

# STUDENT FOOD AND HOUSING INSECURITY

FISCAL YEAR 2023



## ABOUT THIS REPORT

Nationally, college students are increasingly experiencing food and housing insecurity. Often an unseen challenge, food and housing insecurity may not be evident among students.

Student regents led an effort during the 2020-21 academic year to address this issue and the Arizona Board of Regents instituted a tri-university work group to assess the level of student food insecurity and housing needs and providing guidance on evidence-based policies and practices to alleviate identified needs. (See the [2021 Student Food and Housing Insecurity Report](#).)

A work group recommendation approved by the board at its June 2021 meeting requires each university to present an annual report to the board about efforts and activities to assess and alleviate student food and housing needs on campus. Other board-approved recommendations include the development of a Basic Needs Committee at each university and a communications plan and portal dedicated to demonstrating and detailing initiatives taken by the universities.

### ABOUT THE ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS

The Arizona Board of Regents is committed to ensuring access for qualified residents of Arizona to undergraduate and graduate institutions; promoting the discovery, application, and dissemination of new knowledge; extending the benefits of university activities to Arizona's citizens outside the university; and maximizing the benefits derived from the state's investment in education.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The [Hope Center's research survey](#) regarding college and university basic needs comprises the nation's largest annual assessment of basic needs security among college students.

The [USDA](#) defines food insecurity as "a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life." Similarly, the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) defines housing insecurity or instability, as the lack of security in shelter due to issues such as "having trouble paying rent, overcrowding, moving frequently or spending the bulk of household income on housing."

Arizona's public universities address student food and housing insecurity through many initiatives and programs, including providing crisis funds for students in need; facilitating community partnerships in support of food and housing insecurities; distributing food; and promoting resources for students to take advantage of basic needs services.



## ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY ASSISTS STUDENTS IN NEED

Arizona State University is committed to student well-being and success. The Dean of Students Office, specifically Student Advocacy and Assistance, serves as the primary lead for supporting and assisting students in need. The Student Advocacy team offers basic needs resources to students in the community and on campus. A university-wide basic needs workgroup meets monthly to identify and advance support for students. The Dean of Students from the Tempe campus chairs the group of over 15 faculty, staff and student representatives.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Produced [Get to Know Your Dean of Students](#) video, by student request and design, to raise awareness around basic needs support.
- Disbursed 223 Crisis Fund awards totaling \$89,650. The [ASU Student Crisis Fund](#) is available to assist students in need as outlined in the video.
- Updated both the [Dean of Students](#) and [ASU Basic Needs](#) webpages in fall 2023.
- Recorded a 51 percent increase in visitations to the Basic Needs landing page (3,500 to 5,300) from academic year 2021-2022 to 2022-2023.
- [Facilitated re-evaluation of financial support](#) when a student's personal or family situation changed due to job loss, income reduction, illness or other unforeseen hardship.
- Expanded university work group to 15 individuals to advance efforts.
- Furthered collaborative partnerships with key student support units and community partners in support of food, housing and other insecurities, including provision of 60 meal cards and meal swipes.
- Enhanced marketing materials to promote basic needs resources. (See appendix.)
- Distributed redesigned information at various events to increase awareness of basic needs resources and support available to students. (See appendix.)



### UPCOMING PRIORITIES

The following are outlined priorities for the 2023-2024 academic year:

- Develop a basic needs chatbot.
- Add [Basic Needs webpage](#) to quick links on ASU mobile app.
- Create videos for various resource areas on the Basic Needs webpage, including family resources, financial assistance, food resources and off-campus housing.
- Update and enhance basic needs intake form.
- Promote campus and community resources through MyASU banner communication, digiboards, video, social media and other marketing pathways.

## NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY COORDINATES EFFORTS TO ADDRESS FOOD, HOUSING INSECURITY

Northern Arizona University's ethos of care underlies extensive coordinated efforts to alleviate student food and housing insecurities. The Basic Needs Committee and Food Insecurity Task Force met several times throughout the year to review data from NAU's basic needs programs, discuss trends and propose new initiatives. Membership of the committees include Student Affairs staff, faculty and the staff from Sodexo, the university's dining partner.

