Pack Essentials

Thousands of NC State students struggle with hunger, homelessness, and financial insecurity. Pack Essentials is a community-wide effort to support these at-risk students on their paths to graduation.

We’re all in this together.
We’re all in this together: About Pack Essentials

I’ve met students who are hungry and can’t buy food. Students who don’t have anywhere to rest their heads at night. Students who—because of one, unexpected expense—are forced to leave school. As vice chancellor and dean of the Division of Academic and Student Affairs, I am committed to supporting the success of the whole student. But how can we realize our mission while members of our community struggle to meet their most basic needs?

In the fall of 2017, NC State released the results of a research study that determined how many of our students suffer from food or housing insecurity. The results were sobering. Fourteen percent of NC State students have experienced food insecurity, and nearly 10 percent have experienced homelessness in the past year. With a student population of 34,000, that translates to thousands of our students. We couldn’t as a community know these statistics and not “Think and Do”—come up with solutions to ensure that none of our students misses out on graduation due to an unmet urgent or basic need.

We quickly realized that we need the help of the Wolfpack. Students, parents, alumni, faculty/staff, and friends of NC State need to come together to make student success a reality for everyone.

We answered the call by creating Pack Essentials, a central resource where students facing food, housing, or financial insecurity can go for help. Students complete an application and then meet one-on-one, confidentially, with Student Ombuds Services. We collaborate with various partners to determine the best course of action. Sometimes that includes referrals to the Office of Financial Aid, the Counseling Center, the Feed the Pack Food Pantry, or government services such as SNAP (food stamps). In other instances, the best solution includes a donor-supported microgrant or meal plan scholarship.

Our process is thorough, compassionate, and swift. Often, students receive support on the same day they apply.

Ending food, housing, and financial insecurity among our students is a community-wide effort. You can make an immediate, tremendous difference in the life of an NC State student.

We’re all in this together. Thank you for supporting Pack Essentials.

Mike Mullen
Vice Chancellor and Dean
Academic and Student Affairs

“We couldn’t as a community know these statistics and not “Think and Do”—come up with solutions to ensure that none of our students misses out on graduation due to an unmet urgent or basic need. Ending food, housing, and financial insecurity among our students is a community-wide effort”

Mike Mullen
Vice Chancellor and Dean
“I hadn’t considered that there was homelessness in my own ‘family’ among my students. Then I learned that a student working on my research team was living in his car. He was homeless as he tried to keep up with schoolwork, several jobs, and finding a safe place to park each night. I wanted to have data to instigate change.”

-Dr. Mary E. Haskett, Psychology

A silent epidemic

In 2017, Dr. Mary Haskett led the study that unveiled the silent epidemic of food and housing insecurity among NC State students, spurring the creation of Pack Essentials.

Dr. Haskett revealed the extent of hunger and homelessness and the greatest barrier to getting students help: stigma. Students often don’t tell anyone about their struggles. They report a sense of shame over being unable to meet their basic needs.

Supporting Pack Essentials shows students that we’re all in this together. We are united in ending hunger and homelessness among the NC State community.

“If we are truly a Wolfpack family, we need to take care of the whole family.”

- Steve Deaton ’79

co-founder and seed donor to the Pack Meal Plan Scholarships

In spite of facing tremendous hardships, students eligible for Pack Essentials often continue to manage their academic obligations and employment.

- 37% of students who are food insecure work 20+ hours per week
- 25% of food insecure students cited giving food to others before themselves.

NC State students who receive Pack Essentials support earned a 3.0 GPA when averaged.

The Pack Essentials application gives struggling NC State students a way to ask for help.

1. Students complete and submit the Pack Essentials application online

2. Student Ombuds Services reviews and vets each application individually

   Applications are often processed on the same day they are received. The vetting process includes contacting the Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid to determine a student’s eligibility to receive a Student Emergency Fund grant or other available resources.

3. Staff and students collaborate on an individualized work plan

   Each work plan directs students to appropriate services, such as the Counseling Center or the Feed the Pack Food Pantry. Students in need of immediate financial assistance can receive a Student Emergency Fund microgrant of $500 or less or a Pack Meal Scholarship. Grants and scholarships are funded entirely through private support.
Pack Essentials succeeds through a combination of:

**Communication:** Spreading the word so that everyone in the NC State community knows that there is help available for those in need.

**Academic and Student Affairs services:** The division’s service programs, such as the nationally recognized Counseling Center, exist to serve all students.

**Financial support:** Private gifts, including to the Student Emergency Fund and Pack Meal Plan Scholarships, ensure that students in need of financial assistance get help quickly and get on their feet.

**How it works:** A faculty member, who recently heard about Pack Essentials from a colleague, learns that a student in her class has had a sudden death in the family. The student needs to travel home but doesn’t have the money to pay for the travel. He is considering withdrawing from school for the semester to free up the funds to go home. The faculty member encourages the student to apply to Pack Essentials. Within a day of applying, the student has a Student Emergency Fund grant to cover the cost of traveling home, an appointment at the Counseling Center for grief counseling, and information on the Feed the Pack programs. The student is able to remain enrolled and on track to graduate.

Pack Essentials applicants in need of rapid financial assistance can receive a **Student Emergency Fund microgrant** or a **Pack Meal Plan Scholarship**. Both giving programs are funded entirely by private donations.

