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## California State University Monterey Bay Basic Needs Outreach Program

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California State University Monterey Bay Basic Needs Outreach Program

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**Abstract**

Too many CSUMB students lack access to basic resources. The percentage of food insecure students is extraordinarily high at 50.1%. This capstone focused on lessening that burden on CSUMB students. The project consisted of promoting access to CalFresh, creating the Basic Needs Outreach Form, sitting on the CSUMB Basic Needs Committee, and much more all under the supervision of Joanna Snawder-Manzo. Specifically, the creation and implementation of the Basic Needs Outreach Form created a new resource for CSUMB's students. This form provides the students with a central place to access all of the resources that are available to them on the CSUMB campus. A needs assessment found that students often cited a lack of access to resources and a lack of knowledge of the resources that are available to them as barriers to receiving service. Moving forward, I would recommend that the form continue to be added to and revised until all of CSUMB student's basic needs are accessible from a single place.

**Keywords:** *Basic Needs, Outreach, CalFresh, Student Resources*

## **Agency Information and Communities Served**

The agency I had the pleasure of interning with is the California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB), Dean of Students office. More specifically, I interned with the Care Manager, Joanna Snawder-Manzo. The mission that this internship is focused on was student's basic needs. "The CSUMB Basic Needs Initiative endeavors to support students to be successful by ensuring their basic needs are met through resources, access, and advocacy (Basic, 2018)." Through this mission statement it is possible to determine that the Dean of Students office is determined to aide students in their journey to success.

The population that the Dean of Students office serves is the students of CSUMB. There are 7,574 students at CSUMB (About, 2017). It is the goal of the Dean of Students Office to support students on their journey to success. One of the most pressing issues facing CSUMB students is food insecurity. 50.1% of CSUMB students are food insecure (Basic, 2018). Along with the campus partner, Associated Students, work is being done to eradicate this problem.

Many events are supported by Associated Students. One of the most visible is the Associated Students Food Pantry. At these pantries, students have the ability to

The services provided by the Dean of Students office are varied and important. They include: Care Team, the Child Care Center, Student Housing and Residential life, and Student Conduct. The main focus of the program that was developed focused on connecting students to these wonderful resources. For example, if a student is identified as being food insecure and is able to connect themselves or be connected to Care Team or the other CalFresh services on campus, the student will be assisted with the process of applying for CalFresh and if necessary, emergency meals can be provided.

**Problem Description**

The broad, overarching problem that is being attacked is the people are food insecure. The specific problem that is being addressed over the course of this project is that 50.1% of CSUMB students are food insecure. The fact that people are food insecure is not a new phenomenon. It was first identified as a problem in the 1980s (Campbell, 1991). The fact that special attention is being given to college students is a relatively new aspect to the fight against food insecurity.

There are many risk factors contributing to food insecurity. Some of the most prominent for CSUMB students are: competing priorities, access to resources, and the cost of living. This project is taking on the challenge of access to resources. Additional causes include: unemployment, high housing cost, low wages and poverty, and medical or health costs (Causes, 2019). These contribute to having less money to spend on food or spending tradeoffs (Causes, 2019).

The primary consequence is that CSUMB students do not graduate. This is not the outcome that is desired for any student at any level but appears most prominently at the university level. As stated above, spending tradeoffs must be taken into consideration when determining how a student will allocate their resources and education often bears the brunt of budget cuts due to the massive amount of monetary resources that would be reallocated if the university expenses were not considered.

Alternatives to addressing this problem or solving this problem by established means are few. Some of the options are: reduced cost of housing, reduced cost of education, and reduced

cost of nutritious food. This would allow for more food to be purchased and more monetary resources to cover other expenses minimizing spending tradeoffs.

## **Project Description and Implementation Process**

The project was a new outreach campaign. This outreach campaign focused on the basic needs of students at CSUMB. Basic needs include: food security, housing security, financial security, mental health services, physical health services, and safety. Two of the greatest challenges are food security and housing security. With a 50.1% food insecurity rate, the need for food resources is exceptionally high on the CSUMB campus (CSUMB, 2018).

