



State Policy Opportunities to Secure Student Basic Needs

August 2025

SHEEO Higher Education Policy Conference

Your **Presenters** Today



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Minnesota Office of Higher
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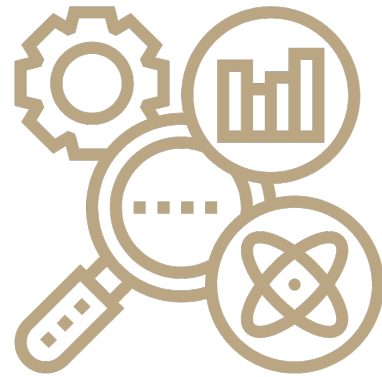
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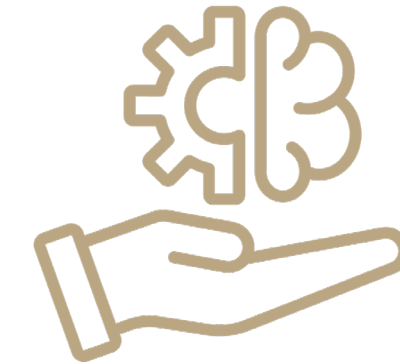
Research

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



Policy

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



Practice

technical assistance to
secure student basic
needs through systems
transformation

Recent Hope Center Collaborations

Texas: Contributed to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's student success grants and co-authored a student mental health strategic plan and playbook with the state's Postsecondary Student Mental Health Coalition.

Pennsylvania: Contributing to coordinated data collection by administering our student survey at 52 Pennsylvania institutions.

Kentucky: Increasing awareness and uptake of basic needs resources with the KY Student Success Collaborative.

New Jersey: Created a practitioner playbook for developing and sustaining a supportive campus basic needs ecosystem.

Michigan: Helped lead statewide Basic Needs Task Force to identify 12 priority recommendations to secure student basic needs.

Minnesota: Served on the Student Basic Needs Working Group to enhance existing statewide basic needs efforts.

Is your state working to:

Meet an educational attainment goal?

Reduce inequities in graduation rates?

Address workforce shortages?

Promote economic mobility and reduce long-term use of public benefits?

Improve resident health & wellbeing (to reduce costs and enhance economic productivity)?



Then you want to meet students' basic needs.

Basic Needs Insecurity

- Common
- Consequential
- Exacerbated by barriers to resources
- Likely growing worse



Photo by Allison Shelley/Complete College Photo Library

Basic Needs **Insecurity**

Three in five
students
experienced basic
needs insecurity



41% experience
food insecurity.



48% experience
housing insecurity.



14% experience
homelessness.

"It's challenging to be a student with good grades when you're **just focused on surviving**, worrying about how you'll pay **rent and bills and food**; working to ensure you have the basic needs **instead of focusing on homework** and studying for your classes."

Student in Texas

Look Beyond Food & Housing

 44% of students face mental health challenges

 18% face transportation challenges

 12% face internet/technology challenges

 18% of parents face childcare challenges

Most students lack access to more than one basic need

“It’s IMPOSSIBLE to work full-time and dedicate myself to school full-time while looking for housing and battling depression. However, if I quit school, I’m stuck in my dead-end job and, if I quit my job, I’ll starve.”

Student in Vermont

Unequal Burdens

- ❑ **Black and Indigenous students** experience basic needs insecurity at rates 15-18 percentage points higher than White peers.
- ❑ **Students 25 and older** experience higher rates of BNI.
- ❑ **Parenting students** experience higher rates of BNI.
- ❑ **First generation students** experience higher rates of BNI.



