



MAY 2019

City Colleges of Chicago #RealCollege Survey

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Executive Summary

The #RealCollege survey is the nation's largest annual assessment of basic needs security among college students. The survey, which specifically evaluates access to affordable food and housing, began in 2015 under the Wisconsin HOPE Lab. This report describes the results of the #RealCollege survey administered in the fall of 2018 at the seven community colleges that make up the City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) system.

Rates of basic needs insecurity are higher for marginalized students, including African Americans, students identifying as LGBTQ, and students who are independent from their parents or guardians for financial aid purposes. Students who have served in the military, former foster youth, and students who were formerly convicted of a crime are all at greater risk of basic needs insecurity. Working during college is not associated with a lower risk of basic needs insecurity, and neither is receiving the federal Pell Grant; the latter is in fact associated with higher rates of basic needs insecurity.

If your institution is interested in participating in a 2019 survey, please contact the Hope Center Research Team at hopesrvy@temple.edu.

MORE THAN 3,000 STUDENTS AT CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO PARTICIPATED. THE RESULTS INDICATE:

- 44% of respondents were food-insecure in the prior 30 days
- 54% of respondents were housing-insecure in the previous year
- 15% of respondents were homeless in the previous year

The Hope Center thanks the Lumina Foundation and the City Colleges of Chicago for making this report possible.

Introduction

According to the federal government's 2018 U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, insufficient food and housing undermines postsecondary educational experiences and credential attainment for many of today's college students.¹

Data describing the scope and dimensions of this problem, particularly at the college level, remain sparse. The GAO report noted that there are only 31 quality studies of campus food insecurity, very few of which involve multiple colleges. Among existing multi-institutional studies, four draw on data from the #RealCollege survey. The #RealCollege survey fills a void by providing needed information for campus leaders and policymakers who are seeking to support students better.

Food and housing insecurity undermine academic success.² Housing insecurity and homelessness have a particularly strong, statistically significant relationship with college completion rates, persistence, and credit attainment.³ Researchers also associate basic needs insecurity with self-reports of poor physical health, symptoms of depression, and higher perceived stress.⁴

While campus food pantries are increasingly common, usage of other supports to promote economic security are not. In particular, use of public benefits programs remains low among students in higher education, with many students missing out on the opportunity to receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also called food stamps).⁵ The GAO estimates that 57% of students at risk of food insecurity and eligible for SNAP did not collect those benefits.

Chicago faces many opportunities and challenges around basic needs security, and some of the area's programs are getting national recognition. For example, earlier this year the Dax Program for homeless students at DePaul University was featured on CBS Sunday Morning. Most of the CCC





campuses now have food pantries. However, until now, no systematic data has been collected on food or housing insecurity among CCC students.

Designing effective practices and policies that can address the challenges of food and housing insecurity at scale requires understanding how students experience and cope with basic needs insecurity. To inform this work at CCC, this report includes overall and subgroup estimates of food and housing insecurity, as well as contextual information.

REPORT OVERVIEW

The following report presents findings from the Hope Center's 2018 #RealCollege survey on basic needs of students at CCC colleges. **Section 1** of this report describes the overall rates of basic needs insecurity across all survey respondents. **Section 2** describes rates of basic needs insecurity by specific groups of students. **Section 3** describes the work and academic experiences of students with basic needs insecurity. **Section 4** describes the utilization of public assistance by students who need support. **Section 5** is the conclusion.

For more on the research methodology and additional tables with information on survey participants, please refer to the appendices.

SECTION 1:

Prevalence of Basic Needs Insecurity

What fraction of students at CCC are affected by basic needs insecurity? This section examines the prevalence of food insecurity during the month prior to the survey, and the prevalence of housing insecurity and homelessness during the previous year.

FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food, or the ability to acquire such food in a socially acceptable manner. The most extreme form is often accompanied by physiological sensations of hunger. We assessed food security among CCC students using the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) 18-item set of questions.⁶

During the 30 days preceding the survey, approximately 44% (due to rounding) of CCC students who responded to the survey experienced food insecurity, with 17% assessed at the low level and 26% at the very lowest level of food security (Figure 1).

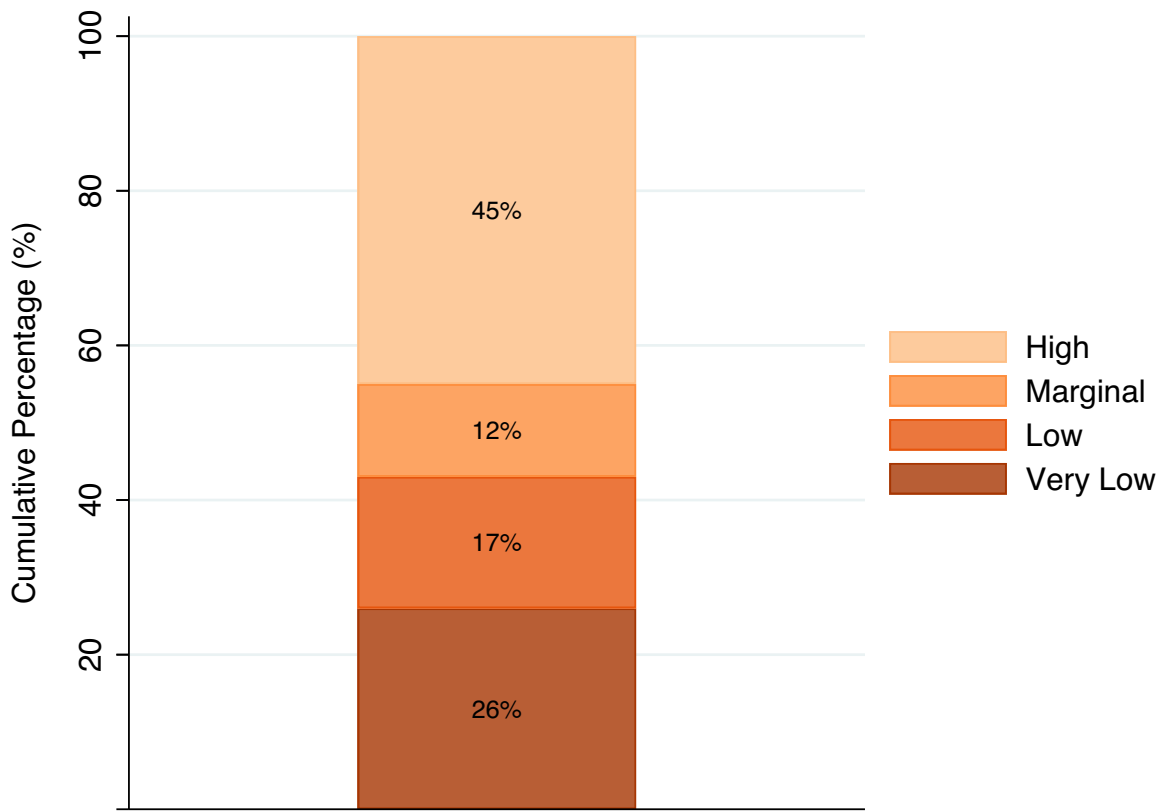
Nearly half of survey respondents worried about running out of food or could not afford to eat balanced meals (Figure 2). Thirty-six percent of respondents said that they cut the size of their meals or skipped meals for financial reasons, and 12% reported not eating for at least one whole day during the prior month because they didn't have enough money.

THE DATA

The data in this report come from an electronic survey fielded to students at CCC colleges. This system-wide report includes data from all seven colleges in the CCC system. Colleges distributed the electronic survey to more than 47,000 enrolled students, yielding an estimated response rate of 6%, or over 3,000 total student participants. For more information on how the survey was fielded and discussion of how representative the results are, please see the appendices.



