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Conducted and co-authored by
Rashida M. Crutchfield, EdD, MSW, Principal Investigator,
California State University, Long Beach State University
and Jennifer Maguire, PhD, MSW, Principal Investigator,
Humboldt State University

California State University Office of the Chancellor

Study of Student Service Access and Basic Needs

Executive Summary

Findings from survey, interview, and focus group data show an urgent need to provide resources serving students' basic needs and facilitate linkages across these resources. Visibility and normalization of programs and services are vital to supporting the health and success of students. Marginalized students such as Black and African American students who were previously identified in the Phase 2 of the CSU Study of Basic Needs were again identified in this study as in need of targeted institutional approaches for outreach and support.

Students who accessed services both on- and off-campus were typically those experiencing the most acute levels of food and housing insecurity. Repeatedly, findings show that the students who utilized services most often, needed them the most. This affirms that the students who accessed services were doing so because their needs were acute. Students were more often in situations so desperate that they were negotiating an untenable juggle of employment, academic demands, and housing and food insecurity. The majority of students who experienced food insecurity, homelessness, or both reported that their financial aid package did not cover all of their living expenses. Students did not have enough financial resources and had to make compromises that significantly impacted their health and quality of life. Many students were unable to navigate meeting their basic needs without help.

Level of food security impacts grade point average (GPA). In general, students with the highest level of basic needs insecurity who accessed services had lower GPAs. Further, students who were both food insecure and experienced homelessness accessed services at the highest rates and also had the lowest GPAs. The implication of this is that students who are utilizing services have an increased level of need and are at a higher risk of diminished academic outcomes.

Though many CSU students are able to afford the cost of tuition with financial aid, living costs often exceed available financial provisions, requiring supports to ensure their basic needs are met. Overall, findings show that there is an underutilization of supports aimed at increasing basic needs security for students. Though some students with the most challenging circumstances did access resources, there were still a substantial proportion of students who experienced basic needs insecurity who did not use services. Findings show that students may be deterred from using services because they do not perceive that they need services, do not know about services, perceive they are not "needy" enough to be eligible for services, or are barred from service access by cumbersome application and eligibility stipulations. Examining the acuity of students' basic needs insecurity and whether they know there are supports available, access them, and if not why, are important next steps to consider as the CSU works toward eliminating equity gaps in retention and graduation.

These findings point to a continued need for sustaining resources directed toward supporting students in meeting basic needs and sharing progress made system-wide. Furthermore, there is need for increasing student supports, including raising awareness of services and developing systematic linkages to on- and off-campus resources to help meet their basic needs, especially for student groups who are disproportionately experiencing the highest levels of basic needs insecurity. Normalization of service use and reduction of barriers to services are also necessary. Campuses should consider creating or sustaining Single Points of Contact (SPOC) to coordinate comprehensive efforts. Provisions are needed to ensure that students do not stop out of universities, forced to seek employment that may not increase their long-term stability. Early identification of students, before their circumstances become acute, may be key to helping increase retention.

Recommendations

Create or sustain Single Points of Contact (SPOC) to coordinate student service provision for unmet basic needs. As awareness about college student basic needs insecurity grows and programs continue to develop, SPOCs are needed as campus and community liaisons to coordinate service provision across campus, lead training and awareness building, supervise student interns, conduct program development and evaluation, build relationships with off-campus service providers and resource brokers, and to sustain current levels of effort.

Sustain and evaluate efforts to address food and housing insecurity. Students who experienced both food insecurity and homelessness were impacted most adversely—their grades were lower and their negative health and mental health outcomes were more severe. Campuses must continue to institutionalize offerings of emergency food and housing and CalFresh application assistance on campus. Continued development of options for affordable healthy food and housing for students is critical to aiding their health, wellbeing, and success. With the passing of California Assembly Bill 1894 (Weber), all CSU campus dining services and auxiliaries are now able to apply for federal approval to administer the CalFresh Restaurant Meals Programs (RMP), a program that allows CalFresh recipients who experience homelessness, have disabilities, or are 60 years of age or older to access their CalFresh benefits to purchase lower cost prepared meals at approved participating restaurants. Evaluate programs aimed at supporting students' basic needs to sustain efforts that demonstrate intended outcomes for holistic student success.

Increase awareness, access, and use of on-campus resources for students, specifically for student groups who are disproportionately experiencing the highest levels of basic needs insecurity. For all student groups, the level of basic needs insecurity far outweighed the frequency of receipt of services. Primarily, students of color were most likely to access services such as campus food pantries and CalFresh application assistance; however, they were also most likely to report experiencing barriers to services. This points to the necessity for interventions that address intersectionality in approaches to service provision. These findings spotlight the potential for development of efforts to strategically facilitate alliances to expand awareness of available on-campus resources and work toward achieving equitable outcomes. Intentional partnerships among on-campus programs where students regularly seek support like cultural centers, student clubs, wellness and recreational activity centers, and during campus orientations are key intersections that will aid early identification of and referrals for basic needs insecure students. Further, fluid linkage with financial aid administrators can support early identification of basic needs insecure students. Financial aid administrators can identify students who qualify for Pell Grants and build awareness of basic needs supports early and often. Continued training across campus to ensure that the university narrative of service seeking and equity are normalized for students across campus is still needed.

Train faculty and staff to identify, respond, and refer students to appropriate points of contact. Findings indicated that many students disclosed their situation to faculty when their grades or attendance began to decline. Students who were received with empathy, understanding, and appropriate linkages to supports reported that this encouraged retention. Training is required for faculty, staff, and administrators to ensure that students are received with a trauma informed approach that ensures that they are appropriately identified and supported. Further, a clear resource page can be made available on each university website. Not only for students, but also faculty and staff can utilize this resource that will serve as a bridge to services. Many students regularly interact with faculty members more than any other employee group on campus. Educating the faculty about symptoms of basic needs insecurity and available resources has the

potential to create deep inroads to systematically supporting students meeting their basic needs at critical points in time (i.e., before and after class, and during advising and office hours).

Institutionalize connectivity across campus services. Students reported using campus health centers and counseling and psychological services to access services and to be referred for basic needs support. Institutionalized assessments and referrals for basic needs security during intake at student health centers and counseling and psychological services have the potential to increase awareness about basic needs security programs and services. Providing students with more coordinated referrals to available programs from these service points can expand students' opportunities to access healthy food and safe, stable housing. Further, increasing the number of counseling appointments available to students in food or housing crises may be needed to support stabilization.

Promote continued sharing of information across campuses. The CSU Basic Needs Initiative (BNI) has been successful at highlighting successes and facilitating solutions to challenges collectively in the CSU through many BNI webinars and at two basic needs conferences. Continuing to share discoveries and opportunities across campuses is critical for increasing the collective impact of this work.

Advocate to address barriers to off-campus public social services for higher education students. The need for off-campus social services heavily surpassed use. Students reported the belief that they did not qualify for services, lacked knowledge of services, or experienced challenges accessing public services. Basic needs insecurity is a symptom of broader issues, often associated with poverty and systemic economic inequality. Addressing basic needs insecurity is not possible without recognizing the multifaceted issues that lead to a student experiencing food insecurity and homelessness. The CSU can act as a convener between higher education and public social services to remove institutional and policy barriers. Specifically, the CSU can facilitate conversations with representatives from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and other public welfare agencies to explore college students' basic needs and public welfare benefits respectively. Similar to developments with CalFresh, coordinated strategic planning is needed between the CSU and CDSS about college student eligibility criteria for public benefits and outreach efforts are needed to inform students about the application process and assist them in the application. Off-campus use of emergency shelters and transitional shelters was low, yet students who faced homelessness and food insecurity had among the greatest level of need. Advocacy for affordable off-campus housing appropriate for college students is needed.



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Introduction and Background

Economic self-sufficiency is often associated with high educational achievement (Louie, 2007; Ma, Pender, & Welch, 2016). As students attempt to achieve academic goals, they must adapt to and manage conflicting priorities inclusive of social and familial relationships, academic responsibilities, as well as employment (Crisp et al., 2009; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, Broton, & Eisenberg, 2015; Goldrick-Rab, 2016). Juggling multiple priorities while also striving to earn a higher education degree is complicated for many students who encounter challenges in meeting their basic needs (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018). A clear examination of the acuity of students' basic needs insecurity provides foundational evidence to support service provision. Further, exploring whether students know supports available, use them, and if not why, are important next steps to consider as the CSU works toward eliminating equity gaps in retention and graduation.

Phase 1 of the California State University (CSU) Study of Basic Needs focused on housing security and very low food security for students, largely from the perspectives and experiences of CSU staff, faculty and administrators (Crutchfield, 2016). The purpose of Phase 1 was to gain better insight into the ways in which CSU campuses were providing services to students who were housing and food insecure. Phase 1 utilized both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups with CSU staff, faculty and administrators as well as surveys and qualitative data collection with CSU, Long Beach (CSULB) students (Crutchfield, 2016).

Phase 2 was a mixed-methods study of the experiences of students who encountered homelessness, low, and very low food security. Surveys were distributed to a census sample across all 23 CSU campuses with an average participation rate of 5.76% (N=24,324), for those students who completed surveys. Interview and focus group data were collected at 11 CSU campuses with students (n=213) who identified as either or both housing and food insecure (Crutchfield & Maguire 2018). Findings of Phase 2 showed that 41.6% of CSU students reported food insecurity, 20% of which experienced low food security and 21.6% very low food security. Of the participants, 10.9% of CSU students indicated experiencing homelessness one or more times in a 12-month period based on the joint Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the U.S. Department of Education definitions. The Phase 2 study also showed that students who reported homelessness, food insecurity or both experienced drastic negative consequences in comparison to their basic need secure peers. Students articulated how homelessness and food insecurity affected most aspects of life, inclusive of long work hours, academic struggle, and damaging influence on mental and physical health. Importantly, students who identified as Black or African-American and first-generation college student experienced the highest rates of homelessness (18%) and food insecurity (65.9%). Findings showed that as program initiatives were developing, some of these services might have been underutilized.

The purpose of the Phase 3 CSU Study of Basic Needs is to gain insight on the supports and barriers CSU students encounter to mitigate their basic need insecurities. This study provides an in-depth exploration of CSU students' unmet basic needs related to access of services on- and off-campus. Additional analysis is presented from Phase 2 quantitative and qualitative data to investigate how the populations of food and housing insecure students utilized services, financial aid, and time.

This report describes service assistance in an effort to ensure that all CSU campuses will be armed with findings to expand understanding and conceptualization of the specific social issues that face students. Additionally, challenges and successes are explored from the two case studies that inform better support and service provision and make recommendations for program and policy initiatives. Program reports for the Humboldt State University Oh SNAP! Student Food Program and the California State University, Long Beach Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program (Appendices C and D) provide case studies on existing programs as examples of promising practices. The outcomes of this study are cutting-edge and will serve as a transformative guide and blueprint for the CSU institution holistically.

Food Security

The United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (USDA ERS, 2017) defines food security as the ability to have economic access to the adequate nutrition needed to sustain a healthy and active life. Food insecurity (low and very low food security) is referred to as the inadequate or indefinite availability of nutritionally suitable and safe foods, as well as the ability to acquire such foods in socially acceptable methods. The U.S. Adult Food Security Survey (10-item) was used to measure food security in this study because it is widely utilized and provided baseline comparison rates with other college students and groups nationally (Nazmi et al., 2018).

Homelessness

Housing security includes a complex range of circumstances ranging from homelessness to housed (Hallett & Crutchfield, 2018). This report refers primarily to students who experienced homelessness, defined as individuals who lack a regular, fixed and adequate nighttime residence (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). This definition is more expansive than the HUD definition, which is more restrictive. This definition is drawn from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and often reflects the experiences of students in higher education. There is a range of challenges for students who are housing insecure inclusive of negative peer relationships, family trauma, barriers to financial aid, and a lack of access to technology or a consistent address, all of which influence the academic success of university students (Gupton, 2017).

Many campuses have developed responses to food and housing insecure students, including CalFresh application assistance strategies, food pantries, and emergency grants and housing. While these efforts are important for addressing the immediate needs of students, research exploring the efficacy of these services is limited.



What We Know About Service Access

Financial Aid

Student financial aid can act as a buffer in economic security and maintenance throughout college, allowing students to focus on their studies rather than being overly concerned about their financial stability (Benz, 2016; Hodara, 2017). For many CSU students, financial aid can cover the entire cost of tuition. However, some students may find barriers to accessing financial aid (Crutchfield, Chambers, & Duffield, 2016; Dubick, Matthews, & Cady, 2016), and this can be compounded for first-generation college students who may not be able to access familial support in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) process (George-Jackson & Gast, 2015). One apparent effective method to increase FAFSA completion, is one-on-one guidance and support by FAFSA trained higher education staff with the capacity to advise students across all socioeconomic, cultural, academic and dependency statuses (Davidson, 2013; Page & Scott-Clayton, 2015; Hodara, 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015).

Though financial aid may cover the cost of tuition for a low-income student in the CSU, there is a gap in the cost of living expenses associated with earning a degree. For many students, financial aid fully accounts for the educational costs of tuition and fees; however, there are limited funds remaining to pay for the most basic needs, such as food and housing. In the past, students could anticipate paying for college and the associated living costs with a combination of Pell Grant, a state university grant, and a small loan. However, the cost of college has risen at an astonishing rate in the past 40 years. According to the ED National Center for Education Statistics (2017), in 2016-17, average college costs were 2.5 times higher (in constant 2016-17 dollars) than in 1974-75, and costs have risen consistently since 1980. Since 1980, the average costs of college have risen to \$23,091 in 2016-17.

Food Pantries

Food pantries on university campuses are often a first response to basic needs insecurity and act as a protective measure in preventing students from falling short of adequate nutrition (Cady, 2014; Goldrick-Rab, Cady, & Coca, 2018). Phase 2 of the CSU Study of Basic Needs showed that of all the students surveyed, 51.9% of students were unaware of a food pantry located on campus or said such services were not available; 35.8% of students reported having heard of an on-campus food pantry, but had not used the service. However, many students said they welcomed this type of support (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018). Dubick, Matthews, and Cady (2016) found that students who identify as food insecure were more likely to utilize on- and off-campus food pantries and free food events for nutritional support when experiencing food insecurity.

Recent research has found that students who were food insecure may avoid speaking about their needs (Henry, 2017). Further, their food secure peers may not acknowledge that food insecurity is an existing issue on college campuses, which may perpetuate the stigma associated with a lack of basic needs and help seeking behaviors for on- and off-campus resources. In an effort to destigmatize student use of on campus food pantries, researchers found that creating a system where student need takes precedence over student eligibility for services not only offset student reluctance in seeking the service, but also help to normalize use of on-campus services (Twill, Bergdahl, & Fensler, 2016). It is evident that food pantries on college campuses can be an important

support for students and can be a first contact point for students, allowing for connection to other resources. In order for students to access and utilize not only on-campus food assistance services, but also state and federal nutritional aid, policies are most effective if access to resources is simplified for college students to meet eligibility requirements (Maguire, O’Neill, & Aberson, 2016). It is essential for higher education institutions to address food insecurity among students because poor or inadequate nutrition can greatly influence student wellness and academic achievement (Cady, 2014).

Utilization of CalFresh

In a report just released from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (2019), it was found that, “some college students are experiencing food insecurity, which can negatively impact their academic success” (p.2). The GAO recommended that the Food and Nutrition Service clarify rules on how states can help eligible students use SNAP (GAO, 2019). CalFresh, federally known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), offers nutrition assistance to low income individuals and families, yet students often encounter tumultuous barriers in accessing this much needed aid (Dubick et al., 2016). On campus application assistance services for CalFresh are considered helpful for students, yet remain underutilized (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018). Federal law requires that college students attending half-time or more are categorically ineligible for CalFresh unless they meet one exemption criteria or work a minimum average of 20 hours per week to qualify. Adding 20 hours per week to full-time course loads intensifies the already demanding schedules of students who lack basic needs (Crutchfield, 2016; Cady, 2014; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015). Additionally, according to Western Center on Law and Poverty (2016), even if a student wishes to work 20 hours per week, on-campus employment is not always easy to find. In the 2015-2016 school year, the CSU was allocated 7,388 federal work-study (FWS) positions for the entire system (The California State University, Office of the Chancellor, 2016). Meaning if a student qualifies for FWS, it may not be a viable option because of limited availability of FWS positions.



Awareness of Existing Services

Recent research has shown that some campus services remain underutilized by students due to lack of service awareness, lack of campus promotion of services, stigmatization, or anxiety of, fear of, or lack of time to enroll in programs due to the application process or risk of ineligibility for services (Crutchfield, 2016; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018). The CSU Study of Basic Needs showed that 71.4% of students were unaware of on-campus emergency housing services and 51.9% of students indicated that they were unaware of an on-campus food pantry. Research has also found that students who identify as food insecure reported that services provided on campus lacked consistent service hours, were geographically located in hard to reach places on campus or lacked the ability to mitigate the issues faced by students (Dubick et al., 2016). This suggests consideration be made to the locality of on-campus services, hours of operation, and a heightened training and capacity when developing support services. This report expands on these findings and further explores the experiences of students as it relates to identifying and accessing such services.

Stigma

Personal and societal stigmas associated with homelessness and food insecurity are among barriers students, staff, faculty and administrators encounter when servicing and receiving on-campus support services. In a research study that evaluated food and housing insecurities in community college, Wood, Harris, and Delgado (2016) found that students who identified as food insecure were considerably less likely to feel a sense of acceptance and affinity as it relates to faculty-student rapport. Furthermore, researchers also found that students with housing insecurity interacted with faculty at higher rates than those who were not regarding matters outside of the standard in-class dialogue. Moreover, research indicated that faculty-student interaction outside of the classroom greatly increased the success of students (Wood, Harris III, & White, 2015). Recent reports on food and housing security in higher education suggest that students who utilize on-campus services felt more comfortable and at ease only when staff normalize students' use of on-campus services, as well as treated students with care and unconditional regard (Crutchfield, 2016; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018). This further implies the need for university campuses to build a community response of acceptance and non-judgment when interacting with students who seek basic needs supports.

First-Generation African American Students

First-generation African American college students experience homelessness at considerably higher rates (18%) than that of any other first-generation ethnic group (9.6-12.6%) in the CSU (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018). Black and African American students who were also first-generation in their families to attend college also indicated the highest levels of food insecurity (65.9%). In a study that analyzed the experiences of African American female students with housing insecurity at community college, Blevins (2018) found that higher education institutions sometimes lack the necessary climate and approach in accessing and servicing students of color. Research has also found that in order to reach and support African American students in higher education, intentional effort is needed to connect university campuses with their Black and African American student body, stressing the significance of hand-to-hand referrals for services. This may include providing referral to direct contacts or offers to connect students by way of a warm-hand-off to potential resources (Rosales & Person, 2003; Wood, Harris, III & Delgado, 2016).

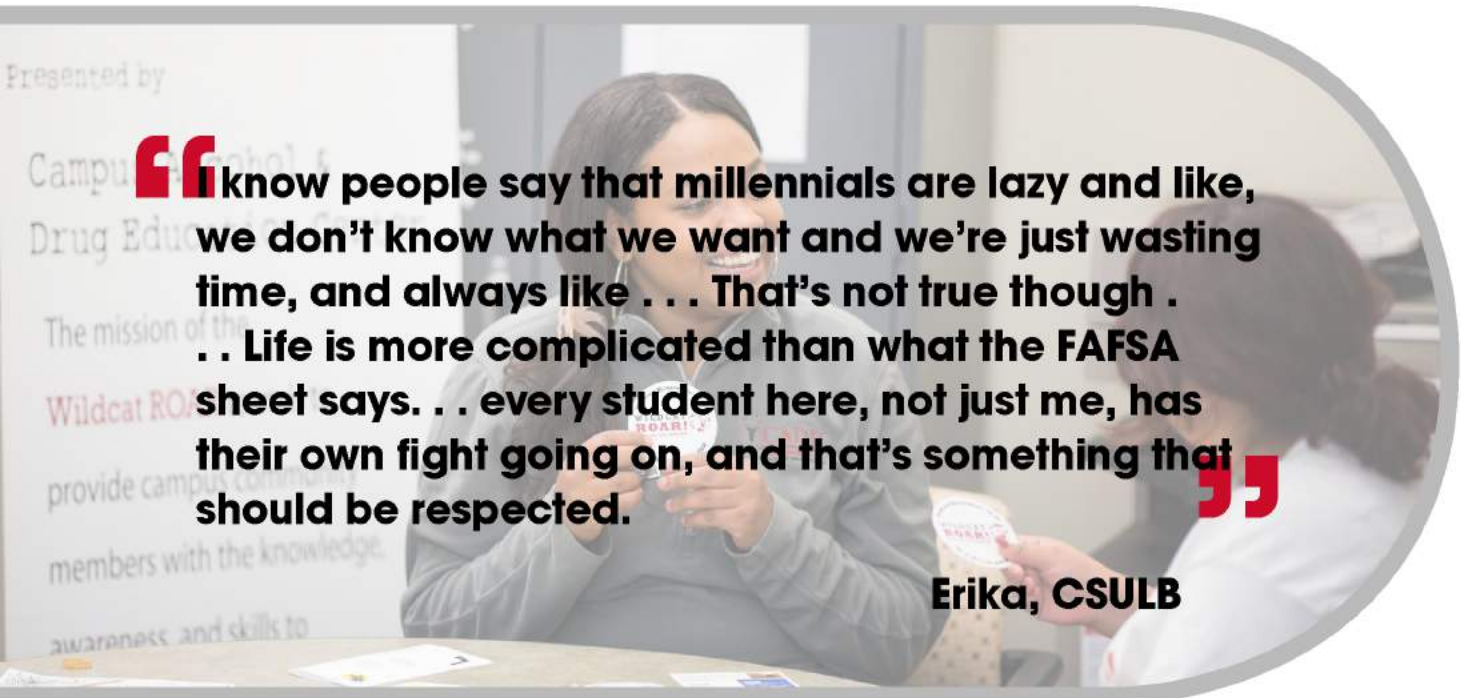
Single Points of Contact

A single point of contact (SPOC) is a person or program who acts a broker in identifying, accessing, and linking students to on- and off-campus services and providing assistance and support as students navigate higher education settings (Crutchfield, 2016; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2015). Students who lack adequate or reliable food, nutrition, or housing are often concerned about navigating through the financial aid process, seeking campus support services, identifying and accessing permanent housing during on and off sessions throughout the school year, managing work and school (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Dukes, 2013). Phase 1 of the CSU study showed that students who had a SPOC experienced feelings of campus connection, care, and success in their university communities. Additionally, SPOC staff seemed to destigmatize students' use of on-campus supportive services. More research is needed to determine the best practices for SPOCs in higher education, yet research findings suggest that they are especially essential in servicing students with low food and housing security.

It is clear that students with low food and housing security experience grave hardship as they endeavor to succeed in a turbulent yet rewarding college journey. It is evident that further exploration is required to understand students' use of services and the best ways to meet their needs. It is essential for the CSU system to not only have resources and services available to the broad student body, but also tailor services to meet the needs of this growing population of students, inclusive of gender, socioeconomic status and cultural background.

This mixed-methods study aims to:

- Explore students' awareness, utilization rates, and obstacles to access of services and supports on- and off-campus. These are related to their level of basic needs security and disparities between cultural and economic backgrounds.
- Analyze the relationship between GPA, basic needs security, and use of services, and examine the disparities in service access by cultural and economic background.
- Investigate students' demands on time when not attending classes.
- Describe student strategies to address financial need.
- Convey students' use of public benefits.
- Provide case studies to illustrate campus responses to basic need insecurity.
- Make recommendations for meeting service gaps.



I know people say that millennials are lazy and like, we don't know what we want and we're just wasting time, and always like . . . That's not true though . . . Life is more complicated than what the FAFSA sheet says. . . every student here, not just me, has their own fight going on, and that's something that should be respected.

Erika, CSULB

Methodology

Survey

Survey data for this report were drawn from the CSU Study on Basic Needs Phase 2 data set. The Phase 2 survey was distributed to a census student sample via email across all 23 CSU campuses an average of 5.76% participation across each campus for the survey (n=24,324) (see Appendix A for campus level response rates). A total of 37,351 students began the survey and 27,805 completed the survey. Of those, 24,324 completed the survey with no missing responses, which provided the most conservative estimate of food security and homelessness. The survey was administered on 21 campuses between late October and November, 2016; on one campus between late November and mid-December, 2016; and on one campus in mid-January and early February, 2017. The surveys were open for approximately three weeks, with one email invitation and two reminders (totaling three emails). Students were able to enter their names in a raffle to win one of two \$40 Target gift cards at each campus. A campus point person, identified by a campus administrator, worked with the research team to recruit students and administer the survey electronically via campus email address. The marketing team through the CSU Office of the Chancellor created marketing materials (e.g., press release, flyer, social media template posts) for the campus point person to disseminate in order to encourage student participation.

Overall survey sample characteristics were similar to the demographics of the CSU student body. Percentages of racial and ethnic groups were similar, with the percentage of White participants (39.5%) and Asian and Pacific Islander participants (22.9%) represented slightly higher within the sample. The distribution of class standing was similar between the sample and the CSU student body. The largest difference is regarding gender, where females are 56.2% of the student body, but 72.4% of the sample. Women often have much higher response rates than men on surveys (Sax, Gilmartin, & Bryant, 2003; Underwood, Kim, & Matier, 2000).

To account for race and ethnicity among students, questions were drawn from the U.S. Census, developed by the Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget. Options to self-report race included American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, Other or prefer not to answer. Options to self-report ethnicity included Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin, Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin, or prefer not to answer.

To measure food security, the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service U.S. Adult Food Security Survey Module (10 items) was utilized, using a 30-day period. The USDA instrument is widely used to measure the concept of U.S. household food security (Bickel, Nord, Price, Hamilton, & Cook, 2000). In 2015, the U.S. Adult Food Security Survey Module (6 items) was piloted in a sample of students at Humboldt State University (HSU) (N= 1,504). Representatives from USDA ERS conducted a psychometric assessment of the HSU food security scales (combined, household, and individual) that suggested responses fit the measurement model adequately (Coleman-Jensen, Rabbit, Gregory and Singh, 2017). A recommendation was made to use the 10-item for future surveys, which was implemented for this study.

There is no instrument being used to consistently measure housing insecurity among college students. The survey questions for this study were created directly from the definitions used to assess for homelessness based on the HUD and ED definitions, drawn from differing subsections of the McKinney-Vento Act. A 12-month timeframe was used to account for residential change patterns over breaks in the academic schedule. Measures of academic and personal concerns came from subscales of the Presenting Problems Scale. The measure has been validated in college student populations (Erdur-Baker, Aberson, Barrow, & Draper, 2006). Measures of physical health, mental health, and inactive days were drawn from the Core Healthy Days Measures recommended by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (2000), which has been found to be valid and reliable among diverse populations (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018).

Analyses

To explore the supports and barriers CSU students traverse to relieve their basic need insecurities and gain a clearer understanding of which student groups use basic needs supports, further analysis on the Phase 2 data were conducted.

Quantitative Methods

Correlation analyses explored relationships between students' awareness, utilization rates for, and obstacles to use of services and supports on and off campus. Additionally, students' time use and personal finances were investigated. These were disaggregated by students' level of basic needs security, cultural and economic demographic factors. To examine grade point averages (GPA), analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare overall mean GPAs by groups disaggregated by demographics (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, first-generation college student and Pell Grant status).

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative data for this report were drawn from the CSU Study on Basic Needs Phase 2 data set. Qualitative data were collected at 11 CSU campuses with students (n=213) who identified as housing insecure, food insecure, or both on the quantitative survey between January and June 2016. Campuses were selected for qualitative data collection with the goal to represent experiences from northern, southern, and central California and to include perspectives from urban, rural, and suburban areas. Student participants volunteered and were selected for interviews and focus groups based on reported levels of food insecurity and homelessness from the survey. Participants were offered a \$15 gift card as an incentive to participate. Students participated in semistructured interviews and focus groups, which lasted 60-90 minutes. Participants were asked broad, open-ended questions about their experiences with food and housing insecurity and use of services. Interviews and focus groups took place between January and June, 2017 at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (SLO), CSU Bakersfield (CSUB), CSU Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), CSU Long Beach, CSU Los Angeles (CSULA), CSU Northridge (CSUN), CSU San Bernardino (CSUSB), Fresno State University (FSU), Humboldt State University (HSU), San Diego State University (SDSU), and San Francisco State University (SFSU). Demographic information about the sample for qualitative methods is located in Appendix B. Students were asked to select pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

For a more in-depth description of the research tools and their construction, please refer to the *Researching Basic Needs in Higher Education measurement guide* (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2017).

Findings

Students expressed consistently that they wanted to be university graduates and were trying their best to achieve it despite their experiences with basic need insecurity. Often the university experience provided hope, community, and stability. As Eli (SDSU) said, "I've had As and Bs, honestly I use school to cope with everything. I love it here, I thrive in college. It's like the one thing in my life that I have complete control over, even if it's just an illusion and FAFSA technically has control over it." Understanding more about how to support students' basic needs so they can be retained and complete their degrees is part of the vision for Graduation Initiative 2025. This report is an exploration of students' awareness of services and supports meant to help them. In this study, student self-reported data are used to identify barriers to utilizing services and findings uncover variability of obstacles based on students' level of vulnerability as defined by their report of homelessness, food insecurity, or both. Unpacking the acuity of students' basic needs insecurity and whether they know there are supports available, use them, and if not why, are important next steps to consider as the CSU works towards eliminating equity gaps in retention and graduation.

Exploring this Report

Findings from Phase 3 serve to illustrate student experiences. Student data are first provided for all study participants, providing overall context for use of on- and off-campus services. Then, data are disaggregated by basic need security. An examination of average grade point averages (GPAs) based on level of basic needs security and receipt of individual service and collective services is provided to illustrate how varying levels of basic needs security and service access shapes this aspect of academic performance. Additionally, descriptions of disparity gaps amongst students of mixed levels of basic needs security, demographic indicators, and use of services are described. An examination of students' demands on their time for paid employment, unpaid work, and familial obligations are presented based on students' level of basic need security to explore how students' demand on their time when they are not in school and how that might help explain how campus supports can increase the quality of their experience. Further, findings about students' use of financial aid, loans, and credit cards to meet their needs are also studied to develop insight into how students are paying for school and managing finances when there is not enough in their personal budgets to cover the full cost of college attendance. These findings can be used to inform thoughtful campus strategic planning to better support students who lack basic needs in making timely progress towards degree completion.

Awareness and Use of Services Among CSU Students

Use of On-Campus Supports For All Study Participants

A summary of students' use and awareness of on- and off-campus services and supports for all participants of the study is presented. Then, data are examined to learn more about how service use differs by level of basic needs security and group demographic. Students who reported using supports at the time of the survey were combined into one group for the analysis to increase understanding about how many students typically use campus resources that support basic needs. Students were able to provide multiple responses to the question item asking which service they had used (for services listed in this report located on campus) and whether they "currently use it," "used it in the past," "heard of it, but never used it," or "never heard of it/or never used it."

Of all survey participants (N=24,324), nearly half were aware that there was a food pantry on their campus (46.4%) and, of those, 12.1% were using or had used the food pantry in the past. Over half of students were aware that there was CalFresh application assistance on-campus (57.9%) and, of those, 10.6% had sought application assistance on-campus. Over a quarter of all students were aware of emergency housing assistance (26.6%), and approximately 1% of those students who were aware of the service were using or had used on-campus emergency housing in the past. Most students knew about on-campus counseling and psychological services (78.5%) and, of those, 15.7% were using or had used these services in the past. The support service accessed by the highest proportion of students was the Student Health Center; nearly half (46.4%) of the students who took the survey reported using the Student Health Center on their campus (14.4% currently used it and 32% had used it in the past).

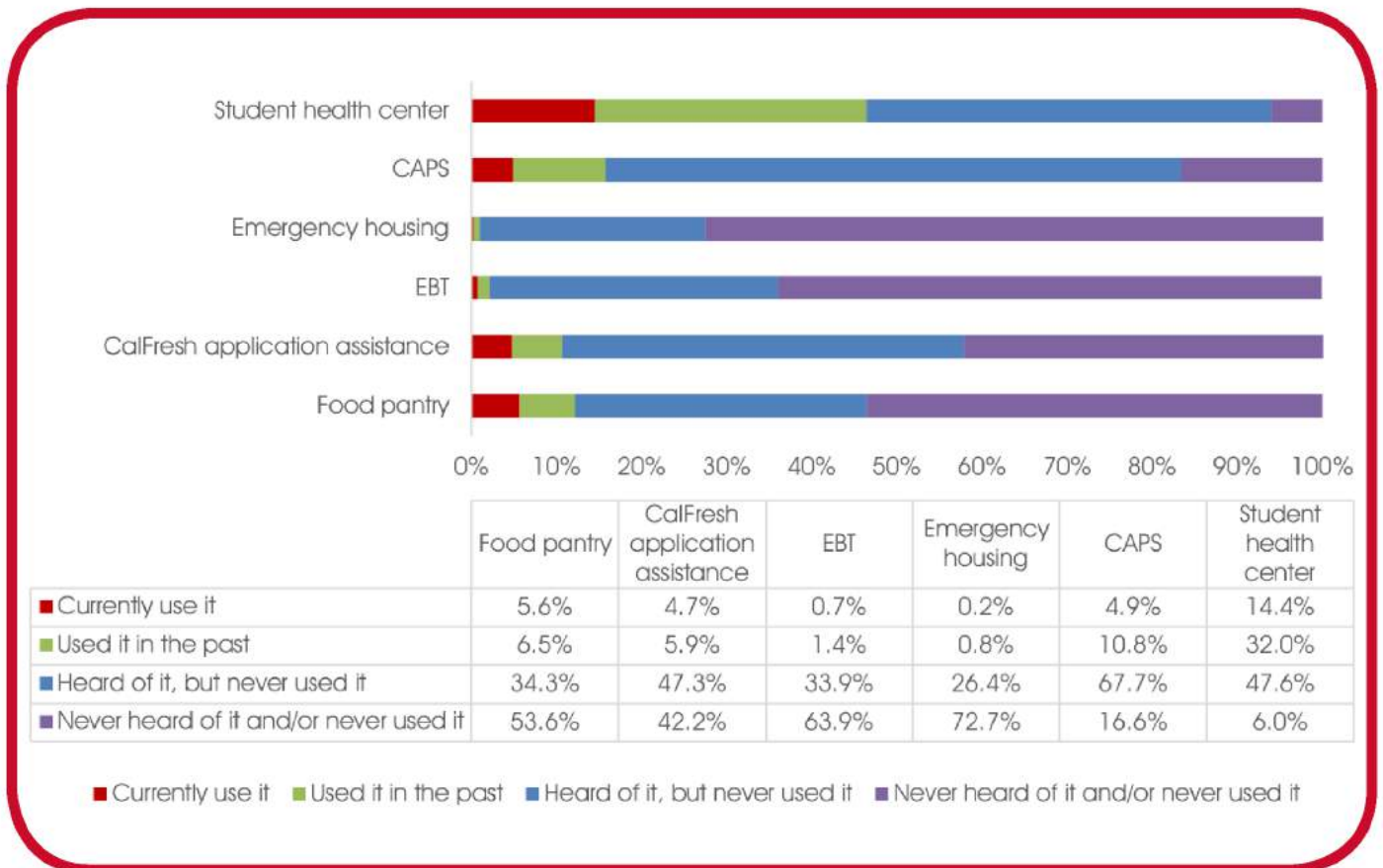


Figure 1. CSU students' use of on-campus supports in the past 12 months

Use of Off-Campus Supports for All Study Participants

All study participants were asked about their use of off-campus support services. This question had a multiple response set, and students were able to select all applicable services and were asked whether they “currently use it”, “used it in the past”, “heard of it, but never used it”, or “never heard of it/or never used it”. Of all survey participants (N=24,324), students reported that they used many off-campus supports; however, the top three utilized were (a) Medicaid (13.9%); (b) Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) (7.3%); and, (c) off-campus food pantries (7.2%). The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) (6.9%) and unemployment benefits (6.5%) were also used by many students. Table 1 provides a summary of students’ overall use of public and community supports located off campus in the past 12 months.

