

**Request for Application**

# PA Hunger-Free Campus Grant 2024-2025

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education (OPHE) is pleased to issue this request for application for eligible postsecondary institutions to fund programs to address food insecurity on campus. This document describes the requirements applicants will be expected to meet and the criteria that will be used to award funding.

The application submission window will open at 12:00 AM on Monday, **August 26, 2024**, and close at 11:59 PM on **Monday, September 23, 2024.**

Please complete and return your application submission via eGrants.

**Background**

The state-wide food insecurity rate in Pennsylvania is 11.9%, according to Feeding Pennsylvania. This includes 1.5 million Pennsylvanians, of whom 436,000 are children, facing hunger insecurity[[1]](#footnote-1). Research shows that 1 in 3 students experience food insecurity[[2]](#footnote-2). A recent study found food-insecure college students have 42% lower odds of graduating. In 2022, 38% of students at two-year colleges and 29% of students at four-year colleges experienced food insecurity.[[3]](#footnote-3) Colleges and universities across the country are continuing to take steps to address these issues so students can focus on their education instead of where to find their next meal.

Additionally, stigma is a major concern. A January 2022 [survey](https://www.ctfoodshare.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Dignified-and-Welcoming-Environment-Report-.pdf) from Connecticut Foodshare’s Institute for Hunger Research & Solutions found that 69% of respondents have concerns about using a pantry because they would rather support themselves; 42% say they would feel embarrassed to use a pantry, and 40% worry that others would find out, as reported in a Food Bank News article from April 12, 2022.

The Office of the First Lady, Mrs. Lori Shapiro, fully endorses the PA Hunger-Free Campus Initiative, which began in 2022. In 2024-25, the work continues to build a coalition of colleges and universities focused on addressing hunger and other basic needs for their students; creating opportunities for connection among student hunger advocates; providing resources and strategies for campuses; and supporting opportunities to apply for grants related to addressing food insecurity.

Governor Josh Shapiro successfully advocated for $1,000,000 in the FY 2024-2025 budget to support postsecondary institutions’ efforts on addressing student hunger needs on campus. Commencing August 2022, postsecondary institutions were invited to apply for the PA Hunger-Free Campus or PA Hunger-Free Campus+ designation to demonstrate their commitment to addressing these needs and diminishing barriers for learners. To achieve the PA Hunger-Free Campus designation, institutions certified and demonstrated they met the following criteria:

1. The institution has a method to **directly connect students to food options** through one or more of the following: an on-campus, ADA-accessible food pantry, a local community-based food pantry, or a food delivery program.
2. The institution has strategies in place to **increase awareness of the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)** eligibility rules for students, focuses SNAP outreach on potentially eligible students, and helps students apply for SNAP and other benefits. These strategies should include accessibility efforts such as providing materials in multiple languages.
3. The institution **has a task force** that meets regularly **to address basic needs initiatives**, including hunger, and raises awareness among students using trauma-informed approaches and an equity, inclusion, and belonging lens. The task force includes a variety of individuals on campus including, but not limited to students, faculty, financial aid staff, student support staff, and at least one member of institutional leadership (Cabinet, Vice President, etc.).
4. The institution **collects and reports data** to the college/university community and/or state on student food insecurity, such as participation in the [Hope Center’s #RealCollege Survey](https://hope.temple.edu/research/hope-center-basic-needs-survey) or [Swipe Out Hunger’s Impact Report](https://www.swipehunger.org/2023impact/).

Postsecondary institutions that received a PA Hunger-Free Campus+ designation implemented additional innovative solutions to address student hunger and other basic needs for their campus community in conjunction with demonstrating the criteria above. Examples of these initiatives included offering a variety of meal plans, including an option that provides ten or fewer meals weekly to avoid interfering with SNAP eligibility, creating, or implementing meal-sharing programs, educating student leaders on campus to develop student-centered programs, or facilitating innovative community partnerships.

# Eligibility

For the purposes of this grant, “institution” shall include postsecondary institutions in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with authorization to award an associate degree or higher academic degree, as defined in section 2001-J of the Public-School Code of 1949, as amended (24 P.S. §20-2001-J) and private licensed schools, as defined in the Act of December 15, 1986 (P.L. 1585, NO. 174).

Only one proposal will be accepted from each institution. Applicants may not apply as a consortium. Only the main campus may apply, and funds can be disseminated to branches as the institution deems appropriate, if awarded.

To be eligible to apply for a PA Hunger-Free Campus Grant, the institution must have applied for and received PA Hunger-Free Campus or PA Hunger-Free Campus+ designations. Institutions must have received their designation by June 30, 2024, to be eligible.

# Funding and Eligible Programs

The 2024-2025 PA Hunger-Free Campus grant offers designated institutions the opportunity to apply for competitive funding in an amount up to:

* $20,000 for institutions with 3,000 or fewer learners;
* $40,000 for institutions with 3,001 to 7,000 learners; and
* $60,000 for institutions with 7,001 learners or more.

Funds may be expended only on eligible programs, activities, and purposes identified in the proposal and approved by PDE’s Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education.

