



EQUITY IN THE TIME OF NEED



Best Practices and
Recommendations for California's
College Basic Needs Centers

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This report and corresponding materials can be found online at:

jbay.org/resources/bnc-report/.



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As recent legislation requires all California Community Colleges to develop basic needs centers, understanding the learnings from those colleges that have been at the forefront of this work is essential. The best practices and recommendations for the community college sector presented in this report emerged from a year-long community of practice that included seven community colleges from across the state. This effort yielded insights that can serve as guideposts for developing a healthy infrastructure and strategic partnerships to effectively meet the basic needs of student populations. The report also includes key recommendations to support the ongoing work of addressing college students' basic needs to promote academic success and retention.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, a body of knowledge has emerged about the significant rates of food and housing insecurity among students enrolled in California's public postsecondary institutions. Dating from the last economic recession in 2008, an increasing number of U.S. studies have documented student food and housing insecurity, with rates of food insecurity as high as 61 percent and housing insecurity as high as 51 percent¹ among college-going students.²

California's leaders have taken stock of the current crisis and met the call to address students' basic needs with a budget commitment to develop one-stop basic needs centers across all public post-secondary institutions.



¹ Goldrick-Rab, et al. (2018). Still Hungry and Homeless In College. Wisconsin Hope Lab. https://www.pdx.edu/student-access-center/sites/g/files/znlchr1891/files/2020-08/Wisconsin-HOPE-Lab-Still-Hungry-and-Homeless_O.pdf

² California Student Aid Commission. (2019). 2018–19 Student Expenses and Resources Survey: Initial Insights—An Initial Look at the Obstacles Students Face Affording Higher Education

BASIC NEEDS DEFINITION AND DIRECTIVE

The research referenced above and the ensuing urgency to address basic needs led to a historic investment by the State of California. [Legislation](#) (AB 132) passed in 2021 allocated \$30 million in ongoing funding to support the development of basic needs centers across California’s public postsecondary institutions. This funding was then increased to \$40 million in the 2022–23 budget. The University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) systems also received allocations to address basic needs: as of 2022–23 the budget included \$15 million for the UCs and \$25 million for CSUs. Basic needs are defined by [California Education Code](#)³ to include housing, food, clothing, hygiene, technology, transportation, childcare, and mental health services. AB 132 brought the studies documenting the urgent need to address basic needs to an actionable phase, providing California’s higher education systems the ability to support the needs of California’s most vulnerable students and reduce barriers to college access and completion.

In addition to colleges creating a Basic Needs Center and identifying a Basic Needs Coordinator, state law requires that each Basic Needs Center do the following:

- Provide assistance to students to enroll in CalFresh and other relevant government benefits programs.
- Collaborate with financial aid services to ensure students have full access to all available aid.
- Coordinate with the local homeless response system to facilitate access to housing support services.
- Cultivate partnerships with community-based programs to facilitate access to services.
- Develop a document that lists all on- and off-campus basic needs services and resources.
- Streamline the application and intake process students must complete to minimize duplication and eliminate barriers to access.
- Develop and implement a plan to outreach to students who have basic needs insecurity.
- Provide a student basic needs tab from a drop-down menu on the home page of the campus website.

BASIC NEEDS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Prior to the passage of AB 132, through funding from the ECMC Foundation’s [Basic Needs Initiative](#), JBAY issued a request for proposals to provide small grants to community college campuses in California to promote the development of a new basic needs center or increase the capacity of an existing center. Seven were selected from 28 applicants based on a combination of the level of need, proposed use of the funding, and capacity to implement the proposed activities. These seven campuses formed a Basic Needs Center Community of Practice facilitated by JBAY. Funded projects included the development of a new emergency housing program for homeless students, expansion of existing basic needs centers, combining existing basic needs services into a centralized hub, and the creation of peer ambassador programs for students experiencing basic needs insecurity (Table 1).

³ See https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=66023.5&lawCode=EDC for statute language.



TABLE 1: Basic Needs Center (BNC) Grantees

CAMPUS	PROPOSED PROJECT FOCUS & GOALS	OUTCOMES
Allan Hancock	<p>Provide emergency short-term housing support to 25 students with the goal of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving course retention and completion Strengthening collaboration with the local homelessness response system 	<p>Served 29 students with emergency housing grants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100% of students remained enrolled Average GPA of grant recipients was 2.58 <p>Established partnership with three housing providers, with one agency co-located on campus</p> <p>Initiated case management platform</p>
Lake Tahoe	<p>Expand existing food pantry with the goal of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating a full-service BNC Increasing utilization of the BNC Increasing FAFSA/CADAA application submission of BNC recipients <p>Develop data collection and evaluation methods to assess BNC impact on student outcomes</p>	<p>Doubled the number of students served between 2020-21 and 2021-22.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiated food delivery system during pandemic Expanded pantry hours of operation <p>Established reporting mechanism to identify and prioritize students experiencing basic needs for FAFSA completion and CARES funding</p> <p>Initiated Basic Needs Task Force platform</p>
Mission	<p>Fund two part-time Peer Resource Mentors with the goal of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing FAFSA/CADAA and CalFresh application submission of BNC recipients Increasing rates of course retention and completion 	<p>Hired three part-time Peer Resource Mentors to conduct outreach efforts including: class presentations and pop-up events</p> <p>Developed Basic Needs website and Canvas shell</p> <p>Established MOU with local homeless services provider for co-located services</p>

TABLE 1 (continued)

