



Lewis Katz
School of Medicine

The Hope Center
for Student Basic Needs

Student Basic Needs Security: Foundational to Student Success and Well-Being

Newcombe Foundation Distinguished Lecture 3.26.25

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The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs



Research

investigating students'
lived experiences with
basic needs insecurity and
evaluating interventions




Policy

informing and advocating
for systemic policy change
to make college more
affordable



Practice

technical assistance to
meet student basic needs
through systems
transformation



Creating the conditions that **foster student success** has never been more important in higher education.



"It's challenging to be a student with good grades when you're just focused on **surviving**, worrying about how you'll pay rent and bills and food; working to ensure you have the basic needs instead of focusing on homework and studying for your classes."

-Hope Student Basic Needs Survey Respondent





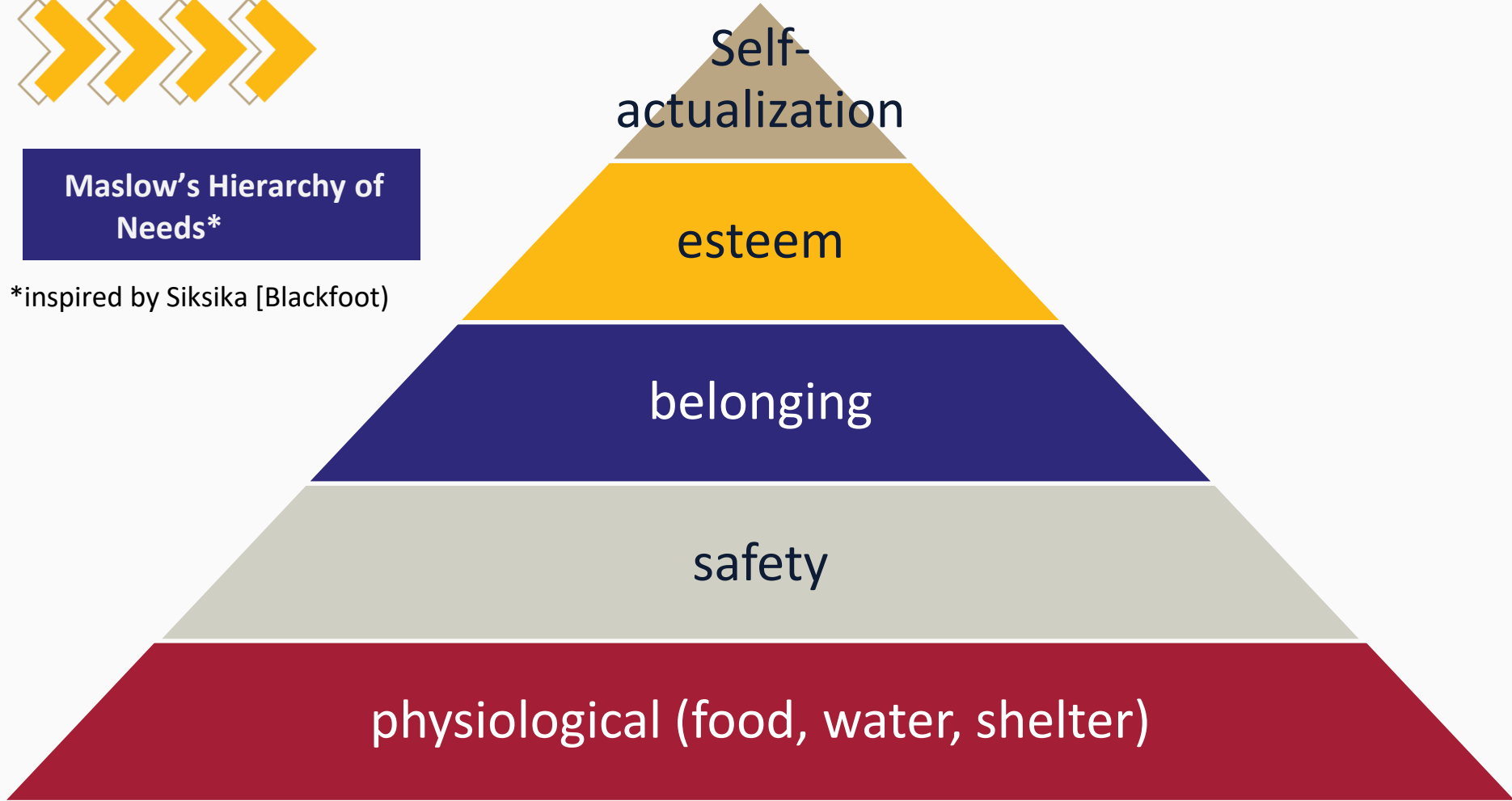
Basic Needs


- regular and nutritious and sufficient **food and safe drinking water**
- safe, secure, and adequate **housing**—to sleep, study, cook, and shower
- healthcare to promote sustained **mental and physical well-being**
- affordable **technology** and **transportation**
- resources for **personal hygiene**
- **childcare** and related needs



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*

*inspired by Siksika [Blackfoot]



A blurred background image showing a diverse group of students of various ethnicities and ages, smiling and looking towards the camera. The image is out of focus, emphasizing the text in the foreground.

Students are **humans first** and their basic needs are central conditions for learning.