Table 1. CSU Student Use of Off-Campus and Public Supports in the Past 12 Months

Service	Currently use %	Used in past %	Currently use and used in past combined %	Heard of it, but never used it %	Never heard of it and/or never used it %
Off-campus food pantry	1.8%	5.4%	7.2%	48.3%	44.6%
Emergency meal assistance	0.2%	0.7%	0.9%	28.3%	70.8%
Shelter	0.1%	1.0%	1.1%	64.1%	34.8%
Transitional living	0.2%	0.9%	1.1%	42.9%	56.0%
Subsidized housing	1.4%	1.3%	2.7%	49.2%	48.0%
WIC	1.7%	5.2%	6.9%	49.0%	44.2%
TANF	0.6%	1.8%	2.4%	33.4%	64.3%
SSI	0.9%	1.4%	2.3%	41.6%	56.1%
SSDI	0.7%	1.2%	1.9%	35.6%	62.5%
Medicaid	8.5%	5.4%	13.9%	60.3%	25.8%
Childcare assistance	1.0%	1.7%	2.7%	58.6%	38.8%
Unemployment	0.5%	6.0%	6.5%	53.8%	39.7%
Utility assistance	2.7%	3.0%	5.7%	38.5%	55.8%
EITC	1.6%	5.7%	7.3%	36.6%	56.1%
Veterans benefits	2.6%	1.1%	3.7%	59.0%	37.3%

Students reported barriers to utilizing off-campus supports. Survey participants were able to mark all barriers to use. Most students had never heard of many of the available off-campus supports (43%), did not think they needed the supports (32.9%), or both. Nearly a quarter of students did not think they would qualify for benefits (22.9%) and about a fifth did not know how to access these supports (20.6%). Of all students, 12.5% did not have time to access supports.

Findings of all students' knowledge and use of services have implications for campus climates and support services. However, for the remainder of this report, emphasis is placed on the use of services specifically for students who experienced food insecurity, homelessness, or both. In the Phase 2 report, prevalence rates of food security and homelessness were reported among CSU students. Findings of Phase 2 CSU showed that 41.6% of CSU students reported food insecurity, 20% of which experienced low food security and 21.6% very low food security. Of all study participants, 10.9% of CSU students indicated experiencing homelessness.

Of all survey participants (N=24,324), there were significant differences in the use of on-campus services by students who lack basic needs. From this point forward, a subsample was configured of just those students who identified as basic needs insecure and this composite of students is used to examine service awareness and usage by basic needs security. This subsample is configured in four levels:

1. Those who experienced both food insecurity and homelessness
2. Those who experienced only homelessness
3. Those who experienced only food insecurity
4. Those who were food secure and housed

Among all students, 7.2% (n=1,765) reported both food insecurity and homelessness, 34.4% (n=8,373) reported only food insecurity, 3.7% (n=896) reported only homelessness, and 54.7% (n=13,315) of students reported being both food and housing secure.

When examining students' basic need security by race, disparities among African American and Black students were significant. Proportionally, this group had the highest level of food insecurity when compared with the other groups when disaggregated by race. Of those who reported only food insecurity, nearly half of the students were Black and African American (46.8%). This was followed by students who did not self-report as being a part of the race groups listed and marked "other" (39.9%). Native American or Other Pacific Islander students also reported high rates of food insecurity (39.1%). Fewer White students (30.3%) and Asian students (29.4%) reported food insecurity, but their numbers are still noteworthy.

A different trend was observed regarding those who reported only homelessness. A larger proportion of White students (4.5%) reported only homelessness when compared to Asian students (3.9%) and Other Pacific Islander students (3.4%). This is followed by 2.9% of other students and 2.0% of Black and African American students.

However, when the greatest level of basic need insecurity was examined, both food insecurity and homelessness, the trend of disproportionality reemerges. The overall average for all students who reported both homelessness and food insecurity was 7.2%. A greater proportion of Black and African American students (12.1%) reported both homelessness and food insecurity compared to other students (7.6%), Pacific Islander students (7.0%) and White students (7.0%). Fewer Asian students (5.9%) reported this high basic needs insecurity.

Basic needs security also varied by ethnicity. A greater proportion of Hispanic/Latino students reported being food insecure (39.4%) and both food insecure and homeless (7.3%) when compared to non-Hispanic/Latino students (31.4% and 6.9%, respectively). The opposite trend was observed regarding only homelessness, such that 4.3% of non-Hispanic/Latino students reported homelessness compared to 2.8% of Hispanic/Latino students. For students who were both food secure and housed, 57.4% were non-Hispanic/Latino students compared and 50.5% Hispanic/Latino students.

Table 2. CSU Student Basic Needs Security by Race

	Food secure and housed %	Only food insecure %	Only homeless %	Food insecure and homeless %
Asian	60.9	29.4	3.9	5.9
Black or African American	39.2	46.8	2	12.1
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	50.5	39.1	3.4	7
Other	49.5	39.9	2.9	7.6
White	58.2	30.3	4.5	7

Table 3. CSU Student Basic Needs Security by Ethnicity

	Food Secure and Housed %	Only Food Insecure %	Only Homeless %	Food Insecure and Homeless %
Hispanic	50.5	39.4	2.8	7.3
Non Hispanic	57.4	31.4	4.3	6.9

Finally, regarding basic needs security by gender, findings were mixed. A greater proportion of women students (36.0%) reported being only food insecure compared to male students (30.4%). However, a greater proportion of men reported only homelessness (5.2%) and both food insecurity and homelessness (8.9%) compared to women (3.1% and 6.5%, respectively). There was only a small difference between men (54.4%) and women (55.4%) who reported being both food secure and housed.

Being a first-generation college student status is correlated with basic need insecurity. A greater proportion of first-generation students reported being only food insecure (40.6%) and both food insecure and homeless (8.4%) when compared to non-first-generation students (30.4% and 6.5%, respectively). The opposite trend was observed regarding only homelessness, such that 4.2% of non-first-generation students reported homelessness compared to 2.8% of first-generation students. This trend was again observed regarding those who were both food secure and housed, 58.9% of non-first-generation students compared to 48.2% first generation students.

Students who received Pell Grants experienced much higher rates of basic needs insecurity as it related to being food insecure and reporting homelessness (59%) when compared to students who did not receive a Pell Grant (34.8%). Pell Grant students also experienced more food insecurity (56.4%) in comparison than their non-Pell Grant counterparts (37.8%). Students with Pell Grants reported lower rates of homelessness (without food insecurity) (39.9%) than students without Pell Grants (54.1%). Students without Pell Grants reported higher food and housing security (52.8%), than students with Pell Grants (41.5%). In interviews and focus groups, students often discussed the use of financial aid to ensure their housing stability. Often, students would sacrifice eating or save funds for emergencies in an effort to avoid homelessness. Though most students who experienced homelessness verbally reported accessing Pell, some students who provided qualitative data said that they did not have access to Pell support. Some students who experienced homelessness mentioned that they had utilized all financial aid support at an earlier age, returned to complete degrees later in life, and were paying for their education on their own.

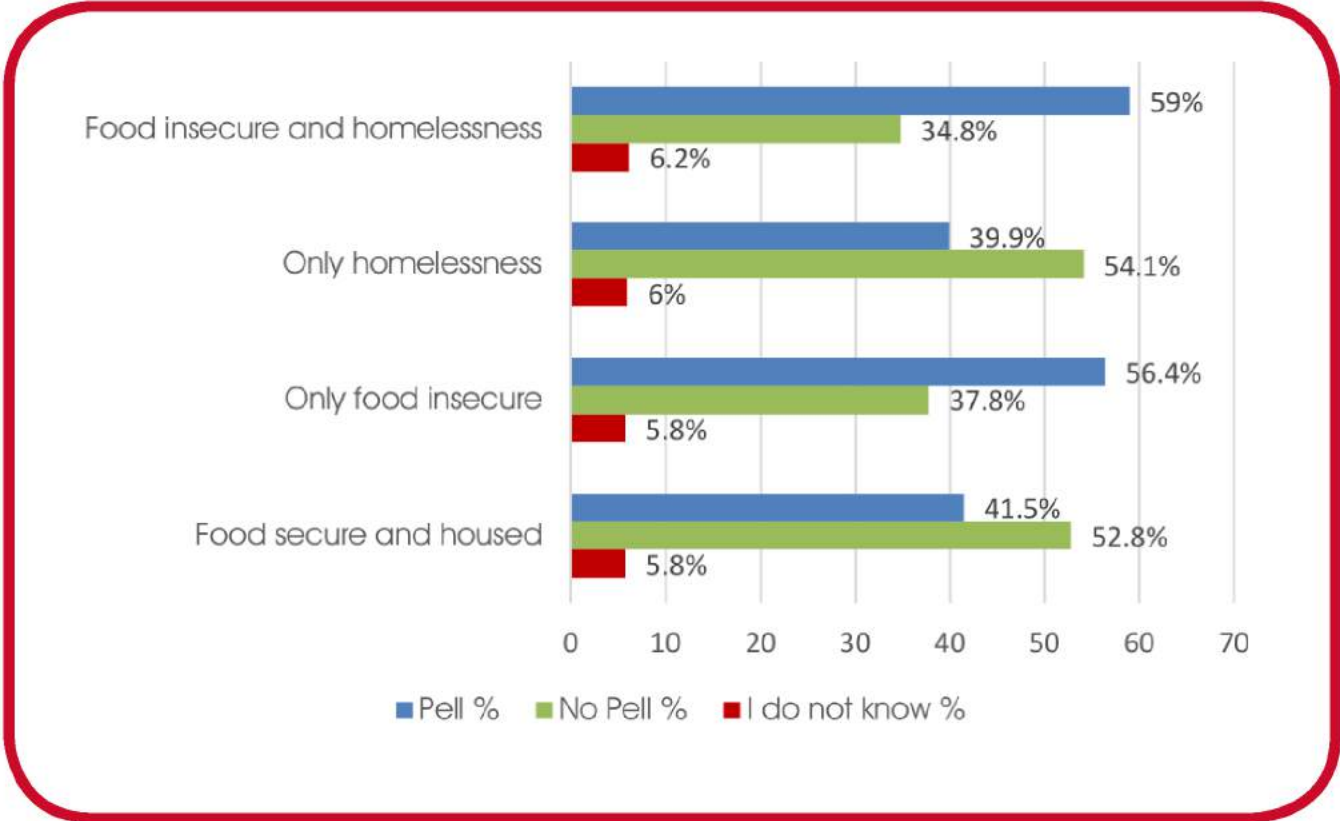


Figure 2. CSU student Pell Grant status and basic needs security.

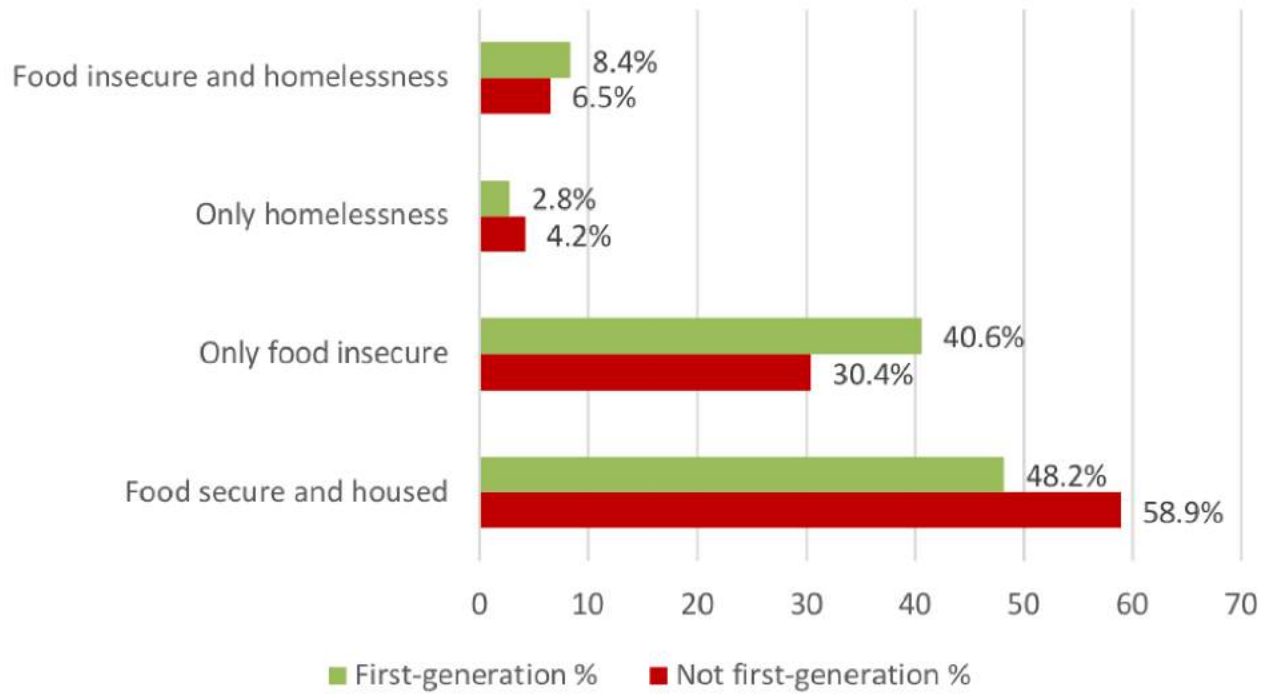


Figure 3. CSU student first-generation college status and basic needs security.

Difference in Grade Point Average Based on Basic Needs Security

This section examines differences in grade point average (GPA) based on both students' level of basic need security and the use of select on-campus services. Significant differences were found. Students who experienced both food insecurity and homelessness reported the lowest GPAs (3.11) compared with students who were both food secure and stably housed (3.32).

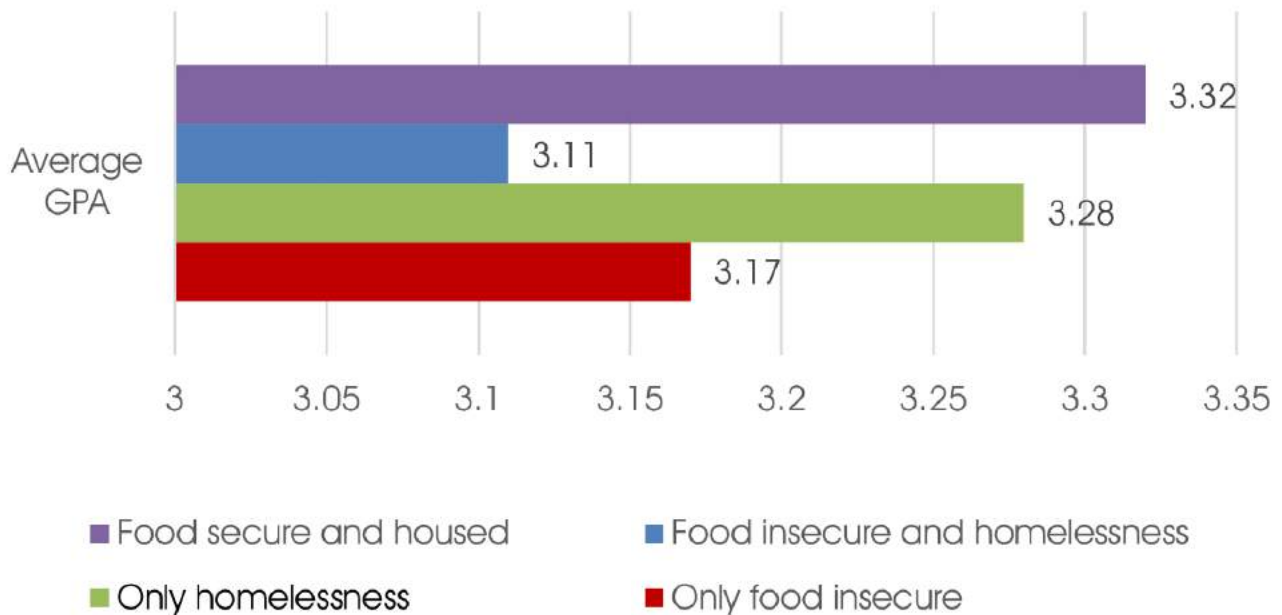


Figure 4. CSU Student average GPA based on level of basic needs security.

There are clear disparities for Black and African American students who reported both food insecurity and homelessness and an average 2.92 GPA when compared with other groups by race, ethnicity and first-generation student statuses. Among Hispanic students who also reported food insecurity and homelessness, their average GPA was 3.03, which was lower than what non-Hispanic students reported (3.19). First generation college students who reported homelessness and food insecurity averaged significantly lower GPAs (3.08) when compared to students who were not first-generation students who were basic needs insecure (3.15). All of these findings were significant.

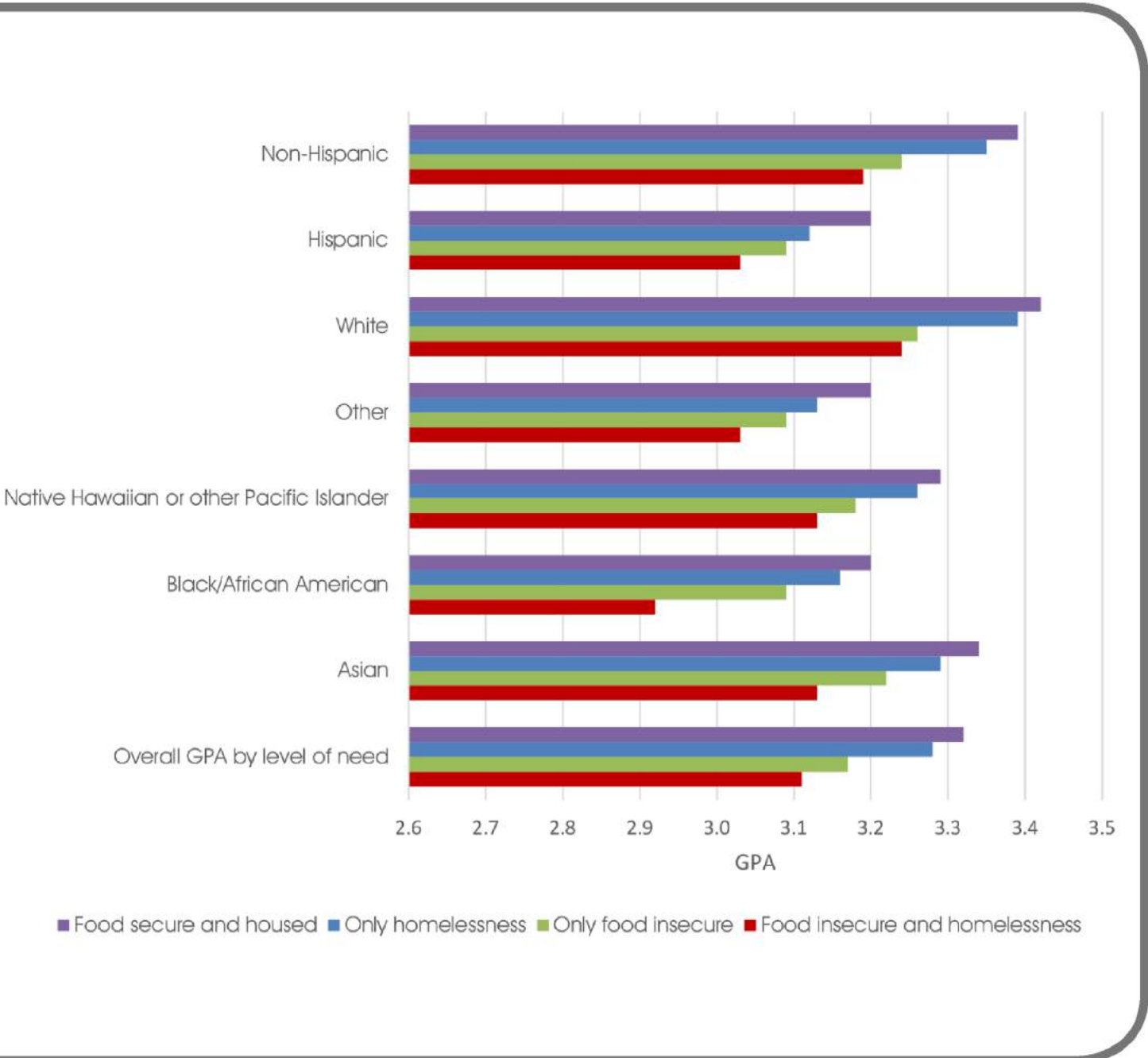


Figure 5. GPA based on basic needs security, race and ethnicity

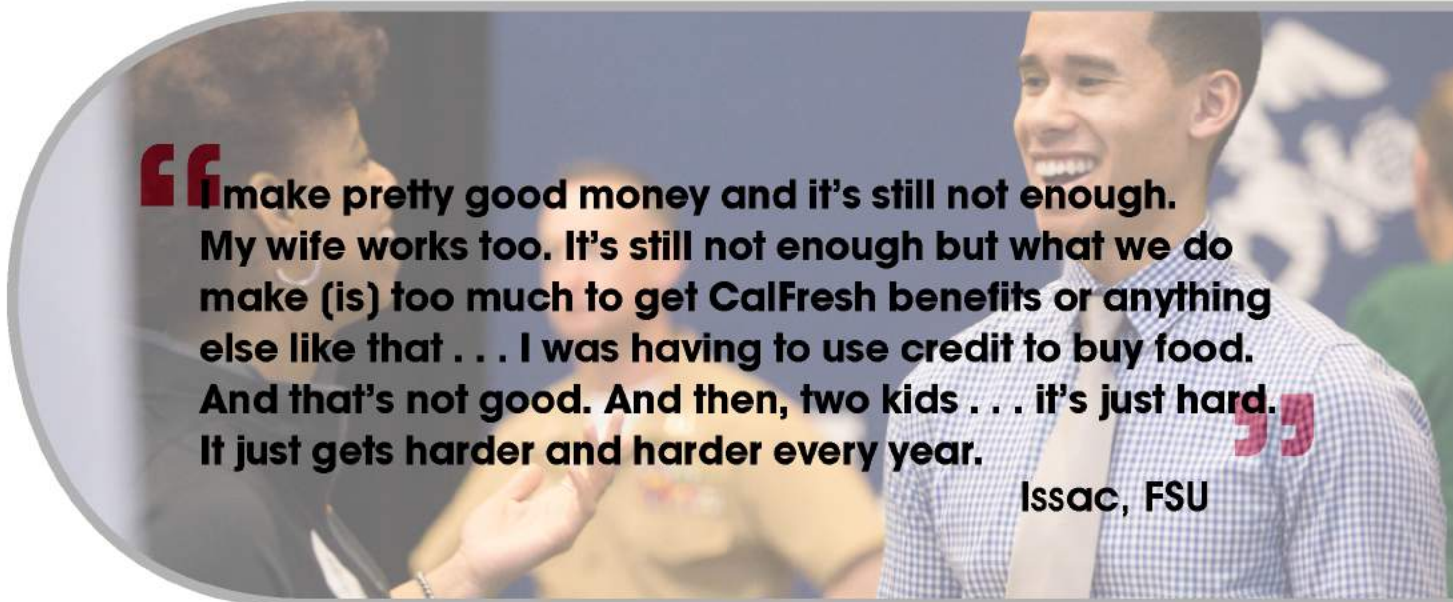
Demands on Students' Time

When the average number of paid and unpaid labor were examined, and the average number of hours spent on family obligations, students who reported being food insecure, or reported experiencing both food insecurity and homelessness had much higher demands on their time outside of class than students who were food and housing secure.

Paid Employment

Students who experienced both homelessness and food insecurity were employed for pay at the highest number of hours per week compared with the other groups. Differences in time spent per week were examined by students' level of need. Level of need influenced the average number of hours students spent doing paid work per week, $F(3, 22,205) = 9.9, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$. Dunnett test demonstrated that students who were only food insecure ($M = 13.8, SD = 13.9$) and students who were both food insecure and homeless ($M = 15.2, SD = 15.0$) had significantly higher average hours worked per week than students who were food and housing secure ($M = 13.3, SD = 14.2$).

Most of the students who took part in interviews and focus groups discussed working at least one, often several, paid jobs to support themselves while enrolled in a CSU. Issac (FSU) felt like he was in an economic trap of need, making too much money to qualify for social service support, but not enough to make ends meet. He reported regularly missing meals due to financial constraints. Though both Isaac and his wife worked full-time, they still could not cover costs for their family and educational expenses.



“I make pretty good money and it’s still not enough. My wife works too. It’s still not enough but what we do make (is) too much to get CalFresh benefits or anything else like that . . . I was having to use credit to buy food. And that’s not good. And then, two kids . . . it’s just hard. It just gets harder and harder every year.”

Issac, FSU

Many students described working in paid employment as necessary, but also expressed frustration at the impact working had on their academic success and progress in their course work. Many took lower course loads to work more hours, but found that taking a low unit load extended their time of struggle with low paying jobs. Students preferred taking high class loads to save money, but often could not. Wendy (SDSU) said, “I was part-timing school for the longest time, working full-time. Finally, I’ve got to my 400-500 level classes. They’re not in the evening [laughs]. They’re all during the day. Crazy hours.”

Some students discussed that having paid work on campus supported their educational progress as well as their basic need security. On-campus employment was often flexible with work hours, minimized commute time, and assisted in linking them to campus support. Nate (CSUSB) said, “Being able to have this job here on campus and not having to drive somewhere else has been really helpful. And when I do have a little extra money, I do try to buy some extra groceries, so we have enough.” For some, on-campus employment was very helpful, but for students who had very low basic need security, limits on available work hours on campus was a barrier. On-campus employment is limited to 20 hours, which can support the academic success of students, but does not allow for employment to cover the expense of basic needs. Meanwhile, the on-campus work limits also make it difficult for students to meet CalFresh 20 hour work requirement because it meant they had to work the maximum available every week, and most on-campus work programs only offered 18 or 19 hours of work so as not to exceed the on-campus cap.

Unpaid Employment

Of all study participants, students reported spending the least amount of time, an average four hours per week, doing unpaid internships ($SD = 10.0$). The level of basic needs security influenced the average number of hours students spent doing unpaid work per week, $F(3, 20,856) = 15.5$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .002$. Dunnett test demonstrated that students who were only food insecure ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 10.8$) and students who were both food insecure and homeless ($M = 5.2$, $SD = 9.5$) had significantly higher average hours of unpaid work per week than students who were food and housing secure ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 9.5$).

Many students discussed the importance of internships and other unpaid work in their educational experience. Deliah (CSUDH), who was both homeless and food insecure, had an unpaid internship that was a requirement for her major. She said she learned many skills and hoped that the agency would hire her once she graduated. However, managing the internship, classes, and additional employment was difficult. She said,

I have my internship all day [1 day a week]. I’m there 8 hours and as soon as I get out, I come straight [to campus] and I don’t get out until 9:45p.m. . . . You fall asleep. You aren’t participating. . . . Damn, my health or my school? My health or my school? Which one?

Deliah, CSUDH

Students were aware that internships provided foundational professional growth and networks that would enhance their prospects of employment after graduation. Students found that research positions, paid and unpaid, made them more inclined to seek graduate studies and situate them as ideal candidates for application to graduate programs. However, taking on these opportunities meant sacrificing short-term basic needs stability. As Tom (CSUN) said, “Experience with internships is invaluable, but that doesn’t make rent and grocery bills disappear.” Low-paying research assistantships had long-term benefits, but did not pay enough to cover expenses. Hours spent in

unpaid internships resulted in less time for paid employment that could pay for food and housing. Additionally, neither research fellowships nor unpaid internships counted as employment for the purposes of meeting the CalFresh work-requirement exemption.

Familial Obligations

Students also discussed spending time on their familial obligations. Many students spent social time with family, along with a great deal of time helping with household tasks. Students also discussed their financial obligations to their families, which included supporting their parents or children and partners. Fernanda's (CSUB) parents were deported and she moved in with her sister. She said, "I had to get my own part-time job, make more money. I paid for rent. It wasn't half but the majority, I paid bills. I put my part in. It was really hard, like with the food."

Food insecure students reported the highest number of average hours per week spent on family obligations, $F(3, 21,768) = 8.3, p < .001, \text{partial } n^2 = .001$. Dunnett test demonstrated that students who were only food insecure ($M = 13.8, SD = 13.9$) had a significantly greater average number of hours spent on family obligations compared to students who were food and housing secure ($M = 11.5, SD = 18.1$). In contrast, students that were only homeless ($M = 8.5, SD = 15.1$) reported a significantly lower average number of hours spent on family obligations per week compared to food and housing secure students.

Evan's (CSUN) parent died unexpectedly during the semester and he took a year educational leave to support his family emotionally and financially. He returned to school, but found balancing his family's continued need for support with his desire to graduate.

E I was helping them out. Then coming back to school and working this job, I still send money back home. I'm still trying to eat healthy, so sometimes—it can't really work for me because with my budget . . . It's really difficult. My family has been telling me, "Get a second job or get another job." I don't want more stress, I don't want more work. **I** If I start stressing I'm going to start becoming unhealthy again and I don't want to do that.

Evan, CSUN

Qualitative data showed how food insecurity, homelessness, or both influenced the time they spent with their friends and peers. Some students were supported by their friends. Beto (SDSU) said, "Until this [campus] food pantry opened up, I didn't really use any food resources. If I didn't have food, I didn't have food . . . I'd be hanging out with friends, if they noticed I wasn't eating, so they're, 'Here, take some of this or take some of this.'" Other students spoke about spending time going to campus events to seek food. Aeon (CSUN) said,

E I end up going to events or doing things because I know there's going to be food there. That makes me more busy and I don't get as much work done like I hang out with people that I know will buy me food but then I'm not like focusing on the work that I should be doing at home... If I go to the food pantry and just be at home that would be better. **I**

Aeon, CSUN

Many students spoke about attending hours of events they did not need to attend in order to get food. They spoke about going to see speakers or participating in meetings that they did not have an interest in because the event provided free food that could be sustaining. Along with classes, employment, and educational commitments, this became another large use of time.

Table 4. Demands on Student Time Compared and Level of Basic Needs Security

	All students	Food Secure and Housed	Food Insecure and Homeless	Only Homeless	Only Food Insecure
Average hours of paid work per week	13.6	13.3	15.2	13.05	13.8
Average hours of family obligations per week	11	10.9	11.14	8.5	11.5
Average hours of unpaid work per week	4	3.6	5.2	3.84	4.3

Receipt of On-Campus Services

Supports and Barriers to Access of On-Campus Services

Students were asked on the survey and in interviews and focus groups about their knowledge and use of on-campus services. In qualitative interviews and focus groups, many students mentioned faculty as a source of information about available services on campus. Some faculty incorporated information about basic needs services in their syllabi or discussed supports in class. Students disclosed their situation to faculty when their grades or attendance began to decline. At times, students said that faculty noticed their academic decline, social struggles, or increased absences and inquired about the students' well-being. Caroleena (CSUN) said that one of her professors sought her out to understand what was happening when she stopped participating in class. "I feel really appreciative that he at least noticed. I was a student that always participated, always like on the second row raising my hand. I didn't think anyone would notice, because my other professors didn't really ask." Caroleena felt inclined to seek services because of the care that faculty person showed in her well-being.

Many students were referred to supports for basic needs from staff in student affairs. In particular, services with a mission to support marginalized students like Educational Opportunity Programs, services for students with disabilities, migrant students, current or former foster youth, and others either provided services on hand or made referrals to programs more specific to their need. Most students found services on their own. They sought services by asking questions

of faculty and staff or searched the internet. Like many others, Kianna (CSULB) was persistent in her search for support. “Even if I don’t know how to do something, I’ll figure it out. That’s kind of my thing too . . . I didn’t know that whole process but I’m like, let me just try it, let me just see.” Navigating services on their own was often time consuming and required persistence.

Students also discussed barriers to exploring potential supports. Many commented that navigating the demands of homelessness, food insecurity, or both was, in and of itself, time consuming and stressful. If there were apparent or perceived obstacles to services such as cumbersome applications, wait times, or difficulty finding the correct contact, they were less likely to apply. Pauline (CSULB) was living in a storage unit at the time of her interview. She said, “I don’t want to sound like I don’t need the help and I’m just busy . . . I don’t have time to sit down and write an essay to explain why I might need \$100 . . . that couple of hours for me is like priceless [crying] . . . I kind of have to weigh out time versus payout.” Further, if hours of operations of services did not coincide with work and school schedules, students were less likely to access the resource. Nadine (CSUSB) said,

“Everything on campus here closes [laughs] right when I have to come for my classes . . . I’ll have to take time off work, that’s losing money that then, if I get there, and they’re like, ‘yes, we can’t help you,’ then I just lost money that I could have been saving up to deal with this issue, not being able to afford to go here.”

