

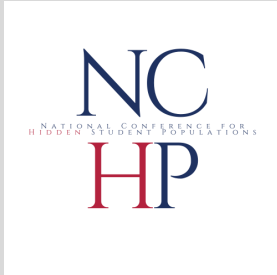
# The Scholar-Practitioner

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A publication of R is for Thursday

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## National Conference for Hidden Student Populations

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<https://nchp.okstate.edu>

## Current Hidden College Student Populations

May include those who have foster care histories, justice-involved experiences, who are survivors of sexual violence or sex workers, recovering substances addicts, who face housing insecurity, or who are considered Third Culture Kids/Individuals

## NCHP Conference Fellows

Dr. Jennifer Geiger,  
University of Illinois, Chicago

Dr. Royel Johnson,  
University of Southern California

Dr. Kerri Kearney,  
Oklahoma State University

Dr. Megan Piel,  
University of Texas, San Antonio

Dr. Lori Tiller,  
University of Georgia

Dr. Lisa Will,  
Oklahoma State University



**The Scholar-Practitioner** is a monthly publication of research summaries that target the research-to-practice gap for U.S. scholar and practitioner advocates for hidden college student populations.

This publication reinforces the work of the **National Conference for Hidden Student Populations (NCHP)** by providing a space to share research applications for practice. NCHP was the first research conference dedicated to this multidisciplinary area of study. **The NCHP 4th conference will be held February 28 - March 1, 2024, at University of Texas—San Antonio.**

## Implications of Food and Housing Insecurity in College Populations

Moya, E. M., Wagler, A., Ayala, J., Crouse, M., Garcia, A., & Schober, G. S. (2022). Analysis of food and housing insecurity among university students at a public Hispanic-serving institution. *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition*, 18(1), 21-35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19320248.2022.2077159>

## Summary by Eva Moya & Araceli Garcia

Food insecurity (FI) and housing insecurity (HI) have been found to be major barriers to student success in higher education. Food security is defined as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life” (Reutlinger, 1985), those who are unable to have nutritionally adequate food available and meet this threshold are food insecure (Coleman-Jensen, et al., 2019). Housing insecurity is more abstract but includes various experiences such as housing instability, unaffordability, poor quality, low neighborhood safety, shelters, couch surfing, living in motels or cars, or homelessness (Cox et al., 2019; Bowers & O’Neil, 2019). FI and HI have been linked to worse academic and health outcomes among university students (i.e., low-class attendance, dropping a class, withdrawal from school, higher risks of mental health issues, unhealthy eating habits, poor sleep quality, perceived stress, and alcohol use behaviors; Bruening et al., 2016; Elzein et al., 2017; Zigmont et al., 2019). These two factors are especially important when considering minority populations, including people of color and first-generation students.

## Purpose

The study sought to examine and describe food and housing insecurity among students attending The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), one of the leading Hispanic Serving Institutions with 80% of students identifying as Hispanic.

## Research Questions

Which specific characteristics put a college student at a higher risk for FI and HI? What are the overall levels of FI and HI among college students?

## Methodology

The survey instrument was prepared by the researchers. Some questions to measure FI and HI were adapted from other instruments that had similar targeted outcomes (Bickel et al., 2000; Wisconsin Hope Lab, 2016). The instrument was piloted to the target population. Students were given the opportunity to leave any comments or suggestions in the last question box.

## Data sources

Data was collected through a university-wide survey from UTEP. The survey asked students to complete questions on demographics, food insecurity,

housing insecurity, and transportation reliability. A total of 24,887 students over the age of 18 were enrolled during Fall 2019; from those, 2,767 (11.12%) completed the survey via an emailed invitation.

**Participants.** Participants reported being Hispanic (82.7%), aged 18-24 years (69%), worked off-campus (36.3%), self-identified as female (68.7%), had a lower level of household income (\$0-24,999; 52.7%), and attended the university full time (86%).

## Findings

**Food Insecurity.** Students with a low income, who were head of household, and were employed had the highest risk of FI. The next highest risk group was heads of households with lower income levels who had a reliable means of transportation. This group was followed by those who reported no reliable transportation, being a head of household, and being unemployed. When asked about food availability and affordability, heads of households at the lowest two income levels without reliable transportation did not eat enough due to lack of money or food. Students who were not heads of household and lived on campus reported not having enough money for food.

**Housing Insecurity.** Students at highest risks for HI were those who do not live with their family and instead live off campus and have an income in the lowest two income levels (less than \$10,000-\$19,999). This group of students had a 30.8% chance of not having a permanent address in the past year.

## Implications for Higher Education

University administration needs to be prepared to serve students who historically have had limited access to education and other basic needs. Identifying the most at-risk groups can ensure that the limited resources are allocated most effectively. Knowing which characteristics put a student at higher risk can also help universities prepare themselves by developing supporting efforts. Students' challenges will be ever-changing, therefore efforts to continue to identify their needs should continue over time. Recommendations are to continuously identify the changing student needs, partner with local community organizations, push for the support of campus food pantries, and increase university support on these issues. It is important to make student needs visible to the administration and other students to keep communication and connection to resources open. Sharing these important pieces of information with students can start a conversation about the changes needed in their institution and motivate them to demand better efforts from the administration. This study represented the first point in time when data was collected. The research team has continued to collect data for Fall 2020, Fall 2021, and Fall 2022. Edits have been made to the instrument to account for the COVID-19 pandemic impact, mental and physical health, and civic engagement. Fall 2023 study is

forthcoming.

## More information

[2020 Food and Housing Security: Obstacles to academic advancement for UTEP student.](#)

[Food and Housing Security among UTEP students in 2021-2022: Obstacles to Academic Advancement.](#)

## References

Bickel, G., Nord, M., Price, C., Hamilton, W., & Cook, J. (2000). Guide to measuring household food security, revised 2000. Alexandria VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

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# NCHP

**Save the date! Feb 28—March 1, 2024**

**Call for Proposal NOW OPEN!**

**Team Leader** - Become a team leader of a multidisciplinary research team. September 1, 2023, Deadline (notifications by September 15)

**Research Team Member** - Become a new multidisciplinary research team member. October 13, 2023, Deadline (notifications by October 31)

**Traditional Research Presenter** - Present an original empirical work. October 31, 2023, Deadline (notifications by November 10)

**Arts-Based Research Presenter** - Present an arts-based work. October 31, 2023, Deadline (notifications by November 10)

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**To sign up for ongoing email updates about the 2024 national conference and/or for archives of The Scholar-Practitioner, go to: <https://risforThursday.okstate.edu>**