NAU's annual Student Food and Housing Insecurity Report provides updates on essential and emergency needs programs, coordinated services and fundraising efforts. As evidenced below, NAU's efforts to address food insecurity are mature and robust, while efforts around housing insecurity are expanding. Progress has been made on the next steps detailed in [last year's report](#), in part due to Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) subsidies supporting programs, and an updated set of next steps are offered in the concluding section.

### BASIC NEEDS UPDATES

- Launched The Lumberjack CARE Center: The Lumberjack Case Management, Advocacy, Resources and Essential Needs (CARE) Center was launched in summer 2022 with a \$175,000 Elevating Excellence grant. The CARE Center is the primary point of contact for awareness and engagement efforts, identifying needs, and promoting and distributing resources. Staff engage in a variety of work from case management and student advocacy to supporting essential and emergency needs programs. During academic year 2022-23, the CARE Center connected with over 4,250 individuals. Additional information is available at:
  - <https://in.nau.edu/dean-of-students/care-center/>
  - <https://in.nau.edu/dean-of-students/louies-cupboard/>
- Expanded Louie's Cupboard and created additional distribution sites:
  - Flagstaff Campus: Early in fall 2022, the cupboard moved from a small closet in the University Union to the remodeled Sechrist residence hall annex location. The much larger space accommodated the 100 percent growth in the number of participants from the 2021-2022 academic year. During academic year 2022-2023, distributions were made to 1,974 households, totaling 5,438 individuals. Households/individuals were counted each time they participated in a distribution.
  - Distribution sites on Flagstaff Campus.
  - Snacks for Jacks in Cline Library.
  - Pocket Pantry in Health Promotion, Health and Learning Center.
  - Pocket Panty in Counseling Services, Health and Learning Center.
  - Yuma Campus: Louie's Cupboard Yuma located in the NAU-Yuma Academic Success Center, commenced operations in February 2022. Since the opening of this pantry, 86 households and 300 individuals have been served. Students can utilize the pantry once per day during normal business hours.
- Enhanced partnerships with local/regional food banks: During the spring 2023 semester, Louie's Cupboard was awarded an industrial refrigerator and freezer and two basket carts through St. Mary's Food Bank Capacity Grant program. These items have a value of approximately \$15,000 and will allow an expansion of food offerings, including frozen fruits and vegetables, and frozen meal options.
- Strengthened and expanded the Meal Swipes for Jacks Program: Supported through joint funding from Sodexo and the NAU Foundation, free mini-meal plans continue to be offered to NAU students through the Meal Swipes for Jacks Program. Students complete a simple application regarding need and are awarded a mini-meal plan of six meal swipes to be used at any of NAU's all-you-care-to-eat dining facilities. Students can receive one mini-meal plan each semester.
  - Fall 2022: 239 students received free mini-meal plans (1,434 free meals).
  - Spring 2023: 525 students received free mini-meal plans (3,150 free meals; increase over fall 2022 due to HEERF).
- Expanded housing insecurity data tracking and resources:
  - The Lumberjack Emergency Assistance Fund (LEAF) provides emergency grants of \$500 to students experiencing unexpected financial need. In 2022-2023, 548 students received LEAF funds.
  - Approximately 70 percent (n=384) of grant requests this year indicated housing-related needs such as help paying rent, housing deposit and utilities. (Note: Requestors can submit more than one reason for needing the funds.)
  - Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to submit a CARE referral to report concerns that may be impacting a student's academic success, including referrals related to housing needs. These referrals are distinct from LEAF requests made by the students themselves. Through wrap-around case management by the CARE Center staff, referred students are informed of university and community housing resources and support. In 2022-2023, 4.2 percent of CARE referrals involved housing insecurity.
  - Housing needs are identified as a top priority in NAU's 2022-2023 Flagstaff Campus master planning process due to the current state of the Flagstaff housing market and the increased demand to live on campus despite there being a high volume of student-focused housing in town.
  - Campus Living and the Center for International Education are partnering to create high density on-campus housing for 237 international students using existing space starting in fall 2023, with plans to expand to 267 spaces for fall 2024.
  - Student Affairs is working with the NAU Foundation to identify funding sources and strategic efforts to address student housing insecurity that align with the Elevating Excellence strategic roadmap. For example, the foundation is looking to expand its relationship with a current scholarship program, which provides wrap-around services for students who have experienced time in foster care or in a legal guardianship, have been a ward of the court or identify as an unaccompanied homeless youth. As the program expands, one element may be a living-learning community for program participants.



