



California Community Colleges



2018 REPORT

San Diego City College

# Basic Needs Survey Report

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office | Eloy Ortiz Oakley, Chancellor



## Basic Needs Survey Report

### 1. Introduction

At colleges throughout the country, there is a rapidly growing awareness of the serious challenges that students face meeting basic needs. A recent study of 70 community colleges found that 56 percent of students were food insecure, and nearly half were either experiencing housing insecurity (35 percent) or homelessness (14 percent). A fall 2017 survey of California community colleges found **56.8 percent of respondents had direct contact with students experiencing basic needs insecurity multiple times per week or every day**. This high rate of contact is not isolated to any student or academic service area (Table 1).

**Table 1. How frequently do you have direct contact with students that are food insecure, housing insecure, or homeless on your campus? (N=222)**

Academic Service Area	Every day	Multiple times per week	Once a week	2 - 3 times per month	Once a month or less
Educational Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS)	20%	41.5%	3.1%	23.1%	12.3%
Student Equity/SSSP	20.8%	30.2%	7.5%	22.6%	18.9%
TRIO	7.1%	28.6%	7.1%	28.6%	28.6%
Disabled Students Programs and Service (DSPS)	21.7%	34.8%	0%	21.7%	21.7%
Veterans Services	14.3%	40%	2.9%	20%	22.9%
Foster youth programs (FYSI, Guardian Scholars, CAFYES, etc.)	24%	32%	8%	24%	12%
Homeless Youth Liaison	25.9%	33.3%	3.7%	25.9%	11.1%
Financial Aid	18.6%	34.9%	4.7%	20.9%	20.9%
Counseling	9.5%	42.9%	2.4%	28.6%	16.7%
Student Activity Advisor	25%	25%	6.3%	25%	18.8%
Teaching Faculty/Staff	28.6%	28.6%	7.1%	14.3%	21.4%
CalWORKs	0%	75%	25%	0%	0%
Other	26.7%	33.3%	8.9%	17.8%	13.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.3%</b>	<b>33.3%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>14.4%</b>

This document provides an overview and analysis of the fall 2017 survey described above, the “Food, Housing and Basic Needs Resources Survey.” Survey participants included administrators, faculty and staff from 105 of the 114 California community colleges, and these participants heavily represented student services and categorical



departments. Ultimately, this document is intended to function as a roadmap to help California Community College leaders, administrators, student services staff, faculty, and other stakeholders identify useful strategies, resources, and funding strategies. **Food pantries, housing support, and other basic needs resources take a variety of forms throughout the California Community Colleges, and this document is intended to highlight this range of innovative and effective practices.**

As the analysis that follows reveals, the California community colleges are already forming networks of deep collaboration that run across campuses and through their local communities. The tools needed to address basic needs insecurity are being discovered and employed to varying degrees throughout the California Community Colleges and their local communities. The next step is to collaborate and disseminate—to ensure that the diverse solutions required to overcome basic needs insecurity are spread throughout the California Community Colleges.

## 2. Survey Background and Methodology

At two recent strategy sessions for leaders of the University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and California Community Colleges systems, participants recognized the need to work collaboratively to address basic needs insecurity.<sup>i</sup> As part of these efforts, the CSU system developed a basic needs survey that the California Community Colleges later modified to reflect the unique conditions of their students and staff.

The California Community Colleges survey was part of an initiative to gather state-level baseline data regarding resources available to students who need assistance meeting their food, housing, or other basic needs as they matriculate through college. In total, 227 survey responses were received, with all respondents completing at least part of the survey. Because the primary purpose of this document is to provide a resource map, all 227 responses were included in the final data set, regardless of whether they completed all questions.

