



Division of
Student Affairs

BASIC NEEDS

Strategic Plan

2025

Prepared by:

Erik Dickson, Executive Director, Associated Students

Dr. Laura Monje-Paulson, Assistant Vice President, Student Affairs

Dr. Wm. Gregory Sawyer, Vice President, Student Affairs

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INTRODUCTION

“Our work, no matter our individual position or title, all contribute to the success of our students”

“...we empower our students by creating an environment here at Sonoma State in which each and every student feels valued, heard, and respected.”

~ Dr. Judy K. Sakaki, President of Sonoma State University – Convocation, August 2019

At the 2019 University Convocation, Dr. Judy K. Sakaki, our University President, announced her desire to set forth a plan to address the basic needs of the Sonoma State student body. Dr. Sakaki charged the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Wm. Gregory Sawyer, with providing her a Basic Needs Initiative Strategic Plan for Sonoma State University. The Vice President for Student Affairs asked the Executive Director of Associated Students to lead this initiative for our campus by creating an Executive Committee that would guide the existing taskforce. The strategic plan included in this document reflects the direction set forth by Dr. Sakaki as well as the California State University’s Basic Needs Initiative: Guiding Principles document. (See Appendix A).

Input to this plan was sought from a wide range of constituencies including faculty, staff, community and students. Input was initially sought from the Basic Needs Task Force, which is in its second full year as a group dedicated to organizing and discussing Basic Needs initiatives on our campus. The Task Force is comprised of faculty appointees, staff and students from Advising, Associated Students’ JUMP program, Cal Fresh Outreach program, Center for Academic Access & Student Enrichment, Counseling & Psychological Services, Culinary Services, Extended Education, Lobos Pantry, Residential Education and Campus Housing, Student Affairs, Student Health Center and Veteran Affairs. The task force also includes representatives from Redwood Empire Foodbank, our community partner in providing food for Lobo’s Pantry.

Because of the depth and breadth of the issues surrounding Basic Needs Initiatives, Dr. Wm. Gregory Sawyer, Vice President for Student Affairs, charged a new committee to give input into this plan – the Basic Needs Executive Committee. This committee brought together leaders across the campus to give input, create strategies and propose campus wide collaborative ideas to address the Basic Needs of the Sonoma State student population. The members include:

David Crozier – AVP for Administration & Finance
Susan Gutierrez – Director of Financial Aid
Ian Hannah – AVP for Advancement
Dr. Gerald Jones – Sr. Director of the Center for Academic Access & Student Enrichment
Melissa Kadar – Executive Vice President, Associated Students
Neil Markley – AVP for Administration & Finance
Gordon McDougall – Vice President for Advancement

Dr. Laura Monje-Paulson – AVP for Student Affairs
Hilary Smith – Chair of the Academic Senate’s Student Affairs Committee
Mark Stapp – Director of Development
Dr. Laura Williams – Director of Counseling & Psychological Services

Included in the California State University’s Basic Needs Initiative: Guiding Principles document is a grid of mandated, commonly implemented, and innovative & aspirational strategies to addressing Basic Needs. Included as Appendix B is that grid with the strategies that Sonoma State University has currently implemented or has underway highlighted in yellow. It also includes highlighted in blue, the strategies Sonoma State University will have implemented with the full execution of this strategic plan.

University Mission Statement

Sonoma State is a regionally serving public university committed to educational access and excellence. Guided by our core values and driven by a commitment to the liberal arts and sciences, Sonoma State delivers high-quality education through innovative programs that leverage the economic, cultural, and natural resources of the North Bay.

Supporting Themes

As a member of the 23-campus California State University system, Sonoma State is proud to serve a diverse student population on our beautiful campus, at our environmental preserves, and at satellite centers throughout the region. Located north of San Francisco in California’s wine country, Sonoma State drives the economic, cultural, and educational engines of the North Bay. Sonoma State University prepares students for meaningful citizenship in a complex world.

Division of Student Affairs’ Purpose Statement

The Purpose of Student Affairs at Sonoma State University is to provide services and programs that support the achievement of students’ educational and personal goals and that enhance the overall student experience.

Division of Student Affairs’ Vision Statement

The Division of Students Affairs at Sonoma State University strives to be nationally recognized for our commitment to student success, diversity and inclusivity, transformative learning, leadership cultivation, and outstanding service.

