

Meeting Student Needs:

California Community Colleges' Basic Needs
Centers Implementation Assessment



November 2022

Author: Sarah Bouabibsa



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	I.
Introduction	II.
Methods & Finding	III.
Recommedation	IV.
Conclusion	V.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report could not have been written without the thought partnership of California Community College students.

Young Invincibles staff members contributed in each step of the process. Many thanks to the Young Invincibles West team for their thought-partnership, including Ruth Sosa Martinez for her efforts; Matthew Eckel for his guidance and editorial support; Stanley Augustin for his design prowess; and Arys Darton, Young Invincibles West Policy Fellow and former Basic Needs Fellow Andrew Nickens, for their tremendous support and leadership throughout the implementation analysis process.

Thank you to Young Invincibles' Young Advocates for your efforts and perspective throughout the surveying process.

Young Invincibles thanks the Michelson 20 Million Minds Foundation for providing support for this report. The views expressed are those of Young Invincibles and do not necessarily reflect the funder.



SUMMARY

Student basic needs are a defining issue of the current and future generations of students across California's higher education system. AB 132 (2021)¹ established the start of the only state-mandated basic needs centers through the California Community College System. AB 132 required community colleges to establish basic needs centers and hire basic needs coordinators. The legislation also laid out the set of services that basic needs centers must provide directly or through resource material.

This report provides insight into the California Community Colleges' progress of implementing basic needs centers throughout the system. Geographically representative samples of campuses across the state were surveyed prior to and after the legally mandated July 2022 deadline to analyze compliance with the requirements laid out in AB 132 (2021). Findings illustrate gaps in meeting requirements for system-wide open basic needs centers, accessible center locations, and range of services or referral to resources. Recommendations call for increasing state funding to meet growing student needs, for California Community College executives to incorporate students into basic needs planning committees, and for advocates and California Community Colleges to develop a holistic basic needs assessment tool.



¹ AB 132 - Postsecondary education trailer bill (2021-2022) https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB132

INTRODUCTION

With over 1.6 million² students and 116 colleges, the California Community Colleges network is the largest higher education system in the nation. The composition of these campuses also reflect a racially, economically, and geographically diverse student population. Serving a higher rate of vulnerable students like foster youth, first generation students, student parents, and veteran students, the California Community Colleges (CCC) require a robust approach toward providing basic needs that can reach their wide-ranging student population.

Although community college student basic needs issues have been addressed on a campus-by-campus basis, they have been thrust to the forefront because of the global disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the California Community Colleges, 53 percent of students reported a decrease in their income while 40 percent experienced food insecurity, 57 percent experienced housing insecurity, and 18 percent experienced homelessness³. Additionally, 65 percent of students across the California Community Colleges were identified as economically disadvantaged at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ The compounded financial impacts of COVID-19 and the shift to an entirely online mode of instruction left 19 percent of students with difficulty accessing courses due to insufficient resources and 40 percent with a general difficulty concentrating on learning.⁵

The prevalence of basic needs issues that students faced during the Covid-19 pandemic was pushed to the forefront by advocates like the California Community College Student Senate, Young Invincibles, and John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY). As the student voice of California Community College System, the Student Senate highlighted the importance of student basic needs in their 2020-2021 legislative priorities.⁶ The leading voice for youth who have been in foster care or homeless, JBAY, centered marginalized students for whom access to basic needs services was and continues to be critical for educational and lifelong success.⁷ As a young-adult led organization, Young Invincibles joined the advocacy efforts as a co-sponsor of student basic needs legislation⁸ because our mission is to expand economic opportunity for our generation and to uplift the voices of non-traditional students.

2 Kouloukakis, Eleni and Eloy Ortiz Oakley. "The Irreplaceable Value of California's Community Colleges," Cal Matters. February 17, 2022. <https://calmatters.org/commentary/2022/02/the-irreplaceable-value-of-californias-community-colleges/>

3 "COVID-19 Impact Survey," California Community Colleges. Accessed October 19, 2022. <https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/Files/Communications/reports/student-impact-survey-v2>

4 "Perkins Economically Disadvantaged," California Community Colleges Launchboard, 2019 - 2020. Accessed October 19, 2022. <https://www.calpassplus.org/LaunchBoard/Community-College-Pipeline.aspx>

