

Chapter 323

(House Bill 774)

AN ACT concerning

Higher Education – Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program – Alterations

FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Higher Education Commission to designate certain private institutions of higher education as hunger-free campuses; prohibiting certain private institutions of higher education from being eligible to receive grant funding under the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program; altering the requirement of the Governor, beginning in a certain fiscal year, to include in the annual budget bill a certain appropriation for the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program; altering eligibility requirements for the Program; requiring the Maryland Higher Education Commission to allocate certain grant funding to certain public institutions of higher education or regional higher education centers for certain purposes; authorizing the Commission to maintain a certain percentage of each grant to administer the Program; and generally relating to alterations to the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program.

BY repealing and reenacting, ~~without~~ with amendments,

Article – Education

Section ~~11-1701 through 11-1703 and 11-1703 through 11-1706, 11-1703, 11-1705, and 11-1706~~

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, ~~with~~ without amendments,

Article – Education

Section ~~11-1704 through 11-1706~~ 11-1702 and 11-1704

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2022 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

11-1701.

(a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

(b) “Emergency assistance” means immediate direct assistance provided by a hunger-free campus to any student facing an unanticipated financial crisis or hardship.

(c) “Hunger-free campus” means a campus of any 4-year ~~public~~ institution of higher education or regional higher education center that meets the requirements of § 11-1703(a) of this subtitle or any 2-year ~~public~~ institution of higher education that meets the requirements of § 11-1703(b) of this subtitle.

(d) “Program” means the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program.

11-1702.

(a) There is a Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program.

(b) The purpose of the Program is to:

(1) Address student hunger;

(2) Leverage more sustainable solutions to address basic food needs on campus;

(3) Raise awareness of services currently offered on campus that address basic food needs; and

(4) Build strategic partnerships at the local, State, and national levels to address food insecurity among students.

(c) (1) The Commission shall administer the Program.

(2) The Commission shall develop the form to be used for the annual student survey required under § 11-1703 of this subtitle.

11-1703.

(a) The Commission shall designate as a hunger-free campus any campus of a 4-year ~~public~~ institution of higher education or regional higher education center that:

(1) Has established a hunger task force that:

(i) Meets at least three times per academic year; and

(ii) Sets at least two goals with action plans;

(2) Has designated a staff member responsible for:

(i) Assisting students in enrolling in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; or

(ii) Connecting students with available Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program outreach partners that can assist students in enrolling in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program;

(3) Has designated a staff member responsible for informing students participating in federal work–study programs that they are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program;

(4) (i) Provides options for students to utilize Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits at campus retailers; or

(ii) Provides students with information on the names and locations of off–campus retailers that accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits;

(5) Participates in an awareness day campaign activity and plans at least one campus awareness event during the National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week;

(6) Provides at least one food pantry on campus, or enables students in need to receive food through a separate, stigma–free arrangement;

(7) Develops and maintains a meal–sharing program that allows students to donate their unused meal plan credits to be distributed to students in need for use in campus dining halls or at an on–campus food pantry, if applicable;

(8) Conducts a standardized annual student survey on hunger and submits the results to the Commission; and

(9) Submits an annual report detailing its efforts to address student hunger to the Commission.

(b) The Commission shall designate as a hunger–free campus any campus of a 2–year ~~public~~ institution of higher education that meets all of the requirements for 4–year ~~public~~ institutions of higher education or regional higher education centers identified in subsection (a) of this section, with the exception of the requirements in subsection (a)(4) and (7) of this section.

(c) (1) Each 4–year ~~public~~ institution of higher education may develop its own procedures for a meal–sharing program.

(2) The 4–year ~~public~~ institutions of higher education shall make information about the meal–sharing program publicly available, including:

(i) How a student may donate unused meal plan credits;

(ii) How a student in need may apply to receive donated meal plan credits; and

(iii) The methodology that a 4-year ~~public~~ institution of higher education uses to ensure that unused donated meal plan credits are used to purchase food to support an on-campus food pantry, if applicable.

11-1704.

~~(A) For fiscal year 2023 and each fiscal year thereafter, YEARS 2023 THROUGH 2026, the Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an appropriation of \$150,000 for the Program.~~

~~(B) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2027 AND EACH FISCAL YEAR THEREAFTER, THE GOVERNOR SHALL INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL BUDGET BILL AN APPROPRIATION OF \$225,000 FOR THE PROGRAM.~~

11-1705.

(a) **(1)** The Commission shall allocate grant funding to any 4-year or 2-year public institution of higher education or regional higher education center that:

~~(1) (I) Pledges a matching contribution to be used to implement the goals of the Program, INCLUDING AT LEAST \$25,000 IN CASH OR IN KIND CONTRIBUTION; and~~

~~(2) (II) Is designated as a hunger-free campus.~~

(2) NOTWITHSTANDING DESIGNATION AS A HUNGER-FREE CAMPUS UNDER THIS SUBTITLE, A 4-YEAR OR 2-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION OR A REGIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER OPERATED BY A PRIVATE NONPROFIT INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE GRANT FUNDING UNDER THE PROGRAM.

(b) ~~(1)~~ The Commission shall determine the amount of each grant.

~~(2) THE COMMISSION SHALL ALLOCATE TO EACH FIRST-TIME RECIPIENT AT LEAST \$25,000 AND NOT MORE THAN \$150,000 FOR PROGRAMMATIC AND ORGANIZATION-BUILDING ACTIVITIES THAT:~~

~~(i) INCREASE THE CAPACITY OF INSTITUTIONS AND CENTERS TO IMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM; AND~~

~~(II) PROVIDE SEED MONEY FOR INDIRECT, UP-FRONT COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.~~

~~(3) FOR EACH GRANT, THE COMMISSION MAY RETAIN 15% FOR THE COST OF ADMINISTERING THE PROGRAM.~~

(c) The Commission shall incorporate into the 2026–2030 State Plan for Higher Education a plan for addressing any basic needs insecurity of higher education students.

(d) (1) The Commission shall adopt regulations necessary to carry out the requirements of this subtitle.

(2) The regulations adopted under this subsection shall allow grant recipients to use grant funds flexibly to implement the goals of the Program, including giving recipients the ability to:

- (i) Support emergency assistance;
- (ii) Hire staff to manage initiatives related to the Program; and
- (iii) Use grant funds for operational activities related to the Program.

11–1706.

(a) Not later than 2 years after establishing the Program, the Commission shall report to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly on the implementation of this subtitle.

(b) The report shall include:

(1) The number and amounts of grants awarded, ~~INCLUDING DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF STUDENTS BENEFITING FROM THE PROGRAM;~~

(2) The impact of the Program on establishing hunger-free campuses at ~~public~~ institutions of higher education and regional higher education centers;

(3) The impact of awarded grants on reducing the number of students experiencing food insecurity; ~~and~~

(4) Recommendations on expanding the Program; ~~AND~~

~~(5) INFORMATION ON BEST PRACTICES AMONG OTHER HUNGER-FREE CAMPUS PROGRAMS.~~

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2025.

Approved by the Governor, May 6, 2025.