



CUNY CARES

*Bronx Pilot Baseline Assessment Report
on Comprehensive Access to Resources for Essential Services*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Available at www.healthycuny.org/23cunycaresbaselinereport

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The full report and its executive summary are available at
<https://www.healthycuny.org/23cunycaresbaselinereport>

Introduction

CUNY Central Offices of Academic and Student Affairs, Healthy CUNY, and the CUNY Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy, recognize the impact that unmet essential needs, such as food, housing, and health, have on academic success among college students, especially in light of the economic and health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, they have partnered with Bronx Community College (BCC), Hostos Community College, and Lehman College to develop the CUNY Comprehensive Access to Resources and Essential Services (CARES) Bronx Demonstration Project. This three-year pilot project, field tested in 2022-2023 and set to launch in September 2023, aims to connect students to services and benefits programs that can support them in meeting needs essential to academic and life success.

The long term goal of CUNY CARES is to create a model for CUNY's student health and social services that can be scaled to all 25 CUNY campuses. The decision to begin in the Bronx was based on several factors. The three Bronx campuses have recently begun to reorganize their essential needs services, fostering a dynamic environment where dedicated students, faculty, and staff are already deeply engaged in transformative initiatives. This foundation of on-the-ground experience, passion and commitment serves as a catalyst for driving meaningful change. Moreover, the Bronx faces unique challenges that make it an ideal starting point for developing innovative approaches to reduce high rates of social inequality and poor health. Bronx county reports the highest poverty rates, lowest levels of residents with a college degree, and worse health outcomes of any of New York State's 62 counties. Disturbingly high levels of food insecurity, premature deaths and COVID-19 mortality rates in the Bronx further underscore the urgent need to develop new approaches to improve the lives of CUNY students, their families, and their communities.

CUNY plays a leading role in moving low income New Yorkers from poverty into the middle class, providing them with the knowledge and skills to advance their careers, support their families, and contribute to the economic, political, and social life of the City. No other University has more consistently fulfilled this mission. But almost half the students who enter CUNY fail to graduate in six years, and many never finish.¹ Financial stressors and their related challenges can lead many students to drop out prior to graduating, and many students require support to meet essential needs for food, housing, and health care. The vision of CUNY CARES is to create an environment for all CUNY students, where it is easier to find high-quality and comprehensive services than to experience unmet needs and where students feel empowered to seek help when they need it. By strengthening the University's capacity to support students in this way, CUNY aims to increase retention and graduation rates and help its students gain

the lifetime health, economic, and social benefits that college degrees confer.

To inform the implementation of CUNY CARES, this report provides a detailed overview of a population-representative survey of almost 2,000 students on the Bronx campuses conducted in Fall 2022. It includes data on students' self-reported experiences with education, food, housing, mental health, and healthcare in the previous 12 months. We also share findings from in-depth interviews with students, providing insights into the facilitators and barriers to seeking support on- and off- campus. Additionally, the report outlines the services offered by the Bronx campuses and feedback received from campus staff regarding what is needed for the CUNY CARES project to be successful on their respective campus.

Using information gathered from the baseline survey, student interviews and year-long planning discussions with campus partners, CUNY CARES has identified seven strategies in four broad intervention categories to be implemented and evaluated over the next three years (See Box 1 below). This report provides an overview of specific intervention activities conducted to date, including successes, lessons learned, and challenges encountered. We analyze how our field-testing of intervention components is informing the CUNY CARES Fall 2023 project launch. Since the goal of CUNY CARES is to test and evaluate new approaches to meeting student needs, we also describe the rigorous evaluation we will implement and a continuous improvement approach we will use to refine and identify the intervention components that are successful and replicable across the CUNY system.

Box 1 Key Start Up Components of CUNY CARES

1. Expand capacity to connect students to services and benefits by:
 - Preparing students to serve as CUNY CARES navigators
 - Preparing students to serve as CUNY CARES peer advocates
2. Expand resources for students facing housing instability by:
 - Hiring a housing specialist to serve the three Bronx campuses
 - Providing one-on-one housing assistance to students with housing instability
3. Develop partnerships with agencies that can provide integrated referral systems and comprehensive services by:
 - Establishing agreements with providers of food assistance, mental health, health care, and social services to serve CUNY students
 - Exchanging information with these providers to ensure continuity and quality of care
4. Increase student awareness of supportive services by
 - Training campus faculty and staff to provide information and referrals for services to students
 - Engaging school leadership in promoting CARES in multiple arenas

State of the Data

Research has consistently identified five key health domains that have a significant impact on academic progress: housing insecurity, hunger and food insecurity, mental health status, access to health care, and sexual and reproductive health.² In this section, we summarize the current state of evidence within the first four domains specifically at the Bronx campuses, as captured by the CUNY CARES Baseline Survey, in-depth student interviews, and discussions with campus and Healthy CUNY program staff. These data underscore the critical importance of addressing students' essential health and social needs in order to support and maintain their academic success.

Data Collection Methods

Fall 2022 Baseline Survey

In Fall 2022, Healthy CUNY collaborated with the CUNY Office of Applied Research, Evaluation & Data Analytics to carry out a population representative survey. The survey aimed to invite a sample of 10,000 students who had been enrolled at BCC, Hostos, and Lehman during the fall of 2021 to complete a questionnaire. Selected students were invited via email to participate in an online survey. The survey was designed to explore various aspects of students' experiences, such as their education, food security, housing, mental health, and healthcare access. Additionally, the survey sought to investigate their level of awareness of on and off-campus support programs and their utilization of these services. Respondents were offered a \$20 gift card and were entered into a raffle for a chance to win a \$100 gift card to reimburse participants for their time.

Of the 10,000 students invited, 1,833 completed the survey (18.3% response rate). The sample was weighted to account for survey non-response bias based on the demographic criteria used to select the initial probability sample. Our response rate was approximately double the usual response rate for CUNY student surveys.

In-Depth Student Interviews

To gain further insight into the opportunities and challenges associated with implementing the CUNY CARES project, in-depth interviews were conducted with students from the three Bronx campuses between November 2022 and May 2023. The interviews aimed to explore students' experiences in navigating unmet essential needs and to identify facilitators and barriers to seeking supportive services on and off-campus.

Students who completed the baseline survey and agreed to be contacted for further participation were invited to take a screener to assess the number of unmet needs they

had. Those who indicated the greatest number of needs were prioritized for participation. Following initial recruitment, to increase participation, Bronx campus staff were also asked to send out emails to students containing the link to the screener and information about the study. All interviewees had at least two unmet needs. Students who agreed to participate received an invitation for a web-based call along with informed consent. The interviews were conducted for up to 90 minutes, and participants received a payment of \$50. A total of 24 students were interviewed.

All research activities, including the surveys and the in-depth interviews, were approved by the CUNY Institutional Review Board.

Discussions with campus staff

During the fall of 2022, the CUNY CARES Director and Evaluator were hired to spearhead planning and implementation of the program. In this capacity, they facilitated several discussions with the campus Deans and resource center staff. These discussions aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the existing campus operations and explore opportunities to enhance and coordinate services in a more holistic manner and to identify perceived barriers to more comprehensive services. The insights extracted from these discussions have been incorporated into this report to guide and inform future decision-making.

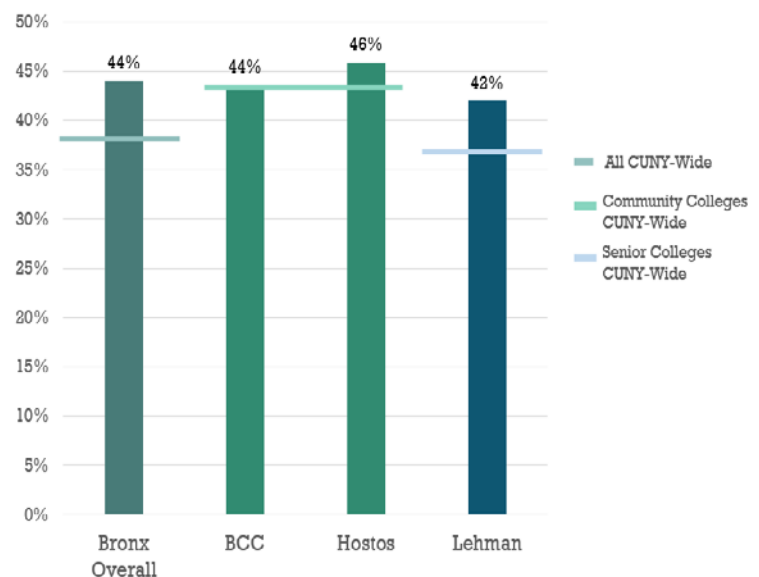
Findings from 2022 Bronx campus survey

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity, defined as insufficient access to adequate food due to a lack of money or other resources, is a significant issue for both CUNY students and their families and communities.³⁻⁵ In the survey, food insecurity was defined as having low or very low food security as determined by the USDA six-item short form.⁶ The findings indicate that in Fall 2022 at Bronx CUNY campuses, 44% of students experience food insecurity, with 36% reporting that hunger affects their academic performance. **Notably, food insecure students in the Bronx were found to be three times more likely to discontinue**

FIGURE 1. FOOD INSECURITY AT CUNY

Bronx CUNY CARES Survey, Fall 2022, CUNY-wide Student Experience Survey, Spring 2022



their studies than their food secure peers (OR 2.95, 95% CI 2.18, 4.00).

Awareness and utilization of campus-based food assistance resources

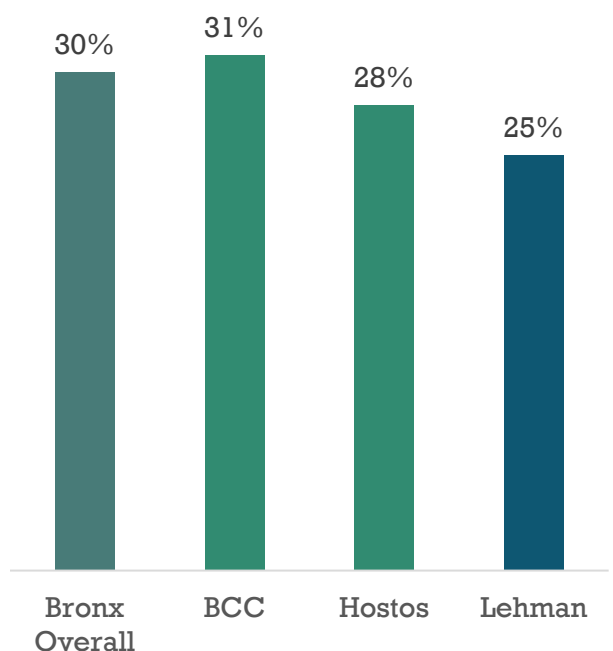
The survey found that 34% of Bronx students used food assistance resources between fall 2021 and fall 2022. Among this group, 22% stated that they most often utilize these resources on campus. Overall, 10% of Bronx students report using a campus-based food assistance resource, such as the food pantry (8%), SNAP enrollment assistance (1%), or meal vouchers (1%). **Notably, students that attended a food pantry were significantly less likely to drop out of their studies (OR 0.20, 95% CI 0.09, 0.45) or take a leave of absence (OR 0.58, 95% CI 0.47, 0.72) compared to those that did use this resource.** Of note, fewer than half (47%) of students reported being aware of food assistance resources available on-campus. However, the primary reasons cited for not utilizing these resources, aside from not needing them, included not believing they were eligible, lacking knowledge about resource availability and accessibility, and feeling that others require food assistance more urgently.