CAMPUS	PROPOSED PROJECT FOCUS & GOALS	OUTCOMES
Mt. San Antonio	Fund a part-time Basic Needs Success Coach with the goal of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing utilization of the BNC Increasing rates of course retention and completion Expand Basic Needs Center outreach efforts to increase number of CalFresh recipients	Increased number of students receiving case management services by 40% between 2020–21 and 2021–22 academic year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Created BNC Ally Training Enhanced Basic Needs Assessment Form Enrolled 900 students in CalFresh during the 2021–22 academic year
Napa Valley	Create a designated BNC space on campus Coordinate with cross-campus partners to create a “one-stop shop” for basic needs to increase course retention and completion Expand outreach to increased utilization of the BNC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established dedicated Basic Needs Pantry and Resource Center space. Developed MOU with Office of Human Services to assist with public benefits enrollment
San Diego	Procure equipment to streamline registration and tracking of BNC recipients Transform existing BNC into a “one-stop shop” to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase utilization of BNC Increase rates of course retention and completion Expand BNC food pantry options	Identified and established dedicated space for Basic Needs Pantry and Resource Center Applied Basic Needs Assessment that provides one-stop case management services Expanded capacity of campus food pantry to provide perishable items
San Joaquin Delta	Create a Basic Needs Task Force to create a campus-wide approach to service provision Gather evidence to recommend hiring of a full-time coordinator Expand emergency grants to improve student success and retention	Convened Basic Needs Task Force <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified dedicated space for campus pantry and basic needs resource center Integrated Basic Needs Goal into campus strategic Plan Hired Basic Needs Campus Coordinator Served 74 students with emergency grants. Of the students served, 65% persisted.

*Based on institutional self-reports from the 2020–21 academic year



Nearly one in four first-year California Community College students do not meet SAP during their first two consecutive terms.

To support the seven campuses receiving mini-grant funding, JBAY facilitated four group technical assistance sessions.

- **SESSION 1:** Introduced campus goals and efforts towards establishing basic needs centers.
- **SESSION 2:** Featured a presentation by Active Minds, centered on increasing capacity to address the mental health needs of students.
- **SESSION 3:** Discussed platforms to improve case management, service delivery, and data tracking.
- **SESSION 4:** Featured a presentation by Leah's Pantry focused on integration of a trauma-informed approach to nutrition and basic needs services.

During the group technical assistance campuses were able to identify and connect with other institutions working towards similar goals and leverage knowledge on topics such as food distribution, staff recruitment, and training. JBAY also provided one-on-one technical assistance to the mini-grant campuses to strategize around outreach and engagement, accessing local homeless coordinated entry systems and housing resources, infrastructure and staffing needs, structuring basic needs websites, and developing on-line intake forms.

Additionally, all seven campuses joined JBAY's Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Community of Practice to review their current financial aid policies and ensure that students experiencing homelessness and basic needs insecurity are able to maintain their financial aid for the duration of their academic program. [Research](#) conducted by JBAY found that nearly one in four first-year California Community College students do not meet SAP during their first two consecutive terms, jeopardizing access to much needed financial aid that could otherwise be used to secure basic needs and other vital resources. A special focus of the community of practice included ensuring the implementation of [AB 2416](#), which mandated that institutions consider homelessness as an allowable extenuating circumstance for students appealing financial aid disqualification due to SAP requirements.

FINDINGS & BEST PRACTICES

Throughout the year-long project, the following four practices were identified as contributing to the successful development of basic needs services across the partner campuses.



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- A** | Using data to drive a prioritization of student basic needs and integration within campus strategic planning efforts and equity plans.
 - B** | Developing a trauma-informed case management structure linked to a robust technology platform that aligns with student data management systems.
 - C** | Developing sustainable cross-departmental and cross-sector partnerships based on identified student needs.
 - D** | Developing a comprehensive campus outreach and engagement strategy that includes staff and faculty trainings and ongoing professional development opportunities.

FINDINGS & BEST PRACTICES



Using data to drive the prioritization of student basic needs and integration within campus strategic planning efforts and equity plans.

Basic needs are intricately tied to issues of equity and access within postsecondary institutions. Several studies have found that students who report being food-insecure are also more likely to report experiencing fair or poor physical health as well as increased rates of depression, anxiety, and stress. A 2021 study conducted by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health⁴ noted that students experiencing food insecurity are less likely to succeed in college and have a higher risk of falling into an achievement gap. The longitudinal study followed students attending college in the early 2000s and reconnected with the same learners in 2015 and 2017 to document their academic and personal progress during and after attending college. This pioneering research showed that students in the food-insecure group were more than 40 percent less likely to graduate from college.

Among those struggling with basic needs, African American students, Latino students, foster youth, parenting students, Native American, and LGBTQ youth are disproportionately represented as a result of historical discriminatory practices and systemic inequities. Addressing basic needs is therefore an essential tool in the drive to enhance equity across different student groups. Marrying this information with local campus data can be a powerful driver toward change.

Community of Practice members Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC), San Diego City College (SDCC), and Lake Tahoe Community College (LTCC) have taken steps to integrate the work of basic needs within campus-wide strategic planning efforts including equity plans. Centering the basic needs of students within student equity and other campus-wide initiatives provides a strong foundation from which to build and secure broad-reaching support and collaboration.

⁴ Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. [Food insecurity during college years linked to lower graduation rate](#)

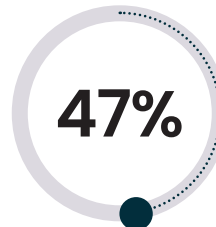
MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE

Mt. SAC has taken measures since 2017 to integrate basic needs into its larger campus infrastructure. The campus partnered with The Hope Center to learn about basic needs on their campus and identify the level of need among their student population. A study conducted in 2018 that surveyed 2,458 students attending Mt. SAC found that 67 percent experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity in the past year, with 18 percent of survey respondents experiencing homelessness.⁵ An additional study in 2020 found that 37 percent of students who experienced food and/or housing insecurity exhibited at least moderate anxiety, 12 percent of students who experienced basic needs insecurity used emergency aid while an alarming 47 percent had not heard of emergency aid programs on campus, and 59 percent of students experiencing basic needs insecurity did not apply for campus supports because they did not know how.⁶