The Hope Center

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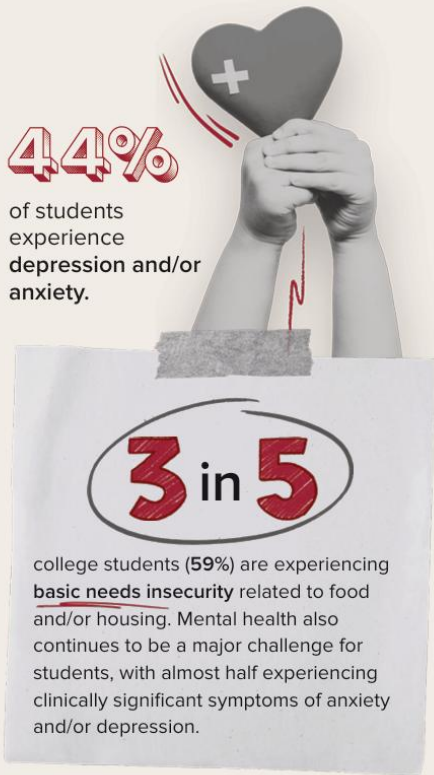
2023-2024 Student Basic Needs Survey Report



How Many Students are Impacted?

4.3 million

students aren't
getting **enough**
to eat



74,350 students across **16** states and **91** schools completed the Student Basic Needs Survey as part of our Hope Impact Partnerships program between Jan. 2023 and July 2024. Of participating schools, **78%** were two-year colleges, **56%** were minority-serving institutions, and **33%** were rural-serving institutions.

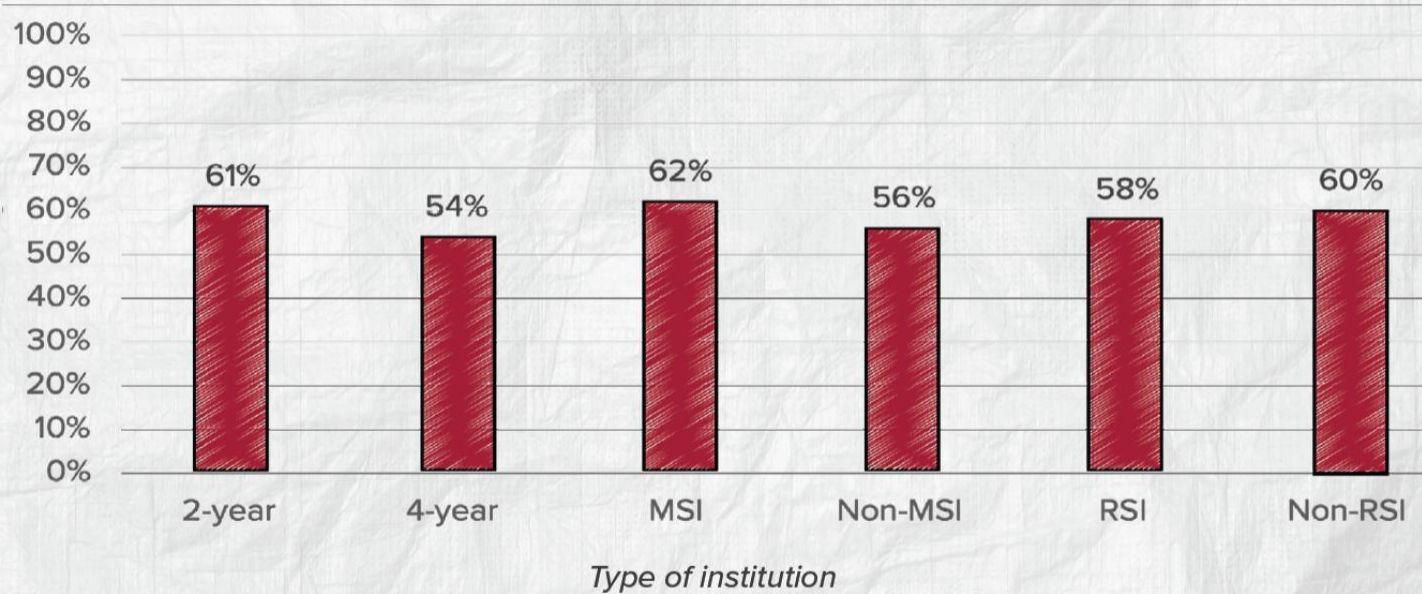
1.5 million

students are experiencing
homelessness



Basic needs security is prevalent across all institutional types

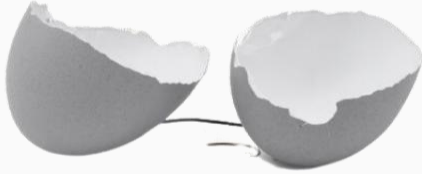
Rates of Student Basic Needs Insecurity by Institution Type





3 in **5**

students experience basic
needs insecurity related to **food**
and/or housing.



41%

experience **food**
insecurity.



48%

experience **housing**
insecurity.



14%

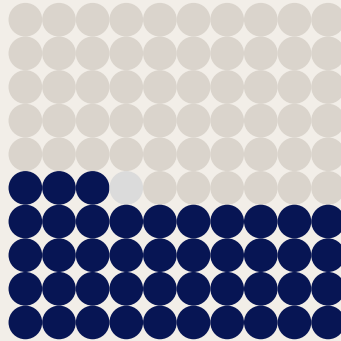
experience
homelessness.

