

FMPH Capstone x The Hub: Food and Housing Insecurities Amongst

Black/African, Brown/Latinx, and Low-Income Students

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Background

- Basic Needs: the most essential resources required to thrive as a student
- Access to nutritious food, stable housing, financial wellness resources
- Housing and food insecurities are two of the biggest challenges that Black (African or African American) and Brown (Latinx) students and low-income students face while attending college.
- Many of these college students also are impacted by instabilities such as:
 - houselessness, lack of access to healthy groceries, and lack of access to transportation
 - less likely to stay on schedule with medical check-ups
 - at a higher risk for poor health and poor mental health

Results

- Survey received 46 responses from a mixture of undergraduate and graduate students
 - 23.9% of the respondents identified as Brown/Latinx
 - 4.4% identified as Black/African
 - About 85% of our participants self-identified as low-income, eligible for federal or governmental aid such as Pell Grants, Cal Grants, and Work Study
- Average amount of engagement, since the Hub usually has around 20-30 likes per post

Discussions/Conclusions

- The Hub has over a thousand followers but average The only 20-30 likes
- We are hoping to stimulate more active follower growth and audience through:
 - Engagement with our next three to four posts
 - Relatability as testimonies are from current and former UCSD students (main audience base for The Hub)

Purpose

- UCSD Public Health Capstone project and Basic Needs Center partnership created to raise awareness about housing and food insecurities amongst student populations who are systematically impacted and placed at a disadvantage:
 - Black/African
 - Brown/Latinx
 - and/or low-income students
- Goal: to spread awareness on the importance of providing housing and food amongst the target student population

Methodology

- Data summarized on challenges of students from Basic Needs Center's Annual Data Report 2019-2021
- Data reports incorporated into social media campaign, posting infographics through The Hub's Instagram page
- Conducted a survey for individuals open to share their experiences as a UC student who dealt with housing and food insecurities
 - Students were incentivized through a gift card drawing
 - Testimonies posted through The Hub's Instagram account to reach target audience

Student Testimony #1

"With the costs of textbooks and fees even with a loan, it means I have to spend hundreds of my money on school. I typically will skip on meals and air on the side of caution when buying anything bc I'm unsure how much I'll be asked to put in fees that quarter. Having food be supplied to me for free takes away that relief and ensures I eat more often."

I used the basic needs food [pantry]. It was helpful although since I wasn't able to pick the food I was given, a lot of it was food I couldn't really prepare in first year dorms. For the food that I couldn't cook here, like rice noodles and such, I just took them home for my family during break. The only item I've noticed expired are the bag of chips sometimes given but overall free food is really helpful."

- Anonymous 1st year undergrad

Student Testimony #2

"I almost became homeless due to problems with my Landlord and no savings to fall on. This caused stress that was reflected in my academics. My low grades almost got me disqualified for financial aid which would leave me with a lot of debt. This added to my stress since my healthcare is also provided by the university and its the most important thing in my life right now and I cant afford to pay for it out of pocket."

I went to the triton food pantry since I was trying to save money for my housing. I was able to get Cal Fresh to help with this issue through university resources. This was extremely helpful and has continued to be an huge help. I no longer have to worry about whether I'll eat or whether I'll be short on rent because I'm hungry."