## 3. Survey Findings

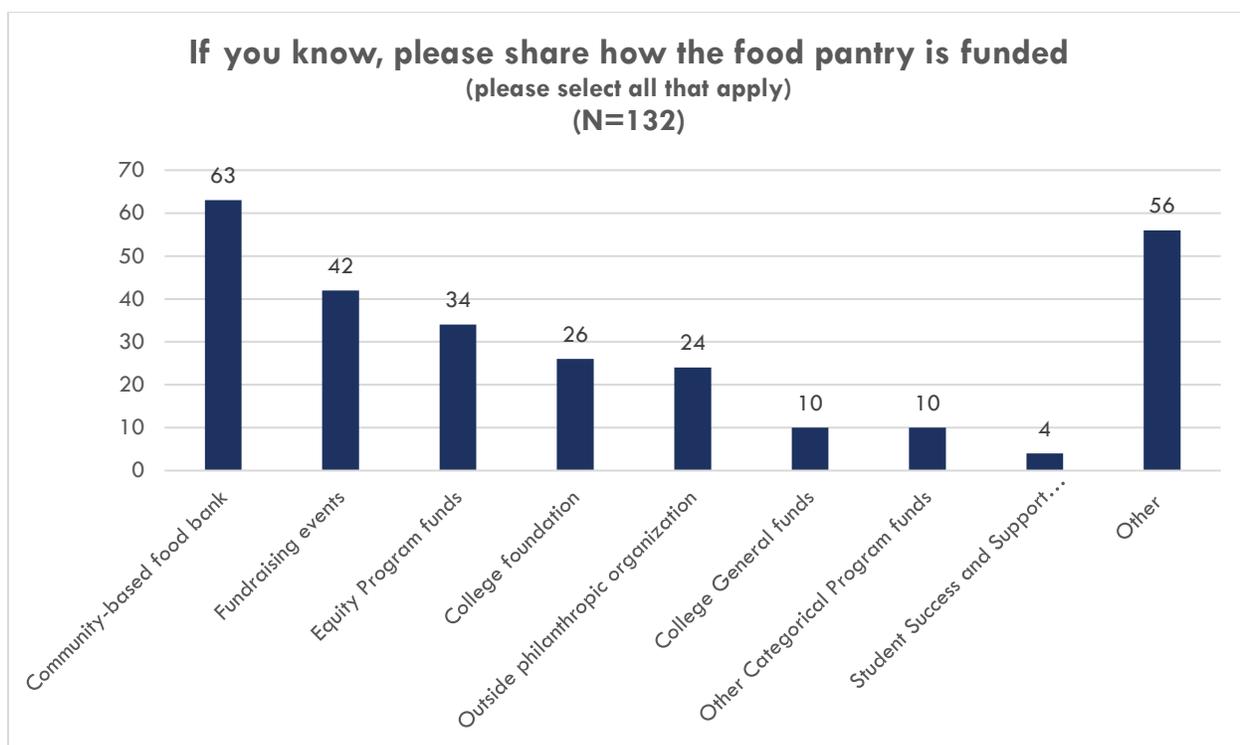
This section summarizes the California Community Colleges survey data around these key areas of basic needs support: food pantries, CalFresh enrollment, and additional food resources; housing resources and emergency funds; campus Homeless and/or Foster Youth Liaison; campus basic needs webpage; and campus health or mental health services. Across these areas, survey respondents described multifaceted efforts to support vulnerable student groups. Examples of respondents' promising strategies are included throughout this section.

### Food Pantries

Studies of basic needs in higher education have found that food pantries are one of the most common sources of support provided to students who may be food insecure.<sup>ii</sup> Similarly, campus food pantries were one of the most-reported basic needs resources in this survey. More than two-thirds of question respondents (68.4 percent, or 132 respondents) indicated that there was a food pantry on campus. Forty-five respondents (23.3 percent) indicated that there was no food pantry on campus, and the remaining 16 respondents (8.3 percent) were unsure.

