



FOOD INSECURITY: THE PROBLEM & A "COMMUNITY FOOD DAY" PROPOSAL

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FOOD INSECURITY: A FUTURE CHALLENGE AND OUTLOOK

- The absence of consistent access to food for an active and healthy lifestyle (US Department of Agriculture, 2019)
- Individuals who consistently experience food insecurity are often consuming a nutrient-poor diet which places a substantial burden on our society through healthcare and even social costs (Oh, Gaysynsky, & Corpening, 2016)
- In food-insecure environments, the need for food competes substantially with other human needs, including medication, housing utilities, transportation and education
- The study and impact of food security in the nation is a priority that will require an effective change, facilitating the access to food

THE CONSEQUENCES OF FOOD INSECURITY

- Food insecurity can affect **how well a student can perform academically.**
- Students tend to **lose interest in school** which often results in students not finishing school.
- Not only is it a problem in four-year and two-year institutions but also globally.

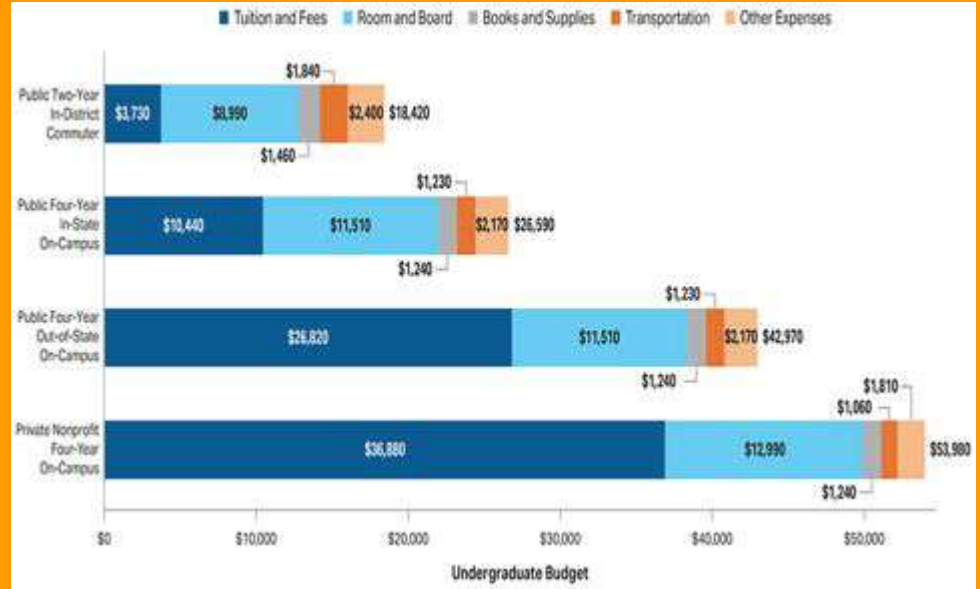


PUTTING FOOD INSECURITY ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES INTO CONTEXT

- An estimated **20% to 33% of students** at four-year colleges experience food insecurity. As a result, the student's academic performance is substantially affected (Blumenthal & Chu, 2018).
- The topic of food insecurity is an interdisciplinary study where other key components can drastically affect the issue. These may include other expenses including tuition, books, transportation, room & board, and utility expenses.
- Over the past, research has shown that food insecurity can occur in any institution and is more **prevalent within the low-income community** (Blumenthal & Chu, 2018).
- When it comes to students budgeting their own expenses, food is usually the most flexible expenditure that can be drastically modified when looking at where to cut expenses.

ESTIMATED STUDENT TUITION AFFECTING FOOD INSECURITY

- Full time students have a lot of expenses to worry about, sometimes cutting expenses in food becomes of necessity.
- As seen on the graph, enrolling in an academic institution can be expensive; As a result, the cost to attend college can be underestimated affecting a student's food budget.



