

Harper College Hawks Care Resource Center A Strategic Review





The Educational Policy Institute was founded in 2002 to fulfill a need for more rigorous educational research and to create better linkages between research and public policy. We provide research design and management, program evaluation, policy analysis, and technical assistance to school districts, institutions of higher education, governmental organizations, and other stakeholders in the educational and public policy arena. SwailLandis is the campus consulting arm of EPI. EPI is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation.

Much of EPI/SwailLandis' research focuses on the access to and through postsecondary education. Many projects are related to federally-funded initiatives involving the preparation and training of teachers, school reform efforts, student college readiness, postsecondary retention, return on investment in education, and workforce outcomes. EPI/SwailLandis' clients include the US Department of Education, Lumina Foundation for Education, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the National Council on Disability, UNESCO, OECD, and school districts and postsecondary institutions around the United States and Canada.

This study was conducted under contract to Harper College by Dr. Watson Scott Swail and Ms. Kimberly Ann Landis. It was funded through a Title V Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions Program grant from the US Department of Education.

CITATION: Swail, Watson S., and Landis, Kimberly A. (2026). *Harper College — Hawks Care Resource Center: A Strategic Review*. An EPI Research Report. Educational Policy Institute.

Visit www.educationalpolicy.org and www.swaillandis.com for additional information.

Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	7
Purpose of the Study	11
Understanding Basic Needs & One Stop Services	12
The RAND Single Stop Study.....	12
The ECMC Basic Needs Initiative.....	14
The University of California Basic Needs Initiative	16
Critical Issues for Harper College and Basic Services.....	18
Overlapping Student Support Services at Harper College	18
Streamlining Student Support Services at Harper College	19
Promising Practices of College Food Pantries in Illinois	20
Balancing Visibility and Privacy in Student Basic Needs Support Programs	21
Unmet Student Needs at Harper College.....	23
The View from Hawks Care Users.....	25
SWOT Findings.....	29
What Does Hawks Care Do Well?	30
What Are the Challenges with Hawks Care?	31
Conclusions and Recommendations	34
References	40
APPENDIX	
Hawks Care Project Interviews and Meetings, 2025	44
Hawks Care SWOT Breakfast Meeting Participants, September 30, 2025	45
Hawks Care User Survey (Instrument).....	46

Executive Summary

Located in Palatine, Illinois, Harper College serves more than 22,000 credit students each year from 23 northwest Chicago suburban communities.¹ Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the 200-acre campus is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)², with students of Hispanic descent representing 30 percent of total enrollment.

In spring 2025, the Educational Policy Institute (EPI)/SwailLandis was contracted to conduct a strategic review of the Hawks Care Resource Center as part of the larger Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Title III federal grant. To support this effort, EPI/SwailLandis conducted document reviews, interviews, focus groups, developed and administered a Hawks Care user survey, and visited Harper College to conduct face-to-face discussions and lead a SWOT session with Harper College staff and students.

This report provides details from the information collected, complete with background information related to the critical issues related to student services and basic needs services at the postsecondary level and at Harper College in particular. As well, the report provides details from the student survey and from the SWOT process conducted with stakeholders. It concludes with a summary and recommendations for consideration.

About the Hawks Care Resource Center

The Hawks Care Resource Center was created in 2018 to provide students with basic needs that include food, housing, and transport. Located in Building D (Room D204), Hawks Care serves approximately 750 students each year with the core mission to “help Harper students overcome non-academic barriers to success by providing resources for food, housing, transportation, technology, and emotional wellness, ensuring a judgment-free space to seek assistance.”

¹ [Harper College “College Plan,” 2025-26.](#)

Current services via Hawks Care include:

- **Campus Pantry.** Walk-in basis shopping experience for food, including fresh and frozen items, and hygiene products.
- **Career Closet.** Walk-in basis shopping experience for clothing for interviews, networking, and Harper College events.
- **Child Care.** Student Parent support is available through child-care assistance programs.
- **Community Resources.** These organizations can offer additional support beyond campus resources and often at a more intense level.
- **Help Your Shelf.** Walk-in access to quick meals, hygiene products, and limited school supplies.
- **Kitchenette.** Walk-in access to heat and meals.
- **Meet With Our Staff.** Individual appointments are available to share student college student experiences and barriers and Single Stop results. Staff connect students to campus and community resources base on appropriate supports.
- **Single Stop.** Online benefits screener that supports individual meetings with staff.
- **Technology Loan.** Laptops and limited hot spots are available for the semester through meeting with Hawks Care staff.
- **Transportation.** Explore transportation options for getting to and from main campus.
- **Counseling Services.** Provides direct, free, short-term counseling on stress, motivation, personal issues, career, and academics, with options for individual, group, and workshops. The counseling is provided by licensed counselors outside of Hawks Care but scheduled by HCRC.
- **Emergency Financial Assistance.** Hawks Care can help students with emergency funds via gift cards, technology loans (described above), and up to \$3,000 for critical needs.

The most utilized service at Hawks Care is the Campus Pantry (79 percent of users), followed by transportation assistance (45 percent)

² Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) are those Title V institutions that have a Hispanic enrollment of at least 25 percent. (https://www.hacu.net/hacu/hsi_definition1.asp).

and emergency financial assistance (43 percent). Of students who used the Campus Pantry, 87 percent used it more than once, and half of students used it four times or more. Three quarters of Help Your Shelf users used it six or more times, and half of the emergency financial assistance users used it once; others used it 2 or three times.

Hawks Care services were universally appreciated by users, with 98 percent of students satisfied with their service, and 84 percent “very satisfied.”

Strengths and Challenges of Hawks Care

Some of the strengths of Hawks Care include:

- Provides excellent basic needs support at a one-stop location.
- Has dedicated staff dedicated to the Hawks Care mission.
- Has a welcoming facility that is clean and comfortable while also provides privacy for students.
- Enjoys excellent partnerships across campus and throughout the region.

Challenges facing Hawks Care:

- Students often wait a long time for counseling appointments.
- Students and staff are sometimes confused about what Hawks Care offers.
- Hawks Care has a consistent challenge marketing to students, resulting in a limited use of some Hawks Care resources.
- Off-campus partnerships have eroded to some level.
- Challenges providing housing assistance due to eligibility barriers.
- Fights the stigma that often follows basic needs services, limiting the use of Hawks Care for some students.
- Career Closet, while an excellent resource at Hawks Care, has limited attire and products.
- Space is limited, especially for Campus Pantry and Career Closet.

- The location can be a challenge and is sometimes described as “hidden.”
- The Campus Pantry has limited variety of cultural foods. Stocking the pantry is a challenge given the physical location of Hawks Care without loading facilities.
- Hawks Care receives excellent funding from Harper College and the Educational Foundation. It could use additional funding that is unrestricted, allowing more flexible use.

Recommendations for Consideration

Location of Services. While Hawks Care’s current space is excellent, its location has some challenges for stocking as well as visibility. The new Canning Student Center will open in 2027 and most of Harper College’s student services will be moved to this location. Hawks Care, however, will remain in Building D. We think that Hawks Care would benefit on being tied in with other student-facing services on campus rather than at a distance. Among other logistic issues, this would facilitate integration and partnerships between service providers, important given that Hawks Care is a “connector” of services across campus. Certainly, having an available loading dock, and perhaps even access to Sodexo food services, also bodes well for Hawks Care.

Hawks Care Marketing. The marketing department has worked diligently with Hawks Care over the last several years to expand its awareness and reach to faculty and students. Still, our research confirms that marketing Hawks Care remains a challenge. Making students aware of Hawks Care is consistently challenging. Hawks Care consistently conducts outreach to faculty, staff, students, departments, student clubs, and community agencies/stakeholders. And while Hawks Care services over 700 students each year, it is clear from the Trellis survey that there is a much greater need for services than Hawks Care is able to provide with current staffing.

Staffing. The current director has a solid understanding of the issues facing students, the resources at her disposal, and the services, departments, and organizations within and beyond Harper College. The

staff we met with, including counseling staff that are not officially under the auspices of Hawks Care, were all compelling and engaged in the mission and work of Hawks Care. We think that future growth of basic needs among Harper College students will necessitate a need for increased staff. While staffing is always complicated due to FTE and budgetary pressures, there is an argument present that Hawks Care would benefit from hiring additional staff in anticipation of growth rather working at in a service deficit.

Faculty and Staff Engagement. Faculty and key service staff (e.g., student services; academic services) are the prime connector between students and the basic needs services provided by Hawks Care and other centers at Harper College. While many faculty are engaged and provide referrals to Hawks Care for services, some instructional faculty and staff are either less aware of Hawks Care or less interested in doing more. Possible strategies include:

- provide additional targeted materials to engage faculty.
- create an early awareness program for instructional staff to identify students along with an improved referral system.
- require Hawks Care information on syllabi.
- increase Hawks Care signage in classrooms.
- Use multi-prong outreach (Instagram videos, email, texts, etc.) to expand awareness to students and educate faculty about Hawks Care services.
- Work with the different academic divisions to get a list of supplies students need (i.e., stethoscopes, paper/pens, etc.).

Campus Pantry/Food Services. As with discussion of Hawks Care growth, the Campus Pantry will become outsized for its space. As well, there were requests for more variation in food options.

- Provide more fresh vegetable options by expanding the garden. This requires more space to be provided for this purpose as well as staffing. There is apparently surplus space in the greenhouse not being used.

- Add cultural foods and provide other types including gluten free options.
- Strengthen partnerships with food-related organizations.
- Increase nutritional items in the pantry as well as in Grab and Go Bags.
- Use bulk food distributors such as Costco to order and deliver food to save time and money or partner with Sodexo.

Career Closet. A unique and important resource for students, whether they need clothes for a job interview or for nursing labs. The clothing is limited by availability and size of the “closet.” Some considerations include expanding the variety of clothing for students that includes more options as well as more casual wear. Career Closet is also expected to outgrow its current space.



we are
HARPER

AVANTÉ

Centre for Science, Health, Society
and Emerging Technologies

Protein Center

Technology Building

Science Building

Introduction

The William Rainey Harper College—known as Harper College—is a large public community college that offers associate degrees, certificates, workforce training, and transfer programs to four-year universities, serving students from Chicago’s northwest suburbs with flexible, accessible education for careers, skill-building, or further study. Founded in 1967, Harper College is recognized for affordability, diverse programs, and community impact, with a focus on student success and career readiness.

Located in Palatine, Illinois, Harper College serves more than 22,000 credit students each year from 23 northwest Chicago suburban communities.³ Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), the 200-acre campus is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)⁴, with students of Hispanic descent representing 30 percent of total enrollment.

According to data collected through the 2023 Trellis Survey, 1 of 3 Harper College students considered themselves food insecure, representing several thousand undergraduate students. In addition, 61 percent of students were worried about having enough money to pay for college and 1 of 5 students ran out of money six times or more during the past year. Over half (52 percent) of Harper students did not have access to emergency cash.⁵

Harper College offers a comprehensive suite of student support services aimed at promoting academic achievement, personal wellness, and overall student success. The integration of these services demonstrates a holistic effort to meet the diverse needs of its student body and enhance student outcomes.

Academic support is a cornerstone of Harper College’s student success strategy. The Academic Support Center (ASC) provides free tutoring for over 200 courses, with specialized resources including the

Anatomy Room and the Developmental Math Center. The Writing Center complements these efforts by offering one-on-one and drop-in sessions to support critical thinking and writing skills across disciplines. Additionally, Success Services provides individualized coaching in study skills, time management, test preparation, and stress management. Harper students are paired with consistent advisors through the SOAR+ program, which facilitates degree planning, academic progress checks, and transfer preparation.

Supporting student well-being is also central to Harper College’s mission. Counseling Services offer short-term personal, career, and educational counseling to enrolled credit-seeking students. Health promotion occurs through Harper Wellness, which features campus initiatives like napping areas, massage chairs, and accessible health supplies, including free menstrual products and safer-sex kits. Innovative digital support is also provided via Togetherall and WellTrack, 24/7 mental health applications offering peer forums and self-help tools.

Harper College demonstrates a commitment to equity and inclusion through its specialized programs. Access and Disability Services (ADS) provides accommodations, assistive technologies, and neurodivergent student support via the Infinity Initiative. The Canning Women’s Program focuses on single parents, survivors of domestic violence, and women pursuing nontraditional careers by providing case management, educational planning, and scholarship opportunities.

Military-affiliated students benefit from the Veterans Center, which offers a dedicated lounge, support with military transcript evaluations, and guidance on GI Bill benefits. Administrative and enrollment support is centralized through One Stop, which handles registration, academic records, tuition payments, and financial aid.

³ [Harper College “College Plan,” 2025-26.](#)

⁴ Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) are those Title V institutions that have a Hispanic enrollment of at least 25 percent. (https://www.hacu.net/hacu/hsi_definition1.asp).

⁵ Trellis Strategies (2023 report).

