

# **Food Insecurity and Student Support Resources at UConn:**

## **A Comprehensive Analysis**

*In Response to Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) 10a-55ee*

*December 2025*

### **Executive Summary**

The attached report is submitted per the mandates set forth by *CGS 10a-55ee*. The University of Connecticut (UConn) assessed the prevalence and dimensions of food insecurity among its student population using standards developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In addition, as required by the Act, the university assessed and reported on awareness and use of institutional resources to address food insecurity. A survey was distributed to all undergraduate and graduate students enrolled at UConn, including Storrs, regional campuses, and our law, medical, and dental schools. The response rate was 8.3% (2,871 students).

### **Key Findings:**

- A majority (63%) of students completing the survey indicate high or marginal food security. However, about 37% of students report low or very low food security, indicating hardship in accessing food.
- Demographic disparities exist, with Black, Latino, and female students reporting heightened challenges to their food security compared to peers.
- The gender gap in food security exists across all UConn campuses. Female students are reporting higher food insecurity than male students.
- Despite relatively strong awareness of food support programs, usage is low. Students who do not use these programs most often cite a perceived lack of need, with logistical issues (e.g., far-distance, limited opening hours) also commonly reported.

The University remains fully committed to expanding awareness and availability of food support resources to all students facing food insecurity. This directly serves UConn's mission to advance equitable success by proactively supporting students who face the greatest hardships.

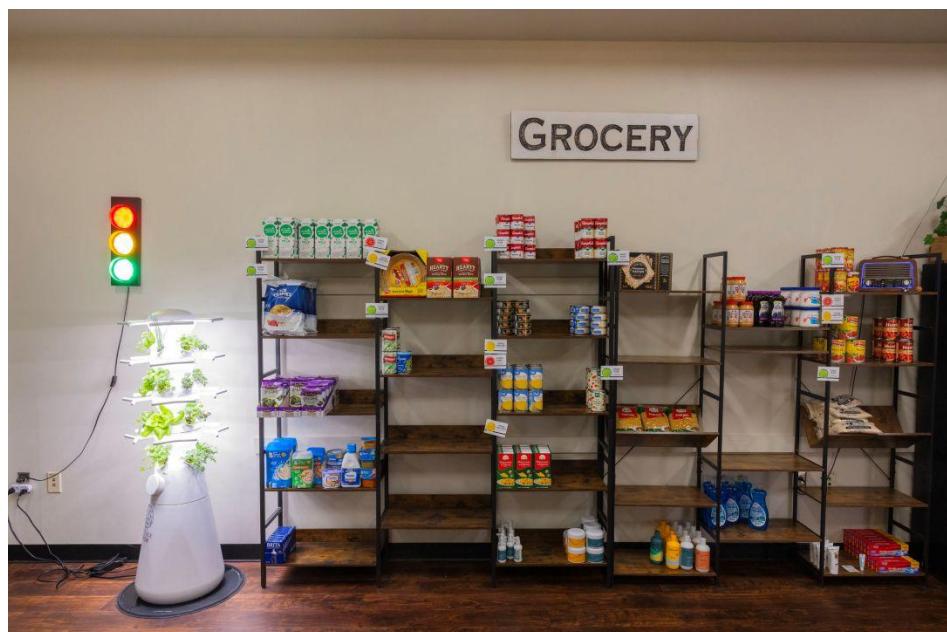
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*For questions regarding this report, please contact the **Office of Budget, Planning and Institutional Research, University of Connecticut**, at [bpipr@uconn.edu](mailto:bpipr@uconn.edu).*

## 1. Background

This report is submitted in response to the requirements of CT Gen. Stat. § 10a-55ee, which mandates that every public institution of higher education conduct a biennial survey of its students to assess the prevalence and causes of food insecurity among the student body, as well as barriers to food access and students' awareness or use of institutional or community resources for food support. The statute further requires institutions to evaluate existing support services — or create new ones — such as meal-plan adjustments, low-cost food options, campus food pantries, financial aid, or referral to state/federal nutrition assistance programs. As part of its ongoing compliance, the institution must publish a report (to the relevant legislative committee) not less often than every two years, detailing the survey results, the programs or services implemented or amended in response, and the number of students who utilized those services over the reporting period.

**Figure 1 - UConn Husky Harvest Food Pantry Waterbury**



UConn Waterbury Husky Harvest Hydroponics 2025 (Steve Bustamante / University of Connecticut)

As part of its commitment to address food insecurity among students, UConn supports two key programs designed to provide immediate and emergency relief: 7 Husky Harvest food pantries (1 per campus ensuring food accessibility across the university community) and the Students First Fund. Husky Harvest is a donation-based, campus-wide pantry system — in partnership with CT Foodshare — open to anyone with a valid UConn ID. The pantries offer non-perishable food items,

toiletries, and other essentials. In its most recent innovations, certain campuses—such as Waterbury—have added infrastructure like refrigerated lockers and on-site hydroponic systems to supply fresh produce and perishable food items, enhancing both convenience and nutritional quality for pantry users<sup>1</sup>. During the spring and summer semesters, the Hartford campus also offers a farmers market-style food distribution near their Husky Market to increase accessibility to fresh produce on campus.

