT Foodshare, The Diaper Bank, Stop & Shop, EFSP/United Way

**Top Needs:** Ramen, Nutri-Grain bars, microwavable mac & cheese cups

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## CT State Northwestern – Food for Thought Pantry

**Contacts:** crystal.wiggins@ctstate.edu; todd.bryda@ctstate.edu

**Website:** <https://ctstate.edu/food-pantries#northwestern>

**Summary:** Northwestern’s Food for Thought Pantry offers student appointments multiple days per week and is supplemented by CT Foodshare’s Mobile Pantry, which provides fresh produce in a no-barrier, market-style format. The Moose Crunch Snack Cabinet supports students with grab-and-go items. Fundraisers and Innovation Grants help sustain the pantry.

**Special Resources:** Mobile Food Pantry, snack cabinet, annual fundraisers

**Sponsors:** Stop & Shop, CT Foodshare, campus fundraisers

**Top Needs:** Canned goods, toiletries, cereal bars, cup noodles

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## CT State Norwalk – The Pantry @ Norwalk

**Contacts:** amanda.degeorge@ctstate.edu; courtney.anstett@ctstate.edu

**Website:** <https://ctstate.edu/food-pantries#norwalk>

**Summary:** The Pantry @ Norwalk offers grab-and-go snacks, produce, frozen proteins, toiletries, and menstrual care products. The pantry operates on an honor system, requiring only a student ID. It focuses on reducing barriers and supporting academic persistence through dignity-centered access.

**Special Resources:** Menstrual care, frozen proteins, honor-system access

**Sponsors:** Foundation, CT Foodshare, CT Food Rescue, Stop & Shop

**Top Needs:** Rice, beans, oil

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## CT State Quinebaug Valley – Grab & Go Pantry

**Contacts:** tanaya.walters@ctstate.edu

**Website:** <https://ctstate.edu/food-pantries#quinebaug-valley>

**Summary:** Quinebaug Valley operates a Grab & Go Pantry restocked twice weekly by Stop & Shop and UNFI donations. Classroom snack baskets ensure real-time access for students. Emergency grocery gift cards are available through the CARE Referral process. A biweekly newsletter connects students to community resources.

**Special Resources:** Snack baskets in classrooms; emergency gift cards; community newsletter.

**Sponsors:** Stop & Shop; UNFI

**Top Needs:** Granola bars, single-serve noodle/cup meals, pasta & sauce

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## CT State Three Rivers – Full Plate Food Pantry

**Contacts:** (no emails listed in sheet; campus-level contacts included)

**Website:** <https://ctstate.edu/food-pantries#three-rivers>

**Summary:** Demand at Three Rivers has grown significantly, with a 30% increase in households and 45% increase in individuals served from 2024–2025. The pantry distributes non-perishables, beverages, hygiene items, cleaning supplies, and pet food. UConn dietitians host nutrition and cooking workshops. Major fundraisers include Penny Wars and Empty Bowls.

**Special Resources:** UConn nutrition workshops, pet food, Mobile Food Pantry, TEFAP distribution

**Sponsors:** United Way, CT Foodshare, Stop & Shop, Follett Bookstore, SGA

**Top Needs:** Laundry detergent, diapers, menstrual products

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## CT State Tunxis – The Pantry @ Tunxis

**Contacts:** ashley.foster@ctstate.edu; sydney.lake@ctstate.edu

**Website:** <https://ctstate.edu/food-pantries#tunxis>

**Summary:** The Pantry @ Tunxis supports students, faculty, and staff with non-perishables, hygiene products, and household supplies. Students can visit unlimited times each month (20 items per visit). A Virtual Shopping Form remains popular, offering customized care-package pickup. Seasonal programs include Spring Bags and Thanksgiving Baskets with food gift cards.