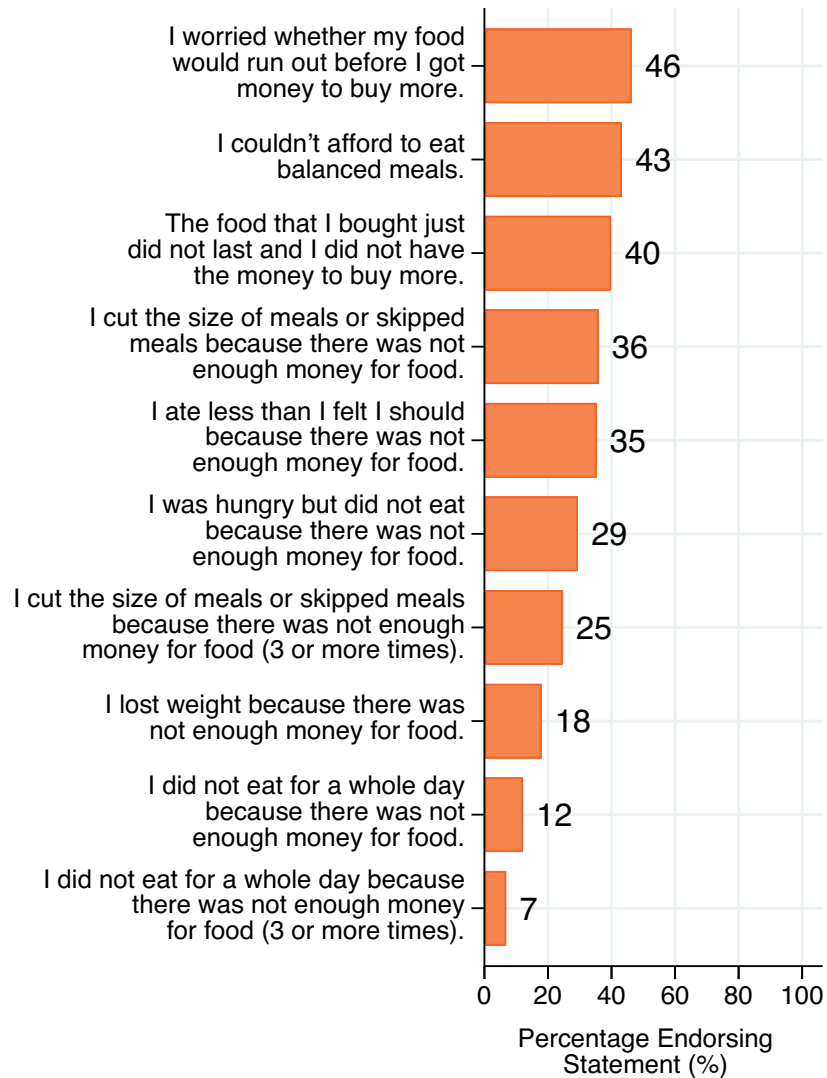
FIGURE 1. Food Security Among CCC Survey Respondents



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: According to the USDA, students at either low or very low food security are termed “food insecure.” For more details on the food security module used in this report, see Appendix C. Cumulative percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

FIGURE 2. Food Insecurity Items Among CCC Survey Respondents



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

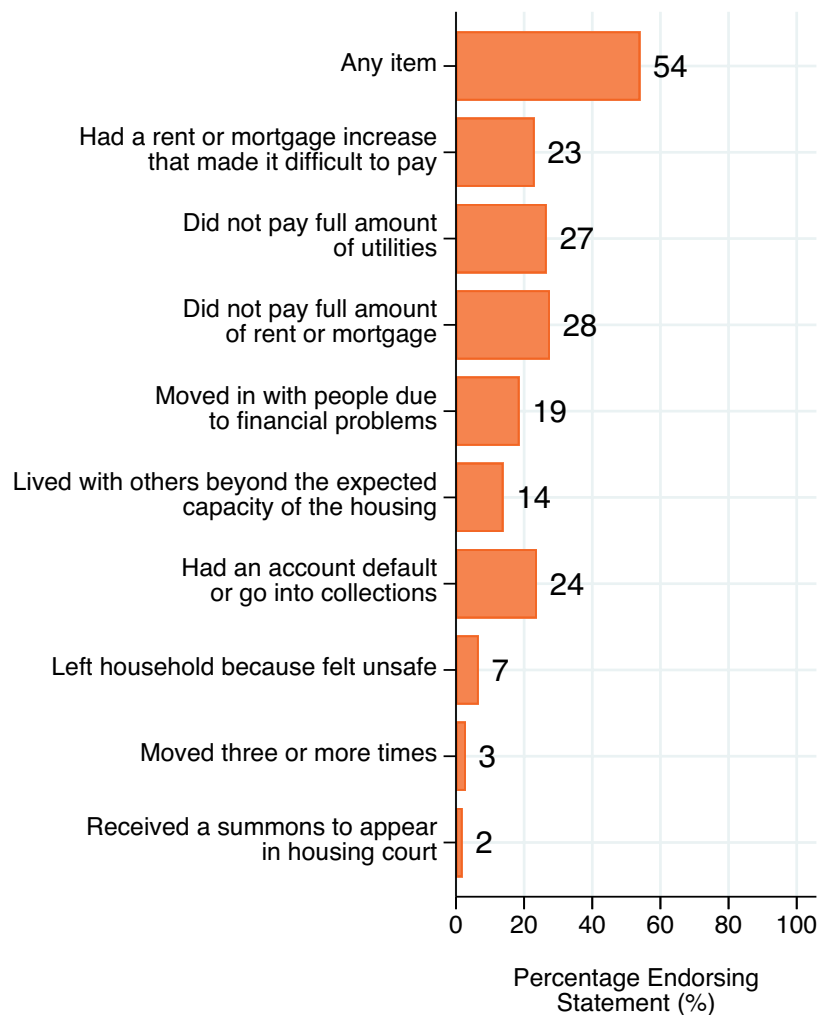
Notes: For more details on the food security module used in this report, see Appendix C.

HOUSING INSECURITY AND HOMELESSNESS

Housing insecurity includes a broad set of challenges such as the inability to pay rent or utilities, or the need to move frequently. All of these challenges affect students, and results suggest that they are more likely to suffer some form of housing insecurity than to have all their needs met during college. Housing insecurity among CCC students was assessed with a nine-item set of questions developed by the Hope Center.

More than half of CCC survey respondents experienced housing insecurity in the previous year (Figure 3). The most commonly reported challenges were not paying the full amount of their rent or mortgage (28%), not paying the full cost of utilities (27%), having an account default or go into collections (24%), and experiencing a rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay (23%).