The purpose of the outreach campaign is to connect students to the resources that are available to them. For example, a food insecure student that is identified would receive information on CalFresh from the CalFresh Outreach Intern or the Care Manager, Joanna Snawder-Manzo. The intern or Care Manager would then work with the student to complete the CalFresh application and, depending on the severity of the food insecurity, make available to the student emergency meals from dining locations on campus. The student in need would also be referred to the Monterey County Food Bank where they would be able to obtain food to sustain them until the student begins receiving their CalFresh benefits. The benefits awarded also vary depending on the severity of the recipients need. For a single person, the award is anywhere between the minimum award of \$10 and the maximum award of \$192 (CalFresh, 2018). \$10 does not seem to be a tremendous amount of money but a surprising amount of food can be purchased with that amount. For the students in need, every little bit helps.

Another possible avenue in which this campaign will be utilized is by university personnel. University personnel would be able to refer students to the appropriate on-campus resources simply by filling out the online form. The people that interact with students regularly, like professors, lecturers, advisors, and residential advisors, and even the students themselves, have access to students to assess if they need of assistance. For example, a residential advisor might

notice that one of their residents (a student) is complaining that they are hungry and that they do not have food to eat. The residential advisor could advise the student to contact the Care Team and the CalFresh Intern. In order to ensure that the student does receive information on the resources that are available to them, the residential advisor could then fill out the online referral form knowing that the appropriate department will reach out to the student. The department, in this case the CalFresh Intern, did everything possible to connect the student to CalFresh resources in Monterey County Department of Social Services. From there the intern advised the student through the application process including, if necessary, referring the student to Catholic Charities because they have the ability to directly communicate with Monterey County CalFresh officials on behalf of the students. This enabled the student to have an advocate that is both knowledgeable in the application process and able to ask questions that will enable the student to receive benefits in a timely manner than if the student were dealing directly with the county.

The expected outcomes of the Basic Needs Outreach Program are numerous. First and foremost, it is expected that there will be an increased knowledge of the resources that are available. Students will have a plethora of resources displayed in a user-friendly format that will serve as the referral to the appropriate resources. Second, there will be an increase in the ease of access to the basic needs resources available. Students will have access to the basic needs resources on campus in one location. Currently, students must seek out resources on their own or reach out to trusted university personnel. Essentially, this outreach program eliminates the middle man by connecting students directly to resources. Third, students will be better able to advocate for themselves. As previously stated, CSUMB students will have access to the basic needs resources on campus in one location instead of having to identify and contact each resource individually. Finally, CSUMB personnel will be better able to advocate for the students



in their care. Building off of the idea that all of the resources are available in one location, university personnel will have the ability to determine which resources their students are in the greatest need of. After making this determination, university personnel will simply enter the student's information on the form and the student will be contacted by the resources that are most appropriate for the identified need.

Currently there is no referral program in place. The need addressed by this program is that students will have easier access to resources that are available to promote their success. Students will benefit from a simplified, central way to access resources because many of them need of more than one resource. For example, students that need to access CalFresh resources might also need to access housing resources. Food security and homelessness are two of the largest unmet basic needs that CSUMB students face. As stated above, 50.1% of CSUMB students are food insecure and 15.9% of CSUMB students are facing homelessness. The capstone project introduced a form by which students will be able to identify which resources they need to be connected with. In short, students will have one centralized location to request assistance in meeting their basic needs.

One of the first required activities was to create the outreach referral form. This was essential because without the referral form, there was no program. Second, the form had to be promoted. It was crucial to promote the form so that the CSUMB community is aware of it. Knowledge of the form allows the CSUMB community to make use of the resources that are available. In order to promote the form emails and flyers were the best course of action. Emails are simpler to create because there is the option of sending emails to massive groups of people at once.

