



# Food and Housing Insecurity at Sacramento State and Connection to Broader Trends in California

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# Goals of this morning

- I. Share ongoing research at Sacramento State
  - Our process, methods and early results
  
- I. Think about connections to broader research
  - What do we know about homelessness in CA
  - Food insecurity on campuses and young adult housing challenges nationally
  
- II. Discuss challenges of this work
  - Measuring housing and food
  - Reporting findings
  - Lessons learned & future directions

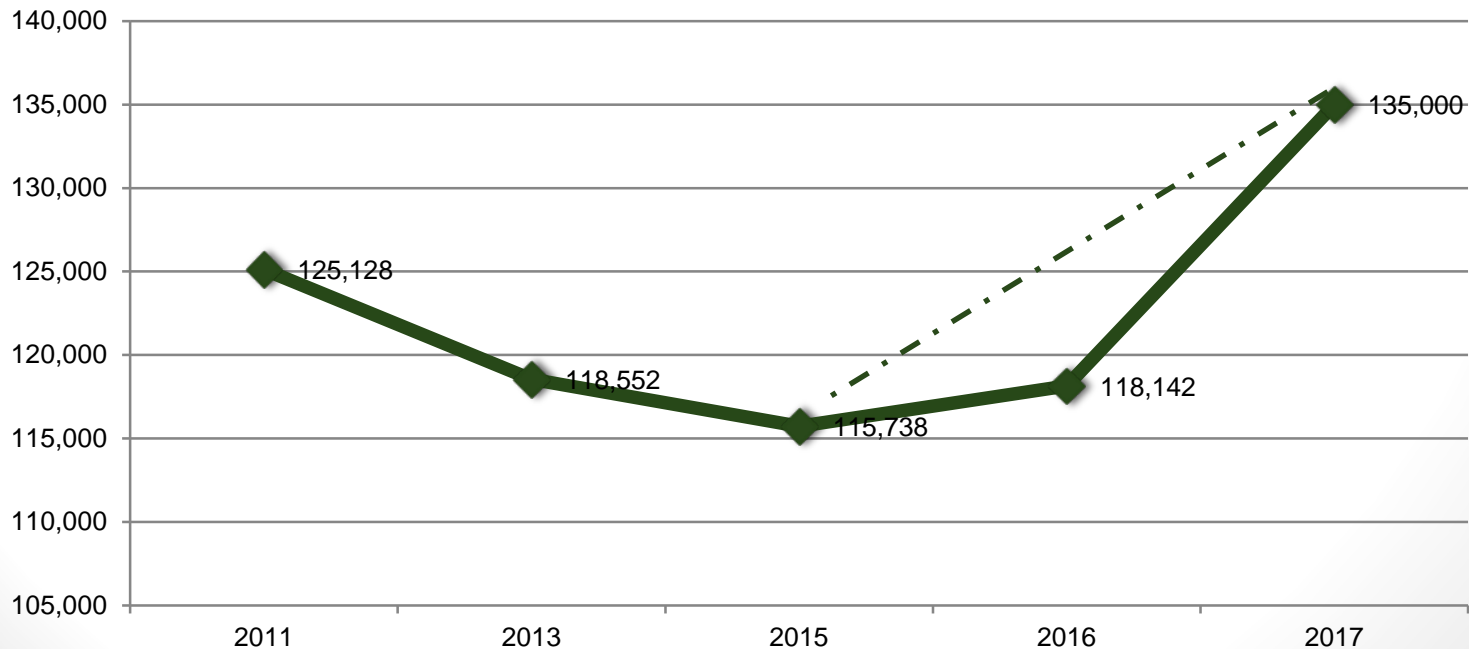
# Agenda

1. What do we know so far?
2. Study background (our process & partners)
3. What have we found so far?
4. What do we (and you) want to know more about?

