

TCNJ *Cares*

DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE, DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

ACADEMIC
YEAR
2021 - 2022

*Annual
Report*

Program Overview:

The Dean of Students Office established the TCNJ Cares program in 2015 to provide support for students in crisis or who have been identified as exhibiting concerning worrisome or threatening behavior. Before its establishment, issues related to students in need were managed by the Dean of Students.

The program supports two full-time staff members whose primary roles include 1) providing comprehensive outreach and consultation services to the TCNJ community, 2) providing early intervention and behaviorally based assessments for students of concern, and 3) monitoring student progress through follow-up and collection of collateral information.

In addition to its role with students, the program also houses the College's CARE Team and provides support for all student-related cases for the College's Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). The CARE team is a cross-campus program that provides support for students whose behavior does not indicate a direct threat of harm to the TCNJ community. The Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) is a multi-disciplinary program that advises representative offices on situations that pose, or may pose a threat to the safety and well-being of the campus community. The BIT Team is coordinated through the Dean of Students Office and chaired by the Dean of Students.

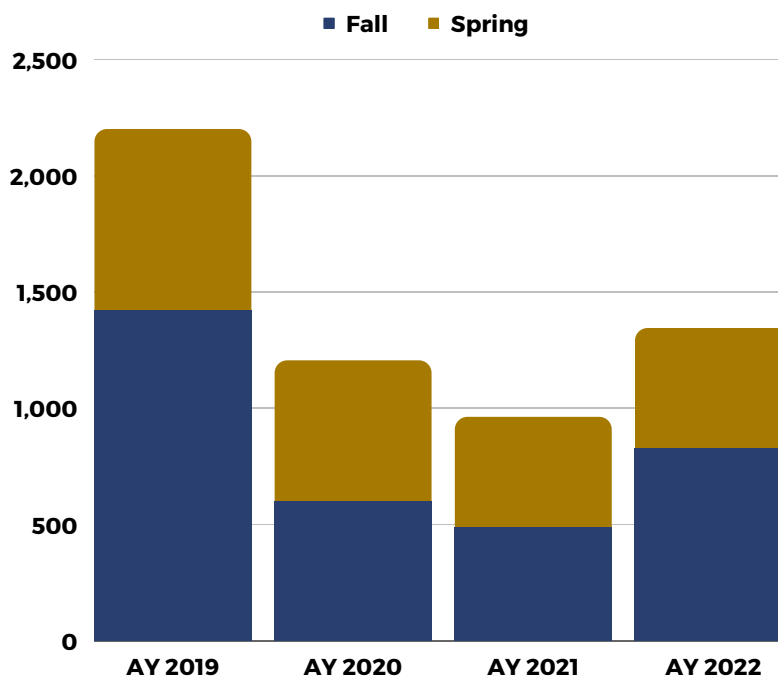
<i>By The</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
1343	# of referrals AY 2022
40	% increase in referrals from last year (961)
52 (\$12,505)	# students receiving emergency funds
1025 (950 disbursed)	# of donated meal plans distributed
106	# of individuals who utilized TheShop@TCNJ

Data Summary:

Number of Referrals Declined:

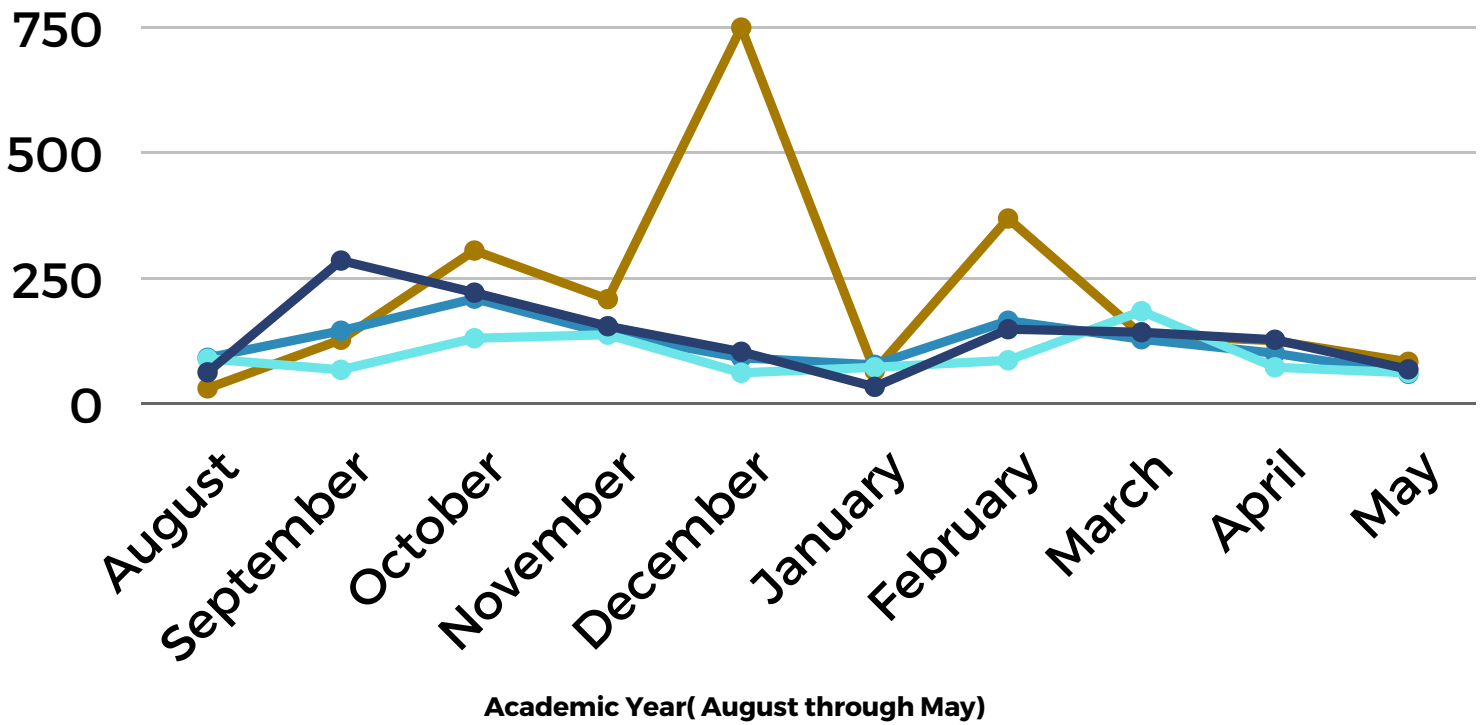
The 2021-2022 academic year occurred during/adjacent to a unique period during a global pandemic of COVID-19. Due to this public health emergency, TCNJ moved back from primarily remote operations to a hybrid model. Due to the move to remote services, there were fewer eyes on students, which led to the decrease of CARE referrals this year. During this time, the program received 961 CARE referrals, representing a 20% decrease from the 2019-2020 academic year. The AY 2022 year saw 1343 referrals representing a 40% increase in referral from AY 2021. The charts below summarize totals for each year, month, and semester between AY 2019 and the present:

Care Referrals by Year and Semester



Number of Referrals by Month

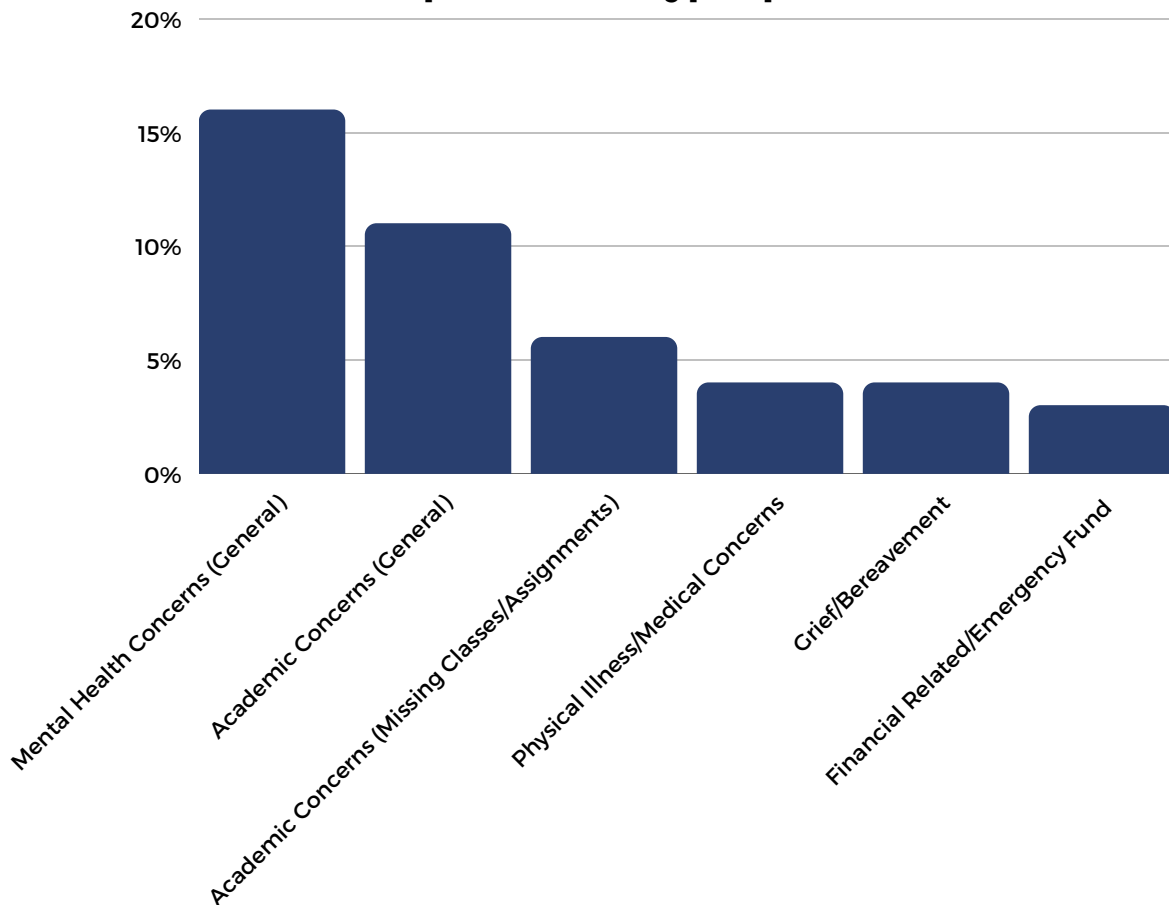
■ AY 2019 ■ AY 2020 ■ AY 2021 ■ AY 2022



Mental Health Remains a Top Priority:

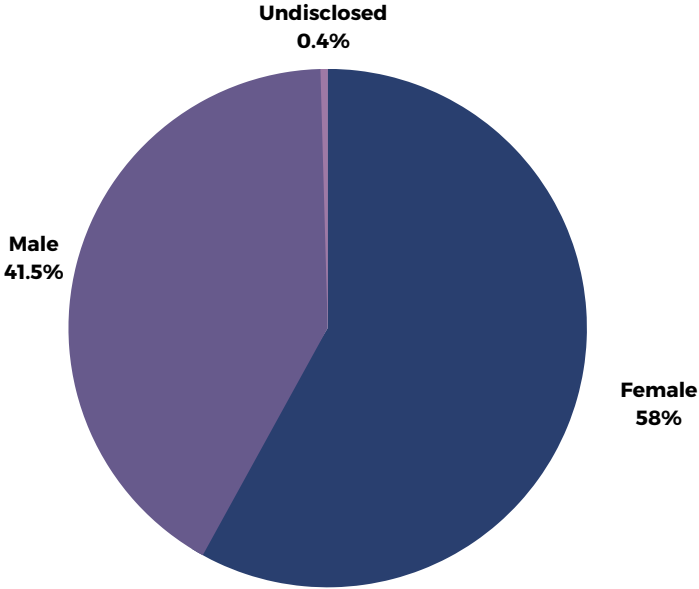
For the first time since recording Cares data, mental health concerns have eclipsed academic concerns as the #1 referral, likely due to the pandemic, mental health remains a significant reason for referrals. The chart below summarizes the top 10 areas of concern.

Referrals by Concern Type-Top Referral Types (multiple concern types per case)



Overall, referrals remained evenly divided between genders. Women are more likely to be referred for mental health concerns and were hospitalized (11) at a higher rate than men (4). Both were equally likely to be referred for all other top 10 referral reasons.

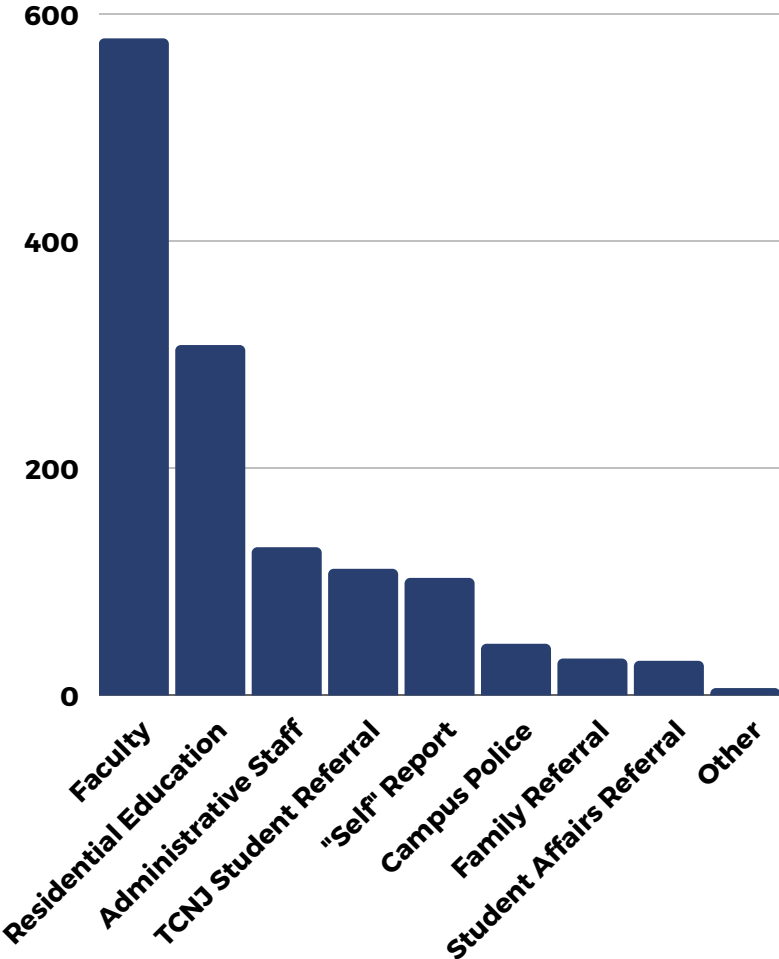
Concern Type by Gender (AY 2022)



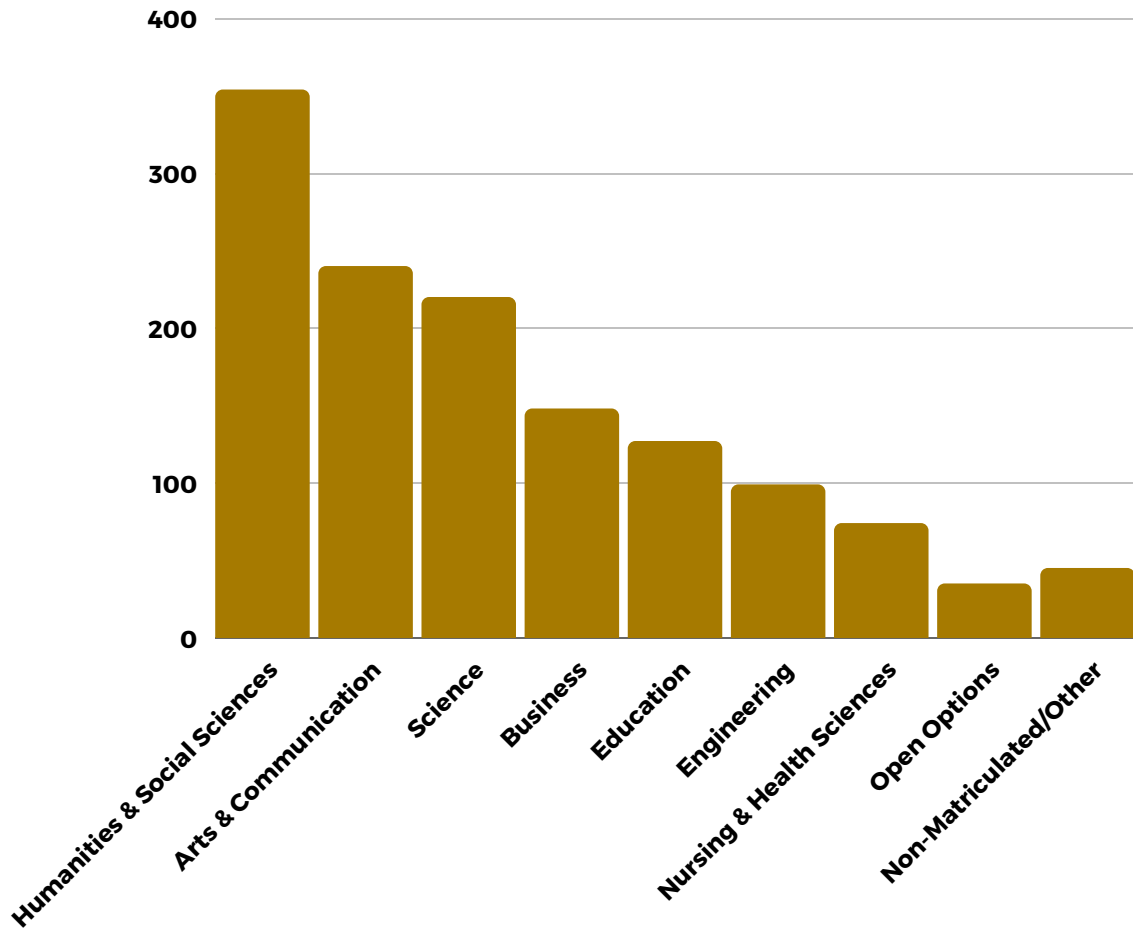
Faculty are the top referral source:

Pre-pandemic, we received the majority of our referrals from Residential Education and Housing. However, due to the limited number of residential students and primary remote instruction method, most referrals were from faculty, staff, and students. As predicted, with the return to normal operations, Residential Education and Housing referrals increased, however faculty still referred 43% of all cases.

Number of Referrals by Initial Referral Source (AY 2022)



Referrals by School



Lions Lifting Lions

Student Emergency Fund Report

- ✓ Keeping TCNJ students in school and on the path to graduation
- ✓ Emergency financial assistance for over 20 students facing economic uncertainty
- ✓ Helping students pay for unexpected expenses related to their basic needs
- ✓ Fast-acting support provided via Dean of Students office through gift cards or direct vendor payment
- ✓ Keeping TCNJ available for everyone, anytime

COMMENTS:

"Thank you so much for the help. I really needed this and I am so glad that I will be able to continue receiving mental health services. I am so grateful, thank you again!"

- Grateful TCNJ Student Emergency Fund Recipient

"Also, I just wanted to say again, thank you so so so much. I don't think I even have the words to express how much this is helping and how incredibly grateful I am to receive this funding and support."

- Grateful TCNJ Student Emergency Fund Recipient

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO HELP OUR STUDENTS STAY IN SCHOOL!

#LionStrong

SUMMARY: STUDENT EMERGENCY FUNDING

Total Students
Awarded:

52



Total Funds
Awarded

\$12,505



What did the funds
pay for?

