



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harvesting Hope: Ramapo College Sows Solutions for Campus Food Insecurity

State and County Grants Provide Funding for On-Campus Food Pantry

Mahwah, N.J.- Ramapo College of New Jersey is better positioned to address the needs of food access on campus thanks to grants awarded by the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education Hunger-Free Campus Grant and the Bergen County Office of Food Security totaling almost \$70,000.

During the Fall 2023 semester, the [We Care Program](#) food pantry provided almost 700 bags of food to students, averaging 40-50 bags of food per week. The timing of the Hunger-Free Campus Grant award is critical, given the increase in students experiencing food insecurity. The funds enable pantries on campus to be stocked from now through June 2024 with fresh food and frozen meals in addition to shelf-stable food items. Funds also will be used to increase shuttle service to the Ramsey Farmers Market for additional access to fresh, locally sourced food.

The almost \$68,000 is on top of the \$125,000 awarded by the same program in January and May. New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education Dr. Brian K. Bridges [visited campus in April](#) to see the first expansion of the food pantry on campus. Since that visit, Ramapo College has been able to add eight satellite pantries on campuses in and near offices with a high-traffic student footprint.

The Bergen County grant is a first for Ramapo College. In April, [Bergen County Commissioner Tracy Zur](#) visited the food pantry on campus and learned about the increase of food insecurity experienced by students. The funds enable the purchase of an additional commercial refrigerator/freezer and freezer chest as well as digital barcode scanners, carts for transporting food across campus, and storage bins for satellite pantries. The freezer chest purchase affords the opportunity for a new frozen food satellite pantry, to be located by the [Civic and Community Engagement Center](#), which houses the We Care Program.

"We are very excited to receive these funds and so grateful to the Bergen County Office of Food Security and OSHE for their support to bolster our food insecurity initiatives on campus," shared Dylan Heffernan, assistant director for the We Care Program and Civic Engagement. "We want to make sure students have both access to fresh food on campus and the ability to obtain food even when the pantry isn't open. These funds will help make that a reality."



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ABOUT RAMAPO COLLEGE

Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The comprehensive college is situated among the beautiful Ramapo Mountains, is within commuting distance to New York City, was named one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America by *CondéNast Traveler*, and boasts the best on-campus housing in New Jersey per Niche.com. Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, data science, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master's degrees in Accounting, Applied Mathematics, Business Administration, Contemporary Instructional Design, Computer Science, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a Doctor of Nursing Practice.