

# Proposal: Cal State LA Meal Share & Food Recovery Initiative



## BACKGROUND & NEED

Food insecurity is a serious issue across the California State University system; a 2018 CSU study found about 41.6% of students had experienced food insecurity.<sup>1</sup> At Cal State LA, thousands of visits to the campus food pantry each year attest to the need, and hunger negatively impacts student well-being and academic success, so expanding support is critical.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, each semester, dining hall meal swipes that students do not use are “cleared at the end of each semester and don’t roll over,”<sup>3</sup> meaning hundreds of prepaid meals vanish instead of feeding hungry students. Likewise, campus dining facilities may have surplus prepared food daily that could be saved. Reducing this waste presents an opportunity to both fight student hunger and improve sustainability by diverting edible food from the trash.

While Cal State LA’s Food Pantry already provides fresh produce, pantry staples, and even small meal grants (e.g., the Eddie Eats program offers \$50 dining credits to eligible students), there is no system yet for meal swipe donations or regular recovery of leftover dining hall food for students. Implementing these programs would fill a key gap in the campus “Hunger-Free Campus” toolkit, complementing existing efforts like CalFresh enrollment and the pantry. (Notably, California’s AB 453 Hunger-Free Campus initiative recommends having a swipe sharing program, alongside a pantry and CalFresh access).<sup>4</sup>

## PROPOSAL OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

The Meal Share & Food Recovery Initiative will be a student-driven program (led by Associated Students, Inc. (ASI) in collaboration with the Dean of Students and University Dining Services) with two primary components:

1. Meal Swipe Donation Program (Eagle Swipes) – Allow students with meal plans to donate unused meal swipes or dining dollars to a fund that provides free meals for food-insecure students on campus.

2. Dining Hall Food Recovery Program (Golden Replate) – Collect safe, unserved leftover food from campus dining halls and events to redistribute to students in need, reducing food waste.

The goals of these initiatives include:

1. Increasing access to meals so that no Cal State LA student has to go hungry or skip meals due to financial hardship
2. Capturing surplus edible food from dining services and local partners, aligning with sustainability mandates (California law SB 1383 now “requires all food generators on campus to donate any excess” edible food)<sup>5</sup>
3. Empowering student leaders (through ASI and volunteers) to lead the fight against hunger and build partnerships with campus departments and local businesses to support basic needs
4. Enabling students in need to dine with their peers in campus facilities or receive nutritious food without stigma, supporting their health and academic performance

### **COMPONENT 1: MEAL SWIPE DONATION PROGRAM (EAGLE SWIPES)**

**Program Design:** This initiative will establish a meal swipe sharing system at Cal State LA, modeled after successful programs at other universities. Students with meal plans can voluntarily donate a portion of their unused swipes (or guest passes/declining dollars) to benefit peers who are food-insecure. For example, during the last two weeks of each semester (when students see they have extra swipes), a “Donate-a-Swipe” drive will be held. Donated swipes will be pooled into meal credits or vouchers for eligible students facing hunger.

**Mechanism:** We will work with University Dining Services (and its meal plan vendor) to create a secure method for donation. Options include an online form or app where meal plan holders pledge swipes, or a station at the dining hall entrance where students can physically donate swipes from their card. Each donated swipe would be converted into a meal voucher or electronic meal credit. The Basic Needs office could then load these meal credits onto the OneCard of students in need or distribute printable one-time meal passes. This ensures the donated swipes directly translate into dining hall access for hungry students, allowing them to get a hot meal just like any other student.

**Distribution to Students:** The program will coordinate with the Food Pantry and Dean of Students to identify students who could benefit (e.g., those who indicate food insecurity or are referred by campus counselors). Alternatively, an application or referral system can be set up through the existing Basic Needs Center. Recipients would receive a certain number of free meal vouchers/credits per term (subject to availability of donated swipes). Care will be taken to keep the process non-stigmatizing and confidential, for instance, utilizing digital credits on student ID cards so that using a donated meal is discreet.

