



JOHN BURTON
Advocates
for Youth

Connecting the Dots:

How Colleges Can Collaborate
with Homelessness Response Systems
to Address Student Needs



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BACKGROUND

Colleges across the nation have become increasingly concerned with meeting students' basic needs given the growing number of housing and food insecure students, and the multiple ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the insecurities they face. Recent efforts to address these needs have focused on establishing service hubs known as basic needs centers across California college campuses as well as funding coordinator and liaison positions to connect students with external resources. Most basic needs centers began as an outgrowth of food pantries; however, as State and institutional support has grown for these efforts in recent years, basic needs centers have increasingly begun to hire full-time, dedicated coordinators who have the capacity to reach beyond their campuses' resources and establish relationships with food banks, housing service providers, and other community resources.

While initially focused on addressing food insecurity, basic needs centers are increasingly recognizing the need to incorporate strategies to address homelessness and housing insecurity among the student body. Addressing these issues is challenging and typically cannot

be accomplished using existing resources at community colleges. Given this reality, one emerging strategy to address these needs is expanding collaboration between California college campuses and homelessness response systems. At a number of campuses, passionate, dedicated, and skilled college staff and housing services providers have partnered to provide unique solutions to the rising number of college students who are homeless and housing insecure.

Through a series of interviews with community college basic needs center staff, housing service providers, and other stakeholders, as well as a review of current literature and research, this report seeks to understand these relationships and highlight innovative strategies for collaboration that can help address college student homelessness and housing insecurity. This report seeks to uplift success stories, provide concrete guidance, and inspire both individual campuses and homelessness response systems to partner to address college student homelessness and housing insecurity.



College Student Homelessness

A higher education degree is associated with long-term economic stability, asset growth, and better health outcomes.¹ Individuals with a bachelor's degree on average earn over a million dollars more over their lifetime than those with only a high school diploma and are 40% less likely to be unemployed.² In fact, higher education has never been more important. Between 2008 and 2018, the economy gained 11 million jobs that require a post-secondary credential while simultaneously losing 5 million jobs that can be secured with a high school diploma or less.³

At the same time, more students are experiencing barriers to meeting their basic needs as they strive to earn a higher education credential. Research conducted in 2019 found that 60 percent of California Community College students were housing insecure and 19 percent experienced homelessness in the previous year.⁴ A fall 2017 survey of primarily student services and categorical program campus staff found that 56.8 percent of respondents had direct contact with students experiencing basic needs insecurity multiple times per week or every day.⁵

California's other segments of higher education are not immune to these challenges. Research conducted in 2018 found that 10.9 percent of California State University (CSU) students experienced homelessness in the previous year.⁶ A 2016 report from the University of California (UC) found that 5 percent UC students experienced homelessness at some point during their enrollment.⁷

Research has shown a clear linkage between experiencing housing insecurity and diminished academic outcomes. A recent study found that housing insecurity is associated with an 8 to 12 percent reduction in the probability of later degree attainment or enrollment. In the short-term, housing insecurity is also associated with a lower mean grade point average (GPA), a lower probability of obtaining at least a 2.0 GPA, and a higher probability of enrolling part-time rather than full-time.⁸ Research from the CSU system found that students who reported food insecurity, homelessness, or both also experienced physical and mental health consequences that were associated with lower academic achievement. They also reported higher rates of "inactive days," where poor physical or mental health kept them from their usual activities such as school, work, self-care, and recreational activities.⁹

It is also crucial to recognize that basic needs insecurity and issues of equity are inextricably intertwined. Research has clearly shown that this insecurity impacts certain subpopulations more severely than others. At California Community Colleges, African American and American Indian students are up to 40 percent more likely than white and Asian students to experience basic needs insecurity. Latinx students, while less likely to experience basic needs insecurity than African Americans, do so at higher rates than white students.¹⁰ While many strategies serve the goal of greater equity in education, a targeted focus on addressing basic needs insecurity is an important element of addressing larger educational and economic equity goals.

Legislative Initiatives

As California's ongoing housing crisis plays out in the lives of the state's college students, the state has worked to identify strategies to both support these students as they endeavor to complete college and identify funding targeted to moving college students out of homelessness into stable housing.

Success for Homeless Youth in Higher Education Act

Assembly Bill 801 (Bloom, 2016) provided certain benefits to homeless youth enrolled in higher education. The bill requires each California State University and California Community College to designate a staff member as a Homeless Youth Liaison who is tasked with informing current and prospective students who are homeless about financial aid and other assistance available to homeless youth. University of California campuses were requested to do the same. The bill also provided priority enrollment to homeless youth and added homeless youth to the group of students who are automatically eligible for a California College Promise Grant to pay for tuition costs at community college. To facilitate

implementation of these requirements, the California Community College Chancellor's Office developed a [primer](#) for staff that outlines best practices for serving students experiencing homelessness.

College-Focused Rapid Rehousing Funding

In July 2019, California allocated new funding—the first of its kind—to address homelessness among college students through the 2019–20 State Budget bill (AB 74). The state allocated \$19 million annually to the state's three public post-secondary institutions. The University of California system receives an annual \$3.5 million allocation, the California State University system receives \$6.5 million, and the California Community College system receives \$9 million. The funding is intended to support rapid rehousing efforts that assist homeless and housing insecure college students. Campuses must establish partnerships with community-based housing providers to provide wraparound services and rental subsidies for eligible students.¹¹

Funds may also be used to connect students with case managers, housing navigators, establish ongoing emergency housing procedures and to provide emergency grants necessary to secure housing or prevent the imminent loss of housing. This funding was distributed by each segment to individual institutions using a unique methodology, and is in place at eight CSU campuses, 14 community colleges, and all 10 UC campuses. At the California Community Colleges, this program was named the Homeless and Housing Insecure Pilot (HHIP) Program.



What Is College-Focused Rapid Rehousing?

