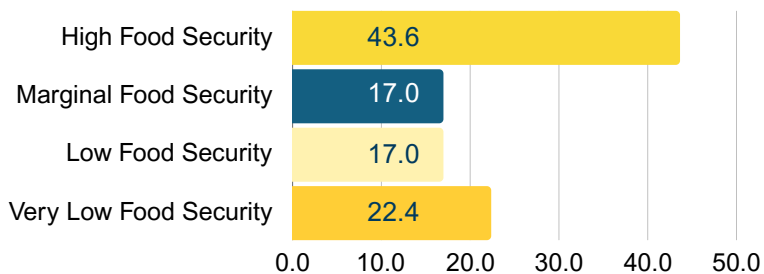


Food insecurity among UCLA Students: Findings from the UCLA-CSUF Study

During Spring 2024, we invited a stratified random sample of 10,000 students, representative of the UCLA student body, to participate in a survey to learn more about their experiences with food insecurity and resources on campus. 940 students completed the survey. We provide the breakdown by socio-demographic characteristics for groups of students that had at least 10 respondents.

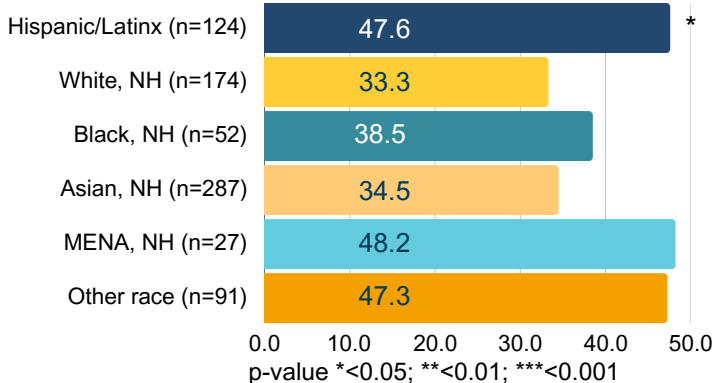
39% students were food insecure

Figure 1. Food security levels reported by UCLA student (n=818)



Using the validated USDA household measure, 44% reported having high food security (no difficulty accessing food nor experiencing limitations). 39% reported being food insecure; 17% had low food security (decreased the quality, variety or desirability of their diet) and 22% were very low food secure (changed their eating patterns and reduced their intake (Figure 1). 17% were marginally food secure (anxious about having enough food but did not change their diet or the amount eaten).

Figure 2. Percentage of food insecure students by race/ethnicity



Other race includes American Indian, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and multiple race.
NH = non-Hispanic; MENA = Middle Eastern & North African.

Statistically significant differences in food insecurity existed by student race and ethnicity. Figure 2 shows that Hispanic/Latinx students reported the highest rates of food security (47.6%) followed closely by students who were Middle Eastern or North African (48.2%).

Figure 3. Percentage of food insecure students by student sociodemographic characteristic

