

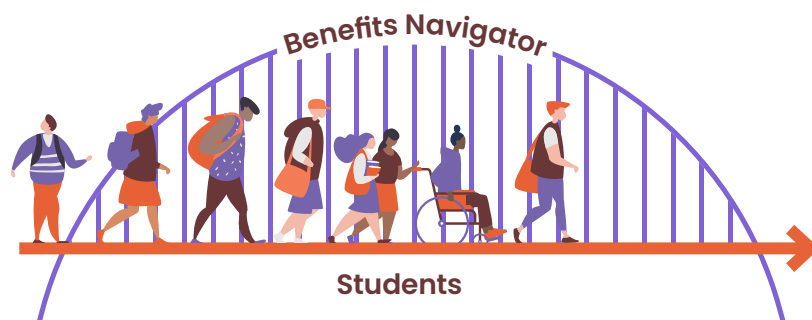
**BRIDGING THE GAP**

# How Basic Needs Oregon Supports College Completion and Workforce Development

**Basic Needs Oregon is a state-mandated program that helps low-income students complete college and prepare for the workforce by connecting them to resources that reduce basic needs insecurity.** When basic needs like food and housing are met, students are better able to focus on their academic and personal achievement. ORS 350.262 (2021) mandates that all public colleges and universities employ a benefits navigator to help students identify and apply for assistance. Benefits navigators are supported by a statewide consortium led by Portland Community College.

## Benefits navigators bridge the gap between students and available resources

- Help students understand eligibility and apply for benefits
- Provide warm referrals to federal, state, or local resources
- Offer culturally specific resources
- Establish student feedback channels
- Collect data and share best practices through the statewide consortium



### Benefits navigators referred students to resources:

-  **13,891** referrals to internal college offices or systems
-  **3,634** referrals to community partners
-  **2,602** referrals to the Oregon ONE portal
-  **2,097** referrals to government agencies

“Housing is a significant concern for many students. I initiated collaborations with property managers in the community. This strategic partnership not only facilitated housing solutions for our students but also **created a seamless bridge between students in need and potential homes**, eliminating many traditional obstacles.”

– Benefits navigator, Klamath County

# Connecting Oregon Students to Essential Resources

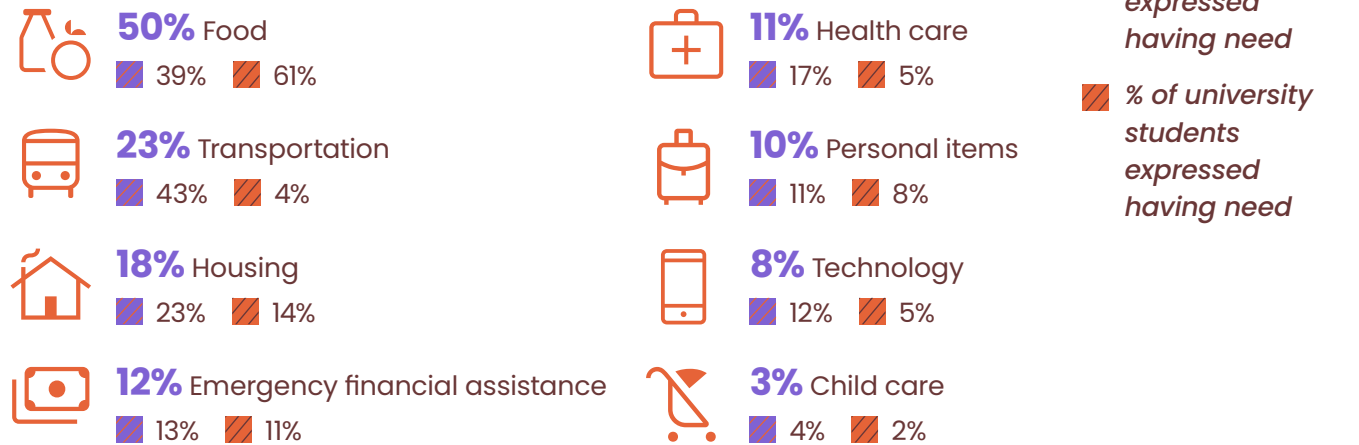
From July 2023 to August 2024,  
Basic Needs Oregon served  
**17,270 Oregon college students**



A **25% increase**  
from the  
previous year

**8,489 community college students**  
**8,781 public university students**

Benefits navigators reported addressing a wide range of student needs, often addressing more than one need when meeting with a student:



Source: Basic Needs Oregon metrics tracking, 2023–24.

## Invest in the Continued Success of Basic Needs Oregon

By investing in Basic Needs Oregon, we can build an education system where every student, no matter their financial circumstances, can thrive personally and academically to reach their full potential. These key strategies will ensure the long-term success of Basic Needs Oregon:

- 1. Secure sustainable funding.** Increased funding will allow Basic Needs Oregon to sustain benefits navigators and expand institutional programming to address students' basic needs.
- 2. Continue the statewide consortium.** The statewide consortium promotes a collaborative, coordinated, and data-driven approach to implementing basic needs programming across Oregon. Institutions benefit from shared resources, knowledge, and support.
- 3. Strengthen local and state agency partnerships.** Expanding and deepening partnerships will enable students to more easily access the services they need.
- 4. Formalize student feedback channels.** Incorporating student feedback leads to more responsive, effective, and relevant services. Institutions have begun to implement feedback mechanisms and would benefit from tools and guidance for collecting, analyzing, and acting on student input.
- 5. Improve data collection.** To understand the effectiveness of Basic Needs Oregon, we need to measure progress and impact. Current data efforts do not fully capture program outcomes. Improving data collection tools will enable comprehensive evaluation while strengthening institutions' capacity to use data for program improvement.