



2019 #RealCollege Survey Report

Institution Report

May 2020



[HOPE4COLLEGE.COM](https://hope4college.com)

2019 #REALCOLLEGE SURVEY RESULTS

INSTITUTION REPORT FOR WHATCOM COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Prepared by
The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice
at Temple University

May 2020 (Update)

OVERVIEW

* Invitations to complete the questionnaire were sent by email to approximately 3,500 students from Whatcom Community College and 495 students participated. Thus, the estimated response rate is 14.3%.

*** Overall Basic Needs Insecurity Rates:**

- 42% of respondents experienced food insecurity in the prior 30 days
- 53% of respondents experienced housing insecurity in the previous year
- 22% of respondents experienced homelessness in the previous year

* 65% of students at Whatcom Community College experienced at least one of these forms of basic needs insecurity in the past year.

* There is substantial variation in basic needs insecurity across subgroups.

* 26% of food insecure students utilize SNAP benefits and 4% of homeless students utilize housing benefits.

For more information on the research methodology and survey participants, please refer to the online appendices for the 2019 National #RealCollege Survey report (available at www.hope4college.com).

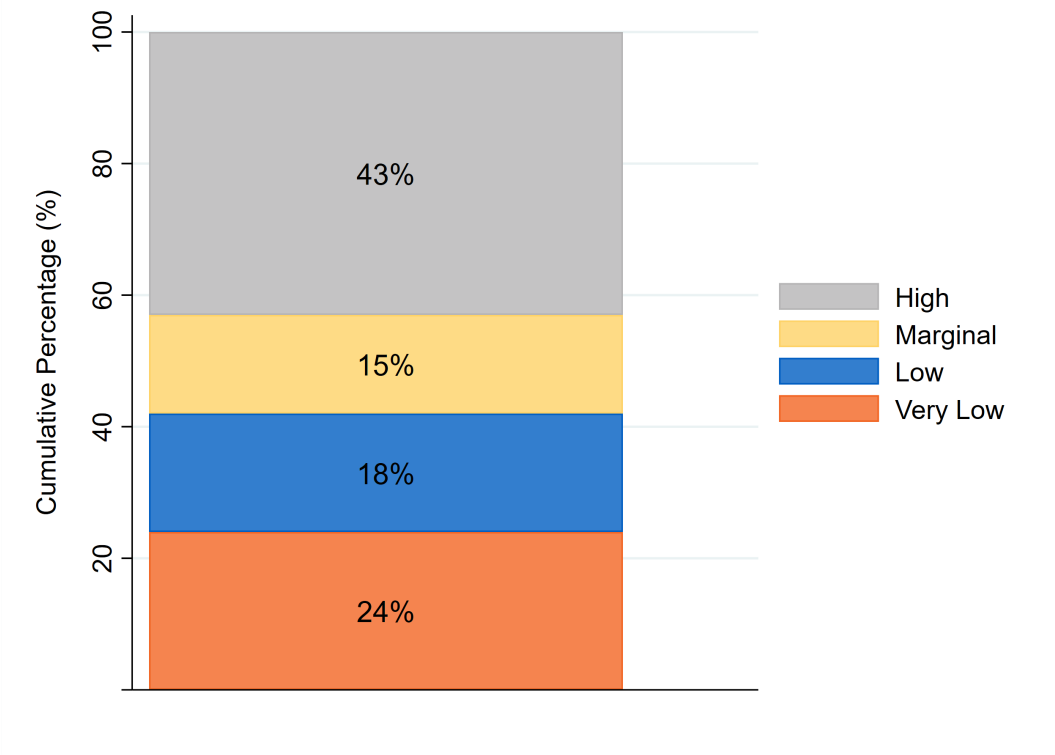
PREVALENCE OF BASIC NEEDS INSECURITY

Food Insecurity

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 with physiological sensations of hunger. We assessed food security among students using the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) 18-item set of questions.

During the 30 days preceding the survey, approximately 42% of survey respondents at Whatcom Community College experienced low or very low levels of food security (Figure 1). Moreover, 47% of survey respondents cannot afford to eat balanced meals and 46% worry about running out of food before they have money to buy more (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Food Security Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Notes: According to the USDA, students at either low or very low food security are termed food insecure. For the full list of questions used to measure food security, see our full report available at www.hope4college.com. Cumulative percentage may not add up to 100 due to rounding error.

Figure 2. Food Insecurity Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College



