



Student Basic Needs Survey Results Spring 2025

Office of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness

Executive Summary

Hagerstown Community College's Student Basic Needs Survey was developed to collect essential data to better understand and address the challenges students face in meeting their basic needs. HCC has students from all walks of life with a variety of experiences and needs that impact their ability to succeed. This survey asked respondents to provide information related to five areas of need that are relevant to their HCC experience: food, housing, transportation, dependent care, and internet access. The survey was administered to credit and noncredit students in Spring 2025 who met the criteria for participation. Over 3,000 students were invited to participate and 315 completed at least part of the survey for a response rate of 8.4%.

Almost half (48%) of respondents faced difficulty with one or both primary basic needs (food and housing) in the past 12 months. Across all needs assessed, 57% faced difficulty with one or more category.

Food Security – In the past year, 30% of respondents report that they or an adult in their household have reduced meal size or skipped meals at least once because there wasn't enough money for food. Additionally, 41% report being unable to afford eating balanced meals at least once in the past year. Almost a quarter of respondents are utilizing a food assistance program. Responses varied by age, gender, enrollment type, and instructional location.

Housing Security – The majority of respondents (85%) report currently living in steady housing. Three percent currently have an unsteady housing situation, while 5% report being homeless at least one night in the past year. About a third of those responsible for rent, mortgage, or utility bills have been unable to make payments in full at least once in the past year. Responses varied by age and gender.

Transportation Security – Most respondents (86%) drive a car as their primary means of transportation. Over 30% report that their primary means of transportation is not reliable or is only somewhat reliable, and 22% have missed class at least once due to transportation issues in the past year. Concerns related to repairs, finances, and scheduling a ride were the most frequently cited reasons for difficulty getting where they need to go. Reports of missing class varied by age, gender, and enrollment.

Dependent Care – About a quarter of respondents identified themselves as caregivers for at least one child under 12 or person over 12 who requires continual supervision. Of the respondent caregivers, 41% have missed class at least once in the past year due to not having someone to look after their dependent and 38% have been unable to afford or had difficulty affording needed dependent care. Responses varied by age, gender, enrollment type, and instructional location.

Internet Access – Two-thirds of respondents use the internet daily for HCC coursework. The majority of respondents (72%) report having very reliable home internet service, but the remaining respondents report that their internet access at home is somewhat reliable, not reliable, or nonexistent. Internet usage, access, and reliability vary by age, enrollment, and instructional location.

Purpose

Hagerstown Community College's Student Basic Needs Survey was developed to collect essential data to better understand and address the challenges students face in meeting their basic needs, including food security, housing, transportation, dependent care, and internet access. The results of this survey will guide the HCC community in enhancing support systems, removing barriers to student success, and creating a more equitable learning environment. By identifying areas of need, HCC reaffirms its commitment to fostering a supportive college community where all students can thrive academically and personally. This survey is a vital tool in assessing progress toward achieving these goals and advancing the college's mission.

Data from this survey will:

- Establish a baseline to measure overall progress in meeting student support needs.
- Identify the college's strengths and uncover opportunities for improvement to better serve HCC students.
- Inform and guide the development of future initiatives, goals, and programming focused on student support, retention, and success.

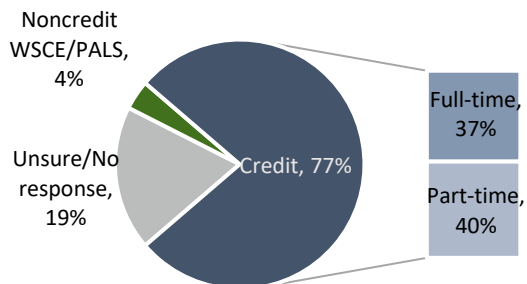
The survey development, administration, and reporting processes were overseen by the Office of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness. Development of the survey instrument and administration plan were completed in conjunction with representatives from College Advancement, Student Affairs, and Workforce Solutions & Continuing Education.

