



For College, Community, and Justice

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New Jersey Community Colleges #RealCollege Survey

April 2020 Revised

Executive Summary

Now in its fifth year, the #RealCollege survey is the nation's largest, longest-running annual assessment of basic needs security among college students. In the absence of any federal data on the subject, the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice created the survey to evaluate access to affordable food and housing among college students.

This report describes the results of the #RealCollege survey administered in the fall of 2019 at 17 of the 18 New Jersey community colleges, a subset of the 227 two- and four-year institutions surveyed across the United States.

In 2019, just over 9,110 students from 17 New Jersey community colleges responded to the #RealCollege survey. The results indicate:

- 39% of respondents were food insecure in the prior 30 days
- 44% of respondents were housing insecure in the previous year
- 14% of respondents were homeless in the previous year

These rates are similar to national trends, though the rate of homelessness is a bit lower. There is wide variation—approximately 30 percentage points—in rates of basic needs insecurity across New Jersey community colleges. Students often marginalized in higher education are at greater risk of basic needs insecurity while attending New Jersey community colleges. This includes Middle Eastern, Black, and Indigenous students; those identifying as nonbinary or transgender; and students who are returning citizens or former foster youth.

New Jersey community colleges are taking steps to advance access to public benefits for their students. While this report shows room for continued improvement, rates of public benefits utilization in New Jersey are similar to the averages we observe for community colleges elsewhere. Our findings point to a need for continued evolution of programmatic work to advance cultural shifts on college campuses, increased engagement with community organizations and the private sector, more robust emergency aid programs, and a basic needs-centered approach to government policy at all levels.

The Hope Center thanks Secretary of Higher Education Zakiya Smith Ellis and the State of New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, as well as the New Jersey Council of County Colleges for making this report possible.

Introduction

Most colleges and universities are striving to build enrollment and increase college completion rates. Their efforts include changes to the structure of academic programs and teaching, advising, and strategically using scholarships. But until recently, few institutions identified basic needs insecurity as a significant challenge keeping students from obtaining credentials. In 2018, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report on food insecurity among college students, stating that “increasing evidence indicates that some college students are experiencing food insecurity, which can negatively impact their academic success.” The GAO concluded that the “substantial federal investment in higher education is at risk if college students drop out because they cannot afford basic necessities like food.”¹

The #RealCollege survey is one of 31 studies the GAO reviewed for its report. It assists college administrators, trustees, staff, faculty, and students, along with community partners, policymakers, and advocates, in understanding the prevalence and correlates of food and housing insecurity on college campuses across the nation. The report provides the most up-to-date evidence, and this year’s report includes other key factors affecting basic needs insecurity, including transportation and childcare. The data provide ample reason to center efforts to address students’ basic needs as institutions seek to become “student-ready” colleges where degree completion is common.²

Supporting students’ basic needs has many benefits for colleges and universities, especially in today’s difficult economic climate. Here are five key reasons for addressing #RealCollege issues:

1. Boost academic performance, helping the institution and its students retain federal financial aid. It also promotes retention and degree completion, helping the institution generate more tuition dollars and improving outcomes about which legislators care.
2. Reduce the barriers that returning adults face, boosting enrollment.
3. Make the jobs of faculty and staff easier, as students are more able to focus on learning.
4. Create bridges between the institution and community organizations, bringing new relationships and resources to bear. It also creates a productive opportunity for the private sector to engage with the institution to help create the graduates that everyone wants to hire.
5. Generate new philanthropic giving and create opportunities to engage alumni who do not have much but will happily contribute to emergency aid.

There are many paths to implementing programs and policies to support students’ basic needs, several of which are listed at the conclusion of this report. The Hope Center strongly recommends focusing on prevention, rather than only responding to emergencies, and finds that systemic reforms are far more effective than one-time solutions.

New Jersey has recently taken several important steps to address basic needs insecurity. In May 2019 Governor Phil Murphy signed the Hunger-Free Campus Act (P.L.2019, C.89), which provides grants to public institutions of higher education that have one or more campuses designated as hunger-free campuses. The purpose of the program is to foster innovative ways to combat food insecurity on public college and university campuses and to assist in planning for long-term solutions. The governor also partnered with the New Jersey Department of Human Services and the New Jersey Council of County Colleges to expand the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and make it available to career and technical education students at community colleges.

Later this year, the federal government will—for the first time—begin assessing food and housing insecurity among students in the National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey, a step the Hope Center has long advocated. In addition, numerous other organizations have begun including similar assessments in their surveys, including the [Trellis Financial Wellness Survey](#), the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement](#) (survey questions now in the pilot stage), the [ACHA-National College Health Assessment](#), and the [CIRP Freshman Survey](#). In addition, some colleges and universities are integrating basic needs insecurity assessments into their early warning systems and institutional surveys. The Hope Center is heartened by this response and continues to provide technical support, including by publishing a [guide](#) for assessment tools.



2019 Findings Overview

This report presents findings from the 2019 #RealCollege survey on basic needs of students in New Jersey community colleges. Section 1 presents the overall rates of basic needs insecurity across all survey respondents. Section 2 shows disparate 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 students' utilization of public assistance and on-campus supports. Section 5 contains concluding remarks and recommendations.

For more information on 2019 survey participants and methodologies used for this report, refer to the [web appendices](#).

THE DATA

The data elements in this report were gathered using an online survey fielded to all enrolled students at participating colleges and universities. Colleges distributed the online survey to over 128,000 enrolled students, yielding an estimated response rate of 7.1%, or approximately 9,110 total student participants. For more information on how the survey was fielded and a discussion of how representative the results are, refer to the [web appendices](#).

The following New Jersey community colleges participated in the fall 2019 survey:

- Atlantic Cape Community College
- Bergen Community College
- Brookdale Community College
- Camden County College
- County College of Morris
- Essex County College
- Hudson County Community College
- Middlesex County College
- Ocean County College
- Passaic County Community College
- Raritan Valley Community College
- Rowan College at Burlington County
- Rowan College of South Jersey
- Salem Community College
- Sussex County Community College
- Union County College
- Warren County Community College



SECTION 1: Prevalence of Basic Needs Insecurity

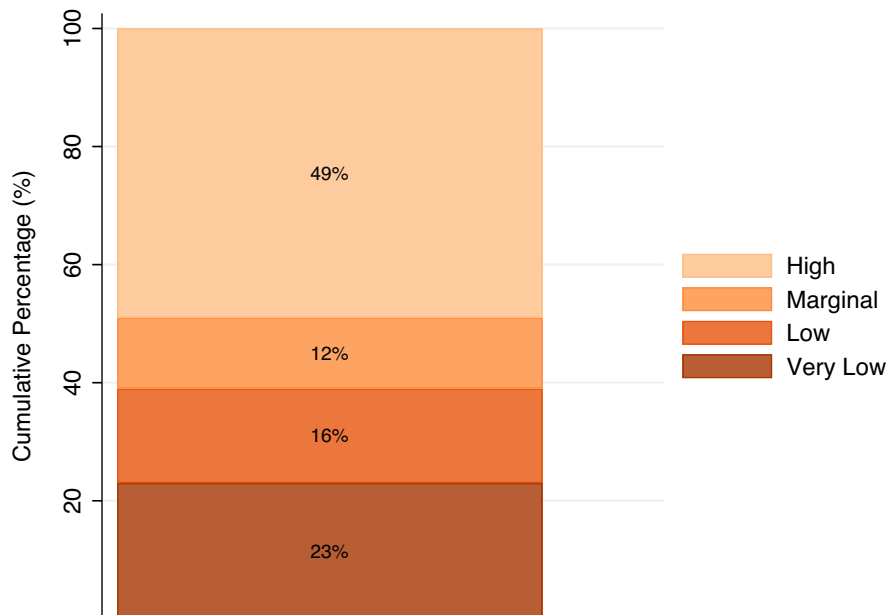
What fraction of students are affected by basic needs insecurity? This section examines the prevalence of food insecurity during the month prior to the survey, and the prevalence of housing insecurity and homelessness during the previous year.

