An aerial photograph of a city street intersection. In the background, several tall buildings are visible, including a prominent orange brick skyscraper with many windows. The foreground shows a wide street with crosswalks, green trees, and a few cars. The sky is clear and blue.

Accelerating Student Success at Texas Colleges Through Supporting Student Basic Needs

*A Report on The Hope
Center's Efforts in Texas
in 2022-2023*

**The Hope Center for
Student Basic Needs at
Temple University**

About Hope

The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University is a leading national action research center removing barriers to student success through:



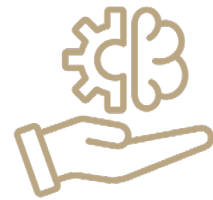
Research

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



Policy

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



Practice

collaborative coaching and training to meet students' basic needs through systems transformation

We are researchers, scholars, advocates, conveners, and storytellers who envision a world where basic needs insecurity is no longer a barrier to pursuing and completing college. We take a systems-change approach to creating a higher education landscape where educational opportunity is universal and equitable.



1800 N 13th Street

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

POLEY HALL & GYMnasium

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Acknowledgements:

Thank you to the Prentice Farrar Brown and Alline Ford Foundation for providing Hope Impact Partnerships training and technical assistance to Texas community colleges at no cost to them. Thank you to The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for recognizing and investing in students' mental health and basic needs as an essential component of driving improvements in student success and degree attainment. We were honored to serve as the technical assistance provider for your Student Success Acceleration Program. Hope's work is the result of tremendous teamwork and collaboration. Myriad contributions helped bring resources, learning sessions, coaching, and more to life. Much gratitude to our funders, school partners, staff, and collaborators! Full acknowledgements may be found on page 37.

Suggested Citation:

Accelerating student success at Texas colleges through supporting student basic needs: A report on The Hope Center's efforts in Texas in 2022-2023. (March 2024). The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs at Temple University.

Executive Summary

During the 2022-2023 academic year, The Hope Center partnered with colleges and universities throughout Texas to enhance capacity for providing comprehensive services that secure students' basic needs and improve student success. Growing evidence indicates that student persistence and college completion are strongly connected to and determined by whether students' basic needs are met. Our partnership with Texas colleges was important for enhancing economic recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic and for meeting the state's [postsecondary attainment and competitive workforce goals](#).

With support from the Prentice Farrar Brown and Aline Ford Foundation, The Hope Center provided training and technical assistance to 39 Texas community colleges. We also partnered with The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to provide training and technical assistance to 59 Texas colleges as part of the Texas Student Success Acceleration Program.

The training and technical assistance provided to Texas colleges built and expanded upon The Hope Center's [Hope Impact Partnerships](#) (HIP) curriculum. Partners had opportunities to field The Hope Center Basic Needs Survey, view their results through our new Data Dashboard, access asynchronous learning content, participate in learning sessions, receive 1:1 coaching, share resources with their cohort, and engage in action planning to advance basic needs systems, services, and impact on their campus. As part of THECB's Student Success Acceleration Program, we expanded our resources and toolkits focused specifically on meeting students' mental health needs in partnership with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute. We are delighted to share this report reflecting on our activities, impact, key findings, and lessons learned with our Texas partners.

Participating colleges and universities highlighted four main areas of growth from our work together:

Better understanding
the needs of their
students

Expanding supports
and dismantling
barriers to access



Setting goals driven
by data

Creating partnerships,
community, and
champions



Better understanding the needs of their students:

Partners that fielded [The Hope Center Student Basic Needs Survey](#) and utilized Hope's new Data Dashboard gained insights into their students' needs, levels of basic needs insecurity, use of and access to services, and preferences for supports and outreach. The dashboard enables partners to view their institution's survey data, understand needs across student populations, and compare their data to similar institutions. Rates of basic needs insecurity in Texas are very similar to numbers from other institutions who fielded the Student Basic Needs Survey across the country.

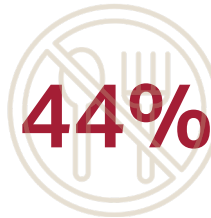
Across Texas colleges, we found:



More than 3 in 5 students are facing at least one of the following types of basic needs insecurity:



housing insecurity



food insecurity



homelessness



In addition, **44%** of students are experiencing **clinically significant symptoms of anxiety or depression.**



Setting goals driven by data:

Participating colleges reported that Hope survey data, coaching, and community sessions guided their next steps to bolster basic needs support on their campuses. For example, one key insight was the importance of better **coordinating basic needs services** because so many students reported facing more than one type of unmet need (e.g., food, housing, transportation, child care, mental health).



Expanding supports and dismantling barriers to accessing them:

Using the student and institutional data we collected, we collaborated with colleges to proactively address gaps in resources for students. **Students experiencing basic needs insecurity reported not using and not knowing about many relevant resources.** Texas colleges launched new outreach campaigns and partnerships. They raised awareness and uptake of existing supports and expanded their service offerings.



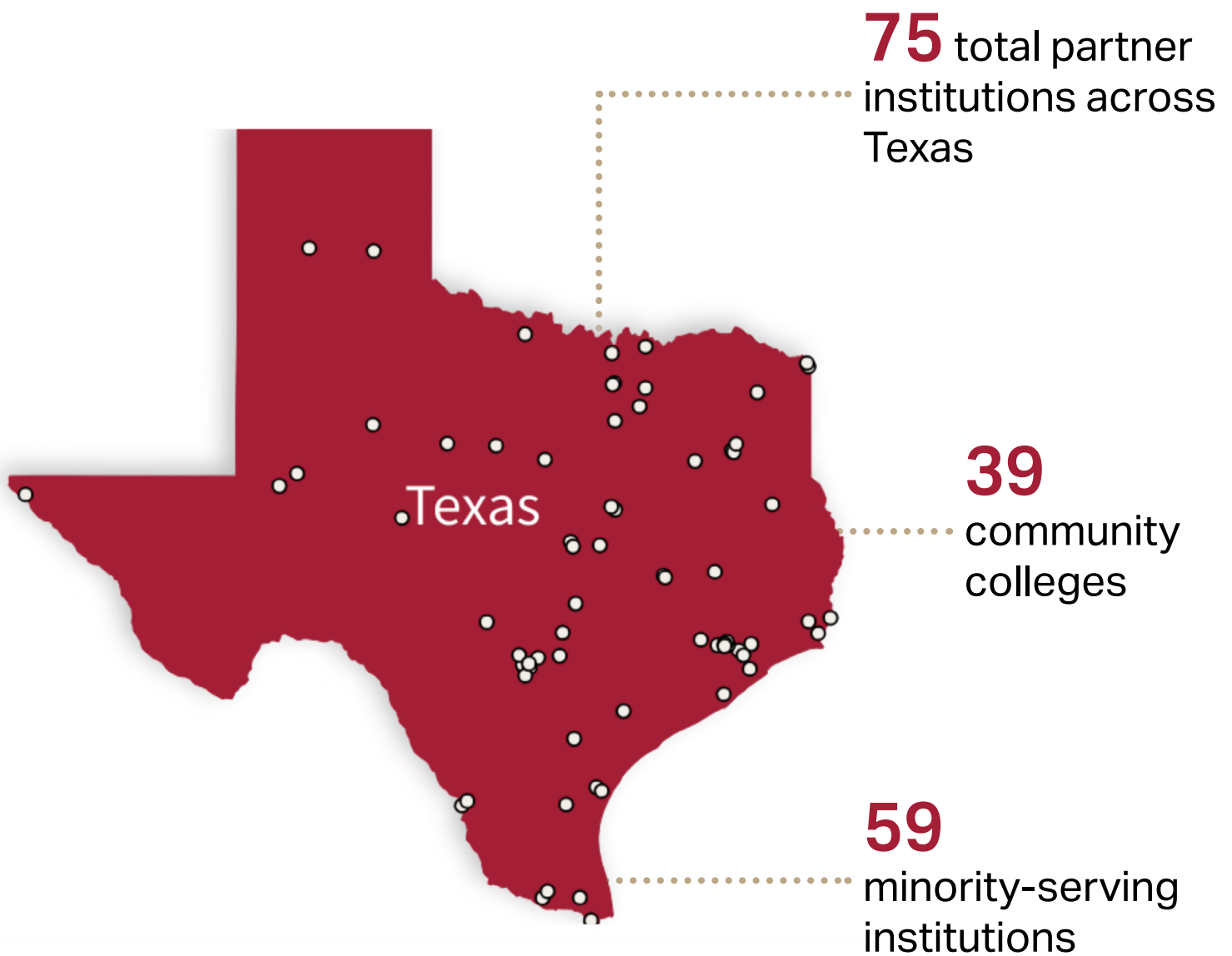
Creating partnerships, community, and champions:

Our **learning modules videos and toolkit** provided a wealth of student narratives and connected data to student stories. Partners found the resources valuable for obtaining buy-in from campus leadership and attracting new collaborators. We also provided learning sessions and resources on cultivating relationships with external resources like local food banks, housing organizations, and mental health providers to expand campus capacity and more holistically meet students' needs.



