

Basic needs services at Highline College

Highline College provides students with a variety of basic needs services, including food assistance (a food pantry, help applying for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and SNAP, food delivery through DoorDash, emergency funds to pay for groceries); financial literacy (workshops, help preparing tax returns); employment support (support applying for unemployment benefits and a SNAP Employment and Training program); housing assistance (help with finding housing, help applying for subsidized housing, emergency funds to pay for housing, assistance with utilities); access to child care; transportation support (Orca Life Card); access to technology (access to digital devices, Wi-Fi hot spots, expanded Wi-Fi service area around campus); and health care, including support accessing mental health services. Staff members and students highlighted the supports for housing, noting that the cost of living in the area is incredibly high. Highline College has a partnership with the King County Housing Authority, which provides 40 Section 8 vouchers for students experiencing homelessness.

Des Moines, Washington
Locale: Large suburb
Fall 2020 enrollment: 5,829
Students of color: 76%
Full-time students receiving Pell: 28%
<i>Highline is an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution</i>

- **Benefits hub website** <https://supportcenter.highline.edu/benefits-hub/>
- **Basic needs resources on LMS (Canvas)** <https://canvas.highline.edu/courses/2089488/pages/basic-needs-resources>
- **Community pantry website** <https://supportcenter.highline.edu/community-pantry/>
- **Community pantry Instagram page** <https://www.instagram.com/highlinecommunitypantry/?hl=en>

Highline College has found that the more services students receive, the more likely they are to return and complete their education. They are working to shift the campus culture to focus on holistic student supports built around research and students' hierarchy of needs.

“We try to lead with equity. We had a specific giveaway to target our ESOL [English for speakers of other languages] and GED students because a lot of our emergency funds that came from COVID-19 [required students] to be eligible for financial aid. And so a third of our campus is GED and ESOL students, and they wouldn’t be able to apply for [those] funds. So, we made sure to have one of our giveaways be targeted to those students, and they showed up and we had a very successful giveaway at our Highline pantry.”

– Staff person at Highline College