Harper College also enhances student success through robust technology services and career resources. The campus library provides Chromebooks, Wi-Fi hotspots, and graphing calculators to students for semester-long loans. Career development is supported by the Job Placement Resource Center (JPRC), which provides resume assistance, interview coaching, and internship opportunities. Technical challenges are addressed via the Student Service Desk, which supports the MyHarper Portal, Blackboard, and student email accounts.

Another important center at Harper College is the Hawks Care Resource Center. Created in 2018 to provide students with basic needs that include food, housing, and transport, Hawks Care has become a comprehensive hub for wellness, connecting students to crucial campus and community resources, with services including a pantry, tech loans, mental health support, and help with family needs, aiming to normalize help-seeking and foster student success beyond academics.

Located in Building D, Room D204, Hawks Care serves approximately 750 students each year. The Core Mission of Hawks Care is to “help Harper students overcome non-academic barriers to success by providing resources for food, housing, transportation, technology, and emotional wellness, ensuring a judgment-free space to seek assistance.”

Hawks Care provides the following services:

- **Campus Pantry.** Walk-in basis shopping experience for food, including fresh and frozen items, and hygiene products.
- **Career Closet.** Walk-in basis shopping experience for clothing for interviews, networking, and Harper College events.
- **Child Care.** Student Parent support is available through child-care assistance programs.
- **Community Resources.** These organizations can offer additional support beyond campus resources and often at a more intense level.

- **Help Your Shelf.** Walk-in access to quick meals, hygiene products, and limited school supplies.
- **Kitchenette.** Walk-in access to heat and meals.
- **Meet With Our Staff.** Individual appointments are available to share student college student experiences and barriers and Single Stop results. Staff connect students to campus and community resources base on appropriate supports.
- **Single Stop.** Online benefits screener that supports individual meetings with staff.
- **Technology Loan.** Laptops and limited hot spots are available for the semester through meeting with Hawks Care staff.
- **Transportation.** Explore transportation options for getting to and from main campus.
- **Counseling Services.** Provides direct, free, short-term counseling on stress, motivation, personal issues, career, and academics, with options for individual, group, and workshops. The counseling is provided by licensed counselors outside of Hawks Care but scheduled by HCRC.
- **Emergency Financial Assistance.** Hawks Care can help students with emergency funds via gift cards, technology loans (described above), and up to \$3,000 for critical needs.

Hawks Care is one of many services on the campus of Harper College. As illustrated in the following exhibit, the college supports other critical activities. Taken together, these eight programs provide an umbrella of support for all of Harper College’s students.

Exhibit 1. Harper College Support Services



The Rita and John Canning Women's Program is dedicated to assisting eligible Harper College students pursuing credit-seeking courses towards either their first college degree, a certificate, or ESL coursework. The program provides education planning, financial assistance, and ongoing support to women at Harper College.

Website: <https://www.harpercollege.edu/services/advising/women-sprogram/index.php>

Location: Building D, Room D205a, b, and c

Hawks Care Resource Center connects students to campus and community resources to address their basic needs and allow them to focus on their education. Resources provided include an on-campus food pantry, clothing closet, gas and grocery cards, connections to mental health services, referrals to community resources, and individualized support based on each student's specific situation.

Website: <https://www.harpercollege.edu/hawkscare/index.php>

Location: Building D, Room D204

Academic Support Center provides services both in-person and online at no cost to students, including an anatomy room,

developmental math center, success services, supplemental instruction, tutoring center, and writing center. The tutoring center offers tutoring in more than 200 courses.

Website: <https://www.harpercollege.edu/academic-support/index.php>

Location: Building F, Room 110

Finish Line Grant Program provides \$1,000 to help students complete their academic program at Harper. Students must have completed at least 70% of their program and describe their financial situation. Students must apply for the grant and provide documents to support the financial situation.

Website: <https://www.harpercollege.edu/registration/financialaid/finishline.php>

Library Technology Loaner Program allows registered students to check out Chromebooks, laptops, graphing calculators, and Wi-Fi hotspots for the semester. Technology is available on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last.

Website: <https://www.harpercollege.edu/library/services/semester-loan-technology.php>

Location: Building F - 2nd and 3rd Floors

One Stop provides centralized services to students to help them register for classes, update records, assist with financial aid, and set up payment plans.

Website: <https://www.harpercollege.edu/start/onestop/index.php>

Location: Building A, Room A-250

Center for Student Veterans and Military-Connected Students provides services and resources to veteran and military-connected students, including a dedicated veterans lounge, information on veteran scholarships, the Student Veterans Association, and referrals to services and veteran assistance organizations. The center is a place for student Veterans to connect with other student Veterans to share information, experiences, and ideas in adjusting from military life to student life.

Website: <https://www.harpercollege.edu/services/involvement/veterans/index.php>

Location: Building A, 1st floor

Access and Disability Services provides accessible programs, services, and support to the Harper community on an individualized basis through an interactive and inclusive assessment process. Includes interpreters/captioning for students and community who need accommodations for attendance at open events, providing sign language interpreters, captioning, use of assistive listening systems or other forms of access. Alternative Format Textbooks for students that have been approved. A note-taker for students approved for the accommodation is available as well as test-taking accommodations.

Website: <https://www.harpercollege.edu/ads/index.php>

Location: Building I, Room I-103

Purpose of the Study

In spring 2025, the Educational Policy Institute (EPI)/SwailLandis was contracted to conduct a strategic review of the Hawks Care Resource Center as part of the larger Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) Title III federal grant. EPI/SwailLandis was asked to do the following:

- Assess the Hawks Care Resource Center's current operations, resources, services, and overall effectiveness in supporting students.
- Assess the efficiency of resource allocation and identify any gaps or redundancies in service delivery that may impact student success.
- Engage with key stakeholders, including students, faculty, and staff, through surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gather insights on unmet needs and potential areas for service enhancement.

During the remainder of 2025, EPI/SwailLandis conducted document reviews, interviews, focus groups, developed and administered a Hawks Care user survey, and visited Harper College to conduct face-to-face discussions and lead a SWOT session with Harper College staff and students. Additional information about the people involved in these processes and the timelines can be found in the appendix of this report.

This report provides details from the information collected, complete with background information related to the critical issues related to student services and basic needs services at the postsecondary level and at Harper College in particular. As well, the report provides details from the student survey and from the SWOT process conducted with stakeholders. It concludes with a summary and recommendations for consideration.



Understanding Basic Needs & One Stop Services

The Hawks Care Resource Center is a one-stop basic needs center for Harper College students. This is not to be confused with the One Stop office located in Building A at Harper, which focuses on academic-related issues, including enrollment, academic records, financial aid, and course registration. Rather, Hawks Care is a wellness center that provides critical resources for students with particular needs.

Colleges have traditionally provided a level of basic needs support for students. Basic needs services have become more pronounced during the last few decades as the knowledge and identification of these issues has become more mainstream. For this study, we borrow from the research literature about some of the known and best practices in basic needs servicing that align with Hawks Care and other resources at Harper College. This is not designed to be a thorough and precise literature review of basic needs servicing; rather, we are choosing a few resources that we think lend themselves to better understanding and comparing Hawks Care to other efforts around the country.

The RAND Single Stop Study

In 2025, Rand⁶ published a report summarizing their multi-year, randomized-control trial across ten colleges in Colorado and North Carolina regarding basic needs services. They identified six core features of strong basic needs support at community colleges:

- **Comprehensive basic needs supports** include a variety of different supports to address range of needs students face, such as nutritional support, housing support, transportation support, and emergency aid.
- **Dedicated basic needs support staff and partnerships** are supported by dedicated staff with the time and expertise needed to

⁶ https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA3771-3.html.

support students. Internal and external partnerships are also essential to supporting promising basic needs approaches.

- **Broad outreach efforts** include broad outreach efforts through a variety of channels to ensure student awareness of the supports available to them.
- **Streamlined intake and case management** minimize administrative processes and eligibility requirements to make services as accessible as possible to students. Proactive, ongoing follow-up (i.e., case management) is also valuable in helping students to navigate and access supports.
- **Institutional culture that prioritizes basic needs** are typically found in colleges that have institutional cultures where student well-being is prioritized. This includes strong leadership support, sustained funding, and broad buy-in and support from faculty and staff.
- **Data-informed practices** leverage data to assess student needs, target services, identify areas for program improvement, and assess the effectiveness of various supports.

One stop/single stop programs are not a panacea for student support. Rather, they are a cog in a larger systemic and campus-wide system to identify and serve students across the spectrum of diversity in terms of socio-economics, educational legacy, and other demographic and experiential sectors. In fact, the RAND research team found that, broadly speaking, single stop programs/centers failed to reach students as intended and “did not deliver a meaningful intervention.”⁷ Primary to the challenges of outreach, identification, and marketing, they found that the need for sustained outreach to build trust in the local community of students was necessary for success, specifically noting that emails or texts were often either unanswered or forgotten by students, and that “administrative burden” for students and staff reduced use of the Single Stop and that colleges were

more apt to prioritize basic needs supports, such as food pantries and emergency aid.

Other studies cited by RAND found that Single Stop offices had a one-year persistence increase of three percent for users versus non-users at community colleges. We view this as a solid-but-underwhelming uptick in persistence.⁸

Some of the findings that seemed to define success in such programming included the need for strong and sustained leadership support, knowing that diminishing support due to competing priorities had a negative impact on implementation. External funding also supported the implementation of basic needs, but again, the sustainability of this funding had an impact on sustained services and focus. Having dedicated case managers “with prior experience” was found to be important to success of Single Stop, while hiring staff who had competing priorities and responsibilities took away from successful implementation.

The RAND study found that even though many students completed “screener” surveys for services, case managers did not always follow-up appropriately with those students to connect them to services. Research does suggest that colleges newer to the use of Single Stop served a much smaller cohort of students (sometimes two percent (Daugherty and Berglund (2018)) versus more mature programs at institutions who may serve 8 to 14 percent (Daugherty, Johnston, and Berglund, 2020). They also found that mature students, those from low-income backgrounds, and students with dependents were more likely to use services than other students.

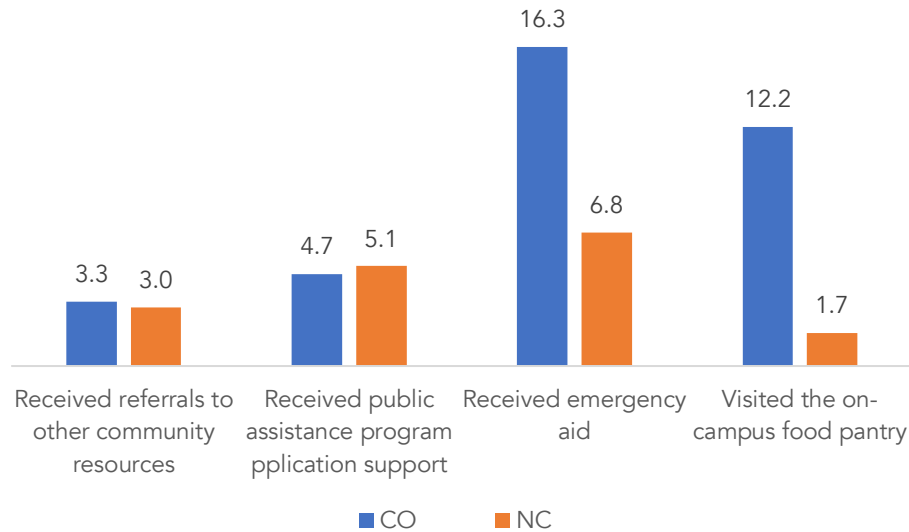
Some of the services used in Single Stop align closely with that of Hawks Care. The most used service in both Colorado and North Carolina was the use of emergency aid (16.3 percent and 6.8 percent, by respective state). In Colorado, the food pantry was the second most

⁷ https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA3771-1.html/

⁸ https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RRA3700/RRA3771-1/RAND_RRA3771-1.pdf

used service while in North Carolina the provision of support for other, external public assistance programs was second.

Exhibit 2. Self-reported use of college basic needs support services at baseline, 2021 (Daugherty et al., 2025).



The ECMC Basic Needs Initiative

The ECMC Foundation created the Basic Needs Initiative and funded seven grantees to “further the development and sustainability of basic needs services at postsecondary institutions through direct service, technical assistance, and research.”⁹ Education Northwest conducted a study of these grantees and their associated colleges. Of

the 57 institutions participating, the following chart illustrates the services offered at two- and four-year institutions. What Exhibit 3 illustrates is that many institutions are doing things that Hawks Care and other campus services are providing. Food assistance, for one, was provided by 54 of 57 institutions. Fifty institutions (88 percent) provided emergency funds.

Exhibit 3. Number and percentage of institutions that reported providing basic needs services, spring 2022 (Hodara et al., 2023).

