

Concordia University

Student Food Insecurity Report

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Executive Summary	2
Introduction	3
Methods	5
Results	6
Summary and Recommendations	21
Appendix A: Survey Respondent Data (Full)	24
Appendix B: Concordia SFI Resources (Overview)	28
References	31

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we conduct our work and research. Tiohtià:ke is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples in the Montreal community and especially as we work toward improving food security at Concordia University.

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Executive Summary

Food insecurity among post-secondary students is an important public health concern that has implications for student health, wellbeing, and academic outcomes. Previous studies have indicated that university students are more vulnerable to food insecurity than the general population due to limited financial resources and other barriers, such as the availability of affordable and culturally relevant food on campus. Major economic events in the past few years have exacerbated an already serious issue for post-secondary students across Canada.

To understand food insecurity at Concordia, a survey was conducted in February 2023 to measure its prevalence among undergraduate and graduate students. The impetus for the work came from the Sustainability Action Plan 2020-25 in which the university committed to addressing food security at Concordia. The report's findings and recommendations support other key initiatives at Concordia, including the Working Group on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, the Loyola Campus Working Group, and Sustainability Development Goals. This report summarizes the results of the Food Experiences Survey, assesses food security initiatives at Concordia, and provides recommended next steps.

Summary of Findings:

- 67% of Concordia students are experiencing some degree of food insecurity, with 27% facing moderate food insecurity and 22%, severe food insecurity
- Over half of severely food insecure and a third of moderately food insecure students report that their experience negatively impacted their academic performance
- Concordia is home to many food insecurity resources, most of which focus on supporting emergency needs. However, there is a lack of coordination among these resources and high student demand has strained resources' budget and staff. Additionally, campus discussion and understanding of *student food insecurity* (SFI) is low.

Based on the survey findings, literature review, and consultations with campus SFI initiatives, a list of proposed actions was developed in the following areas:

- University-wide, coordinated approach to supporting food security
- Awareness of student food insecurity and campus resources
- Support for SFI resources
- Food insecurity-related research and systems innovation

To further these goals, it is recommended that the university create a standing committee with cross-campus representation to effectively address food insecurity as an institution.

Introduction

Background. The *Concordia University Student Food Insecurity Report* was developed in response to the food security goals outlined in the Sustainability Action Plan 2020-2025. The purpose of the report is to present findings from the Food Experiences survey and literature review, assess current SFI resources, and propose recommendations for enhancing food security at the university. Desired outcomes from the report are to inform university decision-makers on the prevalence of student food insecurity at Concordia and to encourage deeper university engagement on the issue.

Research Overview. Concordia University launched its first comprehensive food insecurity research project in Fall 2022. The objectives of the project were as follows:

- Assess the prevalence of food insecurity among Concordia’s student population
- Gain insights into how students are impacted by food insecurity
- Evaluate the efficacy of existing campus food resources

This research was funded by the Sustainability Action Plan for one year (2022-2023) and was led by Claudette Torbey with support from Dr. Erin Barker, Gabriella Szabo, and Hannah Ostiguy Hopp.

Defining Student Food Insecurity. To measure the rate of SFI at Concordia, this report takes a financial-based approach, defined as “inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.”¹ This definition is used in provincial and federal government assessments of household food insecurity and is used by other Canadian universities in their campus surveys.

The financial-based definition excludes other recognized dimensions of food insecurity, including access to culturally relevant food and logistical challenges, such as lack of time, family support, and physical access.ⁱⁱ However, the survey did include questions to assess student experience with non-financial barriers to food security, and responses to these questions have informed the report’s recommendations.

Food Insecurity and Post-Secondary Students.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that food insecurity is a serious issue for post-secondary students across Canada. For example, a 2015 survey involving five Canadian universities found that 39% of students were experiencing moderate to severe food insecurity.² Other universities found similar rates of prevalence.ⁱⁱⁱ

Recent studies show that SFI rates have worsened, suggesting that major events (COVID-19 and inflation) have exacerbated already elevated levels of food insecurity.^{iv} A Meal Exchange’s survey (2021) involving thirteen Canadian universities found prevalence of food insecurity reaching nearly 57%.³ Increased food insecurity among post-secondary students tracks the rise of food-insecure households across Canadian provinces, though rates among students appears to be significantly higher than the general population. As a comparison, Statistics Canada (2022) found that 18.4% of Canadians lived in a food-insecure household.⁴

Studies have indicated that the internalization of the ‘starving student’ narrative, which normalizes food insecurity and can contribute to feelings of shame or embarrassment, discourages students from seeking out resources.⁵ While there is a continued perception that food insecurity is a rite of passage for university students, studies link SFI to poor mental and physical health, as well as academic underperformance, including low grade averages, reduced course load, skipped classes, and dropping

[1] “Household Food Insecurity in Canada,” PROOF. Accessed June 20, 2023, <https://proof.utoronto.ca/food-insecurity/>

[2] Drew Silverthorn. Hungry for Knowledge: Assessing the Prevalence of Student Food Insecurity on Five Canadian Campuses. Meal Exchange.

[3] “New data on household food security in 2022,” PROOF. May 2, 2023, <https://proof.utoronto.ca/2023/new-data-on-household-food-insecurity-in-2022/>

[4] Megan Entz, Joyce Slater, and Annette Aurélie Desmarais. “Student food insecurity at the university of Manitoba”, *Canadian Food Studies* 4, no. 1 (2017); Erica Reynolds, Christine Johnson, Jennifer Jamieson, and Hannah Mawhinney. “Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity Among Students Attending a Small, Rural Canadian University,” *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*, vol. 79 (2018); Erica Phillips, Anne McDaniel, and Alicia Croft. “Food Insecurity and Academic Disruption Among College Students,” *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* 55, vol. 4 (2018).

[5] Merryn Sanders Maynard, Samantha B. Meyer, Christopher M. Perlman, and Sharon I. Kirkpatrick. “Experiences of Food Insecurity Among Undergraduate Students: ‘You Can’t Starve Yourself Through School,’” *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 48, vol. 2 (2023); Rashida M. Crutchfield, Andrea Carpena, Jennifer Maguire and Tahira N. McCloyn. “The Starving Student Narrative: How Normalizing Deprivation Reinforces Basic Need Insecurity in Higher Education,” *Families in Society* 101, vol. 3 (2020).lescent to Adult Health,” *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 34, vol. 12 (2019).

out of school.⁶ Moreover, the strain that food insecurity places on mental and physical health can impact the student well beyond their time at university. Studies have shown a link between food insecurity in young adults and chronic illness, including diabetes and hypertension.⁷

[6] Megan Entz, Joyce Slater, and Annette Aurélie Desmarais. "Student food insecurity at the university of Manitoba", *Canadian Food Studies* 4, no. 1 (2017); Erica Reynolds, Christine Johnson, Jennifer Jamieson, and Hannah Mawhinney. "Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity Among Students Attending a Small, Rural Canadian University," *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*, vol. 79 (2018); Erica Phillips, Anne McDaniel, and Alicia Croft. "Food Insecurity and Academic Disruption Among College Students," *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice* 55, vol. 4 (2018).

[7] Jason Nagata, Kartika Palar, Holly C. Gooding, Andrea K. Garber, Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, and Sheri D. Weiser. "Food Insecurity and Chronic Diseases in US Young Adults: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health," *Journal of General Internal Medicine* 34, vol. 12 (2019).

Methods

Survey Design and Distribution. The Food Experiences Survey was conducted in February 2023 on an online platform and offered in French and English. The survey was labelled and promoted under food experiences, as opposed to food insecurity, to mitigate food-secure students from opting out. The survey was distributed to a random sample of 10,000 students from a list generated by the Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis.

University Communication Systems also promoted participation on the undergraduate and graduate student hub websites. Posters and flyers with QR codes to the survey were distributed across both campuses, in a range of administrative and academic offices. Student participation was incentivized with the chance to win one of ten \$50 gift cards to use at the Concordia Bookstore or Concordia Food Service location.

The survey was developed by the food insecurity team and included 35 questions concerning respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, financial and logistical ability to access food, where respondents sourced their food from, and their awareness of existing campus food insecurity resources. The socio-demographic and logistical food access questions were informed by previous studies, most notably those conducted by Meal Exchange and at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Limitations. There are potential sources of bias that may have affected the survey results. First, the subject of the survey may have discouraged participation from students who do not experience food insecurity. Second, the potential to win a gift certificate to Concordia Food Service cafes may have increased the likelihood of food insecure students to participate in the survey. Finally, survey results may not be representative of the student body since 1,352 completed responses were received out of 45,488 students who were enrolled during the 2022-23 academic year.

Assessing Food Insecurity. Rates of food insecurity were assessed based on responses to seven statements related to respondents' financial ability to buy food over the course of the 2022-23 academic year. These questions (see Table I) were taken from the Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM) – a validated tool used by Canadian and U.S. governments to measure the prevalence of food insecurity at the household level.

For each statement, survey participants indicated their

frequency of experiencing a situation: never (score of 0); some of the time (score of 1); or monthly (score of 2). Respondents were classified into one of four categories of food (in)security status based on their total scores across the seven statements. See Table II for food security status and score.

Table I: Statements used to assess food insecurity rate

Since the start of this school year, how often have you experienced the following situations? <i>Response options: Never, A Few Times or Monthly</i>
I worried food would run out before I got money to buy more.
Food I had didn't last and there wasn't enough money to buy more.
I wasn't able to afford the types of food that would allow me to eat healthy and balanced meals.
I skipped or cut the size of my meals because I couldn't afford to buy more.
I ate less than I personally should because I couldn't afford to buy more.
I was hungry but did not eat because I couldn't afford to buy more.
I did not eat for a whole day because I could not afford to buy enough food.

Table II: Food security status by the number of points individual respondents received (by adding up all responses to Table I)

Status	Score
Food Secure	0
Marginally Food Insecure	1-2
Moderately Food Insecure	3-6
Severely Food Insecure	7+

Results

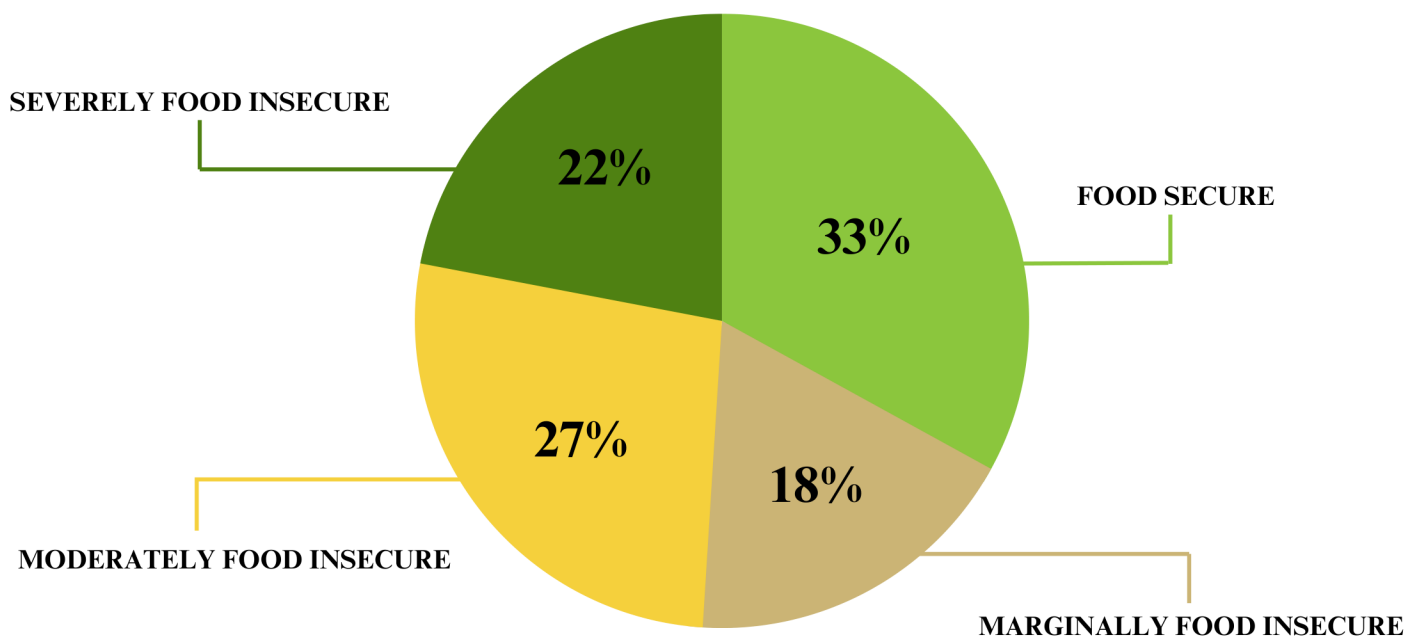
Summary. 1, 352 valid responses were received. Many respondents were of the following socio-demographic groups (percent indicates proportion of total respondents):

- Bachelor's degree (69.9%, n=944)
- Cisgender women (58%, n=784)
- Heterosexual (54.1%, n=731)
- 20-24 years old (52.1%, n=681)
- Faculty of Arts and Science (49.1%, n=663)

Prevalence of SFI. Survey findings indicate food insecurity to be a significant issue for Concordia University students, with 67% (n=835) of the student body experiencing some degree of food insecurity.