- Anonymous UCSD Student

Student Testimony #3

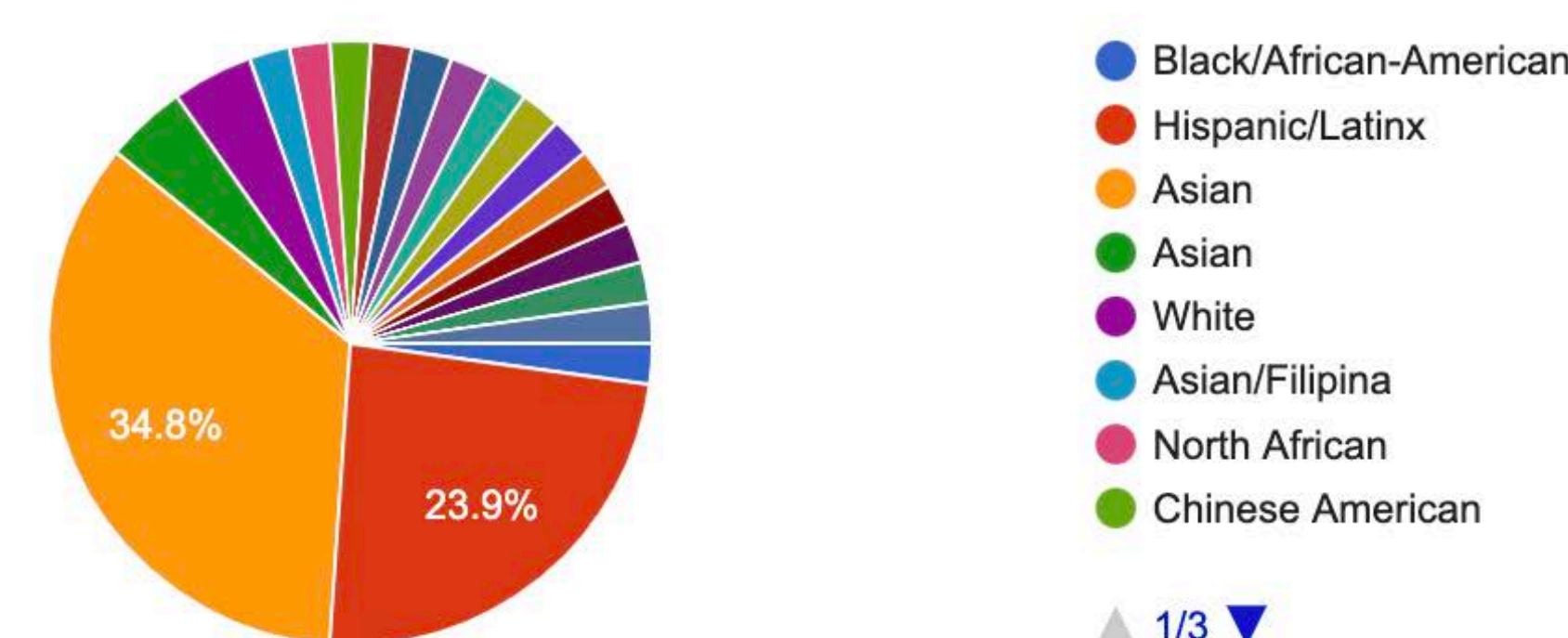
"I have always been very tight on money while attending UCSD. I work two jobs to pay for my necessities; most of which go towards my education. It is very tiring and frustrating because I miss out on events or opportunities because I am too busy working. I wish I never had to struggle this hard and have it easy like many other students at UCSD."

I have used the Triton Food Pantry and the Basic Needs center. Both are amazing and I feel blessed to have them. I use them mainly to get access to food and necessities, but one time in particular where I was really grateful for them was when I had caught COVID. I was unable to work and had to move to isolation on campus and had to buy food. I was skipping meals because I could not afford to keep paying for the campus food, but when I told the basic needs, they payed for my meals and waived the fees. I was so happy I started crying."

- Anonymous UCSD 3rd year undergrad

What race/ethnicity do you identify with?

46 responses



Limitations

- Did not have the chance to advertise or outreach to community members through in-person methods (COVID)
- 28.3% of the response we received aligned with our original target population in terms of race/ethnicity
- Could not directly contact students that were considered "high need" by the financial aid office (privacy concerns)

Public Health Relevance/Implications

- We hope that our campaign is able to impact the communities that the Basic Needs Hub serves by:
 - Sharing their lived experiences and prioritizing student voices
 - Lenses of advocacy, desire, and resilience
 - Raising awareness about services that students might not know about
 - Providing good information for the Hub to re-evaluate based on student needs to address them better