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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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Office

H.B. 157
136th General Assembly

Fiscal Note & Local Impact Statement

[Click here for H.B. 157's Bill Analysis](#)

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsors: Reps. Brennan and Hoops

Local Impact Statement Procedure Required: No

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Highlights

- The bill appropriates \$625,000 in each of FY 2026 and FY 2027 from the GRF for the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE) to award Hunger-Free Campus grants to certain public and private nonprofit institutions of higher education to support efforts to address food insecurity among their students, raise awareness on resources available to address basic food needs, and pursue the hunger-free campus designation.

Detailed Analysis

The bill appropriates \$625,000 in each of FY 2026 and FY 2027 from new GRF line item 235498, Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program, under the Ohio Department of Higher Education's (ODHE) budget for the Chancellor of Higher Education to establish and administer the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program. Under the program, a qualifying public or private nonprofit institution of higher education may receive initial grants, in an amount to be determined by ODHE to help them meet the requirements for the hunger-free campus designation. ODHE must give preference to applications from qualifying institutions with the highest percentage of enrolled federal Pell grant-eligible students, unless ODHE deems an applicant's plan will have greater impact on students experiencing food insecurity than an applicant with a higher percentage of enrolled Pell grant-eligible students. A qualifying institution that has earned the hunger-free campus designation may receive a sustaining grant to support or leverage existing basic needs infrastructure; maximize federal programs; build strategic partnerships at the local, state, and national levels to address food insecurity among students; raise awareness on available resources to address basic food needs; or support the reduction of student food insecurity in other ways.

Permissible uses for the grants include supporting emergency assistance, hiring staff to manage initiatives related to the program, and using grants for operating activities related to the

program. The bill prohibits a grant recipient from reducing its existing funding for initiatives that address food insecurity with the goal of shifting the cost burden of those initiatives to the program.

Each recipient institution must also report to ODHE how the grant is used, its effects on food security on the institution's campus during that academic year, and its progress working toward a hunger-free campus designation. No later than the December 31 date that occurs two years after establishing the program, ODHE must prepare and submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a report on the program that compiles each of the reports submitted by recipient institutions.

In addition to administering the Hunger-Free Campus Grant Program, the bill requires ODHE to develop an application process for a qualifying institution to receive a hunger-free campus designation and an accompanying logo for institutions that receive a designation to display. To receive this designation, for a period to be determined by ODHE, a qualifying institution must meet criteria, as determined by ODHE, which may include any of the following:

1. Having an established on-campus food pantry or a partnership with a local food bank to provide regular, on-campus food distributions;
2. Providing information to students on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and other programs that reduce food insecurity;
3. Having an established emergency assistance grant that is available to students; or
4. Having an established student meal plan credit donation program.