



# UA Recommendations:

## *Food Insecurity*

47<sup>th</sup> Session  
2019 - 2020

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# BACKGROUND

## Overview

Many low-income students across campus face food insecurity in a day-to-basis. While some students are eligible for free meal plans due to their financial aid status, work obligations may prevent students from reaching dining halls or retail locations during current operating hours. Additionally, some students opt for financial aid refunds in lieu of meal plans, which lead to food insecurity when these refunds are not large enough.

## Current Status

There are several initiatives across the University of Pennsylvania to combat student food insecurity:

1. Greenfield Intercultural Center Community Kitchen and Food Pantry ([https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/FGLI\\_books.php/FGLI\\_books.php](https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/FGLI_books.php/FGLI_books.php))
  - a. Food pantry students can utilize free of charge
2. Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative
  - a. Good Food Bag Program (<https://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/what-we-do/programs/university-assisted-community-schools/agatston-urban-nutrition-initiative/good>)
    - i. Provides weekly fresh, local produce to students free of charge
  - b. Food Stamp Application Assistance
3. Student Financial Services (SFS) Budgeting Assistance
  - a. SFS assists students in budgeting their money to cover food costs
4. Other
  - a. Many other departments across campus provide smaller-scale, informal services for students in need. For example, the LGBT center always stocks food in the refrigerator for students to grab if they need.

## Undergraduate Assembly Updates

The Undergraduate Assembly has met with the following organizations to discuss this issue:

1. Agatston Urban Nutrition Initiative
    - a. Date
      - i. November 1, 2019
    - b. Recommendations
      - i. The wide range of food resources across campus should be compiled and shared through a website or other digital resource. They are currently working towards developing this resource. Additionally, more refrigeration should be added to the Greenfield Intercultural Center food pantry to allow for fresh food and produce to be stored.
  2. Student Financial Services
    - a. Date
      - i. November 19, 2019
    - b. Recommendations
      - i. Students should be encouraged to visit SFS if they are experiencing any food insecurity. SFS can assist in providing budgeting assistance.
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# STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

## Greenfield Intercultural Center

1. Constituent Experience
    - a. A student employee at the Greenfield Intercultural Center said that many low-income students choose to receive financial aid refunds in lieu of meal plans. However, these refunds are often not enough to cover their meals costs and other necessities. The student explained that even with the budgeting help provided by Student Financial Services, students still come short on food costs.
  2. Recommendations
    - a. Expand dining hall hours of operation and restructure financial aid refunds to allocate more towards dining expenses
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# UA RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendations

The Undergraduate Assembly recommends the following in order to improve access to food resources:

1. Increase fresh food availability at GIC food pantry
2. Establish a 24-hour retail location that accepts meal plan swipes or dining dollars

## Proposal

1. Increase fresh food availability at GIC food pantry
  - a. Fund the purchase of refrigeration equipment to store fresh food and produce
2. Establish a 24-hour retail location that accepts meal plan swipes or dining dollars
  - a. Location can operate through self-checkout, similar to Mark's Café