## COORDINATED SERVICES FOR FOOD INSECURITY AWARENESS AND RESOURCE AVAILABILITY

NAU's coordinated services helps ensure that individual campus health offices are familiar with spotting the signs of food insecurity among student patients and have resources available within health settings to improve food access for food insecure students.

- Medical services:
  - A registered dietitian used the [USDA six-question screening tool](#) to screen nutrition patients. For example, 17 percent of respondents indicated "yes" to the question: In the last 30 days, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough food?
  - Following a vacancy during fall 2022, the newly hired registered dietitian completed over 130 nutrition appointments, including 81 first-time visits during spring 2023.
  - Psychiatric providers ask about food and general financial insecurities during intake appointments. Patients who answer affirmatively are then offered resources or referred to Campus Health case management. During the 2022-23 academic year, psychiatric providers conducted 522 intakes.
- Counseling Services:
  - Counseling Services include questions on intake paperwork that inquire about food and housing insecurity as concerns; these are simple check boxes.
  - During summer 2022, Counseling Services added two items from the USDA six-item short form of the Food Security Survey Module to intake paperwork. For example, 25 percent of respondents indicated "sometimes true" and 4 percent indicated "often true" to this statement: In the last 12 months, were you ever worried whether your food would run out before you got money to buy more?
  - Counseling Services continues to investigate the impact of COVID on food and housing insecurities.
  - Counseling Services staff co-chair the NAU Mental Health Coalition, which involves supporting students' basic needs.
  - Case Management continually offers food and housing resources to students in need.
- CARE team:
  - The [CARE referral](#) is a public-facing form allowing students or others on their behalf to request support with basic needs.
  - The CARE Center team presented a poster on the program and services at the spring 2023 NAU Showcase of Student Success Strategies event, and provided information about its programs at a variety of tabling events including Discover NAU, Transfer days, NAU Said Yes, Q-Unity Welcome, Exploring Honors Day, SNAP Workshop, Lumberjack Spirit Days and Transfer Visit Day. The team presented information about its services to offices and departments around campus including Transfer and Online Connections, Career Services, First Generation Programs, Academic Advising and various academic departments.

- o Due to the difficult nature of assessing need, the Dean of Students CARE team is collaborating with the Center for International Education to understand, identify and address international students' needs.
- o Donation food bins located around campus help spread the word about Louie's Cupboard. In addition, departments, offices, colleges, and student clubs and organizations hold food drives for the cupboard throughout the year. One example is the NAU Police Department's Beards for Bread holiday fundraiser that raised awareness of food insecurity on campus and \$400 for Louie's Cupboard.

The cupboard hosted a Fill the Louie's Cupboard Van canned food donation drive during Welcome Week in August and at the holiday staff event.

### FUNDRAISING EFFORTS – CULTURE OF GIVING

NAU's culture of giving encourages food service companies to donate funds, food items or space to university managed food pantries and creates a system-led culture of annual giving and volunteerism to address food insecurity.

