
MEETING BASIC NEEDS: CAMPUS PLANNING TOOLBOX

More than half of California Community College (CCC) students experience food or housing insecurity sometimes.¹ When our students can't meet their basic needs – such as having a stable place to live or enough food to eat – it becomes much harder for them to thrive academically.



CCC Health & Wellness created the [Supporting Community College Students in Meeting Basic Needs](#) (2018) infographic to provide examples of basic needs supports that some colleges have created. **This planning toolbox builds on the infographic.**

Purpose of the Toolbox

The **Meeting Basic Needs: Campus Planning Toolbox** is designed to help CCC administrators, staff, and faculty who are interested or engaged in planning basic needs services for their campus. These tools may be most useful for CCC that are just beginning to develop their resources related to basic needs, or that are seeking to expand their services and partnerships.

Important Note

When thinking about basic needs on campus, it is critical to remember that **faculty and staff may also experience housing insecurity, food insecurity, and similar challenges.** A comprehensive basic needs strategy is inclusive and respectful of all members of the campus community who may need these supports. Although the tools in this document refer to “students,” these tools can be used or adapted to include faculty and staff as well.

See also the **Meeting Basic Needs: Customizable Resource List**, a new resource to help make every member of your college community aware of basic needs supports that are available on and off campus.

What's Included in This Toolbox

Tools 1-4 build on one another as part of a complete planning process. They can also be used as standalone tools. **Tool 5** lists additional relevant resources.

- Tool 1. Matrix of Existing Resources on Our Campus
- Tool 2: Assessing Needs
- Tool 3: Determining Gaps and Priorities
- Tool 4: Individual and Organizational Partners
- Tool 5: More Resources to Help You

¹ Goldrick-Rab, S., Baker-Smith, C., Coca, V., & Looker, E. (2019). California Community Colleges #RealCollege Survey. The Hope Center. <https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/RealCollege-CCCCO-Report.pdf>

Edit this Document Collaboratively with Your Team

Tools 1, 3, and 4 include spaces to fill in your college's information. You can share this Word document with members of your team to provide edits. Or you can share the document through a program that allows you to make real-time edits to a shared document. Here are two options:

1. An online version of this document is available for **Google Docs**:
<https://tinyurl.com/CCC-basicneeds-campustoolbox>

Simply open the link; click "Open with Google Docs"; select "File" → "Make a Copy"; and save the copy to a folder in your Google Drive. Then you can easily edit and share the copy with your team.

2. Your college or team may have another preferred system for file-sharing and collaborative document editing. For example, other programs that you may use instead of Google Docs include: **Dropbox** (file sharing) or **Dropbox Paper** (collaborative document editing); **Bit.ai** (collaborative document editing); **Microsoft OneDrive** (file sharing).

TOOL 1. MATRIX OF EXISTING RESOURCES ON OUR CAMPUS

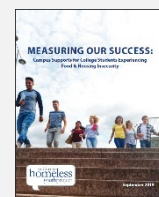
Use the following matrix to identify your college's existing basic needs resources. Make a note of any known challenges or opportunities related to this resource. The first row has been filled-in as an example. Add more rows as needed.

Consider the full spectrum of needs and creative ways to meet them. Examples include:²

- **Food** – food pantry; farmer's market on campus; snacks in campus offices (Financial Aid, veterans center, etc.)
- **Housing** – referrals and warm hand-off to local homeless shelters; alumni housing services; accelerated service entry for homeless students; assistance with identifying and/or applying to low-cost housing; overnight parking lot for sleeping in vehicle
- **Awareness and Respect** – faculty, staff, and student trainings to destigmatize homelessness and encourage help-seeking
- **Critical Services** – 24-hour study area; use of laundry services; use of showers; child care; referral to legal services
- **Financial Services** – emergency loans or stipends; financial coaching; assistance applying for state and federal government benefits (e.g., CalFresh, WIC, CalWORKs, Medi-Cal)
- **Medical Services** – counseling; drop-in treatment for acute needs; free OTC medicines; dental services
- **Other Essential Items** – transit pass; toiletries; clothing pantry; textbook checkout; laptop loan

Resource for Identifying Potential Supports

The **California Youth Homeless Project** conducted a study of basic needs resources at California public universities (including the CCC system). Their report, [Measuring Our Success: Campus Supports for College Students Experiencing Food & Housing Insecurity](#) (September 2019), includes many examples of what other colleges are doing to support their students.