Meanwhile, the Students First Fund is a financial aid resource administered by the University’s Division of Student Affairs to support students who face unexpected hardships — including those that cause food insecurity (e.g., sudden illness, accidents, or other emergencies). Funds can be used to cover essential costs such as food, clothing, books, and other living expenses that might otherwise jeopardize a student’s ability to continue their studies.

Together, these programs represent a dual-approach strategy at UConn: Husky Harvest food pantries to provide ongoing, readily available food and essentials to those in need, and the Students First Fund to offer targeted emergency financial support for students facing acute crises.

In addition to its on-campus initiatives, UConn further supports student food security through its collaboration with the CT Foodshare mobile program, which regularly serves the regional campuses and surrounding areas<sup>2</sup>. This partnership expands access to fresh produce, pantry staples, and other essential food items by bringing community-based resources directly to students. The mobile pantry offers a convenient, stigma-reducing option for those who may face barriers to transportation or consistent food access, and its presence strengthens UConn’s broader network of supports aimed at addressing both immediate needs and longer-term challenges related to food insecurity.

To contextualize the role of these programs within UConn’s broader food-security efforts, the remainder of this report is organized into sections that detail the survey process, analyze student experiences, and evaluate the effectiveness of current food support initiatives: Section 2 summarizes how the 2025 Food Security Survey was conducted at UConn and the demographic information from the survey responses; Section 3 describes how the information required by CGS

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<sup>1</sup> <https://today.uconn.edu/2025/02/husky-harvest-waterbury-innovating-food-access-with-hydroponic-systems-refrigerated-lockers-and-a-transformed-pantry/>

<sup>2</sup> The CT Foodshare program was hosted for 1 year on the Waterbury campus, Winter 2023-Summer 2024.

10a-55ee was surveyed and the calculation method for the food security scores; Section 4 reviews the main results of the 2025 food security survey.

## **2. Survey Administration Summary**

Between November 6 and November 23, 2025, the University of Connecticut administered a comprehensive Food Security Survey to assess the prevalence of food insecurity among UConn students and their awareness of available support resources. The survey was deployed through Qualtrics, with access restricted by NetID authentication to ensure that only enrolled students could participate.

The survey instrument included the validated USDA 10-Item Adult Food Security Questionnaire, a widely used and validated tool for assessing food security status. To better understand the specific challenges faced by UConn students, the survey incorporated supplementary questions addressing barriers to food security as well as students' awareness and utilization of both university-wide and regional campus food resources. These additions provided valuable context for interpreting results and identifying opportunities for enhanced support and intervention.

**Recruitment:** To maximize reach and representation across all student populations, recruitment was conducted through multiple communication channels. An initial invitation and subsequent reminders were sent via Qualtrics to all students on behalf of the Office of the Provost. In addition, regional campus deans sent targeted reminder messages to their respective student communities to encourage broader participation. Notices were also distributed through student-facing listservs using Soapbox, further increasing visibility and engagement. The outreach covered students across all UConn campuses, including Avery Point, Hartford (with the School of Law), Stamford, Storrs, Waterbury, and UConn Health. By engaging across all locations, the survey captured the diverse experiences and needs of students, regardless of geographic region, campus structure, or access to local resources.

The survey was distributed to the entire student body, ensuring that every enrolled student had the opportunity to participate. The population surveyed included all individuals recorded in the 10th-day census freeze on September 10, 2025, ensuring a comprehensive target population of all

enrolled students as reflected in official reporting. Students were offered \$25 to incentivize their participation in the survey.

**Sample:** The survey population also encompassed all student levels, types, and academic careers. This included undergraduate students pursuing associate and bachelor's degrees; graduate students enrolled in master's, doctoral, and certificate programs; first-professional students in Law, Medicine, Dental Medicine, and Pharmacy; and non-degree students at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Including such a broad set of academic paths helped provide a more complete picture of food security at UConn and ensured that the findings reflect the realities experienced by students across the full academic spectrum.

**Findings:** Table 1 displays the gender and ethnicity information for both the UConn student population and the survey recipients for the entire university and by each branch campus. The total student population was 34,424, with a gender distribution of 55% female and 45% male. Racial and ethnic composition across the university showed a majority White population (47%), followed by Asian (11%), Black (8%), Latino (19%), and Other (15%).