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. The survey assesses food security among students using the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) 18-item set of questions.³

During the 30 days preceding the survey, 39% of survey respondents from New Jersey community colleges experienced food insecurity, with 16% assessed at the low level and 23% at the very low level of food security (Figure 1). About one in three respondents ran short on food, and more than one in four said that they went hungry (Figure 2).

FIGURE 1. Food Security Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents



Source: 2019 #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, refer to the [web appendices](#). Cumulative percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

FIGURE 2. Food Security Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents

I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.	41%
I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.	38%
I cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food.	34%
The food that I bought did not last and I did not have the money to buy more.	32%
I ate less than I felt I should because there was not enough money for food.	31%
I was hungry but did not eat because there was not enough money for food.	27%
I cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food (3 or more times).	23%
I lost weight because there was not enough money for food.	16%
I did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food.	10%
I did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food (3 or more times).	6%

Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on the food security module used in this report, refer to the [web appendices](#). This table has been amended from the original release.



HOUSING INSECURITY AND HOMELESSNESS

Housing insecurity includes a broad set of housing challenges that prevent someone from having a safe, affordable, and consistent place to live. Housing insecurity among students was assessed with a nine-item set of questions the Hope Center developed, which looks at factors such as the ability to pay rent or utilities and the need to move frequently. The data show that students are more likely to suffer some form of housing insecurity than to have all their needs met during college.

Forty-four percent of survey respondents from New Jersey community colleges experienced housing insecurity in the past 12 months (Figure 3). The most commonly reported challenges (each affecting 19% of students) are not being able to pay the full amount of utilities and experiencing a rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay. Six percent of survey respondents left their household because they felt unsafe.

FIGURE 3. Housing Insecurity Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents

Any item	44%
Did not pay full amount of utilities	19%
Had a rent or mortgage increase that made it difficult to pay	19%
Did not pay full amount of rent or mortgage	18%
Had an account default or go into collections	16%
Moved in with people due to financial problems	13%
Lived with others beyond the expected capacity of the housing	10%
Left household because felt unsafe	6%
Received a summons to appear in housing court	2%
Moved three or more times	2%

Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

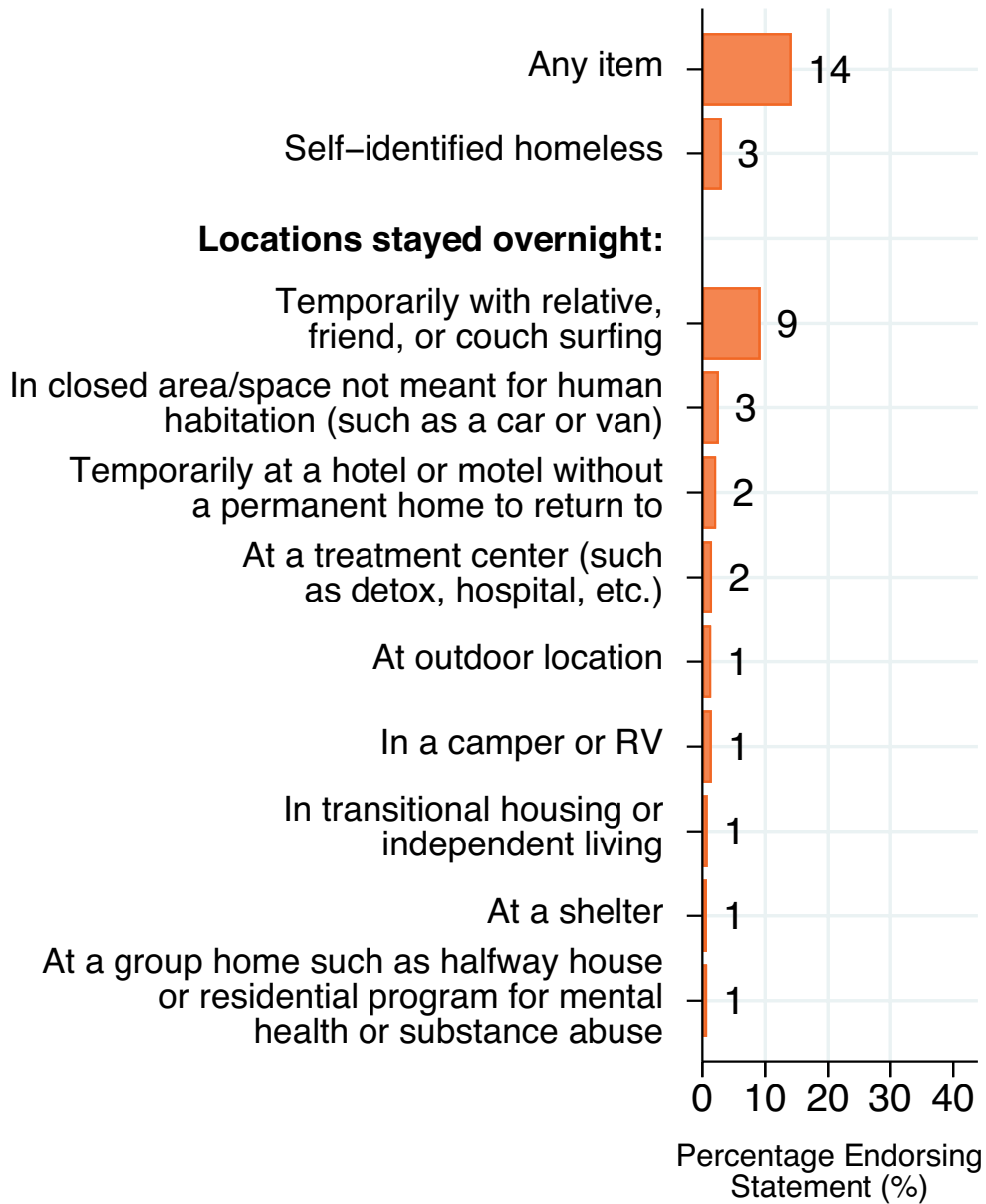
Notes: For more details on the housing insecurity module used in this report, refer to the [web appendices](#).

