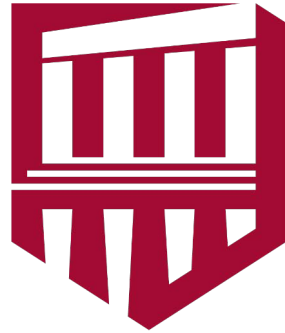


2025 REAL COLLEGE CALIFORNIA SURVEY



PASADENA
CITY COLLEGE

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

Executive Summary

A total of 1,576 Pasadena City College (PCC) students responded to the California Real College Survey, which assessed basic needs insecurity, including food and housing insecurity among students. The survey was administered by the Research and Planning (RP) group in partnership with the CEO Affordability, Food & Housing Access Task Force to learn more about the community college student experience with food and housing security across the state.

Findings from this survey provide insight into how Pasadena City College leadership can support students and aid in their overall academic success.

Pasadena City College had a 77% survey completion rate among student respondents. Survey results suggest that 3 in 5 students at PCC are experiencing at least one form of insecurity, either food or housing. Specifically, 55% of respondents reported facing food insecurity, 50% reported experiencing housing insecurity, and 20% reported being homeless within the last academic year. Financial challenges remain a consistent theme, as many students reported skipping or reducing meals due to budget constraints. Additionally, almost half of respondents (46%) reported using credit cards to help fund their education.

Survey results also indicate equity disparities among marginalized racial and ethnic groups. When focusing on food insecurity alone, American Indian/Native American (77%), Black/African American (67%), and Hispanic/Latino (63%) students reported some of the highest rates of unmet needs. Students with various life experiences, including former foster youth, formerly incarcerated students, and single parents, had high insecurity rates compared to their peers.

Despite the high rates of basic needs insecurity, only 22% of survey respondents reported accessing Lancer Care, PCC's basic needs center. Students who accessed Lancer Care reported relying heavily on the food pantry and transportation services. However, survey findings indicate that overall awareness and utilization of the center remain low. While federal and state public assistance programs help address some basic needs gaps, many students still depend on PCC staff for guidance on application and general program processes.

Respondent Demographics

Survey participants represented a diverse cross-section of PCC's student population. The survey sample included students across enrollment status, with 55% enrolled full-time with at least 12 units and 45% enrolled part-time, with less than 12 units per semester. Nearly all student respondents (94%) reported taking credit-bearing courses within the last year. Additionally, 62% of student respondents reported participating in both in-person and online instruction, and 15% only took online courses. When asked about their student status, over 30% were in their first academic year, 28% were in their second year, and 14% were in their third year. More than half of students were under age 25, with one-third over age 30.

Table 1. General Survey Respondents

Category	Student Group	%	Count
Student Type	Full-Time	55%	865
Student Type	Part-Time	45%	708
Course Type	Credit	94%	1,473
Course Type	Non-Credit	6%	98
Modality	In-Person only	23%	369
Modality	Online only	15%	236
Modality	Hybrid	62%	964
Years at PCC	1st Year	37%	574
Years at PCC	2nd Year	28%	433
Years at PCC	3rd Year	14%	224
Years at PCC	4+ Years	21%	341
Age Group	18 to 20	27%	325
Age Group	21 to 25	26%	218

Category	Student Group	%	Count
Age Group	26 to 30	14%	176
Age Group	Older than 30	33%	402

Students were asked to describe their gender identity and were given the opportunity to select multiple identities. Table 2 describes how students self-identified with multiple gender identities, with 63% identifying as women, 31% as men, 4% as non-binary, and 4% as transgender. Table 2 also provides insight into the sexual orientation of student respondents, with 66% of PCC students identifying as heterosexual or straight, 12% as bisexual, and 13% as either queer, pansexual, gay, or lesbian.

Table 2. Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Category	Student Group	%	Count
Gender Identity	Woman	63%	789
Gender Identity	Man	31%	385
Gender Identity	Non-binary	4%	44
Gender Identity	Gender fluid	2%	22
Gender Identity	Transgender	4%	46
Gender Identity	Other (Agender, Androgyne, Two-spirit, etc.)	<1%-1% each	Various
Sexual Orientation	Straight	66%	825
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual	12%	154
Sexual Orientation	Queer/Pansexual/Gay/ Lesbian	13%	149
Sexual Orientation	Asexual	4%	54
Sexual Orientation	Prefer not to say / Unsure	9%	108

*Note: Students were allowed to select multiple categories.

Table 3 highlights the racial and ethnic diversity of survey respondents. Hispanic/Latino students represent the largest group (41%), consistent with Pasadena City College's student population. Asian students make up a little over 30% of survey respondents, with students identifying as East Asian (14%), Southeast Asian (11%), South Asian (3%), and other Asian (3%). Additionally, 8% of students identified as African American or Black. Students had the option of selecting multiple racial and ethnic identities, reflecting the intersectionality of their identity; as a result, totals may exceed 100%.

Table 3. Racial and Ethnic Background

Racial/Ethnic Identity	%	Count
Hispanic/Latino	41%	507
White or Caucasian	24%	296
East Asian	14%	218
South East Asian	11%	143
African American or Black	8%	97
South Asian	3%	35
Other Asian	3%	39
American Indian / Native American	2%	31
Middle Eastern / Arab / North African	2%	21
Pacific Islander	1%	17
Other / Multiracial / Not Listed	4%	56

*Note: Students were allowed to select multiple categories.

Basic Needs Insecurity

About 3 out of 5 PCC student survey respondents reported encountering at least one basic needs insecurity. As shown in Figure 1, approximately 55% of survey respondents reported food insecurity, 50% reported housing insecurity, and nearly 1 in 5 (19%) reported experiencing homelessness within the past year. These high rates

of insecurity among college students remain a significant institutional concern that impacts academic persistence and mental well-being.