Beyond Food and Housing



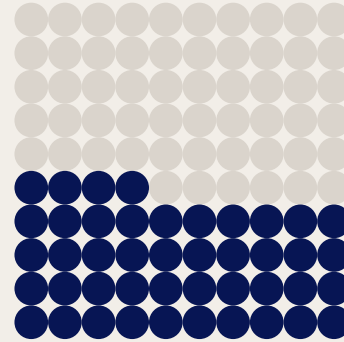
12%

report **lack internet or
technology** access
interfered with academics



43%

found **childcare**
unaffordable



44%

experienced **depression**
and/or **anxiety**



Mental Health is a Basic Need



57%

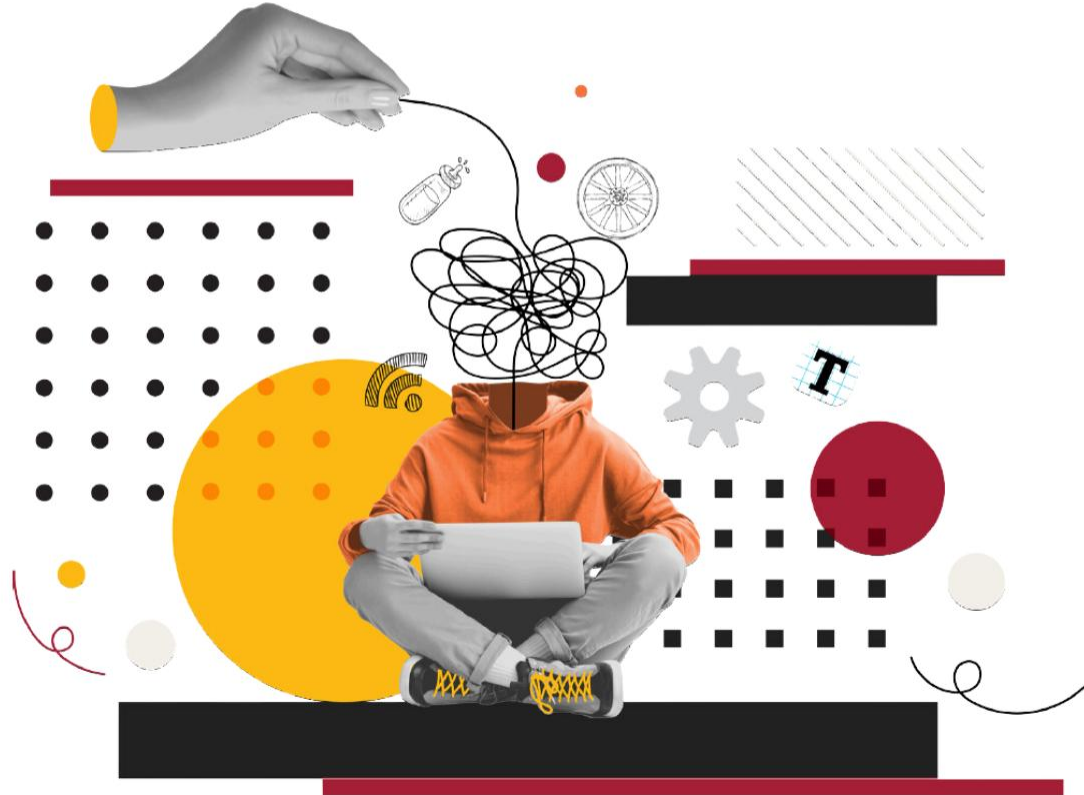
of respondents who had
previously stopped out
(stopped attending college
without completing a credential
and subsequently re-enrolled)
reported **they did so because
of mental health issues.**

Mental health and mental health care
are basic needs.

Mental health is also deeply impacted by
basic needs insecurity and **basic needs
security** is impacted by **mental health**.

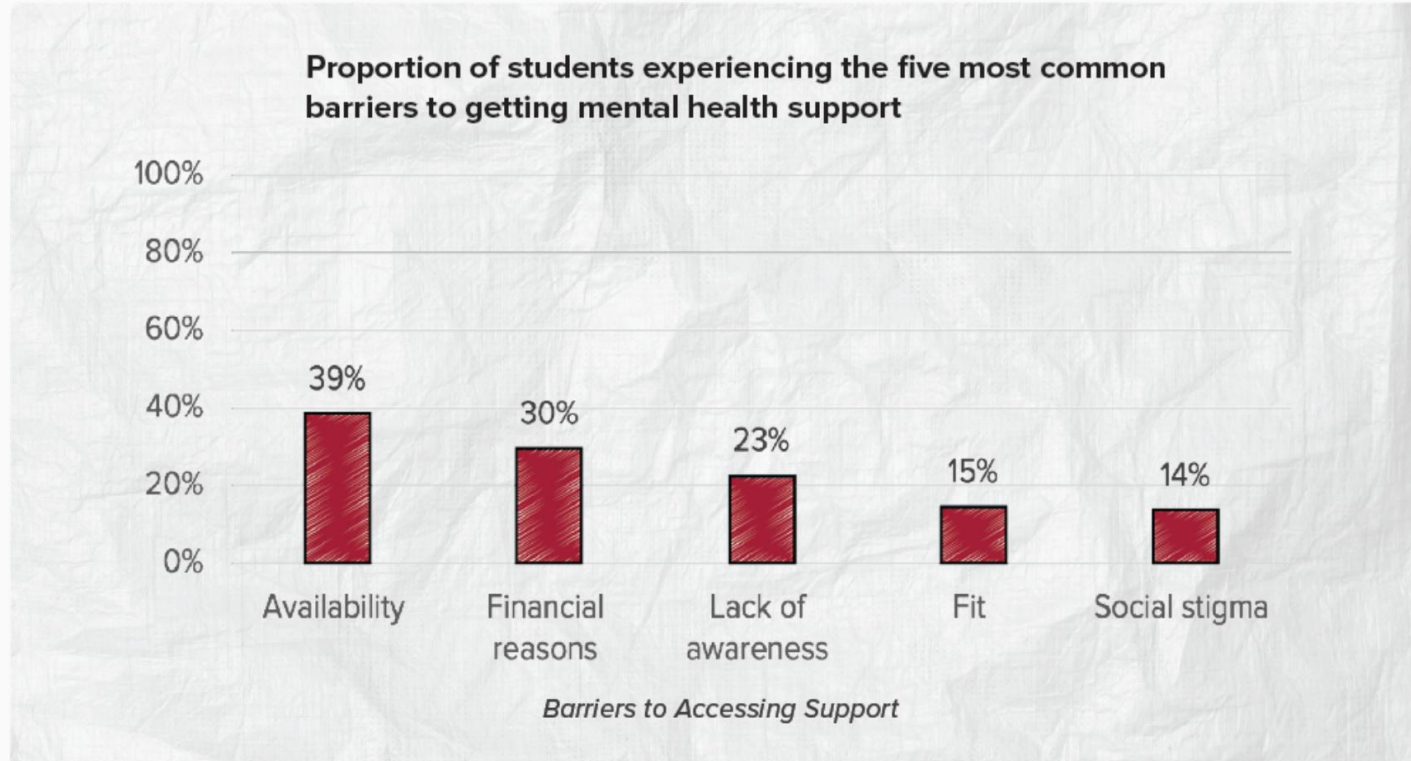
72%

of students experiencing anxiety
or depression also experience
basic needs insecurity.