To create the form, other referral forms were used as models. Using forms that have already been implemented successfully lead to a greater success and smoother user interaction.

Participation in the outreach campaign was entirely centered on the CSUMB community. The CSUMB community is comprised of: students, professors, lecturers, professional staff, residential advisors, and every other entity on campus. In order to get the CSUMB community to participate in the outreach campaign, it was essential to make the community aware of the form. Without knowing the form exists it would be impossible to make use of it and connect students to the resources that are available to them. Collaboration with Joanna Snawder-Manzo, the graphic design interns, and other campus entities was essential. Snawder-Manzo is the Care Team chair and the first line of defense for students that have fallen on hard times. The graphic design interns were tasked with making the form useable. CSUMB students are the critical part of the entire program because the program is designed to assist students in their journey to success.

Resources that were required for the implementation were minimal. The most important resource was man power. This outreach campaign is focused on students. Reaching the over 7,000 students at CSUMB proved to be a tremendous challenge. All of the people involved in this campaign are focused on promoting student success. Any funding that is required can potentially be pulled from SB85 funds.

There were few challenges over the course of this project. Of these, the most challenging was reaching students and getting them to seek assistance. Other challenges were: lack of student involvement, lack of support from campus partners, and some communication challenges. In order to get students to seek assistance there are a few things that can be done. The first is to remove the stigma surrounding whatever basic need the student needs help with.

For example, when a student is accessing CalFresh resources the stigma surrounding food stamps needs to be abolished. Lack of student involvement can be addressed through personal outreach. Over the course of this project, it was found that in person outreach is the most effective way of engaging students.

### **Project Assessment Process**

The expected outcome was for students to have easier access to resources. This is a change from previous systems where students had to search numerous departments on campus to meet all of their basic needs. This was not an environment conducive to student success.

This project was successful because students are able to access resources with greater ease than the previous system provided. The outcomes were measured by the number of students or other members of the CSUMB community that were able to access the site and complete the referral form. The exact number of referrals that were completed determined success. The original goal was twenty students. The actual number of people that were able to access and complete the form was eight. The number twenty was chosen based on the time left before the semester ended and when the Basic Needs Referral Form was published. Eight was determined to be a success taking into consideration the delays in implementation of the Basic Needs Outreach Form.

As part of the CSU Basic Needs Initiative, CSUMB has the goal of having 30 successful CalFresh applicants and 100 total applicants. The Basic Needs Outreach Form was developed in order to facilitate reaching this goal. The overarching goal of 100 total CalFresh applications is reachable if the Basic Needs Outreach Form is able to be distributed throughout the campus effectively. Effective distribution is outreach to: students, staff, faculty, and anyone else that could notice a student in need.

In short, the assessment will be based on how well the Basic Needs Outreach Form connects students and the greater CSUMB community to the resources that are available to facilitate the success of the students.

In order to assess the success of this project, the number of unique applications were quantified. This number provided insight to how well the outreach campaign is progressing. As the campaign progresses, the number of students reached is expected to increase dramatically. In the current stages of the outreach program eight students reached is a success.

## **Findings and Results of Assessment Process**

As a result of this project, students had greater access to resources. Resources were compiled in a single place instead of being spread around the CSUMB campus. A conveniently accessible form simplified the student's mission of accessing resources to further their success.

The project was able to achieve the goal of increasing access to resources. It was expected that students would have an easier time accessing resources as a result of this project and in that regard the project was overwhelmingly successful. After one on one meetings with many students they mentioned how they appreciated having all the resources compiled in a single place. The students often exclaimed that the convince and effectiveness of their time spent with the CSUMB Dean of Students office as reducing barriers to service. Reduction of barriers to service is crucial for empowering students to access the resources at their disposal.

