

Basic needs services at Grand Rapids Community College

Grand Rapids Community College provides students with a variety of basic needs services including food assistance (a food pantry and assistance with applying for SNAP); access to technology, including digital devices and hot spots and expanded Wi-Fi around campus; mental health counseling; and emergency assistance funds. They are working to provide access to washers, dryers, and a clothing closet. They work with community partners to provide housing assistance for students who are housing insecure or unhoused and to connect students with child care assistance. They also partner with Feeding America, their local farm, and the Culinary Institute who all help to provide donations to the food pantry.

Grand Rapids, Michigan
Locale: Mid-size city
Fall 2020 enrollment: 12,107
Students of color: 37%
Full-time students receiving Pell: 45%

- **Get Help website** <https://www.grcc.edu/students/student-life-conduct/get-help>
- **Facebook pages** <https://www.facebook.com/grandrapidscc/>

The Get Help website includes information about how to access campus and community resources. There is a single intake form for all services, and the website is updated every two weeks. The basic needs services staff uses the student life Facebook page and the main college social media platforms to share information about the basic needs services and coordinate with departmental pages to share information. They also coordinate with the provost to include updates in college-wide emails. The staff also collaborates with the communications director to share stories with local, state, and national news outlets. They also have business cards in every academic office with the website, vertical banners, and posters in every classroom. Students discussed the thorough efforts to advertise and offer services, particularly during the pandemic. Students also spoke about how easy it was to access services, both virtually and in person, and about the positive interactions and follow-up with staff members at the basic needs center.

“If we think about our mission and who we serve ... it’s just paramount to know that students are grappling with these needs [and to] find ways to partner with community organizations and philanthropies that that can help us address these needs, because they are substantial.”

– Staff person at Grand Rapids Community College