



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I AT HILO

Student basic needs security is critical for ensuring strong academic performance, persistence to graduation and overall student well being. The UH Hilo student basic needs plan is built on three pillars provided by UH Hilo campus administration:

1. Culture of Care, which includes enhancing awareness and sharing resources and responsibility for addressing student basic needs insecurity across the UH Hilo campus;
2. Partnerships to help expand upon the work that has been established in the area of student basic needs security;
3. Sustainability, which includes ongoing assessments as a way of making data-informed decisions about student basic needs priorities and programming at UH Hilo.

UH Hilo Student Basic Needs Goal: To make the food security and other basic needs of UH Hilo students a priority through holistic, consistent and accessible support services which will increase their perpetual self-sufficiency and academic success.



SUMMARY: STUDENT BASIC NEEDS SECURITY AT UH HILO⁴:

2021 [The Hope Center Report](#): Per the March, 2021 [The Hope Center Publication for UH Hilo](#), invitations to participate in [The Hope Center #RealCollege Survey](#) were sent by email to 3,165 students from UH Hilo. 145 students participated in the survey with an estimated response rate of 4.6%.

We learned that:

- 64% experienced at least one form of basic needs insecurity, including
 - 44% who experienced food insecurity in the prior 30 days,
 - 53% who experienced housing insecurity in the previous year, and
 - 23% who experienced homelessness in the previous year.

We also learned that:

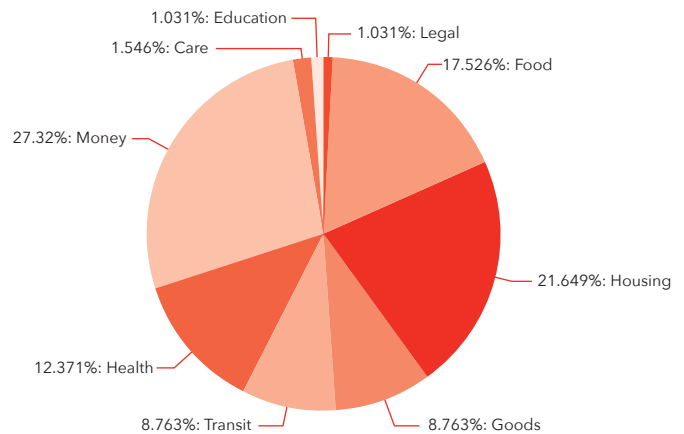
- 26% had a close friend or family member who was sick with COVID-19, while 1% were sick with COVID-19 themselves;
- 47% exhibited at least moderate anxiety;
- 20% of students who experienced basic needs insecurity used emergency aid, but 48% had not heard of emergency aid programs on campus;
- 62% of students experiencing basic needs insecurity did not apply for campus support because they did not know how;
- 49% of students experiencing basic needs insecurity received some form of public assistance.

2021 [Find Help](#) User Data: Find Help is the University of Hawai'i branded version of findhelp.org, an online platform and search engine that allows students to find basic needs resources available in their community. Basic needs resources available on the website include food and housing, childcare, mental health, financial resources and transportation, among others. a

Data gathered during the fall 2021 semester indicate that UH Hilo affiliated users completed 333 searches. The top three searches were for the following:

1. Financial Aid & Loans (13)
2. Help Pay for Gas (13)
3. Financial Assistance (12)

Searches by Category | 2021-08-15 to 2021-12-15



⁴ To be updated periodically approximately every 1-3 years with additional research support from The Hope Center.

EXISTING BASIC NEEDS PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES AT UH HILO:

Currently, our campus has a number of resources/services that support the basic needs of our students. The services provided help to address food insecurity, housing insecurity, financial assistance, and health services (including mental health).

1. Direct Services:

- a. Weekly meal bags are offered by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (VCAA) in collaboration with various departments across the campus.
- b. A [Campus and Community Resources website](#) managed by Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (AVCSA) that links to the UH Student [Basic Needs website](#).
- c. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application support available through the Campus and Community Services Office.
- d. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) support is offered to students through the UH Hilo Financial Aid Office.
- e. Housing support is available for students in crisis that is coordinated between CARE Team Coordinator and UH Hilo Director of Housing.
- f. Access to in-person Student Medical Services and Counseling Services for students who are physically in Hilo and availability of telehealth for students located across the State of Hawaii.

2. Staffing:

- a. Student staff in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and several departments across the division assist with different student basic need initiatives.
- b. Overload is currently provided for a Campus Center staff member to assist with providing SNAP application support.
- c. A casual employee was hired and overload is currently provided for several staff in the Financial Aid office to provide outreach to students who may have specific financial needs (outstanding obligations, professional judgment, etc.)

3. Emergency Aid:

- a. Urgent Student Relief funding is made available to students through philanthropic partnership with the UH Foundation, and is managed by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.
- b. Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) is made available through the federal government. Criteria is determined by campus leadership with the Financial Aid office providing support in administration of the funds.
- c. UH Hilo Crisis Fund is co-managed by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs with awards processed through the UH Hilo Financial Aid office.
- d. Retention grants are made available to UH Hilo students with outstanding financial obligations. These grants are managed by the Financial Aid office.

4. Outreach to Students:

- a. Awareness of resources is provided through weekly UH Hilo Happening emails that are sent to all students by the UH Hilo Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.
- b. The following statement is provided to faculty for inclusion in their syllabi:



- i. *Basic needs include food and housing, childcare, mental health, financial resources and transportation, among others. Student basic needs security is critical for ensuring strong academic performance, persistence and graduation and overall student well being. If you or someone you know are experiencing basic needs insecurity, please see the following resources: [UH System Basic Needs](#).*

- c. Webinars hosted by the UH System Basic Needs Committee are shared with UH Hilo students via email and social media.
- d. A variety of campus departments provide information at the UH Hilo Campus Center Plaza, Library Lanai or outside the Hale Kehau Dining Room about basic needs resources on campus and in the community.
- e. Flyers and informational materials are placed in the weekly meal bags distributed to UH Hilo students.