**Promotion and Participation:** To maximize effectiveness (and avoid the low utilization seen in some swipe donation programs that only collect ~300 swipes/year),<sup>6</sup> ASI and student volunteers will heavily promote the drive. Outreach will include social media campaigns, flyers in the dorms, tabling events, and incentives (e.g. small prizes or philanthropy recognition for donors). Other CSU campuses have seen strong success with student-led meal sharing; for example, San Diego State’s program enabled students to share over 36,000 swipes in one year (about 30% of all swipes used) – “double the amount of all CSU campuses combined who use Swipe Out Hunger.”<sup>7</sup> With robust marketing and student buy-in, we aim for a similarly impactful participation at Cal State LA. Donating a swipe that would otherwise expire costs the donor nothing but can make a huge difference for a classmate in need.

**Funding and Logistics:** The meal swipe donations themselves are a non-monetary transfer, but some funds may be needed to administer the program. Potential costs include programming the card system for donated credits, printing meal vouchers, or covering a minimal fee that the dining vendor might require for each donated meal (some vendors treat donated swipes as lost revenue, but we will negotiate to minimize or waive such costs in the spirit of corporate social responsibility and compliance with SB 1383). ASI can allocate a portion of its budget or seek grant funding (such as CSU Hunger-Free Campus funds) to cover any administrative costs. In addition, any unused guest swipes (each unlimited plan comes with 5 guest swipes that expire if unused)<sup>8</sup> could be automatically pooled at semester’s end for donation, which is a policy ASI will advocate for.

**Expected Impact:** If even a few hundred swipes are donated each semester, that translates to a few hundred extra meals for students in need. This can significantly relieve stress for recipients and help them stay focused on their studies rather than on where their next meal is coming from. Donated meal credits also integrate food-insecure students into campus dining, providing hot and balanced meals and a chance to dine alongside peers (reducing isolation). As one basic needs advocate noted, a free daily meal in the campus cafeteria can improve student well-being and even academic outcomes.<sup>9</sup> Eagle Swipes leverages existing campus resources (unused swipes) to achieve these benefits at a very low cost.

## **COMPONENT 2: DINING HALL FOOD RECOVERY PROGRAM (GOLDEN REPLATE)**

**Program Design:** In tandem with swipe sharing, we propose a Food Recovery initiative (known as Golden Replate) to collect leftover food from campus dining operations and make it available to students, rather than letting it go to waste. Many colleges have pioneered such programs successfully! For example, at Cal Poly Humboldt, students negotiated with dining services to collect unused dining hall food and offer it at the campus pantry for free.<sup>10</sup> A similar approach at Cal State LA could significantly boost food resources for students.

**Mechanism:** The first step is establishing a partnership with the campus dining hall management (likely UAS or an external food service contractor). We will identify specific times

when surplus food is available (typically after meal periods or at closing time). For instance, at the end of dinner service, there may be trays of cooked items (like pasta, rice, meats, and vegetables) that were prepared but not served. Instead of discarding this excess yet perfectly good food, dining staff can set it aside under safe conditions for our program to collect. A team of trained student volunteers (or student staff employed via the Basic Needs office) will pick up the surplus food and transport it to a designated distribution point. We can utilize the existing Food Pantry facility (which has refrigeration and is accustomed to handling food donations)<sup>11</sup> or set up a “community fridge” on campus. One model is to have a same-night distribution: for example, UCLA’s Bruin Dine program serves leftover dining hall food to students at 10 PM on certain days, shortly after it’s collected.<sup>12</sup> We could implement a similar weekly event in the Student Union or another convenient location, where any student can come with a container to take home a free portion of that day’s rescued food. Alternatively, if distributing immediately at night is challenging, the recovered food can be chilled in the pantry refrigerators and offered the next day at a “free lunch” pickup hour. The exact method will be chosen based on food safety guidance.

**Food Safety Procedures:** Ensuring the safety and quality of recovered food is paramount. We will develop protocols in line with health regulations, dining staff will only donate “apparently wholesome” food (per the legal definition)<sup>13</sup> that has been held at safe temperatures and not served to the public. Volunteers handling the food will undergo basic food handler training (we can leverage the county’s free food handler certification programs). All containers and surfaces will be kept clean, and perishable items will be refrigerated promptly. Food will be labeled with the collection date/time and a “consume by” date, and we will disclaim that it is for same-day or next-day consumption. By following best practices (potentially using toolkits from organizations like the Food Recovery Network), we will maintain safety while redistributing leftovers.

