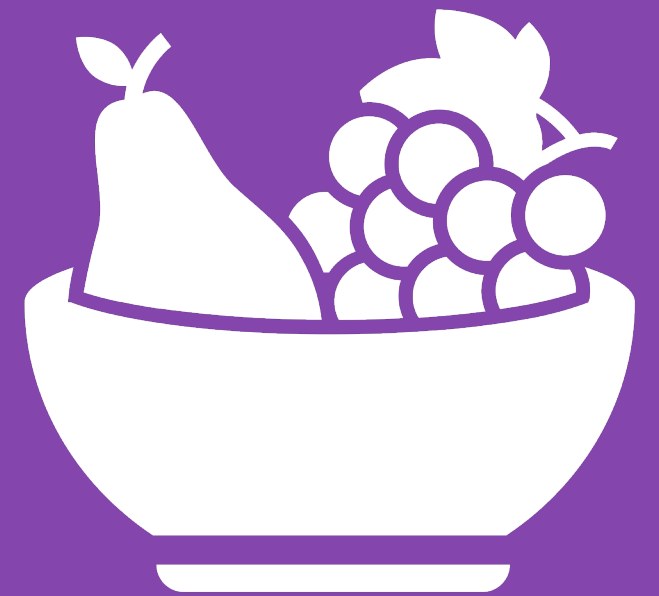


# Food Security Survey of Higher Education Students in Utah



February 2022

# Project Acknowledgements



**WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Center for Community Engaged Learning

**CENTER FOR HOPE**  
HEALTH OUTCOMES & POPULATION EQUITY



# Project Research Questions

- To determine the **extent and severity of food insecurity** among higher education students in the state of Utah
- Determine the **contributing factors to food insecurity** such as transportation, housing, income, etc.
- Determine the **impacts of food insecurity**, such as academics, coping mechanisms, etc.



- **USDA Household Food Security Module** was used to determine food insecurity.
  - Robust and stable measure of food insecurity
  - Appropriate to use for targeted, local population
  - Accounts for household with children
- **PRAPARE Assessment** was used to understand the social determinants of health of the student.
- Other survey questions were developed to better understand the experience of higher education students.
- Sample consisted of 5,692 higher education students. Response rate was 11% and the completion rate was 91%.



# Extent and Severity of Food Insecurity among Higher Education Students

Results of the USDA Household Food Security Module

USDA Household Food Security Module	%
<b>High Food Security:</b> No reported indications of food access problems or limitations.	40.0
<b>Marginal Food Security:</b> One or two reported indications – anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake.	21.2
<b>Low Food Security:</b> Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.	17.7
<b>Very Low Food Security:</b> Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.	21.1



# Basic Needs

Q: In the past year, have your or any family members you live with been unable to get or pay for any of the following when it was really needed?

- Nearly 45% of food insecure students were unable to afford or get medicine or healthcare in the past year.
- About 30% were unable to make rent or a mortgage payment.
- Others typically referred to car repairs or academic expenses such as tuition or books.

	Food Secure	Food Insecure
Food	2.7%	35.9%
Rent/mortgage	9.4%	29.8%
Utilities	5.8%	24.6%
Phone	3.5%	17.4%
Medicine or Healthcare	21.4%	44.8%
Childcare	2.7%	5.8%
Clothing	6.1%	30.4%
Other	3.3%	5.1%



# Coping with Food Insecurity

Q: How do you cope with not having enough or the right foods to eat?

- Over half of food insecure students skipped a meal or went hungry if they didn't have enough food.
- Nearly half of food insecure students relied on family or friends for food.
- About 15% of food insecure students visited a food pantry.
- Few food insecure students used SNAP or WIC benefits.

	Food Secure	Food Insecure
Food pantry	4.7%	15.4%
Family/Friends	16.6%	45.4%
SNAP/EBT	1.1%	5.9%
WIC benefits	1.2%	2.5%
Religious community	3.1%	7.6%
Free food events	12.8%	36.4%
Go hungry/Don't eat	8.2%	53.5%
Not applicable	72.0%	12.5%
Other	2.0%	4.0%



