S

**AS Western Hub of Living Essentials (WHOLE)**

**Decision Package**

**Overview**

**Title:** AS Western Hub of Living Essentials (WHOLE) Pantry Coordinator

**Contact:** Karen Deysher, Coordinator for Student Advocacy and Identity Resource Centers (SAIRC)

**Summary of proposal:** The addition of the AS WHOLE Pantry Coordinator position would allow for a dedicated hourly position to meet the growing needs of students who are experiencing living essentials insecurity. The requested funds would be utilized to pay for a three quarter long, hourly student employee position that would work an average of 15 hours per week.

**Total fiscal impact:** $8,607.00 or $9,090.00

**Information**

We are requesting funding for the addition of an hourly student employee position, the AS WHOLE Pantry Coordinator. The AS WHOLE Pantry Coordinator would be responsible for organizing the day-to-day operations of the AS WHOLE pantry in the Viking Union building, which provides non-perishable food, personal care products, as well as gently used clothing for students needing living essentials assistance at Western Washington University. The length of term for this position would be three quarters (Fall, Winter, and Spring), for an average of 15 hours worked per week.

The facilitation of day-to-day operations for the AS WHOLE Pantry Coordinator would include the following responsibilities:

* Providing general pantry support, such as answering phone calls, replying to emails, and engaging with pantry users
* Maintaining physical space and monitoring inventory
  + Ensuring that safety guidelines are followed with the storage and distribution of all items
  + Coordinating and implementing living essential items drives, fundraisers, and other essential items solicitation events
  + Purchasing and restocking pantry items
  + Organizing donated items
  + Diversifying pantry items to respect autonomy and needs of pantry users
* Volunteer management
  + Recruiting, managing, and training WHOLE pantry volunteers
* Outreach and Marketing
  + Campus outreach, such as tabling
  + Working with the AS SAIRC Marketing and Assessment Coordinator to improve advertising and promotion of the WHOLE Pantry
* Assessment and Data Collection
  + Establishing and executing data collection practices that respect the dignity and confidentiality of pantry users and persons experiencing living essentials insecurity in order to meet diverse and changing needs
  + Collaborating with and soliciting feedback from key stakeholders such as AS Food & Housing Insecurity Advisory Committee, AS Outback, Feeding Western, WWU Career Closet, invested faculty, local community organizations, and pantry users
* Education and providing service/resource referrals
  + Integrating the provision of food, personal care products, and clothing with referrals to additional campus and community supports
* Other duties as assigned by supervisor

**Fiscal Impact**

**Cost breakdown**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Description** | **Previous Allocation** | **Proposed Allocation** |
| F601 | Undergrad Student Hourly | $0 | $8,316.00 |
| F900s | Fringe Benefits | $0 | $ 291.00 |

**- OR -**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Code** | **Description** | **Previous Allocation** | **Proposed Allocation** |
| F601 | Graduate Student Hourly | $0 | $8,783.00 |
| F900s | Fringe Benefits | $0 | $ 307.00 |

**Cost Explanation**

The addition of either an **undergraduate** or **graduate hourly employee** would enable the AS WHOLE pantry to have a dedicated employee to support its operation.

**Cost Metrics**

We have included cost breakdowns for both an **undergraduate** and **graduate student hourly employee** in order to provide options for those determining the outcomes of decision packages.

* The estimated staff expense at an **undergraduate student hourly rate** is projected at $8,607.00. This estimate was calculated by multiplying the pay rate ($15.15) by weeks worked (361) including 2.7% increase for 2021.
* The estimated staff expense at a **graduate student hourly rate** is projected at $9,090.00. This was calculated by multiplying the pay rate ($16) by weeks worked (361) including 2.7% increase for 2021.
  + Collectively, there is limited research on “high impact” or “best” practices when it comes to operating successful pantries within U.S. higher education institutional environments. Therefore, the AS WHOLE Pantry Coordinator would need to have experience in effectively navigating higher education institutions, as well as experience in data collection in order to adequately respond to the growing and specific needs of Western students. Thus, it is not a stretch to assert that graduate students will often possess greater proficiency in both data collection and college navigational skills than undergraduate students for they have completed a bachelor’s degree program successfully.