Rapid rehousing is an evidence-based approach that aims to help people exit homelessness and stabilize in housing as quickly and efficiently as possible. It provides housing search services, short- to medium-term financial assistance (e.g., help paying rent and move-in costs), and case management services. College-Focused Rapid Rehousing (CFFR) is a housing model that combines these three core elements with meaningful, sustained connections to post-secondary education. The model was originally developed by Jovenes, Inc., in Los Angeles in 2016 as part of their [College Success Initiative](#), and has since spread to more than 20 colleges and universities.

✔ HOUSING NAVIGATION AND LANDLORD RECRUITMENT

A key component of rapid rehousing is helping students find housing and troubleshooting barriers that prevent them from accessing that housing. This can include helping students find appropriate rental housing in the community; recruiting landlords to provide housing opportunities; addressing potential barriers to landlord participation; assisting students to complete applications and prepare for interviews with landlords; helping students determine if a housing option meets their needs and preferences; and help with moving. These services could also include identifying housing with a friend or family member if that is the most appropriate option for permanent housing. In some cases, housing providers master-lease units directly in order to sublease them to program participants.

✔ RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Rapid rehousing programs offer financial assistance to cover move-in costs, deposits, and rent and utility payments. The rental assistance may be temporary to facilitate a student's transition into permanent housing or may last until the student has achieved their academic goals.

✔ TRADITIONAL AND ACADEMIC CASE MANAGEMENT

Case management services are provided to students to help troubleshoot and overcome barriers to acquiring and maintaining permanent housing. These services include addressing issues that may impede access to housing such as credit history, rent arrears, and legal issues; negotiating lease agreements with landlords; and making services and supports available to students as well as to the landlords partnering with the rapid rehousing program. Case management services can also include monitoring participants' housing stability—ideally through home visits and communication with the landlord—and resolving housing-related crises should they occur.

Case Managers also assist households with connecting to resources that help them improve their safety and well-being and achieve their long-term goals. This includes ensuring that households have access to resources related to income and health care benefits, employment, and community-based services so that they can sustain rent payments independently when rental assistance ends. These traditional case management services are coupled with academic support, provided through collaboration between the housing provider and the partnering college.



Basic Needs Center Funding

California expanded the proven basic needs center model statewide in 2021 through the adoption of language in the postsecondary education budget trailer bill (AB 132). This bill required each community college campus to establish a basic needs center and hire a basic needs coordinator by July 1, 2022. The center and coordinator are to provide a single point of contact for students to access basic needs services, such as CalFresh and other programs. The role of the basic needs coordinator is to act as a broker in linking students to on- and off-campus housing, food, mental health, and other basic needs services and resources. The 2021-22 State Budget bill (AB 128/AB 129) also provided a \$30 million annual allocation for basic needs centers and basic needs coordinators at community colleges and \$100 million in one-time funding to be spent over three years to address food and housing insecurity. The CSU and UC systems both received a \$15 million annual allocation for basic needs services.¹²

Higher Education Student Housing Grant Program

In the 2021-22 postsecondary education budget trailer bill (SB 169), California took a bold step to address the college housing shortage by appropriating \$500 million over three years to provide affordable, low-cost housing options for public postsecondary students in California. Fifty percent of the available funds are to be made available to California Community Colleges, 30 percent to California State Universities, and 20 percent to the University of California. This program will provide one-time grants for the construction of housing or the acquisition and renovation of commercial properties into student housing. To qualify, housing projects must set rents at a rate that is considered affordable to students with incomes of 50 percent of the local area median income.¹³

Homelessness Response Systems

Homelessness response systems in California are highly localized and vary by county and region. Local jurisdictions receive a combination of federal and state funding to provide services to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness to transition into permanent housing and maintain housing stability. In some cases, local jurisdictions supplement state and federal funding with local allocations from county or city funds.

Continuums of Care

Historically, the largest source of funding to address homelessness has come from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the Continuum of Care (CoC) Program. This program provides over \$2.6 billion nationwide for programs designed to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families, and communities by homelessness.¹⁴ California received just over \$480 million of CoC funding in the most recent allocation cycle.

Each local community has a Continuum of Care entity that disseminates funding to nonprofit providers and local governments to operate permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing programs, and transitional housing programs, and to provide supportive services to homeless households. Each CoC entity has a board that oversees this process and ensures compliance with HUD requirements. Eligibility for services through this program is largely limited to households that meet HUD's definition of homeless, which includes those living in shelters or in places not meant for human habitation (including living in cars), or those fleeing domestic violence.

As a condition of receiving funding, communities must establish a **Coordinated Entry System (CES)**. The goal of a coordinated entry system is to enable people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness to access the crisis response system in a streamlined way, so they can be evaluated for the range of available services through a single point of entry and then connected to the most appropriate service. Households with the most severe needs are typically prioritized for services over those with less pronounced needs when the availability of services is limited.

CoCs are also responsible for conducting a biannual count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January, known as the **Point-In-Time Count**. These efforts often rely on volunteers to fan out across the community during a 24-hour period to establish the number of homeless individuals.

HEAP/HHAP

The state of California has significantly increased its investment in addressing homelessness in recent years through the Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP) and Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention (HHAP) Program. HEAP provided \$500 million in the 2018–19 budget through block grants to the State's 43 CoCs and 11 largest cities for a variety of services targeting people experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness. Funds could be used for rental subsidies, support services, and capital improvements. Local jurisdictions were required to invest a minimum of five percent of the funds to address youth homelessness.

The HHAP program provided \$650 million for similar uses in the 2019–20 budget to the State's 44 CoCs, 13 largest cities, and 58 counties, with an eight percent set-aside for

youth. The 2020–21 state budget included an additional \$300 million for HHAP, which also included an eight percent youth set-aside. The most recent state budget provided \$1 billion in both 2021–22 and 2022–23 for third and fourth rounds of HHAP with a ten percent youth set-aside. The HHAP Program emphasizes long-term solutions and strengthened accountability and planning requirements. Youth are defined as unaccompanied homeless youth ages 12 through 24 who qualify as homeless under the McKinney–Vento education definition, which includes any youth who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including “couch surfers.”

