

# The Prevalence and Impact of Food Insecurity on St. Cloud State University Campus

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## Bridge to Community Resources

Bridge to Community Resources is a pilot project at St. Cloud State University. Our mission is to help identify students who are experiencing financial insecurity on campus and connecting them to the services that they require. Bridge to Community Resources is dedicated to providing students with the tools and resources that will help them succeed in school. As a grass roots project, we are committed to addressing the issue of financial insecurity on St. Cloud State University campus. This research endeavor is part of one of their many active projects to help address food insecurity through measuring its prevalence on campus and researching applicable solutions to help SCSU students succeed.

## Introduction

Food insecurity is increasing nationally in the United States of America.<sup>1</sup> According to the most recent data, Minnesota has had an increase of approximately 10% of individuals experiencing homeless and financial insecurity<sup>2</sup>. Students attending post-secondary institutions are at a particularly high risk of food insecurity. Food insecurity has been shown to comprise the integrity of students in tertiary settings, behavioral and physical development in students<sup>3</sup>, and has the potential to lead to academic determination.<sup>4</sup> This research endeavor seeks to evaluate and measure the current prevalence of food insecurity on St. Cloud State University campus and to investigate the negative academic consequences related to food insecurity.

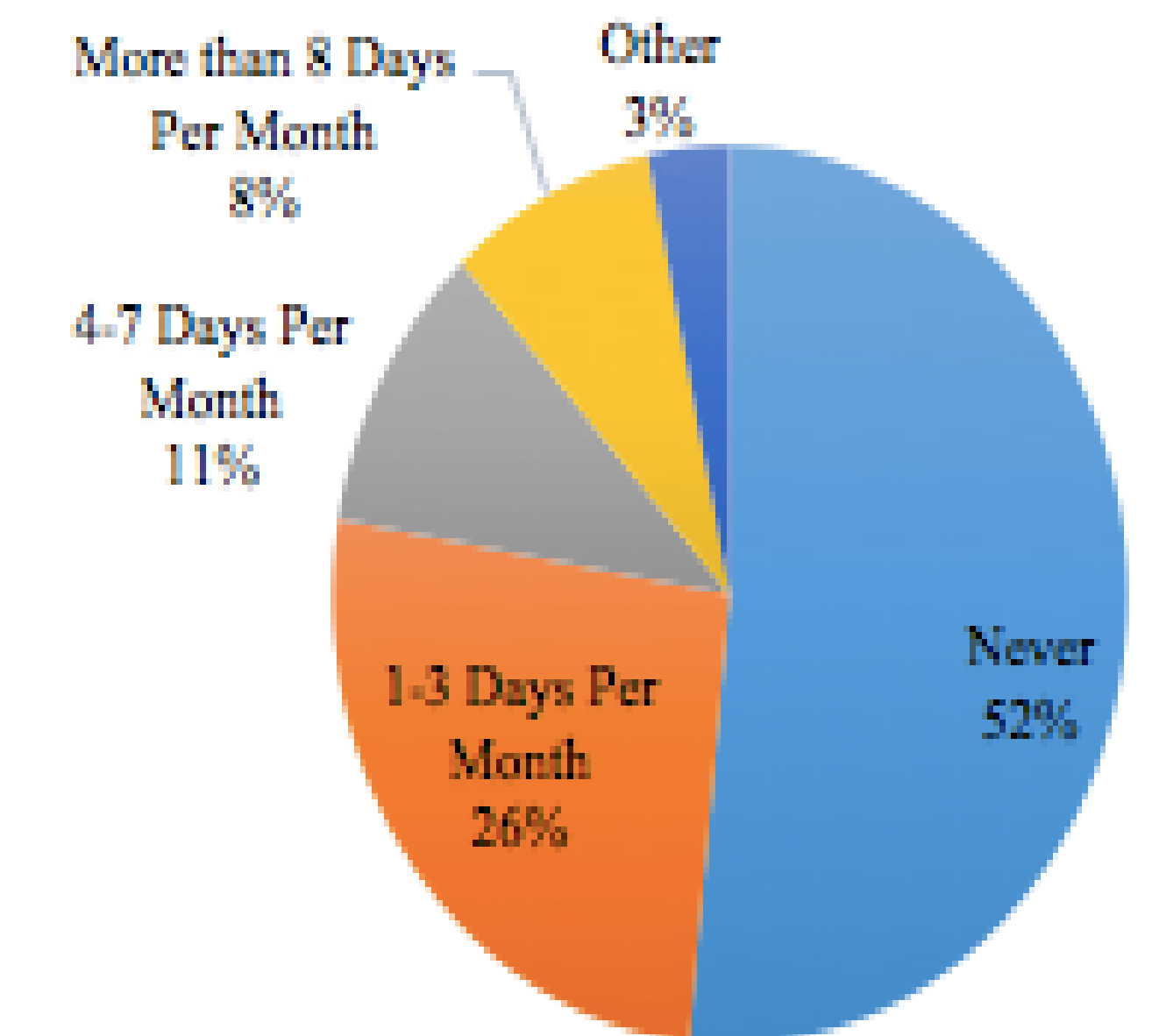
## Methodology

Graduate and undergraduate students at St. Cloud State University completed the Housing and Food Insecurity Survey developed by members of Bridge to Community Resources in March- April 2019. The survey consisted of 22 questions comprised of sociodemographic, food insecurity, and housing insecurity questions. Students were not offered incentives to participate in the survey. A survey reminder was sent to the entire student body population via email invitation three times. 9,000 enrolled students from St. Cloud State University were selected to participate in the survey. Using a convenience sample, 482 students completed the survey resulting in a response rate of 5.35%. Responses to the survey were anonymous and voluntary.