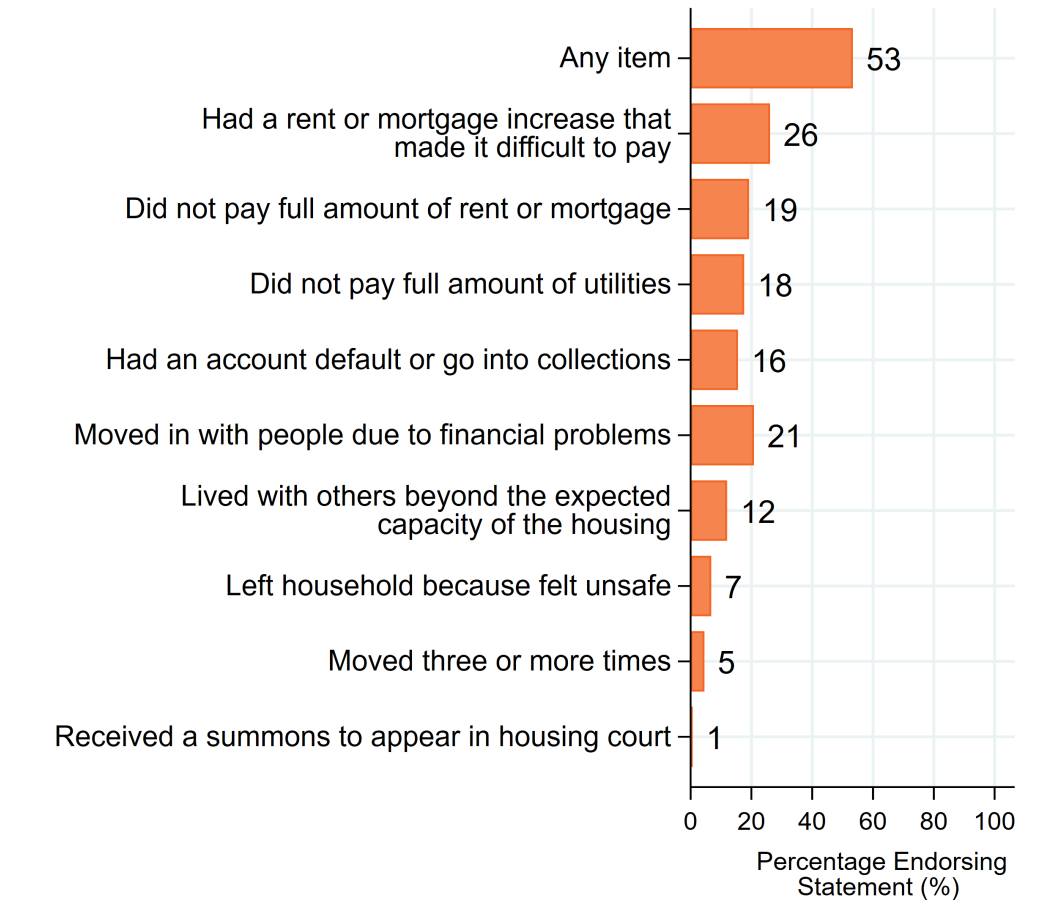
Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey
Notes: This figure has been amended from the original release.

Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity includes a broad set of challenges such as the inability to pay rent or utilities or the need to move frequently. All of these challenges affect students, and results suggest they are more likely to suffer some form of housing insecurity than to have all their needs met during college. Housing insecurity among students was assessed with a nine-item set of questions developed by the Hope Center. Students are classified as housing insecure if they answered affirmatively to experiencing at least one of those items in the previous year.

How prevalent is housing insecurity at Whatcom Community College? As displayed below, 53% of survey respondents are housing insecure (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Housing Insecurity Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College



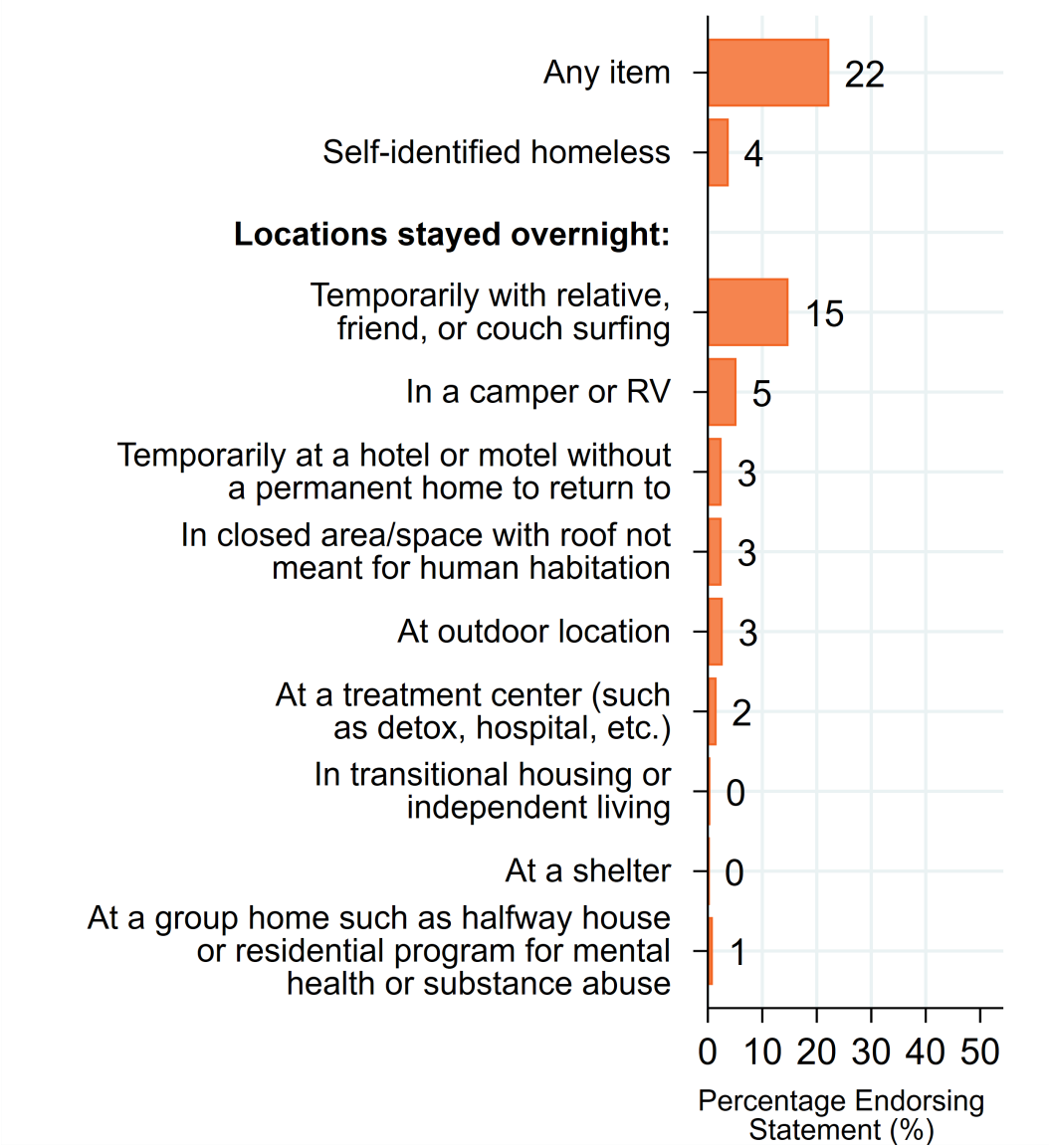
Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Homelessness