Food insecurity among survey participants was commonly experienced by relying on unhealthy foods (54.5%, n=678), skipping or cutting the size of meals (44.3%, n=551), worrying that food would run out and being unable to buy more (43.7%, n=543), and eating less than they should because they could not purchase more (42.9%, n=531).

Graph 1: Rates of Student Food Insecurity (SFI) at Concordia University



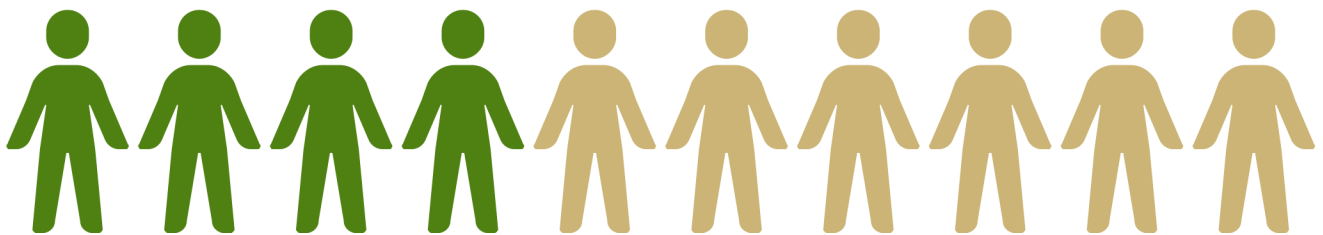
Graph 1: Represents the rate at which students are experiencing food insecurity. By adding together those marginally (n=230), moderately (n=332) and severely (n=273) food insecure, 67% of students are found to be experiencing some degree of food insecurity.

How Students Experience Food Insecurity

44%

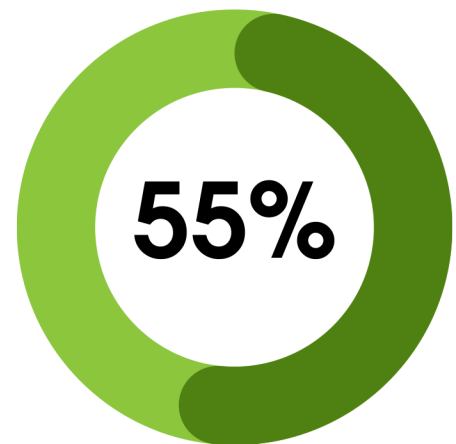
OF STUDENTS
SKIPPED OR CUT
THE SIZE OF THEIR
MEALS

31% OF STUDENTS
RAN OUT OF FOOD
BEFORE THEY
COULD AFFORD TO
BUY MORE



4 OUT OF EVERY 10 STUDENTS ATE LESS THAN THEY SHOULD DURING THE 2022-23 ACADEMIC YEAR

MOST STUDENTS
COULDN'T AFFORD TO
EAT HEALTHY AND
BALANCED FOODS



13% REPORTED THAT, ON A MONTHLY BASIS, THEY WENT AN ENTIRE DAY WITHOUT EATING BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT AFFORD FOOD

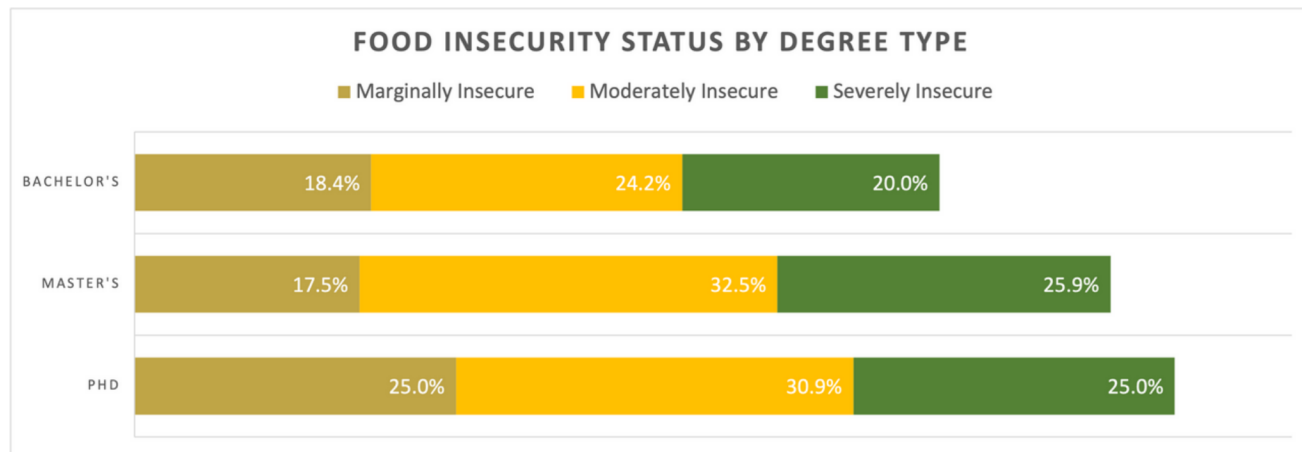
Demographic Factors and SFI

Demographic Factors and SFI. The overall rate of food insecurity among Concordia students suggests that the issue is impacting students across socio-demographic spectrums. However, to better understand the prevalence of food insecurity among various student demographics, SFI rates were compared to socio-demographic variables. Findings were based on the number of respondents who completed the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire and each demographic question. Full data is available in Appendix A.

The following sections highlight the socio-demographic characteristics that showed high rates of food insecurity:

- Degree Type
- Status
- Age
- Race and Ethnicity
- Living Arrangement
- Source of Funds
- Gender
- Disability

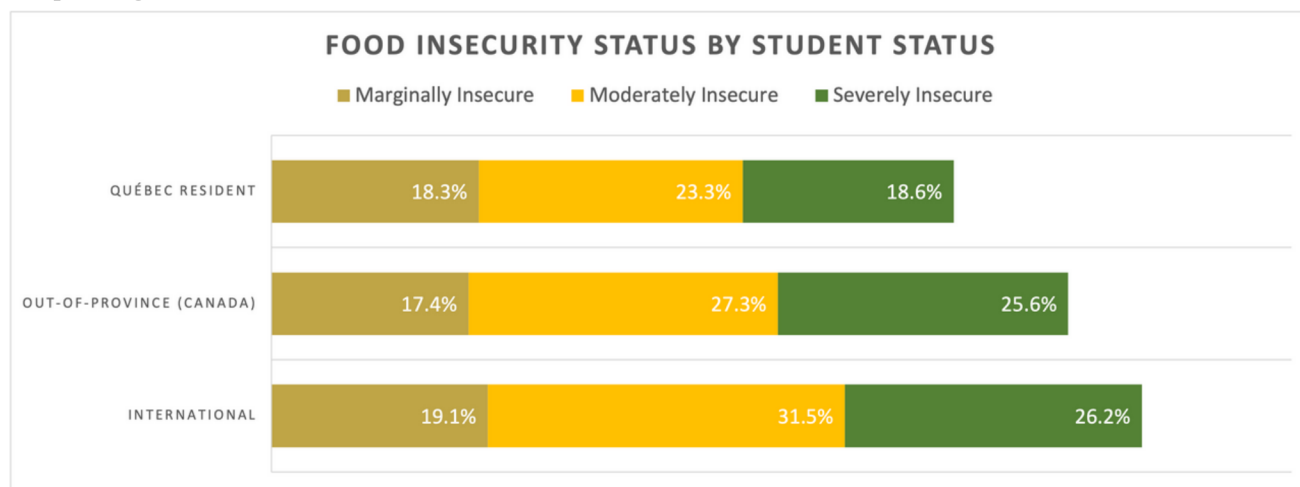
Degree Type. Graduate students showed higher rates of overall food insecurity, with PhD students experiencing food insecurity at a rate of 80.9% (n=55), and master's students at a rate of 75.9% (n=208). Notably, most of these graduate students were of international status (81%, n=313).



Graph 2: Represents the rates at which students are experiencing food insecurity based on their degree type (e.g., PhD, bachelors, masters). This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire and excludes data for students determined to be food secure.

Student Status. International students scored the highest rate of food insecurity at 67.3% (n=330), followed by out-of-province students (65.9%, n=85) and Québec students (56.5%, n=400). These results reflect those of previous studies where international students were found to be particularly vulnerable to food insecurity owing to higher tuition rates, cost of housing, limited employment opportunities, as well as difficulties with the Canadian banking system and transferring money from their home countries.⁸ According to Concordia's estimates, the total cost of attending university (tuition and cost of living) is up to three times higher for out-of-province students compared with Quebec students, and over four times higher for international students.⁹ The difference in cost is attributed to higher tuition rates, housing, and food expenses.

It should also be noted that international students were overrepresented in the survey (their proportion of survey responses was higher than their percentage of the student population at Concordia), suggesting that food insecurity is a pressing issue for these students.

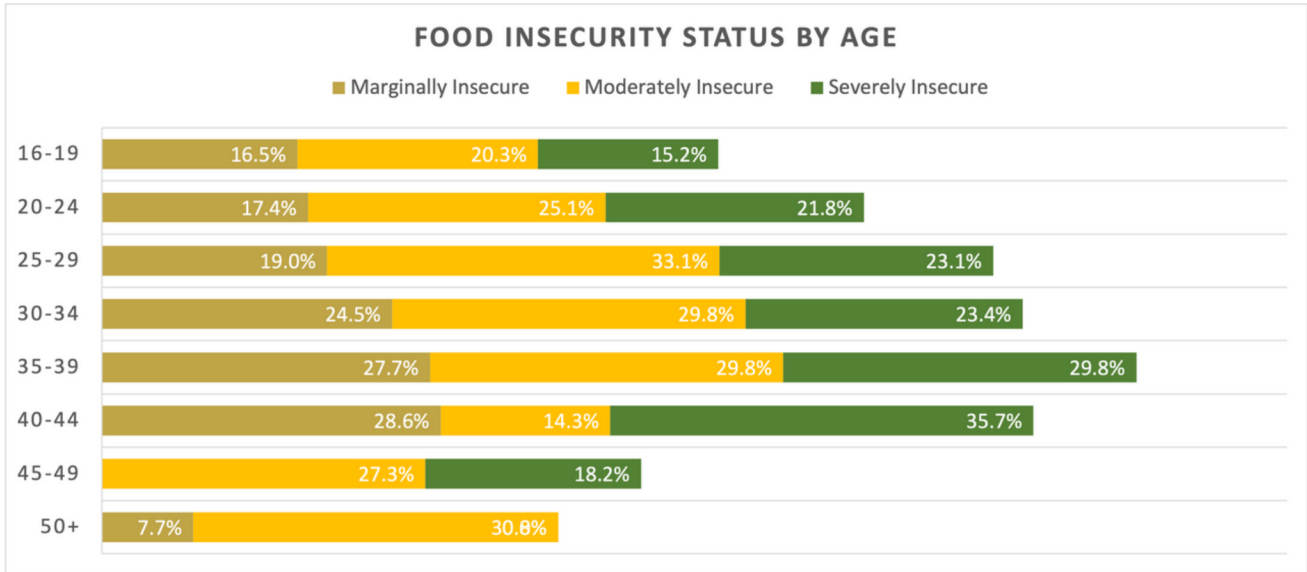


Graph 3: Represents the rates at which students are experiencing food insecurity based on their status (i.e., Québec resident, international, or out-of-province). This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire and excludes data for students determined to be food secure.