**Special Resources:** Virtual ordering, household essentials, children's books

**Sponsors:** Stop & Shop, Foodshare, Tunxis Foundation, Dignity Grows

**Top Needs:** Dish detergent, laundry detergent, canned corned beef

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## CT State Community College: Holistic Student Support (HSS) Survey Overview

The CT State Community College Holistic Student Support (HSS) Survey is a systemwide assessment administered to currently enrolled, credit-seeking students to better understand their academic, personal, and holistic needs. The survey collects information across a wide range of domains, including employment status, transportation patterns, caregiving responsibilities, access to technology, food/ housing insecurity, and the level of social and familial support available to students. Data is essential to institutional planning, resource distribution, and compliance with state requirements related to student basic needs, including Public Act 22-101.

The survey is distributed during the first twelve weeks of both the fall and spring semesters. Students receive an email invitation to their CT State account, followed by up to 7 reminders if they have not completed the

survey. To ensure data integrity, each student may complete the survey only once per term.

For the 2024–25 academic year, CT State received 14,014 total survey submissions, representing 11,288 unique student respondents. As part of CT State’s ongoing commitment to mitigating food insecurity and expanding access to basic needs resources across campuses, the HSS Survey incorporated targeted questions aligned with PA 22-101. These questions focused specifically on student awareness of food resources, experiences with food insecurity, and interest in receiving additional information about available supports.

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### **PA 22-101 Food Insecurity–Related Survey Questions**

Question 12: Please indicate if any of the following statements apply to you (check all that apply):

- I am a veteran
- I am actively serving in the armed forces
- I am receiving SNAP benefits
- In the past 6 months, I have been worried about having consistent access to food
- In the past 6 months, I have been worried about having a consistent and safe place to sleep
- None of these statements apply to me

Question 15: I am interested in receiving additional information about the following (check all that apply):

- Food resources
  - Housing resources
  - Mental health resources
  - Childcare resources
  - Veteran’s resources
  - Educational accommodations
  - Financial aid/scholarship resources
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### **Key Findings Related to Food Resources and Food Insecurity:**

Of the 11,288 unique student respondents, the following was found:

- 983 students (8.71%) indicated they were receiving SNAP benefits at the time they completed the survey.
- 919 students (8.14%) reported they had been worried about having consistent access to food within the past six months.
- 2,307 students (20.44%) expressed that they would like additional information about food resources available through their home campus.

These findings highlight the ongoing prevalence of food insecurity among CT State students and reinforce the pressing demand for improved communication, outreach, and access to campus food resources.

In addition, CT State Community College President Dr. Royal provided \$37,500 in supplemental funding during the federal shutdown to ensure the continued operations of campus food pantries. This investment helped stabilize services during a period of heightened student need. More information can be found in the November 6, 2025, President’s Post: <https://ctstate.edu/president/communications>

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## Charter Oak State College

With the generous support of Stop & Shop, Charter Oak State College (COSC) has created a virtual food pantry to support students facing food insecurity:

**Gift Cards:** COSC, through the Office Academic Services, provides emergency gift cards to Stop & Shop via a [Virtual Food Bank Request Form](#) for students in need. Upon approval of the request, the gift cards are then mailed to the student.

**The Virtual Food Bank will remain available until funds are depleted for the year.**

**Contact:** Wanda Warshauer, Director of Academic Services, [wwarshauer@charteroak.edu](mailto:wwarshauer@charteroak.edu)

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## Central Connecticut State University (CCSU)

Central remains committed to addressing food insecurity within their campus community. At the heart of this effort is Maria's Place, the University's food pantry named in memory of Maria A. Alvarez, who dedicated more than 32 years of service to Central and was deeply loved by students, faculty, and staff. Maria's Place welcomes all members of the Central community to visit the food pantry once per week. All shoppers' check-in and complete a form that collects their Central ID number, contact information, and number of people in their household.

**Key Partnerships & Contributions:** Stop & Shop School Food Pantry Program awarded Maria's Place \$7,000 for the 2024-2025 academic year and \$10,000 for the 2025-2026 academic year. Maria's Place has also been selected numerous times to benefit from the Stop & Shop Bloomin' 4 Good Program. Sodexo, Central's food service provider, has partnered with the national "Swipe Out Hunger" program. Through this partnership, Central can provide eligible students with "swipes" for free meals in the Dining Hall.