SNAP eligibility and utilization

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal program that provides eligible individuals and families with supplemental income to purchase food, which helps to alleviate food insecurity. SNAP also helps to move millions of Americans out of poverty.^{5a} Participants receive an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card that is used like a debit card at grocery stores. In this survey, 25% of Bronx CUNY students reported receiving SNAP benefits.⁷

Survey responses were analyzed to estimate the prevalence of students likely to be eligible for SNAP based on income guidelines, legal status, and meeting specific student exemptions. These exemptions included having dependent child(ren), working 20 or more hours per week in paid employment, receiving TANF cash assistance, being aged 50 or above, participating in a state or federally funded work study program, being a part-time student, being enrolled in a qualified certificate or degree CTE program, being eligible for a state or federally funded work study program (COVID only), or having an expected family contribution (EFC) of \$0 (COVID only).⁸

FIGURE 2. ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF BRONX CUNY STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR SNAP, BUT NOT ENROLLED
Bronx CUNY CARES Survey, Fall 2022



**CUNY-wide data not available*

Based on these criteria, we estimate that **50% of Bronx students were eligible for SNAP. Of these eligible students, 60% were not enrolled in the program, comprising an estimated 30% of the student population (~7,200 students).**

Therefore, a significant portion of students could benefit from assistance in enrolling in SNAP. Currently, only 3% of students who receive SNAP benefits reported that CUNY assisted them to enroll, indicating an opportunity for CUNY to identify and support more eligible students to enroll.

Housing Instability

Housing instability, which encompasses difficulties paying rent, overcrowded or unsafe living conditions, couch surfing, or homelessness, is a growing issue among college students that often goes unnoticed.⁹ In this survey, we defined housing instability as experiencing any of the following in the past year:

- Unable to pay or underpaid rent or mortgage.
- Received a summons to appear in housing court.
- Not paid the full amount of a gas, oil, or electricity bill.
- Moved in with others due to financial problems.
- Lived with others beyond the capacity of the house or apartment.
- Left the household due to feeling unsafe.
- Experienced homelessness.

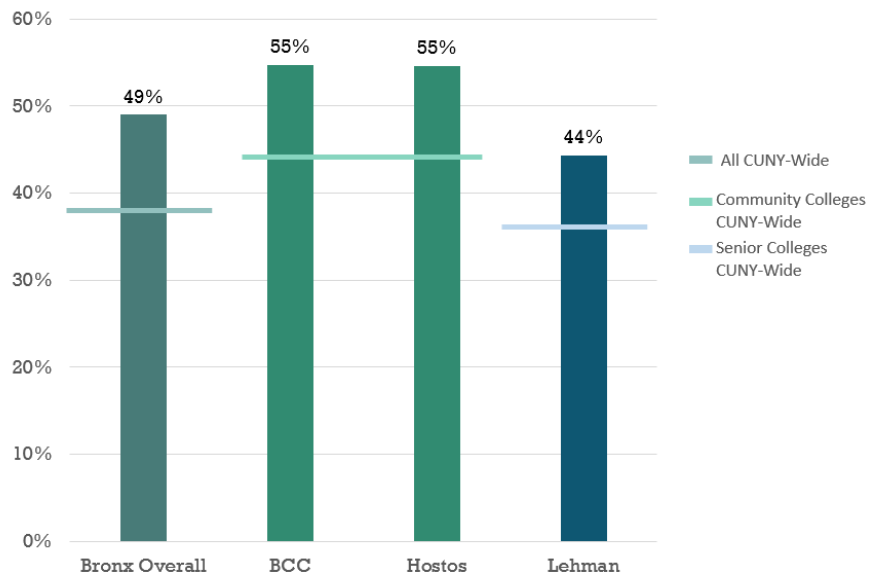
Overall, 49% of Bronx campus students reported experiencing housing instability, with 6% self-reporting having experienced homelessness in the past year. Additionally, 39% of students reported feeling worried about losing their housing. **Those who experienced housing instability were twice as likely to have stopped out of their studies compared to those with stable housing (OR 2.05, 95% CI 1.53, 2.76).**

Utilization of housing services

Although many students have unmet housing needs, **only 10% reported receiving assistance with housing, and merely 1% received support from CUNY.** This is due

FIGURE 3. HOUSING INSTABILITY AT CUNY

*Bronx CUNY CARES Survey, Fall 2022,
CUNY-wide Student Experience Survey, Spring 2022*

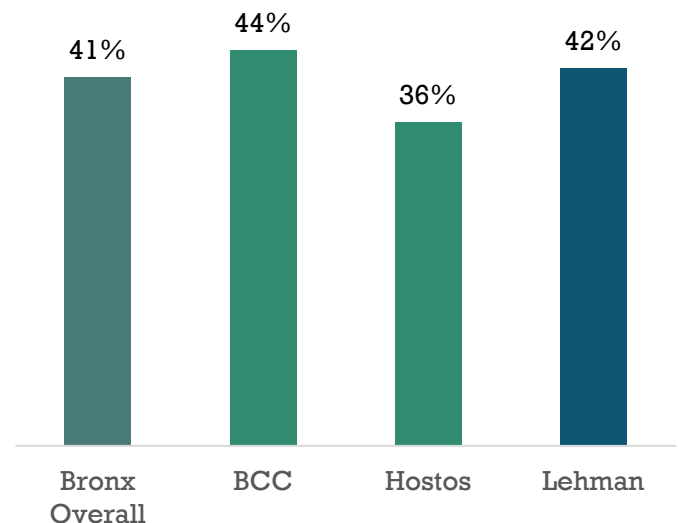


to several barriers that impede students from accessing housing assistance on campuses and in the community. Campuses have limited resources to provide the level of assistance required, such as emergency grant funding to meet demand and suitable housing options for students experiencing a housing crisis. **The campus resource center staff have identified this as one of the most pressing needs that requires more support.** Similarly, community-based resources are also limited, with lengthy wait times and administrative hurdles when seeking assistance. Robust services are needed to connect students to stable housing, and investments in this area are urgently required.

Mental Health

Mental health problems, including anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), are among the primary causes of college failure and dropout not only at CUNY but also in colleges nationwide.¹⁰⁻¹² Survey results revealed that 32% of students are dealing with anxiety or depression, while 48% experience one or more symptoms of PTSD.* Furthermore, 40% of students reported that mental health issues interfered with their schoolwork to some extent. Students with depression and PTSD had notably lower GPAs compared to their peers without these conditions and **those with any mental health problems were three times more likely to be dissatisfied with their overall experience at CUNY.**

FIGURE 4. PREVALENCE OF UNMET MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS* AT BRONX CUNY CAMPUSES
Bronx CUNY CARES Survey, Fall 2022



**CUNY-wide data not available*

In the survey, we defined an unmet mental health need as having anxiety, depression and/or any symptom of PTSD, and either 1) did not receive mental health services in the previous year, or 2) received mental health services, but were dissatisfied with them.

*For this study, we defined PTSD as having one or more of the common symptoms: intrusive memories, avoidance, negative changes in thinking and mood, or changes in physical and emotional reactions. Some others define PTSD as having 3 or more of these symptoms.

Overall, 41% of Bronx students had an unmet mental health need (Fig. 4), and those with such a need were twice as likely to stop out than students whose mental health needs were met (OR 2.32, 95% CI 1.74, 3.09). However, those who used mental health services were half as likely to stop out compared to those who did not seek help (OR 0.52, 95% CI 0.35, 0.79).

Despite the high prevalence of mental health challenges, only 23% of students had received counseling or therapy from a mental health professional during the past year, and just 4% of students received on-campus mental health counseling services. Addressing the obstacles that hinder students from seeking treatment and connecting them to comprehensive services to manage their mental health challenges is crucial to ensuring their academic success.

Healthcare Access

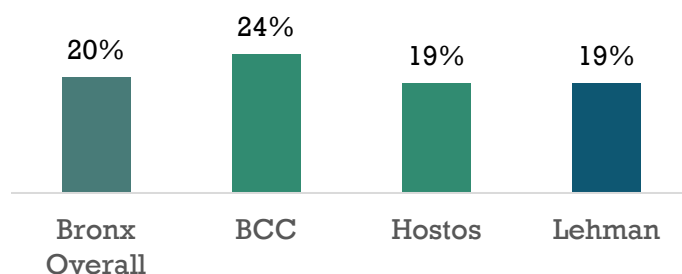
The health of students is an important factor that affects academic success of college students.¹³ In the Bronx, 15% students report having fair or poor overall health. **Such students were almost twice as likely to stop out when compared to those who reported having good health (OR 1.80, 95% CI 1.31, 2.47).** This indicates the need to address the health needs of students to improve academic success.

Having a regular doctor is crucial for young adults as it improves continuity of care, use of preventive services, and early care for emerging conditions.¹⁴ It also increases the likelihood of getting effective care for chronic conditions such as asthma or diabetes, and mental health issues. However, **at Bronx campuses, 21% of students do not have a regular healthcare provider.** This indicates that there is a need to connect students to a regular source of care.

We defined having an unmet healthcare need as either not having health insurance in the past 12 months, or not being able to get medical care at least once during the previous 12 months. Medical care includes doctor's tests, procedures, tests, prescriptions, and hospitalizations. Overall, 20% of students had an unmet healthcare need: **6% were uninsured and 16% were unable to get medical care when they needed it.** This highlights the need to improve access to healthcare services for students.

Compared to students whose healthcare needs are met, students

FIGURE 5. PREVALENCE OF UNMET HEALTHCARE NEEDS* AT BRONX CUNY CAMPUSES
Bronx CUNY CARES Survey, Fall 2022



*CUNY-wide data not available

with unmet healthcare needs were 26% more likely (OR 1.26, 95% CI 1.11, 1.43) to take a leave of absence and 13% more likely to have low GPA (OR 1.13, 95% CI 1.01, 1.26). Therefore, it is essential to prioritize the healthcare needs of students and provide them with comprehensive healthcare services to improve their overall well-being and academic success.

In-Depth Analysis: Total Unmet Needs and Academic Progress

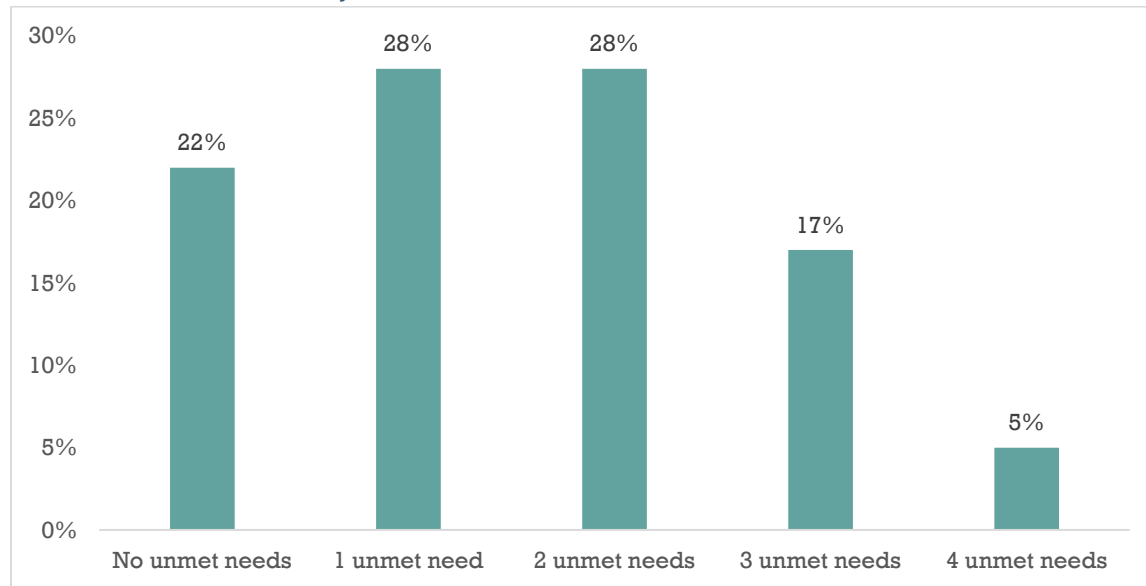
We assessed the association between levels of unmet needs and academic progress among students in the Bronx. To do so, we first defined four types of unmet needs that are prevalent in the student population: food insecurity, housing instability, lack of access to mental health services, and lack of general healthcare access.

To assess food insecurity, we used the USDA six-item short form and defined being food insecure as having low or very low food security. Housing instability was determined by a positive response to any of several questions related to inability to pay rent, receiving housing court summons, inability to pay utilities, moving in with others due to finances, living beyond the capacity of the apartment, feeling unsafe in the household, or being homeless, all within the past 12 months. Mental health unmet needs were defined as having anxiety, depression and/or PTSD, and either not receiving mental health services or being unsatisfied with the services received within the past year. Lack of healthcare access was defined as being uninsured or being unable to get medical care when needed within the past year.

