FOOD AND HOUSING SECURITY:

Status and Service Use of DePaul University Undergraduate and Graduate Students
DATA COLLECTED, ANALYZED AND PRESENTED BY:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REPORTS’ AIMS AND ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

To understand the breadth and depth of the issue of basic needs insecurity at DePaul University

Assess the rates of students who require assistance to meet basic needs (e.g., food, housing)

Assessment questions 1: how many times these students require assistance to meet their basic needs

Assessment questions 2: how often students use or seek assistance to meet their basic needs within DePaul University community (i.e., campus’ organizations, offices and programs) and externally.

Assessment question 3: What barriers are cited by students if they are experiencing basic needs insecurity, but do not currently use DePaul community resources
ASSESSMENT

Participants

- 281 Undegraduate Students
- 330 Masters
- 36 Doctoral Students

Design

- Electronic Survey
- Cross sectional analysis (Sprin 2019) of Longitudinal Assessment (2019-2020)

Analysis

- Food Insecurity
- Housing Insecurity
- Food & Housing Insecurity
- Use of Resources

KEY FINDINGS

- 5% of Sample Housing Insecure
- 8% Experienced Homelessness
- 42% of Sample Food Insecure
- 6% of Sample Food Insecure AND Experienced Homelessness
- 12% of Sample was aware of On-Campus-Services
- Undergraduates Experiencing Higher Rates of Food Insecurity
- Graduate Students Less Aware of Service Provision
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase Awareness of Services

• Promote discussion about basic-needs insecurity during college
• Use institutional systems to make DePaul students and families aware of available services.
• Target Graduate Students for specific services

Food Assistance Services for Undergraduates

• Place services access points in accessible locations
• Increase hours of food pantry
• Make salient information available across students' campus environments.

Comorbidity rates of Food and Housing Insecurity

• Place Housing and Food Services delivery and information in same offices
• Discuss Housing and Food services on same flyer/ announcement.
• Staff & faculty overseeing educational services should be knowlegable of university-based food & housing services
• Student Employees across university settings should receive training on assessing and referring process to adress basic-needs insecurity

System Change

• Develop an interest group(s) at DePaul to discuss basic-needs insecurity
• Include participants from multiple university roles' and across university services areas.
• Implement continuous university level assesment on life insecurities during college.
• Use assessment information as evidence for development & implementaion of services/solutions.
• Develop a plan for sustainable system of change (e.g., frequency for interest group meetings, assessment and reporting)
BACKGROUND

HOUSING AND FOOD INSECURITY ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Basic needs insecurity among college students is an increasingly prevalent problem in the United States (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017) There is a growing body of literature examining the experiences of community college and university students related to needs security (e.g., Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017; Gaines et al., 2014; Tsui et al. 2011; Willis, 2019). Although past literature has predominantly focused on students at two-year institutions, it has been found that basic needs insecurity is also experienced among students at four-year institutions (e.g., Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017; Gaines et al., 2014; Tsui et al. 2011; Willis, 2019). Many barriers exist for college students in attaining basic needs stability. These barriers range from resource inaccessibility, lack of affordable housing, as well as lack of access to wages that reflect cost of living (E.g., El Zein et al., 2019; Fincher et al., 2018; Gaines et al., 2014; Hallett & Crutchfield, 2017). Food and housing security exist on a spectrum, and students may have a range of varied experiences based on their levels in security.

Food Insecurity Among College Students

Food insecurity in college students is significantly greater than the national average (Henry, 2017). A recent study (Willis, 2019) found thirty two percent (32%) of undergraduate students at a New York state university to be food insecure. In this sample, racial and sexual minorities experienced food insecurity at higher rates, and overall had a disproportionately
greater probability of experiencing food insecurity. Another study from 2014 looking at a U.S college students found fourteen percent (14%) of the sample examined to be food insecure. Twenty percent (20%) of students reported experiencing anxiety related to their food supply and access, and fourteen (14%) percent indicated altering their food consumption due to limited resources (Gaines, 2014). These statistics are not unique and other studies have also shown university students skipping meals, or being worried about their food supply due to limited resources (E.g., Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2016; Goldrick-Rab, 2016; Chaparro et al., 2009). An important gap in the literature is on studies assessing graduate student populations. Older adults coming back for graduate school education and/ or young adults transitioning from college to masters and doctoral programs are often left out of discussion about their non-academic student’s needs. This report aims to examine quantitative information to contribute with the understanding of the life experiences of graduate students at DePaul University.

Housing Insecurity Among College Students

According to a 2017 study, between eleven (11%) and nineteen percent (19%) of students at four-year college or university are housing insecure (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017). A survey conducted evaluating City University of New York (CUNY) students showed that approximately one percent (1%) of students were living in a shelter, eleven percent (11%) living in public housing and six percent (6%) received a rental supplement (Tsui et al, 2011). These findings by Tsui and colleagues (2011) showed that almost three times as many students were living in a shelter compared to New York City residents overall, and five times as many students participate in public housing programs. Overall, the CUNY survey found that forty-
two percent (42%) of students reported being housing insecure within the last year, with risk of experiencing housing insecurity not evenly distributed across the student population. Not surprisingly, CUNY students with lower annual household income, children, or whom support themselves financially, showed much higher rates of housing insecurity (Tsui et al., 2011) than those who with high income, less children and with more support available.

Comorbidity of Food and Housing Insecurity

Often, students who experience one form of basic needs insecurity, also experience another (Cady & White, 2018). Willis (2019) found that students that lack housing security have increased odds of also experience food insecurity. For example, between a quarter and a third of CUNY students reported being both housing and food insecure (Tsui et al. 2011). Silva and colleagues (2017) found that college students experiencing found and housing insecurity also had issues attending or performing in class. This suggests that those facing food insecurity or housing challenges are also juggling several obstacles related to college success and completion.

