



## Early Results from 2019 #RealCollege Survey from Washington Community Colleges

January 29, 2020

The #RealCollege Survey is the largest national assessment of basic needs insecurity among college and university students. While complete results from the Hope Center's most recent survey of Washington community colleges will be available in February, this memo previews the findings. Invitations to complete the questionnaire were sent by email to approximately 143,700 students from Washington community colleges. Nearly 13,550 students at 28 colleges participated in the #RealCollege survey. Thus, the estimated response rate is 9.4%.

### The survey reveals:

- **41%** of respondents were **food insecure** in the prior 30 days
- **51%** of respondents were **housing insecure** in the prior 12 months
- **19%** of respondents were **homeless** in the previous 12 months

**Food insecurity** is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food, or the ability to acquire such food in a socially acceptable manner. The most extreme form is often accompanied by physiological sensations of hunger.

**Homelessness** means that a person does not have a fixed, regular, and adequate place to live, often forced to reside in a shelter, an automobile, an abandoned building or outside, while **housing insecurity** comprises a broader set of challenges including the inability to pay rent or utilities, or the need to move frequently.<sup>1</sup>

### Using the 18-item U.S. Department of Agriculture scale to assess food security, we found:

- **25%** of respondents experienced **very low food security**
- **16%** of respondents experienced **low food security**
- **14%** of respondents experienced **marginal food security**

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<sup>1</sup> To assess food security status, we used questions from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Security Survey Module; "food insecure" refers to those with low or very low food security. To learn more about the #RealCollege survey research methodology and how you could field the survey at your institution, see the Hope Center's [Guide to Accessing Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education](#).