[8] Lisa Blundell, Maria Mathews, Claire Bowley, and Barbara Roeböthan. "Determining Student Food Insecurity at Memorial University in Newfoundland," *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*, vol. 80 (2019); Mahitab Hanbazaza, Maryam Kebbe, Arnaldo Perez, Geoff D.C. Ball, Anna P. Farmer, Katerina Maximova, and Noreen D. Willows. "Food Insecurity Among International Post-Secondary Studying on a Canadian Campus: A Qualitative Descriptive Study," *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 51, vol. 2 (2021); Merryn Sanders Maynard, Samantha B. Meyer, Christopher M. Perlman, and Sharon I. Kirkpatrick. "Experiences of Food Insecurity Among Undergraduate Students: 'You Can't Starve Yourself Through School'," *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 48, vol. 2 (2023).

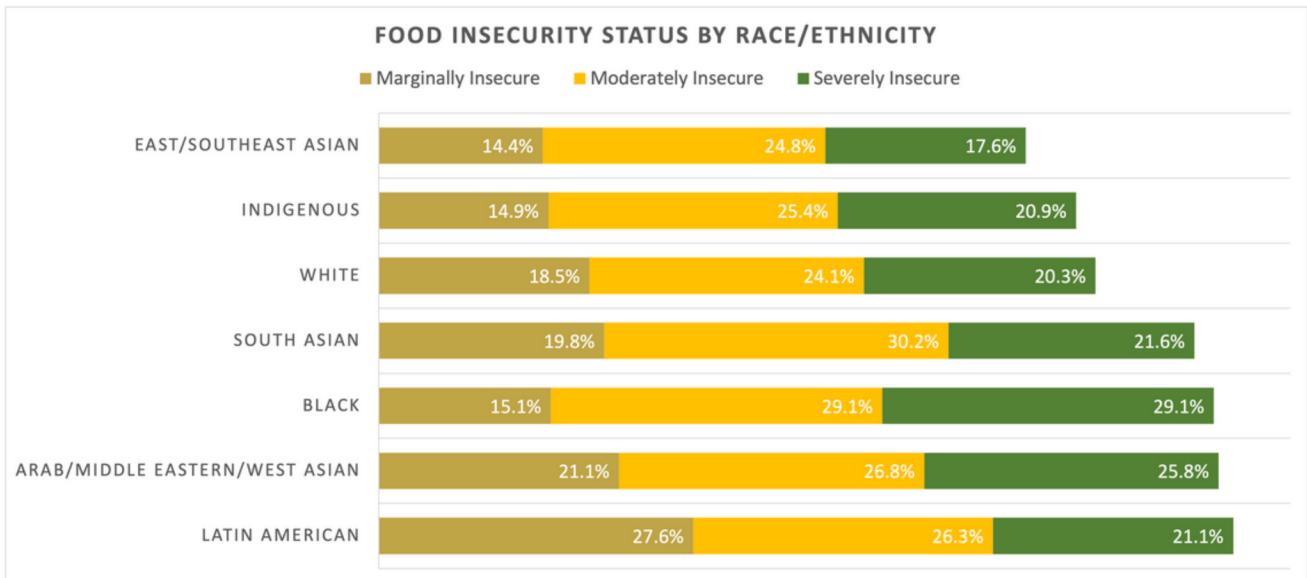
[9] "Cost of Living," Concordia University. Accessed July 5, 2023. <https://www.concordia.ca/students/financial/tuition-fees/costs.html>

Age. Students aged 25-44 years experienced the highest levels of food insecurity, with those aged 35-39 experiencing the peak food insecurity rates (87.3%, n=41). It is assumed that the higher rate of food insecurity relates to their source of income and living situation (e.g., less support from personal relationships and no longer living with family), however additional research is required to better understand the causes of their food insecurity.



Graph 4: Represents the rates at which students are experiencing food insecurity based on their age. This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire and excludes data for students determined to be food secure.

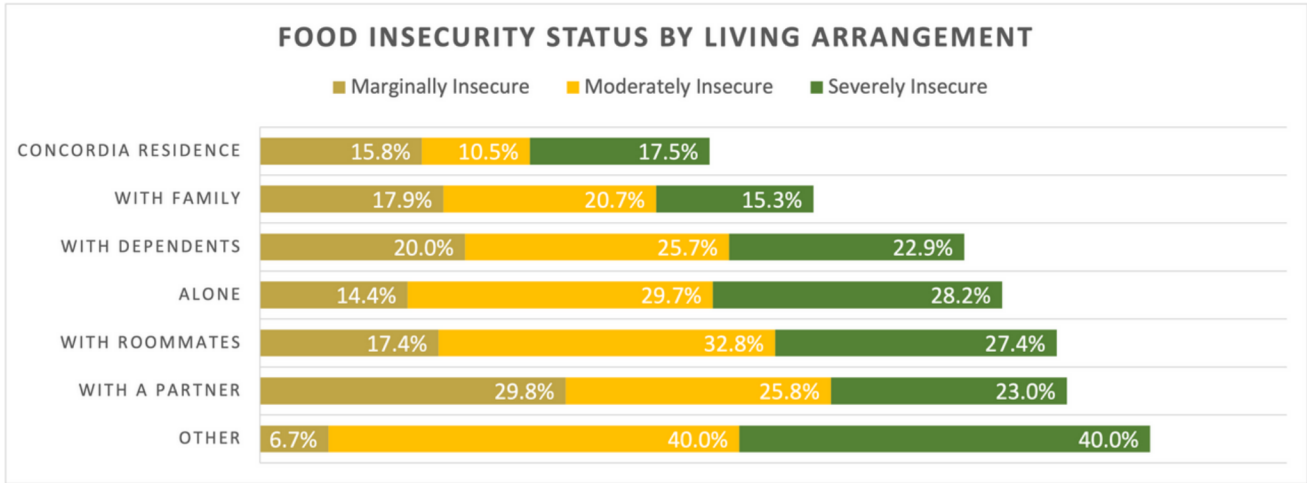
Race and Ethnicity. The highest rates of food insecurity were seen among students identifying as Latin American (74%, n=57), Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian (74%, n=143), Black (72%, n=63), and South Asian (71.6%, n=159). These results largely echo previous studies that have shown food insecurity rates to reflect broader racial disparities in Canada.¹⁰ The lower rates of food insecurity among Concordia respondents identifying as Indigenous and East/Southeast Asian do not align with patterns and predictors found in other food insecurity studies and require further study.



Graph 5: Represents the rates at which students are experiencing food insecurity based on their racial and/or ethnic identity. This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire and excludes data for students determined to be food secure, those who selected ‘Self-describe’, or ‘Prefer not to answer’.

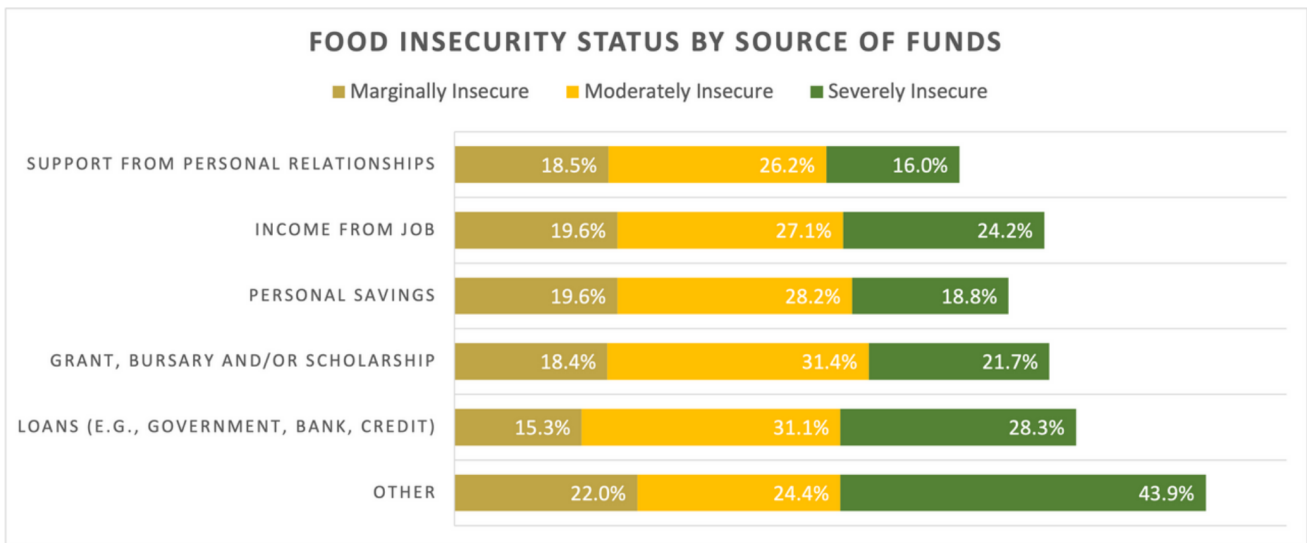
[10] 2021 National Student Food Insecurity Report, Meal Exchange. Published 2021, www.mealexchange.com/resources; Dakshana Bascaramurty. “Food insecurity worse for Black Canadians than White Canadians, report finds,” The Globe and Mail, October 23, 2019, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-food-insecurity-worse-for-black-canadians-than-white-canadians-report/>

Living Arrangement. Respondents who do not live with family or in Concordia residences saw higher rates of food insecurity regardless of whether they lived alone, with roommates, or a partner. Still, over half of respondents who lived with family experienced some level of food insecurity (53.4%, n=224), which indicates that while living with family can mitigate a student’s risk of food insecurity, it does not guarantee food security.



Graph 6: Represents the rates at which students are experiencing food insecurity based on their living arrangement. This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire and excludes data for students determined to be food secure.

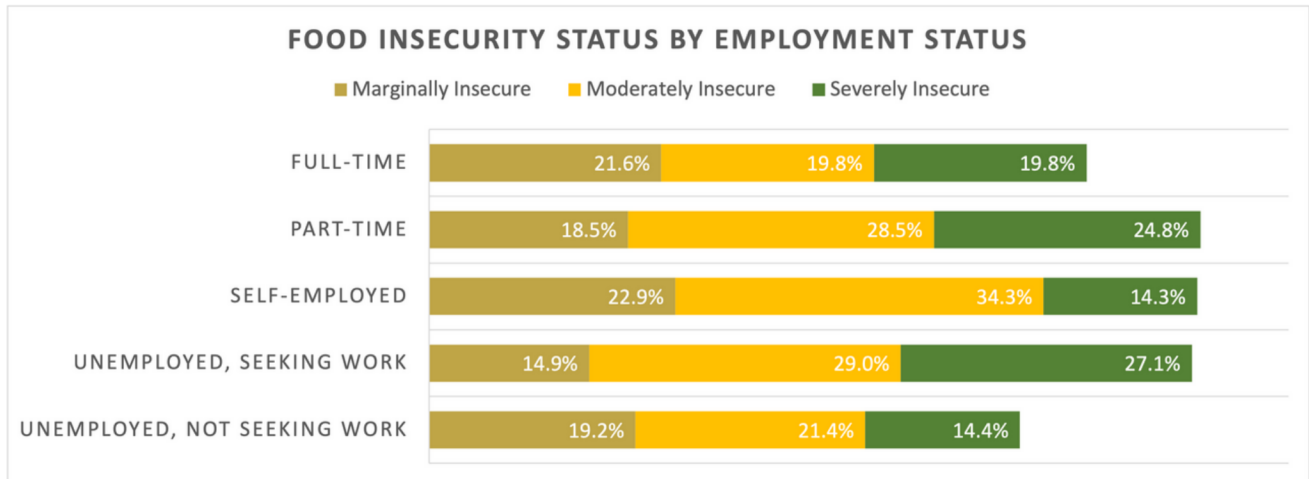
Source(s) of Funds. When considering students’ food insecurity status and their sources of income for paying essential expenses (e.g., rent, tuition, heat/electricity), it is 'other' sources of income (e.g., disability, pension, occasional work) and loans (e.g., credit, government) that show the highest rates of food insecurity. 44% (n=18) of respondents whose income is derived from ‘other’ sources and 28.3% (n=113) of respondents who utilized loans to pay for their expenses, were found to be severely food insecure.