HOUSING AND FOOD INSECURITY AT DEPAUL

Previous Research

Limited research has been conducted on the experiences of DePaul University students regarding food security or housing security. Below are some of the studies that made researchers aware that more information was needed on the subject.

2014 Research Study
In 2014, a study was conducted that revealed approximately 50 students a quarter at DePaul University experience homelessness. In response to these findings, DePaul University collaborated with Depaul USA to implement The Dax Program, an organization working to provide a vast array services to students attending DePaul University experiencing issues with housing. Since the implementation of the Dax program, at least a dozen of DePaul undergraduate students have accessed safe and secure housing with their assistance while completing their college degree at DePaul University.

**Focus groups conducted by TRiO**

In 2017, TRiO and The Center for Access and Attainment conducted focus groups with eleven undergraduate students. Focus group findings suggested that large percent of TRiO students (students from low-income and first-generation backgrounds) were experiencing one or both, food and housing insecurities, while attending DePaul University. These focus groups also indicated that further exploration is necessary into DePaul students’ experiences with both food and housing insecurity, due to the largely unknown prevalence of the issue of basic needs insecurity among undergraduate students.

**Current Solutions**

The services offered by DePaul University available to students experiencing basic needs insecurity are limited at best. Often, students are not made aware of these resources, or for a wide range of reasons are not able to utilize these services (e.g., only for undergraduate students, not easily accessible, limited hours of operation etc.). Some of the existing programs and resources available to DePaul University Students are:
• The Dean of Students’ Office: Helps students find both campus and community resources in times of crises or emergency (offices located on both the Lincoln park and Loop campuses).

• The Mother Seton Food Pantry and Kitchen: Is located on the Lincoln Park Campus. The kitchen serves approximate 125 meals a day, the six days a week it is open from 8:30 am – 10 am. In addition to serving ready-made meals, the food pantry is open on Tuesdays from 10:30 am – 1 pm.

• TRiO programs: The Center for Access and Attainment provides resources for students who come to them in crisis and have been known to provide gift cards for grocery shopping, have snacks available in their offices, and have dorms that can occasionally be utilized by students experiencing housing instability.

• The Dax Program: The Dax Program was created in 2014 by Depaul USA to help provide housing assistance through graduation for students who are experiencing housing insecurity. In addition to housing assistance, the program also provides food stipends, textbook and transit assistance to participants in the program.
CURRENT STUDY

As a result of the previous research conducted among DePaul University undergraduate students, the Center for Access and Attainment ascertained that further research on the subject of food and housing insecurity among DePaul students is necessary, because the issue is not currently very well understood.

PARTICIPANTS

There was a total of 660 DePaul University Students who completed the survey. Of the 660 students, 281 were undergraduate students pursuing a Bachelor’s Degree at the time of the survey, 330 were graduate students pursuing a Master’s Degree at the time of the survey, and 36 were doctoral students pursuing a Doctoral Degree at the time of the survey administration. There were 13 students who opted not to respond to that question.

Figure 1. Breakdown of Students by Degree
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Age

The undergraduate students who filled out the survey ranged from age eighteen to fifty-eight, with the most frequently occurring and median age as nineteen years old. The average age of undergraduate participants was twenty years old.

Figure 2. Age Range of Undergraduate Participants (in years)

Gender Identity

The majority of undergraduate students that filled out the survey, when queried about gender identity selected “Woman” (n = 200), with twenty seven percent identifying as “Man” (n = 75), and two percent identifying as “Other” (n = 6). Approximately seventy five percent of undergraduate students identified as “Heterosexual” (n =209). An additional fifteen percent selected the answer choice “Bisexual” (n = 42), with less than ten percent each identifying as “Gay or Lesbian” (n = 17), or “Other” (n = 11). Two respondents opted not to answer this particular survey item.
Racial Identity

When asked “Please select which of the following best represents your ethnic background” Nearly half of the students surveyed identified as “White” \((n = 129)\). With the next largest group identifying as “Latinx/Hispanic” \((n = 50)\), comprising approximately eighteen percent of the sample. This was followed by students who identified as “Asian” \((n = 36)\) at thirteen percent, and students who identified as “Black” \((n = 29)\) as ten percent of the sample. “Mixed ethnicity” \((n = 21)\), “Middle Easterner” \((n = 11)\), “Other” \((n = 4)\) and “Native American” \((n =1)\) were also ethnicities represented in this study, all comprising less than ten percent of the undergraduate sample. Below, these groups are represented on the chart as “Other (Combination)”.

![Racial Breakdown of Undergraduate Sample](image)

Figure 3. Racial Breakdown of Undergraduate Participants (by Percentage)
Colleges Represented

The students who filled out the survey came from a diverse array of colleges at DePaul. Undergraduates in the sample represented all nine DePaul University Colleges. The college with the most representation was the College of Science and Health ($n = 82$), which made up twenty nine percent of the sample. This was followed by College of Liberal Arts and Social Science ($n = 54$) at nineteen percent, and Driehaus College of Business ($n = 49$) and the College of Computing and Digital Media ($n = 47$) both at seventeen percent. The rest of the colleges fell under ten percent of the overall sample. There were seven undergraduate participants opted not to share their college affiliation.

Student Status

An overwhelming majority of this sample were “Full-time” students ($n = 270$), with the rest identifying as “Part-time” ($n = 11$). Based on their completed credit hours at the time of the survey, sixty two percent of the undergraduate sample were “Sophomores” ($n = 175$), fourteen percent were “Freshman” ($n = 38$), twelve percent were “Seniors” ($n = 35$) and eleven percent were “Juniors” ($n = 32$). One participant opted not to respond to this question.
Age

The graduate students who filled out this survey ranged in age from eighteen to sixty-five years old. The most frequently occurring age was twenty-six years old, with the median age of graduate student participants twenty-seven years old and the mean being almost twenty-nine years of age.