 **Rent**

Medicine



Groceries

Transit



**Emergency
Housing**

Utilities



Gas

The Shop Overview

The Shop@TCNJ launched in Spring 2019 in response to increased requests from students to provide emergency aid to those struggling to eat consistently or find adequate housing, especially during times when the College is on extended breaks. The Shop maintains a wide span of open hours and can also be accessed via Campus Police outside of those hours. The Shop is available to TCNJ students as well as community members. In addition to providing food items, The Shop also stocks toiletries, paper goods, and some clothing items. We believe that we will address at least one basic need by providing food to our campus and the local community.

Changes Due to COVID (and back):

In response to COVID, The Shop adjusted operations to ensure the safety of visitors and staff better.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, The Shop moved to a request system. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Shop moved back to providing enhanced open hours Monday-Saturday, staffed by volunteers, a student intern, and beginning summer 2022, a graduate assistant. Guests were once again permitted to make their own grocery bags. 24/7 access was still graciously provided by campus police, which especially assisted students and community members unable to access the Shop during traditional working hours.

Shop Projects and Expansion:

While COVID-19-related challenges still exist, The Shop was still able to continue to expand in the 2021-2022 academic year. With the help of the Alumni Association, in the Spring semester 2021, we were able to purchase a freezer for The Shop. This has allowed us to expand our offerings to include frozen protein items provided by Mercer Street Friends. The Shop is continuously working to collaborate with the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK) to provide healthy, fresh/frozen meals to guests.

As a result of the OSHE Grant Funding, the Shop was able to expand in the following ways:

- added a paid Graduate Assistant (Summer 2022);
- purchased a software system called PantrySoft to better manage inventory;
- increased frozen fresh offerings to include Turkeys at Thanksgiving;
- enhanced programs (both through social media and tabling events) and targeted "giveaways" to enhance visibility and awareness of the Shop and its offerings, and garner donations (through Lions Day events and programming); and
- completion of the annual hunger survey in May 2022.



Planned expansion for AY 2023 includes:

- purchase of a golf cart for enhanced programming and possible grocery delivery services;
- partnership with TASK or another meal program for healthy, fresh/frozen food offerings; and
- enhanced programming during Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week in November 2022.

Through spring 2022, residential students were required to isolate due to COVID-19 related illness. The Shop continued to purchase and assemble various items for quarantine/isolation care packages. Included in the care packages were snacks, activity books, resources, and information about how to get help and stay connected while in quarantine. The bag contained a note from the Alumni Association with words of encouragement to the students during this time. In addition, The Shop purchased and provided frozen meals for students remaining in the residence halls over holidays and extended breaks.

Contents of a quarantine/isolation bag



TCNJ Class of 2024 - Parents
 Carmen Santos · 39 mins · 📍

Quarantine Update: My daughter just received a snack bag delivered to her door prepared by the Alumni Association (note included). She was very happy to receive it.



Like Comment

25

Carmen Santos
 She cried; she was so thankful. The crayons and Sudoku book was a nice touch.

35m Like Reply

Renee Fidler
 This is super sweet!

35m Like Reply

1

Facebook post from the TCNJ Class of 2024-Parents page regarding the Q/I Isolation Bags

Note from the Alumni Association

Visitors:

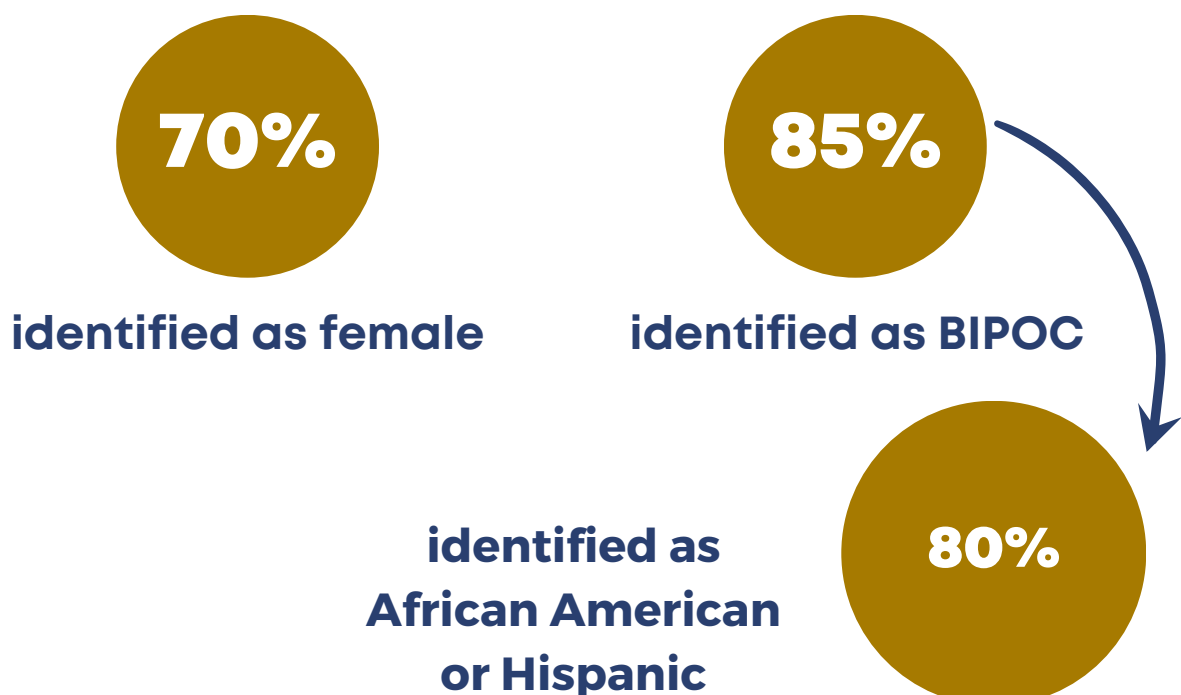
	August 2021	September 2021	October 2021	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022
Visitors	6	10	11	6	1	6	17	15	22	12
Visits	8	10	12	6	1	9	20	20	31	13

Total visitors include 106 (from 66 in AY 2021) visitors and 130 (from 79 in AY 2021) visits. This is a 60% increase in visitors and a 65% increase in visits from AY 2021. This increase was anticipated, and the Shop was prepared to meet the demand. Direct donations from the Amazon Wishlist (based on identified specific items in need) increased significantly in targeted areas and helped to supplement purchases made using Shop funds and the OSHE grant.

Grant:

In January of 2020, The Shop applied for the Hunger-Free Campus Grant through the state. This was put on hold due to COVID and was offered again in Spring 2021. We applied for the grant again in mid-April 2021 and were granted a little over \$99,000 for the time period between Fall 2021 and Fall 2023. As part of this grant, there is a requirement to survey all students to measure food insecurity among its students. We sent this survey out to the campus in mid-May. Notable findings included:

Of those students presenting with food insecurity (receiving meal blocks AND making one or more visits to the Shop):



SEE APPENDIX A
FOR FULL REPORT

Highlights from 2021-2022:

A Global Pandemic Continues

While the number of referrals expectedly increased, likely due to heavier physical presence on campus and in the classroom, the complexity of referrals and difficulties in connecting to students also increased.

Over the summer and throughout the year, we made the following changes according to best practices:

- Updated our operations manual;
- Continued using NABITA's risk assessment as a part of our case assessment process;
- Revamped our usage of our case management systems, including creating and utilizing the "Care Action Plan" or CAP plan module;
- Implemented enhanced follow-up procedures for students who we were concerned were at imminent risk given their lack of attendance, visibility on campus or by others, or their lack of confirmed access to our outreach; and
- Continued to utilize a temporarily expanded definition of emergency regarding our student emergency fund.

New Connections

During the Spring 2021 semester, Rutgers' School of Social Work selected TCNJ Cares program as an internship site for its MSW program. AY 2022 year's intern, Jacob Krause, greatly enhanced our ability to meet student demand while providing direct engagement and support for the challenges they were facing. With Jacob's success in the role, he decided to remain at TCNJ and take on a new role of Graduate Assistant for the Shop for the summer 2022 and possibly AY 2023 year. While we have requested another graduate intern through the RSW program for AY 2023, we have not yet heard back of the availability of a student for the program this year.

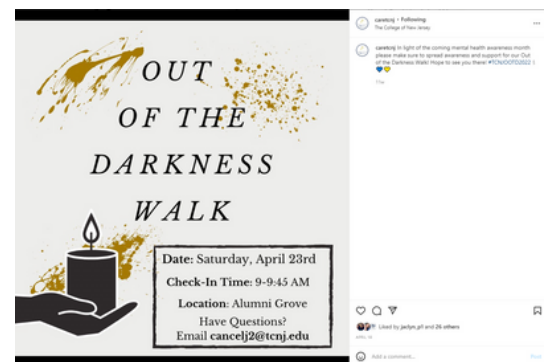
Triage Team Expands Representation:

The Triage Team, a subset of our CARE team, meets weekly to review all new CARE referrals to support the efficient sharing of information and resources with the goal of providing the best practical support for students in need. This was the third full year the Triage Team was in operation. The expansion of the team in year two worked out well through increasing communication and support for students affiliated with the EOF program and/or ARC office. Full membership on the team now includes:

- Mental Health Services (CAPS/MHS)
- Residential Education and Housing
- Campus Police Services (CPS)
- Accessibility Resource Center (ARC)
- Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF)
- Dean of Students Office -Cares Program

A Friendlier, More Caring Web Presence:

This year's program placed a much greater emphasis on our social media presence. We increased our followers on [Instagram](#) (from 1450 to 1629 (Shop) and to 1,378 (Cares)). We have maintained posting to approximately two posts per month, in addition to shares of other campus programs/service posts. Our social media usage has three goals: 1) market the services provided by our program; 2) support the fantastic job that other programs are doing; and 3) enhance the overall wellness education of the public regarding issues of food and/or housing insecurity.



Examples of CARE'sShop Instagram posts

Staff Highlights:

Awards and Recognitions:

- November 2021. The Staff Senate granted the Shop@TCNJ \$350 on behalf of their 20th anniversary celebration.