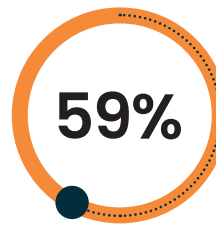
The data prompted Mt. SAC to develop a formal basic needs planning committee to engage departments across campus to strategize around outreach, program services, data collection and evaluation, capacity building, and other areas. The Basic Needs Committee (BNC) was established in 2017 and continues to meet monthly to discuss student needs and opportunities for collaboration. The committee operates under the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs and includes the Vice President of Instruction, students with lived experience, facility management, campus police, classified staff, faculty, and non-credit department staff.



experienced at least one basic needs insecurity in the past year



of students who experienced food or housing insecurity had not heard of emergency aid programs on campus



students experiencing basic needs insecurity did not apply for campus supports because they did not know how



⁵ Mount San Antonio College, #Real College Survey: School Report. Hope Center Publication. April 2019

⁶ Mount San Antonio College. #Real College 2021: Basic Needs Insecurity During the Ongoing Pandemic. Hope Center Publication, March 2021

BNC's functions include:

- Recommending strategies for addressing basic needs to departments, centers, and other units to build a network of support for students in need.
- Recommending updates to the college website, portal, and other online communication tools to include links to services available on campus as well as to community-based resources related to basic needs resources such as housing, food, wellness (physical, emotional, and mental), hygiene, and transportation.
- Liaising with Professional and Organizational Development (POD) to educate College faculty and staff on ways to sensitively and effectively address issues related to basic needs such as housing, food, wellness (physical, emotional, and mental), hygiene, and transportation.
- Exploring ways to create partnerships with businesses as well as public and private agencies in the College's catchment area to supply resources for students in need.

These centralized efforts have allowed Mt. SAC to make strides towards uplifting the well-being of students as a critical consideration in creating an equitable learning experience for all.

SAN JOAQUIN DELTA COLLEGE

San Joaquin Delta College (SJDC) has integrated basic needs into its district strategic plan with the hopes of reducing the percentage of students reporting basic needs insecurity from 60 percent to 40 percent between 2022–27. Much of the work leading to the integration of basic needs work into SJDC's strategic plan began with the Basic Needs Task Force. Launched in 2020, the Basic Needs Task Force engaged in a campus-wide conversation to identify opportunities to review basic needs data and improve access to basic needs resources. The task force included a wide representation of campus personnel, including administration and student support service representatives. Collectively, the group generated a vision statement to galvanize the basic needs initiative on campus that would work to swiftly address the growing needs of its student population.

The vision statement reads:

"Delta College recognizes that basic needs have a direct impact on the mental – emotional – physical health, wellness, academic performance, professional development, and holistic success of students. The District strives for equitable access to basic needs through student empowerment, community collaboration, advocacy, and institutional integration. The District believes access to food and housing is a guaranteed right for every person and refuses to accept hunger, malnourishment, and homelessness."

Along with the vision statement, the task force generated a set of goals including:

1. Bi-annually review campus, systemwide, and state policy and practices related to basic needs and best practices.
2. Develop long-term strategies to increase funding and grant support toward basic needs initiatives and programs.
3. Enhance campus and community partnerships to create more resources and access for students.
4. Become a standing shared governance committee.

Though the campus did not initially have the infrastructure to support a broad-reaching basic needs emergency grant process, SJDC piloted a basic needs emergency program focused on low-income students with dependents and students who identified as homeless or housing-insecure. This pilot allowed the task force to identify areas of improvement and work towards streamlining processes and reporting mechanisms. Through the cross-campus collaboration forged by the task force, SJDC was able to create a payment process to distribute basic needs emergency funding. Staff worked with Fiscal Services to create a Basic Needs Grant account along with an internal tracking system. Staff were also able to work with institutional research to set up reporting templates to more easily access outcome and impact data to share with funders and the campus community. Table 2 below shows the total number of students served through the pilot in the 2021 spring term, along with unit completion and persistence rates.

The goals created by the Basic Needs Task Force and its emergency grant pilot program created a strategic roadmap for launching basic needs services at SJDC and formed a critical foundation for the incoming coordinator.

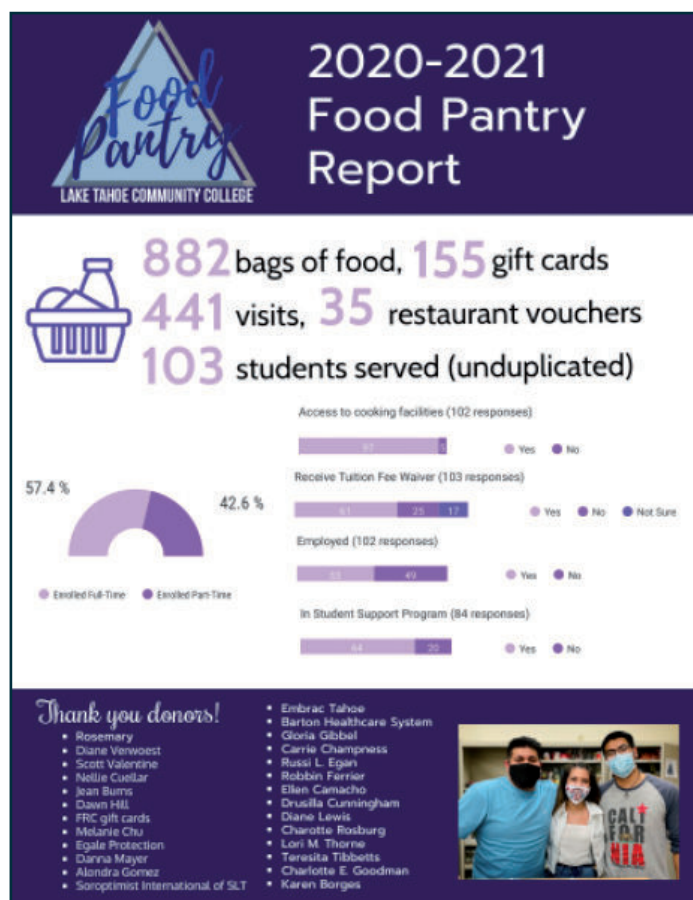
TABLE 2: San Joaquin Delta College Emergency Grant Outcome Tracking

