

# University of Minnesota Hunger Free Campus Grants

*Due February 1, 2026*

## **Report to the Minnesota Legislature**

As required by [2025 Minn. Laws 1st Sp. Sess. Chap. 5 Art. 1 Sec. 4 Subd. 7\(e\)\(3\)](#) which went into effect July 1, 2025.

## **Submitted by:**

Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota

## **Prepared by:**

The report was prepared by staff from the Office for Student Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

## **Report Preparation Costs:**

Per the requirements set forth in Minnesota Statute 3.197, the cost to prepare this report was \$700.

## **Criteria #1: How Hunger Free Campus Grant money was distributed**

The \$200,000 were distributed to University of Minnesota campuses based on enrollment:

- Crookston: \$6,000
- Duluth: \$28,000
- Morris: \$5,000
- Rochester: \$5,000
- Twin Cities: \$156,000

## **Criteria #2: How Hunger Free Campus requirements were met at those campuses**

Food insecurity among University of Minnesota students has increased since 2015. The most recent University of [Minnesota College Student Health Survey](#) data from spring 2024 shows approximately one in four students across the system experience food insecurity.

Addressing food insecurity is part of the University of Minnesota's [Elevate Extraordinary 2030](#) strategic roadmap. The University of Minnesota has long prioritized the well-being of students across all campuses, and that work has continued to evolve. Key early actions include developing new solutions or growing existing strategies to expand access to food options on all campuses.

### **(1) Maintain an on-campus food pantry or partnership with a local food bank to provide regular, on-campus food distributions**

Each campus runs an on-campus food pantry that is open regularly for students and tailored to their local population and community needs. Below are links to each campus' website with an overview of their unique food pantry and related services.

[University of Minnesota Crookston](#)

[University of Minnesota Duluth](#)

[University of Minnesota Morris](#)

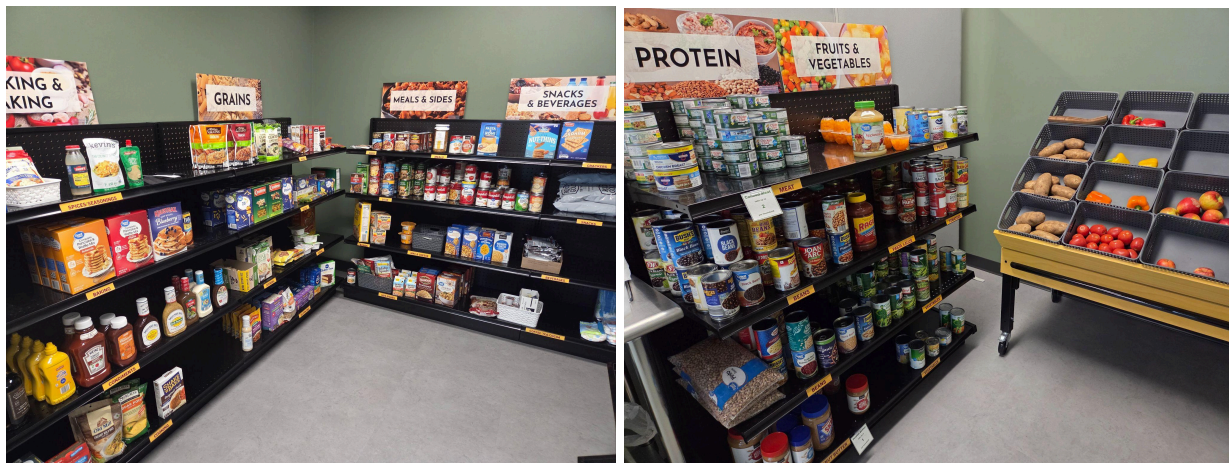
[University of Minnesota Rochester](#)

[University of Minnesota Twin Cities](#)

Campus specific resources addressing a wide variety of concerns, including basic needs, can be found at [mentalhealth.umn.edu](https://mentalhealth.umn.edu). Students, faculty, staff, friends and family can access this website, which is available on all campuses. Basic needs is the second most commonly queried search.

