

Spring 5-21-2020

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Recommended Citation

Coronado, Alexandria Belen, "Research Proposal: Housing and Food Insecurity Among College Students" (2020). *2020 Symposium Posters*. 50.

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Research Proposal: Housing and Food Insecurity Among College Students

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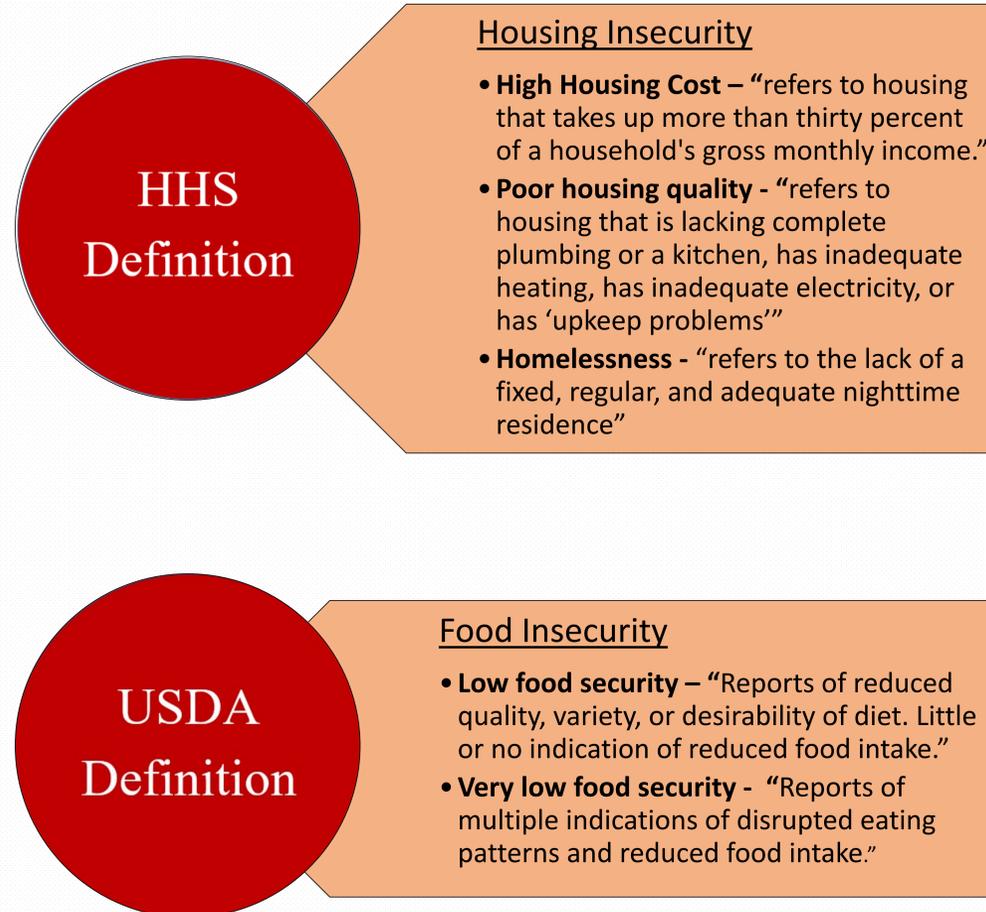
Mentor: Lindsey Upton, PhD, Criminal Justice

Background

There have been many studies conducted on both food and housing insecurity among various populations, but currently there has been a lack of research among college institutions. This study seeks to better understand the relationship between food and housing insecurity among students at one Inland Northwest university.

Those who find themselves in a situation in which they do not have stable housing, often have to face other issues alongside it. Research has shown there can be a link drawn between housing instability with that of the likelihood of losing a job (Desmond, & Gershenson, 2016). Data from this report indicated that income loss was the most significant factor for residents who had to face forced move outs (Desmond, & Gershenson, 2016). This can become an issue that weighs heavily on university students who might have to work to afford school as well. Other research has indicated that individuals with certain characteristics, and who come from certain backgrounds, have higher rates of food insecurity (The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, 2020; Gallegos, Ramsey, & Ong, 2014; Coleman-Jensen, Steffen, & Whitley, 2017).