Gender Identity

The majority of the 366 graduate students who filled out the survey when asked about their gender identity selected the answer choice “Woman” (n = 248). This was followed by students identifying as “Man” (n=114), at thirty-one percent, “Other” (n = 4) at one percent. Approximately eighty-four percent of the sample identified as “Heterosexual” (n =308), with seven percent (n = 26) identifying as “Bisexual”. Graduate students who identified as “Gay or Lesbian” (n = 22) comprised six percent of the sample, and three percent identified as “Other” (n = 9). One student opted not respond the survey item related to sexual orientation.
Racial Identity

When asked “Please select which of the following best represents your ethnic background” almost half of the graduate students surveyed identified as “White” ($n = 171$), with the next largest group identifying as “Asian” ($n = 77$), comprising twenty one percent of the sample. This was followed by students who identified as “Black” ($n = 50$) at fourteen percent, and students who identified as “Latinx/Hispanic” ($n = 36$) at ten percent of the sample. “Mixed ethnicity” ($n = 14$), “Middle Easterner” ($n = 11$), and “Other” ($n = 4$) were also ethnic backgrounds selected by graduate students in this study, all of whom comprised less than 10% of the sample. Below, these groups are represented on the chart as “Other (Combination)”.

![Racial Breakdown of Graduate Sample](chart.png)

**Figure 5. Racial Breakdown of Graduate Participants (by Percentage)**
Colleges Represented

The students who filled out the survey came from a diverse array of colleges at DePaul. These students were representative of all nine Colleges offering graduate programs. The largest amount of graduate students represented in the survey came from the College of Computing & Digital Media (n = 96), making up twenty-six percent of the sample population. This was followed by the Driehaus College of Business (n = 64) at eighteen percent, and the College of Education (n = 57) at sixteen percent. The College of Science and Health (n = 54) made of fifteen percent of the graduate sample, and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (n = 48) was represented by thirteen percent of the sample. The rest of the colleges with representation comprised less than ten percent of the overall graduate sample participants. There were twenty participants opted not to respond to this question, which is approximately five percent of the overall graduate student sample.

Student Status

Approximately 68% (n = 247) of graduate student study participants indicated that they were full-time students enrolled in at least 12 credit hours, while nearly 33% (n = 119) indicated that they were part-time students. It is worth noting however, that for graduate programs at DePaul, eight credit hours is considered full-time, so these numbers may not be accurate.
METHODS

After obtaining approval from the DePaul University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), an electronic survey was delivered via email to the student body at DePaul University in June of 2019. Study participants were invited to complete the survey. Participants were offered either $25 or $10 gift cards pending on rapidity of completion. The survey yielded 660 total study participants at closure of the time one survey.

MEASURES USED

FOOD SECURITY

Existing Measures

Food Security was measure using the validated and often utilized USDA Food Security Survey Short Item version (for both 12 months and 30 days) which can ascertain food security status of the sample (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). For a full list of these survey items, please see Appendix A.

HOUSING SECURITY

Existing Measures

Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity was measured in this survey utilizing a Modified version of Wisconsin HOPE Lab adaptation of the national Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) Adult Well-Being Module (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018) (See Appendix A).
Homelessness

Selected items from Crutchfield and Maguire’s (2017) were utilized to assess if students were experiencing homelessness (See Appendix A).

SERVICE USE

Service use in this study was assessed using items created specifically for this survey based on existing literature and past focus groups conducted with undergraduate students at DePaul University. These items were utilized to assess students’ service use on campus, knowledge of available services, and barriers to students’ service usage. For a complete list of these items, please see Appendix B.

FINDINGS

This section of the report reflects the findings of the study. They are broken down by the Overall Sample, the Undergraduate Student Sample, and the Graduate Student Sample. It is important to note that in the following results depicted, that there are students who opted out of answering certain items. These items may have been left unanswered intentionally due to the nature of the questions. This means that the reported findings may be slightly lower than the actual amount of the student body who may be experiencing basic needs insecurity.
OVERALL SAMPLE

FOOD (IN)SECURITY

Breakdown of Food Security Status

A multitude of survey items were utilized to ascertain students’ need regarding food security.

Food Security Survey

Of the students surveyed, 600 of the 660 total study participants filled out all items on the USDA Food Security Survey. This is a 12-item scale, that has been validated and is widely known as an acceptable measure of food security status (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). For a full list of the items on this scale, see Appendix A. Sample items from this survey include:

“

In the last 12 months, the food that I bought just didn’t last and I didn’t have money to get more

In the last 30 days, I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more

“

Results

Out of the 600 participants who filled out the USDA Food Security Survey, forty three percent were scored as having a high level of food security ($n = 255$). Sixteen percent of participants were scored has having a marginal level of food security ($n = 93$). Thirty two
percent of participants were scored as having low food security \((n = 193)\). Ten percent of participants were scored as having very low food security \((n = 59)\).

![Food Security Status](image)

**Figure 6. Food Security Status of Overall Sample (by Percentage)**

While almost half of the participants were determined to be highly food secure, another forty two percent \((n = 252)\) of the 600 DePaul University students participating in the survey who filled out the USDA Food Security Survey were determined to have low or very low food security status based on their survey responses. Nine percent of survey respondents did not answer every item on the measure, and were therefore omitted from the results in this section.

