

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 24, 2021
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 13, 2021
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 23, 2021
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2021–22 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 775

Introduced by Assembly Member Berman
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Arambula)

February 16, 2021

An act to add Section 66023.5 to the Education Code, relating to public postsecondary education.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 775, as amended, Berman. Public postsecondary education: basic needs of students.

(1) Existing law establishes the California Community Colleges, under the administration of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, as one of the 3 segments of public postsecondary education in this state. Existing law establishes community college districts throughout the state, and authorizes them to provide instruction to students at community college campuses.

Existing law requests campuses of the California Community Colleges to give priority for certain student housing to current and former homeless youth, as specified, and requests those campuses to develop a plan to ensure that current and former homeless youth can access housing resources during and between academic terms, including during academic and campus breaks. Existing law defines homeless youth for these purposes.

This bill would express legislative findings and declarations about the impact of basic needs insecurity on college students.

This bill would require each campus of the California Community Colleges, no later than July 1, 2022, to establish the position of Basic Needs Coordinator and designate a staff person as the Basic Needs Coordinator. The bill would require a basic needs coordinator to act as a broker in identifying, supporting, and linking students to on- and off-campus housing, food, mental health, and other basic needs services and resources, among other responsibilities. The bill would also require each campus, no later than July 1, 2022, to establish a Basic Needs Center, which would be a central location on campus where basic needs services, resources, and staff would be made available to students, as specified. The bill would require each Basic Needs Center, among other duties, to help students to have the information needed to enroll in CalFresh and other relevant government benefit programs. The bill would require campuses to endeavor, to the extent feasible, to use a portion of any funds made available for basic needs support for providing funds directly to students to address urgent needs, as specified. *The bill would make the implementation of these requirements contingent upon an appropriation by the Legislature in the annual Budget Act or another statute for this purpose.*

This bill would further require each campus, no later than February 1, 2022, to develop a document to be made available to students online that clearly lists all on- and off-campus basic needs services and resources, as specified. The bill would require each campus to provide the document to students as a part of campus orientations in either electronic format or paper form, and to provide to faculty, and encourage the faculty to include in their syllabi, the online link to the electronic format of the document, the location of the Basic Needs ~~Center~~, *Center once established*, and the contact information for the ~~coordinator~~, *coordinator once designated*. The bill would also require each campus, no later than February 1, 2022, to streamline the application and intake process for on-campus basic needs services and resources, to develop and implement a plan to identify and provide outreach to students who have basic needs insecurity, and to develop a student basic needs tab that is clearly visible and easily accessible from a drop-down menu on the home page of the internet website of the campus, as specified.

This bill would require each community college campus to report specified information to the office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, and would require the office to develop and

submit to the Governor and the Legislature every 2 years beginning on or before May 1, 2023, a report based on the data and information reported by campuses under the bill.

Because the bill would impose new duties on community college districts, it would constitute a state-mandated local program.

(2) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to the statutory provisions noted above.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

3 (a) California students are struggling to meet their basic needs
4 and are facing housing insecurity, including homelessness, and
5 food insecurity at alarming rates.

6 (b) A report released in March 2019 by the office of the
7 Chancellor of the California Community Colleges and the Hope
8 Center for College, Community, and Justice found that 19 percent
9 of the survey's respondents experienced homelessness in the
10 previous year, 60 percent of respondents were housing insecure
11 in the previous year, and 50 percent of respondents were food
12 insecure in the prior 30 days.

13 (c) Some groups of students are disproportionately impacted
14 by basic needs insecurity. Students of color, first-generation college
15 students, financial aid recipients, former foster youth, and student
16 parents are at much higher risk.

17 (d) Basic needs insecurity has a direct impact on student
18 academic success. Students experiencing basic needs insecurity
19 are much more likely to not buy textbooks, to miss, drop, or fail
20 classes, and to withdraw from school entirely. In addition, these
21 students consistently report high levels of stress and other mental
22 health issues, which negatively impact academic performance and
23 health in general.

1 (e) Addressing Homelessness and Housing Insecurity in Higher
2 Education, a book that provides research-based information and
3 tools for educators and higher education professionals to build
4 effective institutional supports for college students facing housing
5 insecurity, found all of the following:

6 (1) “Understanding how basic needs insecurity exists on and
7 around your campus is an important first step. In order to develop
8 a more fully informed understanding of students’ unmet basic
9 needs on your campus, we recommend that you use a mix of survey
10 data collection to learn about the size and scope of the issues as
11 well as using interviews and focus groups to illustrate the
12 experiences from the viewpoints of students. Additionally, you
13 can include institutional data you previously gathered about student
14 demographics, financial aid use, and the cost of living that may
15 be helpful for expanding the findings of your institution’s
16 evaluation.”