² Includes recommendations from: Angst, M. (June 17, 2019). Bay Area homeless students ask community, officials to stop stigmatizing them. *The Mercury News*. <https://www.mercurynews.com/2019/06/14/bay-area-homeless-students-ask-community-officials-to-stop-stigmatizing-them/>

Tool 1: Matrix of Existing Basic Needs Resources on Our Campus

Resource Type	Resource Name	Lead Department, Partners	Notes, Challenges, or Opportunities
<i>Food</i>	<i>Food Pantry</i>	<i>Associated Student Body partnered with local food bank</i>	<i>Challenges: only open during school year; limited variety of foods. Opportunity: partner with additional food banks in area; integrate faculty donations</i>

TOOL 2: ASSESSING NEEDS

Recent research has shown that hunger and homelessness are widespread in higher education, but you may want to gather data to get a more complete picture of needs at *your* college. For example, collecting data on hunger and homelessness on your campus can help you engage local policymakers or community-based agencies in your efforts. It may also help you identify priority populations to serve (e.g., former foster youth, students with physical disabilities, LGBTQ students).

You can use surveys and focus groups to gather **student opinions about the resources and services** they use or want. For example, you may learn that some students avoid using the pantry because they feel unwelcome. It is helpful to recruit people that represent an array of backgrounds, such as students who actively use your campus food pantry; student veterans; student parents; etc.

You may also find it useful to conduct surveys or focus groups with **staff and faculty** to assess their level of unmet basic needs; whether and to what degree they utilize available resources; and, if not, why they do not use these resources.

Sample questions include:

- Have you ever tried to find out about hunger or housing resources that are available from the college? Who did you talk to, and were they able to help you? What was that experience like?
- Have you ever tried to enroll in benefits programs, like CalFresh? Did anyone on campus help you?
- Have you ever used [campus basic needs resource, such as food pantry]?
 - If not, why not?
 - If so, what was your experience like?
- How often do you use [campus resource] – for example, weekly, a few times a month, every month, every so often?
- Are there ways that [campus resource] could be improved to better meet your needs or the needs of other students?
- Think about other essential needs you have. What are some of your most important needs that aren't being met? How could the college help you meet these needs so that you can better focus on your education? [Examples that could prompt further discussion: access to showers, laundry facilities, a safe place to park and sleep, 24-hour study area, etc.]
- What are some other ways that the college could help students experiencing food and housing insecurity?

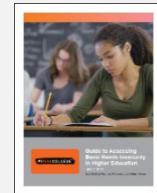
For more ideas, check out the resources below in the “Assessment Tools to Adapt for Your Campus” box.

Assessment Tools to Adapt for Your Campus

The **California State University (CSU) Chancellor's Office** released [Researching Basic Needs in Higher Education: Qualitative and Quantitative Instruments to Explore a Holistic Understanding of Food and Housing Insecurity](#) (August 2017). This valuable resource includes survey instruments, interview protocols, and focus group protocols for gathering data from staff, faculty, administrators, and students.



The Hope Center developed a helpful [Guide to Assessing Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education](#) (July 2018) that you can use to assess the extent of student hunger and homelessness at your campus. It includes survey questions, implementation guidance, and frequently asked questions (FAQs).



The **University of California, Los Angeles**, held focus groups to understand students' experiences related to food insecurity and food literacy. Their report includes the questions they asked, research methodology, and insights and themes from their research: [College Students Identify University Support for Basic Needs and Life Skills as Key Ingredient in Addressing Food Insecurity on Campus](#) (2017).



TOOL 3: DETERMINING GAPS AND PRIORITIES

Now that you have identified existing resources (Tool 1) and needs (Tool 2), reflect on where there are gaps or areas of improvement. It may be useful to have multiple members of your team or staff from multiple departments fill in this tool.