Homelessness means that a person does not have a stable place to live. Students were identified as homeless if they responded affirmatively to a question asking if they had been homeless or they experienced living conditions that are considered signs of homelessness in the previous year. Homelessness among students was assessed with a tool developed by California State University researchers.

How prevalent is homelessness at Whatcom Community College? As displayed below, 22% of survey respondents experience homelessness (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Homelessness Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College

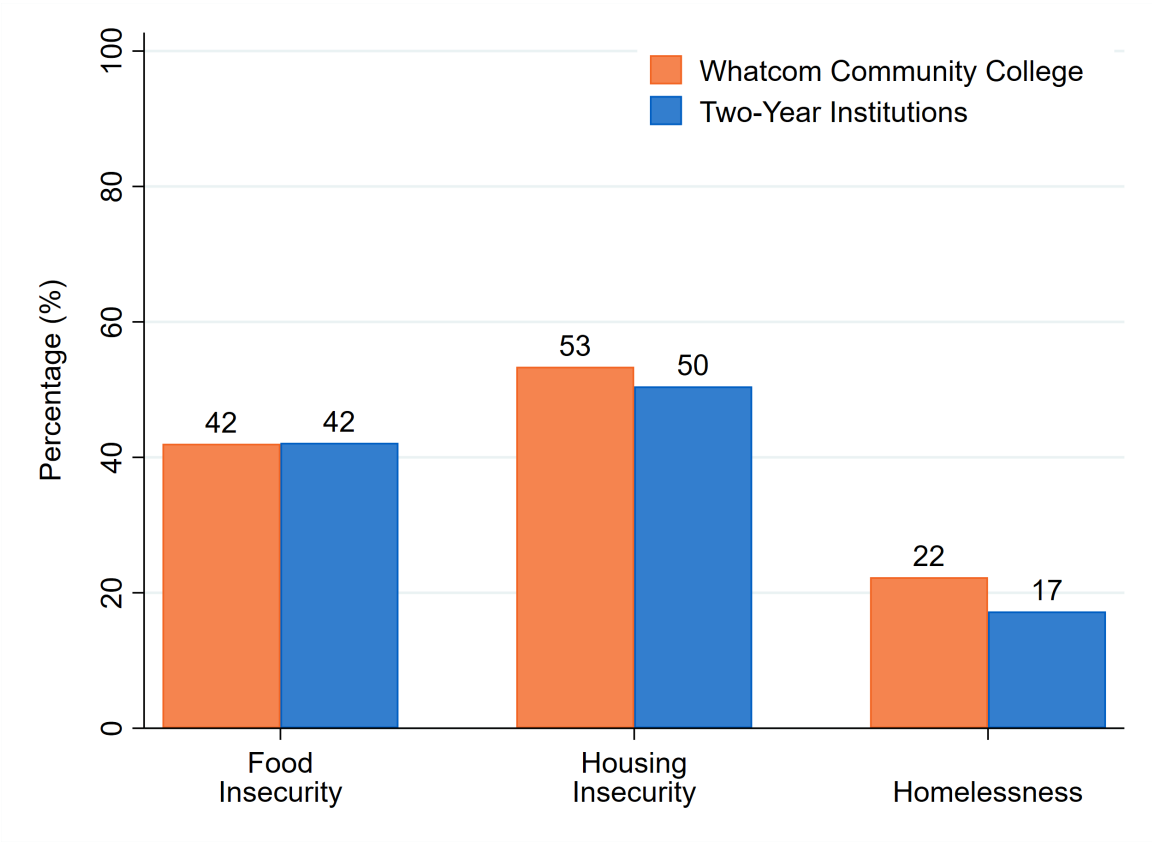


Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

COMPARISON TO SURVEY RESPONDENTS ATTENDING TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

In comparison to the rates for all survey respondents at two-year institutions nationwide in 2019, Whatcom Community College has a similar rate of food insecurity, a higher rate of housing insecurity, and a higher rate of homelessness (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Comparison of Basic Needs Insecurity Rates

