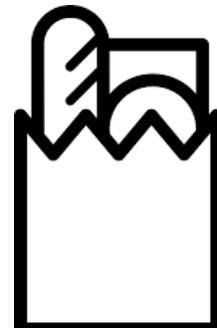


# Addressing Food and Housing Insecurities among Incoming College Students

Office of Assessment and Planning

Office of the Dean of Students

Wellness Center



# Introductions

- Sue Farruggia, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Assessment and Planning
- Annette Wright, Associate Dean of Students
- Amy Chou, Pantry Manager
  
- Carol Petersen, Director of the Wellness Center



# Today's Presentation

- UIC's institutional-level initiatives
- Managing housing insecurities
- Managing food insecurities
- Questions and comments



# UIC's Institutional-level Initiatives

Sue Farruggia, Ph.D – Assistant Vice Chancellor for Assessment and Planning



Office of Assessment and Planning

# Prematriculation Inventory (PMI) Referral Development

- PMI (i.e., noncognitive survey) assessed students' noncognitive strengths at the time of placement testing.
- This inventory provides an opportunity to assess other potential barriers for student success.
- Project team:
  - Sue Farruggia
  - Eric Schwarze
  - Charu Thakral
  - Liz Houlihan
  - Carol Peterson
  - Annette Wright
  - Mark Manderino
- Collaborators:
  - Tanya Cabrera
  - Danielle Earls & Sophia Hamilton
  - Kim Kull



# The Initiative

- Domains
  - Food insecurities
  - Housing insecurities
  - Undocumented student supports
  - Disability accommodations
  - Child care
- First-year students are asked if they would like additional information related to the different domains.
  - They do not self-identify.
- We provide the name and contact information to the appropriate collaborators and then step away.



# 2019 Completed the Inventory

## Completed

## 2019 Cohort

<b>Female</b>	2276	94%	2419
<b>Male</b>	1813	91%	1988
<b>Asian American</b>	924	96%	962
<b>Black</b>	322	93%	345
<b>Latinx</b>	1724	95%	1818
<b>White</b>	814	94%	863
<b>International</b>	146	57%	257
<b>First-Generation in College</b>	728	94%	1835
<b>Pell Grant Eligibility</b>	2413	95%	2543
<b>All Students</b>	4089	93%	4407



# At Least One Referral Request

	At Least One Referral Request		PMI Respondents
<b>Female</b>	922	41%	2276
<b>Male</b>	736	41%	1813
<b>Asian American</b>	342	37%	924
<b>Black</b>	185	57%	322
<b>Latinx</b>	681	40%	1724
<b>White</b>	271	33%	814
<b>International</b>	100	68%	146
<b>First-Generation in College</b>	702	41%	1728
<b>Pell Grant Eligibility</b>	1613	67%	2413
<b>All Students</b>	1658	41%	4089



# Housing Insecurities Request

	Housing Insecurities		PMI Respondents
<b>Female</b>	523	23%	2276
<b>Male</b>	478	26%	1813
<b>Asian American</b>	241	26%	924
<b>Black</b>	137	43% ←	322
<b>Latinx</b>	326	19%	1724
<b>White</b>	165	20%	814
<b>International</b>	86	59% ←	146
<b>First-Generation in College</b>	371	21%	1728
<b>Pell Grant Eligibility</b>	568	24%	2413
<b>All Students</b>	1001	24% ←	4089



# Food Insecurities Request

	Food Insecurities		PMI Respondents
<b>Female</b>	508	22%	2276
<b>Male</b>	359	20%	1813
<b>Asian American</b>	167	18%	924
<b>Black</b>	108	34% ←	322
<b>Latinx</b>	374	22%	1724
<b>White</b>	124	15%	814
<b>International</b>	55	38%	146
<b>First-Generation in College</b>	400	23% ←	1728
<b>Pell Grant Eligibility</b>	554	23%	2413
<b>All Students</b>	867	21% ←	4089



# And then came the pandemic...

You will hear about the response by the Office of the Dean of Student to support our students.