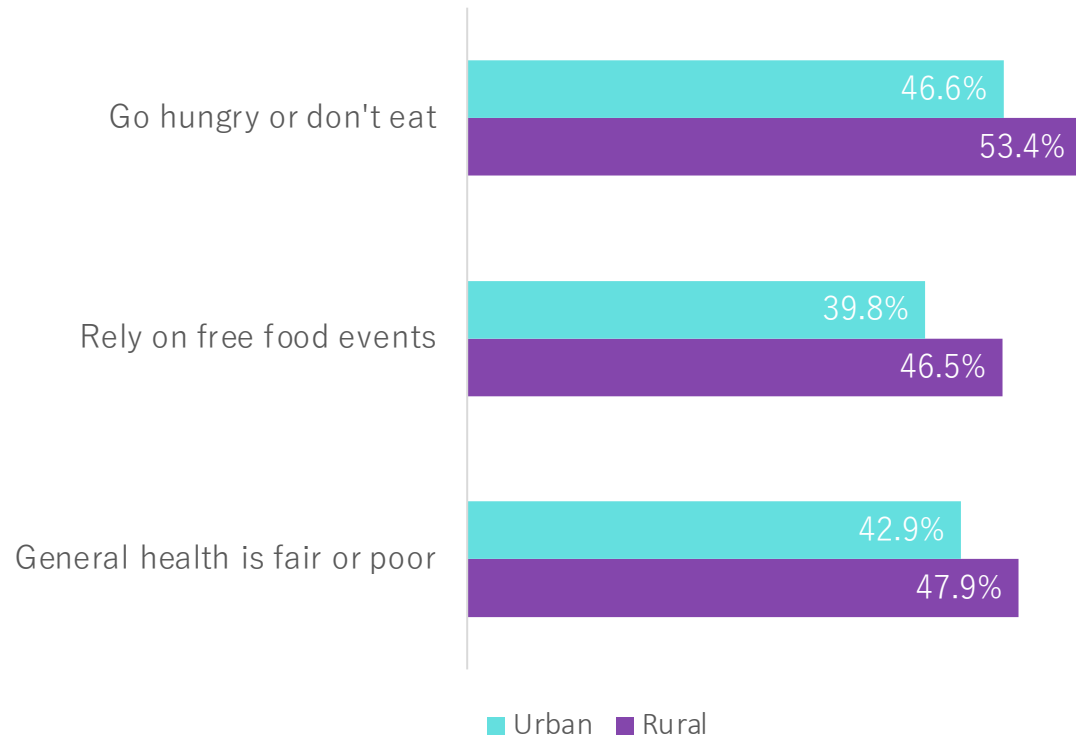
# Food Insecurity Data

- **GPA:** Food insecure students are more likely to have a lower GPA (3.40) than food secure (3.59).
- **Social isolation:** Food insecure students are more likely to be social isolated as 57.5% students who see people that they care about less than once a week are food insecure, compared to 30% of students who see people they care about 5 or more times a week.
- **Safe at home:** Among students who are not safe at home, 66.1% are food insecure, compared to 34.8% of students who are safe at home.
- **General health:** 68.2% of students who reported 'poor' health are food insecure compared to 29.5% students who reported 'excellent' health.
- **Stress:** 58.1% of students who are 'very much' stressed are food insecure compared to 23.1% of students who are 'not at all' stressed.

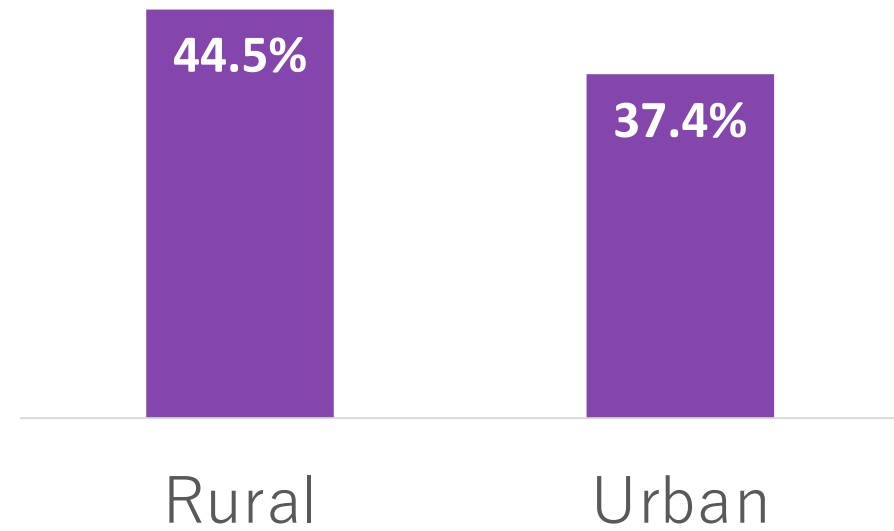


# Food Insecurity among Rural and Urban Utah Students

Urban counties include Cache, Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, and Utah County