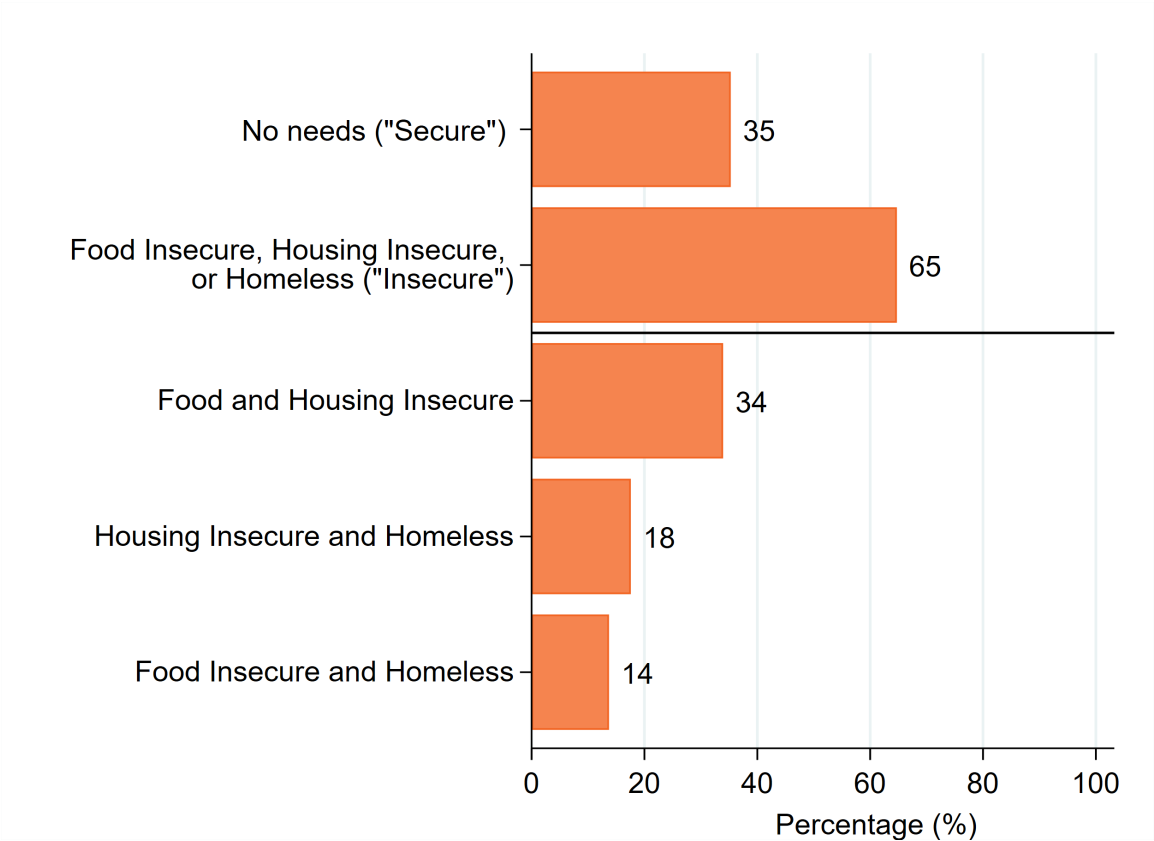


Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

OVERLAPPING CHALLENGES

Food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness are overlapping concerns, with 65% of students at Whatcom Community College experiencing at least one of these forms of basic needs insecurity in the past year (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Intersections of Food Insecurity, Housing Insecurity, and Homelessness Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

DISPARITIES IN BASIC NEEDS INSECURITY

Some students are at higher risk of basic needs insecurity than others. The tables in this section present rates of food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness according to students' demographic, academic, and economic circumstances, as well as their life circumstances.

By Demographic Background

Table 1. Demographic Disparities in Rates of Basic Needs Insecurity Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
GENDER IDENTITY				
Male	124	32	48	23
Female	274	48	57	21
Non-Binary/Third gender	10	70	70	20
Prefers to self-describe	.	.	.	.
TRANSGENDER IDENTITY				
Identifies as transgender	13	54	54	8
Does not identify as transgender	389	42	55	22
SEXUAL ORIENTATION				
Heterosexual or straight	297	38	51	23
Gay or lesbian	18	39	50	11
Bisexual	56	55	73	21
Prefers to self-describe	16	63	75	6
HIGHEST LEVEL OF PARENTAL EDUCATION				
No high school diploma	47	60	51	21
High school diploma	67	54	72	30
Some college	132	42	59	23
Bachelors degree or higher	153	33	44	17
Does not know	.	.	.	.

Table continued on next page.

Table 1 (continued). Demographic Disparities in Rates of Basic Needs Insecurity Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
RACIAL OR ETHNIC BACKGROUND				
White or Caucasian	306	42	57	24
African American or Black	10	80	80	10
Hispanic or Latinx	58	47	57	28
American Indian or Alaska Native	24	46	79	38
Indigenous	18	78	94	17
Middle Eastern or North African or Arab or Arab American	.	.	.	.
Southeast Asian	26	38	19	15
Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	.	.	.	.
Other Asian or Asian American	38	32	37	18
Other	10	60	60	30
STUDENT IS A U.S. CITIZEN OR PERMANENT RESIDENT				
Yes	375	43	57	22
No	32	34	25	19
AGE				
18 to 20	190	33	37	20
21 to 25	84	51	68	24
26 to 30	58	48	74	26
Older than 30	69	59	72	23
STUDENT IS AN ATHLETE				
Yes	11	36	27	9
No	393	43	55	22

Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Note: Results from any category with fewer than 10 respondents are not shown in the table. The Number of Students column indicates the number of survey respondents to our measure of homelessness. The number respondents to our measures of food and housing insecurity may vary slightly. Classifications of gender and race/ethnicity are not mutually exclusive. Students could self-identify with multiple classifications.