1. WHAT DO WE KNOW?

# What we know

1. CA has largest homeless population in the US and it is growing
2. 80%-85% experience episodic homelessness
3. Housing insecurity vs. instability vs. homelessness
4. Complex drivers of homelessness: the role of affordable housing



# What we know

- Homelessness and housing instability among young adults ages 18-25:
  - 5.2% experience “literal” homelessness in a given year
  - 4.5% experience housing insecurity in the form of “couch surfing” in a given year (Chapin Hall, 2017)
- Transition to adulthood as a time of instability and change
  - Some level of instability expected, but there are some youth at greater risk of higher level of instability and associated consequences
  - Homelessness among youth often episodic, short-term. Housing insecurity/instability may be more chronic.
- Homelessness and housing insecurity often hidden (Chapin Hall, 2017)

# What we know

- Food Insecurity
- USDA Definitions of Food Security
- **High Food Security**
- **Marginal Food Security** – anxiety of food sufficiency or shortage of food; little/no change in diet or food intake
- **Low Food Security** – Reduced quality, variety, or desirability; little/no indication of reduced intake
- **Very Low Food Security** - Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake

# What we know

In a nationwide study of food insecurity in college students:

- 56% of food insecure students report having a job
- Being enrolled in a meal plan with a campus dining hall does not eliminate the threat of food insecurity
- Three in four food insecure students received some form of financial aid (Dubick & Cady, 2016)

In a study across 12 UC campuses:

- The most prevalent consequence of not having enough money was purchasing the cheapest food even though it was not the healthiest (43%)
- 13% experienced difficulty studying because of hunger (Martinez, Maynard & Ritchie, 2016)



# What we know

- Study of needs at the CSU (Crutchfield, 2016)
  - Preliminary student surveys from CSU Long Beach estimate that 12% of students are “displaced” and 21% food insecure
  - At the time of Phase 1 of the study (2015), 11 CSU campuses had programs for food insecure students, and one had programs for housing insecure students
    - Campuses tend to focus on addressing students’ food insecurity to a greater extent than students’ housing needs

