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136th General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Brennan and Hoops

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SUMMARY

- Requires the Chancellor of Higher Education to establish and administer the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program and designation.
- Requires the Chancellor to establish criteria for a state institution of higher education or private nonprofit institution of higher education to earn the Hunger-Free Campus designation.
- Establishes requirements for the awarding and use of Hunger-Free Campus grants.
- Requires each institution that receives a grant to report on how the grant is used and its effects on food security that academic year.
- Requires the Chancellor to submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a report that compiles all institutions' grant reports by December 31 two years after the program is established.
- Entitles the bill the "Hunger-Free Campus Act."
- Appropriates \$625,000 for FYs 2026 and 2027 to support the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program and designation.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program

The bill requires the Chancellor of Higher Education to establish and administer the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program and designation. The Chancellor must establish the forms and procedures for state institutions of higher education and private nonprofit institutions of higher education to apply for a grant or designation. The Chancellor also determines how often a participating institution must reapply to maintain its designation. The bill permits the Chancellor to adopt rules to implement the program and designation. Any regulatory restriction

contained in a rule adopted by the Chancellor to administer the Student Choice Grant Program is not subject to S.B. 9 of the 134th General Assembly, which requires rules to be rescinded for each new rule adopted.¹

Designation

The Chancellor is required to determine the criteria to award a Hunger-Free Campus designation, which may include:

1. Having an established on-campus food pantry or a partnership with a local food bank to provide regular, on-campus food distributions;
2. Providing information to students on SNAP, Medicaid, and other programs that reduce food insecurity;
3. Having an established emergency assistance grant that is available to students; or
4. Having an established student meal plan credit donation program.

Institutions that receive the designation may display a logo created by the Chancellor. Institutions that have not received the designation are prohibited from displaying the logo.²

Grant funding

Awarding funding

The bill requires the Chancellor to determine award amounts and award grants to state institutions of higher education and private nonprofit institutions of higher education regardless of whether that institution has received the Hunger-Free Campus designation. The bill requires an institution that has not been awarded the designation to demonstrate a need for funding to meet the designation requirements.

Institutions that *have* received the designation must use grant funding for specified purposes, which must be approved by the Chancellor, including:

1. Leveraging existing basic needs infrastructure;
2. Maximizing federal programs;
3. Building strategic partnerships at the local, state, and national levels to address food insecurity among students;
4. Raising awareness on available resources to address basic food needs; or
5. Supporting the reduction of student food insecurity in other ways.

Under the bill, the Chancellor must give preference to applications from institutions with the highest percentage of enrolled students eligible for the federal Pell Grant. However, the Chancellor has discretion to give preference to applications that demonstrate that an institution's

¹ R.C. 3333.47(A), (B), (F), and (J).

² R.C. 3333.47(C) and (D).

plan for the grant will have a greater impact on students experiencing food insecurity than another applicant with a higher percentage of students who are eligible for the Pell Grant.³

Uses of grant funding

The bill requires the Chancellor to allow grant recipients to use grant funds flexibly to implement the goals of the program. Specifically, the Chancellor must allow institutions receiving a grant to do all of the following:

1. Support emergency assistance;
2. Hire staff to manage initiatives related to the program; and
3. Use grant funds for operational activities related to the program.

The bill prohibits an institution from reducing its existing funding designated to address food insecurity with the goal or net effect of shifting the cost burden of those initiatives to the grant program.⁴

Reporting

Each institution that receives a grant under the program is required to report to the Chancellor how the grant is used and its effects on food security on the institution's campus during that academic year. Institutions without the Hunger-Free Campus designation also must report the institution's progress working toward a Hunger-Free Campus designation.

Not later than December 31, two years after the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program is established, the Chancellor must submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly that compiles the reports submitted by each institution that received a Hunger-Free Campus grant.⁵

Act title

The bill is entitled as the "Hunger-Free Campus Act."⁶

Appropriation

The bill appropriates \$625,000 for FYs 2026 and 2027 to support the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program and designation.⁷

³ R.C. 3333.47(E).

⁴ R.C. 3333.47(G) and (H).

⁵ R.C. 3333.47(I); Section 2.

⁶ Section 6.

⁷ Section 4.

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	03-06-25