**Population of Low Food Secure Students**

To further understand the population of students who indicated experiencing either very low or low levels of food security, the sample was explored based on degree in progress,
age, gender identity, and racial/ethnic background and college. Results are reported below.

Please note, that not all participants may have answered questions pertaining to food security and age, gender identity, racial/ethnic background, or college, so reported sample sizes may differ slightly from those reported earlier in the report.

**Degree**

Of the students who indicated **very low** food security ($n = 59$), 49% were undergraduate students, and 51% were graduate students. Students who indicated **low** food security ($n = 191$), were 46% undergraduate and 54% were graduate students.

**Age**

Of the students who indicated **very low food security** ($n = 59$), 32% were ages eighteen through twenty-one, 25% were between ages twenty-two and twenty-five, 22% were between twenty-six and thirty years old. Students between ages thirty-one and forty comprised 15% of the **very low food security** participants, with participants age forty-one through sixty-five making up the remaining 5% of the students who fell into that category. Students who indicated **low food security** ($n = 193$), from ages eighteen through twenty-one made up 41% of the sub-group, twenty-two through twenty-five and twenty six through thirty each made up approximately 23% of the low food secure sample, with participants ages thirty-one through forty making up roughly 7% of the sample, and those forty-one and older making up 5% of the low food secure population in our overall sample.

**Gender Identity**

Of the students who indicated **very low food security** ($n = 59$), sixty nine percent identified as women, twenty four percent identified as men, and seven percent identified as
other. Approximately seventy-one percent of students who indicated low food security \( (n = 193) \) identified as women, twenty-six percent identified as men, and three percent identified as Other.

**Racial/Ethnic Background**

Of the students who indicated very low food security \( (n = 59) \), thirty-two percent identified as White students, nineteen percent identified as Latinx/Hispanic, nearly nineteen percent identified as Black, twelve percent identified as Asian, and approximately nineteen percent identified as Other (Combined). Approximately thirty-eight percent of students who indicated low food security \( (n = 193) \) were White, with seventeen percent identifying ethnically as Black, eighteen identifying as Latinx/Hispanic, seventeen as Asian, and eleven percent identifying ethnically as Other (Combined).

**College**

Of the students who indicated very low food security \( (n = 58) \), twelve percent were enrolled in the College of Business, seven percent in the College of Communication, twenty-nine percent in the College of Computing and Digital Media, ten percent in the College of Education, sixteen percent in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, seventeen percent in the College of Science and Health, two percent in the School of Music, three percent in the School of New Learning, and three percent in the Theatre School. Approximately seventeen percent of students who indicated low food security \( (n = 181) \) were enrolled in the College of Business, five percent in the College of Communication, twenty-one percent in the College of Computing and Digital Media, eight percent in the College of Education, nineteen percent in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, twenty-three percent in the College
of Science and Health, two percent in the School of Music, one percent in the School of New Learning, and three percent in the Theatre School.

Breakdown of Service Use

Service use was determined by a variety of items that were determined by the research team based on past studies. Sample items be used to determine service use by DePaul University Students include:

“Did you require assistance to meet your basic food needs during the last school year?

Do you know where you can get assistance on campus when you are experiencing a hard time obtaining food or need assistance with a housing issue?”

Knowledge of on Campus Services

Of the 660 students who completed the survey, 592 students answered the item pertaining to knowledge of on-campus services providing basic needs assistance. Eighty five percent (n = 500), of the 592 participants selected the answer choice “No, I do not know where to get assistance on campus for food or housing needs”. Six percent (n = 37) of the 592 participants selected the answer “Yes, I know where to get assistance for food” and another six percent (n = 36) selected the answer “Yes, I know where to get assistance for both food and housing”. These results depict that an overwhelming majority of students sampled are unaware
of on-campus service provision related to basic needs security, and indicate that the majority of DePaul University students may be unaware of the service options available to students.

Barriers to Service Use

An overwhelming majority of students in the sample indicated that they do not know where on campus to ascertain services on campus for either food or housing insecurity. With 88% of students demonstrating that they did not know where on campus to attain services for issues with food security, should the need arise.

Housing (In)Security

Breakdown of Housing Security Status

Housing security was calculated in two different ways, and as such yields two different results. The first gauges the overall security of the participants in the sample, while the other ascertains whether or not participants in the sample experienced homelessness at all in the current or past year.

Housing Security

All 660 participants in the study responded to the housing security questions (Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Eighty five percent ($n = 562$) of our sample were scored to have high housing security, 10% ($n = 65$) were calculated to have marginal housing security, 4.5% ($n = 30$) were
scored as having low housing security, with less than one percent \( (n = 3) \) scored to have very low/no housing security.

**Homelessness**

Of the 660 participants, approximately 8\% \( (n = 51) \) responded that they had experienced homelessness in the past twelve months.

Homelessness was calculated by whether or not a participant indicated that they had done any of the following: stayed at a shelter, stayed somewhere not meant for regular housing, or couch hopped in the past twelve months.

**Breakdown of Service Use**

**Knowledge of On Campus Services**

Of the 660 students who completed the survey, 592 students answered the item pertaining to knowledge of on-campus services providing basic needs assistance. Eighty five percent \( (n = 500) \), of the 592 participants selected the answer choice “No, I do not know where to get assistance on campus for food or housing needs”. Three percent \( (n = 19) \) of the 592 participants selected the answer “Yes, I know where to get assistance for housing” and another six percent \( (n = 36) \) selected the answer “Yes, I know where to get assistance for both food and housing”. These results depict that an overwhelming majority of students sampled are unaware of on-campus service provision related to basic needs security, and indicate that the majority of DePaul University students may be unaware of the service options available to students.
Barriers to Service Use

An overwhelming majority of students in the sample indicated that they do not know where on campus to ascertain services on campus for either food or housing insecurity. With 91% of students demonstrating that they did not know where on campus to attain services for issues with housing security should the need arise.