- Since fall 2022, the NAU Sodexo contract has included a commitment to annually donate 50 mini-meal plans or 300 meal swipes to the Meal Swipes for Jacks program.
- In collaboration with Sodexo, Louie's Leftovers is a program aimed to reduce food waste by providing a notification through the NAUgo app that lets students know when there is free leftover food at campus events.
- Approximately 20 student volunteers assist cupboard operations during each bi-weekly distribution. Volunteers include NAU social work students, members of a variety of campus clubs and organizations, and other students eager to donate their time. Volunteers package produce, set up distribution, deliver produce to Campus Living, pick up produce at the Flagstaff Family Food Center and assist in running distribution operations. Volunteers can also help at the Open Air Market on the Union Pedway.
- Conversations and collaborations are ongoing with the NAU Retirees Association regarding volunteering with basic needs programs. In addition, the NAU Alumni Association sponsors the very popular program, Louie's Cupboard Spice Rack, providing a variety of cooking spices to Louie's Cupboard clients.
- LEAF: NAU Foundation account current balance: \$64,563.
  - o Amount raised at fall and spring Giving Days, \$53,220 and \$1,730, respectively.
- Louie's Cupboard: NAU Foundation Account current balance: \$106,110.
  - o Amount raised at fall and spring Giving Days, \$3,115 and \$1,385, respectively.



### NEXT STEPS

NAU's next steps are grounded in national and local data that suggest demand for food and housing insecurity support and services will continue to trend upward. Recent data from the 2023 American College Health Association's National College Health Assessment indicates reports of food insecurity continue to rise among students. And, NAU has seen increases in emergency fund requests for food and housing related needs, and on-campus housing and affordable housing in Flagstaff, Yuma and other municipalities surrounding the campuses. Moving forward with the goal of meeting student needs, it will be important to:

- Continue to partner with the NAU Foundation for fundraising.
- Advocate for the continuation of college students' eligibility for SNAP benefits.
- Engage with the master planning effort on campus to construct additional on-campus living communities.
- Collaborate with Campus Living regarding dedicated beds for temporary housing, intentional placement of students in communities with close proximity to the Lumberjack CARE Center and other ways to support the most vulnerable students.
- Evaluate the ability of the Access to Excellence initiative to mitigate financial need for students and decrease demand on services.
- Monitor potentially negative effect of the discontinuation of relief funds on capacity to meet needs at current levels.
- Consider combining the Basic Needs Committee and Food Insecurity Task Force to streamline efforts and resources.

## UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE LEADS BASIC NEEDS EFFORTS

The Dean of Students Office is the primary lead for student basic needs, including the Richard H. Tyler Student Emergency Fund, Campus Pantry, Fostering Success, Campus Closet, Student Assistance and partnerships with social services agencies. The office works collectively and regularly reviews how to enhance processes and innovate ways to utilize the talents of students, faculty and staff in service to students.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The University of Arizona [HSI Initiatives Program](#) proudly supported the Campus Pantry during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing \$10,000 in 2021 for increased food distributions to meet the need. In fall 2022, UArizona HSI Initiatives also provided significant funding to support the inaugural Basic Needs Symposium, a culmination of multi-year evaluation efforts beginning in 2019.
- A second full-time staff member was hired in spring 2023 to support and serve the Campus Pantry and student users.
- The Basic Needs Center & Services (BNC&S) staff partner with 30-plus community-based collaborators for increased access to basic needs resources including but not limited to food, mental health services, housing and transportation.

### BASICS

- UArizona engages cross-campus stakeholders through the Basic Needs Coalition to assess campus communications to determine ways to promote resources, for basic needs insecure students and increase awareness of resources available to students.
- The BNC&S unit within the Dean of Students Office is comprised of the Campus Pantry addressing campus food insecurity, Campus Closet for student clothing insecurity, and Fostering Success to address the needs of students with experience in the foster care system or with housing insecurity concerns. The BNC&S team also oversees the campus-based Basic Needs Coalition, comprised of faculty and staff members representing areas across campus, including the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid, Campus Health, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Residence Life, and Assessment and Research.
- The BNC&S team now has a dedicated and shared email address (shared between BNC&S full-time staff members - [basicneeds@arizona.edu](mailto:basicneeds@arizona.edu)) to more quickly answer questions about basic needs access and resources while sharing information about basic needs programming, services and opportunities to students, staff and faculty. The BNC&S team also started a monthly newsletter that is emailed to relevant stakeholders, including pertinent information to increase access to resources and provide feedback to improve existing services.
- The university ensures that individual campus health offices are familiar with spotting the signs of food insecurity among student patients and have resources available within health settings to improve food access for these students.