17 (2) “Students who need support often have a difficult time
18 finding and accessing supports on campus. Campuses can have
19 complex interlocking or disconnected systems that can be difficult
20 to negotiate while managing the stress of homelessness. Students
21 must traverse through complicated financial aid processes and seek
22 appropriate campus support services, while managing courses and
23 other responsibilities.”

24 (3) “A centralized and coordinated effort can more easily be
25 publicized in a way that all students can benefit. Developing a
26 coordinated strategy increases the likelihood that students, faculty,
27 and staff can more easily access the various forms of support.”

28 (4) “Research and anecdotal feedback indicate that students
29 who have a single point of contact experienced feelings of campus
30 connection, care, and success in their university communities.
31 Additionally, single point of contact staff can destigmatize
32 students’ use of on-campus supportive services.”

33 (5) “We recommend creating an integrated approach that
34 includes housing and food insecurity programming working
35 collaboratively. Both services should be in a centrally located space
36 on campus. Students applying to one service should be given
37 information about the other services.”

38 (6) “Having a web presence with information about services
39 available is important. Students may resist disclosing their
40 circumstances to another person, but they may feel more confident

1 in doing so if they have had the opportunity to explore available
2 resources electronically. Creating a webpage with available
3 resources as well as short stories normalizing students’
4 circumstances can be a helpful tool in identifying students who
5 need support.”

6 (f) Community colleges have begun taking steps to meet the
7 basic needs of their students through food pantries, housing-related
8 efforts, and other services and resources. However, students have
9 expressed that the current system is often fragmented, with no
10 single point of contact tasked with overseeing existing basic needs
11 services and resources.

12 (g) Some community colleges are already moving in the
13 direction of a more coordinated and integrated approach.

14 SEC. 2. Section 66023.5 is added to the Education Code, to
15 read:

16 66023.5. (a) As used in this section:

17 (1) “Basic needs services and resources” includes, but is not
18 limited to, housing, food, clothing, feminine hygiene, diapers,
19 technology, *childcare*, and mental health services and resources.

20 (2) “Coordinator” means a basic needs coordinator established
21 pursuant to this section.

22 (b) Each campus of the California Community Colleges shall
23 do all of the following:

24 (1) (A) No later than July 1, 2022, establish the position of the
25 Basic Needs Coordinator, and designate a staff person as the Basic
26 Needs Coordinator to serve as the single point of contact for
27 students experiencing basic needs insecurity related to basic needs
28 services and resources. The coordinator shall act as a broker in
29 identifying, supporting, and linking students to on- and off-campus
30 housing, food, mental health, and other basic needs services and
31 resources. To ensure the effectiveness and impact of this position,
32 the coordinator shall be a dedicated position solely focused on
33 addressing the basic needs of ~~students~~. *students and meet*
34 *qualifications such as experience providing services to high-need*
35 *and diverse populations*. The coordinator shall oversee and
36 coordinate with other staff tasked with addressing students’ basic
37 needs, shall inform students of all on- and off-campus basic needs
38 services and resources and how to access them, and shall develop
39 on- and off-campus partnerships to provide basic needs services
40 and resources to their students.

1 (B) *Implementation of this paragraph is contingent upon an*
2 *appropriation by the Legislature in the annual Budget Act or*
3 *another statute for this purpose.*

4 (2) (A) No later than July 1, 2022, establish a Basic Needs
5 Center, which means a central location on campus where basic
6 needs services, resources, and staff are made available to students.
7 The Basic Needs Center is intended to be a one-stop, single location
8 and point of contact for students to more easily access and gain
9 awareness of basic needs services and resources. The campus shall
10 make a reasonable effort to locate all on-campus basic needs
11 services and resources at the Basic Needs Center. If the campus
12 cannot reasonably locate all basic needs services or resources at
13 the Basic Needs Center, the campus shall provide students with
14 the location and contact information, including name, telephone
15 number, and email address, for all basic needs services and
16 resources not located in the Basic Needs Center. The coordinator
17 shall be housed in the Basic Needs Center.

18 (B) Each Basic Needs Center shall help ensure that students
19 have the information they need to enroll in CalFresh and other
20 relevant government benefits programs. Each Basic Needs Center
21 shall coordinate with their campus Financial Aid Department and
22 shall connect students to the Financial Aid Department as
23 appropriate to ensure that students are receiving all available
24 financial aid. Each Basic Needs Center shall coordinate with their
25 local homelessness response system to refer students to community
26 resources available to address homelessness in addition to services
27 and resources provided by the campus. Basic Needs Centers shall
28 be authorized to provide support to students who can be reasonably
29 expected to enroll in the upcoming term and to provide support to
30 students during summer and winter breaks who were previously
31 enrolled or are enrolled for the upcoming fall or spring term.