**Justification**

**Need for the AS WHOLE Pantry Coordinator Position**

Hunger is a real problem for far too many of college students. Current national estimates suggest that as many as half of undergraduate students experience food insecurity while pursuing college degrees.2 Similarly, Western Washington University’s WELS Second Year Survey in 2017 found that approximately 53% of students surveyed (n = 633) had cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because they did not have enough money to afford a balanced meal.3 Defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as the “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or the ability to acquire such foods in a socially acceptable manner,” food insecurity is associated with reduced academic performance and lower rates of degree completion.4 Growing recognition that food insecurity must then be addressed in order to promote both educational attainment and individual well-being has led to the creation of hundreds of living necessity pantries on college campuses nationwide.5

Very few campus pantries have sizable budgets, but most employ some paid staff, often who are undergraduate or graduate students.6 As of present, the AS WHOLE Pantry does not have an exclusively dedicated employee to oversee its day-to-day operations. However, since the inception of the AS WHOLE pantry in spring quarter of 2018, there have been an ever-increasing use of its resources by students in need of living essentials. Due to limited staffing, exact numbers are not available to discern how many unique pantry users there are, or how many items have been provided. Nonetheless, the SAIRC employees that currently operationalize the pantry, in addition to their assigned job duties, have undoubtedly recognized a marked upsurge in its usage from fall quarter 2019 to winter quarter 2020 through the need to repeatedly restock pantry shelves daily.

Currently, the responsibilities of the proposed AS WHOLE Pantry Coordinator position have been distributed amongst the three SAIRC general office employees, but such duties have been largely executed by those who have held the Coordinator for SAIRC position. Most of the tasks could be accomplished by a student employee; however, the two SAIRC main office student employees already possess so many responsibilities, that it would be unethical to overtask them with more than can be accomplished within their positions’ hourly constraints. Thus, the addition of this proposed position would allow for much needed coordination to meet the growing needs for living essentials from Western students.

**Funding Outcomes**

The efficacy of funding would be indicated by pantry usage and engagement. The intent to add the AS WHOLE Pantry Coordinator position is to meet the growing needs of Western Students experiencing living essentials insecurity. Through the use of community engagement, outreach, and data collection, the coordinator would be better suited to understand what these needs are, make better informed decisions, and collaboratively create a plan of action to address the growth.

**Alternative Approaches**

If no funding was awarded, employees within the general SAIRC office would continue to oversee its operation. However, it would be incredibly difficult to appropriately meet the increasing need that the AS WHOLE Pantry has been experiencing as of late.

**End Notes**

1. Weeks per quarter: Fall = 14 (12 weeks + 2 weeks of training), Winter = 11 weeks, Spring = 11 weeks

2. Broton, K. A., & Goldrick-Rab, S. (2017). Going without: An exploration of food and housing insecurity among undergraduates. Educational Researcher, 47(2), 121-133; Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, A. (2017). *Hungry and homeless in college: Results from a national study of basic needs insecurity in higher education*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin HOPE Lab; Nazmi, A., Martinez, S., Byrd, A., & Ritch, L. (2018). *A systematic review of food insecurity among US students in higher education*. Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition.1-16.

3. Western Washington University’s Office of Survey Research. (2017). *WELS Second Year Survey 2015-2017*. Available from the WWU Web site: <https://wp.wwu.edu/oie/wels/wels-second-year-follow-up-surveys/wels-second-year-survey-2015-2017/>

4. Philips, E., McDaniel, A., & Croft, A. (2018). *Food insecurity and academic disruption among college students.* Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice.

5. Callahan, C. (2018, Feb. 16). Choosing between books or food; Esch, M. (2018, Apr. 18). *Free food for thought: Campus food pantries proliferate*; Lobosco, K. (2018, Jan. 3). New York governor wants food pantries at every state college: Palocko, J. (2018, Jan. 8). *Growing number of Pennsylvania colleges adding food pantries for hungry students.* The Morning Call.

6. Goldrick-Rab, S., Cady, C., & Coca, V. (2018). *Campus food pantries: Insights from a national survey*. Philadelphia, PA: The Hope Center.