Division of Student Affairs’ Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Statement

The Division of Student Affairs at Sonoma State University affirms the importance and centrality of the values of diversity, equity, and inclusivity. As Student Affairs professionals, we believe that inclusivity and social justice require persistence and perseverance to ensure that members from all identities, backgrounds, abilities, and belief systems have access, acknowledgement, opportunities, and a voice to participate at all levels within the university. Additionally, the Division of Student Affairs strives to ensure that our staff, programs, activities, and services are reflective of these values and that through the mission of our university and purpose of our division, we hold ourselves accountable to these principles in our everyday work.

BASIC NEEDS INITIATIVE PURPOSE

The Basic Needs Initiative (BNI) of Sonoma State University supports the mission of the institution and serves to address the range of “basic needs” of the students of the university. The BNI exists to advance equitable opportunities for access to and success in the pursuit of a Sonoma State degree. The University, in support of its Student Success priority resolves to promote and encourage student well-being and engagement as essential for active learning and educational success, to strategically build on and amplify basic needs initiatives, and to advance programs, services and partnerships that promote holistic support both in-and out- of the classroom.

Sonoma State University Strategic Plan 2025 – Student Success (Priority #1)

Sonoma State University aspires to be a national model for student success, which includes all aspects of the student experience, from academics to campus life to graduation. All members of our campus community have the responsibility to serve students with integrity and to provide the support services students need to succeed.

Supporting Themes

Student success includes all aspects of the student experience, including educational experience; timely progress to degree; graduation and retention rates; health and wellness services; and inclusive support services for a diverse student population. For students to be successful, we must support all aspects of faculty and staff success, including hiring, retaining and supporting diverse faculty and staff; building streamlined, up-to-date business processes; and maintaining a healthy campus environment. We prepare students to succeed in the workforce and to embrace lifelong learning.

OBJECTIVE #1: CREATE A SOUND AND STABLE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR BASIC NEEDS INITIATIVES ON CAMPUS

Goal 1: Expand and solidify staff infrastructure to support the Basic Needs Initiative

Tactic 1: Establish committees and subcommittees to serve as collaborative leadership for each subsequent stated objective in the BNI Strategic Plan 2025

Tactic 2: Hire at least one full-time Basic Needs Case Manager

Goal 2: Identify and secure basic needs resources

Tactic 1: Work with on-campus partners as well as CSU colleagues to seek grant funding to support the university's basic needs initiatives, programs and students

Tactic 2: Work with University Advancement to seek private funding and philanthropy to support the university's basic needs initiatives, programs and students

Tactic 3: Create a community space for students addressing their basic needs and to house BNI staff

Goal 3: Curate and disseminate basic needs information to improve awareness and utilization of resources

Tactic 1: Provide a comprehensive website with access and links to all basic need-related resources and materials

Tactic 2: Work with on-campus partners to provide information to the California Community College and high-school counselors of basic needs support at the university

Tactic 3: Widely market all available basic needs initiatives, programs and resources to the students of the university through university correspondence

Tactic 4: Provide information on basic needs during Orientation

Tactic 5: Work with faculty (e.g., Academic Senate) to encourage faculty to add the campus basic needs website to their syllabus

Goal 4: Conduct research and assessment of the university's basic needs initiatives and programs, as well as the needs and challenges of the students

Tactic 1: Create an infrastructure and process for collecting comprehensive data on student needs and utilization of basic needs resources

Tactic 2: Create participant action research projects to amplify the student voice and perspective in identifying outcomes and additional needs

Tactic 3: Conduct campus-wide and individual initiative outcome assessments to determine areas of strength and growth

Tactic 4: Create an annual campus-wide report on basic needs usage and lessons learned

OBJECTIVE #2: ADDRESS AND COMBAT FOOD INSECURITY OF SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Goal 1: Expand the availability of and access to fresh and nutritious food on campus

Tactic 1: Add refrigeration in the food pantry for distribution of fruits and vegetables

Tactic 2: Expand outreach efforts to facilitate students' enrollment in CalFresh

Tactic 3: Strengthen vital partnerships to facilitate students' enrollment in CalFresh

Tactic 4: Collaborate with Sonoma State Enterprises to have EBT accepted at (at least one) campus culinary location(s)