A total of 2,871 students completed the Food Security Survey, representing a diverse group of participants across campuses and demographic categories and yielding a response rate of 8.3%. The gender distribution among respondents leaned more strongly female (68% female, 32% male) compared to the overall student population. Racial and ethnic representation among respondents closely mirrored the university population, with participation from White (46%), Asian (11%), Black (7%), Latino (20%), and Other/Multiracial (16%) students. Storrs contributed the most responses (1,862 respondents), reflecting its relative size. All regional campuses also had student participation, though at smaller scales consistent with their enrollment sizes.

Table 2 provides detailed demographic information of the 2,871 students who completed the Food Security Survey. It summarizes key characteristics—including age, academic program level, marital status, employment status, and annual income. By examining these demographic patterns across all campuses as well as within individual locations, the table offers important insights into the diversity of student experiences represented in the survey and supports a more accurate interpretation of food security outcomes.

**Table 1 – Summary Statistics for Student Population and Survey Responses**

	<b>Total (Response Rate)</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Latino</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Population</b>	<b>34,424</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Storrs	25,826	56%	44%	49%	11%	7%	16%	16%
Stamford	2,981	47%	53%	26%	10%	15%	37%	13%
Hartford	2,756	56%	44%	44%	12%	13%	20%	11%
Waterbury	714	53%	47%	33%	11%	12%	35%	9%
Avert Point	550	46%	54%	56%	7%	4%	21%	12%
UConn Health	1,004	60%	40%	48%	19%	7%	11%	15%
UConn Law	593	57%	43%	57%	6%	6%	8%	24%
<b>Survey Total</b>	<b>2,871 (8.3%)</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Storrs	1,862 (7.2%)	70%	30%	50%	11%	6%	17%	17%
Stamford	367 (12.3%)	53%	47%	22%	12%	13%	35%	17%
Hartford	299 (10.8%)	74%	26%	47%	8%	11%	22%	11%
Waterbury	67 (9.4%)	73%	27%	30%	15%	12%	39%	4%
Avert Point	47 (8.5%)	66%	34%	64%	6%	2%	21%	6%
UConn Health	160 (15.9%)	64%	36%	51%	18%	6%	9%	16%
UConn Law	69 (11.6%)	70%	30%	61%	4%	3%	9%	23%

Note: Student population data is based on the unduplicated student count in Fall 2025. “Other” ethnicity group includes Native American, Hawaiian/Pacific, Multi-Ethnicity, Non-Resident Alien, and Unknown.

The respondent group represented a broad age range, though the majority fell within the traditional college-aged brackets. Nearly 47% of respondents were 18–20 years old, and about 24% were 21–24, making these the two largest age groups, followed by 18% aged 25–34 and 6% aged 35 or older. In terms of academic level, most participants were undergraduate students (67%), with graduate students comprising 31% and the remaining 1% identifying with other program categories. Reflecting typical university demographics, the majority identified as single (88%), and employment varied across respondents, with 57% reporting employment and 41% not working at the time of the survey. Income levels also showed substantial variation: the most common category was \$0–\$5,000, selected by 45% of students, while 14% reported earnings of \$5,001–\$10,000, 8% reported \$10,001–\$15,000, and about 5% indicated incomes between \$15,001–\$20,000.

**Table 2 – Socio-Economic Background of Survey Responses**

	All Campuses	Storrs	Stamford	Hartford	Waterbury	Avery Point	UConn Health	UConn Law
Grand Total	2871	1862	367	299	67	47	160	69
<i>Age</i>								
<= 18	4.5%	4.6%	7.4%	2.3%	7.5%	8.5%	0.0%	0.0%
18-20	47.0%	54.6%	57.2%	21.4%	62.7%	36.2%	0.0%	0.0%
21-24	23.9%	22.9%	19.6%	24.7%	22.4%	12.8%	40.0%	39.1%
25-34	18.2%	13.7%	11.2%	30.1%	4.5%	38.3%	53.1%	43.5%
>=35	6.4%	4.1%	4.6%	21.4%	3.0%	4.3%	6.9%	17.4%
<i>Program level</i>								
Undergraduate	67.3%	76.5%	86.4%	31.4%	94.0%	68.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Graduate	31.5%	22.2%	12.3%	67.2%	4.5%	29.8%	99.4%	100.0%
Other	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%	1.3%	1.5%	2.1%	0.6%	0.0%
<i>Marital status</i>								
Single	87.7%	89.4%	91.6%	75.6%	95.5%	87.2%	83.1%	76.8%
Married or Domestic Partnership	9.7%	8.3%	6.0%	18.7%	3.0%	10.6%	15.6%	20.3%
Divorced	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
Separated	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%
Widowed	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to answer	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.7%	1.5%	2.1%	0.0%	1.4%
<i>Employment status</i>								
No	40.5%	41.6%	42.8%	22.4%	32.8%	25.5%	59.4%	49.3%
Yes	56.9%	56.0%	52.0%	75.3%	64.2%	74.5%	40.6%	47.8%
Prefer not to answer	2.6%	2.4%	5.2%	2.3%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%
<i>Annual income</i>								
\$0 - \$5,000	45.3%	48.7%	44.1%	24.1%	41.8%	38.3%	54.4%	39.1%
\$5,001 - \$10,000	13.9%	15.4%	14.7%	9.7%	16.4%	6.4%	3.1%	13.0%
\$10,001 - \$15,000	7.6%	6.8%	8.7%	12.0%	11.9%	8.5%	2.5%	10.1%
\$15,001 - \$20,000	4.7%	4.1%	4.9%	7.0%	6.0%	12.8%	3.1%	4.3%
More than \$20,000	19.1%	16.6%	9.8%	37.5%	7.5%	31.9%	33.1%	26.1%
Prefer not to answer	9.5%	8.3%	17.7%	9.7%	16.4%	2.1%	3.8%	7.2%