Lists of the funding amounts provided to each CoC, county, and city are included in the appendices of this report.

Homekey

Homekey was established in 2020 as a state response to protecting Californians experiencing homelessness who are at high risk for serious illness and are impacted by COVID-19. Homekey provides funding to purchase and rehabilitate housing and convert it into interim or permanent, long-term housing. The state budget provides \$1.45 billion in 2021–22 and \$1.3 billion in 2022–23 for Homekey. This new funding comes with a “youth set-aside.” A minimum of 8 percent of funds must be available for projects serving homeless youth.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CAMPUS PRACTICES

Cultivating relationships with the local homelessness response system can take time and may not lead to immediate results. It is, however, worth pursuing, as the investment in developing relationships can pay off over the long term, as evidenced by the examples described below. Given narrow definitions of homelessness and the scarcity of housing resources, homelessness response systems are not the sole answer to the question of how to address college student homelessness, but these systems are nonetheless a valuable tool. As noted above, significant new state resources are being made available in coming years to address homelessness, so these systems will have the capacity to be more responsive than ever before as new housing opportunities are rolled out. By combining community resources with those available on campus, colleges can make progress towards the goal of eliminating homelessness among their student body.

In fact, new legislation makes such collaboration a legal requirement for community colleges. New community college basic needs funding was accompanied by several mandates, one of which is that “each Basic Needs Center must coordinate with their local homelessness response system to refer students to community resources available to address homelessness.”¹⁵

Leveraging community homelessness response systems takes effort and most strategies will require commitment and buy-in from campus administrators. All the campus staff members interviewed for this report shared that their basic needs efforts had strong support from campus administration, which was key to their success. While relationship-building may

begin with basic needs center staff, bringing in administrators early in the process of implementing the strategies below is highly recommended.

1 Ensure appropriate staffing is in place to effectively leverage homelessness response systems.

The first step in this work is gaining an understanding of one’s local homelessness response systems. Campus staff should understand how coordinated entry systems work in their community, including eligibility criteria, how to make referrals, and whether there are specialized entry points for youth. Historically, many colleges have been unable to provide dedicated staffing at basic needs centers, limiting their ability to develop strong external partnerships. As part of the 2022 Budget Act, funding is now available across all three systems of postsecondary education to hire full-time basic needs coordinators and support staff, and in fact, the presence of a coordinator on each community college campus is now mandatory.¹⁶

Colleges and universities should take full advantage of this dedicated funding to address staffing capacity at their basic needs centers and should endeavor to hire coordinators with experience providing services to high-need and diverse populations. College staff reported that coordinators and support staff with backgrounds in social work and social services found it easier to navigate the complexities of their local community system of homeless services and establish relationships.

Adequate staffing is also crucial so that students can be appropriately referred to services and assisted with navigating available supports. For example, **Southwestern College** hired two basic needs specialists to respond to students who indicated housing insecurity on intake forms and make appropriate referrals. While both specialists are part time, Southwestern College is working to make these two positions full time to respond to the growing number of basic needs requests. **San Diego City College** employs two project assistants to manage intakes, two case managers, and one housing navigator. These colleges reported greater success with follow-up actions regarding housing navigation and ensuring students gained access to housing services. Colleges without similar levels of staffing reported being unable to provide the same quality of services.

2 Participate in the local Continuum of Care.

Many colleges reported that existing homelessness response systems are not designed with students in mind, creating barriers to their access to services. For this to change, campus staff must become active participants in the conversation regarding homeless services. This is often the first step towards expanding resources for college students. Several colleges have successfully made connections to their local CoC coordinating body and gotten involved in conversations to set priorities for local funding, bringing the lens of college student homelessness to discussions where this perspective had previously been absent.

John Burton Advocates for Youth maintains a list of [CoC contacts](#) on its website that can be used to identify the appropriate contact person for a particular CoC.¹⁷ This roster also provides links to CoC websites and information about



each community's coordinated entry system. CoCs are largely designated by county, however in regions with smaller counties, multiple counties may be combined into a single CoC. In addition to making one-on-one connections with CoC staff, college representatives can attend CoC board and relevant committee meetings. Participation in these meetings can help college staff understand how these systems function and develop relationships with potential partners. College staff who attend should feel empowered to raise the issue of college student homelessness as appropriate in these conversations to begin the process of developing greater awareness around this issue.

Colleges can play a particularly impactful role as CoCs determine how to spend state funding that is restricted to serving transition aged youth. Youth are defined as unaccompanied homeless youth ages 12 through 24 who qualify as homeless under the McKinney-Vento education definition. This includes any youth who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including "couch surfers." While not all college students fit into this

age category, many do, and there is often less competition for these resources than for resources targeted to the broader adult population.

📍 **Cabrillo College**

Cabrillo College first got involved with their local Continuum of Care through participation in the application development process for a federal Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project grant. The community received this grant, which led to further collaboration, ultimately leading to the receipt of a HEAP grant by the college to support homeless and housing insecure students with funds for housing deposits and limited rental subsidies. Staff shared that participation in CoC meetings has helped them to learn about community resources and develop relationships with local providers. As a result, they have established direct referral relationships with various community providers including the county's Youth Homeless Response Team and Safe Parking program.

📍 **Fresno City College**

In June 2020, Fresno City College (FCC) utilized Qualtrics, the college's internal research software, to conduct a survey of students to gauge the degree to which students were experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. Of 1,936 respondents, 29 met the HUD definition of homelessness and 327 were unstably housed per the McKinney Vento Definition. This data proved essential in subsequent interactions with the CoC Executive Board. FCC staff were able to share their internal institutional housing data, which made a compelling case for the CoC, County and City to invest newly obtained state funds in addressing college student homelessness.

This led to FCC securing \$275,000 in HEAP funds (from the County of Fresno) and

\$500,000 in HHAP funds (from the City of Fresno) to serve 18–24-year-old students with intensive housing navigation, rental subsidies, and the college's own 24-hour, year-round twenty bed emergency shelter. This also led to a subsequent partnership between FCC and the City of Fresno, which resulted in the receipt of \$13 million from the second round of Homekey funding for a project to build 69 rent-restricted apartments for college students.