Basic Needs Insecurity Among PCC Students (2025)

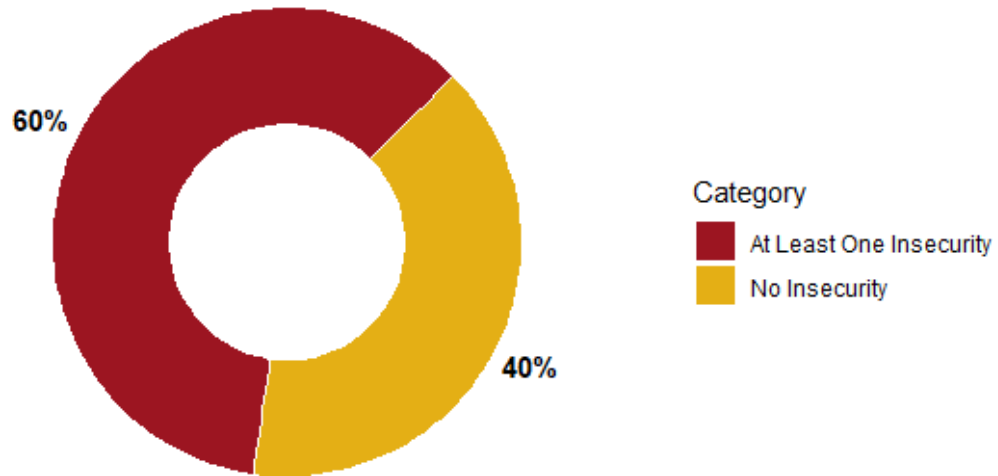


Figure 1a. Basic needs insecurity among PCC students, 2025.

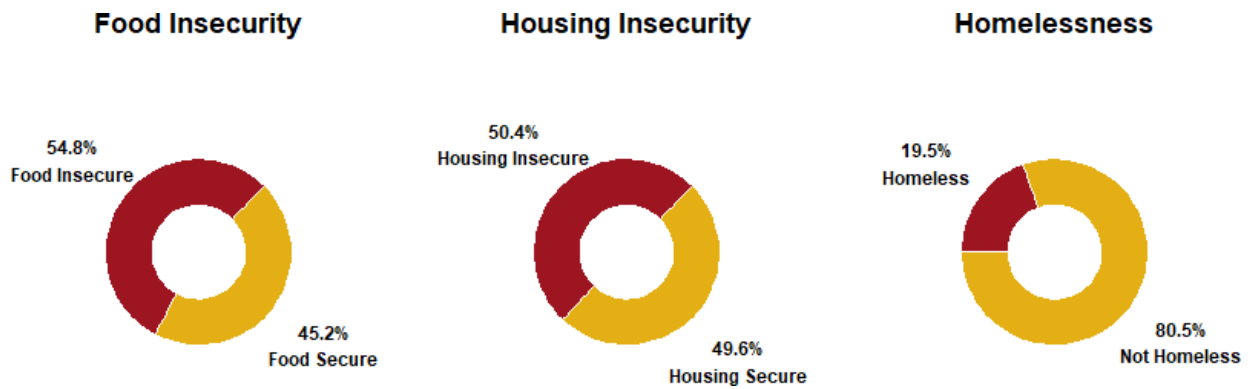


Figure 1b. Food insecurity, housing insecurity, and homelessness among PCC students, 2025.

Financial Challenges

Students at PCC relied on a variety of financial resources to pay for their education. Many reported using federal or state grants, personal savings, or income from work. Most students received a federal or state grant (58%); specifically, 53% received the Pell Grant. More than half (55%) of students reported tapping into their savings to fund their schooling. Notably, 46% of students reported using credit cards to fund their studies (Figure 2), raising concerns about debt accumulation and financial instability.