FIGURE 3. Housing Insecurity Among CCC Survey Respondents

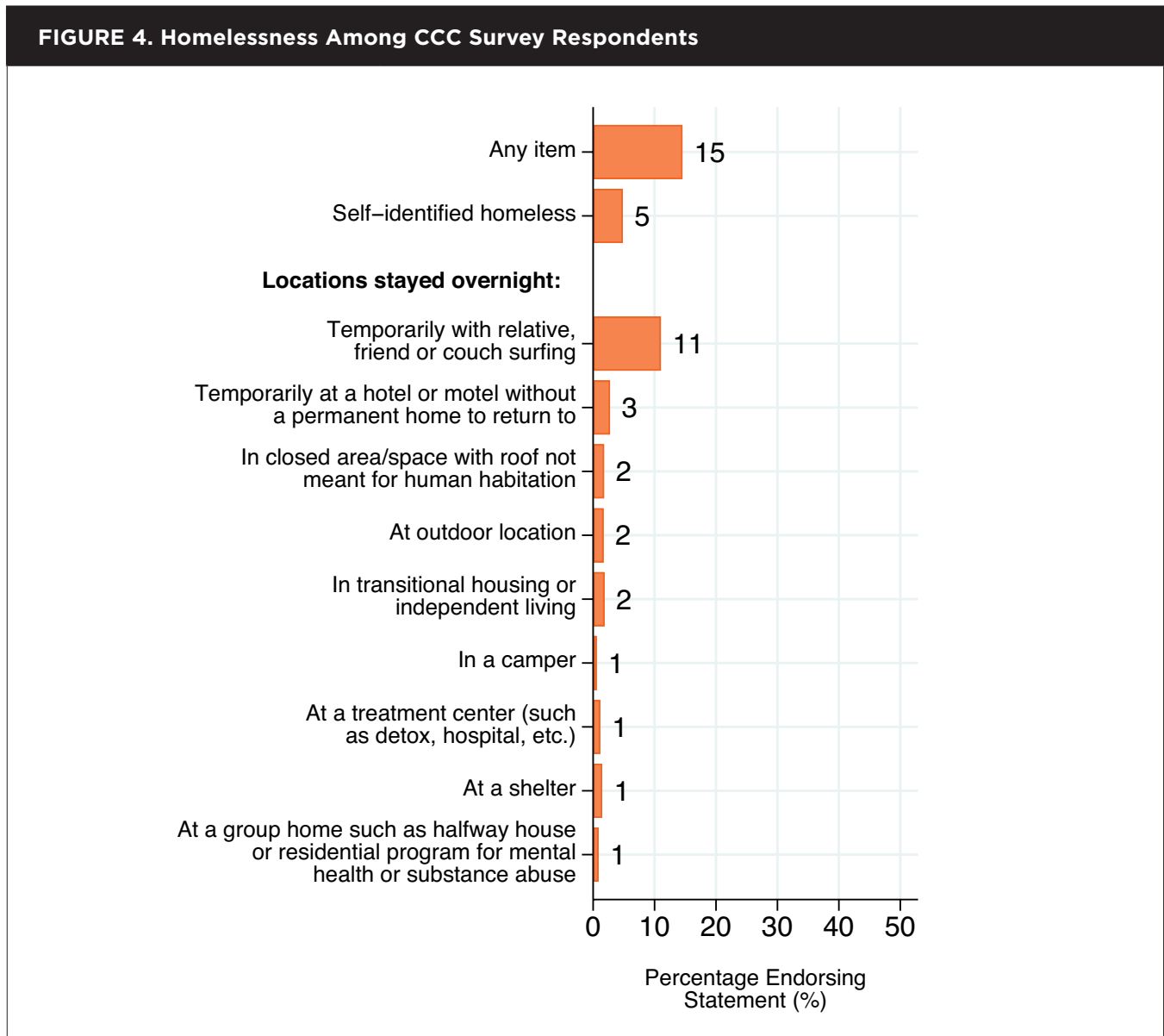


Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on the housing insecurity module used in this report, see Appendix C.

Homelessness means that a person does not have a stable place to live. Students were identified as homeless if they responded affirmatively to a question asking if they had been homeless or they identified living conditions that are considered signs of homelessness. Homelessness was assessed with a tool developed by California State University researchers.

Homelessness affects 15% of CCC survey respondents (Figure 4). Five percent of respondents self-identify as homeless; 10% experience homelessness (e.g. living under conditions indicating housing insecurity), but do not self-identify as homeless. The vast majority of students who experience homelessness temporarily stayed with a relative or friend, or couch surfed.



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

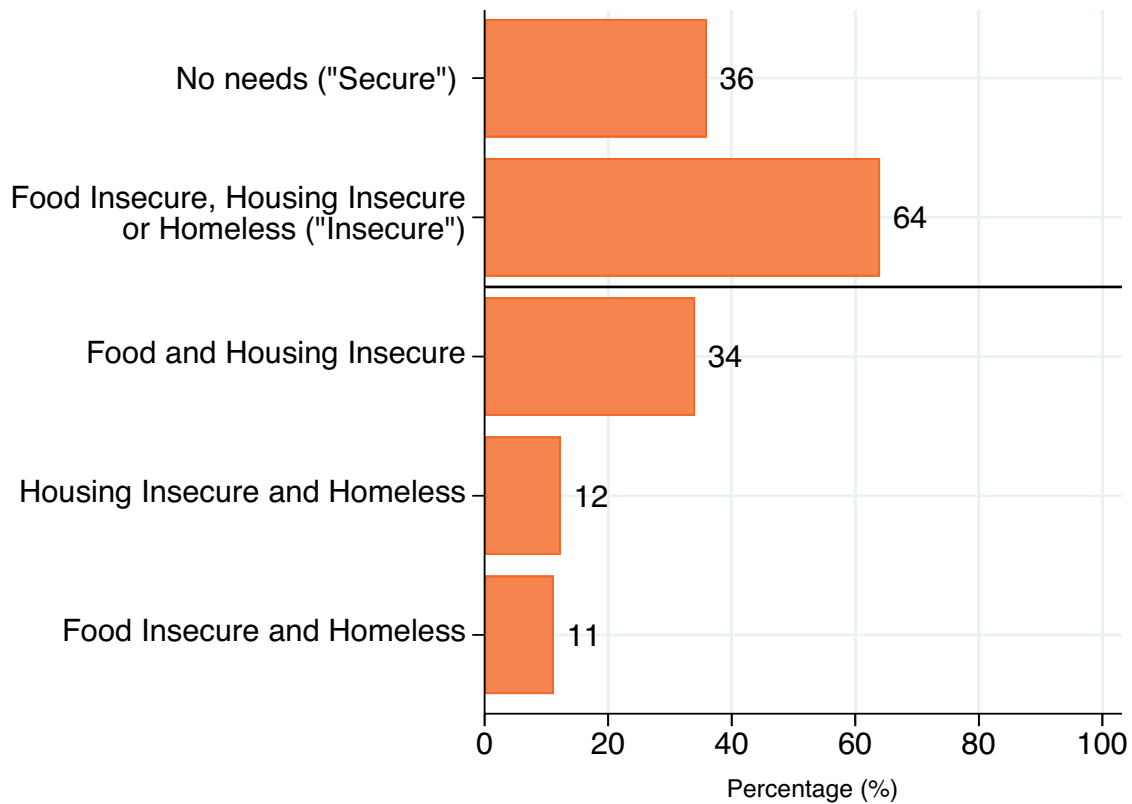
Notes: For more details on the homelessness module used in this report, see Appendix C.

OVERLAPPING CHALLENGES

Students who lack resources for housing often also lack resources for food. In addition, basic needs insecurity varies over time, such that a student might experience housing insecurity during one semester and food insecurity the next. Some students are housing insecure during the summer and homeless during the winter.

Nearly two in three CCC students responding to the survey experienced food insecurity, housing insecurity, or homelessness during the previous year (Figure 5). In addition, 34% of respondents were both food and housing insecure in the past year, and 12% experienced both housing insecurity and homelessness during that time. Many of the latter group were also food insecure. Finally, 11% were both food insecure and homeless in the past year.

FIGURE 5. Intersections of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness Among CCC Survey Respondents



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C.

SECTION 2:

Disparities in Basic Needs Insecurity

Some CCC students are at higher risk of basic needs insecurity than others. This section of the report examines basic needs insecurity according to students' demographic, academic, and economic characteristics, as well as their life circumstances.

DEMOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES IN BASIC NEEDS INSECURITY

Students who are heterosexual, male, or female have lower rates of basic needs insecurity as compared to their peers (Table 1). Students who are transgender have higher rates of food and housing insecurity as compared to other gender orientations. Transgender students and students who do not identify as female, male, or transgender have the highest rates of homelessness at 20% and 27%. Gay or lesbian students have rates of food insecurity seven percentage points higher than their heterosexual and bisexual peers, at 51% versus 44%. Gay or lesbian students have rates of homelessness about seven percentage points higher than their heterosexual peers.

There are also sizable racial/ethnic disparities in basic needs insecurity among CCC students. For example, rates of food insecurity among students identifying as African American or Black are 55%. This is approximately 15 percentage points higher than rates for Hispanic or Latinx students, and 20 percentage points higher than rates for students identifying as White or Caucasian. American Indian or Alaskan Native students experience the highest rates of housing insecurity (70%) compared to their peers. Students who are U.S. citizens are more likely than students who are not U.S. citizens to experience food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness.

Higher levels of parental education are associated with lower risk of food or housing insecurity, with the clearest disparities evident based on whether or not a student's parent possesses a bachelor's degree. Students who experience the highest rates of food and housing insecurity are those whose parent(s) have some college, with 52% of students experiencing food insecurity and 63% experiencing housing insecurity. Nonetheless, about 30% of CCC students with college-educated parents experience food insecurity, and 46% experience housing insecurity.

Basic needs insecurity is more pronounced among older CCC students, particularly students ages 26 and older. Sixty-nine percent of students surveyed ages 26 to 30 experience housing insecurity (compared with 36% for 18–20 year olds).



