



## **ANNOUNCEMENT:**

# **The Hope Center Connects California Community Colleges to CalFresh Food Benefits to Reduce Food Insecurity**

**September 23, 2021**

[The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice](#) is pleased to announce it is collaborating with California community college leaders to help reduce food insecurity for more than 300,000 students by connecting them with under-utilized federal aid.

With an investment from the Michelson 20MM Foundation, The Hope Center is partnering with California college leaders and staff to increase access for students to nutritious food through the SNAP\* (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) program, known as CalFresh in California.

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) and San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) serve students across 12 colleges. The Hope Center is focused on equipping leaders and staff members with knowledge and effective strategies to enhance their outreach to students. The goal is to increase accessibility to the CalFresh program and ultimately reduce food insecurity among its students.

“Knowledge is power that translates to action,” said Sara Goldrick-Rab, Founder and President of The Hope Center. “Helping college leaders better understand the CalFresh program and communicate its benefits is an essential component to removing the access barrier for students. We are excited to have begun this work in California and look forward to continuing to be a resource to help increase utilization and ultimately support students in completing their college degrees.”

California has made significant strides in expanding eligibility and access to public support programs to reduce basic needs insecurity among college students. Yet there remains a gap between food insecure students and utilization of food supports like SNAP. The Hope Center’s #RealCollege 2020 study revealed that students in the [Los Angeles Community College District](#) and [San Diego Community College District](#) faced higher food insecurity rates than the national average for students at two-year institutions, with 40% of students in the LACCD and 43% of students in the SDCCD being food insecure in the prior 30 days.

In partnership with President and CEO of the Compton College and Compton Community College District and Hope Center Advisory Board Member Dr. Keith Curry, Goldrick-Rab delivered briefings to over 60 community college CEOs this year, sharing important CalFresh changes and an overview on the necessary next steps to support their students with expanded CalFresh access.

In addition to the CEO briefings, The Hope Center conducted a student focus group and CalFresh partners' meetings to understand challenges and opportunities to enhance CalFresh outreach practices. It also hosted two intensive webinars to offer guidance to college administrators about models to engage students to increase SNAP participation, as well as strategies to use data to boost CalFresh access and student persistence.

## ABOUT THE HOPE CENTER

The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice is an action research center redefining what it means to be a student-ready college with a national movement centering #RealCollege students' basic needs. Our work is guided by five pillars: action research, institutional transformation, policy and advocacy, communications, and sustainability.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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*\*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - [SNAP](#) is a government-funded program that provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency.*