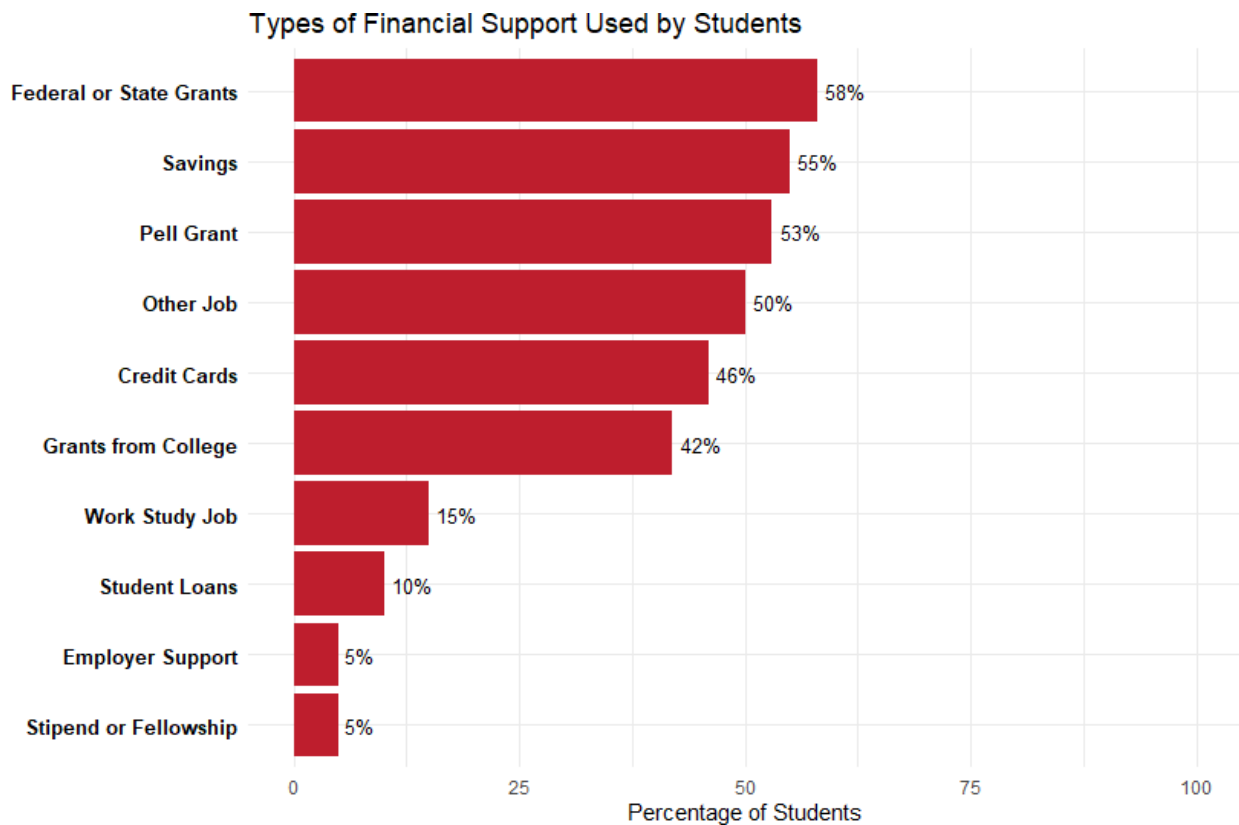


Figure 2. Types of financial support used by students.

Over half of respondents (n = 855) were employed last academic year. Among them, 25% worked between 10 and 19 hours per week, 24% worked 20 to 29 hours, and over 20% worked more than 40 hours per week (Table 4). These findings suggest that many students are balancing various work commitments alongside their academic responsibilities. Despite being employed, a large portion of these students continue to face food and housing insecurity.

Table 4. Employed Students Workload

Hours Worked Each Week	%	Count
Less than 9 hours	12%	101
10-19	25%	222
20-29	24%	209
30-39	16%	143
40-49	19%	171
50-59	2%	21
Over 60 hours	2%	18

Housing Insecurity

Housing insecurity remains a pressing issue among PCC students. Approximately 53% of students indicated experiencing housing instability, including frequent moves, difficulty paying rent, or living in overcrowded conditions. Figure 3 highlights students' living arrangements within the last 12 months. Although 62% of students reported living with family members for some time, a large percentage (40%) also reported couch surfing with friends and extended relatives in the last year.

Living Arrangements (Past 12 Months)

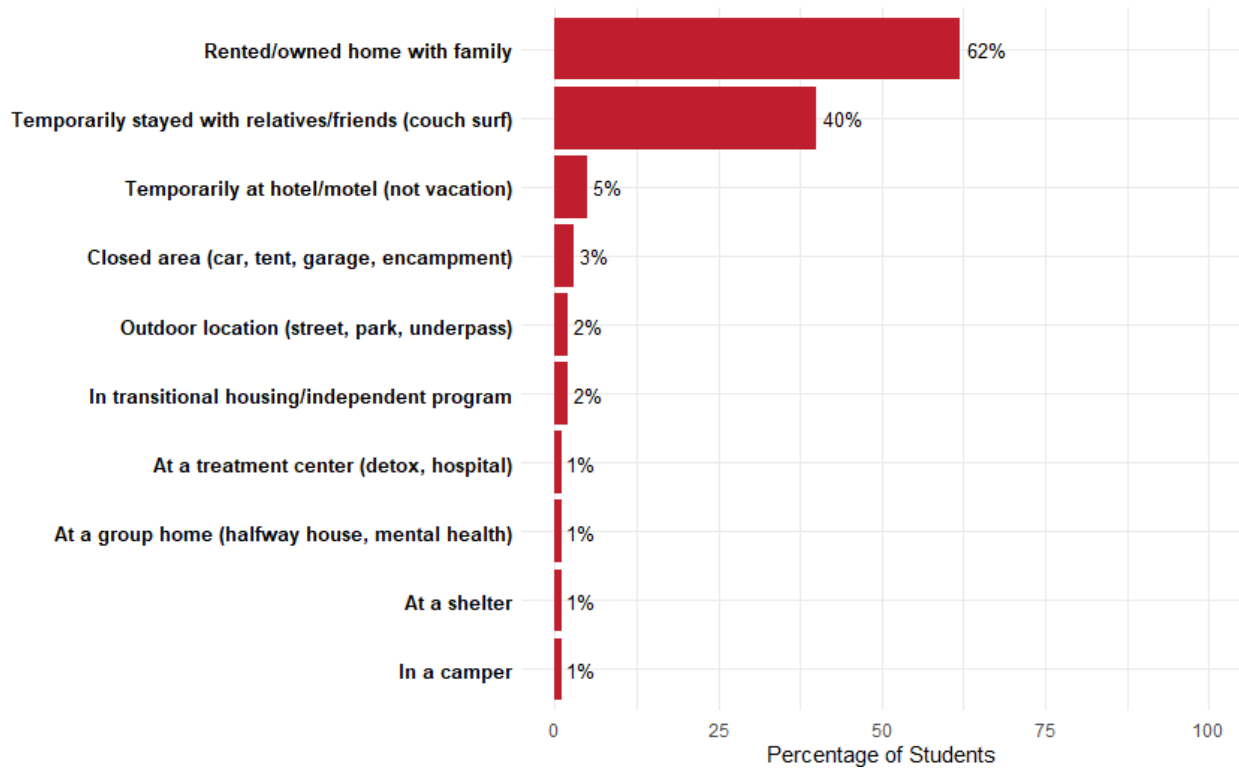


Figure 3. Living arrangements in the past 12 months.

In addition to financial concerns raised in the previous section, Figure 4 highlights the financial challenges students face and how they may contribute to housing insecurity. One in 3 students reported having to borrow money to pay their bills. Specifically, about 20% of students were unable to make full payments on their rent or mortgage. Some students (17%) had to move in with others to help alleviate the financial burden of paying rent on their own.

