

Bristol Community College announces partnership with the Boston BullPen Project to further assist student needs

Bristol Community College has announced a new partnership with the Boston BullPen Project to further assist students' financial needs. The innovative Boston BullPen Project provides emergency funding to a wide and diverse community from Boston to Worcester, including veterans, families, at-risk youth, homeless, patients and others. The unique partnership with Bristol will be the project's first collaboration with a higher education institution or Southcoast organization and will provide a rolling funding source to further assist students' basic needs.

Upon referral from Bristol's Basic Needs Support program, the partnership will provide students facing an emergency with financial support for immediate needs, including home appliance or heating repair, winter clothing, or other cash-based one-time bills affecting students' livelihood. The collaboration aims to support many students who may be disqualified from other utilized community resources either because of their age, lack of disability or lack of dependents.

"Bristol is very excited to have the opportunity to work towards the shared goals of the Boston BullPen Project on this exciting partnership, said Nikita Viera, Program Coordinator, Basic Needs Support, Bristol Community College. "Knowing that funding will directly support critical needs in our communities by supporting Bristol's hard-working students, provides me with immense gratitude for this collaboration."

Understanding that any basic needs insecurity can cause students to withdraw from social and academic settings impacting their success, the college's Student & Family Engagement department has incorporated a holistic and intentional approach to address critical student needs. As a result, the college has recently launched a dedicated Basic Needs Support program, led by Program Coordinator Nikita Viera, designed to help students bridge the gap in access to a broad spectrum of community wellness and financial support resources. Through individualized support, Bristol's Basic Needs Support program aims to empower students with personal and professional life skills designed to promote self-determination and financial stability.

Bristol's commitment to basic needs support has been fostered by standing college initiatives, such as the Mobile Food Market, in collaboration with the Greater Boston Food Bank, and the "Grab & Go" Food Pantry, addressing food insecurity, as well as most recently, the college's CARE Team, which helps make connections to services based on self-reported student issues that can be addressed through established channels at Bristol. Through these and similar efforts, Bristol has identified the continued need for advancing dedicated college-wide and student-centered support.

The Boston BullPen Project was established in early 2017 by four childhood friends with a shared love of baseball and a commitment to helping those in need. Since it began, the project has provided more than \$400,000 in emergency funding assistance to a wide and diverse community of residents, from Boston to Worcester. Through its work, the project identifies gaps in social services and responds quickly and effectively to support critical needs that would otherwise go unfulfilled. By partnering with agencies and groups that are experienced with offering support to in-need residents, the project ensures that help is provided where it is most needed. The project also works to promote a spirit of "paying it forward."

In doing so, recipients of the Boston BullPen Project's assistance also receive an additional gift card to share with a friend or family member in need.

For more information about the Boston BullPen Project, please visit <https://www.bostonbullpenproject.org/>.

For more information about Bristol Community College's partnership with the Boston BullPen Project or how Bristol is supporting basic students' needs, please visit <http://www.bristolcc.edu/basicneeds> or email nikita.viera@bristolcc.edu.