5. Education for Faculty and Staff:

- a. Emails announcing the availability of basic needs support for students (emergency funding, meal bags, etc.) are sent to faculty and staff via the all-employee listserv. Employees are encouraged to share the opportunities with students.
- b. All employees have access to the full suite of Innovative Educator webinars, including topics about meeting student basic needs. This initiative is managed by the Interim Vice Chancellor for Administrative Affairs.
- c. Via the Division of Student Affairs (DSA) Professional Development Committee, DSA members have access to a variety of professional development offerings related to student basic needs through third party training vendors, such as [Academic Impressions](#) and [PaperClip Communications](#).

6. Measuring Impact:

- a. Students who participate in the weekly meal bag program are asked to complete a survey at the end of each semester. This semester, we are able to add retention as another way to measure the impact of this program.
- b. The Director of Financial Aid completes an analysis of outcomes for those students who received a retention grant in the previous year.

7. Institutional Policy:

- a. Discussions have started about how to more holistically provide basic needs support to students at UH Hilo.

8. Partnerships:

- a. [Vibrant Hawaii Hubs 1.0 and 2.0](#) provided inaugural funding for the current weekly meal bags program. Hubs 1.0 also provided enough resources for prepared meals twice a week.
- b. Through a private gift to support general programming and services, the LGBTQ+ Center was able to join the meal bag program as a sponsor.

NEW BASIC NEEDS PRIORITIES AND BEST PRACTICES:

The UH Hilo Council of Vice Chancellors defined the following eight priority areas for basic needs programming. As the campus develops a formal committee to advise on student basic needs, the ranking below may change.

PRIORITY LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
1	Direct Service: Implementation of provisioning programs that will directly support student basic needs security
2	Staffing: Adjust or increase on-campus basic needs support staffing
3	Emergency Aid: Increase availability of emergency financial aid from a variety of sources
4	Outreach to Students: Communications and programming (e.g. webinars) directed toward UH students intended to raise awareness of basic needs insecurity and connect students to resources and services that will support basic needs security
5	Education for Faculty and Staff: Providing faculty and staff with educational opportunities (professional development) to better understand basic needs insecurity and how best to connect students to basic needs resources
6	Measuring Impact: Measuring the efficacy of basic needs programming
7	Institutional Policy: Changes to university policy that serve to address upstream determinants of basic needs insecurity (e.g. tuition cost, financial aid, etc.)
8	Partnerships: Creating partnerships with others outside of the University

Priority 1: Coordinate Direct Services to Students

The first priority for UH Hilo is to coordinate direct services to students. The campus will work to better assess the needs and provide services relating to personal hygiene, financial literacy and need, and food insecurity.

Priority 2: Ensure Adequate Staffing for Basic Needs Programming

The second priority for UH Hilo is to ensure adequate staffing to sustain various basic needs efforts and services on the campus. This priority can be viewed as a means to support the first priority.

Priority 3: Increase Financial Resources Provided Directly to Students

The third priority for UH Hilo is to increase financial resources for students. This will be done by analyzing FAFSA completion data, outcomes for students who received financial aid, and assessment of data based on need and other aid provided. The data will be used to evaluate additional funding sources to supplement additional aid to students.

The top three new priorities are detailed further below and placed within an estimated timeline for implementation.

PRIORITY 1: COORDINATE DIRECT SERVICES TO STUDENTS			
PRIORITY 2: ENSURE ADEQUATE STAFFING FOR BASIC NEEDS PROGRAMMING			
SPRING 2022	FALL 2022	SPRING 2022	FALL 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Better define food insecurity needs and assess outcomes of prior food insecurity projects on campus. 2) Better assess needs for hygiene and toiletry items. 3) Begin plans for a financial literacy program (increasing hours for current part-time casual hire). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Start discussions to formalize structure and provide adequate resources (location, funding, staffing) for an on-campus food pantry. 2) Examine the possibility of meal vouchers in addition to or as a replacement for meal bags. 3) Appoint a working group to propose a project around hygiene and toiletry needs. 4) Assess outcomes for SNAP assistance. 5) Pilot financial literacy program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Redesign food insecurity project for Fall 2022 implementation. 2) Determine feasibility of hygiene and toiletry needs proposal. 3) Determine whether to continue SNAP assistance. 4) Deep dive into FAFSA completion data. 5) Determine the effectiveness of a financial literacy program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Implement a redesigned food insecurity project. 2) Adequately resource hygiene and toiletry needs proposal. 3) Provide resources to better incorporate SNAP assistance into an existing position (reband position or redescribe into another position) 4) Provide resources to make permanent the duties currently being provided by casual hire in FA office for outreach and support assistance (1.0 FTE) 5) Adequately resource financial literacy program.
PRIORITY 3: INCREASE FINANCIAL RESOURCES PROVIDED DIRECTLY TO STUDENTS			
SPRING 2022	FALL 2022	SPRING 2023	FALL 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Appointment of Campus Basic Needs Committee. 2) Appointment of Institutional Aid task force. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Deep dive into outcomes for students who received financial aid, including those who received HEERF, including assessment of data based on need and other aid provided. 2) Research and evaluate additional funding sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review Institutional Aid task force recommendations plus HEERF outcomes to formulate a proposal for 22-23 additional institutional and other sources of aid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Implement proposal(s) for additional financial aid to students.