DISCREPANCIES IN FOOD INSECURITY REPORTING

- Food insecurity amongst college students is a major issue; studies may not show the complete magnitude of the problem.
- The US Department Of Agriculture's Adult Food Security provides a survey for each student addressing the food insecurity issue and throughout the process, researchers found that **students were inconsistent in their responses** by being uncertain of their complete budget (Smith, 2019)

STUDENT RESPONSE TO FOOD INSECURITY

- Students experiencing food insecurity may often feel **vulnerable** when responding to these issues.
- When responding to surveys or to someone in general, students **do not want to communicate** the lack of food security going on in their lives.
- Surveys and other reports made on food insecurity **lack accuracy** affecting the various strategies and methods that can be used when addressing the issue.

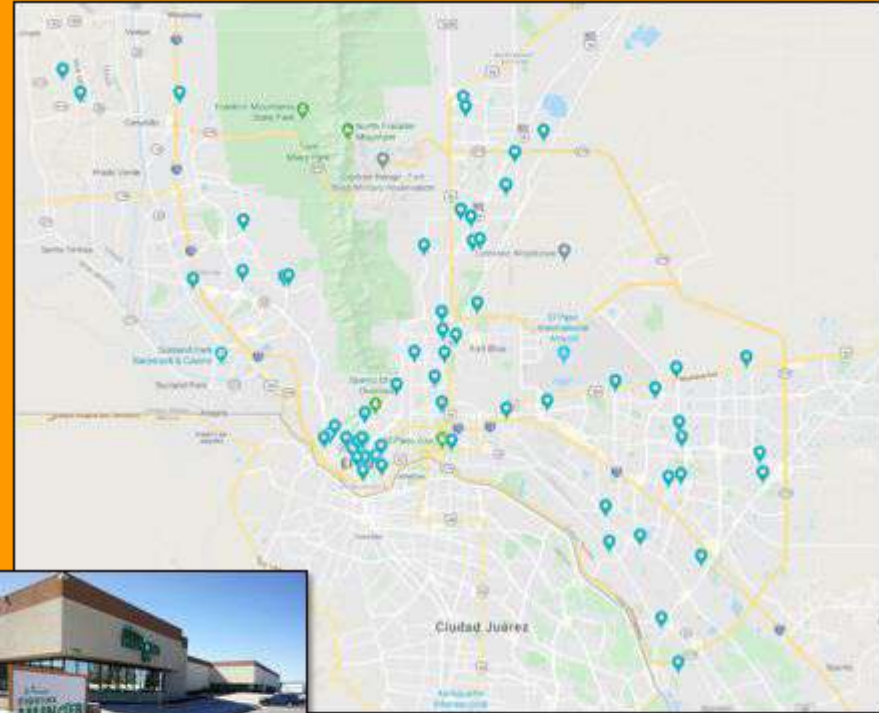
STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

- **Develop working groups** that can help alleviate or reduce the problem on college campuses, producing and coordinating initiatives addressing food insecurity.
- Effective initiatives include **food banks, pantries, food recovery programs**, and building **campus community gardens** (Blumenthal and Chu, 2018)
- Establishing a strong platform that will address the issue is important for all students being affected by the shortage of food. The significant steps that can be applied to addressing the issue would be **on-campus food resources, vouchers** and even **food scholarships**.

PEER
PROGRAM
BENCHMARKING

LOCAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

- Over 62 food pantries within the El Paso county lines.
 - Most church based.
- Churches, not only provide Food Pantries but resources to pay bills.
- **El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank** (Largest local food bank supplying more than 132 partner agencies (food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters))



STATE PROGRAMS

- ***El Paso County Texas Assistance Programs*** - provide a safe and healthy quality of life that enables people to thrive and reach their potential through the efficient, effective use of County community and social service program.
- ***Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*** - provides a monthly supplement for purchasing nutritious food. If you qualify, you'll get a debit card to use for groceries.
- ***Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*** - provide families with financial assistance and related support services.
- ***Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)*** - provide good nutrition to the children of working parents.
- ***Nutrition Program Centers*** - provide nourish and enrich the lives of older individuals by providing nutritious meals to active and homebound individuals; thereby, promoting their health, well-being and independence