The Basic Needs Outreach Form contributed to the solution of the problem of food insecurity on the CSUMB campus. The form contributed to the elimination of food insecurity by allowing students to self-identify themselves as being in need or refer their peers as being in need. This allows for a greater number of people to reach out and seek resources for students in need. The fact that students do not have to refer themselves to receive benefits and services from the form is a tremendous benefit. There is an attitude amongst students that someone else needs the services more than they do so they do not pursue resources that are designed specifically for them. Not all of the responsibility is lifted from the student because the student identified must still keep appointments to receive the resources. Initial contact of the student is not a challenge. Maintaining contact remains a challenge.

**Recommendations**

Moving forward, it is recommended that the Basic Needs Outreach Form be continuously updated and improved to fit the needs of CSUMB as the university expands and evolves. This will allow for the form to stay current and be useful for years to come. This project has provided the CSUMB Dean of Students office with the ability to track student's needs and develop programs to better meet those needs. In the future, it will be necessary to increase outreach and promotional efforts. This is a completely new program and resource, so it is crucial to make the CSUMB community aware of the resource. Without knowledge of the resource it will be impossible for students to access the resources that are available through the Basic Needs Outreach Form.

This project contributes to CSUMB student's basic needs in many ways. One of the most obvious ways is that access to resources is increased. This allows for students to more easily achieve success. It is only possible to achieve success after all basic needs are met. This is especially true regarding food and housing. Without these two critical, basic needs it is impossible for a student to focus on pursuing their academics.

In order to spread knowledge of the incredible resources that are available on campus it would be beneficial to employ the use of social media. Many students use social media on a daily basis. There are many options for which social media platform can be used. It is recommended that a survey be conducted to determine what social media platform the most students are using. This would allow for the greatest number of students to view the outreach material posted online.

In order to effectively continue this outreach campaign, the Dean of Students office must: continue to update the Basic Needs Outreach Form and make use of social media to perform outreach.



### **Conclusions and Personal Reflection**

The most important insight I gained from this process is that processes rarely go as smoothly as is anticipated. I found that it was more valuable to be able to handle problems and issues as they arose than trying to wait until the end of a project and do all of the trouble shooting then. Implementing my project produced a surprising number of setbacks. Most of the setbacks were outside of my control. In order to solve problems as they arose, it was necessary to have an almost constant stream of communication with all the people involved in the project. This contributed to my professional growth because I was able to facilitate communications from various sources and distribute enough information to ensure the project was still able to be completed. In short, collaboration and communication were able to make this project a far greater success than it otherwise would have been.

There were several lessons learned from this project. One of the lessons that I learned time and time again is that students are highly motivated when they want to be. It is difficult to pull a student away from their studies and force them to focus on something that is not as critical as ensuring all of their basic needs are met. In order to motivate students a friendly atmosphere is essential. The creation of a friendly atmosphere will allow students to wander the campus and find a niche that they are truly excellent at. One of the biggest lessons that I learned is to maintain relationships with students. Students will talk to each other about the services they have received from a certain campus group and that often reflects poorly on the department. With a good attitude, friendly people, and a few snacks it is possible to create a friendly feeling space anywhere.

For the next intern, I would recommend listening to what Joanna Snawder-Manzo has to say. Snawder-Manzo has incredible long-term vision and a clear path of how to get there. She will need help along the way and that is the role of the intern to find paths to reach those goals.

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Appendix 1

Problem Outline

<b>Project Title: Basic Needs Resources Outreach Form (BNROF)</b>		
<b>Problem Statement:</b> Too many students lack access to resources.		
<b>CAUSES/RISK FACTORS TO BROADER HEALTH PROBLEM</b>	<b>AGENCY-SPECIFIC “MICRO-LEVEL” PROBLEM ADDRESSED BY PROJECT</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCES TO SOCIETY</b>
Cost of living Competing priorities Access to resources	Too many CSUMB students are food insecure.	Students drop out Students do not eat Less CSUMB graduates
<b>CAUSES TO AGENCY PROBLEM</b>	<b>BROADER “MACRO-LEVEL” HEALTH/SOCIAL PROBLEM</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCES TO AGENCY</b>
Competing priorities Cost of living Cost of schooling Access to resources	Students have limited access to resources.	Students leave school Students are not successful Quality of life is diminished

Appendix 2

Basic Needs Outreach Form



Basic Needs Referral Form

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: If this is an emergency that requires immediate attention, call 911 or University Police at (831) 655-0268, before completing this form. This form is NOT designed as an emergency response notification.