Nadine, CSUSB

Many students discussed mixed feelings about using support services. Often concerned that they may not be “needy enough,” students hesitated to feel as though they might be taking from others who might need services more. Bianca (CSUSB), who was regularly missing meals, did not access her campus food pantry, questioning, “Am I broke enough for this free food? . . . There might be a student who has nothing . . . I don’t wanna like take away from them.” Students who were identified as basic needs insecure still appeared to have the perception that their level of need might not earn them the right to access services.

Figure 6 compares barriers to use of services indicated by housing and food insecure and secure students. Students who were housing and food insecure reported more often than housing and food secure students that being embarrassed (15.9%) and not having transportation (7.4%) made it difficult to access on-campus supports. Consistent with qualitative data, survey participants indicated that barriers for many students, no matter their level of basic needs security, did not know how to access services. It is apparent that many students who were basic needs insecure did not have time to access services and did not believe they needed services or did not believe they qualified for services. This also suggests that students may believe that in order to seek services they must struggle far more than they are, even though they are experiencing basic needs insecurity.



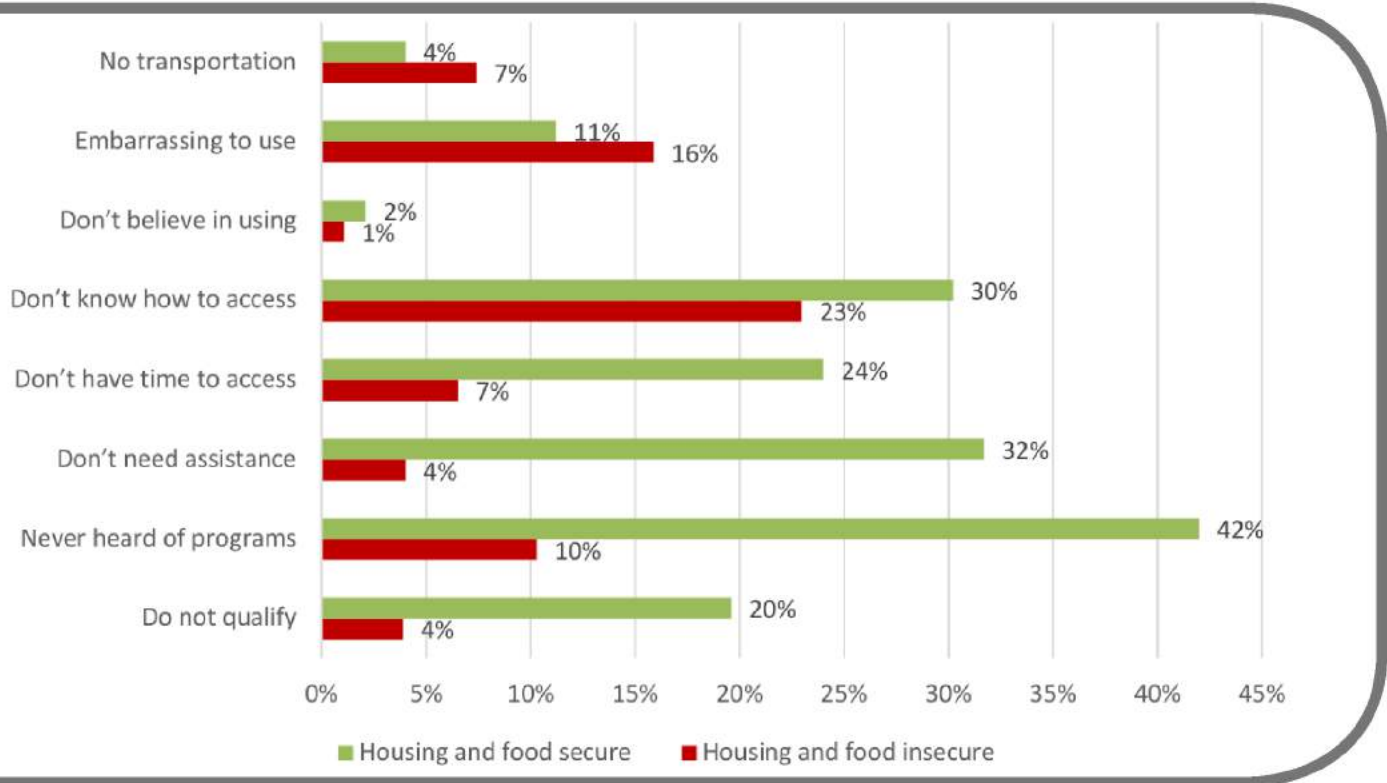


Figure 6. Barriers to on-campus service access, comparing housing and food insecure and secure students.

There was a clear gap in knowledge of services between students who were basic needs insecure and those who were not. Given that students who were basic needs insecure said that they have very little time, it may be that it was difficult for them to hear about available resources. When exploring barriers to use of on-campus services by race, disparities reappear (Table 5). Black and African American students were more likely to have never heard of services (14%) than other groups, though Black and African American students were also more likely to be already accessing services (25.2%). Students who identified as other were most likely not to know how to access services (27.5%) and Asian students were most likely not to use services because of embarrassment (18%).



Table 5. Overall Percentages of Barriers to Accessing On-Campus Services by Race for Students who Reported Food and Housing Security

	Asian %	Black or African American %	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander %	Other %	White %
Not eligible for programs	2.9	4.2	5.6	2.4	4.4
Never heard of programs	10.7	14.0	5.6	10.8	10.3
Don't need assistance	6.6	3.5	5.6	1.0	3.4
Don't have time to access	6.6	7.0	5.6	7.0	6.4
Don't know how to access	22.5	21.0	19.4	27.5	24.5
Don't believe in using	1.2	2.1	0.0	0.8	1.2
Embarrassing to use	18.0	11.9	16.7	16.3	16.5
No transportation	8.2	8.4	5.6	8.8	6.0
Already use programs	16.8	25.2	25.0	16.5	21.3
Other	6.6	2.8	11.1	9.0	6.0

Table 6. Overall Percentages of Barriers to Accessing Campus Services by Ethnicity for Students who Reported Food and Housing Security

	Not eligible for programs %	Never heard of programs %	Don't need assistance %	Don't have time to access %	Don't know how to access %	Don't believe in using %	Embarrassing to use %	No transportation %	Already use programs %	Other %
Hispanic	2.1	11.6	2.1	6.4	25.8	1.3	16.8	8.6	18.1	7.2
Non Hispanic	4.4	9.6	3.6	6.6	23.3	1.1	16.7	6.9	21.6	6.2

CalFresh Application Assistance

A greater proportion of students who identified as experiencing both food insecurity and homelessness (21.6%) indicated using an on-campus CalFresh application assistance program compared to students who were only food insecure (15.1%), followed by students who were only homeless (9.5%). The CalFresh intended population for application assistance is being reached. Of students who were accessing CalFresh, nearly half (46.2%) are food insecure, housing insecure or both. While, a much lower proportion of students who accessed CalFresh were food secure and housed (6.1%). On average, based on any level of basic needs security, students of color use CalFresh application assistance at higher rates than White or Non-Hispanic students (See Table 7). The vast majority of students using CalFresh demonstrate significant need for this vital resource. On average, students who are Pell eligible (16.9%) use CalFresh Application Assistance more often than those who are not (5.6%). Additionally, women (11.2%) use CalFresh application assistance more than men (8.3%) do and first-generation college students (14.7%) use the benefit more than non-first-generation college students (7.7%).

Students who reported that CalFresh was openly promoted on their campus said they did not feel hesitant to sign up and access it. As Jessica (HSU) said, "It's just one fact about my life." Along with campus efforts, students often promoted services like CalFresh among themselves. Fernanda (CSUB) told her friends to apply, saying to them, "You're barely getting by too.' . . . I even bring in the application and tell them this is what you need to do."

Students who did not have support in CalFresh application assistance on-campus found seeking support off-campus untenable. Some found it difficult to navigate on their own and others were met with misinformation from county workers. Numerous students recounted being told by county workers that they were completely ineligible for CalFresh as university students. Others were told that the 20-hour work requirement was a rule without exception. Some students persisted, but met requirements that could have been avoided, like Monica (SDSU) who was asked for multiple meetings and letters of support. She said, "I figured since it's the government, there's no way around it." It appears that the on-campus CalFresh application assistance mitigates barriers to this important resource.



Table 7. CalFresh Application Assistance by Race and Ethnicity

	Currently use it %	Used it in the past %	Currently use and used in past combined %	Heard of it but never used it %	Never heard of it/not offered at my campus %
Asian	2.5	4.8	7.3	40.5	52.1
Black and African American	8.7	11.7	20.4	48	31.6
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4.4	4.9	9.3	44.3	46.4
Other	5.7	6.6	12.3	49.2	38.6
White	4.2	4.8	9	49.6	41.4
Hispanic	5.6	6.3	11.9	49.4	38.7
Non-Hispanic	4	5.4	9.4	46.3	44.3

On-campus CalFresh application assistance appeared to mitigate barriers that students experienced off-campus. Many students discussed the ease of enrollment facilitated by on-campus support staff who were knowledgeable about exemptions. Participants in interviews and focus groups who reported use of on-campus CalFresh application assistance made enrollment “quick,” “easy,” or “fine.” Students found CalFresh application assistance days publicized on campus as “just another campus program.”

Some students still found difficulty in successfully completing their CalFresh follow-up interview, which was required after an application was completed on campus. Some students said they missed phone calls and were unclear about how to follow up with county workers.

Food Pantries

On average, based on any level of basic needs security, students of color accessed campus food pantries at higher rates than White or Non-Hispanic students (See Table 8). On average, students who were Pell eligible (14.9%) accessed the food pantry more often than those who were not (9.1%). Women (12%) and men (12.2%) accessed the food pantry at similar rates. First-generation college students (14.7%) accessed the support more than non-first-generation college (10.4%),

Food pantries were identified by students as vital. The greatest proportion of students who accessed the on-campus food pantry reported being food insecure and experiencing homelessness (18.9%), compared with students who were only food insecure (16.7%),

were only homeless (10.8%), or were food secure and housed (8.3%). As Feather (FSU) said, “[The] Student Cupboard saved my life.” Qualitative data at some campuses showed that knowledge and use of food pantries was normalized. Many students said that feeling comfortable at a food pantry encouraged them to utilize it when they needed it. Lenore (FSU), who also was pleased with her experience at The Student Cupboard, said, “It’s been amazing. Everybody’s super friendly. It’s super casual. You don’t get that vibe like you’re a lesser person.” However, at some campuses, pantries were less well known. Charles (SLO) suggested making food pantries visible. “. . . We walk in, you don’t know where the food pantry is, and I guess you have to have someone to accompany you to take you there . . . I feel . . . Oh, can I just come in? Does someone have to take me there?” Accessibility, visibility, and rapport building in campus pantries influenced access.

Luz (CSUSB) similarly emphasized the need for a visible and accessible location, but also, like others, added that the hours of services had to meet the needs of students. Many students who were basic needs insecure had very little available time and, resource hours of operation were prohibitive to access. She added, “The only bad thing is that it’s very time-limited . . . And maybe students aren’t here those days or even at that time. And it’s pretty far away.” Many students discussed the challenge of the location of the pantry. On some campuses, food pantries were located on the edges of campus. For students who were taking many classes and often also working long hours to make ends meet, finding a pantry on campus was difficult. Nate (CSUSB) said that he was able to access small free snacks on campus, but was unable to go to the campus food pantry for his larger needs. He said, “Just to walk all the way over there . . . The first time I drove over there . . . I was like am I going the right way?” In general, accessible and normalized food pantries were viable options for those students who knew about them.

At the time the survey was distributed, many campuses were still developing awareness of programs and services. For those students who were at a campus with a new food pantry, they expressed a lack of awareness of services. Students suggested that the campus pantry would have been an important resource for their well-being. Peter (CSUN) had not heard about his campus pantry until he filled out the study survey. His prior semester had been very difficult and he noted that his pantry would have been very helpful. He said he was at the point where he had to make difficult choices. “Do I sacrifice work so I can dedicate the time I need for these classes, and get started again? Or do I risk failing these classes so I have money? I dedicated the time to the studies, and my belt went down two notches [laughter].”

Some students described utilizing the campus food pantry to supplement their financial aid, which covered tuition and some other bills, but not all of their expenses. Catrina (SDSU) said,

“ Ever since I found [out] about them I’ve been going there like a robot every week getting food for my family, because it’s the only healthy food we get. I have to show up there as soon as they open cause so many students are starting to realize that it’s there and they’re utilizing it. **”**

Catrina, SDSU

Overall, students emphasized that awareness of services, how they were received when those services were accessed, and the location and ease of access to the pantry services encouraged use. Contrarily, pantries that were difficult to access due to location or hours of service were often outside of their reach. Again, across racial groups, high percentages of students reported that they had not heard of food pantries on their campuses.

Table 8. *Food Pantry Use by Race and Ethnicity*

	Currently use it %	Used it in the past %	Currently use and used in past combined %	Heard of it but never used it %	Never heard of it/not offered at my campus %
Asian	5.8	7.4	13.2	33.9	52.8
Black or African American	6.7	7.3	14	35.8	50.2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	5.5	6.6	12.1	30.9	57
Other	6.5	7.8	14.3	33.9	51.8
White	4.4	4.7	9.1	35.3	55.6
Hispanic	6.3	7.9	14.2	33.5	52.3
Non-Hispanic	5	5.5	10.5	35	54.4

Counseling and Psychological Services

Differences were found regarding the utilization of an on-campus counseling and psychological services center by level of students' basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (26.3%) indicated using an on-campus counseling center compared to students who were only homeless (19.0%) or only food insecure (18.8%). Although, a greater proportion of these students used a campus counseling center compared to students who identified as food secure and housed (12.0%). Given that students who experience a lack of basic needs often also experience negative mental health consequences (Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018), these findings are not surprising.

Qualitative data were consistent with survey results, showing that many students who lacked basic needs sought services in on-campus counseling centers. Gloria (CSULA) said that this resource was very important for her. She said, "I think that that has really been helping, because [my counselor] kind of knows what has been going on . . . It has been hard kind of like grinding back into the year and you know just having to deal with the anxiety of possibly not having housing next year." Gloria was able to access 11 sessions with the same counselor who was able to support her through very difficult circumstances.

Other students were able to find basic needs services through counseling centers. Kaylee (CSUB) was introduced to food resources on campus by her counselor, who told her about it and then emailed her to remind her to go. Along with a campus email that reinforced this message, Kaylee felt prompted to try. She said, "I was able to go, and then I have it scheduled for the next month . . . That was really nice and they have some really good information for on-campus stuff."

Some students said they would avoid counseling unless they felt so overwhelmed that they had very little other choice. However, some students who sought mental health services struggled to find counseling appointments. Like many of her basic needs insecure peers, Tatiana (CSUDH) was food and housing insecure, taking a full load of classes, and working to make ends meet. She attempted to make an appointment by phone, but was required to come to the office in person. “I tried last semester and they were booked,” she said. Though needed, counseling felt out of reach. The circumstance was similar for Cindy (HSU).

“It was kind of hard to even get an appointment there to start with. I tried a couple days and called right at 8 in the morning when they opened. It was busy, and as soon as it wasn't busy, they were already full for the day. And, so I had to make a several weeks in advance appointment which when I got there it was really helpful, but it was also like I needed help sooner.”

Cindy, HSU

Students appeared to find support for their mental health helpful. Further, students who sought this resource were often referred for other pertinent services as well. This suggests that counseling service support can be an important centralized location for referral. However, students who found it difficult to access counseling services, such as experiencing long wait times for appointments, did not benefit from these opportunities.

Student Health Centers

A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (55.2%), only food insecure (51.5%), or only homeless (51.6%), indicated using an on-campus health center more than students who were food secure and housed (41.5%). Students who used the health center had more days of negative physical symptoms and missed days of work and school in a month than those who did not use services.

Student health centers were also an important resource for health along with referrals to service for basic needs. Ella (CSUSB) said that she would not generally seek help, but was identified by her health practitioner as basic needs insecure. When asked if she had sought help, she said,

“Oh, no. I'm a very private person, so I don't really talk personal. But, for me, it was actually the Health Medical Service . . . I went there and — it was around the time when my parents got arrested by ICE . . . I guess I told the health doctor because they ask you questions, and then they sent me to [counseling and psychological services] and then that's when I got my counselor, and then she brought up The Den [food pantry]. . . . She told me that they help out students in need.”

Ella, CSUSB

Health centers were reported as critical in the maintenance of physical health; however, additional to medical services, students who lacked basic needs also found resources to mitigate their food and housing insecurity that they otherwise would not have sought.

Emergency Housing Services

Variability was also found regarding the use of on-campus emergency housing program. It is important to note that not all campuses provided emergency housing at the time of this study. Results indicated that there were differences in students' use of campus emergency housing

program based on students' basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (2.5%) or only homeless (2.1%) indicated using on-campus emergency housing program compared to students who were only food insecure (1.0%) or food secure and housed (0.7%). However, overall participation in this service was the lowest among all on-campus services measured.

It was clear that students who sought emergency housing were among the most vulnerable. Many campuses did not have programs that provided institutionalized emergency housing programs; however, many students who did have access to this resource found it to be a helpful temporary bridge to stability. Erika (CSULB) found that having the resource made her feel more connected to the campus community. She said, "I love this school, 'cause they knew what was going on so they let me stay in the dorms until the semester ended. They allowed it. So, I'm really grateful for that." Similarly, Elizabeth (FSU) said having emergency housing allowed her time to find new housing after she was unexpectedly evicted without cause. She said, "She [support staff] got me to stay in a temporary room until I was able to figure out something." For those who had the resources to seek new housing, emergency housing allowed for a smooth transition.

Students who were experiencing longer-term homelessness described emergency housing as helpful, but not completely stabilizing. Pauline (CSULB) had been living in storage units for several months. She said,

“Yeah, the temporary stuff is like, okay, well that's great, but it's temporary and like there's no promise that I only need a few weeks to get on my feet [and get a job] . . . And I still haven't found anything. So, I can't like think, oh, this is just for two months and then after that like I will be on my feet. There is no guarantee.**”**

Pauline, CSULB

Emergency housing for those who had the resources to regain stability appeared to be valuable. However, it appeared students with protracted lack of basic needs require sustained services.

Emergency Meal Programs

Similar to emergency housing, results may reflect that, at the time of data collection, many campuses did not have emergency meal programs. For those students who did have access to these programs, meals that were free and made available through a coupon or on their identification card as a "swipe" meal at dining halls were incredibly helpful. Kendrick, an alumni of CSULB, was able to utilize several emergency supports on his campus when he was a student that helped support him toward graduation. He said, "I was able to take advantage of a \$300 grant that helped me out with food and, you know, [emergency] dorming and [emergency] food. It was nice to just eat like, healthy again." The provision of meal assistance often acted as a bridge as students found financial stability.

Regarding the use of an emergency meal program, results indicated differences based on students' basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as both food insecure and homeless (3.9%) indicated using an emergency meal program compared to students who were only homeless (2.0%). A greater proportion of these students reported using an emergency meal program compared to students who were only food insecure (0.9%) or food secure and housed (0.4%).

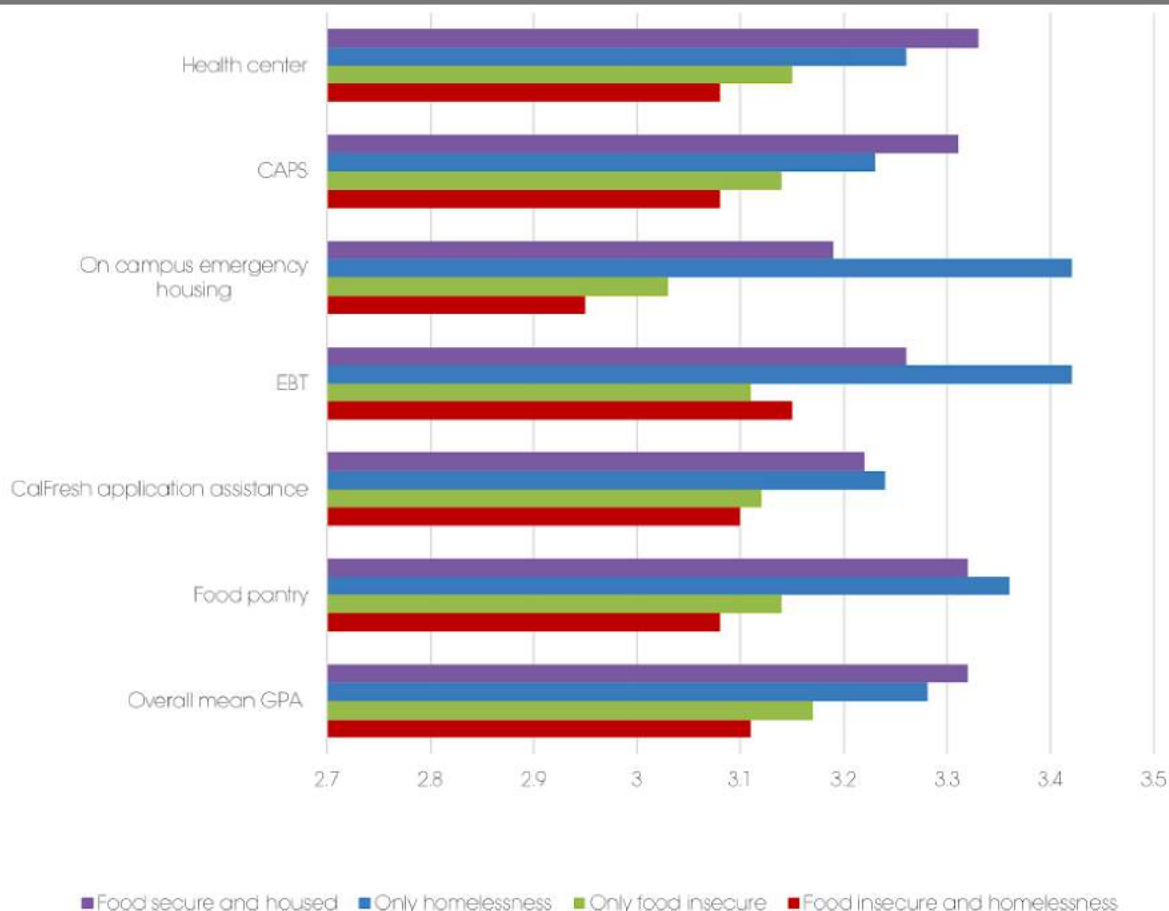
Students Who Accessed More Than One Support

Students who reported being food insecure and experiencing homelessness on average used more services than those who were food and housing secure. Conversely, students who were food secure and housed used fewer on-campus services compared to students who were only homeless, only food insecure ($M = 1.05$, $SD = 1.06$), or both food insecure and homeless. Moreover, students who reported homelessness ($M = 1.21$, $SD = 1.17$) used a greater number of on-campus services compared to students who had not been homeless within the past 12 months.

GPA by Level of Basic Need Security and Access of On-Campus Services

Students who experienced both food insecurity and homelessness ($M = 3.11$) had the lowest average GPA. Those who were only food insecure had slightly higher GPAs ($M = 3.17$), then those who were only homeless ($M = 3.28$), and those who had experienced neither ($M = 3.32$) the highest average GPAs. Students who “currently use” or “used in the past” on-campus services reported the highest rates of food insecurity and homelessness. In general, students who accessed the supports and were food insecure or food insecure and homeless had statistically significant lower GPAs than students who did not use the health centers. Lack of basic needs takes a significant academic toll on students who experience food and housing insecurity. However, important to note is that students who are homeless, in most service use categories, are thriving compared to all other groups when observing average GPAs (See Figure 7).

Figure 7. Average GPA based on basic needs security and access of campus support program.



Some students who were homeless but did not experience food insecurity described achieving in academics. Hanna (CSUN) said,

I only got one C and then the rest are all As and Bs. So despite my situation, I'll still do what I'm supposed to do. Even though I'm unstable and there is just so much going on, outside the school is really bad and turbulent, and it's just toxic, it's just like complete opposite. School is like escape.

Hanna, CSUN

However, other students discussed how difficult it was to maintain their GPAs while trying to meet their basic needs. Pauline (CSULB), who was both food insecure and experiencing homelessness, said,

I've been working a couple of side jobs just to make some money here and there to keep myself afloat . . . I have to prioritize being able to bring in a little bit of money for myself versus having the extra time to work on school work and I always make school work a priority when I can, but it's hard and I don't have the time.

Pauline, CSULB

Many students described actively accessing on- and off-campus services; however, the ongoing struggle to achieve academically, find time to seek services, maintain employment to cover expenses, and participate in familial or social responsibilities was a difficult balance.



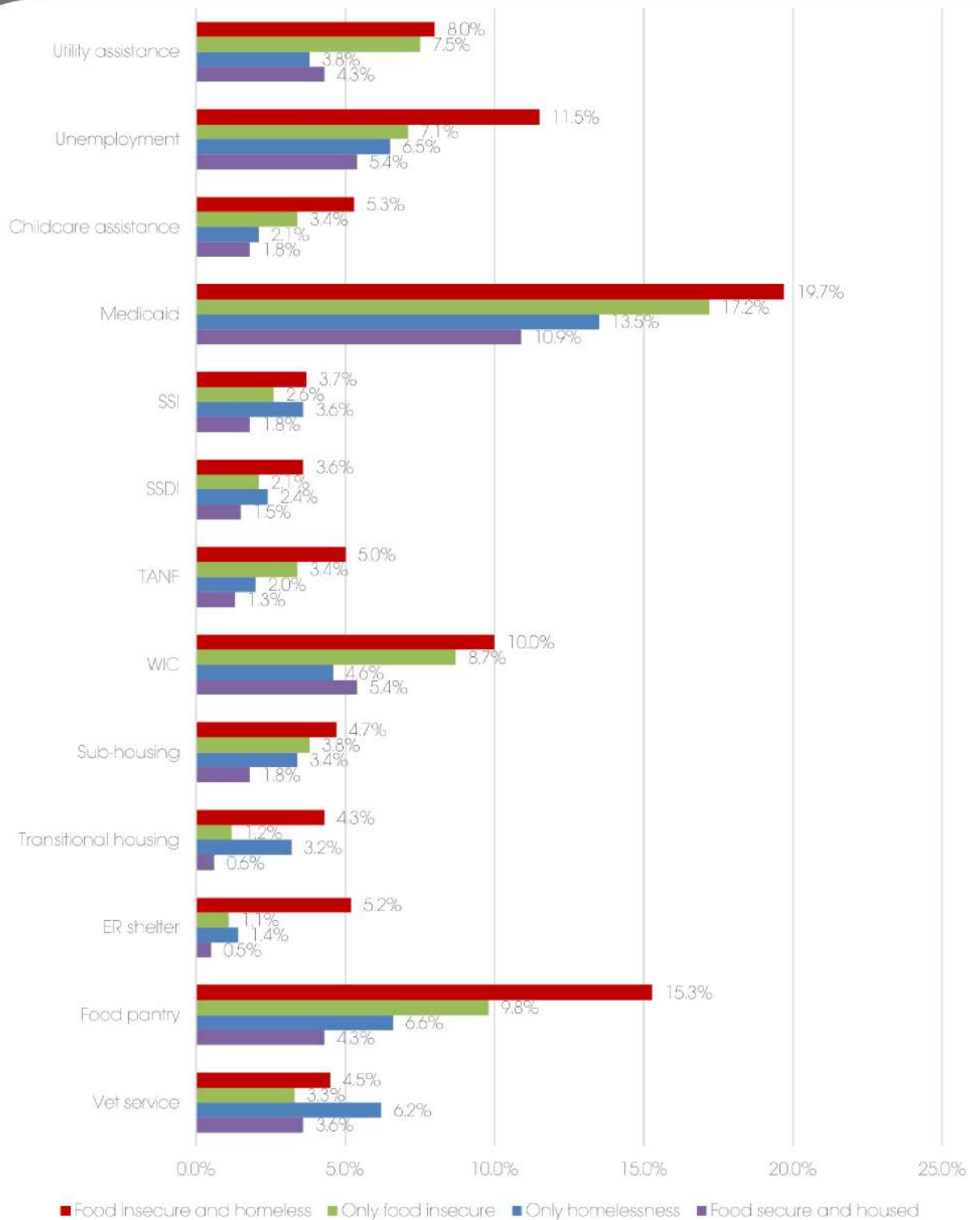
Receipt of Off-Campus Supports

Findings showed that use of off-campus services was low for all groups. Though some students found community food pantries and emergency or transitional housing helpful, they were often not seen as appropriate for their specific needs. State and federal benefits like veterans benefits, Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability (SSI/SSDI), and Medicaid, unemployment, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) were important for those students who accessed them; however, there appeared to be room for stronger linkages to ensuring access.

It was arduous and time consuming for many students to qualify for public benefits and to navigate the government bureaucracy required accessing those benefits. Results demonstrated that many students experience an acute level of food and housing insecurity while earning a college degree. It is clear in Figure 8, that students with the greatest basic need insecurity, those who reported both food and housing insecurity, were utilizing off-campus services and public benefits. However, the percentages of students who used these were scant. Students with the greatest basic needs insecurity accessed Medicaid, off-campus food pantries, unemployment, utility assistance, and Women Infants and Children (WIC) the most. This may be linked to the ability for students in higher education to qualify for these services and suggests an opportunity to begin the establishment of linkages and improved policy to expand off-campus supports for students. These findings also point to which public benefits need further exploration as higher education administrators continue to build bridges for students with the greatest need for the benefits.



Figure 8. CSU student receipt of off-campus supports and public benefits by level of basic needs security.



Students who had used off-campus supports prior to college often recounted accessing services while in school to mitigate their lack of basic needs. Ivan (CSUN) mentioned going to seek resources like off-campus food pantries with his mother when he was a child. "I remember also going to food pantries. Just knowing that she's the one that taught me how to like, 'Oh, this how you research this or find resources in the community.'" He discussed that using services as a child helped him navigate finding and applying for services. Like other participants, Ivan heard people describe people who used these services as "lazy" or "users," but acknowledged that his need outweighed the impact of stigma. "If these things don't exist, I don't know what I would be doing. It would be much harder for me, for my education, for my work or for a living." A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (15.3%) indicated using an off-campus food pantry compared to students who were only food insecure (9.8%) or only homeless (6.6%). A much greater proportion of these students reported accessing an off-campus food pantry compared to students who were food secure and housed (4.3%). Staff members need to be aware that individuals with no connection to these services may need additional support.

Results indicated differences in the use of off-campus emergency shelters based on students' basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (5.2%) indicated using an off-campus emergency shelter compared to students who were only homeless (1.4%), only food insecure (1.1%) or food secure and housed (0.5%). This pattern of variability was unique in that students who were food insecure and homeless were overrepresented compared to all other groups. Very few students reported using emergency shelters in interviews and focus groups. Many said that shelters seemed to focus on populations in greater need. This was true of students who recounted sleeping in cars or open spaces, students often perceived themselves as vulnerable, but sought to preserve off-campus services for those not in universities. Ivette (CSULA) said that she stayed in a shelter when she had no other choice. She resorted to a shelter when she had a Section 8 voucher, but could not find housing that would accept it.

Quantitative data were reflective of Ivette's experience. Students who were both food and housing insecure were the most represented, followed by student experiencing either food insecurity or homelessness. Results did suggest that a greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (4.7%) indicated using subsidized housing compared to students who were only food insecure (3.8%) or only homeless (3.4%). Students who were food secure and housed were the least represented (1.8%). Although, a greater proportion of students who were the most basic need insecure used this service, this proportion of the population was low.

Some students found off-campus shelters unsafe. Hanna (CSUN) said that one of her professors suggested that she try a local shelter, but that shelter was located in Skid Row and she was unwilling to go to a place that seemed unsafe. She said, "I'm not trying to be staying at the shelters down there, so I'd rather just stay at my car or go somewhere else."

Results indicated that there were differences in students' use of transitional housing based on students' basic needs security. Transitional housing provides interim stability for individuals and families experiencing homelessness until they can find long-term housing stability (United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2018). A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (4.3%) indicated using transitional housing compared to students who were only homeless (3.2%). Although, a greater proportion of these students reported using transitional housing compared to students who were only food insecure (1.2%) or food secure and housed (0.6%).

Qualitative data showed that students who discussed use of subsidized housing often had the most tenuous experiences. Often, these students described long-term experiences with instability in their housing and food security. Ivette (CSULA) and her children lived in a transitional housing facility. She was initially there to move out of her car and into stable living. Once she was stabilized and was given access to subsidized housing, she still remained in the shelter because there were no available apartments that would take her Section 8 voucher. The staff at the shelter helped her find subsidized housing after living in the shelter for 6 months, all while she was attending college. She said that very few people on campus knew about her circumstances, “Not a lot of people know, just like my close friend . . . I think just school is the one that kept me up. I feel like I would have gotten depressed or something.”

Veterans Benefits

Very few qualitative participants were veterans, but of those that did participate, they suggested that veteran specific services on their campus provided assistance with seeking housing, navigating campus services, and provided social support and connection to other veterans. Survey results indicated that there were differences in students’ use of veterans benefits based on students’ basic needs security. This was the only service for which students who were only homeless had the highest service use. A greater proportion of students who identified as only homeless (6.2%) indicated using veterans benefits compared to students who were food insecure and homeless (4.5%). Although a greater proportion of these students reported using veterans benefits compared to students who were food secure and housed (3.6%) or only food insecure (3.3%).

The GI Bill is any Department of Veterans Affairs education benefit earned by members of Active Duty, Selected Reserve and National Guard Armed Forces and their families. Results indicated that there were differences in students reporting that a GI Bill was a part of their financial aid package based on their basic need security. A greater proportion of students who identified as homeless (6.9%) indicated using the GI Bill compared to students who were only food insecure (4.3%), food insecure and homeless (5.3%), and food secure and housed (4.6%).

Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability (SSI/SSDI) Benefits

The effects of basic needs insecurity on the use of SSI and SSDI were also small. Results indicated that there were differences in students’ use of SSI based on students’ basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (3.7%) or only homeless (3.6%) indicated using SSI compared to students who were only food insecure (2.6%). A greater proportion of these students reported using SSI compared to students who were food secure and housed (1.8%). Results indicated that there were differences in students’ use of SSDI based on students’ basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (3.6%) indicated using SSDI compared to students who were only homeless (2.4%) or only food insecure (2.1%). A greater proportion of these students reported using SSDI compared to students who were food secure and housed (1.5%). Several students discussed how difficult it could be to stay within income requirements of SSI, navigate financial aid, and make ends meet. Anna (CSULA) said,

Because I’m on SSI, I cannot spend that scholarship money on anything other than rent and anything other than school supplies. The minute I spend that money on rent, food, or clothing, it counts against my check. They’ll take money out of my check. I don’t have that money to pay rent with. And they’re counting it as income and they raised my rent \$80. That’s why I’ve been such a bad buying with the food because I run out of money. I try to budget as best I can.