**Volume and Frequency:** We will start with a pilot at one dining hall (e.g., the main Village Commons dining facility) on a limited basis, perhaps by collecting once or twice per week in the evenings. This pilot will let us gauge how much food is typically available and how many students participate. Early anecdotal evidence from other programs suggests substantial quantities can be rescued; UCLA’s Bruin Dine, for instance, rescued over 2,631 pounds of food in a single quarter, providing nearly 1,889 meals to students.<sup>14</sup> Based on pilot results, we can adjust the frequency and potentially expand to daily collections or include other campus food vendors (like coffee shops with unsold pastries, catering from events, etc.). The ultimate vision is to seamlessly integrate food recovery into dining operations, as it should become routine that any leftover edible food is either given to students on the spot or saved for donation, in compliance with California law.

**Community Partnership Opportunities:** Cal State LA’s location in LA means there are many nearby restaurants and grocery outlets. While the initial focus is on campus dining hall leftovers, the program can forge partnerships with local businesses over time. For example, nearby bakeries or cafes might donate end-of-day bread and meals; farmer’s market vendors could contribute unsold produce (building on our existing Student LunchBox partnership that already brings in rescued farmers’ market produce). We will coordinate with the Los Angeles

Community Fridges network and food banks for any surplus we cannot use on campus, ensuring no food goes to waste. By tapping into the amazing food in the area, we can enhance the variety of offerings to students (e.g. culturally diverse foods from local eateries) and strengthen town-gown relationships.

**Expected Impact:** Golden Replate will directly provide ready-to-eat meals or ingredients to students who might otherwise go hungry, at very low cost. It also has a sustainability payoff, as every pound of food diverted from the landfill helps reduce waste and greenhouse gas emissions. This aligns with Cal State LA's goals as a responsible, community-engaged university. Importantly, this initiative normalizes the idea that feeding students is a priority and that no food should be thrown away while students are food-insecure. Other campuses have demonstrated that such programs create a positive campus culture around mutual support and sustainability. For example, Cal Poly Humboldt's students reported feeling peace of mind knowing that if they can't afford food, there's always a place to get a meal. We anticipate similar benefits in student well-being and sense of community at Cal State LA.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementing the Meal Share & Food Recovery Initiative will involve careful planning, coordination, and a phased approach. Below is an outline of the key steps and timeline to launch the program this year:

1. **Secure Administrative Buy-In (Month 1-2):** Present this proposal to University Dining Services management, the Dean of Students/Basic Needs Department, and campus administrators to gain support. Emphasize how the program helps fulfill the Hunger-Free Campus criteria and SB 1383 compliance, and how liability concerns are addressed (with the Good Samaritan Act protection).
2. **Form a Working Group (Month 1-2):** ASI will establish a task force or committee (including student leaders, an ASI Basic Needs representative, dining services staff, the Food Pantry coordinator, and possibly a Risk Management officer). This group will refine the program details and oversee implementation.
3. **Develop Policies & Agreements (Month 2-3):** Draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or informal agreement between ASI and Dining Services for both program components. This should spell out responsibilities: e.g. dining will allow swipe donations and set aside leftovers on agreed schedule; ASI/student volunteers will handle collection and distribution, etc. Also, work out the technical process for tracking donated swipes and a protocol for food recovery (including food safety guidelines in writing).
4. **Logistics & Resource Setup (Month 2-4):** Update the meal plan management system (or create a simple Google Form if needed initially) to record donations. Design meal vouchers or digital credit system with the campus OneCard office. Set up a secure

database of recipients (possibly expanding the existing Dean of Students basic needs database). We'll also need to acquire supplies like food storage containers, thermal bags or coolers for transport, gloves, etc. If using a community fridge, obtain a refrigerator and place it in an accessible location (with necessary permissions). Ensure the Food Pantry can accommodate an extra food influx on distribution days (e.g., cleared fridge space). Finally, we'll recruit student volunteers through service clubs, nutrition students, or the Environmental club (since food recovery ties to sustainability). Train them on safe food handling, distribution etiquette, and confidentiality.

