A RESOURCE FOR POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Basic Needs Services Implementation Rubric

Context

In early 2020, ECMC Foundation launched the Basic Needs Initiative (BNI) and funded seven organizations across the United States to further the development of basic needs services at postsecondary institutions. The grantee organizations are: Arkansas Community Colleges, Auburn University's Hunger Solutions Institute, Ithaka S+R, John Burton Advocates for Youth, Michigan Community College Association, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in partnership with the University of Texas at San Antonio, and United Way of King County. ECMC Foundation also engaged Education Northwest to lead an evaluation of the BNI and facilitate a learning community for the grantees.

ECMC Foundation developed four goals around implementing basic needs services based on prior research. Education Northwest researchers developed this rubric to assist postsecondary institutions in working toward these goals. Indicators and activities for each goal and examples of implementation practices were developed and refined based on survey data collected from postsecondary institutions that partnered with the ECMC Foundation BNI grantees. BNI grantees also provided feedback on the rubric. The survey was administered in spring 2021 and 2022. Partner institutions included a mix of community colleges and universities across six states (Alabama, Arkansas, California, Michigan, Texas, and Washington; see acknowledgements).

Rubric use

This rubric can be used to assess basic needs service implementation progress and set goals toward full implementation of basic needs services under different goals and indicators.

Suggested citation

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Goal 1

Provide timely, accessible, and comprehensive basic needs resources and services with clearly navigable systems and outcomes.

Indicator	Pre-implementation	Early implementation	Full implementation	Example practices
Comprehensive services	Preparing to launch new services; identifying student needs and gaps in services	Services not yet comprehensive; implementing new services; identifying student needs and gaps in services	Embedded institutional practices support access to a range of comprehensive services that address students' needs, transportation to access services, and connections to community resources/partners	Students have access to services that address their diverse needs, such as food assistance, emergency aid, physical and mental health care, technology, housing assistance, transportation, financial planning, employment support, and child care support
Leadership support	Campus leaders are engaged; connecting basic needs services to strategic plan; identifying sources of funding	Campus leaders are engaged; some funding secured; developing strategic plan around basic needs services	Campus leadership views basic needs services as a key strategy for student success and retention and services are fully funded and staffed	Basic needs task force or dedicated team; basic needs integrated into college's strategic plan; college foundation provides funds
Streamlined intake process	Outreach and services fragmented; planning to develop systems to align services	Developing systems to align services across college	Students access services through a single intake or application process and there is alignment with other student support programs	"One-stop-shop" approach (basic needs center); centralized screening through an orientation survey; documented referral process
Cross-campus collaboration	Building relationships with offices across campus	Some partnerships across campus, developing others	Collaborating with key offices across campus, including faculty, financial aid, campus police, student senate, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA) leaders or offices	Basic needs staff works closely with financial aid office, advisors, and DEIA leaders to support student access to basic needs services
Community partners	Looking into potential community partners	Building relationships with community partners to supplement on-campus services	Community partners support access to resources available on and off campus	Partnerships with local food suppliers/ farms; external partners have space on campus to increase access to public benefits and other services

Goal 2

Provide student-centered approaches that alleviate stigma associated with utilizing basic needs resources and services.

Indicator	Pre-implementation	Early implementation	Full implementation	Example practices
Campus culture around basic needs services	Staff is planning to increase access to services and identify and address stigma associated with accessing basic needs services	Accessing services is becoming normalized on campus; staff members and students work to identify and address stigma associated with accessing basic needs services	Basic needs services are integrated and normalized; staff members and students work to alleviate stigma associated with accessing basic needs services	Basic need services are marketed on syllabi and LMS (e.g., Canvas, Blackboard); staff members and students share personal stories about accessing basic needs services; resources (e.g., mobile food pantry) are easily available to all students
Faculty and staff training	Reviewing best practices and planning for staff training	Expanding, enhancing, or obtaining funding for staff training	Faculty and staff members receive regular training on student-centered approaches	Campus-wide trainings focus on equity, trauma-informed practice, implicit bias, and culturally responsive approaches
Marketing of basic needs services	Reviewing best practices and planning for marketing with student input	Expanding, enhancing, and/or obtaining funding for marketing activities; reviewing materials for cultural competence; involving students in marketing	Culturally responsive, authentic, and caring marketing campaign focuses on normalizing services	Services are advertised to all students through presentations, social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok), flyers, news articles, and word of mouth
Accessible services	At present, services may be difficult to find or are fragmented across the college; planning processes and structures to make services more accessible	Developing new processes and structures (centralized location/office) for making services more accessible with a focus on priority populations	Services are open access; locations are centralized, easy to find, and discreet; and there are varied distribution methods	Services are located in a central location with a discreet entrance, food is distributed in grocery bags (not boxes), and students can order ahead or at a drive through
Student partnerships	Developing partnerships with student organizations to support decision making and outreach	Strengthening partnerships with student organizations and co-developing strategies for outreach and marketing	Students are involved in the basic needs center, decision making, and outreach for basic needs services	Student government and clubs are engaged and provide regular feedback on services; peer mentors encourage fellow students to access services

Goal 3

Provide targeted case management to help students navigate and access basic needs resources and services.