Anna, CSULA

Students often discussed being discouraged from gaining higher education by public social services, either by policy or verbally from human service staff. Eligibility requirements and restrictions on access of funds were barriers financing education. Many public services required students prioritize employment, often low-income employment, over enrolling in college. Some eligibility workers told students directly that they needed to choose between the public support that paid for their housing, food, or child care over a university degree.

Medicaid

Medicaid produced a similar pattern of receipt as other off-campus services. Results indicated that there were differences in students' use of Medicaid based on students' basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (19.7%) or only food insecure (17.2%) indicated using Medicaid compared to students who were only homeless (13.5%). Although, a greater proportion of these students reported using Medicaid compared to students who were food secure and housed (10.9%). This service had the highest levels of participation among off-campus services measured.

Unemployment

Survey results indicated that there were differences in students' receipt of unemployment based on students' basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (11.5%) indicated using unemployment compared to students who were only food insecure (7.1%) or only homeless (6.5%). Although, a greater proportion of these students reported using unemployment compared to students who were food secure and housed (5.4%). These two services also yielded similar sized effects.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Some students received benefits through the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) program, known as the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program in California and colloquially known as welfare. TANF benefits includes child care, a diaper supplement, a cash grant and ancillary support services like books and transportation. In order for a student to participate in TANF and receive education services through the program, they must have a Welfare-to-Work plan approved by their county eligibility worker. Results indicated that there were differences in students' receipt of TANF based on students' level of basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (5.0%) indicated receiving TANF compared to students who were only food insecure (3.4%). Although, a greater proportion of these students reported receiving TANF benefits compared to students who were only homeless (2.0%) or food secure and housed (1.3%).

Students who were recipients of TANF assistance reported that navigating public social services as a student was difficult. Kathy (CSULA) managed her college enrollment process with difficulty and had to ensure that, if she gained employment to meet her basic needs, she did not inadvertently work too many hours, which could result in negatively impacting her TANF grant. She found the support from TANF was valuable, saying, "So with that assistance, I'm actually able to graduate. Without that, I would still be working and going to school part-time . . . and that means school would take longer to graduate." Applying and maintaining eligible status for these programs often took a great deal of time, but they were critical resources.

Services for Parenting Students

Students reported that parenting while managing education was challenging. However, those who could meet eligibility requirements found low-cost childcare invaluable. Prior to parenthood, students described trying to persevere without services, but having children often required making choices they often would not make just for themselves. Wendy (SDSU) said, “But now I have my kids . . . I updated my CalFresh and I’m like okay, have another person because hardly any income I only got \$16 a month, that’s why I went to the food pantry.”

Students who experienced homelessness and students that were food secure and housed were similarly represented in receipt of childcare assistance programs. Results indicated that there were differences in students’ receipt of childcare assistance based on students’ level of basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as food insecure and homeless (5.3%) indicated receiving childcare assistance compared to students who were only food insecure (3.4%). Although, a greater proportion of these students reported receiving childcare assistance compared to students who were only homeless (2.1%) or food secure and housed (1.8%).

Students who experienced homelessness were least likely to receive Women Infants and Children (WIC). A greater proportion of students who identified as both food insecure and homeless (10.0%) or only food insecure (8.7%) indicated using WIC compared to students who were food secure and housed (5.4%) or students who were only homeless (4.6%).

Receipt of More Than One Public Benefit

Students found access to public social services mired with barriers. As Pauline (CSULB), who lived in a storage unit, said, “I couldn’t get county based assistance if I was taking more than 6 units of courses . . . That counted as me like having enough money to pay for those courses, so I didn’t need help.” Meeting strict eligibility requirements often felt like having a part time job, going to public social service offices, acquiring necessary documents to prove their need was challenging. When these efforts resulted in necessary support, persistent and knowledgeable students were able to navigate these obstacles. Those that did access services often had to repeatedly go through these processes. As Pauline (CSULB) pointed out, “I have MediCal, but they sent me a letter in like February that said I’m up for review again . . . So, I guess I have to go back down there and figure out how I prove to them that I’m not making anything [laughing].”

Other students who lacked the time, did not know how to navigate services, or felt unable could not access those options. Ophelia (CSULA) said that she spent so much time trying to apply for services that she could not complete her schoolwork. After much deliberation, she chose writing a paper over her WIC application. “I kind of don’t need that stress right now. So, I stopped getting WIC.”

Many students without children who were food insecure, experiencing homelessness, or both said they did not use public services or were hesitant to do so. Tom (CSUN) said that his friends discouraged him from seeking public social services like food pantries because they said he was “not needy enough.” Tom said “[My friends said], ‘Oh no, that’s for people that need it.’ That’s for people that are hungry.” He disclosed that he was dealing with hunger. Tom suggested that reframing basic needs would have helped him in his search for help. He said,

“We have this picture in our head of what a homeless person looks like or what someone that’s low income looks like and they don’t want to put you in that box. Part of the stigma of going to a food pantry, it’s a community, one . . . I’m doing stuff on my own . . . that stigma, maybe I don’t deserve going to that food pantry, maybe I don’t deserve getting free fruits and vegetables from the fruit garden. But the longer I can do that for without having to ask people for handouts, the more confidence I have as an adult.

Tom, CSUN

For other participants, public pantries or homeless shelters did not feel safe or an appropriate fit for their age group. In recounting going to a community homeless shelter, Lucy (CSULB) said, “I just left there because I didn’t feel like it was a safe situation.” She said that the resources on campus were a better fit, even if there were fewer resources available. Regarding her campus pantry, she said, “The one here it’s like really nice and stuff but if you go [to] ones in like downtown Long Beach, it’s scary for sure.”



Financial Aid, Loans, and Credit Card Use

Regarding the use of a Pell Grant as a form of financial aid, results indicated that there were significant differences based on students' level of basic needs security. Students who reported only food insecurity (56.4%) indicated using Pell Grants more than students who were only homeless (39.9%). A slightly higher proportion of students who were food and housing secure used Pell Grants (41.5%) more than the number of students who reported only homelessness (39.9%). Over half of students who reported being both food insecure and having experienced one or more incidents of homelessness in the past 12 months received Pell Grants (59%). Some students described needing to support their families with financial aid. Cathy (CSULA) said, "With my financial aid I'm able to help my mom pay bills and gas. That's my responsibility from month to month. That's another [reason] why I'm living off of rice and pasta."

Pell was often a resource for students who lacked basic needs; however, many students discussed using financial aid funds for tuition and housing, having very little financial support left for other expenses. Many students budgeted very tightly and still could not make ends meet. Lavender (HSU) said, "I also try to just spend my money wisely and...I'll make a whole pot of lentils to last for the week or whatever . . . I try to just like strategically buy my groceries to fit into a long-term, weekly plan or something." Kathy (CSULA), like others, resorted to a short-term, high interest loan from a local neighborhood payday lender, which created high interest debt. As she was trying to make her initial deposit for on-campus housing, Kathy struggled to pay her expenses. She said, "I had ended up taking out a temporary loan from one of the loan services . . . I was freaking out at first because I was like, wait, how am I going to pay for this?"

Regarding the use of credit cards to cover remaining education and living expense, results indicated that there were differences based on students' level of basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as both food insecure and homeless (57.1%) and as food insecure only (47.7%) indicated credit card debt to cover expenses compared to students who were only homeless (31.5%) and food and housing secure (25.4%).

Many students discussed the use of credit cards to fill in financial gaps not met by other sources of financial aid. Tatiana (CSUDH) discussed how she negotiated her bills with credit card debt. She said, "Okay, I'm going to pay this card, and with that card, I'm going to do this once I pay it off. And then this one's going to be paid off so that I can pay . . . So it's like I pay it off, but then I'd use it again." She attempted to make payments on her cards, but never seemed to gain ground. Like Tatiana, Fernanda (CSUB) used credit cards in hopes that she would find relief after graduation. "It's an investment in my education. I'm paying it. Right now, I live by my credit card. With my job, hopefully, I'm able to save up and pay that . . . [So], okay, I'll buy the food this week." Students using credit cards to meet their basic needs often expressed feeling in a perpetual cycle of increasing debt. They may work to pay down their bills, but the need to have housing or sleep was persistent. Bernard (SFSU) said, "Every semester my credit card bill would go up because, you know, you're starving so you use your credit card."

The lack of financial resources to meet basic needs and the cost of higher education pressed students to have high course loads. Most of the students who participated in interviews and focus groups recounted taking as many classes as possible to graduate as quickly as possible. As Emily (SDSU), who was taking 19 units at the time of her interview said:

“The thought of maybe having to stay past 4 years just honestly makes me want to cry. I’m already starting to plan a full set of classes for the summer because I really don’t want to be in college for . . . because every single year I’m here, I have to pay so much. Not only just the tuition, but books and food and just everything.
”

Emily, SDSU

Overall, students’ receipt of financial aid varied by students’ level of basic needs security. This included use of Federal Pell Grants, Cal Grants, grants from nongovernmental sources, scholarships, Federal Work Study, GI Bill, CSU application fee waivers, and subsidized and unsubsidized loans.

Results also indicated that there were differences in students reporting that loans were a part of their financial aid package based on students’ level of basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as both food insecure and homeless (62.7%) and as only food insecure (61.7%) indicated using loans compared to students who were only homeless (48.8%) and food and housing secure (46.9%). Many students discussed loans in interviews and focus groups. Some students found loans to be a part of their educational investment, and others expressed great fear of having long-term debt. Some students discussed how, even with loans, it was difficult to make ends meet. Regarding loans, Pauline (CSULB) said, “They helped out some, but it didn’t cover everything. And then I still needed living expenses.”

A different trend was reported regarding the use of scholarships as a form of financial aid, results indicated that there were differences based on students’ level of basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as both food and housing secure (26.1%) and only homeless (27.5%) indicated using scholarships. This is compared to students who were only food insecure (24.5%) and food insecure and homeless (24.5%).

Additionally, results indicated that there were differences in students reporting no financial aid based on students’ level of basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as both food and housing secure (27.9%) and only homeless (28.6%) indicated receiving no financial aid compared to students who were only food insecure (17.1%) and food insecure and homeless (16.2%).

Regarding the use of work study, results indicated that there were differences in students qualifying for work study based on students’ level of basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as both food and housing secure (86.4%) and only homeless (84.1%) indicated not qualifying for work study compared to students who were only food insecure (78.5%) and food insecure and homeless (77.2%). Many students described this as an important opportunity, but also said that finding work study positions was difficult.

Moreover, results indicated that there were differences in students obtaining a work study position based on students’ level of basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as both food insecure and homeless (9.9%) and as food insecure (8.4%) indicated that they had secured a work study position compared to students who were only homeless (7.8%) and food and housing secure (5.6%).

When students were asked whether their financial aid package covered all of their educational expenses, results indicated that there were differences based on students' level of basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as both food and housing secure (56.7%) and as only homeless (56.1%) reported that their financial aid did not cover all of their education expenses compared to students who were only food insecure (52.0%) and food insecure and homeless (52.7%).

An opposite trend was reported by students when asked whether their financial aid package covered all of their living expenses. Results indicated that there were differences in students reporting that their financial aid package covers all of one's living expenses based on students' level of basic needs security. A greater proportion of students who identified as both food insecure and homeless (89.0%) and as food insecure only (88.4%) also indicated that their financial aid did not cover all of their living expenses compared to students who were only homeless (83.1%) and food and housing secure (82.4%).

Summaries of Campus Case Studies

Appendix C- California State University, Long Beach Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program

Initially a small idea that grew quickly into a robust, holistic, student-centered initiative, the California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program (SEIWP) aims to identify and support students who are experiencing basic need insecurities and provide critical resources and services to alleviate distress and to increase wellness and academic success. SEIWP provides immediate support to students who are facing high stress situations such as housing insecurity, food insecurity, and financial crises. Services included are emergency short-term on-campus housing, grants, loans, meals, CalFresh application assistance, linkages to the on-campus food pantry, case management and referrals for off-campus services to meet students' intermediate and long-term needs. SEIWP was developed as a short-term intervention approach for students experiencing high-risk situations impeding their ability to achieve individual wellness and academic success.

The CSULB report provides a narrative and timeline of the development of the program, and qualitative analysis of the experiences with SEIWP from the perspectives of CSULB staff, faculty, administrators, and student participants. This study included qualitative interviews with staff, faculty, administrators, case coordinators and student interns (n=19). Second, interviews and focus groups

were conducted with students who had received services from the program (n=39). This case study is an examination of the evolution of SEIWP, describing the program development, implementation, challenges, and successes. The perspectives of SEIWP held by CSULB students, staff, faculty, and administrators are shared in this case study. The following areas are included in this report: (a) narrative and timeline of the program, (b) staff, faculty, and administrator experiences with the program, and (c) student experiences with the program. Additionally, implications and recommendations will be provided.

Since its inception in 2014, SEIWP has implemented comprehensive programs to ensure students experiencing basic need insecurities at CSULB can regain stability, health and receive support on their path to college graduation. While it is clear this innovative program has greatly impacted the lives of many students, more work is necessary in order to ensure basic needs of every CSULB student are being met. Recommendations include seeking campus, community, CSU system and state support to continue expanding the resources and programs available through SEIWP. Also, as financial and community support expands for the program, SEIWP can extend greater awareness of the program across campus. This support will also allow for reevaluation of the Student Emergency Grant eligibility criteria. As with many campus programs, SEIWP is encouraged to continue to close communication with the California Department of Social Services.

Appendix D- Humboldt State University (HSU) Oh SNAP! Student Food Programs

Over a 5-year period, Oh SNAP! has grown from a CalFresh recruitment strategy to comprehensive food security program that includes an ongoing research agenda that focuses on the unmet basic needs of college students on the campus of Humboldt State University. In its second year, Oh SNAP! transitioned to an emergency food pantry that now provides students with nutritional education and training in basic food preparation, access to emergency food supply and community garden, and food recovery. The full evaluation is the story of how Oh SNAP! came to be, and an appraisal of its services by the students who use them.

The evaluation consisted of the following activities: (a) five key informant interviews with Oh SNAP! staff (n=5), (b) two focus groups with student utilizers of Oh SNAP! (n=21), and (c) key informant interviews with student utilizers and non-utilizers of Oh SNAP! (n=5). This evaluation examined the development of the Oh SNAP! project, describing its operations and its challenges, and reviewed the perspectives of Oh SNAP! held by students, staff, faculty, and administrators on the HSU campus with regard to the aims of the program.

There were key themes identified that were critical to the success of the Oh SNAP! program on HSU's campus. Critical to the success of the program were the student-centered design and peer-to-peer program implementation. Integral to the development of the programs was the myth-busting narrative created about basic needs security by student activists, faculty, staff through research, collective efforts and advocacy, which helped to reconceptualize hunger and food insecurity at HSU as a product of unequal socioeconomic conditions that adversely affected physical and mental health. This collaborative effort transformed basic needs insecurity into a legitimate concern for health services at the university. The finances that fueled the project's development were the result of intense personal networking and sharing of research findings gathered during early CalFresh recruitment, which drew attention to a problem of students' unmet basic needs. Diverse funding created a network of on- and off-campus stakeholders invested in the innovation and success of increased access to healthy, affordable, culturally relevant foods for all students. Oh SNAP! developed in large part because of outspoken campus champions involved in HSU and in the

community, who constantly talked about it and looked for connections, funding, and new ways to support students, which created broad-based, multi-level partnerships critical to its growth. With the success of Oh SNAP! came lessons learned. Students identified obstacles to program utilization. The food pantry was not in a central campus location. The food pantry was in a small space that often felt crowded. Students shared that they had wished there were more fresh fruits and vegetables. Among those who had applied for CalFresh, there was a sense of confusion about eligibility and mixed messages about how to qualify. For some students there were shame and stigma associated with the use of Oh SNAP!, although most students stated after they had walked into Oh SNAP! they were welcomed and felt very comfortable being there. There were important recommendations from the Oh SNAP! Evaluation:

- Structure food pantry open hours around class schedules.
- Develop outreach to students about the variety of supports available to students through Oh SNAP!
- Diversify dissemination of information about services to a broader segment of the student population through formal orientation programs, official campus publications and postings on campus and on-line.
- Build partnerships that provide legal assistance for students, including remote media technology options.
- Coordinate food and housing support programs on campus. Increase strategies for meeting student housing needs with community partnerships that decrease financial barriers and racial disparity and provide assistance with the acquisition of affordable, appropriate student housing.
- Expand on existing services to students who are experiencing homelessness by identifying existing lockers and showers and designating resting spaces on campus.
- Centralize information for registration for car-pooling and other transportation assistance for students living off-campus.
- Convene a collaborative team of students, working within a similar organizational structure to Oh SNAP! to tackle the student housing problem in this community.

The Oh SNAP! project demonstrated the creativity and persistence of student activists, collaborating with campus champions who were embedded in hierarchical as well as lateral connections to resources, in solving local problems. Importantly, these students did more than merely help people in need; they helped to change the public discourse about the problem of meeting basic human needs. With their critical perspectives, combined with the optimism and determination of staff members and administrative supporters who took their circumstances seriously, these students succeeded in building an integrated program of supports on the HSU campus that contain the seeds of social change. Essentially, the services themselves focused on empowerment and self-determination, rather than the commonly practiced relationship of charitable acts done for the unfortunate.

Since the Oh SNAP! program was placed under the umbrella of Student Health and Wellbeing Services 2 years ago, several new programs have emerged that are focused on basic needs of students: The Oh SURE! Program and the online Interactive Wellbeing Map which provided greater awareness of all the services offered in the local area. Staff there have also developed the Wellbeing Ambassadors program, through which volunteer faculty and staff were trained to recognize and talk with students about basic needs, and to do referrals. HSU recently developed a campus Housing Liaison, a part-time position funded by the University that was created in January 2018. The position was launched as point of contact to a host of programs to support increasing housing security for students on campus. Unfortunately, these programs were too new to evaluate at the time of data collection.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Students who accessed services both on- and off-campus were typically those experiencing the most acute levels of food and housing insecurity. Repeatedly, findings show that the students who utilized the services the most often, needed them the most. This affirms that the students who accessed services were doing so because their need was acute. Students were more often in situations so desperate that they were negotiating an untenable juggle of employment, academic demands, and housing and food insecurity. The majority of students who experienced food insecurity, homelessness, or both reported that their financial aid package did not cover all of their living expenses. Students did not have enough financial resources and had to make compromises that significantly impact their health and quality of life. Students were unable to navigate meeting their basic needs without help.

Level of food security impacts grade point averages (GPAs). In general, students with the highest level of basic needs insecurity who accessed services had lower GPAs. Further, students who were both food insecure and experienced homelessness had the highest rates of services used and also had the lowest GPAs. The implication of this is that those students who are using services are at a higher risk of diminished academic outcomes.

Overall, findings show that there is an underutilization of supports aimed at increasing basic needs security for students. Though some students with the most challenging circumstances do access resources, there are still a substantial proportion of students who experience basic needs insecurity who do not use services. Findings show that students may be deterred from using services because they do not perceive that they need services, do not know about services, perceive they are not needy enough to be eligible for services, or are barred from service access by cumbersome application and eligibility stipulations. Examining the acuity of students' basic needs insecurity and whether they know there are supports available, access them, and if not why, are important next steps to consider as the CSU works toward eliminating equity gaps in retention and graduation.

These findings point to a continued need for sustaining resources directed toward supporting students in meeting basic needs and sharing progress made system-wide. Furthermore, there is need for increasing student supports, including raising awareness of services and developing systematic linkages to on- and off-campus resources to help meet their basic needs, especially for student groups who are disproportionately experiencing the highest levels of basic needs insecurity. Normalization of service use and reduction of barriers to services are also necessary. Campuses should consider creating or sustaining Single Points of Contact (SPOC) to coordinate comprehensive efforts. Provisions are needed to ensure that students do not stop out of universities, forced to seek employment that may not increase their long-term stability. Early identification of students, before their circumstances become acute, may be key to helping increase retention.

Recommendations

Create or sustain Single Points of Contact (SPOC) to coordinate student service provision for unmet basic needs. As awareness about college students' basic needs insecurity grows and programs continue to develop, SPOCs are needed as campus and community liaisons to coordinate service provision across campus, lead training and awareness building, supervise student interns, conduct program development and evaluation, build relationships with off-campus service providers and resource brokers, and to sustain current levels of effort.

Sustain and evaluate efforts to address food and housing insecurity. Students who experienced both food insecurity and homelessness were impacted most adversely – their grades were lower and their negative health and mental health outcomes were more severe. Campuses must continue to institutionalize offerings of emergency food and housing and CalFresh application assistance on campus. Continued development of options for affordable healthy food and housing for students are critical to their health, wellbeing, and success. With the passing of California Assembly Bill 1894 (Weber), all CSU campus dining services and auxiliaries are now able to apply for federal approval to administer the CalFresh Restaurant Meals Programs (RMP), a program that allows CalFresh recipients who experience homelessness, have disabilities, or are 60 years of age or older to access their CalFresh benefits to purchase lower cost prepared meals at approved participating restaurants. Evaluate programs aimed at supporting students' basic needs to sustain efforts that demonstrate intended outcomes for holistic student success.

Increase awareness, access, and use of on-campus resources for students, specifically for student groups who are disproportionately experiencing the highest levels of basic needs insecurity. For all student groups, the level of basic needs insecurity far outweighed the frequency of receipt of services. Primarily, students of color were most likely to access services such as campus food pantries and CalFresh application assistance; however, they were also most likely to report experiencing barriers to services. This points to the necessity for interventions that address intersectionality in approaches to service provision. These findings spotlight the potential for development of efforts to strategically facilitate alliances to expand awareness of available on-campus resources and work toward achieving equitable outcomes. Intentional partnerships among on-campus programs where students regularly seek support like cultural centers, student clubs, wellness and recreational activity centers, and during campus orientations are key intersections that will aid early identification of and referrals for basic needs insecure students. Further, fluid linkage with financial aid administrators can support early identification of basic needs insecure students. Financial aid administrators can identify students who qualify for Pell Grants and build awareness of basic needs supports early and often. Continued training across campus to ensure that the university narrative of service seeking and equity are normalized for students across campus is still needed.

Train faculty and staff to identify, respond, and refer students to appropriate points of contact. Findings indicated that many students disclosed their situation to faculty when their grades or attendance began to decline. Students who were received with empathy, understanding, and appropriate linkages to supports reported that this encouraged retention. Training is required for faculty, staff, and administrators to ensure that students are received with a trauma informed

approach that ensures that they are appropriately identified and supported. Further, a clear resource page can be made available on each university website. Not only for students, but also faculty and staff can utilize this resource, which will serve as a bridge to services. Many students regularly interact with faculty members more than any other employee group on campus. Educating the faculty about symptoms of basic needs insecurity and available resources has the potential to create deep inroads to systematically supporting students meeting their basic needs at critical points in time—before and after class, and during advising and office hours.

Institutionalize connectivity across campus services. Students reported using campus health centers and counseling and psychological services to access services and to be referred for basic needs support. Institutionalized assessments and referrals for basic needs security during intake at student health centers and counseling and psychological services have the potential to increase awareness about basic needs security programs and services. Providing students with more coordinated referrals to available programs from these service points can expand students' opportunities to access to healthy food and safe stable housing. Further, increasing the number of counseling appointments available to students in food or housing crises may be needed to support stabilization.

Promote continued sharing of information across campuses. The CSU Basic Needs Initiative (BNI) has been successful at highlighting successes and facilitating solutions to challenges collectively in the CSU through many BNI webinars and at two basic needs conferences. Continuing to share discoveries and opportunities across campuses is critical for increasing the collective impact of this work.

Advocate to address barriers to off-campus public social services for higher education students. The need for off-campus social services heavily surpassed use. Students reported the belief that they did not qualify for services, lacked knowledge of services, or experienced challenges accessing public services. Basic needs insecurity is a symptom of broader issues, often associated with poverty and systemic economic inequality. Addressing basic needs insecurity is not possible without recognizing the multifaceted issues that lead to a student having food insecurity and homelessness. The CSU can act as a convener between higher education and public social services to remove institutional and policy barriers. Specifically, the CSU can facilitate conversations with representatives from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and other public welfare agencies to explore college students' basic needs and public welfare benefits respectively. Similar to developments with CalFresh, coordinated strategic planning is needed between the CSU and CDSS about college student eligibility criteria for public benefits and outreach efforts are needed to inform students about the application process and assist them in the application. Off-campus use of emergency shelters and transitional shelters was low, yet students who faced homelessness and food insecurity had among the greatest level of need. Advocacy for affordable off-campus housing appropriate for college students is needed.



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APPENDIX A

Table 9. *Campus Survey Participation Rates*

Campus	%	Survey Administration Dates
Bakersfield	4.5%	10/31-11/21/2016
Channel Islands	3.3%	11/28-12/19/2016
Chico	5.8%	10/31-11/21/2016
Dominguez Hills	3.7%	10/31-11/21/2016
East Bay	4.9%	10/31-11/21/2016
Fullerton	4.6%	10/31-11/21/2016
Fresno	6.2%	10/31-11/21/2016
Humboldt	16.6%	10/3-10/24/16
Long Beach	5.2%	10/26-11/16/2016
Los Angeles	2.09%	11/4-11/25/2016
*Maritime	4.8%	1/11-2/2/2017
Monterey	9.16%	10/31-11/21/2016
Northridge	3.03%	11/8-11/21/2016
Pomona	4.2%	10/31-11/20/2016
Sacramento	5.9%	10/31-11/21/2016
San Bernardino	6.3%	10/26-11/16/2016
San Diego	4.29%	11/8-11/29/2016
San Francisco	4.5%	11/1-11/21/2016
San Jose	6.8%	10/31-11/21/2016
San Marcos	7.8%	10/31-11/21/2016
Stanislaus	3.1%	10/31-11/21/2016
Sonoma	5.4%	11/2-11/21/2016
San Luis Obispo	10.3%	10/31-11/21/2016

Note. Surveys administered fall, 2016.

**Maritime survey administered spring, 2017.*

APPENDIX B

Table 10. *Qualitative data collection n*

Campus	n = Interviews	n = Focus Group	Total
CSUB	11	3	14
CSUDH	10	9	19
CSULA	5	13	18
CSUN	12	17	29
CSUSB	4	13	17
FSU	5	9	14
HSU	5	11	16
CSULB	14	16	30
SDSU	8	21	29
SFSU	11	6	17
SLO	7	3	10
Total	92	121	213

Table 11. *Qualitative sample*

Numbers by Race

Campus	Black/ African American	White	Latinx	Asian	Bi/ multi	Native American	Decline to state
CSUB	1	6	5	1	1	0	0
CSUDH	6	5	6	0	2	0	0
CSULA	2	3	10	0	3	0	0
CSUN	4	9	8	3	4	0	1
CSUSB	5	3	7	0	1	1	0
FSU	1	4	7	1	0	0	1
HSU	0	10	3	0	2	0	1
CSULB	3	9	8	5	4	0	1
SDSU	1	8	7	6	6	0	1
SFSU	1	3	6	1	6	0	0
SLO	0	6	0	1	3	0	0
Total	24	66	67	18	32	1	5

Table 12. *Qualitative sample gender and age*

Campus	Gender				Age			
	Male	Female	Trans/ gender atypical	Decline to state	18-20	21-25	26-30	Over 30
CSUB	2	11	0	1	4	6	3	1
CSUDH	5	14	0	0	3	3	8	5
CSULA	2	16	0	0	5	7	1	5
CSUN	11	18	0	0	6	11	6	6
CSUSB	5	12	0	0	3	11	1	2
FSU	5	9	0	0	2	5	0	7
HSU	3	13	0	0	3	12	1	0
CSULB	5	24	1	0	8	11	7	4
SDSU	11	18	0	0	5	10	7	7
SFSU	5	12	0	0	2	4	4	7
SLO	4	5	1	0	3	7	0	0
Total	58	152	2	1	44	87	38	44

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Contact: 1 Harpst Street, Arcata, CA 95521, Phone: 707-826-3400, ccrp@humboldt.edu

Brett Wormsley, BPlus Art for graphic design. Phone 412-327-2267, bplusarts2013@gmail.com

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Study Advisory Committee

Jessica Bartholow, Policy Advocate, Western Center for Law and Poverty; Stephen Fleischer, Executive Director, University-Student Union, California State University, Los Angeles; Virginia Gray, Assistant Professor, Nutrition and Dietetics, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, California State University, Long Beach; Shahera Hyatt, Director, California Homeless Youth Project; Jeff Klaus, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs; Cykeia Lee, Director, The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo; Connie Stewart, Executive Director, California Center for Rural Policy, Humboldt State University

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For more information about the report or research on basic needs in the CSU, contact

Rashida Crutchfield, EdD, MSW Assistant Professor
School of Social Work
California State University, Long Beach
(562) 985-2109
Rashida.Crutchfield@csulb.edu

Jen Maguire, PhD, MSW Associate Professor of Social Work
Department of Social Work
Humboldt State University
(707) 826-4565
Jennifer.Maguire@humboldt.edu

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SEIWP

The Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program



Addressing Basic Needs at
California State University, Long Beach:

An Exploration of the
Student Emergency Intervention and
Wellness Program



Abstract

Initially a small idea that grew quickly into a robust, holistic, student-centered initiative, the California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program (SEIWP) aims to identify and support students who are experiencing basic need insecurities and provide critical resources and services to alleviate distress and to increase wellness and academic success. As part of the California State University systemwide Study of Student Basic Needs, the development and implementation of SEIWP is explored as an exemplary campus response to student food, housing, and financial insecurity. This report provides a narrative and timeline of the development of the program, and qualitative analysis of the experiences with SEIWP from the perspectives of CSULB staff, faculty, administrators, and student participants. This study provides insight on the program construction, challenges, and successes, and offers recommendations for others who may seek to develop or expand their own initiatives.

Andrea Carpena
Stephanie Valverde Loscko
Tahirah N. McCloyn
Rashida M. Crutchfield
Ruth M. Chambers

California State University, Long Beach
1250 Bellflower Blvd
Long Beach, CA 90840

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***Addressing Basic Needs at California
State University, Long Beach:***

***An Exploration of the Student
Emergency Intervention and
Wellness Program***

The Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program

The Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program (SEIWP) is an initiative that was developed at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). CSULB is a large public institution dedicated to developing an inclusive student-centered learning experience, serving over 37,400 students. SEIWP was created to support students who are experiencing basic need insecurities and require comprehensive services to alleviate distress. This program provides immediate support to students who are facing high stress situations such as housing insecurity, food insecurity, and financial crises. Services included are emergency short-term on-campus housing, grants, loans, meals, CalFresh application assistance, linkages to the on-campus food pantry, case management and referrals for off-campus services to meet students' intermediate and long-term needs. SEIWP was developed as a short-term intervention approach for students experiencing high-risk situations impeding their ability to achieve individual wellness and academic success.

This case study is an examination the evolution of SEIWP, describing the program development, implementation, challenges, and successes. The perspectives of SEIWP held by CSULB students, staff, faculty, and administrators are shared in this case study. The following areas are included in this report: (1) narrative and timeline of the program, (2) staff, faculty, and administrator experiences with the program, and (3) student experiences with the program. Additionally, implications and recommendations will be provided.

As a part of the California State University systemwide Study of Student Basic Needs, the Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program (SEIWP) at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) was explored. First, qualitative interviews with 19 campus stakeholders were held. The interviewees included staff, faculty, administrators, case coordinators and student interns. Second, interviews and focus groups were conducted with 39 students who had received services from the program. Program documents were also reviewed.

Staff, Faculty, and Administrator Participants

Staff, faculty, and administrators (SFA) who took part in the initial and continuing development of SEIWP were recruited for this study. Nineteen qualitative in-person interviews took place with campus stakeholders, including staff, faculty, administrators, case coordinators, and student interns. All respondents completed a post-interview demographic survey. During interviews, SFA were asked to share their experiences in developing, implementing, and evaluating SEIWP services.

A total of 19 CSULB Staff, Faculty, and Administrators (SFA) participated in this research study. Of these participants, 57.9% identified as female, 31.6% male, and 10.5% declined to answer. Approximately 48% of SFA participants were White, 21% African American, 21% Latino/Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 5% Multiracial. A total of 26% of SFAs interviewed reported working at CSULB fewer than 12 months, 26% worked for CSULB between 1 and 5 years, 16% between 11 and 15 years and 21% have been working for CSULB for more than 16 years (See Appendix A).



Organizational Timeline

Identifying the Need

The development of SEIWP began in January 2014 when the Dean of Students noticed an increase of students who were being referred to him because they were experiencing food and housing insecurity or unforeseen financial crises. Based on the circumstance of the student, the Dean would then refer the students to a case manager for Disabled Student Services (DSS) and the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at CSULB. However, as the number of student referrals increased, the Dean felt it important to become more aware of what resources the case manager was making available. The case manager explained that there were limited options for support on campus and she often referred students to City of Long Beach resources to meet the students' needs. One resource the case manager often used was the Long Beach Multi-Service Center (MSC), located 5-1/2 miles away from campus at the west end of Long Beach. The MSC housed representatives from many public and private partner organizations that largely provided services for people experiencing homelessness.

While the Dean knew the Multi-Service Center was a vital resource, he felt the university community had the opportunity to support the success of these students on campus. The Dean recruited a committee of dedicated campus stakeholders he knew would be interested in developing an initiative on campus to better support CSULB students who lacked basic needs. The committee submitted a proposal to campus leadership to develop the program, and the CSULB President and Vice President of Student Affairs enthusiastically supported moving forward with what is now called SEIWP.



The Organic Growth of a Program

The Dean, who had worked for CSULB for more than 15 years, was able to build on his relationships with staff, faculty, and administrators to assemble this committee. The Dean invited individuals who were addressing aspects of the work, including nine people from a variety of departments across campus including the Director of DSS, Director of Student Life and Development, the DSS and CAPS case manager, the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) and Guardian Scholars Coordinator, an Assistant Professor from the School of Social Work, the Associate Director of Financial Aid, the Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts, the Assistant Dean of Students, and a staff member from the interfaith program on campus. All of the invitees accepted his invitation emphatically, eager to address these issues and support CSULB students. In this way, the composition of the SEIWP committee was organic in nature, offering a volunteer opportunity for those interested as well as the opportunity for growth. One member of the committee said, "Not only did we build it organically without being told that we needed to do it, but we've tried to incorporate ways for people to stay connected and engaged with it."

