



# Georgia Campus Food and Nutrition Security Summit

Georgia State University,  
Student Center West Room 101,  
55 Gilmer St SE, Atlanta, GA

2024

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Science for Georgia and Dr. Nida I. Shaikh, Assistant Professor Nutrition, Georgia State Univ, welcome you to the Campus Food Security Summit. This summit aims to shed light on the often silent problem of food insecurity on college campuses by bringing together groups, organizations, and individuals who are working in and around Atlanta. It will serve as a platform to share lived experiences, ongoing campus activities and research, and reach out into the greater community.

We hope that by providing this platform for constructive collaboration we can pull together our collective experience and resources. There are many passionate people already working on food insecurity, and a critical missing component is collaboration. The event will emphasize the importance of collective action and empower individuals to make a difference in the university setting.

The goals of this summit are greater awareness, heightened connections, and deciding on one to two actions that can keep momentum going over the coming academic year to address campus food insecurity.

Herein, we provide information on the impact of food insecurity, the current status of campus food insecurity, and example programs being utilized to address this issue. We then pose some thought provoking questions to get to thinking about what we can do to move the needle.

A big thank you to Home Run Fund, Souper Jenny, and United Way of Greater Atlanta for making today possible.





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# What is Food Insecurity?

## Census Tract

- small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a county
  - a. minimum population – 1,200
  - b. maximum population – 8,000

## Food Desert

- a census tract that is low-income and low-food-access

## Large Grocer

- over \$2M in sales
- has all major food departments

## Food Insecurity

- a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food
- assessed in the food security survey and represented in USDA food security reports

## Low-Income Census Tract

- eligible for USDOT New Markets Tax Credits
  - a. poverty rate  $\geq$  20%
  - b. median family income  $\leq$  80% of metro area's median
  - c. in non-metro areas, median family income  $\leq$  80% of statewide median

## Low Food Access

- a census tract where over 33% or 500 people live
  - a. more than 1 mile in an urban setting
  - b. more than 10 miles in a rural setting
 from a large grocer or supermarket





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# Impact of Food Insecurity



**13%**

of Georgia's population is food insecure

**23%**

of minority-serving institutions, such as GSU, have a higher food insecurity prevalence than other institutions.

Food insecurity is more than just lack of food; it is a nuanced issue that is compounded by many factors, such as background, financial status, housing status, etc. The financial difficulty in acquiring nutritious foods and fresh fruits and vegetables promotes the consumption of cheaper and highly processed food items.

Food insecurity is linked with numerous health conditions including diabetes, hypertension, and depression. The inability to acquire nutritious and sufficient foods can cause stress, depression, and anxiety. The lack of nutritious food and increased stress, in turn, negatively impact academic performance. Food insecure students experience lower completion rates and GPAs as a result.

Food insecure individuals, esp students, become locked in a vicious cycle of inadequate nutrition, increased stress, poorer health, and depressed academic (and/or work) performance. A cycle that is difficult to break.

**22.6%**

of undergraduates and

**12.2%**

of graduate students nationwide reported low or very low food security





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# The Current Situation on Campus

Campus food insecurity is often addressed through food pantries and other student services. Though helpful, they lack essential aspects of food distribution.

## Awareness

Universities may not adequately advertise food security assistance leaving students unaware. The stigma associated with requesting help contributes to student unwillingness to seek services. University outreach builds awareness. Increased sharing of stories and facts builds comfort with utilizing services, demonstrating to students that they are not alone.

## Operating Hours

Between school and work, students are juggling full schedules. Services should not be available only from M-F 9-5, and must be available at odd hours and on the weekends.

## Whack-a-Mole Services

Students who are food insecure are likely to also face housing insecurity and lack health insurance. Services that are distributed in silos, where students have to visit multiple offices and apply for multiple programs, put an increased burden on students to cobble together a full package. Combining services into a “whole student” model where the university focuses on the student, and not individual needs, decreases stress and increases utilization of services.

## Transportation

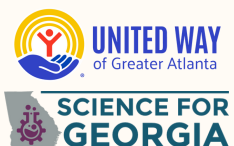
Students may not have access to reliable transportation. Accessing services like a food pantry is especially difficult if they must lug pantry items on the bus or by foot back to their home. What is the cost-value proposition of spending one hour on public transportation to get a bag of groceries? If the bag from a food pantry is clearly labeled “Campus Food Pantry” - do the students want to carry that visible stigma across campus or on the bus?

## Online vs. In-Person

Requiring students to apply for services in-person is a relic of the past. Students are more comfortable researching and utilizing services that can be applied for and accessed online.

## Cultural & Dietary Options

Grocery options in a food pantry should mirror the diversity of the student body. We must acknowledge that food is personal and cultural. A recipe that is comforting and filling to one, may be off-putting and forbidden to another. Additionally, foods available in pantries are often high in sodium (canned goods) or otherwise highly processed. Services need to account for the cultural and dietary needs of students.







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# On-Campus Programs

## The GSU Panthers Pantry

- stationed at 4 of the 6 GSU campuses
- the Panthers Pantry provides food and hygiene products to alleviate short-term food insecurity
- recently branched out to a mobile food pantry on the Atlanta campus

## The GSU Student Success Program

- overarching resource for students with difficulties in and outside the classroom
- helpful in all aspects of college life
- events include helping incoming first-year students know about campus resources and the Panther Express.

## The Campus Kitchen at UGA

- student-powered hunger relief program of the UGA Office of Service Learning
- spotlights sustainable solutions to hunger and food waste
- showcases a mutually beneficial university-community partnership.