## 2. STUDY BACKGROUND

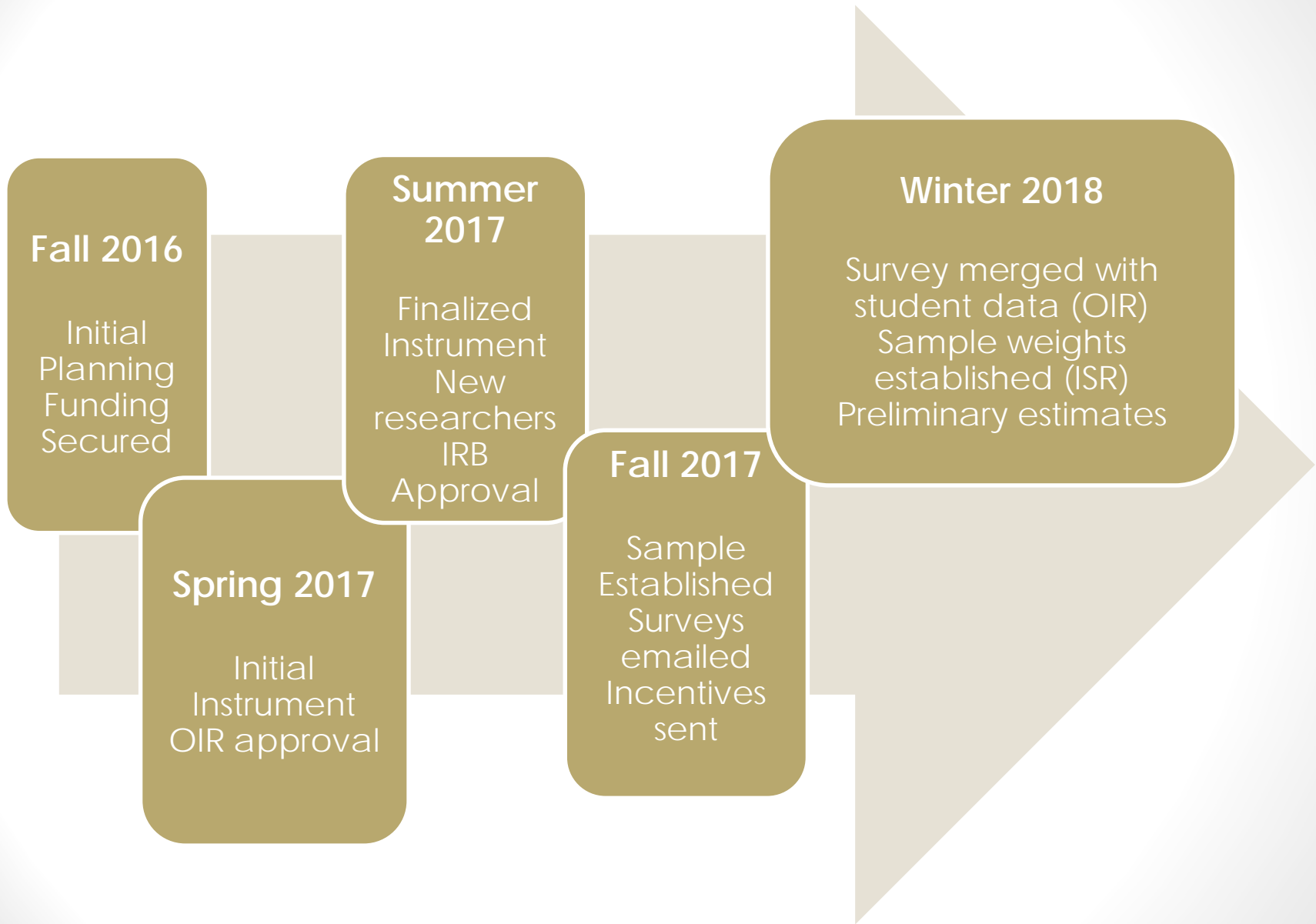
# Post 2016 CSU Needs Conference

- CSUS Strategic Plan
- Task Force on Housing & Food Security.
  - Promote new campus programs & supports
    - (Emergency Housing Program. Hornet Roommate Finder, etc)
  - Support ongoing research
- Stakeholders
  - President's Office
  - The Union Well
  - Division of Student Affairs
  - Associated Students Inc.
  - Office of Institutional Research
  - Faculty researchers

# Study Purpose

- Task Force Subgroup sought to design a new study to understand food and housing insecurity at CSUS
- Goals to build on CSU study and expand previous assessments by Dr. Lynn Hanna
  - Examine both housing and food insecurity issues at CSUS
  - Identify student groups particularly at-risk
  - Assess how insecurity issues may affect time-to-degree and graduation rates

# Timeline



# Study Design

- Instrumentation: 40 survey items
  - 13 food security items (based on USDA assessments)
  - 15 housing security items (based on HUD assessments)
  - 7 demographics items (based on census and other surveys)
  - 5 items on awareness of campus resources
- Stratified random sampling of 8,768 student emails
  - Stratified by student level, status and college
  - Undergraduates and Graduates
- Automated email invitations and incentives
  - 1,390 students responded to email (15.6% response rate)
  - 1,140 complete responses (13% effective rate)

# Study Design

- Data merged with Student Records and Anonymized
  - **Office of Institutional Research** matched responses with student data
    - Demographics
    - Pell Grant Eligibility
    - Units Attempted & Completed
    - Overall GPA
- Sample weighted to adjust for response bias
  - **Institute for Social Research** assessed bias of sample to campus demographics
  - Biases found for students who are Male, Pell Grant eligible, Latinx, Transfer and Part-Time
  - Current Sample Weights restricted to sophomores, juniors, and seniors (n=970)

## 3. FINDINGS



# Prevalence of Food Security among CSUS Undergraduates

2017  
(N=970)

Food Secure	35.7% (32.5%-39.0%)
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Some level of Food Insecurity	64.3% (61.0%-67.5%)
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(95% CI Range)

