

# Food for Thought Act of 2019 (H.R. 4065)

## National Meal Pilot Program for the Community Colleges

### Summary

The Community College League of California & the Affordability, Food & Housing Access Taskforce are proud to be joining **Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA)** co-sponsoring the *Food for Thought Act*, which would create a demonstration program administered by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) within USDA making grants available to community colleges to provide free meals, including snacks, to eligible food-insecure students.

### Problem

While tuition has remained low at our community colleges, it is still difficult for most lower-income students to achieve their educational goals due to our state's higher cost of living and the lack of adequate financial aid to cover non-tuition expenses, such as food. Food insecure students, in particular, are more likely to indicate intention dropping out of school and less likely to feel confident in their academic abilities. Therefore, they may be forced to delay their education to make ends meet – setting them up for a cycle of poverty that can be increasingly difficult to break.

A national effort is necessary to eliminate hunger as a barrier to student success and degree attainment.



**50%** of community college students reported experiencing some type of food insecurity

### Grants

\$6 million for the fiscal year 2020 and each of the succeeding three fiscal years

- Grants shall be awarded to an assortment of community colleges, reflecting varying: student body size; full-time student enrollment; geographic location; minority-serving institutions; and residential character, including race/ethnicity make-up and socioeconomic status.
- The Secretary may give priority to colleges: with prepared food infrastructure, or those that can identify outside sources of support to help develop such infrastructure; that serve more than 300 students who are eligible for Federal Pell Grants; or that are located within proximity to a K-12 school eligible to elect the Community Eligibility Provision within the National School Lunch Act.
- Grant applicants must include an estimate of how many students they expect to serve under the program.
- Grant awards are maxed out at \$200,000. Funds must be used to provide free meals and snacks to students, conduct campus outreach, prepare and/or purchase meals from vendors, and provide information to participating students on eligibility for federal food assistance programs.
- No more than 20% of funding may be used to purchase equipment.

*This program does not apply to community colleges that award a bachelor's degree (or an equivalent degree).*

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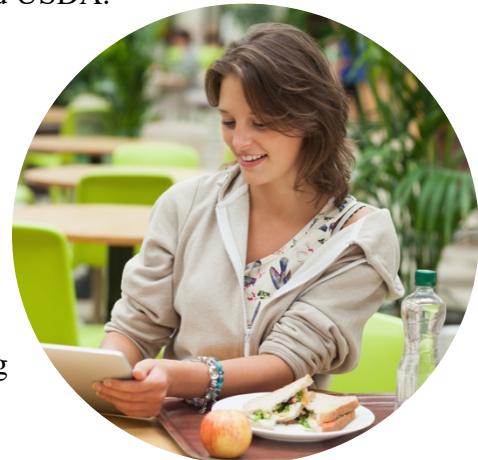
In administering the program, **the Food and Nutrition Service must/shall**

- consult with community colleges, State educational agencies, and State boards of higher education.
- provide technical assistance to grantees, which includes general program administration, training college employees to manage the program, developing student outreach materials, and, as applicable, developing prepared food infrastructure.
- develop dietary requirements for meals served under this program that are consistent with the goals of the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans developed by HHS and USDA.

### Study

Within 18 months of receiving a grant, grantees must submit a report to the Secretary of Education on the prevalence of food insecurity among enrolled students and an evaluation of the use of grant funding in addressing such food insecurity.

Within two years of program enactment, FNS must submit a report to Congress evaluating the results of the pilot program, including recommendations to expand the program nationwide.



### Co-sponsors of Food for Thought Act



Berkeley City College   Clovis Community College   College of the Canyons - Santa Clarita CCD

De Anza College   Foothill College   Foothill-De Anza CCD   Fresno City College   Glendale CCD

Hartnell College   Imperial CCD   Laney College   Los Angeles CCD   San Diego City College

San Mateo County CCD   Shasta-Tehama-Trinity Joint CCD   Solano Community College - Solano CCD

South Orange County CCD   State Center CCD   Ventura County CCD   West Los Angeles College

West Valley-Mission CCD   Congressman Adam Schiff   Community College League of California