Overall, 22% of students had no unmet needs, while 28% had one unmet need, 28% had two unmet needs, 17% had three unmet needs, and 5% had all four unmet needs (Fig. 6). **In sum, half of CUNY students in the Bronx had one or no unmet needs while the other half had two or more unmet needs.** Food insecurity, housing instability, and mental health were the most prevalent unmet needs among students, with lack of healthcare access being less prevalent.

FIGURE 6. PREVALENCE OF TOTAL UNMET NEEDS AMONG BRONX STUDENTS

Bronx CUNY CARES Survey, Fall 2022

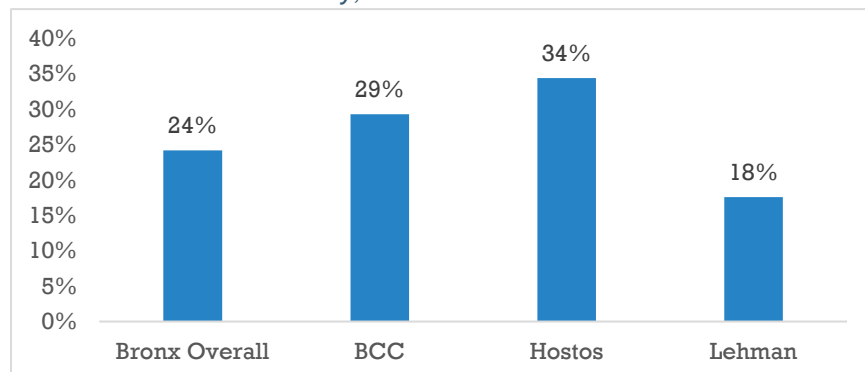


In this analysis, our outcome measure was academic problems, which we defined as stopping out, taking a leave of absence, or having a low GPA in the past year. Low GPA was defined as being at risk for academic probation, with a GPA less than 2.5 for students who completed 25 or more credits, or slightly lower GPA thresholds for students who completed fewer credits. In the overall sample, 24% had experienced academic problems.

Students with more academic problems and more unmet needs tended to be from community colleges, Black and Hispanic race/ethnicity, part-time students, women, and LGBTQ+. Those aged 21-24 tended to have more academic problems compared to other age categories, while those aged 25+ had greater unmet needs.

FIGURE 7. PREVALENCE OF ANY ACADEMIC PROBLEMS AMONG BRONX STUDENTS (STOPPING OUT, TAKING LOA OR LOW GPA)

Bronx CUNY CARES Survey, Fall 2022



We found that there was a dose-response relationship between the number of unmet needs and the odds of experiencing academic problems (Table 1). In models adjusted for age, gender, race/ethnicity, college type, and enrollment status, **those with one unmet need had 16% greater odds of having academic problems (p=0.04), those with two unmet needs had 55% greater odds (p<0.01), those with three unmet needs had 72% greater odds (p<0.01), and those with four unmet needs had 84% greater odds (p<0.01), all compared to students with no unmet needs.** Every unit increase in the number of unmet needs increased the odds of having academic problems by 33%.

Table 1. Logistic regression for the association between number of unmet needs predicting any academic problem.

| # Unmet Needs | Wt. % | Crude OR (95% CI) | Adjusted OR* (95% CI) |
|---------------|-------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 0 | 18.6 | -ref- | -ref- |
| 1 | 21.6 | 1.23 (1.05, 1.43) | 1.16 (1.01, 1.35) |
| 2 | 27.3 | 1.73 (1.49, 2.01) | 1.55 (1.34, 1.79) |
| 3 | 28.4 | 1.71 (1.46, 2.01) | 1.72 (1.47, 2.03) |
| 4 | 32.1 | 2.17 (1.79, 2.64) | 1.84 (1.46, 2.32) |

Overall, this analysis suggests that greater levels of unmet needs are associated with higher likelihood of academic problems among students in the Bronx. The most prevalent unmet needs were food insecurity and housing instability. These findings underscore the importance of CUNY CARES to address basic needs among college students to promote academic success and graduation.

Findings from In-Depth Student Interviews

CUNY CARES interviewed 24 Bronx students experiencing at least two unmet essential needs about their experiences navigating seeking and receiving supportive services and public benefits. We found that these students persistently live on the edge of financial insecurity and expend a significant amount of time and energy to meet their essential needs, employing various strategies to stay afloat. The key findings revealed the following challenges:

- **Time Poverty:** Many students experience time poverty due to the demands of work, parenting, and caregiving. These responsibilities take time away from school and force students to make choices about which essential needs they can prioritize fulfilling.
- **Bureaucratic Hurdles:** Students encounter difficulties navigating service and public benefit enrollment systems. Applying for benefits can be challenging and time-consuming, while staying enrolled can be unpredictable due to factors such

as SNAP benefits ending when they find employment or earn more income, as well as the need to regularly recertify for benefits. Additionally, benefits may not be available or not widely accepted, particularly for housing. Within schools, students may encounter long wait times or unresponsive staff, impeding access to needed assistance.

- **Perceptions of Benefits:** Fear of taking from others, stigma associated with needing services, and immigration status influence students' decision to seek support.
- **Coping Strategies:** Students develop coping strategies to address their essential needs without formally getting support. For example, reducing food intake, relying on informal support networks for mental health rather than seeking services, living in challenging home environments to save on rent, or seeking medical care from urgent care or emergency rooms.
- **Importance of Networks:** Some students are able to access benefits through their family, learn about resources through school sources (peers, faculty, resource centers), and depend on community resources (e.g., Medicaid managed care, food pantries) to link them to supportive services.
- **School Support:** Schools can play a vital role in assisting students by advertising available services, providing support for working students, offering advisement programs, assuring students there is support for all, and following up to ensure they feel supported and that their needs are met.

Regarding program implementation, the interviews revealed several key themes, including the importance of providing students with follow-up and support, addressing stigma, and debunking misconceptions, strengthening community support networks, providing housing support, increasing awareness of available services, and implementing innovative ways to reduce the barriers students face in accessing support. Below we present key recommendations based on findings from the interviews and highlight the ways that CUNY CARES will work to meet the needs expressed by students.

Key Recommendations based on findings:

1. **Ensure follow-up support after services are provided:** Several students expressed lack of follow-up by campus-based services can hinder their willingness to reach back when they need help. Regularly checking in with students who have been served can overcome this problem. Students also emphasized that advisors checking in with them makes them feel cared for. One student shared: *"I felt like...I was contacting the advisor more and asking more questions, than advisor was checking on me...It was overwhelming [because I knew he had many other students to deal with]...So I was kind of left on my own. If I had an issue, it was basically a*

'contact me' kind of thing." Conversely, advisors who provided regular follow-up and support were highly valued by students.

How CUNY CARES can address this:

- ✓ Implement a robust follow-up system within CUNY CARES to ensure that students receive proactive and consistent support.
- ✓ Deploy Navigators to resource centers or specific on-campus services to maintain regular communication and conduct follow-ups with students.
- ✓ Integrate findings into trainings for advisors, emphasizing that proactive check-ins can help address students' concerns and provide them with a sense of reassurance that their school cares about them and their success.

2. **Strengthen networks and peer support:** Students, particularly those who are new to the country or who lack a family support system faced difficulties in seeking and receiving support, such as SNAP and other public benefits. Networks of support were identified as crucial for students to access the support they need. One student described the experience of not having a family support system, which made their experience of getting help more difficult: *"I was feeling very frustrated because I didn't know where to go to receive proper information. What should I do? Who can help me? And it's hard when you don't know like you have the resources, but you don't know where to go and who can help you. So ... I have to look (for) everything for myself. And yeah, I can say it was really hard. Because I didn't have support basically from anyone."*

How CUNY CARES can address this:

- ✓ Establish and promote networks and support systems that facilitate connections between students and available resources. Collaborate with community organizations and establish partnerships to expand mental health services and other forms of support.
- ✓ Create tailored support systems for the immigrant population. Communicate that CUNY services are available to all students, regardless of their immigration status, and clarify whether seeking support has any adverse consequences on their immigration situation.
- ✓ Encourage and create spaces for students to share resources and support each other as repeated messaging about available services is essential to increase visibility.

3. **Address stigma:** Stigma surrounding seeking food support and mental health services was a recurring concern among students. For example, students shared feeling uncomfortable seeking help at the food pantry because others might see

them, or at the mental health counseling center for fear that would appear as though they were “failing.” Students said:

- *“I knew about the food pantry, but the thing is, is I feel so shy to go and you have to like to get an appointment and be in the line waiting I feel so shy to go and be seen, I don't know. It's like everyone knows you don't have food at your house.”*
- *“When you have to get those services, you have to go in person is just I mean, for me I don't get it because I don't want other people to see me.”*
- *“I didn't want to share my personal problems with college...I try to keep my life private because I don't like to fail...I keep my life private, and I just try to do what I can.”*

How CUNY CARES can address this:

- ✓ Conduct anti-stigma training for advocates and CUNY student services staff to promote a supportive and inclusive environment.
- ✓ Implement awareness campaigns to address barriers related to stigma.
- ✓ When framing messages for students, emphasize the non-judgmental and confidential nature of CUNY services, assuring them that seeking support is a sign of strength and that their privacy will be respected.

4. **Debunk misconceptions and address concerns head-on.** One crucial aspect of increasing awareness of services is debunking myths surrounding using services. Many students expressed a lack of knowledge about the support services offered by CUNY and often mistakenly believed that using such services will cost them money. One student shared, *“I have not sought support because, from what I was told, as an adult now that I'm above 18, things would be costly for me in terms of mental health needs. So it was identified that it's best for me to work through my insurance to keep costs low; So seeking mental health services through CUNY was actually discouraged.”* Some students also had concerns about privacy and others feared that if they access services, it will take away from others. For example, one student said, *“I didn't [use the food pantry] because I get food stamps so I didn't feel like I should- so many might need it.”* Addressing these concerns head-on can help dispel misconceptions and create a more welcoming environment. By emphasizing confidentiality and assuring students of privacy, CUNY can encourage more individuals to confidently seek the support they need.

How CUNY CARES can address this:

- ✓ Provide clear information on the availability of services and debunk myths related to service costs, emphasizing that many CUNY services are available

- at no additional cost to students. Highlight the financial support options available to those who may need assistance accessing off-campus services.
- ✓ Enhance awareness campaigns to address concerns related to taxes and immigration status, providing clear explanations of the impact of benefits, and assuring students that seeking services will not take away from others or have adverse effects on their taxes or immigration status.

5. **Build out housing resources and partnerships.** Housing emerged as a major issue for CUNY students, especially for student parents. Students expressed the need for stable housing options and highlighted the importance of housing support services. One student shared, *“I kind of just dealt with it on my own. I feel like when it comes to housing, it's not talked about much. So I wouldn't know exactly who or where to go to ask, per se, if I honestly did have housing troubles.”* Another said, *“I wasn't sure if [CUNY] had that [housing assistance]. Or, if they did, it wasn't really advertised. It didn't really seem like something that they could help with to be honest.”*

How CUNY CARES can address this:

- ✓ Develop an office dedicated to housing support that provides information, resources and assistance to students facing housing challenges.
- ✓ Collaborate with housing organizations and explore partnerships to expand housing options for CUNY students.

6. **Leverage academic advisors as champions:** Students consistently emphasized the critical role of academic advisors in connecting them to services and providing emotional support. Advisors were often seen as trusted individuals with whom students felt comfortable discussing their personal and academic challenges. For example, a student reported, *“For me, I knew my advisor for a year...I'm more comfortable with him to say anything or tell him about how my family life is.”* And another said, *“[My advisor] was one of the people that was always there for me.”* Conversely, when advisors did not provide this support, the students shared how this often compromised their overall experience at CUNY. Students also emphasized the role of advisors in helping them access services and navigate the support system. For example, one student said, *“I will go to my advisor and see where they do those types of things and just go from there to get help.”*

How CUNY CARES can address this:

- ✓ Champion the role of academic advisors and recognize their importance in supporting students. Provide ongoing training and resources to enhance advisors' ability to connect students with appropriate services and resources.

