

ALEX PADILLA

U.S. SENATOR  for CALIFORNIA

Basic Assistance for Students in College (BASIC) Act

U.S. Senator Alex Padilla and Representative Norma Torres

The BASIC Act would help institutions of higher education address the unmet basic needs of their students by establishing a \$1 billion competitive grant program for institutions and requiring data sharing between federal departments that administer public assistance programs.

What the bill would do:

Establishes a \$1 billion competitive grant program to help institutions of higher education identify and meet the basic needs of students, including food, housing, transportation, child care, health care, and technology. The bill also requires a national report on student basic needs insecurity.

- **Planning Grants (\$40 million):** Authorizes 2-year planning grants of up to \$200,000 for institutions of higher education to conduct basic needs research and develop a plan to address unmet basic needs at the institution.
- **Implementation Grants (\$960 million):** Authorizes 5-year implementation grants of up to \$5 million for institutions of higher education to develop basic needs infrastructure. Grantees must use funds to carry out at least two of the following activities to meet basic needs:
 - Provide eligible students with free or subsidized food, secure sleeping arrangements, temporary housing, priority access to existing on-campus child care, and other basic needs to eligible students;
 - Conduct outreach to students to reduce stigma, educate, and encourage participation in basic needs programs and services and help eligible students apply for and enroll in local, state, and federal public assistance programs;
 - Coordinate and collaborate with government and/or community-based organizations;
 - Purchase materials, equipment, transportation, and facilities; hire personnel to build and facilitate implementation; or other matters determined by the Secretary.
- At least 25% of planning and implementation grants must go to community colleges, another 25% must go to HBCUs, TCUs, or MSIs. Grant priority will also go to institutions with 25% or higher federal Pell Grant enrollment.

Connect students to the social safety net:

- Requires the Department of Education to coordinate with the heads of relevant agencies to identify current students who may be eligible for federal means-tested programs, including SNAP, SSI, TANF, WIC, Medicaid, federal housing assistance, federal child care programs, free and reduced-price lunch, EITC, CTC, and other programs; and coordinate efforts to help institutions of higher education enroll eligible students with guardrails to protect sensitive data.