Financial Challenges Impacting Housing Security

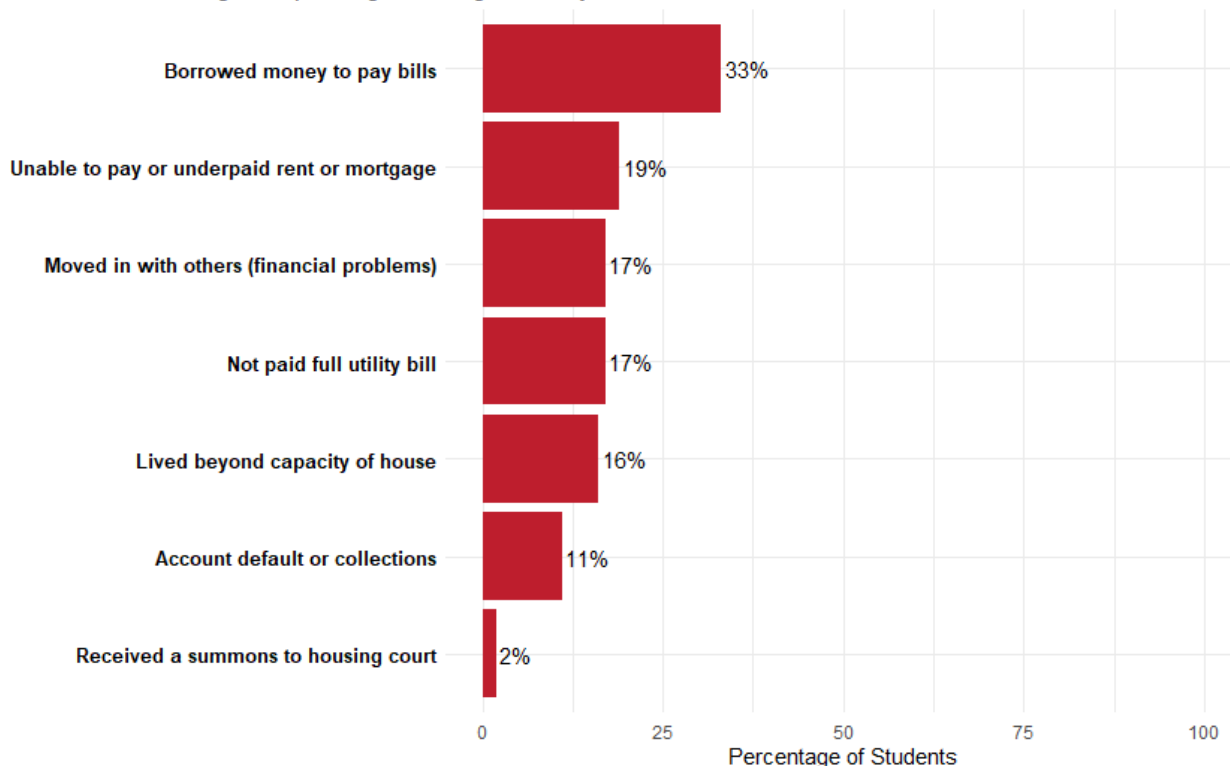


Figure 4. Financial challenges impacting housing security.

Additionally, 19.5% of students reported experiencing homelessness within the past year, with 7.5% explicitly identifying as being homeless. These data are consistent with the experiences described in Table 6, which illustrates that students identifying as American Indian or Native American, Black or African American, and multiracial groups experience significantly higher rates of housing insecurity and homelessness than their PCC peers. The lack of stable housing can hinder academic success, mental health, and access to essential resources. The findings suggest the importance of emergency housing, rental assistance, and other housing-related resources.

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is one of the most critical and prevalent issues affecting PCC students. According to survey results and Figure 1, over half (55%) of respondents experienced food insecurity within the past year. About 41% of students experienced low or very low levels of food security, resulting in reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns, as shown in Figure 5. One area of concern is that 1 out of 4 students reported very low levels of food security.