- ✓ Focus on building strong relationships between students and their advisors, fostering a sense of trust and comfort that encourages students to seek assistance when needed.

7. Advocate for increased staffing capacity to serve more students: Many students shared that there are long wait times for accessing services and expressed that resource and counseling center services staff are overworked, have limited availability to help them, and have high turnover. For example, one student said, *“When it comes to my school, I feel like when I needed help, CUNY wasn’t ready to help, and I would call, and I would try. They would always tell me to see a counselor, but they never were able to set up an appointment for me to talk to someone.”* Another said, *“It is difficult to get in contact with certain people for help because around the time I was struggling...Nobody would ever answer my call. So I wasn’t able to speak to anyone about it.”*

How CUNY CARES can address this:

- ✓ Share findings with appropriate staff in the resource and counseling centers and work together to create ways to mitigate lack of response with students.
- ✓ Advocate to CUNY Administration for improved staffing in resource and counseling centers to reduce wait times.
- ✓ Work to utilize Advocates and Navigators to expand support for resource and counseling centers to accommodate the demand and provide timely access to services.
- ✓ Given the stretched resources of CUNY schools, identify partnerships with mental health organizations and explore options for increased capacity. CUNY should strive to provide mental health services that are readily available, offer follow-up support, and ensure the availability of therapists who share similar backgrounds with the students.

8. Reduce barriers to service accessibility: Students identified inconvenience as a primary barrier for accessing CUNY services. For example, some students reported time constraints due to work or class schedules, limiting their ability to utilize on-campus services. One student shared *“Timing-wise, usually when I’m free, if I’m not at work, I’m in class. So I don’t actually have a decent time where I can actually go seek services.”* Another student said, *“[The services] need to be available online. Zoom and timing, that’s it. It cannot be 9 to 5. It just can’t – we don’t work in a 9 to 5 world. Issues are 24 hours a day not that I didn’t need to be open 24 hours, or maybe a hotline. I don’t know something like that with more extended hours.”*

Additionally, some students shared that they did not use the food pantry because it was too difficult to carry all of the food from campus to their home. They recommended extending online delivery options, which were offered during the pandemic. One student reported, *“Well, I thought they were going to continue the online pantry especially because most of the students [have classes] online... And then most students again don't live there, around there, to carry all those groceries is a lot. I know they want to help. But I don't really think a lot of people access the pantry for that reason.”* Having an online option can also help to address the stigma students feel when accessing services. Another student said, *“So I feel like just with the fact that when you have to get those services you have to go in person is just, I mean, for me I don't get it because I don't want other people to see me.”*

How CUNY CARES can address this:

- ✓ Expand the service availability of the navigators and advocates programs by offering extended time slots and remote navigator meetings.
- ✓ Frame messages to highlight efforts to enhance accessibility, such as offering online services, extended hours, or establishing a hotline for support. Emphasizing the flexibility and convenience of accessing services, including online options, can help alleviate these concerns and encourage more students to seek assistance.
- ✓ Advocate for or identify funding sources to restart online food pantry ordering and/or food delivery.

9. **Foster a sense of community on campus:** Creating a sense of community on campus was found to facilitate students' awareness and use of services. By focusing on building initiatives that promote community-building, CUNY CARES can help to facilitate a culture of connection and caring to encourage more students to seek services.

How CUNY CARES can address this:

- ✓ In addition to attending existing events on campus, explore whether Advocates could facilitate separate CUNY CARES community-building activities.
- ✓ Increase advertisements and information about existing activities on campus so that more students can become more connected to their peers and to sources of information on campus.

10. **Leverage successful awareness-raising channels, such as email, Blackboard, and faculty and advisor involvement to ensure students are informed about available services.** Students discussed obtaining information

about services through Blackboard and email. Blackboard is a learning platform offered by many CUNY classrooms, which can be leveraged to disseminate important announcements and resources to the entire class. One student noted, *“My psychology professor gave me that information. She put it on the Blackboard so that’s where I found that information.”* Sending emails with relevant information and updates can also help students stay informed about available support services.

Another student said, *“I believe I received an email... after that, I’ve been speaking to her ever since, we’ve been talking.”* In addition, the interviews made clear that faculty members play a crucial role in connecting students to services. Some students mentioned that professors were actively engaged in supporting students’ mental health and directing them to appropriate resources. One student disclosed, *“I had a professor who was big on helping students with mental health issues and she was constantly just letting us know...where the office was.”* CUNY CARES should collaborate with faculty members to ensure they are knowledgeable about available services and encourage them to promote resources to their students. Utilizing physical materials like flyers and posters can also be an effective way to raise awareness about support services. Placing them in visible locations on campus, such as bulletin boards, common areas, and classrooms, can help ensure that students see and take note of the available resources.

How CUNY CARES can address this:

- ✓ Work with faculty to help them understand what resources are available for their students and encourage them to connect with a navigator.
- ✓ Work with the campus to integrate an effective communications strategy using email, Blackboard, flyers, and word of mouth via faculty, advisors and other campus staff that ensures that students receive consistent and comprehensive information about supportive resources and encourages them to seek the help they need.
- ✓ Engage advisors as valuable allies in connecting students with services. Advisors can guide students to the appropriate support systems within CUNY and provide information about available resources.
- ✓ Utilize existing platforms such as Blackboard and email to disseminate information about services to a wider student audience.

By addressing issues such as follow-up support, stigma, awareness, accessibility, housing support, and community-building, CUNY CARES can enhance its services and better meet the diverse needs of CUNY students. Implementing these recommendations will contribute to a more supportive and inclusive environment for all students at CUNY and ensure that students have the necessary resources to succeed

academically and personally. It is essential to prioritize student feedback and continuously evaluate and adapt programming to meet the evolving needs of CUNY students.

Supportive Services on Campus

Assets

Campus Resource Centers

CUNY CARES has made it a priority to establish strong partnerships with the offices at each Bronx campus that provide essential resources to students, such as food, health insurance, and financial assistance. These campus resource centers, referred to as CARES at BCC, One Stop at Hostos, and the Basic Needs Center at Lehman, serve as a valuable bridge between students and the services they need to stay in school and succeed academically.

While the community college resource centers have been operating for several years, the Basic Needs Center at Lehman was recently founded and will begin serving students in the upcoming academic year. These centers serve as a one-stop shop for students to obtain assistance accessing benefits and resources, such as SNAP, food pantries, transportation, housing job assistance, financial assistance, and legal services. Their staff offer direct assistance to students and provide referrals to other campus offices and partner organizations that can help address students' needs. They also work to operate and promote the on-campus food pantries. The resource centers' staff are highly dedicated and strive to ensure that every student is supported and has access to the resources they require to be able to persist and succeed in school.

Health Services

The Bronx CUNY campuses offer an extensive range of on-campus health services that address the physical, mental, and sexual health needs of students. These services include some mix of well-visits, immunizations, nutrition services, smoking cessation, and COVID testing, as well as sexual health services such as pregnancy testing, lactation services, HIV/ STI testing, and condom and period-product distribution. Mental health counseling services are also offered for students, including individual counseling, group counseling, crisis intervention, and phone/virtual counseling. Health services centers also provide referrals to off-campus health services and assist students in enrolling for insurance by connecting them with the resource centers.

The essential needs services offered by each campus have been carefully identified and documented based on comprehensive campus scans conducted during the fall of

2022, CUNY CARES staff visited each campus, engaging with the campus staff to confirm the availability of each service. Appendix A outlines the essential needs services offered by each CUNY CARES campus partner. We did not conduct a separate assessment of the quality of these services, nor did we review student records, content protected by confidentiality and privacy rules.

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite the availability of health services, the baseline survey indicated that only 10% of Bronx students use CUNY-related health services. Specifically, 5.6% reported using a campus health center, and 4.8% reported using a mental health counseling center during the previous year. CUNY CARES staff has worked with the resource centers and spoken to Bronx students to identify factors that contribute to the limited utilization of health services among Bronx students. These include:

- **Limited Staffing:** The resource centers and mental health counseling centers face a significant challenge in their limited staffing capacity. This places a constraint on the number of students they are able to serve effectively. To address this issue, **campuses have identified a need for additional staff to provide personalized attention to students and to assist with the food pantry operations so that current staff can focus on their primary responsibility of serving students.**
- **Lack of Awareness:** Students may not know about the health services available to them or how to access them. In fact, 53% of students said that they were unaware of food assistance resources or services provided on their campus. **The absence of a robust awareness campaign and a centralized mechanism to promote these services makes it difficult for students to identify and seek out the help they need.**
- **Lack of Available Housing Resources:** One of the greatest challenges expressed by campus resource center staff is the lack of available services related to housing, which poses a significant obstacle for many students. Despite a staggering 49% of students experiencing housing instability, the availability of services to address this critical need remains limited. Students are often referred to existing off-campus services, which frequently entail administrative hurdles and long wait times, thus providing little immediate relief. Moreover, many students come to the resource centers in urgent need of a place to stay for the night and suggesting a New York City homeless shelter is often not a viable solution. While the Petrie Emergency Grants have offered some assistance to students facing such challenges, the allocated amount falls short of meeting the growing demand. **Additional sources of support that can effectively help students facing unstable housing situations or homelessness are urgently needed.**

- **Barriers to Access:** In some cases, students may face barriers to accessing campus services. These may include stigma, times that services are offered or other logistic challenges, perceived quality of CUNY services, or the belief that other students need assistance more than they do.
- **Organizational Silos:** **Campus organizations that serve students need to better coordinate their efforts to promote health services and ensure that students can find and use the resources they need.** Currently, these organizations operate in silos, and there is no consistent mechanism built into systems to promote services for students.

To address these barriers, CUNY CARES sees opportunities to provide support for campuses in the following ways:

1. Identify ways to expand resource centers and food pantry staffing to ensure students can receive prompt and personalized attention. This may include:
 - (a) partnering with and referring students to organizations that provide social and mental health services.
 - (b) utilizing student peer navigators to provide social services and benefits enrollment assistance in order to alleviate pressure on existing staff.
2. Develop a robust awareness campaign to promote services for students. This approach should be multi-channel and utilize a combination of social media, email, flyers, presentations, and other communication channels to reach students. Two-way communications channels should be designed to enable students to ask questions, provide feedback, and make suggestions for improving services.
3. Expand the supply of housing-related services to address the needs of students who are housing unstable.
4. Identify solutions to address the barriers students face for accessing services, such as normalizing help-seeking behaviors and promoting cultures of caring and wellness on campus. Providing support to students during non-business hours can help accommodate busy schedules and make services more accessible, and identifying partner organizations that can address students' concerns about using CUNY services can provide alternative options. Finding additional ways to connect individual students to caring faculty and staff is a proven way to strengthen a culture of caring.
5. Enhance campus-wide coordination. Develop a centralized mechanism to promote health services and ensure that departments work together to provide comprehensive support to students.

CUNY CARES Program Model

Based on comprehensive analysis of student surveys, interviews, and extensive consultations with Bronx campus staff, CUNY CARES has developed a program model aimed at maximizing student engagement with essential services and benefits. The program model incorporates five key strategies:

1. **Expand campus capacity to connect students to services and benefits** by training students to provide assistance, support, information, and referrals to their peers.
2. **Expand resources for students facing housing instability** by hiring a housing specialist to develop and lead housing support services and providing case management and educational support for students facing housing challenges;
3. **Develop community partnerships with integrated referrals systems** in order to is to expand the supply of essential needs services available to students,
4. **Increase student awareness of supportive services** by engaging campus faculty, staff, and leadership to connect students with essential needs resources, and to foster an environment where students feel comfortable seeking help and support, and
5. **Implement a robust program evaluation** by employing a quasi-experimental research design to assess the impact of CUNY CARES on improved student outcomes across multiple domains.

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the program model, delving into each aspect in detail. It also includes a thorough account of the process evaluation assessments conducted to date, offering valuable insights into the program's development and implementation.