Maria's Place was accepted to join the Connecticut Foodshare partner program network. During the 2024-2025 academic year over \$43,000 was obtained from external sources to support Maria's Place.

### **Key Findings Related to Food Resources and Food Insecurity:**

During the 2024-2025 academic year and the fall 2025 semester CCSU distributed a total of 6,010 meal swipes to students experiencing food and/or housing insecurity:

- o Fall 2024 – 2,000
- o Spring 2025 – 2,010
- o Fall 2025 – 2,000

**Contacts:** Courtney McDavid, Special Project Administrator, Office of the President

**Email:** [mcdavidc@ccsu.edu](mailto:mcdavidc@ccsu.edu), Phone: 860.832.3003

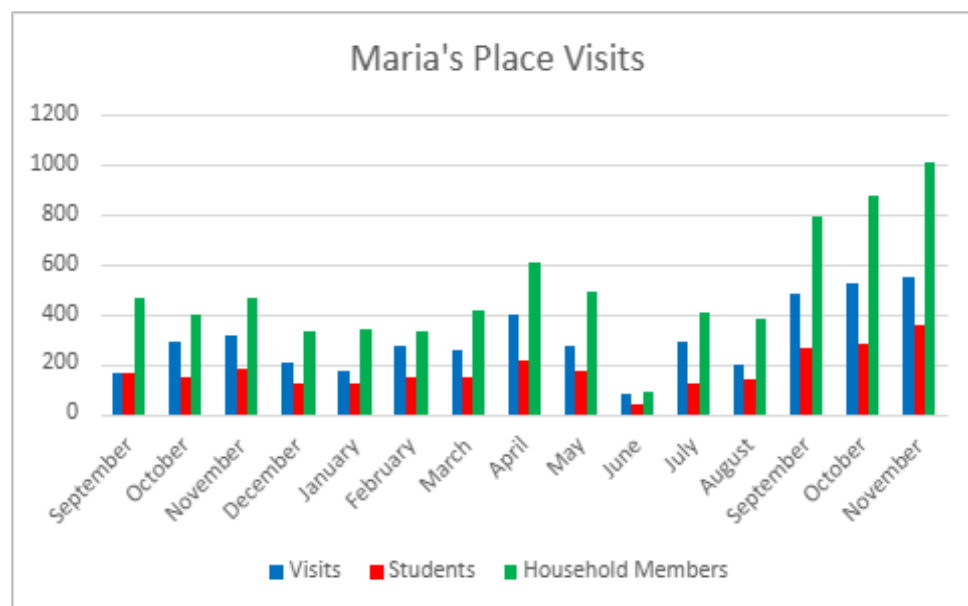
**Email:** [foodpantry@ccsu.edu](mailto:foodpantry@ccsu.edu)

**Website:** <https://www.ccsu.edu/mariasplace>

**Maria's Place Data for 2024-2025 Academic Year and Fall 2025 Semester**



Year	Month	Total Visits	Total Students (Unduplicated Visits)	Household Members	Unduplicated Household Members
2024	July	42	42	49	49
2024	August	75	74	163	163
2024	September	168	167	463	463
2024	October	292	148	832	399
2024	November	316	183	824	463
2024	December	209	122	560	335
2025	January	177	127	488	345
2025	February	271	151	731	337
2025	March	261	151	622	419
2025	April	398	212	1148	607
2025	May	273	178	787	490
2025	June	82	37	197	93
2025	July	293	120	1078	409
2025	August	196	137	574	386
2025	September	480	262	1393	792
2025	October	528	286	1523	879
2025	November	549	360	1568	1010
2025	December				
AY 2024-2025		2365	1439	6455	3858
Fall 2025		1557	908	4484	2681



#### **Food Insecurity:**

Central Connecticut State University identifies food insecurity through use of FAFSA as well as an anonymous survey.