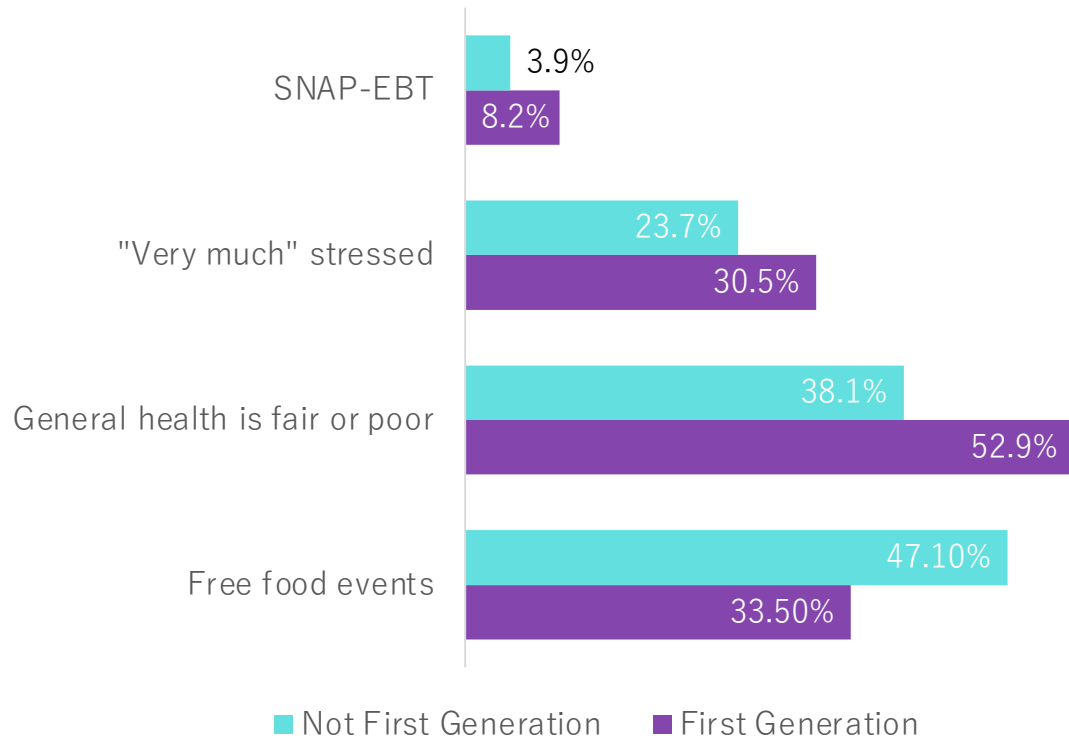


Rural students are more likely to report food insecurity.