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**Student Emergency Fund**

For financially insecure students, one surprise expense can spell disaster. A sudden illness or unexpected car repair can lead to a leave of absence or even withdrawal from NC State. A grant from the Student Emergency Fund can make all the difference. The Student Emergency Fund provides one-time microgrants (approximately $500) to keep financially insecure students on the path to student success.

**Examples of student emergencies:**

- Personal or family illness or injury
- Travel expenses (e.g. to a family funeral)
- Natural disaster relief
- Car repair
- Sudden loss of housing
- Essential utilities (water, electricity, etc.)
- Safety and security

**Gifts to the Student Emergency Fund Endowment** ensure that the program has a stable source of income and does not solely rely on annual giving, which fluctuates year-to-year.

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**Pack Meal Plan Scholarships**

Dr. Mary Haskett’s study found that one in seven NC State students has experienced food insecurity in the last 30 days. Food insecurity takes many forms. Sometimes, it arrives suddenly as a student realizes they don’t have the money for groceries to get through the week. Other students can’t afford a meal plan. Some students are in constant need of food support. The Pack Meal Scholarships give members of the Wolfpack community the opportunity to help end hunger on campus by underwriting a student’s meal plan.

In 2017, alumnus Steve Deaton, ’79 made the seed gift that launched the scholarship program. Since then many have joined him, helping offset the costs of on-campus and commuter meal plans.
The success of Pack Essentials depends upon the entire NC State community coming together to do what NC State does best: serve others and solve pressing problems.

NC State students make Pack Essentials possible by:
- Volunteering to manage and staff the Feed the Pack Food Pantry
- Donating unused guest meals to the Pack Meal Share program

The Feed the Pack Food Pantry is centrally located in Quad Commons, near Reynolds Coliseum with a continuous supply of donated food for members of the campus community in need. Student groups, campus departments, and alumni and friends can collaborate and join the “Pack the Shelves” initiative, sponsoring a shelf and ensuring it remains stocked. The pantry is led by students and advised by a campus advisory board. Volunteers help staff the pantry. Individuals can support the pantry through cash gifts and donations of food and hygiene products.

The Pack Meal Share program gives NC State students the opportunity to help their fellow students realize food security. Students can donate their unused guest meals, providing students in need with free meals.

“These students continue to go to class, study, and work even while hungry or homeless. We just need to encourage them, support them, and make sure they don’t fall through the cracks. My purpose in life is to help those who are struggling by already working hard to help themselves.”

Steve Deaton ’79, co-founder and seed donor to the Pack Meal Plan Scholarships
“While a student at NC State, I was solely responsible for securing my own food and housing. Thanks to the Student Emergency Fund and Student Ombuds Services, I was able to make my first month’s rent and learn how to manage my personal finances.”

We’re all in this together: Supporting Pack Essentials

All supporters at all giving levels can make a tremendous difference in the lives of NC State students through a gift to Pack Essentials.

Student Emergency Fund
Gifts of any amount are welcome. Each eligible student receives a one-time microgrant of $500 or less. As awareness of Pack Essentials grows, so will the need for a robust Student Emergency Fund.

Student Emergency Fund Endowment
Make financial security possible for the Student Emergency Fund and for future generations of students with an investment to the Student Emergency Fund Endowment. The economy fluctuates and so does annual giving. A robust endowment ensures that the Student Emergency Fund remains a lifeline for students regardless of the state of the economy or yearly fundraising. All endowment gifts may be made over a period of five years or through a planned gift*.

*Planned gifts provide giving options beyond cash contributions and enable donors to create a legacy at NC State without making an immediate or undue financial commitment. Planned gifts can also lead to tax and income benefits.

Pack Meal Plan Scholarships
Donors may choose to underwrite a meal plan for an on-campus or commuting student struggling with food insecurity. On-campus meal plans cost $4,670 and commuter meal plans cost $3,160. (Meal plan costs are subject to change.)

Gifts In-Kind
The Feed the Pack Food Pantry is always accepting donations of nonperishable food and personal hygiene products. Additionally, groups may sponsor a shelf in the pantry and lead a food drive. The Career Development Center operates the Wolfpack Styled Professional Clothing Closet, which accepts donations of new or gently used professional clothes that students need to wear to interviews, career fairs, conferences, and the first weeks of work.

Think and Do the Extraordinary: The Campaign for NC State
The Think and Do the Extraordinary Campaign is the most ambitious fundraising effort in NC State history, with a goal of raising $1.6 billion in private support. The campaign launched in 2016 and will conclude in 2021. Donations supporting Pack Essential initiatives count toward the campaign.
Together we can make student success possible.

Invest In Our Students
As an alum, parent, or supporter of NC State, you are integral to our long-term commitment to student success. Tuition and fees fund only a portion of the division’s programs and services. By supporting Academic and Student Affairs, you are impacting the lives of students by giving them the freedom to explore their passions while pursuing an exceptional academic experience.

Give today
Make an immediate impact with a gift online, by phone or by mail.

Visit our page: giving.dasa.ncsu.edu to donate online.

Call: 919.515.5317 and a staff member will assist you.

Mail:
Send your check, made payable to the NC State University Foundation.
On the check memo line, please indicate Division of Academic and Student Affairs.
Division of Academic and Student Affairs
Office of Development
Campus Box 7301
Raleigh, NC 27695-7301

Planned gifts and endowments
We offer creative, flexible strategies for your estate and charitable planning that touches the lives of future generations. Talk to us to learn more.

Thank you for showing your commitment to student success by supporting Academic and Student Affairs.