Office of Assessment and Planning

# GEER Funding

- Fall 2020, UIC was awarded \$7M+ through GEER (Governor's Emergency Education Relief) Fund
- 17 initiatives to support students to overcome barriers created by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We used some of these funds to support both food and housing insecurities.
  - Housing: 1) Grants for students in housing (\$2500); 2) Grants for students of concerns (\$13,000); 3) Grants for housing students experiencing housing insecurities (\$17,000).
  - Food: Increased the funds for the pantry to increase staffing and food.



# Next Steps

- What is the role of food and housing insecurities on student success, engagement and development?
- What kinds of interventions and prevention efforts reduce the impact?
  
- Funded by the Crown Family Philanthropies



# Addressing Housing Insecurity

Annette Wright – Associate Dean – Office of the Dean of Students



Office of the Dean of Students

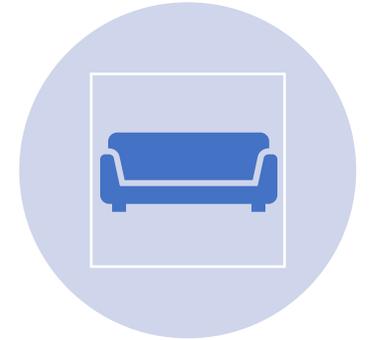
# Definition Housing Insecurity



An individual does not have a fixed, regular, and adequate place to live.



In alignment with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, students are considered homeless if they identified as experiencing homelessness or signs of homelessness (for instance, living in a shelter, temporarily with a relative, or in a space not meant for human habitation).



Additional terms include couch surfing or doubling up.



## National Data

- 3 out of 5 students facing housing insecurity

## UIC Data

- Lack of data to understand the scope of the issues
- What we do know



# Challenges

- Inability to identify students unless they self-disclose
- Limited institutional resources
- Rising tuition rates
- Lack of awareness of the issue within the campus community





Academic Year  
2021



## GEER Funding

Program participants:

Undergraduate students – 29

- Provided housing and meal plan for AY
- Demographics
- Pell Eligible



Office of the Dean of Students

# Impact of GEER Funding

- “I have been doing much better now that I am at UIC. I am completing my assignments at a scary rate. Assignments that would typically take me a week or two to complete. I am finishing them in a day or two. Thank you for helping me obtain this lovely opportunity.” – Anonymous
- “This semester has been tough, but having found a home in the dorms, I am very grateful for the office of the dean of students. Thank you so much for your assistance and resources! I couldn't be more thankful for all your help.” – Anonymous
- “This grant helped mentally, physically, and emotionally; I went from being on the probation list to the dean list. I am very appreciative for the stability that this grant offered me. Thank you very much” - Anonymous

## Outcomes:

- 81% of these students returned to UIC for the spring term.
- 2 completed their undergraduate program.



# Spring 2021

## **Housing Insecurity Program**

Pilot Program – 10 undergraduate students

- Program Design
  - Provide wrap around services and education to support students
  - Case Management
  - Workshops
- Funded by the Crown Family Philanthropies



# Program Goals

1. Improve academic outcomes and retention of program participants
2. Development of a campus wide system of support and resources
3. Increase awareness of housing insecurity amongst the campus community
4. Reduce feelings of isolation and stigmatization of housing insecurity



# Workshops Developed

- Career Tips for Graduating Seniors
- Apartment Hunting Do's and Don'ts/Understanding a Lease
- Understanding Your Award Letter & Loans
- Creating a Support Network in College
- Career Services Overview, Handshake, and Part Time Employment
- Tools for Life
- Financial Literacy



# TOOLS FOR LIFE

Preparation is the key to success

## Banking

- Open savings/ checking account
- A safe place to keep extra cash and emergency money
- Establish credit with a credit card
- Can order debit card without credit card access

