

HB273 INTRODUCED



1 HB273
2 IUYE666-1
3 By Representatives Collins, Almond
4 RFD: Ways and Means Education
5 First Read: 13-Feb-25



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SYNOPSIS:

This bill would establish the Hunger-Free Campus Act.

This bill would require the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to establish a process for a qualified public institution of higher education to be designated as a hunger-free campus.

This bill would provide application and eligibility requirements for designation as a hunger-free campus.

This bill would also provide for the award of grants to a hunger-free campus to purchase equipment and supplies for on-campus food pantries, subject to the appropriation of funds by the Legislature.

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 public institution of higher education as a hunger-free campus; to provide application,



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29 eligibility, and renewal criteria; and to require the
30 commission to adopt necessary rules.

31 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

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

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

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

38 (2) PUBLIC INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION. A public
39 two-year or four-year institution of higher education which
40 provides vocational, technical, collegiate, professional, or
41 any other form of education above the secondary school level.

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

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

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

56 (1) Establish a hunger-free task force. A task force



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57 shall meet at least three times per academic year, annually
58 establish at least two program goals, and develop action plans
59 for each of those goals. The membership of a task force, at a
60 minimum, shall include all of the following:

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

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

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

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

69 (2) Designate a staff member to be responsible for
70 assisting students with receiving information on SNAP benefits
71 in the state.

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

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

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

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



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

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

93 (b) If the commission determines that a public
94 institution of higher education does not meet the requirements
95 to renew its designation, the commission shall do both of the
96 following:

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

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

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

111 Section 6. Subject to the appropriation of funds by the
112 Legislature, the commission shall accept grant requests from



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113 any public institution of higher education designated as a
114 hunger-free campus and shall award grants to those designated
115 public institutions of higher education on a competitive
116 basis. The commission shall determine the amount of each
117 grant, prioritizing grants made to designated public
118 institutions of higher education with the highest percentages
119 of eligible Pell Grant recipient enrollment. The grants shall
120 be used for the purchase of equipment and supplies including,
121 but not limited to, refrigeration appliances and shelving for
122 the conversion or upgrade of existing facilities to house food
123 pantries.

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

130 Section 8. Grant recipients shall submit an annual
131 report to the commission regarding hunger-free activities on
132 the campus during the prior year and describe how grant awards
133 were used. The commission shall provide an annual report to
134 the Chair of the House Ways and Means Education Committee and
135 the Chair of the Senate Finance and Taxation Education
136 Committee to account for the use of funds and the
137 effectiveness of the grant program.

138 Section 9. This act shall become effective on October
139 1, 2025.