COMORBIDITY OF FOOD & HOUSING INSECURITY

Crosstabs Analysis

To further understand the relationship between food security status and homelessness and in this sample, a crosstabs analysis was run on the data.

Results

Of the 600 participants who responded to the food security variable as well as the homelessness variable, approximately 48% of the sample \( n = 287 \) were both highly food secure, and had not experienced homelessness in the past 12 months. Nearly 15% \( n = 88 \) were marginally food secure, and had not experienced homelessness in the past 12 months. Approximately 29% \( n = 171 \) of this sample had low food security, and had not experienced homelessness in the past 12 months. Roughly 7% \( n = 43 \) of the overall sample were scored to have very low food security and had not experienced homelessness in the past 12 months. One percent \( n = 8 \) of participants had experienced homelessness in the past 12 months, and
were scored to be **highly food secure**. Less than one percent \((n = 5)\) of participants had **marginal food security**, and had **experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months. Four percent of the sample \((n = 22)\) were scored to have **low food security**, and had **experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months. Three percent \((n = 16)\) of the sample were scored to have **very low food security**, and had **experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months.

<table>
<thead>
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<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Low Food Security</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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Table 3. *Participants Comorbidity of Basic Needs Security Status*

Of the 8% \((n = 51)\) of the total sample who had **experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months, 75% \((n = 38)\) of these participants also scored **low** or **very low** on the USDA Food Security Survey.
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SAMPLE

Breakdown of Food Security Status

A multitude of survey items were utilized to ascertain students’ need regarding food security.

Food Security Survey

Of the undergraduate students surveyed, 254 of 281 filled out all items on the USDA Food Security Survey. This is a 12-item scale, that has been validated and is widely known as an acceptable measure of food security status (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). For a full list of the items on this scale, see Appendix A.

“In the last 12 months, I lost weight because there wasn’t enough money for food.

In the last 30 days, I was hungry but skipped 1 or more meals because I didn’t have enough money for food.”

Results

Of these 254 participants, 37% (n = 94) of the total undergraduate sample were scored as having a high level of food security. Seventeen percent (n = 44) of the sample answered...
were scored as having marginal levels of food security. Of participants in the undergraduate sample, 34% \((n = 87)\) of students were scored as having low levels of food security. Eleven percent \((n = 29)\) of students surveyed were scored as having very low levels of food security.

Figure 8. Undergraduate Food Security Index Results (by Percentage)

Population of Low Food Secure Students

To further understand the population of undergraduate students who indicated experiencing either very low or low levels of food security, the sample was explored based on age, gender identity, and racial/ethnic background and college. Results are reported below. Please note, that not all participants may have answered questions pertaining to food security and age, gender identity, racial/ethnic background, or college, so reported sample sizes may differ slightly from those reported earlier in the report.
Undergraduate students comprise 43% of the overall study sample, however undergraduates make up 46% of students in the sample experiencing food insecurity. This indicates that food security may be more of an issue in the undergraduate student sample.

**Age**

Of the students who indicated very low food security \((n = 29)\), 66% were ages eighteen through twenty-one, 17% were between ages twenty-two and twenty-five, 10% were between twenty-six and thirty years old. Students between ages thirty-one and thirty-five comprised 7% of the very low food security participants in the undergraduate sample. Students who indicated low food security \((n = 87)\), from ages eighteen through twenty-one made up roughly 87% of the sub-group, while participants ages twenty-two through twenty-five comprised 9% of those undergraduates scored for low food security. Undergraduates in the sample ages twenty-six through thirty-two made up just over 3% of the undergraduates with low food security.

**Gender Identity**

Of the students who indicated very low food security \((n = 29)\), 76% identified as women, 17% identified as men, and 7% identified as other. Approximately 70% of students who indicated low food security \((n = 87)\) identified as women, 26% identified as men, and 3% identified as other. These percentages map on roughly to the overall sample gender identity percentages.

**Racial/Ethnic Background**

Of the students who indicated very low food security \((n = 29)\), 24% identified as White students, 28% identified as Latinx/Hispanic, nearly 21% identified as Black, 7% identified as
Asian, and approximately 21% identified as Other (Combined). Approximately 38% of students who indicated low food security \((n = 87)\) were White, with 13% identifying ethnically as Black, 22% identifying as Latinx/Hispanic, 11% as Asian, and 16% identifying ethnically as Other (Combined).

**College**

Of the students who indicated very low food security \((n = 29)\), 10% were enrolled in the College of Business, 17% in the College of Communication, 24% in the College of Computing and Digital Media, 3% in the College of Education, 21% in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, 24% in the College of Science and Health, 3% in the School of Music, and 3% in the Theatre School. Approximately 20% of students who indicated low food security \((n = 84)\) were enrolled in the College of Business, 6% in the College of Communication, 19% in the College of Computing and Digital Media, 20% in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, 29% in the College of Science and Health, 1% in the School of Music, and 5% in the Theatre School.

**Breakdown of Service Use**

**Knowledge of On Campus Services**

Of the 281 undergraduate students who completed the survey, 250 students answered the item pertaining to knowledge of on-campus services providing basic needs assistance. Seventy-eight percent \((n = 194)\), of the 250 participants selected the answer choice “No, I do not know where to get assistance on campus for food or housing needs”. Nine percent \((n = 22)\) of the 250 participants selected the answer “Yes, I know where to get assistance for food” and another 8% \((n = 20)\) selected the answer “Yes, I know where to get assistance for both food and housing”. These results depict that an overwhelming majority of students sampled are unaware
of on-campus service provision related to basic needs security, and indicate that the majority of DePaul University students may be unaware of the service options available to students.