Funding requests can include a combination of any eligible programs described in this request for application. Funding is not guaranteed to any applicant.

Eligible proposals must focus on addressing the goals of the PA Hunger-Free Campus initiative, listed in the Background section of this document.

Consideration for a PA Hunger-Free Campus Grant will be given to proposals that include (but are not limited to):

1. Partnering or collaborating with additional local agencies to connect students directly to expanded food options such as on-campus food pantries, local community-based food pantries, or food delivery programs.
2. Travel costs associated with local community partnership meetings and pick up of food and pantry supplies (limited to gas and mileage).
3. Travel costs associated with student transportation to access off-campus food services (i.e. gas cards or public transportation passes).
4. Expansion of pantry services on campus, including the purchase of refrigeration, purchase of food, including basic needs, and upgrades to existing facilities.
5. Providing stipends for staffing of food pantry services on campus (this cannot exceed more than 25% of the total grant).
6. Providing stipends for staff to assist students in completing applications for benefits such as SNAP, LIHEAP, etc. in the [COMPASS system](https://www.compass.state.pa.us/compass.web/Public/CMPHome/).
7. Programs that provide services for students on weekends, holidays, and breaks (ex: pre-bundled food).
8. Record keeping systems implementation and/or improvement.
9. Advertising/marketing materials to communicate the existence of services on campus and the hours of operation.
10. Partnering with the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University’s #RealCollege Survey.
11. Alliance(s) with off-campus partners to facilitate the expansion of services on campus, (i.e., Swipe Out Hunger).
12. Awareness initiatives to ensure food insecurity is addressed in equitable ways.
13. Programs tailored towards anti-stigma campaigns.
14. Data collection efforts.

Resources for both institutions and students may be found on PDE’s website at [Pennsylvania Hunger-Free Campus Initiative (pa.gov)](https://www.education.pa.gov/Postsecondary-Adult/PAHungerFreeCampus/Pages/default.aspx).

# Allowable Expenses

Due to limited funding, only items directly related to eligible programs and activities covered in this request for application will be funded by the PA Hunger-Free Campus grant. Honorariums and stipends cannot exceed 25% of grant funding.

# Unallowable Expenses

Grant funds paid to the institution may not be used for direct salaries, fringe benefits, or operational rates. All budgets will be reviewed to evaluate appropriateness and connection to proposed grant activities and goals.

***Note:*** *Once approved, the institution will invoice for payment of the grant.* ***Funding must be spent by the end of the grant period, and institutions may ask for a no-cost extension 60 days prior to the end of the grant period.*** *Requests made beyond that date will not be granted.*

**eGrants Access**

Grant applications will be submitted through the eGrants system.

For access to the eGrants system and the related grant opportunities, prospective applicants should complete the [eGrants Request Form.](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=QSiOQSgB1U2bbEf8Wpob3qbJhbcJBZlDgFhJJTNvrV5UN05aSEhXN1dZUEpaOThKQjgxRkJSV1hIUC4u&sharetoken=nQfBsiVdPLNSvZjpUgqM) **Applicants must complete a new request form each grant cycle.** Please note that the person completing the grant application must have signatory authority to negotiate grants and contracts for the institution and be able to upload documentation into the eGrants system. Institutions with sign ability in eGrants will be able to utilize this feature to complete the application.

**Grant Application Components**

The PA Hunger-Free Campus grant application consists of four areas: Applicant Information, Program Information, Narratives, and Budget.

**Area 1. Applicant Information**

In this section, institutions will provide detailed information regarding contact information for the individual responsible for the grant application. It is important to provide any changes to the institution’s contact to ensure all vital information and continuity of information between PDE and the institution.

**Area 2. Program Information**

**Project Overview** - In this section, the institution will provide the project overview, including the title of the project, estimated start date (no sooner than **January 1, 2025**), estimated completion date (no later than **December 31, 2025**), estimated total project cost, and grant amount requested.

**Area 3. Narratives**

**Proposal Narrative -**This section addresses the institution’s specific plans to implement the proposed programs. The institutions should ensure their response is detailed and provide specific examples of how the initiative will be further developed on campus and include the mentioned eligible programming options above. If institution was a grant recipient in prior years, data is required. Institutions are encouraged to upload letters of commitment for proposed partners. The institution must explain how campus administration, along with the developed task force, will be instrumental in the execution of the proposed goals/objectives.

**Expected Outcome** – In this section, the institution will tie each specific goal or objective stated in the goals/objectives section of this application to an expected outcome —what the institution hopes to see happen to show that the objective was met. The institution should state the expected outcomes in measurable terms, including baseline information and expected improvements, and explain how program impact will be assessed. Prior recipients are asked to address outcomes from prior PA Hunger-Free Campus grant years and how the institution plans to build on those outcomes.

**Area 4. Budget**

**Instruction; Purchased Professional and Technical Services; Contracted Services; Supplies and Equipment -** The budget demonstrates a fiscally sound allocation of funds to successfully provide activities related directly to the PA Hunger-Free initiatives. Round amounts to the nearest whole dollar. All budgets will be reviewed to evaluate appropriateness and connection to proposed grant activities and goals.