Homelessness means that a person does not have a fixed, regular, and adequate 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. California State University researchers developed the tool used in this report to assess homelessness. Using an inclusive definition of homelessness that lets respondents self-identify both their status and living condition allows more students to receive the support they need, as well as aligning with the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act.⁴ A recent Brookings Institution study of K-12 students found that “academic outcomes for doubled-up homeless students and other homeless students are almost indistinguishable from one another.”⁵

Homelessness affected 14% of survey respondents at New Jersey community colleges (Figure 4). Three percent of respondents self-identified as homeless; 11% experienced homelessness but did not self-identify as homeless. Nine percent of students who experienced homelessness temporarily stayed with a relative or friend, or couch surfed.



FIGURE 4. Homelessness Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

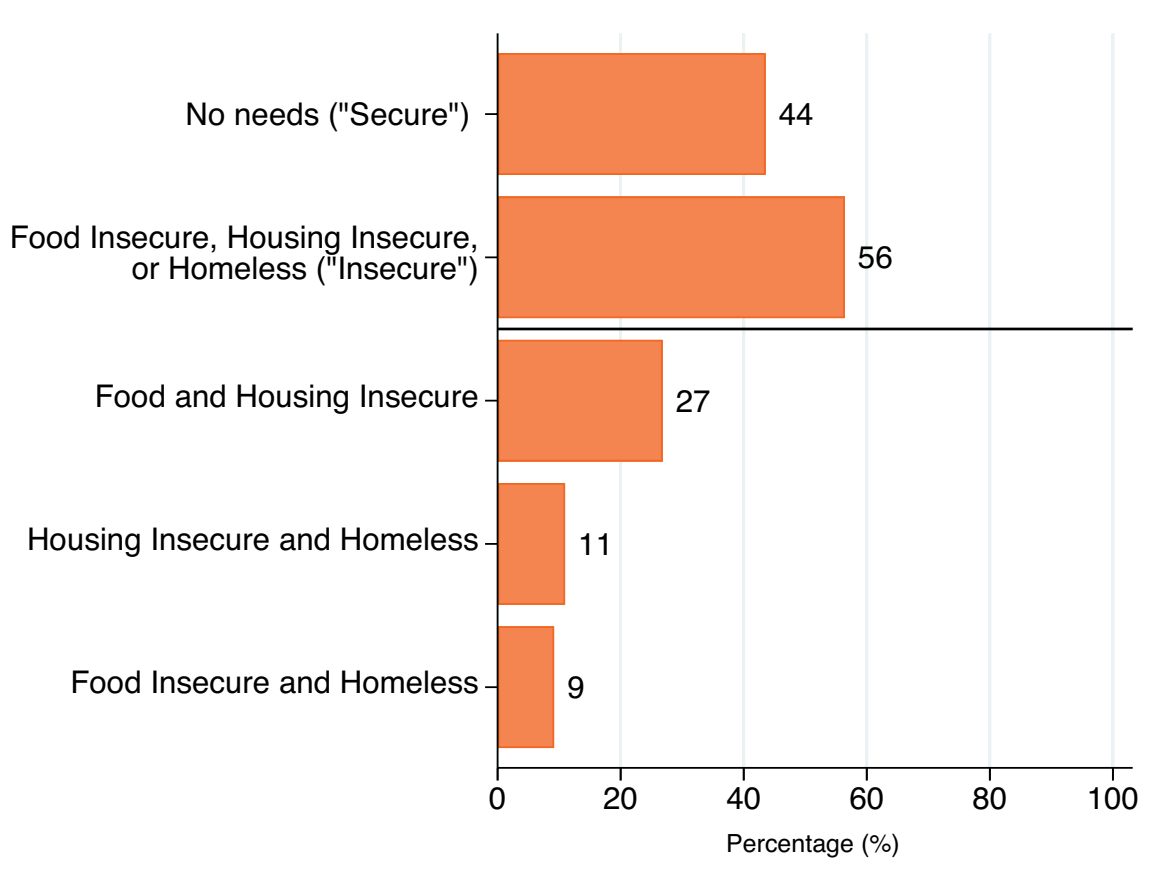
Notes: For more details on the homelessness module used in this report, refer to the [web appendices](#).

OVERLAPPING CHALLENGES

Students often experience basic needs insecurity in one or more forms, either simultaneously or over time. Students' overlapping challenges in the data demonstrate that basic needs insecurities are fluid and interconnected.

Over half of New Jersey community college students responding to the survey experienced food insecurity, housing insecurity, or homelessness during the previous year (Figure 5). Twenty-seven percent of respondents were both food and housing insecure in the past year.

FIGURE 5. Intersections of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents



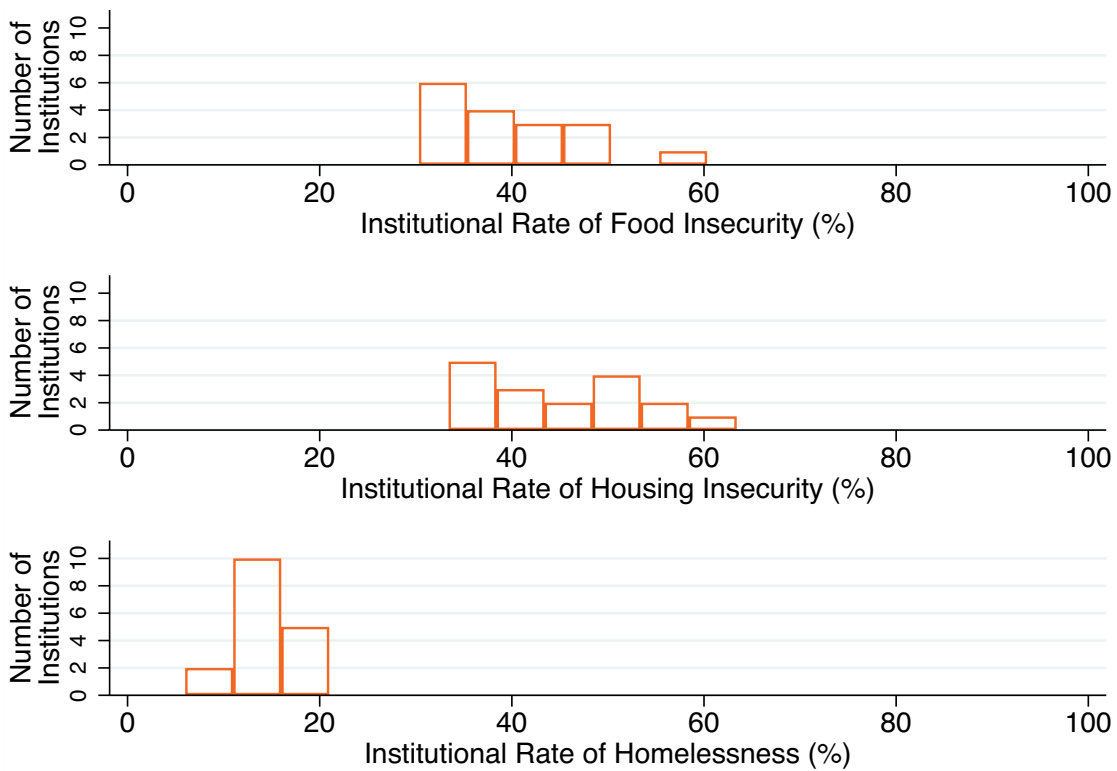
Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, refer to the [web appendices](#).