Deeply dedicated to the success of *all* students, our Texas partner institutions expressed gratitude to receive support from The Hope Center as they watched, with alarm, the passing of the troubling Texas Senate Bill 17. This legislation bans diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in higher education in Texas—undermining colleges' efforts to create a welcoming environment and combat bias and discrimination. As these crucial strategies for enhancing student success come under attack, efforts to secure student basic needs will become even more essential for reducing inequities in postsecondary attainment in Texas.

Our Partners



Our Texas partner institutions collectively serve more than...




Background

The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University is a leading national action research center dedicated to removing barriers to student success. For more than a decade, we have documented and raised awareness of the prevalence of basic needs insecurity in higher education. As the importance of addressing students' basic needs became increasingly apparent throughout the pandemic, we were called on by a growing number of colleges and states to help them enhance their ecosystems of support and reduce student basic needs insecurity. Reflecting our dedication to move beyond documenting rising basic needs insecurity to eradicating it, in 2022 we created **Hope Impact Partnerships (HIP)**—an initiative combining our Student Needs Survey, our new Data Dashboard, coaching, learning modules, technical assistance, and other resources to assist colleges as they work to secure student needs, provide support, and enhance success. Recognizing there is no one-size-fits-all approach or solution to basic needs insecurity, we set a goal to meet our partners wherever they are on their journey.

We were thrilled to receive funding from The Texas higher Education Coordinating Board and Prentice Farrar Brown and Alline Ford Foundation to adapt and expand upon HIP programming and provide training and technical assistance to colleges throughout Texas during the 2022-2023 school year. Our efforts aimed to enhance capacity for providing comprehensive student support services that secure students' basic needs and improve student success. With support from the Prentice Farrar Brown and Alline Ford Foundation, we provided Hope Impact Partnerships training and technical assistance to 39 Texas community colleges. We served 59 Texas 2- and 4-year colleges as part of THECB Student Success Acceleration Program. For the THECB project, The Hope Center provided supports alongside fellow technical assistance providers—Equity Accelerator, Trellis Foundation, and the Institute for Higher Education Policy—and focused specifically on supporting colleges' basic needs efforts as well as their mental health efforts, in partnership with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute.

THECB Student Success Acceleration Program:

	<h3>Partners</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equity Accelerator• Trellis Strategies• Institute for Higher Education Policy• The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs (with support from the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute)	

	<h3>Focus</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scale evidence-based programs and initiatives that support college persistence and completion• Promote pandemic recovery• Build a future competitive workforce for Texas	

Our work in Texas built on significant past Hope Center partnerships with Texas colleges and policymakers. We studied Texas [student basic needs during the pandemic](#), collaborated with the [Texas Success Center in 2021 to enhance supports and benefits access as Texas community colleges](#), and conducted [research with colleges, such as Amarillo College, to evaluate strategies to reduce basic needs insecurity](#). We were delighted to build on these collaborations during the 2022-2023 school year and work directly with over 75 Texas colleges—**servicing more than one million students**—to enhance their capacity to secure students’ basic needs. We celebrate Texas’ commitment to ensuring all students are fed, housed, and able to access healthcare, child care, transportation, technology, and other essential supports for attaining postsecondary certificates and degrees. We are **proud to contribute to institutional and state efforts to secure students’ basic needs** and, through doing so, help to advance [Texas’ higher education strategic plan and build a globally competitive workforce](#).



Our work with Texas colleges was essential considering needs revealed and exacerbated by the pandemic. Colleges throughout Texas were deeply affected by COVID-19.



Thousands of students and their parents lost jobs, [contributing to the highest unemployment rate in Texas’s recent history](#).

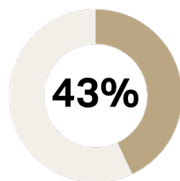


Typically, job loss drives students to community colleges to build new skills, but [Texas community college enrollment fell by 11%](#).

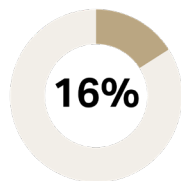


The largest decline was among Black and Latine students, including a 20% drop among first-time students.

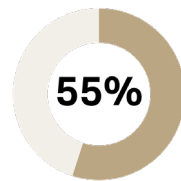
The pandemic exacerbated basic needs insecurity and [already rising mental health concerns among students](#). The Hope Center’s 2021 study “Basic Needs Insecurity Among Texas College Students During the Ongoing Pandemic” indicated the following rates of basic needs’ insecurity:



food insecurity



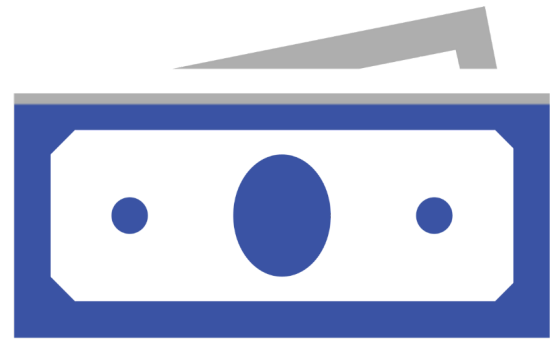
homelessness



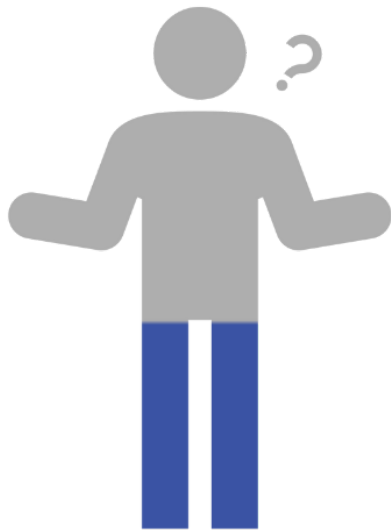
housing insecurity

In addition, **one-third** exhibited anxiety or depression, **41%** had internet and/or computer access problems, and **69%** of parenting students missed class or work because of childcare arrangements. It charted a grim landscape, especially among non-White students.

Complementing our pandemic findings, the [federal government](#) collected nationally representative data in March 2020 and found that **more than 4.3 million undergraduate and graduate students were food insecure**, and **1.5 million were experiencing homelessness**. While only including two measures of basic needs, these nationally representative federal estimates strongly affirm that colleges of all types have significant basic needs insecurity on their campuses. When students are hungry, unsure of where they will sleep that night, or unable to access needed transportation, child care, and healthcare, they cannot learn. Experiencing any kind of basic needs insecurity (BNI) makes it much more difficult to graduate. **In other words, basic needs security is a prerequisite for student success.**



80% of students said that emergency aid helped them secure their basic needs.

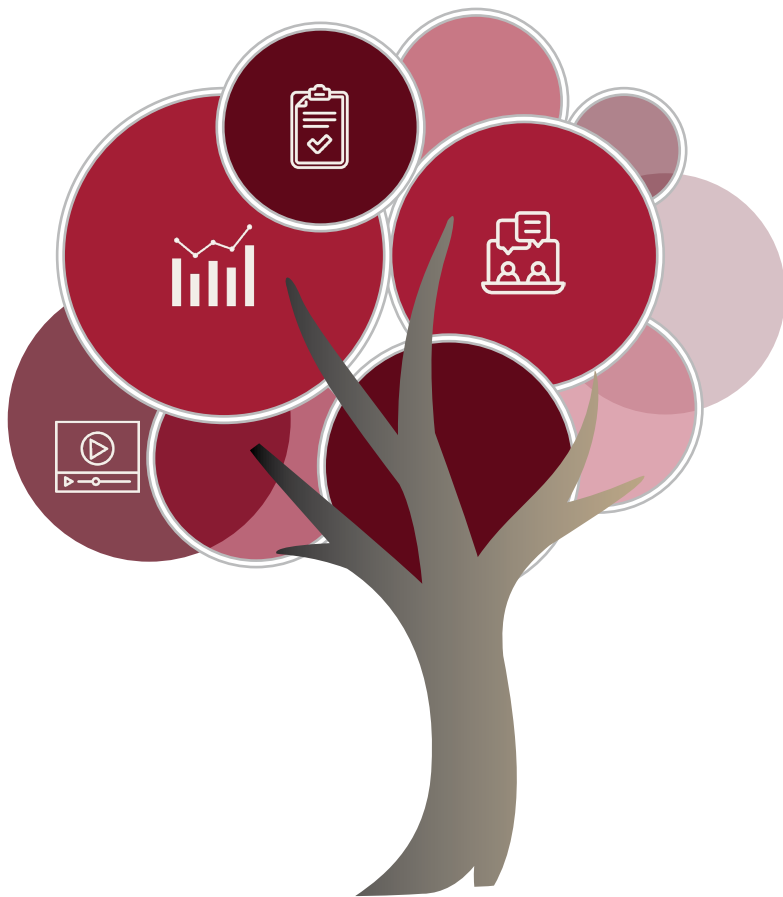


Barely half of the students experiencing basic needs insecurity were aware that federal pandemic emergency aid was available.