Indicator	Pre-implementation	Early implementation	Full implementation	Example practices
Case management system	No case management approach	Piloting case management approach; coordinating with other support systems on campus (advisors, early alert systems, DEIA office); hiring new staff members	Full-time staff members assess student needs and refer them to or provide services; all students accessing services are supported by a case manager	Full-time staff members assess needs, provide referrals, and coordinate with community partners; benefits coaches or social workers on staff or reduction in advisor/counselor caseloads, so they can support students' holistic wellness needs
Ongoing follow-up with students	Staff members support students with accessing services but insufficient capacity to follow-up	Staff members beginning to engage in targeted follow-up and ongoing communication	Staff members engage in targeted follow-up and ongoing communication at specific intervals	Staff members use intake forms, follow up to answer questions and assess new needs, and ensure referrals were successful; staff members have access to college data systems (e.g., Starfish) to help track student needs and use of services
Case management training	Staff members do not have training in case management	Training staff members or advisors to support case management	Case managers have training in case management, including integrating data and student voice, using a holistic approach, and building trusted relationships	Staff members are provided with time and resources to obtain case management training and to maintain certification on an annual basis; staff members trained in case management are hired into permanent positions

Goal 4

Collect and use in-depth student data and demographics.

Indicator	Pre-implementation	Early implementation	Full implementation	Example practices
Data system that links multiple data sources	Developing partnerships between IR and basic needs staff to support data collection and analysis	Beginning to align data collected across campus and the community to track student needs, usage, and outcomes (by demographics); beginning to develop data-sharing agreements with external partners	IR and/or basic needs staff tracks and shares data on student basic needs, use of basic needs services, and academic/career outcomes (by student demographics); data analysis is guided by strategic plan	Key staff and faculty members have access to data on student needs, awareness, usage, and academic/career outcomes (by student demographics); data-sharing agreement exists with partner agencies
Data collection tools	Reviewing existing data and assessing data needs to develop data collection approach	Acquiring or developing new data collection tools and approaches to expand existing data collection activities	College is using tools to collect data on student needs, awareness, and usage (by key student demographic groups)	College implements new climate survey with student population or exit surveys for students using basic needs services; college adds indicator for key student groups (e.g., LGBTQIA+) to data collection tools
Data-informed decision-making	Not yet evaluating services or data collection, analysis, and use is fragmented	Beginning to use data to support continuous improvement	Data supports continuous improvement, and there is college-wide support for data collection and analysis	Data supports ongoing decision making and strategic planning around what basic needs services should be provided and opportunities for targeted outreach to specific student groups

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BNI Grantees

- Arkansas Community Colleges
- Auburn University's Hunger Solutions Institute
- Ithaka S+R
- John Burton Advocates for Youth
- Michigan Community College Association
- University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in partnership with the University of Texas at San Antonio
- United Way of King County

Alabama Postsecondary Institutions

- Alabama A&M University
- Auburn University
- Jacksonville State University
- The University of Alabama
- Troy University
- Tuskegee University
- The University of Alabama at Birmingham
- University of North Alabama
- University of South Alabama

Arkansas Postsecondary Institutions

- Arkansas Northeastern College
- North Arkansas College
- Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas
- University of Arkansas-Pulaski Technical College

California Postsecondary Institutions

- Allan Hancock College
- Antelope Valley College
- Barstow Community College
- Butte College
- California State Polytechnic University-Pomona
- California State University-Chico
- California State University-Long Beach
- California State University-Sacramento
- Cerritos College
- College of the Redwoods
- Fresno City College
- Gavilan College
- Imperial Valley

- Lake Tahoe Community College
- Long Beach City College
- Mission College
- Mt. San Antonio College
- Napa Valley College
- San Diego City College
- San Francisco State University
- San Joaquin Delta College
- University of California, Davis
- Victor Valley College

Michigan Postsecondary Institutions

- Alpena Community College
- Bay de Noc Community College
- Delta College
- Glen Oaks Community College
- Gogebic Community College
- Grand Rapids Community College
- Jackson College
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College
- Lake Michigan College
- Macomb Community College
- Monroe County Community College
- Montcalm Community College

- Mott Community College
- North Central Michigan College
- Northwestern Michigan College
- Oakland Community College
- Schoolcraft College
- St. Clair County Community College
- Washtenaw Community College
- West Shore Community College

Texas Postsecondary Institutions

- Brazosport College
- Texas A&M International University
- Texas State University

Washington Postsecondary Institutions

- Bellevue College
- Cascadia College
- Green River College
- Highline College
- North Seattle College
- Renton Technical College
- Seattle Central College
- Shoreline Community College
- South Seattle College
- University of Washington-Bothell Campus