# Prevalence of Food Security among CSUS Undergraduates

	2017 (N=970)	2013 Pell Grant (n=848)
<b>Food Secure</b>	35.7% (32.5%-39.0%)	30.9% (26.1%-36.1%)
<b>Some level of Food Insecurity</b>	64.3% (61.0%-67.5%)	69.1% (63.9%-73.9%)

(95% CI Range)

# Prevalence of Food Security among CSUS Undergraduates

	2017 (N=970)	2013 Pell Grant (n=848)	2017 Pell Grant (n=383)
<b>Food Secure</b>	35.7% (32.5%-39.0%)	30.9% (26.1%-36.1%)	30.9% (26.1%-36.1%)
<b>Some level of Food Insecurity</b>	64.3% (61.0%-67.5%)	69.1% (63.9%-73.9%)	69.1% (63.9%-73.9%)

(95% CI Range)

# Unpacking “Levels of Food Insecurity” (USDA 10-item)

## Among Food Insecure Students

**Straddling Marginal Security**  
*“Anxiety about food...”*

28.5%  
(24.7%-32.7%)

**Low Food Security**  
*“Reduced food quality...”*

**Very Low Food Security**  
*“Reduced food quantity...”*

(95% CI Range)

# Unpacking “Levels of Food Insecurity” (USDA 10-item)

## Among Food Insecure Students

<b>Straddling Marginal Security</b> <i>“Anxiety about food...”</i>	28.5% (24.7%-32.7%)
<b>Low Food Security</b> <i>“Reduced food quality...”</i>	24.1% (20.5%-28.1%)
<b>Very Low Food Security</b> <i>“Reduced food quantity...”</i>	47.4% (43.0%-51.8%)

(95% CI Range)

# Unpacking “Levels of Food Insecurity” (USDA 10-item)

	Among Food Insecure Students	Among All Students
<b>Straddling Marginal Security</b> <i>“Anxiety about food...”</i>	28.5% (24.7%-32.7%)	17.2% (15.4%-20.7%)
<b>Low Food Security</b> <i>“Reduced food quality...”</i>	24.1% (20.5%-28.1%)	15.1% (12.8%-17.8%)
<b>Very Low Food Security</b> <i>“Reduced food quantity...”</i>	47.4% (43.0%-51.8%)	29.7% (26.7%-33.0%)

(95% CI Range)

# How often do you...cut the size or skip meals?

Approximately **16.2%** of *all students* report that they skip at least one meal every week

	Marginal Security	Low Security	Very Low Security
Every week	1.3%	10.3%	48.0%
Once per month	0.6%	24.0%	33.6%
Less than once per month	9.0%	33.5%	17.0%

# How often do you...not eat for a whole day?

Approximately **4.8%** of *all students* report that they go at least one entire day without food each week

	Marginal Security	Low Security	Very Low Security
Every week	0%	2.7%	14.8%
Once per month	1.5%	2.3%	25.7%
Less than once per month	2.5%	9.6%	35.5%



# How often do you...go hungry because you can't afford more food?

Approximately **9.3%** of *all students* report feeling hungry every week because they can't afford food

	Marginal Security	Low Security	Very Low Security
<b>Every week</b>	0.5%	3.5%	29.2%
<b>Once per month</b>	2.6%	15.6%	36.4%
<b>Less than once per month</b>	2.1%	28.9%	27.7%

# Prevalence of Housing Security among CSUS Undergraduates

	<b>2017 (N=970)</b>
<b>Secure &amp; Stable Housing</b>	84.8% (82.7%-87.0%)
<b>Some Level of Housing Instability</b>	15.2% (13.0%-17.8%)

(95% CI Range)

# Unpacking housing insecurity

	Among Housing Insecure Students (the 15% group)	Among All Students (100%)
<b>Experienced periods of Instability in the past year</b> <i>"Evicted, moved twice, trouble paying rent..."</i>	91.5% (85.1%-95.3%)	13.6% (11.0%-15.6%)

