



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 23

February Session, 2022

Substitute House Bill No. 5033

House of Representatives, March 16, 2022

The Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement reported through REP. ELLIOTT of the 88th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF FOOD-INSECURE STUDENTS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) (a) As used in this section, (1)
2 "food insecurity" or "food insecure" means the lack of financial resources
3 needed to consistently access enough food for an active and healthy life,
4 and (2) "fruit and vegetable incentive program" means a program that
5 offers participants matching funds to purchase fruits and vegetables in
6 any increment relative to the cost of such fruits and vegetables.

7 (b) Not later than March 1, 2023, and biennially thereafter, each public
8 institution of higher education in the state shall administer a survey to
9 each student enrolled at such institution for the purpose of collecting
10 data on the number of students who are food insecure and the causes of
11 and reasons for such food insecurity. Such survey shall include, but
12 need not be limited to, questions regarding a student's (1) demographic
13 background, including age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, marital

14 status, income, education and employment; (2) specific barriers to food
15 access; and (3) awareness or use of community or institutional resources
16 to address food insecurity and any barriers to accessing such resources.

17 (c) Not later than October 1, 2023, and biennially thereafter, each
18 public institution of higher education shall evaluate any services and
19 programs offered by such institution to address the needs of food-
20 insecure students. Based on the results of the survey administered
21 pursuant to subsection (b) of this section, each institution shall amend
22 any existing services or programs or establish a new service or program
23 to address the needs of food-insecure students. Such service or program
24 may include, but not be limited to, (1) assistance and support for
25 students to enroll in the supplemental nutrition assistance program
26 pursuant to the federal Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, or any other
27 state or federal program for nutrition assistance or financial aid,
28 including programs for families, if such program is applicable to the
29 student; (2) providing low-cost food or meal plan options on campus;
30 (3) allowing students additional meals through additional card swipes
31 on meal plans; (4) providing financial assistance or other financial
32 student aid; (5) establishing or expanding a food pantry on campus; or
33 (6) initiating a fruit and vegetable incentive program, or making such
34 program available to students through agreement with a community
35 nonprofit organization or governmental agency that provides such
36 program. When amending or establishing any service or program
37 pursuant to this subsection, each institution shall have the goal of
38 providing such service or program to not less than ten per cent of the
39 number of students identified as being food insecure in the survey
40 administered pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

41 (d) Not later than January 1, 2024, and biennially thereafter, each
42 public institution of higher education in the state shall submit a report,
43 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes,
44 to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
45 cognizance of matters relating to higher education, regarding any food
46 insecurities among the students at such institution, including, but not
47 limited to, (1) results from the survey administered pursuant to

48 subsection (b) of this section, (2) services or programs to address the
49 needs of food insecure students, including any amendments made to
50 such services or programs pursuant to subsection (c) of this section, and
51 (3) the number of students who utilized such services or programs
52 during the preceding two years.

53 Sec. 2. Section 17b-105f of the general statutes is amended by adding
54 subsections (e) and (f) as follows (*Effective July 1, 2022*):

55 (NEW) (e) (1) Not later than January 1, 2023, and annually thereafter,
56 the Board of Regents for Higher Education and the Board of Trustees of
57 The University of Connecticut shall consult with the Department of
58 Social Services for the purpose of identifying any educational program
59 offered at an institution of higher education governed by said boards
60 that qualifies as an employment and training program that increases a
61 student's employability and complies with the requirements for an
62 exemption, as specified in 7 CFR 273.5(b)(11), as amended from time to
63 time, from the supplemental nutrition assistance program eligibility
64 rule in 7 CFR 273.5(a), as amended from time to time. In identifying such
65 educational programs, the department and said boards shall seek to
66 maximize the number and types of employment and training programs
67 offered at the institution of higher education governed by said boards.

68 (2) Any independent institution of higher education in the state may,
69 in such institution's discretion, consult with the Department of Social
70 Services for the purposes set forth in subdivision (1) of this subsection.

71 (NEW) (f) Not later than July 1, 2023, the Department of Social
72 Services, the Board of Regents for Higher Education and the Board of
73 Trustees of The University of Connecticut shall each post, and regularly
74 update, on their Internet web site, the list of educational programs
75 offered at each institution of higher education governed by said boards
76 that has been qualified as an employment and training program
77 pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (e) of this section.

78 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) For the purpose of determining
79 eligibility for the supplemental nutrition assistance program pursuant

80 to the federal Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended from time to
 81 time, the Department of Social Services, to the extent permitted under
 82 federal law, shall consider any student enrolled in an institution of
 83 higher education in the state to be participating in a state or federally
 84 financed work-study program if such student receives approval of
 85 work-study as part of a financial aid package to attend such institution
 86 of higher education, regardless of whether such student has received his
 87 or her work-study program assignment.

88 Sec. 4. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) Each public institution of higher
 89 education shall notify students regarding the supplemental nutrition
 90 assistance program pursuant to the federal Food and Nutrition Act of
 91 2008, as amended from time to time, including, but not limited to, (1)
 92 the qualification requirements for such program, (2) the application
 93 procedure for such program, and (3) where to obtain assistance in
 94 completing an application for such program.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2022	New section
Sec. 2	July 1, 2022	17b-105f
Sec. 3	July 1, 2022	New section
Sec. 4	July 1, 2022	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(a), the definition of "fruit and vegetable incentive program" was added for clarity; in Section 1(c), "amend any existing or establish new services and programs" was changed to "amend any existing services or programs or establish a new service or program" for clarity; in Section 1(c)(1) "if applicable" was changed to "if such programs are applicable" for clarity; in Section 1(c)(3), "extra" was changed to "additional" for consistency; throughout the bill, "services and programs" was changed to "service or program" for consistency; and in Section 2, "which" was changed to "that" for consistency.