“The first thing colleges must do is understand their internal data regarding the housing needs of students and then get connected to their continuum of care. If you are bridging your homeless world and the higher education world, that is your expressway.”

— CAMPUS STAFF

📍 **Imperial Valley College**

Imperial Valley College (IVC) basic needs center staff participate in their local CoC meetings. Staff shared that this participation has been instrumental in putting this population on the radar of the CoC. When HEAP funds were made available, IVC was able to obtain an allocation from the funding designated for transition aged youth to expand efforts on campus to address homelessness. The institution also participated in the biannual point-in-time count to ensure that homeless college students were included in the count and to demonstrate the campus's active participation.

“If we don't have a seat at the table, no one even knows we exist.”

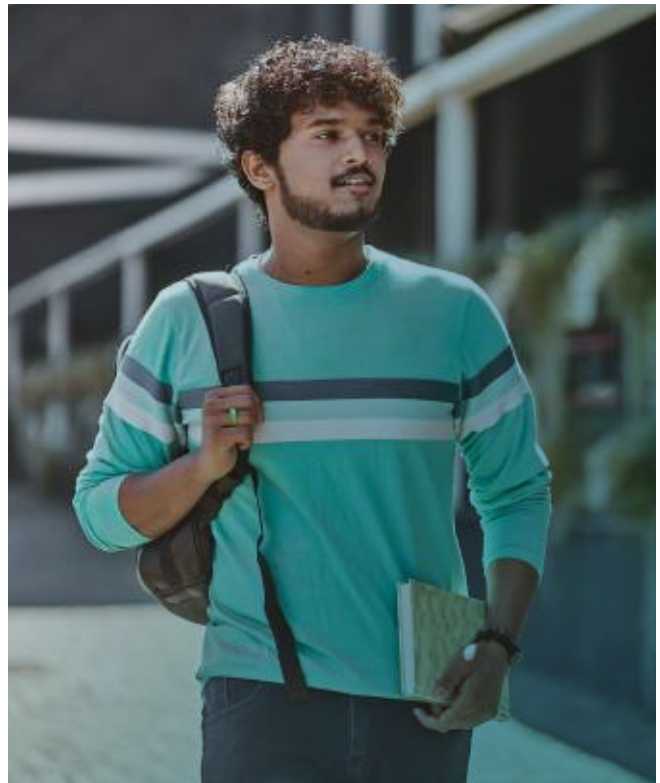
—CAMPUS STAFF

📍 Long Beach City College

After attending a conference presentation at which CoCs were discussed, Long Beach City College (LBCC) staff reached out to their local CoC to determine how to get involved. This ultimately led to the inclusion of an LBCC staff member on the CoC's governing board. Staff reported that serving in this role has been extremely advantageous as it has provided a greater connection to community housing resources. Staff have learned about the availability of housing vouchers, new grants, and other available resources. Participation on the board, as well as on the CoC subcommittee focused on coordinated entry, allows LBCC staff to elevate the issue of college student homelessness and educate the community about this need.

📍 Napa Valley College

Napa Valley College's Manager of Student Life began their relationship with Napa County by exploring what programs could help their students while developing their own basic needs center. They discovered that their County Department of Health and Human Services, which functions as the CoC, was looking for ways to better serve transition aged youth, as homeless youth were often not aware of county services. For Napa County, Napa Valley College served as a natural partner in this effort. From there, the County connected Napa Valley College to Abode Services, a housing provider that operates emergency shelter and rental assistance programs in Napa County. NVC is now embarking on developing a relationship with Abode in order to leverage these services.



📍 San Diego City College

San Diego City College initially reached out to their Continuum of Care for guidance and technical assistance with operationalizing their College-Focused Rapid Rehousing Program funded by state HHIP funds. The CoC assisted campus staff with connecting to local housing providers who could partner on implementation and provided professional development to help college staff better understand the housing world. The San Diego CoC functions using a membership structure, with formal members having a role in electing the governing board and setting policies. SDCC chose to pay the nominal membership fee to become an active participant and help introduce the CoC to the issues and needs community college students are facing. The staff interviewed for this report stressed the importance of participating in their CoC as a paid member and that as the CoC staff begins to understand what the college is doing, more opportunities are expected to emerge.

SPOTLIGHT: LOS ANGELES COUNTY

While most CoCs have not engaged proactively to consider strategies to address college student homelessness, Los Angeles is a notable exception. At the direction of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA), the CoC oversight body for the County, has taken several concrete steps to address college student homelessness. The **Higher Education and Homelessness Workgroup** (HEHW) was launched in July 2017 to develop strategies and cross-systems solutions to student homelessness. HEHW, facilitated by LAHSA, began by bringing together leaders from youth housing providers, over a dozen postsecondary institutions, the CEO's Homeless Initiative, the Center for Strategic Public-Private Partnerships, and education policy advocates. In 2020, LAHSA conducted a strategic planning process, which outlines a plan for addressing college student homelessness.¹⁸ Plans were delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic; however, the group was restarted in 2022 as part of the planning process for a federal Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project grant.

In 2019, using local funds derived from Measure H, LAHSA began subcontracting with community providers to employ **peer navigators**. These peer navigators assess community college students who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness for their housing needs through LA's Coordinated Entry System and connect students with resources that can end their housing crisis. Pre-pandemic, these peer navigators were co-located at 22 college campuses across the county, working in tandem with campus support staff. Services transitioned to online during periods when in-person activities were suspended.



3 Establish relationships with housing providers.

Another promising strategy that was reported by campus representatives was to develop relationships directly with housing providers in their communities to expand the scope of housing options available to students. As noted previously, while colleges have a need for housing options for students of all ages, beginning with providers that target transition aged youth may be the most effective starting place as local homelessness response systems may be seeking strategies to ensure that youth set-aside requirements are fully met. Colleges reported that initial investigations into their homelessness response system often led to robust partnerships that have served their homeless and housing insecure students.