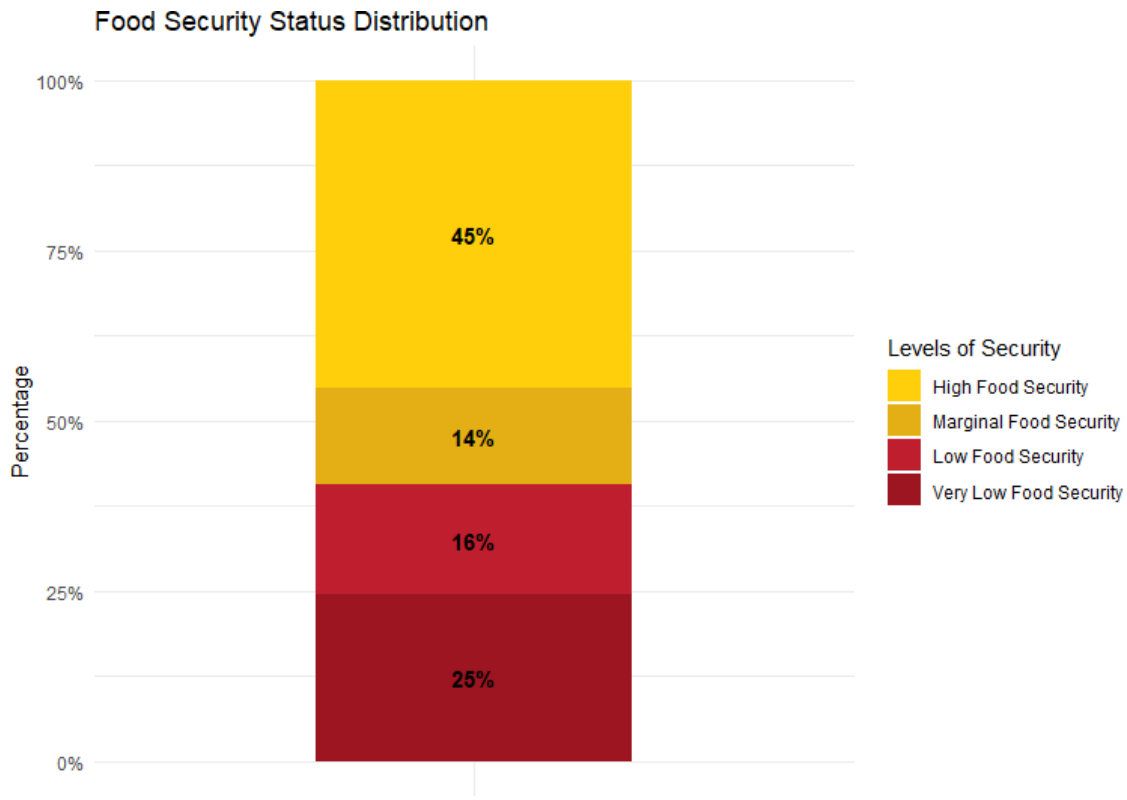


Figure 5. Food security status distribution.

Additionally, 1 out of 4 students said they cut meal sizes or skipped meals entirely due to financial constraints. Reducing or skipping meals was not rare. Table 5 indicates that 75% of students who reported skipping meals did so three or more times within a single month. As a result of eating habits, 14% of respondents reported they lost weight because they did not have enough food.

Table 5. Eating Habits within Month

Frequency	%
Once	7%
Twice	18%
Three times	24%
Four times	14%
Five times	9%
More than five times	28%

Basic Needs Insecurity by Student Demographics

Certain student groups experienced disproportionately high rates of basic needs insecurity. Female students reported food insecurity at 56%, housing insecurity at 53%, and homelessness at 19% (Table 6). Male students experienced similar challenges, with 51% facing food insecurity and 47% housing insecurity. Non-binary and transgender students also reported high levels of food insecurity, with non-binary students at 54% and transgender students at 50%.

Ethnic and racial disparities were also evident. American Indian students experienced the highest rates of food insecurity (77%) and homelessness (48%), followed by Black students (67% and 34%, respectively). Latino students also reported high rates of food insecurity (63%). Among sexual orientation groups, LGBTQ+ students experienced 56% food insecurity and 22% homelessness (Table 6). When comparing age groups, students aged 26 to 30 reported the highest food insecurity (66%) and housing insecurity (70%), with students over 30 also showing elevated levels.

Table 6. Basic Needs Insecurity Rates by Student Demographics

Category	Demographic Group	Food Insecurity	Housing Insecurity	Homelessness
Gender Identity	Female	56%	53%	19%
Gender Identity	Male	51%	47%	20%
Gender Identity	Non-Binary	54%	46%	27%
Gender Identity	Transgender	50%	40%	10%
Gender Identity	Other Gender Orientation	38%	38%	25%
Sexual Orientation	Straight or Heterosexual	54%	50%	18%
Sexual Orientation	LGBTQ+	56%	54%	22%
Sexual Orientation	Not Sure	62%	62%	25%
Sexual Orientation	Prefer Not to Disclose	58%	52%	23%
Age Groups	18 to 20	38%	28%	11%
Age Groups	21 to 25	60%	49%	19%
Age Groups	26 to 30	66%	70%	24%
Age Groups	Older than 30	59%	62%	25%
Racial or Ethnic Background	American Indian or Native American	77%	77%	48%
Racial or Ethnic Background	Black or African American	67%	74%	34%
Racial or Ethnic Background	Latino/a/x	63%	59%	19%
Racial or Ethnic Background	Middle Eastern or North African	48%	38%	24%
Racial or Ethnic Background	Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	59%	59%	24%
Racial or Ethnic Background	East Asian	40%	29%	10%
Racial or Ethnic Background	South Asian	44%	37%	17%
Racial or Ethnic Background	South East Asian	52%	48%	17%
Racial or Ethnic Background	Other Asian	55%	44%	13%
Racial or Ethnic Background	White	45%	44%	24%
Racial or Ethnic Background	Other	66%	70%	34%

Single parents, who face unique challenges balancing caregiving and academics, reported 82% food insecurity, 80% housing insecurity, and 30% homelessness. Similarly, students with foster care backgrounds reported extreme levels of unmet needs, with 94% experiencing food insecurity and 88% experiencing housing insecurity. Students previously convicted of a crime are also disproportionately impacted, with 76% reporting food insecurity and 44% experiencing homelessness.

Table 7. Basic Needs Insecurity Rates by Student Life Experiences

Category	Student Group	Food Insecurity	Housing Insecurity	Homelessness
College Enrollment Status	Full-time (at least 12 credits)	54%	49%	20%
College Enrollment Status	Part-time (fewer than 12 credits)	56%	52%	19%
Dependent Status	Dependent	42%	33%	9%
Dependent Status	Independent	62%	62%	24%
Student Receives Pell Grant	Yes	65%	58%	22%
Student Receives Pell Grant	No	47%	44%	17%
Single Parent	Yes	82%	80%	30%
Single Parent	No	52%	49%	13%
Relationship Status	Single	53%	47%	20%

Category	Student Group	Food Insecurity	Housing Insecurity	Homelessness
Relationship Status	In a Relationship	60%	59%	20%
Relationship Status	Married or Domestic Partner	46%	47%	14%
Relationship Status	Divorced	83%	78%	35%
Relationship Status	Widowed	67%	83%	33%
Student has been in Foster Care	Yes	94%	88%	56%
Student has been in Foster Care	No	53%	49%	18%
Student has served in Military	Yes	52%	61%	29%
Student has served in Military	No	54%	50%	19%
Employment Status	Employed	58%	56%	20%
Employment Status	Not Employed, looking for work	63%	52%	25%
Employment Status	Not Employed, not looking for work	37%	33%	13%
Student has been Convicted of a Crime	Yes	76%	84%	44%
Student has been Convicted of a Crime	No	53%	49%	19%

Survey results reveal that students with disabilities and other medical conditions also experience high rates of basic needs insecurity. For example, 75% of students with a learning disability and 72% of those on the autism spectrum reported food insecurity. In addition, students with a physical disability or students with ADHD also experienced food insecurity rates of 69%. Housing insecurity and homelessness are also prevalent within this student population. About 70% of students with learning disabilities and students with ADHD reported being in unstable housing situations. Those with a physical disability reported the highest rate of homelessness (38%) this past year.