HED Joint Favorable Subst.

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill results in no fiscal impact to the constituent units because the units have sufficient expertise and resources to carry out the survey, reporting, program, and other activities required by the bill.

In addition, the bill is not anticipated to result in a fiscal impact to the Department of Social Services (DSS) associated with the consideration of work-study requirements for purposes of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility for students. The bill's change (from eligibility based on participation in a work-study program to approval for one) conforms to current practice as allowed under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, for the duration of the public health emergency. SNAP benefits are federally funded and the provision of such is subject to federal regulations.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5033

AN ACT ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF FOOD-INSECURE STUDENTS AT PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes various requirements to assess and address food insecurity for the state’s public college and university students. It defines “food insecurity” or “food insecure” as the lack of financial resources needed to consistently access enough food for an active and healthy life.

Specifically, the bill requires public colleges and universities to do the following:

1. starting by March 1, 2023, biennially administer a survey to enrolled students to collect data on student food insecurity and the causes and reasons for it;
2. starting by October 1, 2023, biennially evaluate their services and programs addressing the needs of food-insecure students and, based on the survey results, amend any existing services and programs or establish a new service or program to address these students’ needs;
3. starting by January 1, 2024, biennially report to the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee on the (a) survey results; (b) food insecurity services and programs offered, including any changes made based on the survey results; and (c) number of students who used the services and programs in the preceding two years; and
4. notify students about eligibility requirements for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

The bill requires the Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) and UConn Board of Trustees (BOT) to annually consult with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to identify and maximize the number of work-study programs they offer that qualify as an employment and training program for purposes of SNAP.

Lastly, the bill requires DSS, when determining SNAP eligibility and to the extent allowed by federal law (7 C.F.R. § 273.5), to consider a state public college or university student to be participating in a state or federally financed work-study program as soon as the enrolled student is approved for the program as part of their financial aid package, regardless of whether the student has received his or work-study program assignment yet. Under federal law, a student is eligible to receive SNAP benefits if they are actively participating in a state or federal funded work-study program (see BACKGROUND).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022

§ 1 — FOOD INSECURITY SURVEY

Under the bill, the survey administered by each public college and university must include questions about a student's (1) demographic background, including age, race, ethnicity, gender identity, marital status, income, education, and employment; (2) specific barriers to food access; and (3) awareness or use of community or institutional resources to address food insecurity and barriers to accessing these resources.

Under the bill, the services or programs that public colleges and universities establish or modify to address student food insecurity may include the following:

1. giving assistance and support for students to enroll in SNAP or any other state or federal nutrition assistance or financial aid program, including programs for families, if applicable;
2. providing low-cost food or meal plan options on campus;
3. allowing students additional meals through extra card swipes on

-
- meal plans;
4. providing financial assistance or other financial student aid;
 5. establishing or expanding on-campus food pantries; and
 6. starting a fruit and vegetable incentive program or making one available through an agreement with a local nonprofit or government agency.

Under the bill, a “fruit and vegetable incentive program” is a program that offers participants matching funds to purchase fruits and vegetables in any increment relative to their cost.

The bill requires services and programs amended or established based on survey results to set a goal of serving at least 10% of the students identified in the survey as being food insecure.

§§ 2 - 4 — SNAP ELIGIBILITY FOR PUBLIC COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

By January 1, 2023, the bill requires BOR and BOT to consult with DSS to (1) identify any of their offered educational programs that would increase a student’s employability and qualify as an employment and training program under SNAP student eligibility requirements (see BACKGROUND) and (2) maximize the number and types of these programs offered. BOR, BOT, and DSS must also post and regularly update the list of these qualified programs offered at each institution under their governance on their respective websites. The bill allows any of the state’s public colleges and universities to consult with DSS to identify these programs.

The bill requires each public higher education institution to notify students regarding SNAP and include in the notification (1) program eligibility requirements, (2) the program application process, and (3) information on assistance in completing the program application.

BACKGROUND

SNAP Student Eligibility

Students enrolled at least half-time at a higher education institution are generally ineligible for SNAP unless they qualify for an exemption. These exemptions include participating in a (1) state or federally financed work-study program during the regular school year and (2) SNAP employment and training program or other eligible program.

A student participating in a federally financed work-study program must be approved for work-study at the time of application for SNAP benefits, the work-study must be approved for the school term, and the student must anticipate actually working during that time. The exemption begins the month the school semester starts or the month the work-study is approved, whichever is later (7 C.F.R. § 273.5(b)(6)).

The federal Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 temporarily extends SNAP eligibility to students enrolled at least half-time at a higher education institution who either (1) are eligible to participate in a state or federally funded work-study program during the academic year or (2) have an expected family contribution of zero in the academic year and meet all other SNAP eligibility criteria. This benefit extension will remain in effect until 30 days after the COVID-19 public health emergency ends (P.L. 116-260, § 702(e)(1)(B)(i)).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 19 Nay 4 (03/03/2022)