Survey Administration and Respondents

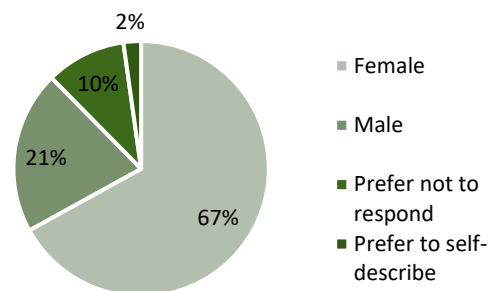
The Student Basic Needs Survey was administered to all actively enrolled credit students, non-credit Workforce Solutions and Continuing Education sequence or Program of Adult Literacy Services students in Spring 2025 (as of 2/12/2025) who were 18 years or older at the time of administration and not concurrently enrolled in high school. In total, 3,740 students were invited to participate via email and 315 completed at least part of the survey, for a response rate of 8.4%. Respondents were able to take the survey in English, French, or Spanish.

Credit students make up the majority of respondents (77%), and of those, 49% are full-time. Forty-four percent of respondents are currently taking both in-person and online courses, while 29% are taking only in-person, 21% are only online, and the remaining 6% did not respond. Over half of the respondents are 18-24 years old, and two-thirds are female. The majority of respondents identified themselves as White (alone or with another race/ethnicity, 57%), followed by Black or African American (alone or with another race/ethnicity, 22%).