University students come from very diverse economic backgrounds and there could be an under reporting of the true extent of these issues on campuses. This study looks to analyze which populations of people might be more susceptible to these concerns and highlight how the university might better serve their student needs.



Proposed Method

This intends to be a Quantitative study conducted through

- Surveys
 - Population : Eastern Washington University students
- Analysis of previously acquired data

Potential Obstacles of Study

- Low turnout rate
 - Intended to be resolved with use of incentives
- Potential impacts of COVID-19
 - The impact of the novel COVID-19 virus will be noted within the research

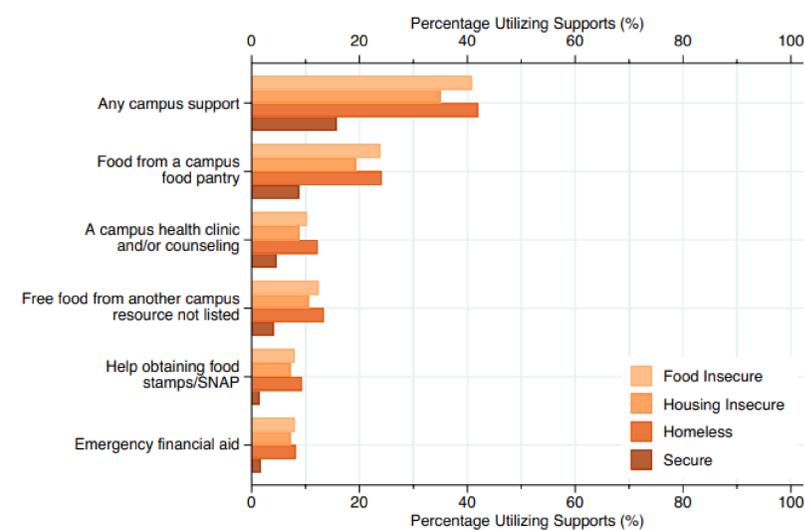
Expected Outcomes

Through this study, it is expected that this overlooked issue will be highlighted and focused on more by both the university and the students of Eastern Washington University. Currently the university collects data on students who face an insecure source of food. Results from this study looks to fill missing data on housing insecurity at the university. With these results, the institution can take part in a dialogue that could foster new policy that better meets the needs of their students. New policy could be expanding current resources in place or determining new solutions.

Current Data

A recent study conducted by Temple University’s Hope Center did a similar study over the Community Colleges in Washington State. This study indicated approximately one third of the population who replied to their survey faced both issues during the academic year, with the other estimated two thirds going to students who faced one of the two (The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, 2020). Their data also indicated that students who experienced these issues did not access resources available to them (The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice, 2020). Other recent data indicated that renter populations experience very high food insecurity rates compared to other living arrangement individuals (Gallegos, Ramsey, & Ong, 2014).

FIGURE 10. Use of On-Campus Supports According to Basic Needs Security Among Washington State Community and Technical College Survey Respondents



Source: 2019 #RealCollege Survey

Table 3 Associations between food insecurity and sociodemographic, health and dietary factors among university students

	Food secure (%)	Food insecure (%)	p value	Odds ratio	95 % CI
Household structure^a					
Living alone, no children	11.8	15.0		1.00	
Couple with children	29.0	15.0	0.898	0.33-2.55	
Single-parent family	4.5	6.8	0.878	0.49-1.58	
Single living with friends/relatives	41.0	48.3	0.569	0.28-1.17	
Couple with no children	13.8	15.0	0.02	0.696	0.34-1.44
Housing tenure^b					
Living at home	47.3	18.4		1.00	
Renting	18.9	40.1	3.40	1.88-6.16	
Boarding/renting room	27.3	34.8	2.29	1.28-4.12	
Home-owner	10.1	6.8	<0.01	1.58	0.70-3.58

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