LOCAL UNIVERSITIES TAKING ON THE FIGHT AGAINST FOOD INSECURITY

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO PROGRAMS

- One campus within El Paso
- UTEP Food Pantry
- Community of Care Program
- Donation web portal
- Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Student Health and Wellness Center
- Social medial coverage

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER EL PASO PROGRAMS

- Raider Red's food Pantry
- Social medial coverage
- Programs addressing all basic needs are only found at Texas Tech in Lubbock, TX



LOCAL 2-YEAR COLLEGE TAKING ON THE FIGHT AGAINST FOOD INSECURITY

EL PASO COMMUNITY COLLEGE PROGRAM

- Consist of 5 campuses within El Paso area and only 1 Food Pantry
- Donation portal



COMPARING PROGRAMS BETWEEN TWO 4-YEAR SCHOOLS

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO PROGRAMS

- One campus within El Paso
- UTEP Food Pantry
- Community of Care Program
- Donation web portal
- Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Student Health and Wellness Center
- Social medial coverage

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY PROGRAMS

- One campus within UC Berkeley
- UC BERKELEY Food Pantry/ Bear Pantry/Mobile Food Pantry/ Pop-up Pantry
- Large # of Sponsors
- Social medial coverage
- University Food Assistance Program
- Tang Center- Nutrition Resources Program
- CalFresh Clinic
- Monthly events
- Donation online portal
- Emergency food relief resources
- Pantry visibility app

20-33% OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE
FOOD INSECURE DURING THEIR
COLLEGE CAREER...

HOW CAN FONTVILLE COLLEGE RESPOND?

FONTVILLE COMMUNITY FOOD DAY:

An event to kickstart a community of care
for food insecure students

ABOUT THE FONTVILLE COLLEGE COMMUNITY:

- Campus Context
 - Urban, public university - 25,000 students
 - Located near El Paso, TX - 840,000 residents
 - Borderland region
 - Average median family income: \$42,037/yr



ADDRESSING A SERIOUS PROBLEM

- Fontville is facing a serious problem in the form of **food insecurity**.
 - Initial estimates place 30% of Fontville students have in the past or currently struggle with food insecurity.
- As part of our institution's mission, Fontville has a responsibility to meet our students needs in order to promote a safe, supportive environment for student growth and learning.

THE BIG IDEA

- In order to effectively address food insecurity on campus at Fontville, a solution must be established that:
 - Provides for students in **immediate need** of food.
 - **Educates students** on available resources on and off campus.
 - Engages the Fontville community to **long-term care and support** for food insecure students.
 - Solicits donations for a **new emergency food fund**

WHY A "COMMUNITY OF CARE?"

- Campus and community-wide initiatives have proven **highly effective** in meeting students need in food and housing insecurity.
- These programs **directly engage students** and encourage a **greater sense of community and belonging.**

THE FIRST STEP

- We propose, as a first step to a long-term initiative, that Fontville host a “**Community Food Day**” event on campus.
 - This would be a campus-wide, Fontville-sponsored event **open to all students.**

WHY A "COMMUNITY FOOD DAY?"

- A kick-off event provides opportunities to:
 - **Engage student and campus organizations** to support the campus in serving food insecure students.
 - Invite the **local community to assist Fontville** in providing food and services for struggling students.
 - Gather **data and information** on the food insecure population of Fontville in order to drive meaningful and useful interventions.
 - **Begin educating students** on resources available to combat food insecurity.

WHAT WILL THE COMMUNITY FOOD DAY BE?

- Student organizations volunteer to provide **free food for students**.
 - This allows organizations to **do outreach and build connections**, while showing off their unique qualities.
- **Staff provide education** on what food insecurity is and what resources are available to food insecure students.
 - Staff will also be **collecting data** on food insecure student demographics at Fontville.
- Local businesses and organizations are invited to **promote solutions and build relationships** with students and student organizations.
 - Community members are encouraged to **donate funds** to establish a Fontville emergency food fund.
- Fostering these relationships opens doorways for **collaboration and resource-sharing** with the local community in the long-term.

