



Kentucky's Student Basic Needs Statewide Strategy

Nearly three in five undergraduate students on U.S. campuses experience basic needs insecurity, which means they lack access to stable sources of food, housing, or other living or educational essentials, like affordable childcare or technology.

Basic needs insecurity unequivocally jeopardizes student success, increasing the likelihood of leaving college without a degree. As Kentucky approaches 2030 with the goal of increasing the state's educational attainment rate to 60%, we must do more to enroll a greater proportion of students from low-income backgrounds into postsecondary education and support them with campus and community-based services throughout their academic journey.

With funding support from Lumina Foundation, the Kentucky Student Success Collaborative (KYSSC) embarked upon a year-long project focused on student basic needs. The primary objectives of the project were to increase access to basic needs services for postsecondary students and to increase access to postsecondary education for individuals receiving state support.

The project's phases included discovery and strategy development. In the discovery phase, several projects were undertaken to develop a comprehensive understanding of student basic needs. Discovery projects included:

- * An analysis of benefit participation rates among students.
- * Faculty research on the availability and effectiveness of campus basic needs programs to meet student needs.
- * A public benefit policy scan and interviews with diverse stakeholders.

In the strategy development phase, a diverse stakeholder group, the Student Basic Needs Action Network (SBNAN), synthesized the knowledge gained through the discovery projects and developed a strategic plan for collaborative work moving forward. The SBNAN identified priority recommendations and critical success factors to ensure the plan is successful, scalable and sustainable.



**The Kentucky
Student Success
Collaborative**

Priority Recommendations

Objective 1:

Increase access to basic needs support for postsecondary students.

1. Implement basic needs screening and benefits eligibility screening for students.
2. Review state public benefit plans and programs to increase flexibility for postsecondary students.
3. Increase staff capacity of colleges and universities to provide basic needs support to students.
4. Provide training and ongoing professional development for college and university staff and faculty to provide accurate information and consistent support to students.

Objective 2:

Increase access to postsecondary education for individuals receiving state support.

1. Explore and identify solutions to alleviate the lack of childcare availability and affordability.
2. Identify models and incentives to increase direct referrals for enrollment from the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services and workforce agencies to postsecondary institutions.
3. Facilitate training and information sharing among postsecondary, government, and nonprofit partners focused on outreach to target populations.
4. Communicate clear career pathways to prospective students aligned with in-demand labor market opportunities that lead to financial self-sufficiency and economic mobility.

Early Impact:

In partnership with Kentucky stakeholders, the KYSSC has continued the work from strategic planning to strategy implementation.

1. The Cabinet for Health and Family Services invested \$1.6 million per year to place full-time benefit navigators (kynectors) on all community college campuses.
2. KYSSC received a \$1.5 million grant from ECMC Foundation to develop a data dashboard, lead collaborative work on childcare solutions for parenting students, and strengthen communications and reduce stigma around basic needs supports.

Learn About Our Efforts

Opportunities to learn about and engage in the statewide work to support Student Basic Needs include:



▶ Read the Research

Learn more about Kentucky's Statewide Strategy to support Student Basic Needs by reading the full report released in July 2023.



▶ Collaborate with Peers

Join the Student Basic Needs Community of Practice – monthly virtual meeting with stakeholders and partners to share promising practices, discuss challenges, and improve the ecosystem of supports available to students.



▶ Get Certified

Participate in the Trauma Resilient Communities Training – a six-hour certification focused on increasing understanding and support for students who have experienced trauma.



▶ Make a Difference

Reach out to the KYSSC if you are interested in hosting a kynector (Cabinet for Health and Family Services staff member) on your campus to provide outreach and benefits screening to students.



▶ Find Resources

Check out specific Student Basic Needs resources on the Impact exChange – Kentucky's knowledge and resource hub for student success.



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Kentucky Student Success Collaborative
kystudentsuccess.org

The Kentucky Student Success Collaborative (KYSSC) is made possible through a partnership and financial investment from the James Graham Brown Foundation with the goal of engaging Kentucky's postsecondary partners with nonprofit, workforce and governmental stakeholders to address the state's most pressing challenges and barriers to student success.