Regional and National Involvements:

- Cares team staff
- Heather Mills, Manager of Case Management Services represented TCNJ at the Higher Education Case Managers (HECMA) conference in New Orleans, LA in June 2022.


Appendix A

SPRING 2022


RESULTS

Campus Hunger Survey



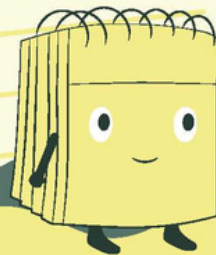


In the spring of 2022, the Division of Student Affairs partnered with the State of New Jersey to administer the Campus Hunger Survey which is an instrument designed to gain insight into the food and eating habits of students. The effort to address food insecurity issues has been an emerging topic that has been taken on by various academic leaders. According to the latest national studies, approximately 35% of college students have some type of food insecurity. Food insecurity has been linked to lower GPAs, lower completion rates, and higher levels of stress. At TCNJ, the Division of Student Affairs has taken leadership on this issue and while partnering with TCNJ's Police Department, established a campus food pantry in 2019.



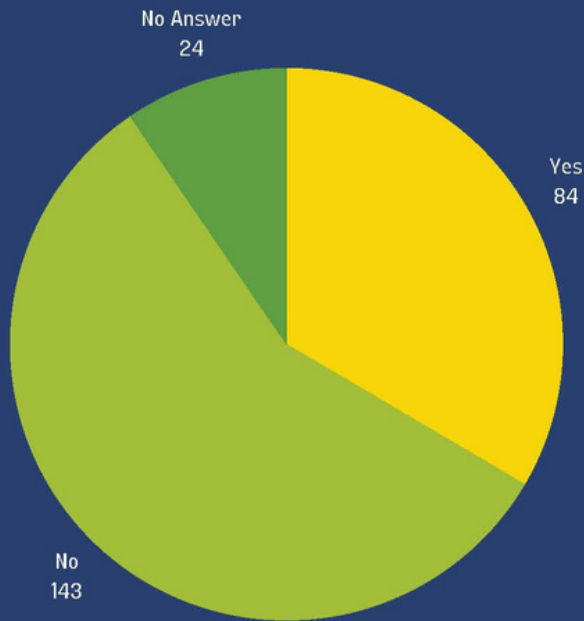
The Campus Hunger Survey is a 20-item instrument with most of the questions being placed in a Likert-scale format. There are 2 primary demographic questions, and additional follow-up question if someone states that they experienced some level of hunger. The instrument was developed by the grant-lending agency and was administered by the funding organization. The distribution of the instrument was coordinated by the Division of Student Affairs and was exhaustive to include all enrolled students, including graduate students, in the spring 2022 semester.

The total number of respondents were 253 representing about a 3% response rate. Given the response rates, a cautious approach should be used when applying this data to policymaking on campus or even inferences about the students. Nevertheless, this data is useful as part of building an ongoing and sustained effort around the area of campus hunger.