**Budget Summary**

The budget demonstrates fiscally-sound allocation of funds to successfully provide activities related directly to the PA Hunger-Free Campus initiatives. Round amounts to the nearest whole dollar. Grant funds may not be used for direct salaries, fringe benefits, or operational rates; however, funds can be used for honorariums and stipends. All budgets will be reviewed to evaluate appropriateness and connection to proposed grant activities and goals.

**Budget Narrative**

In this section, the institution will provide an explanation of the budget items above and how they relate to the objectives of your proposal. Ensure that the budget narrative demonstrates how funds will be used equitably for supporting the highest-risk community members.

**Compliance Objectives**

All grantees will be required to sign a grant agreement with the Pennsylvania Department of Education. All grant funds must be spent, and services performed/products received on or before **December 31, 2025**. The Pennsylvania Department of Education shall seek repayment of funds if it determines that funds were not utilized for the stated and approved purpose. Grantees will be required to submit reports in the eGrants system on forms supplied by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Final Expenditure Reports must be submitted no later than **January 31, 2026**. Grantees are also expected to participate in Pennsylvania Department of Education evaluation research, including staff interviews and student surveys.

# Review Process

Applications will be reviewed on a competitive basis by a team selected by the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education. Applications will be reviewed for:

1. ***Alignment*** of goals and objectives in the proposal to the PA Hunger-Free Campus initiatives.
2. ***Clarity*** of narrative describing programming for which funding will be used, including details of how the proposed program will improve existing food pantry services on campus and how the administration and the established task force will be involved in executing the proposed goals/objectives.
3. ***Improvement*** of food services provided on campus, including expansion of the institution’s pantry and meal services.
4. ***Correlation*** of detailed budget information with the goals and objectives of the proposal.
5. ***Viability*** of expected outcomes and alignment to program activities.
6. ***Adaptability*** of the proposal to already established resources.
7. ***Accuracy*** of the information submitted.

Applications that do not include all the required information as stated on the application will not be considered for funding. Applications that include more than 25% of unallowable expenses will not be reviewed or scored. All qualifying applications will be reviewed and scored based on a rubric. Each application will be scored twice by unique grant evaluators.

# Scoring

The following criteria will be evaluated to rank and score applications:

1. Goals and Objectives **(15 points)** – Goals and objectives of the program are clearly stated.
2. Proposal Narrative, Expected Outcomes and Assessment **(45 points)** – The proposal includes a detailed description of the program, fully addressing each component of the grant application.
3. Budget information **(40 points)** – Budget information is aligned to the program’s goals and is accurate and itemized using per–unit cost and total expenditure.

# Award and Disbursement

All grantees will be required to sign a grant agreement with the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education (OPHE). All grant funds must be committed, and services performed by December 31, 2025. Funding must be spent by the end of the grant period, and institutions may ask for a **no-cost extension 60 days prior to the end of the grant period.** **Requests made after November 1, 2025, will not be granted.**

OPHE shall seek repayment of funds if it determines that funds were not utilized for the original stated and approved purpose. All unused grant funds must be returned to OPHE with the final report.

# Program Reporting and Evaluation

Upon completion of the grant, grantees will be required to submit a final report on forms supplied by OPHE. **Final reports and correlating invoices/receipts must be submitted no later than January 31, 2026.**  It is highly recommended to include various individuals involved in the grant administration activities to coordinate across campus to ensure awareness of the program reporting and evaluation deadlines.

# Program Changes

All requests for changes to the approved grant must be submitted to the Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education in writing no later than **March 31, 2025**. OPHE must approve program changes, or the grant will be rescinded. If approved, the institution must revise the budget in eGrants.

# Technical Assistance

Contact OPHE at [ra-edhungerfreecampus@pa.gov](mailto:ra-edhungerfreecampus@pa.gov%20) for technical assistance or to obtain answers to questions related to the grant application. All substantive questions must be submitted by **Tuesday, September 3, 2024**. Responses will be provided in the form of an FAQ distributed to all institutions on **Friday, September 6, 2024**.

**Please ensure that staffing changes are communicated to our office, so your institution maintains access to the eGrants system.**

The deadline for submission is **Monday, September 23, 2024, at 11:59 pm**. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

1. [Feeding America study shows the amount of money people facing hunger need to be food secure reaches highest level in 20 years - Feeding Pennsylvania (feedingpa.org)](https://www.feedingpa.org/2024/05/map-the-meal-gap-2024-feeding-pa/) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Snelling, A., & Hagedorn, R. (2021). 1 in 3 college students face food insecurity – expanding SNAP benefits on campus will help stave off hunger. The Conversation. [https://theconversation.com/1-in-3- college-students-face-food-insecurity-expanding-snap-benefits-on-campus-will-help-stave-offhunger-156360](https://theconversation.com/1-in-3-%20college-students-face-food-insecurity-expanding-snap-benefits-on-campus-will-help-stave-offhunger-156360) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Fighting Stigma in Hunger Relief, One Small Step at a Time - Food Bank News](https://foodbanknews.org/fighting-stigma-in-hunger-relief-one-small-step-at-a-time/) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)