Mental Health Resources are often unavailable or too expensive





Inequitable Distribution

Black and Indigenous students experience basic needs insecurity at rates 15-18 percentage points higher than White peers.

Students 25 and older experience higher rates of BNI.



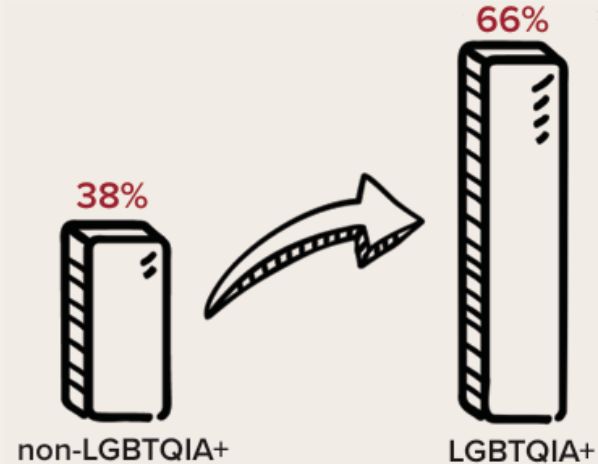


Inequitable Distribution

Parenting students experience higher rates of food and housing insecurity.

First generation students experience higher rates of BNI.

Students who receive a Pell Grant experience higher rates of BNI.



LGBTQIA+ students are almost **30 percentage points more likely** to experience depression and anxiety.

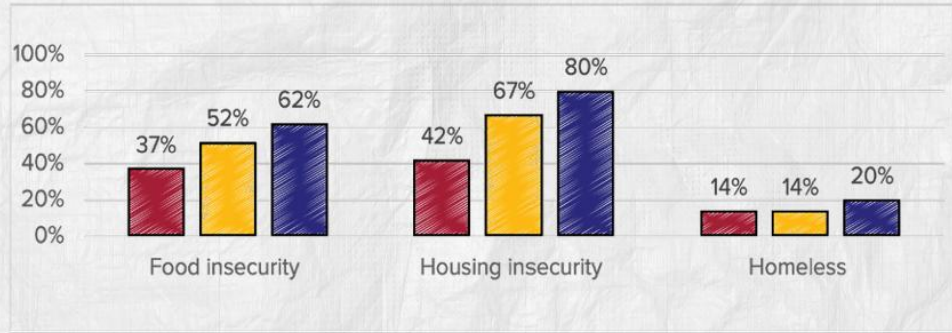


Parenting students

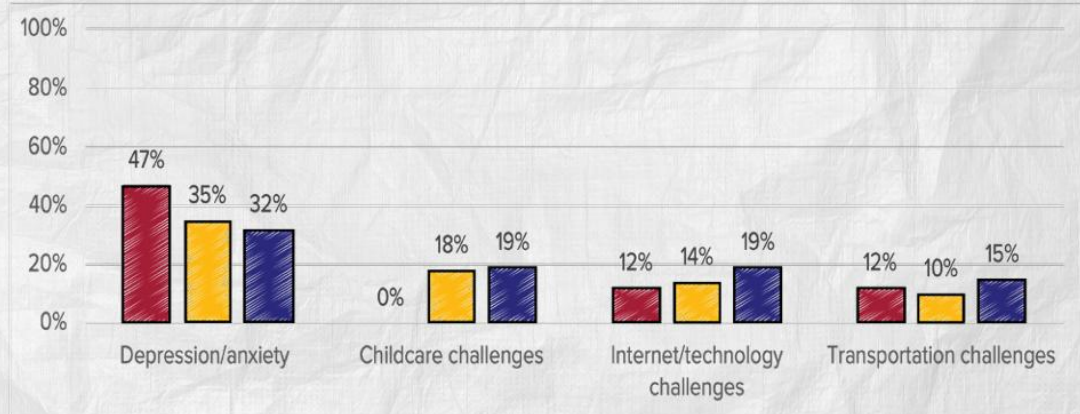


Black men have the **lowest rate of retention and completion** compared to other student groups.