Key for selection of this committee was having people who could speak for their department at the table, such as directors of programs. This was vital in mitigating wait time in decision-making. That way, when discussing a policy or initiative, committee members could agree on implementation rather than waiting to move forward, helping drive change quickly. This intentional process was a central component in the composition of the committee.

“We had to construct this from scratch. Definitely a lot of research was done to look at what existed, but really there wasn’t much to go from, to build from other institutions.”



First of its Kind

As the committee came together early in the spring semester of 2014, the members began discussing the challenges the most vulnerable students were facing. They explored the existing programs on campus that were being utilized and the services that were missing. One of the first tasks the committee undertook was researching existing programs other campus communities had instituted to support their students’ basic needs. Many of the faculty and staff interviewed stated that they found very few other examples in the CSU and nationwide when conducting program research. One faculty member stated, “We had to construct this from scratch. Definitely a lot of research was done to look at what existed, but really there wasn’t much to go from, to build from other institutions.”

While the committee found some campuses had established food pantries and others had created financial assistance programs, very few had developed an intervention to provide both meals and housing. As one administrator put it, “... if you look[ed] nationally... there was no gold standard.” With this, the committee began to brainstorm ways in which they could incorporate meals and emergency housing into SEIWP. They were determined to move quickly to promote interdepartmental collaboration and to establish comprehensive policies and procedures that would be the first of its kind. Programming for SEIWP was created and developed through a collaborative approach, where all committee members at the table had equal power. Committee decisions were made by consensus; informed by experiences with students, student feedback, and available research.

Programing and Policy Development

The three initial core programs—the Student Emergency Grant Program, Meals Assistance Program (Feed A Need), and the Short-Term Emergency Housing Program—were designed to meet the needs of the most at-risk students. The Student Emergency Grant Program was created to aid students experiencing unexpected financial emergencies. The Meals Assistance Program (Feed A Need) provided students experiencing food insecurity with access to healthy meals in the campus dining halls. Lastly, the Short-Term Emergency Housing Program provided students who were housing insecure access to temporary on-campus housing while they secured permanent, safe living arrangements.

The committee decided minimum grade point average (GPA) and academic standings would not be included in SEIWP eligibility requirements, as circumstances related to a lack of basic needs and the need for additional support may negatively impact a student’s academic standing.

All SEIWP programs required that students be currently enrolled at CSULB and have the ability to demonstrate an urgent financial need. Some program components required students to have exhausted all other sources of financial aid to meet criteria, with the exception of international and undocumented students. These students were exempt from this stipulation because they do not have access to federal financial aid.

All programs required that students be currently enrolled; however, emergency housing and the emergency grant had additional stipulations. To be emergency housed, students had to meet with a financial aid administrator to explore available funding once they were housed. For an emergency grant, students had to meet the highest level of criteria, confirming they had already exhausted all sources of financial aid available to them in order to be deemed eligible.

However, to obtain emergency housing, students had to meet with a financial aid administrator to explore available funding once they were housed. For an emergency grant, students had to meet the highest level of criteria, confirming they had already exhausted all sources of financial aid available to them in order to



CONTACT INFORMATION
Basic Needs Program
 Website csulb.edu/basicneeds ♦ Email supportingstudents@csulb.edu ♦ Phone 562.985.2038

be deemed eligible. Much discussion took place about this criterion as concerns were raised around short- and long-term financial instability of at-risk students. One committee member stated “...we felt like we need[ed] to have it for those that don’t have any other options, no family to go [to], no aunt, godparent, no financial aid ... we had to table that one, and that was probably the most difficult decision.” Ultimately, the committee came to a final agreement and the stipulation was instituted.

As SEIWP continued to grow, the number of core programs expanded, including on-campus CalFresh application assistance, case management, and referrals to the Beach Pantry, which was developed by CSULB’s student government, the Associated Students Incorporated (ASI).

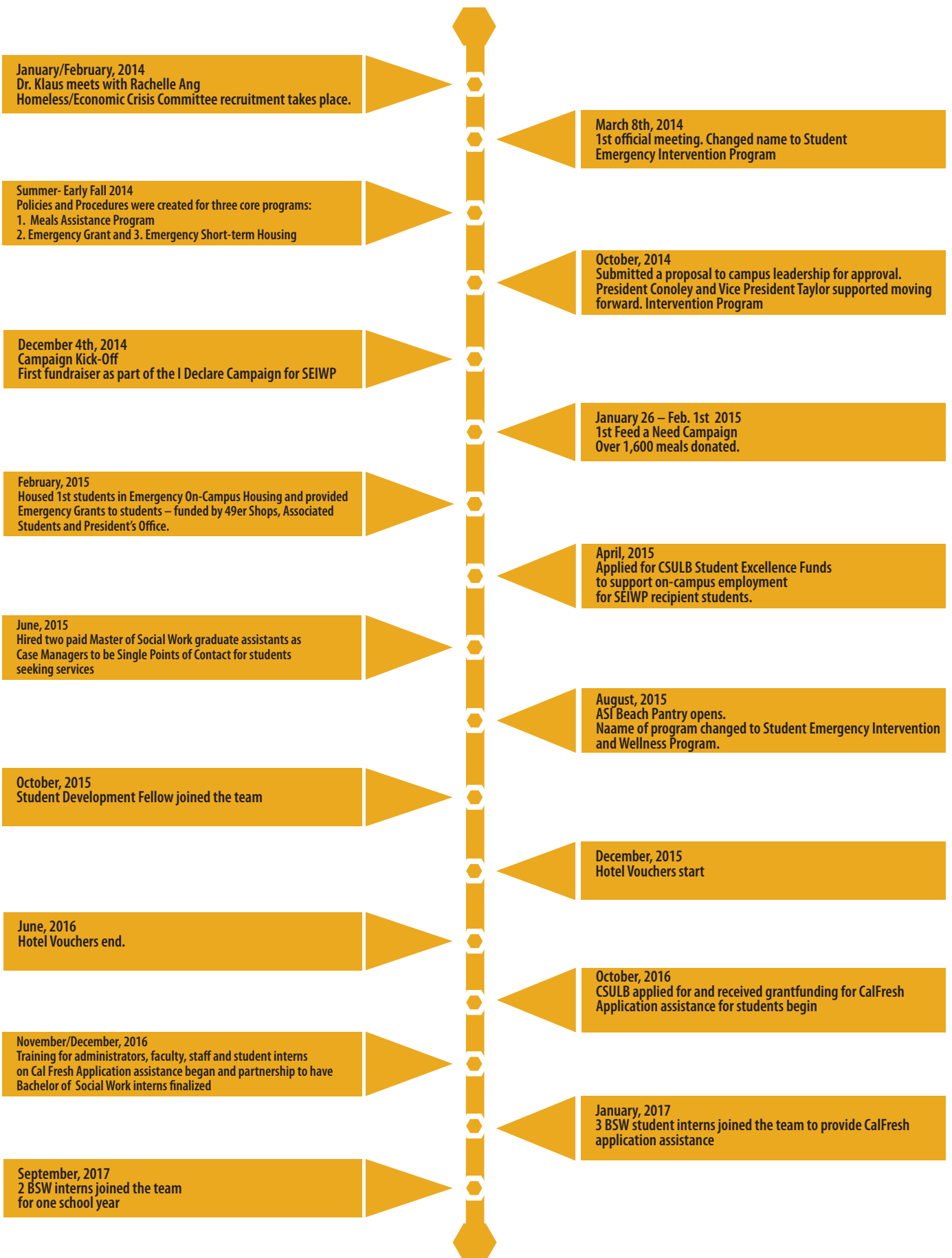


Funding and Fundraising

Similar to the organic formulation of the committee, funding was secured from departments willing and eager to contribute available resources toward SEIWP. These departments also saw the need for comprehensive services, knowing it would help students achieve academic success and wellness. Initial funding was procured through CSULB President’s Office, Associated Students, Inc., and the CSULB 49er Shops.

The 49er Shops, a campus auxiliary organization that provides food and commercial campus services, also provided additional support for SEIWP by spearheading a new fundraising initiative called Feed A Need. This campaign asked CSULB students who held dining hall meal plans to donate a meal each semester to students experiencing food insecurity. More than 1,600 meals were donated during the inaugural campaign early in the spring semester of 2015, and those meals were allocated towards SEIWP’s Meals Assistance Program. This campaign has been held every semester since.

Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program Timeline



Program Elements and Implementation

To access services, first students had to be identified through self-disclosure or an on-campus referral. Most often these referrals came from faculty or staff in an existing on campus program such as CAPS, DSS, the Student Health Center, and EOP; however, anyone on campus had the authority to refer a student in need of emergency support services. When the program was first developed, the application was only accessible by paper. After some time, the committee was able to make it available online, where the application now exists exclusively.

Case Management

Case management was identified as an essential component of SEIWP as the program quickly evolved. The committee intentionally sought out social workers for this role, as they believed social work training on trauma informed care, rapport and engagement with marginalized communities, as well as their connection to community-based resources would best support at-risk students at CSULB. One committee member stated,

We wanted social work interns ... Our staffing within the dean of students, we might have the heart to help students, but we don't have the background and experience to connect all of the resources in the community. Because again, ours is short-term, so we can help the students here, but we wouldn't view it as a successful program if we weren't trying to do the hand-off or the baton pass [to community resources].

By June 2015, two Master of Social Work (MSW) students were hired as case managers to serve as points of contact for students seeking SEIWP services. The Assistant Dean of Student Services worked closely with the social work interns to ensure student applicants were provided responsiveness, empathy, and were not stigmatized or made to endure unnecessary questions or inquiry. SEIWP staff worked diligently to provide access to program elements when students were eligible and referrals to off-campus services when they were not. As the program continued to grow, SEIWP committee members saw the immense benefit the MSW case managers had on the program and realized the impact an expanded staff would have. One of the committee members stated,

One of the things I think that it's taught us is that we're gonna need to have more and more case managers throughout the campus... cause you're not just dealing with a problem that's here one day and goes away the next. They're ongoing ... that's the nature of our program. ... what's the systemic issues for that student? Is there something greater?

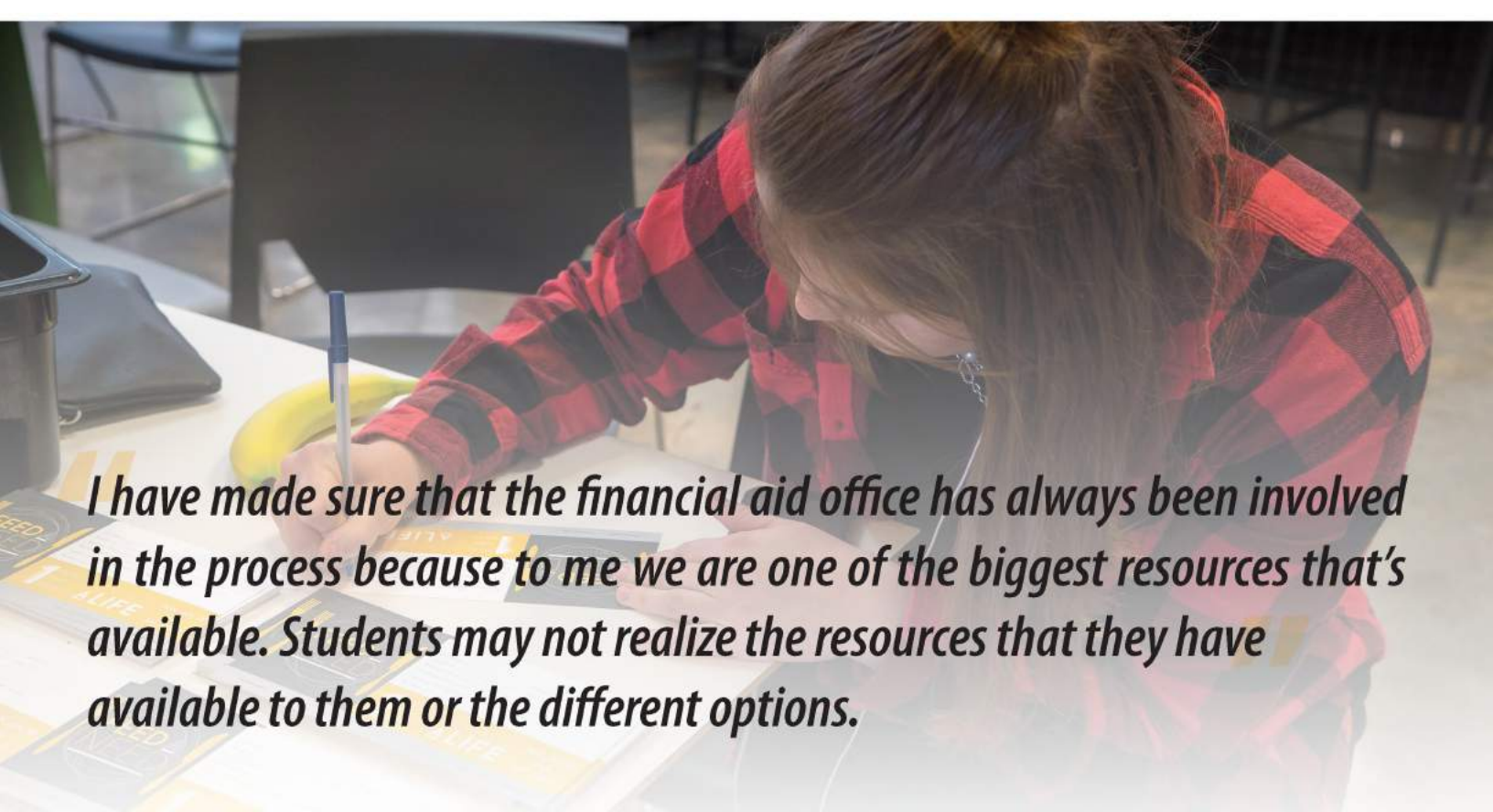
The program continues to include paid master level social workers and unpaid social work interns. Additionally, the SEIWP committee members serve as points of contact for referrals in their respective departments, accelerating the process further and ensuring that students were being received by someone who understood their situation so they are not required to retell their story multiple times.

Intake Process

Once an application was submitted to SEIWP, a case manager would contact the student within 24 hours to schedule a meeting. During that meeting an assessment for eligibility would take place and, depending on the service(s) needed, the application was either approved or forwarded to a supervisor or designated grant reviewer for final approval. The goal was for this process to be as fair, transparent, and structured as possible, and take no longer than 48 hours so that the student could receive the service within a matter of days.

Collaboration with the financial aid department was of utmost importance during the process, to streamline information dissemination about available aid the student could access for support. This allowed the option to explore potential additional financial aid resources to increase the prospect of more long-term stability for the student. This collaboration was advantageous in fast tracking services, and it also offered many students the opportunity to become better educated on financial aid requirements and options for support far larger than the emergency grant. One interviewee said, ***I have made sure that the financial aid office has always been involved in the process because to me we are one of the biggest resources that's available. Students may not realize the resources that they have available to them or the different options.***

Whether found eligible or ineligible for SEIWP services, students were connected with an on-campus case manager to explore additional resources to meet their needs.

A photograph of a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a red and black plaid shirt, sitting at a desk and writing in a notebook. She is looking down at her work. On the desk, there is a laptop, a yellow banana, and some papers. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a library or study area with bookshelves.

I have made sure that the financial aid office has always been involved in the process because to me we are one of the biggest resources that's available. Students may not realize the resources that they have available to them or the different options.



Meal Assistance

One of the first program elements to be implemented under SEIWP was meal assistance. The Meals Assistance Program offered students experiencing food insecurity meals in the residential dining halls. All students with meal plans at CSULB have their meals on their ID cards, so no student receiving emergency meals is differentiated at the time of purchase from students on a meal plan. In addition to the meals donated by students through the Feed A Need campaign, the 49er Shops matched the first 300 meal donations. This campaign has continued to be successful, averaging 1,400 donated meals per semester since the initiative's inception.

Committee members felt it was important that meals be available to students immediately. The Senior Manager for Bookstore Operations and ID Card Services, who had the authority to put meals on student ID cards and a member of the committee, was able to create a quick and efficient method ensuring students timely access to the benefit. The committee was able to come to the agreement that once the student met with a case manager and got approved, the Senior Manager for Bookstore Operations and ID Card Services would receive an approval email and would add the meals to the card. Often by the time the student finished meeting with the SEIWP case manager, the meals were available on the student's ID card. Since the inception of the program, 185 students have received meals from the Meal Assistance Program (See Table 1).

Emergency Grant

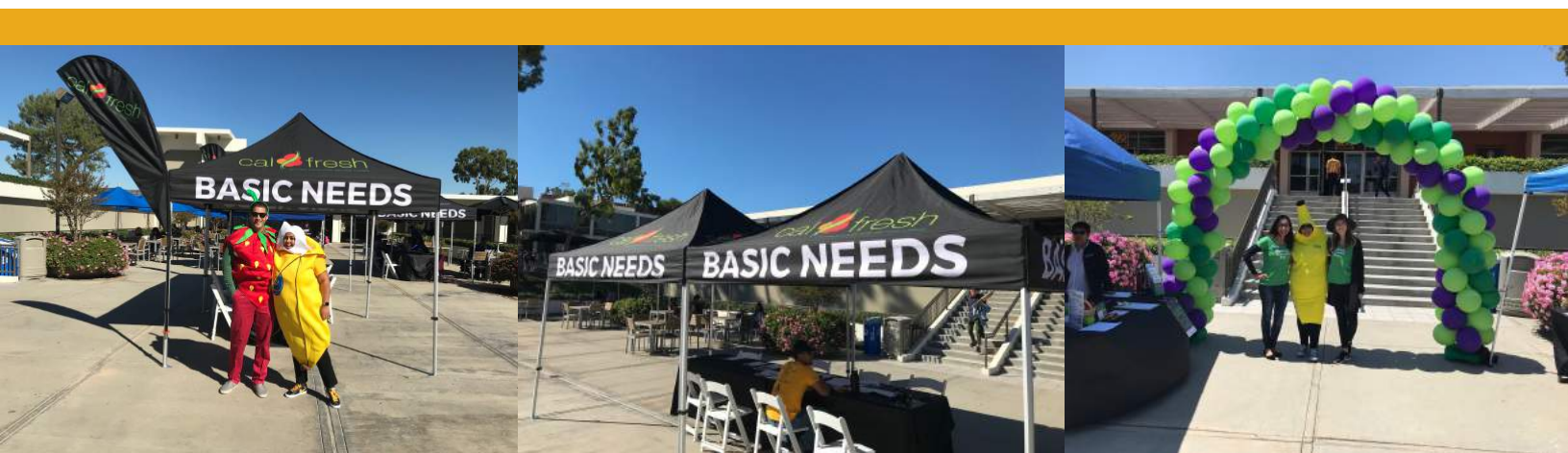
The emergency grant provided financial assistance to CSULB students who encountered temporary financial hardships resulting from an emergency crisis or catastrophic event. This grant was aimed to provide immediate financial support to students when unexpected circumstances arose that jeopardized their retention at CSULB. The limitations of funding for the program led to the development of the grant's criteria. Since CSULB's student population was over 37,400 students with approximately 70% Pell Grant eligible, portending a high need for emergency assistance. These elements led to a policy that was established with the goal of ensuring priority for the most at-risk students' access. One committee member stated,

When we have \$10,000 and potentially 30,000 students who might be eligible for an emergency grant you know, it's easier to feel like you need to add stipulations to make sure that if students are in crisis, they get access to that money. Now as the program has grown and has a bit more support, I think there [are] opportunities for us to really think about those things harder and think about what are the repercussions for students if they have to take out loans to get a little support?

The emergency grant has a maximum amount of \$500. As stated previously, one of the eligibility criteria for this service included students' ability to demonstrate that they were experiencing an unforeseen emergency, such as major car repair, an emergency medical situation, or risk of homelessness. However, making sure the application was sensitive to the student's situation was something the committee took into consideration as they developed what it would look like. One member stated,

I was involved with the kind of helping to set the criteria for the grant, also ensuring that we weren't using language that was potentially off-putting to a student ...We tried to keep the language as approachable as possible and not have any negative connotations or anything that people typically associate with certain categories.

Soon thereafter, an online application was developed to facilitate quick processing. Beyond accessing the grant, committee members had to ensure that funds were directed to the student rather than to campus fees in their time of crisis. Fiscal automated systems initially redirected funds made available in student accounts to any outstanding campus debts such as library fees or other outstanding campus bills. Troubleshooting and cooperative work with CSULB fiscal offices ensured that grant funds went directly to students to ameliorate their emergency situation. Since January 2015, 98 students have received an emergency grant (See Table 1).



Emergency Short-Term Housing

Emergency short-term housing assistance provided students experiencing homelessness with a room at one of the resident halls to ensure the students' safety and wellbeing until they could acquire secure housing. The committee said this program element was the most difficult to make happen. Members were met with some resistance when establishing emergency housing given that it was a self-sustaining university auxiliary. Roadblocks developed that required support from high-level leadership to encourage collaboration. Initially, the program was offered space when it was available at a rate of \$30 per night per student. After the first year of implementing this model, the SEIWP committee decided to purchase dedicated space to ensure availability to students in need. Housing and Residential Life provided a room for \$10,000 a year and SEIWP secured two rooms. Further, stipulations initiated by university leadership required students to write a letter justifying their need and required an additional meeting with housing administration for emergency placement in addition to the SEIWP application process. Each of these steps required students in crisis to relay their story repeatedly.

Although these challenges presented barriers to implementing emergency housing on campus, the SEIWP committee worked diligently to create eligibility requirements that would foster access to emergency housing for CSULB's students with the least number of barriers. Extraneous stipulations like additional letters and meetings were eliminated. The committee agreed on a 20-day stay to start, enough time to stabilize the student, set up appointments with on-campus services, and to utilize SEIWP's case management services to connect students to appropriate off campus, community-based services for more long-term needs. Additionally, the committee agreed that students would have access to emergency housing should they need it during academic breaks. Since the start of the program, 59 students have been temporarily housed through SEIWP (See Table 1).

Initially, the committee attempted to house families using hotel vouchers, as the lack of campus family housing barred this population from access to on-campus dorms. Collaboration with a nearby hotel produced a voucher program briefly, until the hotel closed and this aspect of SEIWP was eliminated. New opportunities to reinstate this element of the program are currently being sought.



Really supporting our students cannot happen on the backs of students . . . At the same time, we build a community of acceptance when students know what's going on and are willing to participate in the efforts that are happening that are heavily supported by our institutions. I think we can have both . . . We as an institution have to be committed to supporting our students. When we have students who take leadership and activism and action to make those things happen, then we build a campus climate that is open and accepting.

ASI Beach Pantry

During the summer of 2015, the Vice President of Associated Students Incorporated (ASI), the student governing body at CSULB, requested a meeting with the Dean of Students. The meeting focused on ASI's concern about food insecurity among students at CSULB and the need for a food pantry on campus. The SEIWP committee initially explored opening a food pantry; however, they understood the level of responsibility that was required to maintain it including staffing, volunteer management, food donations, tracking, and development of policies and procedures. With the other programs developing, they could not do it alone.

At the same time, a community-based organization called Food Finders reached out to committee members of SEIWP asking if it could contribute to creating a pantry. With ASI's ambition to make the pantry a reality, the Dean met with the ASI Executive Director and Vice President to discuss logistics of the project. While the SEIWP committee was aware that support could not solely come from students, they knew this contribution was what they needed to make a food pantry on campus possible.

ASI moved forward with this project and created what is known as the Beach Pantry. ASI manages the pantry's operations, including staffing and leadership, alongside University Student Union staff. They have fostered collaborative relationships with community partners to ensure the pantry is supplied with food, hygiene products and school supplies and continue to pursue new partnerships to enhance sustainability, nutrition and variety. There are no formal eligibility requirements for a student to access the Beach Pantry. The process is simple: A student swipes their ID card at entry and has instant access to what the pantry has available to meet their immediate need. The development of the pantry has been helpful in conjunction with SEIWP as it supplements the needs of students beyond the capacity of the program. However, as the program promotes its services and the need grows, the pantry continues to outreach additional collaborations to bolster resources. One resource that proved to be helpful in this way was on campus CalFresh application assistance; pantry protocol includes referring students when staff discovers their long-term nutritional needs are not being met. Over 115 students have received products the Beach Pantry to date (**See Table 1**).

TABLE 1. Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program

Number of students served per program from Spring 2015 - Fall 2017

Meals Assistance Program	185
Emergency Grant	98
Emergency Housing Program	59

CalFresh Outreach Program

CalFresh is the USDA-funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the state of California. It is a nutrition assistance program that supports individuals facing financial insecurity so severe that it may limit access to food. The CalFresh Outreach Program in the Division of Student Affairs provides outreach and application assistance to eligible students.

Shortly after the inception of the ASI Beach Pantry, SEIWP applied for a grant in collaboration with the CSU Basic Needs Initiative led by the Chico State University Center for Healthy Communities (CHC) to obtain funding to build a CalFresh application assistance program. SEIWP was awarded a subcontract to introduce application assistance services on CSULB's campus. Chico State had developed this program on their campus and saw great success, and this collaboration was helpful for the CSULB program development.

The CalFresh team at CHC provided training at CSULB for the SEIWP committee and students that would be interning with the program that spring. They reviewed county eligibility requirements as well as the most up-to-date student stipulations under California state law. This included exceptions for students meeting certain criterion such as students who were work-study eligible, a recipient of Cal Grant A or B, currently enrolled in CalWORKs, enrolled in state funded program that increases employability such as EOP, DSS or Guardian Scholars, or being a parent of a minor. Many committee members and staff interviewed explained how often their follow-up included educating county staff on the change in stipulation so that they could ensure their students received benefits. They were also trained on confidentiality requirements, sensitivity, and tactics to normalize the process to reduce stigma.

The CalFresh application assistance program recruited three undergraduate social work students to intern with the program. To promote outreach, fliers were produced and distributed throughout the campus and each semester a CalFresh Outreach Day was promoted as an event on campus. Whether by flier, the event, word of mouth, the Beach Pantry, staff or faculty referral, the CalFresh application assistance interns and staff assessed eligibility with students inquiring about these benefits to make sure they met criteria. If the students did, they would start the CalFresh application with them online, which could take anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour to complete. Once completed, the students were given copies for their records and instructions on next steps, including the follow-up call they should expect from the county, and what that phone interview would entail.



CalFresh interns are a vital resource to students seeking supplemental food assistance. Not only do they have the ability to help process paperwork that can be overwhelming to someone who has never applied before but can act as a liaison throughout the process. By faxing a consent form along with the application materials, interns are given the authorization to contact county workers to ensure the applicant's unique situation as a student is clarified and understood. However, this is an ongoing process that requires close coordination with the county to promote access to eligible students. One CalFresh case manager stated, "We have been really diligent... about getting everyone on the same page. So talking to the managers and having county meetings and going to the different regional meetings and checking in... giving names and different things... cases that've been denied so they can be investigated and explored.. So there's definitely been a good collaboration, and I think that the hiccups that we've had at first, they're ironed out"

The SEIWP committee continues to work towards strengthening lines of communication with the county and to stay informed of the most up-to-date policies in order to effectively train CalFresh interns working with the program. Since January 2017, 41 students have successfully enrolled in CalFresh through SEIWP alone. (See Table 2)

"We have been really diligent... about getting everyone on the same page. So talking to the managers and having county meetings and going to the different regional meetings and checking in... giving names and different things... cases that've been denied so they can be investigated and explored.. So there's definitely been a good collaboration, and I think that the hiccups that we've had at first, they're ironed out"

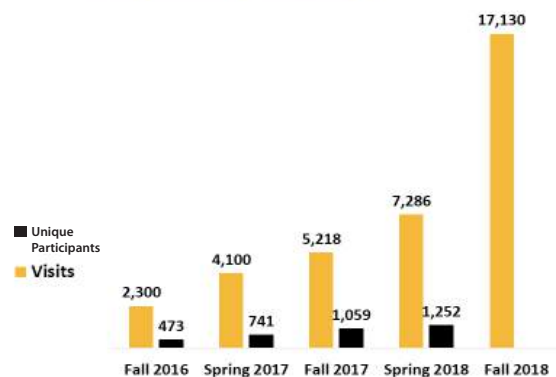
TABLE 2. Number of SEIWP Students Enrolled in CalFresh

January 2017-December 2017

Students successfully approved for CalFresh

41

TABLE 3. ASI Pantry Usage



Program Challenges

As with any new program, challenges arose throughout SEIWP's development. While much of the campus community were eager to collaborate, the committee inevitably met resistance from some departments. Multiple interviewees disclosed that some individuals expressed the opinion that academic institutions should not function as social service agencies. While more departments were supportive of SEIWP's development than not, this created a barrier. One committee member spoke to the challenge of meeting this resistance, saying, **"I see us as a university community made up of different kinds of people, experiences, thoughts, disciplines, all of that. But, we don't all see things, not even from the same perspective ... So, sometimes our hindrance is other staff or faculty who thinks, 'I did it, why can't they? Why are you doing all this extra help? This is not a social service agency...' [I say] if you think about it, you maybe could've ended up in that situation at some point in your life ... I do have folks at the university that question why are you doing that? So, that would be a barrier.**

The SEIWP committee took this opportunity to not only transform services to make them more comprehensive, but to reframe this issue as a responsibility of the campus to look beyond academic standing and more closely at the many layers that equate to student success.

In the case of student ineligibility for SEIWP, program staff had to determine how to frame the application for student support. The committee had to balance maintaining students' dignity in the process while assessing for need. One of the administrators expressed the care and advocacy that went into this process. She said, "We want to make sure [we're] very conscientious ... What's too much for somebody that's in crisis to be able to answer and fill out?" The result was an assessment that avoids extensive questioning with a primary focus on the issues that need to be addressed.

Beyond intake, some student circumstances were more challenging to find the appropriate support and resources than others. A few examples include students experiencing chronic homelessness, severe crises during the middle of an academic break, and individuals who were experiencing severe, persistent mental health issues. These complex situations often required more specialized, long-term services that went beyond what the program could provide. One committee member stated, "I think we have had some struggles with what to do when a student has a chronic issue. We're still figuring that out ... It's not like, if I just get X, then I won't be homeless anymore. We haven't figured that out yet and we have differing opinions on how to respond to that."

"We want to make sure [we're] very conscientious ... What's too much for somebody that's in crisis to be able to answer and fill out?"

The SEIWP committee and staff are still working to find appropriate community resources to connect these students to more long-term support that can aid their overall wellbeing.

Some individuals from the institution believed students experiencing more chronic, severe issues would be better off taking a break from their studies rather than seeking support from the university. The SEIWP committee discussed the importance of advancing a new way of thinking about academic success and retention versus the more traditional concept of counseling students to take leaves from the university. One administrator stated, ***The old philosophy was students should***

really-- if they're in that much of a crisis situation, they should stop out of the school to "get their life together" and then come back. But clearly what we have learned is that the support network, the system that we have here is so much greater than what they have if we didn't have them in place ... Not only can financially that keep them going ... We have an infrastructure that really does support students. So the stop out really didn't make sense.

Keeping students with basic needs insecurities enrolled at CSULB meant creating more aspects of SEIWP to meet the need. However, issues of complexity created barriers to developing new program elements, most notably for emergency housing. As discussed previously in the report, logistics around housing families presented challenges, as the hotel SEIWP was collaborating with shut down and it could no longer meet the need of this population. As it works towards sourcing a new voucher program to meet the needs of these populations, the committee is still challenged with limited space and funding as the overall volume of students who disclose their basic need insecurities continues to grow.

Sensitivity is something all aspects of the program aim to provide. However, during the inception of SEIWP, finding a program space to meet with students that ensured their comfort and confidentiality was challenging. Space on campus is difficult to find. This concern arose from a number of staff working with the program, and they advocated for the importance of dedicated space for students seeking services. In expressing this, one staff member stated her greatest concern about the program,

Privacy. Having privacy with students. We did have an office that was shared ... there were two offices, so sometimes we could use the other office [to meet with students], and when that second office wasn't available, we'd go into the Learning Resource Center. When that wasn't available, I had to pull students out into the courtyard ... There's a lot of foot traffic in that office. A lot of times, I felt like I was just shuffling the student around, and they were coming in visibly stressed. I didn't feel good about that.

As accommodations change on campus, SEIWP hopes to have the appropriate location to best meet students' needs. Similarly, as more students hear about and request services from the program, SEIWP continues to seek avenues to be financially sustainable to pursue further growth. The program seeks to have the financial capacity to remove some of the financial restrictions and expand. That takes time. As one person said, ***What I think we're at is the point where now we got the foundation built, now it's time to look at, to the future and what can we continue to expand on. Maybe we increase the amount of the grants, maybe we look at is there another option with housing, maybe we look at just making sure we are continuing to grow...***

As challenges present themselves, the committee does their best to address issues each with growing experience, research informed program development, and on- and off-campus collaborations. The journey through trial and error requires accountability and diligence to expand programming, outreach new community-based resources and to provide urgency in meeting students' basic needs.

Program Successes

Since its inception in 2014, SEIWP has achieved much success in creating new lines of support for students experiencing basic need insecurities. New programming like the emergency grant, on-campus emergency housing, and the Feed A Need campaign were imperative to expanding support to CSULB's most at-risk students. With over 300 students served by SEIWP directly and far more by the Beach Pantry, the sheer number of students who have benefited from this program is by far the program's most important success to date. The development of services is paramount to meeting students' needs; however, there are many ways to measure success. Interviews with staff, faculty, and administration presented elements outside the programmatic components of SEIWP that contributed to accomplishing its innovative goals. While these aspects are far more difficult to quantify, stakeholders expressed that commitment to students, compassion, empathy, and activism were essential to the program's development and evolution. Many of the committee members conveyed that without these components the rate in which SEIWP gained momentum would not have been possible.

Student Centered

While the SEIWP committee consisted of people in different roles from an array of diverse backgrounds, they all had the same mission: to enhance student success and wellness. Interviews with the staff, faculty and administrators revealed positive perceptions of the populations they were serving. Maintaining a focus on the strengths and needs of students was of the highest priority when developing SEIWP, as was reaching the greatest number of students possible with the resources it had available. Many of the interviewees described these students as resilient, highlighting their strength and perseverance in the face of adversity. One committee member stated, ***I think all of our students are pretty amazing ... They are figuring out how to manage life as they transition sometimes to adulthood ... they're also transitioning in a new environment and then transitioning from hopefully one economic strata to some stability ... So many of the students that I talk to really just want to do the best they can with what they have and will sacrifice everything to finish, to get their degree ... They tend to tolerate probably way too much before they ask for help.***

Students sought these services with audacity, daring to trust in some of their most vulnerable moments. While a variety of factors contributed to SEIWP's success, the most important of all was the capacity to serve students and in that, achieving a safe and welcoming space to provide relief. The priority rested in finding a way to serve all students experiencing basic need insecurities so that they could achieve stability in their time of greatest need.