Graph 7: Represents the rates at which students are experiencing food insecurity based on their source of funds for essential expenses. This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire and excludes data for students determined to be food secure.

Notably, respondents whose income came from employment saw rates of overall food insecurity (70.9%, n=448) comparable to those who rely on loans to pay for expenses (74.7%). This finding indicates that employment does not safeguard students from experiencing food insecurity. In the graph below, both employed and unemployed students show comparably high rates. Survey results saw a high rate of food insecurity among respondents working part-time (71.8%, n=411) or self-employed (71.5%, n=25), followed by respondents who were unemployed, but seeking work (71%, n=157).

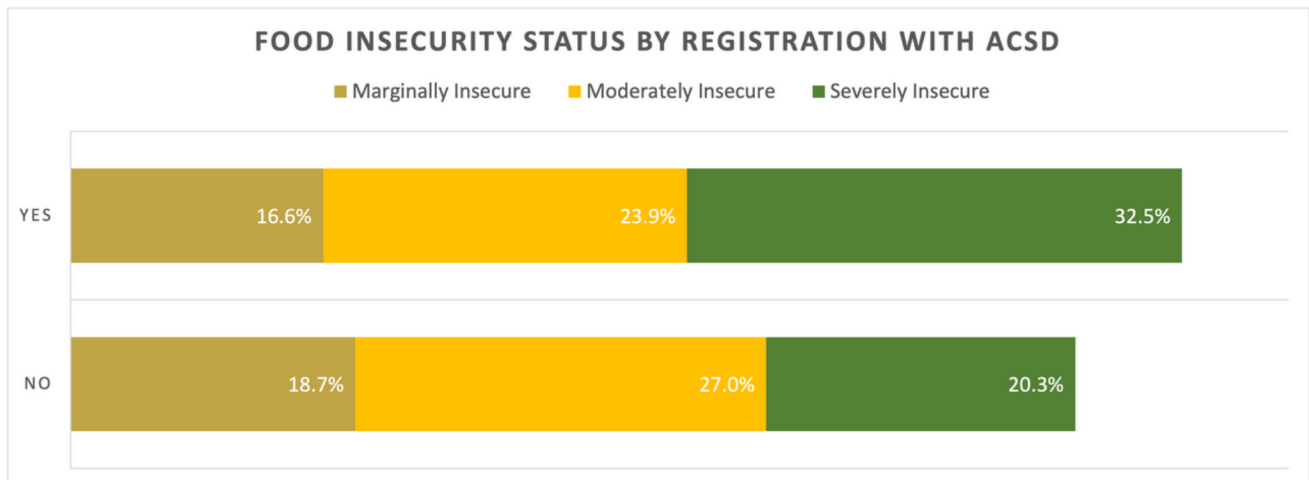
The high rate of food insecurity among respondents working part-time may be explained by low wages or not working enough hours to cover living expenses. However, additional research would be needed to identify the barriers to food security for employed students.



Graph 8: Represents the rates at which students are experiencing food insecurity based on their employment status. This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire and excludes data for students determined to be food secure.

Disability. 73% (n=119) of students registered with the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities (ACSD) were found to be experiencing some degree of food insecurity, of which 32.5% (n=53) were severely food insecure. For reference, 20.3% (n=220) of respondents who were not registered with ACSD were identified as severely food insecure. It should be noted that students registered with ACSD accounted for 12.5% (n=169) of overall responses.

The survey results align with previous research showing a correlation between disability and food insecurity. Based on the survey data, it is not possible to know the nature of the students' disability and how it relates to food insecurity. Additional research would be required to identify the barriers for ACSD and to recommend strategies that address their specific needs.



Graph 9: Represents the rates at which students are experiencing food insecurity based on whether they are registered with the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities (ACSD). This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire and excludes data for students determined to be food secure.

[11] Jeremy Wagner, Cassandra Hayward, and Cassandra Salatas. Student Food Insecurity at Wilfrid Laurier University: A 'Food 4 Hawks' Research Study. Accessed October 5, 2022; Desré M. Kramer, Rhonda Ferguson, and Jennifer Reynolds. Sustainable Consumption for All: Improving the Accessibility of Sustainably-Produced Foods in Canada. Published May 2019.

Student Experiences with Food Insecurity

Time. Most respondents felt they had the knowledge and skills to cook nutritious meals (76.4%, n=1031) but lacked time for these tasks. 61% (n=805) of students reported not having the time to shop for their food and 70% (n=928) did not have the time to prepare meals.

Time management appears to be a significant challenge for students who may be juggling work, academics, and life at home. Most of the survey respondents were full time students (87.2%, n=1175) and held full or part-time employment (62.7%, n=826). For young adults, the difficulty of balancing a course load with other responsibilities – an experience that may be new to some – can be overwhelming. According to a 2021 study co-authored by Concordia Psychology professor Dr. Erin Barker, time management emerged as one of two main stressors for post-secondary students, alongside academics.¹²

Awareness of Campus Resources. Respondents reported limited awareness of campus food insecurity resources. 26% (n= 354) indicated that they had not heard of any of the resources (e.g., People’s Potato, Hive Free Lunch, Student Emergency and Food Fund) and 49% (n=662) were hesitant about using resources because they did not know enough about them. 54.1% (n=732) of respondents were also unaware of any cooking, budgeting, and/or gardening workshops offered at the university. Given the low level of awareness about different food insecurity resources, it is unsurprising that more than a quarter of survey participants recommended promoting existing initiatives to improve student food security. Below are a few of the comments provided by survey respondents:

"It feels like there are a lot of resources for people and food, but no one knows where they are or how to use them."

"I wish it was more marketed because I had no idea of the resources we have and I'm too ashamed of my situation to ask for help."

Accessibility of campus food. 34% of respondents raised concerns about the physical and/or financial accessibility of food on campus. Feedback related to physical accessibility highlighted the lack of food services, particularly in the VA building and on Loyola campus, and noted that food locations’ hours of operation did not accommodate students’ schedules. Respondents also commented on the need for more physical food resources, like microwaves and fridges. Finally, several respondents identified the cost of food on campus as a significant issue. Some comments provided by survey respondents:

"Concordia could provide more affordable and better-quality food especially at the Loyola campus since the options are scarce and very expensive for both quality and quantity."

"VA building has no food, coffee options on site and [students] lose lots of time having to go outside to get food."

"I find it hard to bring my lunch every day because I don't have anywhere to keep it cold during the day so a fridge to store lunches during class and the day would be really helpful."

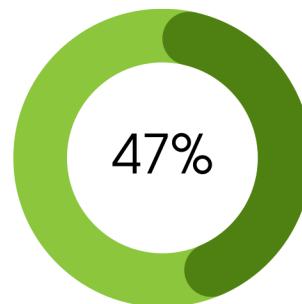
"Provide more seating areas with microwaves/ovens around campus to encourage the convenience of bringing your own food."

"I wish the university could collaborate with the restaurants/grocery store to offer students some discounts."

"I have days where my first class starts at 8:45[am] and my last class ends at 8:15[pm]. I have to bring 2 meals and snacks from home that need to stay good throughout the day without refrigeration. It's also an incredible amount of work buying groceries and planning/preparing meals. There's nowhere on campus that has cheap, healthy meal options."

[12] Andrea L. Howard and Erin Barker. "Mental Health of Students Reporting Food Insecurity during the Transition to University," Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research 82, no. 3 (2021).

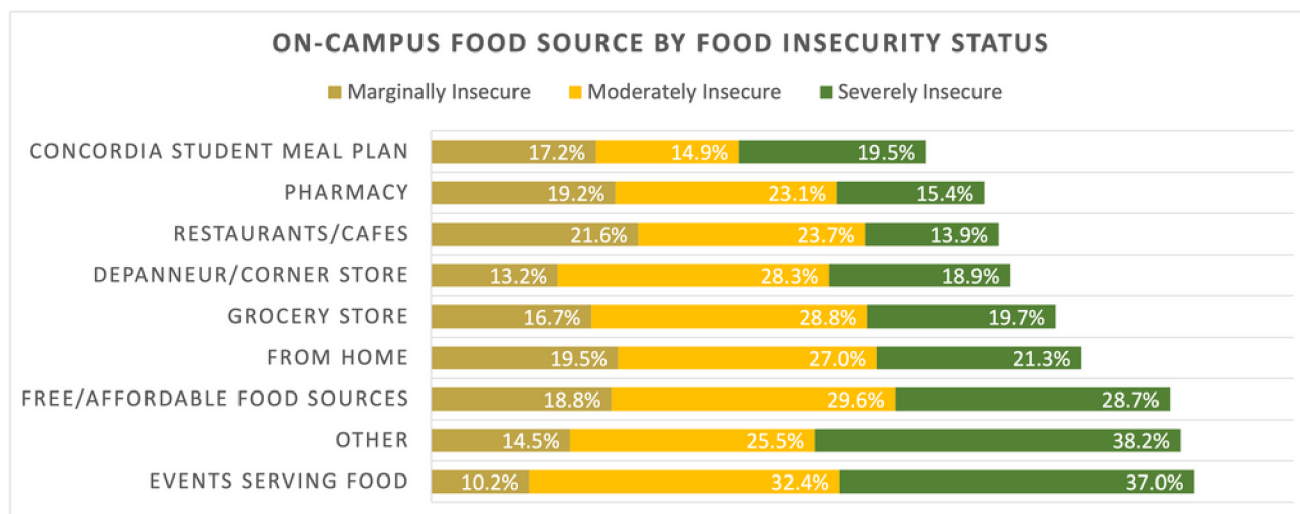
Culturally Relevant Food. For international and/or racialized students, this may be especially pertinent. It has previously been reported that international students may struggle in several key areas of food access, including affordability, accessibility, availability, and acceptability.¹³ One of the challenges for international students was finding affordable foods that they knew how to cook with and enjoyed eating. This served as a disadvantage when compared to local students.



of students had inconsistent access to **culturally relevant** foods

Coping with SFI. Food is a flexible budget item that can be sacrificed when there is not enough money to cover fixed expenses like tuition or rent. For this reason, food insecurity can serve as an indicator of larger financial difficulties. Considering the prevalence of food insecurity among students, it is unsurprising that nearly 59% of survey respondents reported spending less money on food to cover the cost of living and attending university. Moreover, students who consistently sacrificed spending on food to pay their bills showed the highest rates of severe food insecurity.

To cope with the trade-off, survey findings showed that many food insecure students relied on free food while on campus. Of the respondents who reported attending events for free food, 79.6% (n=86) were moderately or severely food insecure. 77% (n=263) of respondents who used services such as People's Potato and Hive Free Lunch were experiencing some level of food insecurity while 78% (n=43) of respondents who relied on alternative means for acquiring their food (e.g., food bank, community pantry/fridge, dumpster) were found to be food insecure.