Experiences with basic needs insecurity by parenting status and race



Type of Basic Needs Insecurity



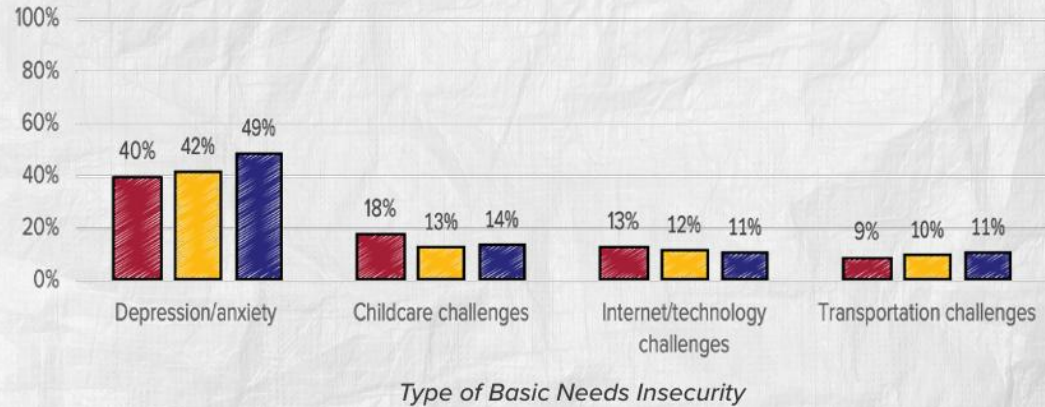
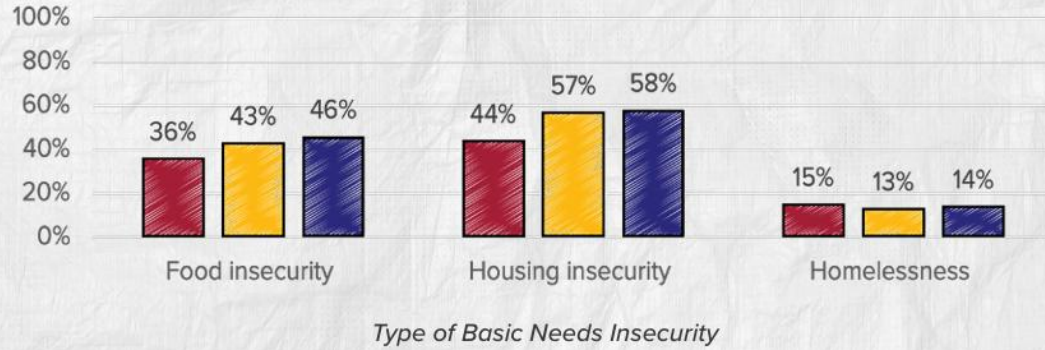
Type of Basic Needs Insecurity

■ Non-Parenting Students ■ Parenting Students ■ Black Parenting Students



Part-time and working students

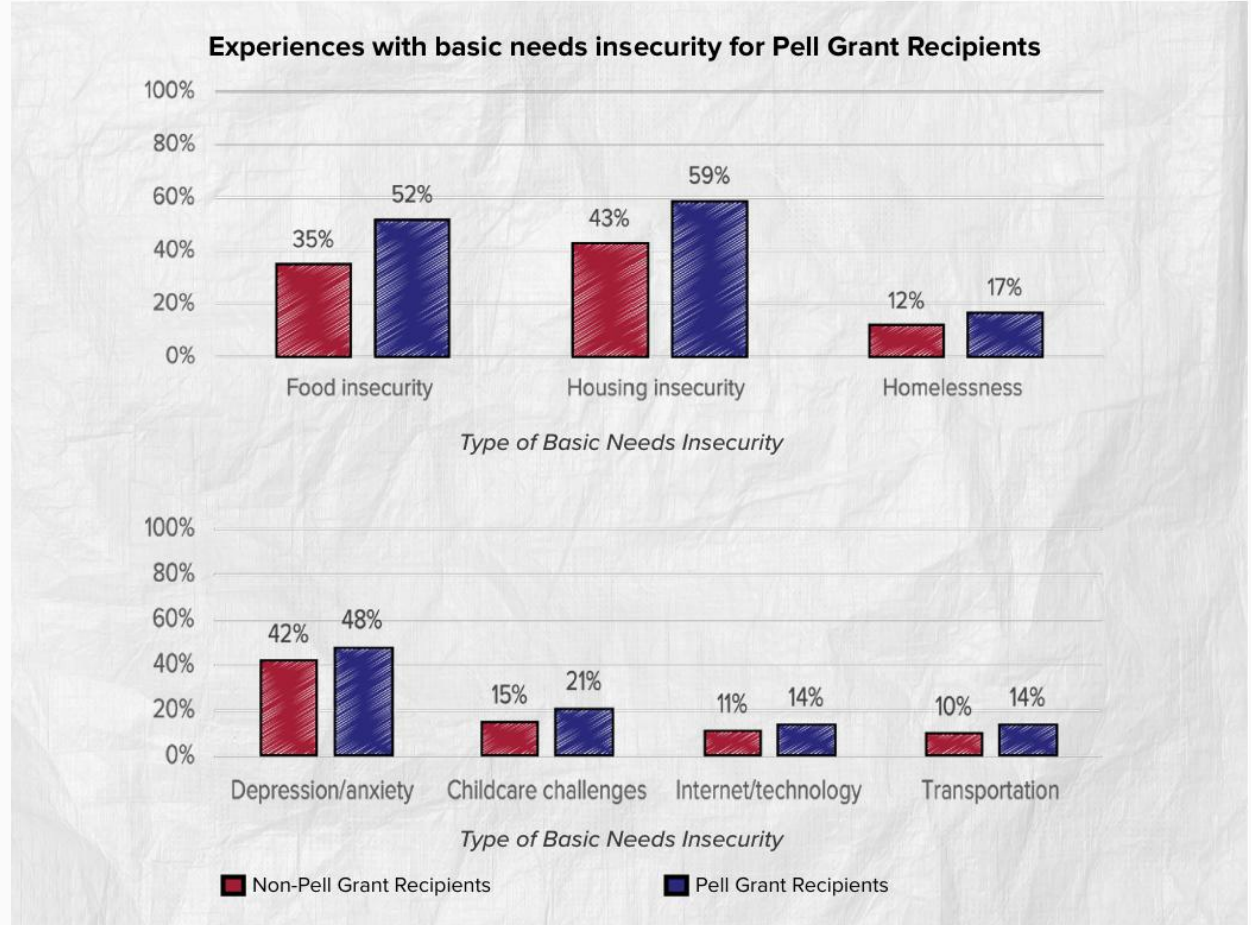
Experiences with basic needs insecurity for part-time and working students



■ Part-time students who are not employed ■ Part-time students who are employed ■ Students working 20+ hours/week