Barriers to Service Use

A vast margin of students in the undergraduate sample surveyed indicated that they do not know where on campus to attain services on campus for either food or housing insecurity. With 83% of students demonstrating that they did not know where on campus to attain services for issues with food security should the need arise.

BREAKDOWN OF HOUSING (IN)SECURITY

Housing security was calculated in two different ways, and as such yields two different results. The first gauges the overall security of the participants in the sample, while the other ascertains whether or not participants in the sample experienced homelessness at all in the current or past year.

Housing Security

All 281 of undergraduate participants in the study responded to the housing security questions (Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Eighty-seven percent (n = 245) of our sample were scored to have high housing security, 9% (n = 24) were calculated to have marginal housing security,
4% \((n = 10)\) were scored as having **low housing security**, with another 1% \((n = 2)\) scored to have **very low/no housing security**.

**Homelessness**

Of the 281 participants, approximately 8% \((n = 23)\) responded that they had **experienced homelessness** in the past twelve months. Homelessness was calculated by whether or not a participant indicated that they had done any of the following: stayed at a shelter, stayed somewhere not meant for regular housing, or couch hopped in the past twelve months.

**Breakdown of Service Use**

**Knowledge of On Campus Services**

Of the 281 undergraduate students who completed the survey, 250 students answered the item pertaining to knowledge of on-campus services providing basic needs assistance. Seventy-eight percent \((n = 194)\), of the 250 participants selected the answer choice “**No, I do not know where to get assistance on campus for food or housing needs**”. Five percent \((n = 14)\) of the 250 participants selected the answer “**Yes, I know where to get assistance for housing**” and another 8% \((n = 20)\) selected the answer “**Yes, I know where to get assistance for both food and housing**”. These results depict that an overwhelming majority of students sampled are unaware of on-campus service provision related to basic needs security, and indicate that the majority of DePaul University students may be unaware of the service options available to students.
Barriers to Service Use

A large portion of undergraduate students surveyed indicated that they do not know where on campus to go for services on campus for either food or housing insecurity. With 87% of students demonstrating that they did not know where on campus to attain services for issues with housing security should the need arise.

COMORBIDITY OF FOOD & HOUSING INSECURITY

Crosstabs Analysis

To further understand the relationship between food security status and homelessness and in the undergraduate population surveyed, a crosstabs analysis was run on the data.

Results

Of the 281 undergraduates in the study, 254 responded to the food security variable as well as the homelessness variable. Approximately 35% of the sample \( (n = 90) \) were both highly food secure, and had not experienced homelessness in the past 12 months. Nearly 17% \( (n = 42) \) were marginally food secure, and had not experienced homelessness in the past 12 months. Approximately 30% \( (n = 77) \) of this sample had low food security, and had not experienced homelessness in the past 12 months. Roughly 9% \( (n = 22) \) of the undergraduates surveyed were scored to have very low food security and had not experienced homelessness in the past 12 months. Two percent \( (n = 4) \) of participants had experienced homelessness in
the past 12 months, and were scored to be **highly food secure**. Less than one percent ($n = 2$) of participants had **marginal food security**, and had **experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months. Four percent of the sample ($n = 10$) were scored to have **low food security**, and had **experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months. Three percent ($n = 7$) of the undergraduate participants were scored to have **very low food security**, and had **experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the Past 12 Months:</th>
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<th>Experienced Homelessness</th>
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<tr>
<td>High Food Security</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marginal Food Security</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Food Security</td>
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<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low Food Security</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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Table 4. Undergraduate Participants Comorbidity of Basic Needs Security Status

Of the 8% ($n = 23$) of the undergraduate sample who had **experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months, 74% ($n = 38$) also scored **low** or **very low** on the USDA Food Security Survey. Overall, there were few very slight differences between the breakdown of the basic needs security status of the undergraduate population and overall sample surveyed.
GRADUATE STUDENT SAMPLE

FOOD INSECURITY

Breakdown of Food Security Status

A multitude of survey items were utilized to ascertain students’ need regarding food security.

Food Security Survey

Of the graduate students surveyed, 343 of 366 filled out all items on the USDA Food Security Survey. This is a 12-item scale, that has been validated and is widely known as an acceptable measure of food security status (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). For a full list of the items on this scale, see Appendix A.
In the last 12 months, I was hungry but skipped 1 or more meals because I didn’t have enough money for food

In the last 12 months, I couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals

Results

Of these 343 participants, 47% (n = 161) were scored as having a high level of food security. Fourteen percent (n = 48) of graduate students in the sample were scored as having marginal levels of food security. Among those surveyed, 30% (n = 104) of graduate students were scored as having low levels of food security. Nine percent (n = 30) of students surveyed were scored as having very low levels of food security.

Figure 10. Graduate Food Security Index Results (by Percentage)
Population of Low Food Secure Students

To further understand the population of graduate students who indicated experiencing either very low or low levels of food security, the sample was further explored based on degree in progress, age, gender identity, and racial/ethnic background and college. Results are reported below. Please note, that not all participants may have answered questions pertaining to food security and age, gender identity, racial/ethnic background, or college, so reported sample sizes may differ slightly from those reported earlier in the report.

Graduate students comprise 55% of the overall study sample, however graduate students make up 53% of students in the sample experiencing food insecurity. This indicates that food security may be more of an issue in the undergraduate student sample.

Degree

Master’s students comprise 90% and doctoral students comprise 10% of the graduate student population in this study.

Of the students who indicated very low food security \((n = 30)\), 83% were masters students, and 17% were pursuing a doctoral degree. Students who indicated low food security \((n = 104)\), were 95% seeking a master’s degree and 5% were doctoral students.