In some cases, colleges have leveraged existing funding available through their housing provider partner and in other cases colleges have partnered with a housing provider to obtain funding with the express purpose of serving homeless college students. This has only become possible in recent years due to the availability of significant new state investments. New dollars are expected to continue to roll out from the State to CoCs, counties, and large cities in the coming years, and so opportunities to replicate this model are likely in the near-term.

In addition, community colleges received a substantial infusion of one-time funding through the 2021-22 budget, with \$100 million being made available over three years. Because of the time-limited nature of these funds, hiring additional staff may be challenging. Partnering with housing providers to develop college-focused rapid rehousing programs, however, may be a viable use. While some colleges may be inclined toward maintaining these funds with the institution, subcontracting housing services is recommended, as developing effective

housing programs without a community provider skilled in delivering housing services may be challenging.

📍 Cosumnes River College

In January 2017, the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency was awarded a Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth (P3) grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Sacramento P3 program serves eligible youth ages 16–24 who are either homeless, in foster care or emancipated, involved in the juvenile justice system, unemployed, or not enrolled in/at risk of dropping out of school. Eligible youth can access P3 vouchers, which function similarly to a Section 8 voucher, through Lutheran Social Services of Northern California (LSS).

Cosumnes River College (CRC) learned about the services LSS provided and partnered with LSS using these P3 vouchers to create a college-focused rapid rehousing program. The P3 vouchers have since expired and CRC is investigating how they can continue their Rapid Rehousing Program with new funding. LSS has received CARES act funding to continue to offer a scaled down version of the program for CRC that provides first and last month rent, funds for paying off prior housing debt to clean up credit reports, and short-term rental assistance.

“Colleges really need to use their community partners to provide wraparound services for students experiencing homelessness. As a community college we can only do so much, and so leveraging these relationships is key.”

—CAMPUS STAFF

📍 San Joaquin Delta College

Lutheran Social Services of Northern California (LSS) was operating a transition aged youth program in Stockton funded through HUD. LSS recognized that many of the youth who were being served in their existing housing programs were also college students and reached out to San Joaquin Delta College to discuss their needs. This relationship led LSS to apply for and receive HEAP funding, which they used to pilot a college-focused rapid rehousing program for two years at San Joaquin Delta College. Additional funding was subsequently provided through HHAP to continue to operate the program.

📍 Southwestern College

At Southwestern College, the Department of Student Services struggled to serve students experiencing homelessness, which led them to reach out to a local provider, South Bay Community Services (SBCS). The Department of Student Services began meeting regularly with SBCS to establish a relationship and develop an MOU to enable the college to refer students to SBCS's housing programs. This relationship eventually led to Southwestern College and SBCS partnering on a successful application for HEAP funding that was then used to offer college-focused rapid rehousing to homeless students. To date, nine students have been housed through this program.

📍 Homeless and Housing Insecure Pilot Program

Fourteen California community colleges were awarded grants through a \$9 million allocation included in the 2019–20 budget (AB 74) by the state Legislature to support rapid rehousing services to California community college students. The CSU system received an allocation of \$6.5 million that was awarded across eight institutions. Each awarded institution has partnered with a local provider to develop a college-focused rapid rehousing program. The approach differs by institution, and housing options made available include a combination of units master-leased by housing providers and subleased to students as well as opportunities for students to lease units directly from landlords with an accompanying rental subsidy. Service models also vary in terms of the roles and responsibilities of the housing provider and campus program staff and the degree to which housing navigation and case management services are delivered by each respective entity.

As noted above, although these programs were created with a dedicated source of funding, one-time basic needs funding could be utilized to replicate this model on a smaller scale.

“It is easy to get overwhelmed with the diversity and level of needs students have on campus. Most cities have community collaboratives. Just look online and see what local nonprofits are doing and reach out and attend a meeting. Colleges can’t do it alone, can’t pay rent for months at a time. How else are we going to address homelessness without connecting to the folks who are able to?”

—CAMPUS BASIC NEEDS COORDINATOR

COMMUNITY COLLEGES FUNDED BY HHIP

- Antelope Valley College
- Barstow College
- Butte College
- Cerritos College
- College of the Redwoods
- Fresno City College
- Gavilan College
- Imperial Valley College
- Long Beach City College
- Los Angeles Southwest College
- Modesto College
- Riverside City College
- San Diego City College
- Victor Valley College

CSUs RECEIVING FUNDING

- Cal Poly Pomona
- Cal State Long Beach
- Cal State Northridge
- Chico State
- Sacramento State
- San Diego State
- San Francisco State
- San Jose State



4 Consider becoming a Coordinated Entry site or co-locate Coordinated Entry providers on campus.

In some cases, colleges have begun to explore whether they can assist more students to access housing through the homelessness response system by bringing the coordinated entry function on campus. All HUD-funded housing and most state-funded programs must utilize their community's Coordinated Entry system (CES) to identify eligible individuals and families. CES looks different in each community with varying numbers of access points, phone vs. in-person options, and intake protocols. In some communities, separate CES systems exist for transition aged youth.

By making the college a CES access point, students are more likely to gain access to these services and staff can be trained to better understand the nuances of student homelessness. Bringing CES to campus does not necessarily mean that the college itself must become a separate access point. As demonstrated by the examples below,

providers from existing CES access points can instead come to campus on specified days to conduct intakes with students identified by the basic needs services programs as in need of housing support.

College staff with CES experience stressed the importance of knowing who to refer to coordinated entry, and how. Many homeless or housing insecure college students, in particular those who are "couch-surfing," may not qualify for services because they do not meet the federal definition of homelessness. Because the coordinated entry system prioritizes homeless people according to need and risk, college students may also face long waiting lists. It is important that staff understand which students to refer to coordinated entry and how to offer realistic expectations regarding what types of support are available.

Despite these limitations of the coordinated entry system, colleges have experienced some success partnering with these systems.