5 "COVID-19 Impact Survey," California Community Colleges. Accessed October 19, 2022. <https://www.cccco.edu/-/media/CCCCO-Website/Files/Communications/reports/student-impact-survey-v2>

6 "2021-2022 Legislative Priorities," Student Senate for California Community Colleges. Accessed October 19, 2022. https://ssccc.org/file_download/inline/929d4cfe-6458-47a4-8ec1-894a5df1d8bd

7 "Equity Made Real: Promising Strategies for Addressing College Student Basic Needs," John Burton Advocates for Youth, October 2020. <https://jbay.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Basic-Needs-Report.pdf>

8 AB 775 (2020; Berman) https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB775



Advocacy efforts through AB 775 ultimately led to the successful establishment of basic needs centers through AB 132 (2021).

The bill requires all CCC campuses to establish a basic needs center and hire a basic needs coordinator or identify pre-existing staff to fill the role. Basic needs coordinators fulfill an important role as they are solely dedicated to the position, identifying and linking students with access to basic needs services and resources. Additionally, the bill requires all campuses to publish a digital document accessible to all students with information on how students can access basic needs services and implement a plan to identify and conduct outreach to students in need.

This brief aims to provide insight into California Community Colleges' progress in implementing AB 132. We will lay out the successes and challenges facing community colleges and provide next steps that the state and the colleges can take to expand access to basic needs.

METHODOLOGY

To understand the progress of California community colleges in implementing AB 132, we adopted a student-led approach toward surveying and outreach in order to identify areas of focus that were particularly important to community college students.

Qualitative Methods

Survey questions were developed following a community college student listening session that was open to community college students statewide. Digital outreach through social media platforms, e-mail, and peer-to-peer networks. The listening session held a total of six participants. Following the listening session, the emerging areas of interest were as follows:

- I. Centrality of basic needs center
- II. Capacity for serving students
- III. Outreach and digital/in-person presence to increase awareness of the basic needs center
- IV. Ease of identifying basic needs center staff contact information
- V. Types of services and resources offered by the basic needs center, particularly CalFresh

Findings from the listening session also inform report recommendations to ensure that students' lived experiences are reflected in future advocacy efforts and expansion of services.

Quantitative Methods

One survey was conducted across two periods: pre-July 2022 deadline (Wave One) and post-July 2022 deadline (Wave Two). Both surveys included identical questions that aimed to gauge the progress and robustness of the centers. Wave One was administered via telephone.

Outreach to schedule an interview session for Wave One was distributed to all campuses (n=116) via email. Of the 116 campuses, 10 campuses did not yet establish a basic needs center and 30 campuses held no identifiable staff to contact about basic needs. Amongst the 76 campuses that listed contact information about basic needs, 42 percent (n=32) completed the survey over a three month period. Wave Two was administered to all 116 campuses via a digital link to an online survey form over a three-week period and resulted in a 20 percent response rate (n=24). Surveys one and two received responses from different schools, with 8 campuses completing both surveys.

To measure the implementation progress of the basic needs centers, the surveys measured:

- I. Whether the campus received information regarding the basic needs centers implementation process;
- II. The centrality of the basic needs center's location on campus;
- III. The type and frequency of outreach conducted to raise awareness of the basic needs center
- IV. The average number of students served each week
- V. The variety of services provided by the basic needs center
- VI. The working hours of the basic needs center

In addition to the two surveys, additional analysis of the number of students served by unresponsive campuses was conducted to provide a more comprehensive look into future recommendations for improvement and expansion of services.

FINDINGS

The findings from both surveys represent a geographically diverse sample, with campuses from each macroregion as listed under the California Community Pipeline Dashboard (see Appendix). The findings highlight both surveys from before and after the legally mandated July 2022 deadline, as well as findings from data collected via campus websites. Following a discussion on the Wave One and 2 findings, a brief discussion....

Did Campuses Receive Information Regarding AB 132 and its Requirements?

