

BASIC NEEDS ACADEMY

Integrating Basic Needs into State Postsecondary Data Systems

CALL FOR STATE TEAMS

The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) is pleased to announce the launch of a new state policy academy. A three-year initiative developed in partnership with the ECMC Foundation, the academy will support up to seven states in expanding data capacity and developing policy infrastructure for integrating and using basic needs information in state postsecondary data systems.

Among the myriad challenges facing postsecondary education, basic needs insecurities among college students stands out as an urgent issue. Every year, millions of students experiencing basic needs insecurities (e.g., lack of food, housing, mental health resources, childcare, technology, transportation) are faced with significant challenges that can hinder their success. Further impacting this issue is the lack of clear and aligned basic needs data in state postsecondary data systems. Although recent efforts by SHEEO agencies to collect this information have led to improved insights and student support, widespread collection, use, and alignment of these data with other state administrative data remains inconsistent nationally. This inconsistency significantly hampers understanding of basic needs insecurities' impacts on student success and the effectiveness of programs addressing these needs.

Over the next three years, SHEEO's Basic Needs Academy will support state teams as they develop or leverage their existing capacity to define, align, collect, and use basic needs data to improve policy and decision making, engage stakeholders, inform programming and services, and support students. Through academy participation, states will:

- Better understand their basic needs data landscapes, including required capacities and necessary partnerships with institutions, state agencies, and stakeholders.
- Develop a definition of basic needs and a taxonomy of basic needs data that align across state agencies, institutions, and partner organizations.
- Create surveys or collect data elements that capture students' basic needs insecurity indicators and corresponding services, programs, or interventions.
- Integrate new or refined basic needs data into postsecondary student unit record systems to improve tracking and effectiveness of associated policies, programs, or interventions to improve student experiences and academic and nonacademic outcomes.
- Improve awareness of basic needs data and associated policies and programs.

To achieve these goals, state teams will prepare a self-assessment; articulate a state vision for basic needs data; identify goals associated with improved definition, alignment, collection, and use of these data; develop and implement an action plan with steps for integrating basic needs data into postsecondary data systems, policy, and practice; attend three virtual and three in-person convenings; host one site visit; and complete project and post-convening surveys.

To support state teams in this process, SHEEO will provide each team with a \$60,000 capacity-building sub-grant. These funds may be used for technology upgrades, to contract additional analytics capacity, to develop institution-level pilots and collaborations, or to host in-state meetings focused on basic needs reporting. SHEEO will also provide states with access to state team coaches and content experts who will

meet regularly with state teams throughout the project to provide guidance and technical assistance support both individually and at annual virtual and in-person convenings.

States are asked to identify five to seven team members, which may include senior leaders or data, research, policy, academic affairs, communications officers, or other relevant individuals from SHEEO or other postsecondary systems, postsecondary institutions, SLDS, or workforce, K-12, health and human services agencies. Working with SHEEO and Basic Needs Academy coaches and facilitators, team members will set the vision and goals for basic needs data in their state's postsecondary system and will employ learning from the academy into organizational processes, policies, and practice.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

States interested in participating in the academy should submit a letter of interest by **December 6, 2024**. Letters should address the following:

1. What is your state's vision for addressing students' basic needs insecurities and its capacity to integrate basic needs data into state postsecondary data systems?
2. What has been achieved, thus far, to advance that vision? What enabling conditions, relevant public policy, or current practices are guiding this vision?
3. How sustainable is your state's political commitment and your partnering institutions' or agencies' leadership to this issue?
4. What is your state's most pressing need as it moves forward to achieve its vision for addressing basic needs insecurities through improved postsecondary data alignment, collection, and use?
5. How would your state team use the \$60,000 capacity-building sub-grant?
6. Please list the names, titles, and organizational affiliations of five to seven proposed state team members.

Letters of interest should be three to five pages in length, should clearly identify how the goals of the Basic Needs Academy align with the state's current or future activities, and should indicate the SHEEO leader's support for their agency's participation. SHEEO will use information from the letters to select states for academy participation. Selected states will be notified by early 2025.

Letters of interest should be addressed to Dr. Christina Whitfield, SHEEO Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff, and emailed to Brenna Mathews at bmathews@sheeo.org by the December 6, 2024, deadline.