Texas colleges offered multiple forms of pandemic relief. More than [1 million Texas students](#) received federal emergency aid through HEERF, which is nearly half (47%) of all students statewide. According to the [Education Trust in Texas](#), improved retention rates at the institution level were correlated with larger percentages of students receiving emergency aid. In our study of emergency aid practices at 10 Texas community colleges, **about 80% of students said that emergency aid helped them stay enrolled, reduced stress, helped them afford food, pay for housing or transportation, and/or supported medical care**. However, too many students went without needed supports. Barely half of the students experiencing basic needs insecurity were aware that federal pandemic emergency aid was available—and only 29% received a grant. More than 60% of Texas community college students who sought emergency aid while experiencing basic needs insecurity found the process stressful. **It took an average of 13 days for students to learn whether they would get help.**

Today, many of the policies and programs created during the pandemic to address food insecurity, housing, and emergency expenses have expired or reverted to insufficient pre-pandemic norms, even while student needs, costs, and concerns have risen.

At-a-Glance Impact



Texas partners gained access to our:

-  Student Basic Needs Survey,
-  Data Dashboard,
-  coaching,
-  Learning Modules, and more.

When we reached out to Texas college partners to learn about their experiences working with The Hope Center during the 2022-2023 academic year, several key themes emerged. We organized this report around what our college partners told us they gained from their experience.

Our partners told us they:

- Gained a better **understanding** of their students' needs
- Used data to align their goals, drive advocacy, and take **action**
- Expanded supports and **dismantled barriers** to access
- Formed new partnerships, **found community**, and fostered new champions

In the sections below, students across the state share why progress is so important, and our partners celebrate their wins in their own words. We shed light on the programming, resources, and key data insights that helped drive forward movement.



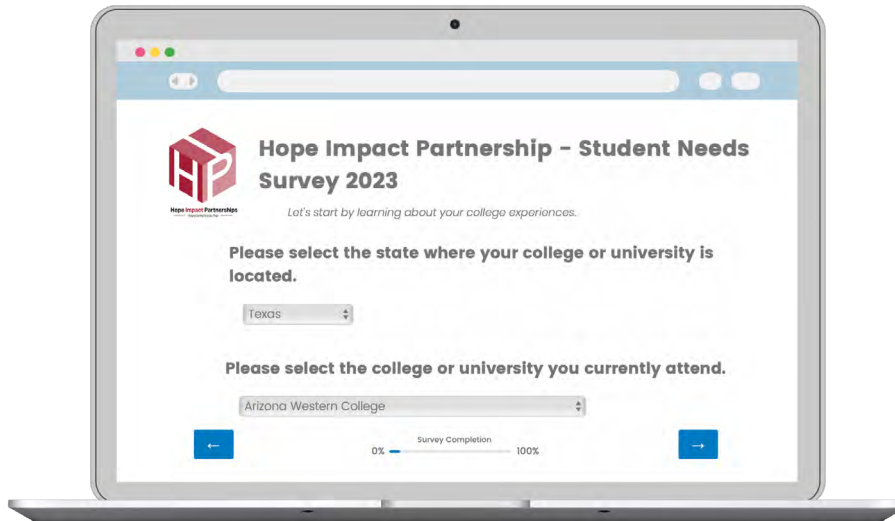
Texas College Partners Gained:

Understanding of Student Needs

SECTION A

Understanding of Student Needs

Twenty-five Texas colleges partnered with The Hope Center during the 2022-2023 school year to survey their students to better understand their needs. 13,865 Texas students completed The Hope Center Student Basic Needs Survey.



25 Texas colleges partnered with The Hope Center during the 2022-2023 school year to survey their students to better understand their needs.

13,865 Texas students completed The Hope Center Student Basic Needs Survey.



The Hope Center Student Basic Needs Survey includes a wide array of **demographic measures**, standard measures of **food insecurity, housing insecurity, homelessness, and mental health**, as well as a suite of measures pertaining to **other basic needs** (e.g., childcare, transportation, technology), **utilization** of benefits and supports, and **barriers** to accessing those benefits and supports.

The Student Basic Needs Survey was fielded by **21 community colleges** and **four 4-year institutions** in Texas.

Participation by school size:



13 (<10K students)



6 (10-20K students)



6 (>20K students)



Being a college student is incredibly difficult, especially when one comes from a poor or underprivileged background where they cannot rely on aid from family. If, like at my school, the staff and advisors do not make themselves available, it is incredibly difficult to get any assistance when things like finances or physical and mental health harm academic performance. If you are not confident in your ability to navigate the confusing world of higher education alone and without aid from the advisors who are meant to direct and guide you, then you must make sure that you attend a school that prioritizes those things for students. But most do not.

WHITE, QUEER, FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT



We provided significant support, resources, and technical assistance to help colleges successfully administer and promote the survey to garner robust participation. For example, we celebrated and shared the strategies pursued by Temple College in Texas that resulted in an above-average (27%) response rate:

Staggered Messaging:

Multiple emails and texts were sent to students at different, optimized times.



Personalized Messaging:

Student groups, segmented according to their demographic characteristics, received personalized emails from the provost of Temple College.

Incentives:

Temple College used incentives, such as wireless earbuds and Bluetooth speakers, to promote the survey.

“

Every year it is becoming **more and more difficult to complete a degree**. I have been on my academic journey for over 5 years now and have struggled every semester but continue. To do so, I have given up my full-time job, daycare expenses, and my car, along with all bills that came with it. My partner and I receive **paychecks that aren't enough** for us, and **my rent goes up yearly**. With everything becoming increasingly unaffordable, it is difficult keep your head held high. At some point, one cannot keep up appearances with **fake positivity** so 'faking it till you are making it' is not a long-term option for many students.

QUEER & LATINE PARENTING STUDENT, IN THEIR SIXTH YEAR OF COLLEGE

”



Texas Needs by the Numbers

Out of the 13,865 students from Texas who responded to The Hope Center Student Basic Needs Survey:



29% were parenting students,



18% were LGBTQIA+ students, and



43% were Pell-grant recipients.

62% of students experienced basic needs insecurity.



44%

of students experienced food insecurity.



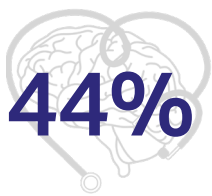
51%

of students experienced housing insecurity.



15%

of students experienced homelessness.



44%

experienced depression or anxiety.



35%

missed class due to child care.



14%

had tech/internet issues interfere with academics.



12%

missed class/work due to transportation issues.

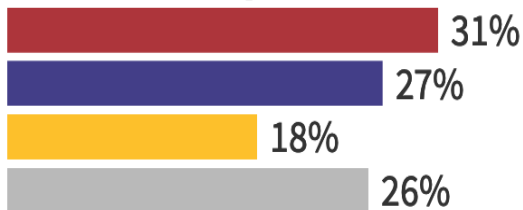
Meeting the Needs of ALL Students:

An essential part of our work with partner colleges was identifying inequities in basic needs insecurity and strategies to reduce these inequities. For example, we identified elevated levels of basic needs insecurity among parenting students, LGBTQIA+ students, and Pell Grant recipients. Looking across racial groups, Black, Native, and Indigenous students experienced the highest rates of basic needs insecurity.

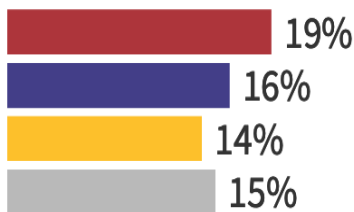
LGBTQIA+, Pell Recipient, and Parenting Students Experience Elevated Rates of Basic Needs Insecurity