Students Served	Grant Awards	Unit Comp. Rate (21-22)	Persistence	Avg. GPA	Race/Ethnicity	Basic Needs Request
74	\$146-250	70%	65%	2.28	Black/African Am: 4 API: 3 Am. Indian: 1 Latinx: 20 White: 12 Multiracial: 8 Unknown: 26	Utilities: 42% Housing: 35% Transportation/ Vehicle Repairs: 20% Food: 16% Other: 8% Books/Supplies: 5%

LAKE TAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Lake Tahoe Community College (LTCC) is a small college serving approximately 6,300 students in the Lake Tahoe area. The basic needs center is overseen by the Office of Equity and has integrated efforts to bridge gaps for its most vulnerable students. The office worked with available data to identify and prioritize students with outstanding fees and balances for emergency grants to prevent the balances from becoming a barrier to re-enrollment. By helping to remove this obstacle, the center was able to assist students to re-enroll and maintain ongoing access to financial aid, a critical resource for low-income students. One observation that emerged from the basic needs center was the need to improve communication with students who had no FAFSA on file with the school to facilitate completing the application and ensuring access to financial aid. Additional emphasis was placed on reviewing the campus SAP notification process to inform students of the appeal process and provide the support necessary to successfully submit an appeal.

Over the course of the year, the center was able to utilize data to identify unique needs influenced in part by the college’s location and scarcity of public transportation. To address the barriers created by its location, LTCC instituted a home delivery system to ensure students received food staples. Students with access to book vouchers could opt to have books delivered to their homes at no additional cost. Digital gift cards were used to connect students with clothing, groceries, and transportation assistance. Services were individualized to meet the unique needs of students. In one instance, a student was able to receive a motorized scooter to facilitate transportation to and from school as well as their place of employment. To ensure timeliness of support, a liaison within the business and procurement office provided expedited assistance for purchase requests submitted by the basic needs center. By looking at the broader context of students’ experiences, LTCC doubled the number of students served (103 to 224) through its food pantry and facilitated enrollment into CalFresh, ensuring that students’ needs remained the priority.



FINDINGS & BEST PRACTICES

B Developing a trauma-informed case management structure linked to a robust technology platform that aligns with student data management systems.

Case management offers the opportunity to focus on assessment, student advocacy, and streamlining processes to assist students with navigating college resources to maximize student success.⁷ Case managers can also work to explore challenges that may prevent students from utilizing campus resources and identify areas for service improvement. A critical role of the case manager is to maintain a student-centered approach to services to reduce barriers to access. The lens of a student-centered approach can also be useful in informing how students interface with the basic needs resources including:

- **Creating request forms and standard communication protocols to help students understand processes and next steps.**
- **Designing opportunities for direct access to staff such as drop-in “office hours” where students can contact a person to ask questions or receive additional information.**
- **Facilitating and streamlining linkages to campus and community resources through co-location of services or coordination of virtual office hours with community-based partners.**
- **Offering hours of operation and service delivery models that address the needs of students across varying demographics, including evening and online students.**

Effective integration of a case management data platform is equally important. Many campuses now use crisis intervention tracking and referral platforms (e.g., Maxient and Advocate) to manage basic needs case management services. Additional options include integration of basic needs case management into early alert systems or acquiring a specific case management platform (e.g., Apricot). Working with a platform that can be integrated into the daily operations of the campus and is compatible with the student data management system is important in effectively tracking case management efforts and outcomes and creating opportunities for seamless cross-campus communication and collaboration.

⁷ Rafael, Stacey and Goldrick Rab, Sara. Beyond the Food Pantry: Social Work Case Management. March 2020.

SAN DIEGO CITY COLLEGE

San Diego City College (SDCC), located near downtown San Diego, serves approximately 24,000 students and the basic needs center operates within the Student Affairs Division. The Basic Needs Center developed a comprehensive intake and assessment tool to help centralize students' requests for services and bridge access to the resources across campus and within the local community. [The Basic Needs Assessment](#) asks students to provide information on housing status, food security, technology needs, enrollment, financial aid status, employment status, and enrollment in student support programs. Students can also indicate the days and times they are available for a follow-up phone call from a Welcome Home City caseworker, who engages the student to complete a phone screening to review and evaluate needs and bridge services for the most urgent items.

SDCC has experienced a growing demand for basic needs resources over the past year. To effectively maintain their level and quality of case management services, they have looked closely at revising their basic needs infrastructure. Currently, the infrastructure includes three part-time project assistants who track communication and services rendered. Plans are in place to expand the case management infrastructure to keep up with demand. Caseworkers partner closely with the financial aid office to help students who have not filed a FAFSA complete the application and gain access to financial aid resources. The campus also hosts a full-time housing navigator provided through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with San Diego Path.



The Basic Needs Center developed a comprehensive intake and assessment tool to help centralize students' requests for services and bridge access to resources...

ALLAN HANCOCK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Allan Hancock Community College serves approximately 16,776 students from surrounding areas, including Santa Maria, Lompoc, and the Santa Ynez Valley. A Basic Needs Manager was brought on board in the spring of 2021 to help operationalize and coordinate services. One of the first steps to improve service quality and timeliness of access was hiring and training basic needs student peer advocates. The team worked to gather information regarding campus and community resources to address a wide range of needs, including county- and state-based programs to support:

- Health insurance through Covered CA
- Low-cost car insurance programs
- Low-cost child care services
- Emergency housing resources and rent relief services
- Utility assistance programs
- Mental health services and crisis counseling
- Income Tax Assistance services
- Credit counseling services

Allan Hancock, like many other campuses, utilized spreadsheets to record and track case management notes, student demographic data and services rendered. However, as the program evolved, the center began using the campus's crisis management software (Advocate) to communicate and track services. The functionality of the crisis management platform lent itself to case management, cross-campus referral, and communication as well as data tracking for reporting purposes. The platform also allowed for varying degrees of access to sensitive or confidential information to maintain compliance with student privacy.