Campus food pantries are one of the fastest growing movements to address hunger on college campuses, and they often draw on multiple funding sources.<sup>iii</sup> Respondents to this survey were asked to provide information about how their food pantry is funded and staffed, and the results revealed a wide degree of variation. As Table 2 shows, community-based food banks were the most commonly indicated form of funding, with nearly half (47.7 percent) of

the campus food banks collaborating with one of these outside organizations. These results, combined with the high rate of collaboration with outside philanthropic organizations (18.2 percent), suggest **deep collaborations with the local community**. At the same time, nearly one-third (31.8 percent) of respondents indicated that their food pantry funding includes fundraising events.



The “other” category received 56 responses in total, and the majority of these fell into one of two categories: 27.3 percent of the question respondents indicated that their food pantry was funded with donations—including food drives, faculty and staff donations, and employee wage deductions—and 8.3 percent shared that their food pantry funding incorporated the student government. These results suggest the presence of **strong campus buy-in to address basic needs insecurity**.

While funding for these food pantries varied, the majority of respondents indicated that their food pantry used multiple forms of funding: whereas 34.9 percent of respondents shared that their food pantry received funding from one source, over half reported at least two forms of funding. In terms of staffing, 36 percent of respondents indicated that their team included students, and 27.3 percent included volunteers; 15.2 percent included both.

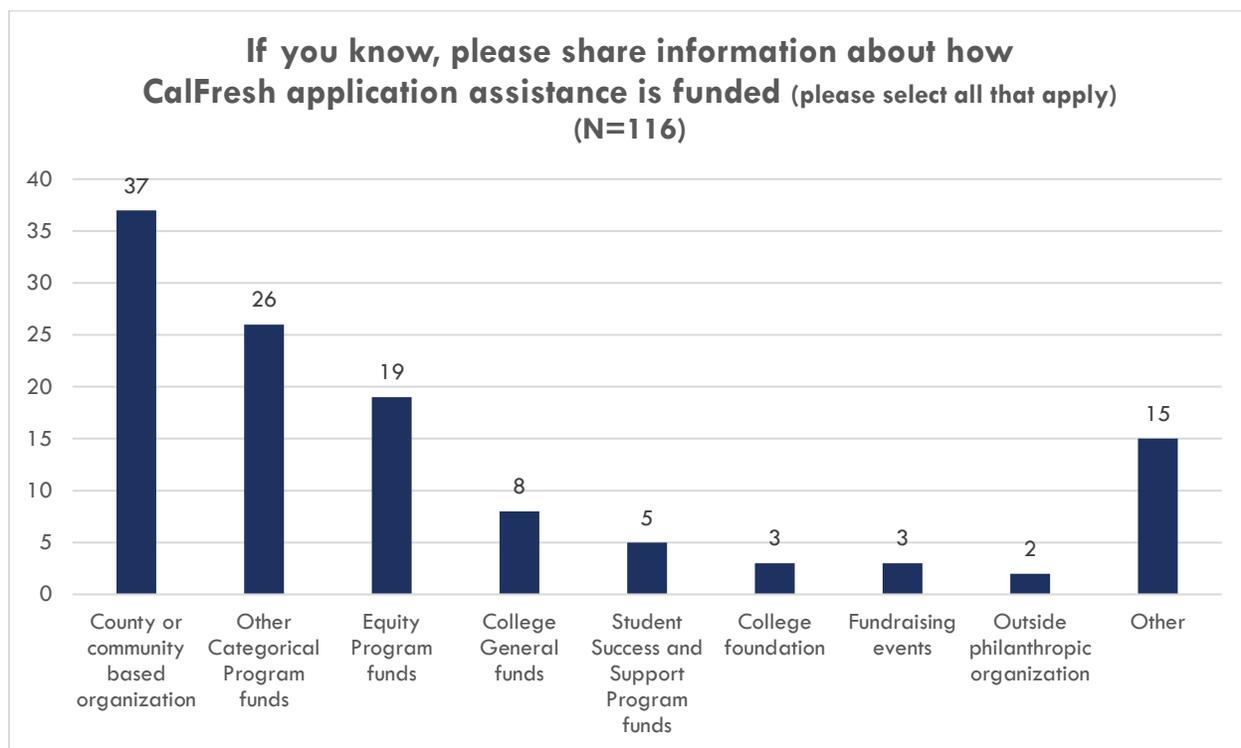
Many survey respondents described innovative outreach techniques for engaging students experiencing basic needs insecurity. One respondent noted, “[their pantry] is very sensitive to the students’ needs and the stigma that accompanied using the pantry. **We provide an environment that provides students with integrity and dignity. Students come into the pantry, they check in, get a basket and go into our storage to pick their items** [...] it’s like going shopping.” Another respondent noted that food is supplied through a creative textbook rental system, in which students can bring in ten cans of food to checkout a textbook for the system. These approaches help normalize food insecurity services by making them a part of campus culture.