32 (C) Campuses shall endeavor, to the extent feasible, to use a
33 portion of any funds made available for basic needs support for
34 providing funds directly to students to address urgent needs. To
35 the extent that a Basic Needs Center is already in place, that center
36 may be used to satisfy the requirements of this section. If the
37 existing Basic Needs Center fulfills only part of the requirements
38 of this section, basic needs services and resources shall be expanded
39 as needed to satisfy all the requirements of this section.

1 (D) *Implementation of this paragraph is contingent upon an*
2 *appropriation by the Legislature in the annual Budget Act or*
3 *another statute for this purpose.*

4 (3) (A) No later than February 1, 2022, develop a document
5 that shall be provided to students at the Basic Needs-~~Center~~ *Center;*
6 *once established pursuant to paragraph (2)*, in either electronic
7 format or paper form, and that shall be made available to students
8 online, that clearly lists all on- and off-campus basic needs services
9 and resources that includes, but is not necessarily limited to, all of
10 the following:

- 11 (i) The description of the service or resource.
- 12 (ii) The location of where the service or resource is provided.
- 13 (iii) The point of contact for the service or resource, including
14 a name, telephone number, and email address.
- 15 (iv) Any eligibility restrictions on accessing the service or
16 resource.

17 (B) Provide the document to students as a part of campus
18 orientations in either electronic format or paper form.

19 (C) Provide to faculty the online link to the electronic format
20 of the document, the location of the Basic Needs-~~Center~~ *Center;*
21 *once established pursuant to paragraph (2)*, and the contact
22 information for the ~~coordinator~~ *coordinator; once designated*
23 *pursuant to paragraph (1)*, and encourage faculty to include the
24 online link to the electronic format of the document, the location
25 of the Basic Needs Center, and the contact information for the
26 coordinator in their syllabi.

27 (D) To ensure that the document remains useful to students, the
28 document shall be reviewed, updated, and made available online
29 on both the internet website of the campus via the student basic
30 needs tab and the internet website-based student account associated
31 with a student's attendance at the institution, as specified in
32 paragraph (6), no later than the first day of every fall and spring
33 semester or no later than the first day of every fall and spring
34 quarter.

35 (4) No later than February 1, 2022, streamline the application
36 and intake process for on-campus basic needs services and
37 resources to minimize duplication and eliminate barriers to access.
38 If an application is required, develop and use a single application
39 for students to receive on-campus basic needs services and
40 resources.

1 (5) No later than February 1, 2022, develop and implement a
2 plan to identify and provide outreach to students, including
3 nontraditional students, who have basic needs insecurity related
4 to housing, food, and mental health. Once the coordinator is
5 designated *pursuant to paragraph (1)* and the Basic Needs Center
6 ~~is established~~, *established pursuant to paragraph (2)*, the outreach
7 shall include information about the coordinator and the Basic Needs
8 Center.

9 (6) No later than February 1, 2022, provide a student basic needs
10 tab that is clearly visible and easily accessible from a drop-down
11 menu on the home page of the campus's internet website and
12 include the information described in paragraph (3) conspicuously
13 on both the internet website of the campus via the student basic
14 needs tab and the internet website-based student account associated
15 with a student's attendance at the institution. Once the coordinator
16 is designated *pursuant to paragraph (1)* and the Basic Needs Center
17 ~~is established~~, *established pursuant to paragraph (2)*, information
18 about the coordinator and Basic Needs Center shall also be included
19 on both the internet website of the campus via the student basic
20 needs tab and the internet website-based student account associated
21 with a student's attendance at the institution.

22 (c) (1) Each campus of the California Community Colleges
23 shall report to the office of the Chancellor of the California
24 Community Colleges information that shall include, but not
25 necessarily be limited to, all of the following:

26 (A) The description and number of basic needs services and
27 resources, broken down by category.

28 (B) The number of students served by the basic needs services
29 and resources.

30 (C) The socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds of these
31 students.

32 (D) Challenges and best practices in the implementation of the
33 basic needs services and resources.

34 (E) Whether students who used the basic needs services and
35 resources remained enrolled or graduated from a campus
36 maintained by the district.

37 (2) The data and information reported under this subdivision
38 shall be disaggregated by each basic needs service and resource,
39 where applicable.

1 (d) The office of the Chancellor of the California Community
2 Colleges shall develop and submit to the Governor and the
3 Legislature every two years beginning on or before May 1, 2023,
4 a report based on the data and information reported by campuses
5 pursuant to subdivision (c).

6 SEC. 3. If the Commission on State Mandates determines that
7 this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to
8 local agencies and school districts for those costs shall be made
9 pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division
10 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

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