BASIC NEEDS SERVICES	Two-year institutions (n=30)	Four-year institutions (n=27)	All (n=57)
1. Food assistance	93%	96%	95%
2. Emergency funds	83%	93%	88%
3. Health care, mental health, and personal care assistance	77%	81%	79%
4. Access to technology	90%	63%	77%
5. Housing assistance	77%	70%	74%
6. Transportation assistance	70%	59%	65%
7. Financial planning, employment support, or legal assistance	60%	67%	63%
8. Childcare assistance	53%	30%	42%

The question of interest is less what the institutions are doing—because many institutions seem to provide these same services—but rather, the manner to which these institutions conduct services and with what level of efficacy? This is the real determinant between peer institutions. Exhibit 4 on the following page further breaks down the items in this list.

⁹ <https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/pdf/ecmc-bni-evaluation-report-508c.pdf>.

Exhibit 4. Number and percentage of institutions that reported providing basic needs services (expanded), spring 2022 (Hodara et al., 2023).

BASIC NEEDS SERVICES	#	%
Of institutions that provide food assistance		
Food pantry/meals provided on campus	52	96%
Help applying for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	42	78%
Connections to off-campus food pantry	41	76%
One-time/emergency fund to pay for groceries/food	35	65%
Help applying for Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children	21	39%
Help applying for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	20	37%
Ongoing assistance to pay for food outside of SNAP/TANF, WIC or other state-level	16	30%
Food delivery	14	26%
Other (includes cooking demos)	1	2%
Of institutions that provide health care, mental health, and personal care assistance		
Mental health services or referral	45	100%
Hygiene supplies	38	84%
Emergency fund for medical expenses	30	67%
Physical health services or referral	25	56%
Clothing closets	23	51%
Enrollment in health insurance	19	42%
Other (includes partnerships with external organizations, addiction recovery, linen/ bedding closet)	6	13%
Of institutions that provide access to technology		
Loan/gifted/rented digital device	43	98%
Loan/gifted/rented Wi-Fi hotspots	37	84%
Digital textbooks/electronic course materials	30	68%
Expanded Wi-Fi service area around the campus (e.g., parking lot)	27	61%
Assistance with internet utility bill	20	45%
Expanded Wi-Fi service in participating local businesses	2	5%
Other (includes computer labs and student IT services)	3	7%
Of institutions that provide housing assistance		
One-time/emergency fund to pay for housing	34	81%
Help with finding housing	32	76%
Assistance with utilities (water, power, phone)	29	69%
Hotel/motel vouchers, emergency fund, or reimbursement	28	67%
Help applying for Section 8 housing assistance or other subsidized housing	21	50%

Ongoing assistance to pay rent other than Section 8	15	36%
Assistance with furniture and household items	14	33%
Off campus moving assistance	10	24%
Other (includes Rapid Rehousing Program, partnership with external organization, Section 8 voucher program)	6	14%
Of institutions that provide transportation assistance		
Bus pass	30	81%
Gas cards	24	65%
Free parking	19	51%
Support with car payment/insurance	12	32%
General funds available for transportation	10	27%
Funding for Uber/Lyft/taxi	9	24%
Other (includes university ride assistance, subsidized transit pass)	9	24%
Of institutions that provide financial planning, employment support, or legal assistance		
Help with completing the FAFSA or other financial aid applications	34	94%
Financial planning or financial literacy classes or workshops	32	89%
SNAP Employment and Training program	20	56%
Help preparing tax returns	15	42%
Legal assistance	15	42%
Support applying for unemployment benefits	9	25%
Other (includes career counseling, job search assistance, connections with agencies)	5	14%
Of institutions that provide child care assistance		
Referrals to low-cost childcare	13	54%
Subsidized on-campus childcare	12	50%
Vouchers for off-campus childcare	8	33%
Free on-campus childcare	4	17%
Other (includes one-time emergency fund, partnerships with external organizations, diapers available in the food pantry)	6	25%

The University of California Basic Needs Initiative

The University of California Basic Needs Initiative created a model to serve as guiding principles for colleges and universities. This model is a “preventative approach aims to decrease the need for emergency resources, enabling campuses to move beyond crisis support to a more holistic basic needs model — with an emphasis on basic needs skills development, financial literacy workshops, healthy cooking classes and more.”¹⁰

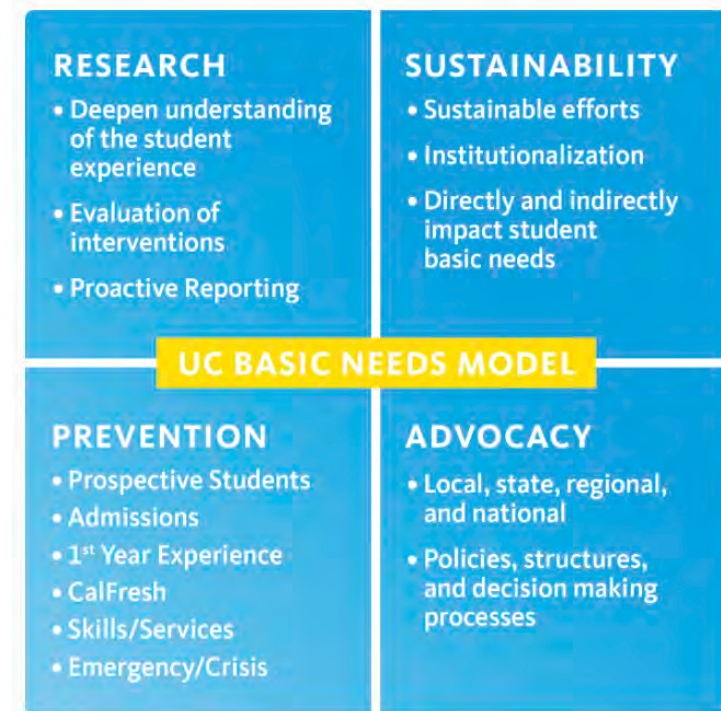
The UC model began at UCLA in 2009 with the creation of its Food Closet to support students and employees during the Great Recession. By 2014, the UC Global Food Initiative ensured that there were food pantries on every UC Campus. The model focuses on four key areas:

- **Research:** Basic needs leadership shall prioritize research, data collection and program evaluation to study students' experiences with basic needs and the effectiveness of campus interventions.
- **Prevention:** Basic needs leadership shall devote funds to preventative measures, such as increasing the visibility of basic needs resources and financial training in pre-college outreach efforts to all students, especially first-year and prospective students. By providing these students an understanding of how to manage finances, food and housing, they can be better equipped to evade basic needs insecurity in the first place.
- **Sustainability:** Basic needs efforts shall be designed in a manner that sustains their operation and creates

institutional memory, so that basic needs efforts continue beyond the first few years of their inception.

- **Advocacy:** Basic needs leadership shall advocate for this work as a model for other institutions and actively promote further systemic changes at the state and federal level to bolster programs aimed at reducing basic needs insecurity.

Exhibit 5. University of California Basic Needs Model



Source: <https://basicneeds.ucop.edu/about/approach.html>.

¹⁰ <https://basicneeds.ucop.edu/about/approach.html>.

Given the high level of research and development, as well as service, through the UC system, we recommend that Harper College also use this as a measuring stick to ensure that they are following many if not all of the same guidelines and approaches in the four areas, with special focus on institutionalization and sustainability.



Critical Issues for Harper College and Basic Services

Overlapping Student Support Services at Harper College

Harper College's student support ecosystem reflects an integrated yet overlapping model of financial, academic, and personal resources designed to meet diverse student needs. A review of the institutional programs—including the Rita and John Canning Women's Program, Hawks Care, Academic Support Center (ASC), Finish Line Grant Program, Library Technology Loaner Program, One Stop, Center for Student Veterans and Military-Connected Students, and Access and Disability Services (ADS)—indicates multiple points of convergence in four primary areas: financial assistance, technology access, case management, and basic needs support. Harper College's student support services reveals both intentional redundancy and complex service interconnections which creates a multilayered safety net for students. Centralization through One Stop and shared referral networks mitigate duplication and enhance coordinated care, though students may still navigate multiple access points to receive full support.

Food Resources. The primary food resource at Harper College is the Hawks Care Campus Pantry, which provides food and personal hygiene supplies. While the college has implemented smaller quick-access stations like "Help Your Shelf" and a Community Garden that supplies fresh produce to the pantry, these are extensions rather than separate services. The only minor overlap in food access is with the campus dining hall and vending machines, which are commercial services and not part of the need-based support programs.

Financial Assistance and Emergency Grants. A significant area of overlap exists in financial support services aimed at ensuring students can remain enrolled during periods of hardship. The Finish Line Grant Program and Hawks Care both provide emergency funds; the former targets students nearing program completion and experiencing sudden financial crises, while the latter serves a broader student population with basic needs such as food, rent, and transportation. The Rita and John Canning Women's Program contributes specialized scholarships for single parents, women pursuing non-traditional careers, and survivors of domestic violence. All these efforts ultimately converge through One Stop, which acts as the central processing hub for grants, scholarships, and tuition assistance.

Technology and Equipment Loans. Overlapping technology lending services are notable between the Library Technology Loaner Program, Hawks Care, and the Academic Support Center. The library serves the general student population with semester-long loanable devices such as Chromebooks, Wi-Fi hotspots, and calculators, whereas Hawks Care prioritizes laptops for students with demonstrated financial need. The ASC provides additional specialized computer access, including discipline-specific hardware for anatomy and science courses, further intersecting with the library's academic technology role. While the Women's Program focuses more on financial aid for required course materials, its case managers often coordinate with Hawks Care to ensure their students have the necessary hardware.

Specialized Advising and Case Management. Cohort programs such as the Center for Student Veterans, the Women's Program, and ADS demonstrate overlap in the provision of personalized advising and holistic case management. While

general academic support, including tutoring and success coaching, is delivered through the ASC, these specialized centers offer targeted guidance for their unique populations—for example, veteran educational counseling or disability accommodations. One Stop facilitates registration and records-related advising, but the individualized academic planning often occurs within these program-specific departments. The Women’s Program offers “customized case management” to support students in their educational and career journeys. Hawks Care, on the other hand, connects students with counselors to address career path challenges. Job readiness is another area of overlap. The Women’s Program provides job readiness preparation, which complements the professional clothing and networking support available through the Hawks Care Career Closet.

Basic Needs and Community Referrals. Hawks Care functions as the primary hub for addressing students’ essential needs, including food, clothing, and emergency assistance, yet the Women’s Program supplements these services with direct support for childcare and clothing grants. All major programs—ADS, the Women’s Program, the Veterans Center, and Hawks Care—maintain their own referral pipelines to community-based services for housing security, legal aid, and healthcare, illustrating a decentralized but overlapping support model. The Canning Center and Hawks care serve as referral hubs for high-intensity needs such as housing, legal aid, and domestic violence support. The Women’s Program specifically refers participants to the Hawks Care Resource Center to help identify additional on-campus resources. Hawks Care also connects students with specialized community partners for domestic violence support.

Referrals to community resources are primarily handled by the Hawks Care staff, who use tools like the Single Stop screener to connect students with external organizations for housing, legal aid, and utility assistance. Counseling Services also offer referrals for long-term support, including mental health and basic needs, often collaborating with Hawks Care to ensure comprehensive support. The Women’s Program emphasizes long-term case management and scholarships for specific cohorts, while Hawks Care focuses on immediate basic needs support for all students. The Women’s Program primarily provides financial aid and vouchers, whereas Hawks Care offers on-campus resources such as a pantry and career closet. Additionally, the Women’s Program is referral-based for domestic violence support, while Hawks Care connects students with specialized community partners.

Streamlining Student Support Services at Harper College

Harper College’s efforts to enhance student support services can be framed within the broader research on community college student success, integrating best practices in technological innovation, service consolidation, and proactive advising models. The literature supports Harper College’s strategic focus on technological integration, service consolidation, and proactive outreach as effective mechanisms for streamlining student support services. By adopting a unified AI platform, centralizing resources within a Hub-and-Spoke one-stop model, and implementing SSIPP-based predictive advising, Harper can improve efficiency, equity, and student outcomes.

Technological Integration. Research consistently supports the integration of centralized student data systems to improve service efficiency and personalization. Centralized student profiles and AI-driven chatbots can reduce repetitive administrative

tasks while offering 24/7 support for routine inquiries such as registration or financial aid.

Watermark Insights (2023) and Liaison (2025) highlight that AI implementation has allowed institutions to automate over 50 percent of student interactions, freeing staff for complex case management. Early adoption of such systems has shown improved responsiveness to student needs and a measurable increase in student satisfaction.