## Mailing:

- Submit an application for PO box ( must submit proper ID and have a verifiable point of contact)
- UPS offers PO boxes and has a real street address, easy to apply

## Budget:

- Try Budget friendly stores like Aldi, Wal-Mart and Dollar Tree
- Splurge on quality shoes, web, and a coat
- Avoid: convenience stores

## WHEN SHELTERED

### Establish Boundaries

- Personal boundaries are guidelines, rules or limits that a person creates
- 5 Boundaries You Need
  - Emotional
  - Material
  - Time/ Energy
  - Mental
  - Physical
- Protect yourself with Boundaries
  - Understand what to say yes or no to and speak up
  - Ask for help or for space
  - Share personal information gradually

## Nutrition on the Go

### Eating healthy when you can't cook:

- Find stores with a fresh food buffet or reduced food items like Jewel, Tony's, Mariano's
- Look into no-cook meal ideas such as:
  - Chicken or veggie wraps
  - Pita chips with hummus
  - Packaged Salad

### UIC Pop-Up Pantry ( Registration required)

- Every Wednesday and Thursday 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
- Look for portable and quick eats like ramen or oatmeal
- If you are living in a No-Cook alternative space, let us know!

## Essentials

### First Aid:

- Stock up on supplies like band-aids, alcohol wipes, pain reliever, hand sanitizer, and period products
  - These can be found at:
    - Dollar Tree, Target, CVS, Walmart, and Walgreens

### Water

- Drink 64 ounces of water every day, it will help avoid
  - Fatigue, Dizziness, confusion, etc.

\*Wellness Center may help with select supplies\*

## Safety

### Personal Defense Alarms

- Small, inexpensive, and make a loud noise to distract predator or alert others

### UIC SAFE

- Download the UIC SAFE app to report, contact UIC police or have someone walk with you at night, etc!

Your best safety tool will always be your common sense and observation

Find Safe Spaces like the Covenant House

Remember COVID-19: Maintain safety protocols regardless of vaccination status

\*Note: Wellness Center offers consultations and guidance to resources\*



Wellness Center

# Tools for Life



Office of the Dean of Students

# Outcomes



80% of program participants engaged in the process



100% of those who actively participated successfully completed the semester



Engaged campus community in the discussion



# Next Steps

- Develop an advisory committee
- Dedicated staff member for basic needs
- Development of Emergency Housing/Temporary Housing Support
- Develop website/central resource for basic needs initiatives on campus
- Partnership with Development to raise funds for basic needs initiatives
- Creation of a marketing campaign to increase awareness of students
- Increasing basic awareness of staff
- Review of Policies



# Managing Food Insecurity

Amy Chou – Pantry Manager – Wellness Center – UIC Pop-Up Pantry

# How do we define Food Insecurity?

## Low Food Security

*Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.*

- In this case, an individual **has food** however, it is at a level “less than” what they want or used to receive.

## Very Low Food Security

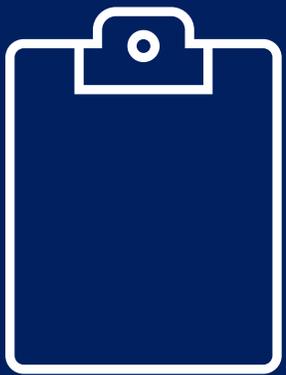
*Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.*

- In this case, an individual is **eating less food** and **eating less frequently**.

# How Prevalent is Food Insecurity Among College Students?

The Hope Center for College, Community and Justice (national experts) administered the #RealCollege survey in 2018 to nearly 1.5 million students at 123 colleges and universities. Almost 86,000 students responded.

Based on responses, the Center estimates 48 percent of community college students and 41 percent of four-year university students are food insecure.