VARIATION BY INSTITUTION

Rates of basic needs insecurity vary not only in type and severity among students, but across institutions as well (Figure 6). There is variation, approximately 30 percentage points, in rates of basic needs insecurity across New Jersey community colleges. This variation could be attributed to a number of factors, for example regional differences across the state. For the most part, institution-level rates of food insecurity fall between 32% and 48% in the New Jersey community college system. Rates of housing insecurity vary widely across institutions as well, with most participating institutions having between 37% and 55% of students experiencing housing insecurity. Institution-level rates of student homelessness mainly range from 11% to 17% in New Jersey community colleges.

FIGURE 6. Variation in Institutional Rates of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness Among New Jersey Community Colleges



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: For more details on institutional rates shown in the figure above, refer to the [web appendices](#).

SECTION 2: Disparities in Basic Needs Insecurity

The Hope Center’s prior work, as well as that by other researchers, has consistently found that some students are at higher risk of basic needs insecurity than others.⁶ This section highlights disparities in basic needs insecurity by student demographic, academic, or economic characteristics, as well as their life circumstances. Below we highlight several ways in which basic needs insecurity differs.

For more on demographic disparities and additional tables with information on survey participants, refer to the [web appendices](#).

Racial and ethnic disparities are evident. For example, White students have lower rates of food insecurity (33%) as compared to most of their peers; rates of food insecurity among Indigenous (52%), Black (51%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (50%), and Hispanic or Latinx (46%) students are higher (Table 1). Though rates are higher for housing insecurity than food insecurity, the disparities across racial and ethnic groups are similar. Students who identify as Middle Eastern, North African, Arab, or Arab American have the highest rates of homelessness, followed closely by Indigenous students; as with the other basic needs insecurities, White students have lower rates of homelessness than many of their peers.



TABLE 1. Disparities in Basic Needs Insecurities by Race and Ethnicity Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
Racial or Ethnic Background				
American Indian or Alaskan Native	168	50	61	30
Black	1,104	51	58	18
Hispanic or Latinx	1,905	46	52	15
Indigenous	81	52	63	32
Middle Eastern or North African or Arab or Arab American	238	39	50	16
Other Asian or Asian American	390	31	39	15
Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	68	37	40	19
Southeast Asian	259	39	39	14
White	3,660	33	39	15
Other	205	42	52	17
Prefer not to answer	128	52	54	22

Source: 2019 #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. Classifications of racial and ethnic background are not mutually exclusive. Students could self-identify with multiple classifications. For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see [web appendices](#).



The overall rate of food insecurity for students attending school part-time is 39%, which is approximately equal to the overall rate for those attending full-time. Students that have spent more than three years in college are more likely than those in college less than one year to experience housing insecurity (Table 2).

TABLE 2. Disparities in Basic Needs Insecurities by Enrollment Status Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
College Enrollment Status				
Full-time (at least 12 credits)	5,153	38	41	15
Part-time (fewer than 12 credits)	2,464	39	51	13
Level of Study				
Undergraduate	6,341	39	45	14
Non-degree	484	33	39	12
Years in College				
Less than 1	2,848	35	39	15
1 to 2	3,051	39	44	13
Three or more	1,713	42	52	14

Source: 2019 #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 [web appendices](#).



Students' basic needs insecurity varies in relationship to their gender identity and sexual orientation (Table 3). Food insecurity and housing insecurity are lowest for male students; non-binary and transgender students have the highest rates of food insecurity and homelessness.

TABLE 3. Disparities in Basic Needs Insecurities by Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
Gender Identity				
Female	4,634	41	47	14
Male	1,848	33	38	16
Non-binary/Third gender	72	53	46	31
Self-describe	46	39	50	26
Transgender	94	43	51	27
Sexual Orientation				
Heterosexual	5,181	37	43	13
Gay or Lesbian	233	48	50	18
Bisexual	673	47	52	24
Self-describe	193	46	47	27

Source: 2019 #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. Classifications of gender identity are not mutually exclusive. Students could self-identify with multiple classifications. For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see [web appendices](#).



In addition, particular life circumstances are associated with a higher-than-average risk of basic needs insecurity. Parenting students, those that formerly served in the military, former foster youth, and returning citizens are more likely to experience basic needs insecurity than their peers (Table 4). For example, over half of returning citizens, parenting students, and former foster youth experience food insecurity and more than 65% experience housing insecurity. The rates for their peers remain below 40% and 45%, respectively. Forty-one percent of returning citizens and former foster youth experience homelessness, more than double the average rate.

TABLE 4. Disparities in Basic Needs Insecurities by Student Experience Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
Parenting Student				
Yes	1,182	54	69	14
No	6,151	35	39	14
Student has Been in Foster Care				
Yes	129	54	65	36
No	6,384	39	44	14
Student Served in the Military				
Yes	148	45	59	19
No	6,393	39	44	15
Student is a Returning Citizen				
Yes	156	60	76	41
No	6,799	38	43	14

Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

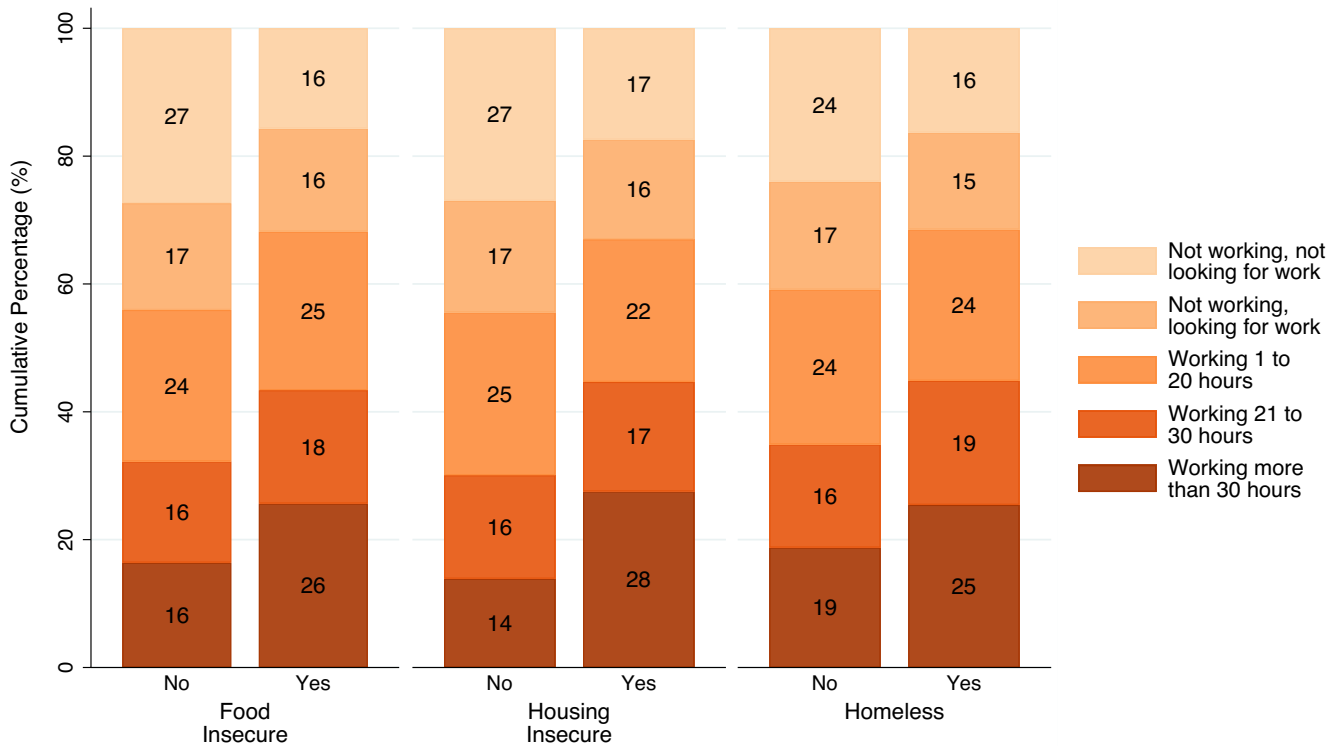
Notes: The Number of Students column indicates the number of survey respondents to our measure of homelessness. The number of survey respondents for our measures of food insecurity and housing insecurity may vary slightly. For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, see [web appendices](#).



