

was Atlantic County, with Atlantic City casino workers receiving more than 3,000 meal kits.

Between January and June, Atlantic County also had proportionally the highest rate of calls to the NJ 211 hotline for information on food assistance, according to the report.

“Behind all the statistics in this report is a portrait of real people grappling with the challenge of providing enough food for their families,” said John Froomjian, executive director of the Hughes Center.

The Hughes Center undertook the student research as a follow-up to a March Stockton University Poll that found that even before the lockdown, a significant percentage of Atlantic County residents struggled with food insecurity. Nearly one in five residents said they had run out of food and did not have money to buy more right away, while 14 percent had skipped a meal because they could not afford to buy food, according to the poll. Among those with children, 17 percent had skipped a meal so that their children could eat.

“The Hughes Center [poll](#) showed that food insecurity was a problem in Atlantic County before the pandemic struck, when times were still good. Our new research shows that the coronavirus lockdown created a food security crisis,” Froomjian said.

The new research by Bolton, a political science major from Hamilton Township, Mercer County, aimed to document the effect of economic conditions on food insecurity after Gov. Phil Murphy ordered business closures that resulted in layoffs. Hughes Center Research Associate Alyssa Maurice contributed to the report with data analysis.

Find the full report at the Hughes Center [student research web page](#).

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey. The Center is named for the late Ambassador William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career included service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton College. The Hughes Center can be found at www.facebook.com/Hughes.Center.Stockton.College and can be followed on Twitter: @hughescenter.

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