# Why are Students Food Insecure?

- Federal grants have decreased funding and/or below cost of living
- Unexpected life circumstances/emergencies
- Supportive families unable to provide financial support
- Non-traditional students have more living expenses
- Unemployment
- Part-time employment at minimum wage
- High cost of living
- Higher cost of college tuition
- Higher cost of college related expenses (computer, phone, internet service)

# A look at U.S. Poverty Guidelines shows some students' annual salaries are at or below poverty levels

2021 U.S. Poverty Guidelines

1 person: \$12,880

Department of Health and Human Services

2 people: \$17,420

## Yearly Income for Working College Student (part-time)

$\$15.00 \text{ hr} \times 10 \text{ hours a week} = \$150.00$

$\$150.00 \times 52 \text{ weeks in a year} = \underline{\$7,800 \text{ annual income}}$

$\$15.00 \text{ hr} \times 20 \text{ hours a week} = \$300.00$

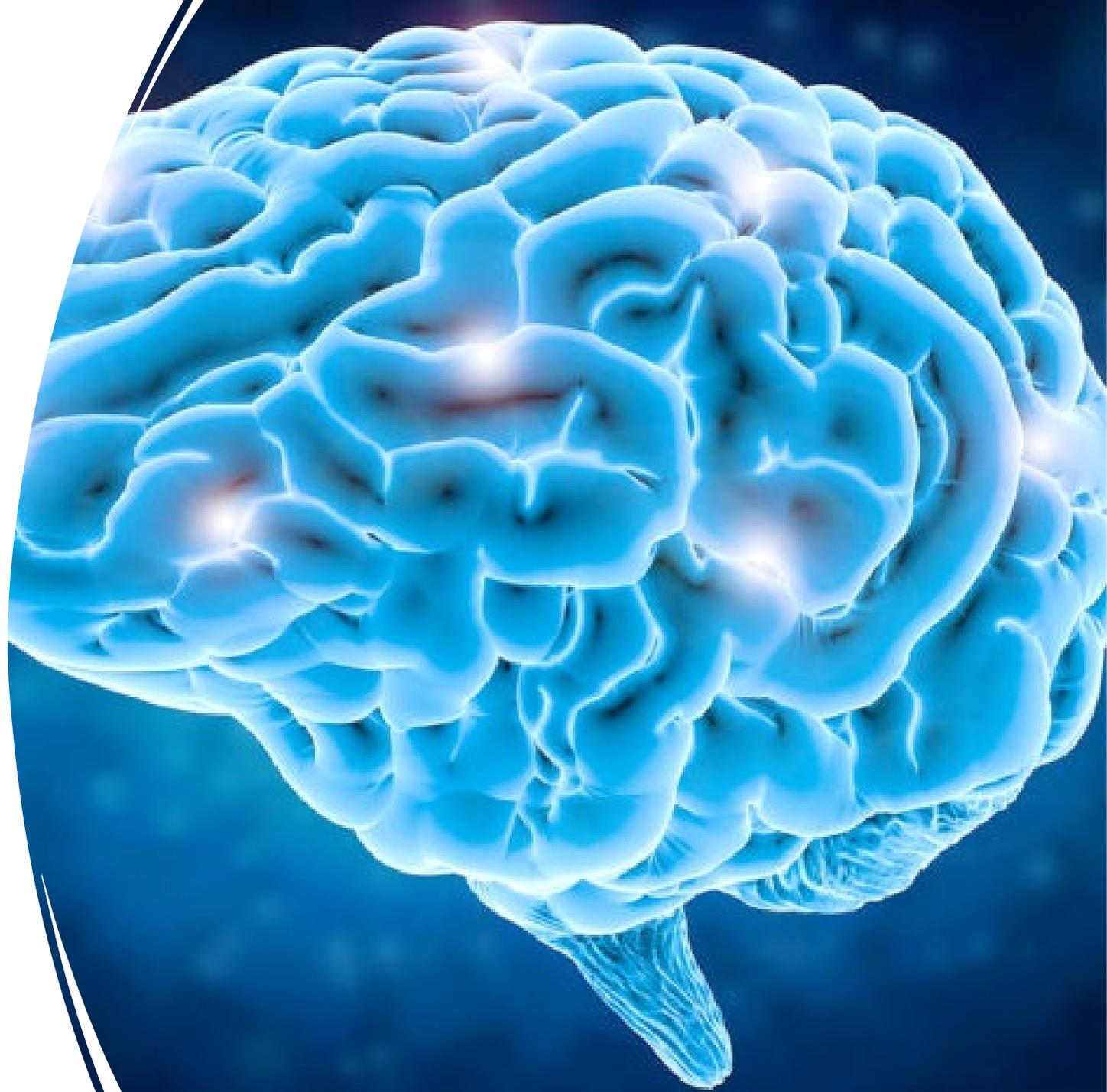
$\$300.00 \times 52 \text{ weeks in a year} = \underline{\$15,600 \text{ annual income}}$



