



**Resolution:** Student Basic Needs at USC

**Authors:** Natasha Wasim, GSG Director of External Affairs, KJ Queen, GSG Director of Diversity & Equity - Advocacy

**Sponsors:** Briana James, GSG Senator for the School of Dramatic Arts

**Date:** Monday, January 29th, 2024

WHEREAS, research links food and housing insecurity to lower levels of academic performance.<sup>1, 2</sup>

WHEREAS, in 2022 a GSG survey found that basic living expenses consume an average of 87% of take home income for USC Ph.D. students.<sup>3</sup>

WHEREAS, those most vulnerable within our communities - student veterans, first-generation students, graduate students, students with disabilities, student parents, students experiencing homelessness, students experiencing an unexpected crisis, and international students - are those most likely to struggle with financial uncertainty.<sup>4</sup>

WHEREAS, GSG allocates over \$500,000 in grants to students annually, and while this is a substantial sum, it does not begin to address the extent of students' basic needs. Students requesting funds for basic needs are encouraged to apply for aid through the University of Southern California (USC) Student Basic Needs (SBN) office. However, students regularly return to GSG with concerns about the lack of communication and financial support provided by SBN. When GSG has communicated these concerns to SBN, GSG is told that the office has limited capacity due to understaffing and limited funding. We also note that GSG provides yearly funding to SBN (\$10,000 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year), however this amount is not nearly enough and was never intended to meet the totality of graduate student needs but rather to bolster funding provided by the University.

---

<sup>1</sup> Weaver RR, Vaughn NA, Hendricks SP, McPherson-Myers PE, Jia Q, Willis SL, Rescigno KP. University student food insecurity and academic performance. *J Am Coll Health*. 2020 Oct;68(7):727-733.

<sup>2</sup> *University student food insecurity and academic performance. Journal of American College Health*, 1–7.

Kornbluh, M., Wilking, J., Roll, S., & Donatello, R. (2022). Exploring housing insecurity in relation to student success. *Journal of American College Health*, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2022.2068016>

<sup>3</sup> GSG Wellness Survey 2022

<sup>4</sup> Martinez, S. M., Webb, K., Frongillo, E. A., & Ritchie, L. D. (2017). Food insecurity in California's public university system: What are the risk factors? *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 13(1), 1–18.

<sup>5</sup> Trojan Food Pantry: <https://seip.usc.edu/centers/studentbasicneeds/tfp/>

WHEREAS, the Trojan Food Pantry (TFP) provides “fresh food, non-perishable items, toiletries, and academic supplies,” however the offerings lack nutritional variety, access to fresh produce and the amount of items are insufficient for the volume of students who need support. Additionally, the TFP is only open for five hours per week all of which are during normal class times at University Park Campus only, which also isolates students at the Health Sciences Campus who may be in need.<sup>5</sup>

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that USC allocates additional funding to SBN to expand and enhance its services. This funding will allow the center to offer additional food and supplies at TFP, weekly free hot meals, increase access to temporary housing solutions, and hire additional staff to better serve our students (see the Appendix for offerings by Student Basic Needs offices at other local universities). This additional funding to SBN will also extend service sites and assistance across both the University Park Campus and Health Sciences Campus.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that USC establishes partnerships with local organizations to secure a consistent source of food donations and financial contributions for the center.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that USC promotes awareness and education about the resources available at the USC Student Basic Needs Center to ensure that students who need assistance know that support is available.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be delivered to President Carol Folt, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Andrew Guzman, Vice President for Student Life Monique Allard, Dean of the Graduate School Andy Stott, and Assistant Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Student Equity and Inclusion Naddia Palacios within two weeks of being passed by the Graduate Student Government Senate.

**Appendix:** Benchmarking of Student Basic Needs Initiatives by other local universities.

Name	Services Offered	Highlights
UCLA Student Basic Needs ( <a href="#">website</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Crisis Help</li> <li>• Food</li> <li>• Finances</li> <li>• Housing &amp; Family</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">CalFresh Initiative at UCLA</a> Online Office Hours and team dedicated to CalFresh student enrollment</li> <li>• Comprehensive <a href="#">Resource Guide</a>, including local resources</li> <li>• <a href="#">Resource Map</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Emergency Housing</a> - up to 14 days in UCLA housing</li> </ul>
CSUN HEART ( <a href="#">website</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Security</li> <li>• Housing Stability</li> <li>• Emergency Financial Support</li> <li>• Communities of Support</li> <li>• Mental and Physical Wellness</li> <li>• Safety and Advocacy</li> <li>• Technology Tools and Resources</li> <li>• Transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CalFresh <a href="#">enrollment appointments</a> available online or at the CSUN Food Pantry whenever it is open</li> <li>• <a href="#">Matabites</a> - notifications whenever free food is available on campus</li> <li>• <a href="#">MataCare</a> - emergency grants for students between \$50 and \$500</li> <li>• <a href="#">Temporary Emergency Housing</a> - housing on campus for up to 20 days with support for finding long term solutions</li> </ul>
UCI Student Basic Needs ( <a href="#">website</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zot Bites</li> <li>• Financial Wellness Consultations</li> <li>• CalFresh Application Assistance</li> <li>• Emergency Meal Swipes</li> <li>• FRESH Pantry</li> <li>• Short-Term Grocery Card Support</li> <li>• Short-Term Transportation Support</li> <li>• Diaper Bank Support</li> <li>• Economic Crisis Response Grant</li> <li>• Campus Social Worker Consultations</li> <li>• Basic Needs Sponsored Housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Mobile Food Pantry</a> New mobile food pantry delivery van to increase food access for college students in local communities</li> <li>• <a href="#">Basic Needs Sponsored Housing</a> UCI Housing and the Office of Campus Social Work provide temporary housing with a meal plan to students facing homelessness</li> <li>• <a href="#">Campus Social Worker Consultations</a> Appointments with our on-campus clinical social worker to provide support to students experiencing financial stress and/or food/housing insecurity</li> <li>• <a href="#">Diaper Bank</a> Basic Needs Center provides student parents with a monthly supplement of diapers or pull-ups</li> </ul>