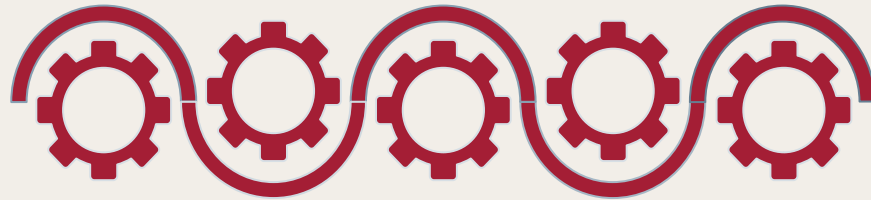


Pell recipients





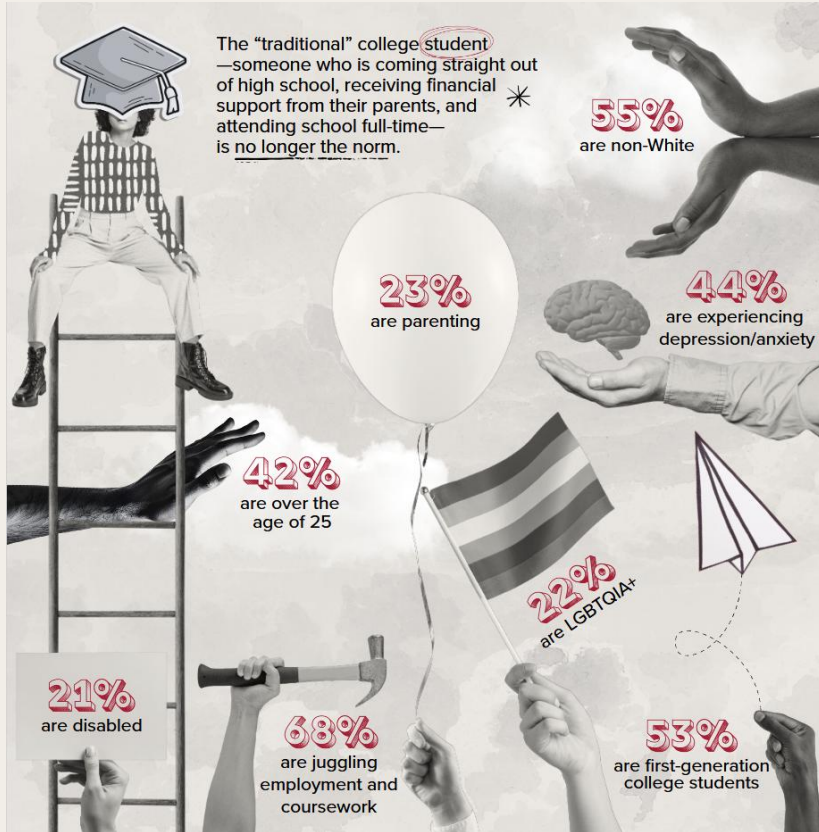
Systems Context



Higher Ed Institutions Weren't Built for Today's Students



Today's Students



Plus,

- 33% of students of color are **at or below the poverty level** compared to 20% of white students
- 65% of bachelor's graduates have **student loan debt**, owing an average of \$30,000
- 11% of young adults from **low-income families** earn bachelor's degrees by age 24 compared with 58% from high-income families

When your rent goes up 40%. As pandemic fades, many tenants see big hikes

The cost of college increased by more than 25% in the last 10 years—here's

**1 in 3 v
this ye**

Housing Costs Continued to Rise Faster Than Before the Pandemic

*When
the A*

It will be difficult for the Federal Reserve to rein in inflation fully if shelter costs continue to run hot.

Here's why your food prices keep going up

Expect to see higher prices in the last quarter of this year in a number of grocery categories. After that, some relief is likely, experts say.

**Transportation Costs Con
Consumer Prices?**

THE NEW ECONOMICS OF COLLEGE:

Widened Gap Between Resources/Aid and Cost of Attendance



- **BURDEN OF PRICE**
- **FINANCIAL AID GAP and the TRUE COST OF ATTENDANCE**



- **FAMILY ECONOMICS**
- **DISPROPORTIONATE GENERATIONAL WEALTH**

Average undergraduate college tuition has **more than tripled**, over the last 58 years, rising from \$4,648 in 1963 to **\$14,307** in 2021 (NCES).

Putting \$880 Billion in Potential Federal Medicaid Cuts in Context of State Budgets and Coverage

SNAP Benefits and Spending Cuts: What the Stopgap Bill means for benefits

Trump's plan to move student loans to the Small Business Association would be messy,' experts warn

Education Dept. cuts are here. What happens now to student loans, FAFSA and IEPs?

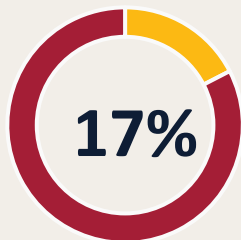
Hundreds protest at Penn after Trump administration freezes \$175 million in funding

Executive Order to Close the Department of Education: What It Means for Your School

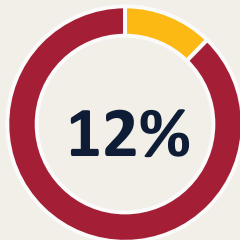


Consequence: Academic Impact

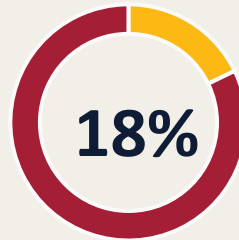
Lack of basic needs access interferes with academics



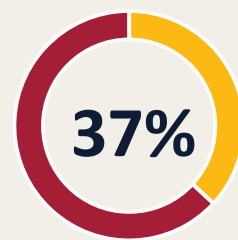
of parenting students
missed class due to
child-care access



of students missed
assignments due to
internet/technology
access



of students were late
to class or work due
to transportation
access



of students reported
emotional or mental
difficulties hurt their
performance



79%

of student respondents to our survey who had **previously stopped out of college** (and subsequently re-enrolled), or were **considering stopping out of college**, told us it was due to **basic needs insecurity** (emotional stress/mental health, lacking money for living expenses, childcare/caregiver responsibilities, lack of transportation, lack of access to internet/technology) or **financial reasons** (cost of attendance/insufficient financial aid, cost of textbooks or course materials, unexpected financial expense/emergency).