By Student Academic, Economic, and Life Experiences

Table 2. Rates of Basic Needs Insecurity by Student Life Experiences Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
LEVEL OF STUDY				
Undergraduate	325	42	55	23
Graduate	45	42	51	22
Non-degree	73	42	48	18
COLLEGE ENROLLMENT STATUS				
Full-time (at least 12 credits)	291	38	50	22
Part-time (fewer than 12 credits)	152	51	60	22
YEARS IN COLLEGE				
Less than 1	136	44	50	26
1 to 2	213	44	54	22
3 or more	94	35	57	19
DEPENDENCY STATUS				
Dependent	142	32	39	19
Independent	199	54	68	25
Does not know	66	32	45	18
STUDENT RECEIVES THE PELL GRANT				
Yes	198	53	72	25
No	211	35	41	21
RELATIONSHIP STATUS				
Single	196	36	45	17
In a relationship	151	48	62	26
Married or domestic partnership	42	43	62	19
Divorced	.	.	.	.
Widowed	.	.	.	.

Table continued on next page.

Table 2 (continued). Rates of Basic Needs Insecurity by Student Life Experiences Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College

	Number of Students	Food Insecurity (%)	Housing Insecurity (%)	Homelessness (%)
STUDENT HAS CHILDREN				
Yes	61	74	79	25
No	373	37	49	22
STUDENT HAS BEEN IN FOSTER CARE				
Yes	11	64	82	36
No	391	42	53	21
STUDENT HAS BEEN IN MILITARY				
Yes	14	50	71	43
No	391	43	53	21
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Employed	118	42	59	24
Not employed, looking for work	39	35	44	18
Not employed, not looking for work	40	23	30	15
STUDENT HAS BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIME				
Yes	26	69	69	31
No	395	40	53	21
DISABILITY OR MEDICAL CONDITION				
Learning disability	73	51	66	26
Physical disability	34	50	74	32
Chronic illness	74	66	73	23
Psychological disorder	186	56	66	25
Other disability or condition	17	53	82	35
No disability or medical condition	168	29	38	18

Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Note: Results from any category with fewer than 10 respondents are not shown in the table. The Number of Students column indicates the number of survey respondents to our measure of homelessness. The number respondents to our measures of food and housing insecurity may vary slightly. Survey questions about employment status were administered to a subset of randomly selected respondents. Classifications of Disability or Medical Condition are not mutually exclusive. Students could self-identify with multiple classifications.