Expand capacity to connect students to services and benefits

CUNY CARES trains students to provide assistance, support, information, and referrals to their peers. Currently, the Program recruits, trains, and pays students to work in two complementary roles: as navigators and as advocates. Navigators provide direct one-on-one support to other students to assess their needs, connect them to services, trouble shoot and follow up to ensure that needs are being met. Advocates promote CUNY and community health and social services, develop educational campaigns using a variety of social and other forms of media, and refer their peers to navigators. Both navigators and peer advocates embody the CUNY CARES value that students are credible, trusted, and accessible sources of information and support. Both also provide a valuable resource for keeping services student-centered and engaging students in the design implementation, evaluation, and improvement of services.

CUNY CARES Navigators Program

The CUNY CARES Navigator program was launched and pilot tested from February-May 2023. The program hires and trains CUNY students enrolled in social services programs to provide personalized support to students who need assistance finding essential needs services. It was created to address the need for increased resource center capacity to support students. After students complete a resource request form documenting their specific needs, they are matched with a Navigator who then meets with them virtually during designated hours. The forms are distributed by advocates and at campus events.

The program's primary objectives include assessing students' specific needs, screening for benefits eligibility, helping them gather the necessary documentation to complete benefits applications, and providing referrals and facilitating warm handoffs to relevant campus and community-based resources, as well as aiding students in locating resources within their campus and community. Navigators continue to support the student by following up with them throughout the thirty days after the initial meeting to ensure they have received the assistance they need, and to make sure that the students know they are there to support them should they need further assistance. During the spring 2023 pilot semester, four Navigators were hired and trained to support students. A total of 151 students reached out to a Navigator across the three Bronx campuses, and 76 students attended a meeting.

Successes:

"When the program first launched, I felt hesitant. Guiding students through life changing situations involves a newfound level of responsibility. However, students were able to not only address their needs- but openly share several other aspects of their lives. We were able to laugh about tedious coursework or the little things affecting us, while addressing their next steps. Students felt comfortable meetings with me, and I take pride in that!" – Jade, a CUNY CARES Navigator

- Flexible hours: CUNY students often face challenges with flexibility and available hours. Students often work late night shifts, take classes during the day, or have families to care for. The Navigation Program makes room for all CUNY students, with navigator sessions offered beyond normal business hours, including evenings and Saturdays, making it convenient for students to request a time to meet with the navigator that works best for them.

- Live calls: CUNY students are often sent to an unresponsive email address when they need to ask important questions. Our program shifts from emails to live Zoom calls, to allow face-to-face and honest interaction. Navigators have been able to foster a sense of caring among students who attend meetings. In some cases, navigators have spoken with their student's family members to provide additional information on benefits.
- Continuation of care: Navigation goes beyond one initial meeting. Students are able to connect with us through follow-up calls via Google Voice, and follow-up emails containing any resources that we find useful to them.
- Positive feedback from campus partners: The program has garnered buy-ins from the Bronx campus staff, increasing their willingness to collaborate with and promote the program to their students. It has also helped to increase the capacity of resource center staff.

Lessons and Solutions for 2023-24:

- No-show meetings: During feasibility testing, only 43% of students who requested a meeting attended the meeting. This may be due to students having busy schedules, forgetting about their appointments, or simply not being ready to seek help. For those students who requested a meeting but did not show up, the navigator used the students' preferred method of communication to follow up and encourage them to reschedule. Implementing strategies that minimize no-shows will be a priority for Fall 2023.
- Lack of follow-up response: After the student attends a meeting, the navigators follow up with them to ensure they were connected to the support they needed. The student outcomes, such as receiving support from a campus or community-based resource, or enrolling in benefits, are recorded, and reported as indicators.
- One challenge has been in getting responses from the students about the results of their interactions with agencies and providers. We believe the number of students enrolling in benefits is under-reported due to the lack of response rate. CUNY CARES recently established a MOU with HRA as a Provider Portal, so we will be better able to report on how many students are enrolling in benefits without depending on the student to report back. We initiated a texting service and Google Voice phone number to make follow-ups more convenient for the student.
- Lack of consistency in promotion: To promote the program, Bronx campuses were asked to distribute flyers and send emails, but this approach resulted in a lack of consistent promotion, resulting in an inconsistent weekly flow of requests for meetings with navigators. To ensure sustainability, the program will work with the campus to integrate promotion of navigators into normal campus

operations, such as during advising, regular email communications, or on class syllabi. It will also leverage peer advocates to provide presentations to students during classes to let them know about the program. Doing this will require collaboration with campus staff to help identify and pave new pathways for promotion.

- **Complicated cases:** Many students seeking services required assistance on issues beyond the scope of the navigator's level of training. A common issue that arose involved fearfulness and legality issues. Students often expressed their concerns with how public benefits may impact their financial aid, housing, or documentation status. To better assist students, the program will bolster the training curriculum and work more closely with campus staff and CBO partners to provide direct and timely referrals. CUNY CARES will also work to expand CBO and healthcare organization partnerships to improve the scope of services that can be offered to students.
- **Resource center involvement in training and oversight:** The program has learned the importance of engaging resource center staff in training, planning and implementation of the program to ensure that navigators provide high-quality services that are aligned with the needs of the campus community. In Fall 2023, campus staff will be included to assist with training and overseeing the navigators on campus.
- **Lack of in-person navigation:** The program also recognizes the importance of assigning navigators to campuses and meeting with students in person. In Fall 2023, both in-person and virtual sessions will be offered at Bronx Community College to maximize the options that students have to meet with navigators, while also ensuring that navigators can meet students beyond normal business hours. Identifying spaces on-campus where navigators can meet with students privately remains a challenge at Lehman and Hostos, and CUNY CARES is continuing to work with the schools to identify how navigators can meet with students in-person.

CUNY CARES Peer Advocates Program

The CUNY CARES Advocates Program, originally launched in Fall 2021 under Healthy CUNY, aims to equip CUNY students with knowledge about essential needs resources. These trained advocates play a crucial role in educating their peers and promoting access to services and benefits. Advocates engage in various activities on campus, including event tabling, classroom presentations, distribution of informational flyers, and other direct interactions with students. Advocates have successfully connected students to campus-based services. The advocates program also provides employment opportunities for students and offers them a valuable educational a foster a sense of

connection between campuses and students, both for themselves and the peers they serve.

In spring 2023, the six CUNY CARES advocates reported attending 154 events, including 45 tabling activities, 39 flyering sessions, 24 club-based events, 10 presentations, 25 food pantry events, and 11 office hour sessions. In Fall 2023, CUNY CARES aims to work with the Bronx campuses to identify additional placements for advocates to increase the number of students they can engage. For example, by identifying additional campus events, enlisting faculty support to deliver more classroom presentations, or having advocates host their own campus events could extend our reach campus-wide.

Program and campus staff documented these lessons about the problems CUNY CARES faces and proposed solutions:

Learnings:

- Accountability structures require strengthening: Due to the lack of on-campus supervisors, the program relies on self-reporting of activities by advocates. This presents a challenge in accurately tracking the hours logged and understanding the time commitment required to implement activities. Furthermore, resource center staff have identified the need for increased campus-based oversight to enable them to effectively guide advocates towards activities that in their view would have a meaningful impact on their respective campuses.
- Systems to quantify impact are needed: Assessing the program's impact in connecting students to campus and community-based services has been challenging. The current data collection approach does not provide clear insights into the number of referrals generated solely through the program's efforts. Campus services center staff are essential to support CUNY CARES' tracking efforts by engaging with students visiting the resource center and inquiring about their interactions with peer advocates.

Solutions:

- Improved tracking mechanisms: The program will introduce revised methods for tracking advocates' activities, ensuring more accurate monitoring of their hours. This will include more extensive tracking forms completed and signed by the advocates, including the start and end times of events, which will be verified by the campus. This will help to streamline the reporting process and provide clearer visibility into the time spent on each activity. Unannounced site visits will also be implemented to improve accountability while also providing advocates with

additional guidance and resources to help them engage with students more effectively.

- Improved campus-based oversight: The program will hire additional supervisors to work on campus and provide direct support and oversight for advocates and to effectively guide them towards activities that would have a meaningful impact on their respective campuses.
- Data collection and analysis: The program will improve the systematization of data collection procedures to measure the advocates' impact on student connections to campus and community-based services. Total interactions will be calculated based on the number of flyers distributed at the event. Students that would like more information about resources will be asked to fill out a 'sign-in' sheet via QR code, and will be considered a referral, and referrals will be cross-referenced with the resource center's system to determine whether any students visited the resource center. Whether students were connected to a navigator via an advocate is also tracked in the navigation system (HubSpot). Improved tracking will help us to better understand the effectiveness of advocates in facilitating access to essential needs resources.
- Goal-oriented approach: To enhance accountability and promote student engagement, CUNY CARES will establish clear goals for advocates regarding the number of referrals they aim to generate per event. These goals will serve as benchmarks for measuring the impact of their advocacy efforts and encourage proactive outreach to students.

Expand resources for students facing housing instability

CUNY CARES Housing Specialist

Recognizing the need for expanded on-campus services available related to housing, CUNY CARES will hire a dedicated housing specialist to develop and lead housing support services for CUNY students at the Bronx campuses. The housing specialist will play a crucial role in providing case management support for students who require assistance with various housing issues including eviction court cases, eviction prevention assistance, rent arrears, apartment searches that accept vouchers, understanding and applying for voucher programs, and other housing support services. With the introduction of this new role, CUNY CARES aims to provide comprehensive support to students at the Bronx campuses, enabling them to thrive academically.

The housing specialist will take on these responsibilities:

- Inventory the housing support services CUNY provides;

- Develop community and city-based partnerships to enhance housing support services for CUNY students;
- Convene a Housing Support Workgroup including staff and students from Bronx campuses to develop a multi-year work plan for implementation of housing support services and campus partnerships;
- Develop workshops and educational sessions to assist students facing housing instability to get appropriate help; and
- Provide training and technical assistance to other campus programs that seek to enhance or add housing support services.

Provide one-on-one support for students facing housing instability

During the spring 2023 semester, a small pilot was introduced to offer case management support for students facing housing difficulties. CUNY CARES helped eleven students facing such problems as rent arrears, eviction cases, housing vouchers, and apartment searches. For those with rent arrears, the program referred them to organizations such as Bronxworks, Human Resources Administration (HRA), and Part of the Solution (POTS) to receive further assistance. Additionally, students were given educational materials on voucher programs and information on where to apply for affordable housing applications, including Housing Connect and New York City Housing Association (NYCHA). Hiring and onboarding the housing specialist will enable CUNY CARES to serve more students to assist them to overcome housing challenges and continue their studies at CUNY.

Develop community partnerships with integrated referral systems.

A key goal of CUNY CARES is to expand the supply of essential needs services available to students by leveraging health and social services from city agencies and community providers. To realize this goal, the Program is working actively to develop new and expanded partnerships to enhance its capacity to connect students with essential needs services. By establishing integrated referral systems with social services and healthcare organizations, CUNY aims to further expand its support network for students facing food and housing insecurity and related challenges. To date, CUNY CARES has developed formal agreements and tested new services for CUNY students with NYC Health and Hospitals, HRA, Hunger Free America (HFA), Bronxworks, and NADAP, a citywide nonprofit health and social services provider. In addition, CUNY CARES participates in the NYC Benefits Coordinating Committee convened by the Mayor's Office to develop new models for facilitating enrollment of eligible New Yorkers in multiple public benefits programs. Other partnerships are in development.

Key areas of progress to date include:

- ✓ Worked with H+H to establish a telephone line for CUNY students to access the NYC CARE program.
- ✓ Held discussions with H+H to work toward a comprehensive agreement where uninsured CUNY students or those dissatisfied with their current care can receive care at H+H hospitals and health centers.
- ✓ Established a MOU with HRA, enhancing the ability to assist students with benefits applications and facilitate data sharing.
- ✓ Established a training partnership whereby HRA will provide training to Navigators to better support students with benefits applications.
- ✓ Partnered with HFA to deploy SNAP Benefits Specialists to assist students with SNAP enrollment across Bronx campuses, including both virtual and in-person assistance.
- ✓ Partnered with NADAP to facilitate CUNY student enrollment in Health insurance programs.
- ✓ Arranged for Bronxworks to facilitate a virtual workshop on Homebase services for CUNY students.
- ✓ Implemented a streamlined referral system with Bronxworks, enabling campus resource centers to directly connect CUNY students with Bronxworks for comprehensive support in accessing food resources or securing stable housing.