- There are continued and expanded efforts to engage departments to increase understanding of basic needs insecurities and build partnerships to secure sustainable resources to support students experiencing these insecurities.
- Partnerships with local and regional food banks were strengthened and maintained.
- Donations were made from food service companies.
- A partnership with the UArizona Student Unions donated leftover food from restaurants and catering events, safely packaged items and distributed the food through the Boxing Up Hunger program.
- The UArizona Unions also have steward relationships with partners such as Shamrock Foods and Coca-Cola to receive weekly food allocations.
- The UArizona Foundation supports an annual giving drive to the Campus Pantry through donor, alumni and staff networks. This includes participation in the annual Basic Needs Center Benefit Dinner, raising more than \$26,000 this year.
- Campus Pantry worked with UA4Food on the annual Stuff the CatTran food drive to raise awareness of food insecurity while also collecting donations.
- UArizona worked to ensure students are aware of the programs that are available on and around campus by addressing basic needs insecurity in the New Student Interest Form and implementing information access through CatCloud.
- A focus is on enhancing marketing methods through communication vehicles, including syllabi, dorms, Campus Health and Campus Recreation, and new student orientation.

### RESOURCES, RESEARCH AND REPORTS

- [Bring Insights to Action: Data Informed Approaches to Addressing Student Basic Needs](#)

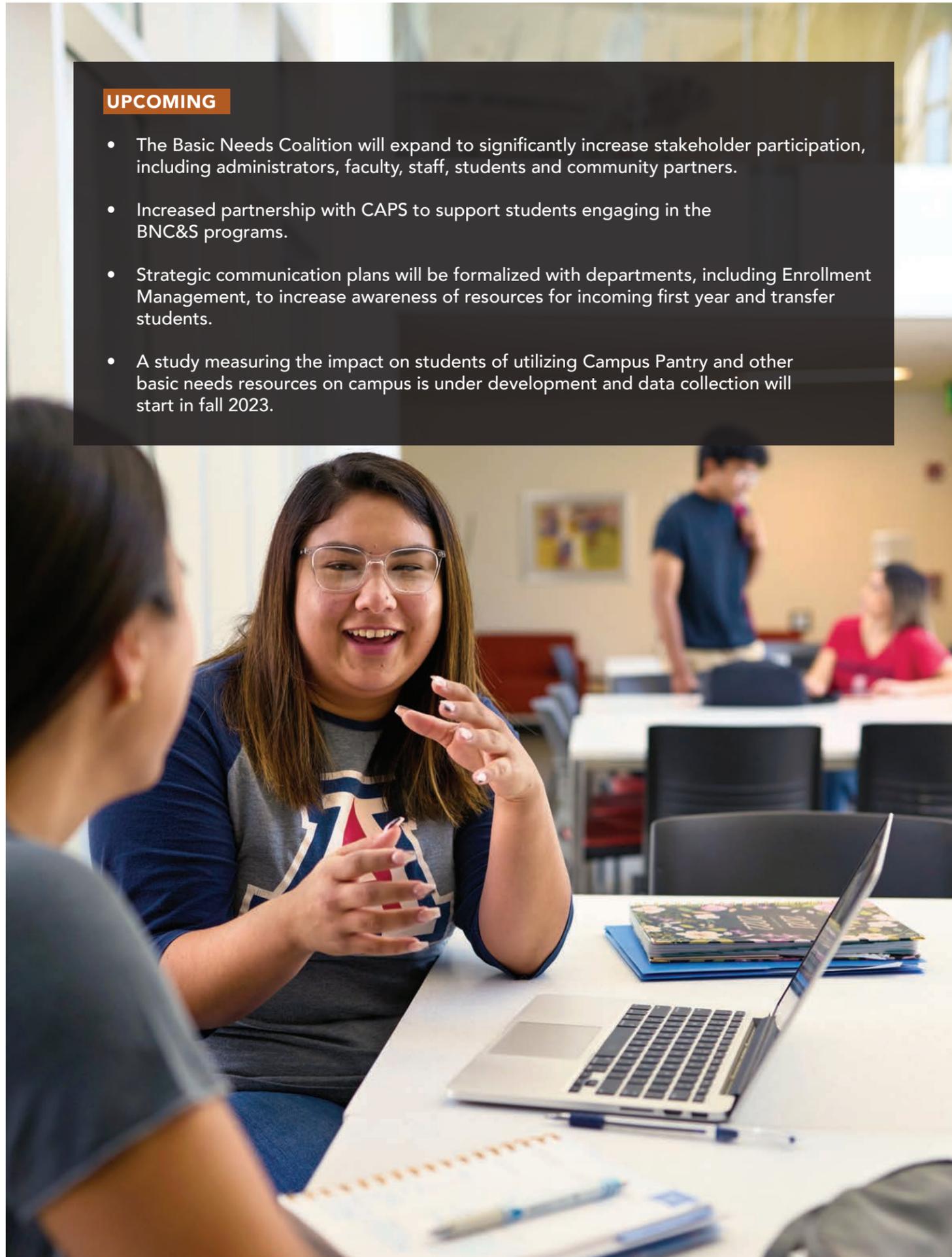
Relevant Reports and Summaries:

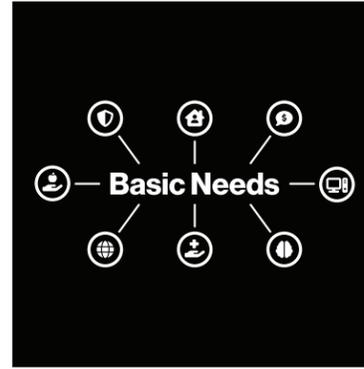
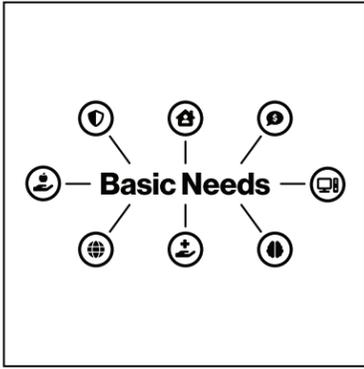
- [Student Basic Needs Survey \(spring 2021\)](#)
- [Student Basic Needs Focus Groups Report \(spring 2022\)](#)
- [Review of Research on Student Basic Needs \(fall 2021\)](#)
- [UA Foster Care, Unaccompanied, and Homeless Students & Solutions from Fostering Success](#)
- [International Students Food Access and Behavior Survey \(fall 2022\)](#)

## UPCOMING

- The Basic Needs Coalition will expand to significantly increase stakeholder participation, including administrators, faculty, staff, students and community partners.
- Increased partnership with CAPS to support students engaging in the BNC&S programs.
- Strategic communication plans will be formalized with departments, including Enrollment Management, to increase awareness of resources for incoming first year and transfer students.
- A study measuring the impact on students of utilizing Campus Pantry and other basic needs resources on campus is under development and data collection will start in fall 2023.

# APPENDIX





**Engage,  
Connect, Belong.**

**We are glad you are a part of the Sun Devil Family**

The Dean of Students Office is a central resource for student assistance on campus. We strive to foster a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for learning and achievement while serving as a connector to individualized support and services:

- Guidance and assistance for students experiencing challenges with academics, housing, student employment, visa/immigration, financial aid and other student services areas
- One-on-One consultation with students seeking guidance in resolving personal challenges and concerns
- Assistance with administrative matters impacting academic persistence and success, including: Absence Letters, Course Incompletes, Course Withdrawals, Compassionate Withdrawals and Medical Withdrawals

Whether you require immediate or long-term support, we are here to help you get connected to university resources or meet with a staff member.

Scan to contact Student Advocacy and Assistance



Scan for resources for basic needs



If you have questions, please contact the Dean of Students Office  
[deanofstudents@asu.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@asu.edu) | 480-965-6547

