
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Sasha Renée Pérez, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 1734	Hearing Date:	June 17, 2026
Author:	Stefani		
Version:	June 15, 2026		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Olgalilia Ramirez		

Subject: Count Hunger Act.

SUMMARY

This bill encourages the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), when administering the California Health Interview Survey (CHIS), to expand the portion of the survey relating to food insecurity to include households with incomes below 400 percent of the federal poverty level and only to the extent sufficient resources are available for that purpose.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes a state policy that every human being has the right to access sufficient affordable, and healthy food. The policy defines food insecurity as the occasional or constant lack of access to the amount of food a person needs to live a healthy life. The policy further defines food insecurity as the uncertainty of being able to acquire enough food to meet the needs of a person or a household due to insufficient funds or resources. Requires all state agencies to consider this state policy when revising, adopting, or establishing policies, regulations, and grant criteria when the policy, regulation, or grant pertains to the distribution of sufficient affordable food. The policy does not expand the obligation of the state to provide food or nutrition assistance or to require the expenditure of additional resources to develop food infrastructures. (Welfare and Institutions Code § 18700)
- 2) Establishes the University of California (UC) as a public trust to be administered by the Regents and grants the Regents full powers of organization and governance subject only to legislative control as necessary to ensure the security of funds, compliance with terms of its endowments, and the statutory requirements around competitive bidding and contracts, sales of property, and the purchase of materials, goods, and services. (California Constitution Article IX, § (9) (a))
- 3) Establishes the distinctive and differentiated mission and functions of California's public and independent segments and their respective institutions of higher education. Specifically, the UC may provide undergraduate and graduate instruction in the liberal arts and sciences and the profession, including teaching professions. The UC will have exclusive jurisdiction in public higher education

over the professions of law, medicine, dentistry, and veterinary medicine. The UC will be the primary state-supported academic agency for research. (Education Code § 66010.4, Subdivision (c))

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Encourages the UCLA in administering CHIS to expand the portion of the survey relating to food insecurity to include households with incomes at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty level.
- 2) Encourages UCLA to make available, to the extent feasible and in a manner that does not include personally identifiable information, statewide, regional, and county-level data regarding food insecurity among households with incomes at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty level through the AskCHIS reporting tool or a successor public reporting platform.
- 3) Encourages the activities described in the bill to be undertaken only to the extent that UCLA determines that sufficient resources are available and specifies that the bill is not to be construed as requiring the appropriation of state funds or creating an entitlement of state funding.
- 4) States that the Legislature finds and declares:
 - a) That food insecurity is an urgent, nutrition-related health crisis for Californians that experience it.
 - b) That the statewide health survey administered by UCLA, known as the “California Health Interview Survey,” or “CHIS,” is a critical measure of food insecurity in California.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) **Need for the bill.** According to the author, “The California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) fills a critical gap in understanding food insecurity and the needs of Californian families. University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) administers this survey to 25,000 households annually, collecting data on income, demographics, health, and food insecurity that directly shapes safety net policies and resource allocation. The CHIS study, unique to California, has been a valuable supplement alongside the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Hunger Survey. Conducted annually by UCLA’s Center for Health Policy Research. CHIS also measures food security, and it is able to reach several Asian and Latine subpopulations that the USDA survey could not. It also enabled analysis of the relationships between food security and health or social conditions, as well as comparisons of counties and regions within the state.

“However, with the impacts of federal cuts to these social safety net programs and the uncertain future for CHIS funding for future years, this survey too may be in jeopardy. Without sustainable funding for this program, California may lose a

critical tool and second dataset for identifying Californians experiencing hunger. CHIS previously administered the food security screener only to California households below 200% Federal Poverty Level (FPL), approximately \$64,000 for a family of four. This cutoff excludes a substantial share of Californians living above 200% FPL yet below their county's cost-of-living threshold, which has been identified as the majority of working households. According to the Brookings Institution, 1/3 of all households that are food insecure are above the 200% FPL."

- 2) **California Health Interview Survey.** CHIS is conducted by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, in collaboration with the California Department of Public Health and the Department of Health Care Services and is considered to be the nation's largest state health survey and a primary source of information regarding the health and health care needs of Californians. CHIS conducts ongoing surveys of randomly selected households across all 58 counties in California, and collects information on a broad range of topics, including health status, health care access, health insurance coverage, public program participation, mental health, food insecurity, employment, income, and other demographic and health-related characteristics. The survey data are used by policymakers, researchers, state and local agencies, community organizations, and others to better understand health trends and inform policy decisions. UCLA makes CHIS data available through several public data tools, including AskCHIS, which provides statewide, regional, and county-level health statistics derived from survey responses. This bill encourages UCLA to expand the food insecurity component of CHIS to include households with incomes at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty level and, to the extent feasible, make the resulting data publicly available through AskCHIS.
- 3) **Food insecurity data collection.** According to a report published by the Center in 2025, CHIS has measured food insecurity since 2001 and has been used to evaluate which populations are most affected and how policy changes may affect food access. Current CHIS food insecurity reporting primarily focuses on low-income households, below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. This bill encourages UCLA to expand food insecurity data collection and reports to include households with incomes at or below 400 percent of the federal poverty level. Expanding the available data may provide additional information regarding food insecurity among households that may not traditionally be considered low-income but nevertheless experience challenges with food expenses due to the high cost of living in California.
- 4) **Encourages UC.** As noted in the background of this analysis, the California Constitution establishes the UC as a public trust to be administered by the Regents and grants the Regents full powers of organization and governance, subject only to limited legislative control. Consistent with UC's constitutional autonomy, this bill does not require changes to be made to the survey; rather, it encourages that changes be undertaken and only to the extent that UCLA determines that sufficient resources are available.

SUPPORT

San Francisco-Marin Food Bank (co-sponsor)
AARP
California Immigrant Policy Center
City of Emeryville
County of Santa Clara
County Welfare Directors Association of California
First 5 LA
StopWaste

OPPOSITION

None received

-- END --