Understanding Housing and Food Insecurity among University of Washington Students

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Study contact: Urban@UW, 206-240-6903 (ph.), Urbanuw@uw.edu.

This study aims to understand the prevalence and characteristics of University of Washington (UW) Seattle, Tacoma, and Bothell students experiencing housing and food insecurity. Our study is motivated by concern for the well-being of UW students in light of the increased living costs in the Puget Sound region and the lack of systematic information about how UW students on all three campuses are affected by the economic changes in our region.

To address this, we invite you to participate in a web-based online survey to help us learn more about UW students’ experiences with housing and food insecurity. Topics include housing costs, barriers to adequate or safe housing, experiences with insufficient food, service utilization, concerns around meeting housing and food needs, financial resources, and identity.

The survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose to stop the survey at any time. You may refuse to answer any question.

The study will also use participant information from UW’s administrative records pertaining to enrollment, demographics, academic performance, financial aid eligibility, and, when relevant, on-campus housing and meal plans.

This survey is confidential. No reports of the data will identify individual students, and we will take every effort to protect your privacy. Participating in this survey will not affect your eligibility for or access to housing, aid, or other services.

Survey participants will be entered into a lottery for Visa gift cards.

If you are younger than 18, you are not eligible to participate so please exit the survey now.

If you think you have been harmed from participating in this research, contact Rachel Fyall, 206-616-7677 (ph.).

This study is a project of Urban@UW in partnership with a variety of UW, UWT, and UWB units and student groups.
UW Student Housing and Food Insecurity Survey

1. What is your main campus?
   [ ] Seattle
   [ ] Tacoma
   [ ] Bothell

2. What zipcode do you live in or most regularly spend the night?

3. How long have you lived in this zip code?
   [ ] Less than 6 months
   [ ] More than 6 months but less than 1 year
   [ ] 1 year
   [ ] 2 years
   [ ] 3 years
   [ ] 4 years
   [ ] 5-10 years
   [ ] More than 10 years

4. Did you move to your city or neighborhood specifically because you are attending the University?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

Now we’d like to ask you a few questions about your current living situation.

5. With whom do you currently live? (Select all that apply)
   [ ] No one/I live by myself
   [ ] Roommate(s). How many? ____
   [ ] Child(ren). How many? ____
   [ ] Partner
   [ ] Spouse
   [ ] Parent(s). How many? ____
   [ ] Grandparent(s). How many? ____
   [ ] Other: ____

6. Please describe where you live currently:
   [ ] I live in university-owned housing (any type)
   [ ] I rent an apartment, house, condo, or townhome (not university-owned)
[ ] I own a house, townhome, or condo
[ ] I live in my parents’ or relatives’ home
[ ] I couch surf or double up with people I know
[ ] I sleep/live in a car, van, truck, or other vehicle
[ ] I sleep/live in a tent, encampment, or tiny house village
[ ] I sleep/live in a shelter
[ ] I live in transitional housing
[ ] I stay where I can: Please explain: _____
[ ] Other: Please explain: _____

[Skip logic: If checked “I rent… (not university-owned)” in Question 6, answer Question 6A1-6A4.]

6A1. Is your name on the lease?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No
[ ] Don’t know

6A2. What is your rent payment per month? We are interested in the amount of rent you are personally responsible for paying, which might be a portion of the total rent for housing unit.

6A3. Does this include utilities?
[ ] Yes, this includes all utilities
[ ] Yes, this includes some utilities
[ ] No, this does not include utilities
[ ] Don’t know

6A4. If you pay for utilities in addition to your rent, what is your approximate utility payment per month? We are interested in the amount of utilities you are personally responsible for paying, which might be a portion of the total utility payment for the housing unit.

[Skip logic: If checked “I own…” in Question 6, answer Questions 6B1-2.]

6B1. What is your housing cost per month (including mortgage, taxes, insurance, and any HOA fees)? We are interested in the housing cost you are personally responsible for paying, which might be a portion of the total cost for the housing unit.
6B2. What is your approximate **utility payment** per month? We are interested in the amount of utilities you are personally responsible for paying, which might be a portion of the total utility payment for the housing unit.

7. Do you **currently** use any of the following housing-related resources? (If you are taking this survey on your phone, turning your phone sideways may help with question viewing.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 8/housing voucher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary rental assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit-owned housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income-based housing or rent (i.e., your income makes you eligible for access to your housing or a reduced rental rate)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeowner assistance (e.g., assistance with mortgage payments, home repairs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: _____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Since you have been attending the university, have you **applied** but **not received** any of the following housing-related resources?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 8/housing voucher</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Nonprofit-owned housing</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Public housing</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: _____</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Housing stability means having choice over when and under what circumstances you want to move. How worried are you about your housing stability?