In fall semester 2025, over 120,801 pounds of food were distributed to students across all University of Minnesota campuses, due in large part to the support provided by the Hunger Free Campus Grant. Students on all University of Minnesota campuses have been positively impacted by the Hunger Free Campus Grant appropriation, as demonstrated by the examples below:

- University of Minnesota Crookston purchased a larger refrigerator for their on-campus food pantry, Eagle's Essential Pantry, which increases the variety and amount of fresh food available to students.
- University of Minnesota Duluth recently expanded their food pantry, Champ's Cupboard. The expansion now allows them to provide fresh produce, refrigerated and frozen food items, and a dedicated space for gluten-free food products. For the fall 2025 semester, the number of visits increased 400% compared to fall 2024. The expanded space has helped ensure that Duluth is able to keep up with growing demand. (Note - equipment purchased for this expansion was covered by an Office of Higher Education Equipment Grant last year.) [Duluth TV Station WDIO recently covered the expansion of Champ's Cupboard, highlighting the needs around food security for college students in the region.](#)



*Pictures of the newly expanded "Champ's Cupboard" on the UMD campus*

- University of Minnesota Morris established an agreement with Cougar Athletics to add a food pantry for student-athletes. The new food pantry was established with

equipment and infrastructure purchased using the Hunger Free Campus funds, making this the seventh food pantry on campus. Morris is also working to connect students with culturally appropriate foods by partnering with Indigenous sources to provide bison and elk meat. Wild rice, wild rice flour and indigenous fruit preserves are also available in the pantries.

- University of Minnesota Rochester's campus food pantry, The Pantry, provides students with fresh and shelf-stable food options and hygiene products and is open every day, including weekends.
- This fall, the Nutritious U Food Pantry on the Twin Cities campus was open weekly and operated in three locations: Coffman Memorial Union, St. Paul Student Center, and West Bank Skyway. Due to the pause on SNAP benefits, two additional dates were added to the Nutritious U Food Pantry schedule, and it opened one hour earlier in November and December to further expand capacity. There were 10,251 visits this fall, a 62% increase from fall 2024, due to these expansion efforts. Students can find a variety of fresh foods (from refrigerator/freezer) and foods that meet a variety of dietary needs and are culturally appropriate.

**(2) Provide information to students on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), and other programs that reduce food insecurity**

**and**

**(3) Notify students in work-study employment of their potential eligibility for SNAP benefits and provide information to those students about eligibility criteria and how to apply for benefits**

Each campus provides information and support for accessing SNAP benefits. One Stop Student Services, which assists students with academics and finances, helps connect students who may be eligible for SNAP benefits with information about how to apply. This includes notifying students in work-study employment about potential eligibility. Each campus amplifies messaging about food insecurity programs in many ways, including emails, referral to case management, and information posted in food pantries. Here are additional examples:

- At the University of Minnesota Duluth, a trained student leader utilizes tools provided through the Student Basic Needs Coalition to help students determine their eligibility for SNAP, submit applications, and provide on-going support.

- On the University of Minnesota Morris campus, The Morris Basic Needs Initiative disseminates information related to food access, resources and programs intended to improve access to basic needs, and educational content about food. It also promotes “Foodways,” which is a basic needs navigator staff on campus that provides information about SNAP and other programs in a variety of ways, including hosting workshops about eligibility criteria, the application process and available assistance for students who would like to apply to basic needs assistance programs.
- On the University of Minnesota Rochester campus, the Office of Student Wellbeing works with the Office of Student Activities to highlight food resources in the student newsletter, which is sent to all students. The open rate for this email newsletter is high. Criteria for SNAP benefits is also distributed through this newsletter.

They also have a [“Food Resources” webpage](#) that highlights SNAP. Brochures on SNAP and MFIP are also provided in the pantry. The Rochester campus has an employment program for students with and without work study. Human Resources, which oversees student employment, creates awareness of the program and eligibility requirements for SNAP.

- At the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, we notify students who may be eligible for SNAP by email and MyU notifications one to two times per academic year. This includes students who are in work-study employment. The email directs interested students to [SNAP for University of Minnesota students](#), where they can take a screening survey to see if they are likely to be eligible and connect to the SNAP application if they are. During fall semester 2025, there were 34,238 Twin Cities students who received notifications that they might be eligible for SNAP. As of January 9, 2025, a total of 3,598 screening surveys had been completed, with 79% of students screening as likely eligible for SNAP. The University of Minnesota Twin Cities has also offered in-person SNAP application support in partnership with Second Harvest Heartland.

On the Twin Cities campus, students with children are referred to the Student Parent Help center for referrals to programs they may be eligible for, including SNAP, MFIP and WIC. The Care Program provides case management and referrals to programs that address food insecurity both on and off campus. Care managers work individually with students to help them access resources that meet their unique needs—for example, support in their hometown during academic breaks, assistance locating halal food options or identifying discounted grocery resources to supplement on-campus support.

#### **(4) Hold or participate in one hunger awareness event per academic year**

Each campus uses a variety of ways to promote the services available and build awareness around hunger amongst students. These include events, such as hosting or tabling during resource fairs, and promotion during new student orientation.

