

Introduction

The Basic Needs for Postsecondary Students (Basic Needs) Program provides grants to eligible institutions of higher education (IHEs) to support programs that address the basic needs of students and to report on practices that improve outcomes for students. Funded for the first time in FY 2021, the Basic Needs Program supports IHEs that demonstrate a commitment to developing or enhancing programs that support the basic needs of students. The Notice Inviting Applications for this program was published in the Federal Register on November 5, 2021. The deadline to submit applications was December 6, 2021. We received 37 applications. Applications were reviewed on panels that consisted of 3 non-Federal reviewers. Due to budget constraints for the program, we were only able to fund the 6 highest ranked applications. The maximum award amount allowed is \$990,000 for the 3-year Performance period. Project Abstracts for the 6 funded applicants are below.

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**Montgomery College
MD**

ABSTRACT

The Montgomery College (MC) Social Resource Program: Nourishing the Mind, Body, and Spirit (SRP), will improve outcomes for underserved students by coordinating efforts with government agencies and community-based organizations that address basic needs insecurities. The project staff will connect a minimum of 1,500 underserved students to College and community resources for food assistance, health and mental health support, housing, transportation, childcare, dependent care, and technology. The target population includes: (a) students in poverty; (b) students of color; (c) members of federally recognized Indian Tribes; (d) students with disabilities; (e) students experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity; (f) students who are pregnant, parenting, or caregiving; (g) LGBTQ+ students; (h) first generation college students; (i) first-time adult college students; and (j) Pell-eligible students.

The project includes following components: (1) Increase the SRP to provide 1:1 coaching to help minoritized students access College and community resources; (2) Strengthen cross-agency coordination and community engagement to provide direct services to students; (3) Collaborate with community partners to coordinate on-campus and virtual events, information sessions, and service delivery; and (4) Increase outreach efforts and marketing to underserved populations to encourage use of the SRP and community resources. The expected outcomes are: (1) The number of students served by the SRP will be 300 in Year 1, 500 in Year 2, and 700 in Year 3; (2) Student persistence resulting from any direct engagement with SRP will increase by 5% over three years; and (3) Student degree or certificate completion will increase from 11.4% to 16%.

The contribution to practice is that this project will provide evidence that a one-stop, single point of contact for connecting students to public benefits and resources will help meet basic needs, as well as social, emotional, and academic needs, leading to increased student persistence and degree completion.

McLennan Community College (MCC)
TX

ABSTRACT

McLennan Community College (MCC) is a public, two-year Hispanic-Serving Institution. Located in Waco (McLennan County), Texas, halfway between Dallas and Austin, MCC serves a diverse student population of over 8,500 students per term. The Waco metropolitan area is the largest metro area in the state not served directly by a four-year public college or university. MCC's Basic Needs for Postsecondary Students Program will create a network of supports that addresses students' basic needs and is fully integrated with campus operations. The program will have staff to connect students with on-campus and off-campus resources that support academic, social, and emotional needs and identify other support agencies that can provide additional student supports primarily focusing on food assistance, housing, transportation, and health care/mental health.

The program seeks to improve student outcomes. The two main outcomes are to 1) increase the annual low socioeconomic, FTIC persistence rate to 60% and 2) increase the average low socioeconomic, FTIC successful course completion to 70%. MCC is requesting **\$575,210** over three years to support the program. MCC's Basic Needs for Postsecondary Students Program grant is designed to meet the **Absolute Priority** requirement to take a systemic approach to improving outcomes for underserved students through coordinating efforts with Federal, State, or local agencies, or community-based organizations that support students.

MCC's project will also address the **Competitive Preference Priority** to support students' social, emotional, and academic needs with a focus on underserved students.