TABLE 1. Demographic Disparities in Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness*

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
GENDER ORIENTATION				
Male	659	38	47	17
Female	1,726	46	57	14
Transgender	20	55	70	20
Does not identify as female, male, or transgender	63	49	56	27
SEXUAL ORIENTATION				
Heterosexual or straight	1,855	44	54	14
Gay or lesbian	138	51	67	21
Bisexual	235	44	56	20
Is not sure or neither heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual	152	38	47	11
RACIAL OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND				
White or Caucasian	483	35	53	16
African American or Black	708	55	64	21
Hispanic or Latinx	1,141	40	48	10
American Indian or Alaskan Native	44	68	70	20
Middle Eastern or North African or Arab or Arab American	31	42	58	10
Southeast Asian	51	35	49	10
Pacific Islander or native Hawaiian	23	43	52	9
Other Asian or Asian-American	98	35	41	11
Other	41	49	71	20
Prefers not to answer	63	57	71	27

TABLE 1. Demographic Disparities in Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness* (continued)

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
STUDENT IS A U.S. CITIZEN OR PERMANENT RESIDENT				
Yes	2,173	44	55	15
No	132	38	50	13
Prefers not to answer	92	41	53	10
HIGHEST LEVEL OF PARENTAL EDUCATION				
No high school diploma	458	45	54	12
High school diploma	461	39	47	18
Some college	959	52	63	17
Bachelors degree or greater	405	30	46	11
Does not know	131	37	47	11
AGE				
18 to 20	902	32	36	12
21 to 25	613	49	58	18
26 to 30	382	48	69	14
Older than 30	510	54	72	17

*Among CCC survey respondents

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: The Number of Students column indicates the number of survey respondents to our measure of homelessness. The number of survey respondents for our measures of food insecurity and housing insecurity may vary slightly. For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C. Classifications of gender orientation and racial/ethnic background are not mutually exclusive. Students could self-identify with multiple classifications.

BASIC NEEDS INSECURITY BY ACADEMIC, ECONOMIC, AND LIFE EXPERIENCES

Rates of basic needs insecurity vary as well by students' academic, economic, and life experiences (Table 2). Food insecurity and homelessness vary minimally with respect to part-time or full-time academic status, though full-time students experience less housing insecurity than their part-time peers, at 50% versus 60%. Students in adult education programs at CCC are more likely to experience basic needs insecurity in comparison to their counterparts enrolled in undergraduate or other programs. Students who spend three or more years in college have higher rates of housing insecurity than students still in their first year, at 64% compared with 46%. Forty percent of students in their first year of college are food insecure, while 49% of students with more than three years in college are food insecure. Rates of homelessness do not differ by number of years in college.

Students who are considered independent from their families for the purposes of filing a FAFSA are more likely to experience food insecurity, homelessness, and housing insecurity than those claimed as a dependent by their parents. We also find disparities in basic needs insecurity by financial need (measured using Pell Grant status). Pell Grant recipients experience greater basic needs insecurity compared with students who do not receive the Pell.

In addition, students with children experience higher rates of food insecurity (56%) and housing insecurity (67%) as compared with those who do not have children; rates of homelessness did not vary. Students who are married, in a domestic partnership, or in a relationship have lower rates of homelessness than their peers. While the total number of students who reported being divorced or widowed (n=46) is small, the rates of housing insecurity (85%) and homelessness (28%) are worth noting, as these rates are higher than those for any other relationship category.

TABLE 2. Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness by Student Life Experiences*

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
COLLEGE ENROLLMENT STATUS				
Full-time (at least 12 credits)	1,627	42	50	14
Part-time (fewer than 12 credits)	1,011	46	60	14
LEVEL OF ENROLLMENT				
Undergraduate	2,231	44	54	14
Adult Education	114	46	58	20
Other	314	41	52	13

TABLE 2. Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness by Student Life Experiences* (continued)

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
YEARS IN COLLEGE				
Less than 1	902	40	46	15
1 to 2	890	45	55	15
3 or more	623	49	64	14
DEPENDENCY STATUS				
Dependent	776	37	41	13
Independent	1,604	47	61	16
STUDENT RECEIVES THE PELL GRANT				
Yes	1,177	52	60	18
No	1,303	37	48	12
STUDENT HAS CHILDREN				
Yes	525	56	67	16
No	2,134	40	51	14
RELATIONSHIP STATUS				
Single	1,367	44	52	16
In a relationship	707	44	54	13
Married or domestic partnership	293	40	62	11
Divorced or Widowed	46	61	85	28
STUDENT HAS BEEN IN FOSTER CARE				
Yes	68	65	78	38
No	2,348	43	54	14
STUDENT SERVED IN THE MILITARY				
Yes	69	59	75	25
No	2,345	43	54	15
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Employed	1,608	47	62	15
Not employed	957	38	41	12

TABLE 2. Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness by Student Life Experiences* (continued)

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
STUDENT HAS BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIME				
Yes	61	69	85	43
No	2,435	43	53	14
DISABILITY OR MEDICAL CONDITION				
Learning disability (dyslexia, etc.)	128	63	62	25
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	164	53	65	30
Autism spectrum disorder	24	58	54	38
Physical disability (speech, sight, mobility, hearing, etc.)	84	62	75	29
Chronic illness (asthma, diabetes, autoimmune disorder, cancer, etc.)	305	51	65	17
Psychological disorder (depression, anxiety, etc.)	609	55	63	22
Other	43	44	67	21
No disability or medical condition	1,492	39	50	12

*Among CCC survey respondents

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: The Number of Students column indicates the number of survey respondents to our measure of homelessness. The number of survey respondents for our measures of food insecurity and housing insecurity may vary slightly. For more detail on how each measure of insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C. Classifications of disability or medical conditions are not mutually exclusive. Students could self-identify with multiple disabilities or medical conditions.

Table 2 also illustrates variations in basic needs insecurity by student life circumstances. CCC students who have been in the foster care system are much more likely to report basic needs insecurity than their peers. Sixty-five percent of these students experience food insecurity and 78% experience housing insecurity. Thirty-eight percent of students who were formerly in foster care also experience homelessness.

Students who served in the military are more likely to experience basic needs insecurity than students who did not: rates for students with military experience are 59% food insecurity, 75% housing insecurity, and 25% homelessness.

Within employment categories, students who were not employed experience the least amount of basic needs insecurity compared to their peers. However, employed students experience higher rates of basic needs insecurity in all three categories compared to their peers. For more detailed information about employment and basic needs insecurity, refer to Section 3.

Among students who reported that they had been convicted of a crime in the past, many encounter food and housing challenges while attending college. Sixty-nine percent of respondents convicted of a crime experience food insecurity, while 85% experience housing insecurity. Also, a significant share of these students (43%) experience homelessness.

Basic needs insecurity varies widely by disability or medical condition. Students who reported being on the autism spectrum or having a learning disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, physical disability, chronic illness, or psychological disorder struggle the most with basic needs insecurity.



