

HOUSE No. 4408

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, August 28, 2025.

The committee on Higher Education, to whom was referred the petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1466) of Andres X. Vargas, Mindy Domb and others for legislation to establish a hunger-free campus grant program, reports recommending that the accompanying bill (House, No. 4408) ought to pass.

For the committee,

DAVID M. ROGERS.

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act establishing the hunger free campus initiative.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 15A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official
2 Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

3 Section 46. (a) Subject to appropriation, there shall be a hunger-free campus grant
4 program managed by the department to provide grants to public institutions of higher education
5 to address student food insecurity and hunger in order to support students in completion of their
6 career and technical education at the post-secondary level with the goal of enhancing the
7 workforce of the commonwealth. This grant program shall also be available to municipally
8 administered colleges and to minority-serving institutions as defined under 20 U.S.C. 1067k (3)
9 as determined by the United States Department of Education. Funding for the grant program may
10 include, but not be limited to, appropriations from the Education and Transportation Fund
11 established in section 2BBBBBB of chapter 29.

12 Using funding allocated under the grant program, the department may hire a director of
13 the program who shall report to the commissioner. The director shall develop guidelines and

14 procedures governing the grant making process and the program using available data pertaining
15 to student hunger. The director may also conduct any additional surveys the department deems
16 necessary to understand gaps in addressing student food insecurity and hunger eligible public
17 institutions higher education campuses across the commonwealth.

18 The guidelines and procedures that govern the program shall specify any requirements
19 applicable to eligible public institutions of higher education including, but not limited to: (i)
20 whether the institution has designated campus staff to interface with the department; (ii) the
21 existence and extent of any campus-level hunger awareness programs, including notification to
22 students of their rights to participate in federal and state food assistance programs; (iii) whether
23 the institution has established on-campus meal vendors to accept available federal and state
24 nutrition benefits; (iv) the existence or development of a student meal credit sharing program; (v)
25 income based standards by which grant levels are determined according to the student population
26 at each participating campus; and (vi) any other pertinent criteria as developed by the
27 department. The department shall further develop and deliver technical assistance to assist
28 eligible public institutions of higher education to meet the goals of this program.

29 (b) Subject to appropriation, the department shall award grants to institutions that have
30 met the guidelines and procedures established by the department. Upon recommendation by the
31 director of the program, the commissioner or a designee shall determine the amount of each grant
32 which shall be used by the institution to address food insecurity among its students in accordance
33 with the program and shall establish reporting guidelines for grant recipients.

34 (c) Annually, not later than July 1, the department shall submit a report on the hunger-
35 free campus grant program for the preceding fiscal year to the governor, the clerks of the senate

36 and house of representatives and the joint committee on higher education. The report shall
37 include the number and amounts of grants to eligible institutions well as a comprehensive
38 assessment of the program for the applicable year, including: (i) identifying the institutions
39 participating in the program; (ii) describing the activities of participating campuses; (iii) the level
40 of student engagement in activities; and (iv) the outcomes resulting from activities.

41 SECTION 2. Chapter 29 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition,
42 is hereby amended by adding the following section:

43 Section 2EEEEEE. (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the
44 commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Hunger-Free Campus Trust Fund
45 administered by the commissioner of higher education. The fund shall be credited with: (i)
46 revenue from appropriations or other money authorized by the general court and specifically
47 designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) interest earned on such revenues; and (iii) funds from
48 public and private sources such as gifts, grants and donations. Amounts credited to the fund shall
49 not be subject to further appropriation and any money remaining in the fund at the end of a fiscal
50 year shall not revert to the General Fund. Amounts credited to the fund shall be used to fund
51 grants made pursuant to the program, and for the cost of administration of such program by the
52 department of higher education.

53 (b) Annually, not later than October 1, the commissioner shall report to the clerks of the
54 senate and house of representatives, the joint committee on higher education and the house and
55 senate committees on ways and means on the fund's activity including: (i) the source and amount
56 of funds received; (ii) the amounts distributed and the purpose of expenditures from the fund;

57 (iii) any grants provided to public institutions of higher education and other stakeholder
58 organizations; and (iv) anticipated revenue and expenditure projections for the next year.