Age

Of the students who indicated very low food security \((n = 30)\), 33.3% were ages twenty-one, through twenty-five. An additional 33.3% were between twenty-six and thirty years old. Students between ages thirty-one and forty comprised 23% of the very low food security, participants in the graduate sample with the remaining 10% between the ages for forty-one
and sixty-five. Graduate students who indicated low food security \((n = 104)\), from ages eighteen through twenty-one made up roughly 5% of the sub-group, while participants ages twenty-two through twenty-five comprised 35% of those scored for low food security. Graduate students in the sample ages twenty-six through thirty made up just over 40% of students in this population who were scored for low food security. Twelve percent of graduate students with low food security were between the ages of thirty-one and forty, with the remaining 8% between the ages of forty-one and sixty-five.

**Gender Identity**

Of the students who indicated very low food security \((n = 30)\), 63% identified as women, 30% identified as men, and 7% identified as other. Approximately 71% of students who indicated low food security \((n = 104)\) identified as women, 27% identified as men, and 2% identified as other. These percentages map on roughly to the overall sample gender identity percentages, however it does appear that they may be disproportionately higher rates of persons who identify as men experiencing very low food security in the graduate student sample compared to the overall sample population.

**Racial/Ethnic Background**

Of the students who indicated very low food security \((n = 30)\), 40% identified as White students, 10% identified as Latinx/Hispanic, nearly 17% identified as Black, 17% identified as Asian, and approximately 17% identified as Other (Combined). Approximately 39% of students who indicated low food security \((n = 104)\) were White, with 20% identifying ethnically as Black, 13% identifying as Latinx/Hispanic, 20% as Asian, and 8% identifying ethnically as Other (Combined).
College

Of the students who indicated very low food security \((n = 29)\), 14% were enrolled in the College of Business, 3% in the College of Communication, 34% in the College of Computing and Digital Media, 17% in the College of Education, 10% in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, 10% in the College of Science and Health, 7% in the School for New Learning, and 3% in the Theatre School. Approximately 14% of students who indicated low food security \((n = 97)\) were enrolled in the College of Business, 4% in the College of Communication, 23% in the College of Computing and Digital Media, 15% in the College of Education, 19% in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, 19% in the College of Science and Health, 2% in the School of Music, 2% in the School for New Learning and 1% in the Theatre School.

Breakdown of Service Use

Knowledge of On Campus Services

Of the 366 graduate students who completed the survey, 339 students answered the item pertaining to knowledge of on-campus services providing basic needs assistance. Eighty-nine percent \((n = 303)\), of the 339 participants selected the answer choice “No, I do not know where to get assistance on campus for food or housing needs”. Four percent \((n = 15)\) of the 339 participants selected the answer “Yes, I know where to get assistance for food” and another 5% \((n = 16)\) selected the answer “Yes, I know where to get assistance for both food and housing”. These results depict that a majority of graduate students sampled are unaware of on-campus service provision related to basic needs security, and indicate that the majority of DePaul University students may be unaware of the service options available to students.

Barriers to Service Use
A vast margin of students in the undergraduate sample surveyed indicated that they do not know where on campus to attain services on campus for either food or housing insecurity. With 91% of students demonstrating that they did not know where on campus to attain services for issues with food security should the need arise. This number is greater than that of the overall sample or the undergraduate sample, indicated that graduate students are less aware of on campus service provision available to them.

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**HOUSING (IN)SECURITY**

**Breakdown of Housing Security Status**

Housing security was calculated in two different ways, and as such yields two different results. The first gauges the overall security of the participants in the sample, while the other ascertains whether or not participants in the sample experienced homelessness at all in the current or past year.

**Housing Security**

All 366 of graduate participants in the study responded to the housing security questions (Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Eighty-four percent ($n = 306$) of our sample were scored to have high housing security, 11% ($n = 39$) were calculated to have marginal housing security, 5% ($n = 20$) were scored as having low housing security, with less than 1% ($n = 1$) scored to have very low/no housing security.
Homelessness

Of the 366 participants, approximately 7% \((n = 27)\) responded that they had experienced homelessness in the past twelve months. Homelessness was calculated by whether or not a participant indicated that they had done any of the following: stayed at a shelter, stayed somewhere not meant for regular housing, or couch hopped in the past twelve months.

Breakdown of Service Use

Knowledge of On Campus Services

Of the 366 graduate students who completed the survey, 339 students answered the item pertaining to knowledge of on-campus services providing basic needs assistance. Eighty-nine percent \((n = 303)\), of the 339 participants selected the answer choice “No, I do not know where to get assistance on campus for food or housing needs”. Two percent \((n = 5)\) of the 339 participants selected the answer “Yes, I know where to get assistance for housing” and another 5% \((n = 16)\) selected the answer “Yes, I know where to get assistance for both food and housing”. These results depict that an overwhelming majority of students sampled are unaware of on-campus service provision related to basic needs security, and indicate that the majority of DePaul University students may be unaware of the service options available to students.

Barriers to Service Use

A large portion of graduate students surveyed indicated that they do not know where on campus to go for services on campus for either food or housing insecurity. With 93% of
students demonstrating that they did not know where on campus to attain services for issues with housing security should the need arise.

**COMORBIDITY OF FOOD & HOUSING INSECURITY**

**Crosstabs Analysis**

To further understand the relationship between food security status and homelessness and in this sample, a crosstabs analysis was run on the data.