“Community college students are speaking a different language than the coordinated entry system as a whole, but the system needs to learn about this population as well.”

– CAMPUS STAFF

📍 Cabrillo College

Working with their local CoC ultimately led Cabrillo College to obtain authorization to enter students into the centralized coordinated entry system. Two campus staff have been trained to use the system. When students meet the eligibility criteria for the services available through coordinated entry, these staff enter their information, which puts the students in the pool for housing programs as space becomes available. Campus staff shared that they are continuing to have conversations with the CoC regarding how to make this system as effective as possible for the student population.

📍 Southwestern College

Southwestern College worked with South Bay Community Services (SBCS) to bring coordinated entry to campus. SBCS had to develop unique protocols with their CoC in order to take referrals directly from the college. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, SBCS staff came onto campus once a week to enter students into the CES by appointment. This process was discontinued because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but Southwestern is currently determining the appropriate timing for reengaging in this partnership. In the interim, if a student discloses information that makes them a likely candidate for services available through CES, the student is referred to SBCS, who meets with them at SBCS’s office or online for assessment.

📍 San Diego City College

San Diego City College (SDCC) worked with their CoC to become a CES site. Their ability to do so was facilitated by the presence of a housing navigator on campus who is an employee of PATH San Diego, a local housing provider who works with the college on their HHIP-funded rapid rehousing program. The college’s two program project assistants are authorized to conduct intakes and enter students in the coordinated entry system. The housing navigator from PATH San Diego enters students who have a deeper level of need. The process of becoming a CES site did require significant negotiation with the CoC to accommodate the unique circumstances of SDCC students, who often do not meet the HUD definition of homeless but may qualify for certain homelessness prevention services.

As San Diego City College has developed this function, they have needed to gain an understanding of the nuances of eligibility requirements for CoC services in order to make appropriate referrals. SDCC is continuing to receive training from the CoC regarding the use of this system and is working to identify systems for tracking outcomes for students referred to the CoC.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to actions that can be taken by individual institutions, systemic changes can also play a role in solving the crisis of college student homelessness. Both postsecondary educational systems and homelessness response systems have a role to play in this effort, and the recommendations below can serve both to improve collaboration and expand proven strategies to address this need.

1 **Require Continuum of Care boards to include representation from the post-secondary sector.**

In order for homelessness response systems to view the college student population as a group that must be incorporated into existing services models, CoCs must have a better understanding of the needs of this population. The California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) is charged with coordination around the state's response to the homelessness crisis. The Council's mission is to develop policies and identify resources, benefits, and services to prevent and work toward ending homelessness in California. In 2019, SB 687 mandated the inclusion of a representative of the state public higher education system on the council, a seat currently filled by the Vice Chancellor of Educational Services and Support for the California Community College Chancellor's Office. Legislation could be enacted that requires local homelessness response coordinating bodies to similarly include post-secondary representation on their governing boards.

2 **Provide more funding to support innovative and effective housing programs targeted at college students.**

While the strategies described in this report to leverage broader homelessness response systems are an important tool to address student homelessness, all the college representatives interviewed for this report were clear that these systems serve just a fraction of the homeless student population, even with the most robust collaboration. To have a more significant impact on this issue, state funding specifically designated for this purpose must be made available.

Initial results from the College-Focused Rapid Rehousing model are showing that it is an effective approach to solving college student homelessness. While the program is still new, HHIP grantees are reporting considerable success connecting students experiencing homelessness to housing. Jovenes, Inc.'s College Success Initiative, which has been in place since 2016, reports that through the first four years of the initiative, 63% of students who enrolled in the program have either graduated or transferred from college, or are still currently enrolled and pursuing their goals, while 97% of students maintained their housing stability. Because of limited funding, the state-funded program is available only at 14 of 116 community colleges and 8 of 23 CSUs, leaving the vast majority of California college students experiencing homelessness with no targeted resources designated to address their housing needs. Providing additional funding so that more institutions can operate similar programs would make a significant dent in this crisis.

“A frustration that a lot of campuses have is that the students they refer out are not going to be eligible for the basic homeless services unless there is specific funding or prioritization of homeless students at a local level. That’s where a program like AB 74 is so important because it creates a direct mechanism of community support for students experiencing homelessness.”

—HOUSING SERVICE PROVIDER

3 **Prioritize projects that offer deep affordability for homeless students for Higher Education Student Housing Grant Program funding.**

As described in the introduction to this report, the 2021–22 California budget appropriated \$500 million over three years for the construction of low-cost housing options at postsecondary institutions. To qualify, housing projects must set rents at a rate that is considered affordable to students with incomes of 50 percent of the local area median income. Under the current formula, rents would range from roughly \$600/month in lower-cost rural regions to up to \$1300/month in high-cost urban areas. While below market rate, rents set at this level will remain unaffordable to many and will not offer realistic opportunities to ameliorate college student homelessness. The scoring criteria for this program could be modified to provide a bonus to projects that incorporate strategies that enable students experiencing homelessness to gain permanent housing through these projects.



CONCLUSION

College students experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity stand at a crossroads. Before them lies a path of long-term economic sustainability through the attainment of a postsecondary credential or a period of homelessness that may lead to long-term economic insecurity. Targeted and robust intervention that rapidly connects students to housing resources allows students to stay on the right path and keeps the socioeconomic mobility promise of higher education alive for the students who rely on it most.

The depth of services needed to serve a homeless or housing insecure college student, however, reveals that a college cannot employ these interventions on their own. They require the partnership and support of the organizations whose primary function is to help individuals and families exit homelessness. Homelessness response systems are uniquely positioned to partner with colleges in serving homeless students. The development of such partnerships has led to life-changing impacts for students at the institutions highlighted in this report. The experiences of those colleges can point the way for others to follow.