Tactic 5: Utilize the campus garden to provide produce to the campus food pantry and provide community gardening options to the students

Tactic 6: Provide food recovery (i.e., leftovers) options to students

Tactic 7: Work with campus and community partners to create greater access to food options, including but not limited to, access to local stores, ordering and delivery of groceries and a variety of food plan options

Goal 2: Create educational initiatives through which students gain knowledge, awareness, skills, and efficacy related to food security

Tactic 1: Create a program in which students will learn about food insecurity management strategies, including shopping on a budget, cooking and recipes using pantry ingredients, and how to shop for and properly store food

Tactic 2: Create a program in which students will learn about systems and structures that perpetuate inequities in access to food security, equipping students to identify and participate in areas for positive structural change on campus and in their communities

Tactic 3: Offer online resources for students that detail stores, food pantries, and other free or low-cost food options on- and off-campus

OBJECTIVE #3: ADDRESS AND COMBAT HOUSING INSECURITY OF SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Goal 1: Improve process and options for students with immediate/emergency housing needs so that access is equitable and consistent

Tactic 1: Create a process by which students can access immediate transitional housing when faced with same-day need of housing or relocation

Tactic 2: Create a process by which students can access existing resources (e.g., vacant residence hall beds, Marina Crossing) to offer short-term housing to students in need

Tactic 3: Work with community partners to offer a collaborative rapid re-housing program to the students of the university

Goal 2: Increase housing options and housing-related funding opportunities that are responsive to financial need and insecurity

Tactic 1: Conduct a study to determine the feasibility of offering affordable on-campus housing options that address students' financial needs and means

Tactic 2: Create an equitable and consistent process through which students can access housing-related mini-grants to assist with needs including but not limited to, deposit and entry fee assistance, rental assistance, and repairs and maintenance

Goal 3: Create educational initiatives through which students gain knowledge, awareness, skills, and efficacy related to housing security

Tactic 1: Create a program through which students will learn about housing security related topics, including how to be a model tenant, how to be a positive neighbor, how to find a dwelling that is income appropriate, how to rent/sign a lease, and how to use alternative transportation options

OBJECTIVE #4: ADDRESS AND COMBAT FINANCIAL INSECURITY OF SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Goal 1: Create educational initiatives through which students, faculty, and staff will gain knowledge, awareness, skills, and efficacy related to financial security

Tactic 1: Create a financial literacy workshop that will be required of all incoming/new students that will provide a foundation for building financial literacy during their time at Sonoma State University

Tactic 2: Provide information and education to new students and their support network (e.g., parents, guardians, counselors) about managing the cost and affordability of a college education

Tactic 3: Provide targeted support through workshops offered to all students that educate on topics of financial insecurity, including financial literacy and budgeting, financial systems and structures, seeking and maintaining financial aid, and seeking and maintaining employment while a student

Tactic 4: Provide education for faculty and staff on creating accessible and equitable learning and engagement opportunities that do not perpetuate financial inequalities

Goal 2: Provide financial options for students facing unexpected financial pressures that may interrupt the student's pursuit of a degree

Tactic 1: Create an equitable and consistent process through which students can access mini-grants for unexpected financial pressures that may serve to interrupt the student's pursuit of a degree

OBJECTIVE #5: ADDRESS AND IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Goal 1: Create educational initiatives through which students, faculty, and staff will gain knowledge, awareness, skills, and efficacy related to health and wellness

Tactic 1: Create educational opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to learn the important relationship between physical and mental health and student success

Tactic 2: Offer educational opportunities and trainings (e.g., I CAN HELP seminars) that provide important intervention tools for people in crisis

Tactic 3: Include basic needs questions on student health/mental health intake forms to allow for greater knowledge and understanding of issues affecting Sonoma State University students

Goal 2: Provide free or low-cost opportunities through which all students will actively improve their physical and mental health

Tactic 1: Increase awareness and availability of physical and mental health services (e.g., Student Health Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, support groups) including increased staffing and resources as necessary

Tactic 2: Offer trauma-informed services and programs so that students can build a strong foundation for healing and growth

SUMMARY

In summary, Sonoma State University is committed to ensuring the success of our students in their pursuit of a degree. The whole university will strive to address the basic needs of all students to ensure issues like food insecurity, housing insecurity and financial burdens do not serve as an impediment to graduation.

