



Understanding Food Security Issues and SNAC Usage among USU Students: Summary of Key Findings

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Working with community partners to build knowledge through research

The USU Transforming Communities Institute (TCI) partnered with USU's Student Nutrition Access Center (SNAC), the Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Science Department, and the Department of Social Work to conduct a research study that:

- assessed food security issues in the USU system;
- identified common characteristics of SNAC service users and evaluated the individual health, social, and economic impacts of SNAC on its service users; and
- determine awareness, support, and knowledge of SNAC among USU students, faculty, and staff.

This project utilized three undergraduate BSW research courses to develop and launch an online survey, which was completed in Fall 2023 and Winter 2024.

Defining Food Security

USDA 10-Item Food Security Scale

Low food security: Reduced quality, variability, or desirability of diet

Very low food security: Disrupted eating patterns, reduced food intake, and hunger

SNAC at USU

SNAC at USU is a low-barrier food pantry that provides Aggies with a hunger-free education by offering nutritious and diverse food options.

SNAC programs are available at residential campuses (i.e., Logan, Price, and Blanding).

About the Student Respondents



All Campuses (n=1538)

- 89% Logan
- 88% Undergraduate
- 93% Full-time student
- 25% Pell Grant recipients
- 76% Employed
- 82% White
- 63% Female (Cisgender)
- 74% Heterosexual
- 71% Religiously-affiliated
- 43% Conservative or very conservative

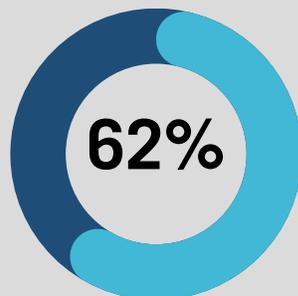
SNAC Users (n=809)

- 95% Logan
- 87% Undergraduate
- 95% Full-time student
- 25% Pell Grant recipients
- 78% Employed
- 80% White
- 61% Female (Cisgender)
- 73% Heterosexual
- 70% Religiously-affiliated
- 38% Conservative or very conservative

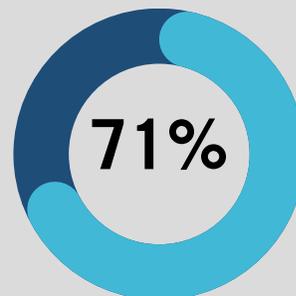
Statewide (n=82)

- 21% Brigham City
- 79% Undergraduate
- 63% Full-time student
- 42% Pell Grant recipients
- 79% Employed
- 84% White
- 77% Female (Cisgender)
- 73% Heterosexual
- 67% Religiously-affiliated
- 44% Conservative or very conservative

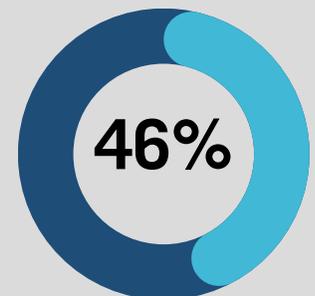
Levels of Food Security



of all USU students experience low or very low food security



of SNAC users experience low or very low food security



of statewide students experience low or very low food security

► What do students think about SNAC as a service?

94%

of students on residential campuses are supportive or very supportive of SNAC

88%

of Statewide students would like a food pantry on their campus

69%

of students who have not used SNAC reported they would only use it if they were not food secure

89%

of Statewide students would use a food pantry on their campus if they needed to

Mean yearly fee students at residential campuses would pay to support SNAC

\$18.05

(SD=14.28)

Mean yearly fee students at statewide campuses would pay to support a food pantry on their campus

\$21.24

(SD=16.13)

► How are SNAC users benefitting from services?

60%

report SNAC helps them *avoid going hungry* when they don't have enough money for food

83%

say SNAC helps them *feel less worried* about having enough food

68%

indicate SNAC helps them *eat more balanced meals*

67%

report SNAC helps *avoid cutting the size of meals or skipping meals altogether*

★ Why is it important to continue to address low food security at USU? ★

Our study found that USU students with low or very low food security experience...

- Higher levels of stress
- Lower quality of life
- Lower sense of connection to the community
- Greater dissatisfaction with their economic situation

Supporting SNAC is a way to support the overall quality of life of USU students.



Recommendations to continue to address food security at USU

- Include the "Food Security" paragraph from the syllabus resources available at usu.edu/teach
- Advocate for expansion of SNAC at statewide campuses
- Develop SNAC student ambassadors who can present on services throughout campus
- Recruit department "SNAC Champions" to promote SNAC and organize drives
- Develop an advisory board to address consistent funding of SNAC programs at all USU campuses