### Best Practice Spotlight: Imperial Valley College

Imperial Valley College has an array of food resources for students. Starting with a food shack in an Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS) cubicle, Imperial became a weekly distribution site for a food bank and makes daily packs available to any student. Students experiencing homelessness have access to campus showers, shower kits, and financial analysis; faculty and students can contribute to dinner packs for homeless students through the Imperial kitchen. In addition, Imperial provides wireless service and some computer donations.

### CalFresh Enrollment Assistance

Many campuses provide support to help eligible students enroll in CalFresh, known nationally as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP). **More than half of respondents (61.7 percent, or 116) indicated that there is assistance with CalFresh enrollment on campus**, 32 (17.0 percent) indicated that there was not, and 40 (21.3 percent) were unsure. As shown in Table 3, 37 respondents (31.9 percent) reported that enrollment assistance was funded through collaboration with county offices or community-based organizations; 26 respondents (22.4 percent) said their campus used categorical program funds, such as EOPS; and 19 respondents (16.4 percent) used Equity Program funds.



**One hundred and thirteen of the respondents (60.8 percent) indicated that their campus featured additional food security resources, and this rate goes up to 68.2 percent when it is isolated to campuses without a food bank on campus.**

### Additional Food Resources

While food pantries are sometimes used as an index of food insecurity awareness,<sup>iv</sup> the survey responses revealed a variety of alternative food insecurity resources available throughout the California Community Colleges. One hundred and thirteen of the respondents (60.8 percent) indicated that their campus featured additional food security resources, and this rate goes up to 68.2 percent when it is isolated to campuses without a food bank on campus. The prevalence of these other resource suggests that campuses are adjusting their strategies based on both institutional resources and campus culture.

**Food or meal vouchers were the most common additional resource** (64 respondents). An additional 35 respondents indicated that students had access to free snacks, groceries, or produce. These resources were often described as less centralized—and thus potentially less formal—than food pantries. In many cases, snacks were casually available in areas such as student centers, financial aid and EOPS offices, Veterans Resource Centers and other areas frequented by students. Such an approach might be useful for battling the stigma often associated with food and other forms of basic needs insecurity.<sup>v</sup>

### Housing Resources

Some researchers have argued that, because they are less likely than a four-year institution to offer on-campus housing, community colleges are at a disadvantage when it comes to supporting students experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness.<sup>vi</sup> Survey participants were asked to provide information about the availability and funding of housing resources available on campus. In total, 185 participants responded to this question, of which 72 (38.9 percent) indicated that their campus offered housing resources; 83 (44.9 percent) indicated that housing resources were not available; and the remaining 30 (16.2 percent) were unsure. As shown in Table 4, the most common form of resource available is a referral. Of the 72 respondents that indicated that their campus featured housing resources, 61 (84.7 percent) of these included referrals to a shelter, and 50 (69.4 percent) included referrals to Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP-PLUS).