The CSUMB Basic Needs Initiative endeavors to support students to be successful by ensuring their basic needs are met through resources, access and advocacy. Basic Needs refers to the food, housing and overall wellness security of our community. Having one's basic needs met has a direct impact on the academic performance, mental health, physical health, professional development and holistic well-being of our students.

For more information please visit the Basic Needs website at https://csumb.edu/basicneeds. If you have any questions please email basicneeds@csumb.edu.

Background Information

Enable additional features by logging in.

Form fields for background information: Your full name, Your position/title, Your phone number, Your email address, Who is making this referral?, Date Referred (Required).

Referred Student(s) name:

Please provide as much information you have regarding the student you are referring.

Form grid for referred student information: Name, Select Gender, Select Role, ID Number, DOB (YYYY-MM-DD), Phone number, Email address, Hall/Address.

Add another

Appendix 2 cont.

Resources

**Financial**

For information on the financial services that are available, such as scholarships, grants, and loans. Check out the [Financial Aid](#) website.

**Food**

To promote the food security of students at CSUMB there are many available resources. These resources include: CalFresh Outreach, Associated Students Food Pantry, Fresh Access, Otter Snacks Map, Otter Eats, and the Feed Each Otter program. For more information on the available food resources check out the [Basic Needs](#) website.

**Health and Well-being**

The Campus Health Center (CHC) provides urgent, primary, and diagnostic care, as well as referral services to students, faculty, staff, their dependents, and guests of the CSUMB community. For more information, check out the [Campus Health Center](#) website.

**Housing**

For more information on housing please look at the [Student Housing and Residential Life](#) website.

**Mental Health**

The Personal Growth & Counseling Center (PGCC) is dedicated to improving the quality of CSUMB students' lives and aiding them in achieving academic success. The PGCC provides: crisis help, individual counseling, mental health screenings, and much more. For more information check out their [website](#).

**Safety**

The mission of the CSU Monterey Bay Police Department (UPD) is to protect life and property with a commitment to professionalism and community cooperation. UPD is a fully accredited law enforcement agency employing sworn peace officers who are vested with full arrest authority in the State of California, pursuant to California Penal Code, Section 830.2(c) and Education Code, Section 89560. For more information on the services UPD offers, check out their [website](#).

Please provide a brief description about why you are seeking assistance at this time. **(Required)**

Which of these resources are you seeking additional information about? (Please check all that apply) **(Required)**

- Financial
- Food
- Health and Well-being
- Housing
- Mental Health
- Safety

Appendix 2 cont.

What is your (or the person being referred's) primary mode of transportation? (Required)

- Car
- Bus
- Bike
- Walk
- Other

How did you hear about this form? (Required)

- Email
- Word of mouth
- Website
- Faculty
- Food pantry outreach
- Other

If you heard about this form by word of mouth, from a faculty member, or other means, how or who told you about the form?

Supporting Documentation

Please attach any documents that would help us better understand your situation. Documents like eviction notices, car repair estimates, photos, video, emails, any diagnosis that you are seeking assistance with, or any other supporting documents can help us better connect you with resources. 1GB maximum total size.


**Attachments require time to upload, so please be patient after submitting this form.**

One last step ...

*Help us prevent spam reports by completing this captcha.*

**NOTE:** If you do not see a gray box with a checkbox that says "I'm not a robot", please try a different web browser.

 I'm not a robot 

- Email me a copy of this report

Appendix 3

Basic Needs Outreach Form Flyer

**KNOW a  
STUDENT  
in NEED?**

**THE BASIC NEEDS REFERRAL FORM IS HERE!**


Scan the QR code to get to the referral form.  
Make sure to visit the Basic Needs Initiative's page at:  
[csumb.edu/basicneeds](https://csumb.edu/basicneeds).

