



INDIANA COMMISSION *for*
HIGHER EDUCATION



MEDIA CONTACTS:

Allison Kuehr at (317) 232-1016 or AKuehr@che.in.gov

Kate Shepherd at (317) 442-1674 or Kate@KateShepherdCommunications.com

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New Report Spotlights Housing and Food Insecurity Resource Gaps on Indiana College Campuses

(INDIANAPOLIS) – Indiana public colleges and universities provide a variety of resources for students facing housing and food insecurity like food pantries, emergency funds and on-campus housing during breaks, according to results from the Housing Instability and Food Insecurity report released today by [Foster Success](#).

Earlier this year, Foster Success and the [Indiana Commission for Higher Education](#) surveyed all Indiana public colleges and universities to gather information on the ways campuses support students facing housing and food insecurity. The survey report was funded through a grant from [United Way of Central Indiana](#). Survey design, analysis support and interview facilitation were provided by [Chamberlin/Dunn LLC](#). Representatives from 27 unique campuses responded – which is about 76 percent of Indiana public colleges and universities.

The report reveals that while most campuses who responded have resources in place to assist students experiencing food and/or housing insecurity, there is a significant lack of high-quality data capturing the prevalence of such barriers and challenges.

Only about half of the campuses report tracking food insecurity, and just 10 of these track data on housing insecurity. However, data are almost entirely based on counts of use or number of referrals. These methods do not capture the prevalence, particularly the unmet needs, of students who are experiencing food or housing insecurity and are unaware of or unable to access on-campus support.

“Food and housing insecurity among college students is likely more prevalent than we know because our study revealed that the information isn’t being systematically collected around the state,” said Foster Success CEO and President Dr. Maggie Stevens. “Hopefully, this study will raise awareness of the issue and lead to better collection of data and communication to students about the resources and support that are available to them.”

Strong presence of on-campus food pantries

Over three-quarters of responding campuses have an on-campus food pantry available to students. Of those campuses, less than half have restrictions on student access to the pantries, with the most common restriction being the need to set appointments or request access. Five campuses provide emergency relief funds for food, specifically.

The report spotlights examples of resources offered by Indiana University Bloomington, Indiana University South Bend, Purdue University Northwest, Vincennes University, Ball State University, Ivy Tech Community College – South Bend/Elkhart and Ivy Tech Community College – Kokomo. For instance, along with having an on-campus food pantry, Indiana University Bloomington offers a variety of additional resources for students experiencing food insecurity. Campus Kitchens in Bloomington provides weekly boxes of fresh produce with recipes and \$10 dining cards are available

for students “on the spot.” Additionally, during winter and summer breaks, IU Dining and Catering staff provide one free cooked meal to students in need. This can expand to include a snack or two meals.

“We have served 7,500 meals through the emergency meal project in a period of about six months,” said Executive Director of IU Dining Rahul Shrivastav. “Students who are suffering food insecurity during breaks do not have to worry about where the next meal comes from. We are delighted to take this on, and our team feels great about it.”

Other report findings:

- Students who live on campus are likely at greater risk for housing insecurity over winter break due to the additional criteria students must meet to remain housed, such as having lived in housing the previous semester.
- All campus respondents offer emergency funds for students to pay for transportation, books and utilities. All these programs were in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Twenty-five of the 27 campuses who responded have campus liaisons or navigators who can refer students to the support available on campus and in the community for their specific needs, and 23 campuses disseminate information to faculty and staff for sharing.
- There is a mix of active and passive external partnerships and resources for students including a formal referral process, directories, databases or community resources.

“The Commission’s approach to educational equity includes a commitment to providing greater wraparound services to Indiana’s low-income and first-generation students,” said Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers. “This includes making food, housing and emergency resources readily available on our higher education campuses.”

Recommendations to improve understanding of need and resources

Based on the findings from the Housing Instability and Food Insecurity survey, recommendations are focused on improving data collection, proactive outreach and more collaboration among institutions. Recommendations also call for collaboration centered around sharing best practices for developing active networks and referral relationships with community organizations, disseminating information and resources to students, and tracking and measuring the impact of programs designed to address food and housing insecurity.

Read the [full Housing Instability Stability and Food Insecurity survey report](#).

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About the Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Created in 1971, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education plans, coordinates and defines Indiana’s postsecondary education system to align higher learning with the needs of students and the state. The Commission also administers Indiana’s financial aid programs, including the [21st Century Scholars](#) early college promise scholarship, which celebrated 30 years in 2020. Learn more about the Commission’s [Reaching Higher in a State of Change](#) strategic plan at www.in.gov/che.

About Foster Success

Foster Success is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization that provides financial, educational and social support to foster care youth at a most critical time - when they are about to or have already transitioned out of the foster care system, most often with no family or economic support. Each year, Foster Success supports about 300 students who have experienced foster care on their path to enroll in, persist through and complete college. More information about Foster Success can be found at www.fostersuccess.org, on [Facebook](#), on [LinkedIn](#) and on Twitter @FosterSuccessUS.