ESTABLISHING AN EMERGENCY FOOD FUND

Donations solicited from community.

Funds will be acquired through donations from students, alumni, staff and faculty year round.

Funds available for emergencies.

Students can apply for dining hall swipes for emergency situations.

Co-offer counseling support.

To receive funds, students are required to visit the Career Center for assistance with obtaining employment to support financial stability.



FUNDING PROPOSAL

- We will set aside \$2000 to provide student organizations with funding for ingredients to cook their food.
- \$700 dollars will go to facilities and materials.
- \$300 dollars will go to promotional and educational materials.

LONG TERM IMPLICATIONS

The “**Fontville Community Food Day**” is designed to kick off a long-term initiative to build a community of care on and off campus that works to meet the needs of students who are food insecure.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

- Use data to drive specific events and strategy and to understand Fontville's food insecure student population.
- Work with student organizations to continue to hold free events/meals for students.
- Seek support from off-campus community partners (businesses, food pantries, religious organizations, charities) in providing resources and emergency food fund donations.
- Educational events and one-on-one counseling to match food insecure students with available resources.

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Fontville College Community Food Day Proposal

At Fontville College, our institutional mission is to foster an environment where students can effectively learn and develop; unfortunately, food insecurity, or the absence of consistent access to food for an active and healthy lifestyle (U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2019), is posing a serious threat to our students' well-being. It's time to take action. In collaboration with college administrators, university leaders and community partners, we have researched the problem of food insecurity and developed an event to kick-off a long-term food insecurity initiative at Fontville. The following paper outlines our major research findings and provides more details about the proposed program.

Food insecurity is a much larger problem than simply a lack of consistent access to food. For example, not knowing where your next meal is coming from establishes a sense of worry which can lead to unfavorable outcomes such as long-term chronic diseases. Further, individuals who consistently experience food insecurity are often consuming a nutrient-poor diet which places a substantial burden on our healthcare and even social costs (Oh, Gaysynsky, & Corpening, 2016). In food insecure environments, the need for food also competes substantially with other human needs including medication, housing utilities, and education. Scholarly research and community needs assessment emphasize the long-term impacts of food security in the nation and suggest that immediate action is needed to facilitate the access to food in low-income communities.

In higher education, food insecurity can affect how well a student performs academically. This can be considered an obstacle to a student's academic journey including the process of finishing school. In fact, students experiencing food insecurity tend to lose interest in school which results in elongating the process of graduating or simply dropping out. Food insecurity is

more prevalent in two-year institutions due to low-tuition cost and the magnitude of the population. However, food insecurity also exists in four-year institutions, affecting roughly 22% to 33% of students (Blumenthal & Chu, 2018). When it comes to budgeting their expenses, food is usually the most flexible expenditure that can be drastically modified to cut expenses.

Despite a major focus on close analysis of the issue by experienced researchers, there are still discrepancies when analyzing data concerning food insecurity. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Adult Food Security provides a survey for each student addressing the food insecurity issue. Throughout the process, researchers found that students were inconsistent in their responses due to uncertainty of their complete budget (Smith, 2019). When responding to surveys, students do not want to communicate their lack of food security.

To inform our Fontville food insecurity initiative proposal, we researched existing university and community programs that combat this issue. Initiatives that have been developed to address food insecurity in communities include food banks, pantries, food recovery programs, and building campus community gardens (Blumenthal & Chu, 2018). Commonly cited strategies to address the issue on-campus are food pantry resources, vouchers and even food scholarships. Federal and state government programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) also address food insecurity. Programs are created with the intent of a combined voice within the community in a campaign to end hunger. Communities go a little further and address local challenges through partnership projects, education and awareness, and distribution.