Service Consolidation with a “One-Stop” or Hub-and-Spoke Model. Service fragmentation is a known barrier to student engagement, as students often do not differentiate between institutional offices (Watermark Insights, 2023). Harper College’s proposed Hub-and-Spoke model, leveraging the Canning Student Center, aligns with best practices in creating a physical and virtual “one-stop shop” for all support services (EAB, 2025). The centralization of technology resources and specialized program staff—such as those supporting veterans, women, and students with disabilities—ensures equitable access and simplifies workflows (Forbes, 2025).

Proactive and Predictive Student Support. Shifting from reactive to predictive support reflects the principles of SSIPP (Sustained, Strategic, Integrated, Proactive, and Personalized) advising (Lumina Foundation, 2025). Predictive analytics can identify at-risk students before critical academic junctures, such as midterms, and automatically trigger outreach from advisors or financial aid counselors. Studies such as the MAAPS Advising Experiment suggest that caseloads under 150 students allow advisors to build trust-based, high-impact relationships that increase retention (Ithaka S+R, 2019).

Bridging Non-Credit and Credit Student Support Gaps. Many community colleges face challenges in extending wraparound supports to non-credit and adult education students. Lumina Foundation (2023) noted that aligning eligibility for services like food, emergency grants, and technology loans across learner types reduces barriers and ensures comprehensive student success. Standardized access models have proven to improve overall completion rates for adult learners (Western Governors University, 2023).

Closing Remaining Support Gaps. In addition to structural improvements, research emphasizes the need for robust academic and career supports. Inside Higher Ed (2024) suggests that scaling tutoring, study skills development, and career preparation alongside AI-backed case management maximizes the impact of service redesign.

Promising Practices of College Food Pantries in Illinois

Food insecurity among college students has emerged as a critical barrier to academic success and overall well-being. In Illinois, a growing network of campus food pantries has adopted innovative strategies to address this challenge, focusing on accessibility, dignity, and nutritional quality. Illinois college food pantries demonstrate that integrating accessibility, nutrition, systemic support, and community engagement creates a robust model for addressing campus food insecurity.

Innovative Distribution Models. One of the most significant developments in college food pantry operations is the implementation of innovative distribution strategies that prioritize convenience and privacy. The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) has introduced 24/7 smart lockers, enabling students to retrieve pre-ordered groceries anonymously, which

reduces stigma and accommodates nontraditional schedules (Campus Rec Magazine, 2025¹). Additionally, satellite and mini-pantries located in academic libraries extend service hours and increase visibility, fostering greater engagement (Illinois Open Publishing Network, 2024²).

Illinois campuses are also leveraging virtual queues and online ordering systems such as Link2Feed and Qless to minimize physical wait times and replicate a commercial grocery experience (Swipe Out Hunger, 2023³).

Nutrition and Health Focus. Recent studies underscore the importance of integrating nutritional considerations into pantry operations. Graduate dietetics students often play a critical role in developing distribution protocols based on the MyPlate framework, ensuring students receive balanced portions of fruits, vegetables, proteins, and dairy (NIH, 2024⁴). Further, Illinois pantries increasingly stock perishable items—fresh produce, eggs, and lean proteins—shifting away from a historically shelf-stable model (Taylor & Francis Online, 2022⁵).

Efforts to include culturally appropriate foods meet the diverse dietary needs of international and parenting students, enhancing the inclusivity and utility of pantry offerings (Illinois Open Publishing Network, 2024²).

Legislative and Systemic Support. State-level policy initiatives have catalyzed the growth and sustainability of campus food pantries. Illinois' Hunger-Free Campus legislation provides grants for colleges to establish basic needs centers and meal donation programs, reinforcing systemic support (ICCB, 2024⁶). Pantries also serve as hubs for SNAP enrollment, helping students navigate eligibility and application processes

(Greater Chicago Food Depository, 2023⁷). Moreover, statewide campaigns like the ICCB's annual "Feed the Need" drive raise awareness while fostering inter-campus collaboration and competition.

Community and Operational Practices. Community partnerships and professional training emerge as critical dimensions of effective pantry management. The University of Illinois Extension offers a comprehensive training series for staff and volunteers, emphasizing trauma-informed care, cultural humility, and food safety (Illinois Extension, 2023⁸). Concurrently, partnerships with regional food banks—such as the Midwest Food Bank and Greater Chicago Food Depository—help maintain inventory and expand access to fresh and nutritious foods (Midwest Food Bank, 2023⁹).

Balancing Visibility and Privacy in Student Basic Needs Support Programs

Student support programs like Harper College's Hawks Care Resource Center are essential in addressing the growing prevalence of food insecurity, housing instability, and other basic needs challenges faced by college students. However, programs that provide direct assistance must balance two competing objectives: ensuring high visibility so students are aware of available resources while protecting the privacy of students who utilize these services to mitigate stigma.

Environmental design (e.g., decals, co-location), discreet distribution (e.g., lockers, micro-pantries), stigma-reducing communication, and digital confidentiality all contribute to a model that normalizes engagement while safeguarding the dignity of users. Hawks Care's strategies align with these evidence-based

practices, suggesting that campuses can simultaneously elevate awareness and protect the students they serve.

This review demonstrates that student support programs can achieve both visibility and privacy through a multi-pronged approach.

Strategic Visibility and Visual Privacy. Visibility is critical for awareness, but overt identification of students accessing services can lead to stigma. Campus service centers increasingly use environmental design strategies to protect privacy while maintaining a public presence. For example, the use of opaque window decals or frosted glass, often called the “Decal Strategy,” allows for light-filled spaces that advertise the service externally but obscure the identity of users inside. This approach mirrors best practices noted in campus pantry design, where visual shielding prevents the social exposure of individuals seeking support (Academic Impressions, 2020). Such designs create an inviting, normalized exterior without compromising confidentiality.

Co-Location with Non-Stigmatized Services. Locating basic needs services within multi-use student centers or administrative hubs is a common strategy to protect privacy. By co-locating services like Hawks Care alongside admissions, career advising, or financial aid offices, the intent of a student’s visit is rendered ambiguous. This “One-Stop” co-location model has been widely adopted to encourage usage without the fear of social judgment (CannonDesign, 2023). Service blending ensures that students entering the building could be accessing any number of resources, reducing the perception of being singled out for needing assistance.

Discreet Distribution Models. Operational innovation further supports privacy. Smart food lockers, where students submit online requests and pick up items using QR codes, provide a contactless and confidential distribution method (Smiota, 2025). Similarly, decentralized “Help Your Shelf” stations or micro-pantries placed in public but non-identifiable campus locations offer discreet access to snacks and hygiene products (Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 2025). These strategies remove the need for face-to-face intake and visible waiting, which have been identified as barriers to participation in support programs (Hope Center for Student Basic Needs, 2025).

Language, Outreach, and Stigma Reduction. Communication plays a pivotal role in balancing visibility and privacy. Research shows that presumptive framing—messaging that positions basic needs support as a normal part of student life—reduces stigma and encourages broader usage (Ideas42, 2025). Peer-to-peer marketing, wherein student leaders openly endorse and share their positive experiences with services, also normalizes engagement. When combined with high-visibility branding, this approach transforms resource centers into community hubs rather than hidden relief offices.

Digital Privacy and Confidentiality. Finally, digital strategies safeguard privacy while facilitating visibility. Virtual “lobby” systems allow students to wait for remote or in-person appointments without physically occupying a visible space (ConexED, 2025). FERPA-compliant confidentiality protocols ensure that usage of services like Hawks Care does not appear in academic records (Northwest Council for Computer Education, 2024). These measures build trust, which is a prerequisite for effective student engagement with basic needs resources.

Unmet Student Needs at Harper College

Harper College has made significant strides in supporting its students through initiatives like the Hawks Care Resource Center. However, while Harper College has made commendable efforts to support its students, several critical needs remain unmet. Addressing these issues will require targeted interventions and continued collaboration with external partners. By focusing on long-term housing stability, social connectivity, specialized support for non-credit students, integrated transfer mobility, and digital accessibility, Harper College can enhance its support systems and better serve its diverse student body.

Long-Term Housing Stability. Despite the efforts of Hawks Care in providing referrals and short-term emergency aid, Harper College lacks direct on-campus housing and a dedicated long-term rental assistance program. This gap is critical, as regional trends indicate that nearly 58 percent of community college students face housing insecurity (Community College League of California, 2025). The reliance on external community partners often leaves students who do not qualify for state-level aid but cannot afford local market rates without adequate support.

Social Connectivity and Belonging. Student feedback in 2026 consistently points to a “non-existent social life” as a significant issue (Inside Higher Ed, 2026). While academic and basic needs services are robust, there is a noticeable absence of structured, non-academic support that fosters deep peer-to-peer social networks. These networks are essential for long-term retention, particularly in a commuter-heavy environment.

Specialized Support for Non-Credit Students. The majority of specialized financial and personal support services, such as The Rita and John Canning Women’s Program and Counseling

Services, are primarily targeted at credit-seeking students. Non-credit students in Adult Education Development (AED) or Continuing Professional Education (CPE) programs often find themselves ineligible for these services, despite facing similar or greater basic needs barriers.

Integrated “Learning Mobility” for Transfers. While the One Stop at Harper College assists with transcript processing, there is a growing need for more proactive transfer mobility support (Inside Higher Ed, 2026). Students frequently encounter fragmented systems when attempting to align their Harper coursework with the specialized requirements of four-year institutions, leading to “credit loss” (Inside Higher Ed, 2026). Although a new student success model is being introduced in 2026 to address these issues, challenges remain.

Digital Accessibility Compliance. Harper College has set a goal for full WCAG 2.1 AA digital compliance by April 24, 2026. However, students currently using assistive technologies may still experience intermittent barriers as the college works through its final months of software and interface remediation.



The View from Hawks Care Users

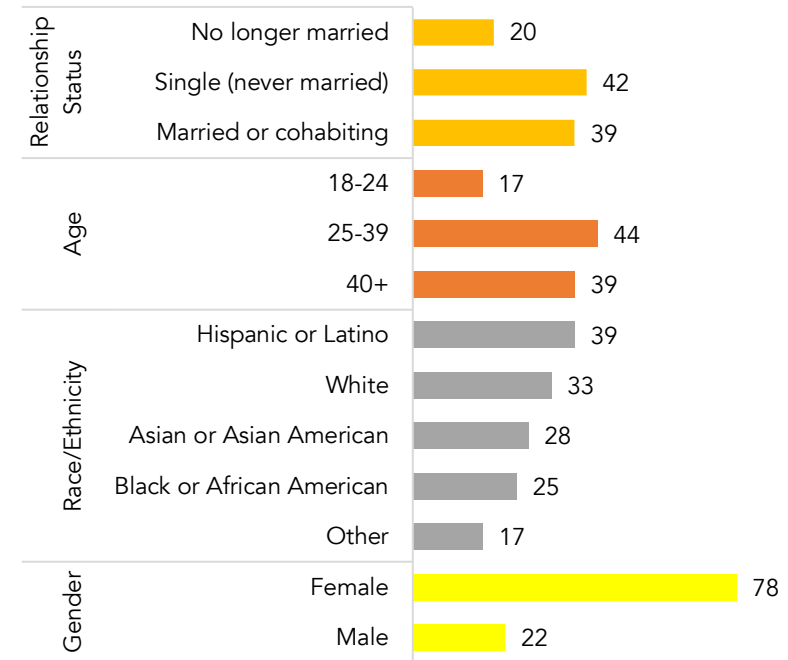
During late summer and into fall 2025, EPI/SwailLandis, in partnership with Harper College, developed and administered a survey to Harper College students who utilized Hawks Care services during the 2024-25 academic year. The survey was completed by 62 users between July 1, 2025 and October 1, 2025. The survey was administered by Harper College and the findings provided to EPI/SwailLandis in a PDF file, from which a spreadsheet was created for analysis.

In addition, Hawks Care provided EPI/SwailLandis with findings from its administrative sheets. The following is a summary of findings from the survey.

Who uses Hawks Care? Most Hawks Care users identified as non-traditional, mature students, either single or married, majority minority and Hispanic, and female.

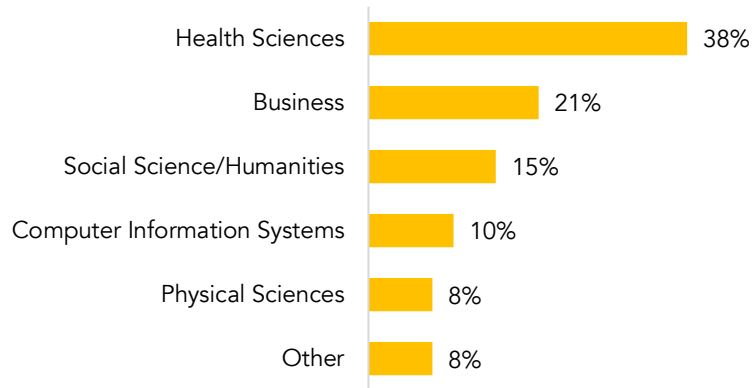
- Only 17 percent of Hawks Care users were of traditional age (18-24 years of age). Forty-four percent fell within the 25-39 range, and 39 percent were 40 or older.
- Forty-two percent of Hawks Care users were single (never married). An additional 39 percent were currently married or cohabitating, and 20 percent were no longer married.
- Two thirds (67 percent) of users were non-White, with Hispanics representing 39 percent of all Hawks Care users, 38 percent Asian, and 25 percent Black.

