

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS & STUDENT SUCCESS

SPOTLIGHT

CHARTING STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH DATA & RESEARCH

FOOD INSECURITY: STUDENTS & HUNGER



What does it
mean to be

**FOOD
INSECURE?**



How much
does a

**MONTH
OF FOOD
COST?**



How can
students

**RECEIVE
HELP?**

JANUARY 2018
VOLUME 1 ISSUE 1

NOVA
Northern Virginia
Community College

THE REAL PROBLEM OF HUNGER

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE FOOD INSECURE?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines food insecurity as the lack of “consistent, dependable access to enough food for active, healthy living.”¹ In other words, it means going hungry or being at risk of going hungry.

For some, food insecurity is a lifelong struggle, but for most the cause is a temporary financial setback. Every person has needs, which in our society include food, shelter, health care, transportation, and sometimes child care. When an unexpected and costly event happens and money suddenly becomes scarce, individuals may find they have to temporarily forgo one of these needs. Often, that need is food.

Food insecurity is an all-too-common problem for today’s college students. Research by the University of Wisconsin shows that one-third of students at two-year colleges are without adequate nutrition.²

BY THE NUMBERS



= 1 million students

20 MILLION
undergraduates nationwide³

35 PERCENT
attend community college³



food insecurity
affects as many as
1 IN 3
undergraduate students²

HARDSHIPS

Nationally, students experiencing food insecurity often suffer from other hardships, such as housing insecurities.

38%
had trouble paying rent²

49%
borrowed money
from friends²

15%
experienced homelessness²



STUDENTS & FOOD

In Fall 2016, NOVA students participated in a survey about their eating habits. Their responses, summarized below, reflect the food-related challenges faced by many NOVA students.⁴

39%

“The food that I bought just didn’t last and I didn’t have enough money to get more.”

38%

“I have cut the size of my meals or skipped meals.”

30%

“I have been hungry but didn’t eat because there wasn’t enough money for food.”

47%

“I couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.”



¹ Coleman-Jensen, A., Nord, M., Andrews, M., Carlson, S. (2012). *Household Food Security in the United States in 2011*. United States Department of Agriculture.

² Cady, C., Dubick, J., Mathews, B. (2016). *Hunger on Campus*. Wisconsin HOPE Lab.

³ (2017). Retrieved from National Center for Education Statistics Website: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372>

⁴ (2017). *Northern Virginia Community College Report from Fall 2016 Survey of Student Basic Needs*. Wisconsin HOPE Lab.

⁵ (2014). *Hunger in America 2014*. Retrieved from Feeding America Website: <http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/hunger-in-america>

⁶ (2017). *Virginia ALICE*. United Way.

⁷ (2016). *Trends in Higher Education: Average Estimated Undergraduate Budgets 2016–17*. Retrieved from College Board Website: <https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/average-estimated-undergraduate-budgets-2016-17>

⁸ Estimated cost of \$82 per book for four courses.

⁹ Cities and counties used in calculation include: Arlington County, Alexandria City, Fairfax City, Fairfax County, Falls Church City, Loudoun County, Manassas City, Manassas Park City, Prince William County.

¹⁰ (2017). *Poverty Guidelines*. Retrieved from United States Department of Health & Human Services Website: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

HUNGER & EDUCATION

31% of households must choose between paying for education or food⁵

59% of food insecure households do not possess a post-secondary education⁵

56% of first-generation undergraduate students are food insecure²



MONTHLY CHOICES

Food insecure students must make choices on how to spend their money, often making the difficult decision between food and school-related expenses.



\$169

average monthly cost of food for a single adult^{6,9}

OR



\$225

monthly public transportation costs^{6,9}



\$183

cost of one credit hour at NOVA

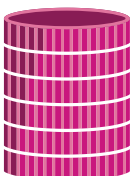


\$328

cost of textbooks for one semester^{7,8}

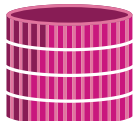
HARDWORKING STUDENTS

Food insecure students seek many ways to help fund their education, including employment and financial aid.