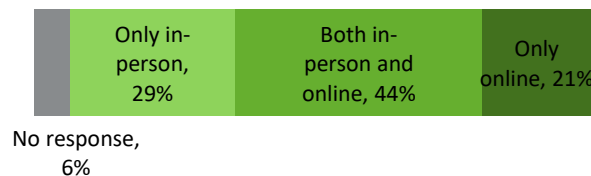
Enrollment of Respondents



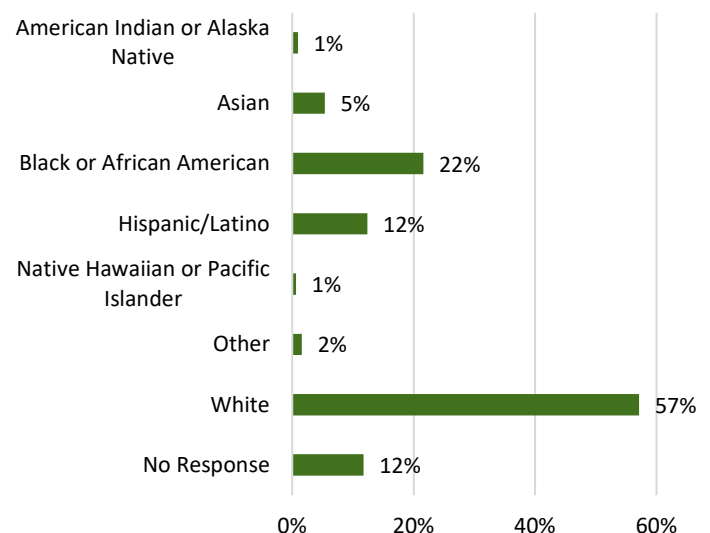
Gender of Respondents



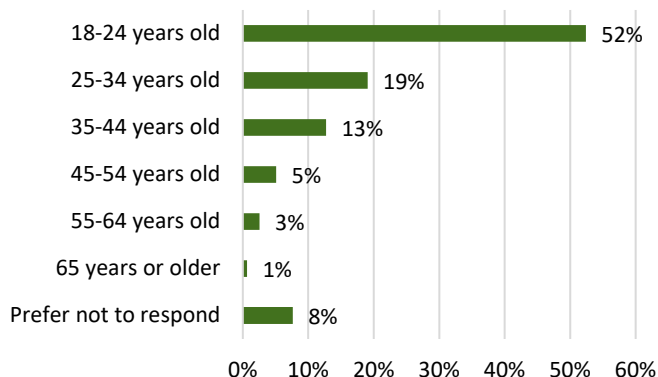
Current Instructional Location



Ethnicity and Race of Respondents



Age Range of Respondents

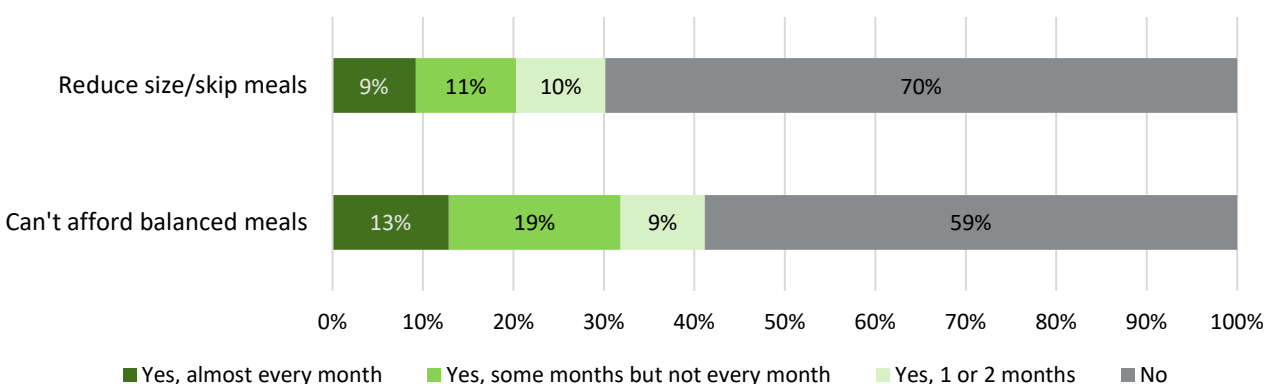


Multiple Selection Option. 10% of respondents selected more than one category. Percentages add to more than 100%.

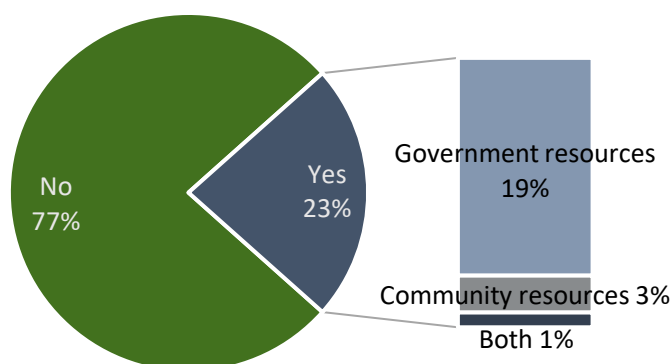
Food Security

To assess food security, respondents were asked a pair of questions about themselves and the adults in their household over the past 12 months. In at least one month out of the last year, 30% of respondents reported cutting the size of their meals or skipping meals because there wasn't enough money for food and 41% felt they could not afford to eat balanced meals. Nine percent reported cutting or skipping meals almost every month and 13% reported an inability to afford balanced meals almost every month. Twenty-three percent reported using a food assistance program, and most of those are using government resources like SNAP or WIC. When asked about HCC's Care Cupboard, over 70% of respondents are aware of it and 14% have used it.

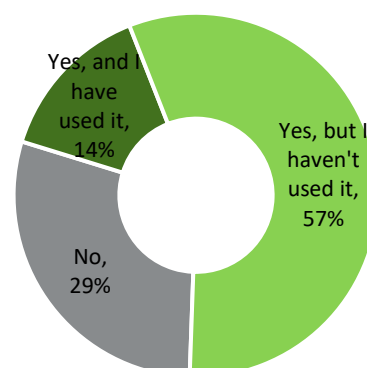
Frequency in the Past 12 Months for Household Adults