Table 8. Basic Needs Insecurity Rates of Students with Disabilities or Medical Conditions

Disability or Medical Condition	Food Insecurity	Housing Insecurity	Homelessness
ADHD	69%	64%	26%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	72%	57%	25%
Chronic Illness	62%	60%	30%
Learning Disability	75%	70%	32%
Physical Disability	69%	62%	38%
Psychological Disorder	64%	60%	27%

College Support: Lancer Care

Pasadena City College offers a variety of support services aimed at mitigating the challenges students face with basic needs. Specifically, the Lancer Care Center helps with a food pantry, food and clothing, childcare and after-school programs, social services support, health care, housing and shelter, and financial assistance and employment services.

Students were asked if they were aware of a basic needs center on campus and whether they had accessed its services. Survey results indicate that only 22% of student respondents utilized Lancer Care Center this past year. Findings also suggest that 44% of students reported that they know about the center but had not utilized its services. Lastly, 34% of students did not use or did not know about the support services offered at Pasadena City College.

Awareness and Use of Basic Needs Center

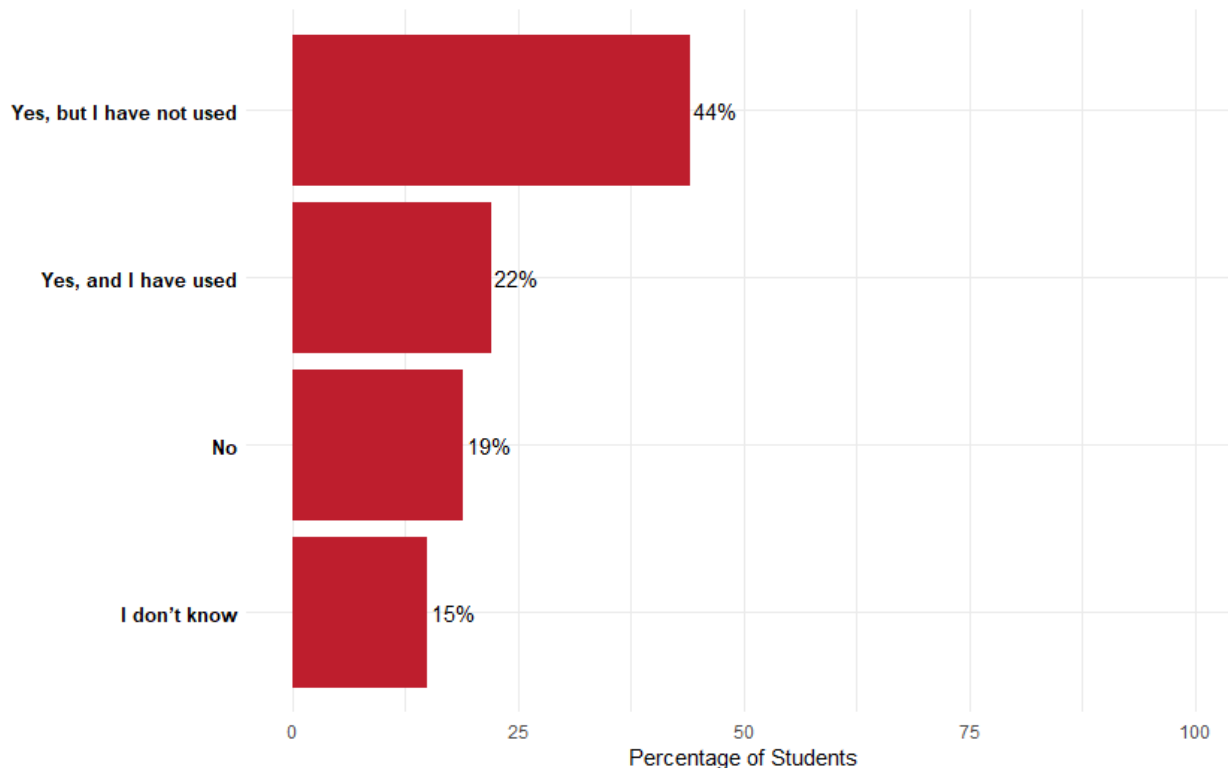


Figure 6. Awareness and use of Basic Needs Center.

Figure 7 highlights the various channels through which students become aware of the Lancer Care Center and its support services. Survey results indicate that word of mouth, the college website, and campus communication via email are the most common sources of awareness. Despite the widespread use of social media among college students, it was the least effective outreach method, with only 13% of students identifying it as their source of awareness.

