

Legislative Analysis



HUNGER-FREE CAMPUS ACT

Phone: (517) 373-8080
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House Bill 5097 (proposed substitute H-1)

Sponsor: Rep. Jenn Hill

Committee: Higher Education

Complete to 5-14-24

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5097 would create a new act, the Hunger-Free Campus Act, which would create the hunger-free campus program. This program would be intended to aid students who lack basic needs while attending an *institution of higher education* and aid in connecting college students with applicable resources to address their basic needs. The program would be administered by the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP).

Institution of higher education would mean either of the following:

- A degree- or certificate-granting public or private college or university, junior college, or community college in Michigan.
- A federally recognized tribal college in Michigan.

The purpose of the program would be to do all of the following:

- Address student hunger at institutions of higher education.
- Leverage sustainable solutions to address basic needs on the campuses of institutions of higher education.
- Raise awareness of basic-needs services offered on the campuses of institutions of higher education.
- Build strategic partnerships at the local, state, and national levels to address food insecurity among students attending institutions of higher education.
- Reduce barriers to student achievement resulting from basic needs insecurity.

The bill would require MiLEAP to designate a campus of an institution of higher education as a “hunger-free campus” if the institution of higher education meets all the following regarding that campus:

- Establishes a hunger task force that includes representatives from the student body and campus administration and that meets at least three times per academic year to set at least two goals with action plans.
- Designates a staff member responsible for informing students about enrollment opportunities in Michigan’s supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) and other assistance programs offered by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).
- Provides options for students to use SNAP electronic benefits transfer (EBT) benefits at campus stores or provides students with information on establishments in the surrounding area where they can use SNAP EBT benefits.
- Holds, participates in, or promotes at least one hunger awareness event per academic year.

- Provides at least one physical food pantry on campus or enables students to receive food through a separate, stigma-free arrangement. A campus could partner with a local food bank or food pantry to meet this requirement.
- Develops a student meal credit donation program or designates a certain amount of funds for free food vouchers that might otherwise be raised through such a program. Each institution of higher education could develop its own procedures for a meal donation program.
- Each academic year, conducts a student survey on hunger, developed by MiLEAP, that is formulated by using best practices from the Trellis Research Student Financial Wellness Survey¹ and submits the results of the survey to MiLEAP at a time prescribed by MiLEAP for inclusion in a comparative profile of each campus designated as a hunger-free campus

MiLEAP would also have to promulgate rules it considers necessary to implement the bill, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 5097 would have a minimal increase of costs to the state and an indeterminate increase of costs to public colleges and universities. Under the bill, the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential would be required to promulgate rules for the program and ensure general monitoring of institutions who participate. Costs to MiLEAP would fall to the Office of Higher Education and should be covered under current appropriation levels.

Public universities and community colleges could face increased costs to implement aspects of the hunger-free campus program if the institutions decided to seek certification as a hunger-free campus from MiLEAP. Some aspects of the proposed program are already happening on a number of college campuses, such as a designated food pantry for students. Due to the variables in meeting aspects of the hunger-free campus program, from conducting student surveys, creating a meal donation program, and establishing and running a food pantry, the potential increased costs faced by public universities and community colleges that choose to participate in the program cannot be determined.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

¹ <https://www.trellisstrategies.org/sfws/>