



# STUDENT HUNGER & HOMELESSNESS

at Massachusetts Public Colleges & Universities

# What We Know

- **There are 1,020** “unaccompanied homeless youth” or students at risk of homelessness enrolled at public campuses
  - FAFSA & HUD Data for Massachusetts
- Many campuses have reported **increases in student hunger & homelessness** over the past year
  - DHE Annual Food & Housing Insecurity Survey

# 2016 DHE Survey Results

- **Over 1/3** of MA public campuses report student hunger & homelessness has risen in the past year:



- **34%** report an increase in students being served by food pantries on or near campus
- **38%** report an increase in students living with food insecurity
- **45%** report an increase in student homelessness

# 2016 DHE Survey Results

### Campus Food Assistance

- **24 of 29** campuses use on-campus pantries or mobile food marts, or community-based pantries

- **18 of 29** campuses offer additional or other types of assistance programs such as:

- Community resources & referrals
- Food drives
- Hunger awareness programs
- Voucher programs
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Student donations of meal plan credits
- Emergency loans



# 2016 DHE Survey Results



## Student Homelessness

- **15** Community Colleges
- **7** State Universities &
- **2** UMass Campuses

... are **aware of homeless students** attending classes in 2016

## Student Hunger & Homelessness

# 2016 DHE Survey Results

### ■ Where Homeless Students Sleep:

- Couch surfing with friends
- Shelters
- Cars
- 24-hour businesses (Dunkin Donuts, airports)

### ■ What's Driving the Increase:

A word cloud of factors driving the increase in student hunger and homelessness. The words are in red and vary in size. The largest words are 'Lack of Family Support' and 'Cost of Living'. Other prominent words include 'Insufficient Funds', 'Student Debt', and 'Financial Aid Issues'. Smaller words include 'Selection of Insufficient Meal Plan', 'Poor Budgeting', and 'Low-Paying Jobs'.

Insufficient Funds  
Cost of Living  
Lack of Family Support  
Student Debt  
Financial Aid Issues  
Selection of Insufficient Meal Plan  
Poor Budgeting  
Low-Paying Jobs

# What's Being Done?

### ■ DHE/State-Level Actions

- ✓ \$400K for One Family, Inc. Scholarship
- ✓ \$4.53M for Adopted & Foster Fee Assistance Program
- ✓ Linking campuses with MA Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH) for resources
- ✓ Including college students in *Annual Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Survey*



## Student Hunger & Homelessness

# What's Being Done?

“We are helping to create a welcoming environment where students will not feel ashamed when they need food or help with housing. We are helping students to realize that the best way out of poverty is through their education.”

Bunker Hill Community College

### ■ Campus Actions

- ✓ Increasing student supports, launching new initiatives
- ✓ Foundations raising funds to fill need
- ✓ BHCC hosting spring conference



# National Context

“My concern is that we’re seeing a huge increase in the 18–24 homeless youth population nationally, and I want to make sure that these individuals don’t become the chronically homeless

# North Shore Community College Food and Housing Insecurity

**Board of Higher Education**

**January 24, 2017**

**Dr. Patricia A. Gentile**

**President**



# National Attention

- \* March 2016 – Dr. Pam Eddinger, president BHCC, asked US Senators from MA to request a study from US Government Accountability Office (GAO) on hunger and food insecurity on 2- and 4-year college campuses.
  - \* Followed by similar call from American Council on Education
  - \* Followed by similar letters/calls from presidents of Berkshire CC and North Shore CC
- \* September 2016 *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream* published by U of Chicago Press, Author: Sara Goldrick-Rab, Wisconsin HOPE Lab.

# North Shore Community College

- \* October 2016 – NSCC administered Wisconsin HOPE Lab's Hunger/Homelessness Eradication Applied Research Tools (HEART) instrument to survey our students:
  - \* Sent electronically to all NSCC credit and non-credit students enrolled in fall semester
  - \* Online survey system
  - \* Heavily marketed on campuses; faculty asked to remind students to take survey
  - \* Reminders emailed both 5 and 10 days after initial distribution to NSCC students

# NSCC Survey Outcomes

- \* NSCC students rated at higher levels of hunger and homelessness than national college students:
  - \* **32.1%** of NSCC students are “hungry” – at lowest level of food security; compared to 20% national sample
  - \* **53.5%** of all respondents found to have a low or very low level of food security
  - \* **19.1%** of NSCC students are “homeless” – at lowest level of housing security; compared to 13% of national sample
  - \* Nearly **70%** of NSCC students are struggling with food and/or housing insecurity

# Advocacy

## \* Post Survey and Outcomes:

- \* Oct 2016 Shared with NSCC Faculty/Staff, all MA CC Presidents and requested other cc's implement the survey to develop statewide view
- \* Nov 2016 Reported back to CommUniverCity at Lynn Social Services sub-committee; various community groups and leadership
- \* Nov – ongoing NSCC internal meetings to revise/expand SHOC and SAVE distribution of funds
- \* Nov 2016 DHE survey completed and submitted; attended Dec statewide meeting with EOHHS
- \* Jan 2017 – presentation at BHE, collaboration with DHE/HHS

# Student Perspective

Student Hunger & Homelessness

# Discussion

Student Hunger & Homelessness