APPENDIX A



Basic Needs Initiative: Guiding Principles

Vision – *The CSU strives to be a nationally-recognized higher education leader for addressing the basic needs of students in alignment with the academic mission, through four pillars: research and curriculum, collaboration and partnerships, campus leadership and innovation, and development and delivery of initiatives that enhance students’ college completion.*

Purpose – *Our resolve is to (1) promote and encourage student wellbeing and engagement as essential capacities for active learning and educational success, (2) strategically build on and amplify basic needs initiatives implemented at the campus-level (food security, housing stability, crisis prevention and early intervention, etc.) where systemwide coordination can help realize resource efficiencies, and (3) advance a systemwide framework of programs and services, as well as community and governmental partnerships, to promote holistic support both in- and out-of-the-classroom, designed to help students maintain focus on academic completion.*

The CSU recognizes that a student’s experience with basic needs can range across the entire continuum in terms of incidence, severity, frequency, and length of time. We will strive to be responsive to as many of these needs as possible, while being mindful of limited resource capacities. We further believe that while it is not possible to eliminate all gaps college students experience when it comes to basic needs, strategic efforts to meet some basic needs constitute a critical strategy for advancing equitable opportunities for access to and success in higher education.

Foundational Values

- **Student Wellness is Essential to Student Success.** *Enhancing student wellness and student engagement is a guiding pillar in Graduation Initiative 2025 and compels us to maximize students’ capacity to remain active and engaged learners, as well as realize their full potential. A supportive, inclusive, and welcoming campus culture strengthens the potential for students to achieve their goals and develop holistically.*
- **A Public Health Approach Improves Student Outcomes.** *The imperative to create high-impact educational and engagement experiences for our student requires that we both remove barriers that impede student learning and provide interventions that facilitate student success. Further, educational outcomes in college are the result of the complex interplay between both institutional structures and systems designed to enhance student learning and foster goal achievement, along with student autonomy and self-efficacy to make informed personal choices;*

- ***Priority-Setting Should be Based Evidence-Based.** In a context of limited resources and many strategic priorities, investments to promote student success will prioritize those initiatives that have the greatest opportunity for population impact and measurable contribution to student retention, persistence, and graduation rates. Continued evaluation of services related to basic needs is important in understanding the efficiency and impact of programs on student success.*

CSU Basic Needs Framework

To address basic needs, the CSU is focused on campuses establishing a seamless delivery model that connects students with both on- and off-campus resources through a structured rollout in five key areas:

Immediate Needs

Addressing challenges in the “now” will serve as a nexus point for students to connect, learn, and access various programs, services and resources that can help alleviate basic needs challenges.

Growth

Enhancing current programs in response to demand, raising awareness, and promoting basic needs resources, while emphasizing awareness of the diversity of our campus faculty, staff, and students, can increase utilization.

Scale

Sharing and integrating best practices across the system is key to advancing programs and services that have had demonstrated impact in supporting a substantial number of students in crisis.

Collaboration

Working with external and internal partners to improve resource availability, as well as coordinated, “wrap around” and streamlined access to services for students statewide, is essential to innovation and integration of efforts.

Sustainability

Ongoing evaluation to identify the most effective programs, delivered in a resource-efficient manner, will let campuses know which ones to institutionalize and incorporate into the campus infrastructure.

High Impact Practices & Effective Strategies

Statewide, and across the country, campuses are working to address their students' basic needs. Below are several high-impact, nationally-recognized strategies that are being used to address food insecurity, housing instability, and homelessness on campus.

- **Meeting Immediate Needs:** *Quick access to resources is a crucial step in supporting students experiencing basic needs insecurities. These can include, but are not limited to, providing emergency housing (on-or-off campus), food cupboards, etc. (CSU Study of Students' Basic Needs, 2018).*
- **Combatting Food Insecurity:** *CalFresh is California's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]. It is one of the most critical strategies campuses are using to connect students to sustainable and consistent food resources (California Budget & Policy Center, 2018).*
- **Financial Supports:** *Providing emergency aid or micro-grants to students with financial emergencies, such as security deposits, rent shortfalls, or car repairs, can help a student remain enrolled in college. (NASPA, 2018).*
- **Staff and Faculty Opportunities:** *Incorporate staff as single points of contact and ensure they are trained in integrated programmatic responses to students experiencing food and housing insecurity (CSU Study of Students' Basic Needs, 2018).*
- **Legislative Partnerships:** *Share the work campuses have done to address basic needs with local and state governmental entities, so that they understand the CSU's commitment and will support policy efforts aimed at to reducing basic needs insecurity. (California State Assembly Report: College Ready, Hungry and Homeless, 2018).*