Basic needs ***insecurity*** is a structural characteristic.

Basic needs ***security*** means that there is an ecosystem in place to ensure students basic needs are met.

Addressing student basic needs insecurity is an institutional responsibility.



Student demographics have changed

Basic needs insecurity is **common**

College is **not affordable**

Financial aid is **insufficient**

Student support resources are **under-staffed and under-funded**

Public benefits are **complicated and being eroded/elminiated**

Student awareness of campus and public resources is **limited**



The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs Learning Module

WHY DOES
STUDENT BASIC NEEDS SECURITY
MATTER?



Promising
Approaches to
address basic
needs
insecurity

When Colleges Address Basic Needs, Good Things Happen for Them and for Students



**Boosts academic
performance**



**Promote retention
and degree
completion**



**Discover systemic
barriers to
learning and
engagement**



**Collaboration
across institution**

When Colleges Address Basic Needs, Good Things Happen for Them and for Students



**Address historic
systemic
inequities**



**Address
accreditation and
compliance
expectations**



**Equip institutions
with data to make
transformational
change**



**Contribute to
structural
transformation of
HE and society**



Hope Impact Partnerships

The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs



Student basic
needs survey



Data dashboard



Action planning

What are campuses doing?

- **Surveying and talking to** students on the state of basic needs insecurity
- **Food pantries** and other direct interventions to provide temporary support.
- **Building and centralizing basic needs centers**, employing benefits navigators, and other one-stop shops for students to receive additional supports.
- **Emergency aid** for short term needs such as textbooks, parking, rent, childcare and more

What are **campuses** doing?

- **Mental health screening, skills training, & treatment/counseling** – on campus/in person and virtually/tele-counseling
- **Connecting students to benefits** – public benefits, local resources, campuses resources and supports
- **Communications and outreach** to make sure that students know about and feel comfortable accessing available resources, benefits, and supports.



A 2024 Survey found,

36%
OF STUDENTS
WERE FOOD INSECURE

36% WERE
HOUSING INSECURE

7% EXPERIENCED
HOMELESSNESS



Bunker Hill Community College
Food Pantry

Delivering
Information,
Sustenance and
Health



@bhccdish

DISH Food Pantry: Dish and Dash Lockers

Bunker Hill Community College
Boston, Massachusetts





CUNY CARES (Comprehensive Access to Resources for Essential Services) is a new model for helping CUNY students find the campus and community-based essential services they need for health care, mental health, food, and housing.



**Improving the quality of life for
single parents and their children
through post secondary education
and comprehensive supportive
services.**

Pittsburgh Scholar House offers educational, motivational, and family-centered support for single parents seeking a college degree while raising their children.



THE 2GEN APPROACH

Two-generation (2Gen) approaches build family well-being by intentionally and simultaneously working with children and the adults in their lives *together*. 2Gen approaches center the whole family **to create a legacy of educational success and economic prosperity that passes from one generation to the next.**



Institutional Example: **Community College of Vermont**

Our partners tell us that one of the most effective ways to connect students to public benefits is to connect them to someone with experience navigating the system. For example, the [Community College of Vermont partners with United Way Working Bridges](#) to pair students with a resource coordinator to help them apply for benefits. This addresses both the information barrier and the administrative burden placed on the student.





Institutional Examples: **Dallas College and** **St. Catherine University**

HIP partner **Dallas College's Family Care Program** and **St. Catherine University** both provide good examples of how institutions can meaningfully address parenting students' basic needs. In addition to direct support like food pantries, both provide wraparound services including individualized coaching, case management, peer support groups, and connections to parenting supplies and basic needs resources. Dallas College also has an inventory of free Family Care items, such as car seats, diapers, formula, and smoke detectors.

Data into Action: Trinity Valley Community College, Melinda Berry, Director of Student Access and Counseling



- My boss, the VP of Student Services, created a task force: “The Whole Student Approach” and put several student services staff on it and some folks from the academic side. **WHAT YOU SAY? YES! He did.**
- The Board of Trustees approved a new Associate VP position: “AVP of Student Advocacy Services”. This person will be tasked with championing holistic student support initiatives!
- I was asked to do a presentation for our faculty and staff Learning Day, about “Holistic Student Support”. I did two presentations with about 50 or so staff and faculty in attendance. **I used the Hope Center’s Learning modules and other AMAZING resources** to target and drill down using actual data from the Basic needs survey from the Spring 2023. **IT WAS AWESOME!**
- I have been asked to speak in front of our Board of Trustees about holistic students support and how TVCC can better serve our students. I plan to use Amarillo college as an example to them as to how these services actually **INCREASE** graduation rates.

Unfortunately, almost 2 in 3 students (65%) reported that they were not aware of relevant resources.



51%

of students who experienced at least one type of basic needs insecurity did not receive any public benefits.



88%

of students facing housing insecurity or homelessness did not utilize public housing or utility assistance.



92%

of students who missed classes due to transportation issues did not access public transportation assistance.

Among students who experienced at least one type of basic needs insecurity, we found that **48%** were not aware of the relevant campus supports we asked about.

Why don't students use campus supports?

