



Resolution 11: Establishing a Basic Needs Center & Expanding Low-income Resources at Cornell

Abstract: This resolution highlights the current need to make Basic Needs resources visible at Cornell and urges administration to establish a Basic Needs Center.

Sponsored by: Amisha Chowdhury '23, Sanvi Bhardwaj '24, Valeria Valencia '23, Bahram Mehretu '26, Selam Woldai '23

Reviewed by: Diversity and Inclusion Committee, (11-0-6), 10/30/2022

Type of Action: Recommendation

Originally Presented: 11/03/2022

Current Status: New Business

Whereas, Cornell University is responsible for ensuring equitable access to food, housing, health insurance, job employment, health and wellness, and financial literacy resources and all other Basic Needs resources for all members of the Cornell community;

Whereas, the Student Assembly Office of the Student Advocate conducted a Basic Needs Survey during the Summer of 2022, with over 560 undergraduate students, graduate students, alumni, and faculty testifying to the abject failure of basic needs resources at Cornell;

Whereas, financial aid does not accurately reflect the high cost of living in Ithaca, despite Cornell claiming to meet full demonstrated financial need of all students;

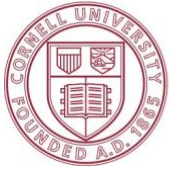
Whereas, the Office of Financial Aid and Student Employment (FASE) is understaffed, not trained on Basic Needs resources, and actively encourages students to take out loans if they are experiencing greater financial needs;

Whereas, students struggle to find housing due to their financial aid package not reflecting the high cost of off-campus housing in Ithaca, leading students to become homeless and experience housing law violations;

Whereas, 1/3 of survey respondents struggled with food insecurity, citing that current institutional food insecurity resources are inadequate;

Whereas, not all low-income students have access to affordable healthcare through Medicaid/SHP+, resources for these programs are not visible, and the cost of this plan is still an undue burden on low-income students;

Whereas, students have testified to working three jobs and still struggling to pay bills;



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31 **Whereas**, student workers have experienced worker’s rights violations, faced verbal harassment,
32 exploitation by their employers, and have difficulty finding employment;

33 **Whereas**, undocumented and DACA students do not have centralized institutional support and
34 lack sufficient legal aid from Cornell;

35 **Whereas**, 19.9% of the Class of 2026 are first-generation college students who often lack the
36 institutional support they need;

37 **Be it therefore resolved**, Cornell University cannot live up to its motto of, “Any Person, Any
38 Study” while continuing to neglect the most basic needs of the Cornell community;

39 **Be it finally resolved**, that the Student Assembly supports the demands of the Basic Needs
40 Coalition and urges Cornell administration to adopt the following changes:

- 41 • Overhauling financial aid to accurately reflect the high cost of living in Ithaca by
42 expanding aid for housing, food, transportation, and health insurance to meet student
43 needs;
- 44 • Establishing a centrally located, physical Basic Needs Center staffed with student
45 navigators trained to connect individuals to financial, housing, food, health insurance, job
46 employment, worker’s rights, mental health, and all other basic needs resources available;
- 47 • Centralizing information on Basic Needs resources through the creation and continuous
48 updating of a Basic Needs hotline via email and phone;
- 49 • Increasing student accessibility by expanding eligibility (e.g., housing, food,
50 transportation) for emergency grants, the Access Fund, and the creation of a Basic Needs
51 Fund;
- 52 • Completing a semesterly systematic review of Basic Needs campus resources and address
53 and resolve any access or equity issues identified in this survey;
- 54 • Creating more Community Basic Needs Coordinator federal work study positions to
55 support the Basic Needs Workshop and ensure project longevity;
- 56 • Destigmatizing Basic Needs at the University by actively advertising and providing food,
57 housing, health insurance, mental health, and employment resources

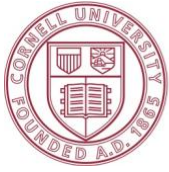
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59 **Respectfully Submitted,**

60 Amisha Chowdhury ‘23

61 *Student Advocate*, Student Assembly

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63 Sanvi Bhardwaj ‘24



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- 64 *College of Human Ecology Representative, Student Assembly*
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- 69 Valeria Valencia '23
- 70 *President, Student Assembly*
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- 72 Selam Woldai '23
- 73 *Vice President Emeritus of Diversity and Inclusion, Student Assembly*
- 74 *Undergraduate Student Trustee*