Exhibit 6. Background characteristics of Hawks Care users (2024-25).



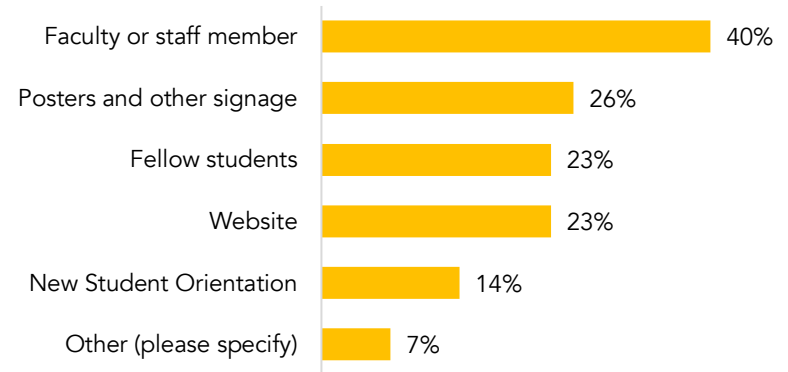
38 percent of Hawks Care users were from Health Science programs, followed by business (21 percent), social science/humanities (15 percent), computer information systems (10 percent), and the physical sciences (8 percent).

Exhibit 7. Academic program origin of Hawks Care users (2024-25).



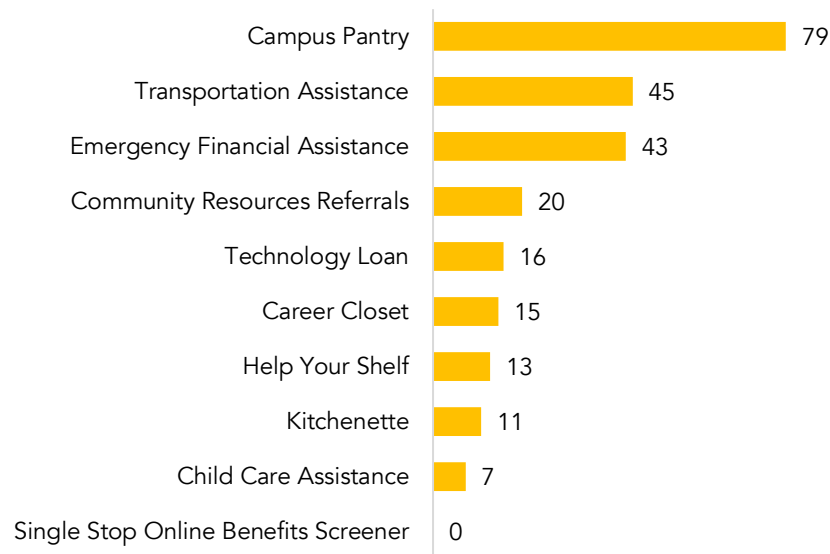
How did students learn about Hawks Care? A plurality of students learned about Hawks Care through a faculty or staff member (40 percent). Others saw posters and signage (26 percent), heard from fellow students (23 percent), or from the website (23 percent). Only 14 percent of users learned about Hawks Care from the New Student Orientation.

Exhibit 8. How Hawks Care users learned about Hawks Care (2024-25).



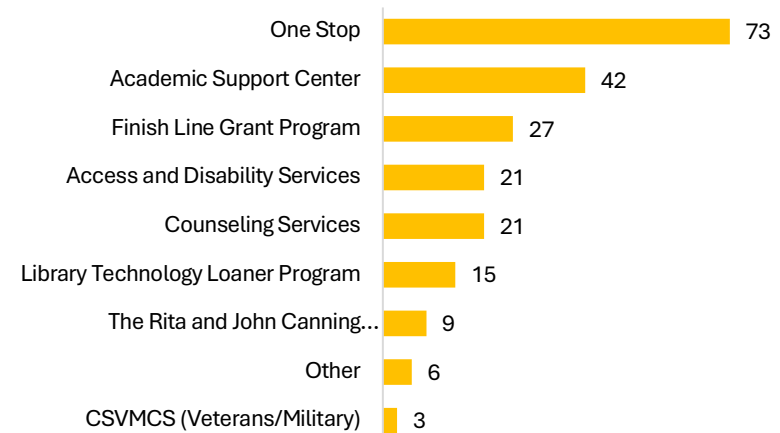
Which Hawks Care services were most used by students? The Campus Pantry was, by far, the most used service within Hawks Care. Seventy-nine percent of users said they had used Campus Pantry in the last year. Transportation Assistance (45 percent) and Emergency Financial Assistance (43 percent) were the next two most used services, followed by Community Resource Referrals (20 percent), Technology Loans (16 percent), Career Closet (15 percent), Help Your Shelf (13), the Kitchenette (11 percent), and Child Care Assistance (7 percent).

Exhibit 9. Hawks Care services used, by number of students, unduplicated (2024-25).



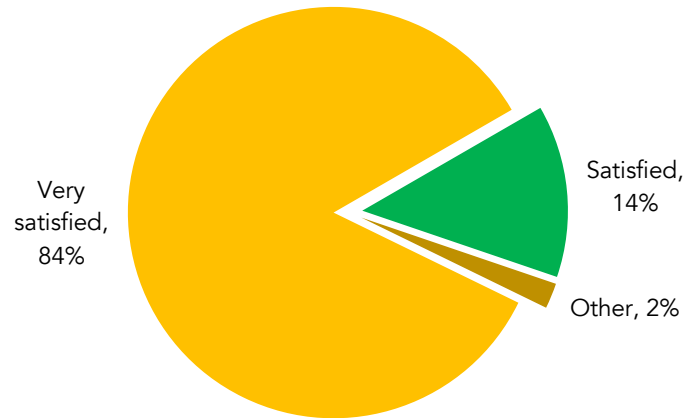
Which Harper College services were most used by students who also used Hawks Care in the last year? The top Harper College service used by students was One Stop (73 percent). The Academic Support Center was used by 42 percent of Hawks Care users, followed by the Finish Line Grant Program (27 percent), Access and Disability Services (21 percent), Counseling Services (21 percent), Library Technology Loaner Program (15 percent), the Canning Women's Program (9 percent), and the Center for Student Veterans and Military-Connected Students (3 percent).

Exhibit 10. Harper College services used by Hawks Care users, by number of students, unduplicated (2024-25).



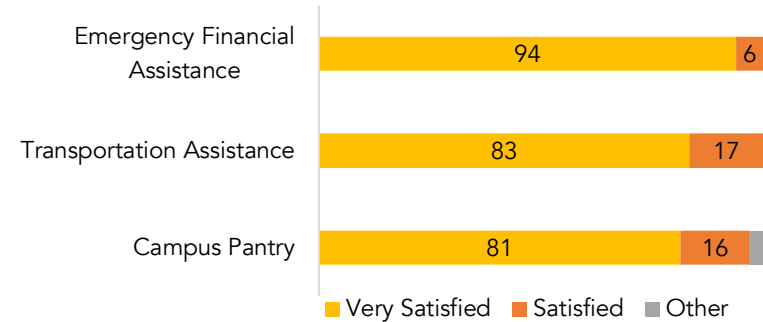
Were students satisfied with Hawks Care services? Almost all Hawks Care users were satisfied with their service (98 percent), with 4 of 5 Hawks Care users “very satisfied” (84 percent).

Exhibit 11. Satisfaction of Hawk Care services used by Hawks Care users (2024-25).



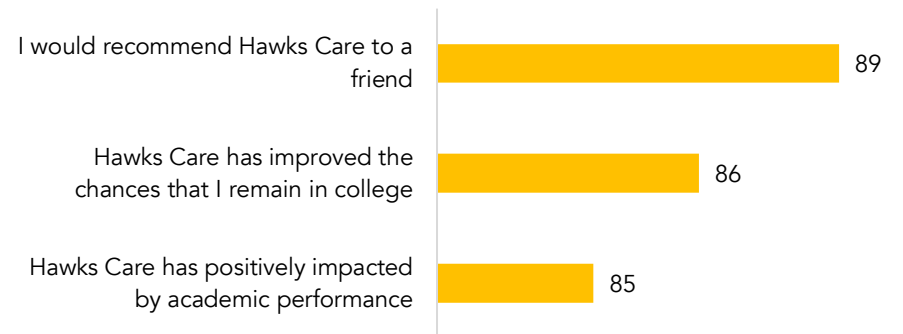
The highest ranked services including Emergency Financial Assistance (94 percent Very Satisfied; 6 percent satisfied; 100 percent overall), Transportation Assistance (83 percent Very Satisfied; 17 percent satisfied; 100 percent overall), and Campus Pantry (81 percent Very Satisfied; 16 percent satisfied; 97 percent overall).

Exhibit 12. Satisfaction of Hawk Care services used by Hawks Care users (2024-25).



Other comments. Eighty-nine percent of Hawks Care users would recommend Hawks Care to a friend. Eighty-six percent said that Hawks Care improved their chances of remaining in college, and 85 percent said it positively impacted their academic performance.

Exhibit 13. Additional comments by Hawks Care users (2024-25).



In addition:

- 87 percent of Campus Pantry users used it more than once; over half used it four times or more.
- 75 percent of Help Your Shelf users used it 6 times or more.
- Approximately half of Emergency Financial Assistance users used it once; the others twice or three times.
- Most users of Transportation Assistance used it once or twice. Three people used it more than 12 times.



SWOT Findings

This section provides selected findings from our SWOT analysis. These were collected and analyzed by SwailLandis using information primarily from interviews conducted throughout 2025 and the SWOT focus groups held on campus September 30-October 1, 2025.

What Does Hawks Care Do Well?

Basic Needs Services. Hawks Care provides comprehensive basic needs support to students who may be on the periphery of the institution. Services include emergency housing, food pantry, transportation assistance, and help with public benefits. The holistic and individualized nature of support addresses multiple aspects of student well-being.

This includes adult students, students who are unhoused, and those who have food insecurities. We know from Harper College surveys that 1/3 of students (35 percent) say they have some level of food insecurity. Hawks Care doesn't solve these issues; it does provide some salve for those in need.

One-Stop Support. Hawks Care provides "one-stop support" for students and is very accessible to students, requiring only minimal eligibility requirements making support broadly accessible. "The model in itself of Hawks Care consolidates dedicated space for all these key services in one spot." Knowing that "students don't always know what they need," the Hawks Care staff are able to onboard students and assess their needs in a timely manner. Hawks Care is able to provide multiple

services in one, single location. In addition, it provides referrals and connections to non-Hawks Care services around campus and works in tandem with many of these services. Hawks Care was said to provide a "thoughtful approach to supporting students/services."

"We discuss thoughtful approaches for how we set up our services for students, like what would be most beneficial for them. How can we appeal to many students, regardless of their situation."

The Food Pantry and Kitchenette allow students who either have significant food insecurities or just need a "catch up" snack to address their needs quickly and efficiently. These services are well-used and have a demonstrable positive impact on students.

Staffing. The staff are inviting, professional, and accommodating. EPI/SwailLandis spoke at length with all staff members on several occasions and were taken with their dedication and commitment. Other terms that were used by stakeholders included "Safe Space" and "Community." Confidentiality was listed as a primary descriptor of Hawks Care services.

Words used to describe Hawks Care staff included friendly, empathetic, listening, and diverse. "The diverse backgrounds of Hawks Care staff, social work, mental counseling, public health; Hawks Care offers different insights to our students when it comes to resources." Having staff members who are multilingual, including Spanish, is a plus to their services and inclusion.

With its core staff, Hawks Care does an excellent job onboarding students and assessing their needs.

Facilities and Location. The facility itself is modern and inviting. As one person noted, “I don’t think we can underscore enough how welcoming of an environment it is... that can really make the difference between your experience there.” Noted were the “good light” and the full windows in the pantry area where students can sit down and relax. Combined with its privacy, Hawks Care’s welcoming environment allows students the comfortability to be themselves and tell their stories. We heard from several stakeholders that Hawks Care staff are good “listeners” for these students.

Some say that Hawks Care has a strong on-campus presence, complete with marketing materials visible throughout campus.

Partnerships. Hawks Care works with community partners from the region and is not simply isolated on campus. Hawks Care extends services to satellite campuses: “Hawks Care is really good about extending services to satellite campuses at LCC, and we work well together. Inclusive of all students near and far.” Hawks Care is open between 8am and 7pm for an 11-hour working day, four days a week, making it easy for students to drop in. Students mentioned the ease of making appointments.