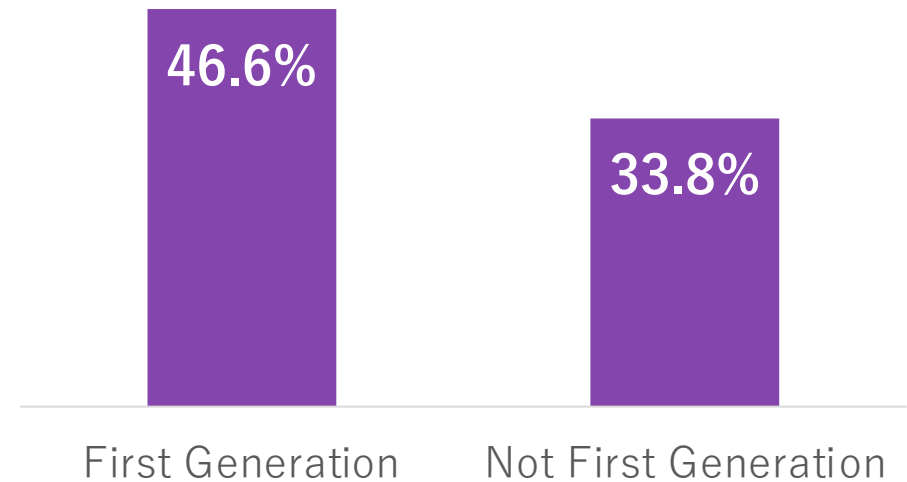


# Food Insecurity among First Generation College Students

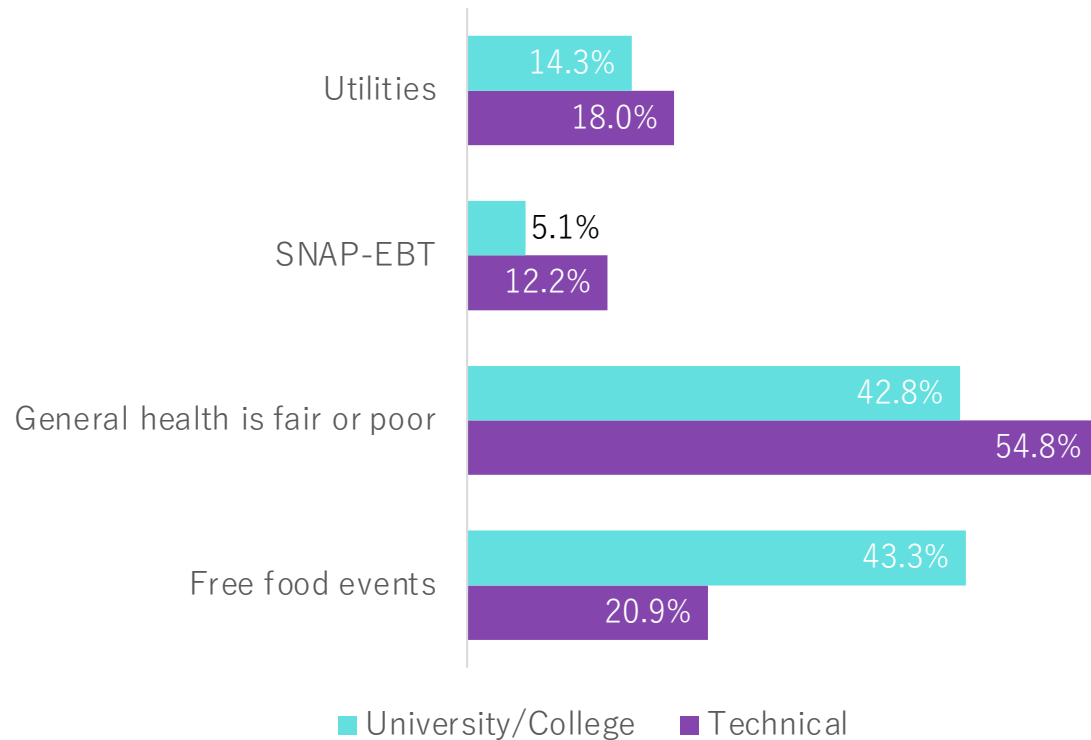
Neither parent graduated with a baccalaureate degree



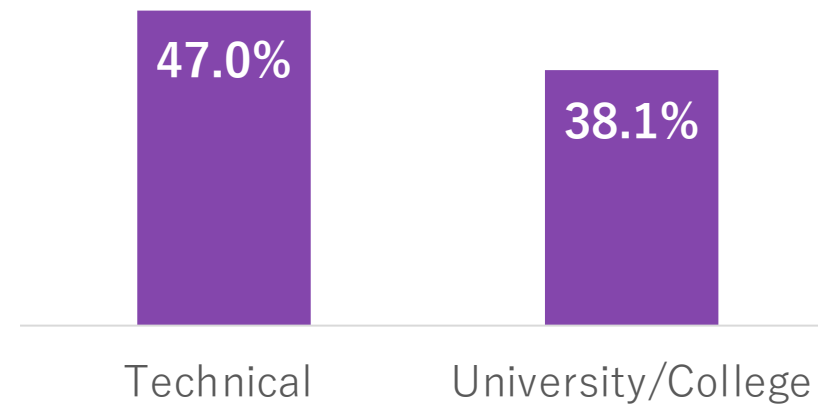
First generation students are more likely to report food insecurity.