■ LGBTQIA+ ■ Pell Recipient ■ Parenting Students ■ Overall

Untreated Depression or Anxiety



Homelessness



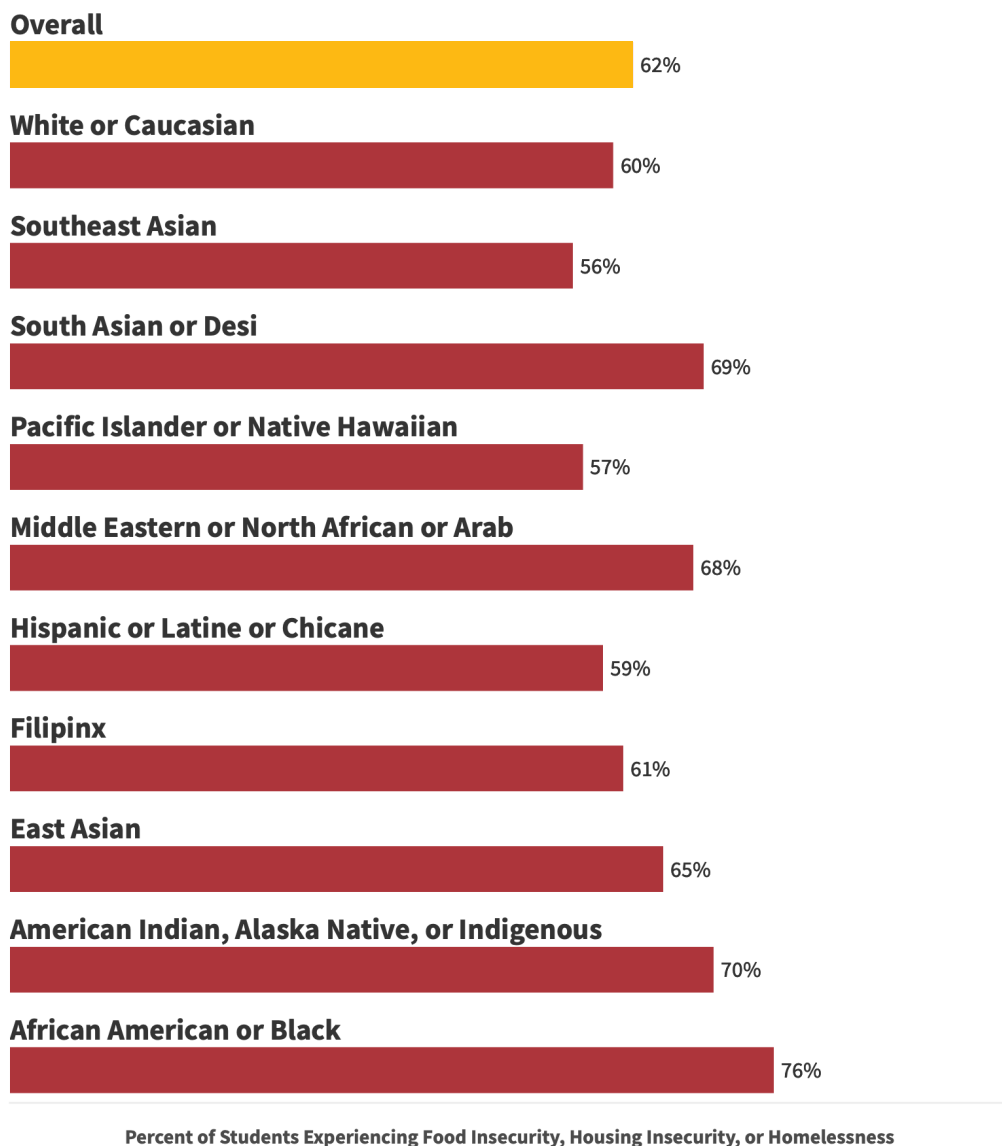
Housing Insecurity



Food Insecurity



Students from Structurally Marginalized Racial/Ethnic Groups Face Basic Needs Insecurity at Higher Rates

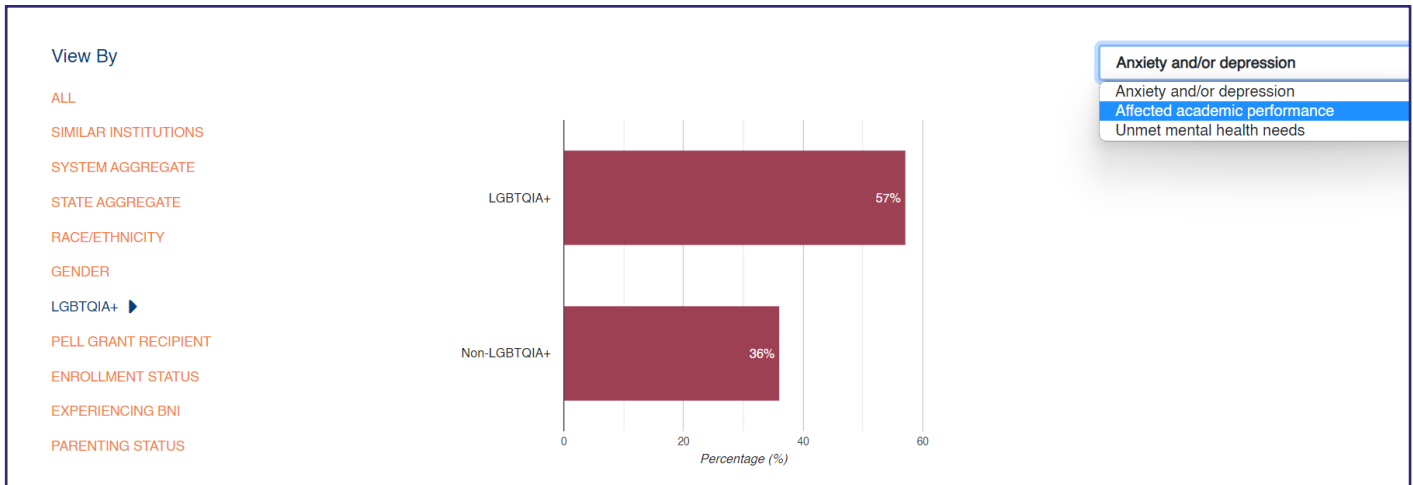


A New Resource for Accessing Student Data:

A key benefit of fielding The Hope Center's Student Basic Needs Survey is Hope's new Data Dashboard, which enables partner colleges to review findings from their survey of students in real time. Designed for data-driven action planning, partners access and interact with a summary of:

- (a) students' needs,
- (b) awareness and utilization of supports,
- (c) barriers students are experiencing in accessing those supports, and
- (d) how students prefer to be contacted about resources.

College partners can compare their findings to similar institutions and identify areas of relative strength and areas for growth. Partners can also disaggregate their student data by subgroups so that outreach and services can be tailored to specific groups. We ensure that colleges understand their students' needs from as many perspectives as possible—and crucially, understand where there are equity gaps in needs and access to services.



Visit our [website](#) to learn more about the Data Dashboard, and how institutions can use it to assess their students' needs.



Having the opportunity to work with The Hope Center and participating in the Hope Impact Partnership initiative over the past year has allowed Dallas College to be more intentional about understanding the needs of our students and their basic needs insecurities. Additionally, having the opportunity to disseminate the Hope survey and access the new Data Dashboard gave us an in-depth look at our data and where we might be able to make more data-informed decisions regarding the overall well-being of our students and the student journey.

Carlos Cruz

Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Wellbeing & Social Support,
Dallas College

Student Narratives:

In addition to quantitative data, our basic needs survey collects critical qualitative input from students. Students are the experts on their lived experiences and must be centered in basic needs security work. Our partners used student stories to understand student experiences and advocate for funding for resources. We and our partners heard:

“

There is **not enough time in the day** to be a responsible full-time working student. There is already **too many assignments** taking up sleep hours because there is no other time to pull from. **Work** is not negotiable, **household tasks** are necessary, and you cannot neglect family. This is **exhausting...**

30-YEAR-OLD LATINE FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT, WHO IS ENROLLED PART-TIME AND CARING FOR A CHILD

”

“

In my opinion, it's important for the world to acknowledge that **college students come from diverse backgrounds** and may be dealing with personal challenges that they may not feel comfortable discussing. Pursuing higher education requires a significant investment of time and effort, which can make it **difficult to balance** other life obligations. **Providing basic necessities such as food, shelter, childcare, and healthcare as part of enrollment benefits would help to alleviate these concerns** and allow students to focus on achieving their goals without worrying about their basic needs. After all, why should someone have to struggle with these challenges when all they want to do is improve their future prospects?

38-YEAR-OLD BLACK SINGLE MOTHER WHO PREVIOUSLY STOPPED OUT OF COLLEGE

”

“

The world needs to know that being a college student looks different for everyone. Some of us are **older than 25, working full-time jobs, caring for children or family**, or supporting others while they try to get a degree. Financial difficulties are only one of the many struggles we face.

28-YEAR-OLD FIRST-GENERATION LATINE STUDENT

”



Texas Partners Gained:

Data-driven Goal Alignment to Spur Change

SECTION B

Data-driven goal alignment

The Hope Center also provided coaching, learning engagement sessions, and asynchronous resources to help colleges strengthen their ecosystems of support. The evidence drove our offerings.

Basic needs and mental health experts provided personalized, one-on-one coaching sessions for institutional teams. These sessions uncovered colleges' goals, priorities, and barriers to progress. We tailored subsequent sessions to address the priorities our partners identified.



Fourteen institutions participated in coaching.

We developed and shared a resource on federal funding sources for supporting campus basic needs strategies and a guide to assembling a basic needs "task force" on campus. We also helped colleges develop communication plans and strategies to raise awareness of basic needs insecurity among faculty and staff, and knowledge of basic needs resources among students. In coaching sessions, Hope shared strategies for incorporating student voices and fostering faculty champions.



We delivered 31 coaching sessions.

For example, many of our college partners identified the following goals:

1. locating more funding
2. increasing awareness of basic needs insecurity and mental health,
3. creating buy-in from campus decision-makers, and
4. expanding campus capacity



100% of participants stated that they were satisfied or extremely satisfied.