Other Support. Hawks Care provides a relationship building opportunity for students. “The advantages about it (Hawks Care) being a place where or an opportunity for students to build those internal relationships, as well as opportunities for the campus to partner with external partners.”

What Are the Challenges with Hawks Care?

Waitlisting. There can be significant waitlists for appointments, especially at the start of the semester, with only one main resource specialist meeting with 20–25 students per week. This limits the program’s capacity to meet demand. Several stakeholders recognized that students sometimes wait up to two weeks for an appointment. This can be especially troublesome for issues that are typically “today” type scenarios. Hawks Care does the scheduling for the counseling services, which are provided by non-Hawks Care staff. The counselors are sometimes booked up for a long time, necessitating delays. It was offered that perhaps additional case management staff would reduce wait time for appointments.

“The operational budget limits professional and classified staffing to the point that Hawks Care is only one deep for each position, so that can definitely impact front desk coverage, student wait times for resource appointments and not being able to do your job because somebody is absent.”

Confusion About Services. Both students and staff sometimes misunderstand what Hawks Care can offer, particularly regarding emergency housing. This confusion can lead to misplaced expectations and underutilization of services. Some of the confusion is part of the awareness issue mentioned by students, staff, and other stakeholders, and a specific need for more faculty to both be aware of and refer more students to Hawks Care.

Marketing. While some pointed to marketing as a strength of Hawks Care, others saw it the other way and that there were too many students, faculty, and staff that didn't know enough about Hawks Care. One stakeholder suggested that perhaps integrating with Banner and Salesforce could help connect Hawks Care to other parts of the campus.

Informal Off-Campus Partnerships. Relationships with external organizations are mostly informal and have weakened over time due to staff turnover and changes in available services.

Barriers to Housing Assistance. Many emergency housing resources require income or have other eligibility barriers, making it difficult for some students to access help.

Limited Use of Some Resources. Programs like the Career Closet are underutilized, even though they are valuable for those who do use them. It was mentioned that 30 percent of Black students are parents yet not enrolled or participating in CCAMPIS (Childcare Access Means Parents in School Program), the US Department of Education program that provides support for low-income students who are parents. Harper College received a \$499,620 grant from USED in 2023 via CCAMPIS.

Unrealistic Expectations. We heard from stakeholders, that include Hawks Care staff, that some student users have unrealistic expectations of what Hawks Care can provide.

"We discussed student expectations sometimes being higher than what we can realistically provide just from the students that we have met with. We're not sure if that's coming from promises made of like, yeah, go to Hawks Care, they'll get you an apartment."

Stigma. There is often a stigma aligned with basic needs services for students. This isn't anything particular about Harper College; simply a reality of human nature. Still, this was identified as a barrier to expanded use of Hawks Care services by students who would benefit from participation. "I think Harper staff, faculty... we can remove those barriers just by making it something very common like going to the One Stop for financial aid help, which is also a stigma."

Career Closet. The Career Closet is a unique service provided by Hawks Care, focusing primarily on business-like apparel for men and women. The choices are limited by style and size but still provide utility for students who cannot afford or have access to professional attire, including and lab coats for Harper College's health sciences programs.

Stakeholders questioned whether The Career Closet is appropriately utilized. Some surmised that the Career Closet needs more casual wear clothing options and more sizes and stock items. It was noted that there are no gender-neutral options and undergarments in stock.

Facilities. While there are many pluses related to the Hawks Care facilities (see "strengths"), there are also issues of limited spacing for private meetings and limited supply and storage.

Hawks Care has effectively used its current space. This is an issue when stakeholders are asking for an expansion of pantry stock items as well as more items for the Career Closet. There is currently no space allocated to expand. It was noted during the site visit by SwailLandis that an empty classroom next door, which is being used for campus storage, could be apportioned to Hawks Care for expansion and storage.

Location. As with facilities, location is a double-edged sword for Hawks Care. The current location provides a discrete, safe haven for students. However, we received feedback that the location is difficult to find or “hidden.” As well, accessibility issues were noted:

“There's no accessibility button for students to get in, so students in wheelchairs, crutches have a really hard time. You can't really see into the office, so students literally stand outside and kind of circle around and don't know what to do, or they can't see in and so they just don't know if that's where they should go. The door is a little weird, how you have to open it, so they try to open it, and even though they have found it they can't open it.”

Pantry Options and Operations. While the pantry provides excellent resources in terms of food options, there were comments about its services, including the lack of variety of cultural foods (i.e., Latine staples, Halal options, kosher options). The lack of nutritional grab-and-go bag lunches, hot foods, and limited fresh vegetables. There is concern on the challenge of

purchasing and stocking the pantry by staff. This requires staff to travel to the grocery store, purchase items, transport them back to campus, and then bring them a distance from the parking area and up to the second floor.

Program Funding. The program received funding from a variety of areas, including Harper College and the Harper College Educational Foundation. Still, stakeholders believe that the program would benefit from additional funding which may ameliorate some of the critique of Hawks Care in this section. However, there was also concern that Hawks Care was not spending all the funding earmarked for the program from the Foundation. It is our understanding that the only underuse of Foundation funds has been due to reporting requirements for these funds which are difficult for undocumented students. Beyond that, it appears that the program uses all its funds.

There were comments about the money used for Lyft discounts for students. Students are capped at how often they can use Lyft discounts at 8 rides per month at \$10.00 each. Still, the college spends \$250,000/year on Lyft Pass Program, which is a large budget item.

Other Services. Stakeholders mentioned the lack of addressing the housing insecurity of students and suggested providing hotel gift cards, although this, too, would be a big-ticket item. Additionally, providing dedicated services targeted to mature students and reducing any duplicative services between Hawks Care and other areas of the campus, as identified as Tech Loans and gift cards.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Through our many meetings, discussions, and reviews of various materials, we are, at the end of this process, very impressed with what the Hawks Care Resource Center has to offer for Harper College students. In particular, the college leadership—at all levels—deserves acknowledgement for the vision to provide this type of one-stop, basic needs services for students.

We were very impressed by the Hawks Care staff members. Stakeholders we spoke with—almost to a person—offered laudatory comments about the Hawks Care staff. There were comments about either how things are done or the ability of Hawks Care to meet the great needs of many Harper College students. However, these comments were made in the best intent to advise and improve the program.

It is incumbent upon us, as researchers and strategic planning specialists, to provide direction and focus on what the college should do with the information herein and perhaps provide next steps for the continuous improvement for both Hawks Care and basic needs services at Harper College.

We provide these comments and suggestions as just that: our take on what we learned through this almost year-long process. Like most colleges, Harper College is a complex organization serving tens of thousands of students via hundreds of staff. It connects the local community with an institution of higher education, and in doing so enters a dialogue with the community on how they should operate within a community dynamic. There are many connections between Harper College and the greater Palatine area. Careful thought should be taken on how

an effort like Hawks Care can be effective and efficient in serving the students and community of the college.

We would suggest that leadership use this report to engage college committees, or if necessary, task one of those committees to look at the content and findings of this report and decide on what makes most sense for the college to follow-up upon. We have no illusions that everything herein will be important to everyone or necessary for the improvement of Hawks Care. But this report should provide insight into what we heard and observed. Use this information in a mindful way to get to the next level.

The following discussion is not provided in any order of priority or intent, although surely some of these issues matter more than others. As part of this process, Harper College needs to decide on how it views the priorities for improvement.

The Importance of a One-Stop, Basic Needs Approach. Providing services to students—especially those focused on basic, non-academic needs—can be daunting to providers. Of course, it is more daunting to students and potential users who are often resistant to acknowledging their issues, let alone actually walk into a facility to receive services and support.

A one-stop solution helps with that process. We found that Hawks Care staff were able to provide a knowledge of not only the services within Hawks Care, but of the services across campus, across the community, and safety net programs at the state and federal levels.

Location of Services. When the Canning Student Center opens in 2027, many of the student services options for students will move to the building, including admissions outreach, academic advising, disability services, and job placement resources. Hawks Care is not on the list of campus centers that will be moved to the new building. There are both positive and negative considerations for this decision. On the positive side, the uniqueness of the Hawks Care Resource Center and its location in D Building provides it with a sense of privacy for students. However, the current location is also a challenge for fulfilling the groceries and sundries in the Campus Pantry in particular, given there is no easy access nor is there a loading dock. Each week, Hawks Care staff must trek to the store and then haul purchases from vehicles to the second floor of Building D. For various reasons, the college has decided to leave Hawks Care where it is, even though there seems to be considerable alignment with the needs, logistically and otherwise, to locate Hawks Care at the Canning Student Center. Given also that Hawks Care serves as a connector of campus services, being able to direct students to an office in the same building rather than across campus would be a benefit for students. Certainly, having an available loading dock, and perhaps even access to Sodexo food services, also bodes well for Hawks Care.

There are always considerations on the decision-making on this issue, but it seems worth reconsideration given the challenges of locating Hawks Care in Building D.

Hawks Care Marketing. As the research studies illustrated, marketing is a challenge for one-stop and basic needs centers. Getting information in front of students so they will either acknowledge or comprehend the options available to them is always challenging. This is also made more challenging by the

need for the college to send other important notices to students. At some point, students often “tune out” from campus notifications.

For Hawks Care, there has been due diligence in conducting outreach to faculty, staff, students, departments, offices, student clubs, and community agencies/stakeholders. While Hawks Care services over 700 students each year, it is clear from the Trellis survey that there is a much greater need for services than Hawks Care is able to provide with current staffing.

We know from conversations that Hawks Care has worked effectively with the Harper College marketing staff. Continued conversations on the best ways to access the niche population of students that can benefit from basic needs support is greatly recommended.

Staffing. Hawks Care appears to operate effectively and efficiently. The current director has a solid understanding of the issues facing students, the resources at her disposal, and the services, departments, and organizations within and beyond Harper College. The staff we met with, including counseling staff that are not officially under the auspices of Hawks Care, were all compelling and engaged in the mission and work of Hawks Care.

Given our discussion of marketing and outreach for new students, staff appear to be able to meet the current needs. However, if Hawks Care was able to gain access to additional students that would benefit from their services, they would require additional staffing to meet the need.

We encourage Harper College leadership to look towards the future when planning for Hawks Care staffing and professional development as it will surely realize service growth. While staffing is always complicated due to FTE and budgetary pressures there is an argument present that Hawks Care would benefit from hiring additional staff in anticipation of growth rather than working at in a service deficit.

Faculty and Staff Engagement. Faculty and key service staff (e.g., student services; academic services) are the prime connector between students and the basic needs services provided by Hawks Care and other centers at Harper College. Many referrals for services come directly from instructional faculty who are keen to notice students with needs in their classrooms. The challenge is to get more faculty to understand the services available for students and to also take the necessary steps to advise students of Hawks Care services.

In discussions, the research team was told that even with dedicated outreach to faculty, there is almost no take up on the offer to provide a presentation to faculty and students. Interestingly, Hawks Care information is provided to adjunct professors during the onboarding process, but never to full professors/faculty.

There are two levels of consideration for Harper College (and all colleges) on these issues. The first is engaging in intentionality, referring to the likelihood that mechanisms are in place to make referrals and services provided by Hawks Care relatively automatic rather than “by chance.” While staff who identify needy students should be celebrated, the concern is how many students are missed through this process. Focus on

identification and knowledge of services is primary to the efficacy of basic needs services at Harper College.

Second, the intrusiveness of services is also at play. Working with basic needs services is challenging due to the nature of students and their particular needs. The stigma associated with basic needs, such as food insecurities, makes it particularly challenging to identify and service. Harper College needs to balance its ability to be intrusive while also providing the utmost sensitivity and privacy for students. Hawks Care seems to have done nicely on this issue. However, we think that some of the marketing and outreach could, through faculty and others, be more intrusive than is currently practiced.

Here are some specific considerations to leverage increased faculty and staff engagement:

- ✓ Provide more targeted materials and opportunities to engage faculty and bring them into the Hawks Care “tent.”
- ✓ Help faculty understand the need and commitment of the college for Hawks Care services.
- ✓ Work on an early awareness program with professors to identify students who are at risk and connect them with people who can help them.
- ✓ Prepare a better referral system for faculty and Hawks Care so there is more of an automatic lever.

"...our faculty, our staff, who meet regularly with students, there's such an opportunity there. And while many of them are great referral sources, there's certainly an opportunity to improve that and work more closely with our adjunct faculty additionally..."

- ✓ Require every syllabus to include information on Hawks Care and other services.
- ✓ Place Hawks Care signage in every classroom.
- ✓ Expanding the use of resource tables at events and in hallways as well as Blackboard Shell with resources.

"I think it would be very helpful for students to see that right away (Hawks Care) built into our blackboard shell... because it should be right there for students to access and for faculty to know it's there to access and can easily show it."