The integration of the basic needs referral form onto Allan Hancock's Campus Assessment and Support Team (CAST) platform allowed basic needs staff to access a student's profile including class schedule, academic history, and GPA. This integration created opportunities for further collaboration across campus departments. For example, financial aid awards are tracked within this system to centralize information needed to assess eligibility for services. Access to the platform also facilitates communication with students, keeping them updated on the status of their request (e.g., referred, pending application, completed, receiving). Most importantly, the system can be built out to grow with the center's services.

Integrating the basic needs referral form within the CAST platform allowed for expedited collaboration across financial aid and the Vice President's Office of Student Affairs to process requests for gift cards and emergency grants. The reduction of time between a student's basic needs request form submission and the processing of financial assistance aligns with trauma-informed practices, centering students' needs and significantly increasing the likelihood that the student remains enrolled.

FINDINGS & BEST PRACTICES



Developing sustainable cross-departmental and cross-sector partnerships based on identified student needs..

Basic needs across each campus will be impacted by many factors, including geographic location, accessibility of reliable public transportation systems, and availability of community-based programs and services, including medical, dental and mental health services. Additional resources such as child care, shelter access, and local food pantries may vary depending on whether a campus is situated in an urban, suburban, or rural environment. Developing service delivery systems and partnerships that bridge distance and address disparities is a critical aspect of basic needs efforts.

Building sustainable basic needs partnerships requires an understanding of the service landscape of the campus and surrounding community. Identifying campus values and service approaches (e.g., trauma-informed, low-barrier, etc.) is important to align with partners that share these values and service approaches or advocate for their implementation. Basic needs centers can engage in these conversations within their basic needs planning committees or task forces to help create a standard of practice that centers the student experience and uplifts the highest quality standards.

MOUNT SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE

Equipped with the data from the basic needs assessment, Mount San Antonio College has been able to look at basic needs from an equity lens and has partnered across campus to improve support services and access for all students. One strategy included partnering with the School for Continuing Education to remove unit enrollment requirements for campus food pantry access. Students enrolled in non-credit courses at Mt. SAC are eligible to access campus food resources. Another cross-campus collaboration included working with the financial aid office to identify students who were eligible for CalFresh benefits based on pandemic eligibility expansion. Based on changes to CalFresh eligibility during the pandemic, students who had completed the FAFSA and had a zero Expected Family Contribution (EFC) were eligible to receive CalFresh benefits. The basic needs center staff worked with financial aid to notify students of their eligibility and provide assistance in completing the benefits application. As a result of this effort, Mt. SAC was able to assist nearly 900 students over the course of the 2021-22 academic year with accessing CalFresh benefits.



LAKE TAHOE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

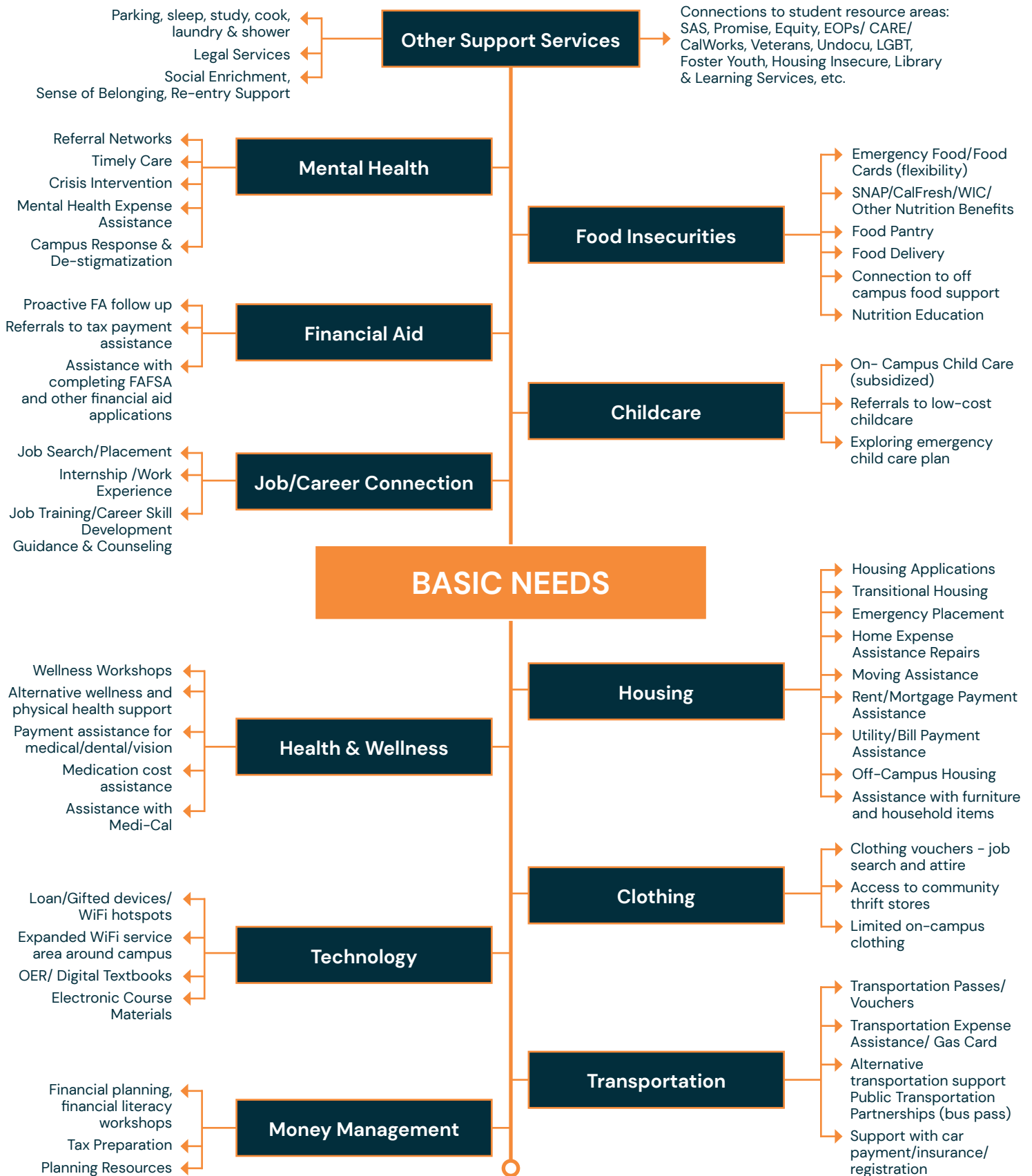
Lake Tahoe Community College (LTCC) conducted a needs and services landscape analysis to create a campus ecosystem of support. This outcome, reflected in Figure 1 on the next page, was used to assess what services could be met through local campus, county, and state resources and which services required a shift in current practice, advocacy for a policy change, or development of new program services. This exercise can also identify opportunities to enhance services through additional professional development and training for staff and faculty.