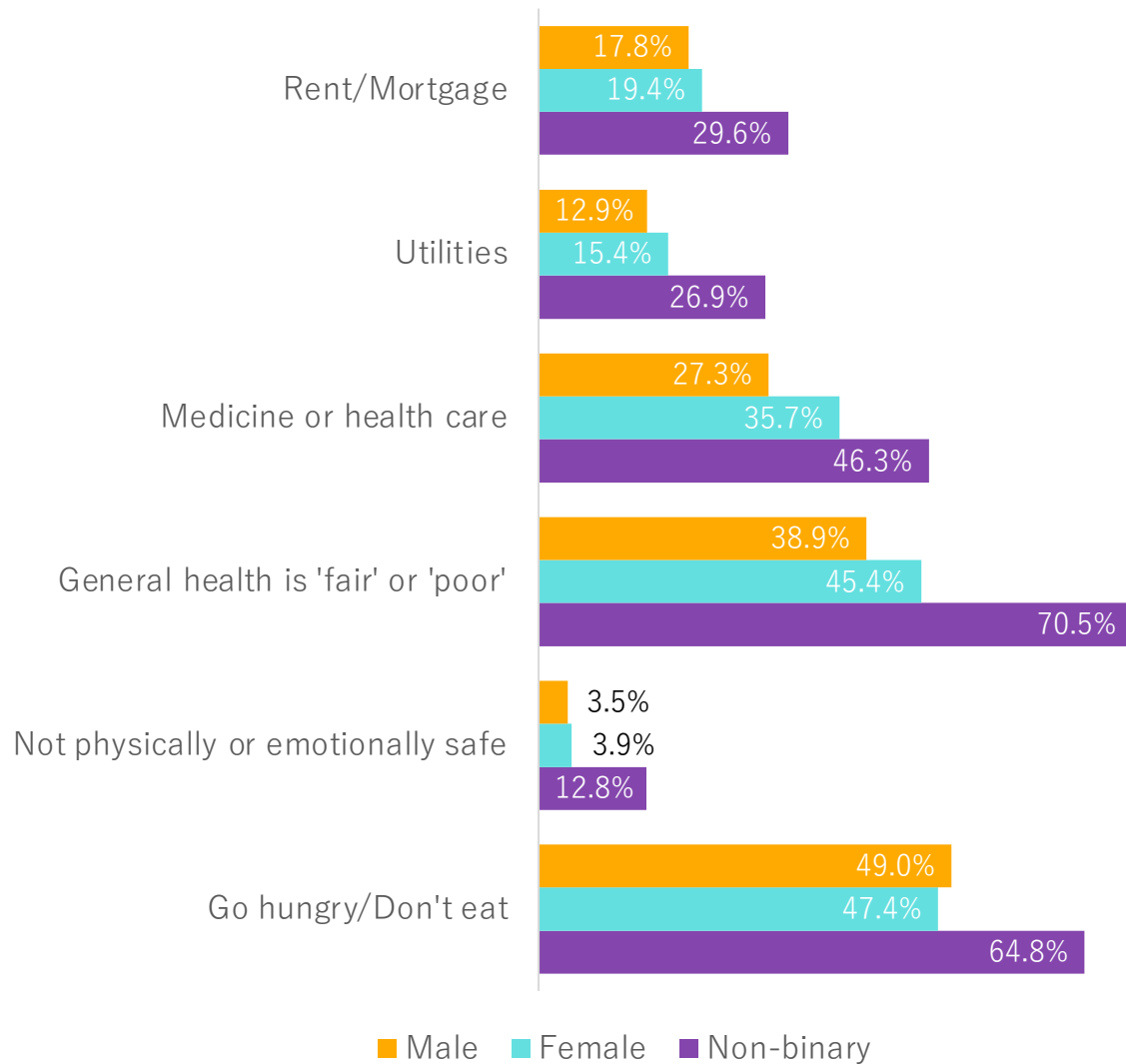
# Food Insecurity and Technical College/University Students



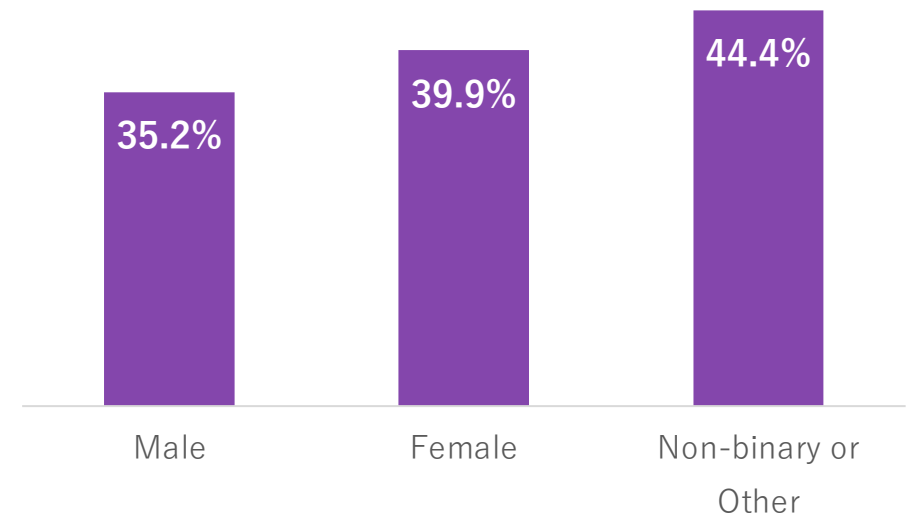
Technical college students are more likely to report food insecurity.