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APPENDIX A

CONTINUUM OF CARE HHAP FUNDING AMOUNTS

CONTINUUM OF CARE	HHAP Round 1	HHAP Round 2	HHAP Round 3*	Total
Alpine, Inyo, Mono Counties CoC	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$320,292	\$1,070,292
Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, Tuolumne Counties CoC	\$995,414	\$470,994	\$1,264,704	\$2,731,113
Bakersfield/Kern County CoC	\$1,566,747	\$741,328	\$1,990,600	\$4,298,675
Chico, Paradise/Butte County CoC	\$1,491,355	\$705,655	\$1,894,811	\$4,091,821
Colusa, Glenn, Trinity Counties CoC	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$287,365	\$537,365
Daly/San Mateo County CoC	\$1,781,144	\$842,773	\$2,262,998	\$3,105,771
Davis, Woodland/Yolo County CoC	\$771,593	\$365,090	\$980,333	\$2,117,016
El Dorado County CoC	\$722,117	\$341,680	\$917,472	\$1,981,269
Fresno City & County/Madera County CoC	\$2,954,437	\$1,397,933	\$3,753,702	\$8,106,072
Glendale CoC	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$363,696	\$1,113,696
Humboldt County CoC	\$2,004,965	\$948,677	\$2,547,369	\$5,501,011
Imperial County CoC	\$1,664,521	\$787,591	\$2,114,825	\$2,902,416
Lake County CoC	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$610,650	\$1,360,650
Long Beach CoC	\$2,231,142	\$1,055,696	\$2,834,734	\$6,121,572
Los Angeles City & County CoC	\$66,271,041	\$31,357,060	\$84,199,375	\$181,827,476
Marin County CoC	\$1,218,057	\$576,341	\$1,547,579	\$3,341,977
Mendocino County CoC	\$924,734	\$437,551	\$1,174,903	\$2,537,188
Merced City & County CoC	\$716,227	\$338,893	\$909,988	\$1,965,109
Napa City & County CoC	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$481,935	\$1,231,935

Nevada County CoC	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$621,127	\$1,371,127
Oakland, Berkeley/Alameda County CoC	\$9,449,958	\$4,471,378	\$12,006,459	\$25,927,795
Oxnard, San Buenaventura/Ventura County CoC	\$1,966,091	\$930,283	\$2,497,978	\$5,394,352
Pasadena CoC	\$638,479	\$302,105	\$811,207	\$1,751,791
Redding/Shasta, Siskiyou, Lassen, Plumas, Del Norte, Modoc, Sierra Counties CoC	\$1,589,129	\$751,918	\$2,019,037	\$4,360,084
Richmond/Contra Costa County CoC	\$2,703,522	\$1,279,209	\$3,434,907	\$4,714,116
Riverside City & County CoC	\$3,311,373	\$1,566,822	\$4,207,200	\$9,085,395
Roseville, Rocklin/Placer County CoC	\$726,829	\$343,909	\$923,459	\$1,994,197
Sacramento City & County CoC	\$6,550,887	\$3,099,643	\$8,323,102	\$17,973,632
Salinas/Monterey, San Benito Counties CoC	\$3,185,326	\$1,507,181	\$4,047,054	\$8,739,561
San Bernardino City & County CoC	\$3,071,060	\$1,453,114	\$3,901,875	\$8,426,048
San Diego City and County CoC	\$10,790,528	\$5,105,688	\$13,709,694	\$29,605,910
San Francisco CoC	\$9,465,272	\$4,478,625	\$12,025,916	\$25,969,814
San Jose/Santa Clara City & County CoC	\$11,433,719	\$5,410,022	\$14,526,888	\$31,370,629
San Luis Obispo County CoC	\$1,746,982	\$826,609	\$2,219,594	\$4,793,184
Santa Ana, Anaheim/Orange County CoC	\$8,081,116	\$3,823,692	\$10,267,304	\$22,172,112
Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County CoC	\$2,123,943	\$1,004,973	\$2,698,535	\$5,827,451
Santa Rosa, Petaluma/Sonoma County CoC	\$3,476,293	\$1,644,856	\$4,416,737	\$9,537,886

Stockton/San Joaquin County CoC	\$3,099,332	\$1,466,492	\$3,937,795	\$8,503,619
Tehama County CoC	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$431,047	\$1,181,047
Turlock, Modesto/Stanislaus County CoC	\$2,265,304	\$1,071,860	\$2,878,138	\$6,215,302
Vallejo/Solano County CoC	\$1,355,884	\$641,555	\$1,722,692	\$3,720,131
Visalia/Kings, Tulare Counties CoC	\$1,253,398	\$593,062	\$1,592,480	\$3,438,939
Watsonville/Santa Cruz City & County CoC	\$2,552,737	\$1,207,863	\$3,243,331	\$7,003,931
Yuba City & County/Sutter County CoC	\$849,342	\$401,878	\$1,079,115	\$2,330,334

*Round 3 allocations are being disbursed on an incremental basis. The initial Round 3 funding disbursement shown in this table is 20% of each applicant’s total allocation, or 25% for those who are administering their HHAP funding jointly with another jurisdiction. Subsequent disbursements will occur later in the five-year grant life and are dependent on the development of a local homeless action plan.

APPENDIX B

COUNTY HHAP FUNDING AMOUNTS

COUNTY	HHAP Round 1	HHAP Round 2	HHAP Round 3*	Total
Alameda	\$8,754,710	\$4,002,153	\$11,206,029	\$23,962,892
Alpine	-	-	-	
Amador	\$233,546	\$106,764	\$298,939	\$639,249
Butte	\$1,381,633	\$631,604	\$1,768,491	\$3,781,728
Calaveras	\$202,989	\$92,795	\$259,826	\$555,609
Colusa	\$61,115	\$27,938	\$78,227	\$167,280
Contra Costa	\$2,504,620	\$1,144,969	\$3,205,913	\$6,855,502
Del Norte	\$200,806	\$91,797	\$257,032	\$549,635
El Dorado	\$668,990	\$305,824	\$856,307	\$1,831,121
Fresno	\$2,325,640	\$1,063,150	\$2,976,820	\$6,365,610
Glenn	\$62,206	\$28,437	\$79,624	\$170,267
Humboldt	\$1,857,457	\$849,123	\$2,377,544	\$5,084,124
Imperial	\$1,542,060	\$704,942	\$1,973,837	\$4,220,839
Inyo	\$158,244	\$72,340	\$202,552	\$433,136
Kern	\$1,451,479	\$663,533	\$1,857,893	\$3,972,905
Kings	\$272,834	\$124,724	\$349,228	\$746,786
Lake	\$445,266	\$203,550	\$569,940	\$1,218,756
Lassen	\$50,202	\$22,949	\$64,258	\$137,408
Los Angeles	\$64,319,071	\$29,403,004	\$82,328,411	\$176,050,486
Madera	\$411,434	\$188,084	\$526,636	\$1,126,154