Analysis of Wave One (n=32), 97 percent of respondents indicated that their campus was notified of the requirements under AB 132 while 3 percent were unsure of whether

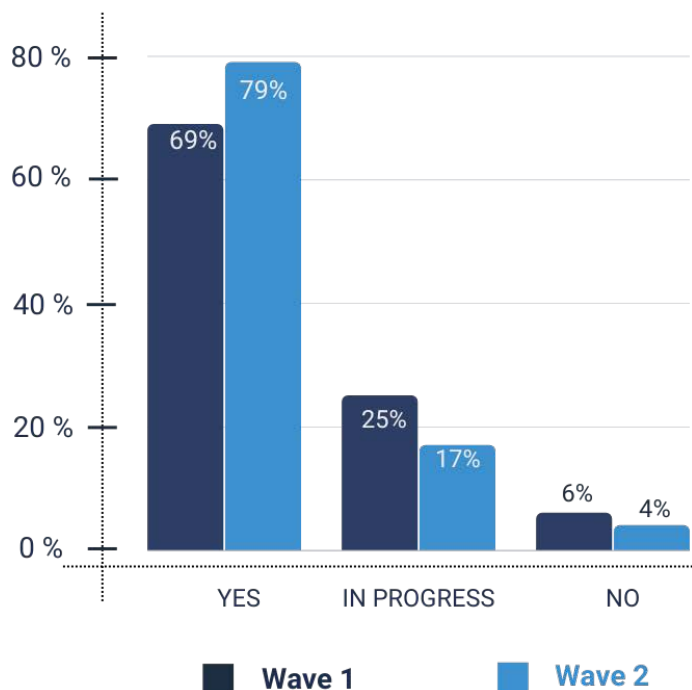
their campus was notified. Wave Two (n=24) highlights an interesting change with a decrease in the number of respondents stating that their campus was notified of AB 132. This change in Wave Two also extends to the share of respondents who were unsure of whether their campus was notified about the requirements of AB 132. This shift between Wave One and Wave Two could potentially be due to an increase in newly hired basic needs coordinators.

Count of Basic Needs Centers

In analysis of the primary requirement and purpose of AB 132, we find in Wave One (n=32), 72 percent of campuses had an open basic needs center, 22 percent of campuses were in progress to open a center, and 6 percent did not have a basic needs center in progress to open.

Wave Two (n=24) illustrates an increase in the number of open centers. 79 percent of campuses indicated that they have an open center, 17 percent of campuses were in progress to open a center, and 4 percent of campuses did not have a center in progress to open.

Count of Open Basic Needs Centers
By Wave



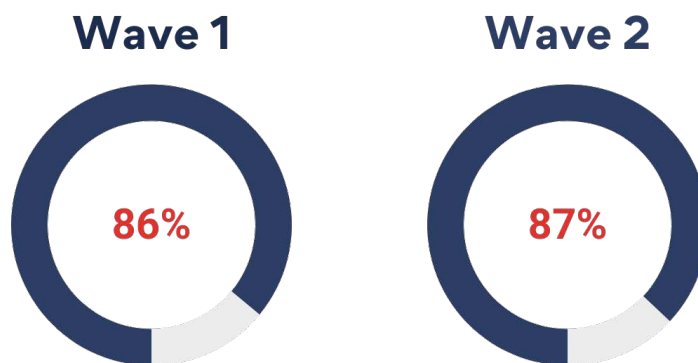
In addition, we find a 7 percent increase in the number of open basic needs centers and a 5 percent decrease in the share of basic needs centers in progress to open. In terms of unopened centers, we also find a 2 percent decrease in the number of campuses that do not have an open center nor an indication of a center in progress of opening.

Although the differences between Wave One and Wave Two indicate a positive trend wherein campuses will continue to work toward meeting the primary requirement of AB 132, we do not find that all campuses opened a basic needs center by the July 2022 deadline.