**Survey Results:**

Central administers a [Food & Housing Insecurity survey](#) to all students annually. Questions were developed using the [USDA definitions](#) for Low Food Security (reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet and little or no indication of reduced food intake) and Very Low Food Security (reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake). The most recent survey results from Fall 2024 (Table 1) reveal that 55 percent of survey respondents reported that they could not afford to eat balanced meals and 47 percent reported they had to reduce the size of their meals because they didn't have enough money to purchase more food. Just over a quarter of students (27 percent) reported they went at least one day a week without eating because of their financial situation.

Question	Response Summary						
	Response	Undergraduate		Graduate		Overall	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Total Responses</b>		<b>1252</b>		<b>269</b>		<b>1633</b>	
<b>Food Access</b>							
In the last three months, how often have you worried whether your food would run out before you had money to buy more?	Sometimes, Often, or Very Often	661	53%	108	40%	830	51%
In the last three months, how often has the food you bought not lasted, and you didn't have money to buy more?		611	49%	94	35%	763	47%
In the last three months, how often could you not afford to eat a balanced meal?		712	57%	118	44%	891	55%
How often did you have to cut the size of your meals because you didn't have enough money for food?	Sometimes, Often, or Very Often	599	48%	103	38%	761	47%

How frequently have you gone a full day without eating due to finances?	1, 2, or 3 times a week or more	365	29%	45	17%	447	27%
Do you utilize SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits?	Yes	81	6%	19	7%	110	7%
<b>Food Pantry</b>							
Are you familiar with CCSU Food Pantry: Maria's Place?	Yes	797	64%	108	40%	970	59%
<b>How did you learn about Maria's Place Food Pantry? (Select all that apply.)</b>							
At Orientation event		314	25%	21	8%	351	36%
An On-Campus event		158	13%	18	7%	182	19%
Faculty		171	14%	23	9%	200	21%
Counselor or Staff		96	8%	11	4%	109	11%
Website		121	10%	20	7%	147	15%
Brochure or Poster		165	13%	24	9%	193	20%

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## Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU)

Eastern Connecticut State University provides a comprehensive array of programs to address food insecurity and basic needs among students. [Shawn's Cupboard](#), the campus food pantry overseen by Campus Ministry, has expanded significantly through its partnership with CT Foodshare and continued support from Stop & Shop. These collaborations allow the pantry to stock a wide variety of fresh, frozen, and shelf-stable foods at reduced cost. Open Monday through Friday and staffed by volunteers, the pantry also offers individualized pick-up arrangements to ensure access for all students.

### Key Findings Related to Food Resources and Food Insecurity:

During Fall 2025, demand for the pantry grew sharply, with student visits rising from 271 to 475 between September 2 and October 15, a 75% increase.

Eastern also operates "Swipe it Forward," a Chartwells-supported initiative that enables students with meal plans to donate unused swipes, which the Dean of Students then distributes to peers experiencing food insecurity.

In addition to food resources, Eastern's Dean of Students' office administers Basic Needs Emergency Funding to support students facing acute financial hardship, providing assistance for essential needs beyond food. The university also offers Warriors Thrift, a student-run shop that redistributes gently used clothing, home goods, and residence-hall essentials collected during the annual Warriors Do not Waste Move Out event. Open three days a week (Tuesday- Thursday, 3-7pm) and staffed by 18 student volunteers, the thrift shop saw 365 visitors in Fall 2025, during which students accessed more than 1,092 free items.

**Basic Needs Survey:** Eastern continues to strengthen its understanding of student needs through systematic data collection. A Basic Needs Survey aligned with PA 22-101 was launched in 2023 and will be re-administered in Spring 2026 to both commuter and residential students.