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<b>Pell-grant</b>								
No	73%	76%	45%	80%	36%	70%	100%	100%
Yes	27%	24%	55%	20%	64%	30%	0%	0%

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### 3. Key Measurements

#### 3.1 Measuring Food Security

To assess food insecurity among students, we used the *USDA 10-Item Adult Food Security Questionnaire*, which evaluates food security across several dimensions of food access and eating behavior.

The instrument measures:

- **Worries about food sufficiency**
  - Whether respondents worried that food would run out before they had money to buy more
  - Whether the food they purchased did not last and they lacked money to get more
- **Food intake and eating behaviors**
  - Whether respondents could not afford balanced meals
  - Whether they cut the size of meals due to lack of money for food
  - Whether they were hungry but did not eat because they could not afford food
  - How often they cut or skipped meals
  - Whether they lost weight as a result of insufficient funds for food
- **Extreme food deprivation**
  - Whether they went an entire day without eating because of lack of money
  - How frequently they experienced a full day without food

Following USDA classification guidelines, each affirmative response indicating food scarcity was assigned one point, while responses suggesting food security were assigned zero points. A raw score, ranging from 0 to 10, was calculated for each participant based on their total number of affirmative responses.

Then, raw scores were grouped into four food security categories:

- **0:** High food security

- **1–2:** Marginal food security
- **3–5:** Low food security
- **6–10:** Very low food security

Individuals with low or very low food security are classified as *food insecure*, while those with high or marginal food security are classified as *food secure*. This scaled approach allows for a nuanced understanding of both the presence and severity of food insecurity within the UConn student population.

### **3.2 Awareness and Use of Campus Food Support Resources**

In addition to measuring food security, the survey assessed students' awareness and utilization of food support services available across the university. These questions examined both institution-wide resources and campus-specific programs. Through a screen mechanism, questions regarding campus-specific programs can only be seen by students at that campus.

#### **Institution-wide food support resources included:**

- Awareness of the Husky Harvest food pantry on their campus
- Awareness of the Students First Fund
- Whether the respondent had ever obtained food from Husky Harvest
- Whether the respondent had ever applied to the Students First Fund to purchase food
- Whether they had received funds for food through that program

#### **Regional-specific resources included:**

- Hartford Campus
  - Awareness of the CT Foodshare Mobile Pantry (free weekly food distribution)
  - Awareness that the Times Building Café accepts meal plan funds
  - Whether the respondent used these resources
- Waterbury Campus
  - Awareness of discounted meals at Spirit Café
  - Awareness of the CT Foodshare Mobile Food Pantry
  - Whether the respondent used these resources

- Avery Point Campus
  - Awareness that Mort's Café operates on campus
  - Whether the respondent used it
- UConn School of Law
  - Awareness of the Law School food pantry, in addition to the Husky Harvest pantry
  - Whether the respondent used it

This combined measurement of food security status and resource utilization provides a comprehensive picture of students' experiences with food access and the extent to which available supports are known and utilized across UConn's campuses.