Tool 3: Determining Gaps and Priorities				
Food				
On our campus, what is the level of unmet need for this resource?				
High Need	Moderately High Need	Some Need	Little Need	No Need
Currently, how well are we helping individuals address this area of need?				
Very Well	Well	Neither Well nor Poorly, or Unsure	Poorly	Very Poorly
To what degree is this need a priority for our college (this year or in the upcoming year)?				
Highest Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Somewhat of a Priority	Not a Priority
What are some strategies that we could establish or improve to meet this need? <i>Partnership with food bank, dining hall meal vouchers, snacks in key offices (Financial Aid, veterans center, etc.), collect food donations from faculty and staff, CalFresh outreach and enrollment, etc.</i>				
Housing and Housing-Related Needs				
On our campus, what is the level of unmet need for this resource?				
High Need	Moderately High Need	Some Need	Little Need	No Need
Currently, how well are we helping individuals address this area of need?				
Very Well	Well	Neither Well nor Poorly, or Unsure	Poorly	Very Poorly
To what degree is this need a priority for our college (this year or in the upcoming year)?				
Highest Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Somewhat of a Priority	Not a Priority
What are some strategies that we could establish or improve to meet this need? <i>Referrals to low-cost housing, access to laundry services, use of showers, place to park and sleep, warm hand-off to shelters, vouchers for emergency stay at local hotel or motel, etc.</i>				

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Transportation

On our campus, what is the level of unmet need for this resource?
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High Need	Moderately High Need	Some Need	Little Need	No Need
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Currently, how well are we helping individuals address this area of need?
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Very Well	Well	Neither Well nor Poorly, or Unsure	Poorly	Very Poorly
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To what degree is this need a priority for our college (this year or in the upcoming year)?
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Highest Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Somewhat of a Priority	Not a Priority
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What are some strategies that we could establish or improve to meet this need? <i>Bus passes or free bus service, vouchers to local auto repair, etc.</i>
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Health Services

On our campus, what is the level of unmet need for this resource?
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High Need	Moderately High Need	Some Need	Little Need	No Need
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Currently, how well are we helping individuals address this area of need?
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Very Well	Well	Neither Well nor Poorly, or Unsure	Poorly	Very Poorly
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To what degree is this need a priority for our college (this year or in the upcoming year)?
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Highest Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Somewhat of a Priority	Not a Priority
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What are some strategies that we could establish or improve to meet this need? <i>Free over-the-counter medicines, partnership with low-cost dental center, counseling on campus, peer or group counseling, referral to substance abuse treatment services, Medi-Cal enrollment assistance, etc.</i>

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Financial Supports and Services				
On our campus, what is the level of unmet need for this resource?				
High Need	Moderately High Need	Some Need	Little Need	No Need
Currently, how well are we helping individuals address this area of need?				
Very Well	Well	Neither Well nor Poorly, or Unsure	Poorly	Very Poorly
To what degree is this need a priority for our college (this year or in the upcoming year)?				
Highest Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Somewhat of a Priority	Not a Priority
What are some strategies that we could establish or improve to meet this need? <i>Financial education seminars or coaching, emergency loans, job training and referrals, stronger support for taking advantage of available student aid and loans,³ etc.</i>				
Other Essentials and Personal Care Items				
On our campus, what is the level of unmet need for this resource?				
High Need	Moderately High Need	Some Need	Little Need	No Need
Currently, how well are we helping individuals address this area of need?				
Very Well	Well	Neither Well nor Poorly, or Unsure	Poorly	Very Poorly
To what degree is this need a priority for our college (this year or in the upcoming year)?				
Highest Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Somewhat of a Priority	Not a Priority
What are some strategies that we could establish or improve to meet this need? <i>Clothing donation program, packets of hygiene essentials, textbook loans offered through library, etc.</i>				

³ Goldrick-Rab, S., & Cochrane, D. (March 2019). Addressing the Basic Needs of California Community College Students. The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice and The Institute for College Access and Success. Retrieved from https://ticas.org/sites/default/files/pub_files/hope-ticas-ccco-brief.pdf

Other Basic Needs				
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High Need	Moderately High Need	Some Need	Little Need	No Need
Currently, how well are we helping individuals address this area of need?				
Very Well	Well	Neither Well nor Poorly, or Unsure	Poorly	Very Poorly
To what degree is this need a priority for our college (this year or in the upcoming year)?				
Highest Priority	High Priority	Medium Priority	Somewhat of a Priority	Not a Priority
What are some strategies that we could establish or improve to meet this need? <i>Vouchers for child care, referrals to Legal Aid, access to heated 24-hour study area, etc.</i>				
Other Basic Needs				
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What are some strategies that we could establish or improve to meet this need?