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Rio Hondo College CA

ABSTRACT

Rio Hondo College (RHC) is a 2-year, public community college located in the city of Whittier, in Los Angeles County, located about 15 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles and is at the crossroads of low-income and middle-class communities. The College's areas include some of the lowest income areas in LA County, with the poverty rate at 19.5% compared to the state of CA at 11.8% and LA County 13.4%. RHC is a Hispanic Serving Institution and in Fall 2019 served 33,198 students. 19.17% first-time students, 14.04% first time transfer students, 38.26% continuing students, 20.89% returning students, and 7.64% dual enrollment students. Over 56% of RHC students are considered high need, low-income, first-generation college students, and over 80.2% are of Hispanic origin. According to data compiled by the U.S. Department of Education, California has experienced a 48% increase in student homelessness over the last decade. Such a dramatic increase in students experiencing homelessness has made implementing strategies for reducing the impact of homelessness on student education challenging to accomplish, for all community colleges. RHC Office of Student Life and Leadership proposes to increase capacity for its pilot program, **Hope Scholars**, a student-focused model to implement strategies to attain two interrelated goals: (1) to increase institutional capacity to address the needs for additional academic preparation and holistic support programs specifically for unhoused and transitionally unhoused students; and (2) to strengthen cross-agency coordination and community engagement to improve student success, retention, persistence, and completion on an increasing scale. The strong collaboration between RHC and its federal, state, and community-based partners has the collective goal to model current best practices found in the Guardian Scholars (for foster care youth), California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOP&S) aiming to provide housing and food relief, psychosocial and emotional support, mental health, and academic support services (**CPP**). **Hope Scholars** is the first holistic and comprehensive program that services housing insecure students within Los Angeles County. The **Hope Scholars** program meets the absolute priority by addressing within the system the following key areas of basic needs insecurities: food assistance, housing, transportation, health, childcare, and technology. Beyond increasing the institution's own capacity, the proposed project aims to evaluate service delivery methods and program implementation. Partnering with the Center for Equitable Higher Education for program evaluation will impact the field, as no current research exists to support the development and need for trauma-informed, holistic approaches to basic needs. To create systemic change in California and Nation-wide the **Hope Scholars** project will encapsulate lessons learned and working with John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY), create tangible toolkits and webinars to share evidence-based best practices with the field. RHC is requesting \$989,000 over three years to support **Hope Scholars** strategy implementation, knowledge generation, and best practices dissemination. Objectives to be met with this funding include: Hope Scholars will persist for 3 semesters at a rate of 75%, Hope Scholars will increase overall completion rates by 25%, 90% Hope Scholars will enroll in Math and English within their first year, and 75% Hope Scholars will complete at least 3 program contacts semester.

**HARTNELL COLLEGE
CA**

ABSTRACT

Hartnell College's Basic Needs Resource Center project will develop and enhance systemic coordination of, and integration with, existing services and improve collaboration among service providers to better connect students with available support and to efficiently utilize the capacity of the services and support available in the communities where Hartnell's students live. The project will create *a one-stop resource center* enabling students to access both on- and off campus resources across a wide array of documented need areas, including: housing; food/nutrition; healthcare; mental health/wellbeing; transportation; technology; student and academic support services; financial aid; counseling; and links to other public services such as childcare, legal support and income tax preparation, as needed. The project will accomplish this by creating a sustainable program that includes a One-Stop Resource Center at each of the five Hartnell campus locations; an online resource portal; dedicated basic needs and case management staffing; an extensive public and non-profit partnership network; outreach; professional development; and evaluation.

The proposal is based on an extensive needs assessment which identified the primary gap and weakness in the basic needs services infrastructure as the lack of a centralized place for students to access basic needs information and resources and receive informed support on where and how to access services. The lack of a one-stop resource center makes it challenging for already stressed students to find the help they need. Students, especially first-generation, underrepresented, and disadvantaged groups, face multiple challenges to make ends meet while pursuing a degree or certificate. Social and economic deprivation, previous traumatic experiences, and/or the complexity of navigating higher education systems can interfere with students' timely access to the resources. Based on a human-centered approach, this one-stop model will seek to consolidate existing campus-level interventions and supports with public benefits, social services, and other comprehensive assistance bundled in a single on-campus location and accessible online.

Hartnell College, an accredited California Community College and Hispanic Serving Institution, serves a large population of low income, underrepresented, educationally disadvantaged students in a 1,000 square mile agricultural region in California's Salinas Valley. The College designed this program in the face of increased student homelessness, food insecurity, and unmet mental health needs that have resulted in a **33 percent decline** in Hartnell enrollment during the pandemic with students stopping out (delaying time to degree/transfer) or dropping out altogether. The pandemic has exacerbated long-term basic needs deficiencies for a vast majority of Hartnell College's students.

The project will address both the **absolute priority** and the **competitive preference priority**.