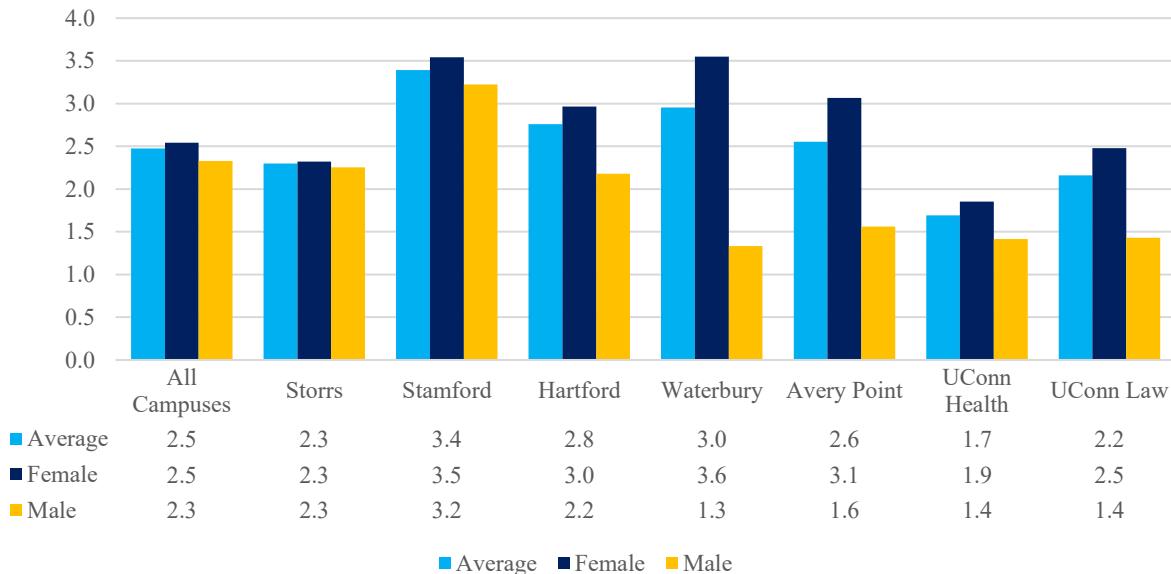
## 4. Results

### 4.1 Food Security

Figure 2 presents the average food security scores by gender across all UConn campuses, highlighting notable variation in food insecurity levels among locations. Across the university as a whole, average scores were modest (2.5 overall), with females reporting slightly higher food insecurity than males (2.5 vs. 2.3). Stamford Campus and Waterbury Campus showed the highest average scores (3.4 and 3.0, respectively), indicating greater levels of food insecurity at these campuses, with female students consistently reporting higher scores than their male peers. Hartford and Avery Point displayed moderate averages (2.8 and 2.6), while Storrs—UConn's largest campus—reported comparatively lower food insecurity (2.3 overall). UConn Health and UConn Law showed the lowest average scores (1.7 and 2.2), reflecting relatively higher food security among professional and graduate students. Overall, the figure illustrates differences across campuses and highlights persistent gender disparities in food security throughout the institution.

Table 3 displays average food security scores by race and ethnicity across UConn campuses and reveals differences in food insecurity levels among ethnic groups. It highlights notable racial and ethnic disparities in food security that vary in magnitude across campuses. Across all campuses

**Figure 2 - Average Food Security Score by Gender and Campus**



combined, Black (3.9) and Latino (3.3) students reported the highest average scores, indicating greater levels of food insecurity relative to peers. Students identifying as Other Ethnicity also showed elevated average scores (2.9), while Asian (2.1) and White (1.8) students reported comparatively lower food insecurity. These patterns were generally consistent across individual campuses, though some locations exhibited sharper disparities. For example, Stamford showed particularly high average scores for Black (4.5) and Latino (3.8) students, and Waterbury displayed the highest average among students grouped as Other (5.0). In contrast, UConn Health and UConn Law recorded some of the lowest scores across all groups, reflecting comparatively higher food security among professional and graduate student populations.

**Table 3 – Average Food Security Score by Race & Ethnicity**

	All Campuses	Storrs	Stamford	Hartford	Waterbury	Aver Point	UConn Health	UConn Law
White	1.8	1.8	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.6	1.5	2.1
Asian	2.1	1.9	3.0	1.9	2.7	3.0	1.4	0.7
Black	3.9	3.9	4.5	3.3	4.1	0.0	2.8	2.5
Latino	3.3	3.0	3.8	4.0	3.3	3.4	1.2	6.0
Other	2.9	2.8	3.6	3.9	5.0	0.3	2.6	1.0
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.2</b>

Note: “Other” ethnicity group includes Native American, Hawaiian/Pacific, Multi-Ethnicity, Non-Resident Alien, and Unknown.

Figure 3 presents an overview of food security among UConn students. The data is categorized into four levels: High Security (dark blue), Marginal Security (orange), Low Security (green), and Very Low Security (light blue). It shows that nearly half of respondents (48%) experience High Security, meaning they consistently have reliable access to sufficient food. However, the chart also shows that a portion of students at UConn face some level of food insecurity: 16% fall into the Low Security category and 21% experience Very Low Security, indicating disrupted eating patterns or reduced food intake. Another 15% report Marginal Security, reflecting occasional concerns or limitations around food access.