- University of Minnesota Crookston hosted a month-long food drive in November and had a successful turnout.
- University of Minnesota Duluth engaged a trained student leader (called a peer navigator) through support from the Student Basic Needs Coalition. This student has regular events on-campus to share basic needs resources with students, including accessing SNAP benefits, Champ's Cupboard food pantry, and student emergency grants. The Peer Navigator helped with coordinating a food drive at the end of the fall semester that was structured as an informal competition between collegiate units to see which college could collect the most food products for the pantry. The winning college received a traveling trophy.
- The University of Minnesota Morris Basic Needs Initiative hosted many events over the fall 2025 semester including a successful food drive in November and monthly tabling in the Student Center to provide students with information about campus food resources, available support for students applying for SNAP (and other state and federal basic needs assistance), and recipes using ingredients that can be found on campus food shelves. Other events included:
  - Student Hour at the Stevens County Food Shelf, a periodically offered service-learning partnership that designated an hour exclusively for our students using a "Give a little, Take a little" approach in which students volunteer before taking home groceries and essential items, with free transportation arranged in collaboration with the county between campus and the food shelf;
  - Food and Cultural Odyssey trip to Willmar, MN with a goal to improve student access to cultural activities; and,
  - Second annual "Pancakes on the Prairie Breakfast" hosted in partnership with the Morris Campus Student Association (University of Minnesota Morris' student government) to improve awareness about the Morris Basic Needs Initiative.
- Each semester, the University of Minnesota Rochester Student Association (RSA) sponsors a late night meal at "The Perch" dining space that is open to all students. RSA also hosts food for finals each semester which provides a daily meal during each day of final exams with support from the Office of Student Activities in Student Life. The spring 2025 event was centered on hunger awareness. The event included an interactive display that highlighted important facts about food insecurity. In December 2025 for the fall event, RSA leaders presented a poster during the Food for Finals effort to students to raise awareness on food insecurity on college campuses, the visual included University of Minnesota Rochester-specific data.



- Boynton Health on the Twin Cities campus participated in the University of Minnesota Day at the Capitol on February 18, 2025, and used this opportunity to promote the Nutritious U Food Pantry and talk to attendees about the issue of hunger among University of Minnesota students. We also promote ongoing awareness about hunger on campus through our work connecting with and presenting to academic advisors and student governments.



*Picture University of Minnesota staff promoting food insecurity resources for students at 2025 U of M Day at the Capitol*

### **(5) Provide emergency assistance grants to students**

Each campus offers student emergency grants with eligibility and access details available on their One Stop Student Services webpage:

[University of Minnesota Crookston](#)

[University of Minnesota Duluth](#)

[University of Minnesota Morris](#)

[University of Minnesota Rochester](#)

[University of Minnesota Twin Cities](#)

**(6) Establish a hunger task force that meets a minimum of three times per academic year and that includes at least two students currently enrolled at the institution**

Each campus has developed basic needs task forces that include student, faculty, and staff representation. These task forces help identify needs and future opportunities for each campus to explore.

- The University of Minnesota Crookston campus started the Eagles Essentials Committee made up of students that will bring awareness to food insecurity across campus and the community.
- University of Minnesota Duluth utilizes the Basic Needs Coalition to help prioritize efforts on campus and to spread awareness about food insecurity and basic needs concerns broadly. The coalition also works to identify grants and other fundraising opportunities to pursue and is composed of students, faculty and staff.
- The University of Morris Basic Needs Initiative team meets monthly with a network of food access organizations to engage in peer-to-peer education related to basic needs and food access as well to identify potential for partnerships between organizations.
- University of Minnesota Rochester campus taskforce, Raptor Eats Food Group, meets monthly to work on food priority efforts. The group includes campus leadership, staff and students. The group works to reduce food waste, provide feedback and input on the campus dining program, and reduce food insecurity. One example of the impact is that they created a food waste initiative where leftovers from “The Perch” dining service are transported each Tuesday-Friday in single serving containers and distributed at The Pantry.

The Director of Student Engagement & Wellbeing is collaborating with a group of Rochester students enrolled in the Spring 2026 Community Collaboratory course and two Rochester faculty members to pursue additional resources to support The Pantry. Grant opportunities have already been identified and it is a key priority of the group to ensure the efforts are student-driven and student-centered.

- The Basic Needs Network on the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus meets three times each year to share information and coordinate efforts related to student food insecurity. The Basic Needs Network includes representatives from more than 30 different campus units as well as leaders from all three student government groups (Undergraduate Student Government, Professional Student Government, and the Council of Graduate Students). Basic Needs Network meetings are planned & hosted by the Basic Needs Action Team, which is convened by Boynton Health as part of the Office for Student Affairs.



### Criteria #3 How many students were served

Campus	Number of student visits to campus food pantries fall semester 2025 (September-December)
Crookston	75
Duluth	925
Morris	788
Rochester	846
Twin Cities	10,251
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,885</b>