## The Be Well Panthers Health & Wellness

- provides opportunities for students to contribute and participate in healthy initiatives
- activities emphasize mental wellness and overall mindfulness
- holistic approaches to student well-being leads to improving the community as a whole

## The GSU Student Civic Engagement

- organization supports student involvement in outside initiatives in the Atlanta area
- student-tailored volunteer work and non-profit work can be found through the organization
- both local and outside community works are explored to expand GSU's service community





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# Off-Campus Programs

## The Free Food Fridge at Siena College

- a project of the Siena Student Senate who bought and now maintains the fridge on campus in partnership with Free Food Fridge
- provides free meals for food insecure students, faculty, staff, and the local community
- the fridge is stocked with surplus food from the college dining hall
- for many years has been upcycling and now packaging leftover dining hall food for Free Food Fridge as a part of their sustainability initiatives

## Swipe Out Hunger

- a nonprofit organization founded at the University of California Los Angeles in 2010 by students
- the original model was the “swipe drive” enabling students to donate their extra meals to their peers facing food insecurity on campus
- offers support for things ranging from helping with food drives, SNAP guides for students, and grants of around \$3,000 to combat food insecurity

## Okanagan Charter

- looks at a student as a whole person
- understanding that all aspects of student life are intertwined, it has created an action framework for higher education to embed student mental and physical health in all aspects of campus policies
- seeks to coordinate and design campus services to ensure that there is equitable access and enable students to be active participants in their current health - leading to a lifetime of healthier choices



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# Food Distribution Apps

Atlanta lacks significant engagement with most food redistribution apps. There is a severe lack of food variety and nutritious options as most companies sell pastries and lack nutritious options. There may be an opportunity for students to engage with businesses to promote these apps.

## Too Good To Go

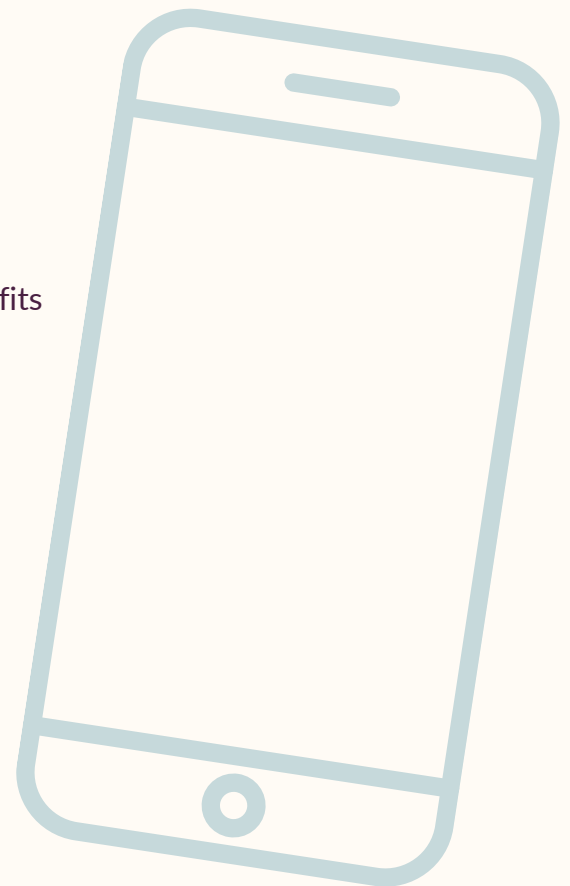
- provides the locations of restaurants that have bags of surplus food available at reduced cost
- provides pick up times, number of bags left, and bag reservations
- restaurant ratings and notifications for pick-up
- very active in Atlanta
- around \$5 to \$8

## Goodr

- operates in Atlanta as a large-scale food redistributor
- picks up excess food from businesses and delivers to nonprofits
- takes organic waste
- sets up pop-up grocery markets
- delivers food for seniors

## Flashfood

- notifies when surplus items are available at reduced prices
- not very active in Atlanta
- partnered with small grocery stores not found in Atlanta





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# Community and Larger Efforts

## The Virginia Roadmap to End Hunger

Virginia released a **Roadmap to End Hunger** in 2020. The roadmap outlines how state agencies and local communities should coordinate and work together. It establishes universal metrics to track progress, and a central agency to record and track these metrics. There are three main pillars to success: maximizing participation in federal nutrition programs, empowering local communities via community partnerships, and investing in regional food systems. Combined, these pillars meet acute food insecurity needs and work toward building strong public-private partnerships on a regional level to uplift communities.

## Local Community Councils or Task Forces

Local community task forces aid in coordinating activities, information, and access to food security programs. By coordinating all organizations that focus on this issue, it is easier for people to utilize programs that already exist. Check out our **Community Capacity Building Guide**.

## Congress to consider bill to fund basic student needs

The Basic Assistance for Students in College Act has been reintroduced in Congress to help students access vital necessities like food, housing, child care and health care. One of its sponsors, Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Calif., described the BASIC program as "a student social safety net that sets them up for success." Full Story: **Diverse: Issues In Higher Education (9/18)**







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# Reflection Worksheet

What is one new thing you learned today?

On your own: dream big about your topic. If we had unlimited time, money, and resources: what would you do to address your table's topic?

Go around the table. Introduce yourself, what you do, your new thing you learned, and your dream big idea. No comments until everyone has shared.



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# Group Breakout Session

In the reality of the now, what can we do to move the needle on our table topic? Remember to “yes, and” ideas...

Pick one thing your table recommends from the list above.

Have one person share with the group:

1. What is the thing to do?
2. How will it be done?

**Example:** To combat food waste, we will enable students to compost their food by providing compost bins in the cafeteria, compostable serving ware and utensils, and by creating a composting education campaign.



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# Notes





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