Barriers and Consequences

2/3 of students eligible for SNAP are not receiving benefits

(GAO, 2024)

48% of students experiencing at least one type of BNI did not use any campus supports for basic needs

(Hope, 2025)

BNI harms academic performance, belonging, GPA, and persistence

(Multiple references)

79% of students who had stopped out or were considering stopping out noted it was due to basic needs insecurity or financial reasons

(Hope, 2025)

States are **taking action**

- 1 Collecting & harnessing data** to understand student needs and target supports
- 2 Reaching out to students** about public benefits
- 3 Centralizing resources** in the form of basic needs navigators or hubs
- 4 Creating emergency aid** programs for short-term, unexpected needs that traditional financial aid doesn't cover



Photo by Allison Shelley/Complete College Photo Library

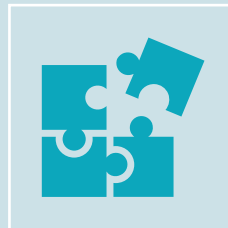
Minnesota Context

- State led basic needs work/research happens across multiple systems (University of Minnesota, Minnesota State colleges and universities, tribal colleges, private non-profits)
- Existing supports included state level funding for childcare grants, emergency grants (disbursed by campus), and Hunger Free Campus grants as well as a robust state financial aid model
- 2023 legislative mandate resulted in the creation of a large statewide student basic needs working group
 - Identified key basic needs areas: financial stability, housing, transportation, mental health, healthcare, food insecurity, and childcare
 - Deliverable: report to identify opportunities for legislative intervention to improve student basic needs landscape
- Current relationship status: It's complicated

Illinois Programs to Address Student Basic Needs Insecurity



HOUSE Liaisons



Benefits Navigators



Mental Health Early Action on Campus

About HOUSE Liaisons, Benefits Navigators, and Mental Health Early Action on Campus

- **HOUSE Liaisons** required at all institutions of higher education by the Higher Education Housing and Opportunities Act
 - Staff member designated to assist students experiencing homelessness and youth in care with campus and community resources
- **Benefits Navigators** required at Illinois 12 public universities and 48 community colleges
 - Staff member designated to help students determine eligibility for benefit programs and identify campuswide and community resource supports
- **Mental Health Early Action on Campus** required at Illinois 12 public universities and 48 community colleges
 - Five initiatives for institutions outlined under law including increased identification of mental health issues in students, increased access to services and supports, and development of peer support services.

Student Basic Needs Grants—Use of Funds



End Student Housing Insecurity:

Emergency funding for student housing, food, utilities, or transportation

Student basic needs surveys

Emergency basic needs kits

Food pantry expansion into basic needs pantry

Summer Bridge Programs for students at risk of homelessness

Vocational preparation program

Childcare assistance vouchers

Creation of long-term emergency housing space



Mental Health Early Action on Campus

Awareness, including resources and messaging

Online screening tools

Training (faculty, staff, or students)

Peer support programs

Strategic Partnerships on campus and in the community

Clinical Ratio Benchmark 1:1,250



**Michigan Department of Lifelong
Education, Advancement, and Potential**

Barriers to Bridges: Michigan's Approach to Addressing Unmet College Students' Basic Needs

Task Force Structure

The Who

government

MDHHS
MSHDA
MiLEAP – childcare
High-speed Internet Office
Veteran Affairs

Higher ed

Bay Mills Community College
Grand Rapids Community College
Wayne State University
University of Olivet
Ferris State University
Pontiac Promise Zone

advocacy

Michigan Community College Assoc.
Community Mental Health Assoc.
Detroit Regional Chamber
Benefits Data Trust

The What

The Task Force, Hope Center and 60x30 will develop a report that identifies a set of best practices, policy recommendations and action items to support student enrollment and graduation rates

- 1 Create an action plan**
Steps higher ed institutions colleges can take to support students
- 2 Identify solutions**
Change bureaucratic process in government; streamline services
- 3 Build momentum**
Establish a network of champions who connect students to services

The When

★ **Official kick-off March 2024!**

*Task Force members are being asked to commitment to four meetings over the **next 12-months**.*

Does not include additional ad-hoc topically focused sessions on housing and food insecurity, health and wellness, and digital equity

Wrap with a 3-month report roll out “road show”



Collaborative Approach

- **Internal planning team** from The Hope Center, MiLEAP, and MCCA
- A **Task Force** consisting of 16 representatives from multiple sectors across the state, including colleges and universities, state departments, policy and advocacy organizations, and regional and community nonprofits
- An **Advisory Council** consisting of 10 Michigan higher education association representatives and additional policy experts
- 37 **students** shared their experiences and insights with us
- 36 **colleges and universities** shared their current basic needs practices
- 20 representatives from **state departments and community organizations** who shared their expertise to strengthen the recommendations

