



Weekend Refresh: A Weekly Food and Care Pantry Pop-Up

Naomi Klockars, Environmental Studies 480, College of the Sciences, Central Washington University

Introduction

The challenge with access to food is a sustainability problem observed worldwide, but especially in rural areas like Ellensburg, WA.

Unreliable access to food, also called food insecurity, is common in college populations. Further, a lack of nutritious options exacerbates negative health outcomes.

At Central, food options covered by a meal plan often have limited hours in the evenings/weekends, and our on-campus food bank "Wildcat Pantry" is closed on Fridays as well as weekends. With these barriers, the struggle to find healthy and affordable meals becomes embedded in daily life.

What is Food Insecurity?

- Food insecurity is defined as a lack of access to food that negatively affects your daily structure and habits of living.
- Here are some examples of **Food Insecurity**

Short term Food Insecurity	LongTerm Food Insecurity
Leaving class late and noticing Dining/SURC food options are closed for the day	Loss of income forcing a consistent, under-budgeting of groceries



Figure 1: The Multicultural Center (MCC) is a home for community, collaboration, and cultural celebration at CWU. It's an open space for all students and is fully equipped for students to stop by, host, and attend a wide variety of events, including a fully functioning kitchen, dance space, meeting rooms, and a reflection/prayer room. The kitchen area will be the space for Weekend Refresh.

What is Weekend Refresh?

- Weekend Refresh** is a weekly meal, snack, and hygiene package pick-up where students can order ahead of time and pick up items to supplement weekend necessities, starting Fall 2026!
- The goal → supplement student's weekend meals & ease worries on where to find food outside of normal business hours.

How Does it Work?

- Before every Monday, students can use an online form to order a package to pick up the following Friday at the Multicultural Center (MCC).
- A **Wildcat Pantry** Staff Member will distribute pickup orders at the MCC's kitchen from 12PM-3PM every Friday starting September 20th.

What is included in the packages?

The different varieties of packages are:

Three recipes for stovetop meals, Microwave meals and snacks, & Hygiene supplies!



Keep an eye out on the Wildcat Pantry Instagram for specific dietary details on each package.



Figure 2: An example of Weekend Refresh stovetop meal kit packages and ready for pick-up.

Figure 3: An example of perishable items available for kits To keep the refrigerated food fresh, items will be in Multicultural Center (MCC) fridges prior to distribution.



Figure 4: The Wildcat Pantry is an on-campus secondary food resource available to CWU students and located in the Brooks Library. Wildcat Pantry Staff will filter through student's orders, as well as individually package and distribute food out to students each Friday at the Multicultural Center (MCC).

Summary

Weekend Refresh is a weekly food and hygiene order-to-pickup service where students can choose a package to fit their nutrition and hygienic needs without breaking the bank.

This pilot program will launch Fall of 2026 and help the student population in many ways including aiding cooking skills, independence in college life, and overall help finding food and necessities within a student's budget.

The goal is to aid over 60 students per week for the first 4 weeks of fall quarter. After this time, the Wildcat Pantry will choose whether they will adopt this pilot program to continue all year if survey results demonstrate a beneficial aid to students' basic needs.

UN Sustainable Development Goals:



Acknowledgements

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References

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