While coaching sessions provided tailored support to schools, learning engagement sessions enabled participants to learn from diverse experts and share ideas and solutions with fellow partners. In a learning engagement session focused on “Using Data to Build Momentum for Change” we introduced a backward mapping exercise designed to help partners identify an actionable goal for using their data as well as specific next steps to achieve that goal.

“

Del Mar’s partnership with The Hope Center gave us the tools to identify where our students need the most assistance. With this initiative, and the data we received, our campus has been able to establish data-driven goals that will revolutionize services we offer so that our students’ needs are met. We have also been able to build cross-campus partnerships to ensure goals are aligned for the betterment of our students.

Sara King

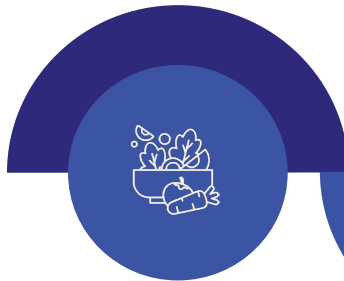
Director of Student Engagement & Retention at
Del Mar College

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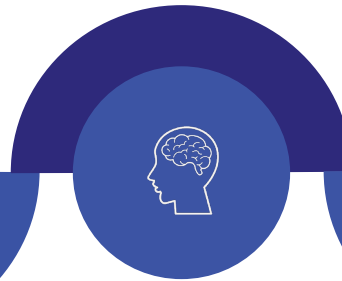
Coordinating Supports:

Findings from our survey helped colleges set goals and make the case for providing more wrap-around and integrated supports for students. This integration is key; our survey data revealed just how often different types of basic needs insecurity coincide:

66% of students facing housing insecurity are also experiencing food insecurity.



52% of students facing basic needs insecurity also have anxiety or depression.



78% of students experiencing food insecurity are also facing housing insecurity.

74% of students experiencing significant mental health symptoms also face basic needs insecurity.

Our partners and their students expressed concerns that resources were siloed on campus and shared efforts and desires to create “one-stop shops.” We helped Lee College identify approaches for evaluating and demonstrating the effectiveness of its [Student Resource and Advocacy Center](#) (SRAC). SRAC focuses on providing students with food assistance, child care assistance, emergency aid, transportation, and more. With a generous gift from MacKenzie Scott, Lee College is undergoing renovations to create an expanded and more centralized hub for its center. The new space will enable students to connect to student resource coordinators, mental health counselors, financial wellness coaches, academic advisors, and more—all in one place. We collaborated with Lee’s student support team to identify existing and potential new data sources to track the impact of the center on student success and academic outcomes.



A generous gift from MacKenzie Scott is supporting SRAC’s expansion into a more centralized hub which will enable students to connect with advisors, student resource coordinators, and more.



[The world needs to know] that it can be hard, and many things can get in the way of students reaching their goals. So it is **important for institutions to make sure students know what programs are available to them so they can get help.**

28-YEAR-OLD LATINA, WHO IS ALSO A FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENT



Inventorying services:

In addition to data about students' experiences from the Student Basic Needs Survey, 20 Texas colleges completed inventories of their campus basic needs services. The inventory tool, newly created by The Hope Center for the HIP program, is intended to help address some of the siloed nature of basic needs services by providing a collaborative tool that teams across campus can use to take stock of what services are available to students. The tool is a checklist of commonly available services related to food, housing, health and wellbeing, child care and parenting, transportation, technology and course supplies, and other student needs, as well as overall approaches to providing support, federal funding sources, and more. Institutions used their inventory results and survey results together to identify areas of strength, points of collaboration across units/departments, and opportunities for growth in their basic needs ecosystem where services did not sufficiently address the needs students expressed on the survey.

In addition to helping Texas inventory their basic needs services broadly, we helped several colleges focus on their **mental health services** as a part of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Student Success Acceleration Program (SSAP). We were pleased to work with the Texas Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute to share a suite of resources and programming specifically focused on helping colleges pursue goal alignment, advocacy, and action focused on student mental health. Growing numbers of students are facing clinically significant mental health symptoms and there is great urgency among federal, state, and institutional leaders who recognize that improving mental health efforts is essential for enhancing student success. We produced an interactive workbook *Fundamentals of Postsecondary Mental Health Systems* with exercises that helped colleges [map the continuum of mental health supports and services on campus](#) and identify supports according to a public health framework for postsecondary mental health. Within that workbook a toolkit on [Making the Case for Investments in Postsecondary Mental Health](#) helped colleges identify and **communicate unifying priorities and returns on investing in such priorities**. We created an additional toolkit to help colleges **strategize on how to implement trauma-informed practices through their mental health efforts**.

A young man and woman are sitting on the floor in a library, surrounded by bookshelves. They are both wearing glasses and looking at books. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right. The background is filled with bookshelves and books. The text "Texas Partners Gained:" is overlaid on the image.

Texas Partners Gained:

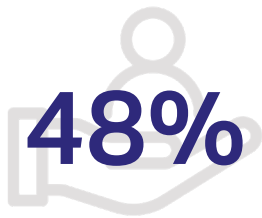
Expanded Supports & Dismantled Barriers to Access

SECTION C

Expanded supports & dismantled barriers to access

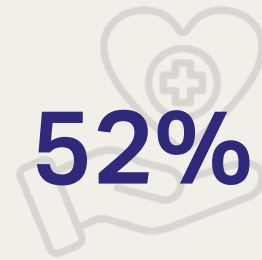
In addition to helping Texas colleges understand student needs and set priorities for action, we assisted them in expanding their mental health and basic needs supports and dismantling barriers to access.

Across colleges and student groups, data revealed that **large numbers of students experiencing basic needs insecurity are not receiving or accessing supports.**



of students with **unmet basic needs¹** had **never used any** of the following campus-based resources:

- emergency grants
- campus food pantries
- assistance applying for SNAP
- assistance applying for other public benefits (e.g., unemployment, WIC, TANF)
- food scholarships/meal vouchers
- emergency housing, help finding affordable housing
- transportation resources (e.g., bus passes)
- campus health clinics/counseling
- loaned or free wi-fi hotspots or laptops.



of students with significant **depression or anxiety** symptoms received **no treatment** (medication or counseling) in the past year.

¹We classified students as having unmet basic needs if they reported experiencing any of the needs described: food insecurity, housing insecurity, homelessness, depression or anxiety, missing class due to childcare, missing class/work due to transportation challenges, or having internet/technology access interfere with their academics.



Applications for assistance can be really challenging, and depending on life circumstances, students may not have access to all the paperwork necessary for assistance applications. It is also frustrating to have an estimated family contribution because for a lot of us, even if family is assumed to be capable, they can't or won't help. Mental health is still not taken as seriously as it should be, and I personally can vouch for how hard it can be to get an ADHD diagnosis as a woman. I am lucky that I was able to see doctors for my mental health at all. Many college students can't afford that and are left to struggle.