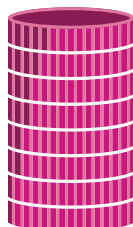
56%

of students are employed²



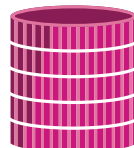
38%

of employed students work more than 20 hours a week²



75%

of students receive some form of financial aid²



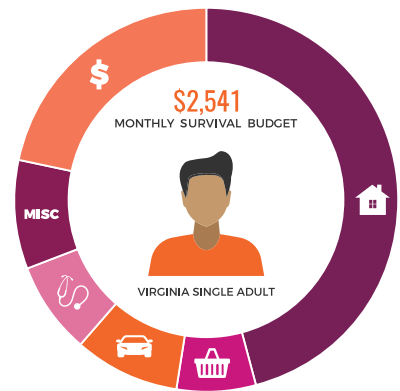
52%

of students receive a Pell Grant²

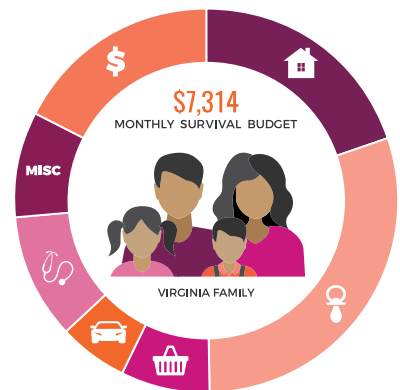
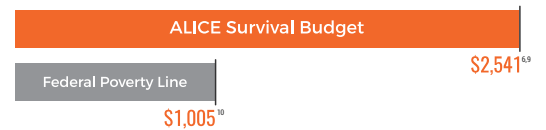
ALICE SURVIVAL BUDGET

FEDERAL POVERTY LINE: The federal poverty line is set annually to reflect the minimum income needed for food, clothing, transportation, shelter, and other necessities. Federal poverty lines are used to determine the eligibility of an individual or family for certain federal assistance programs.

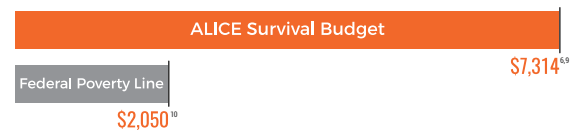
ALICE: Created by the United Way, ALICE stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. ALICE households are above the federal poverty line, which means they do not always qualify for aid. However, they often struggle to afford basic necessities. The ALICE Household Survival Budget was created to provide a more realistic estimate of the cost of living compared to the federal poverty line.



Housing	\$1,167	Health Care	\$199
Food	\$169	Miscellaneous	\$231
Transportation	\$225	Taxes	\$550



Housing	\$1,458	Health Care	\$767
Child Care	\$2,184	Miscellaneous	\$665
Food	\$561	Taxes	\$1,263
Transportation	\$416		



LEARN MORE

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

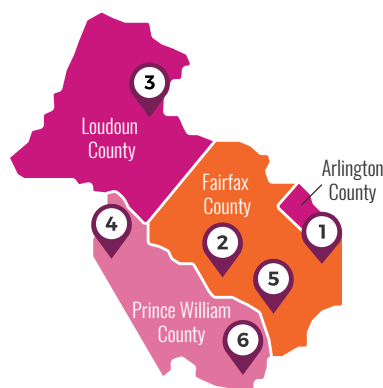
On-campus and community resources are available to NOVA students to help fill the gaps left by federal nutrition programs. Food pantries, shelters, and counseling are available in all Northern Virginia counties, offering services to those in need such as nutritious meals and financial assistance to pay for groceries.

NOVA is helping to combat food insecurity by running one food pantry on each of our six campuses, open to all students to feed themselves and their families. For more information, go to blogs.nvcc.edu/wssn/resources-services/food-pantries.



ON-CAMPUS RESOURCES

NOVA operates a **Food Pantry** on each of our six campuses. Pantries are operated by volunteers and are open during normal business hours (8:30 A.M.–5:00 P.M.) to provide free food to students who may need it.



- 1 **Alexandria:** AA194 (Student Service Center)
- 2 **Annandale:** CF232 (Student Life Office)
- 3 **Loudoun:** LR2491 (Financial Aid Office)
- 4 **Manassas:** MH108 (Student Life Office)
- 5 **MEC Springfield:** Rm. 116 (Student Life Office)
- 6 **Woodbridge:** WS158 (Student Life Office)



GET ASSISTANCE

NOVA's Working Student Success Network (WSSN) helps students apply for food assistance programs to help with buying food at local grocery stores. WSSN can help you check your eligibility and fill out an application.

To schedule an appointment, email rpthompson@nvcc.edu.



DONATE

Become a **NOVA Food Ambassador** and help stock our campus food pantries! Ambassadors are provided with a NOVA Green Bag to fill with nonperishable food items. Set the bag out on designated collection days and we will pick it up and supply you with a new bag. Pick-ups occur six times per year.

To sign up, visit our website at blogs.nvcc.edu/wssn/ and search "Green Bag."



VOLUNTEER

Those interested in **Volunteering** can sign up to collect NOVA Green Bags, volunteer at one of our **Food Pantries**, or organize a **Food Drive**.

For more information on volunteering, email rpthompson@nvcc.edu.

THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS & STUDENT SUCCESS

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