Food Assistance Program Usage



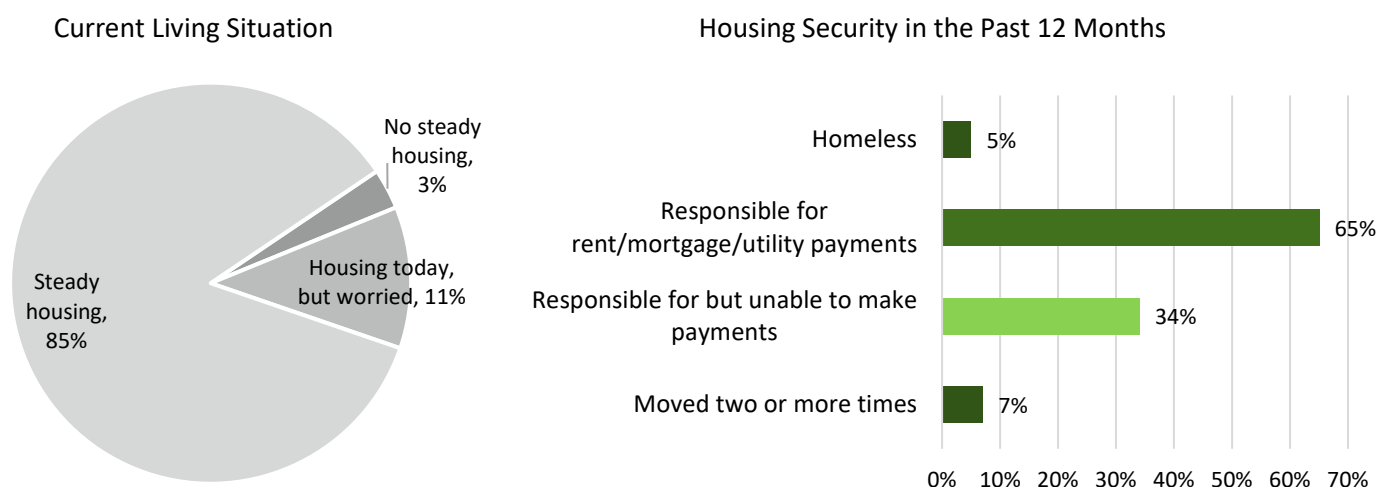
HCC Care Cupboard Awareness



Food insecurity, indicated by reduction of meal size or skipping meals and/or inability to afford balanced meals at least once in the past 12 months, was most likely to be reported by those 25-34 years old or 35-44 years old, those who prefer to self-describe their gender, part-time students, and those currently taking only online courses.

Housing Security

Respondents were asked about their current living situation and their experiences in the past year to determine their overall housing security. The majority of respondents (85%) report currently having a steady place to live. Three percent of respondents are currently staying somewhere unsteady, such as a shelter, temporarily with others, hotel/motel, other temporary building, or outside. The remaining respondents (11%) have a steady place today, but are worried about losing it in the future. In the past 12 months, 5% of respondents reporting being homeless for at least one night, 34% of the respondents who are responsible for bills such as utilities, rent, or mortgage reported they were unable to make payments in full, and 7% reported moving two or more times.

