

STATE OF NEW YORK

2637

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 22, 2025

Introduced by Sens. MAY, ADDABBO, COMRIE, COONEY, GOUNARDES, HARCKHAM, HOYLMAN-SIGAL, JACKSON, KAVANAGH, KRUEGER, LIU, MYRIE, RIVERA, SALAZAR, SCARCELLA-SPANTON, SKOUFIS, WEBB -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing the "hunger-free campus act"

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "hunger-free campus act".

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3 § 2. The education law is amended by adding a new section 319 to read as follows:

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5 § 319. Hunger-free campus grant program. 1. The commissioner shall
6 establish the hunger-free campus grant program pursuant to this section
7 and regulations of the commissioner adopted for such purpose. Within the
8 amounts appropriated for this purpose, the commissioner shall award
9 grants on a competitive basis to public institutions for higher educa-
10 tion which have one or more campuses that are designated by the commis-
11 sioner as hunger-free campuses.

12 2. The purpose of the grant funding shall be to:

13 a. address student hunger;

14 b. leverage more sustainable solutions to address basic food needs on
15 campus;

16 c. raise awareness of services currently offered on campus which
17 address basic needs; and

18 d. continue to build strategic partnerships at the local, state, and
19 national levels to address food insecurity among students.

20 3. a. For an institution to be designated as a hunger-free campus,
21 such institution shall:

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD04226-01-5

1 (i) establish a hunger task force which includes student represen-
2 tatives from the student body that meets a minimum of three times per
3 academic year to set at least two goals with action plans;

4 (ii) designate a staff member responsible for assisting students with
5 enrollment in the state's supplemental nutrition assistance program
6 (SNAP);

7 (iii) institute a system of educating the student body about the
8 state's supplemental nutrition assistance program. This may include, but
9 is not limited to, including information about SNAP in all financial aid
10 information, including information about SNAP in new student orientation
11 materials, including SNAP information on class syllabi, posting informa-
12 tion about SNAP in all on-campus housing;

13 (iv) provide options for students to utilize SNAP benefits at campus
14 stores or provide students with information on establishments in the
15 surrounding area of campus where they can utilize SNAP EBT benefits;

16 (v) hold an awareness day campaign activity or event during the
17 national hunger and homelessness awareness week that includes SNAP
18 outreach and application assistance;

19 (vi) provide at least one physical food pantry on campus, or enable
20 students to receive food through a separate, stigma-free arrangement.
21 Such campus may partner with a local food bank or food pantry to meet
22 the requirements of this subparagraph;

23 (vii) develop a student meal credit donation program, or designate a
24 certain amount of funds for free food vouchers or gift cards that can be
25 used at campus stores, eateries or local establishments. Each institu-
26 tion of higher education may develop its own procedures for a meal
27 donation program; and

28 (viii) annually conduct or participate in a student survey on hunger
29 and submit the results of the survey to the commissioner at a time
30 prescribed by the commissioner for inclusion in a comparative profile of
31 each campus designated as a hunger-free campus.

32 4. The commissioner shall allocate grant funding to each public insti-
33 tution of higher education that has one or more campuses designated by
34 the commissioner as a hunger-free campus in accordance with the criteria
35 established pursuant to subdivision three of this section. The commis-
36 sioner shall utilize the hunger-free campus funding formula to determine
37 the amount of each grant which shall be used by the institution to
38 further address food insecurity among students enrolled in the institu-
39 tion. The commissioner or such commissioner's designee shall prioritize
40 grants to institutions of higher education with the highest percentage
41 of Pell grant eligible students enrolled in the student body. Following
42 the awarding of such grant funding, recipients will be expected to
43 provide basic information to the department on how such grant award was
44 used, its deliverables and outcomes.

45 5. The commissioner shall submit a report to the governor, the tempo-
46 rary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly, no later
47 than two years after the establishment of the hunger-free campus grant
48 program. The report shall include, but not be limited to, the number and
49 amounts of the grant awards, examples of how students were supported by
50 the program and how this funding helped them continue their education
51 through to completion, examples of the impact the grant program has had
52 on establishing additional hunger-free campuses at public institutions
53 of higher education and reducing the number of students experiencing
54 food insecurity, and recommendations regarding the potential establish-
55 ment of an annual appropriation for the grant program.

56 § 3. This act shall take effect immediately.