NYC Health + Hospitals (H+H)

H+H is the largest municipal public healthcare system in the United States, providing quality, affordable and accessible healthcare services to all New Yorkers, regardless of their ability to pay. Their comprehensive services, including medical care, behavioral and mental health services, preventive care, and public health initiatives, play a crucial role in promoting community health and well-being.¹⁵

H+H has established a telephone line specifically for CUNY students to gain access to its NYC CARE program. NYC CARE stands for NYC Comprehensive Assessment and Review for Enhanced Services and creates a safety net for individuals who face barriers to obtaining health insurance due to their immigration status, lack of insurance, or limited financial resources. Key constituencies are undocumented individuals and those who are ineligible for or dissatisfied with public health insurance programs.¹⁶ CUNY CARES is working with H+H to determine how to best refer CUNY students to enroll in the NYC CARE program. We hope that a strengthened partnership will further enhance the overall well-being and healthcare support available to the population of CUNY students who are uninsured. In addition, CUNY CARES is exploring a more comprehensive agreement with H+H in which CUNY students without health insurance and an established health care provider will be offered care at one of H+H's 11 hospitals

or 30 community health centers. We hope to make progress in defining such a partnership in Fall 2023 and developing a plan for implementation in the coming years.

Human Resources Administration (HRA)

HRA is the NYC government agency responsible for implementing various public benefits programs and other social services to support individuals and families in need.¹⁷ CUNY CARES has cultivated a partnership with HRA to enhance support services for students. CUNY CARES recently establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with HRA to gain access to the HRA portal, allowing us to better assist students with their applications for public benefits, such as SNAP, Cash assistance and Medicaid, and will enable data collection on student outcomes regarding their benefits applications. Furthermore, HRA will provide personalized training for CUNY CARES navigators in advance of the Fall 2023 semester, so that they can better support students to complete their benefits applications.

Hunger-Free America (HFA)

HFA is a nonprofit organization that works to combat hunger and food insecurity in New York City and elsewhere in the United States. Their mission is to ensure that all individuals have access to nutritious foods and to eliminate the root causes of hunger.¹⁸ Building on an existing relationship, CUNY CARES has partnered with HFA to deploy a SNAP Benefits specialists to assist students with SNAP enrollment across the Bronx campuses. They are currently providing on-campus assistance for Bronx Community students weekly and Lehman College students bi-weekly. Additionally, virtual SNAP benefit application appointments are now available across all three Bronx campuses. Through this partnership, CUNY CARES aims to ensure that students have access to adequate nutrition and food resources. From January-March 2023, HFA assisted 51 students with SNAP application submission and confirmed enrollment of 18 students, amounting to \$5,434 in total monthly benefits.

NADAP

For fifty years, NADAP has helped New Yorkers sign up for healthcare, find work, receive community support, and access the resources they need to improve their mental, physical, emotional and financial well-being.¹⁹ In Spring 2023, CUNY CARES partnered with NADAP to facilitate enrollment of CUNY students in health insurance. Through this collaboration CUNY CARES navigators refer students to a NADAP Health Insurance Navigator, who provides students with personalized guidance and assistance in navigating the process of enrolling in health insurance. This partnership enhances the overall well-being of students by helping them access vital healthcare services.

Bronxworks

Bronxworks is a nonprofit organization that provides a wide range of social services and support to individuals and families in the Bronx. The group offers comprehensive programs and initiatives in housing, immigration, employment, education and community development.²⁰ Bronxworks has supported CUNY CARES' efforts to address housing instability. For example, during the spring 2023 semester, they conducted a virtual workshop on Homebase services, an HRA homelessness prevention initiative that provides New Yorkers experiencing housing instability with services to support them. We've also established a streamlined referral process, enabling campus resource centers to directly refer students to Bronxworks for assistance with food access or housing. This referral process involves submitting student information through a digital form, which allows Bronxworks to screen students and provide tailored benefits and services. This partnership aims to prevent homelessness and provide stable housing solutions for students in need.

For each partnership that includes a referral system, CUNY CARES seeks to establish reporting mechanisms to enable tracking of the number of CUNY students that received support. The Program will also continue to work with partners to establish mechanisms for regular communication and identifying new ways to improve connection to services.

Increase student awareness of supportive services

To ensure that CUNY CARES can effectively support as many CUNY students as possible, it is essential to identify and utilize all available promotional avenues. Collaborating with campus staff to seamlessly integrate such pathways into campus operations is crucial. Currently, CUNY CARES has identified and utilized several pathways for promotion, including activities attended by CUNY CARES Advocates Program (described previously), such as classroom presentations, school-sponsored events, and club gatherings. Additionally, while campus-wide communications via emails, flyers, and web-based outreach through social media and webinars were used to promote the program, CUNY CARES needs to maximize their utilization by bolstering their integration into campus systems.

CUNY CARES recognizes the importance of identifying new promotional pathways and is actively working with campus staff and leadership in order to enhance them. Such strategies may include faculty training to include CUNY CARES information in course materials such as syllabi and Blackboard platforms, and to engage in conversations with students about essential needs, integrating referrals to navigators by the financial aid office and advisors, promoting services during campus orientation activities, and organizing CUNY CARES events. By pursuing these strategies, CUNY CARES aims to

reach and assist a greater number of students across the CUNY system.

Training for campus faculty and staff

Faculty and staff members often interact with students on a regular basis, making them well-positioned to identify signs of distress or recognize when students may be facing challenges related to essential needs. They also play a pivotal role in establishing a sense of belonging and trust for students, a critical factor for improving student retention.²¹ By equipping faculty and staff with the knowledge and skills to connect students with essential needs resources, colleges can create a supportive network that extends beyond academic instruction. Faculty and staff members can act as empathetic and informed allies, fostering an environment where students feel comfortable seeking help and support.

By facilitating training for faculty and staff, CUNY CARES will assist campuses to proactively address the challenges students face. The program has recently dedicated a staff member to develop, test and facilitate trainings which will not only raise awareness among faculty and staff about the range of resources and services available both on and off campus, but may also cover topics such as identifying signs of student distress, understanding the various resources and services offered, and learning how to effectively refer students to the appropriate support systems.

Engage school leadership to enhance campus services coordination

CUNY CARES recognizes the critical role of school leadership in fostering a culture of support for students' essential needs. Engaging university leadership through the CUNY CARES initiative will facilitate the creation of a coordinated support ecosystem across various departments and administrative units within the school. By involving key decision-makers, including presidents, provosts, and deans, CUNY can establish a shared vision and commitment to addressing students' essential needs. Leadership plays a crucial role in fostering communication and collaboration among different departments such as academic affairs, student affairs, housing, financial aid, health services, and other relevant units offices, helping to break down silos and encourage cross-departmental collaboration. Furthermore, University leadership also possesses the authority and influence to drive policy changes and enact systemic improvements to support students' essential needs. This may involve revising policies related to financial aid disbursement, housing assistance, food security and mental health support. Through their leadership roles, university leaders can champion the adoption of student-centered policies that prioritize students' well-being.

To effectively engage with leadership, CUNY CARES will organize regular meetings for school leadership, including college presidents, provosts, deans, and department

heads. These gatherings will serve as platforms for dialogue, information sharing, and collaborative decision-making. The meetings will focus on the importance of addressing essential needs, the role of school leadership in driving change, and the specific actions needed to enhance campus services coordination. CUNY CARES will also establish clear lines of communication with school leadership, ensuring that they receive regular updates on the progress, challenges, and outcomes of essential needs initiatives. This communication will include reports, data analysis, and success metrics that demonstrate the impact of coordinated services on student well-being and success. By maintaining open and transparent communication channels, CUNY CARES will foster a sense of accountability and encourage ongoing collaboration with school leadership.

Implement a systematic program evaluation

The ultimate value of CUNY CARES depends on its success in assisting students to improve their health, meet their essential needs, and make academic progress. CUNY's decision to expand scale CUNY CARES from the three Bronx campuses to replicate this approach on all 25 campuses depends on the evidence showing impact.

To comprehensively evaluate the impact of the Bronx Demonstration Project, we have identified key outcome measures across multiple domains (Table 1) and will implement a quasi-experimental study design to assess them. Domains include academics, mental health, housing, food security, healthcare, and peer education, as well as awareness and utilization of both campus and community services. Our primary outcome variables will focus on academic success, which will be measured by indicators such as GPA, progress towards degree completion, and graduation status. These measures will allow us to assess the overall impact of CUNY CARES on students' educational achievements.

In order to assess the process of program implementation, we will document the activities carried out by project staff and partners involved in the initiative. We will also analyze student interactions with various components of CUNY CARES and monitor any changes made to the configuration and delivery of student services on the participating campuses. The evaluation of the implementation process will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness and efficiency of the program.

The data for our evaluation will come from various sources. We will conduct surveys of representative samples of CUNY students to capture their experiences and perspectives. Academic and demographic data from the Office of Applied Research, Evaluation, and Data Analytics (OAREDA) will provide important quantitative insights. Additionally, interviews with students and program staff will offer qualitative data to further enhance our understanding of the program's impact. We will also observe CUNY

CARES activities and events to gain firsthand knowledge of the program's implementation and its effects. Furthermore, program process data will be collected to track the delivery and administration of CUNY CARES. By employing this diverse range of data sources, our evaluation aims to elicit meaningful student experiences and perceptions. These insights will not only inform the design and implementation of CUNY CARES but also allow us to track the program's impact on outcomes among CUNY students in the Bronx. The findings from this evaluation will provide valuable guidance for future enhancements and improvements to the CUNY CARES initiative.

Student Outcome Measures

We will assess if the following key measures changed from baseline to post-implementation in the Bronx compared to CUNY-wide (comparison group). Using the quasi-experimental difference-in-difference study design, we will assess if there were significantly greater changes at the Bronx campuses, compared to the comparison group for each key indicator, shown below.

Table 1. Key Performance Indicators and Prevalence Estimates, *Fall 2022 Baseline Assessment*

| | Fall 2022 Prevalence Estimates | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|------|--------|--------|-------------------|
| | All Bronx | BCC | Hostos | Lehman | Total Bx Students |
| Academics | | | | | |
| Any academic problem | 16.7 | 15.1 | 16.7 | 18.8 | 4,008 |
| Risk for academic probation | 15.9 | 25.8 | 17.7 | 10.8 | 3,816 |
| Took leave of absence | 11.4 | 13.2 | 14.2 | 9.5 | 2,736 |
| Stopped out | 2.0 | 3.8 | 3.4 | 0.7 | 480 |
| Food Security | | | | | |
| Food Insecurity | 43.6 | 45.9 | 45.4 | 41.9 | 10,464 |
| Receives SNAP benefits | 24.8 | 26.3 | 33.9 | 20.7 | 5,952 |
| Aware of food assistance resources | 46.6 | 48.3 | 45.2 | 46.3 | 11,184 |
| Utilized food assistance resources | 42.3 | 42.3 | 56.0 | 38.5 | 10,152 |
| CUNY helped them enroll in SNAP | 0.7 | 0.2 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 168 |
| Used campus food pantry | 8.4 | 7.6 | 8.3 | 8.8 | 2,016 |
| Housing | | | | | |
| Housing instability | 49.0 | 54.7 | 54.6 | 44.3 | 11,760 |
| Homelessness | 6.3 | 7.3 | 8.7 | 4.9 | 1,512 |
| Received assistance for housing | 9.8 | 9.5 | 13.0 | 8.7 | 2,352 |
| Received assistance for housing at CUNY | 0.8 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 192 |