SECTION 3: Employment and Academic Performance

Students who experience basic needs insecurity are overwhelmingly active participants in the labor force. The majority (approximately 68%) of students who experience food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness are employed (Figure 7). Among working students, those who experience basic needs insecurity often work more hours than other students.

FIGURE 7. Employment Behavior by Basic Need Insecurity Status Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents

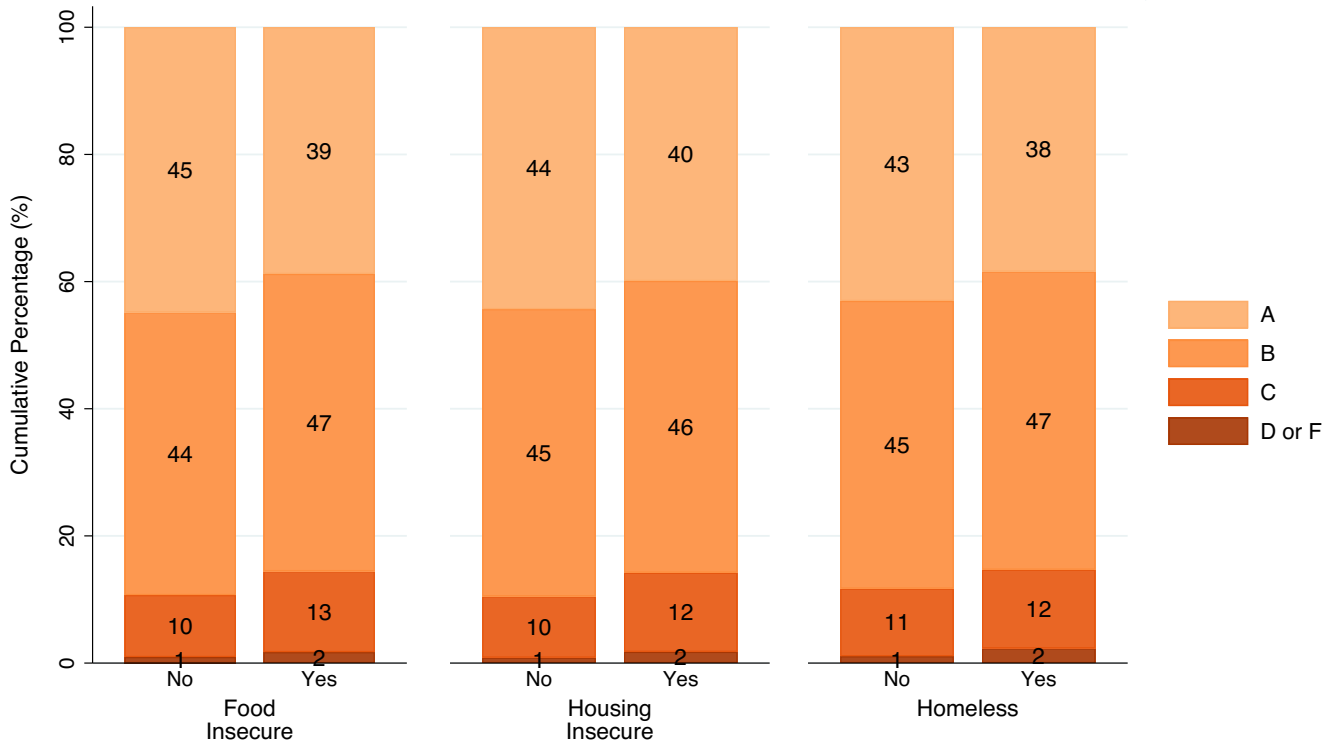


Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: Cumulative percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding. Survey questions about work status and number of hours worked were randomly administered to a subset of respondents. For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, refer to the [web appendices](#). This table has been amended from the original release.

While most students report receiving A's and B's, students who experience food insecurity, housing insecurity, or homelessness more often report grades of C or below than students who do not face these challenges (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8. Self-Reported Grades by Basic Need Insecurity Status Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