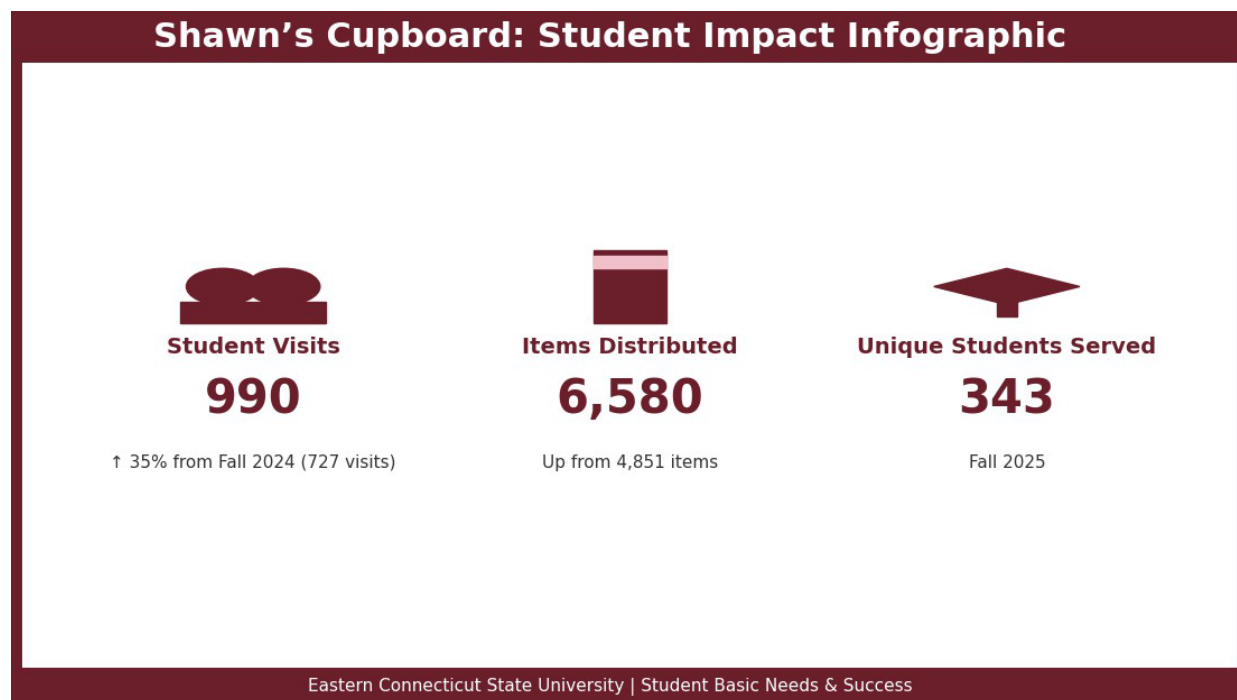
Housing & Residential Life is also conducting a *Perception of Housing Survey* containing the same basic-needs indicators, enabling comparative analysis. Counseling & Psychological Services further includes an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) item related to food insecurity as part of its intake assessment; (31 students)12% of students responded affirmatively in 2022–2023, increasing slightly to (34 students)13% in 2024–2025. Together, these initiatives reflect Eastern's sustained commitment to supporting student well-being and addressing the multifaceted challenges associated with food and basic needs insecurity.

*\*Adverse Childhood Experiences question "Did you feel you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes or had no one to protect you."*

**2024-2025 Data: Shawn's Cupboard has experienced a significant increase in student utilization over the past year.**

During Fall 2024, the pantry recorded 727 student visits and distributed 4,851 food and essential items. In Fall 2025, student visits increased to 990, representing a 35% year-over-year increase. During the same period, 6,580 items were distributed, and 343 unique students accessed support through Shawn's Cupboard. This growth reflects both increased awareness of the resource and rising student need, underscoring the critical role of food security in supporting student success, persistence, and overall well-being at Eastern Connecticut State University.





#### Contact information:

Food Pantry: Nancy Brennan [brennann@easternct.edu](mailto:brennann@easternct.edu)

Swipe It Forward: Kemesha Wilmot, [wilmotk@easternct.edu](mailto:wilmotk@easternct.edu) Warrior

Thrift: Lana O'Connor, [occonnorla@easternct.edu](mailto:occonnorla@easternct.edu)

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## Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU)

### Key Findings Related to Food Resources and Food Insecurity:

SCSU opened its food pantry in the fall of 2020. Since that time, there has been a steady increase in the use of this service. In the 2021-2022 academic year the pantry saw 176 unique students compared to 1017 unique students in 2024-2025. This represents a 578% increase in students using the pantry. In terms of visits, in 2021-2022, the pantry had 654 visits compared to 4716 visits in 2024-2025, accounting for a 721% increase in the number of visits.