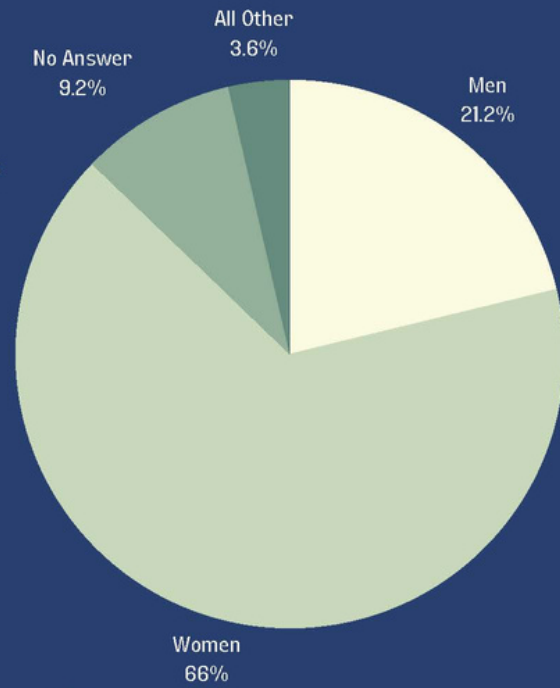


Categorization of Respondents

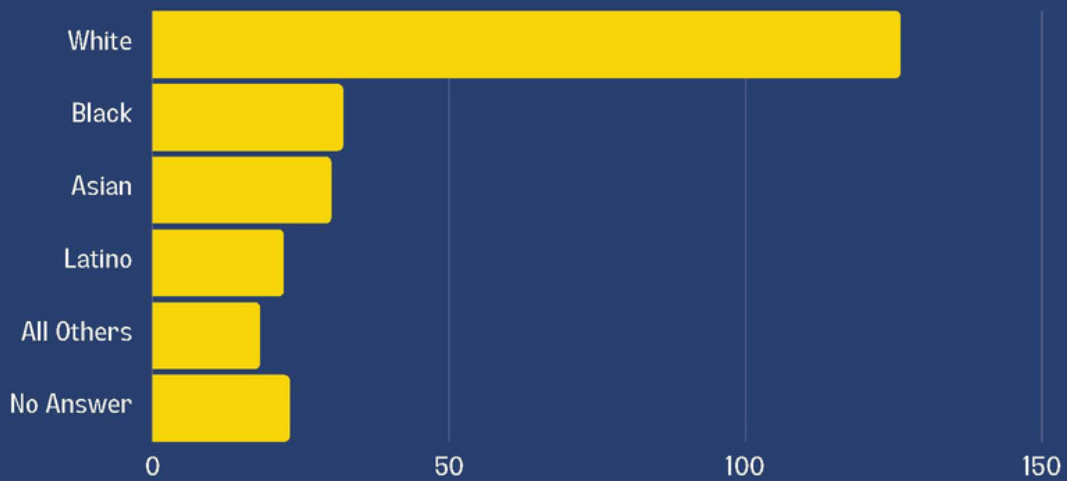
First Generation



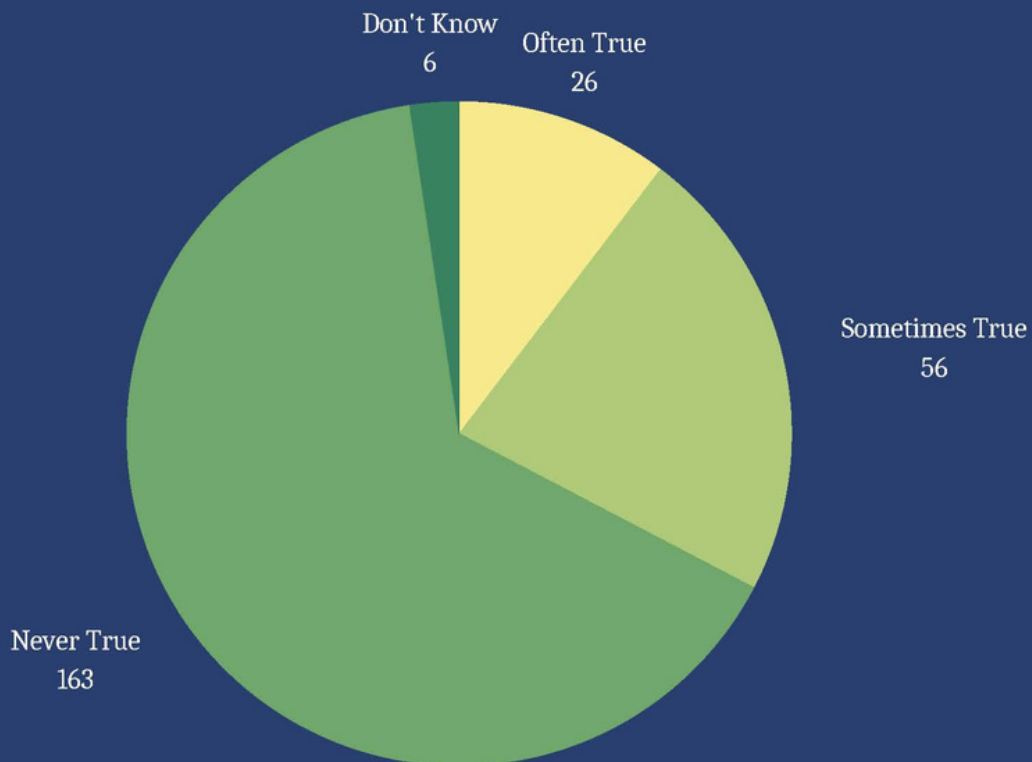
Gender



Description of Race



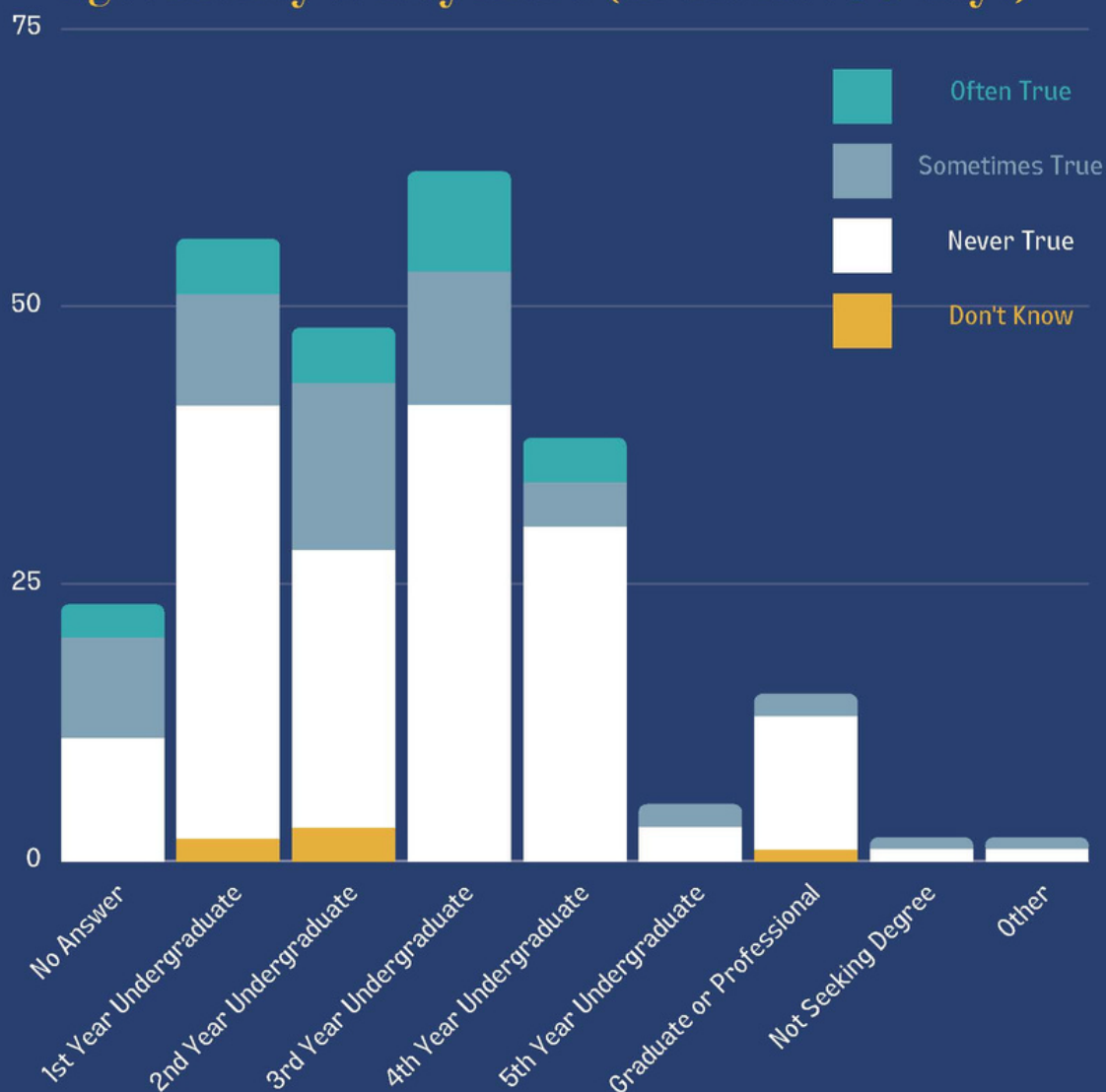
I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more (In the last 30 days)



Approximately 1 in 3 respondents had some worry about whether their food would run out.



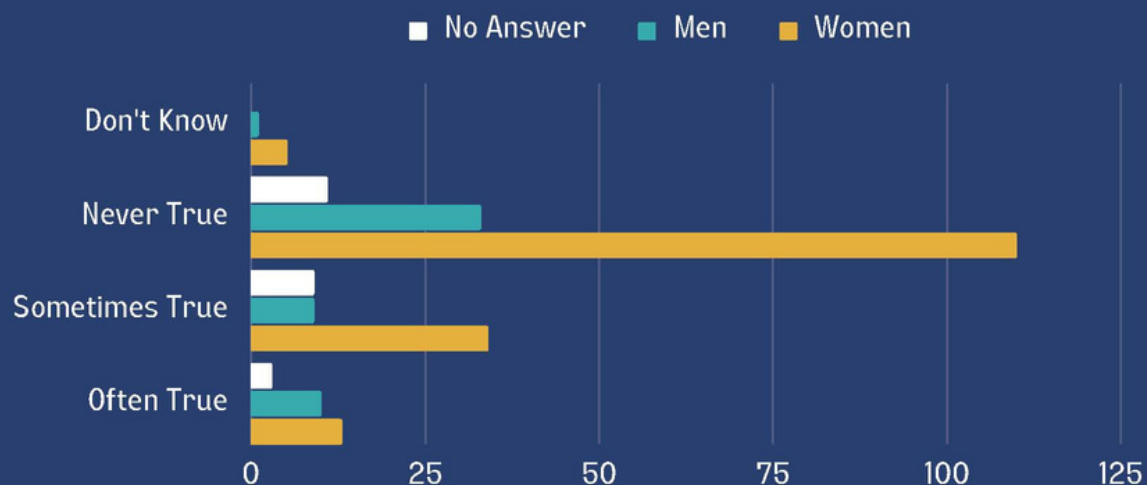
I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more (In the last 30 days)



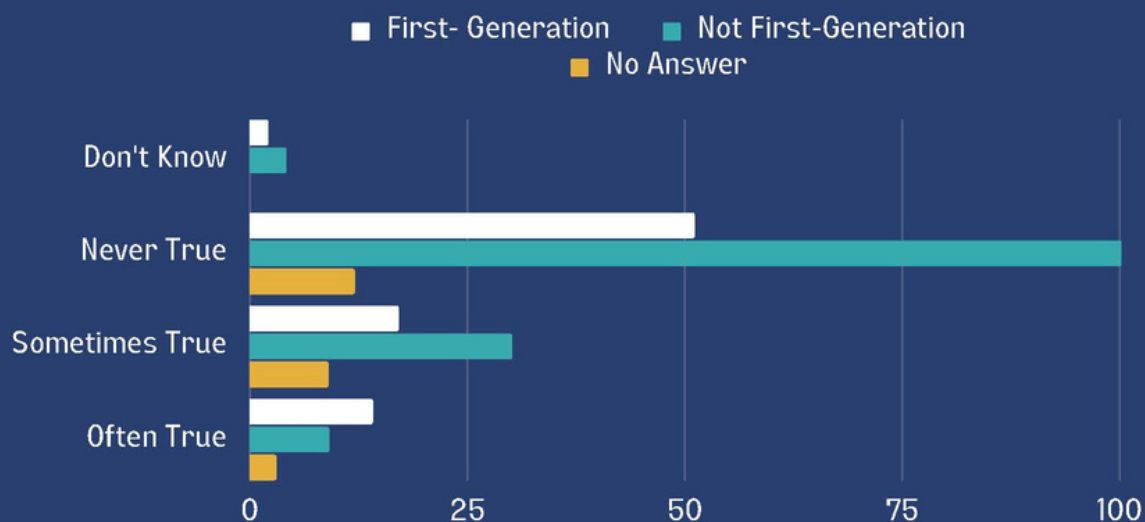
The distribution of being worried is seen throughout all four years. In this response set, 26% of 1st year students reported as sometimes true or often true. For second-year students, the number skyrockets to 41%; however, even for third and fourth-year students, the percent is still above 30%. Given the small Ns when controlling for class, the data should be viewed with caution.

Please note that the percent were derived by calculating the sum of the sometimes true and often true against the total number of respondents for that given year.