LTCC utilized this process to create partnerships with UNITE US. Through UNITE US, the campus can connect students through a shared [technology platform](#) to coordinate care and services to address medical and social needs. LTCC primarily used this resource to bridge students with mental health providers as a means of addressing the growth in demand for services during the pandemic. Outcomes of electronic referrals and services delivered can be tracked through the platform to measure impact.

LTCC first identified housing as a critical issue in 2014 with the integration of student housing in the college's master plan. Since then, the administration has worked to address the growing housing shortage impacting the Tahoe Basin Area. The rising cost of housing in the Lake Tahoe area has heightened the need for affordable housing to support students who struggle to afford the living costs associated with attending LTCC. The college conducted an analysis of the housing market and noted that LTCC's students were getting priced out of Tahoe, with the cost of rental units rising up to 32 percent since 2020. The college has actively pursued capital funding available through the state and foundation grant funding. In 2021 LTCC successfully partnered with [Tahoe Regional Planning Agency](#) and the [Tahoe Prosperity Center](#) to begin construction on an apartment complex with 100+ units for affordable housing to support low-income and non-traditional students. To centralize resources and reduce barriers for residents, the apartments will feature an on-site food pantry, and the campus will partner with the local continuum of care agencies to provide supportive services.

A periodic review of the ecosystem can help maintain an accurate sense of the landscape of services and help prevent service gaps in collaboration with local leadership.

Figure 1. LTCC Service Ecosystem



SAN DIEGO CITY COLLEGE

San Diego City College (SDCC) instituted a Basic Needs Assessment Form to capture students' requests for assistance. This data was utilized to help prioritize partnership opportunities and engage in broader campus-wide conversations regarding equity and access for vulnerable student populations. Table 3 is a data sample gathered from the Basic Needs Assessment indicating the highest needs including food security (54%) and housing (75%). Based on the data collected, SDCC worked to establish partnerships to support low-barrier access to food pantries across the city and skilled housing navigation services.

TABLE 3: San Diego City College Basic Needs Assessment

Percentage of students who are full-time enrolled who completed the Basic Needs Assessment	45%
Percentage of students who reached out who had not completed the FAFSA	10%
Percentage reporting technology assistance needs	22%
Percentage of students reporting food insecurity as defined as rated 6 or less out of 10 of their confidence they would have consistent access to food this semester	54%
Percentage of students reporting housing insecurity as defined as rated 6 or less out of 10 of their confidence they would have secure housing this semester	75%

San Diego City College worked with Leah's Pantry to develop strategies to reduce stigma and create trauma-informed services that support food security and general well-being for culturally and linguistically diverse populations. SDCC developed partnerships to distribute food bi-monthly through its Hunger Action Days, when students and community members can drive or walk to pick up pantry staples and fresh produce. The multiple forms of access are intentional to address potential physical limitations and mobility issues while also acknowledging the financial barriers to private transportation. Throughout 2021, over 11,000 individuals were served through Hunger Action events in partnership with Feeding San Diego and the San Diego Food Bank. Through these partnerships, the campus was able to streamline access to services by utilizing a one-time application that captures students' ID, demographic data, income information, and household size. Once completed, the students' ID can be scanned at any participating food pantry location throughout the city of San Diego without filling out additional paperwork, thereby expediting services, reducing the potential for re-traumatization, and facilitating broader access to food resources.

To facilitate housing support, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was established with PATH San Diego, a local provider that offers a wide range of services, including:

- Interim housing and permanent supportive housing units
- Rapid rehousing
- A co-located Family Health Center which includes mental health and medical services

The MOU provides a full-time housing navigator co-located on campus to provide direct assistance to students, including:

- Housing needs assessments and referrals for PATH resources
- Support with housing applications and rental assistance applications
- Navigation of San Diego’s Continuum of Care resources and referrals to community- based housing services

The partnership has supported students presenting with housing insecurity with the expertise and support that best addresses their needs.



FINDINGS & BEST PRACTICES

D Developing a comprehensive campus outreach and engagement strategy that includes staff and faculty trainings and ongoing professional development opportunities.

According to research from the Hope Center, there are various factors that impact the utilization of basic needs services:

- **A student’s sense of how their basic needs insecurity came about, and their belief that they created the current problem (they often believe that they provoked their poverty)**
- **Lack of access to campus resources, including challenges with timing and transportation**
- **Negative perceptions of help-seeking and of public benefits programs⁸**

Findings from this same research indicate that the primary barriers to accessing resources from a food pantry include social stigma (36.8 percent), lack of sufficient information on eligibility requirements and how the program works (33.8 percent), a sense that the services available through the food pantry were intended for those less fortunate than themselves (17.6 percent), and limited access to food pantry services due to limited hours of operation (11.8 percent). Given these findings, it is important to create an outreach strategy that will not only increase awareness but also combat stigma and demystify the process by which students can access services.