Centrality of Basic Needs Center Location

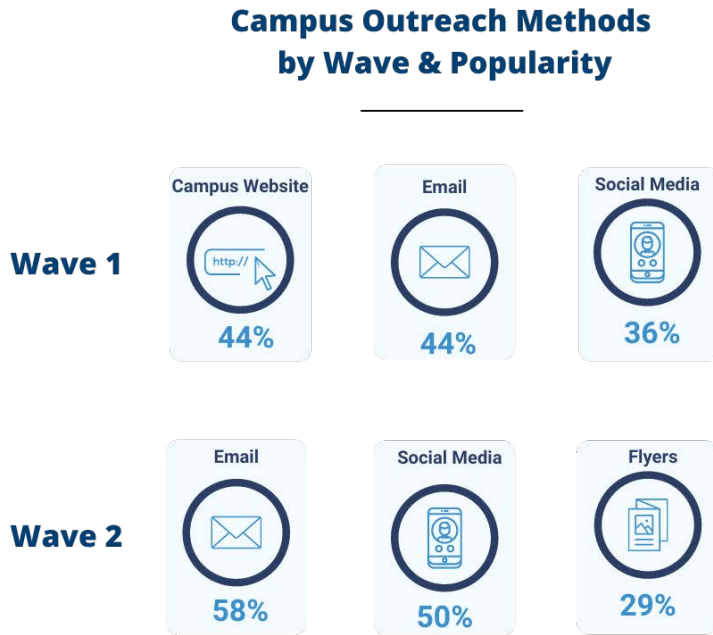
Wave One findings indicate that 87 percent of campuses have a centrally located basic needs center while 13 percent of campuses do not have a centrally located center. Wave Two also shows 87 percent of campuses have a centrally located basic needs center while 13 percent do not. Between Wave One and Wave Two, we find no difference in the share of campuses opening centrally located basic needs centers. In an analysis of both waves, we find that 13 percent of campuses do not meet the requirement of a centrally located center, per AB 132.

Share of Centrally Located Basic Needs Centers



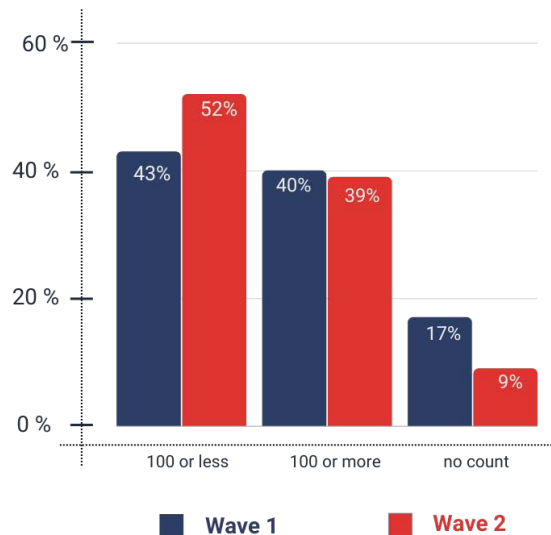
Outreach

In an analysis of Wave One and Wave Two, we find that all campuses utilize at least one method of outreach to inform students about their basic needs center. Below, we illustrate the three most utilized methods of outreach that campuses use to inform students about the basic needs center.



The average number of students served on a weekly basis can illustrate the need for services and allow campuses to increase basic needs services based on previous data. The graph below highlights the average number of students that access basic needs services before and after the July 2022 deadline.

Average Number of Students Served Per Week



Wave One and Wave Two highlight interesting differences in the variation average number of students served on a weekly basis. In Wave One, we find no major difference in the distribution of centers serving at least 100 students (43 percent) and those serving more than 100 students (40 percent). In Wave Two, however, we find that the share of campuses serving at least 100 students is 13 percent higher than the percentage of campuses serving more than 100 students. This increase in variation amongst campuses could point to newly opened centers beginning to conduct outreach to their student population.

Between Wave One and Wave Two, we also observe an 8 percent increase in the share of campuses maintaining record of the number of students they serve on a weekly basis. This increase in the percentage of campuses engaging in record-keeping is crucial for future advocacy for increased investments and ability to meet student needs as they increase.

Range of Services Provided by Basic Needs Center

Wave One and Wave Two both inquired about the range of services offered through basic needs centers as required by AB 132. The table below highlights the percentage of campuses that provide each required service, comparing pre and post July 2022 deadline.