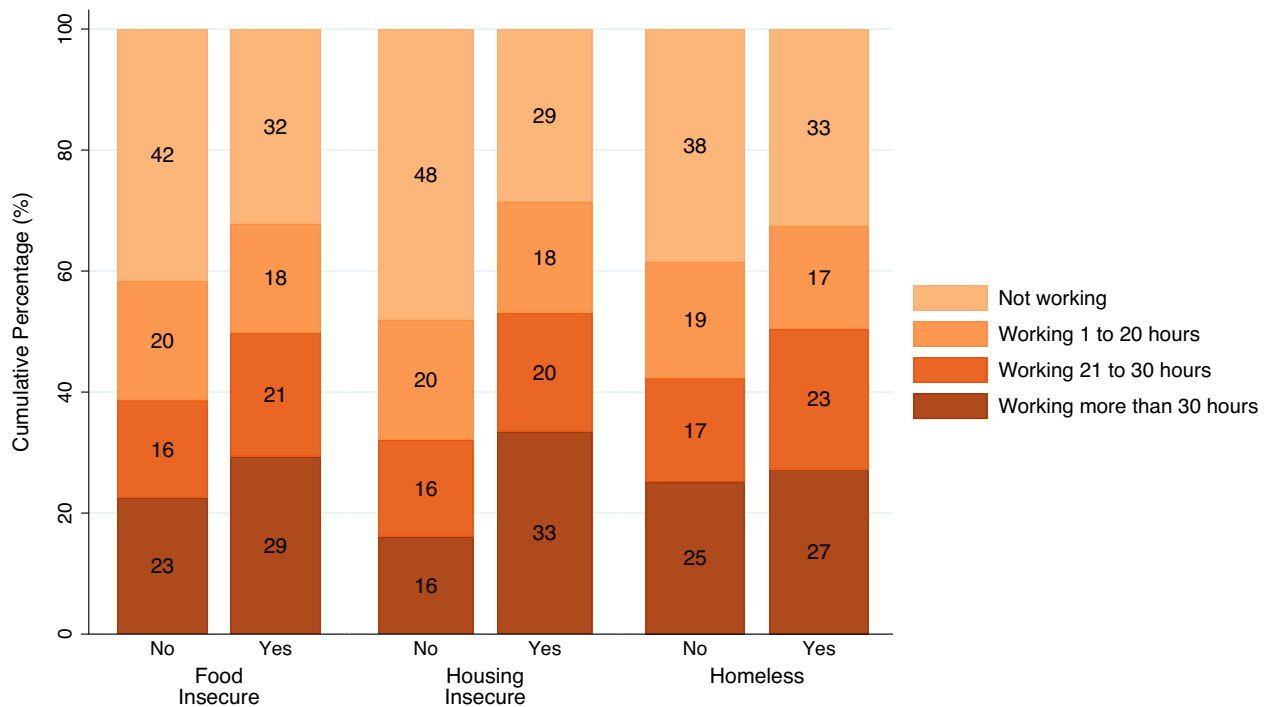


SECTION 3:

Employment and Academic Performance

Like most American undergraduates, CCC students experiencing basic needs insecurity are overwhelmingly part of the labor force. For example, the majority of students who experience food insecurity (68%), housing insecurity (71%), and homelessness (67%) are employed (Figure 6). Also, among working students, those who experience basic needs insecurity work more hours than other students.

FIGURE 6. Employment Behavior by Basic Need Insecurity Status*

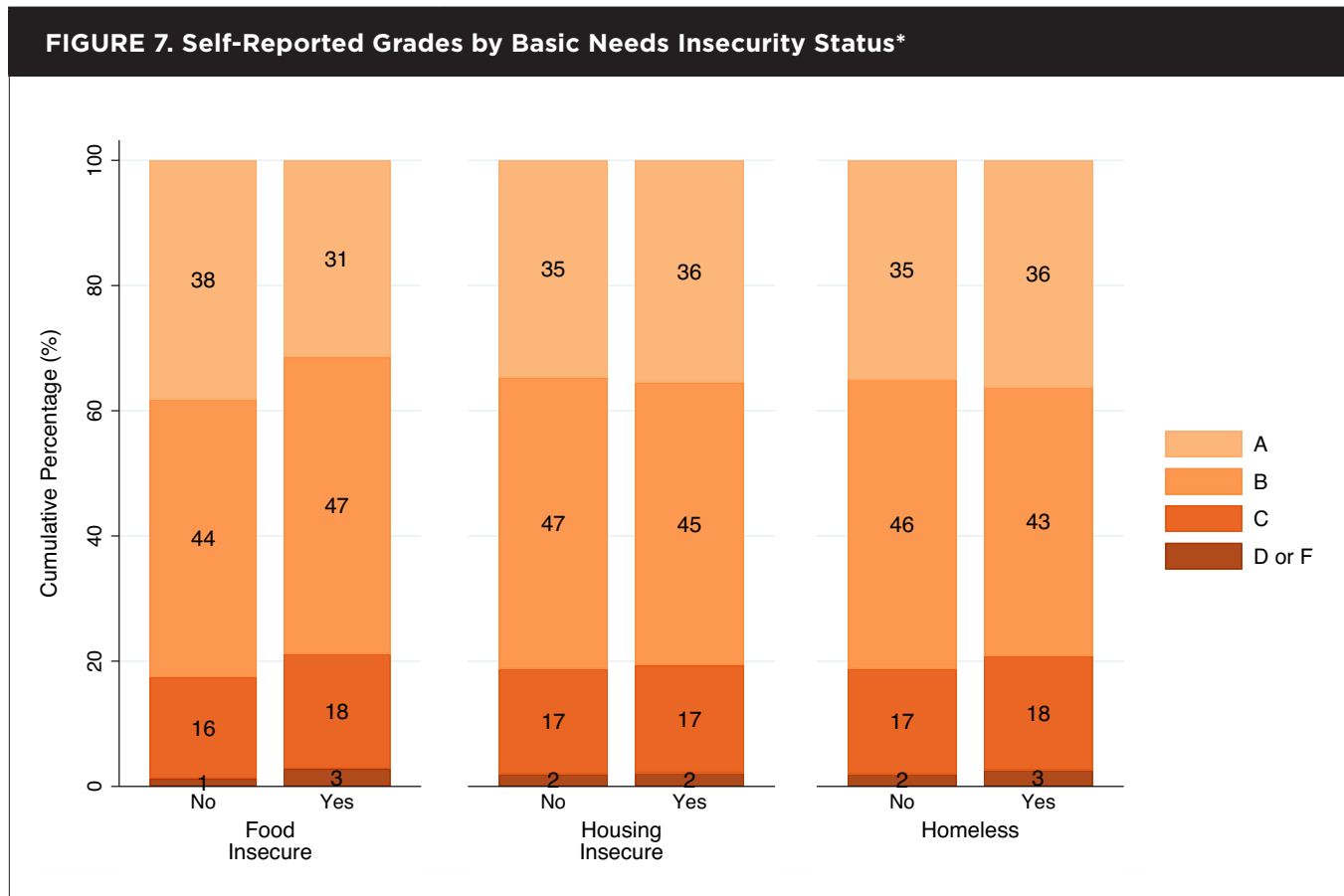


*Among CCC survey respondents

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C. Cumulative percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding error

Figure 7 illustrates that while most students report receiving A's and B's, students who experience food insecurity or homelessness report grades of C or below at slightly higher rates than students who do not have these experiences.



*Among CCC survey respondents

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C. Cumulative percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

SECTION 4:

