



# **MHEC Institutional Guidelines for the Hunger-Free Campus Annual Student Survey**

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Wes Moore  
Governor

Aruna Miller  
Lt. Governor

Elena Quiroz-Livanis  
Interim Secretary of Higher Education

**MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**  
217 E. Redwood Street, Suite 2100 • Baltimore, MD 21201  
[www.mhec.maryland.gov](http://www.mhec.maryland.gov)



**Wes Moore**  
Governor

**Aruna Miller**  
Lt. Governor

**Catherine J. "Cassie" Motz**  
Commission Chair

**Elena Quiroz-Livanis**  
Interim Secretary

## **Maryland Higher Education Commission Institutional Guidelines for the Hunger-Free Campus Annual Student Survey**

These guidelines are provided by the Maryland Higher Education Commission to aid in conducting the standardized annual student survey on hunger and preparing the mandated annual report in accordance with [Md. Education Article, Section §11-1703](#).<sup>1</sup>

Please take time to read this entire set of guidelines to ensure your institution is compliant with what is required for submission.

### ***Background***

The Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program was established in 2021 by the Maryland General Assembly to support efforts by institutions of higher education to address student food insecurity. In 2025, the General Assembly expanded eligibility for the Hunger-Free Campus designation to include private nonprofit institutions. The program provides state matching funds to Maryland public institutions of higher education and regional higher education centers designated as Hunger-Free Campuses to expand access to basic food resources, strengthen campus-community partnerships, and raise awareness of student hunger.

These guidelines are intended to support institutions in administering the annual student hunger survey and preparing the required annual report, as outlined in statute. They were informed by feedback from partners and institutional stakeholders engaged in Hunger-Free Campus efforts across the state and are designed to clarify statutory requirements, support consistent reporting, and ensure that the information collected is useful to institutions, students, and the State.

If you have additional questions or concerns regarding these guidelines, please contact [barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov](mailto:barbara.schmertz@maryland.gov).

### ***Requirements***

Institutions receiving Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program funding are required by statute to:

- **Conduct a standardized annual student survey on hunger;** and
- **Submit an annual report** detailing the institution's efforts to address student hunger.

Institutions must administer the annual student hunger survey during each year in which they receive Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program funding and submit the survey results and required report to the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) by the deadlines specified in their grant award documents. MHEC will review institutional submissions and compile statewide information for reporting purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> These guidelines reflect the statutory requirements as of June 2026. Should statute change, MHEC would issue revised guidelines and alert all current Hunger-Free Campus grantees and applicants accordingly. Up-to-date guidelines are maintained on the [Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program webpage](#).

## **MHEC Institutional Guidelines for the Hunger-Free Campus Annual Student Survey**

Because institutions vary in size, structure, and student populations, these guidelines should not be considered exhaustive. Institutions should rely on their internal experts (e.g., institutional research staff, student affairs professionals, legal counsel) for guidance on survey administration, data analysis, and reporting.

These guidelines outline expectations for survey administration and reporting and provide recommended practices to support consistency across institutions.

### ***Key Takeaways***

- Institutions must administer a standardized annual student hunger survey during any year in which they receive Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program funding.
- Annual survey results, as required by statute, must be incorporated into the institution's final grant report for the funding year.
- Institutions may use their own survey instrument, provided it collects the information needed to meet statutory requirements and the reporting prompts in these guidelines.
- Institutions may revise or replace their survey instrument from year to year to better meet campus needs.
- A sample survey instrument accompanies these guidelines and is available on the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program webpage.

### ***Survey Narrative Guidance and Prompts***

Institutions must include the results of the annual student hunger survey within their required annual report. The narrative should address all required topic areas and clearly describe how the survey was administered, who was surveyed, and how the results inform the institution's hunger-free campus efforts.

Institutions may present survey results in **tables, charts, or narrative form**. Tables and charts are encouraged when they help summarize data clearly and consistently.

### **Formatting requirements**

Reports must be submitted in **PDF or Microsoft Word (.docx)** format. If tables or charts are included, institutions should ensure they display correctly in the submitted file.

Please use the following formatting standards:

- 1" margins
- Single-spaced lines
- Left-justified text
- 11- or 12-point font in one of the following recommended fonts:
  - Calibri
  - Arial
  - Times New Roman
  - Georgia
  - Verdana

Institutions may use headings, subheadings, bulleted lists, color, and a cover page as needed.

## **MHEC Institutional Guidelines for the Hunger-Free Campus Annual Student Survey**

### ***Survey Administration Guidance***

To support consistency and reliability across institutions, the following practices are recommended:

- Institutions may use the sample survey instrument provided, adapt an existing instrument, or develop their own.
- Institutions may administer the survey using any method appropriate to their campus (e.g., web-based, paper, mobile-friendly).
- Institutions should consult internal experts, such as institutional research staff, student affairs staff, or legal counsel, when designing or administering the survey.
- Institutions may determine the target population(s) for the survey. While surveying all students is encouraged, institutions may survey a representative sample if appropriate.
- Institutions should take reasonable steps to protect student privacy in the collection, analysis, and reporting of survey data.
- Institutions should consider factors that affect response rates and data quality, such as survey length, timing, incentives, and outreach strategies.