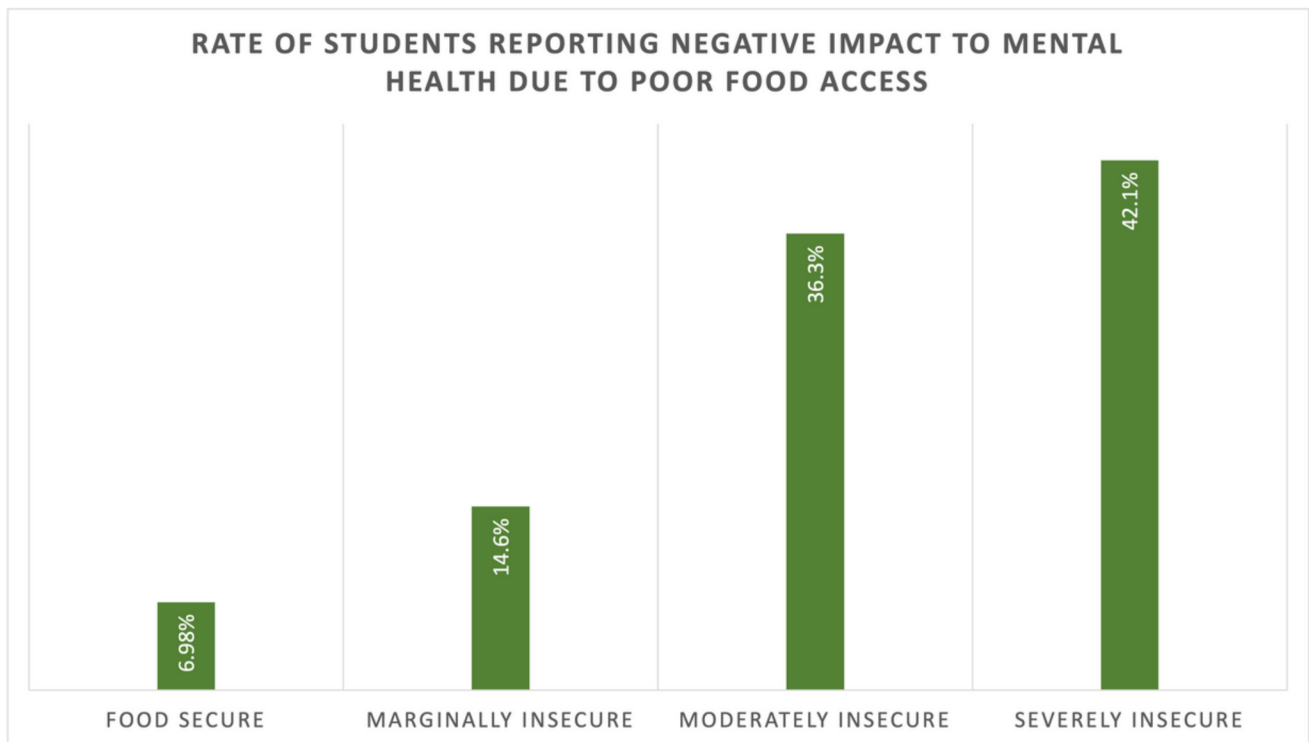
Graph 10: Represents the rates at which students are experiencing food insecurity based on where they source their food while on campus. This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire and excludes data for students determined to be food secure.

[13] Mahitab Hanbazaza, Maryam Kebbe, Arnaldo Perez, Geoff D.C. Ball, Anna P. Farmer, Katerina Maximova, and Noreen D. Willows. "Food Insecurity Among International Post-Secondary Studying on a Canadian Campus: A Qualitative Descriptive Study," *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 51, vol. 2 (2021).

Impacts of SFI

Student Health. Students' inability to access food appears to have significant impacts on health and wellbeing. Across physical, mental, and social health variables, the trends are similar. From the graph below, it is evident that of the students whose mental health was negatively affected by poor food access, 93% (n=413) were experiencing some degree of food insecurity.

This relationship between food insecurity and poor mental and physical health mirrors findings in a Professor Dr. Barker's study that saw consistently poorer mental health (e.g., depression, anxiety, low satisfaction with life) in students classified as food insecure. The study also found that the students' mental health deficit was comparable to socioeconomic disadvantages associated with food insecurity.¹⁴

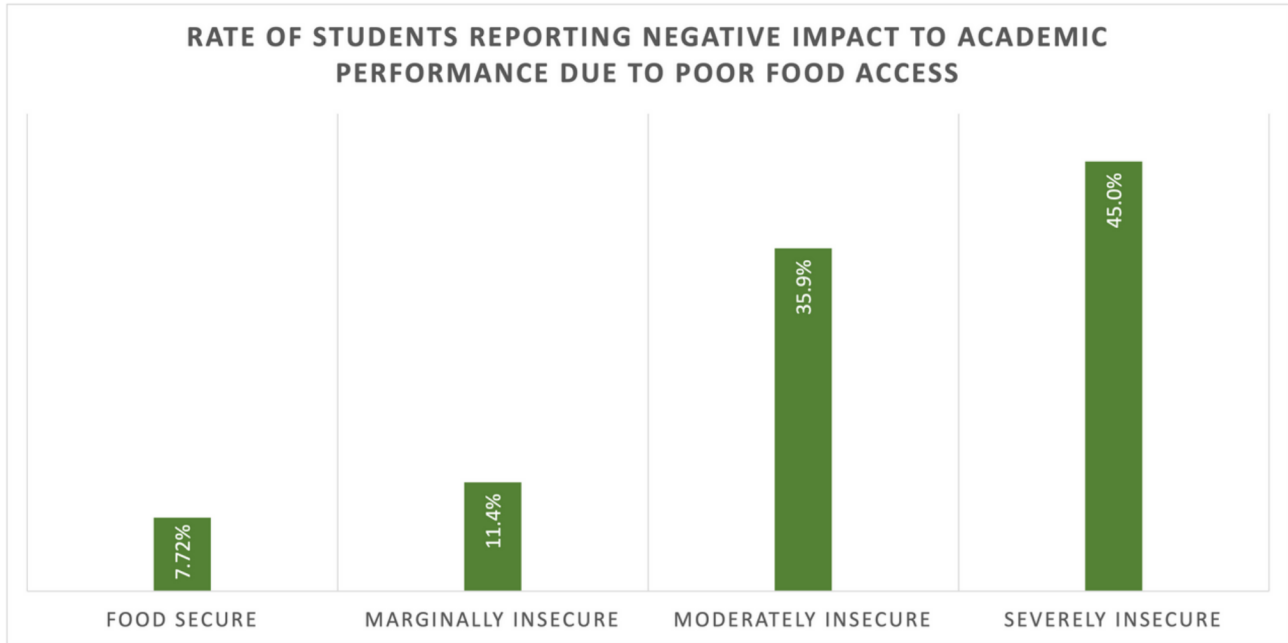


Graph 11: Reports the rate at which students felt their mental health was negatively impacted by their access to food throughout the 2022-2023 academic year, based on their food security status. This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire of the survey.

[14] Andrea L. Howard and Erin Barker. "Mental Health of Students Reporting Food Insecurity during the Transition to University," *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research* 82, no. 3 (2021).

Academic Performance. Overall, 24.8% (n=320) of students indicated feeling negative impacts on their academic performance due to their inability to access food. Among respondents who reported being negatively affected, 92.3% (n=295) were found to be experiencing some degree of food insecurity.

The graph below shows the rate of students (according to their food insecurity status) who felt their academic performance was negatively impacted by poor access to food. The data demonstrates that most of these respondents were experiencing the most acute forms of food insecurity, with 35.9% (n=107) moderately insecure and another 40.5% (n=134) severely food insecure.



Graph 12: Reports the rate at which students felt their academic performance was negatively impacted by their access to food throughout the 2022-2023 academic year, based on their food security status. This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire of the survey.

Evaluating SFI Resources

Assessment Framework. To assess Concordia University's response to student food insecurity, an analysis of existing resources focused on the following aspects:

1. **Quantity and Diversity of Initiatives:** The number and range of resources to meet the varying needs of students facing food insecurity. To determine the diversity of responses, resources were grouped into specific types, including:

- Food provisioning
- Affordable meal options
- Food literacy and skills interventions
- Physical food resources (e.g., microwaves, fridges)
- Opportunities for growing food on-campus
- Healthy food options
- Food-related faculty
- Financial aid resources
- Campus narrative (e.g., framing food insecurity as a systemic issue and not an emergency need)

2. **Governance:** The level of collaboration and coordination between student organizations and university leadership in managing the initiatives aimed at combating student food insecurity

3. **Community Awareness:** The level of awareness among the campus community about student food insecurity and the initiatives in place to address it.

Food Provisioning & Institutional Engagement. The assessment framework was developed for a 2021 study by Guelph Lab that examined the SFI resources across 22 Canadian universities. The study found that most campuses had at least four to five resources with food provisioning as the most prevalent type.¹⁵

Food provisioning refers to resources such as food banks, grocery gift cards, and pay-it-forward initiatives. While this type of resource provides emergency relief for students and can help to increase the visibility of student food insecurity, research has shown that this type of support is often ineffective due to the constraints on accessing these services.¹⁶ More specifically, food provisioning initiatives frequently impose restrictions on the amount of food provided and/or the frequency with which students can utilize the service, thereby inadequately meeting students' needs.

The study from Guelph Lab, referenced earlier, also found that food insecurity resources were commonly led by student groups with minimal engagement by university leadership. Rather than solely relying on grassroots action, the study recommends a hybrid-approach to address SFI. A coordinated approach could partner students' lived experience with institutional knowledge/support to grow and diversify campus initiatives. Greater university involvement may also increase food insecurity awareness among staff and faculty as well as reduce the burden on students to sustain initiatives.

The study highlighted University of British Columbia as an example for comprehensive cross-campus coordination and multifaceted initiatives. UBC's senior administration has been active in the development of strategic plans to combat food

[15] Glaros, A., MacIntyre, J., Laban, S., & Maynard, M. (2021). Student Food Insecurity Campus Readiness Assessment. Guelph, ON: Community Engaged Scholarship Institute. <https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/handle/10214/2501>

[16] Silverthorn, D. (2016). Hungry for knowledge: Assessing the prevalence of student food insecurity on five Canadian campuses

insecurity. Moreover, the university's approach extends beyond food provision and incorporates programming centred around cultural sensitivity, food literacy, and food skills.

[17]"Wellbeing Strategic Framework," University of British Columbia. Accessed April 14, 2023, p. 13]

UBC currently provides 19 SFI resources, which are coordinated through their Food Security Initiative. This interdisciplinary partnership between UBC Wellbeing and the UBC Food Systems Project adopts a university-wide, systems-based approach to address food insecurity. In their Wellbeing Strategic Framework (2021), UBC set a target to "reduce food insecurity for UBC community members by 2025."¹⁷ Moreover, UBC has integrated food insecurity into a broader discussion of the affordability of post-secondary education. In 2022, a task force comprising student leaders, faculty, staff, and senior administration was established to address student affordability challenges, which included making recommendations regarding food insecurity, housing, student aid, and continued research efforts.