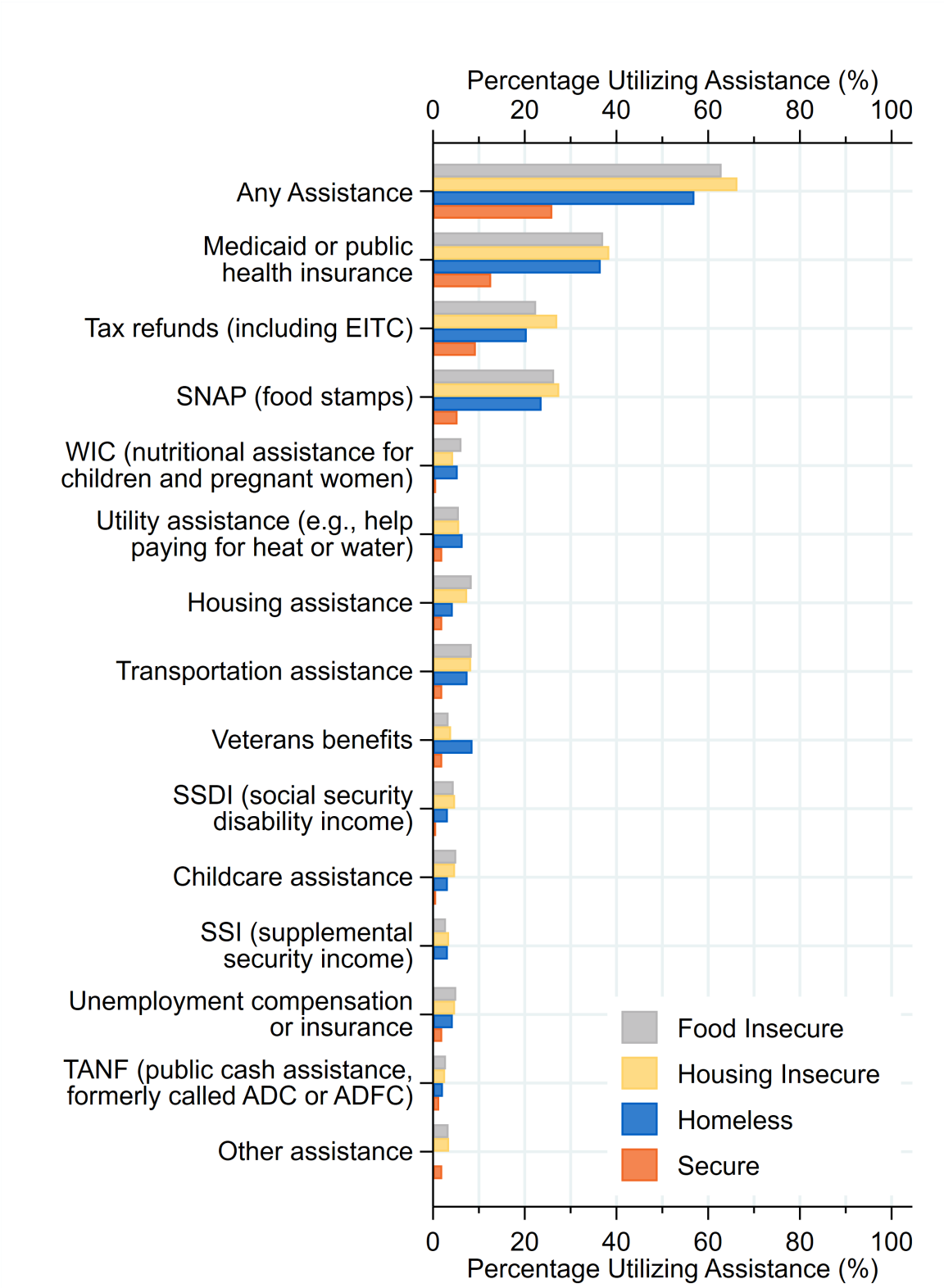
UTILIZATION OF SUPPORTS

Many students at Whatcom Community College who experience basic needs insecurity do not receive public assistance (Figure 7). Among food insecure students, 26% receive SNAP benefits. In addition, 4% of students who experience homelessness receive housing assistance. It is also worth noting that students who are secure in their basic needs are still accessing public benefits, albeit at lower rates (26%) than their peers.

A growing number of on-campus supports are being offered but again, only some students are accessing them (Figure 8). Of the students experiencing basic needs insecurity at Whatcom Community College, only about 36% use on-campus supports.

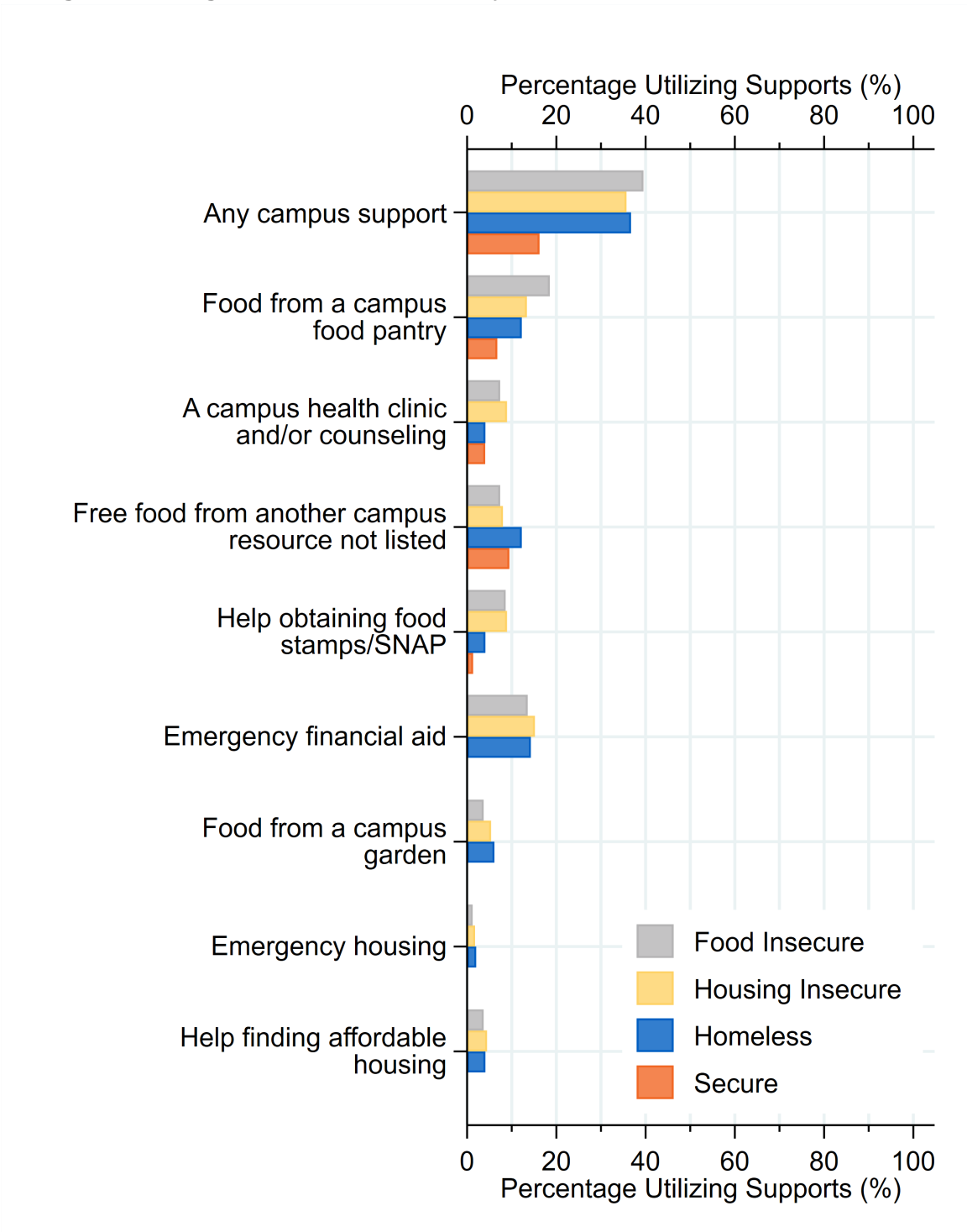


Figure 7. Use of Assistance Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College According to Basic Needs Security



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Figure 8. Use of Campus Supports Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College According to Basic Needs Security



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Note: This figure has been amended from the original release. Survey questions about campus supports were administered to a subset of randomly selected respondents. Results for subgroups with fewer than 10 respondents are not shown in the figure above.