**In total, 185 participants responded to this question, of which 72 (38.9 percent) indicated that their campus offered housing resources.**

**Table 2. Which housing resources are available on your campus? (N=72)**

Housing Resources Available on Campus	Percent
Referrals to shelters	84.7%
Referrals to Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP-Plus) for former foster youth	69.4%
Support with seeking subsidized HUD housing	20.8%
On-campus housing	6.9%
Hotel/motel vouchers	6.9%
Rental assistance/vouchers	2.8%
<b>Other</b>	<b>23.6%</b>

As Table 3 shows, housing resources are funded through a variety of mechanisms. As the previous question showed, housing resources at California community colleges are usually referrals, a relatively low-cost service. For this reason, the funding categories below may largely reflect the department(s) where the housing referrals list or staff can be found.

**Table 3. If you know, provide information about how housing resources on your campus are funded (N=72)**

Mechanism for Funding Housing	Percent
Equity Program funds	19.4%
Community based organization	16.7%
Other Categorical Program funds	16.7%
College General fund	11.1%
Outside philanthropic organization	8.3%
College foundation	8.3%
Student Success and Support Program funds	6.9%
Fundraising events	4.2%
<b>Other</b>	<b>15.3%</b>

Despite the lack of on-campus housing, the survey results suggest that community colleges throughout California are finding creative solutions for their students experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness. For example, one respondent shared that their campus offers **case management and one-on-one sessions that help students develop a budget and navigate the rental process**. Several respondents stated that they provide emergency rental assistance, described in more detail in the next section. While there are many barriers for housing insecure and homeless students, these programs emphasize that there also many possible solutions.

#### Best Practice Spotlight: Skyline College

Skyline College hosts SparkPoint, a one-stop service that provides longer term, intensive financial coaching. Services are available to whole community, and also include career coaching and employment. Skyline also supports student enrollment in public benefits, including CalFresh, staffed by CalWorks students. Skyline’s DREAM Center staff and allies help students who are immigrants navigate financial aid and other resources.

### Emergency Funds

Survey participants were asked to provide information about emergency funds. Of the 182 respondents, 92 (50.6 percent) indicated that emergency funds were available on campus. Forty-seven (25.8 percent) reported that emergency funds were not available, and the remaining 43 (23.6 percent) were unsure. Participants provided a brief description of available resources, and these were coded into six, non-mutually exclusive categories based on analyst-identified trends.

**Table 4. What kind of emergency funding is available on campus (transportation funding, gift cards, etc.)? Please list: (N=92)**

Emergency Funding Available	Percent
Transportation (including gas cards, bus passes, etc.)	60.9%
Grants and Cash Assistance (including gift cards)	38.0%
Grocery Cards and Food Vouchers	17.4%
Text Book	17.4%
Emergency Loans	7.6%
Housing	3.3%

### Foster Youth and Homeless Youth Liaisons

As the above discussion of housing resources suggests, housing insecurity and homelessness present significant challenges to community colleges and the survey data suggest that the California Community Colleges are still identifying opportunities to support students facing these issues. One resource already in place throughout the California Community Colleges are homeless youth and foster youth liaisons. Although basic needs insecurity and homelessness cuts across race, gender and geographical space, former foster youth are the most likely to experience homelessness as community college students: one survey found that almost three-quarters of former foster youth experienced housing insecurity, and that nearly a third experienced homelessness while enrolled at community college.<sup>vii</sup>

In this survey, 101 respondents listed a foster youth liaison, and an additional 54 listed two liaisons. The results for homeless youth liaisons were similar, with 86 respondents listing a homeless youth liaison, and an additional 40 listing two liaisons. The list of [Homeless Youth Liaisons](#) can be found on the California Community Colleges Student Mental Health Program (CCC SMHP) website, and a directory of [Foster Youth Success Initiative \(FYSI\) Liaisons](#) is available on the Chancellor’s Office website.