MiLEAP
Michigan Department of Lifelong
Education, Advancement, and Potential

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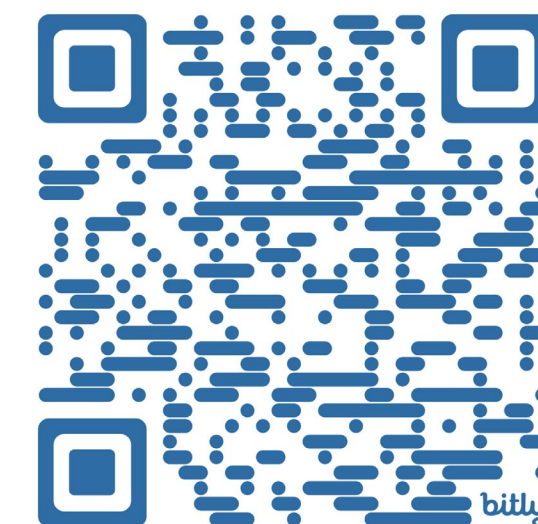
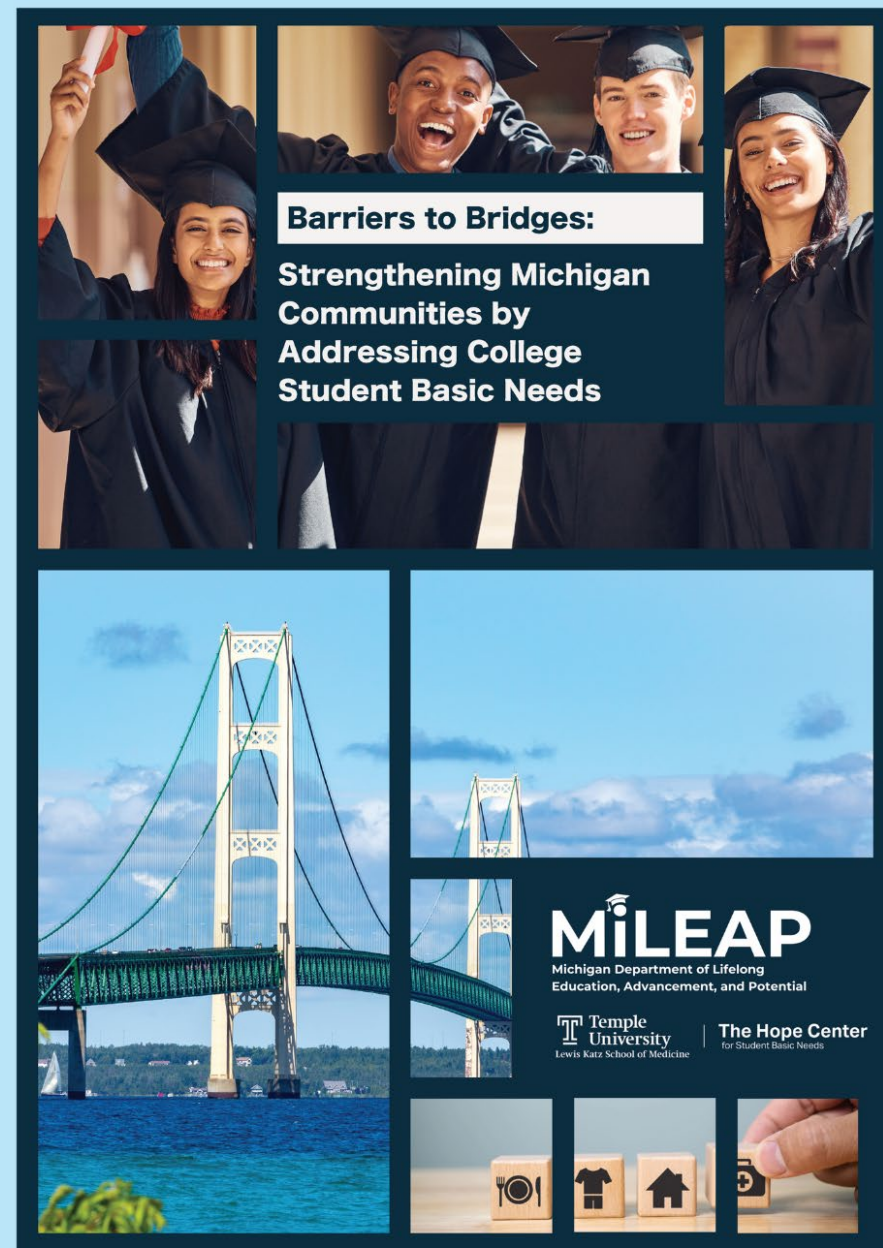
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THE REPORT