5. **Pilot Launch (Month 5 - start of semester):** Kick off the programs on a small scale. For meal swipes, we can do a pilot donation drive in the fall semester to collect a batch of swipes, and immediately distribute those to a small group of pre-identified students to test the workflow. (Additionally or alternatively, plan the main drive for end of semester when donations will peak). For food recovery, we can run a trial run once a week at one dining hall for the first 4-6 weeks. Monitor how much food is collected, how many students show up to take it, and refine the pickup process (timing, location, signage).
6. **Feedback and Scale-Up (Month 6-7):** This will be the time to gather feedback from participants, dining staff, and volunteers. Address any issues (for example, if demand exceeds supply or vice versa, adjust frequencies). By mid-semester, aim to expand the leftover food pickups to more days per week or include other campus eateries if the pilot shows success. Also, we will prepare for the big end-of-semester swipe donation drive: start publicity early, coordinate with resident advisors to remind students about donating their unused swipes before expiration.
7. **Full Implementation (Month 8 onward):** Execute the end-of-semester meal swipe donation event (likely in the last 1-2 weeks of the term). Convert donated swipes into meal credits and distribute them to students before finals (a high-stress time when a free meal could be especially welcome). For food recovery, move from pilot to a continuous program the next semester – potentially 3-5 nights per week of leftover distribution, based on volunteer capacity. Partner with more groups to sustain volunteer staffing (perhaps service-learning internships or Greek organizations adopting a night to help).
8. **Evaluation and Institutionalization (Ongoing):** Overall, we'll continuously track metrics: number of swipes donated, number of meals served via donation, pounds of food recovered, number of students served, etc. This data will be reported to ASI and campus leadership. Success stories from students who benefited should be collected (respectfully, with permission) to demonstrate impact. The goal is to secure long-term support, for instance, making the program a permanent part of Cal State LA's Basic Needs services (with a dedicated coordinator position funded, if possible). We will also use the results to apply for any relevant grants or the state's Hunger-Free Campus funds for additional resources. Over time, the program can expand (e.g., inviting faculty/staff to donate from their meal plans if applicable, or organizing community food drives to supplement).

This timeline allows a launch within the current academic year, starting small and building up. By the end of the year, we expect to have a proven model that can be refined and continued annually.

Phase	Time Frame	Primary Tasks & Milestones	Lead / Key Partners	Concrete Outputs
Secure Administrative Buy-In	Months 1 – 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present proposal to Dining Services, Dean of Students/Basic Needs, Risk Management, Facilities, Sustainability</li> <li>• Emphasise Hunger-Free Campus status, SB 1383 compliance, Good Samaritan liability shield</li> <li>• Obtain written “green-light” &amp; access to card-system data + dining kitchens</li> </ul>	ASI Exec Team (lead), Dining GM, Dean of Students, Risk Mgr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email/letter of support from each office</li> <li>• Access credentials to OneCard/meal-plan back-end.</li> <li>• Steering memo noting legal protections</li> </ul>
Form Working Group	Months 1 – 2 (overlaps)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruit 8-12 members: ASI Reps, Food Pantry coordinator, Dining Services Ops mgr, Sustainability rep, Risk Mgmt, two student volunteers.</li> <li>• Set weekly meeting cadence; adopt decision-making charter</li> </ul>	ASI President (Chair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official roster &amp; charter</li> <li>• Shared Slack/Teams channel &amp; Google Drive</li> </ul>
Develop Policies & Agreements	Months 2 – 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft MOU for both components (swipe donation + food recovery)</li> <li>• Define responsibilities, insurance language, food-safety SOPs,</li> </ul>	Working Group, University Counsel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed MOU,</li> <li>• SOP binder (pdf + printed)</li> <li>• Flowchart of swipe donation process</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>data-sharing rules</li> <li>Map technical workflow for swipe transfer &amp; voucher generation</li> </ul>		
Logistics & Resource Setup	Months 2 – 4	<p><i>Eagle Swipes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modify card system / build Google Form</li> <li>Design printable meal vouchers &amp; digital credit field in OneCard</li> <li>Database of eligible recipients</li> </ul> <p><i>Golden Replate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase Cambro pans, insulated bags, gloves, thermometers</li> <li>Secure community fridge location &amp; power</li> <li>Clear extra fridge space in pantry</li> </ul>	OneCard Office, Dining, IT, Facilities, Food Pantry, Volunteer Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Configured meal-swipe module</li> <li>20+ certified volunteers</li> <li>Fridge delivered &amp; plugged-in</li> <li>Inventory list of supplies</li> </ul>
Pilot Launch	Month 5 (Fall Sem.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eagle Swipes: 2-week “Donate a Swipe” mini-drive; 50–100 swipes targeted; distribute to 20 pre-screened students</li> <li>Recovery Pilot: Once-a-week pick-up from Village Commons for 4–6 weeks; serve food same night at Student Union (“Take-Home Tray Night”).</li> <li>Track temps, quantities, attendance,</li> </ul>	Volunteer Lead, Dining Shift Mgr, Basic Needs Case Mgr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot metrics sheet (swipes, lbs, students served)</li> <li>Issues log (timing, equipment, demand mismatch)</li> </ul>