- [ ] Not at all worried
- [ ] A little worried
- [ ] Moderately worried
- [ ] Quite a bit worried
- [ ] Extremely worried
Now we’d like to ask you a few questions about your living situation in the last 12 months.

10. In the last 12 months, have you experienced a rent increase that made it difficult to pay rent?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] I have not paid rent in the last 12 months

11. In the last 12 months, have you ever skipped or delayed your rent payment because you lacked funds?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] I have not paid rent in the last 12 months

12. In the last 12 months, have you ever skipped or delayed your utilities payment because you lacked funds?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] I have not paid for utilities in the last 12 months

13. In the last 12 months, have you experienced any of the following related to your living situation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kicked out of your living situation by someone in the household</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evicted by a landlord</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved because you ended a relationship with a romantic partner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved because of problems with neighbors or roommates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved to escape domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, other forms of violence, or stalking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved because you felt unsafe due to building problems (e.g., broken appliances, mold)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost housing as a result of a fire or other building problems (e.g., condemned building)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. **In the last 12 months**, have you used any of the following strategies because you lacked a stable and adequate nighttime residence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slept on a friend’s or relative’s couch or floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slept in a vehicle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slept outside (including in a tent)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessed or tried to access a shelter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traded work for a place to sleep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traded sex for a place to sleep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived in a motel/hotel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added people to your housing without telling the landlord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joined someone else’s housing without telling the landlord</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvised places to sleep (e.g. slept in a building that’s open all night, slept on a bus).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please explain: _____</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: _____</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. **In the last 12 months**, have you lacked a stable and adequate nighttime residence because of school breaks (including summer)?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

The next questions ask about the food you’ve eaten **in the last 30 days** and whether you were able to afford the food you need.

For the following statements, please indicate whether the statement was often true, sometimes true, or never true for you **in the last 30 days**.

16. “I was worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.” Was that often true, sometimes true, or never true **in the last 30 days**?

[ ] Often true

[ ] Sometimes true

[ ] Never true

17. “The food that I bought just didn’t last, and I didn’t have money to get more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true **in the last 30 days**?

[ ] Often true

[ ] Sometimes true

[ ] Never true
18. “I couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 30 days?
   [ ] Often true
   [ ] Sometimes true
   [ ] Never true

[Skip logic: If “Often true” or “Sometimes true” is checked for at least two of Questions 16-18, answer Questions 19A-D.]

19A. **In the last 30 days**, did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

19B. **In the last 30 days**, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn’t enough money for food?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

19C. **In the last 30 days**, were you ever hungry but didn’t eat because there wasn’t enough money for food?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

19D. **In the last 30 days**, did you lose weight because there wasn’t enough money for food?
   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

Now we would like to ask you about these same experiences in the **last 12 months**.

20. **In the last 12 months**, did you ever not eat for whole day because there was not enough money for food?

   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

21. If you selected "Yes", How often did this happen?
22. Is there a food pantry or food bank on your campus?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Don't know

23. **In the last 12 months,** have you used any of the following strategies because you lacked adequate or affordable food?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessed an ON-CAMPUS food pantry or food bank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessed an OFF-CAMPUS food pantry or food bank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessed an OFF-CAMPUS free meal site or program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended campus events for the free food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipped a meal because on-campus food was too expensive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipped a meal because on-campus food vendors were closed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. **In the last 12 months,** have you lacked adequate or affordable food because of school breaks (including summer)?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No

[Skip logic: If “Yes” to “Accessed an ON-CAMPUS food pantry…” to Question 23, answer Questions 23A1-3.]

23A1. **In the last 12 months,** how often have you used an ON-CAMPUS food pantry or food bank?
   - [ ] Once
   - [ ] 2-5 times
   - [ ] More than five times

23A2. Were you able to find culturally appropriate food at an ON-CAMPUS food pantry/bank?
   - [ ] Yes
23A3. Were you able to find adequate food to accommodate any of your dietary restrictions at an ON-CAMPUS food pantry/bank?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

[Skip logic: If “Yes” to “Accessed an OFF-CAMPUS food pantry…” to Question 23, answer Question 23B.]

23B. In the last 12 months, how often have you used an OFF-CAMPUS food pantry or food bank?
[ ] Once
[ ] 2-5 times
[ ] More than five times

[Skip logic: If “Yes” to “Accessed an OFF-CAMPUS free meal site…” to Question 23, answer Question 23C.]

23C. In the last 12 months, how often have you used an OFF-CAMPUS free meal site or program?
[ ] Once
[ ] 2-5 times
[ ] More than five times

25. Did you ever feel you needed the resources at the ON-CAMPUS food pantry or food bank but chose not to go there?
[ ] Yes
[ ] No

26. If you selected “Yes”, please share why you decided not to go.

27. Do you have any recommendations for the ON-CAMPUS food pantry/bank?

The last set of questions ask for information on a range of topics that are important for helping us understand the context for your earlier responses.