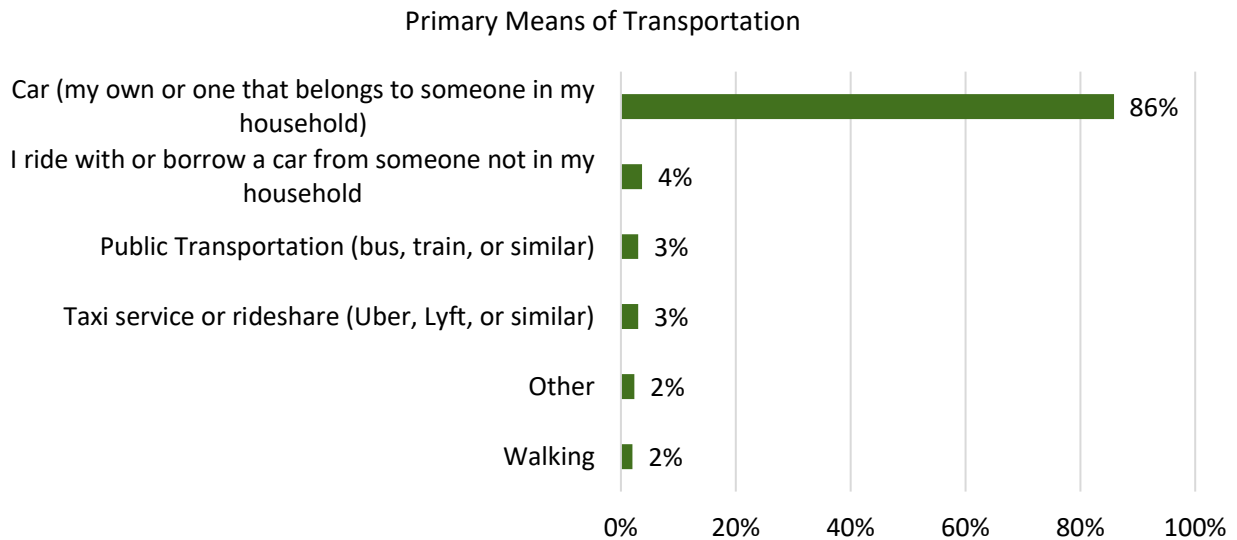


Respondents aged 25-34 years and 35-44 years had the highest rates of unsteady housing (no housing or currently housed but worried) and were most likely to have been homeless for at least one night in the past year. Respondents aged 18-24 years were the least likely to be responsible for housing and utility bills and the least likely to be unable to make full payments on the bills they do have, along with 45- to 54-year-olds. Over half of the 25- to 34-year-old respondents who are responsible for payments have been unable to make those payments in full, and 17% of 25- to 34-year-olds have moved at least twice in the past year.

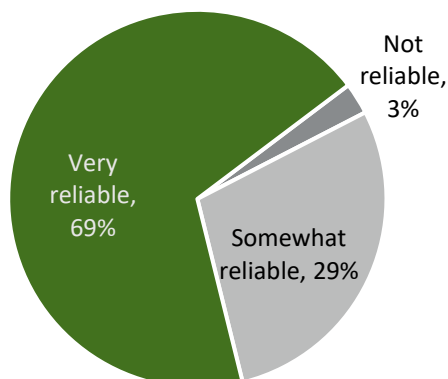
Female respondents are the least likely to report current unsteady housing (no housing or currently house but worried), being homeless in the past year, or moving two or more times in the past year compared to males and respondents who prefer to self-describe their gender. Males are the most likely to be responsible for housing/utility payments, but females who are responsible for payments are more likely to have been unable to make those payments in full.

Transportation Security

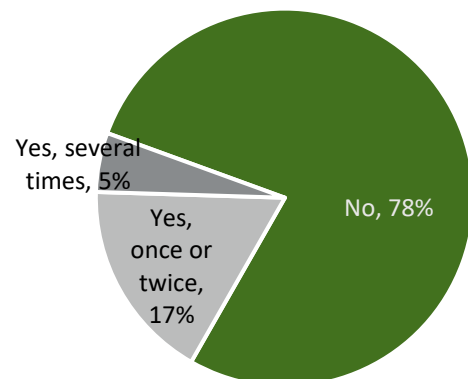
Respondents were asked about their primary means of transportation, the impact of transportation issues on their class attendance, and barriers to reliable transportation. The majority of respondents (86%) use a car as their primary means of transportation. Just over two-thirds report that their primary means of transportation is very reliable, 29% report that it is somewhat reliable, and 3% report it is not reliable. Over one-fifth of respondents have missed class at least once in the past 12 months due to transportation issues (17% once or twice, and 5% several times).