Mental Health

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Anxiety and/or depression | 31.9 | 35.9 | 29.0 | 31.0 | 7,656 |
| Unmet mental health need | 41.1 | 44.1 | 36.1 | 41.6 | 9,864 |
| Mental health interfered with school | 39.7 | 40.4 | 40.5 | 39.1 | 9,528 |
| Received counseling at CUNY | 4.8 | 4.4 | 4.9 | 4.9 | 1,152 |
| Received counseling outside of CUNY | 19.3 | 19.0 | 17.6 | 20.1 | 4,632 |
| Don't know where to get help | 18.6 | 18.8 | 17.9 | 18.7 | 4,464 |

Healthcare

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Unmet healthcare need | 20.2 | 24.4 | 19.4 | 18.5 | 4,848 |
| No health insurance coverage | 5.9 | 7.2 | 6.6 | 5.1 | 1,416 |
| Referred to outside provider by CUNY | 2.2 | 3.8 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 528 |
| Used CUNY health service | 14.7 | 15.2 | 13.9 | 13.7 | 3,528 |
| No primary care visits | 18.4 | 20.2 | 20.1 | 16.9 | 4,416 |
| General health is fair or poor | 15.2 | 16.5 | 17.4 | 13.8 | 3,648 |

Peer Education

| | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Received assistance from peer educator | 9.9 | 13.9 | 14.0 | 6.6 | 2,376 |
| Saw a message on SNAP on social media | 43.3 | 40.6 | 42.7 | 45.1 | 10,392 |
| Got info on SNAP at a CUNY food pantry | 17.0 | 21.2 | 20.9 | 12.9 | 4,080 |

Data Collection Timeline

| Data Source Type | Data Source | Baseline | | Post-Implementation | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|----------|--------|---------------------|--------|----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|
| | | AY 23-24 | | AY 24-25 | | AY 25-26 | | AY 26-27 | | AY 27-28 |
| | | Fa '23 | Sp '24 | Fa '24 | Sp '25 | Fa '25 | Sp '26 | Fa '26 | Sp '27 | Fa '27 |
| Student Surveys | CUNY CARES survey-treatment group (Bronx) | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | CUNY CARES survey-control group (CUNY-wide) | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| OAREDA Academic Data | GPA | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Retention rates | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Graduation Rates | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| | Drop-out rates | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Interviews | Student interviews | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| | Interviews/feedback from Advocates & Navigators | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| CUNY CARES Process Data* | Students assisted by Navigators | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Students assisted by Advocates | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| | Students served by CUNY CARES partner orgs | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Trainings held with campus faculty/ advisors/ staff | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| <i>*See below for all process indicators</i> | | | | | | | | | | |

Overview of Process Evaluation

In order to evaluate the implementation of the program, we will conduct comparisons for the indicators listed in the table below at the baseline and subsequently at the ends of Years 1,2, and 3. By systematically tracking and comparing these indicators, we can identify any trends, improvements, or challenges that have emerged over the course of the project. These findings will help inform decision-making, guide program adjustments, and ensure the effective implementation of the program to meet its intended objectives.

| Process Data Type | Indicator |
|--|---|
| Navigator Program | |
| Overall reach | # students requesting navigator meeting # navigator meetings held |
| Awareness of services | # students provided information about campus-based resources # students provided information about CBO/healthcare resource |
| Service referrals | # referrals to campus-based resource # referrals to CBO/healthcare resource |
| Utilization of services | # students that utilized campus-based resource # students that utilized CBO/healthcare resource |
| Benefits application assistance | # students assisted with benefits eligibility assessment # students supported with benefits application # students that applied for SNAP, Cash assistance, Fair fares, NYC CARE, Medicaid, and HEAP |
| Benefits enrollment | # students enrolled in SNAP, Cash assistance, Fair fares, NYC CARE, Medicaid, and HEAP |
| Advocates Program | |
| Outreach | # students provided information about resources by an Advocate # Navigator referrals made by Advocates |
| Connection to services | # students connected to resource center via Advocates* # students connected to counseling center via Advocates* |
| Other Promotional Activities | |
| How students were connected to | # students connected through emails |
| Navigator program | # students connected through flyers # students connected through webinars |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| | # students connected through faculty/advisors |
| Partnerships | |
| Reach | # students referred to partner organization(s) by navigator |
| | # students served by partner organization* |
| Webinars & Trainings | |
| Webinars | # students attending webinars |
| | # referrals to Navigator program via webinars |
| Trainings | # faculty trainings held |
| | # faculty attending trainings |
| | # advisors trainings held |
| | # advisors attending trainings |
| | Pre/post survey data from trainings (to be developed) |

*Reliant on data collection/reporting from partners

Projected Reach of CUNY CARES Demonstration Project

Based on the identified channels for communication with students on each Bronx campus, we have projected that approximately 2,000 students will be referred to navigators and other campus services during the upcoming 2023-24 academic year. From this total, we anticipate that half, about 1,000 students, will actively engage with a navigator to seek assistance regarding benefits enrollment and access to the necessary on- and off-campus services.

CUNY CARES is focused on achieving scalability in reaching a larger number of students. Our surveys show that in 2022, 50% of Bronx students reported at least two unmet needs (~12,000 students). Based on these estimates, by Year 3, we expect to reach a high proportion of these students with offers of assistance. By implementing strategies to increase the number of students reached by 50% in Year 2 and Year 3, we aim to refer 3,000 students in Year 2 and 4,500 students in Year 3. This expanded outreach would result in connecting 1,500 students to services in Year 2 and 2,225 students in Year 3. As a result of these efforts, the program has the potential to reach a substantial number of students over a three-year period, with an estimated reach of 9,500 students. Out of this total, we anticipate being able to effectively connect approximately 4,750 students to the necessary services throughout the duration of the program.

As a result of program reach, we have also set projected targets for change in prevalence for each key indicator ranging from 5%-10% change at 1-year, and 20%-40% change by three years, depending on the target and feasibility for change based on program activities, shown in Appendix B. It is important to acknowledge that our estimates are based on incomplete evidence, and as a result, our actual reach and engagement with students may vary from the predicted numbers. In 2023-24, we will collect preliminary data that will help to verify or amend these estimates and targets.

In order to achieve the projected estimates, the active involvement of campus leadership is crucial. Campus leadership plays a pivotal role in promoting the work of CUNY CARES and encouraging staff members to integrate promotion into campus-wide operations. Their support and engagement are vital for effectively reaching and connecting students to the services provided by CUNY CARES. In order to gain a clearer understanding of our program's reach and effectiveness, a key task during our first year is to refine these estimates. This iterative process of refinement allows us to adapt and respond to the realities on the ground. By utilizing evidence-based insights and actively seeking feedback from students and stakeholders, we can make informed adjustments to our strategies and improve the accuracy of our estimates over time.

New Directions for CUNY CARES

The data and findings summarized in this report have suggested some additional directions and new approaches for CUNY CARES as it moves into the implementation phase. These are briefly described here and will be developed in our future work and reports.

1. **Mental health.** As noted, CUNY students report a high burden of mental health problems and many are not receiving care for the problems they experience. In the coming year, CUNY CARES will explore more systematically how CUNY students move between campus-based care, community care, and telehealth services and develop new approaches to using CUNY CARES to assist students to negotiate these systems of care and connect to the services and providers that can best serve their needs.
2. **Sexual and reproductive health.** The Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v Wade* has highlighted concerns about access to sexual and reproductive health services in New York and elsewhere. As CUNY CARES seeks to connect CUNY students to the full range of health care services needed to maintain well-being, we will focus more specifically on the needs, service utilization, and preferences of CUNY students. In addition, the new mandate by New York State Governor Kathy Hochul that CUNY And SUNY must provide all students with access or referrals to medication abortions will give CUNY an opportunity to consider how best to fulfill this mandate.
3. **Partnerships with city agencies.** As described here, CUNY CARES has begun conversations with city agencies to expand student access to benefits. A new Mayoral initiative to better coordinate benefits enrollment across city agencies and services and to ensure that all New Yorkers are enrolled for the benefits for which they are eligible provides an opportunity for more robust, comprehensive partnership to bring this approach to CUNY students.
4. **Focus on workforce development and career preparation.** From our conversations with students, faculty, and providers, CUNY CARES has recognized the potential for integrating our model for linking students to the services that can meet their

health and social needs with CUNY’s growing commitment to preparing students for employment, providing internship experiences while they are enrolled and ensuring that graduates have marketable skills that will help them find lifetime employment. With the CUNY Office of Health of Human Services, we will look to develop and field test various approaches to integrating our navigator and advocate programs with academic programs, certificates, and opportunities for workforce development .

5. Linking CUNY CARES to CUNY Lifting New York. CUNY Lifting New York is the strategic plan to transform CUNY into “the nation’s foremost student-centered University system by 2030.” By describing how CUNY CARES will contribute to and benefit from this plan, CUNY CARES will lay the foundation for developing a sustainable and replicable approach to better meeting the health and social needs of our students in order to more fully support their academic and life success.

Conclusion

Drawing upon survey data from students in the Bronx, insightful interviews with students, productive discussions with campus staff, and valuable input from other stakeholders, CUNY CARES has developed a robust program model aimed at increasing student access to supportive services and public benefits. Our strategies encompass personalized one-on-one navigation support, fostering partnerships with community and healthcare organizations, and enhancing awareness of the supportive services available to students through the utilization of peer advocates. We also prioritize implementing comprehensive training with faculty and advisors, as well as engaging school leadership to strengthen campus-wide coordination.

To ensure the effectiveness of our efforts, we will conduct a rigorous program evaluation that will identify the key components driving positive outcomes. By leveraging these insights, we aspire to expand our activities across the entire CUNY system. Our ultimate goal is to make a substantial impact on the number of students experiencing unmet essential needs, empowering them to persist and thrive academically.

Building upon CUNY’s remarkable 150-year history, CUNY CARES endeavors to establish a national model for supporting students from low-income families, immigrants and Black and Latine students. Through our comprehensive approach, we aim to facilitate college completion, improve lifelong well-being, and contribute to closing the economic, educational, and health disparities that characterize both New York City and the nation as a whole. By championing the success of our students, we strive to create a transformative impact that extends beyond the boundaries of our institution.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Campus Services

| Health Services | Hostos | BCC | Lehman |
|-------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|
| Well Visits | YES | NO | NO |
| Other Outpatient | YES | NO | NO |
| Outside Referrals | YES | YES | YES |
| Immunizations | YES | YES | NO |
| OTC Medications | NO | YES | YES |
| Smoking cessation | NO | YES | NO |
| COVID testing | YES | NO | YES |
| Help with health insurance | YES | YES | YES |
| Educational Services | YES | YES | YES |
| Sexual Health Services | Hostos | BCC | Lehman |
| Pregnancy testing | YES | NO | NO |
| Lactation services | YES | YES | YES |
| Condom distribution | YES | NO | YES |
| Period product distribution | YES | NO | YES |
| HIV/STI Testing | YES | YES | YES |
| Mental Health Services | Hostos | BCC | Lehman |
| Individual counseling | YES | YES | YES |
| Group counseling | YES | YES | YES |
| Crisis intervention | YES | YES | YES |
| Outside Referrals | YES | YES | YES |
| Phone/virtual counseling | YES | YES | YES |
| Food Assistance | Hostos | BCC | Lehman |
| Food pantry | YES | YES | YES |
| SNAP Enrollment | YES | NO | NO |
| WIC Enrollment | YES | YES | NO |
| Education Services | NO | YES | YES |
| Campus food options | NO | YES | YES |
| Other Essential Needs | Hostos | BCC | Lehman |
| Housing | YES | YES | NO |
| Legal | YES | YES | NO |
| Financial | YES | YES | YES |
| Employment | YES | YES | YES |
| Immigration | YES | YES | NO |