**Figure 3 – Food Security Evaluation at UConn**

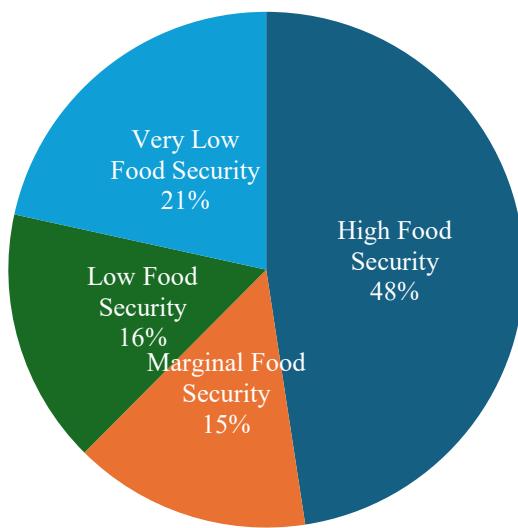
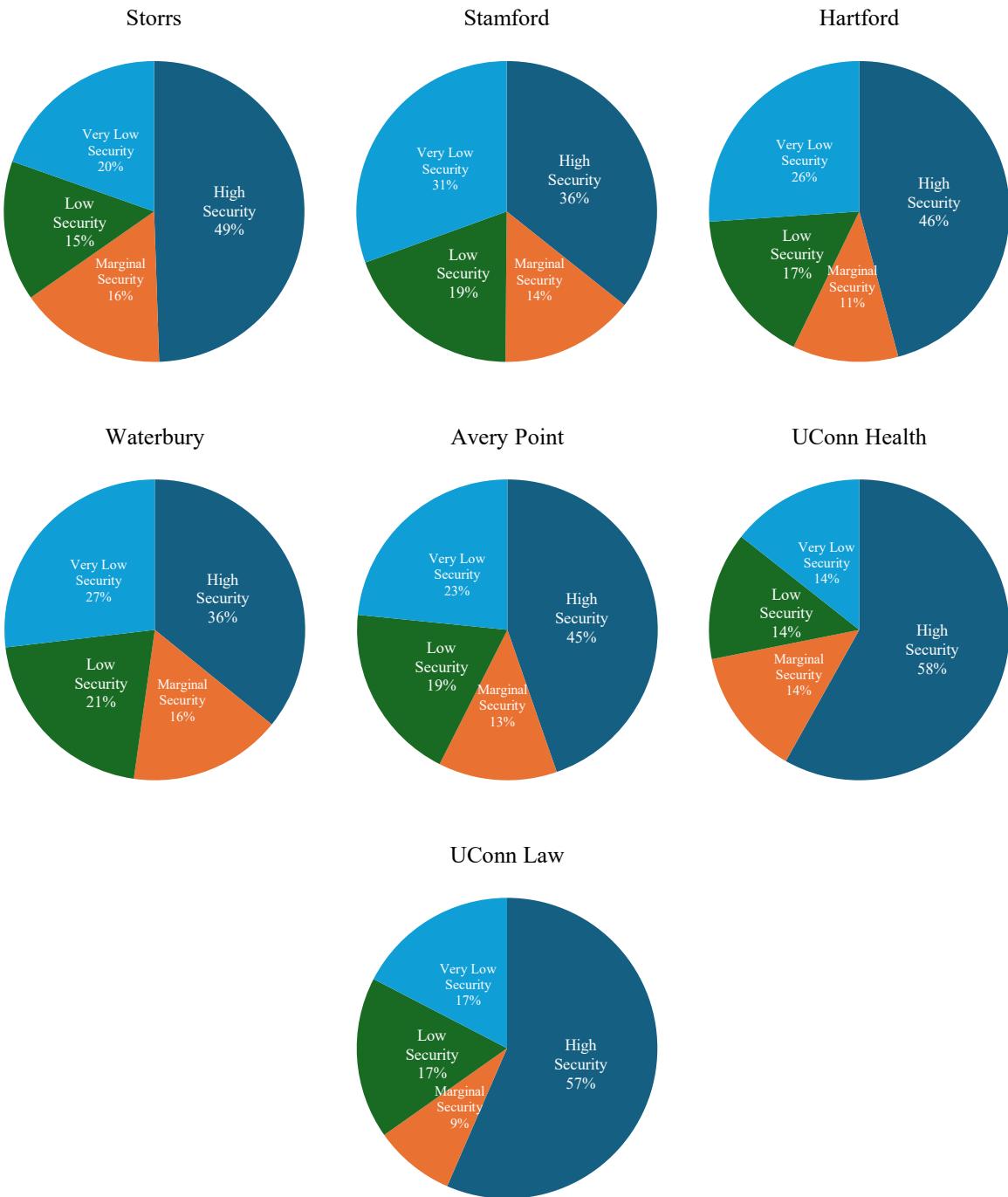


Figure 4 presents the distribution of food security levels across seven different UConn campuses. UConn Law exhibits the highest level of food security, with 57% of respondents reporting High Security, and the lowest percentage of Marginal Security at 9%. Conversely, Stamford reports the lowest percentage of High Security at 36%, followed closely by Waterbury also at 36%. Stamford has the highest proportion of students reporting Very Low Security at 31%, with Hartford and Waterbury also having substantial proportions at 26% and 27%, respectively. In terms of overall food security (combining High Security and Marginal Security), UConn Health stands out with 72% reporting food security.