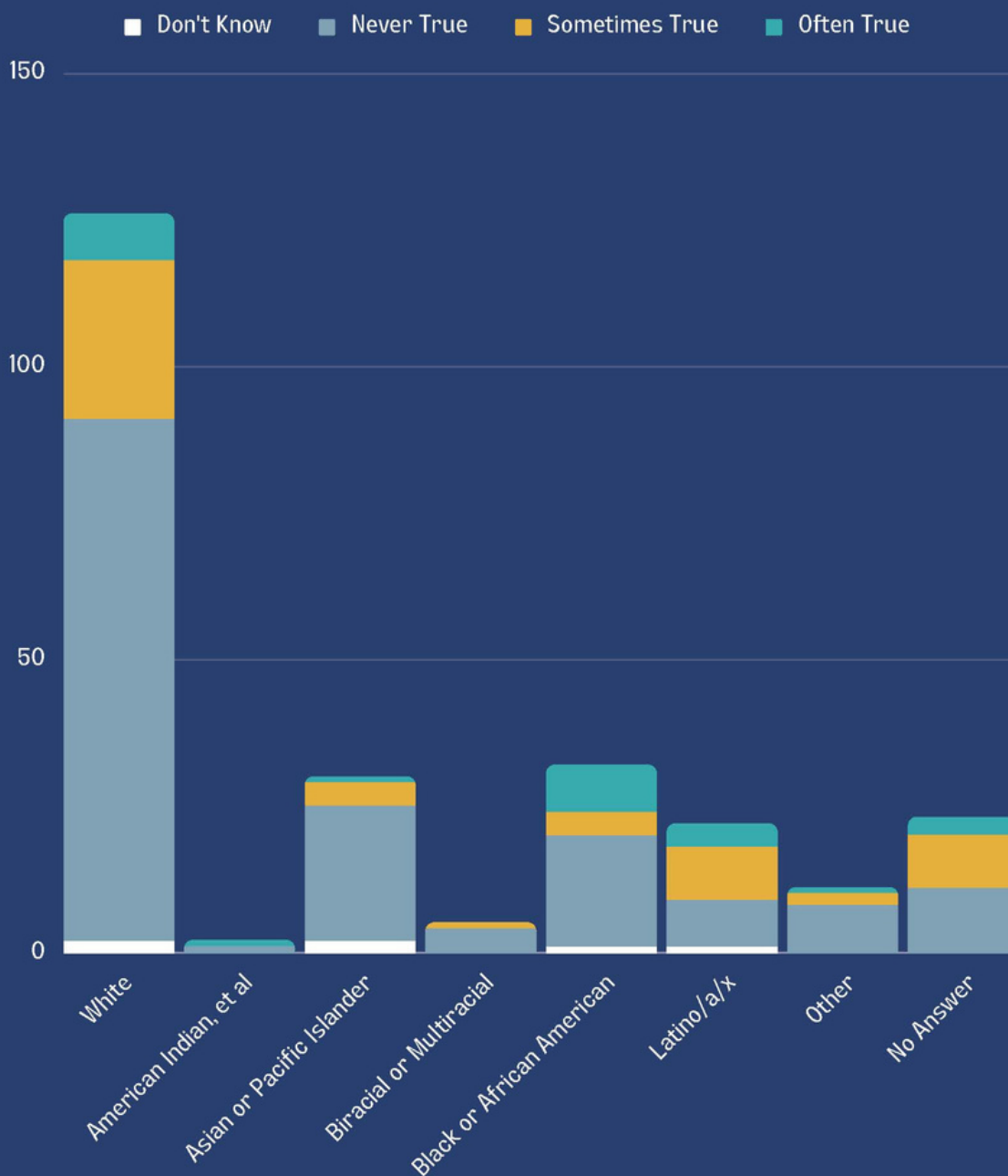
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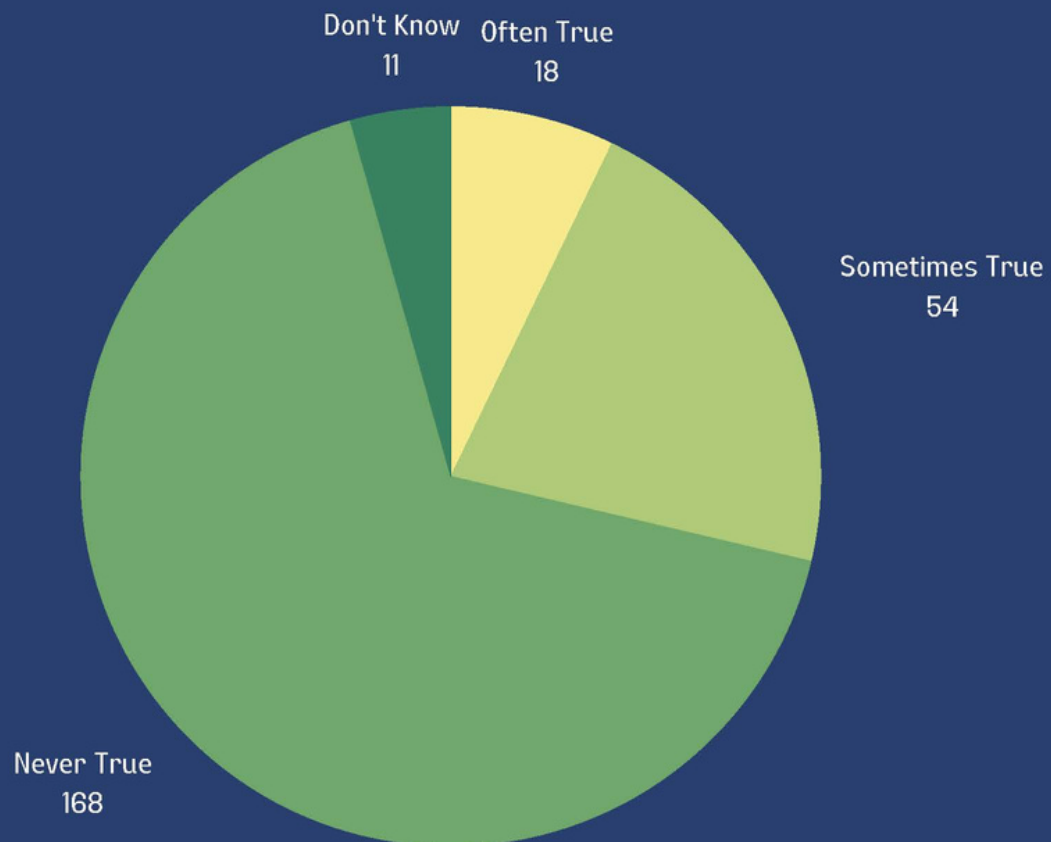
Are you a first-generation college student (i.e. neither of your parents have a college degree from a 4-year institution)?



I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more (In the last 30 days)

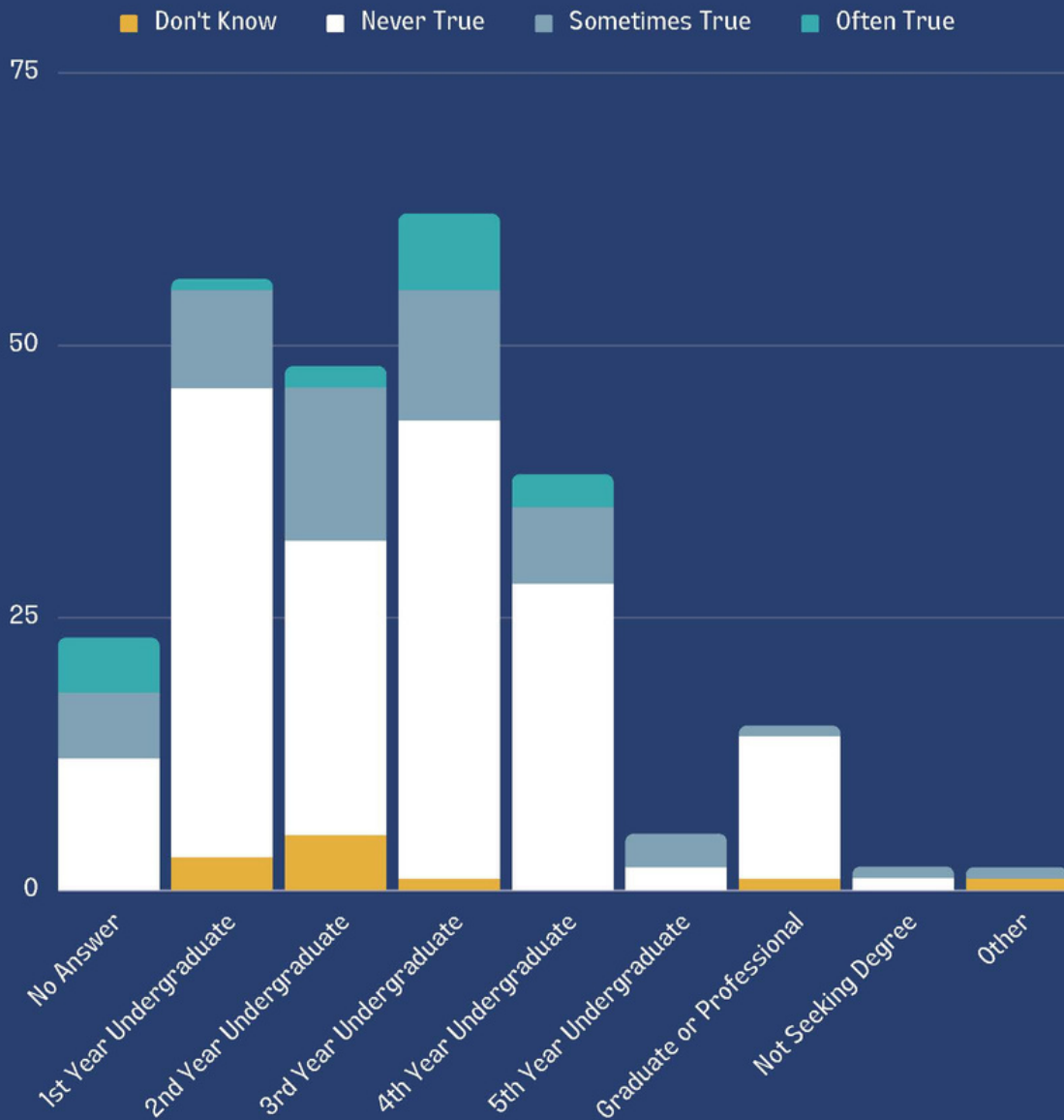


The food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more (Last 30 days)

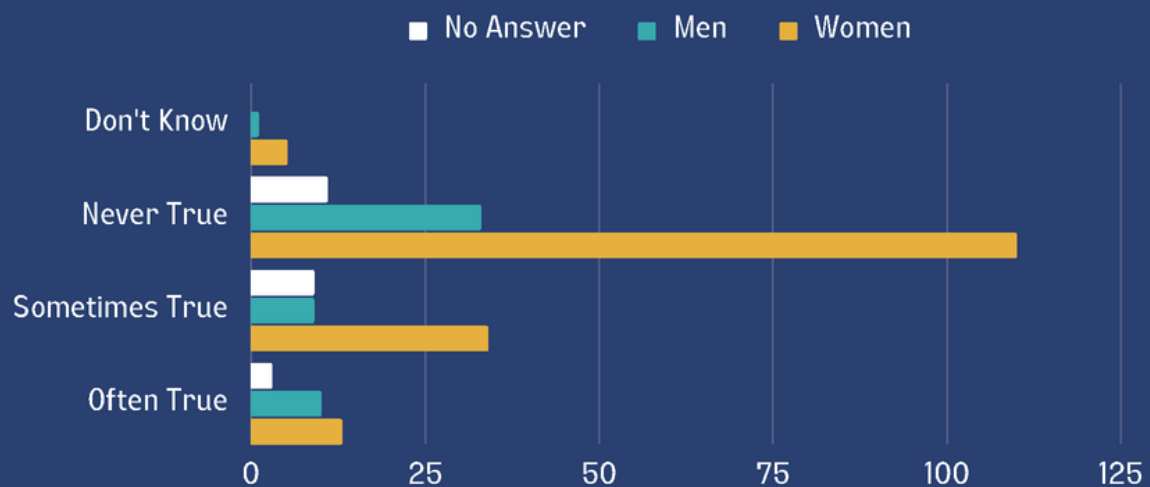


Nearly 30% of respondents reported that their food "didn't last" and they did not have money to get more.