- ☐ I do not think I am eligible (73%)
- ☐ Other people need those programs more than I do (69%)
- ☐ I do not know how to apply (52%)
- ☐ I did not know they existed or were available (51%)
- ☐ I do not need these programs (44%)
- ☐ I am embarrassed to apply (26%)
- ☐ People like me do not use programs like that (19%)
- ☐ I had difficulty completing the application (14%)

Mismatches between needs and supports can include:

- ☐ Inadequate ecosystem of support
- ☐ Systemic barriers
- ☐ Administrative burdens to accessing supports
- ☐ Insufficient outreach to students about the supports

In addition to campus supports, basic needs supports can include

- ☐ Local or regional infrastructure (availability of public transportation, grocery stores, childcare, reliable broadband, affordable housing, community health and mental health services)
- ☐ Public policies and supports (need based financial aid, public benefits, anti-poverty programs, tax credits, health coverage)



The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs



Research

investigating students'
lived experiences with
basic needs insecurity and
evaluating interventions



Policy

informing and advocating
for systemic policy change
to make college more
affordable



Practice

technical assistance to
meet student basic needs
through systems
transformation



Policy and Advocacy

We've informed more than **12 pieces of federal legislation** and have inspired **legislation in 6 states** on topics such as hunger-free campus initiatives and emergency aid. Our technical guidance has informed the current overhaul and expansion of federal financial aid which makes **nearly 800,000 new students** eligible for Pell Grants, and boosts aid for more than **2 million recipients**.

We lead a **federal policy coalition of over 250 national, state, local, and institutional organizations** focused on student basic needs.



The Hope Center's 2025 Federal Policy Priorities

All Americans should be able to afford higher education and training. This principle is essential for a prosperous, innovative, and resilient economy—and creating a society where everyone can meet their full potential. However, to reach our goals for higher education access and attainment, students must be able to meet their basic needs and fully focus on their learning. Students must have enough food, a stable place to live, quality health care, flexible child care, and accessible transportation to complete their degrees and credentials.



Policy Priorities

- ☐ **Remove eligibility barriers:** SNAP (EATS) Act and Student Food Security Act
- ☐ **Remove restrictions on campus-based aid** to allow Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG) to function as emergency aid
- ☐ **Fund comprehensive approaches** to student basic needs insecurity (Basic Needs for Postsecondary Students Program and Basic Act)
- ☐ **Address the crisis of mental health**
- ☐ **Ensure parenting students have affordable and convenient child care** (CCAMPIS Reauthorization Act, Understanding Student Parent Outcomes Act)
- ☐ **Expand access to federal financial aid, including Pell Grant**
- ☐ **End the tax on Pell Grants, scholarships and other aid** (Tax-Free Pell Grant Act, American Opportunity Student Tax Relief Act)
- ☐ **Reduce housing insecurity for students** (Housing for Homeless Students Act, Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth Act)



Policy Priorities

- ❑ **Defend and increase basic research** that promotes student success and basic needs security (What Works Clearinghouse, NIH, IES, IPEDS, etc)
- ❑ **Continue to simplify the FAFSA** and ensure financial aid success
- ❑ Continue to help students and families **meet the full cost of attendance** (Debt-Free College Act, America's College Promise Act, and College for All Act)

Creating a robust ecosystem of student-focused funding, durable state investment, accessible public benefits, and flexible financial aid that works for all students will help secure students' basic needs, reflect the changing demographics of students, reduce wealth and racial inequality, and promote college attainment.



States are taking action

Benefits navigator legislation: CA, IL, KY, OR, WA

Statewide basic needs working groups: CA, KY, MA, MI, MN, PA

Hunger-Free Campus legislation passed: CA, CO, IL, LA, MD, MA, NJ, OK, PA, WA

Hunger-Free Campus legislation introduced: FL, IN, MI, NY, NC, OR, TN, TX, VA, WV

Other state-wide basic needs projects: NY (Healthy CUNY Initiative), NM (Statewide Basic Needs Survey), TN (Higher Education Commission Report on Food Insecurity), WA (Statewide Basic Needs Survey)



Pennsylvania: Department of Human Services Parent Pathways Learning Network; PA Maslow – PA Dept of Ed (Webinar April 17)

Hawaii: Basic Needs Master Plan

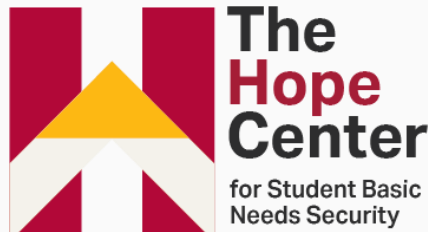
Michigan: Basic Needs Statewide Task Force

Minnesota: HIP + Basic Needs Working Group, Student Parent Alliance, United Way 211 Hub Evaluation

New Jersey: Basic Needs Playbook & Resource Website

Texas: HIP+ Legislative Agenda, Statewide Mental Health Coalition

Emerging conversations and engagements in NC, WI, LA, KY, OR, WA, MA and more





With support from the **National Science Foundation (NSF)**, **INTuitN-STEM** is a collaborative research hub that investigates non-tuition needs among community college STEM students.

Alongside **HIP**, **INTuitN-STEM** is weaving a broader community of institutions interested in building knowledge around supporting student basic needs.

Research

Advancing Transportation Solutions for Community Colleges Students (Kresge Foundation and Heckscher Foundation)

In collaboration with the City University of New York (CUNY), we are conducting an RCT involving appropriately 750 students to evaluate the causal effects of transportation support (MTA MetroCards) on students' academic achievement.



Research

Mental Health Improvement through Community Colleges

Improving access to
evidence-based mental
health care for individuals
attending community
colleges across Michigan





44%

of students
experience
depression and/or
anxiety.



3 in 5

college students (59%) are experiencing **basic needs insecurity** related to food and/or housing. Mental health also continues to be a major challenge for students, with almost half experiencing clinically significant symptoms of anxiety and/or depression.





Hope's Vision

**We envision a landscape
where educational
opportunity is universal
and equitable. We are
co-creating a world
where basic needs
insecurity is no longer a
barrier to pursuing and
completing college.**





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