**Figure 4 - Food Security Evaluation by Campus**



## 4.2 Food Support Resources

Table 4 exhibits the survey results for students' awareness of two major university-wide food support programs, the Husky Harvest food pantry (Panel A) and the Student First Fund (Panel B). Overall, 57% of respondents reported awareness of Husky Harvest Food, with variance among branch campuses ranging from 50% at Storrs to over 80% at Waterbury and Avery Point. In contrast, awareness of the Students First Fund was lower, with only 8% of students indicating familiarity, while the majority (86%) were unaware of this resource.

**Table 4 - Awareness of University-Wide Food Resources**

	All Campuses	Storrs	Stamford	Hartford	Waterbury	Avery Point	UConn Health	UConn Law
Total	2871	1862	367	299	67	47	160	69
<b><i>Panel A – Husky Harvest Food</i></b>								
Yes	1637	931	223	194	56	39	141	53
	57%	50%	61%	65%	84%	83%	88%	77%
No	1081	839	113	91	6	4	14	14
	38%	45%	31%	30%	9%	9%	9%	20%
Missing	153	92	31	14	5	4	5	2
	5%	5%	8%	5%	7%	9%	3%	3%
<b><i>Panel B – Students First Fund</i></b>								
Yes	225	137	27	32	3	3	12	11
	8%	7%	7%	11%	4%	6%	8%	16%
No	2468	1620	306	248	56	40	142	56
	86%	87%	83%	83%	84%	85%	89%	81%
Missing	178	105	34	19	8	4	6	2
	6%	6%	9%	6%	12%	9%	4%	3%

Table 5 shows survey results of students' experiences of university-wide food support resources. 1,621 individuals answered the question regarding Husky Harvest Food Pantry; 224 individuals answered the question regarding the Student First Fund program; and only 24 individuals answered the question about fund acquisition. For Husky Harvest food pantries, 31% reported obtaining food from the Husky Harvest Food Pantry, with usage varying by campus—from 24% at Storrs to 59% at Avery Point. Applications to the Students First Fund were less common, with 11% of students applying for assistance. 9 out of 24 students received funds, representing a small fraction of the overall respondents.

**Table 5 – Utilization of & Applications to University-Wide Food Resources**

	All Campuses	Storrs	Stamford	Hartford	Waterbury	Avery Point	UConn Health	UConn Law
<i>Have you ever gotten food from Husky Harvest Food Pantry?</i>								
Total	1621	918	223	194	56	39	140	51
Yes	502	224	90	49	27	23	69	20
	31%	24%	40%	25%	48%	59%	49%	39%
No	1119	694	133	145	29	16	71	31
	69%	76%	60%	75%	52%	41%	51%	61%
<i>Have you ever applied to the Students First Fund to purchase food?</i>								
Total	224	136	27	32	3	3	12	11
Yes	25	14	6	1	-	-	1	3
	11%	10%	22%	3%	-	-	8%	27%
No	199	122	21	31	3	3	11	8
	89%	90%	78%	97%	100%	100%	92%	73%
<i>Did you receive funds to purchase food?</i>								
Total	24	14	6	1	-	-	1	2
Yes	9	3	3	1	-	-	-	2
	38%	21%	50%	100%	-	-	-	100%
No	15	11	3	-	-	-	1	-
	63%	79%	50%	-	-	-	100%	-

The survey also examined awareness of campus-specific food resources at regional locations, as shown in Table 6. Results indicate significant variation across programs and campuses. At Hartford, 27% of students were aware of the CT Foodshare Mobile Pantry, while 39% knew about the meal plan at the Times Building Café. Waterbury students showed higher awareness of discounted meals at Spirit Café (75%), but only 20% were familiar with the mobile food pantry. Avery Point reported the highest awareness, with 97% of respondents recognizing Mort's Café. At UConn Law, awareness of the campus food pantry was nearly evenly split, with 49% indicating familiarity. These findings suggest that while some regional programs are well-known, others may require enhanced visibility and outreach efforts.

