

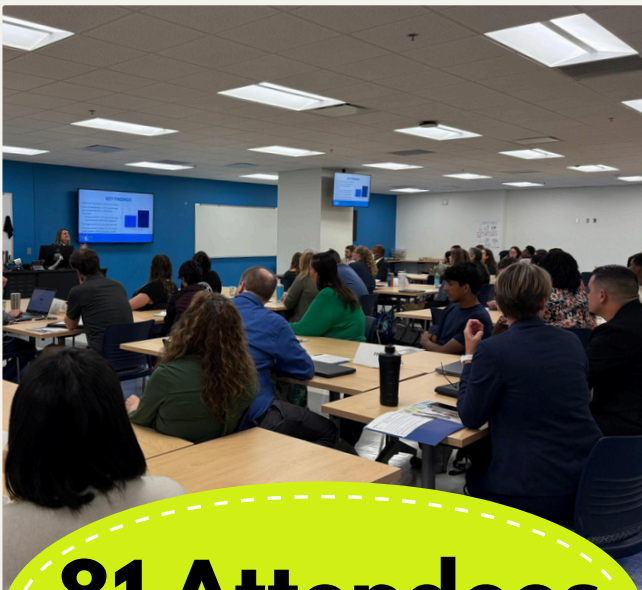


# Georgia Campus Food and Nutrition Security Summit

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

2024

[bit.ly/FoodSummit24-GSU](https://bit.ly/FoodSummit24-GSU)



**81 Attendees**

Science for Georgia and Georgia State University are proud to have convened the Georgia Campus Food and Nutrition Security Summit on October 24, 2024. Facilitated by Dr. Amy Sharma of Science for Georgia and Dr. Nida Shaikh of the Department of Nutrition at Georgia State University, the summit brought together stakeholders from 17 universities and 5 non-profit organizations across Georgia. They discussed experiences addressing food insecurity on their respective campuses and in the community. The morning consisted of short presentations from each stakeholder. It began with campus professionals and students showcasing the work they've done at their universities to improve food and nutrition access. These presentations were followed by remarks from Atlanta-area advocates who are also doing work on college campuses to combat food insecurity. After lunch, participants broke into small groups to discuss food security solutions and then presented their ideas to the group as a whole. After the event, participants stayed and mingled over a cookie happy hour.

Science for Georgia and Georgia State University would like to thank the event sponsors Souper Jenny, GSU Sustainability Initiatives, United Way of Greater Atlanta, Home Run Fund, and NaanStop for their support of the Georgia Campus Food and Nutrition Security Summit.



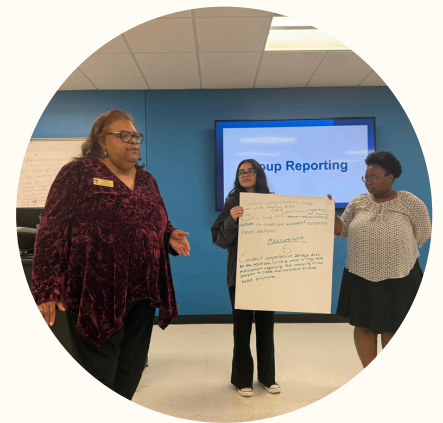
# Summary

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Among the presenters that work in food access on college campuses, a consensus emerged that data collection is crucial to supporting students. Food pantries collect data on the number of students that visit the pantries and often conduct polls on campus to measure general food insecurity. But an overall, comprehensive, measurement of the rates of food insecurity among students and the proportion of students who need basic needs services, be that food, housing, or healthcare, is lacking. One speaker mentioned that his university was going to create a Food Access Map, in collaboration with Dr. Shaikh, for students, faculty, and staff to locate places where food is available on campus including Halal, Kosher, vegan, and vegetarian options. However, each speaker spoke with the undertone that their resources are limited. Funding is not dependable, which impedes the ability to establish reliable aid. Each department maximizes its budget to serve as many students as possible, but it's never enough. Multiple speakers mentioned that they rely on donations or must limit student visits to their food pantry.



The afternoon of the summit was dedicated to interactive breakout sessions and group discussions. Participants divided into smaller groups to tackle some of the challenges discussed in the morning session such as funding, outreach strategies, awareness and utilization of SNAP (formerly food stamps) among students, and meeting diverse needs. These sessions fostered a collaborative environment where attendees could share successful initiatives and brainstorm solutions. The day concluded with group presentations, where representatives from each breakout session shared their insights.



The summit ended on an inspiring note, as participants walked away with new networks and new ideas to better support students experiencing food insecurity on their campuses. We had 41 post-event survey responses that were overwhelmingly positive and excited for next steps and a return event in 2025. These responses gave suggestions for improvement and topics of focus, including more time to hear from students experiencing food insecurity and time for networking and collaboration.





# Recommendations

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## Community Building

Food is an excellent way to bring people together. It was suggested that campuses look into building “community kitchens” that are linked to the campus food gardens. In these shared spaces would be cooking classes, gardening classes, information about support services, and access to nutritious food.

## Awareness

Food insecurity among college students is a hidden issue. Students are unaware that they are food insecure and/or ashamed to talk about it. Just as there has been a focus to destigmatize mental health, a similar one is needed to shine a light on food insecurity. An awareness campaign was suggested. In concert with student groups, students sharing stories of their lived experiences and campus services sharing what is available, would define, destigmatize, and raise awareness and utilization of support services.

## Centralized Dashboard

Providing information and services such as I have / I need, location of free or reduced-price food, public benefit screenings, nutrition information, and a general support services FAQ would increase access, awareness, and measurement of support services and need.