**Results**

Of the 343 participants in the graduate student sample who responded to the food security variable as well as the homelessness variable, approximately 46% (n = 157) were both **highly food secure**, and **had not experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months. Nearly 13% (n = 45) were **marginally food secure**, and **had not experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months. Approximately 27% (n = 93) of this sample had **low food security**, and **had not experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months. Roughly 6% (n = 21) of the graduate sample were scored to have **very low food security** and **had not experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months. One percent (n = 4) of participants had **experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months, and were scored to be **highly food secure**. Another 1% (n = 3) of participants had **marginal food security**, and **had experienced homelessness** in the past 12 months. Three percent of the graduate sample (n = 11) were scored to have **low food security**, and had
experienced homelessness in the past 12 months. Three percent ($n = 9$) of the sample were scored to have very low food security, and had experienced homelessness in the past 12 months.

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<td>High Food Security</td>
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<td>Marginal Food Security</td>
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<td>Low Food Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Low Food Security</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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Table 5. Graduate Participants Comorbidity of Basic Needs Security Status

Of the 7% ($n = 27$) of the graduate sample who had experienced homelessness in the past 12 months, 74% ($n = 20$) of these participants also scored low or very low on the USDA Food Security Survey.

Figure 11. Homelessness and Food Insecurity Among Graduate Students (by Percentage)
RECOMMENDATIONS

The data collected and utilized to inform this survey was done so at the end of the 2018-2019 academic year, in a pre-COVID 19 time. While some information and recommendations gleaned from this data are still applicable some do not reflect measures that may be as helpful in the time of a nearly entirely virtual campus. It is important to note that while campus services may look different, housing and food insecurity still remains during this time period, and are in many cases- further exasperated by the current COVID19 pandemic. This means service provision for students may be more crucial than it was at the time of data collection.

ACTION

INCREASE SERVICE PROVISION

Undergraduate specific services for food security

- Undergraduate students at increased risk for food insecurity

More service options for graduate student

- Currently extremely limited services for graduate students related to housing insecurity
- Create programs that specifically target graduate students

More housing services

- Comprehensive services that go beyond emergency assistance
INCREASE AWARENESS OF SERVICES

Target Undergraduate students for receiving information about food insecurity services

- Co-curricular Seminars
- Within Class Syllabus
- Include in-trainings related to on-campus housing

More visibility on DePaul University website

- Use undergraduate navigational data to identify high transit pages for advertising services- campaign model
- Decrease the amount of pages needed to navigate in order to reach service providers (e.g., 1 click off of main campus page versus 3)
- Highlight Dax program on DePaul University Website

Service Provision offices Easy to Access

- Create visibility across campus- campaign model
- All faculty and staff aware of service providers and able to give referrals when necessary
Coordinate with various student centers

- Train student employees in critical student-to-student interactions (e.g. peer-mentors, student leaders, tutors, etc.) to assess, discuss and do referral on life insecurity during college.

COMORBIDITY OF FOOD AND HOUSING INSECURITY

Issues with Food and housing security are often co-occurring phenomena. Due to this, we believe it is necessary for service provision addressing these issues with students, to occur in tandem.

Service Provision should occur in tandem

- Place housing and food services delivery in same offices
- Discuss housing and food services for students on same flyers/announcements across campus

FUTURE RESEARCH

The Center for Access and Attainment is currently (August 2020) completing a second survey distributed to DePaul University students, this second survey will be completed by the same participants reported here and by new participants. This survey will also assess DePaul students’ experiences with basic needs insecurity and campus climate during the 2019-2020 academic year. This new survey will also take into account the impact that COVID 19 is having
on our students, and will yield more information on the subject for the university to utilize. The expected time for reporting on second survey is winter/Spring quarter of 2021.

Develop a plan for sustainable system change

- Create a DePaul University level observatory to continually assess basic-needs insecurity among college students
  - Assessment project(s) would be to specifically address issues of basic needs insecurity, and focus on implementing changes to mitigate food and housing insecurity among students
APPENDICES

Appendix A - Existing Measures Incorporated in Survey

USDA Food Security Survey Short Item (12 month and 30 days)

1) In the last 12 months (30 days), I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more

2) In the last 12 months (30 days), the food that I bought just didn’t last and I didn’t have money to buy more.

3) In the last 12 months (30 days), I couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals

4) In the last 12 months (30 days), I ate less than I should have because there wasn’t enough money for food

5) In the last 12 months (30 days), I was hungry but skipped 1 or more meals because I didn’t have enough money for food

6) In the last 12 months (30 days), I lost weight because there wasn’t enough money for food

Modified version of Wisconsin HOPE Lab adaptation of the national Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) Adult Well-Being Module (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018):
1. In the past 30 days (12 months), did you not pay or underpay your rent or mortgage?

2. In the past 30 days (12 months), did you not pay the full amount of a gas, oil, or electricity bill?

3. In the past 30 days (12 months), did you move in with other people, even for a little while, because of financial problems?

4. In the past 30 days (12 months), did you “live with others beyond the expected capacity of the house or apartment”?

Items selected from Crutchfield and Maguire (2017) Homelessness Measure:

1. Have you ever stayed at a shelter at any point during this current academic year?

2. In the past 12 months, have you stayed in a place not meant for regular housing *abandoned building, automobile, etc.) even for one night?

3. In the past 12 months, how many times have you had to move or “couch hop” because of financial or other housing emergencies (please account for the number of times it happened, rather than the number of days you did it for).

Appendix B- Items Created Specifically for this Study

Service Use

1. “Did you require assistance to meet your basic food needs during the last school year?”

Barriers to Assistant Service Use
1. “What do you think could be helpful for the university to provide more of in relation to any of the issues brought up?”

Knowledge of Services

1. Is there a food Pantry on Campus?
2. Do you know where you can get assistance on campus when you are experiencing a hard time obtaining food or need assistance with a housing issue?

REFERENCES