# Food is Critical for Academic Success. But Why?

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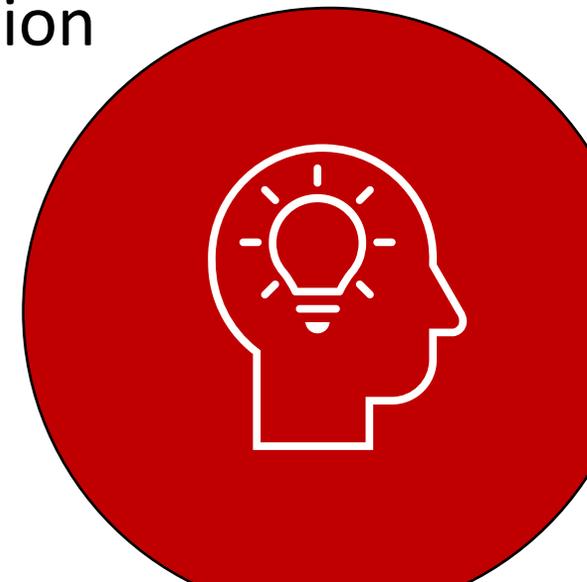
- The brain uses 20 - 30 percent of the body's total caloric intake
- For the student who is food insecure, decreased daily calories compromise cognitive function and overall physical health
- Student has difficulty with focusing, comprehension and recall.



## Research shows that nutritional deficits are associated with the following markers of poor academic performance:

- Lower grades
- Poorer health
- Higher rates of depression
- Higher rates of absenteeism
- Inability to problem solve
- Inability to focus
- Slower memory recall
- Behavioral issues
- Hyperactive and attention problems

**Academic success starts with a nutritious meal. It is the same truth for college students as it is for children in grade school.**



# Supporting proper brain function and academic performance is made clear by students' responses to the UIC Pop-Up Pantry Intake Form

While registering for the Pantry, new student shoppers are asked the following question:

**“How much food do you currently have at home?” (pre-pandemic data)**

Out of 851 responses:

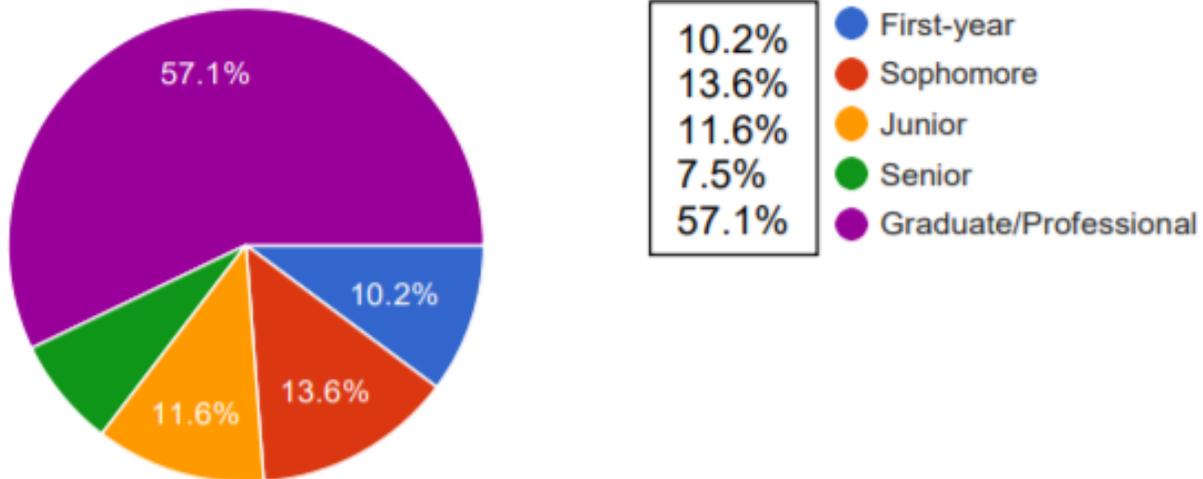
- 40 percent reported they had 0 to 5 items of food at home
- 41 percent reported they had 6 to 10 items of food at home



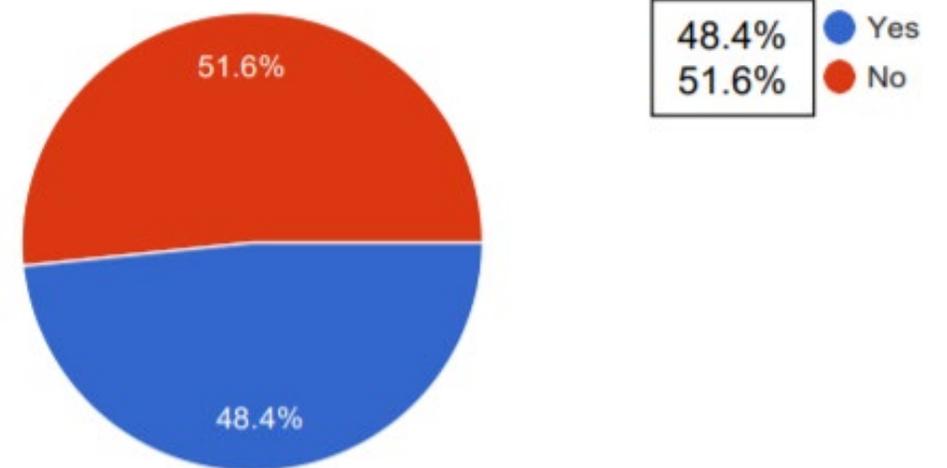
# UIC Pop-Up Pantry April 2021 Student Shopper Survey

Number of Survey Responses: 155

Q. Year in school?



Q. Are you currently employed?

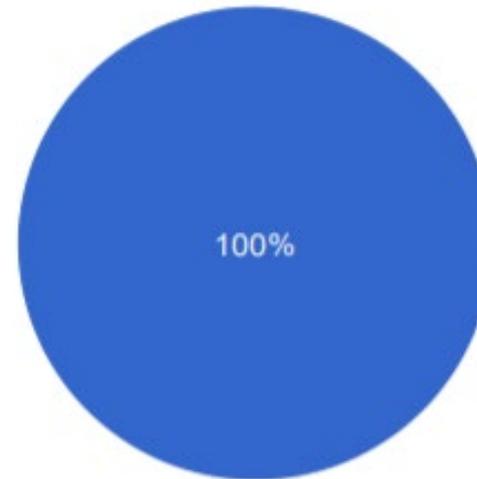
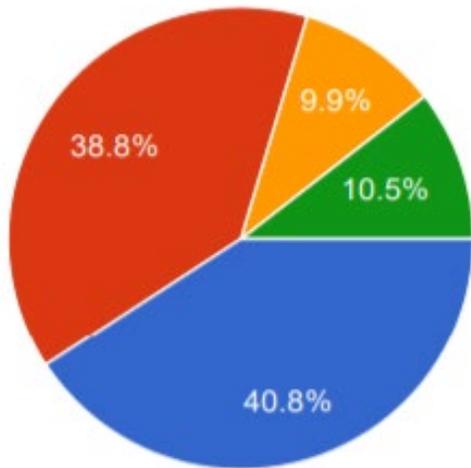


