

### **Lit Review/Prevalence of Student Houselessness**

- 1 in 5 students who identify as houseless in the United States reside in California
- The high costs of living and reduced financial aid have led to more than half of California community college students facing housing insecurity over the past 12 months, with higher-than-average rates of houselessness for Black students.
- The 2019 Real College survey, conducted by the Hope Center, provides a comprehensive assessment of basic needs insecurity among California Community College students. Sampling nearly 40,000 students from 57 community colleges revealed several alarming statistics
- 50% of respondents experience food insecurity in the past 30 days
  - 60% had faced housing insecurity in the surveyed year
  - 19% found themselves houseless during that period of time
- Work-study and federal aid, such as the Pell Grant, do not adequately reduce the risk of basic needs insecurity, as only 22% of food-insecure students actually receive SNAP benefits. This program aims to reduce food insecurity through monthly benefits.
- Assistance programs must not only maintain their funding but also ensure that they are accessible to students who most require their aid within the California Community College System.
- According to a report by the UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools, houseless students report lower GPAs, increased absenteeism, and higher dropout rates than their peers.
- Traditional houseless shelters often fail to meet the needs of unhoused students, with long waitlist times, requiring individuals to have slept on the streets to qualify for their services, and/or strict rules around phone usage and curfews.
- Most shelters do not offer such case management, which negatively affects students' ability to thrive as they navigate complex resource coordination and academic disruption.

Our goal through Bruin Shelter is to educate the community about the needs of unhoused individuals and to help decrease homelessness among students by implementing an effective strategy and model for student shelters.

### **WHAT Is Bruin Shelter?**

- History
  - In 2016, Founder Louis Tse and Luke Shaw, UCLA graduate students at that time, recognized the prevalence of college student homelessness.
  - Louis lived in his car to save money, which would have been used for rent to fund the start of Bruin Shelter.

## Grants

- Established one of the first student run shelters in the US and was founded off of the three missions: (1) Provide students experiencing houselessness with a safe and supportive environment and allow them to invest in their education, (2) Empower shelter volunteers to become social justice leaders, (3) Serve as an open-source model for other universities to create student-run shelters.
- Bruin Shelter
  - What does Bruin Shelter **OFFER**?
    - 1) Free meals
      - Dinner and Breakfast were provided daily and prepared by shelter staff.
      - Residents could also request meals for the duration of shelter closing hours.
      - Alternative diets were accounted for and incorporated into daily menus
      - The stocked pantry was always available for residents to access
    - 2) Peer Supported Environment
      - Shelter staff must undergo a selective application process that ensures residents do not experience stigma or bias from shelter staff or anyone directing operations
      - Academic supportive environment
        - Designated study spaces
        - Quiet hours + WiFi availability
      - More personal interactions with a shared identity of being a student amongst residents and undergraduate volunteers
    - 3) Student resources
      - Tutoring and career development services are offered
        - Financial assistance navigation, CalFresh resources, permanent housing, and transitional support
    - 4) MSW Services
      - Social and medical case management services were assigned to each student to address medical needs and help them find a permanent living situation.
  - What makes Bruin Shelter **EFFECTIVE**?
    - From analysis of resident survey responses, we found three themes that made Bruin Shelter's model more effective than traditional shelter alternatives:
      - (1) "For Students, By Students"
        - Student-to-Student Model
        - Academic Support
        - Volunteer Engagement

## Grants

(2) Post-Shelter Permanent Housing Transition Assistance

(3) Concern with Traditional Shelter Alternatives

- Why do we need sponsors?
  - Currently lacks long-term donor-based funding → lack of sustainable financing makes it challenging to run a shelter with high rent prices and costs to maintain shelter operations.
  - Lack of availability of a location to host the residence → an ongoing problem that ties into financial difficulties, as the places that are open to hosting our shelter may charge large amounts of money for rent
  - Absence of institutional support, including reliable case management services → through proper funding, more effective and consistent case management services can be implemented to improve shelter operations further and create permanent change to student homelessness.