“ I think all of our students are pretty amazing ... They are figuring out how to manage life as they transition sometimes to adulthood ... ”

“When we were creating the program ... we just wanted to help students if they were in an emergency, or dire straits, just get them the resources ... so people just gave up their time to do it.”

Stakeholder Care and Commitment

One of the most significant factors that contributed to SEIWP's success was the stakeholders' commitment to its development. During the beginning of its development there were no role changes, promotions, or increases in pay for what they were doing. Stakeholders volunteered their time to ensure that students could receive these new support services until they could hire staff to help support the growth and success of this program. One member of the committee said, “When we were creating the program ... we just wanted to help students if they were in an emergency, or dire straits, just get them the resources ... so people just gave up their time to do it.” Even though committing to the development and implementation of SEIWP often meant working late, coming in early, or being on call to review incoming applications, committee members found ways to reprioritize tasks to meet the need, all while still accomplishing the work their traditional roles entailed.

For committee members and collaborative partners, the development of the program was not for the recognition or the praise, but truly for the students. Collegiality and commitment propelled the committee to aim high when creating SEIWP, understanding full well the sacrifices they would have to make during the early stages of its inception. Stakeholders described their commitment as an investment; a critical link to the personal wellbeing of students, as well as their academic success and retention.



The fact that our president is so committed to this matters for sure. The fact that we have top down and bottom up support makes a big difference ... That matters a whole lot because it would be an uphill battle if that wasn't true.



Institutional Support and Collaboration

Another important element that contributed to the success of this program was the support of the institution. The university President's Office gave vocal and financial patronage to program efforts. One committee member stated, "The fact that our president is so committed to this matters for sure. The fact that we have top down and bottom up support makes a big difference ... That matters a whole lot because it would be an uphill battle if that wasn't true."

Additionally, campuswide acceptance, collaboration, and cross-campus incorporation of the program, has been paramount to SEIWP's success. This included the cooperation of student support services in EOP, DSS, ASI, and academic affairs, among others. One of the most crucial of these collaborations was with the financial aid office. Its knowledge of campus policies were key in making sure students were able to explore all financial options available to them. The support of caring committee members and campuswide collaboration contributed to an intervention that started a movement, transforming ideas about traditional support services in higher education.

Research

The CSU Office of the Chancellor appointed SEIWP a committee member who was faculty in the CSULB School of Social Work in 2015 to lead a three-phase, systemwide, mixed methods study on basic needs. This created the possibility to develop best practices that were student centered, not only for CSULB, but also for all 23 CSUs in the state. This data provided insight from the perspective of the students and was a pivotal piece in justifying SEIWP's importance to this population's wellbeing and academic success. One of the faculty stated, "I think learning what the students' actual needs are is a challenge. As students talk about their experiences, we learn more about how to respond to them appropriately ..."

As the research developed and university personnel were exposed to the findings, SEIWP incorporated this research in programmatic decision-making. Further, as knowledge of the issue spread, basic needs efforts began permeating the campus community. As institutional support, interdepartmental collaborations, and possibilities for new programming grew, so did attention from administrators and other campuses in the CSU system. More students began to report that faculty had referred them during their time of need or that they had found SEIWP information on a professor's syllabus. Research became a catalyst for growth. One committee member expressed, "It wasn't till you see some research and see some statistics and see the level of need, but it doesn't really sink in ... Sure you think you are doing a good thing, but when you know ... one-fifth of your students are food insecure or there's housing insecurity ... you start to do the math [and] you see the level of need. And I think that's where some of that initial research and some of that initial information hit home for us."

The SEIWP committee has utilized university collaborations, community-based resources, and creativity in creating innovative services to promote comprehensive programming for students experiencing basic need insecurities at CSULB. While stakeholders have been faced with challenges in program development and implementation, they continue to adjust to barriers and work toward growing resources to support students at CSULB. Through the perseverance of students, critical analysis, university support, and determination of stakeholders, the development of SEIWP has created an opportunity for public discourse around the importance of basic needs programming. Most importantly, the program seeks opportunities to integrate insights from students to explore what aspects of the program have positive effects on their academic success and retention, as well as areas where the program still has room to improve.

Student Experiences with SEIWP

SEIWP Student Participant Sample

Respondents in this sample were recruited from a list of past program participants provided by SEIWP staff. Thirty-five students participated in in-person interviews, two in phone interviews, and two in a focus group, for a total of thirty-nine respondents. All respondents were asked to fill out pre- and post-interview surveys that included questions about demographics, knowledge of campus services, and experiences with housing and food insecurity. During interviews and focus groups, students were asked to share their experience accessing and utilizing the different programs under SEIWP.

A total of 39 CSULB students participated in this research study: 74.4% of which identified as female, 20.5% male, and 5.1% declined to answer. About 23% of students were Latino/Hispanic, 21% were not listed, 18% African American, 15% White, 13% Asian, 2.5% African, 2.5% Asian American, 2.5% Multiracial/Biracial, and 2.5% did not answer. A large percentage of students were between the ages of 19 and 25 (59%), with the largest portion between the ages of 21 to 25 years of age (49%). The average number of semesters a student has attended CSULB was between three to four semesters (See Appendix B).

Finding and Applying for SEIWP

Students reported finding SEIWP in several ways including referrals from student programs such as Student Health Services, Equal Opportunity Programs, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Disabled Student Services (DSS), faculty, staff, friends, on-campus presentations, and through an online search.

Relationships with staff and faculty from across the campus were valuable in finding and accessing the program. Some students mentioned disclosing their situation to a trusting faculty member or staff member who then linked them to the program. Most students reported that disclosing their situation to faculty was a positive experience stating they received emotional and academic support, such as extensions on assignments. Some students reported that their professors approached them after noticing unusually lower academic performance. One student said, ***At the time I was kinda struggling financially in school and work and all that. And then she kinda noticed like, "Hey, what's going on? Are you okay? Your grades are kinda dropping, you're not returning your assignments," and I was like, "Yeah. I'm like struggling and stuff."*** This faculty member walked the student over to the SEIWP office that day for an intake.

Another student was surprised at how helpful and understanding professors were. ***Once I acknowledged it was an issue, because I was falling so far behind in my classes, that I was thinking about dropping out ... so I emailed a lot of professors saying, "Hey, I really need extensions. I'm going through an issue. "... I would say something general like homelessness and that'd like spark in them. I had one professor, who like right after my email, called me to the signature number I have, which is my personal cell, she called me. She was like, "Hey. I just received your email. Are you okay?" I was like, "Oh my gosh, I didn't expect that from an email."***

When students were asked how they felt about disclosing their situation to faculty or staff, some mentioned feelings of shame and stigma. Those students stated this held them back from disclosing their circumstances. A small number of students felt that faculty were not helpful or understanding when they disclosed their situation, which created more stress.

One student referring to the support received from a staff member said, ***"She was very helpful, she understood my situation, she tried to give me the best options, she also helped me with the***

program. She showed me the CSULB website that explained the process." Students said that faculty shared information about SEIWP as a resource via a course Facebook page or syllabus. A few students mentioned having peers in the program who shared their experiences and encouraged them to seek information. Others mentioned having received a referral from Student Health Services after seeking services for mental health or medical concerns.

However, most students stated that they found SEIWP information through an online search. Overall, students felt that it was easy to find SEIWP information online when they sought it. When asked how they found online information, students mention searching for keywords such as "financial help," "housing" and "winter break," while others searched the full name of the program.

Most students found the program application very accessible as well. A number of students described the application as "pretty straightforward," "easy," and "fairly easy." One student described the application as "brief and nonintrusive." Further, students were pleased at the quick response following their application submission, most of them reporting that it took between 24-48 hours to hear from a case manager. Some students reported it took less than a week, and one student reported getting a call back the same day. When asked about the in-person assessment process, the majority of students stated it was direct, simple and nonintrusive and that the case manager sought to understand their situation.

Challenges to Service Use

Many students expressed concerns about eligibility requirements of the emergency grant, more specifically about having to exhaust all financial aid available in order to qualify. A number of students who applied for the emergency grant were opposed to exhausting their available loans, and ultimately did not receive the grant. Some of these students expressed negative perceptions of student loan debt, were reluctant to add to their preexisting loan debt, or felt like having to exhaust their loans would ultimately contribute to their long-term financial instability. A few students felt that this stipulation to the emergency grant was counterproductive as it only aided those students in extreme need, rather than acting as an early intervention strategy to prevent the escalation of their own housing and food instability from bad to worse.

One student said, **"Basically they're making sure that you're totally out on the streets, couch surfing, or sleeping in your car before you can apply for this money."** Conversely, in some cases where loans were exhausted and the emergency grant was provided, students stated the money was still not sufficient to cover their long-term housing and food needs. Other students said the stipulation was especially damaging to low-income students who enroll in higher education in hopes of improving their socioeconomic status, as it forces them into more student debt. One student stated, **I know we have loans to help us with school, but as someone who comes from an impoverished family if we don't succeed in school, we won't get a good job ... We're in poverty because we owe so much money to the state and to the federal government, so it's like flipping a coin when you come to college, at least for some of us. ... You either fail and die or you become resilient and get a stable job enough to pay your debts, and maybe, just maybe in 10 years get the rest of your family out of poverty.**

Students stated that CalFresh application assistance was helpful. Those who tried to gain CalFresh benefits off campus without the support of SEIWP interns cited eligibility barriers. A number of students explained they were denied CalFresh off campus because they did not meet the 20-hour work requirement or because their county eligibility worker was not aware of student qualifications under which they were applying. One student said, **There is a lot of workers who aren't even aware of the changes that have been made and the policies, specifically about exemptions and foster youth and involvement in EOP and all those other things ... And things are constantly changing, so they're trained on specific eligibility requirements, and if you don't fit that, then you're denied.**

Students disqualified due to the work requirement expressed it was difficult to meet the 20-hour criteria because of their school and internship commitments.

Students who were denied CalFresh benefits because of misinformed county eligibility workers had to submit additional paperwork or contact the social services office to rectify their application. Other students stated being misinformed about eligibility criteria, which held them back from applying in the first place. Some students who applied for CalFresh and were initially denied either sought out or were offered on-campus application assistance support to reapply. Many of these students were approved for benefits in their second attempt.

Students reported several barriers to accessing the Short-Term Emergency Housing Program. The number one obstacle reported was the allowable length of stay in emergency on-campus housing. Other noted barriers were the lack of accessibility for older students and students with children or dependents. Finally, students noted that the requirement to retrieve loans from their financial package as a condition to accessing housing discouraged them from using the service. Some students declined emergency housing stating the length of stay they were offered would not be sufficient to make the transition into permanent housing.

Students with children and dependents had it particularly difficult since they cannot access the Short-Term Emergency Housing Program in the student dorms. These students also stated having a difficult time finding permanent affordable housing off campus. One of the qualifications for participation in the Short-Term Emergency Housing Program is for students to meet with a financial aid counselor to discuss available aid that could help them secure permanent housing. Several students said in that meeting they were advised that in order to access emergency housing, they would have to take out available loans. As a result, many students were unable to participate in the program because they did not want to acquire more debt.

Another prominent student barrier to services was outreach. Students overwhelmingly stated that more information about SEIWP should be disseminated throughout campus. Almost all students stated they had never seen information about SEIWP around campus. Several students stated this lack of campuswide outreach is a barrier to those who could benefit from participation and that it should be promoted much like how student clubs, events and other services are marketed.

Program Strengths

The majority of students reported positive and supportive interactions with SEIWP staff. Some of those students said their interactions were “to the point” and “quick,” while others said they felt “warm” and “welcoming.” A number of students mentioned the treatment they received lessened feelings of shame and stigma about seeking help, facilitated disclosure of their emergency situation, and increased their likelihood of seeking services from SEIWP in the future. Regarding a SEIWP case manager, one student said, “She’s really nice and very understanding, and she made me feel like I could open up to her very quickly, especially since I’m the type of person that would rather not open up to people.” Most students mentioned they were connected with services quickly and that their case manager was responsive to communication.

Some students reported their case manager stayed in communication with them after they received services. Most of those students were appreciative of the followup, stating they felt supported by the program. A few students stated they did not respond to the communication because they felt embarrassed to ask for more help or experienced other situations that kept them from staying in touch.

In some cases, the continuing communication resulted in the student receiving more program support such as additional meals or other referrals to off- and on-campus resources. Only a few students stated they had negative experiences resulting from having to disclose their story to multiple people or feeling like the case manager was not clear enough about the time it would take for them to receive services.

During case management meetings, students who disclosed their experiences with basic needs insecurity were referred to CalFresh application assistance, the ASI Beach Pantry or received meals through the Meals Assistance Program. Some students described the Meals Assistance Program as “accessible,” “helpful,” and “convenient.” One student said,

It took a lot of stress off me because at that time, my resources were completely tapped out. My whole world kind of just flipped upside down like overnight. Having the option to like, either bring home food for the kids, or if I ever just needed to feed them, if I didn't have class, I know I could just hop on a bus and bring them to eat there and stuff like that.

Students also said having access to meals on campus improved their mood and their ability to perform academically. Some students expressed shame around the idea of receiving help in the form of free meals, but that their perception changed after using their meals in the dining halls. One student expressed this sentiment:

I thought about it after a while, and I was like that's very irrational because no one knows that's why I have those meals on [my ID card]. I could just tell people like, Oh, I added these meals on here myself. So, it was a very good option and it was very helpful for me.

The ASI Beach Pantry was also perceived as a supportive service on campus. Many students stated using the pantry to acquire snacks or larger items to help with cooking at home was helpful. A number of students were pleased that the Beach Pantry is open to provide for any student, without stipulations. One student described his experience at the ASI Beach Pantry by saying, ***“It was good. It was really easy. You just give them your ID and they'd swipe it, and then they'd let you go in and pick whatever items you needed.”*** Some students were pleased to find hygiene products available as well.

The majority of students who received the emergency grant reported it was a critical support in remaining enrolled. One student said, ***“If it wasn't for that grant I think I would have just given up. For sure I wouldn't have attended spring.”*** The Emergency Grant was helpful to students in covering emergency needs including purchasing a new laptop after having theirs stolen, putting a deposit on housing, paying for an unforeseen medical expense, covering outstanding bills and paying for textbooks. One student reported the grant helped pay the cost of her Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) grant renewal. Another student who mentioned the grant was especially helpful to her said, “It was just good to know that the campus is here for us ... Some of us don't have other outlets to reach out to. So, it was nice to know that coming on campus they listen to your story and they'd be able to help.”

“It was just good to know that the campus is here for us ... Some of us don't have other outlets to reach out to. So, it was nice to know that coming on campus they listen to your story and they'd be able to help.”

In the time since data was collected, SEIWP programs and services have continued to expand.

In December 2017, the SEIWP team applied for the one-time funding offered through California Senate Bill 85, which aims to reduce homelessness and hunger across all three California public higher education systems. The CSULB team was awarded \$75,000, which is being used to implement new programs for the Basic Needs program – Beach Finders and Beach Steps.

Beach Finders is a new food rescue program that will allow the campus to package up left over food from all the dining venues on campus and provide boxed, nutritious meals at the Beach Pantry. Students will be able to come to the pantry and select a boxed meal that can be easily reheated.

Beach Steps is a program that provides resources to students who are transitioning from homelessness. In particular, SEIWP staff purchase items for students who are moving into new living arrangements but have no household items. SEIWP will be able to distribute items such as air mattresses, linens, towels, basic pots and pans for the kitchen, etc.

Additionally, the program is commonly requested to offer students clothing, jackets, and umbrellas. SEIWP has also purchased a large volume of t-shirts, sweatshirts, sweatpants, umbrellas, and more that can be distributed to students as needed. Recently, a large volume of clothing was donated to the university from a retailer. These clothing items will also be available to students as needed. Lastly, SEIWP program staff purchased \$5,000 worth of gift cards for students to purchase food during university closures. These times are the most difficult for students who experience homelessness and food insecurity. Students will be provided the gift cards in \$25 increments for groceries.

Once a month the University Art Museum collects leftover produce from a local farmers' market and hosts Farm to Student. Farm to Student not only provides free produce to students, the museum team creates recipes with the available produce, shares a brief demonstration, and offers recipe cards for the students to take. As the Beach Pantry expands to offer perishable foods, the Pantry will be taking the leftover farmers market produce the weeks that University Art Museum is not hosting Farm to Student.

SEIWP has also established a new partnership with a local agency, Giving Children Hope, which has prompted the start of two programs that will provide critical resources. The first program is We Got Your Back, a program that will sponsor 20 students who will receive a weekly backpack that includes nutritious food resources for three-to-six meals for the week, depending on the size of the family. The program aims to serve 20 student-parents through this program in the first pilot as a way to support this particular student demographic.

The second program with Giving Children Hope is Giving for Living, which will allow SEIWP to supplement our Beach Steps program with additional goods from their warehouse. Giving Children Hope provides extensive resources to families experiencing basic needs insecurities with its expansive product overstock from local vendors. SEIWP will be purchasing low-cost palettes of important pantry items on a monthly basis with goods that be redistributed to students.

The last new enhancement of SEIWP is the ability to award Summer Emergency Grants to students who are not enrolled in summer courses, a challenge that was recently discovered. In collaboration with the financial aid office, a plan has been developed to award grants to students who were enrolled in classes the previous Spring semester and are enrolled for the following Fall semester. The award is part of their Spring semester package.

Recommendations

Since its inception in 2014, SEIWP has implemented comprehensive programs to ensure students experiencing basic need insecurities at CSULB can regain stability, health and receive support on their path to college graduation. More broadly, its development has generated awareness about the need for emergency services and enacted action across other CSU campuses and beyond. While it is clear this innovative program has greatly impacted the lives of many students, more work is necessary in order to ensure basic needs of every CSULB student are being met. Some of our recommendations include:

Seeking campus, community, CSU system and state support to continue expanding the resources and programs available through SEIWP. SEIWP is a multifaceted support system that seeks to provide critical services to students. Very few recruitment efforts are needed for SEIWP. Students regularly apply for the program and need exceeds supply. As awareness of the program grows on campus, the number of students who seek services continues to increase. Continued and increased base funding is needed to ensure fiscal sustainability and diminish financial eligibility requirements.

CSU System, local, state, and federal collaboration. SEIWP is one strategy to promote student success for those who face basic needs insecurities. However, addressing this challenge must be a collaborative effort of powerful stakeholders on-campus, in community agencies, in city, state, and federal government. These stakeholders can combat the larger social issues that create these insecurities. Fortified partnerships with the City of Long Beach and off-campus service providers must continue to grow. Among many goals, these partnerships should seek to create housing that is more financially accessible and aligned with the needs of students at CSULB. Additionally, continuing efforts to expand collaborations with off-campus service providers will increase the likelihood of meeting the diverse needs of students with available, appropriate support.

Greater awareness of the program. Continued training for staff and faculty on how to identify students who are basic need insecure is needed. This would contribute to an inclusive environment, enabling a culture where students feel comfortable expressing their needs and seeking services. As the financial well being of the program is fortified, promotion of SEIWP could be increased. Suggested outreach strategies include university social media channels, on-campus presentations, training for academic advisors, faculty announcements, on-campus publicity, and marketing at sporting events.

SEIWP should continue to improve the close communication with the California Department of Social Services. This will facilitate proper evaluation of students applying for CalFresh benefits and ensure on-campus application assistance counselors are providing adequate guidance.

While current eligibility criteria for the Student Emergency Grant was initially necessary due to the limitations on resources, students and SEIWP staff expressed concerns about the criteria increasing their risk of long-term financial instability. As the program grows, a reevaluation of the Student Emergency Grant eligibility criteria and exploration for additional funding will be required.



Conclusion

SEIWP was developed by a dedicated group of higher education professionals who identified a significant need for basic needs assistance and chose to respond in support of students. The development of SEIWP has provided a model of care for students and received national recognition for its comprehensive strategies to provide emergency support services. It has promoted conversations around equitable practices on CSU campus communities and has quickly become a model for higher education institutions because of its successful implementation of innovative student support services and continued growth. Improving the wellbeing of CSULB's most vulnerable students was at the center of SEIWP's mission, which is why it has received institution-wide support. Yet, the work cannot stop here. Findings show that despite the support SEIWP provides, students continue to struggle with housing and food insecurity and financial crises. Responding to those needs will require long-term financial support, continued growth, and creative inspiration.

Acknowledgements

This study was funded by CSU Office of the Chancellor and specifically requested by Chancellor Timothy White. It is with his leadership that this research is possible.

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Special appreciation for contributions to this report from the following:

California State University, Long Beach Research Team

Andrea Carpena, Stephanie Valverde Loscko, Tahirah N. McCloy, Ricardo Mejia, and Rachael Simon

The staff, faculty, and administrators who strive every day to ensure student success at California State University, Long Beach, those who have made SEIWP possible, and those who took time and effort to make this report possible.

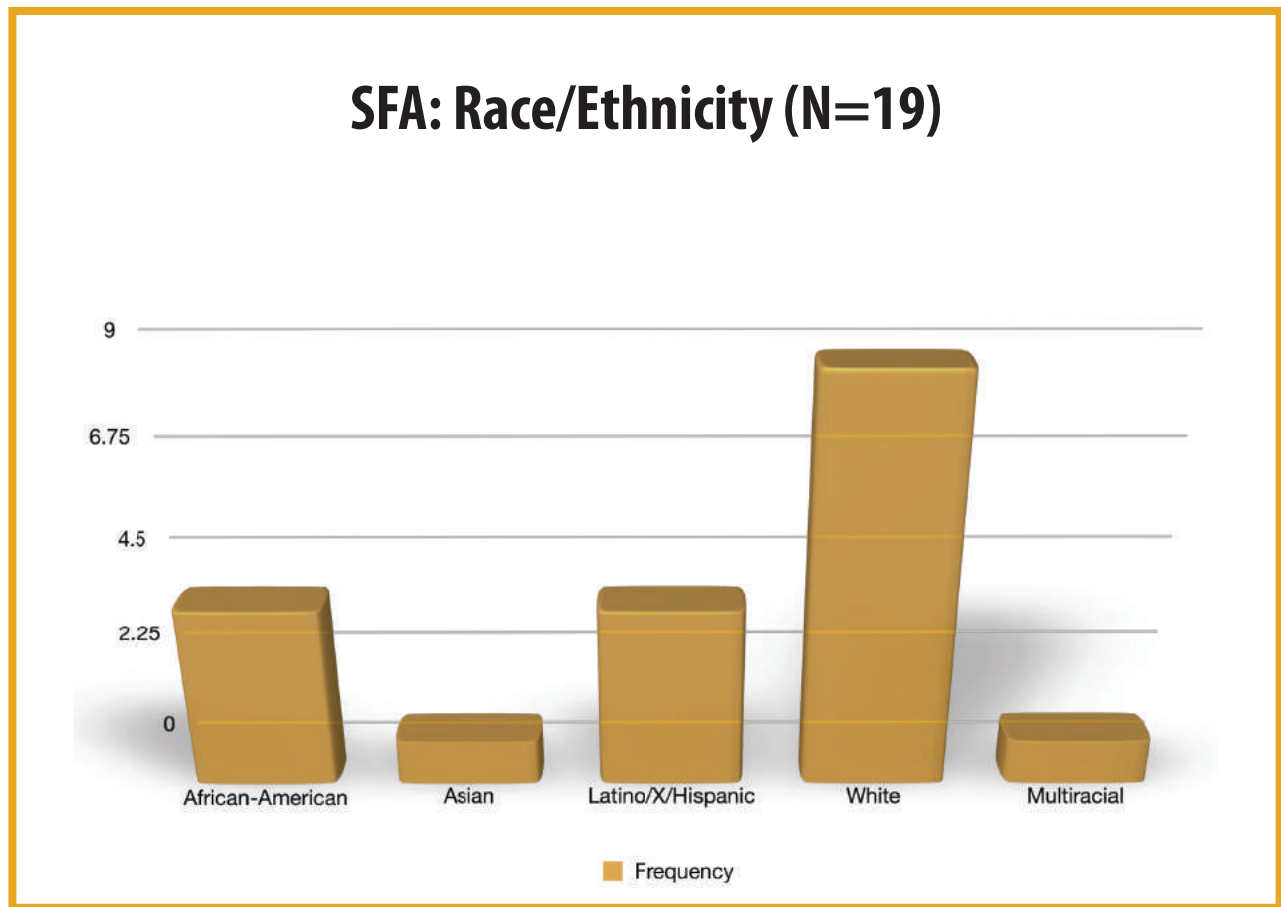
Gratitude goes to the art and graphics by Brett Wormsley at BPlus Arts

Most importantly, thank you to the many students who shared their experience and wisdom with us to help develop the study.

Appendix A

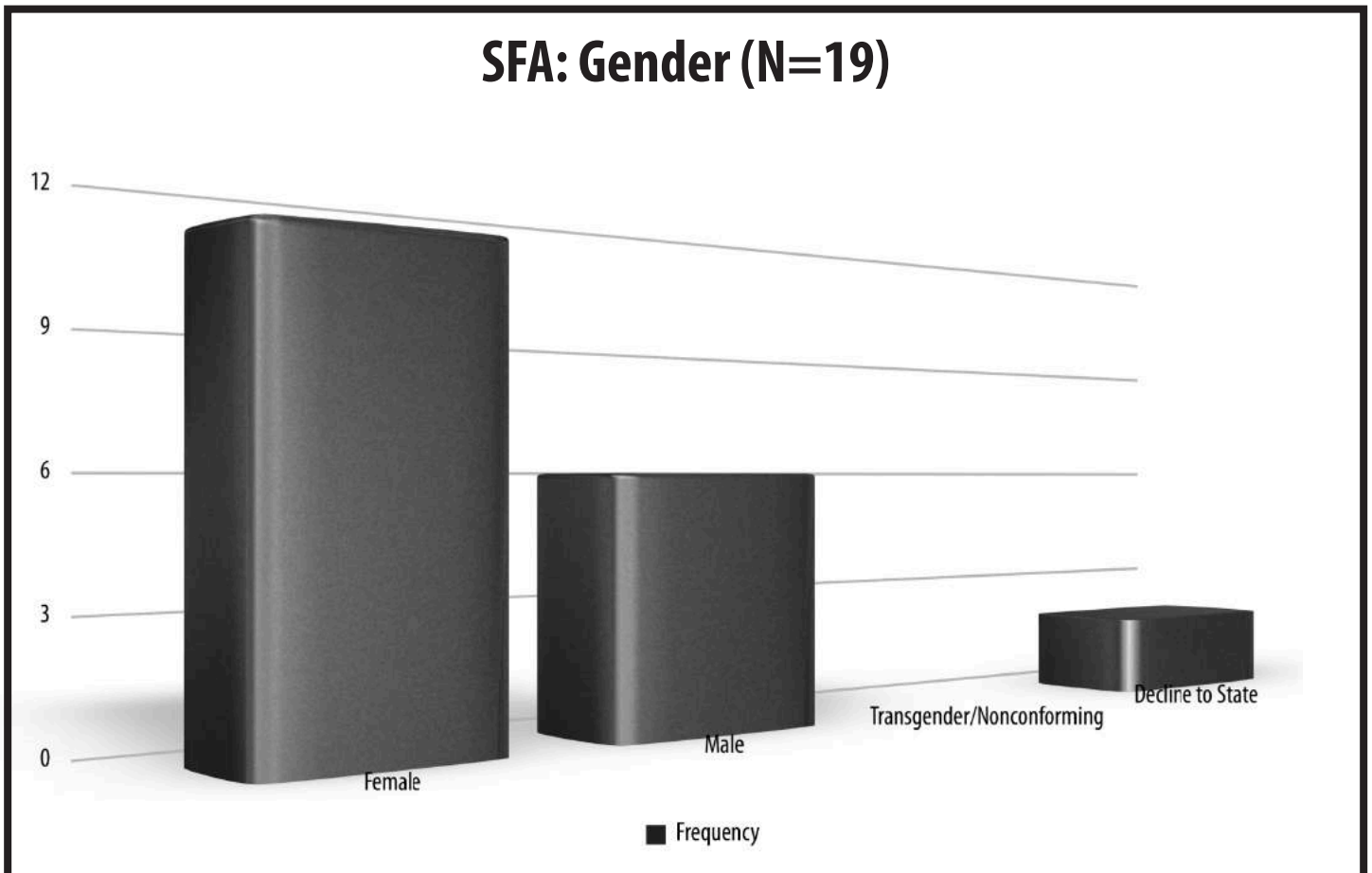
Staff, Faculty & Administrator (SFA) Demographics

Staff, Faculty, and Administrator Race/Ethnicity



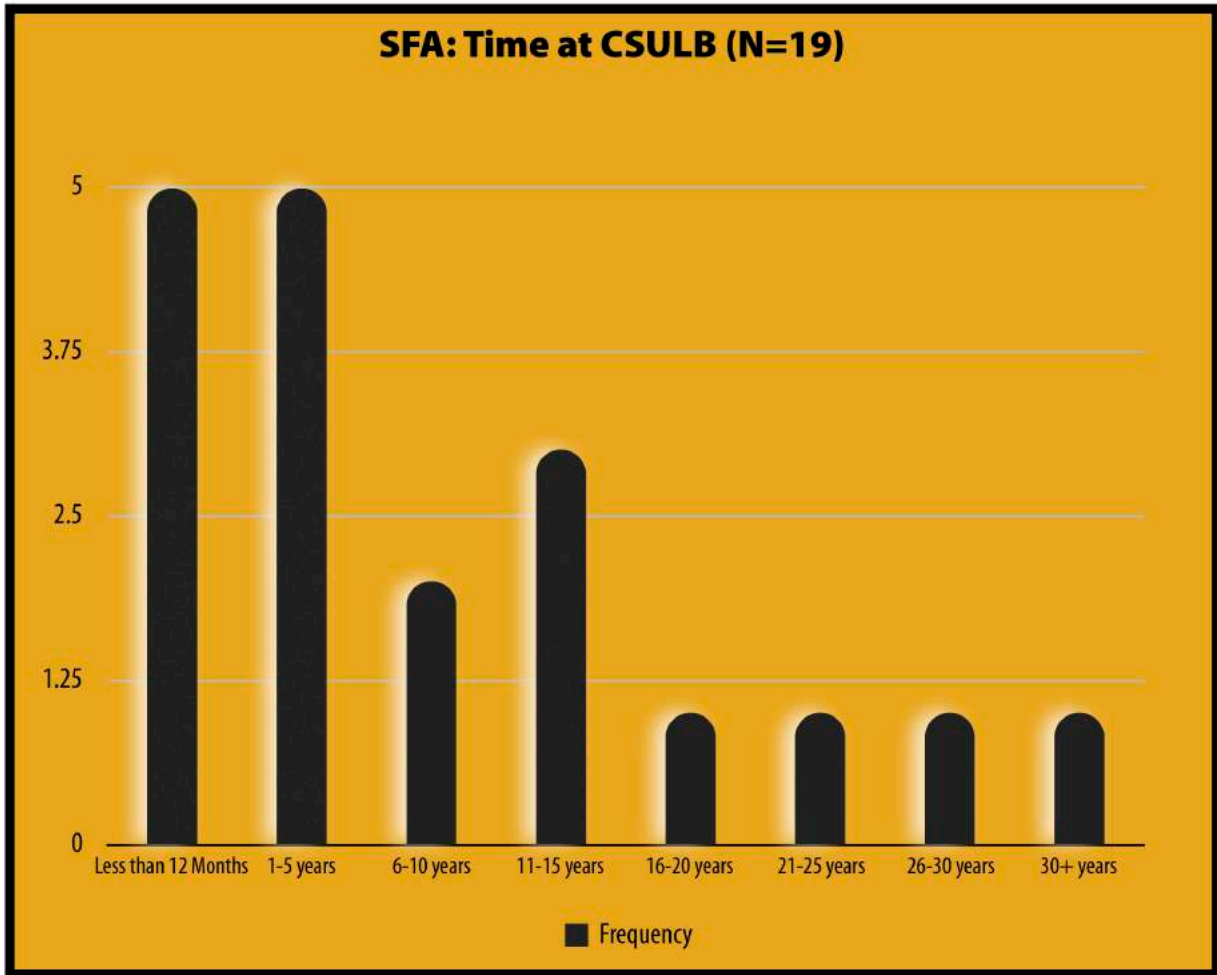
Race/Ethnicity	Frequency
African-American	4
Asian	1
Latino/X/Hispanic	4
White	9
Multiracial	1
TOTAL	19