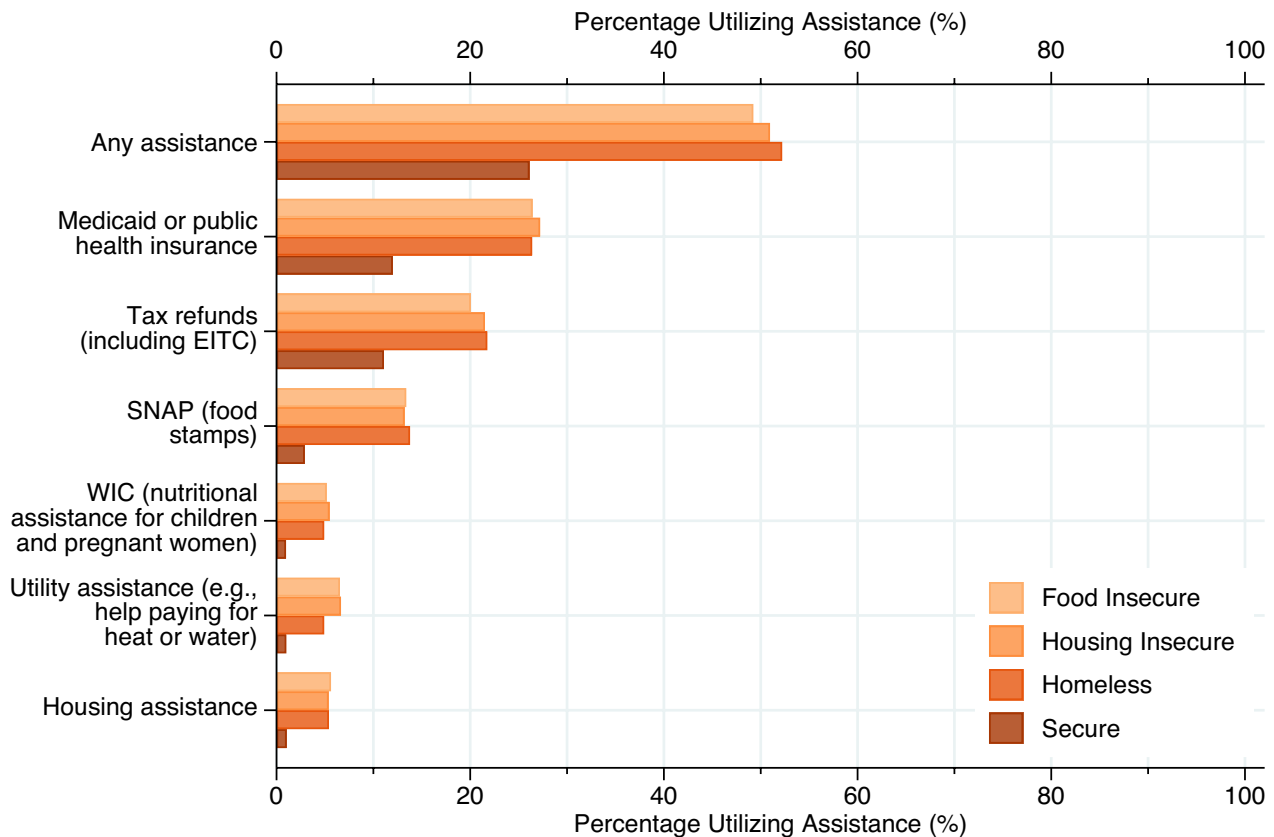
Notes: Cumulative percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding. For more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, refer to the [web appendices](#).



SECTION 4: Utilization of Supports

While supports for students exist on the federal, state, and college levels, results continue to show that most students who experience basic needs insecurity do not access them (Figure 9).⁷ Medicaid or public health insurance, tax refunds, and SNAP are the benefits used most often, though they remain quite low given the needs of students responding. For example, less than one in six food insecure students receive SNAP benefits. Likewise, only 5% of students who experience housing insecurity receive housing assistance. Twenty-six percent of students who experience homelessness utilized Medicaid or public health insurance. Rates of public benefits utilization in New Jersey are lower than the averages we observe for community colleges elsewhere. It is also worth noting that students who are secure in their basic needs are still accessing public benefits, albeit at lower rates (26%) than students who are insecure.

FIGURE 9. Use of Public Assistance According to Basic Needs Security Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents

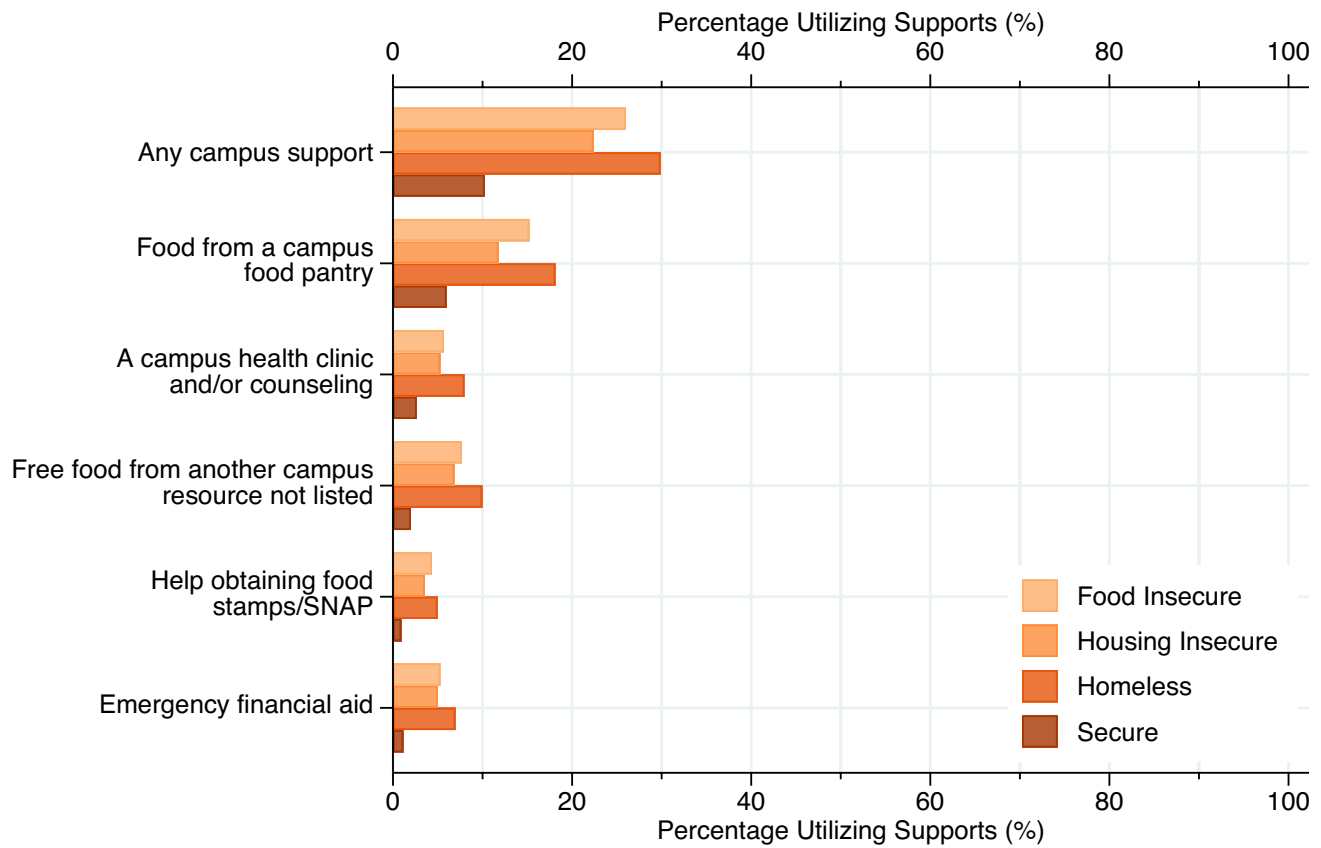


Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: Not all types of public assistance are included in the figure above. See [web appendices](#) for more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed and rates of utilization for other types of public assistance.

A growing number of on-campus supports are being offered but again, few students are accessing them (Figure 10). Of the students surveyed at participating institutions, food from a campus food pantry, campus health clinic and/or counseling, and free food from another campus resource are the most commonly used on-campus supports. For example, just 15% of food insecure students used a campus food pantry.