**Los Angeles City College
CA**

ABSTRACT

The overarching goal of the Los Angeles City College Resources for Success project is to increase the number of underserved students succeeding at Los Angeles City College (LACC) through improved systems coordination that will expand availability of and access to basic needs resources and remove barriers to academic completion. LACC is a public, two-year community college located northwest of downtown Los Angeles, that serves the majority of Central Los Angeles, Hollywood, and the surrounding area. LACC is a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution that enrolls approximately 15,000 unduplicated credit students each fall. 56% of students receive need-based Federal or State financial aid, indicating household income at or below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines. Low-income individuals are disproportionately rent-burdened in Los Angeles, with 78% of renters in the lowest quintile of earners spending *more than half* of their income on rent. A recent survey of LACC students indicated that nearly 70% of students had experienced some form of basic needs insecurity in the year preceding the survey: 60% of students experienced housing insecurity, 16% experienced homelessness, and 46% experienced food insecurity in the 30 days prior to the survey. The Resources for Success project responds to the Absolute and Competitive Preference Priorities by building and fortifying a sustainable cross-agency and campus collaborative to meet students' basic needs, as well as social, emotional, and academic needs. The project will focus on students enrolled in LACC's programs that target underserved students, including: (1) Extended Opportunity Program and Services, which serves low-income and educationally disadvantaged students; (2) TRIO/Student Support Services, a program for low-income and first-generation college students interested in a 4-year degree; (3) California Work Opportunities and Responsibility for Kids, which serves student parents receiving State public assistance; and (4) LACC's Office of Special Services, which serves and facilitates equal access for students with disabilities. To achieve its goal of increasing the number of underserved students succeeding at LACC, the Resources for Success team aims to: (1) implement cross-agency coordination of resources and basic needs support; (2) increase student use of campus and community resources; (3) increase the annual persistence rate for students in the targeted student support programs; and (4) increase the annual rate of degree or certificate completion and reduce the time to completion for an identified cohort of project participants as compared to a matched comparison group. To achieve these objectives, LACC will implement the following activities: (1) financial support for food and housing (including utilities) for a cohort of students with the greatest unmet financial need; (2) textbook and school supply support; (3) case management; (4) basic needs assessment and public benefits enrollment assistance, advocacy, and follow-up; and (5) academic tutoring. Contact: Dr. Armando Rivera-Figueroa, LACC Dean of Economic Development and Workforce Education & Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), Los Angeles City College, 855 North Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90029. (323) 953-4000. riveraa2@lacitycollege.edu

**Passaic County Community College
NJ**

ABSTRACT

Project Title: PCCC Multicultural Wellness and Resource Center (MWRC)

Population(s) to be served: The project will provide basic needs services to 5,000 low-income, first-generation, minority students who also comprise underserved populations such as nontraditional adult students, parenting students, and undocumented students. 250 PCCC students will benefit from internships and volunteer experiences with partner institutions, 100 faculty and staff will be trained to create a supportive learning environment for students who require basic needs, and 60 peer leaders will be trained to encourage student help-seeking behaviors.

Services and Proposed Activities: The project will implement services and activities associated with four major project components: 1) Identifying, assessing, and referring students for basic needs services; 2) Encouraging help-seeking behaviors; 3) Expanding student access to services; and 4) Reporting on practices to improve academic outcomes.

Anticipated Results: Three major program goals and 7 corresponding objectives/outcomes will guide program implementation. The program goals include: 1) Students who access basic needs services will complete their postsecondary credentials; 2) Partnerships with government and community based organizations will be expanded and sustained; and 3) Peer leaders, faculty and staff will be trained to encourage help-seeking behaviors among underserved students.

Absolute Priority Addressed: Yes, PCCC's project will directly address the Absolute Priority by taking a systemic approach to improving outcomes for underserved students. Specifically, PCCC will establish a partnership focused on addressing food insecurity, housing assistance, and mental health support. The project partners will include the Center for United Methodist Aid to the Community (CUMAC), OASIS Women and Children's Center, M&S Psychotherapy and Counseling LLC, the Housing Authority of the City of Paterson (HACP), Father English Center, the Passaic County Board of Social Services, the Passaic County Human Services Department Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and the Mental Health Association (MHA) of Passaic County. PCCC's partnership also includes the Jed Foundation, which is collaborating with PCCC on a long-range plan for improving the mental health and well-being of PCCC students and will be aligned with the project activities.

Competitive Preference Priority Addressed: Yes, PCCC's project is designed to directly support the social, emotional, and academic needs of underserved students.