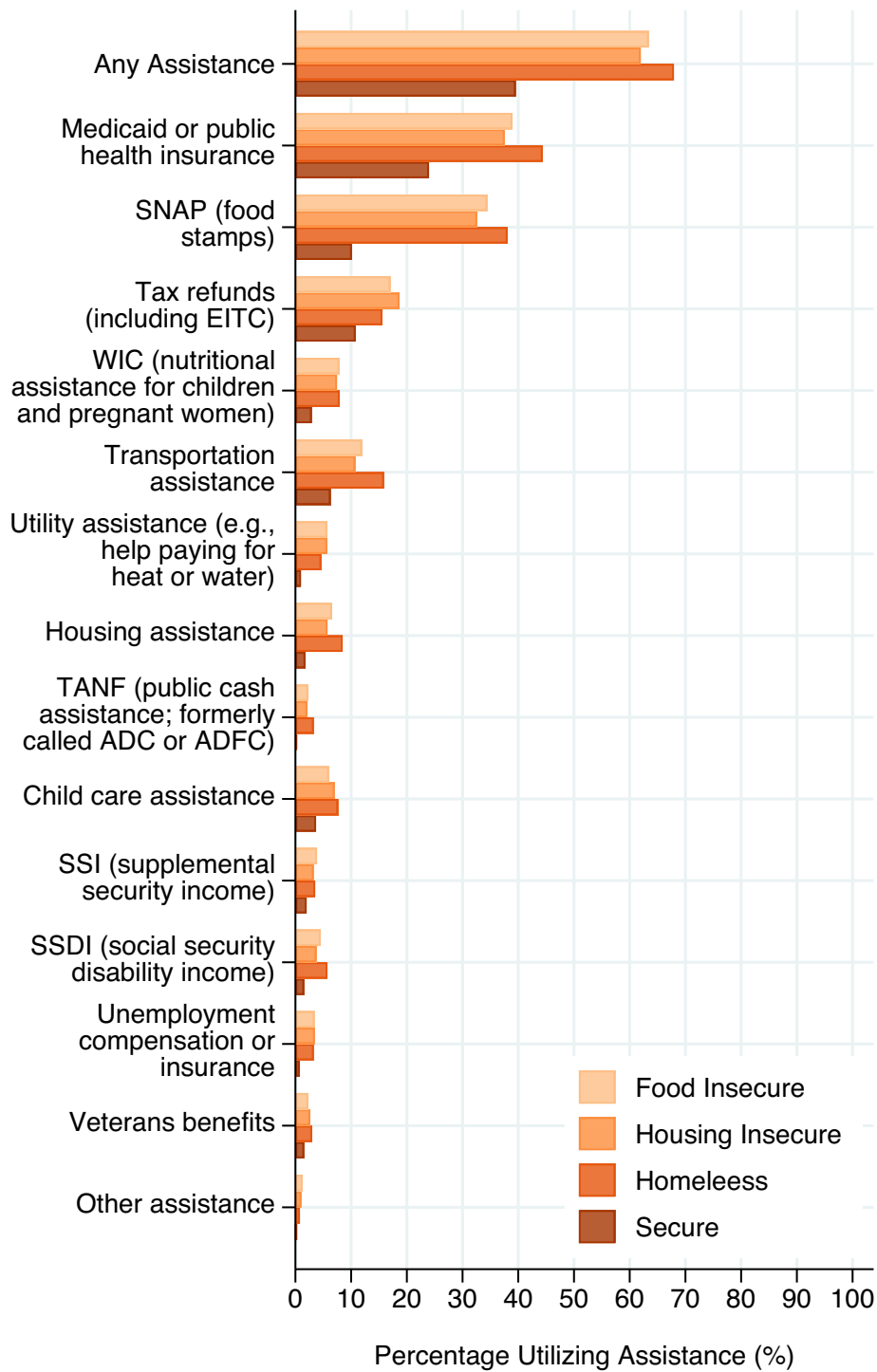
Utilization of Supports

Many CCC students who experience basic needs insecurity do not access public assistance (Figure 8). About one in three food insecure students receive SNAP. Likewise, only 9% of students who experience homelessness receive housing assistance. Sixteen percent of students who experience homelessness utilized transportation assistance. Medicaid or public health insurance, SNAP, and tax refunds are the supports used most often, though they remain quite low given the rates of students experiencing basic needs insecurity.

Overall, Figure 8 highlights that students with basic needs insecurity are not accessing all of the public benefits that they could. It is also worth noting that students who are secure in their basic needs are still accessing public benefits, albeit at lower rates (40%) than students with food insecurity (63%), housing insecurity (62%), and homelessness (68%).⁷



FIGURE 8. Use of Assistance Among CCC Survey Respondents According to Basic Needs Security



Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on the percentages for each bar, see Appendix E, Table E-8. For more detail on how each measure of insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C.

SECTION 5: Conclusion

The #RealCollege survey affirms what has been evident to CCC administrators, faculty, staff, and students for many years: basic needs insecurity is a condition challenging many undergraduates trying to pursue credentials. The scope of the problem described here is more substantial than documented in prior reports and should be cause for a systemic response.



City Colleges of Chicago #RealCollege Survey Appendices

Appendix A. Participating Colleges in this Report

2018 #REALCOLLEGE SURVEY CITY COLLEGES OF CHICAGO PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Harold Washington College

Harry S. Truman College

Kennedy-King College

Malcolm X College

Olive-Harvey College

Richard J. Daley College

Wilbur Wright College

Appendix B. Survey Methodology

SURVEY ELIGIBILITY AND PARTICIPATING COLLEGES

Together with the Advising & Student Success and Learning Agenda teams at Chicago City Colleges, the Hope Center fielded this survey to all institutions in the CCC system. Participating institutions agreed to administer an online survey in the fall and offer ten \$100 prizes to their students in order to boost response rates. Institutions sent a series of invitations and follow-up reminders to all enrolled students encouraging them to participate. The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice provided the email invitation language as well as hosted the survey as shown below. Upon opening the survey they were presented with a consent form in compliance with Institutional Review Board standards. To actually take the survey the student must have clicked continue as a record of his/her consent and completed a minimum of the first page of the survey. Participating institutions were asked to use only the provided invitation language to ensure consistency across institutions.

Subject: #RealCollege: Speak out - chance to win \$100!

Making it in college these days can be tough. We want to help.

Colleges and universities need to know about the lives of real students like you so that they can offer more support. After you complete the survey, you can enter a drawing to receive a \$100 award.

This survey we call “#RealCollege” is all about you and your college experience. You’re getting it because you attend [COLLEGE NAME] and people there want to help you succeed.

Click here to share your story!

Everything will be kept confidential so, tell the truth. Share your challenges. Help us find solutions.

COLLEGE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The sample includes 3,009 students from seven institutions (see Appendix A for a list of participating institutions). Institutions typically fielded the survey early in fall term, as students enduring basic needs insecurity are at greater risk for dropping out of school later in the year.⁸

TABLE B-1. Characteristics of Participating Institutions

	Percentage
UNDERGRADUATE POPULATION	
Fewer than 5,000	29
5,000–9,999	57
10,000–19,999	14
20,000 or more	0
UNDERGRADUATES AWARDED PELL GRANTS	
Less than 25%	29
25%–49%	71
50%–74%	0
75% or more	0

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (2018). Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>

Notes: The information above reflects the characteristics of seven institutions as of the fall of 2017 with the exception of the information on Pell awardees, which was collected in the fall of 2016. Cumulative percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

STUDENT SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Most students sent the #RealCollege survey did not answer it. Institutions sent survey invitations to an estimated 47,454 undergraduate students and 3,009 students participated, yielding a response rate of 6%.⁹ We surveyed all students rather than drawing a subsample due to legal and financial restrictions. The results may be biased—overstating or understating the problem—depending on who answered and who did not. As readers ponder this issue, consider that the survey was emailed to students and thus they had to have electronic access to respond. The incentives provided were negligible and did not include help with their challenges. Finally, the survey was framed as being about college life, not about hunger or homelessness.

TABLE B-2. Characteristics of CCC Survey Respondents

	Percentage
GENDER ORIENTATION	
Male	27
Female	71
Transgender	1
Do not identify as female, male, or transgender	3
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	
Heterosexual or straight	78
Gay or lesbian	6
Bisexual	10
Is not sure or neither heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual	6
RACIAL OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND	
White or Caucasian	20
African American or Black	29
Hispanic or Latinx	47
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2
Middle Eastern or North African or Arab or Arab American	1
Southeast Asian	2
Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	1
Other Asian or Asian-American	4
Other	2
Prefers not to answer	3
STUDENT IS A U.S. CITIZEN OR PERMANENT RESIDENT	
Yes	91
No	6
Prefers not to answer	4

TABLE B-2. Characteristics of CCC Survey Respondents (continued)

	Percentage
HIGHEST LEVEL OF PARENTAL EDUCATION	
No high school diploma	19
High school diploma	19
Some college	40
Bachelor's degree or greater	17
Does not know	5
AGE	
18 to 20	37
21 to 25	25
26 to 30	16
Older than 30	21
COLLEGE ENROLLMENT STATUS	
Full-time (at least 12 credits)	61
Part-time (fewer than 12 credits)	39
LEVEL OF ENROLLMENT	
Undergraduate	84
Adult Education	4
Other	12
YEARS IN COLLEGE	
Less than 1	38
1 to 2	37
3 or more	25
DEPENDENCY STATUS	
Dependent	33
Independent	67
STUDENT RECEIVES THE PELL GRANT	
Yes	48
No	52

TABLE B-2. Characteristics of CCC Survey Respondents (continued)

	Percentage
STUDENT HAS CHILDREN	
Yes	20
No	80
RELATIONSHIP STATUS	
Single	61
In a relationship	23
Married or domestic partnership	14
Divorced or Widowed	2
STUDENT HAS BEEN IN FOSTER CARE	
Yes	3
No	97
STUDENT SERVED IN THE MILITARY	
Yes	2
No	98
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	
Employed	62
Not Employed	38
STUDENT HAS BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIME	
Yes	2
No	98
DISABILITY OR MEDICAL CONDITION	
Learning disability (dyslexia, etc.)	5
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	7
Autism spectrum disorder	1
Physical disability (speech, sight, mobility, hearing, etc.)	4
Chronic illness (asthma, diabetes, autoimmune disorders, cancer, etc.)	13

TABLE B-2. Characteristics of CCC Survey Respondents (continued)

	Percentage
Psychological disorder (depression, anxiety, etc.)	25
Other	2
No disability or medical condition	50

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: Classifications of gender orientation, racial or ethnic background, and disability or medical condition are not mutually exclusive. Students could self-identify with multiple classifications. Percentages of mutually exclusive groups may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

Appendix C. Three Survey Measures of Basic Needs Insecurity

1. Food Security

To assess food *security* in 2018, we used questions from the 18-item Household Food Security Survey Module (shown below) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). It is important to note that while we mainly discuss *insecurity*, the standard is to measure the level of *security*, referring to those with low or very low security as “food insecure.”