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Legislatively-Mandated Strategies: *All 23 campuses have implemented these mandated strategies.*

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Food Pantry/ Distribution | Meal Sharing and/or Donation program | CalFresh Outreach & Application Assistance | Identify a single point-of- contact for all things related to basic needs |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|

Commonly Implemented Strategies: *Several CSU campuses are implementing these strategies based on campus needs.*

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Comprehensive and updated basic needs website | Physical on-campus basic needs space | Availability (promotion) of faculty-staff payroll deductions for basic needs | Accept EBT at on-campus retailer(s) | Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) on campus | Tracking of basic needs resource usage |
| County partnership to host CalFresh application clinics | Create flyers and materials (marketing campaign) to raise awareness of basic needs resources | Farmer's Market on campus or adjoin to campus (EBT accepted) | Emergency (on or off-campus) housing and food resource listing | Adoption of a financial literacy program for all students | Campus-wide committee for basic needs |
| Elevate the student voice by working with student constituents (e.g., CSSA, ASI Inc., etc.) | Establish emergency off-campus partnerships | Faculty & Staff cultural-sensitivity/humility training opportunities | Participation in the CSU system-wide CalFresh Day | Annual participation in the CSU Basic Needs Conference or similar prof. dev. event | Development of skill-based resources (e.g., quick, low-budget cooking video) |

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Innovative & Aspirational Strategies: *Some CSU campuses are implementing these experimental strategies based on campus needs.*

| | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| Combined on-campus & off-campus taskforce | Applying for funding with external partners | Contract language that gives a % of leftover meal dollars toward BNI | Provide hygiene products/ clothing/ other necessities for students in need | Campus garden in which foods are donated to the pantry | App that promotes food recovery (i.e., leftovers from on-campus events) |
| Transitional security deposit program to assist students with move-in costs | Integrated fundraising campaign for Basic Needs Initiative (e.g., basic needs as part of a capital campaign) | Financial literacy workshop as a requirement for all incoming/new students | App that communicates free food resources in the community | Comprehensive data collection and evaluation of current BN programs and linkages to student success | Hire a basic needs case manager |
| App that communicates ALL on-off campus basic needs resources for students | Incorporate basic needs security into Campus Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan | As much as possible, include student staff and/or paid interns for basic needs projects (i.e., social work, nutrition, etc.) | Provide targeted support through financial literacy workshops offered to all parents | Work with high school/ JUCO counselors to raise awareness of BN supports potential students have access to on-campus | Required basic needs cultural humility training for all new part-time and full-time faculty |
| Insertion of systemwide basic needs vision statement into campus materials | Work with faculty (e.g., Academic Senate) to encourage faculty to add the campus basic needs website into their syllabus | Micro-Grants and Emergency Aid resources | Work with on-campus health centers to include basic needs questions onto student health/mental health intake forms | Engagement of Alumni (e.g., Alumni Council) including opportunities for Alum to work/ volunteer directly with basic needs programs | Creation of an annual campus-wide report on basic needs usage and lessons learned |

Color Code -- General; Food; Housing; Other/External

APPENDIX B



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|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| Legislatively-Mandated Strategies: All 23 campuses have implemented these mandated strategies. | | | | | |
| Food Pantry/Distribution | Meal Sharing and/or Donation program | CalFresh Outreach & Application Assistance | | Identify a single point-of-contact for all things related to basic needs | |
| Commonly Implemented Strategies: Several CSU campuses are implementing these strategies based on campus needs. | | | | | |
| Comprehensive and updated basic needs website | Physical on-campus basic needs space | Availability (promotion) of faculty-staff payroll deductions for basic needs | Accept EBT at on-campus retailer(s) | Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) on campus | Tracking of basic needs resource usage |
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existing or currently in progress
 will be addressed by the BNI Strategic Plan