⁸ El Zein, A., Mathews, A. E., House, L., & Shelnett, K. P. (2018). Why Are Hungry College Students Not Seeking Help? Predictors of and Barriers to Using an On-Campus Food Pantry. *Nutrients*, 10(9), 1163. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu10091163>

MISSION COLLEGE

Mission College, located in the city of Santa Clara, serves approximately 11,900 students. The campus's basic needs services launched in 2021 with the intentional growth of its food pantry services and CalFresh outreach efforts. The basic needs staff utilized a number of innovative approaches to promote food resources on campus. These strategies included:

- **Basic Needs Peer Ambassador classroom presentations.** Peer ambassadors were able to draw on lived experience during presentations to help de-stigmatize services and promote awareness.
- **Development of a Student Services Canvas shield that integrates Basic Needs Center Services.** The shield appears on every student's Canvas home page (similar to a class) and remains active year-round. Students can navigate the Student Services site to learn about the various support programs and access related referral forms. A calendar of events can also be pre-populated to include food distribution days and times, service fairs, CalFresh enrollment sessions, and other events where assistance can be accessed.
- **Pantry pop-ups.** Pantry pop-ups take place throughout each semester to feature pantry items and facilitate access to CalFresh enrollment information.
- **Repurposing of campus-owned vending machines to distribute pantry snacks.** The vending machines were placed around campus and included free-of-charge snacks and academic supplies (e.g., scantrons and blue books). Vending machines are restocked throughout the week offering a creative solution to providing "after-hours" support.
- **Partnership with Hospitality Management.** The Basic Needs Center partnered with the Culinary Arts program to create a virtual cooking class that featured healthy recipes and information about CalFresh resources and pantry services.



OUTREACH WEEK

Need money for food? Mission College & CalFresh can help!

TUESDAY 2/22:	WEDNESDAY 2/23:
Second Harvest Food Distribution Time: 10am-12pm Location: Parking lot A	Cal Fresh Outreach Week Basic Needs Workshop (Hybrid) Location: TAV-130 & Online
Hospitality Mgmt. Online Cooking Class Time: 5pm-6pm Location: Live broadcast on social media	 Scan the QR code to register for the Basic Needs Workshop on Zoom!
THURSDAY 2/24:	Can't make it? Mission College is here to help you succeed throughout the semester!
Basic Needs Fair Time: 11am-1pm Location: MC Plaza (by the water fountain)	Schedule a 1-1 meeting with a Student Ambassador to sign up for CalFresh and get information about our basic needs services at: missioncares.missioncollege.edu
EOPS Career Services Center Second Harvest of Silicon Valley Sacred Heart Community Services HomeFirst Services Santa Clara County AINAK Breathe California of the Bay Area, Golden Gate, and Central Coast Community Health Initiative Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County	



NAPA VALLEY COLLEGE

Napa Valley College is located in the heart of Napa Valley and serves approximately 7,000 students. Napa Valley College received a grant to conduct CalFresh outreach and has been working steadily to increase visibility and awareness of food security resources available to students. In addition to hosting monthly food distribution events for enrolled students the campus also provides express pantry services for easy grab-and-go options to assist students with light snacks and meals throughout the day. Basic needs staff have engaged in a number of outreach activities to increase awareness and promote food security across campus including:

- Classroom presentations
- Pop-Up events
- Partnership with local news syndicates
- Outreach week

The campus hosts a food distribution event once a month with the hopes of increasing the frequency of food distribution days. The number of participants sharply increased in March and April due to increased visibility on campus through pop-up events.

The campus is also in the process of exploring a food recovery partnership with the local K-12 district to provide any unused lunches and meals to the college campus for redistribution.

NAPA VALLEY COLLEGE
BASIC NEEDS CENTER

NOW OFFERING
**Student Food
Express
Pantry**

Providing express ready-to-eat snacks in the pantry in an effort to give students a rounded snack or/and lunch in between classes.

HOURS OF OPERATION
Monday & Wednesday: 10 AM-4 PM
Tuesday & Thursdays: 11 AM-5 PM
Friday: Closed

This is a short term emergency food assistance program

1. You will have a maximum of 8 visits per semester.
2. After the 8 visits, you will be referred to the NVC Food Basket for long term assistance.
3. You must be enrolled in a class for the current semester.

Any questions or concerns please contact BNC@NapaValley.Edu

RECOMMENDATIONS

The work of the colleges involved in the community of practice highlighted several areas where strategies can be replicated by other institutions or pointed to a need for broader systemic reform.



INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** | **Integrate basic needs goals within the campus equity and strategic plans.**
Including basic needs within campus equity and strategic plans serves as a means to address the disproportionate impact of basic needs insecurity. Campuses should create and utilize reporting metrics to measure progress toward goals and a system by which these outcomes can be shared with the larger campus community (e.g., student dashboard).
- 2** | **Create pathways for the timely delivery of emergency funding resources in collaboration with fiscal services and financial aid distribution processes.**
Reducing the time between students' submission of emergency funding requests and the disbursement of funds can increase retention and improve academic performance. Campuses should identify a basic needs liaison within fiscal services, create basic needs grant accounts to process checks, and utilize Bank Mobile disbursement processes to leverage existing systems and expedite services.
- 3** | **Create flexibility and low-barrier access to basic needs resources, including food pantry and emergency funding support.** The rising cost of living and inflation makes it difficult for students to keep up with financial demands and may require a more flexible approach to the frequency and level of support a student may need to address essentials like housing and food. Campuses should also avoid imposing additional barriers, such as unit requirements or limiting the frequency of visits or number of pantry items per month.

INSTITUTIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

continued

4

Design robust outreach strategies to elevate basic needs center services that address student well-being. Creating robust outreach strategies across all campus platforms and student-facing materials can help combat stigma and ensure awareness of available services. Campuses should identify and leverage existing platforms and materials, such as Canvas modules, campus websites, student support program websites, syllabi statements, CARE/BIT referrals, campus signage, new student orientations, and appointment systems, to elevate basic needs center services and encourage student engagement. Campuses should also explore opportunities to integrate students with lived experience as peer ambassadors to share available services that address student well-being through pop-up events and resource fairs that include on-campus and community-based programs.

5

Expand operational hours and service models. Basic needs centers are tasked with providing services to all students, including those who are non-traditional, unhoused, and parenting. Campuses should expand their hours of operations and service models to include in-person and online access to core services (e.g., computer labs, study spaces, food pantry, technical assistance, restrooms, and showers). Charging stations should also be made available in centralized areas.

6

Campus representatives should engage with the local Continuum of Care system to create robust partnerships to address the educational and housing needs of housing-insecure and unhoused students. Safe and permanent housing is by far one of the more complex and pervasive issues impacting students enrolled in postsecondary institutions. Basic Needs Centers with the support of campus leaders are pressed to explore opportunities to increase housing resources and bridge housing navigation support services. Cross-collaboration with the housing service sector can create opportunities to advocate and uplift the needs of unhoused students as well as create a well-developed pipeline for youth and young adults engaged in the housing service sector to access postsecondary opportunities as noted in [Connecting the Dots: How Colleges Can Collaborate with Homeless Response Systems](#).

7

Modify existing financial aid policies and appeals processes. Ensuring students maintain access to financial aid is critical to addressing basic needs. Campuses should work collaboratively across departments to examine existing financial aid policies, including SAP standards and appeals processes, and eliminate unnecessary barriers and burdensome documentation requirements. A detailed list of institutional recommendations and an evaluation tool that campuses can use to identify areas of improvement can be found [here](#).

SYSTEM- AND POLICY-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

1 | **Centralize data collection and facilitate outreach by integrating a basic needs assessment section into CCCApply and student enrollment processes.** Including a basic needs assessment in college applications through CCCApply will help to identify and capture student basic needs data and expedite outreach and service navigation from the point of enrollment. In partnership with individual campuses, the California Community College Chancellor's Office should include basic needs assessment questions that examine all applicants' needs in areas such as housing, food, and transportation. To facilitate ongoing engagement and identify trends, campuses should supplement the CCCApply one-time data with a campus-wide pre-registration survey that assesses basic needs insecurity and access to resources.

2 | **Centralize and expand training opportunities for basic needs program staff.** With the passage of AB 132, public postsecondary institutions in California are required to establish a Basic Needs Center and hire a Basic Needs Coordinator. It is critical that Basic Needs Center staff receive centralized and standardized training during onboarding and ongoing professional development opportunities to promote a shared philosophy and ensure a consistent, values-based approach to service delivery. The California Community College Chancellor's Office is leading this effort and has developed a Health and Wellness Resource site featuring a Basic Needs Toolkit and mental health resources. The system's Vision Resource Center, a training platform for college staff and faculty, also hosts trainings such as Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness, Maximizing Financial Aid For California's Community College Students, and Trauma Informed Care. The CCCCO should do regular outreach to colleges to ensure that staff are aware of and taking advantage of these resources. Training could be expanded to include topics such as motivational interviewing, mental health 101, FERPA, and the essentials of trauma-informed case management.

3 | **Maintain funding for basic needs centers.** In 2021, the California legislature made a historic investment in student basic needs, which was further augmented in 2022. As of the writing of this report, economic conditions are uncertain, and many economists are forecasting a looming recession. If this comes to pass, the state may be faced with tough choices, and basic needs spending should be protected from any budget cuts. If California experiences hard financial times in the short or medium term, the need to address student basic needs will become even more pressing. If history is any guide, Black and brown student will be disproportionately impacted by financial stressors and maintaining basic needs support is going to be crucial to continuing to make progress towards California's equity goals.

4

Reform Satisfactory Academic Progress policies within postsecondary institutions in California that participate in state-authorized student financial aid programs. For college and university students, access to financial aid has been cited as key to addressing basic needs insecurity, improving academic outcomes, and addressing racial inequities. Despite the critical role played by financial aid in college achievement, sizeable numbers of marginalized students lose access to financial aid after just one year of college due to academic standards known as satisfactory academic progress (SAP). To address this issue, JBAY is proposing legislation that would:

- establish minimum communication standards related to SAP policies and appeals processes
- prevent institutions from imposing certain additional requirements that are more restrictive than those that are federally mandated
- specify criteria for how SAP appeals must be handled
- ensure students with a prior SAP disqualification have the opportunity to regain access to financial aid upon reentry
- require regular reports on SAP disqualification and appeal rates.



Conclusion

This report reinforces the opportunity to cultivate a stronger and healthier campus community that centers students' holistic needs and well-being. There may be apprehension on behalf of educational institutions with the inclusion of basic needs services, given the broad scope and varying degrees of needs to be addressed. Traditionally, the social service sector and education sector have navigated independently of each other with opportunities for partnership with clearly delineated roles (e.g., CARE, CalWORKs, etc.). The creation of campus-based basic needs programs blurs these lines and invites educational institutions to engage in the coordination of public services students so desperately need. It is important to acknowledge and embrace the learning and growth process inherent in this work. It is equally important to center the significance that addressing basic needs plays in our students' ability to succeed within our education systems. Ultimately, building collective knowledge and increasing visibility of our students' needs will reduce the isolation and stigma that inhibits access to resources, and empower students in their educational and professional journey.



JOHN BURTON
Advocates
for Youth



John Burton Advocates for Youth improves the quality of life for youth in California who have been in foster care or homeless by advocating for better laws, training communities to strengthen local practices and conducting research to inform policy solutions.

For more information
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