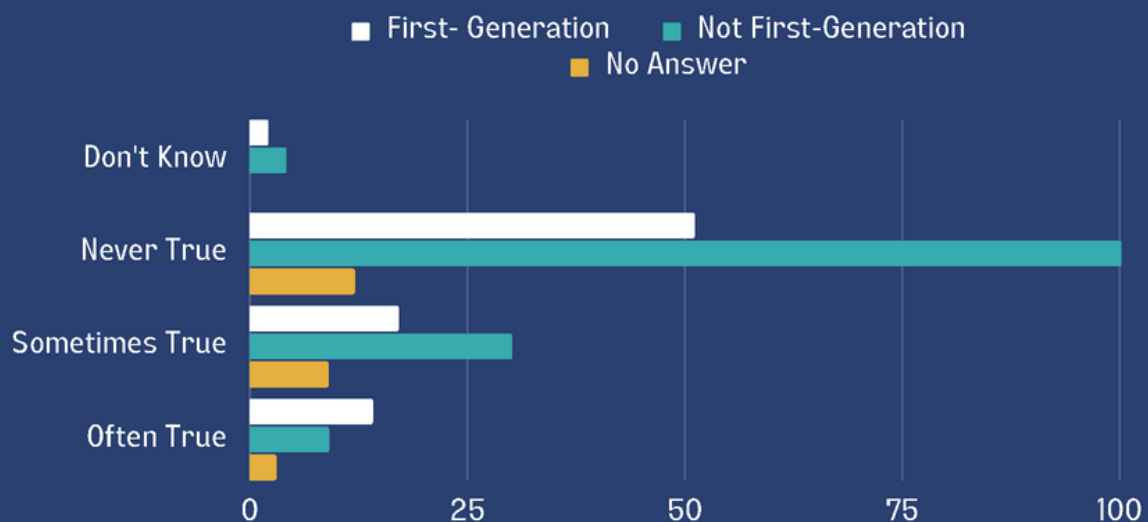
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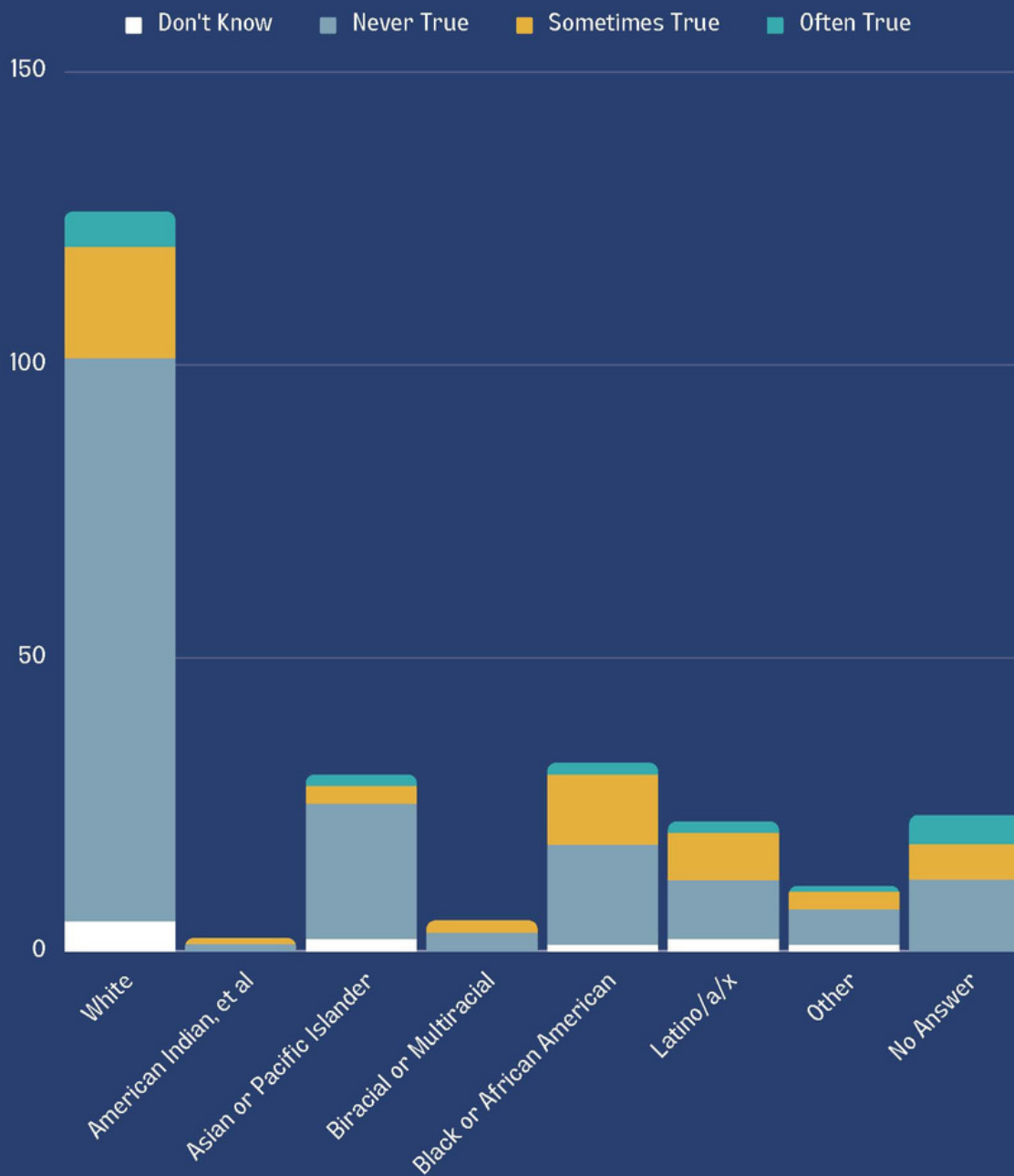
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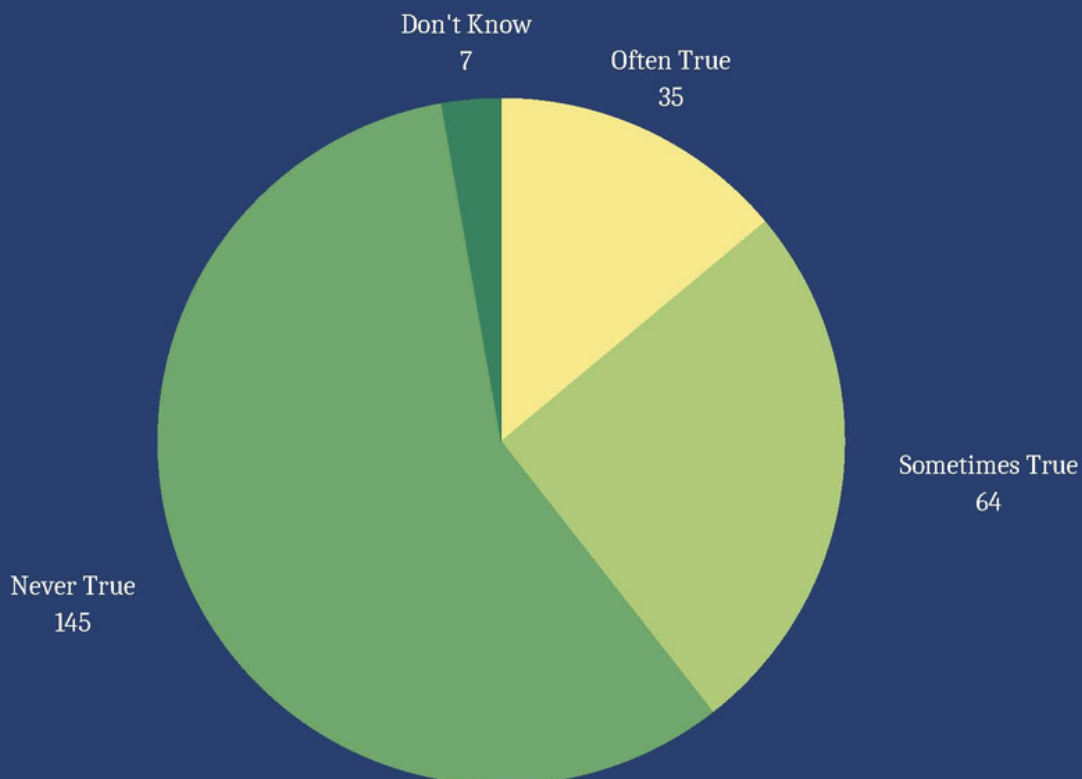
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The food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more (Last 30 days)



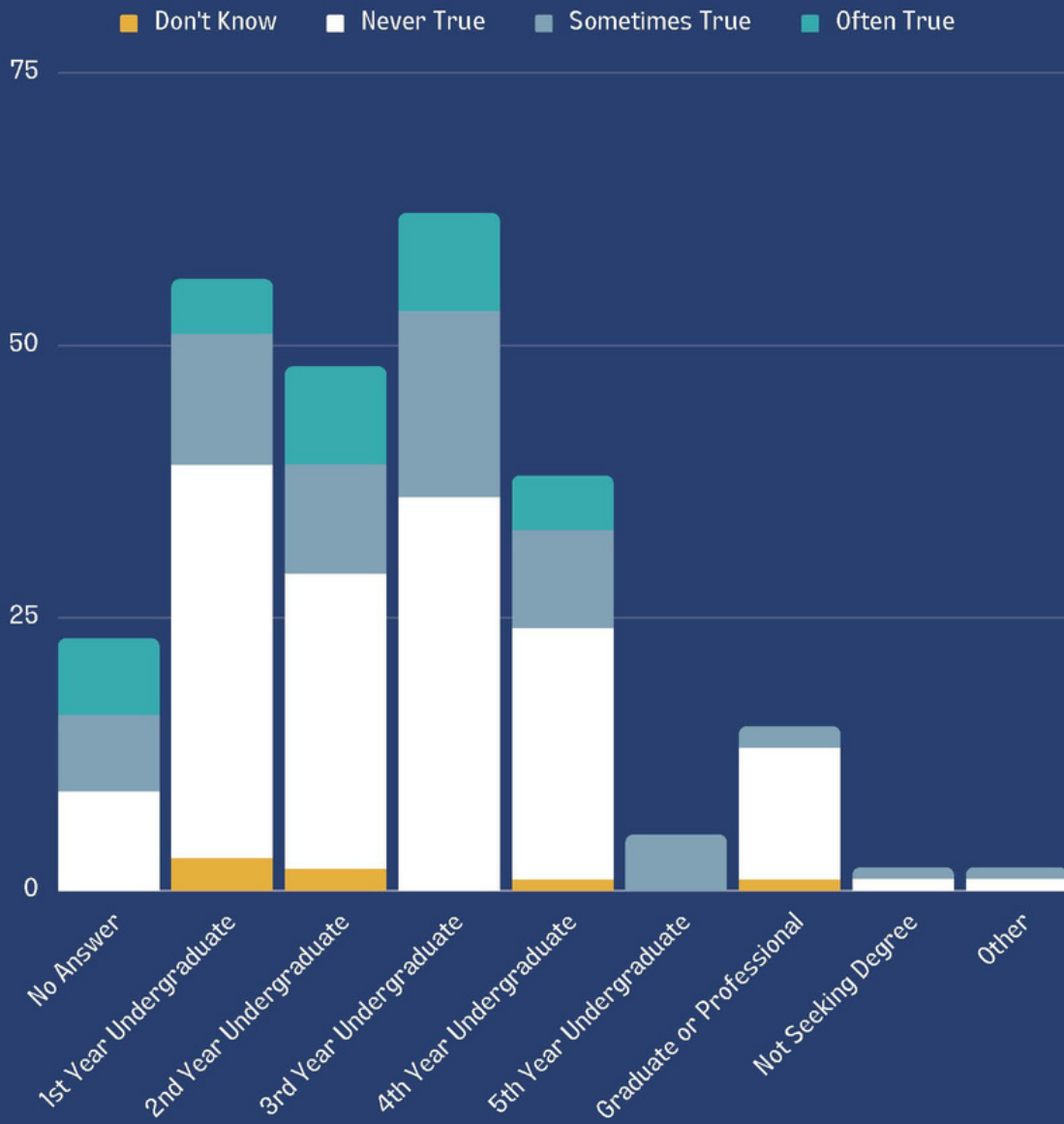
I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals (Last 30 days)