WHITE LGBTQIA+ WOMAN ENROLLED IN HER SEVENTH YEAR OF COLLEGE

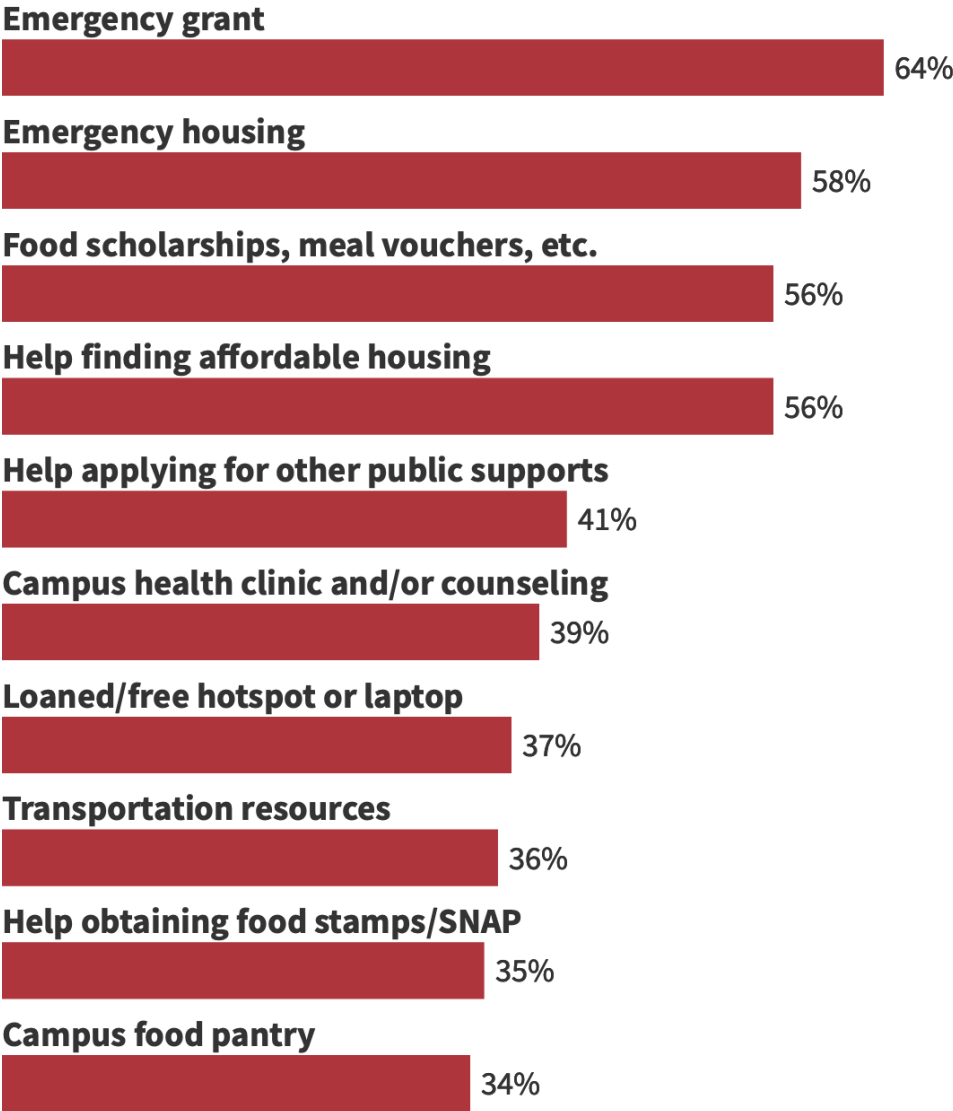


A key step to making resources available to more students is dismantling barriers to access. Across colleges, **lack of awareness of resources** was identified by students as the primary barrier to accessing supports. We assessed a wide range of barriers. We asked students whether awareness, application, time, transportation, finding childcare, concerns about resource limitations, privacy or stigma prevented them from accessing supports. **The top barrier (cited by 66% of students) was awareness, including being unaware of the existence of supports, how to access them, or whether they were eligible.** This was consistent across the student groups we examined (parenting students, LGBTQIA+ students, Pell Grant recipients, and different racial/ethnic groups), suggesting that improved outreach could increase support utilization for all students.

Most students indicated having never heard of most campus-based resources:

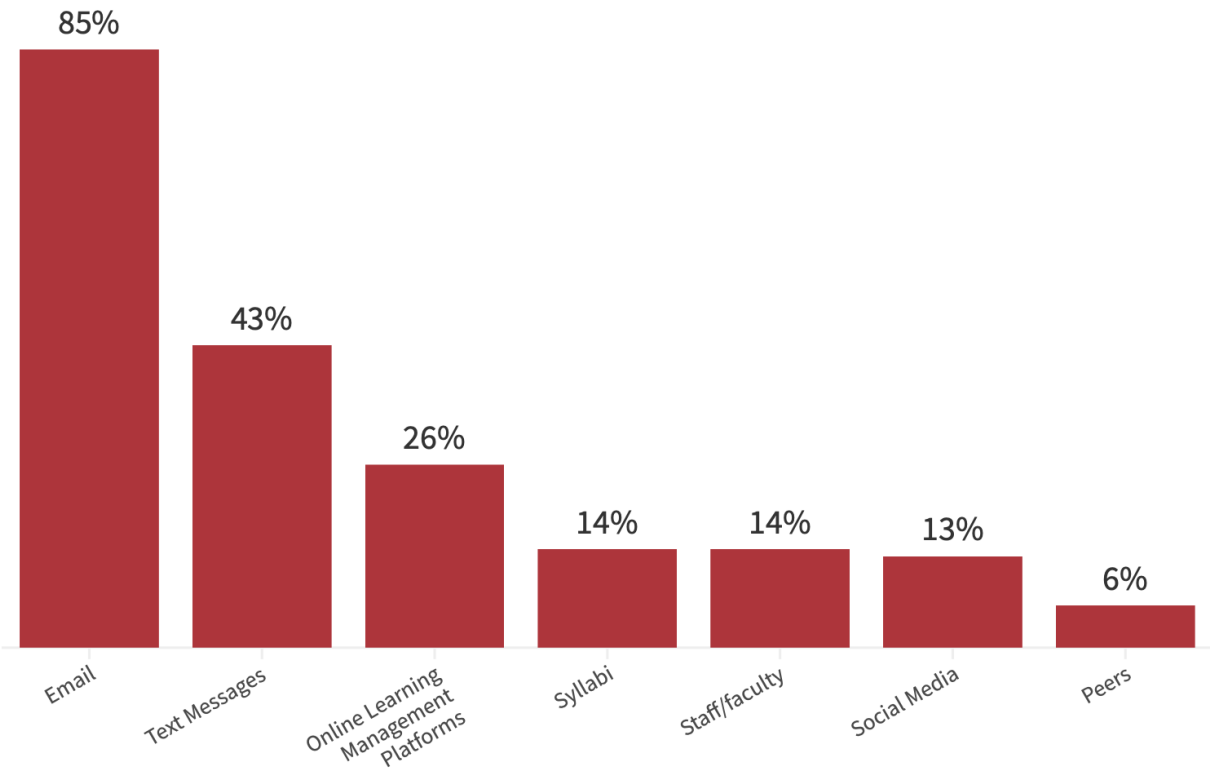
Limited Awareness of Basic Needs Supports

Percent of Students who Reported Having Never Heard of These Resources:



While in some cases this may reflect the absence of this resource at the college, in many cases, schools indicated having these supports and took action to increase awareness.

Students Expressed Wanting to Learn about Basic Needs Supports via:



Institutions set goals and launched advocacy and campaigns to help faculty, staff, and students learn about available resources. For example:



It was through the work with Hope Impact Partnerships and the creation of our HIP Taskforce at Del Mar College that...our campus recently launched Vikings Care. This is a basic needs site that provides on-campus and community resources to assist our students with finding basic needs resources. We've also added other student needs as well, including technology and textbooks. Students can find this site at delmar.edu/vikingscare."

Sara King

Director of Student Engagement & Retention at
Del Mar College

Del Mar was not the only college to launch new communications campaigns and strategies to raise awareness of basic needs resources upon learning how few students were aware of campus resources. To assist our partners in these efforts, we shared a curated collection of outreach materials. These included a blend of templates for physical materials, such as [syllabus statements](#) and [resource referral cards](#), as well as digital resources—including [San Diego State University's Basic Needs & Wellness Toolkit](#). The resources not only provide vital education about connecting students to supports but also reduce the burden for busy faculty and staff by putting referral information at their fingertips.

In addition to reducing barriers to accessing existing supports, colleges also worked to expand their available supports. They gained ideas, inspiration, and potential solutions through HIP Policy, Practice, and Research (PPR) sessions focused on food, housing, mental health, and emergency aid.



Spotlight: Learning Sessions

Institutional partners gained ideas, inspiration, and potential solutions through sessions focused on food, housing, mental health, and emergency aid. In these sessions, practitioners, researchers, and policymakers from across the country shared their latest work, invaluable insights, and real-world experience. In addition to Hope staff, expert presenters included Hani Talebi from [Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute](#), Molly Hansen from [Bunker Hill Community College's DISH food pantry](#), Brandi Simonaro from [California's Center for Healthy Communities](#), Alexa Zwinck from [Amarillo College's Partnership](#), Pam Blumenthal from [College Housing Northwest in Oregon](#), Lain DeSalvo from the [Minnesota Office of Higher Education](#), and others.

The sessions combined conversations with experts and small-group discussions so that our partners could not only learn about the latest developments in the field, and from peer institutions, but also brainstorm how to adapt and apply that learning to their campus context.



Hope Impact Partners Gained:

Partnerships, Community, & New Champions

SECTION D

Partnerships, community, & new champions

Colleges and experts in our learning sessions and coaching calls regularly highlighted the importance of partnerships, community, and champions for growing and sustaining basic needs and mental health efforts. Front-line basic needs staff often participated seeking community and support for the logistically and emotionally challenging work of trying to find resources for food and housing insecure students. Colleges expressed appreciation for the community, encouragement, and support they found through Hope programming.