FOOD SECURITY MODULE

Adult Stage 1

1. “In the last 30 days, I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.” (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)
2. “In the last 30 days, the food that I bought just didn’t last, and I didn’t have money to get more.” (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)
3. “In the last 30 days, I couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)

If the respondent answers “often true” or “sometimes true” to any of the three questions in Adult Stage 1, then proceed to Adult Stage 2.

Adult Stage 2

4. “In the last 30 days, did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?” (Yes/No)
5. *[If yes to question 4, ask]* “In the last 30 days, how many days did this happen?” (Once, Twice, Three times, Four times, Five times, More than five times)
6. “In the last 30 days, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn’t enough money for food?” (Yes/No)
7. “In the last 30 days, were you ever hungry but didn’t eat because there wasn’t enough money for food?” (Yes/No)
8. “In the last 30 days, did you lose weight because there wasn’t enough money for food?” (Yes/No)

If the respondent answers “yes” to any of the questions in Adult Stage 2, then proceed to Adult Stage 3.

Adult Stage 3

9. “In the last 30 days, did you ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food?” (Yes/No)
10. *[If yes to question 9, ask]* “In the last 30 days, how many days did this happen?” (Once, Twice, Three times, Four times, Five times, More than five times)

If the respondent has indicated that children under 18 are present in the household, then proceed to Child Stage 1.

Child Stage 1

11. “In the last 30 days, I relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed my children because I was running out of money to buy food.” (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)
12. “In the last 30 days, I couldn’t feed my children a balanced meal, because I couldn’t afford that.” (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)
13. “In the last 30 days, my child was not eating enough because I just couldn’t afford enough food.” (Often true, Sometimes true, Never true)

If the respondent answers “often true” or “sometimes true” to any of the three questions in Child Stage 1, then proceed to Child Stage 2.

Child Stage 2

14. “In the last 30 days, did you ever cut the size of your children’s meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?” (Yes/No)
15. “In the last 30 days, did your children ever skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?” (Yes/No)
16. [If yes to question 15, ask] “In the last 30 days, how often did this happen?” (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 or more times)
17. “In the last 30 days, were your children ever hungry but you just couldn’t afford more food?” (Yes/No)
18. “In the last 30 days, did any of your children ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food?” (Yes/No)

To calculate a raw score for food security, we counted the number of questions to which a student answered affirmatively.

- a. “Often true” and “sometimes true” were counted as affirmative answers.
- b. Answers of “Three times” or more were counted as a “yes.” We translated the raw score into food security levels as follows:

RAW SCORE

	18-item (children present)	18-item (no children present)
FOOD SECURITY LEVEL		
High	0	0
Marginal	1-2	1-2
Low	3-7	3-5
Very Low	8-18	6-10

2. Housing Insecurity

To assess housing insecurity, we used a series of survey questions adapted from the national Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) Adult Well-Being Module to measure students' access to and ability to pay for safe and reliable housing.¹⁰ In 2018, we asked students the following questions:

HOUSING INSECURITY MODULE

1. "In the past 12 months, was there a rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay?" (Yes/No)
2. "In the past 12 months, have you been unable to pay or underpaid your rent or mortgage?" (Yes/No)
3. "In the past 12 months, have you received a summons to appear in housing court?" (Yes/No)
4. "In the past 12 months, have you not paid the full amount of a gas, oil, or electricity bill?" (Yes/No)
5. "In the past 12 months, did you have an account default or go into collections?" (Yes/No)
6. "In the past 12 months, have you moved in with other people, even for a little while, because of financial problems?" (Yes/No)
7. "In the past 12 months, have you lived with others beyond the expected capacity of the house or apartment?" (Yes/No)
8. "In the past 12 months, did you leave your household because you felt unsafe?" (Yes/No)
9. "In the past 12 months, how many times have you moved?" (None, Once, Twice, 3 times, 4 times, 5 times, 6 times, 7 times, 8 times, 9 times, 10 or more times)

In 2018, students were considered housing insecure if they answered "yes" to any of the first eight questions or said they moved at least *three* times (question #9).

3. Homelessness

To measure homelessness, we asked a series of survey questions that align with the definition of homelessness dictated by the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Please refer to pp. 31-32 in Crutchfield and Maguire (2017) for further discussion of this measure.¹¹ In 2018, students were considered homeless if they answered affirmatively to question #1 OR any part of question #2 (parts e through m) in the Homelessness Module (below).

HOMELESSNESS MODULE

1. "In the past 12 months, have you ever been homeless?"
2. "In the past 12 months, have you slept in any of the following places? Please check all that apply."
 - a. Campus or university housing
 - b. Sorority/fraternity house

- c. In a rented or owned house, mobile home, or apartment (alone or with roommates or friends)
- d. In a rented or owned house, mobile home, or apartment with my family (parent, guardian, or relative)
- e. At a shelter
- f. In a camper
- g. Temporarily staying with a relative, friend, or couch surfing until I find other housing
- h. Temporarily at a hotel or motel without a permanent home to return to (not on vacation or business travel)
- i. In transitional housing or independent living program
- j. At a group home such as halfway house or residential program for mental health or substance abuse
- k. At a treatment center (such as detox, hospital, etc.)
- l. Outdoor location (such as street, sidewalk, or alley; bus or train stop; campground or woods, park, beach, or riverbed; under bridge or overpass; or other)
- m. In a closed area/space with a roof not meant for human habitation (such as abandoned building; car, truck, van, RV, or camper; encampment or tent; unconverted garage, attic, or basement; etc.)

Appendix D. Comparing Measures of Homelessness

One key challenge to supporting homeless students is that they often do not identify as homeless. In this survey, we posed direct questions about students’ homelessness status and compared those results with the indirect measures assessing their actual experiences (described in Appendix C).

As shown in Table D, when asked if they ever experienced homelessness in the past year, the majority of students who said “yes” also reported couch surfing (75%) or sleeping in a location used to classify students as homeless (91%). However, among students who reported couch surfing in the past year—a somewhat greater number of students than those who said they had been homeless (153 versus 116)—only 57% self-identified as experiencing homelessness. Similarly, only 30% who reported sleeping in a location used to classify students as homeless also self-identified as experiencing homelessness.

TABLE D. Comparisons of Homelessness Measures

	Number of Students	Self-identified homeless (%)	Ever couch surfed (%)	Experienced location-based homelessness (%)
AMONG RESPONDENTS WHO:				
Self-identified homeless	116	100	75	91
Ever couch surfed	153	57	100	87
Experienced location-based homelessness	346	30	38	100

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Note: The first row refers to the students who responded “Yes” to the following question: “In the past 12 months have you been homeless?” The second row refers to students who responded “Yes” to the following question: “In the past 12 months, did you couch surf—that is moved from one temporary housing arrangement to another because you had no other place to live?” The last row, experienced location-based homelessness, reflects the students who reported sleeping in any of the following locations in the past 12 months: at a shelter; in a camper; temporarily staying with a relative, friend, or couch surfing; temporarily at a hotel or motel; in transitional housing or independent living program; at a group home; at a treatment center; outdoor location; in a closed area/space with a roof not meant for human habitation.

