



For College, Community, and Justice

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ANNOUNCEMENT:

The Hope Center Launches Initiative to Scale Effective Emergency Aid Practices to Support #RealCollege Students

September 30, 2020

As it begins its third year, The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice is launching a new national initiative focused on scaling effective and equitable emergency aid practices. Emergency aid is an increasingly critical support for #RealCollege students, as they come to college with little financial privilege and often attend under-funded institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic makes emergency aid even more critical, as students are facing shortfalls in earned income, additional costs associated with remote learning (e.g., internet service), and are excluded from many of the pandemic support programs being offered to other Americans.

This three-part initiative draws on The Hope Center's expertise in rigorous applied research, practice, and policy. The team will conduct a national study of current emergency aid practices and student experiences, including CARES Act implementation, support colleges and universities as they refine their practices, and advance state and federal legislation. This effort builds on The Hope Center's extensive work on students' basic needs and financial aid design and delivery, and is grounded in evidence of program under-utilization:

- Even before the pandemic, many students with need did not access emergency aid. The [Fall 2019 #RealCollege survey](#) found that less than 10% of students facing food and/or housing insecurity had accessed emergency aid.
- During the initial months of the pandemic that situation had not much improved. The [Spring 2020 Pandemic survey](#) found that just 15% of students experiencing basic needs insecurity applied for emergency aid. One in three students did not know that emergency aid existed on their campus, and 32% thought emergency aid was unavailable to them.

PART 1: Research on current emergency aid practice and utilization

This spring, for the first time, Congress invested more than \$6 billion in emergency aid via the CARES Act. That investment expanded the use of emergency aid at many colleges and universities around the country, some of which were already deploying homegrown programs funded by institutional dollars and/or philanthropy. Prior evidence offered insights on how to design and deploy emergency aid programs, including streamlining application processes, delivery to students, and setting clear and equitable decision criteria.

But the dramatic changes brought by the pandemic and the CARES Act demands more evidence to build knowledge about how institutions are deploying their emergency aid programs – and the results they are getting for students.

In response The Hope Center is leading a new 18-month study, supported by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) that includes 155 colleges and universities in 42 states (see the participant list at the end of this announcement). All participants are fielding the #RealCollege survey to their students to assess need for emergency aid and use of the institutions' emergency aid programs, including CARES funded-efforts. In addition, practitioners are providing information on how those programs are designed and delivered. Together with DVP-Praxis, The Hope Center's research team will examine which approaches to emergency aid are most closely associated with higher rates of student utilization and signs of academic success. Researchers will pay particular attention to equitable access to emergency aid by minoritized students, parenting students, and those attending Minority-Serving Institutions (for example, participants include 16 Historically Black Colleges and Universities and five Tribal Colleges and Universities).

In addition, The Hope Center's Dr. Christine Baker-Smith is leading an experimental evaluation of [Edquity's](#) technology-driven approach in delivering emergency aid to students. This evaluation would not be possible without funding from [ECMC Foundation](#), or The Hope Center's partnership with [Believe In Students](#), which received support from the Prentice & Alline Brown Foundation and [Schultz Family Foundation](#) to support this evaluation. During 2020, use of Edquity expanded from one community college district to more than a dozen institutions and districts around the country. Dr. Baker-Smith's team will evaluate the efficacy of that approach at Dallas College, several community colleges in West Texas and King County, Washington.

PART 2: Technical assistance to support institutional transformation

Even as the empirical evidence base continues to build, practitioners around the country are doing their best to meet students' immediate needs. In late spring 2020, The Hope Center collected data from 165 institutions in 36 states and the [resulting report](#) revealed that almost 1 in 2 said they needed more guidance on how to distribute emergency aid at scale. Nearly 1 in 4 were not using an online application, less than half felt they could distribute support within 48 hours, and almost 3 in 4 said they lacked adequate financial support to meet demand.

In response, thanks to financial support from Conagra and Aramark, The Hope Center spent summer 2020 increasing its technical assistance to colleges and universities to support their emergency aid and basic needs security practices. This included issuing a new [guide to emergency aid](#) and an [associated webinar](#) on fundraising for emergency aid. The Hope Center also became an approved technical assistance provider for [Gates Foundation Intermediaries for Scale](#) partners, with access provided via both [CatalystED](#) and [NASPA's Student ARC](#). Support from The Hope Center's Institutional Transformation team, led by Paula Umaña and Eddy Conroy (previously at Single Stop at the Community College of Philadelphia, and UCLA's financial aid office, respectively), can also be accessed via [The Hope Center's website](#).