**Basic Needs Survey:** SCSU administered its Basic Needs Survey at the end of September 2024 to understand the extent of food insecurity on campus and to assess available supportive services for students with basic needs insecurities. The survey also addressed student awareness of resources, barriers to utilizing the food supportive services and barriers to meeting other basic needs in addition to those specified in PA 22-101, Section 4. The survey closed at the end of October. The results of the student survey will be used to clarify student needs to better align available resources with those needs and to ensure that limited resources are allocated properly.

Although the response rate was not significant (n=247), preliminary review of the results provides information that will be helpful in identifying student needs and barriers to success. The results showed an increase from 40% in 2023 to 46% in 2025 in the proportion of respondents who reported that the food they purchased often or sometimes did not last until they could buy more.

This finding aligns with national trends; according to the Hope Center's 2024 Student Basic Needs Survey, approximately 41% of college students experience food insecurity. SCSU continues to see increased traffic at the

campus food pantry. Survey results were especially encouraging, showing a 10% increase in respondents who reported being aware of the pantry's existence. The data also revealed that cost and time remain significant barriers to obtaining food, while stigma and limited knowledge of available resources and eligibility requirements pose additional challenges. Overall, the survey provides a strong foundation for ongoing assessment and continuous improvement of basic needs support services.

**Support Services:** Southern has continued to strengthen its support systems for students experiencing basic needs challenges. Southern expanded its partnership with the Master of Social Work (MSW) program, and Student Affairs now hosts four MSW interns who provide increased outreach and case management for students facing food insecurity and other essential needs. The interns also support the university's emergency housing program, which offers temporary housing while requiring participating students to engage in structured case-management meetings to develop long-term, sustainable housing solutions.

Additionally, the SCSU Foundation became a member of CT Foodshare this past year, enhancing its capacity to support the campus food pantry and students' broader basic needs.

These efforts build upon Southern's existing initiatives, including the Meal Share program, the launch of the Opportunity and Resource Support Services Office, and the emergency financial assistance program.

Guided by findings from the student survey, Southern will evaluate all these programs to identify service gaps and determine how to strengthen support for students moving forward.

**Contact:** Jules Tetreault, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs/Dean of Students,  
[tetreaultj4@southernct.edu](mailto:tetreaultj4@southernct.edu)

**Website:** <https://inside.southernct.edu/basic-needs-resources/scsu-food-pantry>

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## Western Connecticut State University

**Resources:** [Food, Housing, and Basic Needs Insecurity](#) webpage that has several support services listed that are available to students both on campus as well as in the greater Danbury community who may be experiencing any or all of these insecurities. There are seven Danbury community food pantries listed on the website as well as several other programs and resources available to WCSU Students.

**Wally's Cupboard:** Wally's Cupboard is WCSU's on-campus food pantry, located at the Midtown Campus. It was established in 2023 by the Student Government Association (SGA) and was initially operated by dedicated SGA members, advisors, and fellow student volunteers. Beginning in the Fall 2025 semester, Wally's Cupboard gained additional support through a Federal Work Study (FWS) student employee, allowing for more consistent access for students in need. WCSU is also in the process of hiring a part-time University Assistant to manage daily operations, extend open hours, and expand the selection of available food and personal hygiene options. Wally's Cupboard is open to all active WCSU students. Access requires only a brief informational application, and students may visit once per week.

**Key Partnerships & Contributions:** Wally's Cupboard collaborates with several local agencies and programs to ensure the pantry remains stocked with essential perishable and non-perishable items. Through the partnership with Community Action Agency of Western CT, the pantry receives shelf-stable donations on as needed basis to support ongoing student demand. In addition, the partnership with Food Rescue US helps reduce food waste by providing recovered food items from Whole Foods, which are then made available to students. Wally's Cupboard also benefits from donations from the campus community collected through events organized by Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, the WCSU Social Committee, and other campus-based organizations.