Food Security Initiatives: Canadian Post-Secondary (Summarized)

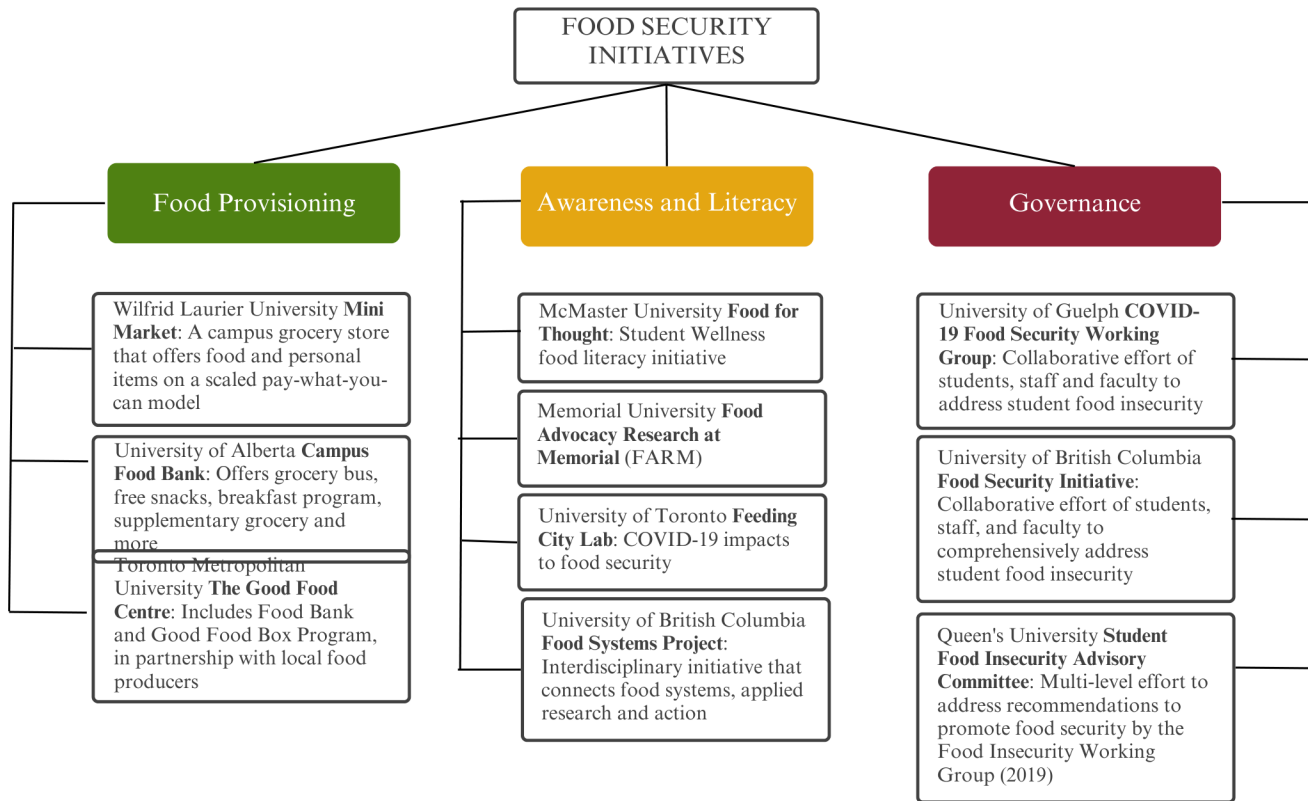


Diagram A: Examples of food security initiatives across Canada, broken down into 3 categories: 1) Food Provisioning, 2) Awareness and Literacy, and 3) Governance. This diagram only captures a handful of the food security initiatives that currently exist at post-secondary institutions in the country.

Concordia SFI Initiatives

Quantity and Diversity of Initiatives. Concordia's volume and range of initiatives is comparable to universities that scored in the top third of the Guelph Lab study. Concordia hosts an estimated 14 SFI initiatives, a majority of which focus on food provisioning. Additional work is required to accurately capture campus SFI narratives as well as the availability of affordable and healthy food options on campus.

Summary of Concordia's SFI initiatives (a detailed list is provided in Appendix B):

- 8 food provisioning initiatives (e.g., free lunch, gift card/voucher programs)
- 2 urban agriculture initiatives
- Student-accessible microwaves
- Budgeting and food literacy workshops
- Bursaries

Food Provisioning. Despite Concordia's numerous food provisioning initiatives, student access to most of the services is quite restricted due to high student demand, overwhelmed staff and for most programs, limited budgets. The result is that many students in need are unable to utilize these resources. Specific challenges for each food provisioning initiative during the 2022-23 academic year are highlighted in *Appendix B*. Below are a few of the comments provided by survey respondents:

“Offer another meal provider on-campus like People's Potato, this will provide employment to students on campus on allow other students to enjoy a proper lunch (not a sandwich, but rather rice with some protein and soup) for a reasonable price or for free.”

“People's Potato is a wonderful resource but I'm not there during their hours and on the rare occasion I am the line ups are terrifying.” - Concordia student

Governance. Similar to many other Canadian universities, most SFI initiatives at Concordia are led by students with limited coordination of food insecurity efforts or engagement by university administration. As previously mentioned, a hybrid approach to addressing food insecurity can more effectively grow, coordinate, and sustain SFI initiatives. For examples, see Diagram A (above), under the label 'Governance'.

Community Awareness. Campus engagement in food security, including campus awareness of food resources, is a critical component of addressing food insecurity on post-secondary campuses.¹⁸ At Concordia, the strategies employed to inform students about available resources are highly decentralized and rely on individual groups such as People's Potato, Hive Free Lunch, and Friigo Vert to promote their initiatives (e.g., website, social media).

For a general overview of food security resources at Concordia, both the Dean of Students Office and Concordia University Student Parents (CUSP) webpages include a list, though these are not immediately available in a general search of the site and require regular updates. Furthermore, there are other campus resources that cannot advertise or promote due to lack of financial and/or staffing capacity.

Survey responses suggest that community awareness about food insecurity and existing initiatives is low. Several respondents mentioned having been at Concordia for at least a year and not knowing anything about the resources offered. Others lacked basic essential information about the resources, such as location and/or hours of operation.

“Make sure there is someone or a board at the entrance to let us know about the food resources offered, it's my 3rd semester and I never knew there [were] food resources at the campus[.] Just learned it from this survey.”

“[Give] more explicit instructions on how to access [the SFI resources] and [put] up signs on how to get there.”

In addition to students not knowing enough about campus resources and initiatives, there also seems to be a general lack of understanding about food insecurity itself, including its definition and how to identify individual experiences of food insecurity. When provided with the widely referenced

[18] Promoting Food Security in Higher Education: Virtual Conference. Promoting Food Secure Campuses: Principles to Guide and Inspire Action on Student Food Insecurity, March 2021. www.mealexchange.com/resources

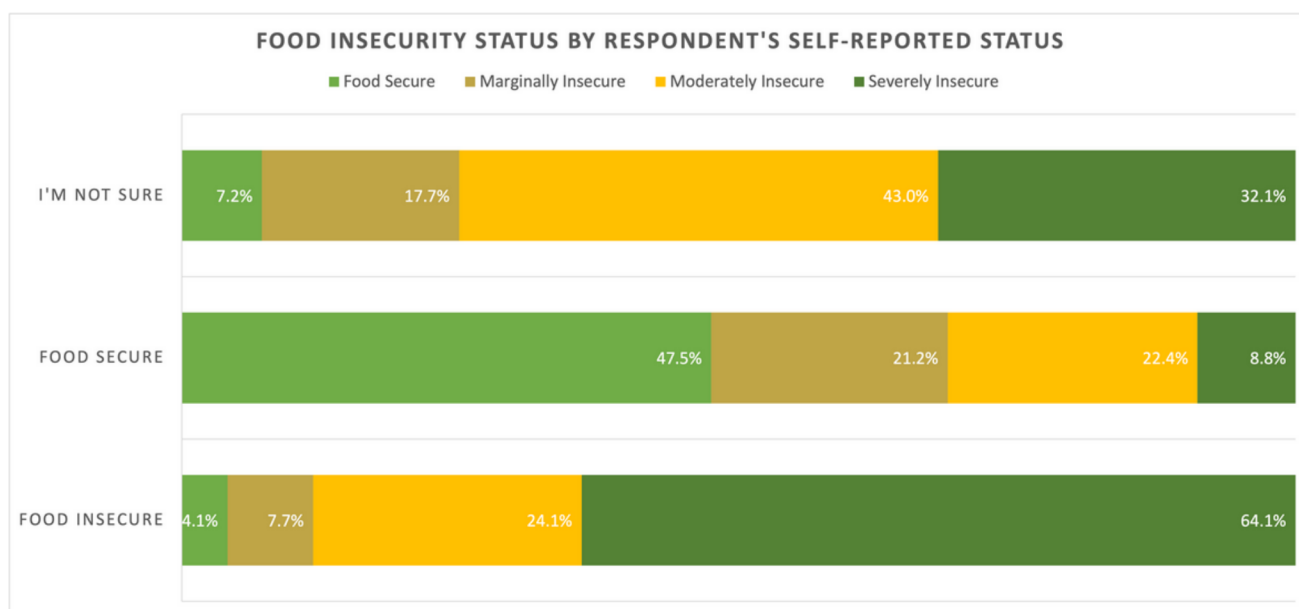
definition of food security from the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO),^[vii] survey participants were asked to identify whether they felt they were food secure. Results found that 65% (n=873) of respondents self-identified as food secure, while just 16% (n=214) self-identified as food insecure, and another 19% (n=263) said they were unsure after reading the definition.

“I do not need [the food resources] and rather save it for people who do.”

These findings point to a larger issue of illiteracy as it concerns food insecurity. Many survey participants noted that they opted not to use the food resources because they did not feel they were as much in need as others. This sentiment shared by many of the students – of guilt for utilizing resources they did not feel were meant for them – further demonstrates how charitable models of food provisioning create a mentality that students must be in dire need before they can seek resources.

The 19% of students who said they were unsure of their status is further evidence that food insecurity is a misunderstood phenomenon. Examining the graph below, which represents students' self-identified status compared with their food security status, a majority of this group was found to be experiencing some of the most acute forms of food insecurity, moderate (43%, n=102) and severe (32.1%, n=76). Likewise, most of the students who self-identified as food secure were determined to be experiencing financial food insecurity at a rate of 52.4% (n=428).

As expected, most of the students who self-identified as food insecure were experiencing moderate and severe food insecurity (88.2%, n=172). The remaining 11.8% (n=23) of students who were marginally food insecure and food secure may be explained by the fact that the HFSSM only considers the financial access to food, when there may be other factors influencing an individual's experience of food insecurity (e.g., cultural, physical and/or social access to food).



Graph 13: Represents the rates at which students are experiencing food insecurity based on how they self-reported their food status (I.e., food secure, food insecure). This data only accounts for those who responded to the 7-item HFSSM questionnaire.

Summary & Recommendations

Food insecurity among Concordia students is a widespread issue that negatively impacts their physical and mental health as well as academic performance. The high rate of food insecurity within the university has increased the demand for campus resources that are ill-equipped to meet the need. Current SFI resources strongly focus on food provisioning and are largely led by students with minimal engagement from the university. Most SFI initiatives have low visibility and, in some cases, cannot promote their services due to budgetary constraints. Greater involvement in SFI by university leaders could help the campus develop a more effective response to food insecurity by

coordinating efforts to address emergency needs and social determinants of food insecurity, building capacity to respond to emergency needs, and increasing the visibility of SFI on campus.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed, which are grouped into four areas: resource support, awareness, research and governance. Among the proposals, the critical first step is a governance action, namely to convene a standing committee on food insecurity that brings together university leaders and stakeholders to establish priorities and coordinate support.

Develop a university-wide approach to addressing food insecurity	
Item	Specified Action
A. Coordinate action on food insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene a standing committee on food insecurity that brings together university and student leaders to establish priorities and coordinate support on a range of food security initiatives that address emergency food needs as well as social determinants • Develop a Food Insecurity Action Plan, including a well-defined home to coordinate food security resources, services and research
Increase awareness of student food insecurity and campus resources	
Item	Specified Action
A. Promote food insecurity resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an online hub where students can learn about food insecurity (including research and outreach events), resources and opportunities to support university efforts to improve food security • Engage departments in strategies to disseminate information about available resources, such as asking faculty to include information about food security resources in their syllabus
B. Encourage discussion on student food insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage peer-to-peer outreach systems, such as Wellness Ambassadors and the Student Sustainability Ambassador Program, to create opportunities for students to learn about food insecurity and campus resources • Provide food security awareness training to university leaders, administrative staff, and student groups • Connect food insecurity with university commitments and policies, relating to student mental health and wellness, sustainability development goals and equity, diversity and inclusion.

