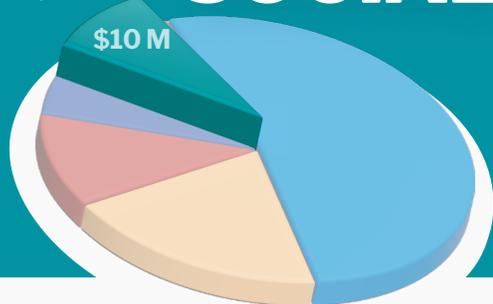




ADDRESSING THE WORKFORCE SHORTAGE:

# SOCIAL SERVICES



**THE STATE SYSTEM IS SEEKING \$112 MILLION IN NEW FUNDING\***

\$10 million of that amount will be used for financial aid to reduce costs for students pursuing jobs in social services

## The POWER of PASSHE:

**3,007 social services students at PASSHE universities**

**9,187 PASSHE social services graduates are working in PA**

**10% of PA's social services shortage can be filled by PASSHE by 2030**

### The Need:

Social services workers are vital to relieving suffering and improving the lives of children, seniors and many other Pennsylvanians, but with 12% job growth anticipated by 2030, the commonwealth needs a stronger pipeline of qualified professionals.

### PASSHE Solution:

With more than 9,000 graduates in social services jobs in Pennsylvania, PASSHE is ready to increase enrollment by 15% to help meet the need for more workers. The State System is seeking a targeted investment of \$112 million in new funding to produce more graduates in six high-growth jobs, including social services. PASSHE plans to use \$10 million to provide direct financial relief to social services students, saving each an average of \$1,500. High-need students could receive an additional \$5,000, for a total of \$6,500 per year.

*\* PASSHE is also seeking \$573.5 million, an inflationary increase of \$21 million (or 3.8%), that combined with the \$112 million in new funding for targeted student support would enable the Board of Governors to consider freezing the basic in-state undergraduate tuition rate for an unprecedented fifth consecutive year.*

### Students Making a Difference

Senior social work majors **Ally Murr, Jessica Jones, Imani Bethea** and **Frances Rimby** are inspired to use their education to make a difference.

While they were researching poverty, the **Shippensburg University** students wanted to bring awareness to the issue and started a collection to support the St. Francis of Assisi Parish Soup Kitchen. The effort far exceeded their initial goals by gathering more than 2,500 items.

“We are truly grateful for the chance to help less fortunate people in this region,” said Murr.

After gaining valuable experience from the project, the students are looking forward to graduation and starting their social work careers helping other Pennsylvanians.

## Social Work Student Goes from Homelessness to Helping Others



**Meghan** may have lived in her car, but it doesn't define her. The **Slippery Rock University** student's full story is more inspiring. Meghan, a senior social work major, is a testament to the power and promise of public higher education.

“If I didn't have access to higher education, I would have never realized or been able to reach my full potential,” said Meghan. “While I got decent grades and people said I have the potential to do anything I wanted in life, if I didn't have access to college, I wouldn't have been able to do the things I wanted to that require a degree.”

At age 14, Meghan met a social worker and mentor who changed her life, inspiring her to help other kids and young adults. But the journey has been challenging. Megan was homeless off and on from 2012-17, including a semester at a private college where she lived in her car.

Her college journey included time at three other schools and was paused in 2017, when she returned to work after the death of her father. Still, using her experiences as motivation, Meghan did not give up and enrolled at SRU in 2021.

“I'm able to look at problems through a different lens than I had before, mixing some of my street smarts with the theories of upper-level classes of academia. I've grown into a completely different person than I was two years ago before I came here.”

While working toward her degree, Meghan also does wheel alignments as a mechanic's apprentice and interns at a regional human services agency. On campus, she worked with the university to make finding supports easier for students who are homeless or from foster care.

Meghan will graduate in May and plans to pursue a master's degree. Her story demonstrates the far-reaching impacts of a college degree.

“A college education can be generation changing,” Meghan said. “You can set your family or your future family up for success with better jobs and things that you didn't have when you grew up. And to be able to make that change within your own family or community is really important.”

### Pennsylvania's High-Growth Jobs and Industries

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NURSING

SOCIAL SERVICES

BUSINESS

COMPUTER SCIENCE

ENGINEERING

[www.passhe.edu](http://www.passhe.edu)

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