**Table 6– Awareness of Food Resources at Regional Campuses**

Regional Campus	Regional Programs	Total	No	Yes
Hartford	CT Foodshare Mobile Pantry	257	187	70
	Meal plan at the Times Building Café	257	156	101
	Discounted meals at Spirit Café	55	14	41
Waterbury			25%	75%

	Mobile food pantry	55	44	11
			80%	20%
Avery Point	Mort's Café	32	1	31
			3%	97%
UConn Law	Campus food pantry	57	29	28
			51%	49%

In addition to awareness, the survey assessed utilization of regional food resources. At Hartford, only 22% of respondents reported using the CT Foodshare Mobile Pantry, and 19% used the Times Building Café meal plan. Waterbury showed higher engagement with discounted meals at Spirit Café (83%), while usage of the mobile food pantry remained 18%. Avery Point demonstrated the highest utilization, with 89% of students using Mort's Café. At UConn Law, 21% reported using the campus food pantry. These findings suggest that while certain programs, such as Spirit Café and Mort's Café, are widely utilized.

**Table 7 – Usage of Food Resources at Regional Campuses**

Regional Campus	Regional Programs	Total	No	Yes
Hartford	CT Foodshare Mobile Pantry	69	54	15
			78%	22%
	Meal plan at the Times Building Café	99	80	19
			81%	19%
Waterbury	Discounted meals at Spirit Café	41	7	34
			17%	83%
	Mobile food pantry	11	9	2
			82%	18%
Avery Point	Mort's Café	37	4	33
			11%	89%
UConn Law	Campus food pantry	28	22	6
			79%	21%

### 4.3 Barriers to Food Support Resources

If the respondent indicated they did not use any food support resources, they were directed to a series of open-ended questions about why they did not use them. Similar to campus-specific questions, a filtering mechanism is set up to link their enrolled campus. Using these open-ended questions, this survey identified several key reasons why students did not utilize available food

support programs, even when they reported knowing the existence of these resources (shown in Table 8). Across university-wide resources such as Husky Harvest Food Pantry and the Students First Fund, for those who did not report that they do not need these services, the most common barrier was lack of need, followed by lack of awareness about location or access, scheduling conflicts, and feelings of discomfort or stigma. At regional campuses, similar patterns emerged, with additional concerns such as distance and dissatisfaction with food options for Hartford's meal plan, and location for discounted meals at Waterbury's Spirit Café.

**Table 8 – Open-Ended Responses Regarding Utilization of University-wide & Regional Campus Usage of Food Resources (N = 2,699)**

Unit/Programs	Selected Example Barriers
<b>University-Wide</b>	
Husky Harvest Food Pantry	
	I don't need it. (N = 724)
	I don't know where it is / how to get there. (N = 232)
	I feel uncomfortable or embarrassed / stigma. (N = 161)
	I am not available during the hours it's open. (N = 171)
Students First Fund	
	I don't need it. (N = 139)
<b>Hartford</b>	
CT Foodshare Mobile Pantry	
	I don't need it. (N = 39)
	I feel uncomfortable or embarrassed / stigma. (N = 6)
	I am not available during the hours it's open. (N = 5)
Meal plan at the Times Building Café	
	I don't need it. (N = 15)
	It's too far away. (N = 8)
	I don't like the food options. (N = 15)
<b>Waterbury</b>	
Discounted meals at Spirit Café	
	I don't know where it is. (N = 1)
	I don't need it. (N = 3)
Mobile food pantry	
	Other (N = 3)

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**Avery Point**

Mort's Café

I don't need it. (N = 1)

I have dietary restrictions/allergies that it does not accommodate. (N = 1)

It's too expensive, even with the meal plan. (N = 1)

**UConn Law**

Campus food pantry

I don't need it. (N = 19)

I feel uncomfortable or embarrassed / stigma. (N = 2)

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## 5. Summary

This report has been submitted in accordance with the requirements of Connecticut General Statutes § 10a-55ee and reflects the University of Connecticut's ongoing commitment to monitoring and addressing student food insecurity. The biennial survey, administered between November 6 and November 23, 2025, utilized the USDA Adult Food Security Module to ensure consistency with established federal measures of food access and nutritional adequacy. Responses were drawn from a broad cross-section of the student body, providing a representative view of the overall population.

The findings indicate that food insecurity is not evenly experienced across demographic groups. Female students, as well as Black and Latino students, report higher levels of food insecurity compared to other demographic groups, highlighting persistent disparities that warrant continued attention. At the campus level, students at Storrs, UConn Health, and UConn Law exhibit the highest levels of food security.

Awareness of available support services also varies. A substantial majority of respondents report familiarity with the Husky Harvest Food Pantry, whereas significantly fewer indicate awareness of the Students First Fund. This gap underscores the need for enhanced outreach and communication strategies to ensure all students, particularly those facing acute or emergency financial hardship, are informed of the full range of resources available to them. For students who are aware of the resources but did not use them, the main reason is a perceived lack of need.

In meeting its statutory obligations, the University will continue to evaluate survey findings, monitor emerging trends, and strengthen support programs to advance equitable food access across all campuses. The results presented here will guide future initiatives and reinforce the University's commitment to promoting student success and well-being.