



**House Ways and Means Education Reported Substitute
for HB273**

A BILL

TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To create the Hunger-Free Campus Act administered by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education; to provide for the designation of a qualified institution of higher education as a hunger-free campus; to provide application, eligibility, and renewal criteria; and to require the commission to adopt necessary rules.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the Hunger-Free Campus Act.

Section 2. For the purposes of this act, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) COMMISSION. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

(2) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION. A public or private two-year or four-year institution of higher education which provides vocational, technical, collegiate, professional, or any other form of education above the secondary school level and is accredited by a recognized regional or national accrediting agency.



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(3) SNAP. The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Section 3. The commission, by rule, shall establish an application process for qualified institutions of higher education to be designated as hunger-free campuses. The process shall include the completion and submission to the commission of an application form developed by the commission, the review of each submitted application form by the commission, and the award of the designation to each institution of higher education that meets the eligibility requirements provided in Section 4.

Section 4. To be eligible for designation as a hunger-free campus, **an** institution of higher education shall do all of the following:

(1) Establish a hunger-free task force. A task force shall meet at least three times per academic year, annually establish at least two program goals, and develop action plans for each of those goals. The membership of a task force, at a minimum, shall include all of the following:

a. At least two students who are enrolled in and attending the institution of higher education.

b. A representative from the office of student affairs of the institution of higher education.

c. A representative from the financial aid office of the institution of higher education.

d. Any additional members deemed appropriate by the institution of higher education.

(2) Designate a staff member to be responsible for



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assisting students with receiving information on SNAP benefits in the state.

(3) Either: (i) provide options for students to utilize SNAP benefits on each campus; or (ii) provide students with information on local establishments in the geographic area surrounding each campus where students may use SNAP benefits.

(4) Hold or participate in at least one food insecurity awareness event per academic year.

(5) Provide: (i) at least one physical food pantry on each campus; or (ii) information about community supported food pantries in the area surrounding each campus.

(6) Either: (i) develop a student meal credit donation program; or (ii) develop and implement a program to provide free food vouchers including, but not limited to, grocery store gift cards, to students.

(7) Administer a student survey about food insecurity and other basic needs of students at least every two years. Each institution of higher education may partner with a local community-based organization to coordinate survey efforts.

Section 5. (a) Designation as a hunger-free campus shall be valid for two years, and, upon application to the commission, may be renewed for an additional two years.

(b) If the commission determines that an institution of higher education does not meet the requirements to renew its designation, the commission shall do both of the following:

a. Provide written notice to the institution of higher education that the institution of higher education has not met the criteria in Section 4.



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b. Provide the institution of higher education within 45 days from the receipt of notice to correct or amend its renewal application. If the institution of higher education does not submit a corrected or amended renewal application that indicates compliance with the renewal requirements, the designation as a hunger-free campus shall not be renewed.

(c) An institution of higher education whose designation as a hunger-free campus is not renewed may not apply for the designation again until the following academic year.

Section 6. Subject to the appropriation of funds by the Legislature, the commission shall accept grant requests from any institution of higher education designated as a hunger-free campus and shall award grants to those designated institutions of higher education on a competitive basis. The commission shall determine the amount of each grant, prioritizing grants made to designated institutions of higher education with the highest percentages of eligible Pell Grant recipient enrollment. The grants shall be used for the purchase of equipment and supplies including, but not limited to, refrigeration appliances and shelving for the conversion or upgrade of existing facilities to house food pantries.

Section 7. The commission shall adopt rules as necessary to administer and implement the program. A percentage of any appropriation made to the commission for the program may be expended by the commission for the operation and maintenance of the program. Any funds appropriated to the program shall be non-reverting.



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113 Section 8. Grant recipients shall submit an annual
114 report to the commission regarding hunger-free activities on
115 the campus during the prior year and describe how grant awards
116 were used. The commission shall provide an annual report to
117 the Chair of the House Ways and Means Education Committee and
118 the Chair of the Senate Finance and Taxation Education
119 Committee to account for the use of funds and the
120 effectiveness of the grant program.

121 Section 9. This act shall become effective on October
122 1, 2025.