FIGURE 10. Use of On-Campus Supports According to Basic Needs Security Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: Not all types on-campus supports are included in the figure above. See [web appendices](#) for more detail on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed and rates of utilization for other types of on-campus supports. This figure has been amended from the original release. Survey questions about campus supports were administered to a subset of randomly selected respondents.

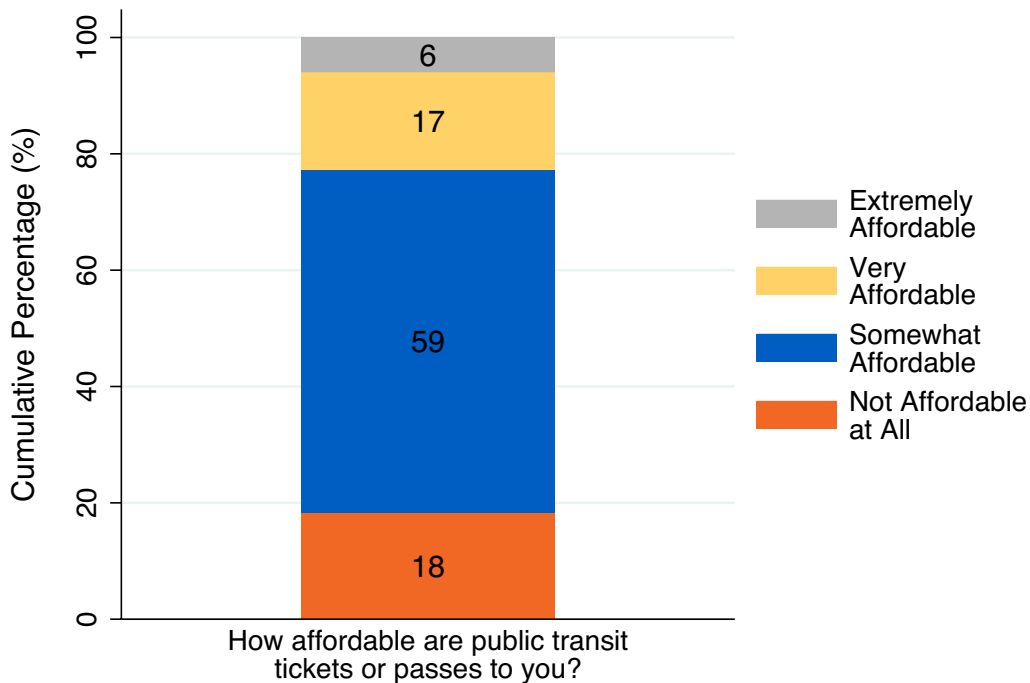
SECTION 5: Transportation & Childcare

TRANSPORTATION

In order to succeed academically, students need affordable, reliable transportation between home and campus. Currently, the College Board estimates that transportation costs make up approximately 17% of an average postsecondary student's budget who commutes to school.⁸ It is therefore critical to ensure that students, especially students who are already making difficult choices about how to spend their money, are able to secure transportation to campus.

Approximately 18% of survey respondents said that they use public transit in order to get to their college campus (not shown). When those students were asked about the affordability of public transit tickets or passes, 18% said those transit tickets or passes were unaffordable, and another 59% said they were only somewhat affordable (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11. Affordability of Public Transit Tickets or Passes Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents



(Among those who take public transit)

Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: Survey questions on transit use and affordability were administered to a subset of randomly selected respondents.

Paying for public transit is related to students' experiences with basic needs insecurity. About 8 in 10 students who experience basic needs insecurity and use public transit report that public transit tickets or passes are unaffordable or only somewhat affordable (Table 5). High transit costs are a problem for some of these students. About one in four students experiencing basic needs insecurity report that they spend at least \$30 per week on transportation to and from college (Figure 12). Conversely, among students whose basic needs are secure, 31% said they spend \$0-9 per week on transportation, but that was true for just 18% of students who are basic needs insecure.

TABLE 5. Transit Affordability Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents Who Take Public Transit, by Basic Needs Security

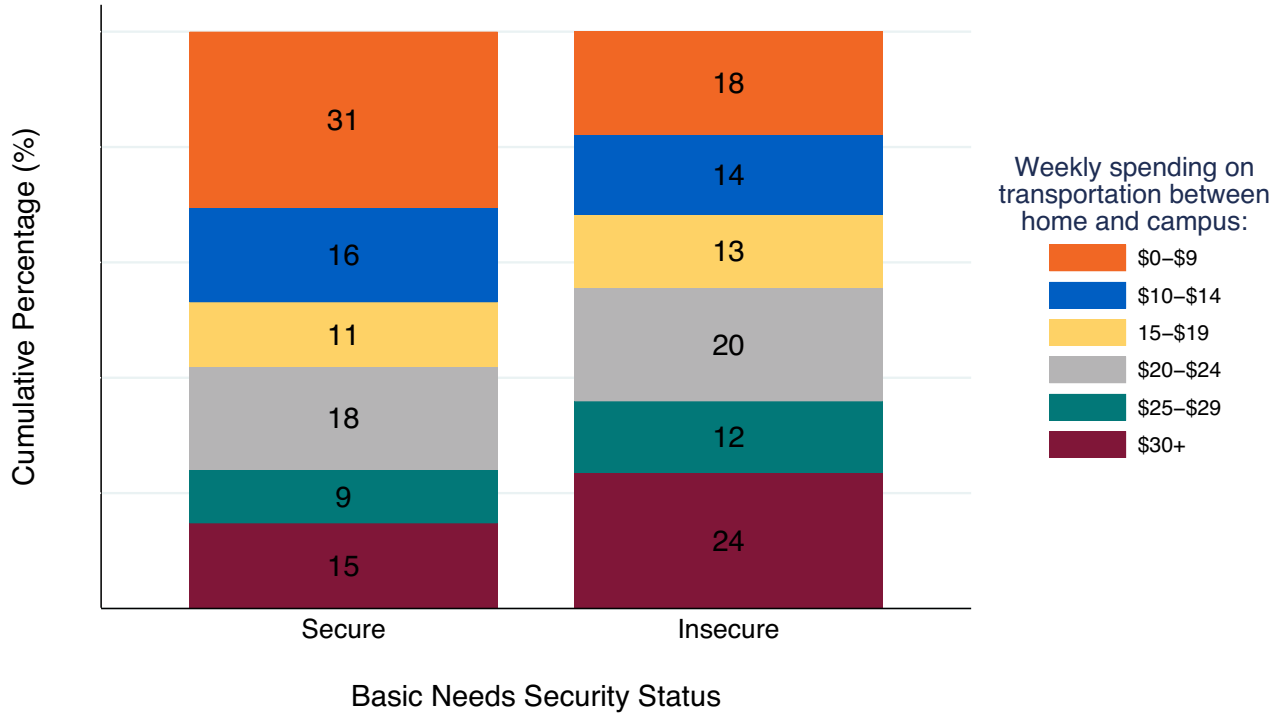
How affordable are public transit tickets or passes?					
Basic Needs Security Status	Number of Students	Not Affordable At All (%)	Somewhat Affordable (%)	Very Affordable (%)	Extremely Affordable (%)
Secure	220	9	54	27	10
Insecure	435	23	62	11	3

Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: Survey questions on transit use and affordability were administered to a subset of randomly selected respondents. For more details on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, refer to the [web appendices](#).