28. Which of the following ways do you pay for your expenses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work-study job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA or TA position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other on-campus job (not work-study, RA, or TA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pell Grant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant(s) or scholarship(s) from the University of Washington</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other grant(s) or scholarship(s) (e.g., federal or state government, foundation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student loans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit cards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW emergency aid</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: _____</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

29. Do you use any of the following resources?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIC (Supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a.k.a. food stamps)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSI (Supplemental Security Income)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicaid or Public health insurance (e.g., Apple Health)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran’s benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation assistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other social service (e.g., soup kitchens, free clinics)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30. Were you ever in the foster care system as a youth?

   [ ] Yes
   [ ] No

Previous research indicates that individuals from minority or underrepresented groups are more vulnerable to housing and food insecurity. Given that, we ask the following identity questions:

31. How do you describe your race/ethnicity?

32. How do you describe your gender identity?

33. How do you describe your sexual identity?
We would appreciate any additional insight you can offer on the issues addressed in this survey. If you are willing, please take a moment to respond to the questions below.

The survey concludes on the next page with a list of resources.

34. What are the main reasons you choose to live where you currently do?

35. What are your biggest 3-4 expenses? How do you prioritize them?

36. How do your housing and food needs affect your experience of going to the University? In other words, in what ways is your university experience shaped by your housing and food needs?

37. Are there support resources that you would use if they were made available to you? Examples might include help with food or transportation, additional on-campus housing, or more student job opportunities. Please explain your response.

38. Are there resources you use now that could be improved? Please explain your response.
Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. You will be entered into a drawing to receive one of 20 $100 Visa gift cards.

Below please find a list of resources for students on your campus who may be experiencing challenges related to housing, food, or finances.

Seattle

- UW Seattle Student Life Resources [https://www.washington.edu/studentlife/health/](https://www.washington.edu/studentlife/health/)
- Adjustments to UW Financial Aid [https://www.washington.edu/financialaid/receiving-aid/request-changes-to-your-award/](https://www.washington.edu/financialaid/receiving-aid/request-changes-to-your-award/)
- University District Resources [http://doorwayproject.org/u-district-services/](http://doorwayproject.org/u-district-services/)
- For statewide referrals to food, housing, and many other resources, call 211 on your phone or visit Washington 2-1-1 at [https://win211.org/](https://win211.org/)
- The YMCA Accelerator can help link those aged 18-24 with housing, case management, and employment [www.seattleymca.org/accelerator](http://www.seattleymca.org/accelerator)
- To access campus resources for students who have experienced foster care, please connect with the UW Champions Program at [uwchamps@uw.edu](mailto:uwchamps@uw.edu)

Tacoma

- Food Pantry on campus [http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/thepantry](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/thepantry)
- The Office of Student Advocacy and Support provides referral and support services for emergency housing, food and support. Email: [stusuppt@uw.edu](mailto:stusuppt@uw.edu)
- FREE Student Counseling [http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/search/all-uwt/student%20counseling](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/search/all-uwt/student%20counseling)
- Shelter for Young adults near our campus: Shelter for young adults 18-24 Open daily 6:30pm – 6:30am. Doors close at 10 pm [http://www.communityyouthservices.org/piercecounty.shtml](http://www.communityyouthservices.org/piercecounty.shtml)
- ST Leo’s Food Connection [http://foodconnection.org/](http://foodconnection.org/)
- Rainbow Center Through education, advocacy, and celebration, the Rainbow Center expands resources and safe space for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and allied (LGBTQA) community [http://www.rainbowcntr.org](http://www.rainbowcntr.org)
- Oasis Center [http://www.oasisyouthcenter.org/](http://www.oasisyouthcenter.org/)
- Center for Equity and Inclusion [http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/equity/center-equity-inclusion](http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/equity/center-equity-inclusion)
- Associated Ministries [https://associatedministries.org/](https://associatedministries.org/)
- For statewide referrals to food, housing, and many other resources, call 211 on your phone or visit Washington 2-1-1 at [https://win211.org/](https://win211.org/)
Bothell

- UW Bothell CARE Team [https://www.uwb.edu/studentaffairs/care-team](https://www.uwb.edu/studentaffairs/care-team)
- Childcare Assistance Program [http://www.uwb.edu/financial-aid/childcare-assistance-program](http://www.uwb.edu/financial-aid/childcare-assistance-program)
- Adjustments to UW Financial Aid [https://www.washington.edu/financialaid/receiving-aid/request-changes-to-your-award/](https://www.washington.edu/financialaid/receiving-aid/request-changes-to-your-award/)
- For statewide referrals to food, housing, and many other resources, call 211 on your phone or visit Washington 2-1-1 at [https://win211.org/](https://win211.org/)