



2026 Fact Sheet: SUNY's Ongoing Commitment to Student Supports

To be successful in their studies, students must feel secure that their basic needs – including hunger, shelter, transportation and care for their children – will be met. However, even when help is available, many students may not know that support is there. It can be challenging for college students to seek support due to “embarrassment, fear of exposure, and general stigma around food insecurity or help-seeking.”¹

SUNY is dedicated to addressing our students basic needs, reducing the stigma of seeking assistance, and allowing our students to thrive on and off campus. SUNY's robust Basic Needs Agenda includes:

- **Expanding Resources to Combat Food Insecurity:** SUNY remains committed to combating food insecurity, and all 64 campuses receive recurring annual funding to support food pantries. This year, we awarded five campuses, adding to the two awarded last year and five awarded in 2024, totaling 12 supported institutions. SUNY has also hosted the second annual Basic Needs Summit that illuminates basic needs champions in September from across New York State that represent the students' voices and share best practices occurring across the system. SUNY has also incorporated a meal swipe program to alleviate food waste and student hunger and expanded the SUNY system pantries for culturally inclusive foods for students. The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs found that 59% of students nationally experience a basic needs insecurity, with 41% reporting food insecurity. SUNY provides State-operated campuses with \$1 million annually in operating funds to address food insecurity.
- **Broadening SNAP Access for Greater Impact:** The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can help provide money for groceries, but the program can be challenging to access for college students. Building on previous initiatives, including a self-service enrollment verification online form, every SUNY campus is connecting with potentially eligible students to ensure access to SNAP benefits. The Empire State Service Corps continues training students in understanding SNAP benefits and connecting with peers to help destigmatize accessing benefits. SUNY will work with farmers' markets to expand SNAP utilization and provide additional fresh food options to students. SUNY will also work to increase the number of approved SNAP eligible stores on SUNY campuses and will support efforts to make more nutritious foods available to students.
- **Improving SUNY's Basic Needs Data:** SUNY was awarded a grant from the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) to participate in the [Basic Needs Data Academy](#). Through this support, SUNY has created a cross-agency team with the Governor's Office and New York State Office of Temporary & Disability Assistance to define, collect, and use basic needs data to improve policy and decision-making, inform programming and services, and directly support students. This three-year grant will enable

¹ <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/napa.12190>



SUNY and New York State to better understand the impact of basic needs insecurities on student success and develop best practices for addressing these needs in the long term.

- **Strengthening Housing Support for Students in Need:** Every SUNY campus is required to have a Homeless Liaison to ensure that students experiencing homelessness receive the academic, financial, and wraparound support they need to succeed and thrive. SUNY will continue supporting the SUNY Campus Homeless Liaison Learning Network and related basic needs work by providing individualized technical assistance to address individual campus needs. SUNY will also host Campus Homeless Liaison Learning Network meetings to promote best practices.
- **Advancing Child Care and Support for Parenting Students:** Through the SUNY Child Care Expansion Initiative, SUNY invested nearly \$2 million to expand child care access at 11 community colleges, creating more than 100 new child care slots and expanding evening, weekend, infant, and toddler care options for student parents across the state. Campuses leveraged partnerships with community providers, converted underutilized space, and added staffing to create sustainable new capacity. These investments directly support student-parent retention and degree completion by removing a critical barrier to higher education access. SUNY has also developed a playbook targeting food insecurity among parenting students, which can be found [here](#).
- **Expanding Transportation Solutions for Students:** Limited access to transportation contributes to lower college completion rates. With students spending an average of [\\$1,840 annually on transportation](#) and [92% of those missing class due to transit issues](#) and not receiving assistance, SUNY partnered with the Civic Mapping Initiative in 2023 to assess transit access to campuses. The partnership worked with five campuses to provide grants that supported collaboration with local transit agencies and the development of strategies to close transportation gaps for students and their communities. Building on best practices learned from the initial pilot program, SUNY is working with five additional campuses to expand their transportation efforts to ensure students can access the community and resources they need.
- **Enhancing Mental Health Resources:** Thanks to Governor Kathy Hochul's investments in SUNY, SUNY allocated \$10 million in ongoing operational funds to support mental health services across State-operated campuses and \$3 million for mental health services at community colleges. These resources enable the hiring of additional mental health staff, the extension of hours for mental health counseling availability, and the expansion of access to tele-counseling. Additionally, SUNY is preparing the [next generation](#) of the mental health workforce with programs like the EOP Scholars mental health program. SUNY is also ensuring that representatives across SUNY campuses are able to obtain Mental Health First Aid training, a nationally recognized program. A SUNY suicide awareness prevention toolkit was also created to support students in need.