For example:



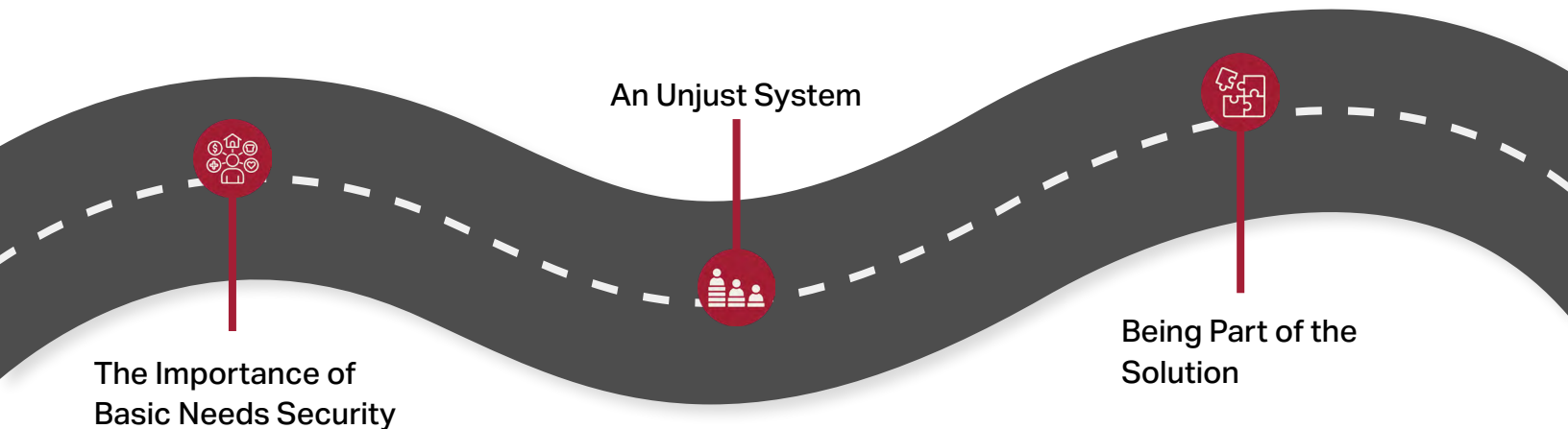
Several of the colleges we worked with in Texas **shared fears and stress resulting from their Legislature's passage of Senate Bill 17**. This [legislation](#) banned diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in higher education in Texas—undermining steps by their colleges to create a welcoming environment, address gaps in student success, and combat bias and discrimination. They valued the support they received from The Hope Center to continue to prioritize and advance the success of *all* students even as the landscape shifts around them.

Cultivating college champions through Learning Modules:

Knowing that some people are spurred to action through data and others are inspired through stories, we helped our college partners find and cultivate basic needs champions across their institutions through a variety of strategies.

In addition to helping colleges share and disseminate compelling data, we shared our HIP Learning Modules with Texas colleges. This digital toolkit can be used to introduce stakeholders, institution-wide, to the importance of student basic needs security through compelling stories.

In three segments, the Learning Modules cover:





The Learning Modules video content is accessible and captivating, designed to be shared with any member of the campus community to help them understand student basic needs insecurity and gain staff and faculty buy-in for broadening support. HIP partners used them in faculty retreats, orientation sessions, and more to build basic needs champions campus-wide.

Importance of student champions:

Student champions and advocates are key partners for advancing basic needs and mental health efforts at colleges and universities. Our mental health programming in Texas included a session on *Mental Health Messaging That Works*. It focused on strategies for partnering with students to build community and champions for mental health efforts on campus. Representatives from Young Invincibles, Active Minds, Paul Quinn College, and Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research spoke about practical strategies to engage students in decision-making and the importance of meaningful connections between students, faculty, and staff.

Expanding community partnerships:

We also worked with colleges to expand partnerships outside their institution. Several colleges developed external partnerships to enroll more students in public benefits. Survey data reveal that while some students are currently accessing these supports, much more can be done to help students connect to these vital resources.

Few Students With Unmet Basic Needs Access Public Benefits

Proportion of Students with Unmet Basic Needs* Accessing Public Benefits in the Past 12 Months

Community Supports or Services from Local Nonprofit/NGO



Transportation Assistance



Veterans



Housing or utility



Healthcare (e.g., Medicaid)



Food (SNAP/WIC)



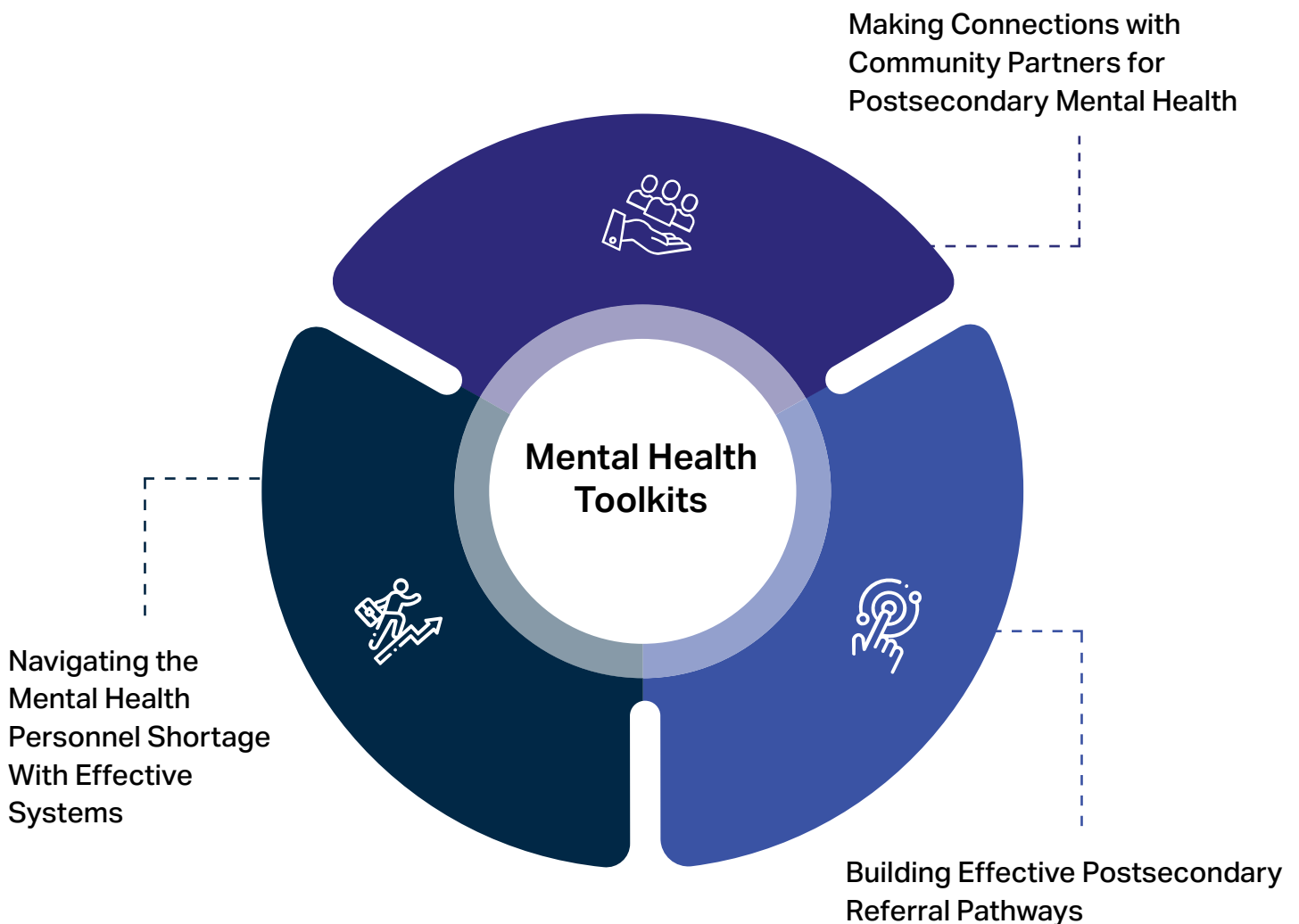
Direct Financial (TANF/SSI/SSDI/Tax Refunds)



*see page 25 for how we calculated unmet needs

A big focus of our mental health training and technical assistance was focused on leveraging community resources to enhance institutional mental health capacity and more holistically meet students' needs.

In partnership with the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, we produced an interactive workbook with [three toolkits](#) focused on the biggest barriers and greatest challenges noted by colleges:



The workbook and toolkits were supplemented by a speaker series which featured peer institutions and community partners highlighting approaches, lessons learned, and keys to success. One session discussed the intersection between mental health and other basic needs and how colleges are creatively working with community partners to holistically advance student wellbeing and success. For example, the Dean of Counseling at Austin Community College and their community partner Foundation Communities (which focuses on housing) joined the Director of the Student Advocacy Center for Alamo Colleges and their community partner from the San Antonio Food Bank in a robust conversation. They emphasized the importance and value of data for demonstrating the need and securing funding to support collaborations with community resources.

The work and stories from our institutional partners provided powerful reminders about how building partnerships, relations, and champions—one person at a time—ultimately leads to institutional transformation:



The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs at Temple University

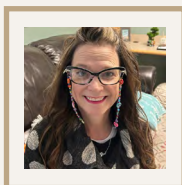
In my second HIP coaching call, I laid all my frustrations on the table. I explained we have all the passion, but no administrative understanding. It was then that Joshua Williams, a former practitioner-researcher on the HIP team at The Hope Center, asked an important question: “Who is your champion?” My colleague and I could only answer in frustration. “No one,” we said. “No one, but each other.”

