

A HELPING HAND



HOW THE CALIFORNIA
COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE
ADDRESSING INSECURITY

*Commissioned by the
California Community College
Chief Executive Officers*

*Authored by:
J. Luke Wood
Frank Harris III*

CCEAL

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE EQUITY ASSESSMENT LAB

INTRODUCTION

Students facing food and housing insecurities are significantly less likely to be on track to achieve their goals, have lower grades, and experience a myriad of challenges that inhibit their success. Given this, many college leaders have become concerned about how to address insecurities. As a result, the Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL) conducted a study on insecurities on behalf of the Food and Housing Taskforce of the California Community College Chief Executive Officers in 2018.

A total of 89 individual campuses participated in a questionnaire that accounted for their efforts to reduce the prevalence of insecurities. The majority of respondents were executive leaders including Chancellors and College Presidents (57.8%), followed by Directors (13.3%), Vice Presidents (12.0%), and Deans (7.2%). The remainder were comprised of counselors, staff, and other personnel.



STATE RESOURCE FOR RESIDENTIAL HOUSING

Respondents in this survey were asked to indicate the degree that they believed that state funding was needed to build residential housing at community colleges. Across the state, few community colleges have residence halls, despite serving students who are more likely than the California State University or University of California system to come from backgrounds that necessitate housing support.

Overwhelmingly, college leaders believe that the state legislature should finance residential housing. In fact, over 70.2% of college leaders either strongly agreed or agreed that their institutions would be better positioned to address student success if that received state resources to build residential housing. This percentage rises to 89.3% when including those who somewhat agree with this statement.

Residential housing would provide physical space on college campuses to help link students who are facing homeless and housing instability with on-campus support. Given the number of students served by the California community colleges, residential housing will not fully address issues of insecurity. However, residential housing could certainly enable institutions to address some of the most acute cases of students in need of housing.

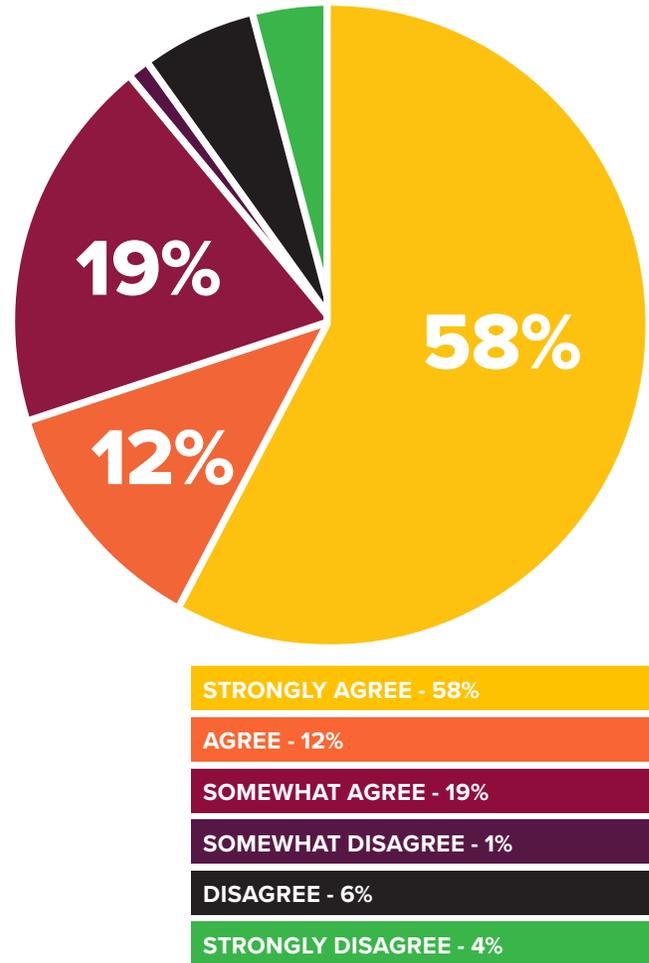


Figure 1. State resources are needed to build residential housing.

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE INTERVENTION STRATEGY

There are a number of interventions that colleges are using to address food and housing insecurities. Among the respondent colleges, the five top interventions employed for students facing food and housing insecurities include:



Figure 2. Top Five Interventions Currently Being Used to Address Insecurities

The least used interventions included providing emergency housing (16.5%), creating places for students to store personal belongings (36.5%), second-hand clothing closets (49.4%), providing priority admission and course registration (52.4%), streamlining financial aid services (52.4%), and implementing strategies for notifying students when free food is available after campus events have concluded. These all represent areas of opportunity for college leaders to explore.

Respondents also indicated areas of intervention that were under development. The top areas that college leaders are actively exploring how to implement, include: a second hand clothing closet (26.5%), streamlined financial aid services (26.2%), open education resources (25.3%), student training on financial literacy (21.2%), and emergency housing (21.2%).