Support a range of SFI initiatives to address emergency need and enhance food security in the Concordia community

Item	Specified Action
A. Build capacity to meet students' emergency food needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a fund to support new and existing initiatives with the aim of expanding access to services and allowing all resources to be promoted • Foster relationships between SFI initiatives and administrative units who could provide material or in-kind support
B. Engage campus food vendors to address affordability barriers for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Concordia Food Services in dedicating a retail space to promoting food security, such as converting the LB café into a location that offers at-cost meals and grocery • Encourage food vendors to offer discounted meal deals and snacks with a focus on healthy food options • Consider including healthy food options and affordability criteria in food tenant leases
C. Increase availability of physical food resources and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide food services in buildings where classes occur, with particular focus on VA building and Loyola campus • Add vending machines that provide 24-hour food options that include healthy, affordable options • Provide more microwaves
D. Diversity food options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult students about the types of foods they would like to find on campus and the barriers to accessing cultural foods • Assess the campus food environment to determine availability of culturally relevant foods and identify areas for improvement
E. Encourage student participation in food and budget skills workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce for-credit opportunities (e.g., courses, experiential learning) to build food-related, budget, and health-focused skills
F. Increase financial support for students in need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Financial Aid and Awards Office and Graduate Studies Office to identify opportunities for increasing available needs-based funding

Advance food insecurity-related research and systems innovation

Item	Specified Action
A. Deepen understanding of student food insecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage research and experiential learning projects related to student food insecurity • Consult students (with a particular focus on racialized and marginalized students, graduate, and international students) and other campus stakeholders to identify the barriers to food security and develop recommendations specific to their needs
B. Foster knowledge exchange to promote food security at Concordia and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participate in food insecurity committees and networks in Montreal, Quebec and among Canadian universities

Appendix A: Survey Respondent Data (Full)

	Variable Option	Frequency of Total (n)	Percent of Total	Marginally Insecure	Moderately Insecure	Severely Insecure	Rate of Food Insecurity (Overall)
Age (Years)	16-19	172	13.2%	16.5%	20.3%	15.2%	52.0%
	20-24	681	52.1%	17.4%	25.1%	21.8%	64.3%
	25-29	261	20.0%	19.0%	33.1%	23.1%	75.2%
	30-34	102	7.8%	24.5%	29.8%	23.4%	77.7%
	35-39	53	4.1%	27.7%	29.8%	29.8%	87.3%
	40-44	14	1.1%	28.6%	14.3%	35.7%	78.6%
	45-49	11	0.8%		27.3%	18.2%	45.5%
	50+	13	1.0%	7.7%	30.8%		38.5%
Faculty	Arts and Science	663	49.1%	19.1%	25.0%	22.9%	67.0%
	Gina Cody School of Engineering	403	29.9%	17.0%	31.3%	20.9%	69.2%
	Fine Arts	123	9.1%	19.3%	28.9%	28.1%	76.3%
	John Molson School of Business	161	11.9%	18.4%	20.4%	14.3%	53.1%
Degree	Bachelor's	944	69.9%	18.4%	24.2%	20.0%	62.6%
	Master's	310	23.0%	17.5%	32.5%	25.9%	75.9%
	PhD	75	5.6%	25.0%	30.9%	25.0%	80.9%
	Other	21	1.6%	4.80%	38.1%	38.0%	80.9%
Status	Québec resident	725	53.7%	18.3%	23.3%	18.6%	60.2%
	Out-of-province (OOP)	130	9.6%	17.4%	27.3%	25.6%	70.3%
	International (INT)	494	36.6%	19.1%	31.5%	26.2%	76.8%
Living Arrangement*	Concordia residence	63	4.7%	15.8%	10.5%	17.5%	43.8%
	With family	455	33.7%	17.9%	20.7%	15.3%	53.9%
	With roommate(s)	431	31.9%	17.4%	32.8%	27.4%	77.6%
	Alone	211	15.6%	14.4%	29.7%	28.2%	72.3%
	With partner(s)	191	14.1%	29.8%	25.8%	23.0%	78.6%
	With dependent(s)	38	2.8%	20.0%	25.7%	22.9%	68.6%
	Other	16	1.2%	6.7%	40%	40%	86.7%
Neighbourhood	NDG/CDN	187	13.8%	19.1%	24.3%	24.9%	68.3%
	Mount Royal (region)	179	13.2%	18.7%	32.7%	21.6%	73.0%
	West Island	87	6.4%	21.4%	23.8%	11.9%	57.1%
	Downtown	339	25.1%	17.2%	32.7%	25.1%	75.0%
	Hochelaga	41	3.0%	20.0%	30.0%	27.5%	77.5%
	South Central Montreal	99	7.3%	22.6%	26.9%	23.7%	73.2%
	South Shore	73	5.4%	25.4%	15.5%	8.5%	49.4%
	North Montreal	39	2.9%	15.2%	27.3%	27.3%	69.8%
	Jean Talon/Petite Patrie	30	2.2%	24.1%	17.2%	27.6%	68.9%
	East Montreal	29	2.1%	21.4%	25.0%	17.9%	64.3%
	Laval	49	3.6%	15.6%	20.0%	8.9%	44.5%
	Westmount	19	1.4%	11.8%	29.4%	41.2%	82.4%
	Other	67	5.0%	12.9%	21.0%	17.7%	51.6%

The * indicates that respondents were asked to 'Select all that apply' for that variable. For this reason, the total number of responses are greater than the total number of respondents.

	Variable Option	Frequency of Total (n)	Percent of Total	Marginally Insecure	Moderately Insecure	Severely Insecure	Rate of Food Insecurity (Overall)
Academic Commitment	Part-time	172	12.8%	23.8%	21.3%	22.5%	67.6%
	Full-time	1175	87.2%	17.7%	27.4%	21.8%	66.9%
Campus	Sir George Williams (SGW)	1009	74.7%	18.3%	26.5%	21.6%	66.4%
	Loyola	256	18.9%	16.7%	29.3%	20.5%	66.5%
	Both (equally)	70	5.2%	26.2%	20.0%	33.8%	80.0%
	Neither	16	1.2%	21.4%	21.4%	7.1%	49.9%
Time on Campus	1-2 days	273	20.4%	19.6%	26.7%	20.8%	67.1%
	3-4 days	747	56.0%	19.0%	28.4%	21.7%	69.1%
	5+ days	315	23.6%	15.9%	22.6%	24.0%	62.5%

	Variable Option	Frequency of Total (n)	Percent of Total	Marginally Insecure	Moderately Insecure	Severely Insecure	Rate of Food Insecurity (Overall)
Gender Identity*	Cisgender man	379	28.0%	17.3%	27.1%	22.5%	66.9%
	Cisgender woman	784	58.0%	20.2%	24.9%	20.2%	65.3%
	Non-binary	53	3.9%	11.5%	28.8%	36.5%	76.8%
	Prefer not to answer	54	4.0%	11.6%	30.2%	27.9%	69.7%
	Self-described	106	7.8%	12.4%	32.7%	26.5%	71.6%
Sexual Orientation*	Bisexual	177	13.1%	23.7%	26.0%	23.1%	72.8%
	Gay/Lesbian	108	5.3%	21.6%	21.6%	20.6%	63.8%
	Heterosexual	731	54.1%	18.1%	27.4%	18.7%	64.2%
	Prefer not to answer	108	8.0%	14.6%	25.0%	33.3%	72.9%
	Self-described	297	22.0%	18.1%	27.7%	25.5%	71.3%
Race/Ethnicity*	Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian	222	16.4%	21.1%	26.8%	25.8%	73.7%
	Black	92	6.8%	15.1%	29.1%	29.1%	73.3%
	East/Southeast Asian	135	10.0%	14.4%	24.8%	17.6%	56.8%
	Indigenous (First Nation/Métis/Inuit)	73	5.4%	14.9%	25.4%	20.9%	61.2%
	Latin American	78	5.8%	27.6%	26.3%	21.1%	75.0%
	South Asian	253	18.7%	19.8%	30.2%	21.6%	71.6%
	White	535	39.6%	18.5%	24.1%	20.3%	62.9%
	Prefer not to answer	34	2.5%	25.0%	25.0%	28.1%	78.1%
	Self-described	32	2.4%	19.4%	16.1%	19.4%	54.9%
Registered with ACSD	No	1179	87.5%	18.7%	27.0%	20.3%	66.0%
	Yes	169	12.5%	16.6%	23.9%	32.5%	73.0%

The * indicates that respondents were asked to 'Select all that apply' for that variable. For this reason, the total number of responses are greater than the total number of respondents.

	Variable Option	Frequency of Total (n)	Percent of Total	Marginally Insecure	Moderately Insecure	Severely Insecure	Rate of Food Insecurity (Overall)
Employment Status	Full-time	176	13.3%	21.6%	19.8%	19.8%	61.2%
	Part-time	617	46.7%	18.5%	28.5%	24.8%	71.8%
	Self-employed	36	2.7%	22.9%	34.3%	14.3%	71.5%
	Unemployed, seeking work	252	19.1%	14.9%	29.0%	27.1%	71.0%
	Unemployed, not seeking work	240	18.2%	19.2%	21.4%	14.4%	55.0%
Source of Funds*	Support from personal relationships	740	54.7%	18.5%	26.2%	16.0%	60.7%
	Income from job	671	49.6%	19.6%	27.1%	24.2%	70.9%
	Personal savings	527	39.0%	19.6%	28.2%	18.8%	66.6%
	Grant, bursary, and/or scholarship	312	23.0%	18.4%	31.4%	21.7%	71.5%
	Loans (e.g., Government, bank, credit)	433	32.0%	15.3%	31.1%	28.3%	74.7%
	Other	46	1.8%	22.0%	24.4%	43.9%	90.3%
Able to Budget	Yes, I use skills to budget	834	62.0%	20.3%	25.2%	19.4%	64.9%
	No, I'd like to be able to budget	470	34.9%	16.6%	29.8%	27.5%	73.9%
	I have no interest	41	3.0%	5.1%	20.5%	10.3%	35.9%

	Variable Option	Frequency of Total (n)	Percent of Total	Marginally Insecure	Moderately Insecure	Severely Insecure	Rate of Food Insecurity (Overall)
Able to Make Nutritious Meals	No	318	23.6%	17.4%	28.8%	25.3%	71.5%
	Yes	1031	76.4%	18.8%	25.9%	20.8%	65.5%
Impact of COVID-19*	More reliance on home delivery	288	21.3%	18.6%	24.8%	24.5%	67.9%
	Stress/anxiety in public food places	432	32.0%	17.5%	29.1%	27.2%	73.8%
	Worry/difficulty accessing supports	177	13.1%	10.5%	32.7%	38.3%	81.5%
	Less availability of food supports	177	13.1%	18.2%	32.1%	37.0%	87.3%
	Unemployment/reduced hours	210	15.5%	13.3%	36.9%	39.5%	89.7%
	No impact	513	37.9%	18.6%	22.7%	14.4%	55.7%
	Other	44	3.3%	19.0%	28.6%	23.8%	71.4%
Transportation*	Personal vehicle	314	23.2%	17.9%	19.9%	12.2%	50.0%
	Public transit	808	59.8%	18.6%	27.7%	22.7%	69.0%
	Walk	1031	76.3%	18.3%	28.4%	22.3%	69.0%
	Home delivery	205	15.2%	17.9%	23.6%	22.1%	63.6%
	Other	266	19.7%	19.1%	25.9%	21.5%	66.5%
On-Campus Food Source*	From home	942	69.7%	19.5%	27.0%	21.3%	67.8%
	Student meal plan	97	7.2%	17.2%	14.9%	19.5%	51.6%
	Restaurant/Café	659	48.7%	21.6%	23.7%	13.9%	59.2%
	Free/affordable food source	356	26.3%	18.8%	29.6%	28.7%	77.1%
	Events serving food	112	8.3%	10.2%	32.4%	37.0%	79.6%
	Depanneur	113	8.4%	13.2%	28.3%	18.9%	60.4%
	Grocery store	153	11.3%	16.7%	28.8%	19.7%	65.2%
	Pharmacy	55	4.1%	19.2%	23.1%	15.4%	57.7%
	Other	58	4.3%	14.5%	25.5%	38.2%	78.2%

