



NEWS

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New Survey of California Community College Students Reveals More than Half Face Food Insecurity and Nearly 20 Percent Have Faced Homelessness

More than half the students attending a California community college have trouble affording balanced meals or worry about running out of food, and nearly 1 in 5 are either homeless or do not have a stable place to live, according to a [survey](#) released today.

These numbers are in line with student statistics at Compton College, where current research shows 59 percent of students reporting food insecurity, 68 percent face housing insecurity, and nearly 18 percent experience homelessness. A full report about the college will be available in the spring to help guide programs designed to support students.

“Compton College is committed to assisting students in need, especially those who have housing and food concerns or simply need some extra support,” said Keith Curry, President/CEO of Compton College. “The Compton College Tartar Support Network is examining other ways to assist students with basic needs.”

A leading institution in addressing housing and food insecurity among community college students, Compton College recently established the Tartar Support Network to provide additional support. Notable outcomes include the creation of the Tartar Food Pantry and a program that offers student access to on-campus shower facilities. Compton College leaders are also exploring opportunities to build residential student housing on campus and established a partnership with St. John’s Well Child and Family Center to staff the Compton College Student Health Center. The new agreement ensures student access to much-needed medical services, physical exams, dental screenings, behavioral health, nutrition, family planning, and assistance with benefits enrollment. Mental health awareness is addressed through free workshops open to all students throughout the year and counselors are also available.

In addition, the college hosted the successful and well-attended statewide Real #114 Housing and Food Insecurities Conference this past December to discuss the housing and food insecurities that Compton College students, and students throughout California, face daily. The event hosted representatives from community colleges throughout the state. Guest speakers addressed equity and student success and what students need to be successful. Nearly 250 people attended the daylong conference.

Research has shown a strong correlation between food and housing challenges and academic success. For example, students having trouble affording a meal had grades at a C or below at higher rates than students who did not experience food insecurity.

The statewide survey features findings from nearly 40,000 students from 57 community colleges that participated in the assessment of basic needs security released by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office and The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice.

Additional results from the survey include:

- A combined 52 percent of students said they either could not afford to eat balanced meals or worried whether their food would run out before having money to buy more.
- Forty-one percent of respondents reported that they skipped meals or ate smaller portions for financial reasons, and 12 percent said they had not eaten for an entire day during the previous month because they did not have enough money.
- Sixty percent of survey respondents said that in the previous year they had experienced housing insecurity, which includes an array of challenges that include an inability to pay rent or utilities, not having a place to stay or needing to move frequently.
- Homelessness, defined as not having a stable place to live, affected 19 percent of survey respondents. The majority temporarily stayed with a relative or friend or couch surfed.
- Thirty-two percent of students said they experienced a rent or mortgage increase that was difficult to meet, 28 percent could not pay the full cost of utilities and 28 percent could not meet their full rent or mortgage obligations.
- Overall, 7 in 10 students responding to the survey experienced food insecurity or housing insecurity or homelessness during the previous year.

“Students across California Community Colleges want degrees. This report demonstrates the importance of improving the distribution of need-based aid and creating supplementary supports, especially for students who cannot access aid,” said Sara Goldrick-Rab, founder, Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice. Goldrick-Rab was the keynote speaker at the Compton College Real #114 Housing and Food Insecurities Conference; the college’s Fall Book Club read her book "Paying the Price - College Costs" in preparation for the conference.

The #RealCollege Survey highlights the need for financial aid reform and to address students’ basic needs.

“Compton College is a leader in the California Community College system addressing housing and food insecurity of our students,” said Keith Curry, President/CEO of Compton College. “We are excited about participating in the #RealCollegeCalifornia coalition which will offer strategic advising and technical support to colleges throughout California as we seek to secure students’ basic needs and promoting degree completion.”

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About Compton College

Compton College is the community’s education solution offering a full complement of transfer and degree courses, as well as career and technical education. Students may earn an associate degree or certificate, transfer to a four-year university or train for a career. Compton College is located at 1111 E. Artesia Boulevard, Compton, CA 90221.