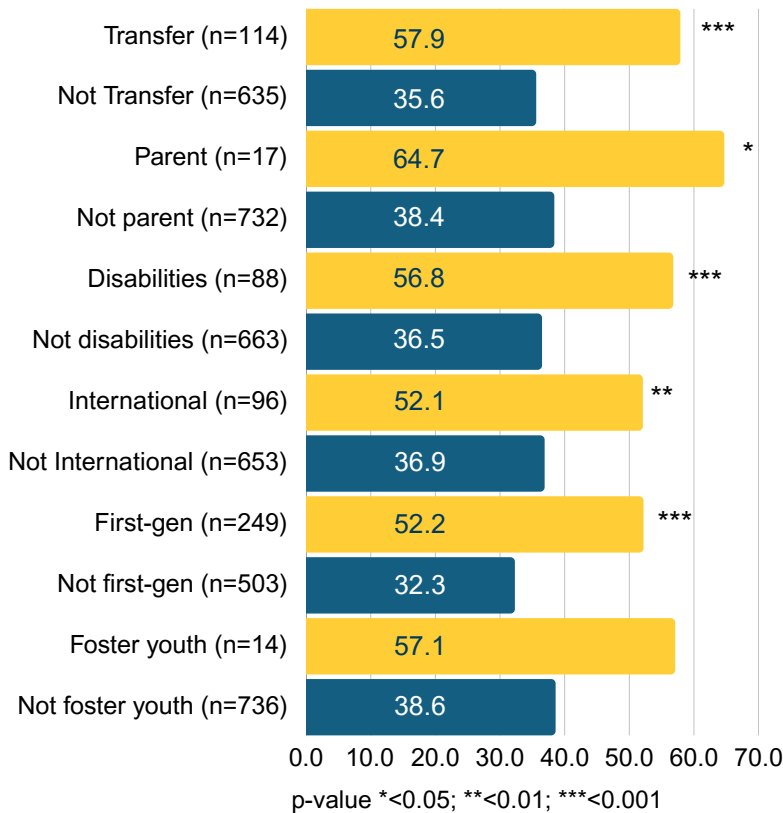


Figure 3 shows that students who were transfer students, parents, had disabilities, international students and first generation college students were significantly more likely to be food insecure than their counterparts, with rates that were about 60% higher. There were no significant differences by foster youth status, however, this could be due to few foster youth participating in the study.

We thank ECMC Foundation for their support of this research.

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Figure 4. Use and awareness of food assistance programs by food insecurity status

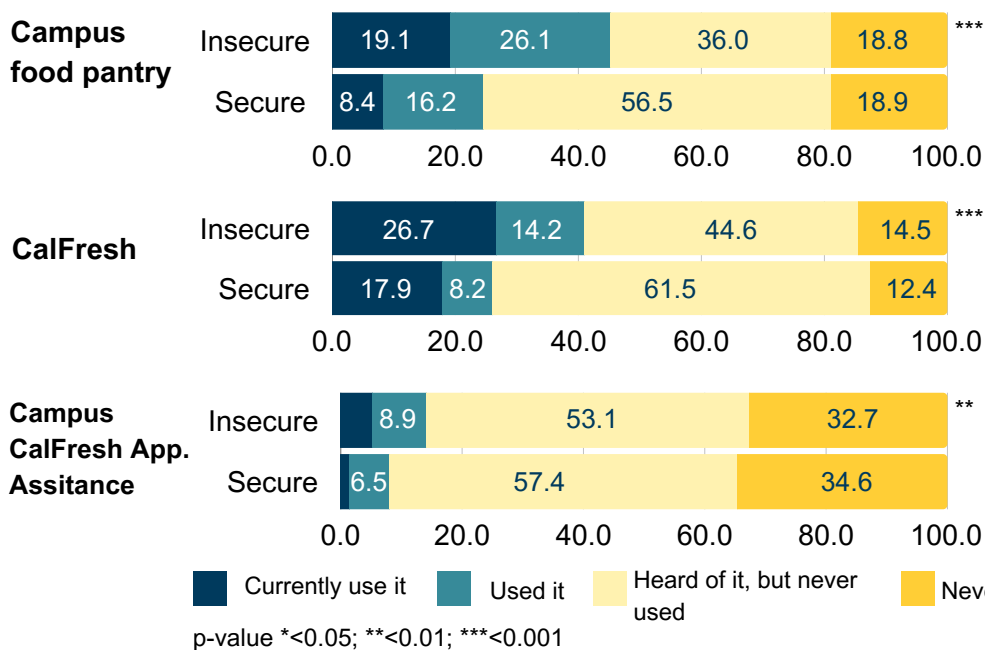
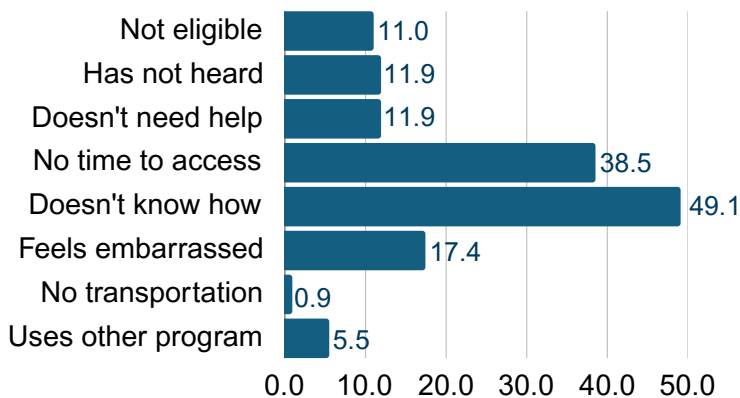


