



SchoolHouse
Connection

BUILDING THE BRIDGE FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO HIGHER EDUCATION

*Thursday, October 10, 2019 | 9:15AM
Orlando, Florida*



About SchoolHouse Connection

SchoolHouse Connection is a national nonprofit organization working to overcome homelessness through education, from birth through postsecondary. We provide strategic advocacy and technical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

- Website
<http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org>
- Facebook Group
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SchoolHouseConnection/>
- Newsletter
<https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/sign-up/>
- Federal and state policy advocacy
- Q&A from our inbox
- Webinars and implementation tools
- Youth leadership and scholarships



Today's Agenda

- Quick overview of the causes of homelessness and barriers in higher ed. access.
 - Early Intervention
 - Tuition and Fee Resources
 - FAFSA
 - Engaging Students
 - Post-Acceptance Support
 - Creative Supports
 - Current bills addressing barriers
-

Causes of Youth Homelessness

Sexual Abuse
20-40%

Family Homelessness
Nearly 1/4

**Prior experience of
foster care**
Nearly 1/3

Physical Abuse
40-60%

**Death of a parent or
caregiver**
Over 1/3

**Need for
trauma-informed
wraparound** and case
management services
in addition to housing
support

Government Accountability Office Report: Access to Federal Financial Assistance for Homeless and Foster Youth

Burdensome program rules can hinder the ability of homeless and foster youth to access federal supports.

Annual re-verification of homelessness poses barriers for unaccompanied homeless youth.

Key findings of
[May 2016 report:](#)

Extensive documentation requests can impede access to aid for homeless youth.

Limited academic preparation, family support, and awareness of resources **make it harder** for homeless and foster youth to pursue college.

Early Intervention

- Reach out to McKinney-Vento eligible students as early as freshman year to schedule meetings to discuss postsecondary options.
- Create a checklist to review each time you meet.
- Encourage them to read the U.S. Department of Education's guide, ["I Want to go to College: Now What?"](#)

Tuition and Fees

- If students are interested in postsecondary education, make sure they take the ACT/SAT exams.
 - Utilize fee waivers ([ACT/SAT](#)).
- Inform students of Florida state tuition/fee policy
 - **Florida §1009.25 (1991):** A student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, or who lives in a shelter or a public or private place not ordinarily used as regular accommodation, is exempt from the payment of tuition and fees for a school district workforce education program, Florida College System institution, or state university.

Financial Aid

- Understand how to verify (through a [homeless service provider](#) and [independently](#)) that a student is experiencing homelessness or is at risk of experiencing homelessness for financial aid purposes.
- Have a sample verification letter ready.
- Who can verify?
 - A school district homeless liaison
 - The director (or designee) of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
 - The director (or designee) of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program.
 - The Financial Aid Administrator

To Whom It May Concern:

I am providing this letter to convey my determination that after July 1, 2019, [NAME OF STUDENT] was

an unaccompanied homeless youth, as defined by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act and the U.S. Department of Education's July 29, 2015, Dear Colleague Letter.

an unaccompanied, self-supporting youth at risk of homelessness.

Student's SSN:

Student's DOB:

Student's Mailing Address: *[if the student does not have a stable address, you may list the name, phone number and mailing address of a friend or relative, or the school]*

As per the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (Public Law 110-84), I am authorized to document this student's living situation and determine his/her independent student status as an unaccompanied homeless youth or unaccompanied, self-supporting youth at risk of homelessness. The financial aid office is not required to confirm this determination in the absence of conflicting information. It is not conflicting information if the financial aid administrator disagrees with my determination.² Feel free to address any questions to me at the number or e-mail address listed below.

Financial Aid Tips

- Offer one on one support as students fill out the FAFSA by connecting with a local campus to offer a FAFSA event or by hosting one within your school.
- Utilize resources like [Form Your Future](#) to find local events and to learn how to design your own.
- Disseminate information as often as possible on FAFSA deadlines and events.
- Provide safe and secure access to computers.
- Help families utilize [FAFSA4Caster](#) to estimate their aid.

Engaging Students

- Host a college tour.
 - [McKinney-Vento Opportunity Tour](#) created by Kylee Fuhr, District Homeless Liaison, St. Lucie Public Schools, Florida
- Put aside a stack of scholarships students are eligible for.
- Create [partnerships](#) with local campuses to have representatives from admissions, TRIO, Student Support, etc. come and speak with students.
- Utilize [summer bridge programs](#) to keep students engaged and supported during the summer between high school graduation and higher education.

Post-Acceptance Support

- Help students choose the best housing/meal plan option
 - Ask if there is housing that stays open through the holiday break/all year.
 - Choose a meal plan that will provide food the entire semester rather than a lump sum of dining cash at the beginning if possible.
- Connect students who are going to the same campus for support, roommate opportunities, and potential transportation options

Post-Acceptance Support

- Dorm Supplies as a Civic Engagement project
 - <https://www.kiwanis.org/news/newsitem/news/newsitem/jump-start-a-life>



Post-Acceptance Support

- Consider sending an email to students once they begin college to let them know that you are thinking of them and that you believe in them.
- Second year FAFSA letters: if you can't provide one, let them know who can.
- Encourage them to start thinking about summer housing options early if their on-campus housing closes
 - Resources can include summer employment with housing such as summer camps, or summer fellowship/support programs that provide housing, such as the [Public Policy and International Affairs](#) summer program for college students.

SchoolHouse Connection Scholarship Program



- Deadline in November
- Eligible students:
 - Born on or after November 11, 1999
 - Entering college for the first time during the 2020-2021 school year.

<https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/youth-leadership/scholarship-program/>

Higher Education Resources

Pathways to Partnership: Higher Education Tip Sheets

- Transition from High School to Postsecondary
- Financial Aid

Archived webinar:

[Paving the Way to and Through Higher Education: Learning from Indiana's Liaisons](#)

THE
FAFSA!



4 Things You Can Do To Help Homeless and Foster Youth

“Be willing to ask”



Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth (HEASHFY) S.789 / H.R. 1724

Removes barriers to higher education access and success caused by homelessness and foster care by simplifying eligibility for federal financial aid and improving outreach, resources, and policies.

Sponsored by:

- U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and U.S. Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) in the Senate
- U.S. Representatives Katherine Clark (D-5th/MA) and Don Young (R-At Large/AK) in the House of Representatives



The Fostering Success in Higher Education Act

*U.S. Representative Danny Davis (D-7th/IL) and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)

Authorizes a new grant program in the Higher Education Act administered by the US Dept. of Ed. to provide:

\$150 million a year in formula grants to states, tribes, and territories to:

- **Establish or expand transitions between K-12 and higher education for foster and homeless youth**, including summer bridge programs, through statewide initiatives;
- Develop “institutions of excellence” committed to serving foster and homeless youth from entrance to completion via robust support services and by covering the remaining cost of attendance beyond federal and state grant



The Homeless Children and Youth Act of 2019 H. 2001 (HCYA)

Corrects long-standing flaws in U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) homeless assistance for children, youth, and families.

Sponsored by:

- U.S. Representatives Steve Stivers (R-OH) and Dave Loebsack (D-IA) in the House of Representatives

Thank You!



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