		satisfaction surveys		
Feedback & Scale-Up	Months 6 – 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debrief with dining &amp; volunteers</li> <li>• Adjust pick-up time or location; add second dining hall if feasible</li> <li>• Begin marketing for large end-of-semester swipe drive (flyers, RA scripts, IG reels)</li> </ul>	Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised SOP v2.</li> <li>• Marketing toolkit (Canva assets, captions).</li> </ul>
Full Implementation	Month 8 +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eagle Swipes Drive: 2-week campaign; goal ≈ 1,000 swipes; convert to e-credits &amp; disburse before finals</li> <li>• Golden Replate: 3-5 nights/week; include campus cafés &amp; catering leftovers</li> <li>• Integrate service-learning interns; Greek org “adopt-a-night.”</li> </ul>	ASI Basic Needs, Dining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semester impact report</li> <li>• Volunteer rota covering all nights</li> </ul>
Evaluation & Institutionalisation	Ongoing (each term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly KPI dashboard: swipes donated, meals redeemed, lbs recovered, GHG avoided, unique students served, volunteer hours.</li> <li>• Collect anonymised student testimonials; share at ASI board &amp; President’s Cabinet</li> <li>• Apply for CSU Hunger-Free Campus funds; explore permanent Basic Needs</li> </ul>	ASI ED & Pres, Sustainability Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual report &amp; infographic</li> <li>• Grant applications submitted</li> <li>• Proposal for permanent staffing</li> </ul>

		Coordinator line item <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate adding faculty/staff meal-plan donations &amp; community restaurant partners.</li> </ul>		
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## LEGAL AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

A crucial aspect of this initiative is complying with all legal, health, and safety regulations. We have carefully considered the liability and food safety issues and will implement the program accordingly:

1. **Liability Protection:** Donating food in good faith to those in need is protected by the federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act. This law “protects you from civil and criminal liability when you donate to a non-profit organization, should the product donated in good faith later cause harm”) <sup>45</sup> Cal State LA (through ASI or the campus Foundation) is a non-profit educational institution, so both the university dining services and any external food donors will be covered under this Act’s protection. In California, this federal protection is further reinforced by state policy encouraging food donation. We will document that all food is donated and distributed for charitable purposes to ensure these protections fully apply. Additionally, recipients will be informed that the food is donated (typically via posted signage at distribution), which is a recommended practice. The only exception to liability protection is gross negligence or intentional misconduct, but our training and protocols will prevent those (e.g., we won’t knowingly serve food that has spoiled or been mishandled).
2. **Food Safety Laws:** The program will adhere to California Retail Food Code guidelines for food handling. Although the Good Samaritan Act preempts many local regulations, it “shall not be construed to supersede State or local health regulations,” meaning we still follow health department rules. All volunteers or staff handling food will have a California Food Handler’s card. We will coordinate with the campus Environmental Health & Safety office to ensure our storage and distribution methods meet any on-campus requirements. For example, if we operate a community fridge or distribution point, we may need approval as a temporary food facility. However, since the food is free and for students, requirements may be less strict than in a commercial operation. We will use NSF-approved food containers, maintain proper temperature control (hot foods kept hot above 140°F until pickup, or cooled to below 41°F within 2 hours for

refrigerated storage), and log all donation times and distribution times. Any perishable food not taken by the designated time will be promptly discarded to avoid risk.

