



January 2026 Postsecondary Food Pilot Webinar - Questions & Answers

- 1. What kind of conversations happened and/or consideration/impact did this pilot have for youth with specific food needs (immigrant and refugee youth/Muslim youth)? I work with immigrant and refugee foster youth and this is a HUGE impact on their financial stability and experience on campus. Sometimes, for example, youth are required to have a meal plan, but campuses don't offer culturally and religiously relevant food, meaning youth spend money out pocket on better food options and do not make use of meal plan they are required to have. If they do not have additional financial aid that covers indirect costs or allows for a refund check, often they have no financial aid support for these extra costs.**

Many of the pilot sites have been considering specific food needs; in some cases they've been able to work with on-campus food vendors to change or expand their offerings to be responsive to what students want. And, in the example of the program where the off-campus food co-op has been able to help the on-campus food pantry to purchase items at cost (this was WWU), this has been really helpful for purchasing specialty items that meet dietary restrictions, where typically the campus food pantry would have to pay retail prices to stock these foods which they know many students need.

- 2. Is there disaggregated data for the data points?**

At this point we don't have disaggregated data, but this is something we can definitely consider when we're evaluating the current year of the pilot program (Year 3 / 2025-2026).

- 3. Speaking of FRPL at the high school level, I'm wondering how our pilot schools may have addressed the food insecurity that follows current high school students who are doing full-time running start at the CCs and can therefore not access their high school's free lunches. Anything specific outlined for that particular group, or was it mostly just global access to food for the entire student population?**

At some of the pilot sites, Running Start students who met the rest of the eligibility criteria were also able to participate in the pilot program!

- 4. Is there data as to what the most effective assistance method for students was (e.g. dining plans vs gift cards, etc)**

Marie Spiker: Because each pilot site was really different in how the pilot program was implemented, this kind of comparison is quite challenging to make. To isolate the effect of which format is more effective, you'd need the programs to be comparable in all other ways... if I had unlimited resources as a researcher, we could come up with matched pairs of campuses that have similar characteristics and the only difference is how they're implementing the program

(e.g., dining plans vs gift cards). Within our six pilot sites we're not able to make this comparison, but the question you're asking is a good one, and I think we can maybe get at that kind of information in other ways, which I will definitely be thinking about!

5. How can we get involved in the next round?

This is the end of the 3-year grant funding, and we won't have legislative funding going forward. But with state advocacy, and local initiatives, we hope there are more opportunities in the future!

6. How did you choose pilot campuses?

The SBCTC held an RFP process for the CTC system. WSAC and Council of Presidents did an held an RFP process for selection of two universities.