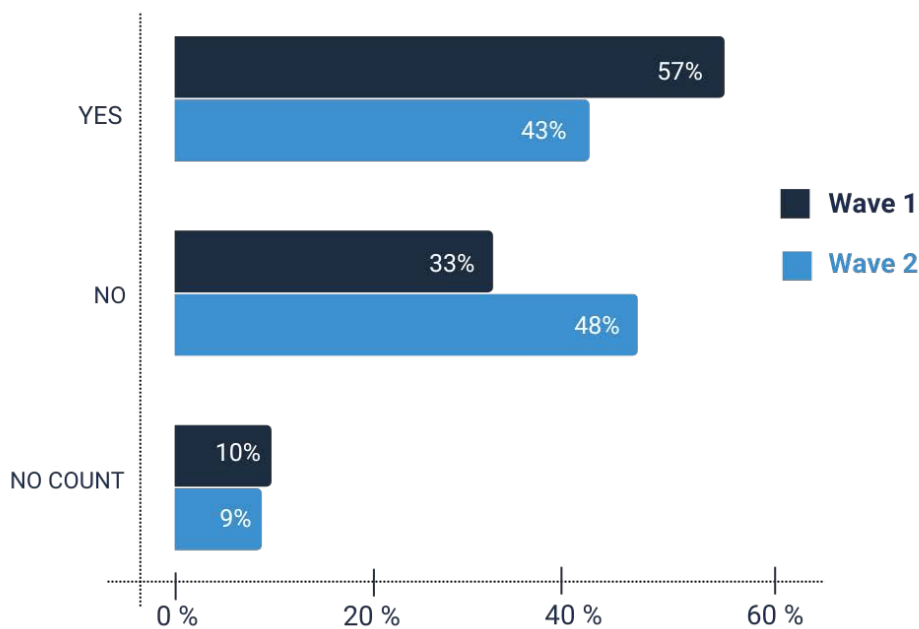
Share of Basic Needs Centers Providing Services Required by AB 132

SERVICE	WAVE 1	WAVE 2
Childcare	60%	65%
Clothing	63%	65%
Diapers	57%	65%
Feminine Hygiene Products	70%	83%
Food	90%	100%
Housing	77%	78%
Mental Health Services	77%	91%
Technology	63%	78%

Working Hours

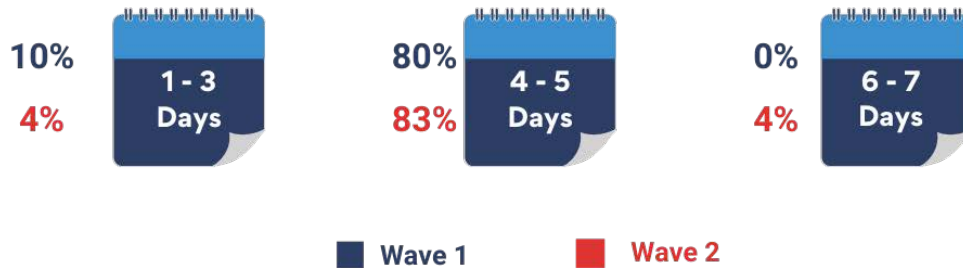
Wave One and Two asked campuses to list their working hours in order to better understand the time frame within which students are able to access services. Although AB 132 did not require campuses to remain open during specific hours, we found that working hours emerged as an area of interest for community college students during the listening session detailed above.

**Share of Basic Needs Centers Open During Business Hours
By Wave**



The figure illustrates the distribution of campuses that are open during normal business hours from Wave One to Wave Two. We find a decrease in the share of basic needs centers open during normal business hours from Wave One to Wave Two. In addition to analyzing whether basic needs centers are open during business hours, we asked campuses to list the number of days per week that their center was open. We find that the distribution in the number of days that basic needs centers are open can provide insight into the decrease in the share of basic needs centers that are open during normal business hours in Wave Two.

Distribution of Basic Needs Centers' Days of Operation* By Wave



*10% of Wave 1 respondents and 9% of Wave 2 respondents did not provide a response

We find a 3 percent increase in the portion of basic needs centers open between 4 and 5 days per week from Wave One to Wave Two. Additionally, we find that 4 percent of basic needs centers were open between 6 and 7 days of the week in Wave Two while no centers were operated during the weekend in Wave One. The Wave Two distribution of working hours could be explained by an increase in the share of basic needs centers open between 4 and 7 days of the week. This variation also provides insight into the importance of increased funding allocation to increase staffing.

Recommendations

The establishment of basic needs centers through AB 132 was an important and timely step in the direction of increasing student support services, especially because of the lasting financial impact of COVID-19. Resources like those that can be provided through basic needs centers are a critical launching point for many marginalized and vulnerable student populations.

In our analysis of California Community Colleges' progress implementing basic needs centers, although we did not find that all community colleges successfully implemented the requirements of AB 132, we found an overall increase in the number of open centers and services for students from Wave One to Wave Two. The challenges associated with system-wide change require more stakeholders at the decision-making table in order to ensure that leaders, educators, support staff, and students are represented in the roll-out of large-scale changes. Below, our recommendations address community college leaders, advocates, lawmakers, and students alike.

