

# PANTHER'S PANTRY

## *Nourishing Student Success*

*Meeting academic goals is challenging when your basic needs are unmet. Food insecurity undermines a student's ability to succeed academically and, according to evidence-based studies, is linked to lower graduation rates among college students.*



Food insecurity is a persistent reality for many Georgia State students. The university serves a vulnerable population. Many are first-generation college students, and more than half of the student body is Pell-eligible. Many work full- or part-time jobs while managing a full academic course load. Some students are the primary breadwinners for their families. It's understandable for a student to struggle under these demands and stresses, especially when ends don't meet.

**The mission of Panther's Pantry is to help alleviate food insecurity among Georgia State students and staff.**

Fall 2019- Spring 2020 Annual Report

**59%** OF GEORGIA STATE STUDENTS COME FROM PELL-ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS

**74%** OF FULL-TIME UNDERGRADUATES RECEIVE ED-BASED FINANCIAL AID\*

\*U.S. News & World Report, 2022







## RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF THE GEORGIA STATE COMMUNITY

Panther's Pantry was established on Georgia State's Atlanta Campus in 2014 by graduate students in the Nutrition Department in response to a survey they conducted that found that **68 percent of Georgia State students faced food insecurity at some point while enrolled at the university.** Subsequent locations were established at three Perimeter campuses to help meet the needs of those communities.

*The pantry helps me out by supplying me with food when I am low on funds and hungry, which is 80 percent of the time.*

*—Georgia State student & Panther's Pantry shopper*

Over the years, the pantry has established vital partnerships with area organizations that provide food, basic provisions and funds that enable Panther's Pantry volunteers and student staff to help hundreds of members of the Georgia State community each month. The pantry distributed 23,232 pounds of food, 276 pounds of non-food and 1,049 pounds of hygiene items between August 2019 and March 2020.

## FEEDING PANTHERS IN EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the pantry to close between March and August 2020. During that period, the university assisted students facing food insecurity and financial crises through the Emergency Assistance Fund (EAF). More than half of the nearly 11,000 applicants for emergency aid submitted between March 2020 and February 2021 cited difficulty obtaining enough food for themselves and their families as a primary reason for their request. Through remarkable donor support for the EAF, the university was able to help students seeking emergency food assistance while the pantry was closed. During this period, more than \$200,000 in food vouchers and Kroger gift cards were disbursed to students within 24 hours of their aid request.

*"Food insecurity remains a significant and recurring barrier to success for many students, one that frequently leads to lower academic performance and, all too often, the inability to persist to timely degree completion. Research shows that earning a college degree can alter the economic trajectory of a family for generations, so removing the barriers that disrupt students' lives is at the heart of Georgia State's student success mission. A robustly supported Panther's Pantry changes lives by providing a much-needed healthy meal along with holistic support to create long-term solutions."*

*—Michael L. Sanseviro,  
Interim Vice President for Student Engagement & Programs and Dean of Students*

**4,000** POUNDS

OF FOOD PER MONTH WAS DISTRIBUTED ON AVERAGE BY PANTHER'S PANTRY IN FALL 2019\*

**500–600** INDIVIDUALS

PER MONTH RECEIVED PANTHER'S PANTRY ASSISTANCE IN FALL 2019\*

\*FY2020–21 Pantry numbers were lower due to pandemic-related closures and significantly reduced population density on campus.







*Beyond the many hurdles presented by the pandemic, the experience provided Panther's Pantry leadership the opportunity to envision how they could better support students in need.*

This resulted in a restructuring of all four campus pantries under one administration and fostered greater collaboration across departments to provide students facing food insecurity with other wraparound services (academic support, counseling, community referrals).

### **EXPANDED PANTRY: SERVING STUDENTS BY ENHANCING SIZE, SELECTION AND SAFETY**

In 2020, the Atlanta pantry was moved from a small room in a campus parking garage to a large indoor space at 75 Piedmont Ave. NE. Renovations for the new, expanded location began in early 2021 and are scheduled to be completed by June 2021.