Josh listened and worked with us on a customized plan to advocate for our students at TVCC. **With HIP’s guidance, I decided I was no longer going to be a passive “watcher” and “complainer.”** I was determined to educate the campus community so that our administration would support our imperative work.

HIP is full of basic needs heroes. We **received so many amazing ideas from other institutions in the HIP community such as Alamo College, who partners with their local Starbucks to use donated leftover pastries to offer a “pop up” snack cart to students.** They were all so willing to share ways in which they supported their basic needs programs, and that informed our own. The Hope Center’s **“Basic Needs Taskforce”** guide gave us the ability to go forward in creating our taskforce. I began recruiting faculty whenever and wherever I could.

Since then, we’ve made so many incredible strides toward supporting our students. In addition to the wins above, I’ve also been able to share the message widely. My recent presentation “Connection to Completion: Supporting the Holistic Student” was attended by over 60 faculty members and staff. In preparing for the presentation, I used The Hope Center’s **Learning modules** and data from our participation in the Spring 2023 **Student Basic Needs Survey**.

My advice to fellow administrators struggling to get a program off the ground: Don’t give up! Keep trying. Keep educating and enlisting others, even when it seems dismal.



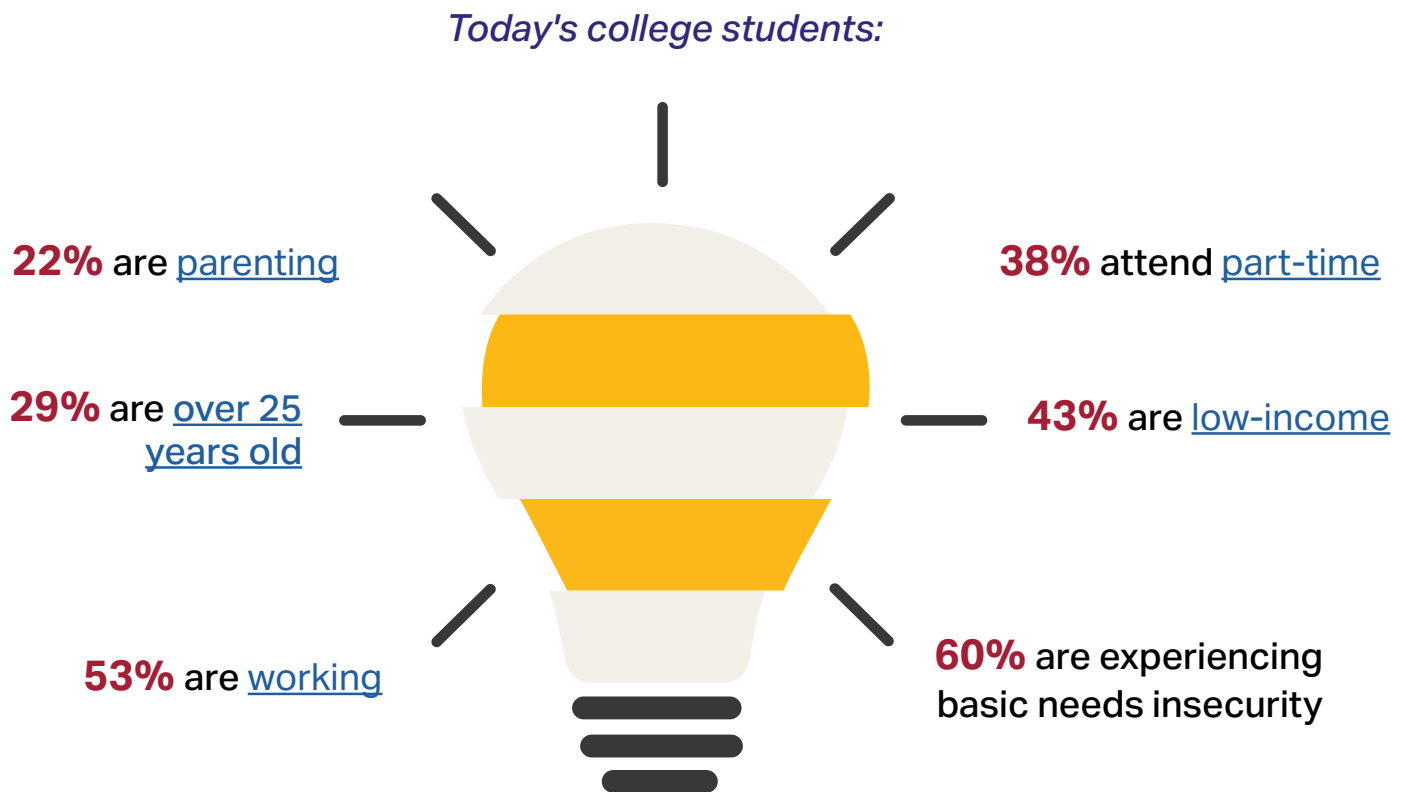
Melinda Berry

Director, Student Access and Counseling

Trinity Valley Community College

Conclusion

Student basic needs insecurity is a direct result of our national failure to invest in higher education, keep college affordable, and adapt systems for the needs of diverse learners. Higher education policies and institutions were not designed for today's college students.

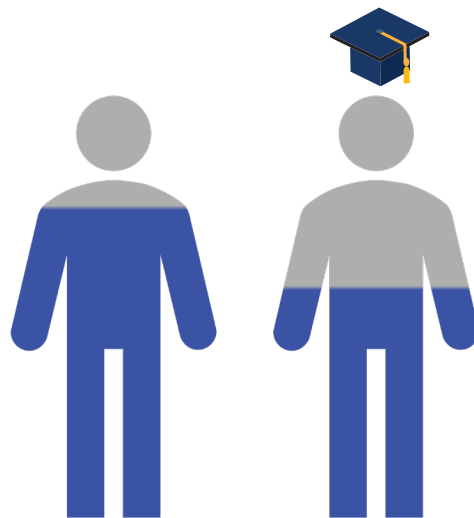


Too many national policies and public benefits exclude college students and strand them without the lifelines and supports provided to other Americans. The cost of college continues to rise, while financial aid remains inadequate. From 2020 to 2021, the [cost to attend a public four-year university in Texas rose by more than one-thousand dollars and the cost to attend a public two-year college rose by \\$738](#). These increases were driven by food and housing costs, which make up nearly 40% of the cost of attendance. Financial aid that does not cover the cost of food, housing, healthcare, and other basic needs, prevents many students from enrolling and leads others to depart before completing a degree or credential. Students [who stand to gain the most from college](#) are often the same students who are the least likely to attend or graduate. Research shows that millions of students leave college annually because of small, emergency expenses they cannot meet. Student basic needs security isn't just a factor in student success and completion, it's a prerequisite.

While receiving a postsecondary degree is becoming increasingly unaffordable—it also becoming [increasingly crucial for social and economic mobility](#). Ensuring that students' basic needs are met is essential to meeting Texas' goal of having 60% of Texans ages 25-64 receive a degree, certificate, or other postsecondary credential of value by 2030. It is critical for fostering a productive and prosperous Texas for years to come. It is also central for the mission, bottom line, and long-term viability of Texas colleges and universities. Institutions will not improve enrollment, equitably enhance student success, foster student health, graduate their students, and [retain Americans' faith in the value of college](#) without meeting students' basic needs.

Our work with Texas colleges reminded us that this work is both necessary and impactful. **Eighty percent of Texas student respondents to our survey who had stopped out or were considering stopping out told us it was due to basic needs insecurity** (emotional stress/mental health, lacking money for living expenses, child care/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). **Sixty percent of Texas students who had previously stopped out and were now enrolled again said their decision to re-enroll was thanks to changes in their physical/mental health, financial situation, childcare/caregiving situation, transportation situation, or internet/technology access.**

Students report stopping out due to basic needs insecurity



students report re-enrolling thanks to changes in their access to basic needs



We look forward to ongoing work together and to growing collaborations in Texas. We are excited to contribute to a state coalition focused on advancing postsecondary mental health...and to serve new and returning We are excited to contribute to a state coalition, collaborate with Education Trust to advance policies for securing student basic needs, continue partnership with Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute to serve the mental health needs of rural colleges in Texas and serving new and returning Texas colleges through Hope Impact Partnerships, and invite you to join us. Together, we can rebuild a higher education system that is better

We are thankful to The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Prentice Farrar Brown and Alline Ford Foundation for recognizing the importance of securing student basic needs and for enabling us to partner with colleges throughout Texas to enhance capacity for providing comprehensive services that improve student success. We would like to thank and celebrate all Texans who participated in our programming during the 2022-2023 school year who poured their time, energy, passion, and creativity into improving students' lives. It was an honor to witness your dedication and to join you on your change-making journeys. We salute the many ways in which your increased understanding of student needs, data-driven goals, expanded resources and capacity, and new champions are shifting cultures, changing norms, and creating ecosystems of support—all while making a difference in students' lives.

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