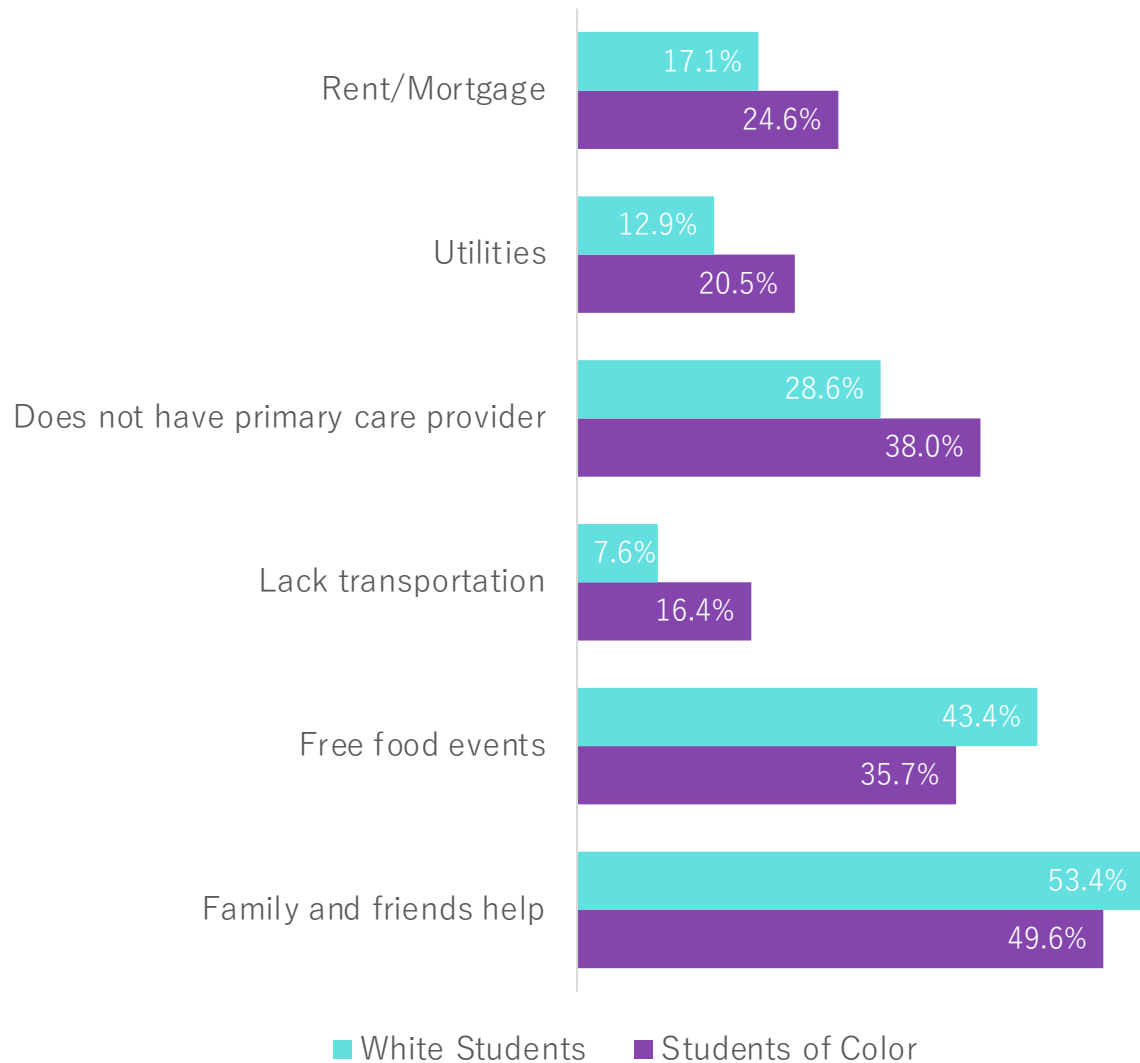
# Food Insecurity and Gender



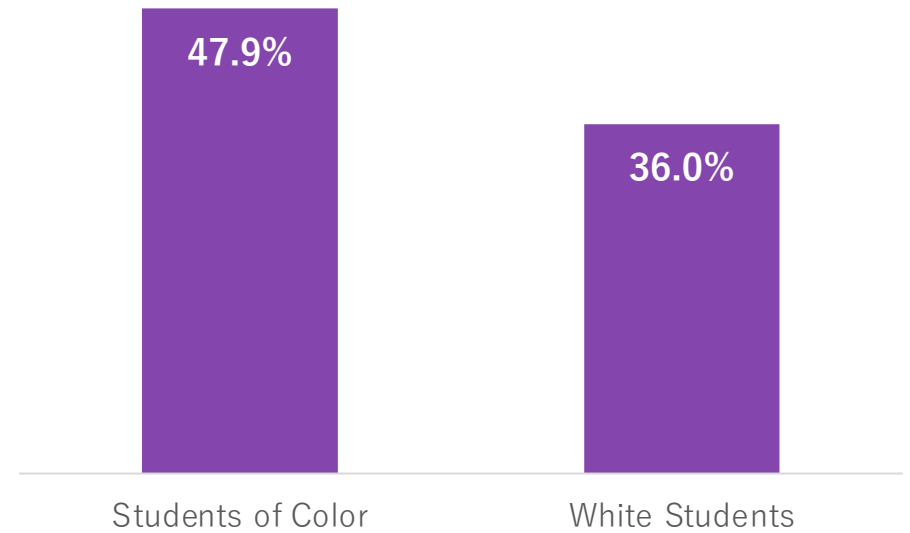
Non-binary or Other students are most likely to be food insecure.