Renovations for the new pantry were, in part, made possible by a \$40,000 grant generously provided by BlackRock, Inc. The grant will enable the pantry to purchase management software, shelves that meet food safety standards, freezers, microwaves, door card-swipe systems, donation bins and more. These items will help Panther's Pantry manage inventory, track student usage and provide the conditions necessary for safely collecting, storing and distributing food.

*"Partnering with Georgia State University and Panther's Pantry gives BlackRock an incredible opportunity to give back to Atlanta, work closely with a group of diverse and talented students to eliminate hunger in the university community and invest in bright minds that will go on to make a real difference in our future."*

*—Peter Williams,  
Head of Community Strategy,  
BlackRock Atlanta*

**10,400** APPLICATIONS

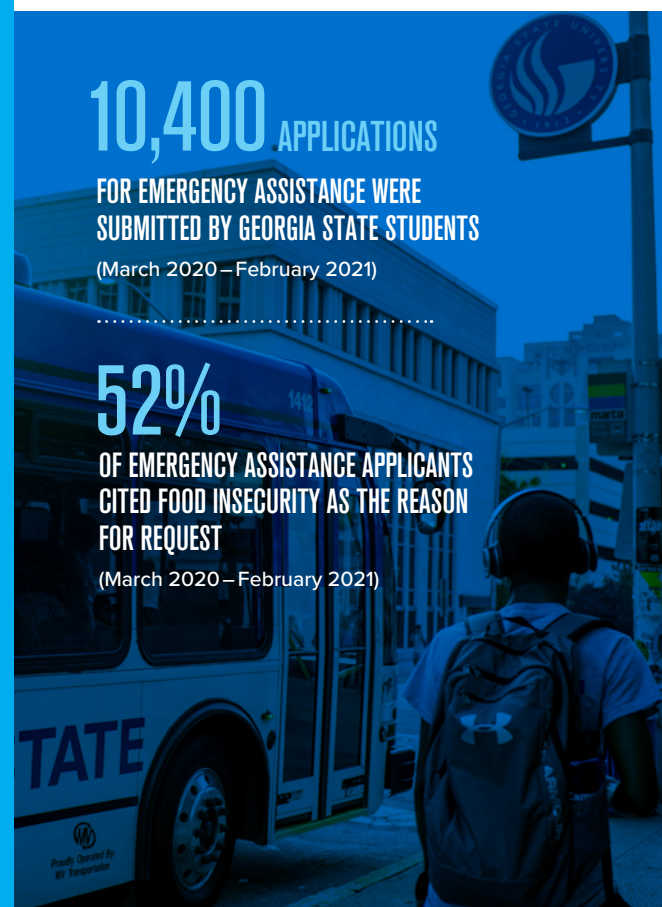
FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE WERE  
SUBMITTED BY GEORGIA STATE STUDENTS

(March 2020 – February 2021)

**52%**

OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE APPLICANTS  
CITED FOOD INSECURITY AS THE REASON  
FOR REQUEST

(March 2020 – February 2021)





Panther's Pantry plays a crucial role in removing food insecurity and other unmet, basic needs as barriers to achievement. When you support Panther's Pantry, you sustain students and help them progress toward earning their college degrees, which can change family trajectories for generations to come.

For information about ways to donate, visit [pantry.gsu.edu/donate](https://pantry.gsu.edu/donate) or contact:

## Holly Joseph

Director of Development, Student Success  
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*"We are so grateful to the Georgia State community and to our community partners and volunteers for your support of Panther's Pantry. Because of you, the pantry was able to provide emergency food packages (and food vouchers) to students during these very challenging times. We would have not been able to do so without your generous gifts and support! We hope that you will continue to stay connected to Panther's Pantry as we prepare for the new academic year."*

*—Allison Calhoun-Brown,  
Senior Vice President for Student  
Success and Chief Enrollment Officer*

**Thank you to our campus  
& community supporters!**

  
**PANTHER'S  
PANTRY**



@pantherspantry