**Basic  
NEEDS  
INITIATIVE  
>>>> @CSUMB**



Appendix 4

CalFresh Outreach Flyer



**cal fresh**  
Basic Eligibility Information

**1) Who do you purchase & prepare food with?**  
Use the number of people in your household to determine which row to use on the chart to the right.

**2) Using this row, is your household under the gross monthly income limit?**  
If yes, go to next question. If no, your household is likely not eligible for CalFresh benefits.

**3) Does your household include at least one US citizen or lawful permanent resident (LPR)?**  
If yes, go to next question. If no, your household is likely not eligible for CalFresh benefits.

**4) Does the student in your household receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)?**  
If yes, they won't be eligible for CalFresh benefits BUT others in your household still may be.

**5) Is the student in your household provided more than half (11 or more) meals per week from another source?**  
If yes, they won't be eligible for CalFresh benefits BUT others in your household still may be.

**6) Is anyone in your household a college student per CalFresh standards enrolled at least half-time (6+ units), and between the ages of 18-49?**  
If yes, please see reverse side for additional student eligibility information.

**7) Is anyone in your household over 60 or disabled?**  
If yes, make sure to add medical deductions on your application.


**8) Does anyone in your household have a child 0-5?**  
If yes, you may also be eligible for WIC . Contact your local WIC office for more details.

**Effective Oct. 1, 2018 - Sept. 30, 2019**

Number of people in Household	Gross Monthly Income Limit	Maximum CalFresh Allotment*
1	\$2,024	\$192
2	\$2,744	\$353
3	\$3,464	\$505
4	\$4,184	\$642
5	\$4,904	\$762

Household = a person living alone or a group of people living together who purchase and prepare food together.  
\*Minimum Amount is \$15/month

**Need help applying?**  
Please come to our office at **Sand Hall, Building #8** on Mondays & Wednesdays 11 A.M. - 1P.M. or email [calfresh@csumb.edu](mailto:calfresh@csumb.edu)



## Appendix 4 cont.

## Student Eligibility Information

A student between the ages of 18 and 49 are enrolled in at least 6 units, and meet **AT LEAST ONE** of the following student eligibility bullet points:

- Working and getting paid for at least 20 hours per week OR a total of 80 hours a month.
- Approved for (or awarded or accepted) federal or state work study, anticipates working, and has not refused a work assignment (can still be eligible even if a work study job has not begun or is not currently available).
- Students attending CSU or UC, receiving Cal Grant A or B, and falling within the following qualifications: un-married; AND 25 years of age or younger, AND household income is less than \$50,000 (per FAFSA application).
- Enrolled in a state funded program that increases employability (EOP, EOPS, WIOA, DSPS, CARE, McNair, Puente Project or MESA).
- Enrolled in a program that increases employability for current and former foster youth (Guardian Scholars, FYSI, CAFYES, ETV, or Extended Foster Care).
- Exerting parental control over a dependent child under the age of 6 OR between the age of 6 and 12 with no adequate childcare (as determined by the county on a case-by-case basis) OR are a single parent of a dependent household member under the age of 12.
- Participating in the CalFresh Employment and Training program (CFET) or Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS), or be a recipient of CalWORKs or Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

### Other Things to Consider

- Students who live with their parents must be 22 years of age or older in order to apply as an individual household
- International, DACA, and DREAM students have been shown to not be eligible, even with a work VISA/SSN
- Out-of-state students can still be eligible for CalFresh if they are residing in California for the school year.
- Student eligibility is based on enrollment at higher education institution, which are either: business, trade, technical or vocational schools normally requiring a high school diploma or GED to enroll; or a junior, community, two-year or four-year college or university, or graduate school, regardless whether a high school diploma or GED is required.