### Basic Needs Webpage

Respondents were asked to provide webpage addresses within their campus website that direct students to resources for food, housing, or other basic needs. Fifty-two respondents provided one website, 29 provided two, and 28 provided three. Many of these websites highlight campus food pantries, resources for students from traditionally marginalized populations (e.g., foster youth, students who are undocumented immigrants), and referrals to community-based resources. The list of [CCC Basic Needs Webpages](#) can be found on the [CCC SMHP website](#).

**For more resources and tools from the basic needs survey, visit:**

**[www.cccstudentmentalhealth.org/resources/](http://www.cccstudentmentalhealth.org/resources/)**

## Health and Mental Health Resources

Research has found strong links between basic needs insecurity, stress, and mental health challenges (e.g., anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and suicide).<sup>viii</sup> Health and mental health services can serve as a critical screening point for identifying and supporting students with basic needs insecurity. One hundred and eighty survey participants provided information about the availability and funding of health/mental health resources available on campus. One hundred fifty-seven (87.2 percent) indicated that health/mental health services were available on campus; 16 (8.9 percent) reported that health/mental health services were not available; and the remaining seven (3.9 percent) were unsure.

Respondents were asked to provide information about how health/mental health services are funded. The most commonly indicated form of funding was college general funds (43.3 percent, 68 respondents), and 36 respondents provided additional information that indicated that student health fees were used to support these services.

**Table 5. If you know, provide information about how health/mental health services at your campus are funded (N=157)**

Health/Mental Health Services Funded on Campus	Percent
College General funds	43.3%
Equity Program funds	14.0%
Other Categorical Program funds	9.6%
Student Success and Support Program funds	7.0%
Community based organization	3.2%
Family PACT	3.2%
Medi-Cal Administrative Activities	3.2%
Outside philanthropic organization	1.3%
College foundation	1.3%
Fundraising events	1.3%
Local Educational Agency Medi-Cal Billing	1.9%
<b>Other</b>	<b>26.1%</b>
<b>Student Health Fees</b>	<b>22.9%</b>
<b>Free Internships</b>	<b>2.5%</b>



### Best Practice Spotlight: Saddleback College

Saddleback provides health and mental health services in innovative ways. Saddleback was the first college in the country to be approved as a Medi-Cal provider. All Saddleback health services come from categorical funding and fundraising. They have a compassionate care fund for health services, and a family pack that reimburses for family planning care. In addition, Saddleback is pursuing funding to do mixed income housing, and has an “adopt-a-student” program in which alumni provide housing for free.

## 4. Identified “Best Practices”

In total, 83 respondents provided an example of a best practice that was utilized either on their campus or on another campus. Some of these best practices have already been discussed above, but the survey revealed many important practices that warrant further attention. Although a full discussion of best practices is beyond the scope of this resource, this conclusion will discuss trends that emerged across responses, with the hope of providing a framework for development and implementation. Visit the CCC SMHP website for the full list of identified [Basic Needs Best Practices](#).

### 1. Developing Awareness

Several of the best practices revolved around developing awareness of basic needs insecurity. These practices ranged from sending reminder emails about available resources to employees and students, to making sure basic needs resources were shared at all departmental and leadership meetings. As one respondent put it in a discussion of a recently developed “HelpFinder” website, “The idea is that we have a lot of resources for students, but they aren’t currently organized in a way that would be logical or accessible to students.” Developing awareness helps ensure that students can find—and staff and faculty can recommend—the basic needs resources that are already in place.