**Jane Goodall Permaculture Garden:** The permaculture garden donates a portion of its harvest to the campus food pantry and allows garden volunteers to pick fruits and vegetables for their own use as needed. In addition, the garden contributes produce to several food pantries within the Danbury community.

**Stop & Shop Partnership:** Stop & Shop provides WCSU with a generous annual contribution that enables the university to keep Wally's Cupboard well-stocked with nutritious food items. This partnership plays a vital role in supporting students facing food insecurity and ensuring they have reliable access to essential resources.

**Meal Swipe Program:** The Meal Swipe Program was launched during the 2024-2025 academic year through WCSU's partnership with Swipe Out Hunger and with Sodexo, the university's food service provider. This program allows students who are experiencing food insecurity, and do not have a meal plan, to submit a request for meal swipes, which are added directly to their WCSU ID card. Since its launch, the Meal Swipe Program has provided more than 430 meal swipes to over 30 students, helping increase access to nutritious meals on campus.

**Emergency Funding:** [WCSU Student Cares Student Assistance Fund](#) - The WCSU Cares fund supports our students with different types of assistance, ranging from food insecurity and textbook assistance to short term housing arrangements due to unforeseen financial emergencies that would impact their ability to pursue their education. Students can submit their request through an online application. Completed applications are reviewed on a weekly basis.

**Professional Clothing Closet:** [The Professional Clothing Closet](#) (PCC) offers students free access to high-quality professional attire suitable for career fairs, interviews, and the workplace. By reducing the financial barriers of building a professional wardrobe, the PCC enables students to focus on confidently preparing for interviews and starting new positions. Available inventory includes suits, blazers, pants, dresses, sweaters, skirts, shirts, and a variety of professional accessories.

**Basic Needs Survey/Data:** On October 10, 2025, WCSU launched an updated version of the Basic Needs Survey, which incorporated the USDA 6-Question Food Security Survey to evaluate students' food security. The survey was emailed to all registered undergraduate and graduate students and yielded 282 unique responses, for a response rate of 7%. Of those respondents, 44.7% reported experiencing low or very low food security within the past 12 months.

In addition to inquiring about food insecurity, the WCSU Basic Needs Survey also included questions related to housing insecurity and homelessness that were developed based on the #Real College survey from The Hope Center. Of the 282 respondents, 39.7% indicated they had experienced housing insecurity in the past 12 months while 11% indicated they experienced homelessness.

To enhance data accuracy, WCSU implemented a new registration and check-in process in Spring 2025 using a card-swipe system. During the first semester of its use, Wally's Cupboard recorded 227 visits by 76 unique students. In Fall 2025, Wally's Cupboard saw over 250 visits, nearly 100 unique students.

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## **Conclusion**

As a system, CSCU is unwavering in its commitment to the wellbeing of every student and family we serve. We know that learning cannot flourish in the absence of stability, and our data remind us why this work matters: nearly half of CT State students report that their food does not always last, and national studies show that more than one in three college students struggle to meet basic needs. These numbers are not just statistics, they are reminders of the dreams, potential, and resilience of the students who walk through our doors every day.

This is why CSCU's mission extends far beyond academics. We believe that when students are nourished, supported, and seen, they gain the confidence and grounding required to rise. By addressing the foundational levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, we are not only removing barriers, but we are also creating pathways

for persistence, achievement, and hope.

Across our campuses, faculty and staff embody this commitment daily. From food pantries and emergency resources to compassionate outreach and holistic support services, our CSCU community shows up with care, dignity, and purpose. Our efforts demonstrate a shared belief that when we remove barriers and meet students where they are, we unlock their potential not just to persist, but to excel.

CSCU's commitment is clear: every student deserves the stability, dignity, and support necessary to succeed, and together we are building a system where that promise is truly possible.

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