

## Background

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of college students were experiencing food insecurity — the lack of consistent access to enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life. Among college students, food insecurity is associated with lower grade point average, difficulty concentrating, and academic delays, as well as poor overall health and depression.

Young adults have had the highest rates of pandemic-related joblessness and face many challenges ahead. College students have also systematically been denied access to federal programs like SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or 'Food Stamps'). To better understand the experiences of students early in the pandemic, Boynton Health conducted an online survey with 2,067 respondents from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and Duluth campuses in April 2020.

## One in every 5 students (20%) experienced food insecurity in the past 30 days



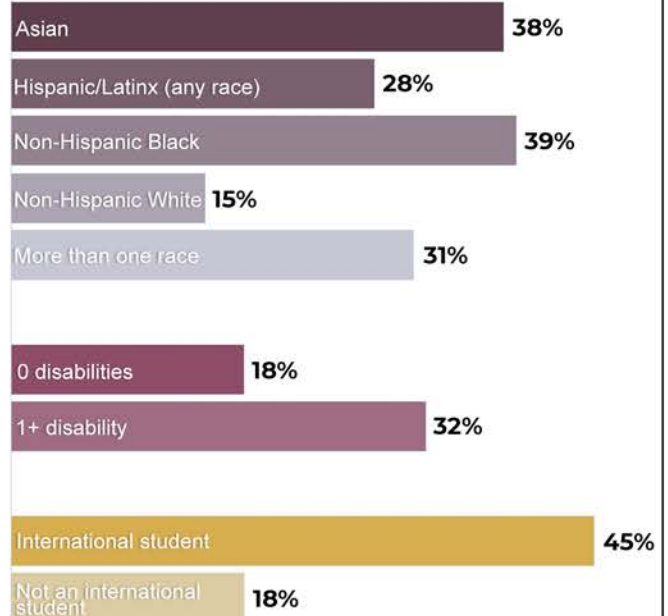
## Who responded to the survey?

Surveys were sent via multiple email invitations to 7,668 randomly selected students. The response rate was 27%, and 39% of the final sample represented students from the Duluth campus.

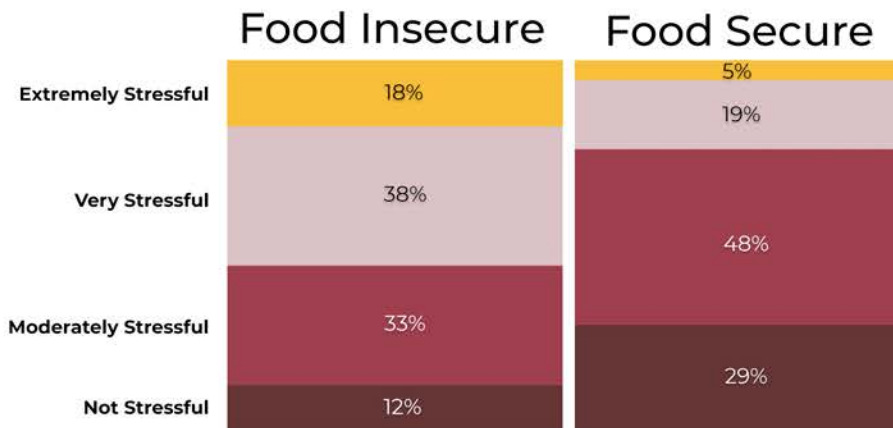
	Twin Cities Campus	Duluth Campus
<b>Average age</b>	24 years	22 years
<b>Undergraduate</b>	58%	88%
<b>Race/ethnicity*</b>		
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3%	1%
Asian	7%	19%
Black/African American	3%	4%
Hispanic/Latinx	2%	4%
White	85%	71%
<b>Living situation in spring 2020</b>		
Living in parent's home	55%	42%
Renting or sharing rent	37%	44%
Living in a residence hall	1%	1%
<b>International student</b>	2%	11%
<b>Student reporting 1+ disabilities</b>	17%	15%

\*not mutually exclusive

## Who is experiencing food insecurity?



## How stressful is your day-to-day life as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak?



## Students experiencing food insecurity face many challenges.

***"Most or all of the time..."***

	Food insecure students	Food secure students
<i>...I'm worried about financial problems, money, or the economy."</i>	85%	38%
<i>...I'm having problems with my job, like worrying about my safety or worrying about losing my job."</i>	59%	38%
<i>...I feel stressed or overwhelmed."</i>	76%	50%
<i>...I feel anxious or worried."</i>	80%	45%
<i>...I feel lonely or isolated."</i>	61%	35%

## What does this mean and what's next?

In summary, many students are struggling. It is clear the pandemic has resulted in significant stressors, anxieties and challenges for students.

It is important we monitor food insecurity over time. These data reflect student experiences early in the pandemic. Circumstances have changed over time. Many students may have had sufficient resources to avoid food insecurity in April 2020, but have since depleted these resources.

The University of Minnesota is dedicated to preparing students to meet the great challenges facing our state, our nation and our world. Clearly, ensuring students' basic needs are met must be a priority. Campus leaders continue to invest in programs like campus food pantries, meal donation programs and services to connect students to government assistance programs, as well as seeking new and innovative ways to prevent student hunger. Unfortunately many current programs — such as food pantries — serve short-term student needs, but are not designed to address the underlying causes of food insecurity. Ultimately, college affordability and financial aid determinations that account for the full cost of living, including food and housing costs, are critical considerations in ending student hunger.