3. **SB 1383 Compliance:** California Senate Bill 1383 (effective 2022) mandates large food generators (like universities) to donate a minimum of 20% of their surplus edible food to recovery organizations. By creating an on-campus recovery program, Cal State LA will fulfill this mandate in-house and can report those metrics. We will coordinate with Cal State LA's sustainability office to include our recovered food quantities in the required reporting to CalRecycle. This not only keeps us compliant with state law but also could reduce any waste disposal costs or penalties for the university. Essentially, our student-led effort helps the university meet a legal obligation in a positive, community-building way.
4. **University Policies and Insurance:** As an ASI-run initiative, this program will likely be covered under ASI's insurance and the university's liability umbrella, as ASI is a non-profit auxiliary of the university. We will nonetheless consult with the University Risk Management department before launch. If needed, participants can sign a simple waiver when volunteering or receiving food, though we aim to make access barrier-free for students. We will also ensure that any use of campus facilities (dining hall kitchens, student union space for distribution, etc.) is approved via the proper event/services requests, so all activities are officially sanctioned.
5. **Contractual Considerations:** Since Cal State LA's dining services are outsourced, we will review the contract to ensure there are no clauses preventing food donation or transfer of swipes. In fact, many dining vendors are increasingly willing to support such programs as part of their corporate social responsibility. SDSU's collaboration with Aztec Shops (their dining provider) on a swipe donation and food pantry support is a precedent. We will seek a written acknowledgment from the vendor that they agree to the swipe donation scheme and food recovery pickups. This will clarify that donating surplus food to students is permitted and encouraged. Additionally, to avoid any misuse of meal swipes (e.g. someone trying to sell their swipes), the program will have clear rules: donations are voluntary and go into a general fund and students cannot direct their swipes to specific individuals, nor can recipients exchange the free meal credits for cash or other items.

In summary, with these precautions and agreements in place, the initiative will operate safely and lawfully. The strong legal protections for food donation in the U.S. give us confidence that we can focus on feeding students rather than fearing liability. As shown, not only is it legal to donate food, it's encouraged by law, and our program will exemplify Cal State LA's commitment to both legal compliance and student welfare.

## ROUGH BUDGET

### **Eagle Swipes:**

Category	Item	Estimated Cost	Frequency	Notes
Swipe tracking system / IT integration	Tech support or OneCard programming	\$500–\$1,000	One-time	For swipe transfer mechanism (could be waived if handled internally)
Printing materials	Swipe donation cards, flyers, signage	\$300	Per semester	For tabling, dining hall displays, instructions
Marketing	Social media graphics, giveaways	\$100–\$200	Per campaign	Small incentives (e.g. bookstore raffle, stickers) to encourage participation
Staff training / outreach	Training for ASI staff or volunteers	\$0–\$200	Per semester	Could be free if done internally or through Peer Leaders
<b>Subtotal:</b>		<b>\$900-1,700</b>		

**Golden Replate:**

Category	Item	Estimated Cost	Frequency	Notes
Food-safe transport	Insulated bags, gloves, aprons, food pans	\$500–\$700	One-time	For safely transporting recovered food from dining halls
Cold food storage	Energy-efficient fridge/freezer	\$800–\$1,200	One-time	To store food before distribution; optional if using Food Pantry's storage
Signage & compliance	Food safety labels ("prepared on" stickers, etc.)	\$75–\$100	Per semester	Ensures SB 1383 and food safety compliance
Volunteer support	T-shirts, water bottles, small thank-you items	\$450	Per semester	Helps with volunteer retention and recognition
Training & certification	Food handler certification for 10–15 volunteers	\$200–\$300	Annual	Required for food safety; sometimes available for free through LA County
Distribution materials	Napkins, disposable trays, utensils	\$200	Per semester	For hygienic, accessible food service
Data & metrics tracking	Digital food scale and logbook/app	\$100	One-time	Tracks pounds of food rescued, meals served, etc. for reporting and grants
Outreach & marketing	Awareness signage, flyers, branding materials	\$1,000	Per semester	Promotes the program, educates students on safety and access
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$3,325-4,050</b>		

## CONCLUSION AND FINAL THOUGHTS

By launching the Meal Share & Food Recovery Initiative, Cal State LA can take a bold step toward ending student hunger on our campus. This multifaceted program, run by students, for students, directly addresses hunger by using resources we already have: meal swipes that would otherwise be wasted and food that would otherwise be thrown out. It aligns perfectly with our values of community, service, and sustainability. Moreover, it strengthens partnerships: between students and administration, between the university and local community donors, and among students themselves in a culture of care. Implementing this initiative in the current year is an ambitious but achievable goal. The planning outlined above will ensure that we start small, learn, and scale up effectively. In the coming weeks, we will finalize approvals and begin the pilot phases. Our hope is that by the end of this academic year, no Cal State LA student will have to go to bed hungry, whether through a free hot dinner from donated swipes or a package of recovered food picked up after class. Success will be measured not just in pounds or swipes donated, but in the stories of students able to focus on their education because their campus community had their back.