Through peer benchmarking of how other communities address food insecurity, we discovered that the amount and type of resources often differ within the two-year college, four-year university, community, and state settings. For example, in the El Paso borderland region

where Fontville is located, we see minimal food insecurity support programs in the two-year versus the four-year institution setting. We also see a difference in resources from city to city. As described in the presentation, one four-year institution in California has a much more established community food insecurity initiative compared to a four-year institution program in the El Paso area. While developing our initiative, we've considered the existing support services in our community so we can make use of all resources available to Fontville residents.

Fontville College is an urban, public university with approximately 25,000 students. Based on the data from Blumenthal and Chu (2018), we can estimate that anywhere from 5,500 to 8,250 students will experience food insecurity at Fontville College during their academic career. We also recognize that food insecurity is not an isolated issue and affects our community of over 840,000 residents too. Our proposal, a Fontville Community Food Day, will launch an initiative that can both address and assess the magnitude of the food insecurity problem within our campus and partner with existing community programs to most effectively support students.

The Fontville Community Food Day is step one of a long-term initiative designed to meet the needs of students struggling with food insecurity on campus. The three major components of such a program are introduced in the presentation, which are: immediately providing for student food needs, education for students on available resources, and community engagement and collaboration. We assume that those we are presenting to would question why a food pantry itself wouldn't be an effective solution, which we address in the presentation. A "community of care" is emphasized, since it has been shown to be effective in other schools (such as Amarillo College), and it helps to engage students and the community in a meaningful way.

The Community Food Day is introduced as a "kick-off" event for the food insecurity initiative. This event is a suggestion for the immediate program sought by the President of the

institution that can be built off of. The reason that a Food Day could be so effective is because it can create a safe and fairly light-spirited way for the campus to engage with the problem of food insecurity, while allowing food insecure students to get some free food, make connections, and learn about solutions without feeling singled-out, since it would be an event open to all students.

We propose funding student organizations to provide free food because some student organizations already provide free meals to students (Baptist Student Ministry, for example, often provides food to international students), and it provides an excellent opportunity for them to advertise this on-campus. These student organizations can then build connections and invite students struggling with food insecurity to more events and support them on a more individual basis (if the organization so desires). For campus staff to provide education at the event on available resources means that all students are able to learn what is available. This means that not only will food insecure students feel more comfortable in relative anonymity, but other students can carry this knowledge to their peers.

By inviting the local community, Fontville creates opportunities to build relationships that can lead to more resources for meeting the needs of food insecure students. Food banks, churches, businesses, local government, and other parts of the community are given opportunities to partner with the school in helping students in need and advertise resources that they already provide for members of the community. By bringing the school itself, the students, and the local community together to address a common issue, a level of synergy might be created that could be more effective than the three components separately.

As a long-term component of the event, we also proposed developing a donation-funded emergency food fund that would provide dining hall swipes to in-need students. To access the

program, students would also be required to make an appointment with the Fontville Career Center to get help with obtaining employment that would support financial stability.

The funding for the event is a rough estimate utilizing the \$3,000 allotted by the President for the effort. Most of the funds (\$2,000) will go to organizations to fund ingredients for the meals they will be providing for the event. Organizations will have to sign up to provide food and then submit a request for funding for the ingredients. Depending on how many organizations petition for funding, how much promotional material we need, and facility costs, it may be possible to move money around in between the three different categories.

The Community Food Day would be an introductory event to a long-term initiative designed to raise awareness of the issue of food insecurity and engage all parts of the institution's community in helping solve the problem. Short-term or one-off measures will make little impact, but staying committed to a long-term, comprehensive program should show high levels of improvement over time. The Food Day event will also help the institution gather useful data to help drive specific interventions within the program. The event will allow opportunities for education on what food insecurity is and what resources are available to those who need help, as well as those who want to help. Perhaps the greatest advantage for the long-term initiative, however, would come from the relationships that would be fostered between students (and student organizations), campus faculty and staff, and the local community.

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