
Hunger Free Campus Grants

Annual Report

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About the Office of Higher Education

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education is a cabinet-level state agency providing students with financial aid programs and information to help them gain access to postsecondary education. The agency also serves as the state's clearinghouse for data, research and analysis on postsecondary enrollment, financial aid, finance and trends.

The Minnesota State Grant Program is the largest financial aid program administered by the Office of Higher Education, awarding more than \$224 million annually in need-based grants to Minnesota residents attending eligible colleges, universities and career schools in Minnesota. The agency oversees other state scholarship programs, tuition reciprocity programs, a student loan program, Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan, licensing and early college awareness programs for youth.

About This Report

This is a legislative-mandated report. As requested by Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197, this report cost approximately \$1,270.26 to prepare, including staff time.

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Executive Summary

The Hunger Free Campus (HFC) Grant program, originally established in 2021, supports eligible postsecondary institutions as they work to reduce student food and basic needs insecurity. Although the Hunger Free Campus Designation and Grant program is no longer in statute, the legislature renewed its commitment to Hunger Free Campus efforts through [Laws of Minnesota 2025 1st Special Session Chapter 5 Art. 1 Subd. 25](#) which authorizes the Office of Higher Education (OHE) to administer the 2026-2027 HFC Grant.

In alignment with legislative requirements, OHE implemented a structured and competitive process to solicit proposals from eligible postsecondary institutions and select grantees giving preference to postsecondary institutions with the highest number of federal Pell Grant eligible students enrolled. As a result of this process, nine eligible nonprofit, private postsecondary institutions and Tribal colleges were awarded a total of \$360,000 to implement projects that advance hunger-free campus activities during fiscal years 2026-2027.

Grantees are required to use grant funds to support efforts that meet or maintain the Hunger-Free Campus requirements listed in the law. These include:

- Maintain an on-campus food pantry or partnership with a local food bank to provide regular, on-campus food distributions
- Provide information to students on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), and other programs that reduce food insecurity
- Notify students in work-study employment of their potential eligibility for SNAP benefits and provide information to those students about eligibility criteria and how to apply for benefits
- Hold or participate in one hunger awareness event per academic year
- Establish a hunger task force that meets a minimum of three times per academic year and that includes at least two students currently enrolled at the institution

As required in law, this report provides the Legislature with an overview of how funds were distributed, how campuses are using the funds to meet program requirements, and the estimated number of students to be served. Collectively, the 2026–2027 grantees continue to demonstrate the ongoing need for food and basic needs security initiatives on Minnesota campuses and the results of state investment in addressing student them.

Introduction

The HFC Grant is administered by the Grants and Workforce Initiatives (GWI) division at OHE. Through a competitive process, OHE invites eligible postsecondary institutions to propose projects that improve access to food resources, expand awareness of nutrition awareness programs, and engage students in coordinated hunger-related activities.

For 2026-2027, the program continues to focus on direct, campus-based strategies that support students facing food insecurity. Funded projects must include activities that meet or maintain the Hunger-Free Campus requirements listed in the law including maintaining food pantries or hosting regular food distributions, connecting students with SNAP and other public assistance programs, informing work-study students about potential benefit eligibility, coordinating hunger awareness events, and convening a campus task force that meets regularly and includes student representation. These requirements ensure that funded initiatives address both immediate food needs and broader awareness of available support. Grantees are also required to match at least 50 percent of the amount awarded with either in-kind contributions or other resources.

OHE is also responsible for reporting annually to the Legislature on the distribution of funds, the ways grantees implemented required hunger-free activities, and the number of students reached through these projects.

FY2026-FY2027 Grantees

Timeline

- October 13, 2025: Request for Proposal Published
- November 13, 2025: Proposals Submission Deadline
- February 10, 2026: Awardees Notified
- April 2026 through July 31, 2027: Project Period Dates

For FY2026-2027, 11 proposals were received and in February 2026, \$360,000 in HFC funds were awarded to 9 grantees.

Project Summaries

FY 2026-2027 projects began in April 2026. Thus, each summary includes the grant award amount and the estimated number of students to be served during the grant period. Future reporting will include detailed information on how campuses are using the funds to meet program requirements. The estimated number of students to be served over the grant period may include duplicated students who benefit from more than one grant funded activity over the entire grant period.

Augsburg University

Project Title: Addressing Hunger at Augsburg University

Grant Award: \$50,000.00

Grantee Required Match: \$25,000.00

Estimated Number of Students to be Served: 3,000

Carleton College

Project Title: Hunger-Free Carleton

Grant Award: \$30,954.00

Grantee Required Match: \$15,477.00

Estimated Number of Students to be Served: 288

College of St. Scholastica

Project Title: Hunger Free Campus - The College of St. Scholastica

Grant Award: \$17,600.00

Grantee Required Match: \$8,800.00

Estimated Number of Students to be Served: 425

Concordia College

Project Title: Sustaining the Cobber Food Pantry: Hunger Free Campus at Concordia College

Grant Award: \$44,516.19

Grantee Required Match: \$22,258.10

Estimated Number of Students to be Served: 1,326

Herzing University

Project Title: Herzing University Minnesota Hunger Free Campus

Grant Award: \$49,941.81

Grantee Required Match: \$24,970.91

Estimated Number of Students to be Served: 75

Macalester College

Project Title: Macalester College Open Pantry Hunger Free Campus Grant

Grant Award: \$50,000

Grantee Required Match: \$25,000.00

Estimated Number of Students to be Served: 650

Red Lake Nation College

Project Title: RLNC Student Pantry

Grant Award: \$38,988.00

Grantee Required Match: \$19,494.00

Estimated Number of Students to be Served: 200

St. Catherine University

Project Title: Hunger Free Campus

Grant Award: \$50,000

Grantee Required Match: \$25,000.00

Estimated Number of Students to be Served: 486

St. Olaf College

Project Title: Hunger Free Campus St. Olaf College

Grant Award: \$28,000.00

Grantee Required Match: \$14,000.00

Estimated Number of Students to be Served: 600