- ✓ Use multi-prong outreach (Instagram videos, email, texts, etc.) to expand awareness to students and educate faculty about Hawks Care services.

"I think what we were saying is (marketing) in many different forms of modalities that you offer, you know, the quick, the social, the email, the text, the in-person, that report, all of it will then ultimately lead students at one point or another to access the services. I don't think that one entirely will."

- ✓ Work with the different academic divisions to get a list of supplies students need (i.e., stethoscopes, paper/pens, etc.).

Campus Pantry/Food Services. Without doubt, the Hawks Care Campus Pantry has been very helpful and successful meeting food insecurity issues amongst Harper College students. Given the size and scope of Campus Pantry, it provides a refreshing assortment of healthy and serviceable foods for users. It also does so with privacy and respect.

As with prior discussion of possible growth of basic needs services on campus, there will likely be a need to enlarge the pantry as more students become cognizant of its existence. This would require additional space. We do know there is a vacant classroom immediately adjacent to Hawks Care that could be utilized for Campus Pantry, Career Closet, and other services of Hawks Care. Considerations may include:

- ✓ Provide more fresh vegetable options by expanding the garden. This requires more space to be provided for this purpose as well as staffing. There is apparently surplus space in the greenhouse not being used.
- ✓ Add cultural foods and provide other types including gluten free options.
- ✓ Strengthen partnerships with food-related organizations.
- ✓ Increase nutritional items in the pantry as well as in Grab and Go Bags.
- ✓ Use bulk food distributors such as Costco to order and deliver food to save time and money or partner with Sodexo.

"...strengthening the partnership with the Chicago Food Depository...there are opportunities for clubs and orgs and offices to volunteer to get more goods from the Food Depository, and other ways to beef that up. So, it's a great partnership. How can we do more?"

Career Closet. A unique and important resource for students, whether they need clothes for a job interview or for nursing labs. The clothing is limited by availability and size of the "closet." Expansion would likely require additional space.

- ✓ Increase the variety of clothing that expands on career clothes only:
 - casual wear (jeans, t-shirts, sweatshirts/pants, etc.).
 - ergonomic shoes (for health sciences students).
 - safety clothing (i.e. construction pants, coveralls, etc.)
 - cold weather clothing (i.e. hats, gloves, coats).
 - gym shoes.
 - accessories, such as belts and undergarments (which are provided but students are reluctant to take).
- ✓ Storage Space is limited. Consider providing additional space dedicated to clothing.

Hawks Care Funding. Hawks Care has received adequate funding to date, but expansion would require additional investments from Harper College, the Educational Foundation, and perhaps other philanthropic and state entities. For consideration:

- ✓ Conducting an employee campaign for fundings.
- ✓ Contributions from corporations.
- ✓ Discuss the best use of Educational Foundation funds versus other "unrestricted" funding that is available to Hawks Care.

Other Services

- ✓ Appropriately scale operations to the expected need of the student population via staffing, food, clothing, finances, and other Hawks Care provisions. Staffing is critical to any scaling of Hawks Care.
- ✓ provide more resources for students who are parents, including items for infants (Need to include items for infants, i.e., diapers, formula, teething snacks, etc.)

"If we scale an opportunity, then we have to staff better. Can't just scale and then expect the team to absorb more, right?"

"I think it's important as we sit here and reflect what we can do differently to enhance health security; we have to be cognizant of the need to provide Katie (Hawks Care) with more staff."



References

- Academic Impressions. (2020). *Addressing the Stigma of Student Food Insecurity*.
- Academic Impressions. (2024). *Combatting Food Insecurity on Campus: 9 Strategies to Create...*
- Academic Impressions. (2025). *Tackling the Challenge (and the Stigma) of Student Food Insecurity*.
- ACUI. (2018). *Using Theory to Inform Practice: Supporting College Students...*
- Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. (2023). *Home Gardener's Guide to Fresh Produce Donations*.
- Boise State University. (2020). *Tackling the Challenge (and the Stigma) of Student Food Insecurity*.
- Boise State University. (2025). *Reducing the Stigma of Food Insecurity on College Campuses*.
- Campus Rec Magazine. (2025). *University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Food Assistance Lockers Fuel Student Success*.
- CannonDesign. (2023). *Addressing Basic Needs on College Campuses*.
- Caylor Solutions. (2026). *Marketing Trends in Higher Education: What to Expect in 2026*.
- City Colleges of Chicago. (2025). *Feed the Need drive success story*. Retrieved from City Colleges of Chicago website
- Colleges on Delivering Basic Needs Support. Retrieved from <https://www.rand.org>
- Community College Daily. (2026). *Women's Program - Harper College*. Retrieved from Harper College website
- Community College League of California. (2025). *2025 Real College California Basic Needs Survey*. Sacramento, CA.
- Community Commons. (2025). *Innovative Initiatives on College Campuses Addressing Food Insecurity*.
- ConexED. (2025). *10 Tips to Make Student Services More Visible, Flexible, & Accessible*.
- ConexED. (2026). *Beyond Enrollment: Building Student-Centered Marketing Strategies*.
- CPL Team. (2025). *Tackling Campus Hunger with College Food Pantries*.
- EAB. (2025). *Implementation Guide: Addressing Students' Basic Needs*. Retrieved from <https://www.eab.com>
- EAB. (2025). *Scaling Student Support in Community Colleges*.
- EAB. (2026). *How to Optimize Your Student Communications Strategy*.
- EducationDynamics. (2026). *The 2026 Growth Strategy Higher Ed Needs Right Now*.
- Element451. (2026). *10 Digital Marketing Strategies in Higher Education*.
- Elgin Community College. (2026). *Feed the Need Campus Food Drive*.
- Feeding America. (2023). *Gleaning for Good: Reducing Waste in Local Farm Networks*.
- Feeding America. (2025). *Addressing Food Insecurity Among College Students*.
- Feeding America. (n.d.). *OrderAhead*. Retrieved from Feeding America website
- Feeding Florida. (2023). *How Does That Work: Distributions*.
- Food Bank News. (2024). *How College Food Pantries Are Pushing the Envelope*. Retrieved from <https://www.foodbanknews.org>
- Food Bank News. (2025). *Breaking Barriers: Smart Lockers for Campus Food Pantries*.
- Food Tank. (2024). *The Smart Pantry Offers Solutions for Students Facing Food Insecurity*.
- Forbes. (2025, Feb 23). *Tech Trends in Higher Ed: Redefining Enrollment, Engagement & Success*.
- Four Star Realty. (2024). *6 Ideas for Marketing to College Students*. Retrieved from <https://www.fourstarrealty.com>

- Georgetown University. (2022). New report finds community college students struggling to afford basic needs, highlights institutional support. Retrieved from Georgetown University website
- GoodSource Solutions. (2025). Strategic purchasing for food pantries. Retrieved from GoodSource Solutions website
- Greater Chicago Food Depository. (2023). *Helping College Students Thrive Through Food Access*.
- Higher Education Marketing. (2024). Best Practices For An Effective Student Ambassador Program. Retrieved from <https://www.highereducationmarketing.com>
- Hope Center for Student Basic Needs. (2025). *Beyond the Food Pantry: One-Stop Center Models*.
- Ideas42. (2025). *Reframing Basic Needs to Encourage Students to Share*.
- Illinois Campus Recreation. (2025). *Food Assistance & Well-Being Program*.
- Illinois Community College Board. (2024). *Illinois Community Colleges Launch Second Annual Feed The Need*.
- Illinois Extension. (2023). *Enhance Your Food Pantry Operations: Free Interactive Training*.
- Illinois Extension. (2024). *Growing Together Illinois: Community Garden Partnerships*. University of Illinois.
- Illinois Extension. (2025). *Regional Food Bank Integration Strategies for Pantries*.
- Illinois Open Publishing Network. (2024). *A Case Study of a Mini Pantry Collaboration within a Library*.
- Inside Higher Ed. (2023). *Five Factors Causing Food Insecurity Among College Students*.
- Inside Higher Ed. (2024, Sep 13). *The Student Readiness Crisis: 4 Ways Community Colleges Can Respond*.
- Inside Higher Ed. (2025). *College Programs Support Holistic Student Basic Needs*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com>
- Inside Higher Ed. (2026). *Why community colleges can't be fixed — they must be rebuilt*. Retrieved from Inside Higher Ed website
- Ithaka S+R. (2019). *Interim Findings Report: MAAPS Advising Experiment*.
- Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development. (2025). *Exploring College Student Experiences with Little Pantries*.
- Liaison. (2025, May 27). *How AI Is Boosting Community College Student Success*.
- Link2Feed. (n.d.). Link2Feed. Retrieved from Link2Feed website
- Lumina Foundation. (2023). *Closing the Credit-Noncredit Divide*.
- Lumina Foundation. (2025). *Advising & Student Supports*.
- Manaferra. (2026). *Higher Ed Marketing Trends 2026: What to Expect?*.
- MDRC. (2022). *Helping Students Meet Basic Needs to Support Their Success*. Retrieved from <https://www.mdrc.org>
- Medicat. (2024). *5 Strategies to Promote Resources on Your Campus*. Retrieved from <https://www.medicat.com>
- Midwest Food Bank. (2023). *MFB Nonprofit Partners Helping College Students*.
- Mongoose. (2026). *2026 Higher Ed Tech Trends to Watch*.
- Motimatic. (2025). *Top University Marketing Strategies to Boost Enrollment in 2025*.
- Mount Carmel Guild. (2024). *Choice Restores Dignity. Hope Begins with a Voice*. [Facebook Post]
- National Institutes of Health (NIH). (2025). *Obstacles to University Food Pantry Use and Student-Suggested Solutions*.
- National Institutes of Health. (2024). *Evaluating a Campus Food Pantry's Potential Impact on Nutrition*.
- National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness. (2025). *Running a Campus Food Pantry*.
- Northern Illinois Food Bank. (2025). *Get Groceries & Resources*.
- Northern Illinois Food Bank. (n.d.). *My Pantry Express*. Retrieved from Northern Illinois Food Bank website
- Northwest Council for Computer Education. (2024). *Protecting Student Privacy in the Digital Era: 6 Strategies*.

- Parcel Pending. (2024). *Fighting Hunger on Campus: The Power of Food Pantries*.
- Parcel Pending. (2025). *How to Overcome Barriers to Food Access on Campus*.
- Rosica Communications. (2026). *2026 Content Marketing Forecast for Higher Education*.
- Rutherford Source. (2024). *The Store: Client-Choice Models in Food Pantries*.
- Scoir. (2026). *Student-Centered Enrollment Marketing Trends for Colleges*.
- SGC™ Foodservice. (2025). *The Rise of Food Lockers on College Campuses*.
- SLO Food Bank. (2025). How do food banks source food?. Retrieved from SLO Food Bank website
- Smiota. (2025). *How Smart Food Lockers Transform Campus Food Security*. Retrieved from <https://www.smiota.com>
- Sustain. (2025). Models of community food projects. Retrieved from Sustain website
- Swipe Out Hunger. (2021). *College Campus Food Pantries: Learnings from a 2021 Survey*.
- Swipe Out Hunger. (2023). *Campus Food Pantries: Insights from a 2023 Survey*.
- Taylor & Francis Online. (2022). *Pivoting During COVID-19: Campus Pantries' Innovations and Challenges*.
- The California Aggie. (2025). *CoHo launches new reusable container program*.
- The Common Market. (2025). Advancing school food procurement. Retrieved from The Common Market website
- The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs. (2025). The Hope Center's 2025 Federal Policy Priorities. Retrieved from The Hope Center website
- TheCoolist. (2026). *24 Pantry Organization Ideas That Make Storage Simple and Stress-Free*.
- True Charity. (2025). Approaches to food distribution. Retrieved from True Charity website
- U.S. News & World Report. (2025). *How Colleges Are Addressing Food Insecurity*.
- University Business. (2025). *5 Ways to Overcome Food Insecurity on Your Campus*.
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. (2024). *Unlocking Innovative Approaches to Food Security at Illinois*.
- University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. (n.d.). Food Assistance & Well-Being Program. Retrieved from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign website
- University of New Hampshire. (2023). *Food Safety Practices for Hunger Relief Organizations*.
- USDA. (2024). USDA publishes final rule expanding geographic preference for child nutrition program purchasing. Retrieved from USDA website
- Virginia Tech. (2024). *Produce Handling for Food Banks: Balancing Waste Prevention and Safety*.
- WA.gov. (2023). *Best Practices for Storing Perishable Produce*.
- Watermark Insights. (2023). *Why Your One-Stop Is Worth More Than You Think*.
- Western Governors University. (2023). *Recommendations for Policy-makers to Support Learners*.
- WGEM. (2022). *Social Media Campaign Boosting Awareness of Campus Food Pantry*.