# UIC Pop-Up Pantry April 2021 Student Shopper Survey

Number of Survey Responses: 155

Q. How often do you visit?

Q. Does having access to the free food offered at the UIC Pop-Up Pantry help you?



## UIC Pop-Up Pantry April 2021 Student Shopper Survey

When asked, "How has having access to free food helped you?"

Students positively reported that access helped to:

- Decrease daily hunger
- Decrease stress/worry
- Improve ability to study
- Improve physical wellbeing
- Improve emotional wellbeing

71% of student reported that the UIC Pop-Up Pantry was an "Important source of support during the Pandemic."





# Early Days of the Pantry

## Opened in 2014

- One day a month
- Open for six hours a day
- Closed during summer
- Location: Transient
- Serving: 100 to 200 students a month
- Food supply: Unpredictable in quantity, quality, and frequency of donation



*This picture was taken in 2015 at an actual Pop-Up Pantry event. The line wraps around the corner and goes down the hall another 20 feet. Average wait time was 40 minutes.*



## Pantry Growth Over Time 2021

- Two shopping days every week (regular school year)
- From 1:00 to 4:00pm (Wed/Thurs)
- Open during summer (one day a week)
- Location: Permanent
- Receiving: 500 to 680 visits a month
- Distribute: 1,000 to 2,000 pounds of food a week
- First state university in Illinois to receive full membership with Greater Chicago Food Depository
- Food supply: Predictable, reliable, good quality, fresh fruit and veggies



*2021 current Pantry space. Access to larger space and new food set-up decreased student wait time to 5-10 minutes.*

# Impact

During the Pandemic, the UIC Pop-Up Pantry continued to serve students every week for six hours.



## BY THE NUMBERS

MARCH 2020 TO  
MARCH 2021

*Founded and managed  
by the UIC Wellness Center*



**5,724**



Tons of food distributed



# Impact

In an April 2021 survey, we asked student shoppers to tell us their story of how the Pantry helped them. This is what a few of them said.

"It has helped so much not worrying about constantly questioning if I can afford groceries this week. Because of the pandemic, my finances have changed dramatically & the pantry has helped so much!" – UIC Student

"In the beginning of this academic year, I planned to be in charge of my own food and supplies while my parents focused on paying rent for my apartment and their own, so our expenses were already getting noticeably thin. Unfortunately, I lost my job over the summer break due to the pandemic, so saving money was no longer possible for me. I relied on whatever I had left saved from my job, a school refund, and some assistance from my parents to help make it through fall semester with no worries on food. Spring semester rolled around however and my savings were gone, which led me to rack up a ridiculous amount of credit card debt and I was unemployed. I turned to the pantry, which helped me get back to my feet financially and gave me peace of mind knowing that I won't get deeper in debt. I eventually got a job and am now very close to paying off my debt and being able to save money again!" – UIC Student

"I am homeless for the second time, but I don't feel as hopeless as I did last time because I know I have resources like the Pantry!" – UIC Student

