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Understanding Your Political Landscape
Community Landscape
From your leadership in basic needs work and your own experience as a student, you know that your campus is experiencing basic needs insecurity. You didn’t need a survey or a statewide percentage to convince you to lead programs and advocate for your community.

Solutions that convince decision makers to act come from data and storytelling. The steps outlined below, you will inform your campaign so that you are advocating for programs and policies that will be most helpful to students. You will also bring others close to the student experience. This will demonstrate the need for support and reforms around student basic needs on campus.

Data is Key: Investing In Student Service
Student surveys elevate the student perspective and give you vital information to make your case. Having reflective statistics, like the percentage of students on campus, in the school system, in the state, or in the country facing food insecurity, will add credibility to your efforts. Beyond Swipe Out Hunger’s general Evidence Webpage that highlights key data, it will also be important to collect data about your community to inform your asks and convince folks who might still think: “But it's not happening on our campus.”

Here are ways to collect key evidence on basic needs insecurities in your campus community:

- **Add questions to existing campus surveys:** Does your campus already have a survey that is circulated on a semester or annual basis? Many schools have surveys that ask about academic experience or the campus community—why not include a question about food insecurity? Ask an administrator who supports this work on campus or meet with the office that conducts this survey to see about the possibility. This will help you and campus leadership understand the percentage of students on campus who are experiencing food insecurity at scale, so you can then advocate for future programs and policies.
The Hope Center’s *Guide to Assessing Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education, Fall 2019* lists the following as potential initial prompts:

1. “I worried whether my food would run out before I got money to buy more.” Was that often true, sometimes true, or never true for you in the last 30 days?

2. “The food that I bought just didn’t last, and I didn’t have money to get more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 30 days?

3. “I couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 30 days?

- **Conduct your own survey:** Using The Hope Center’s *Guide to Assessing Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education, Fall 2019* as a guide, conduct your own survey on campus. Send it out through social media, ask key support offices to conduct outreach to students, advertise it on campus, and even add a raffle option as an incentive. This will allow you to ask a wide range of questions, including what programs and policies will be most effective for students.

- **Participate in Swipe Out Hunger’s Annual Impact Survey:** Swipe Out Hunger conducts an annual impact survey as an opportunity for any campus that runs a meal distribution program in its network. This survey is an in-depth analysis of what your campus needs and what food insecurity looks like nationwide. In the past, the results of this survey have successfully advocated for more meal swipes, increased funding, and produced data for political advocacy efforts on the state level. It also results in Swipe Out Hunger’s *Annual Impact Report*, which helps move the field of student basic needs forward.
• **State-or system-wide survey:** School systems have conducted surveys that have powerfully moved a state forward in its advocacy efforts. For example, in January 2018, California State University's Basic Needs Initiative published a [Study of Student Basic Needs](#) that reflects the entire school system's experience. Requiring campuses to collect data or investing in data collection at the state government level has unveiled student experience around food insecurity.

**Engaging Your Allies: Listening Tours Across Campus**

As you engage folks on your asset map across campus, take that opportunity to listen and ask questions. Every invested ally brings a unique perspective that can inform what you are advocating for and how you will navigate the campus and political structures. This is an opportunity to hear what students need and use that as the basis of your campaign.

**Uniting Around Basic Needs: Town Halls and Convenings**

Bringing people together around an issue gives it importance. Whether through a Zoom or in-person town hall, a task force gathering, or an awareness-building event, it’s important to create opportunities for folks who have never heard of or haven’t worked on issues around basic needs in higher education higher education basic needs to be welcomed into the movement. It’s also an opportunity to normalize the experience of food insecurity and destigmatize interventions that alleviate food insecurity.

There are many creative ways to unite folks around this issue: compelling speakers, a presentation of data collected around food insecurity, or storytelling from students. These convenings are moments to invite key administrators, local policymakers, partner organizations...basically anyone from your asset map! This gives them a moment to engage with the work in a meaningful way. You could also invite legislators to speak or hold a listening tour for them to learn more.
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Understanding Your Political Landscape
Relationship Audit and Asset Map
Building a successful campaign or movement to end hunger cannot be done in a silo. Every campaign must embrace relationships and assets in their community under a united goal.

**What is an Asset/Relationship?**

When running advocacy campaigns, you might think you only have access to the small number of people who have already expressed interest in advocacy. But the truth is that you have so many resources at your disposal-- if you know where to look. Think about the following assets and relationships to help move your campaign forward:

- Other Students, including Student Government Leaders and Members of Like-minded Student Organizations
- School Staff & Administration
- Local Businesses
- Local & State Elected Officials
- Federal Elected Officials and their Staff
- Food Service Provides
- School Board of Trustees
- School Alumni
- Community Leaders

Don't limit yourself just to students around you. Remember, it takes an entire community to lift up a movement and call for change.
As you bring people together, the first step is to do a full audit of your current relationships, including existing partnerships and connections.

Who are the current people, organizations, community leaders, elected officials, and business leaders that you currently have relationships with? Who are the campus-specific contacts you can work with, such as basic needs coordinators, deans, university president’s office staff, dining staff, and/or campus organizations? Make this list as comprehensive as possible. You never know who might be able to help your movement.

The key in a Relationship Audit is taking into account the relationships of your entire organization, including volunteers and members on the sidelines of the work. While you might be able to map out key relationships amongst your organization (key school administrator, elected official staff, etc.), you will be unaware of relationships held by others in your group. For example, a student team member could work at a local business that would support your movement, or a school administrator might have a relationship with a local elected official.

To get started, complete this simple Relationship Audit form:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Member Name</th>
<th>Contact Name</th>
<th>How You Know Contact</th>
<th>Contact Title</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
<th>Possible Goal for Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stephen A. Smith</td>
<td>Max Kellerman</td>
<td>Go To Church W/ Max</td>
<td>VP of programs at Sodexo Midwest.</td>
<td><a href="mailto:MKellerman@sodexo.com">MKellerman@sodexo.com</a></td>
<td>Max can help our group deepen relationship with Sodexo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Asset Map

Once you complete the Relationship Audit, the next step is to create what is called an “Asset Map.” This map takes your Relationship Audit and allows you to see how you can leverage them. This step takes the view “from the trees to the forest” to give your group a bigger picture of all the places for potential connections and support.

This can be done by gathering the information from the Relationship Audit and strategically placing each relationship within the Asset Map worksheet. You can use any format that you find best fits your needs or use the template below. As you continue meeting people during the campaign, return to your asset map and add them in for record keeping and for your next campaign.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Category (Student, Campus Ad in, Elected Official, Large/Small biz)</th>
<th>Person of Interest</th>
<th>Contact Originator</th>
<th>Ways To Utilize Contact</th>
<th>Contact Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Expand relationships with food service provider.</td>
<td>Large Business</td>
<td>Max Kellerman, VP of Programs Midwest</td>
<td>Stephen A. Smith-Deas of Student Affairs</td>
<td>Meet with Max and speak with him about Sodexo’s commitment to helping end hunger on campus</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Mkellerman@sodexo.org">Mkellerman@sodexo.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>