Not mutually exclusive

(95% CI Range)

# Unpacking housing insecurity

	Among Housing Insecure Students (the 15% group)	Among All Students (100%)
<b>Experienced periods of Instability in the past year</b> <i>"Evicted, moved twice, trouble paying rent..."</i>	91.5% (85.1%-95.3%)	13.6% (11.0%-15.6%)
<b>Experienced homelessness in the past year</b> <i>"Stayed in shelter, no place to go..."</i>	32.7% (24.5%-42.1%)	4.6% (3.3%-6.4%)
Not mutually exclusive	(95% CI Range)	

# Unpacking housing insecurity

	Among Housing Insecure Students (the 15% group)	Among All Students (100%)
<b>Experienced periods of Instability in the past year</b> <i>"Evicted, moved twice, trouble paying rent..."</i>	91.5% (85.1%-95.3%)	13.6% (11.0%-15.6%)
<b>Experienced homelessness in the past year</b> <i>"Stayed in shelter, no place to go..."</i>	32.7% (24.5%-42.1%)	4.6% (3.3%-6.4%)
<b>Currently homeless</b> <i>"Couch surfing, shelter..."</i>	5.0% (2.1%-11.7%)	0.7% (0.3%-1.7%)
Not mutually exclusive	(95% CI Range)	

# Unpacking housing insecurity

- Important to remember that there is quite an overlap in these groups because housing status is fluid
  - 95% of students who experienced homelessness also experienced housing insecurity in the past year
  - They represent 30% of all students who experienced housing insecurity
  - 90% of students who experienced homelessness in the past year report that they are today in either a house or an apartment

# What type of housing issues do CSUS students experience?

Across all undergraduates, approximately:

- **7.8%** say they struggled to pay rent after a substantial increase in the past year
- **3.4%** report that they have underpaid or missed a rent payment at least once in the past 12 months
- **5.2%** say they have been evicted out of their housing by their landlords in the past year
- **5.1%** say they were kicked out of their housing by a roommate or partner in the past year
- **4.0%** say they have slept in a car or an abandoned building at least once in the past year

# What These Preliminary Analyses Tell Us

65% of CSUS undergraduates experience some level of food insecurity during the academic year

- Approx. **17%** are straddling **marginal food security** (anxiety about food)
- Approx. **15%** experience **low food security** (reduced quality but not quantity)
- Approx. **28%** experience **very low food security** (disruption to food intake)



# What These Preliminary Analyses Tell Us

Experience of food insecurity varies widely across campus

- Approximately **16.2%** of all students skip at least one meal every week
- Approximately **4.8%** of all students go at least one entire day without food each week
- Approximately **9.3%** of *all students* feel hungry but can't afford food each week

# What These Preliminary Analyses Tell Us

- Significant proportion of CSUS experiencing housing insecurity (including homelessness) within a 12-month period (~13%)
  - 4.6% of these students have experienced "literal" homelessness within the past year
  - These estimates for "literal" homelessness are similar to those from a recent national prevalence estimate of 18-25 year-olds (~5.2%; Chapin Hall, 2017)

# What These Preliminary Analyses Tell Us

- Homelessness is typically part of an ongoing and cyclical experience of housing insecurity among students
  - Important implications for how we support students
    - Ongoing support may be needed beyond “literal” homelessness

# Implications for Future Research

- We do not yet know what the consequences are for housing and food insecurity
  - To what extent are housing and food insecurity related to academic performance and retention?
  - To what extent is homelessness related to academic performance and retention?
- Are there differences in housing insecurity, food insecurity, and homelessness among certain groups of students?
- Follow-up interviews could help us understand further these experiences of housing and food insecurity, to what extent they are vulnerable and could impede academic retention and performance

# Potential Implications

- Implications for potential campus interventions
  - Where do we target our resources?
  - Do we need to provide different levels of support than we are already providing?
  - How can we address housing insecurity before it leads to homelessness, before it impedes academic performance, retention, student well-being?

Thank you,

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