How Students Learned About the Basic Needs Center

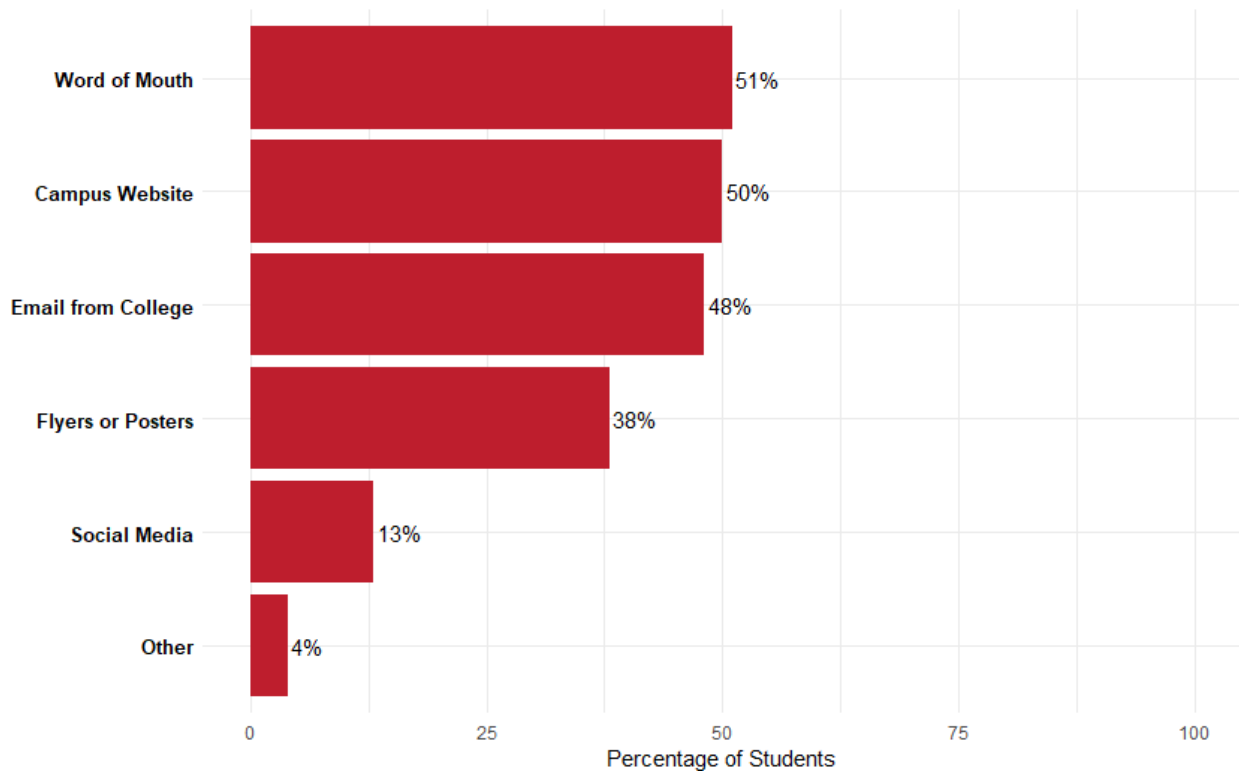


Figure 7. How students learned about the Basic Needs Center.

Despite knowing about the support services offered by Lancer Care, some students still do not utilize the services. Of those students, half believe that they do not need the additional support, and 26% do not think they are eligible. Some students (20%) reported not seeking resources out of embarrassment. Students showed interest in support services; however, 22% were unsure of how to access resources, and 11% had trouble accessing them due to inconvenient hours.

Reasons Students Did Not Use Basic Needs Services

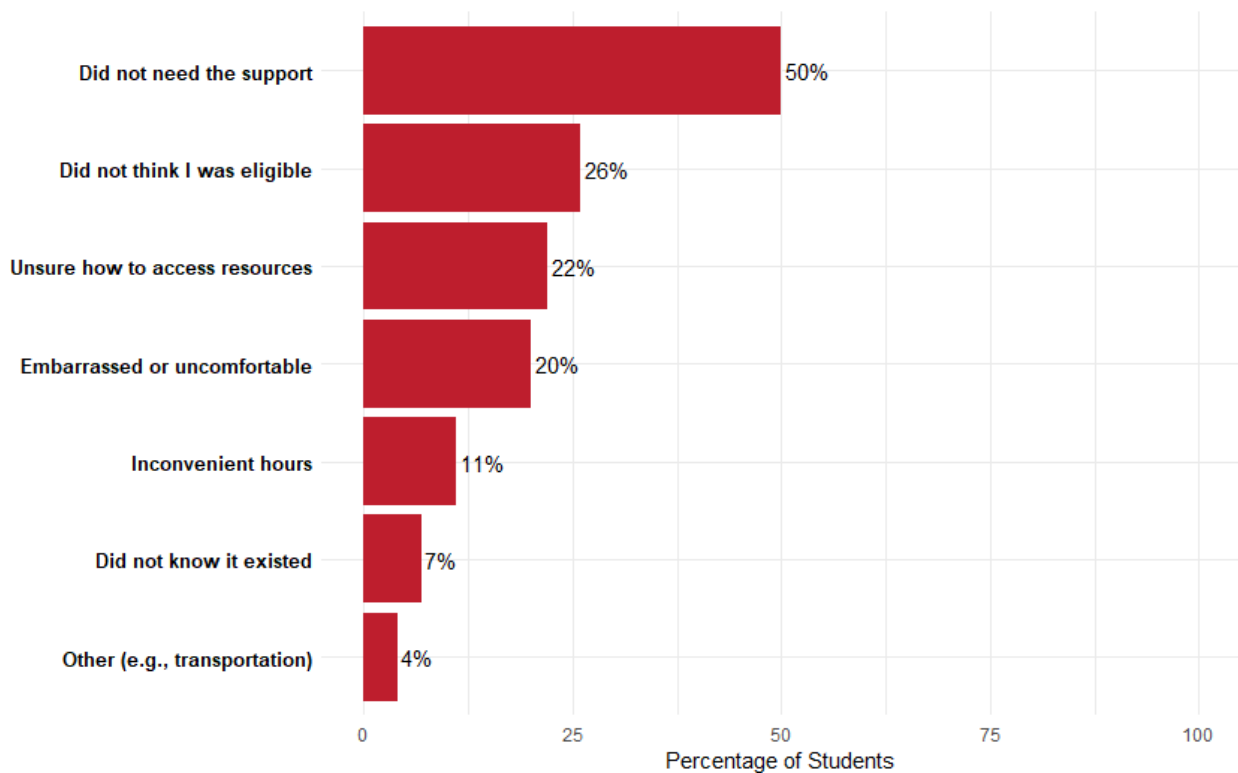


Figure 8. Reasons students did not use Basic Needs Services.