APPENDIX

Hawks Care Project Interviews and Meetings, 2025

NAME	TITLE	DATE OF INTERVIEW			
David Antonides	Student Development Faculty	September 16, 2025	Victoria Mineo	Supervisor - Account Payable	September 11, 2025
Dennis Baskin	Associate Provost of Student Affairs	September 30, 2025	Kate Murphy	Educational Foundation - Manager of Database, Technology & Advancement Services	September 9, 2025
Diane Boldt	PATHWAY - Career Navigator	September 24, 2025	Andrew Ney	HCRC Office Assistant	May 9, 2025
Katie Butera	Manager, Hawks Care Resource Center	March 25, 2025 & April 1, 2025	Melissa Ochwat	Women's Program Academic Advisor	September 24, 2025
Brian Collins	Manager - One Stop	September 11, 2025	Christina Paskon	HCRC Resource Specialist and HOUSE Liaison	May 7, 2025
Stephanie Dardon Paz	HCRC Childcare Case Manager	May 6, 2025	Carolyn Phipps	Financial Aid Specialist	
Marcia Frank	Senior Director of Innovation and Development	October 1, 2025	Omar Sanchez	Coordinator - Workforce Career	September 15, 2025
Amie Granger	Manager - Community Relations	September 11, 2025	Gabby Sanchez	HCRC Administrative Secretary	May 9, 2025
Tamara Johnson	Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	October 10, 2025	Andrew Shelton	Counseling Services Therapist	September 11, 2025
Jeff Julian	Chief of Staff and VP of External Affairs	September 12, 2025	Deann Surdo	Director - Outcomes Assessment & Institutional Effectiveness	September 11, 2025
Julissa Malagon	HCRC Information Receptionist	May 6, 2025	Erika Szotek	Coordinator - Laboratory	September 16, 2025
Laura McGee	Director - Student Financial Assistance	September 16, 2025	Carol Trejo Kroeger	HCRC Clinical Mental Health Therapist	May 12, 2025
Matt McLaughlin	Director - Insights, Planning & Decision Support	September 8, 2025	Ruth Williams	Provost	September 12, 2025
			Heather Zoldak	Educational Foundation Chief Advancement Officer	September 10, 2025

Hawks Care SWOT Breakfast Meeting Participants, September 30, 2025

Pete Almeida, Director, Title V Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI)

David Antonides, Associate Professor

Dennis Baskin, Associate Provost for Student Affairs

Diane Boldt, PATHWAY, Career Navigator

Angelina Bonilla, Coordinator, Financial Literacy Program

Katie Butera, Manager, Hawks Care Resource Center

Brian Collins, Manager, One Stop Center

Stephanie Dardon, Paz, Manager, Childcare Case

Marcia Frank, Senior Director, Innovation and Development

Talitha Gentry, Director, Advising Services

Sandy Gonzalez, Rivas, Coordinator, Undocumented Student Liaison/Peer-to-Peer Coordinator

Kathleen Gorski, Associate Provost for Curriculum and Instruction

Esmeralda Guerrero, Lopez, Coordinator, Student Diversity Initiatives

Tamara Johnson, Vice President, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Jeff Julian, Chief of Staff and VP of External

Julissa Malagon, Information Receptionist - Hawks Care Resource Center

Ginger McHugh-Kurtz, Assistant Professor, Math and Science

Matt McLaughlin, Director, Insights, Planning and Decision Support

Kristyn Meyer, Associate Executive Director, Foundation and Major Gifts

Victoria Mineo, Supervisor, Accounts Payable

Melissa Ochwat, Academic Advisor, Women's Program

Bob Parzy, Associate Provost for Enrollment Services

Christina Paskon, Specialist, Hawks Care Resource Center

Bobbi Pineda, Program Coordinator, Learning and Career Center

Kim Pohl, Director of Communications

Pearl Ratunil, Professor - Liberal Arts

Gabiela Sanchez, Administrative Secretary - Hawks Care Resource Center

Becki Suthers, Manager, Student Communications

Erika Szotek, Coordinator, Laboratory (Math and Science)

Roderica Williams, Dean, Student Success and Retention

Facilitators: Watson Scott Swail and Kimberly Landis, EPI/Swail-Landis

Hawks Care User Survey (Instrument)

Harper College conducting this survey to provide inform an upcoming strategic plan for the Hawks Care Resource Center and related student services. You are receiving this survey request because you utilized the HCRC during the past academic year.

These questions are aimed solely at services you received during the 2024-25 academic year at Harper College. Please do not consider services received in prior academic years or semesters.

Thank you for your time and support. If you have any questions, please contact SwailLandis, the organization who is directing this research, at info@swailandis.com.

How did you become aware of Hawks Care and its services?

- ☐ New Student Orientation
- ☐ Posters and other signage
- ☐ Website
- ☐ Faculty or staff member
- ☐ Family member
- ☐ Fellow student
- ☐ Other (please specify)

What program are your currently enrolled in at Harper College?

CAMPUS PANTRY

Did you use the Campus Pantry this academic year (2024-25)?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

CAMPUS PANTRY

How many times (approximately) have you utilized the Campus Pantry this academic year (2024-25)?

How satisfied are you with this service?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

How satisfied were you with the information provided by Hawks Care staff about how to use the pantry?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied

- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the choices for food and supplies?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the hours of operation?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

What suggestions do you have to improve the pantry?

Do any of the following barriers keep you from using this service more than you do?

- ☐ I find it intimidating to use this service. ☐ It doesn't work well with my schedule. ☐ Transportation.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Would you say this service helped you stay in school?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

If this service were not available, are there other areas or places where you could have received this type of support?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

CAREER CLOSET

Did you use the Career Closet this academic year (2024-25)?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

CAREER CLOSET

How many times (approximately) have you utilized the Career Closet this academic year (2024-25)?

How satisfied are you with this service?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

How satisfied were you with the information provided by Hawks Care staff about how to use the Career Closet?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the choices for clothing and accessories?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the hours of operation?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

What suggestions do you have to improve the Career Closet?

Do any of the following barriers keep you from using this service more than you do?

☐ I find it intimidating to use this service. ☐ It doesn't work well with my schedule. ☐ Transportation.

Other (please specify)

Would you say this service helped you stay in school?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

If this service were not available, are there other areas or places where you could have received this type of support?

☐ Yes ☐ No

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

Did you use the Child Care Assistance this academic year (2024-25)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How many times (approximately) have you utilized Child Care Assistance this academic year (2024-25)?

How satisfied are you with this service?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

How satisfied were you with the information provided by Hawks Care staff about how to use Child Care Assistance?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the hours of operation?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

What suggestions do you have to improve Child Care Assistance?

Do any of the following barriers keep you from using this service more than you do?

- ☐ I find it intimidating to use this service. ☐ It doesn't work well with my schedule. ☐ Transportation.
☐ Other (please specify)

Would you say this service helped you stay in school?

☐ Strongly agree

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

If this service were not available, are there other areas or places where you could have received this type of support?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

COMMUNITY RESOURCES REFERRALS

Did you use the Community Resources Referrals this academic year (2024-25)?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many times (approximately) have you utilized the Community Resources Referrals this academic year (2024-25)?

How satisfied are you with this service?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

How satisfied were you with the information provided by Hawks Care staff about how to use the Community Resources Referrals?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the hours of operation?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

What suggestions do you have to improve the Community Resources Referrals?

Do any of the following barriers keep you from using this service more than you do?

- ☐ I find it intimidating to use this service. ☐ It doesn't work well with my schedule. ☐ Transportation.

Other (please specify)

Would you say this service helped you stay in school?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

If this service were not available, are there other areas or places where you could have received this type of support?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

HELP YOUR SHELF

Did you use Help Your Shelf this academic year (2024-25)?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many times (approximately) have you utilized Help Your Shelf this academic year (2024-25)?

How satisfied are you with this service?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

How satisfied were you with the information provided by Hawks Care staff about how to use Help Your Shelf?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the choices for food and supplies?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the hours of operation?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

What suggestions do you have to improve Help Your Shelf?

Do any of the following barriers keep you from using this service more than you do?

- ☐ I find it intimidating to use this service. ☐ It doesn't work well with my schedule. ☐ Transportation.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Would you say this service helped you stay in school?

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

If this service were not available, are there other areas or places where you could have received this type of support?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

KITCHENETTE

Did you use the Kitchenette this academic year (2024-25)?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many times (approximately) have you utilized the Kitchenette this academic year (2024-25)?

How satisfied are you with this service?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

How satisfied were you with the information provided by Hawks Care staff about how to use the Kitchenette?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the hours of operation?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

What suggestions do you have to improve the Kitchenette?

Do any of the following barriers keep you from using this service more than you do?

- ☐ I find it intimidating to use this service. ☐ It doesn't work well with my schedule. ☐ Transportation.
☐ Other (please specify)

Would you say this service helped you stay in school?

- ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor disagree ☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

If this service were not available, are there other areas or places where you could have received this type of support?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

SINGLE STOP ONLINE BENEFITS SCREENER

Did you use the Single Stop Online Benefits Screener this academic year (2024-25)?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

How many times (approximately) have you utilized the Single Stop Online Benefits Screener this academic year (2024-25)?

How satisfied are you with this service?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

How satisfied were you with the information provided by Hawks Care staff about how to use the Single Stop Online Benefits Screener?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the hours of operation?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

What suggestions do you have to improve the Single Stop Online Benefits Screener?

Do any of the following barriers keep you from using this service more than you do?

- ☐ I find it intimidating to use this service. ☐ It doesn't work well with my schedule. ☐ Transportation.
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Would you say this service helped you stay in school?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

If this service were not available, are there other areas or places where you could have received this type of support?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you use the Technology Loan this academic year (2024-25)?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

TECHNOLOGY LOAN

How many times (approximately) have you utilized the Technology Loan this academic year (2024-25)?

How satisfied are you with this service?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

How satisfied were you with the information provided by Hawks Care staff about how to use the Technology Loan?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the choices for technology?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the hours of operation?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

What suggestions do you have to improve the Technology Loan?

Do any of the following barriers keep you from using this service more than you do?

- ☐ I find it intimidating to use this service. ☐ It doesn't work well with my schedule. ☐ Transportation.
☐ Other (please specify)

Would you say this service helped you stay in school?

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

If this service were not available, are there other areas or places where you could have received this type of support?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Did you use the Emergency Financial Assistance this academic year (2024-25)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

How many times (approximately) have you utilized the Emergency Financial Assistance this academic year (2024-25)?

How satisfied are you with this service?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

How satisfied were you with the information provided by Hawks Care staff about how to use Emergency Financial Assistance?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the hours of operation?

- ☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

What suggestions do you have to improve Emergency Financial Assistance?

Do any of the following barriers keep you from using this service more than you do?

☐ I find it intimidating to use this service. ☐ It doesn't work well with my schedule. ☐ Transportation.

Other (please specify)

Would you say this service helped you stay in school?

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

If this service were not available, are there other areas or places where you could have received this type of support?

☐ Yes ☐ No

TRANSPORTATION

Did you use the Transportation Assistance (e.g., Lyft Pass Program; Pace Campus Connection) this academic year (2024-25)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

TRANSPORTATION

How many times (approximately) have you utilized Transportation Assistance this academic year (2024-25)?

How satisfied are you with this service?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

How satisfied were you with the information provided by Hawks Care staff about how to use Transportation Assistance?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the choices for Transportation Assistance?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

Are you satisfied with the hours of operation?

- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Very dissatisfied

What suggestions do you have to improve the Transportation Assistance?

Do any of the following barriers keep you from using this service more than you do?

☐ I find it intimidating to use this service. ☐ It doesn't work well with my schedule. ☐ Transportation.

Other (please specify)

Would you say this service helped you stay in school?

- ☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree
☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Disagree
☐ Strongly disagree

If this service were not available, are there other areas or places where you could have received this type of support?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Final Questions

Which of the following HarperCollege Services did you also utilize this past year?

- ☐ The Rita and John Canning Women's Program ☐ Counseling Services
☐ Academic Support Center ☐ Finish Line Grant Program
☐ Library Technology Loaner Program ☐ One Stop
☐ Center for Student Veterans and Military-Connected Students ☐ Access and Disability Services

Other (please specify)

Are there other services not provided by Harper College that would be helpful to keep you enrolled and working towards your certificate, diploma, or degree? If so, please provide.

A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

What is your gender? (at birth)

☐ Male ☐ Female

☐ What is your race/ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native ☐ Asian or Asian American
☐ Black or African American ☐ Hispanic or Latino
☐ Middle Eastern or North African
☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander ☐ White

Another race

What is your current age?

Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?

- ☐ Married ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced ☐ Separated
☐ Cohabiting with a significant other or in a domestic partnership ☐ Single, never married
☐ Prefer not to answer

THANK YOU

Thank you for taking the time to complete this important survey to improve Hawks Care.

Would you be willing to take part in an interview or focus group over the next few months to help us in our future planning? If yes, please provide your name, email, and cell number so we can contact you.