PART 3: State and federal policy support to advance legislation

Effectively scaling of equitable emergency aid will require additional state and federal resources. The CARES Act investment in emergency aid was a strong start, building on state emergency aid programs in California, Minnesota, North Carolina, Washington, and Wisconsin. The Hope Center’s Policy & Advocacy team, led by Carrie Welton (formerly of the Center for Law and Social Policy), is advising legislators seeking to maximize the effectiveness of emergency aid programs and ensure that they are an integral part of larger efforts to address college affordability and basic needs insecurity among students. For example, the team recently advised on the Emergency Grant Aid for College Students Act (S.4465), introduced by Senator Tina Smith. The team also issued policy guidance during the [CARES Act implementation](#), and [authored a blueprint](#) on higher education policy for a CDC Foundation and Well-Being Trust pandemic-recovery initiative. These efforts will continue throughout the coming year, with support from the Michaelson 20MM Foundation. The policy team seeks additional partners to adapt to changing needs in a shifting policy environment.

List of Participating Colleges and Universities

- College/University
- Alvernia University
- Amarillo College
- Arizona State University
- Austin Community College District
- Bellevue College
- Berkshire Community College
- Boise State University
- Bowie State University
- California State University Northridge
- California State University, East Bay
- Camden County College
- Chaffey College
- Chestnut Hill College
- Claflin University
- Clarke University
- Cleveland State Community College
- College of Southern Nevada
- Colorado State University
- Columbia Basin College
- Columbia State Community College
- Columbus State Community College
- Community College of Baltimore County
- Community College of Denver
- Community College of Philadelphia
- Community College of Vermont
- Concord University
- Concordia University Texas
- Dalton State College
- Davidson County Community College
- Delaware State University
- Dillard University
- Diné College
- Dyersburg State Community College
- East Los Angeles College
- Eastern Iowa Community College
- Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell
- Elgin Community College
- Emporia State University
- Everett Community College
- Fayetteville State University
- Florida International University
- Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
- Fullerton College
- Governors State University
- Grambling State University
- Grand Rapids Community College
- Grayson College
- Green River College
- Guilford Technical Community College
- Hawai'i Community College
- Highline College
- Honolulu Community College
- Housatonic Community College
- Houston Community College
- Imperial Valley College
- Indian River State College
- Iowa State University
- Ivy Tech Community College Central Indiana
- Jackson State University
- Johnson C. Smith University
- Kapi'olani Community College
- Kaua'i Community College
- Kennesaw State University
- Kutztown University
- La Salle University
- LaGuardia Community College (CUNY)
- Lake Michigan College
- Lane College
- Leeward Community College
- Lorain County Community College
- Los Angeles City College
- Los Angeles Harbor College
- Los Angeles Mission College
- Los Angeles Pierce College
- Los Angeles Southwest College
- Los Angeles Trade-Technical College
- Los Angeles Valley College
- Loyola University New Orleans
- Madison Area Technical College
- Maui College
- Mercy College
- Mercy College of Ohio
- Metropolitan Community College
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
- Miami Dade College

- Middlesex Community College
- Middlesex County College
- Milwaukee Area Technical College
- Minnesota West Community and Technical College
- Mississippi State University
- Montgomery College
- Moore College of Art & Design
- Morgan State University
- Mt. Hood Community College
- Mt. San Antonio College
- Nashua Community College
- Nevada State College
- Nichols College
- Normandale Community College
- North Central Texas College
- North Dakota State University
- North Seattle College
- Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
- Northern Illinois University
- Northern Virginia Community College
- Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College
- Ohio University
- Oklahoma State University
- Paul Quinn College
- Peirce College
- Pellissippi State Community College
- Pima Community College
- Portland Community College
- Portland State University
- Prairie View A&M University
- Queensborough Community College (CUNY)
- Rappahannock Community College
- Roane State Community College
- Rowan College of South Jersey
- San Jose City College
- Seattle Central College
- Sinclair Community College
- Spelman College
- St. Cloud Technical & Community College
- Talladega College
- Temple University
- Texas Southern University
- The City College of New York (CUNY)
- The Evergreen State College
- The Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute
- The Ohio State University at Mansfield
- The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- Thomas More University
- United Tribes Technical College
- University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
- University of Central Arkansas
- University of Central Florida
- University of Hawaii at Hilo
- University of Hawaii at Mānoa
- University of Hawaii West O‘ahu
- University of Massachusetts Lowell
- University of Memphis
- University of Missouri - Kansas City (UMKC)
- University of Missouri St. Louis
- University of Montana
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of South Alabama
- University of South Dakota
- University of South Florida
- University of Washington Tacoma
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Utah State University
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- Wake Technical Community College
- Walla Walla Community College
- Washington State University
- West Liberty University
- West Los Angeles College
- White Earth Tribal and Community College
- Wichita State University
- William Paterson University
- Windward Community College