- Narrowed ~60 recommendations to **12 priority recommendations**
- Highlights student experiences
- Shares relevant data as well as local and national models to build upon
- Describes institutional opportunities
- **Michigan.gov/StudentBasicNeeds**





Lessons Learned

Student voice must be central.

Cross-sector collaboration takes time but creates durable solutions.

There's no one-size-fits-all model—regional and institutional flexibility is key.

Get leadership on the same page early to create synergy in the right direction

Bringing in various perspectives along the way to help us narrow down 60 recs

Resources for Building Momentum

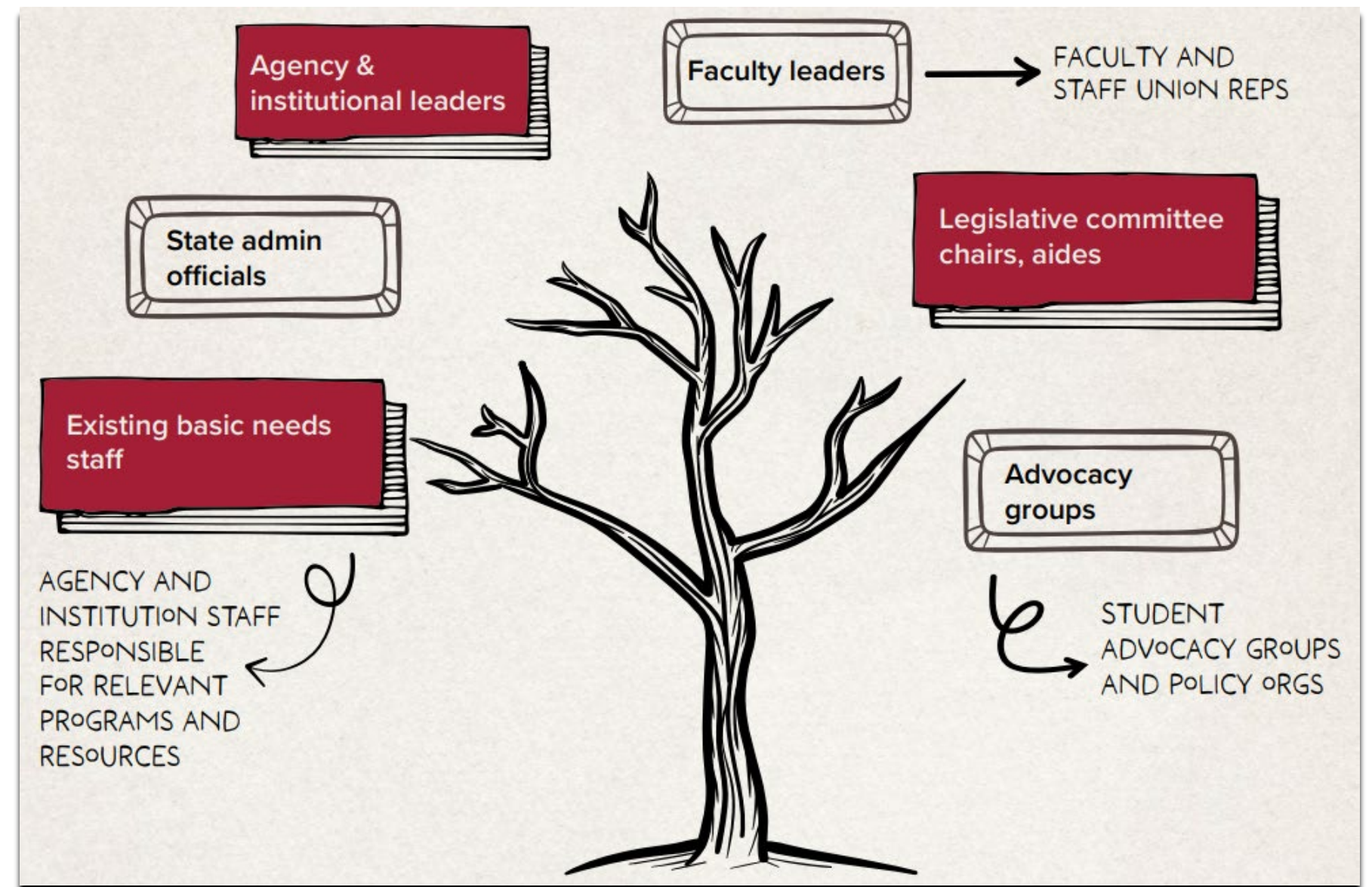
- Guides for starting a statewide task force or working group
- Michigan's student basic need task force report
- Minnesota's Student Basic Needs Annual Report
- Illinois liaison information
- Landscape scan of basic needs policies
- Student Basic Needs Survey Report
- SchoolHouse Connection state resources for addressing homelessness