Staff, Faculty, and Administrator Gender



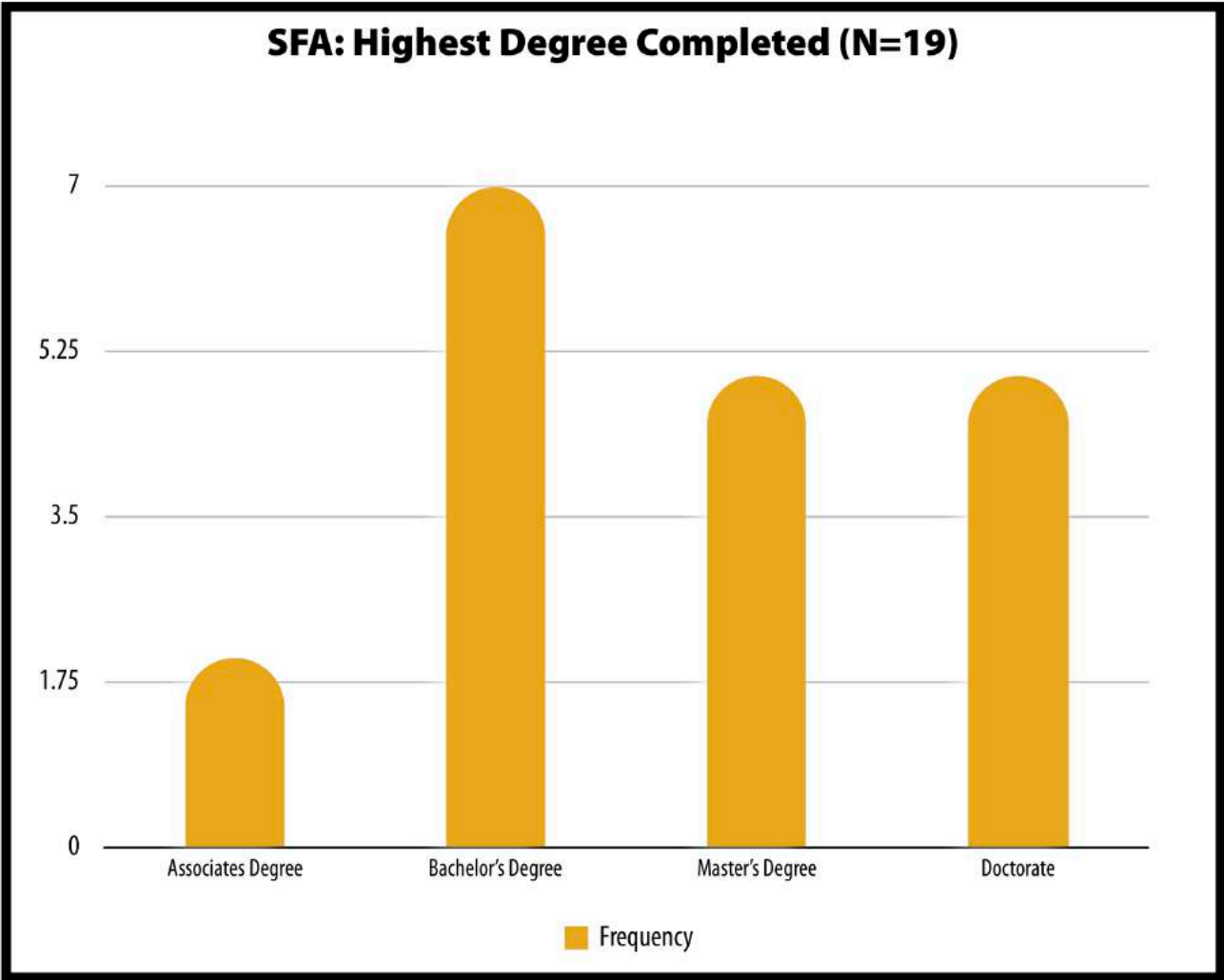
Gender	Frequency
Female	11
Male	6
Transgender/Nonconforming	0
Decline to State	2
Total	19

Staff, Faculty, and Administrator Time Employed at CSULB



Time at CSULB	Frequency
Less than 12 Months	5
1-5 years	5
6-10 years	2
11-15 years	3
16-20 years	1
21-25 years	1
26-30 years	1
30+ years	1
TOTAL	19

Staff, Faculty, and Administrator Highest Degree Completed

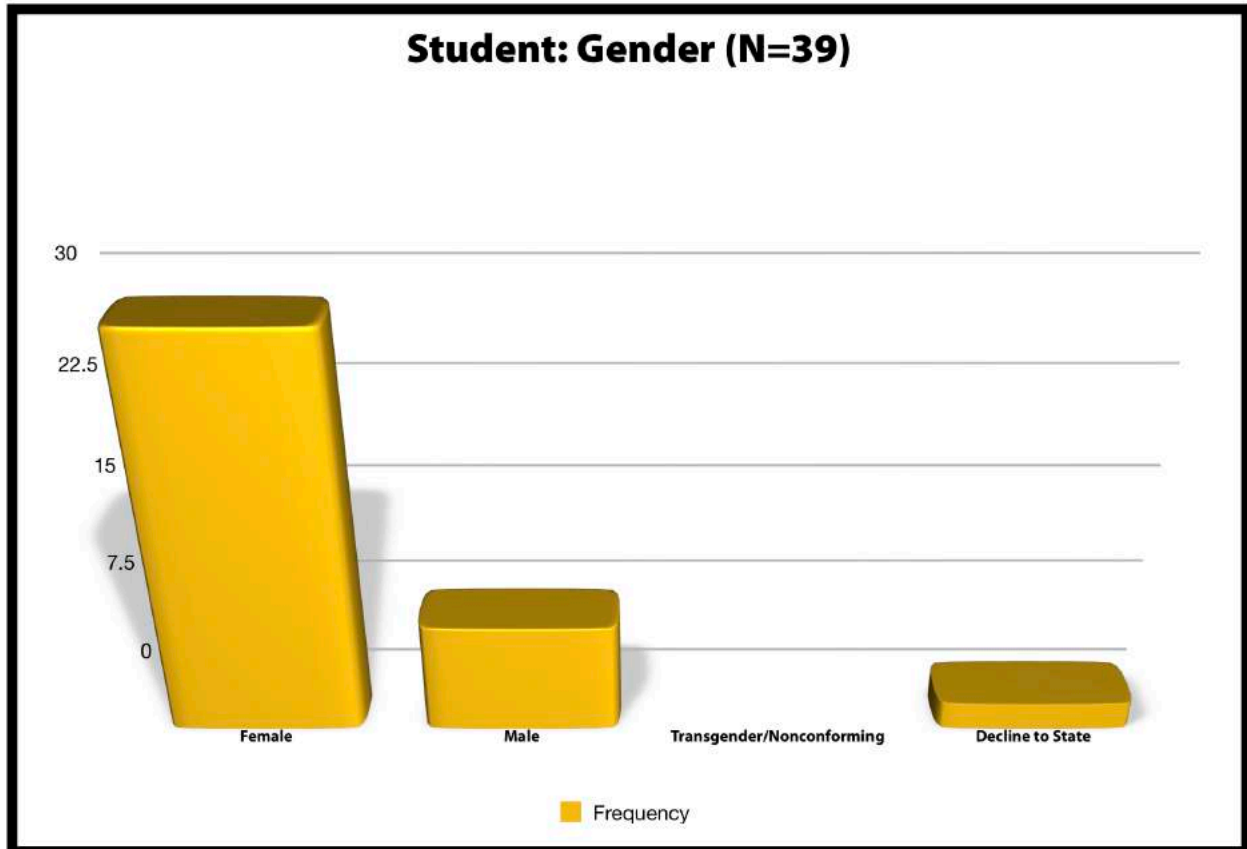


Time at CSULB	Frequency
Associates Degree	2
Bachelor's Degree	7
Master's Degree	5
Doctorate	5
TOTAL	19

Appendix B

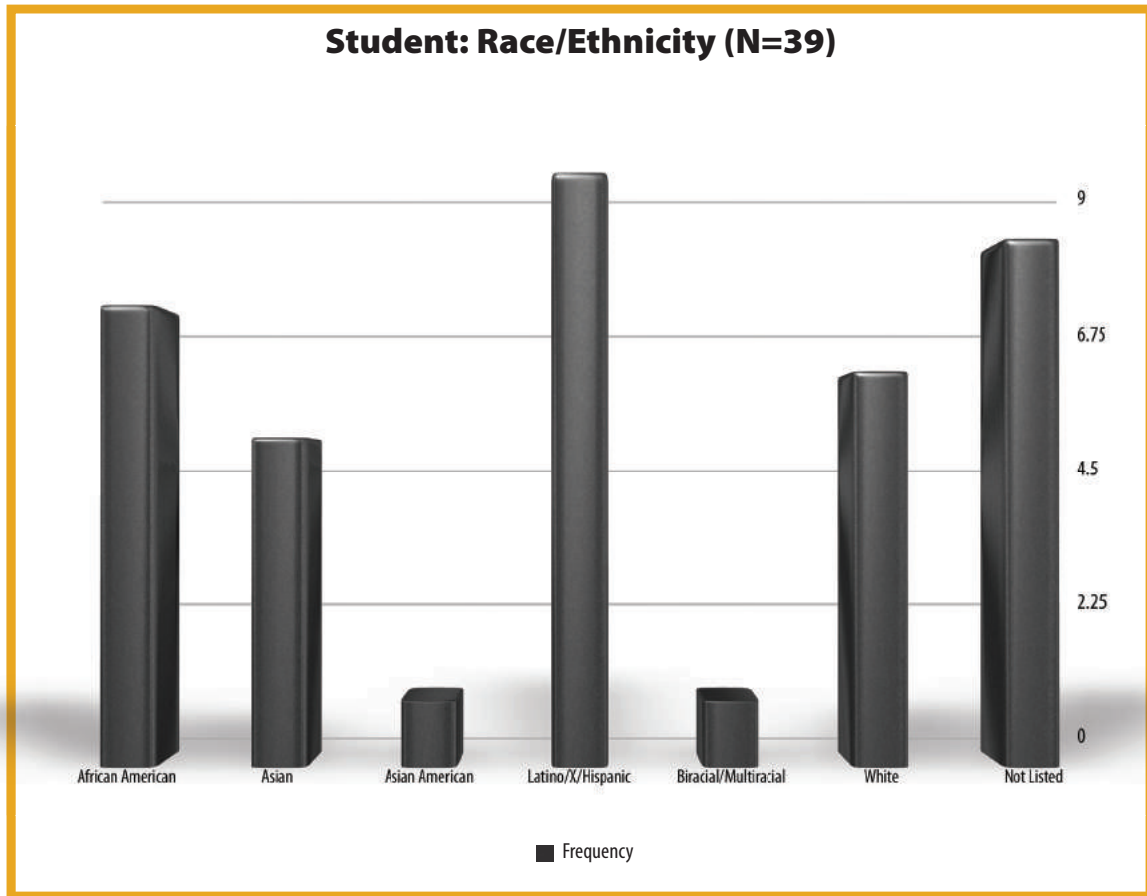
Student Demographics

Student Gender



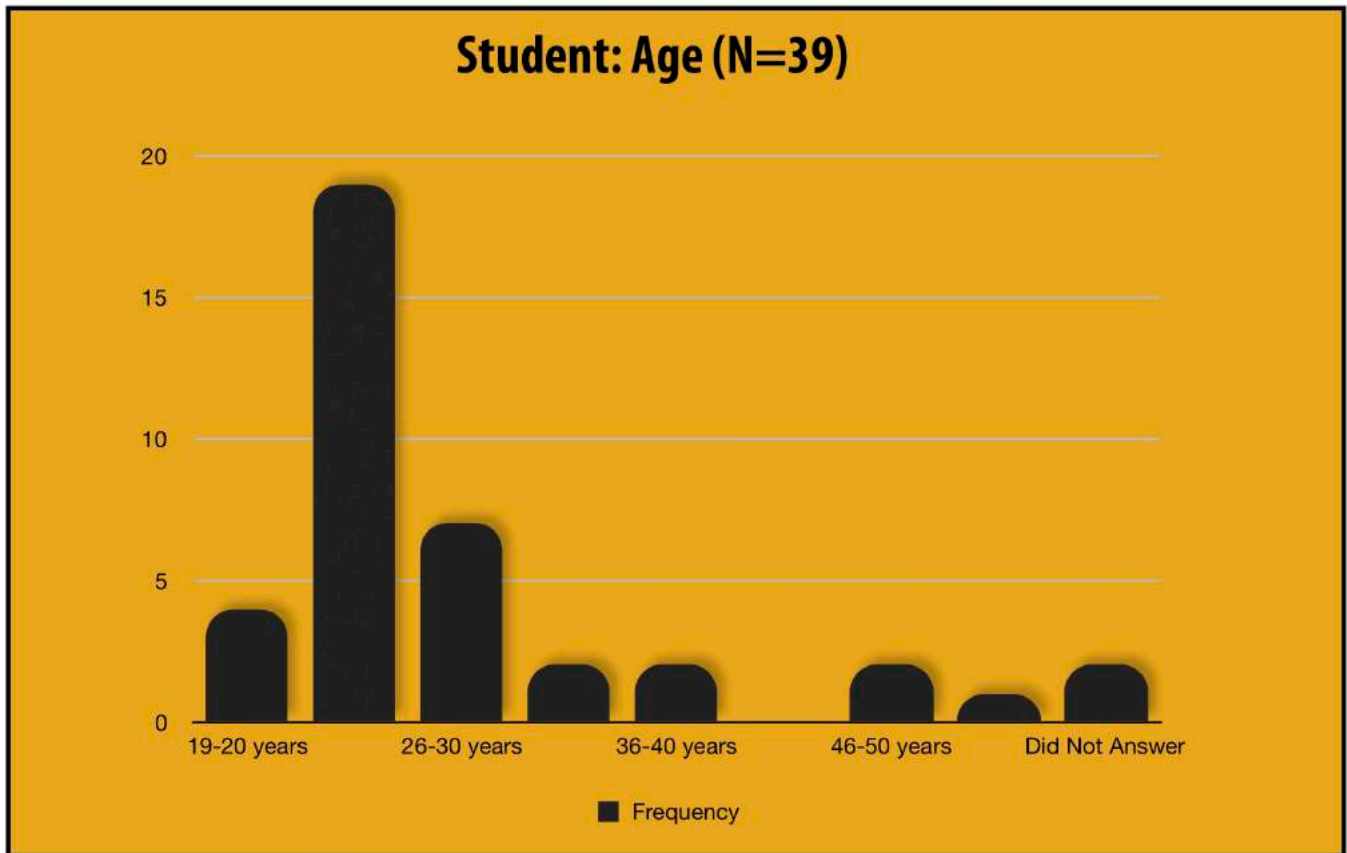
Gender	Frequency
Female	29
Male	8
Transgender/Nonconforming	0
Decline to State	2
Total	39

Student Race/Ethnicity



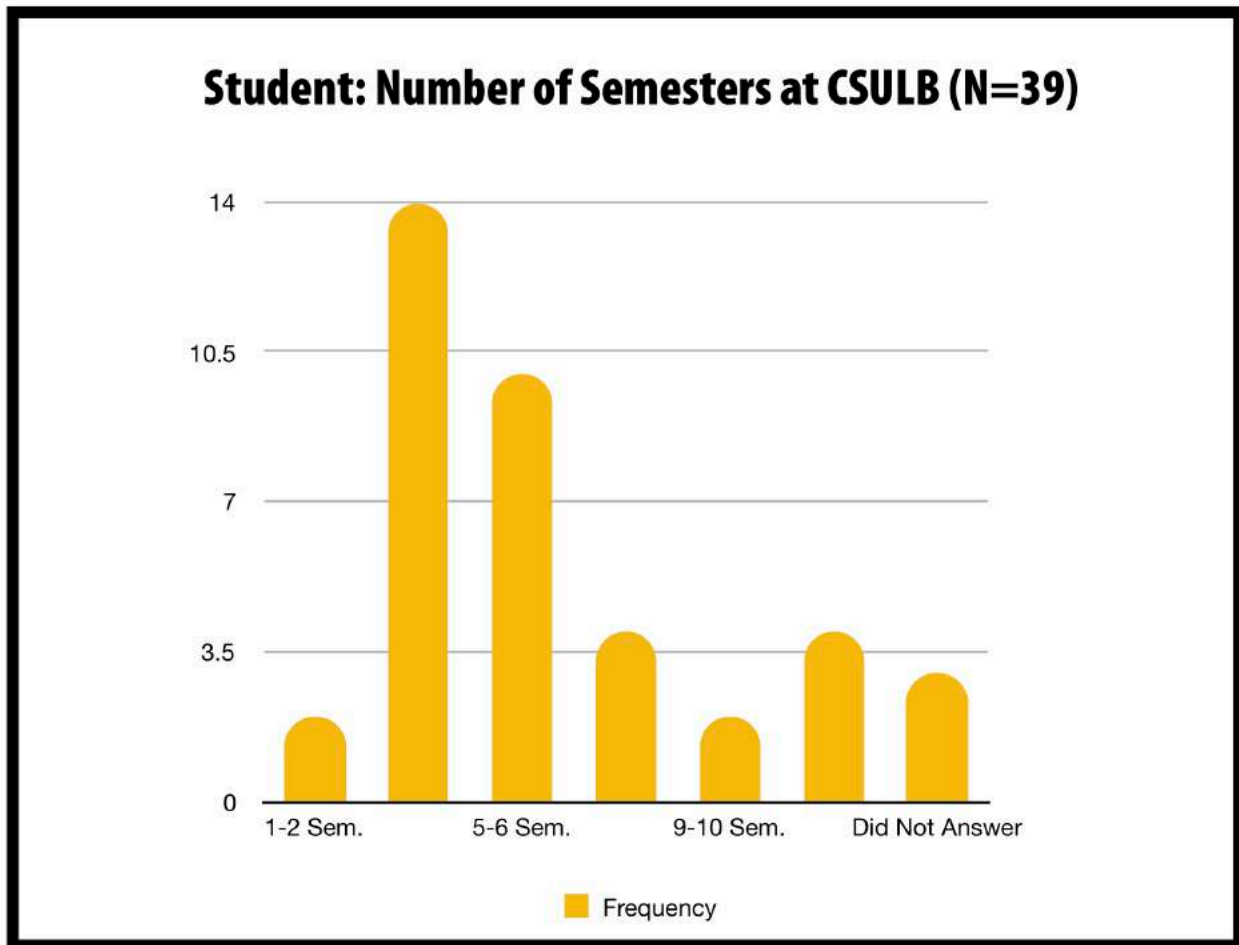
Race/Ethnicity	Frequency
African	1
African American	7
Asian	5
Asian American	1
Latino/X/Hispanic	9
Biracial/Multiracial	1
White	6
Not Listed	8
Did Not Answer	1
TOTAL	39

Student Age



Age	Frequency
19-20 years	4
21-25 years	19
26-30 years	7
31-35 years	2
36-40 years	2
41-45 years	0
46-50 years	2
51+ years	1
Did Not Answer	2
Total	39

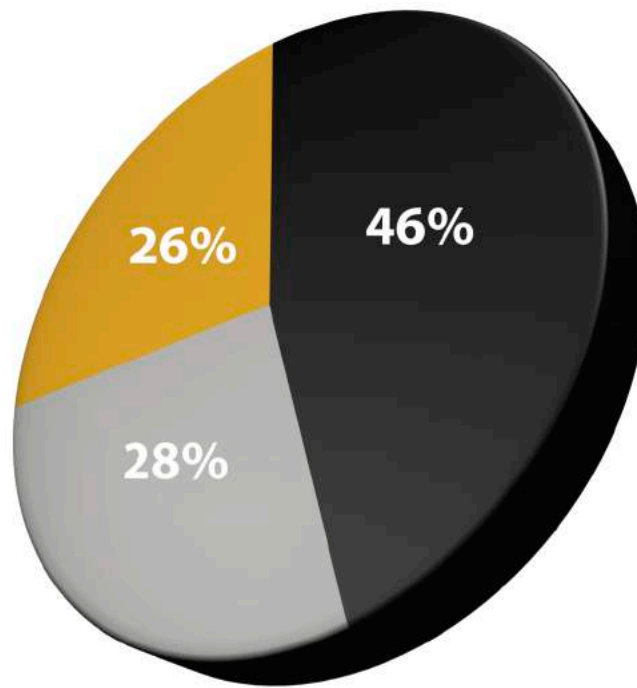
Student Number of Semesters at CSULB



Time at CSULB (Semesters)	Frequency
1-2 Sem.	2
3-4 Sem.	14
5-6 Sem.	10
7-8 Sem.	4
9-10 Sem.	2
11-12 Sem.	4
Did Not Answer	3
Total	39

Student Applied for Financial Aid

Student: Applied for Financial Aid (N=39)



● Yes

● No

● Did Not Answer

Applied for Financial Aid	Frequency
Yes	18
No	11
Did Not Answer	10
Total	39

Appendix C

Student Program Satisfaction Survey Data

Satisfaction With SEIWP Related Services	Frequency	Proportion
How Helpful was SEIWP		
Very Helpful	28	71.79%
Helpful	5	12.82%
Not Very Helpful	2	5.13%
Never Used	2	5.13%
Never Heard of It	2	5.13%
Total	39	
How Helpful was On-Campus CalFresh Enrollment		
Very Helpful	8	20.50%
Helpful	3	7.70%
Not Very Helpful	1	2.60%
Never Used	20	51.30%
Never Heard of It	7	17.90%
Total	39	
How Helpful was the ASI Beach Pantry		
Very Helpful	15	38.50%
Helpful	8	20.50%
Not Very Helpful	1	2.60%
Never Used	12	30.80%
Never Heard of It	3	7.60%
Total	39	
How Helpful was Emergency Housing		
Very Helpful	6	15.40%
Helpful	2	5.10%
Not Very Helpful	0	0
Never Used	25	64.10%
Never Heard of It	6	15.40%
Total	39	
How Helpful were Hotel Vouchers		
Very Helpful	0	0
Helpful	0	0
Not Very Helpful	0	0
Never Used	28	71.80%
Never Heard of It	11	28.20%
Total	39	
How Helpful was the Emergency Grant		
Very Helpful	14	35.90%
Helpful	3	7.70%
Not Very Helpful	1	2.60%
Never Used	16	41.00%
Never Heard of It	5	12.80%
Total	39	

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY OhSNAP! STUDENT FOOD PROGRAMS



An Evaluation of a
Project Addressing
Food Insecurity at
Humboldt State
University

ABSTRACT

Over a five-year period, the Oh SNAP! program has grown from a CalFresh recruitment strategy to a comprehensive set of programs that focus on filling the unmet food needs of college students on the campus of Humboldt State University. At the time of this evaluation, Oh SNAP! included a food pantry, nutrition education, food recovery, student internships, resource referral, training in basic food preparation, and access to affordable fresh vegetables and other healthy foods. This is the story of how it came to be, and an appraisal of its services by the students who use them.

Janette Bramlett, M.A.
Research Analyst



Humboldt State University
1 Harpst Street | Arcata, CA 95521
707.826.3400
www.humboldt.edu/ccrp

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The California Center for Rural Policy (CCRP) was contracted to conduct an evaluation of Oh SNAP! on the campus of Humboldt State University (HSU) as part of a the California State University (CSU) Study of Student Basic Needs. CCRP is a research, evaluation and policy institute dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Northern California.

The evaluation took place in AY 2017-2018 and consisted of the following activities: (a) five key informant interviews with Oh SNAP! staff (n=5), (b) two focus groups with students who accessed Oh SNAP! (n=21), and (c) key informant interviews with students (n=5). This evaluation examined the development of the Oh SNAP! program, describing its operations and its challenges, and reviewed the perspectives of Oh SNAP! held by students, staff, faculty, and administrators on the HSU campus with regard to the aims of the program.

This study has used a participatory research approach in which survey questions were designed with the input and advice of staff members, students, and other stakeholders. Data-checking was done during the report-writing process to ensure that the evaluator's findings and final report accurately represented the program and the community of students who were involved with the study. While CCRP is responsible for the data analysis and interpretation of the survey results, it should be mentioned that two of the three research analysts who contributed to the report were students at HSU and, as such, had an insider's perspective on the issues under review.

According to an article in the *Annual Review of Public Health*¹, three reported benefits of "citizen science" are, "(a) increased research capacity, for example, the labor-saving and increased efficiencies of crowdsourcing, (b) better knowledge, including the incorporation of local lay knowledge, which may lead to novel research strategies and more socially robust knowledge...and, (c) citizen benefits such as improved scientific literacy, empowered communities, and engaged policy and decision making." This program has resulted in legislative changes being made, elevated awareness and analysis among students of the politics of food, housing, and economic inequality, and has been effective in the development of programs that directly serve the student population not only at the HSU campus, but throughout the entire California State University system.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE Oh SNAP! PROGRAM ²

Oh SNAP! is a program designed to combat food insecurity at Humboldt State University. The program coordinator was the CalFresh campus liaison and single point of contact (SPOC) for students seeking resources and referrals for basic needs, who also managed program grants and supervised 8-10 student employees annually. Oh SNAP! is a 'one-stop shop' for resources related to basic needs and referrals. Among its programs were a farm stand (seasonal), a drop-in food pantry

¹ English, P.B. et al, *From Crowdsourcing to Extreme Citizen Science: Participatory Research for Environmental Health. Annual Review of Public Health 2018. 39: 335-50.*

² See Appendix A for a diagram of Oh SNAP! services.

gardening classes, weekly cooking/food preparation workshops, and the “Market Match” program with the Farmers Market that doubles CalFresh purchasing power. Oh SNAP! also provides nutrition education and distributes healthy recipes. The food pantry provides assistance for students applying for CalFresh and distributes surplus soup from the cafeteria and catered events on campus. The program coordinator also developed a phone app that alerts students when new food arrives. The program coordinator split her time between the food pantry and her job as a health educator, which is part of the student health education structure. Another staff member in Student Health and Well-being Services supervised and supported the program coordinator.³

The information in Section I of the report was developed utilizing data from the key informant interviews with Oh SNAP! program staff.

KEY FINDINGS

These key themes were identified as critical to the success of the Oh SNAP! program on HSU’s campus:

- Student-Centered Design
- Myth-Busting Around Basic Needs
- Multiple Funding Sources
- Campus and Community Partnerships
- Campus Champions

PROGRAM ORIGINS

Oh SNAP! is a grassroots, student-centered program that is also research-informed and data-driven. Oh SNAP! has changed the way people think about students and about food insecurity. Oh SNAP! was conceived in 2013 by a new faculty member in HSU’s Department of Social Work who later became the faculty advisor for Oh SNAP! She was hearing students’ stories of hardship and began researching the problem on campus with the help of eight Social Work students. As they organized student-outreach events to provide help with CalFresh application assistance, she was surprised by the number of students who responded to the offers of food assistance, “I expected a few students to show up, and hundreds arrived for our [CalFresh Outreach] events.” As she began researching how other campuses were dealing with food insecurity among college students, she discovered there was little published on the topic. The faculty advisor knew that Clare Cady, at Oregon State’s University Human Service Resource Center, had organized a food bank. The faculty advisor began consulting with Cady, who co-founded the Campus and University Food Bank Association, in the development and launch of Oh SNAP!. Additionally, the local food pantry, Food for People, provided guidance in the design of program operations.

³ See Appendix B for Oh SNAP! organizational structure.

Over the last five years, Oh SNAP! has grown into an organized, institutionally supported operation on the Humboldt State University (HSU) campus. According to its website, Oh SNAP! is a student-driven initiative with a mission to, “increase access to nutritious and culturally appropriate food for all HSU students by engaging in campus and community partnerships and by raising awareness of food insecurity among our peers. We aim to provide our fellow students with basic necessities and connections to community resources.” Indeed, this evaluation has demonstrated that students have been an integral part of decision-making and operations throughout the project’s development.

HSU students and the faculty advisor recognized early on that campus facilities should be able to accept Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT). No other campus in California had EBT yet. After multiple attempts to find a representative at the USDA who understood the complications of setting up EBT on a campus auxiliary market, one of the students working at Oh SNAP! found someone at the USDA who walked them through the application process. The faculty advisor sought the support of HSU’s President, Executive Director of University Center, and the Director of Dining Services for getting EBT on campus, and ultimately it was implemented for a couple thousand dollars. The faculty advisor said that the campus markets have benefited from EBT, bringing in an average of an additional \$10,000 in revenue each month, so the cost of implementation was well worth it.

Associated Students initially provided funding for farm shares to distribute to students. Other university researchers and community partners began to take an interest, guiding the faculty advisor toward people in the community and on campus who would eventually become program partners and/or funding collaborators.

A contract from the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) aimed at increasing CalFresh Outreach and Application Assistance facilitated the first stage of institutionalizing the program. This was an annual contract where the HSU faculty advisor and staff were hired to conduct CalFresh Application Assistance, nutrition education, website development and program evaluation. The grant has paid for 4-5 student interns at Oh SNAP! each year.

In the second year of the program, the faculty advisor reached out to another staff member who had worked in Student Health Services for ten years—there was a rumor that she was informally providing students with emergency food and very interested in starting a food pantry on campus. They connected and found a suitable location on the HSU campus, and together began enlisting community partners to help stock the shelves. In meetings with each other and with the eight founding students, the Oh SNAP! concept evolved through endless conversations, exploring, “How is this going to work? How is this going to get funded? What are we going to do? What are the parameters? How many cans of soup can somebody [use]?”

Oh SNAP! has come from the students themselves driving the design of the program, with the faculty member and Lead for Health Education as guides and supports. The development of a website and a video documentary helped define the structure of Oh SNAP! as well as extend

the program's outreach efforts. The team formulated a model of operations that included meaningful student leadership, peer-to-peer outreach, and cultural representativeness in staffing and food choices, in addition to providing tasty, nutritious food options.

The organizational core of the food pantry was the collective decision-making process among students and staff about student use of the facility. Their vision informed, from the beginning, by a perspective that was well-articulated by the current program coordinator:

“One of the things that we really strived [for] in Oh SNAP! that makes us a little different, and is a part of our mission, is that we’re not just giving people food. We are addressing what is causing food inequity. That means teaching people about the seed diversity problems, and about monoculture, and about Big Ag, and about the way that food insecurity works around the world, and to move towards a food justice model. It’s not just a food program, in that we’re handing cans of food out to people. We’re also trying to educate people about the importance of food politically.”

MYTH-BUSTING AROUND BASIC NEEDS

The faculty advisor's research, combined with the Lead for Health Education's advocacy, helped to reconceptualize hunger and food insecurity at HSU, a product of unequal socioeconomic conditions that adversely affects physical and mental health, transforming it to a legitimate concern for health services. A food pantry is not traditionally considered part of health education, yet the program coordinator argued that nutrition is preventive health education, and certainly everyone needs food as a basic human requirement. Prior to the faculty advisor's research, the Lead for Health Education had tried in small ways to meet the needs of hungry students, but the response was inadequate to meet the level of need. The program coordinator, as a part-time peer health educator, had done some food politics work on campus before the food pantry was opened, and she and the Lead for Health Education

“ [We] would use as much of our budget as we had left over to purchase instant soups and things like that, to have in our office, like granola bars. Any time we knew somebody was hungry, we would be able to just give them food. We were one of many offices that did that unofficially.”

The faculty advisor pointed out that individual pockets of food provision for students across campus forestalled a clear view of the extent of student need. The Lead for Health Education remarked “initially it was really, really challenging because there were folks that didn't think this was an issue that HSU should take on...we're not a social services agency...addressing food security is a social service issue and not [a health] issue.” They discovered the prevailing attitude was often the stereotype of the 'starving college student'—it's part of being a student to eat ramen, to couch-surf, to be hungry, these were considered rites of passage to adulthood.

“When we went to the [Humboldt County] Board of Supervisors and were proposing our contract to do CalFresh outreach on campus, there were people there that said, “Why are we giving money to college students? These are privileged people.” That was another one, that college students are privileged.”

The faculty advisor and the Lead for Health Education, as well as the students who worked on the early research, felt obligated to deconstruct that argument by demonstrating the concrete effects of food and housing insecurity on student health and academic achievement. The pushback against creating services for students was fierce, with a lot of people at all levels saying, “[addressing hunger and homelessness] is not our job.” The faculty advisor viewed supporting college students as a rational economic strategy. Students are often categorically disqualified from public social service programs by virtue of being a student. She said, “We have people who want a degree and want the jobs, want to be trained...when we look at a push in welfare towards work training and workforce development, what better workforce development is there than a college degree?”

Partnering with the student health center “opened doors that previously haven’t been opened,” according to the faculty advisor. Peer health educators were cross-trained, with the help of Humboldt County DHHS, in the sign-up process for CalFresh applications. In the past two years, Student Health and Wellbeing • Services developed the “OhSure!” program that helps students navigate the health insurance process (MediCal and the Affordable Care Act) in the same way that Oh SNAP! supported them through CalFresh application assistance.

MULTIPLE, DIVERSE FUNDING SOURCES ⁴

Though the conceptual development of Oh SNAP! was driven by student-led team collaboration, the finances that fueled the program’s development were the result of intense personal networking at an entirely different level. The research data gathered during CalFresh recruitment drew attention to a problem of students’ unmet basic needs at the same time that local community activism was raising mounting concern about homelessness throughout the county. In the first year of the program, the faculty advisor applied for the CalFresh recruitment grant (\$42,900) and research funding for food insecurity on campus. The second round of funding that brought wider awareness and innovative utilization opportunities for Oh SNAP! came through partnering with the USDA/North Coast Growers Association in writing a grant that brought in nearly \$100,000. This second-year grant facilitated Oh SNAP!’s infrastructural development and allowed the team to diversify its program offerings. Over the five years of the program, students and staff researched and applied for grant opportunities that kept a regular infusion of funds coming through. HSU Advancement ran a fundraising campaign among HSU Alumni and raised over \$44,000 for Oh SNAP!. The Rotary Club of Arcata Sunrise also contributed to this fund. The success of these grant requests was undoubtedly due to the involvement of a faculty researcher’s sponsorship of the program. Later Associated Students helped fund OhSnap!. Additionally, funds from the Instructionally Related Activities fees were used to help sustain the programs.

⁴ See Appendix C for more details on funding sources.

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ⁵

A big part of the growth spurt of Oh SNAP! was having the faculty advisor and Lead for Health Education as a spokesperson out in the community, constantly talking about it and looking for connections, funding, new ways to support students, and being really excited about it. The broad-based, multi-level partnerships formed early on were critical to its growth. The faculty advisor began asking students, other campus professionals and people involved in food industry, “Hey, we’re seeing hungry students, what do you think we need to do?” Food for People, the local food pantry, helped the team think through the logistics of the food pantry, including purchasing, distribution and storage details.

The team partnered with organizations, private businesses and nonprofits in the local community, as well as institutional collaborators within the university, who all provided distinct forms of crucial support at critical junctures. One of the earliest partnerships was with the Humboldt Food Policy Council (HFPC). The faculty advisor began attending those meetings and soon a partnership emerged with the North Coast Grower’s Association (NCGA). Together they applied for and were awarded a two-year grant from the USDA Farmer’s Market Promotion Program for nearly \$100,000 to promote students’ use of CalFresh benefits at NCGA farmers markets in the Market Match program, where five dollars of CalFresh is worth ten dollars of “veggie bucks” at five local weekly markets. This grant also paid for two students per year to promote CalFresh on campus, as well as providing for four workshops conducted by the North Coast Small Business Development Center to coach local farmers on business plan development and marketing strategies. The student employees were involved with this process, which resulted in an increased number of farmers participating in the local farmers markets.

Another key partnership was the Arcata Lutheran Church, which purchased and assembled “emergency food packs,” to distribute through the food pantry. Other community collaborators, such as the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, the Rotary Club, and some private entrepreneurs, supported the program in various ways: with food donations, serving as community liaisons to support students and farmers as well, being co-applicants for grants, and contributing through expert information-sharing, (e.g., local chefs participating in the cooking demonstrations). The College of Professional Studies collaborated with the team to produce a video about Oh SNAP! that, along with the website designer, helped solidify the messaging that would guide their organizational vision.