FIGURE 12. Weekly Amount Spent on Transportation to College, By Basic Need Security Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

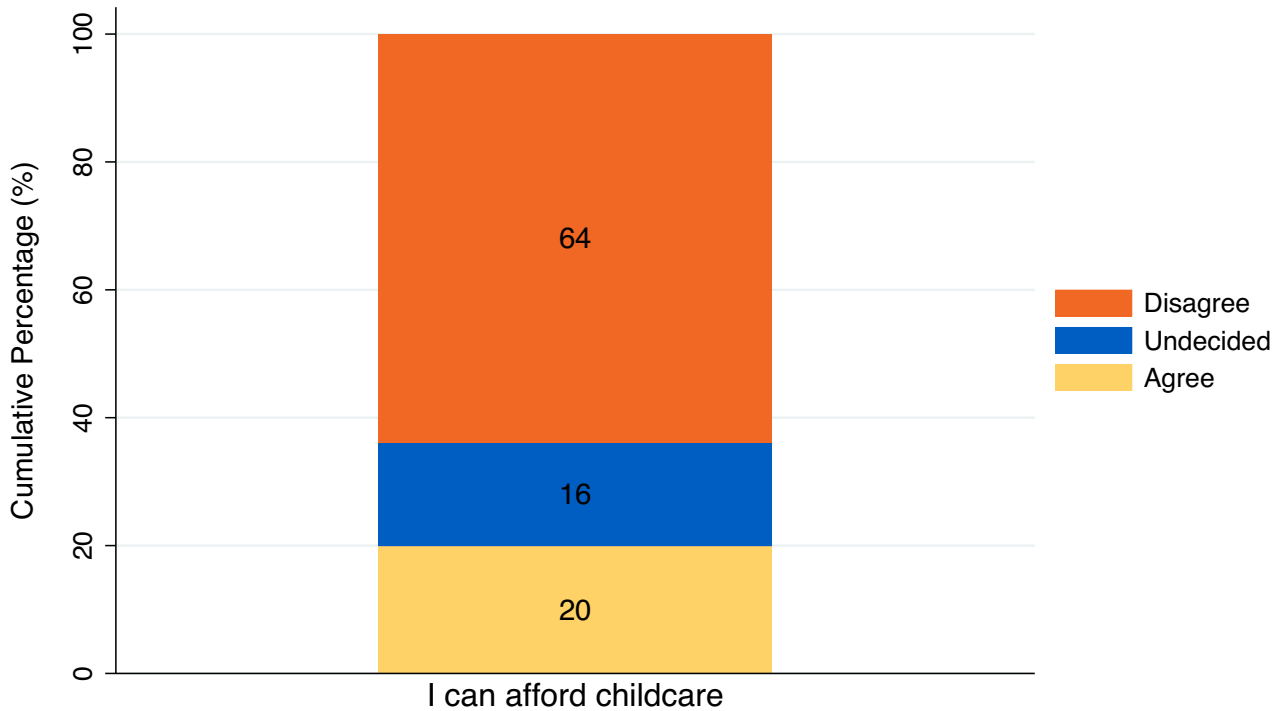
Notes: Survey questions on transportation costs were administered to a subset of randomly selected respondents. For more details on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, refer to the [web appendices](#).

CHILDCARE

Supporting the success of #RealCollege students means covering the basic needs of food, housing, and transportation, while also meeting the childcare requirements of parenting students. However, for many parenting students, finding affordable and dependable childcare is challenging.

In this sample, 16% of all respondents were parenting students and among those parenting students, 39% said that they need, use, or plan to use childcare (not shown). However, just 20% of parenting students who need or use childcare say they can afford the associated costs (Figure 13). Among parenting students who are basic needs insecure, only 15% say that they can afford childcare costs, whereas 44% of parenting students who are food or housing secure (Table 6).

FIGURE 13. Childcare Affordability Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents Who Need, Use, or Plan to Use Childcare



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: The survey question about childcare affordability was only administered to parenting students who reported that they need, use, or plan to use childcare.

TABLE 6. Childcare Affordability Among New Jersey Community College Survey Respondents Who Need, Use, or Plan to Use Childcare, By Basic Needs Security

I can afford to pay for childcare				
Basic Needs Security Status	Number of Students	Disagree (%)	Undecided (%)	Agree (%)
Secure	77	36	19	44
Insecure	360	70	16	15

Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: The survey question about childcare affordability was only administered to parenting students who reported that they need, use, or plan to use childcare. For more details on how each measure of basic needs insecurity was constructed, refer to the [web appendices](#).

SECTION 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

Clearly, basic needs insecurity is a substantial problem affecting many students. Providing support will help students and institutions thrive. Here are five ways for New Jersey to continue advancing its work in this area:

1. Assess the landscape of existing supports on campus, including food pantries, emergency aid programs, access to public benefits, and case managers. The Hope Center recommends paying close attention to the approaches to outreach, the requirements for eligibility, the data collected on numbers served, and the capacity (dollars, staffing, hours, etc.) of these efforts. Please see the Hope Center’s survey of campus food pantries for an example.⁹
2. Encourage faculty to add a basic needs security statement to the syllabus in order to inform themselves and their students of supports.¹⁰
3. Continue to expand public benefits access for students by raising awareness of the revised eligibility criteria.
4. Create a centralized basic needs website with available supports. On that website, be sure to include:
 - How to access public benefits
 - How to reduce the cost of utilities
 - How to secure emergency aid
 - Where to find free food
 - Who to call if more comprehensive support is needed



5. Consider centralizing fundraising for and distribution of emergency aid across institutions, increasing efficiency and effectiveness and relieving campuses of unnecessary burdens. Many institutional emergency aid programs are relatively small and inadequately implemented.

Common problems include:

- A lack of a student-friendly application process that minimizes hassles for both students and their colleges
- Limited staff capacity and resources to do effective outreach, challenges moving from selection of emergency aid to distribution of emergency aid quickly
- Difficulty selecting recipients in an equitable and efficient manner while recognizing the implicit bias compromising the interviews and interactions with students that are usually part of the process
- Difficulty navigating the interactions of emergency aid with Title IV financial aid rules and regulations
- Struggles maintaining strong positive relationships with students while necessarily having to say no to many requests

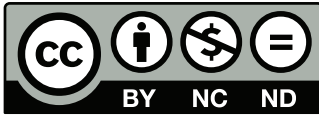
The Hope Center also offers the following additional supports for your efforts:

- An annual [national conference](#) focused on inspiration, education, and action
- An [assessment](#) of your campus supports for basic needs security
- [Guides and Tools](#) including how to assess basic needs on campus, a *Beyond the Food Pantry* series, and a digest of existing research on basic needs insecurity from around the country
- [Evaluations](#) of food and housing support programs



NOTES AND REFERENCES

- ¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2018). [*Food insecurity: Better information could help eligible college students access federal food assistance benefits.*](#) (GAO Publication No. 19-95) Washington, D.C.
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