Expand Existing Investments

Funding for basic needs centers included \$30M annual funding for establishing basic needs centers and hiring basic needs coordinators. In anticipation of an increase in the number of students utilizing basic needs centers, especially as outreach continues, funding for expanding centers and increasing staffing capacity is key to the success of basic needs centers. As demand for services increases, staffing should increase.

Additional, one-time funding of \$100M over three years for basic needs services is not a long-term, sustainable solution for the array of needs and services that community colleges have to provide. We believe that the State should invest in long-term dollars that are earmarked for basic needs services. This would allow community college leadership to plan for and predict trends in the types of services that students need.

The Student Perspective

A key stakeholder that must be incorporated into future assessment of the types of services that basic needs centers provide are students. Students carry the lived experience and perspective of their peers. Community colleges should adopt basic needs equity committees that center the student perspective as a means of ensuring that the types of services offered through basic needs centers are appropriate and reflect the needs of students on campuses. Basic needs equity committees can serve as a core function of the systemwide basic needs ecosystem that is malleable and can shift to fit changing student populations and thereby, needs.

Basic Needs Assessment Tool

California Community Colleges should work in partnership with advocates, students, and practitioners to develop a basic needs assessment tool that can illuminate campuses' areas for improvement and identify trends in the types of services needed in order to allow for centers to pivot prior to reaching maximum service providing capacity. A basic needs assessment tool can also serve as a resource for campuses whose basic needs services infrastructure is newly established and can incorporate the perspectives of campuses who have a longstanding basic needs services system in place.

Conclusion

California's community colleges have been a major economic driver for our state, bringing in more than \$128 Billion⁹ in value to the state's economy each year. Investments into the success of the future of the students that attend community colleges is not only an investment in the institution, but an investment in bettering the lives of more than 1.6 million Californians. We must ensure that students entering in the California Community College system do not prematurely leave prior to completing their studies because of financial hardship. The opportunity to reach over a million students with basic needs supports is important, but equally as important is the need to ensure there is a unified analysis to align goals, meet the needs and measure success.

⁹ Kouloukakis, Eleni and Eloy Ortiz Oakley. "The Irreplaceable Value of California's Community Colleges," Cal Matters. February 17, 2022. <https://calmatters.org/commentary/2022/02/the-irreplaceable-value-of-californias-community-colleges/>



APPENDIX A: Qualitative Methods

The community college student basic needs listening session included six participants representing various regions of the state. Participants were encouraged to share their perspective on areas of focus for survey development and recommendations. The duration of the listening session was one hour and thirty minutes.

Outreach for the listening session was conducted via social media and through email to Young Invincibles’ young adult base, which includes a mix of program alumni and young adults in YI’s mailing list. Outreach was limited to California. The registration form for the listening session asked whether participants were current community college students or those who have attended community college within the past five years. In addition, the form required participants to identify the community college that they were attending or have attended. The sole purpose of this requirement was to ensure that participants were California residents. Beyond these questions, the form did not ask for additional information or include additional requirements.

APPENDIX B: Quantitative Methods

Wave One and Wave Two of the survey represents a geographically diverse sample of campuses. A breakdown of the distribution of survey respondents per macroregion is provided below. The macroregions used to determine geographic diversity are in accordance with the California Community Colleges’ (CCC) Data Launchboard definition.¹⁰ According to the CCC Data Launchboard, the purpose of college groupings into regions is also to decrease the rates of duplicate student data in any given region, considering students’ ability to take courses at multiple colleges.