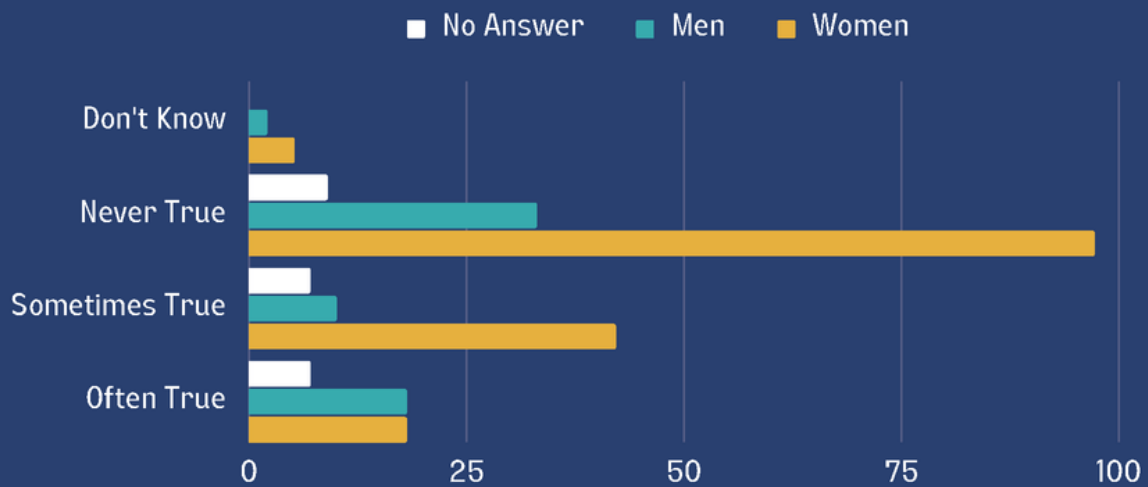
About 2 in 5 respondents reported said they couldn't afford a balanced meal in the last month.



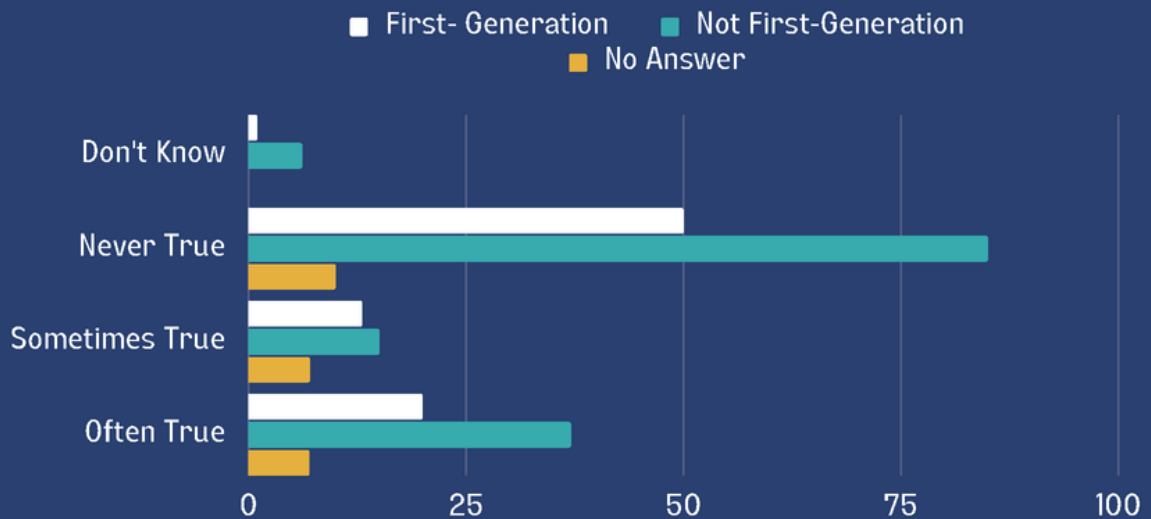
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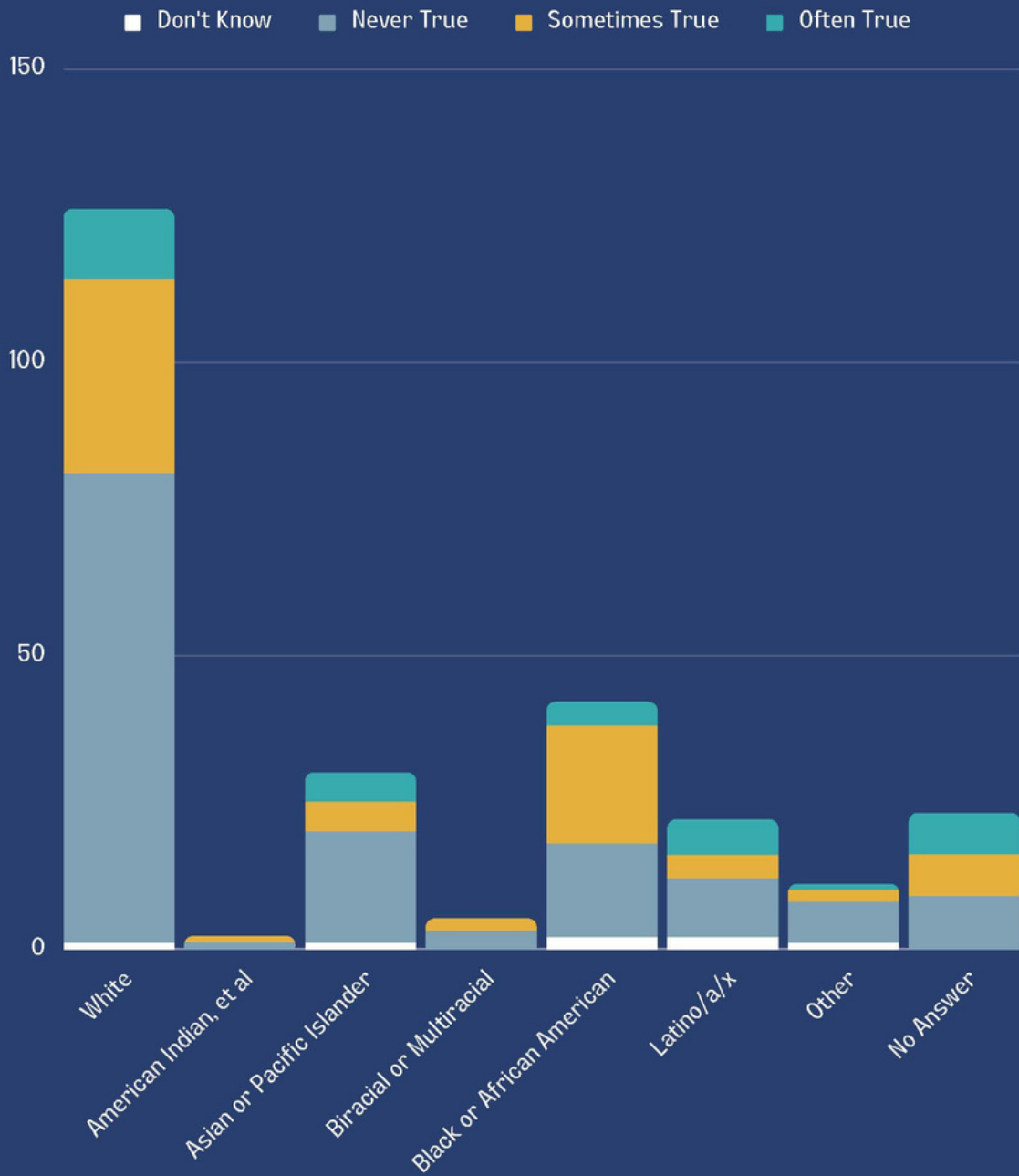
I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals (Last 30 days)



Are you a first-generation college student (i.e. neither of your parents have a college degree from a 4-year institution)?



I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals (Last 30 days)



Negative Effects of Hunger



Eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money
16.7%



Hungry but didn't eat because there's wasn't enough money for food
16.7%



Lost weight because there wasn't enough money for food
13.5%



Didn't eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food
3.6%



Outreach ◆ Intervention ◆ Support