## Conclusion

Findings from this research and applied experience are consistent with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Economic Research Services. Approximately 1 in 4 (28.5%) St. Cloud State University Students identify as food insecure.<sup>5</sup> Another 1 in 5 (20%) St. Cloud State University Students worried about running out of food before getting money to purchase more. This research also illustrates the academic consequences of food insecurity. Approximately 1 in 5 students (18%) identified as struggling to concentrate in class due to food insecurity and 17% responded saying they had to work more hours in order to make ends meet. This research illustrates the need for future steps to be taken by the university in order to address the issue of food insecurity on campus.

## Have you Had Concerns of Running Out of Food This Month?



## Future Steps

As a student, which program outlined below do you think would most benefit you and other students on St. Cloud State University Campus?

- Food Pantry located on Campus
- Fare For All located on Campus
- Students Donate Extra Husky Bucks
- Mobile Food Pantry on Campus

## Acknowledgments

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## Citations

<sup>1</sup> National Research Council. (2006). *Food Insecurity and Hunger in the United States: An Assessment of the Measure*. Panel to Review the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Measurement of Food Insecurity and Hunger, Gooloo S. Wunderlich and Janet L.

<sup>2</sup> *Single Night Count of People Experiencing Homelessness 2018*(Rep.). (2018). Saint Paul, MN: Wilder Research.

<sup>3</sup> Jyoti, D. F., Frongillo, E. A., & Jones, S. J. (2005). Food Insecurity Affects School Children's Academic Performance, Weight Gain, and Social Skills. *The Journal of Nutrition*, 135(12), 2831-2839. doi:10.1093/jn/135.12.2831

<sup>4</sup> Gallegos, D., Ramsey, R., & Won Ong, K. (2014). Food Insecurity: Is it an issue among tertiary students? *Higher Education*, 67(5), 497-510. Retrieved January 27, 2019

<sup>5</sup> Lust, K. (2017). *2017 Boynton Health Survey St. Cloud State University*. Retrieved February 7, 2019, from University of Minnesota.

