

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 27, 2021
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California Funds Basic Needs Centers to Address Food and Housing Insecurity

SACRAMENTO - Today Governor Newsom signed Assembly Bill 132, which provides a coordinated and integrated approach to meet college students' basic needs. This postsecondary education trailer bill is based on legislation (Assembly Bill 775) by Assemblymember Marc Berman (D-Menlo Park) and implements a $30 million ongoing investment in the Budget Act of 2021 to support basic needs centers.

"California community college students are experiencing hunger and homelessness at alarming rates, which is why I introduced legislation this year to require a basic needs center and coordinator on every campus," said Assemblymember Marc Berman, Chair of the Assembly Select Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education. "After years of advocating for students' basic needs, I am proud to have secured significant and ongoing funding to address this crisis. This is long overdue and will help our most vulnerable students succeed and thrive in college."

AB 132 requires each community college campus to establish a basic needs center and hire a basic needs coordinator by July 1, 2022. The center and coordinator will provide a single point of contact for students to access basic needs services, such as CalFresh and other programs. The basic needs coordinator will act as a broker in linking students to on- and off-campus housing, food, mental health, and other basic needs services and resources.

What advocates are saying:

Debbie Raucher, John Burton Advocates for Youth, Director of Education: "To close the achievement gaps between student subpopulations, the state needs to embrace a holistic approach to student success. This cannot ignore the reality that until all students have ongoing and consistent access to food to eat and a place to live, educational equity goals will never be realized. As California moves towards recovery, this groundbreaking investment will ensure that students across the state, and in particular those who have lost ground as a result of the pandemic, can access the resources that they need to be successful. We are extremely grateful to Assemblymember Berman for his advocacy and commitment to this issue."

Mahmoud Zahriya, Young Invincibles, West Advocacy Manager: "Today, the Governor signed landmark legislation that will improve the education experience for low-income college students across the state. When students lack the basic resources they need like food or housing assistance, they are unable to prioritize academic progress. At Young Invincibles, we understand racial equity is a necessary and integral part of overall advancements in higher education. Thanks to efforts championed by Assemblymember Marc Berman, students will no longer have to skip meals or basic necessities over tuition-related costs."

Jasmine Prasad, Student Senate for California Community Colleges, Vice President of Legislative Affairs: "As a student leader, I have heard and witnessed first-hand, students struggling with basic needs across the state. The Legislature has recognized and responded to the students' desperate need for equity reform. The basic needs centers and coordinators will allow more resources to empower students' success in higher education."

Brandon Zuniga, Los Angeles Trade Technical College student: "As a former unhoused student who sometimes lived in the Blue Line metro station, the levels of distress, and hunger I have endured left a long lasting impact on my life and in my educational pursuits. The funds that will be allocated for basic needs centers will influence the lives of countless students and positively impact their educational outcomes. I am proud to see Governor Newsom stepping up to help young adults like me and building structures that will provide the support systems we need to be successful in college. I am proud that many students across the state are going to get the help and resources they desperately need."

Assemblymember Marc Berman represents the 24th Assembly District, which includes southern San Mateo County and northern Santa Clara County in the heart of the Silicon Valley. Website of Assemblymember Marc Berman: www.assembly.ca.gov/Berman. Assemblymember Marc Berman's official headshot is available here.