# Food Insecurity and Students of Color



Students of color are more likely to be food insecure.



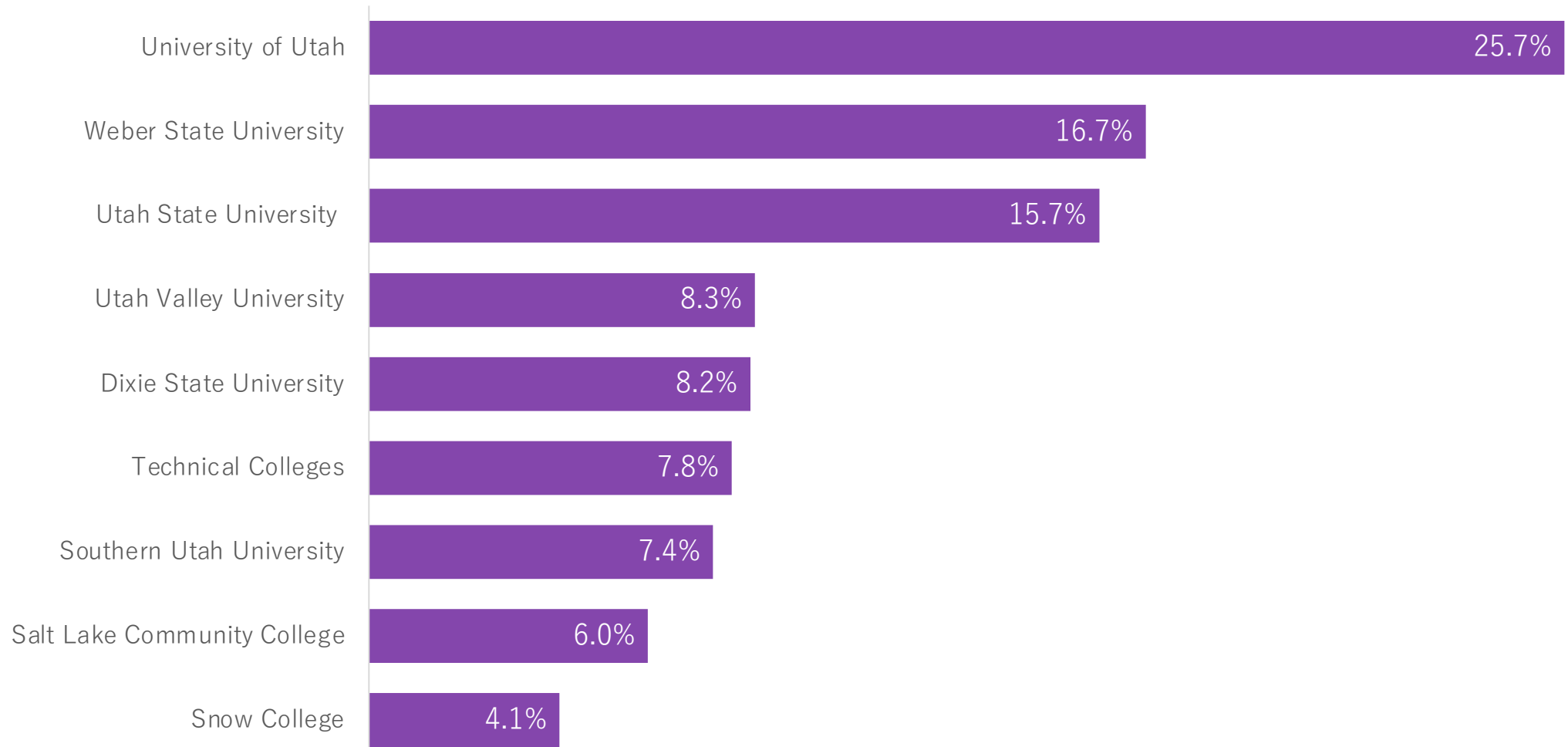
# Survey Response Breakdowns

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>%</b>
Female	62.0
Male	34.7
Non-binary	2.0
Self-identify	0.6
Undergraduates	78.4
Graduate students	14.2
Technical students	7.4
Full-time status	79.5
Part-time status	20.5