TOOL 4: INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

A comprehensive basic needs security approach depends on participation from multiple stakeholders. Your college may have a student support committee to provide leadership around addressing basic needs. Or you may have a less formal group of campus and community partners. It's also possible that only one or a few individuals are currently spearheading your efforts, possibly in isolation.

Reflection Questions. Adapted from [CCC Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\) Guidebook](#) (Appendix).

Which campus departments or team members are currently working to address basic needs?

Who are your other natural allies in this effort?

Who would need to coordinate or manage the services you envision?

Who are the key decision makers you need to engage?

Who else should contribute their voice at the table?

Potential Partners. The following are examples of powerful stakeholders you can engage.

- ✓ Dean of Student Services
- ✓ Health Services Director or leaders
- ✓ Foster Youth Success Program
- ✓ Homeless Youth Liaison
- ✓ Dining services
- ✓ Associated Student Body
- ✓ Student stakeholders (*e.g., self-identified homeless students, student veterans, youth transitioning from foster care*)
- ✓ Campus and/or local library
- ✓ Veterans resource center
- ✓ Disability services or resource center
- ✓ Athletics department
- ✓ Student Equity staff or committee
- ✓ Financial Aid
- ✓ CalWORKs on-campus representative
- ✓ Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS)
- ✓ TRIO Program
- ✓ County social services department
- ✓ Local food bank(s)
- ✓ Local shelter(s)
- ✓ Local health services providers
- ✓ Local faith-based organization(s), particularly if they provide food, etc.
- ✓ Local restaurants, automotive repair shops, and other service providers
- ✓ Local Independent Living Center

TOOL 5: MORE RESOURCES TO HELP YOU

From the CCC Chancellor's Office:

- ✓ [Basic Needs Initiative](#): this webpage on the CCC Health & Wellness website highlights news and resources related to the Chancellor's Office's basic needs activities.
- ✓ [Basic Needs Summit 2018](#): view all the presentation materials from the Chancellor's Office's first-ever Basic Needs Summit, which promoted the spread of innovative and best practices.
- ✓ [CCC Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\) Guidebook](#): start accepting EBT cash and food benefits at your campus with this detailed, step-by-step guide. The appendix includes planning tools.
- ✓ [Basic Needs Best Practices](#): this spreadsheet lists nearly one hundred strategies that CCC are using to support student basic needs (emergency housing or transportation vouchers, creating a homeless student support committee, etc.). Use this spreadsheet for generating new ideas.
- ✓ [Directory of Foster Youth Success Initiative \(FYSI\) Liaisons](#): each campus has at least one liaison to support students transitioning out of foster care, a population that is at significantly higher risk for hunger and homelessness than other college students.
- ✓ [Campus Basic Needs Webpages](#): many respondents to the 2017 CCC Chancellor's Office Basic Needs Survey stated that their college has one or more webpages devoted to basic needs resources and services. These webpages are compiled in this spreadsheet.

From The Hope Center, a leading resource on basic needs and college:

- ✓ [Distributing Emergency Aid to College Students: Recommendations and Sample Distribution Protocol](#)
- ✓ [Beyond the Food Pantry: Faculty-Run Emergency Aid for Students](#)
- ✓ [Beyond the Food Pantry: Supporting Students with Access to SNAP](#)
- ✓ [Beyond the Food Pantry: Supporting Students' Basic Needs with a Syllabus Statement](#)

Visit Wellness Central

[Wellness Central](#) is a free health and wellness online resource created especially for CCC students. Wellness topics are organized into modules under the "Six Dimensions of Wellness" to help students learn about self-care strategies and find supports. For relevant resources, visit the [Homeless and Housing Support](#) and [Hunger](#) pages under the Financial Wellness domain.