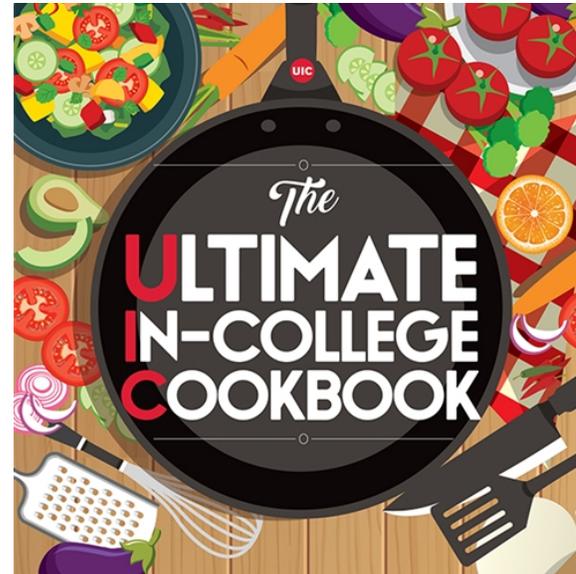
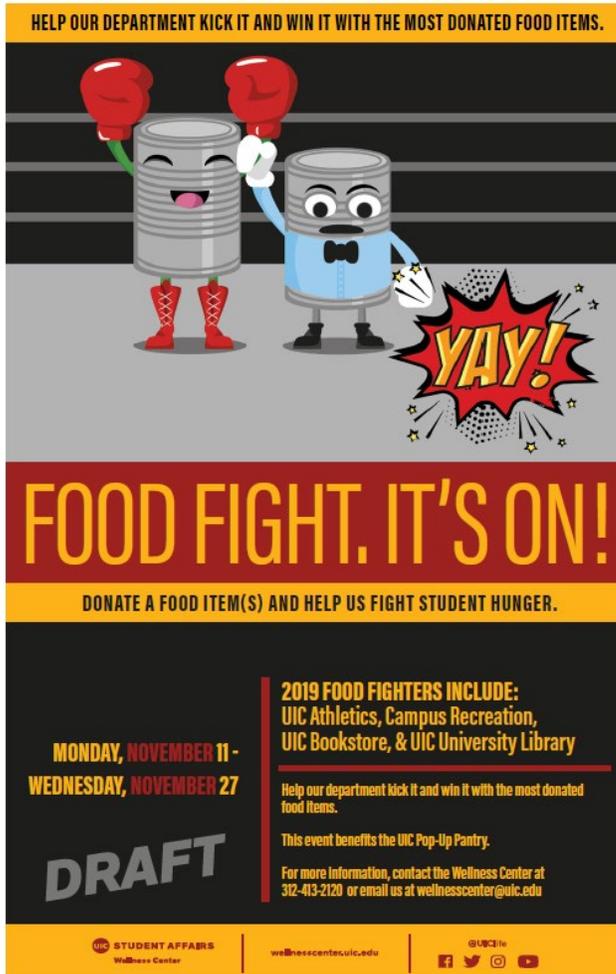
"I moved out during the pandemic and found it difficult to get in 3 nutritious meals/day while balancing nursing school. My roommates suggested trying the UIC food pantry." – UIC Student

# Foundational Steps to Opening a Pantry

- Gather data on student needs on campus and at state, and national levels
- Create a catchy name and an eye-catching logo
  - Every conversation starts with this
  - It establishes your legitimacy
- Establish partnerships with people and departments that have decision making power, influential power, or access to funding
  - Undergraduate Student Government – Graduate Student Government – health or social justice-oriented student organization
  - Deans - Vice-Chancellors – Faculty – Financial Aid – health-oriented colleges or departments
- Find the best location available to you
  - Roomy – space for storage – area for waiting room or line – easy to find - welcoming
- Identify a stable food source
  - Feed America
- Establish a Gift Fund
  - Allows for the acceptance of monetary donations



# Getting Food



- Gift Fund
- Student Run Food Drives
- Department Run Food Drives
- Employee Salary Deductions
- Develop an item to sell (UIC Cookbook)
- Feed America (Greater Chicago Food Depository)
- Corporate partners (start with campus vendors)
- Create program where donations can be made at the point of purchase at campus stores
- Request to have “Student Food Insecurity” Fee added to tuition (Can be as low as \$1.00 to \$2.00 per student)





Thank you.