	Wave One	Wave Two
Bay Area	31%	17%
Central Valley - Motherlode	6%	12.5%
Inland Empire - Desert	9%	8%
Los Angeles - Orange County	19%	38%
North - Far North	16%	12.5%
San Diego - Imperial	13%	4%
South Central Coast	6%	8%

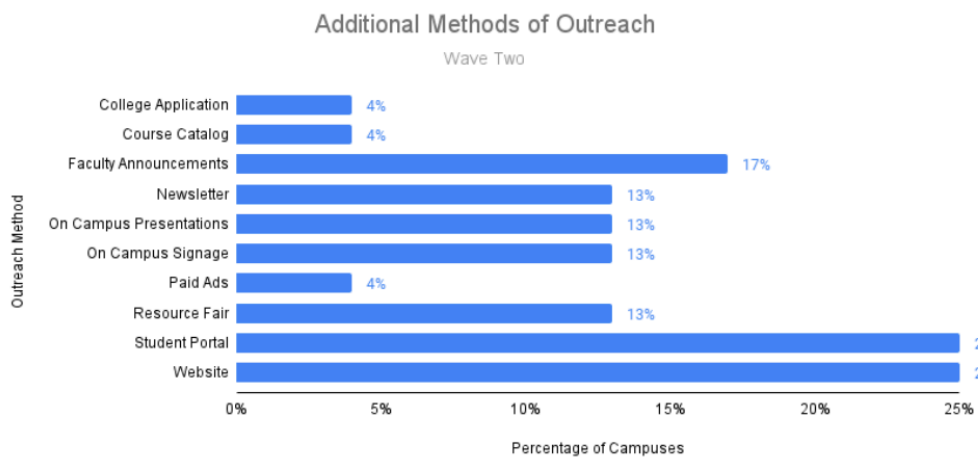
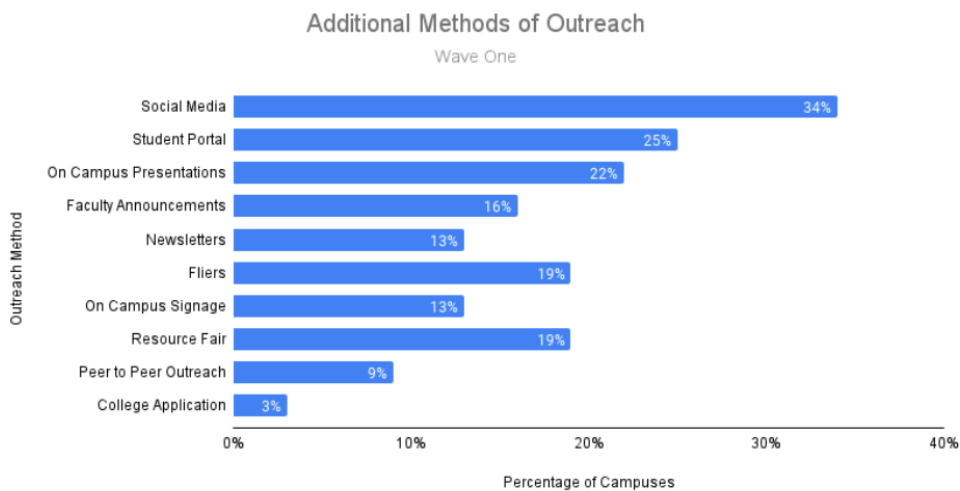
Survey findings reflected results from all campuses for the first two areas of focus: (I) whether employees carrying out basic needs work received notice of AB 132, and (II)

¹⁰ “Launchboard Region Explanation,” California Community Colleges. Modified March 2021. Accessed October 19, 2022. <https://www.calpassplus.org/CalPassPlus2.0/Media/Launchboard/region-explanation.pdf>

whether the campus opened, was in process of opening, or did not indicate plans to open a physical basic needs center location. After this point, findings do not include campuses that stated that they did not have a basic needs center in the process of opening in order to accurately depict implementation progress for remaining areas of focus.

APPENDIX C: Additional Methods of Outreach Findings

Findings for the methods of outreach that campuses utilized to inform students about their basic needs center highlighted the three most widely used methods. However, campuses did utilize a wide array of methods which are listed below, by wave.



APPENDIX D: Additional Findings for Basic Needs Services Offered by Campuses

Findings for the services that campuses provide focused on the services required by AB 132. However, beyond those requirements, we found that campuses offered additional services to their students. These additional services include:

- I. Financial literacy education and resources
- II. Workforce readiness training
- III. Immigration support services for undocumented students
- IV. Textbook vouchers
- V. Graduation regalia
- VI. Household items
- VII. Veterans resources
- VIII. Toiletries and hygiene products
- IX. Tutoring services
- X. Emergency financial assistance grants
- XI. Medi-Cal navigation support
- XII. Emergency shelter and housing
- XIII. Community garden
- XIV. Printing Services