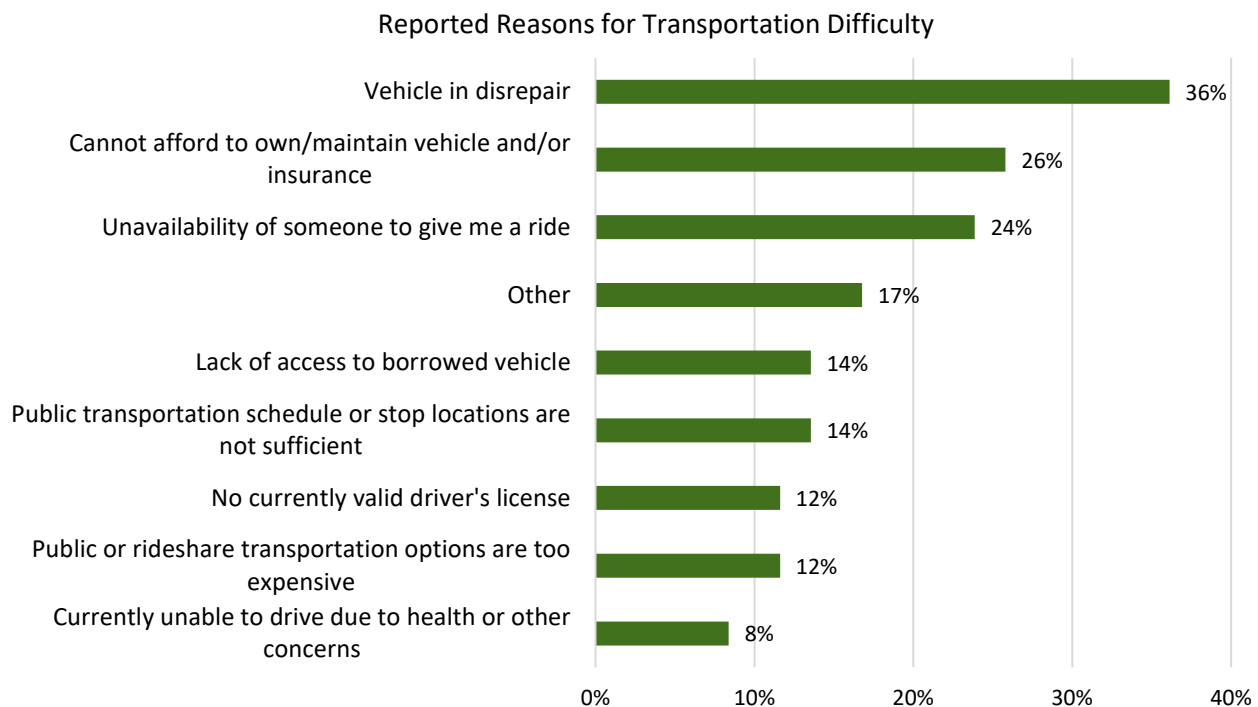
Reliability of Primary Transportation



Frequency of Missed Class due to Transportation Issue



Almost half of the respondents reported that they have not had any difficulties with transportation. The remaining respondents (52%) identified one or more reasons for difficulty. The most common reasons respondents have been unable to get where they needed to go were vehicle in disrepair (36% of those with any reported difficulty), inability to afford vehicle ownership, maintenance, or insurance (26%), and unavailability of someone else to provide a ride (24%).



Respondents reported similar rates of having somewhat or very reliable transportation across age ranges, gender categories, enrollment type, and instructional location. Respondents who identified as male, 18-24 years old, or are enrolled in in non-credit WSCE or PALS programs were more likely to have missed class in the past 12 months due to transportation issues. Respondents who selected “other” as a reason they were unable to get somewhere were asked to describe the situation, and responses varied. Many referenced finances (unable to afford gas, vehicle, insurance, or maintenance), unexpected vehicle disrepair, bad weather impacting public transportation, or personal/family concerns.

Dependent Care

Respondents were asked to identify whether they care for at least one child under 12 years old or a person older than age 12 who is in need of continual supervision. About a quarter of the individual respondents are caregivers in at least one category, and 5% of respondents are caregivers in both categories. The questions in this module were only presented to respondents who identified themselves as caregivers.

The respondents most likely to be caregivers are 35-44 years old, followed by those 25-34 years old. Female respondents are more likely than males to be caregivers, and 85% of respondent caregivers are female. Credit respondents and non-credit WSCE or PALS respondents are equally likely to be caregivers. Within the credit respondents, caregivers are more likely to be part-time or take only online courses.

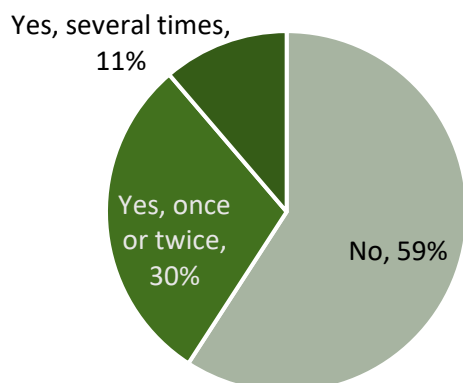
Caregiver Status of Respondents

	Child under 12	Person over 12	Caregivers (unduplicated)
Yes	21%	9%	24%
No	79%	91%	76%

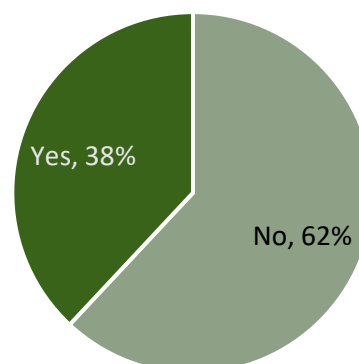
In the past year, 11% of respondent caregivers were unable to attend class several times due to not having dependent care. An additional 30% missed class once or twice due to a lack of dependent care. In the past year, 38% of respondent caregivers were unable pay for or had difficulty affording needed dependent care.