Developing awareness is also a vital tool for ensure that basic needs resources continue to receive the funding that they need. When one community college launched its food pantry last year, “The Associated Students took the lead by purchasing \$1,500.00 worth of food items which could be put in zip lock baggies. Those baggies were then distributed to faculty in packs of 10. The faculty were then asked to share the food with any student they felt had a food insecurity. This created awareness throughout the campus that there was a real need. After that, we solicited the campus to buy items for the newly created Food Pantry. People from the campus community stepped up because they saw firsthand that the need was real and it wasn't just a handful of students.” **Developing awareness is often a crucial early step for programs looking to obtain buy-in from community members and stakeholders.**

### 2. Integrated Services

Students who suffer from basic needs insecurity often require multiple forms of support, and many of the best practices highlighted different models for integrating services. One bundled-service model that was shared revolves around “incentivizing students to use multiple services at the same time to build long term financial stability (including financial coaching, employment coaching, public benefits support, food pantry, scholarships, free tax prep, etc.)” Another respondent discussed how their food pantry is designed to offer a variety of services that provide “immediate, short-term, and long-term solutions to food insecurity. We recognize we cannot just provide snacks as a Band-Aid to food insecurity. We house a federal program ([The Emergency Food Assistance Program](#)) to address immediate and short-term food needs, and we also provide grab-n-go-packs. For a long-term solution, we recognize that enrolling in CalFresh is the most successful approach to food insecurity; thus, we house and provide CalFresh benefits screening.” Both of these practices recognize the **importance of integrating services when trying to provide help for the present and the future.**

Providing integrated services can involve streamlining the process, expediting it, and reducing its stressful nature. For some campuses, these integrated services are centralized to a single location. One campus has a resource center where “anyone can come for resources, referrals, and to talk about the insecurities they are facing.”

### 3. Collaboration

As much of the above data suggest, basic needs resources often develop as the result of deep collaborations. For many respondents, collaboration is its own best practice: “We work collaboratively and have a shared responsibility to address food insecurity. The development of our food pantry was a grassroots effort led by a diverse group of staff, faculty, administration, and students.” Other respondents shared that their campus features **diverse committees that meet as often as weekly to address basic needs insecurity. These work groups help spread awareness surrounding basic needs resources.**

These collaborations often involve partnerships with outside organizations. Many of the food pantries throughout the California Community Colleges receive support from local foodbanks, and multiple respondents shared that they have partnered with a local farmer’s market to procure fresh produce. Although collaborations around food are common, one campus has “collaborated with a local religiously affiliated organization and piloted a safe car park program for our students who live in their cars.”

### 5. Conclusion

Basic needs insecurity is a multifaceted problem, but the above data suggest that solutions are already emerging throughout the California community colleges. As the best practices above depict, some of these solutions have already been developed, and the next step is to ensure that they spread throughout the California Community Colleges and its neighboring communities. However, these best practices also suggest new discoveries—solutions that will be developed from collaborations between administrators, faculty, staff and students. These discoveries—both past and future—result in new resources and funding mechanics that can better equip California community colleges to support their students and address basic needs challenges.

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## California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office

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<sup>i</sup> Office of the President. (2017). Basic Needs Security: Year Three Update. The University of California.

<sup>ii</sup> Page 17. Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, A. (2017). *Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education*. Wisconsin HOPE Lab and Association of Community College Trustees.

<sup>iii</sup> Dubick, J., Mathews, B., & Cady, C. (2016). *Hunger on Campus: The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students*. College and University Food Bank Alliance and National Campaign to End Student Hunger.

<sup>iv</sup> See Henry, L. (2017). Understanding Food Insecurity Among College Students: Experience, motivation, and local solutions. *Annals of Anthropological Practice*, 41(1), 6-19.

<sup>v</sup> See *ibid.* See also King, J. (2017). *Food insecurity among college students — exploring the predictors of food assistance resource use*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Kent State University.

<sup>vi</sup> Au, N. & Hyatt, S. (2017). *Resources supporting homeless students at California’s public universities and colleges*. California Homeless Youth Project.

<sup>vii</sup> Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, A. (2017). *Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education*. Wisconsin HOPE Lab and Association of Community College Trustees.

<sup>viii</sup> Goldrick-Rab, S., Broton, K., Eisenberg, D. (2015). *Hungry to Learn: Addressing Food and Housing Insecurity Among Undergraduates*. Wisconsin HOPE Lab.



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