



Base Request – Cougar
Cupboard Operational Funds



CENTER FOR STUDENT ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY



FY 25-26



FY 2026 Base Request – Cougar Cupboard Operational Funds

Cougar Cupboard opened in January 2020 serving close to 70 students a week prior to COVID-19. Since, the Cupboard has grown exponentially. In FY24, because of the generosity and support of the Student Fee Advisory Committee the cupboard transitioned to a new location in the University Lofts. In the short two months of open operation (i.e. April and May) the program distributed over 97,000 pounds of free food to over 3,200 student visitors per month. Even with the record-breaking service and usage, national research suggests that a campus our size should anticipate serving over double that many students.

Now settled into our new location, the current fall numbers project an average of over 2,000 to 2,500 visits per month. **The exponential trends in utilization necessitate a robust base funding that can meet the current needs of students as well as support future growth for the Cougar Cupboard.**

Currently, the funds we have are not sufficient to keep pace with the growing demand and needs of our student population. While the Cougar Cupboard has benefited greatly from the generosity and support of the Student Fee Advisory Committee, allowing for the relocation and physical expansion, these resources alone are not enough to sustain our operations long-term. The exponential increase in usage—now projected to exceed 800 student visits per week—has placed a significant strain on our budget, especially as we seek to open more days and increase access to vital resources.

Without base funding, we will struggle to meet the needs of our students, particularly those facing food insecurity, leading to fewer opportunities for support and resources for the growing number of students relying on the cupboard. Base funding is vital in ensuring we can continue to provide consistent, reliable access to food and essential services, allowing us to maintain current operations and prepare for future growth. This stable financial foundation is key to sustaining our mission of supporting student well-being, retention, and academic success.

Currently, the Cougar Cupboard has over 7,000 registered users and currently has over 500 students visit a week we project an average of over 800 visits per week to the Cougar Cupboard once we add more days that we are open in the following years. Considering this level of utilization, as well as the costs associated we are requesting additional funding to support the base operations of the Cougar Cupboard.

Operational Costs - Request	
MetroClean services - 1x/week cleaning	\$5,000
Sign-Up Genius Subscription (Volunteer Management)	\$250
Trainings/Food Certifications	\$200
Non-College Work Study Student Workers (2)	\$24,750
NCWS Fringe	\$250.00
Supplies	
Cleaning Supplies - Paper Towels and Soap etc.	\$300
Plastic Grocery Bags	\$1,000
Marketing (i.e. handbills, posters, brochures, giveaways reusable bags, etc.)	\$5,000
Food service gloves (10)	\$250
Student staff meetings and food 2x a year	\$600
Miscellaneous Supplies (batteries for scales, printer paper for workshops, ink etc.)	\$300
Subtotal	\$37,650
Admin Charge	\$2,274
Fringe	\$250.00
Total Request	\$40,174

Meeting students' essential needs is directly tied to student success. Students experiencing basic needs insecurities are more likely to miss, fail and/or drop classes, are less likely to purchase needed textbooks, and more likely to leave their university altogether. In fact, over 38% of students who enrolled in the Cougar Cupboard reported had considered dropping out of the university due to financial concerns. Support to this program will make a huge impact to hundreds of Cougars by helping them have what they need so that they can focus on their education.

DSA Strategic Initiative:

Increase Retention of First Time in College (FTIC) students

- Funding a college food pantry helps reduce food insecurity, allowing students to focus on their academics without the distraction of hunger, which directly improves their well-being, academic performance, and ultimately increases retention rates on campus.
- DSA Values: Care, Community, Integrity

Lowering Costs for Economically Disadvantages

- A college food pantry lowers costs for economically disadvantaged students by providing free access to essential food items, reducing their financial burden and allowing them to allocate limited resources toward other academic and living expenses.
- DSA Values: Care, Innovation, Community

Increased Student Engagement

- Supporting a college food pantry increases student engagement by creating a supportive community where students feel valued, encouraging them to participate in campus programs and events while reducing stress related to food insecurity. This fosters stronger connections between students and campus resources.
- DSA Values: Care, Empowerment, Community

Promote Increased student credit hours and GPA for FTIC

- A college food pantry helps first-time college students by alleviating food insecurity, allowing them to focus more on academics and reducing the need for part-time jobs, which can lead to increased credit hours and improved GPA. Access to essential resources supports academic stability and persistence.
- DSA Values: Collaboration, Care, Community

Funding Request- FY2024

Cougar Cupboard Base Funding	\$37,650
<u>Fringe</u>	<u>\$250.00</u>
<u>Admin Fee</u>	<u>\$2,274</u>
Total	\$40,174