Marin	\$1,128,443	\$515,860	\$1,444,407	\$3,088,710
Mariposa	\$65,480	\$29,934	\$83,815	\$179,229
Mendocino	\$856,700	\$391,634	\$1,096,576	\$2,344,910
Merced	\$663,533	\$303,329	\$849,323	\$1,816,185
Modoc	\$5,457	\$2,494	\$6,985	\$14,935
Mono	\$75,302	\$34,424	\$96,387	\$206,113
Monterey	\$2,642,128	\$1,207,830	\$3,381,924	\$7,231,882
Napa	\$351,411	\$160,645	\$449,806	\$961,861
Nevada	\$452,905	\$207,042	\$579,719	\$1,239,666
Orange	\$7,486,576	\$3,422,435	\$9,582,817	\$20,491,828
Placer	\$673,355	\$307,820	\$861,895	\$1,843,070
Plumas	\$50,202	\$22,949	\$64,258	\$137,408
Riverside	\$3,067,750	\$1,402,400	\$3,926,720	\$8,396,870
Sacramento	\$6,068,928	\$2,774,367	\$7,768,228	\$16,611,523
San Benito	\$308,849	\$141,188	\$395,326	\$845,363
San Bernardino	\$2,845,117	\$1,300,625	\$3,641,750	\$7,787,492
San Diego	\$9,996,652	\$4,569,898	\$12,795,715	\$27,362,265
San Francisco	\$8,768,897	\$4,008,639	\$11,224,189	\$24,001,725
San Joaquin	\$2,871,309	\$1,312,598	\$3,675,276	\$7,859,183
San Luis Obispo	\$1,618,454	\$739,865	\$2,071,621	\$4,429,939
San Mateo	\$1,650,102	\$754,333	\$2,112,131	\$4,516,566
Santa Barbara	\$1,967,682	\$899,512	\$2,518,633	\$5,385,826
Santa Clara	\$10,592,522	\$4,842,296	\$13,558,429	\$28,993,247

Santa Cruz	\$2,364,929	\$1,081,110	\$3,027,109	\$6,473,147
Shasta	\$902,536	\$412,588	\$1,155,246	\$2,470,370
Sierra	\$13,096	\$5,987	\$16,763	\$35,846
Siskiyou	\$249,916	\$114,247	\$319,893	\$684,056
Solano	\$1,256,130	\$574,231	\$1,607,846	\$3,438,206
Sonoma	\$3,220,537	\$1,472,246	\$4,122,288	\$8,815,071
Stanislaus	\$2,098,642	\$959,379	\$2,686,262	\$5,744,283
Sutter	\$319,762	\$146,177	\$409,295	\$875,234
Tehama	\$314,305	\$143,682	\$402,311	\$860,298
Trinity	\$86,216	\$39,413	\$110,356	\$235,985
Tulare	\$888,349	\$406,102	\$1,137,086	\$2,431,537
Tuolumne	\$420,165	\$192,075	\$537,811	\$1,150,051
Ventura	\$1,821,442	\$832,659	\$2,331,446	\$4,985,548
Yolo	\$714,826	\$326,778	\$914,977	\$1,956,582
Yuba	\$714,826	\$213,528	\$597,878	\$1,526,232

*Round 3 allocations are being disbursed on an incremental basis. The initial Round 3 funding disbursement shown in this table is 20% of each applicant's total allocation, or 25% for those who are administering their HHAP funding jointly with another jurisdiction. Subsequent disbursements will occur later in the five-year grant life and are dependent on the development of a local homeless action plan.

APPENDIX C

CITY HHAP FUNDING AMOUNTS

CITY	HHAP Round 1	HHAP Round 2	HHAP Round 3*	Total
Anaheim	\$8,422,163	\$3,981,386	\$10,290,352	\$22,693,901
Bakersfield	\$3,265,737	\$1,543,803	\$3,990,136	\$8,799,676
Fresno	\$6,158,246	\$2,911,171	\$7,524,257	\$16,593,674
Long Beach	\$4,650,605	\$2,198,468	\$5,682,194	\$12,531,268
Los Angeles	\$117,562,500	\$55,575,000	\$143,640,000	\$316,777,500
Oakland	\$19,697,548	\$9,311,568	\$24,066,823	\$53,075,939
Riverside	\$6,902,245	\$3,262,879	\$8,433,288	\$18,598,412
Sacramento	\$13,654,708	\$6,454,953	\$16,683,570	\$36,793,231
San Diego	\$22,491,840	\$10,632,506	\$27,480,939	\$60,605,285
San Francisco	\$19,729,469	\$9,326,658	\$24,105,824	\$53,161,951
San Jose	\$23,832,511	\$11,266,278	\$29,118,995	\$64,217,784
Santa Ana	\$8,422,163	\$3,981,386	\$10,290,352	\$22,693,901
Stockton	\$6,460,265	\$3,053,944	\$7,893,270	\$17,407,479

*Round 3 allocations are being disbursed on an incremental basis. The initial Round 3 funding disbursement shown in this table is 20% of each applicant’s total allocation, or 25% for those who are administering their HHAP funding jointly with another jurisdiction. Subsequent disbursements will occur later in the five-year grant life and are dependent on the development of a local homeless action plan.



jbay.org

235 Montgomery Street, Suite 1142
San Francisco, CA 94104

415-348-0011