QUESTION	YES	NO	UNDER DEVELOPMENT
Campus efforts (e.g., events, activities, drives) to create awareness about food and housing insecurities (for students)	87.2%	2.3%	10.5%
Access to campus showers	87.2%	10.5%	2.3%
Book vouchers for the campus bookstore	81.0%	10.7%	8.3%
Job Placement Services	79.8%	10.7%	9.5%
Student training on financial literacy	76.5%	2.4%	21.2%
Free Bus/Train Passes	69.9%	22.9%	7.2%
Free feminine products	69.8%	20.9%	9.3%
Strategy for notifying students about campus events where food is available	69.8%	12.8%	17.4%
Emergency funding for students	68.2%	15.3%	16.5%
Free toiletries (e.g., toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant)	67.4%	20.9%	11.6%
Efforts taken to reduce barriers for students with "special circumstances" in financial aid	66.7%	13.1%	20.2%
Open education resources	67.5%	7.2%	25.3%
Free school supplies (e.g., backpacks, pencils, paper)	64.7%	23.5%	11.8%
Childcare services	64.2%	28.4%	7.4%
Free healthy snack baskets located in student services and other high traffic areas	62.8%	23.3%	14.0%
Discount on transportation	62.7%	33.7%	3.6%
Food vouchers for campus eateries	55.3%	23.5%	20.0%
Strategy for notifying students when free food is available after campus events have concluded	54.7%	29.1%	16.3%
Streamlined financial aid services	52.4%	21.4%	26.2%
Priority admission and course registration	52.4%	45.2%	2.4%
Second-Hand Clothing Closet	49.4%	24.1%	26.5%
Places for students to store personal belongings (e.g., lockers, closets)	36.5%	54.1%	9.4%
Emergency housing	16.5%	62.4%	21.2%

HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGES FUND THE EFFORTS

Food pantries and food service programs were funded using a variety of sources. The most used source were city/county agency partnerships (food banks). Nearly two-thirds (62.2%) of campuses funded their efforts using this resource. Other commonly used resources included: employee donations (56.7%), free college campus funding (50%), and private foundation monies (43.3%). About a third of campuses (32.2%) helped fund their efforts using student equity funding.

In contrast, few campuses (13.3%) used general funds to support these efforts. It should be noted that the use of funding sources between formal and informal pantries differed in several ways. First, campuses with formal food pantries leveraged every source of funding at a higher degree than those that did not. The largest areas of difference were with hunger-free college campus funding, student equity funding, and employee donations that were leveraged at higher rates than campuses with informal programs, at 17.6%, 13.7%, and 12.1%, respectively.

HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE COLLECTING DATA

Many campuses recognized that data collection was important for understanding issues facing students with food and housing insecurities. In fact, 65.4% had collected data focused specifically on this population. Interestingly, 56% of these campuses had disaggregated data by student characteristics. CCEAL perceives this to be problematic as our statewide data demonstrate that minoritized students (e.g., students of color, LGBT students, athletes) and men of color in particular, are most represented among students experiencing these challenges.

Thus, there is a need for higher levels of disaggregation across campus data. For those that did, disaggregated data were primarily examined by race (29.5%), gender (25.6%), and age (23.1%).

65.4%
have collected
data on students
experiencing
food and housing
insecurity

However, few examined data looking at sexual orientation (7.7%). This is problematic as students who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and/or transgender experience food and housing insecurities at a higher rate than others. Moreover, few institutions examined the intersection of these identities, a strategy which we also believe is problematic. Interestingly, there were few groups that data were made available to. Of the respondents, 32.1% made data available to staff leadership, followed by the President's Cabinet or faculty leaders (28.2% for both groups), and student leaders (24.4%). The groups that were least likely to receive data on food and housing insecurity were trustees (20.5%), all employees (16.7%) and the student body as a whole (6.4%).



HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGES PARTNER TO ADDRESS INSECURITIES

Overwhelmingly, campuses partnered with external entities and agencies to address insecurity challenges (96.3%). These partnerships ranged in function and type, however, some included providing space for community agencies to provide food and housing resources to students (85.3%). The majority of partnerships were formalized through memorandums of understanding that connect students with resource partners (57.3%). Given the high percentage of students who experience challenges with insecurities, this approach is logical.

Most partnerships were with local food banks (84.6%) and food stamps (61.5%). Some campuses also partnered with local entities for emergency housing (44.9%) and for clean and sober living (30.8%). Partnerships ranged across organizational types, including food banks (88.5%), county resources (79.5%), local non-profit organizations (76.9%), faith-based organizations (e.g., churches, synagogues, mosques) (53.8%), business/industry (43.6%), state resources (41.0%), and federal resources (19.2%).

HOW COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE PREPARING THEIR EMPLOYEES

Fortunately, 59.7% of campuses had training for campus personnel that focused specifically on working with students with insecurities. The largest percentage of trainings focused on insecurities overall (30.0%), food insecurity alone (16.7%) or food and housing insecurities (15.6%). Fewer trainings focused on transportation challenges or employment barriers (6.7% for both), or housing insecurity alone (5.6%).



THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE EQUITY ASSESSMENT LAB

**Community College Equity
Assessment Lab (CCEAL)**

5500 Campanile Drive, EBA 210
San Diego, CA 92182

Email: cceal@sdsu.edu

Website: www.cceal.org