Appendix E. Tables on Data Used in Figures

TABLE E-1. Food Security Among CCC Survey Respondents (Figure 1)

	Number of Students	Percentage
FOOD SECURITY LEVEL		
High	1,161	45
Marginal	306	12
Low	448	17
Very Low	687	26

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: According to the USDA, students at either low or very low food security were considered “food insecure.” For more details on the food security module used in this report, see Appendix C. Cumulative percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

Table E-2. Food Insecurity Among CCC Survey Respondents (Figure 2)

	Number of Students	Percentage
I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.	1,215	46
I couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.	1,135	43
The food that I bought just didn’t last and I didn’t have the money to buy more.	1,046	40
I cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there wasn’t enough money for food.	936	36
I ate less than I felt I should because there wasn’t enough money for food.	911	35
I was hungry but didn’t eat because there wasn’t enough money for food.	760	29
I cut the size of meals or skipped because there wasn’t enough money for food. (3 or more times)	634	25
I lost weight because there wasn’t enough money for food.	465	18
I did not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food.	313	12
I did not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food. (3 or more times)	178	7

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

TABLE E-3. Housing Insecurity Among CCC Survey Respondents (Figure 3)

	Number of Students	Percentage
Any item	1,445	54
Had a rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay	611	23
Did not pay full utilities	705	27
Did not pay full amount of rent or mortgage	731	28
Moved in with people due to financial problems	492	19
Lived with others beyond the expected capacity of the housing	366	14
Had an account default or go into collections	622	24
Left household because felt unsafe	174	7
Moved three or more times	77	3
Received a summons to appear in housing court	50	2

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on the housing insecurity module used in this report, see Appendix C.

TABLE E-4. Homelessness Among CCC Survey Respondents (Figure 4)

	Number of Students	Percentage
Any item	389	15
Self-identified homeless	129	5
LOCATIONS STAYED OVERNIGHT:		
Temporarily with relative, friend, or couch surfing	289	11
Temporarily at a hotel or motel without a permanent home to return to	72	3
In closed area/space with roof not meant for human habitation (such as abandoned building; car, truck, van, RV, or camper; encampment or tent; unconverted garage, attic, or basement; etc.)	47	2
At outdoor location (such as street, sidewalk, or alley; bus or train stop; campground or woods, park, beach, or riverbed; under bridge or overpass; or other)	44	2

In transitional housing or independent living	48	2
In a camper	15	1
At a treatment center (such as detox, hospital, etc.)	30	1
At a shelter	38	1
At a group home such as halfway house or residential program for mental health or substance abuse	23	1

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on the homelessness module used in this report, see Appendix C.

TABLE E-5. Intersections of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness Among CCC Survey Respondents (Figure 5)

	Number of Students	Percentage
No needs ("Secure")	964	36
Food insecure, housing insecure, or homeless ("Insecure")	1,715	64
Food and housing insecure	913	34
Housing insecure and homeless	330	12
Food insecure and housing	300	11

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C.

TABLE E-6. Employment Behavior by Basic Need Insecurity Status* (Figure 6)

	Number of Students	Percentage
FOOD INSECURE—NO		
Not employed	583	42
Working 1 to 20 hours	278	20
Working 21 to 30 hours	226	16
Working more than 30 hours	316	23

TABLE E-6. Employment Behavior by Basic Need Insecurity Status* (Figure 6) (continued)

	Number of Students	Percentage
FOOD INSECURE—YES		
Not employed	351	32
Working 1 to 20 hours	196	18
Working 21 to 30 hours	224	21
Working more than 30 hours	320	29
HOUSING INSECURE—NO		
Not employed	565	48
Working 1 to 20 hours	233	20
Working 21 to 30 hours	188	16
Working more than 30 hours	189	16
HOUSING INSECURE—YES		
Not employed	392	29
Working 1 to 20 hours	251	18
Working 21 to 30 hours	271	20
Working more than 30 hours	459	33
HOMELESS—NO		
Not employed	839	38
Working 1 to 20 hours	422	19
Working 21 to 30 hours	374	17
Working more than 30 hours	549	25
HOMELESS—YES		
Not employed	118	33
Working 1 to 20 hours	62	17
Working 21 to 30 hours	84	23
Working more than 30 hours	99	27

*Among CCC Survey Respondents

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C.

TABLE E-7. Self-Reported Grades by Basic Need Insecurity Status* (Figure 7)

	Number of Students	Percentage
FOOD INSECURE—NO		
A	497	38
B	579	44
C	211	16
D or F	16	1
FOOD INSECURE—YES		
A	321	31
B	484	47
C	187	18
D or F	29	3
HOUSING INSECURE—NO		
A	373	35
B	500	47
C	181	17
D or F	21	2
HOUSING INSECURE—YES		
A	457	36
B	581	45
C	221	17
D or F	28	2
HOMELESS—NO		
A	705	35
B	933	46
C	338	17
D or F	40	2
HOMELESS—YES		
A	125	36
B	148	43

TABLE E-7. Self-Reported Grades by Basic Need Insecurity Status* (Figure 7) (continued)

	Number of Students	Percentage
C	63	18
D or F	9	3

*Among CCC survey respondents

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C.

TABLE E-8. Use of Assistance Among CCC Survey Respondents According to Basic Need Security* (Figure 8)

	Number of Students	Percentage
FOOD INSECURE		
Any assistance	685	63
Medicaid or public health insurance	421	39
SNAP (food stamps)	372	34
Tax refunds (including EITC)	184	17
WIC (nutritional assistance for children and pregnant women)	85	8
Transportation assistance	129	12
Utility assistance (e.g., help paying for heat or water)	62	6
Housing assistance	71	7
TANF (public cash assistance; formerly called ADC or ADCF)	25	2
Child care assistance	65	6
SSI (supplemental security income)	42	4
SSDI (social security disability income)	49	5
Unemployment compensation or insurance	37	3
Veterans benefits	25	2
Other assistance	14	1

TABLE E-8. Use of Assistance Among CCC Survey Respondents According to Basic Need Security* (Figure 8) (continued)

	Number of Students	Percentage
HOUSING INSECURE		
Any assistance	837	62
Medicaid or public health insurance	507	38
SNAP (food stamps)	440	33
Tax refunds (including EITC)	252	19
WIC (nutritional assistance for children and pregnant women)	101	7
Transportation assistance	145	11
Utility assistance (e.g., help paying for heat or water)	77	6
Housing assistance	78	6
TANF (public cash assistance; formerly called ADC or ADCF)	29	2
Child care assistance	95	7
SSI (supplemental security income)	44	3
SSDI (social security disability income)	51	4
Unemployment compensation or insurance	47	3
Veterans benefits	36	3
Other assistance	14	1
HOMELESS		
Any assistance	248	68
Medicaid or public health insurance	162	44
SNAP (food stamps)	139	38
Tax refunds (including EITC)	57	16
WIC (nutritional assistance for children and pregnant women)	29	8
Transportation assistance	58	16
Utility assistance (e.g., help paying for heat or water)	17	5
Housing assistance	31	8

TABLE E-8. Use of Assistance Among CCC Survey Respondents According to Basic Need Security* (Figure 8) (continued)

	Number of Students	Percentage
TANF (public cash assistance; formerly called ADC or ADFC)	12	3
Child care assistance	28	8
SSI (supplemental security income)	13	4
SSDI (social security disability income)	21	6
Unemployment compensation or insurance	12	3
Veterans benefits	11	3
Other assistance	3	1
SECURE		
Any assistance	351	40
Medicaid or public health insurance	213	24
SNAP (food stamps)	90	10
Tax refunds (including EITC)	96	11
WIC (nutritional assistance for children and pregnant women)	26	3
Transportation assistance	56	6
Utility assistance (e.g., help paying for heat or water)	9	1
Housing assistance	16	2
TANF (public cash assistance; formerly called ADC or ADFC)	3	0
Child care assistance	33	4
SSI (supplemental security income)	18	2
SSDI (social security disability income)	14	2
Unemployment compensation or insurance	7	1
Veterans benefits	14	2
Other assistance	2	0

*Among CCC Survey Respondents

Source: 2018 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more detail on how each measure of insecurity was constructed, see Appendix C.

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Endnotes

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9 The estimated number of survey invitations is based on the total number of undergraduates at participating institutions in the fall of 2017, as reported by the National Center for Education Statistics's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

10 See https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/about/sipp-content-information.html#par_textimage_5

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