<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>	<b>%</b>
White, Not Hispanic	79.8
Hispanic	11.5
Asian	7.0
Prefer not to answer	3.3
Other	2.4
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.9
Black	1.8
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1.5



# Survey Response Breakdowns



# Student Food Insecurity



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# Recommendations Outline



- Student Pantry Workgroup Meeting Summary
- Federal Policy Options
- State Legislative and Administrative Policy Options
- Higher Education Institution Options

# Defining Basic Needs



- College student basic needs are broadly defined as financial stability; nutritious and sufficient food; safe, secure, and adequate housing; accessible and equitable health/medical care, technology, and transportation. Many Utah higher education institutions addressing college students' basic needs insecurity aim to develop a robust model of prevention, intervention, and emergency relief efforts addressing holistic needs.

# Basic Needs/Student Pantry Workgroup



- Met during the Utah Higher Education Food Summit on Dec 3, 2021.
- We have identified four categories of basic needs operations
  - Campuses with established pantries and/or centralized basic needs services
  - Campuses with established pantries and/or decentralized basic needs services
  - Campuses with an established pantry or basic needs center
  - Campuses who are in the process of establishing a pantry/basic needs center or no pantry/basic needs center.

# Basic Needs/Student Pantry Workgroup



- Most pantries provide in-person service, some work within the community to provide delivery.
- Most pantries provide clients the ability to choose their food items. Many pantries try to accommodate dietary preferences and medical needs when able.
- Most pantries provide hygiene items when available. Some provide gift cards, vouchers, etc.

# Basic Needs/Student Pantry Workgroup



- Many refer clients to on-campus services like financial advising, financial aid.
- Many refer clients to off-campus organizations for navigation services and case management.
- Many pantries receive food from the Utah Food Bank, grocery/food rescue and donation drives.

# Basic Needs/Student Pantry Workgroup



- Many pantries provide information about federal nutrition programs, some help “pre-screen” clients for potential eligibility. However, most look to outside organizations for application navigation.
- Many pantries indicate they would like to provide application navigation services, nutrition education, cooking workshops and outreach services.

# Basic Needs/Student Pantry Workgroup



- When asked what prevented them from expanding their hours of operation, providing additional services or capacity to service. They indicated the following barriers:
  - Funding/Resources – Many pantries rely on volunteers, AmeriCorps VISTAs or on some paid staff to meet their operation needs. Most of their time is dedicated to food box preparation and food distribution. Because funding is uncertain, they are limited in their ability provide additional services outside of food distribution.
  - Operation Space/Storage – Some pantries indicated they operate in small quarters, service capacity is limited to what can fit in a small office or closet.

# Federal Options



- 2023 Farm Bill Reauthorization – Potential Policies
  - Permanently Expand SNAP Eligibility to Students
    - ✦ Eliminate work requirements for students
      - OR Consider time in the classroom as “work.”
    - ✦ Include FAFSA award letter “Expected Family Contribution” to eligibility criteria
    - ✦ Eliminate the 5-year waiting period for immigrant households
- Expand the School Meals Program to include postsecondary students.
- Increase federal funding for student housing and child care.



# State Legislative and Administrative Options



- Maximize existing flexibility in public assistance programs.
  - Raise gross income limits for SNAP
  - Increase minimum benefits levels for SNAP recipients from \$20 to \$50
- Fund student basic needs programming, services and outreach.
- Provide state aid to students that do not qualify for SNAP. (e.g. DACA recipients, international students who have been in the US less than 5 years).

# Higher Education Institution Options



- Appoint a Basic Needs Director
- Create a “Basic Needs Statement” that can be distributed to students during enrollment, orientation and in the classroom.
- Advertise information about SNAP and other federal nutrition programs.
- A cost/benefit analysis in relation to services provided, student retention and completion.

# Higher Education Institution Options



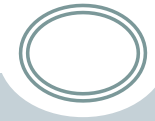
- Educate Financial Aid staff about eligibility criteria for federal nutrition programs.
- Engage with community partners and private sector in a proactive manner.
- Include basic needs questions in bi-annually survey or establish a separate survey around basic needs.

# Sources



- The Hope Center's "[#RealCollege Survey Report](#)" (2019-2021)
- Hunger on Campus: [The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students](#) (2016)
- Congressional Research Office - [Food Insecurity Among College Students: Background and Policy Options](#) (2021)
- FRAC - [Reducing Food Insecurity Among College Students](#) (2021)

# Questions?



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