	Variable Option	Frequency of Total (n)	Percent of Total	Marginally Insecure	Moderately Insecure	Severely Insecure	Rate of Food Insecurity (Overall)
Spent less on food to pay other bills	Never	510	39.9%	20.9%	16.8%	3.8%	41.5%
	Some of the time	414	32.4%	20.5%	39.7%	27.3%	87.5%
	Always	355	27.8%	13.7%	25.6%	41.7%	81.0%
Spent less on food to pay school expenses	Never	540	42.3%	20.2%	18.5%	6.7%	45.4%
	Some of the time	406	31.8%	19.4%	37.8%	28.6%	85.8%
	Always	330	25.9%	15.7%	26.3%	38.1%	80.1%
Spent less on food to socialize	Never	574	45.2%	16.7%	19.6%	15.8%	52.1%
	Some of the time	533	41.9%	21.4%	35.5%	26.4%	83.3%
	Always	164	12.9%	17.2%	20.4%	28.0%	65.6%

	Variable Option	Frequency of Total (n)	Percent of Total	Marginally Insecure	Moderately Insecure	Severely Insecure	Rate of Food Insecurity (Overall)
Food Insecure (Self-Reported)	No	214	15.9%	7.7%	24.1%	64.1%	95.9%
	Yes	873	64.7%	21.2%	22.4%	8.8%	52.4%
	I'm not sure	263	19.5%	17.7%	43.0%	32.1%	92.8%

	Variable Option	Frequency of Total (n)	Percent of Total	Marginally Insecure	Moderately Insecure	Severely Insecure	Rate of Food Insecurity (Overall)
Campus Resource Awareness*	People's Potato Lunch	653	48.3%	18.7%	26.3%	21.7%	66.7%
	People's Potato food baskets	275	20.3%	16.8%	31.7%	25.6%	74.1%
	Hive Free Lunch	420	31.1%	16.2%	26.6%	20.6%	63.4%
	Hive Café Pay-it-Forward	195	14.4%	16.4%	23.8%	18.5%	58.7%
	Community fridge/pantry	135	10.0%	13.4%	27.6%	22.8%	63.8%
	SEFF	122	9.0%	13.5%	30.6%	37.8%	81.9%
	I don't know the above	354	26.2%	18.2%	25.5%	21.4%	65.1%
Hesitancy to Use Campus Resources*	Other	3	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Physically inaccessible	56	4.1%	11.5%	38.5%	38.5%	88.5%
	Do not meet dietary preferences	151	11.2%	18.2%	31.5%	23.8%	73.5%
	Inconvenient hours	380	28.1%	18.4%	32.1%	28.8%	79.3%
	Inconvenient location	216	16.0%	16.3%	28.7%	31.7%	76.7%
	I feel uncomfortable using them	278	20.6%	15.8%	29.3%	30.1%	75.2%
	I don't know enough about them	662	49.0%	19.8%	28.8%	22.1%	70.7%
	I have no interest	119	8.8%	16.4%	6.4%	4.5%	27.3%
Campus Workshop Awareness*	I do not hesitate to use them	165	12.2%	22.4%	21.8%	19.9%	64.1%
	Other	8	0.6%	12.5%	25.0%	12.5%	50.0%
	Cooking	206	15.2%	17.8%	28.4%	23.4%	69.6%
	Budgeting	343	25.4%	19.9%	27.3%	21.4%	68.6%
	Gardening/growing	214	15.8%	20.8%	28.0%	19.8%	68.6%
Campus Workshop Awareness*	I have not heard of any	732	54.1%	16.8%	25.7%	23.5%	66.0%
	Other	1	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

The * indicates that respondents were asked to 'select all that apply' for that variable. For this reason, the total number of responses are greater than the total number of respondents.

Appendix B: Concordia SFI Resources

Food Provisioning

Hive Free Lunch (Loyola SC Building)

Provides free vegan and nut-free lunch Monday-Friday from 12:30pm to 1:30pm. The fee-levy group also has a free grocery table with food sourced from Moisson Montreal, and manages Megan's Community Fridge, which is intended to be stocked with leftover food from events. Starting in September 2023, free breakfast will also be served from 8:30 to 10:30.

Experience 2022-23

- Serves over 1000 meals per week
- 9-12 food baskets per week
- Food baskets and food in Megan's Fridge are taken as soon as they are put out

Megan's Fridge (Loyola SC Building)

A new initiative launched in January 2023 in the Hive Free Lunch location, two mini-fridges are available for Concordia community to take or drop off food on Monday to Thursday, 9am – 3pm.

Experience 2022-23

- Fridges are often empty due to lack of donations
- Any food added to the fridge is quickly taken

People's Potato (SGW Hall Building)

Provides vegan and nut-free lunch by donation on Monday to Thursday, 12:30pm to 2pm. The fee-levy group also offers free bi-weekly food baskets.

2022-23 Experience

- Serves 1,600 meals per week
- Distributes 100 food baskets every other week
- Increased demand:
- Long lines for lunch and sometimes would run out before end of service
- Line-up for food baskets would begin 3-4 hours before opening

Community Cravings Pantry (SGW, Hall Building)

Launched in February 2023 in a space managed by the Concordia Student Union, the free food pantry is available for the Concordia community to take and drop off food. The pantry is accessible whenever the Hall Building is open. The pantry received \$6,000 in funding from the Sustainability Action Plan to purchase food for the upcoming year.

2022-23 Experience

- Distributed \$1,000 worth of food within a month and a half
- During the weeks when People's Potato did not distribute food baskets, the pantry saw more demand
- Cannot be widely promoted due to limited funding

Student Emergency Food Fund (SEFF)

Dean of Students manages this program which distributes \$100 grocery gift cards to students in need. Students are limited to one gift card per term and must schedule an appointment with the DOS, attend a DOS-organized town hall or visit one of the program's administrative unit partners to obtain a gift card. Funding for SEFF is provided by donations from Concordia community and alumni.

2022-23 Experience

- From May 2022-March 2023, \$160,000 worth of grocery gift cards were distributed to students. In previous years, SEFF distributed an average of \$50,000 worth of cards.
- The increased demand overwhelmed the DOS staff administering the program.

Emergency Meal Plan (EMP)

Provide \$100 on student cards to use at Concordia Food Services locations. Though managed by Concordia Food Services, EMPs are distributed by administrative unit partners at their discretion (Financial Aid & Awards, Campus Wellness & Support Services, Concordia University Student Parents, Student Success Centre, Otsenhákta Student Centre). Students are limited to one voucher per term. Funding for EMPs is provided by annual contributions from VP- Services and Sustainability, Alumni Advancement, and the Office of the President.

Experience 2022-23

- Distributed 59 EMPs this year compared with 37 in 2021-22 and 40 in 2019-20
- Program is not promoted due to limited funding (\$5,613 remaining at start of Fall 2022)

Hive Meal Voucher

Provide vouchers for free burrito or free soup & salad to use at the Hive Café Co-op. The voucher program is managed by Concordia Food Services and distributed by the same units as the EMPs. Students are limited to two vouchers per term. Funding was provided by the Concordia Student Union.

Experience 2022-23

- Number of vouchers distributed this year is unknown at this time; in 2019-20, 69 vouchers were distributed
- Program is not promoted due to limited funding (\$2,584 remaining at start of Fall 2022)

Hive Café Co-op Pay-It-Forward

Customers can purchase a food item for someone else to request later.

No information available regarding this initiative's experience in 2022-23

Le Frigo Vert

Low-cost market located near SGW campus, selling a range of products related to wellness and food.

During pandemic, this fee-levy group organized a pay-what-you-can emergency grocery basket program, which distributed 916 baskets to 400 students in Fall 2021. The program was closed when the group did not secure additional funding.

Experience 2022-23

- More people asking for free food
- Trying to rebuild its inventory to offer more groceries
- Interested in reviving the PWYC basket program if able to secure funding

CSU Emergency Voucher Program

Distributes \$25 e-transfers to students in need (previously was a \$25 gift card to a grocery store – this changed during the pandemic). The money can be used for any expense.

Experience 2022-23

- Provides vouchers to the exact number of students their funding allows for.
- Program is not promoted due to limited funding

Affordable Food Options

Concordia Food Services' contract with Aramark requires the food service provider to sell fresh fruit at reduced margins and offer a combo special for less than \$8.

Bursaries

Financial Aid and Awards Office (FAAO) offers bursaries to undergraduate students while bursaries for graduate students are distributed by departments. FAAO also manages emergency bursaries for undergraduate and graduate students in distress. These bursaries are awarded on a case by case basis and are not advertised. 35 students received emergency bursaries during 2022-23 academic year.

Food Facilities

Microwaves are available to students on both campuses. However, there is no information on the number and location of the microwaves.

Food Literacy & Skills

Health & Wellness offers individual counselling and workshops on eating healthfully and on a budget.

Experience 2022-23

- Low attendance for workshops

Budgeting Skills

Financial Aid and Awards Office offers information on bursaries, awards and scholarships, government loans. It also provides individual service to help students budget. A limited number of emergency bursaries are available as a last resort for students in critical need (for example, cannot pay rent or afford food).

In November 2022, they organized a series of budgeting workshops as part of Financial Literacy Month.

Urban Agriculture

- Coop CultivAction (Loyola and Concordia Greenhouse)
- Mind.Heart.Mouth (Loyola)
-

Gardens located on the Loyola campus and SGW rooftop greenhouse allow Concordia students opportunities to learn how to grow food. They also contribute vegetables to student food security initiatives and cafes.

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Notes

[i] Goal from the Report of the Working Group on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (2020): Enhance university services to create an environment in which all campus community members are welcomed and supported; Priority Level 1 for Food: Add diverse food options and availability on both campuses, including vegan, halal, and kosher foods (p. 19)

[ii] While unaffordability (and costs that continue to rise) has been discovered as a main barrier to student food security (Meal Exchange 2016), there are also the physical and socio-cultural factors that may contribute to levels of food insecurity experienced on a university campus. In one study by Hanbazaza et al. (2021) where they assessed the prevalence, causes and consequences of food insecurity for international students studying at Canadian campuses, they found that a lack of access to culturally relevant foods was a significant barrier to the students' food security. Second, while very few food insecurity reports have examined this specific variable, disability (e.g., Physical, cognitive) has been shown as a significant barrier to food security.

[iii] The University of British Columbia (2019 survey found 39.5% of undergraduate students were food insecure, Memorial University 39.9% food insecure, University of Saskatchewan 39.5% food insecure, and the University of Manitoba 35.3% food insecure (Entz, M., Slater, J., & Desmarais A., 2017; Olauson C., et al., 2017; Blundell L., et al., 2019; 2019 survey of undergraduate students, [3 2019.09 Addressing-Food-Insecurity.pdf \(ubc.ca\)](#)).

[iv] Meal Exchange survey conducted during the 2020-21 academic year involving thirteen universities found that 41.7% of respondents faced some level of food insecurity. When students from the same thirteen universities were surveyed again in Fall 2021, the rate of food insecurity had increased for all thirteen universities while the average rate of food security jumped from 41.7% to nearly 57%. Six of the universities reported a food insecurity rate of 60% or higher, including Carleton University at 63.5% and University of Calgary, 66%.

[v] It should be noted that The Student Food Insecurity Campus Readiness Assessment is not a validated tool for measuring the successes and shortcomings of a university's capacity to address student food insecurity. In this report, it is referenced to position Concordia in relation to other universities in Canada.

[vi] Based on the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) definition of food security. Food security exists "when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (2006)