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Every State, Every Student: Key Learnings for Statewide Efforts to Support Student Basic Needs

Informed by Hope's previous state partnerships, this new resource offers **strategies** and outlines **key considerations and decision points** for establishing or strengthening a statewide basic needs task force or working group **to help set you up for success.**



Every State, Every Student: Key Learnings for Statewide Efforts to Support Student Basic Needs

Each section covers a different phase of the work:

- ❑ Defining the Scope
 - Steps for setting the purpose, focus, and goals of your work
- ❑ Building a Team *for* and With Students
 - Considerations to help identify who will be involved and how to structure the work
- ❑ Understanding Current Needs: Inventorying the Landscape
 - Outlines key data to surface and/or collect to understand the current state of need and support for students
- ❑ Determining & Prioritizing Recommendations
 - Options for identifying what ideas to advance as the work progresses
- ❑ What's Next
 - Approaches to help move from ideation to implementation

How The Hope Center Can **Support Your Work**

Assist with
data
collection

**Capture
and
integrate**
students'
experiences
and input

Conduct
landscape
scans to
inventory
current
practice

**Organize,
facilitate,
or support**
a taskforce
or working
group

**Pilot and
evaluate**
initiatives
and
programs

Improve
institutional
policy and
practice
through
tailored TA
and
coaching

Continue the Conversation

☐ Insights from SHEEO's Basic Needs Data Academy | WED 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM



Carrie Klein

Associate Vice President
State Higher Education Executive Officers As...



David Meyers

Senior Public Service Associate
J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Develop...

☐ State Leadership in a Shifting Federal Landscape | THURS 9:45 AM – 10:45 AM



Bryce McKibben

Senior Director of Policy & Advocacy
The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs

Need for **State Action**

- ❑ Measure, quantify, and continue to monitor the **unique needs** facing students, the “when, why, how much, and how long.”
- ❑ Monitor **State and Federal Appropriations** to understand where to fill the gaps – especially in areas of child care, comprehensive basic needs supports.
- ❑ Leverage existing policy infrastructure to **build new or enhance existing programs** (e.g., Emergency Aid)
- ❑ Get ahead of the **Great State Cost Shift** – protect basic needs supports, understand the potential impact on higher ed funding, state financial aid, and Promise Programs
- ❑ **Connect students with benefits:** Eligibility has not changed, guidance remains active, federal agencies are unlikely to actively support.



Thanks!

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