Figure 4 highlights students' use and awareness of the campus food pantry, CalFresh and the campus CalFresh application assistance. CalFresh, federally known as SNAP, provides monthly food benefits. While more food insecure students use the food pantry and are receiving CalFresh benefits than food secure students, close to one in five students do not know that there is a campus food pantry. A third to over half of the students who are food insecure have also heard of these resources but do not use them.

Figure 5. Reasons why food insecure students do not use the campus food pantry (n=109)



Suggesting important avenues for interventions, Figure 5 shows reasons why food-insecure students, despite knowing about the food pantry do not use it. About half reported not knowing how, 39% reported not having time, and 17% reported feeling embarrassed.

Figure 6. Reasons why food insecure students do not use CalFresh (n=135)

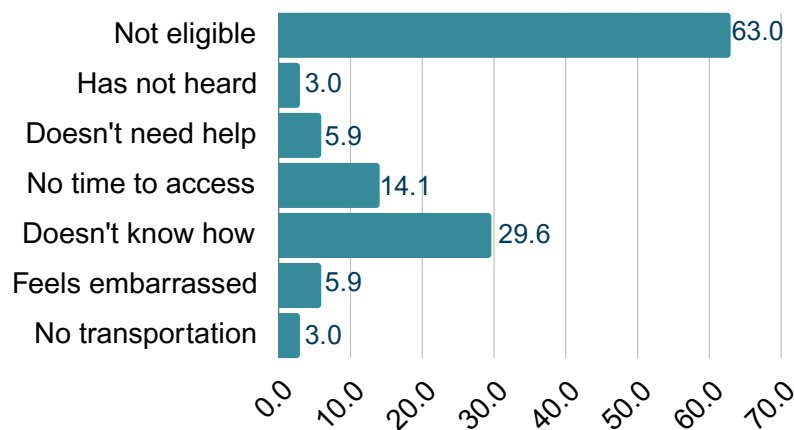


Figure 6 shows reasons why food-insecure students who have heard of CalFresh do not use it. 63% of students reported not being eligible and 30% didn't know how to access it.

Figure 7. Reasons why food insecure students do not use campus CalFresh application assistance (n=161)

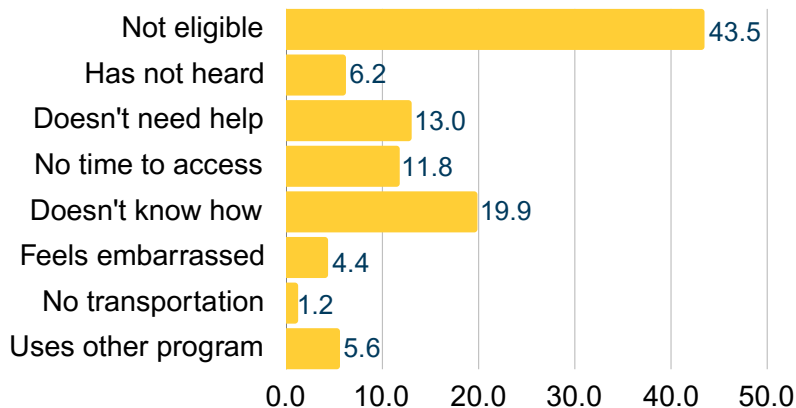


Figure 7 highlights reasons why UCLA students who have heard of the campus CalFresh application assistance do not use it, with 44% reporting they were not eligible, 20% not knowing how and 13% reporting they did not need the help. These findings indicate opportunities to increase awareness of eligibility criteria and how students can access the assistance.