To understand the significance of the support services provided by PCC, students were asked not only to identify the type of assistance they received but also to rate how reliant they are on such services (Table 9). Food-related support services were the most utilized, with 79% of students reporting that they received such assistance. Of those students, almost two-thirds reported relying on the services either entirely or somewhat. Transportation services were the second most utilized basic needs resource, used by 42% of students, with 47% relying on them entirely. Although childcare services reached 2% of students, it is a vital resource, as 60% said they rely on it entirely and 20% rely on it somewhat.

Table 9. Student Reliance on Support Services

Basic Needs Services	% Received Assistance	Rely Entirely	Rely Somewhat	Rely Very Little to Not at All
Food	79%	10%	55%	35%
Housing	3%	25%	50%	25%
Mental Health	20%	24%	46%	30%
Physical Health	9%	25%	38%	37%
Childcare	2%	60%	20%	20%
Transportation	42%	47%	40%	13%
Public Benefits Assistance	10%	43%	43%	14%

Table 10 provides insight into which student populations are accessing the three most popular support services: food, transportation, and mental health. Students across demographic groups had high rates of utilization of food-related services. Among gender orientation groups, both female and male students accessed transportation services at similar rates (40% and 41%, respectively), while students who identified as non-binary reported utilizing transportation services at 70%. Men were less likely to seek mental health assistance, with only 13% usage. Transportation assistance also sees moderate uptake among key groups such as LGBTQ+ students (52%), Latino/a/x students (51%), South East Asian students (51%), and younger students aged 18 to 20 (49%).

Table 10. Basic Needs Services Usage by Student Demographics

Category	Demographic Group	Food	Transportation	Mental Health
Gender Orientation	Female	80%	40%	21%
Gender Orientation	Male	76%	41%	13%
Gender Orientation	Non-Binary	90%	70%	20%
Gender Orientation	Transgender	0%*	100%*	0%*
Gender Orientation	Other Gender orientation	50%*	100%*	100%*
Sexual Orientation	Straight or Heterosexual	78%	39%	16%
Sexual Orientation	LGBTQ+	79%	52%	25%
Sexual Orientation	Not Sure	100%*	50%*	50%*
Sexual Orientation	Prefer Not to Disclose	93%	47%*	20%*
Age Groups	18 to 20	85%	49%	21%
Age Groups	21 to 25	78%	37%	13%*
Age Groups	26 to 30	66%	39%	18%*
Age Groups	Older than 30	80%	43%	22%
Racial or Ethnic Background	American Indian or Native American	86%*	43%*	0%*
Racial or Ethnic Background	Black or African American	83%	46%	12%*
Racial or Ethnic Background	Latino/a/x	78%	51%	21%
Racial or Ethnic Background	Middle Eastern or North African	67%*	33%*	0%*
Racial or Ethnic Background	Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	100%*	50%*	25%*
Racial or Ethnic Background	East Asian	85%	32%	23%
Racial or Ethnic Background	South Asian	57%	29%*	29%*
Racial or Ethnic Background	South East Asian	86%	51%	26%*
Racial or Ethnic Background	Other Asian	100%*	29%*	29%*
Racial or Ethnic Background	White	69%	38%	16%
Racial or Ethnic Background	Other	60%*	53%*	47%*

Note: Percentages marked with an asterisk indicate small sample sizes and should be interpreted with caution.

Use of Public Assistance Programs

In addition to aid provided by Pasadena City College, some students also received state and federal aid through public assistance programs such as Medicaid, SNAP, SSI, and other programs. Table 11 illustrates insecurity rates across various aid recipients. Among students who were food insecure, 74% had SNAP benefits, 82% received utility assistance, and 87% used government childcare assistance. Over one-third of students who identified as homeless reported utilizing programs such as TANF, unemployment benefits, or social security income.

Table 11. Rates of Public Assistance Use in the Past Year by Basic Needs Insecurity Status

Type of Assistance	Food Insecurity	Housing Insecurity	Homelessness	Secure
Medicaid or Public Health Insurance	67%	63%	26%	29%
SNAP	74%	66%	32%	24%
WIC	63%	71%	26%	26%

Type of Assistance	Food Insecurity	Housing Insecurity	Homelessness	Secure
Transportation Assistance	77%	65%	32%	22%
Utility Assistance	82%	85%	27%	11%
Housing Assistance	82%	80%	60%	11%
TANF	82%	86%	36%	9%
Childcare Assistance	87%	77%	37%	13%
SSI (supplemental security income)	68%	64%	30%	30%
SSDI (social security disability income)	70%	68%	23%	27%
Unemployment Compensation or Insurance	70%	67%	28%	23%

Conclusion

The 2025 Real College Survey findings reveal that basic needs insecurity is widespread among students at Pasadena City College. Nearly 60% of respondents reported experiencing at least one form of basic needs insecurity. Some student populations experience insecurity at higher rates than their peers. Historically disadvantaged groups, including American Indian or Native American, Black, and Latino students, reported experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, or homelessness at rates over 50%.

Financial instability is a recurring theme among students with unmet needs. Almost half of respondents reported using credit cards to fund their education. Over one-fifth of employed students reported working over 40 hours per week. Despite high employment rates, many students continue to experience food and housing insecurity.

Pasadena City College continues to work toward reducing these experiences through various support services, including a dedicated basic needs center, Lancer Care. Students reported relying on food and transportation services, as well as assistance with public government-funded programs and initiatives.