In the past 12 months, were you ever unable to...

...attend class due to not having someone to look after your child or dependent?



...pay for, or have difficulty affording, needed childcare or dependent care?



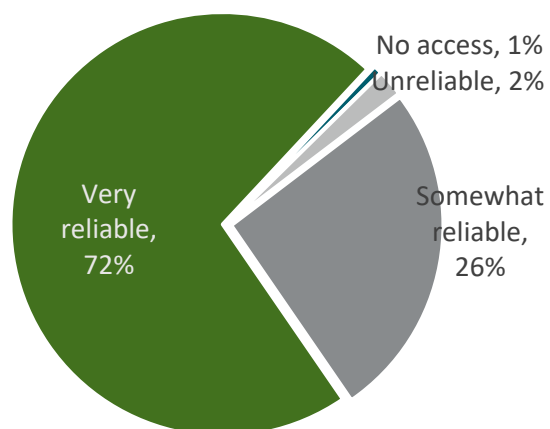
Respondent caregivers in non-credit WSCE or PALS courses were more likely to have missed class due to dependent care needs compared to credit respondent caregivers. Full-time credit respondent caregivers were more likely to report missing class due to dependent care needs and more likely to have experience difficulty or inability to afford dependent care than the part-time credit respondent caregivers. Respondent caregivers in only online courses were the least likely to have missed a class due to dependent care needs.

Respondent caregivers in the 18-24 years range were the most likely to have missed class due to dependent care needs. Respondent caregivers in the 25-34 years range were most likely to experience difficulty or inability to afford dependent care. There were no significant differences between male and female caregivers in regard to missing class or difficulty affording care.

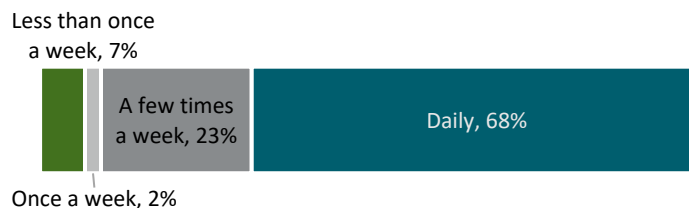
Internet Access

The internet access module comprised three questions regarding internet use for coursework and home internet reliability. Over two-thirds of respondents use the internet daily for HCC coursework. Only 3% of respondents reported no internet access or unreliable internet access at home, while 26% report the connection is only somewhat reliable. One-quarter of respondents frequently or occasionally use public Wi-Fi due to instability in home internet.

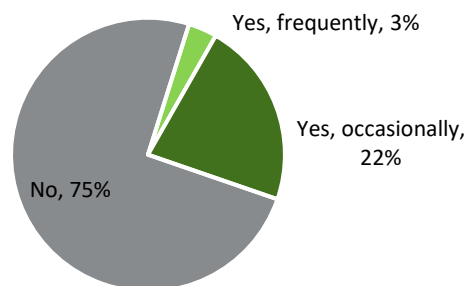
Home Internet Reliability



Frequency of Internet Use for Coursework



Public Wi-fi Use due to Home Connection Instability



Respondents enrolled in non-credit WSCE or PALS courses are less likely to use the internet daily for coursework and are more likely to frequently or occasionally use public Wi-Fi for coursework. Full-time and part-time credit respondents report the same levels of use and reliability. Respondents in only online courses reported the highest rate of very reliable access.

Daily internet usage and public wi-fi usage are highest for respondents who are 45-54 years old. Respondents who are 45-54 years old and 55-64 years old reported the highest rates of very reliable internet access. Responses to the internet access questions were consistent across gender categories.