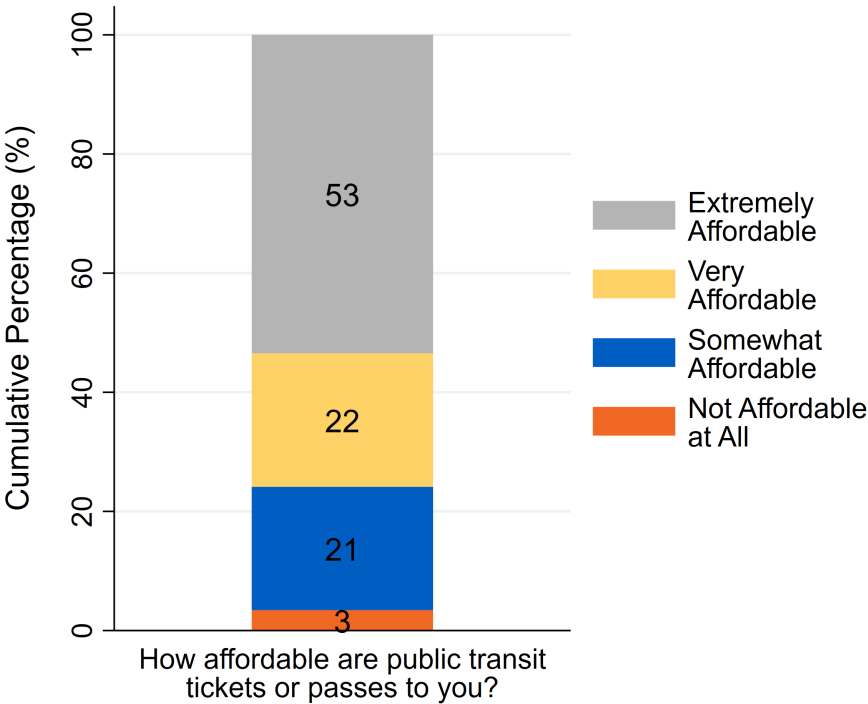
TRANSPORTATION & CHILDCARE

TRANSPORTATION

In order to succeed academically, students need affordable, reliable transportation between home and campus. Currently, the College Board estimates that transportation costs make up approximately 17% of an average postsecondary student's budget who commutes to school. It is therefore critical to ensure that students, especially students who are already making difficult choices about how to spend their money, are able to secure transportation to campus.

Approximately 27% of survey respondents at Whatcom Community College say they use public transit in order to get to their college campus (not shown). When those students were asked about the affordability of public transit tickets or passes, 3% said those transit tickets or passes were unaffordable, and another 21% said they were only somewhat affordable (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Affordability of Public Transit Tickets or Passes Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College



(Among those who take public transit)

Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey
Note: Survey questions about transit use and affordability were administered to a subset of randomly selected respondents.

Paying for public transit is related to students' experiences with basic needs insecurity. About 26% of survey respondents at Whatcom Community College who experience basic needs insecurity and use public transit report that public transit tickets or passes are unaffordable or only somewhat affordable (Table 3).

Table 3. Transit Affordability Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College Who Take Public Transit, by Basic Needs Security

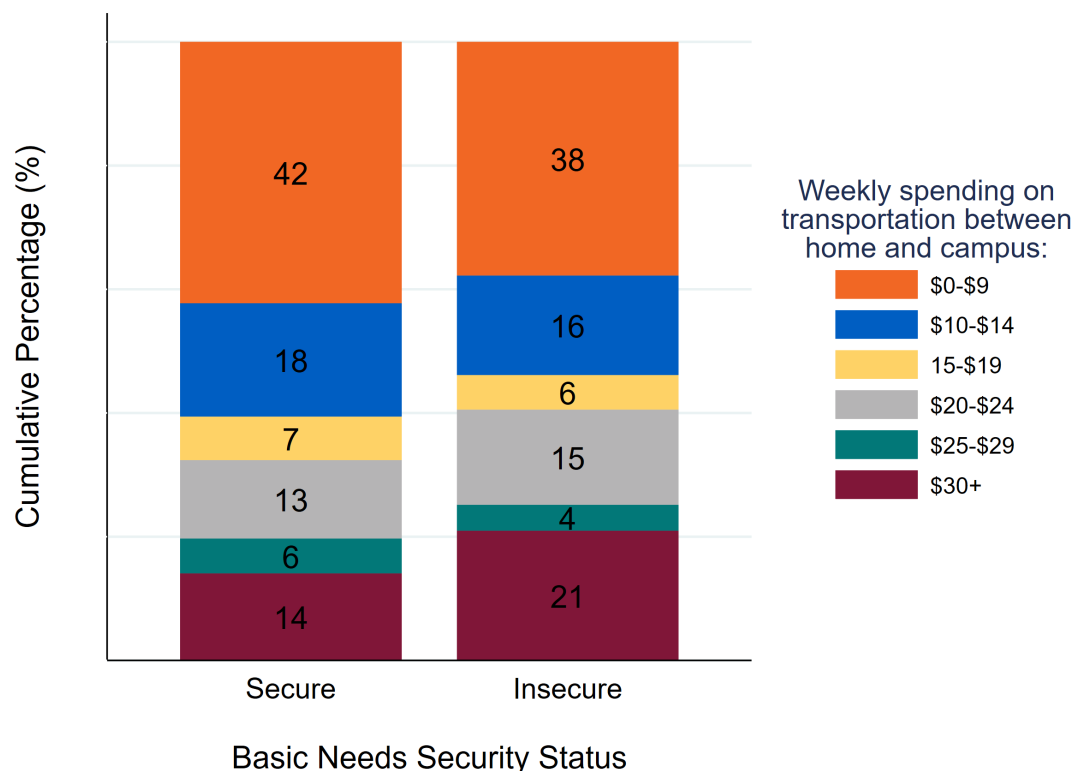
BASIC NEEDS SECURITY STATUS	Number of Students	Not Affordable at All (%)	Somewhat Affordable (%)	Very Affordable (%)	Extremely Affordable (%)
Secure	20	0	20	30	50
Insecure	38	5	21	18	55

Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Note: Results with fewer than 10 respondents are not shown in the table above. Survey questions about transit use and affordability were administered to a subset of randomly selected respondents.

High transit costs are a problem for some of these students. About 21% of survey respondents at Whatcom Community College experiencing basic needs insecurity report that they spend at least \$30 per week on transportation to and from college (Figure 10). Conversely, 42% of students whose basic needs are secure said they spend \$0-9 per week on transportation, while 38% of students who are basic needs insecure did.

Figure 10. Weekly Amount Spent on Transportation to College By Basic Need Security Among Survey Respondents at Whatcom Community College



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

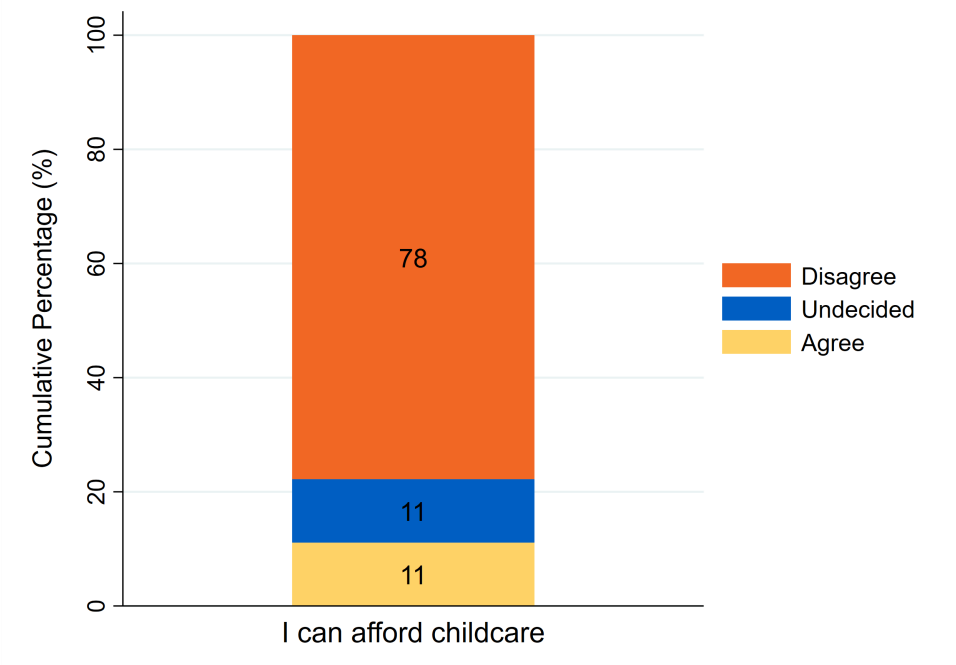
Note: Survey questions on transportation costs were administered to a subset of randomly selected respondents.

CHILDCARE

Supporting the success of #RealCollege students means covering the basic needs of food, housing, and transportation, while also meeting the childcare requirements of parenting students. However, for many parenting students, finding affordable and dependable childcare is challenging.

At Whatcom Community College, 14% of survey respondents were parenting students and among those parenting students, 59% said that they need, use, or plan to use childcare (not shown). However, just 11% of parenting students who need or use childcare say they can afford the associated costs (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Childcare Affordability Among Respondents at Whatcom Community College Who Need, Use, or Plan to Use Childcare



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Note: The survey question on childcare affordability was only administered to parenting students who need, use, or plan to use childcare.

CONCLUSION

The #RealCollege survey affirms what has been evident to college administrators, faculty, staff, and students for years: basic needs insecurity is a condition challenging many undergraduates pursuing credentials. The scope of the problem described here is substantial and should be cause for a systemic response.

ABOUT US

The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice is redefining what it means to be a student-ready college with a national movement centering #RealCollege students' basic needs. In order to advance the necessary systemic changes to support those needs, our work includes four pillars: action research, engagement and communication, advocacy, and sustainability. For more information, visit www.hope4college.com.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions about this report, please contact the Hope Center Research Team at hopesrvy@temple.edu.