## Food Insecurity Impact on Academics

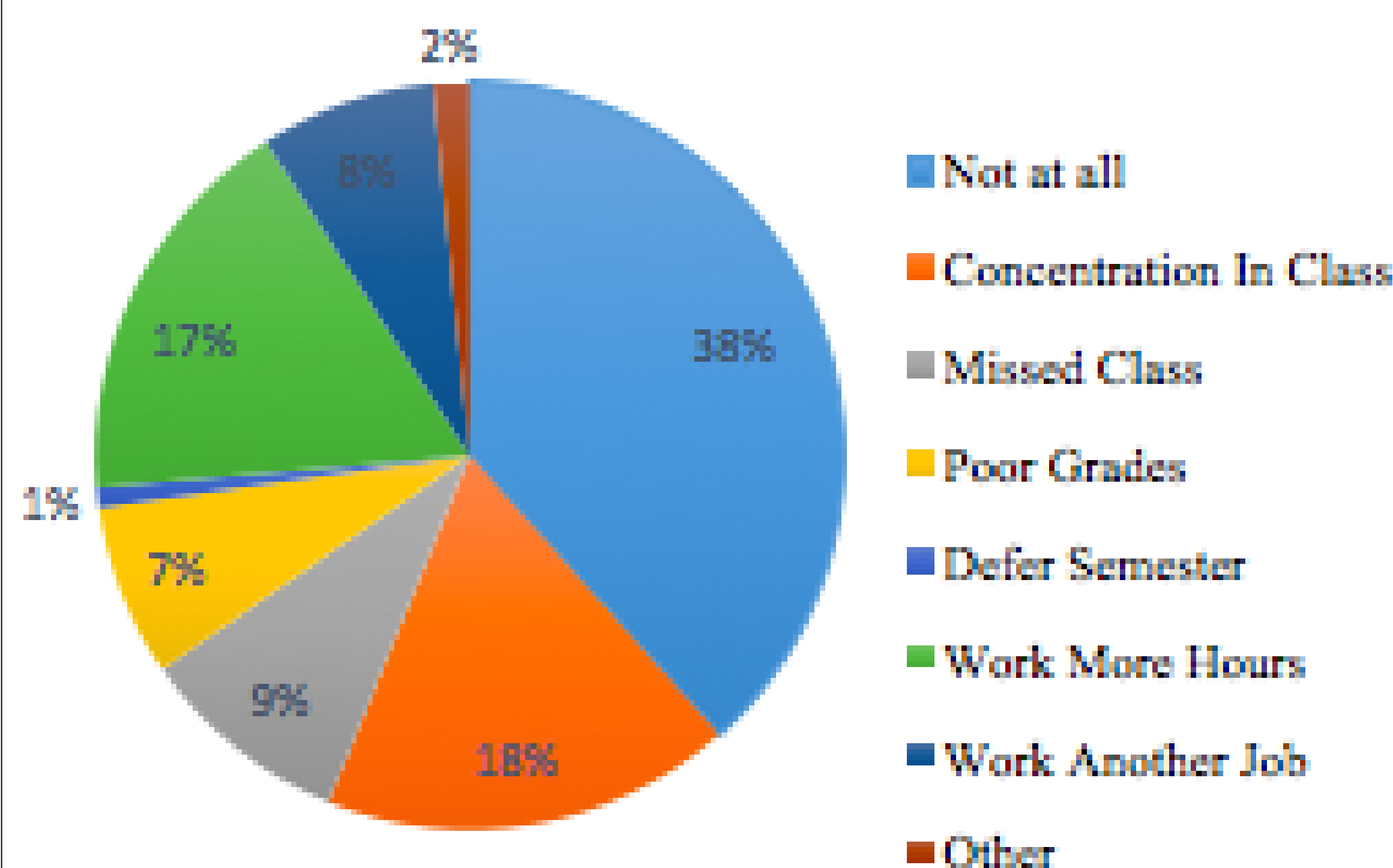


Figure 1: Map of Surveyed Institutions with Campus Pantries