Appendix B. All Survey Indicators

| Key Performance Indicator | Baseline Prevalence Estimates | | | | | 1-yr target (+ or -) | 3yr target (+ or -) | 1-yr goal, overall sample | 3-yr goal, overall sample | 3-yr goal, increase or decrease in # students |
|---|-------------------------------|------|--------|--------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| | Overall | BCC | Hostos | Lehman | Total Bx Students | | | | | |
| Academics | | | | | | | | | | |
| Any academic problem | 16.7 | 15.1 | 16.7 | 18.8 | 4,008 | -5% | -20% | 15.9 | 13.4 | -792 |
| Risk for academic probation | 15.9 | 25.8 | 17.7 | 10.8 | 3,816 | -5% | -20% | 15.1 | 12.7 | -768 |
| Took leave of absence | 11.4 | 13.2 | 14.2 | 9.5 | 2,736 | -5% | -20% | 10.8 | 9.1 | -552 |
| Stopped out | 2.0 | 3.8 | 3.4 | 0.7 | 480 | -5% | -20% | 1.9 | 1.6 | -96 |
| Food Security | | | | | | | | | | |
| Food Insecurity | 43.6 | 45.9 | 45.4 | 41.9 | 10,464 | -10% | -30% | 39.2 | 30.5 | -3,144 |
| Receives SNAP benefits | 24.8 | 26.3 | 33.9 | 20.7 | 5,952 | +10% | +30% | 27.3 | 32.2 | +1,786 |
| Aware of food assistance resources | 46.6 | 48.3 | 45.2 | 46.3 | 11,184 | +10% | +40% | 51.3 | 65.2 | +4,464 |
| Utilized food assistance resources | 42.3 | 42.3 | 56.0 | 38.5 | 10,152 | +10% | +40% | 46.5 | 59.2 | +4,056 |
| CUNY helped them enroll in SNAP | 0.7 | 0.2 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 168 | +100% | +200% | 1.4 | 2.8 | +504 |
| Used campus food pantry | 8.4 | 7.6 | 8.3 | 8.8 | 2,016 | +10% | +40% | 9.2 | 11.8 | +816 |
| Housing | | | | | | | | | | |
| Housing instability | 49.0 | 54.7 | 54.6 | 44.3 | 11,760 | -5% | -20% | 46.6 | 39.2 | -2,352 |
| Homelessness | 6.3 | 7.3 | 8.7 | 4.9 | 1,512 | -10% | -30% | 5.7 | 4.4 | -456 |
| Received assistance for housing | 9.8 | 9.5 | 13.0 | 8.7 | 2,352 | +10% | +30% | 10.8 | 12.7 | +696 |
| Received assistance for housing at CUNY | 0.8 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 192 | +100% | +200% | 1.6 | 2.4 | +384 |
| Mental Health | | | | | | | | | | |
| Anxiety and/or depression | 31.9 | 35.9 | 29.0 | 31.0 | 7,656 | -5% | -20% | 30.3 | 25.5 | -1,536 |
| Unmet mental health need | 41.1 | 44.1 | 36.1 | 41.6 | 9,864 | -5% | -20% | 39.0 | 32.9 | -1,968 |
| Mental health interfered with school | 39.7 | 40.4 | 40.5 | 39.1 | 9,528 | -5% | -20% | 37.7 | 31.8 | -1,896 |
| Received counseling at CUNY | 4.8 | 4.4 | 4.9 | 4.9 | 1,152 | +5% | +20% | 5.0 | 5.8 | +240 |
| Received counseling outside of CUNY | 19.3 | 19.0 | 17.6 | 20.1 | 4,632 | +5% | +20% | 20.3 | 23.2 | +936 |
| Don't know where to get help | 18.6 | 18.8 | 17.9 | 18.7 | 4,464 | -5% | -20% | 17.7 | 14.9 | -888 |

| Healthcare | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|--------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Unmet healthcare need | 20.2 | 24.4 | 19.4 | 18.5 | 4,848 | -10% | -30% | 18.2 | 14.1 | -1,464 |
| No health insurance coverage | 5.9 | 7.2 | 6.6 | 5.1 | 1,416 | -10% | -30% | 5.3 | 4.1 | -432 |
| Referred to outside provider by CUNY | 2.2 | 3.8 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 528 | +10% | +30% | 2.3 | 2.9 | +168 |
| Used CUNY health service | 14.7 | 15.2 | 13.9 | 13.7 | 3,528 | +10% | +30% | 16.2 | 19.1 | +1,056 |
| No primary care visits | 18.4 | 20.2 | 20.1 | 16.9 | 4,416 | -10% | -30% | 16.6 | 12.9 | -1,320 |
| General health is fair or poor | 15.2 | 16.5 | 17.4 | 13.8 | 3,648 | -10% | -30% | 13.7 | 10.6 | -1,104 |
| Peer Education | | | | | | | | | | |
| Received assistance from peer educator* | 9.9 | 13.9 | 14.0 | 6.6 | 2,376 | +20% | +60% | 11.9 | 15.8 | +1,416 |
| Saw a message on SNAP on social media | 43.3 | 40.6 | 42.7 | 45.1 | 10,392 | +10% | +30% | 47.6 | 56.3 | +3,120 |
| Got info on SNAP at a CUNY food pantry | 17.0 | 21.2 | 20.9 | 12.9 | 4,080 | +20% | +60% | 20.4 | 27.2 | +2,448 |

Appendix C. All Survey Prevalence Estimates

| Survey Indicator | Baseline Prevalence Estimates | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|------|--------|--------|----------------------|
| | Overall | BCC | Hostos | Lehman | Total Bronx Students |
| Academics | | | | | |
| Any academic problem (stop out, LOA, or low GPA) | 16.7 | 15.1 | 16.7 | 18.8 | 4,008 |
| Academic probation | 7.0 | 13.9 | 6.8 | 4.0 | 1,680 |
| Risk for academic probation | 15.9 | 25.8 | 17.7 | 10.8 | 3,816 |
| Took leave of absence | 11.4 | 13.2 | 14.2 | 9.5 | 2,736 |
| Stopped out | 2.0 | 3.8 | 3.4 | 0.7 | 480 |
| Satisfied with academic experience at CUNY | 82.2 | 80.5 | 81.1 | 83.4 | 19,728 |
| Satisfied with social experience at CUNY | 57.6 | 61.4 | 64.0 | 53.3 | 13,824 |
| Food Security | | | | | |
| Food Insecurity | 43.6 | 45.9 | 45.4 | 41.9 | 10,464 |
| Hunger interfered with school | 36.0 | 40.1 | 37.2 | 33.8 | 8,640 |
| SNAP-Eligible | 50.0 | 54.2 | 58.7 | 45.0 | 12,000 |
| SNAP-Eligible but not Enrolled | 30.0 | 30.8 | 28.0 | 25.1 | 7,200 |
| Receives SNAP benefits | 24.8 | 26.3 | 33.9 | 20.7 | 5,952 |
| Aware of food assistance resources | 46.6 | 48.3 | 45.2 | 46.3 | 11,184 |
| Utilized food assistance resources | 42.3 | 42.3 | 56.0 | 38.5 | 10,152 |
| CUNY helped them enroll in SNAP | 0.7 | 0.2 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 168 |
| Used campus food pantry | 8.4 | 7.6 | 8.3 | 8.8 | 2,016 |
| Reasons for not using food assistance resource | | | | | |
| Do not need food assistance | 51.2 | 51.1 | 44.4 | 53.0 | 12,288 |
| Do not think they are eligible for assistance | 20.8 | 20.5 | 20.4 | 21.1 | 4,992 |
| Did not know food assistance was available | 16.0 | 14.7 | 16.7 | 16.4 | 3,840 |

| | | | | | |
|--|------|-----|-----|------|-------|
| Concerned it might affect immigration status | 1.0 | 0.7 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 240 |
| Embarrassed or ashamed to use assistance | 2.8 | 5.0 | 1.9 | 2.1 | 672 |
| Applying requires too much paperwork | 3.5 | 2.8 | 5.2 | 3.3 | 840 |
| Feel that others need it more | 10.8 | 9.3 | 8.5 | 12.0 | 2,592 |

Housing

| | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Housing instability | 49.0 | 54.7 | 54.6 | 44.3 | 11,760 |
| Unable to pay or underpaid rent or mortgage | 29.8 | 34.0 | 35.0 | 26.0 | 7,152 |
| Received summons to appear in housing court | 5.2 | 6.1 | 5.7 | 4.7 | 1,248 |
| Not paid full amount of gas, oil, or electricity bill | 24.4 | 25.6 | 24.5 | 23.9 | 5,856 |
| Had account default or go into collections | 16.4 | 16.3 | 19.3 | 15.4 | 3,936 |
| Moved in with others due to financial problems | 11.4 | 13.5 | 14.4 | 9.4 | 2,736 |
| Lived with others beyond capacity .2 | 11.8 | 15.2 | 11.3 | 10.4 | 2,832 |
| Left household due to feeling unsafe | 6.5 | 7.6 | 6.2 | 6.0 | 1,560 |
| Homelessness | 6.3 | 7.3 | 8.7 | 4.9 | 1,512 |
| Worried about losing housing | 38.5 | 42.0 | 44.6 | 34.7 | 9,240 |
| Received assistance for housing | 9.8 | 9.5 | 13.0 | 8.7 | 2,352 |
| Received assistance for housing at CUNY | 0.8 | 1.1 | 0.5 | 0.8 | 192 |

Mental Health

| | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Anxiety | 25.1 | 27.2 | 22.0 | 25.3 | 6,024 |
| Depression | 20.4 | 24.3 | 19.0 | 19.1 | 4,896 |
| Anxiety and/or depression | 31.9 | 35.9 | 31.0 | 29.0 | 7,656 |
| Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder | 49.8 | 50.5 | 51.0 | 45.6 | 11,952 |
| Unmet mental health need | 41.1 | 44.1 | 36.1 | 41.6 | 9,864 |
| Mental health interfered with school | 39.7 | 40.4 | 40.5 | 39.1 | 9,528 |
| Received counseling at CUNY | 4.8 | 4.4 | 4.9 | 4.9 | 1,152 |
| Received counseling outside of CUNY | 19.3 | 19.0 | 17.6 | 20.1 | 4,632 |
| Barriers to receiving mental health counseling | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Any barriers | 51.6 | 51.4 | 45.6 | 54.0 | 12,384 |
| Don't know where to get help | 18.6 | 18.8 | 17.9 | 18.7 | 4,464 |
| Difficult to schedule appointment | 10.7 | 9.4 | 9.9 | 11.1 | 2,568 |
| Don't feel comfortable sharing personal life | 15.1 | 17.7 | 11.6 | 14.6 | 3,624 |
| Difficult to get time off work/school | 13.1 | 10.9 | 12.0 | 13.9 | 3,144 |
| Costs too much money | 10.5 | 8.3 | 5.9 | 12.6 | 2,520 |

Healthcare

| | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Unmet healthcare need | 20.2 | 24.4 | 19.4 | 18.5 | 4,848 |
| No health insurance coverage | 5.9 | 7.2 | 6.6 | 5.1 | 1,416 |
| Enrolled in Medicaid | 47.8 | 50.9 | 53.8 | 44.1 | 11,472 |
| No regular healthcare provider | 21.1 | 24.0 | 24.3 | 18.6 | 5,064 |
| Needed medical care but didn't get it | 16.3 | 19.0 | 14.8 | 15.5 | 3,912 |
| Referred to outside provider by CUNY staff | 2.2 | 3.8 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 528 |
| Used CUNY campus health center | 5.6 | 6.5 | 6.0 | 5.1 | 1,344 |
| Used any CUNY health service | 14.7 | 15.2 | 13.9 | 13.7 | 3,528 |
| No primary care visits | 18.4 | 20.2 | 20.1 | 16.9 | 4,416 |
| General health is fair or poor | 15.2 | 16.5 | 17.4 | 13.8 | 3,648 |
| Talked to advocate about getting help for a health issue | 8.0 | 10.0 | 8.9 | 6.8 | 1,920 |

Peer Education

| | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Received assistance from peer educator | 9.9 | 13.9 | 14.0 | 6.6 | 2,376 |
| Saw a message on SNAP on social media | 43.3 | 40.6 | 42.7 | 45.1 | 10,392 |
| Got info on SNAP at a CUNY food pantry | 17.0 | 21.2 | 20.9 | 12.9 | 4,080 |
| Talked to advocate about SNAP or food insecurity | 7.4 | 7.8 | 9.3 | 6.4 | 1,776 |