CAMPUS CHAMPIONS

During the second year, the faculty advisor developed a close partnership with the Vice President (VP) of Student Affairs while working together on basic needs issues. The VP connected the faculty advisor with Dr. Rashida Crutchfield at Cal State University Long Beach, who interviewed the faculty advisor for her study on food insecurity and homelessness on campus. The faculty advisor and Dr. Crutchfield eventually partnered on Phase II of a two-pronged rural/urban university-wide study commissioned by the CSU Chancellor.

⁵ For a more extensive list of collaborators/contributors, see Appendix D.

Another critical collaborator was the Director of HSU's Student Health and Wellbeing Services, whose department has now taken on much of the administrative responsibility for the Oh SNAP! program. The support of HSU's President was also crucial to being able to move forward. According to the faculty advisor,

“[The President] could easily have said, “No, you can’t operate all these programs.” I think that that put us on the radar nationally, and so we got some good light. We had a great person we hired for marketing, too, which was a student, a graduate from here, who had her own graphic design company. She was a struggling graduate, trying to make her way in the world.”

Student Health and Wellbeing Services has expanded its notions of student health since becoming more formally involved with the Oh SNAP! program in its third year. The health center director has embraced the university's role in helping students to have their basic needs met as the ongoing research continues to identify the degree and type of needs that interfere with students' ability to make it through to graduation.

“While our mission has remained constant—to support student success—our vision is continually evolving...I see my role and the work of SH&WS to help student overcome barriers to graduation so they can continue on their path of healthy development. This includes mental and physical health services, as well as trying to reduce insecurity in other basic needs areas like food.”

As CalFresh recruitment advanced, students and staff identified common barriers to student food security, and their work informed legislative changes that made it easier for students to access publically supported food programs on campus. The faculty advisor and the Lead for Health Education both appeared before a state legislative committee to advocate for bills that ultimately would help other campuses access EBT, clarify CalFresh eligibility for college student exemptions, and create access to Restaurant Meals Programs for CSU campuses. The Lead for Health Education and the program coordinator, over the past two years, took on management of Oh SNAP! so that the faculty advisor was no longer involved in the day-to-day operations. The students and staff continue to identify areas of student need at HSU and partner with the larger community to solve these problems creatively.

2. FOCUS GROUPS AND STUDENT INTERVIEWS

In 2016, some of the students who were part of the CSU Study of Student Basic Needs survey and had experienced food and/or housing insecurity agreed to participate in future research, and CCRP drew the participants for this evaluation from this list. Forty-seven students responded to our invitation, and 21 students attended two focus groups over a two-week period. Five additional students were interviewed, one of whom had never used Oh SNAP! services. All 26 students were asked to fill out a survey questionnaire with questions about demographics, their food and housing security while students at HSU, and other questions about health and academic status. In the focus groups and interviews, they were asked to respond to questions about knowledge and opinions of the Oh SNAP! program features.

The majority of participants were female, 11.5% were male, and 3.8% registered as ‘gender queer’. Sixty percent of the students were Latino/Hispanic, 20% white, 12% Asian, 4% African American, 4% multiracial. Seventy-three percent of participants utilized CalFresh, and 80% had applied for federal aid for schooling. The average age was 22.5, and their average number of semesters at HSU was 5.36 (nine of 23 students had transferred in from two-year colleges). Over 53% of these students reported that Oh SNAP! services helped improve their grades.

A few of the students were recommended to Oh SNAP! by professors, some said their friends had suggested that they apply for CalFresh, and others were told about Oh SNAP! through other campus groups, such as EOP, or the Multicultural Center. Students were asked about their perceptions of Oh SNAP! services prior to their first experience, and if they had used the services, to give their opinions about the food pantry. Overall, students had a very positive perception of Oh SNAP! and highly valued the services they received through the program.

Staff members, in their interviews, expressed warmth and affection for the students who utilized Oh SNAP! services and those who worked there. Over 45 students have been paid to work or intern at Oh SNAP! since its launch. A student employee reported that she had worked a few days over winter and spring breaks because she knows there are some who stay in town: “I’m not going to allow them to be hungry, if we can prevent that.” Often people—staff members and sometimes students—will bring in food to be shared. “Occasionally somebody brings in eggs from their chickens, and then we can give out eggs.” There was a sense of great respect for the students who have made this program work, as articulated by the current program coordinator:

“I have an amazing group of students who work with me, and I know that the pantry would not be possible, and we would not have the culture that is in that space if it wasn’t for the students who [work] there. They care very deeply about the work that they do. They are advocates and activists on this campus. They care very deeply about what the campus is doing to support students’ basic needs, not just what they can do. It’s not just a job to them. They are deeply connecting into making sure things like we have gardens on campus and trying to reduce food prices in our market place. Those are things they’re really concerned about. I didn’t tell them to be concerned about them. They were concerned about them before came to us.”

Some students thought the food pantry was only for CalFresh recipients and were surprised to find out there a food pantry was open to all students. Another student thought it was a place where they give out free canned goods, and was surprised to learn he could apply for CalFresh. The overwhelming number of students reported that the food pantry itself was a very comfortable environment, and the staff were friendly and approachable. Many students used words like, “safe,” “welcoming,” “extremely friendly,” to describe the space, and one student said, “it has improved my grades” because it allowed him to get something to eat in between study time on campus. Others talked about the much-needed stress relief that Oh SNAP! provides as a physical space:

⁶ See Appendix E for demographic details.

“It’s definitely one of my favorite places to go and just go hang out and go get food, you know? Feels really awesome.”

“I came from [a different CSU campus], so over there they just started their own pantry. And from what they had, it was like you go, you get a bag, and you leave. It was different here because...you could choose what you did want, what you didn’t want...I thought it was nice and pretty easy to just go and shop the pantry.”

“A little snack saves me...every time I come by there. Or even just to talk to people, I love everybody there. They’re just so happy and revved up. Because I need a de-stressor from classes, going in there. And sometimes they put on music and they dance.”

Many students shared in the focus groups and interviews that Oh SNAP! services really helped their academic achievement, mental health and overall sense of wellbeing—they didn’t have to worry about when and how they were going to get their next meal.

“Being able to make the meals at home that I want to, and I also use them as a de-stressing mechanism where I’m able just to cook and focus on that before I have to go back and do homework or do stuff. It has been a wonderful, not escape, but it’s been a wonderful help with both my academic endeavors and my mental health, so it’s been great.”

OBSTACLES TO UTILIZATION

Several students said they had a hard time finding the food pantry, which was located on the first floor of the Recreation and Wellness Center at the northeast edge of campus. Others pointed out that it was a very small space and it was often too crowded to comfortably use. Some said there weren’t a lot of fresh vegetables, the hours were not always convenient for their class schedules or it was too far from their dorms to make use of it during the hours it was open. One student felt Oh SNAP! needed to do more advertising for better attendance at their events.

There was a high awareness and utilization among students of the CalFresh application service—only 9.2% of the students surveyed campus-wide had never heard of CalFresh. Many students have applied for and received the benefit—73% of the students who participated in this evaluation were using CalFresh at the time of the evaluation. As utilizers of the food pantry, they probably would have had multiple opportunities to sign up. According to the faculty advisor, of the 32% of HSU students who were CalFresh-eligible, 19.4% currently used it. Some students who did not use Oh SNAP! services or CalFresh reported that they have struggled with not having enough funds to buy food and had gone to other resources such as friends and family for help.

Some of the barriers had been a matter of interpretation—one student, when stating that she had been turned down for CalFresh on two different occasions, said she received completely different reasons from the different county workers who reported the decisions. The program coordinator added another issue: the failure of the lawmakers to keep rules of the assistance programs consistent with the reality of contemporary conditions.

“There are some people who qualify for CalFresh who don’t actually have a food need, and there are some people who don’t qualify for CalFresh who have a definite food need, because of the way that CalFresh qualifications for students work. It’s very convoluted and it’s based off of an old model of what a student is. There are federal laws that were written in the 70’s and they don’t apply to students nowadays, and they need to be changed.”

Several students said that they liked applying for CalFresh through Oh SNAP! because the program employees could clarify terms if they were confused about the questions being asked of them, or could update them on new conditions or changed rules. They also appreciated Oh SNAP! employees following up on applications or helping with the appeal process if they were turned down—several students said this provided a sense of being cared about that is uncommon in campus life. Some students enjoyed being able to buy vegetables from the local farmer’s market with EBT, “...because of that I’m able to go out and buy healthier things, usually. And I think that when I do eat better I do tend to feel better and then I learn better and have more energy throughout the day.” One student preferred to apply through the county DHHS office or directly on the CalFresh website, as she saw Oh SNAP! as an unnecessary middleman.

Another student mentioned rule changes, for example, students who qualified for work study used to be considered eligible for CalFresh, but now they do not. In fact, a staff person explained that a CSU finance administrator determined that in order to be eligible for CalFresh, a student had to be currently employed as a work-study student. Many students qualified for work-study but there weren’t enough job openings to absorb every qualified student. Therefore, there were students with food insecurity who could not access CalFresh because of a particular reading of the regulations that may not be similarly interpreted in other universities outside of the CSU.

One student reported that her application was sidetracked and neither the people at Oh SNAP! nor the county office could find it. She had to reapply after three months. Another student said that the Oh SNAP! person called him to check the CalFresh status and told him that it happens a lot with HSU students, that the processing services lose [the paperwork]. A few students reported problems with the semi-annual recertification process, particularly when the notice comes during a school break and the students miss the filing deadline so they get kicked off, and thus lose food assistance until they resolve the problem.

When students were asked about what they thought of Oh SNAP!, many expressed feelings of shame or stigma associated with taking free food. One student was familiar with CalFresh because her parents had benefited from it. The faculty advisor said that for some students, it wasn’t part of a student’s expectations about what it means to be a college student to utilize services found at off-campus food pantries or public social service buildings, which is why student basic needs resources should be integrated into campus life. Students said,

“When I first went, I felt shameful within myself I don’t know why. There’s all these resources that are giving you free stuff. And they’re not going to shame you, they’re students themselves;”

“You’re...telling yourself that you shouldn’t have to be in that position, but [the] fact that you are kind of puts you down.”

These same students were quick to point out that they see the food pantry as a safe space, a refuge of sorts, and they feel part of something positive that supports their work as a student, not “like the stigma behind EBT itself, and how you’re dehumanized and seen as lazy and don’t work hard.”The students felt good about going there.

“You don’t have to feel shameful going in because they understand everybody struggles. So you can walk in with confidence.”

“They’re not judgmental.”

Many of the focus group students were familiar with the various programs—the gardening classes, the cooking demonstrations, the recipes, but only a few people had used them. Some explained that the workshop times conflicted with their class schedules, and one person suggested moving around the days they are offered in order to broaden the options. Some who had not been aware of these other features mentioned that they would be interested in using such a resource in the future. One student was particularly happy to hear about the recipes on the website. Some students said they preferred to pick up foods that could be eaten without preparation, though according to the survey data, canned foods was the most-frequently used Oh SNAP! offering⁷ by this group.

HOUSING INSECURITY

When asked about what other services would be helpful to them, students rallied around the problem of housing. A very vocal complaint about insufficient housing stock, coupled with stories of mysterious denial of access for students of color, filled the room. Though one student mentioned a student-run Facebook page for sharing information, most students expressed high frustration levels regarding living arrangements, and some reported having to sleep in their cars and shower in the gym. Many students objected to rental agents’ practice of charging a nonrefundable fee (\$40-50) for a unit for which they were never accepted, and others used words like “racial bias,” “exploitation,” “abuse,” “scam,” in describing the local housing market, as well as problems like long wait lists, credit checks and the demand for co-signers.

“I came up here with no idea what it was like, where good places are to live, what property manager to trust and stuff and so I went online and they had a little link to say [off-campus housing]. But it didn’t have any information to direct students and I think that would’ve been really helpful. Because a lot of people come [from] out of the area and you step into this, it’s like its own little world, and if you don’t know what’s going on, kind of hard and stressful to find housing here.”

“And a lot of people are transferring...I know of at least six people who are transferring [from] here because there’s no housing and housing sucks here so a lot of people are going back home just because of that.”

⁷ See Figure 4. Products Obtained at Food Pantry in Appendix E.

The students in one focus group mentioned a website with tips on how to improve odds for getting housing—filling out applications, meeting with property managers, and tips on how to be a good neighbor. In fact, this website was created by the campus Housing Liaison, a part-time position funded by the University that was created in January, 2018. The position is co-funded by the Housing and Residential Life Department and the Office of the Vice President. The Housing Liaison was a student/mother whose family became homeless while she was attending HSU. She participated in a community-based theatre program in which a mixed group of activists, theatre professionals and homeless women were interviewed to produce a collage of vignettes based on real experiences of local people, and performed by several of these women, in an effort to shift stigmatizing attitudes in the community. The local housing crisis is clearly an opportunity for students to participate in creative solutions.

OTHER CAMPUS RESOURCES

Since the Oh SNAP! program was taken under the umbrella of Student Health and Wellbeing Services (SH&WS) two years ago, several new programs have emerged that are focused on basic needs of students: the OhSure! Program and an on-line Interactive Wellbeing Map which provides greater awareness of all the services offered in the local area. Staff at SH&WS also developed the Wellbeing Ambassadors program, through which volunteer faculty and staff are trained in how to recognize and talk with students about basic needs, and how to do referrals.

Several students mentioned Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), the campus mental health program, some with praise and some with frustration over wait lists, the difficulty of getting help in a crisis, or the sense that the counselor couldn't bridge a cultural gap for students of color.⁸ Some students talked about getting a sense of comfort and support from the MultiCultural center, Latinx, African American Center, and their EOP advisor. Others mentioned that certain professors or administrators were very supportive and helpful. One student suggested that a legal center on campus could really help students.

The survey results demonstrate that the food pantry received the highest-rated organization among campus supports, getting a 73.2% vote of "very helpful," while the second favorite among these students was the campus Academic Counseling group. EOP and the students' Departmental (major) academic counseling registered third, with 46.2%.⁹ Among the miscellany that students mentioned as problematic were transportation, campus parking, lack of local jobs—especially those that are time-flexible—and lack of available dentists (several students said they had not seen a dentist in a number of years).

⁸ It should be noted that the entire county suffers from inadequate mental health services.

⁹ Survey data on other campus supports can be reviewed in Appendix E.

In April, 2018, the Chancellor's office announced an award of \$77,000 to the Oh SNAP! program which will fund several new initiatives that address needs that were identified in the last round of research. The Lead for Health Education OhSnap! coordinator had already been collecting excess "J points" from generous students on university meal plans who often have unused credit at the end of the year. In the past, they used these points to buy food for the pantry, but as of Fall 2018, unused points were to be available directly to students in need of short-term food assistance in the form of an EBT card. This grant also provided funding for a pop-up campus thrift store, which freshmen can use to find items donated by students who leave campus.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Given the success of this program, our recommendations included convening a collaborative team of students, working with a similar structure, to tackle the student housing problem in this community.
- b) Annual evaluation of Oh SNAP! services would establish a more formal structure for assessment of whether the programs are meeting students' needs, determine effectiveness of interventions, identify new areas for action, and make sure that students' voices continue to be the primary driving force in this program. Some specific recommendations are drawn from the focus groups:
 - Increase food pantry open hours, structured around class schedules.
 - Develop Systematic outreach to students about the different programs of Oh SNAP!—dissemination of information about services to a broader segment of the student population through formal orientation programs, official campus publications and postings on campus and on-line.
 - Partner with a UC law school to provide legal assistance for students via remote media technology.
 - Collaborate with the Campus Housing Liaison to develop strategies for meeting student housing needs with community partnerships that decrease financial barriers and racial disparity and provide assistance with the acquisition of affordable, appropriate student housing.
 - Expand support services for homeless students by providing access to lockers and showers and resting spaces on campus.
 - Centralize registration for car-pooling and other transportation assistance for students living off-campus.

CONCLUSIONS

The Oh SNAP! Student Food Programs has demonstrated the creativity and persistence of student activists, collaborating with campus champions who were embedded in hierarchical as well as lateral connections to resources, in solving local problems. Importantly, these students have done more than merely “help” people in need, they have helped to change the public discourse about the problem of meeting basic human needs. With their critical perspectives, combined with the optimism and determination of staff members and administrative supporters who have taken their circumstances seriously, these students have succeeded in building an integrated program of supports on the HSU campus that contain the seeds of social change—essentially, the services themselves focus on empowerment and self-determination, rather than the commonly practiced relationship of charitable acts done for the unfortunate.

These students have contributed to our understanding of how food assistance and a hospitable environment for learning about nutrition, cooking skills, healthy foods, can be a welcoming experience and have positive effects on their learning capacity. More focused research should examine the relationship between food and housing security and graduation/retention rates, but these students believed that their academic performance has been positively affected by Oh SNAP!.

APPENDIX A. OhSNAP! SERVICES



*New service in Fall 2018

APPENDIX B. OhSNAP! ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Executive Director Student Health
and Wellbeing Services

Lead for Health Education and
Clinic Support Services
Student Health and Wellbeing
Services

Wellbeing
Ambassadors

**OhSNAP! Student Food
Programs OhSure!
Medical Access
Support Programs**

Student
Volunteers

Peer Health Educators

Student Employees

Health Educator/OhSNAP!
Program Coordinator Campus
Programs and Accreditation
Compliance

APPENDIX C. OhSNAP! FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Food Donors

- Beck's Bakery
- Brio
- HSU campus food drives

Funding Donors

- College of Professional Studies
- Department of Social Work
- Humboldt Area Foundation
- Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services
- HSU Advancement and the OhSNAP Fundraising Campaign
- HSU Associated Students
- HSU Peer Health Education
- Rotary Club
- Instructional Related Activity Fee

Grant Partners

- California State University
- CalFresh Outreach
- Chico Center for Health Communities
- Earthly Edibles
- Humboldt County CalFresh Outreach Partnership
- U.S. Department of Agriculture/North Coast Growers Association

Program Champions

- Area I Agency on Ageing
- California Center for Rural Policy
- Campus Center for Appropriate Technology
- City of Arcata
- College of the Redwoods
- Community Alliance with Family Farmers
- Housing and Dining Services
- Humboldt Food Policy Council
- HSU Office of the President
- Student Affairs
- Student Health and Wellbeing Services
- Waste Reduction and Resource Awareness Program
- University Center

Program Development Guides

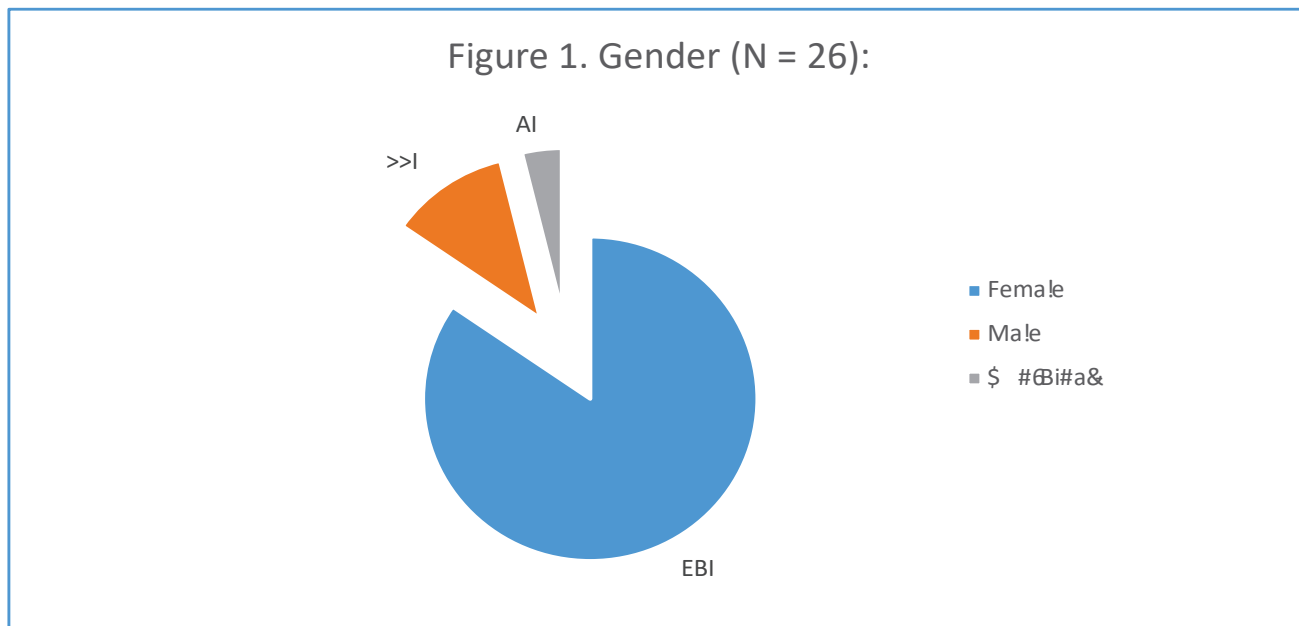
- Campus and University Food Bank Alliance
- Food for People

APPENDIX D. OhSNAP! COLLABORATORS (partial list)

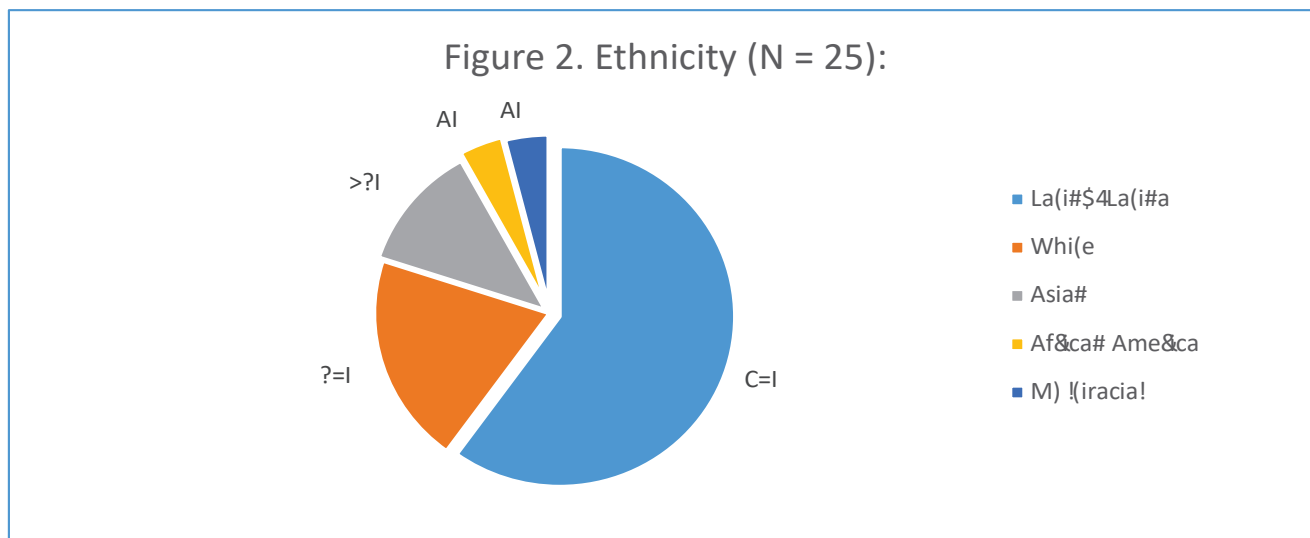
- Accounting Department
- Beck's Bakery (bread for food pantry)
- Campus Center for Appropriate Technology (composting, gardening classes)
- Chefs in the community (cooking demos)
- Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CSAs for students)
- Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services (training for CalFresh applications and peer-to-peer outreach)
- Dining Services
- Dr. Rashida Crutchfield CSULB (research)
- Earthly Edibles (Farm Shares)
- Facilities Management
- Financial Aid
- Food for People (guidance, storage)
- HSU Wellness and Recreation Center (space for Food Pantry)
- Humboldt Food Policy Council (Food Summit conference yielded promotion for the problem and some solutions)
- The Lutheran Church of Arcata (storage, emergency food packs)
- North Coast Growers Association (grant applicants/Farmers Market Match program)
- Sponsored Programs Foundation

APPENDIX E. Student Demographics for Focus Groups/Interviews

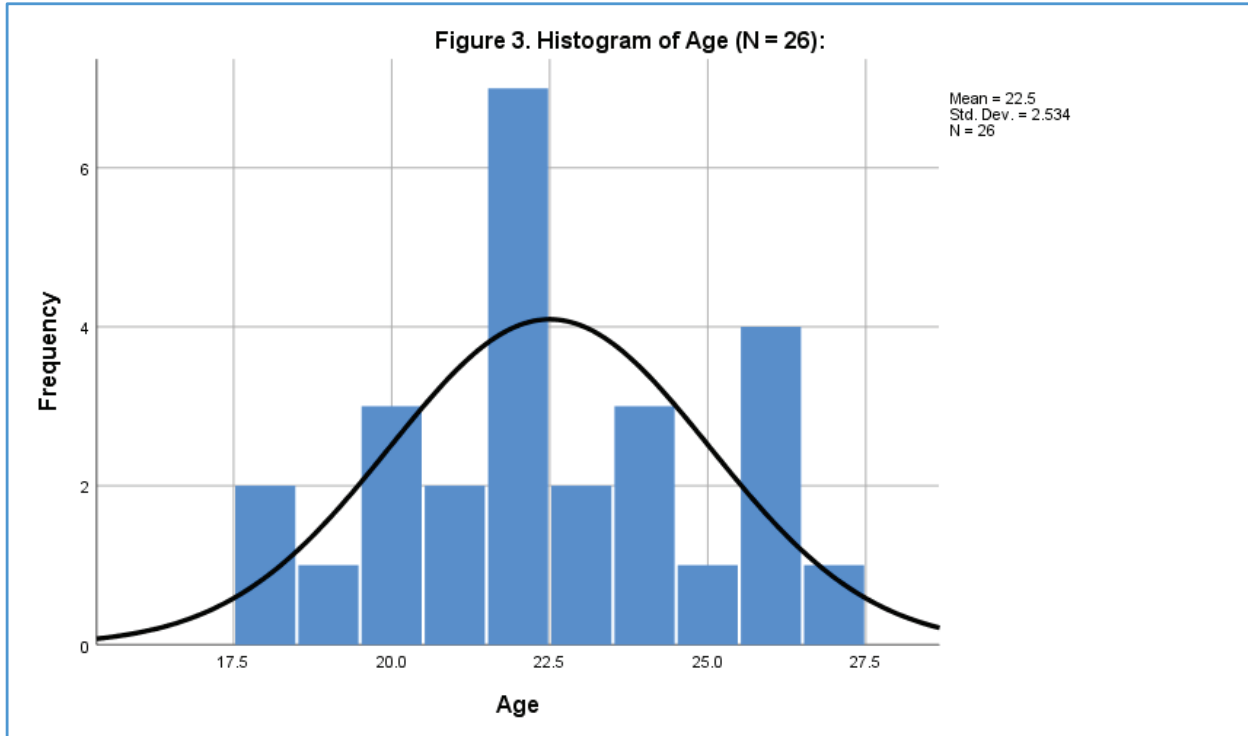
Demographic Data for Oh SNAP: Nicholas Ortiz



Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	22	84.6%
Male	3	11.5%
Non-Binary response	1	3.8%
Total	26	



Ethnicity	Frequency	Proportion
Latino/Hispanic	15	60.0%
White	5	20.0%
Asian	3	12.0%
African America	1	4.0%
Multiracial	1	4.0%
Total	26	



- Age is normally distributed, with a mean of 22.5 and a standard deviation of 2.53; $N = 26$
- 95% BCa CI [21.5, 23.4]. Confidence interval was obtained using 1000 bootstrap samples.

Descriptive statistics for *Number of Semester* are considered

- Normality is confirmed after conservative assumption testing was performed.
- Respondents report, on average, attending 5.36 semesters at HSU, with a standard deviation of 3.05 and range of 8 (min.-max. = 2-10); $N = 25$.
- BCa 95% CI [4.04, 6.48]; confidence interval based on 1000 bootstrap samples.

Descriptive statistics for *Transfer Students* are considered

- Nine of 23 respondents are transfer students (39.1%).
- Nearly 61% of respondents are not transfer students³

Descriptive Statistics for *Planning to Enroll Next year* are considered

- Seventy-three percent of respondents ($n = 19$) plan to enroll at HSU next semester³
- Seven respondents do not plan on attending next semester (27%).

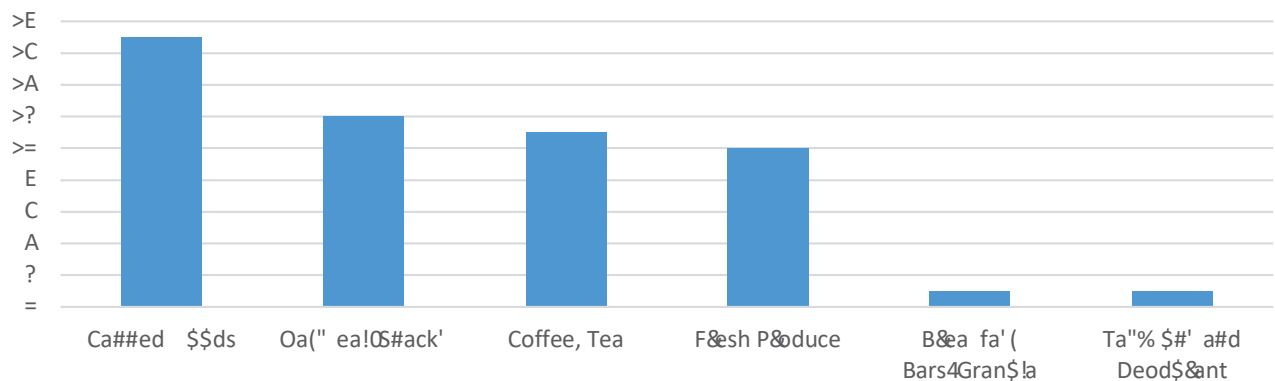
Descriptive statistics for *Applied for FAFSA* are considered

- Twenty respondents (80%; $N = 20$) have applied for federal aid for schooling.
- Five respondents (20%; $n = 5$) did not apply for federal aid when taking this survey.

Who gets Cal Fresh?

- Seventy-three percent of respondents ($n = 19$) utilize Cal Fresh, where 27% ($n = 7$) do not get Cal Fresh.
- Of the 73% who do have Cal Fresh, over 63% reported using the service within the last 30 days.

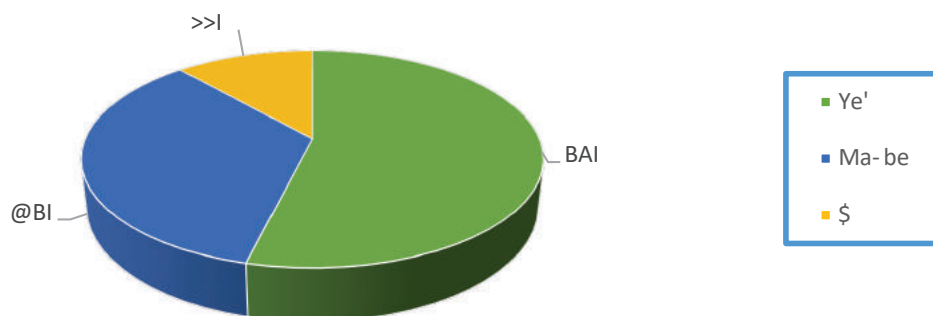
Figure 4. Obtained Products at Food Pantry



Obtained Items at Food Pantry	Frequency	Proportion
Canned Goods	17	32.7%
Oatmeal, Snacks	12	23.1%
Coffee, Tea	11	21.2%
Fresh Produce	10	19.2%
Breakfast Bars/Granola	1	1.9%
Tampons and Deodorants	1	1.9%
Total	52	

Note. Percentages are based on total number of responses, not total number of actual respondents.

Figure 22. Help Grades? (N = 26):



Help Grades	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	53.8%
Maybe	9	34.6%
No	3	11.6%
Total	26	

Helpfulness of Fin. Aid Office	Frequency	Proportion
Äelpful	15	57.7%
Very Helpful	7	27.0%
Not Very Helpful	3	11.5%
Never Used	1	3.8%
Total	26	
Helpfulness of Academic Counseling)Campus Wide		
Very Helpful	13	50.0%
Not Very Helpful	6	23.2%
Äelpful	3	11.5%
Never Used	3	11.5%
Never Heard of	1	3.8%
Total	26	
Helpful is Academic Counseling-Major		
Very Helpful	12	46.2%
Äelpful	10	38.5%
Not Very Helpful	3	11.5%
Never Used	1	3.8%
Total	26	
Helpfulness of CAPS		
Not Very Helpful	9	34.6%
Very Helpful	6	23.1%
Never Used	5	19.2%
Äelpful	4	15.5%
Never Heard of	1	3.8%
Unable to get Appointment	1	3.8%
Total	26	
Helpfulness of EOP		
Very Helpful	12	46.2%
Never Used	8	30.8%
Äelpful	5	19.2%
Never heard of	1	3.8%
Total	26	
Helpfulness of TRIO		
Never Heard of	13	50.0%
Never Used	11	42.4%
Äelpful	1	3.8%
Very Helpful	1	3.8%
Total	26	

Helpfulness of Campus Housing and Res. Life	Frequency	Proportion
Not Very Helpful	11	42.3%
Äelpful	7	26.9%
Never Used	4	15.4%
Very Helpful	4	15.4%
Total	26	
Helpfulness of GSP		
Never Heard of	19	73.1%
Never Used	7	26.9%
Total	26	
Helpfulness of SDS		
Never Used	15	57.7%
Äelpful	4	15.4%
Very Helpful	4	15.4%
Never Heard of	3	11.5%
Total	26	
Helpfulness of VAS		
Never Used	17	65.4%
Never Heard of	7	27.0%
Äelpful	1	3.8%
Very Helpful	1	3.8%
Total	26	
Helpfulness of WGS		
Never Heard of	6	23.1%
Never Used	10	38.5%
Äelpful	9	34.6%
Very Helpful	6	23.1%
Total	1	3.8%
Helpfulness of SEIWP		
Never Heard of	10	38.5%
Never Used	9	34.6%
Äelpful	6	23.1%
Very Helpful	1	3.8%
Total	26	
Helpfulness of FoÖd Pantry		
Very Helpful	12	46.2%
Never Used	8	30.8%
Äelpful	5	19.2%
Very Helpful	1	3.8%
Total	26	
Helpfulness of FoÖd Pantry		
Very Helpful	19	73.2%
Never Used	3	11.5%
Äelpful	3	11.5%
Not Very Helpful	1	3.8%
Total	26	

Use of Campus Housing

- Nearly eighty-five percent of respondents have used campus housing ($n = 22$), while 15.4% have not ($n = 4$).