

HOUSE Liaison Training

AY 2023-2024 | November 8, 2023

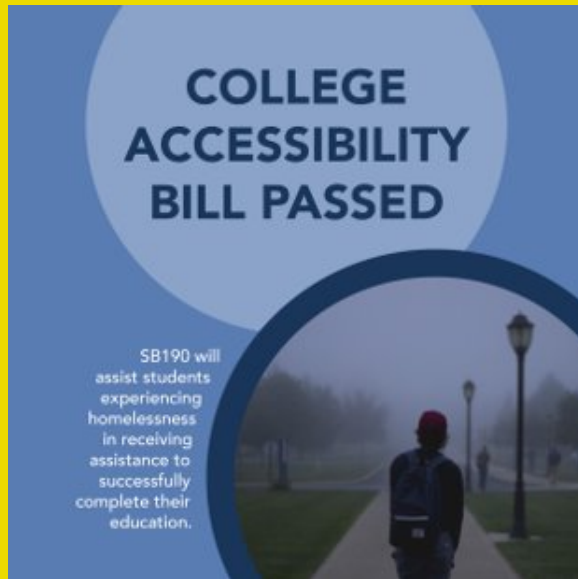
Welcome

Ginger Ostro | Executive Director, Illinois Board of Higher Education

Presenters

- **Alyssa Phillips** from Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
- **Kim Peck** from Department of Children and Family Services
- **Kate Danielson** from Foster Progress
- **Thomas Semanic** from Illinois Student Assistance Commission
- **Jillian Sitjar** from SchoolHouse Connection

COLLEGE ACCESS BILL - HIGHER EDUCATION HOUSING AND OPPORTUNITIES ACT



November 8, 2023

Alyssa Phillips

Aphillips@chicagohomeless.org

HOW WE GOT HERE

Despite facing many challenges including deep poverty and instability many youth who experience homelessness wish to pursue careers that require some form of postsecondary education.



HOW WE GOT HERE

- Students experiencing homelessness are often invisible on college campuses, unsure if there are services available, and confused about who they should turn to when problems arise.
- Students attempt to blend in because they want to be like other students despite their atypical circumstances.



HOW WE GOT HERE



Students experiencing homelessness who were part of our scholarship program shared their perspectives and expressed struggles with applying for financial aid, finding housing, and identifying staff on campus who can answer their questions.

This conversation inspired what became SB190 (Public Act 102-0083) – Higher Education Housing and Opportunities Act (Sen. Glowiak-Hilton and Rep. West).



HIGHER EDUCATION HOUSING AND OPPORTUNITIES ACT

DEFINITION



A student experiencing homelessness or homeless student is “an individual enrolled in an institution who lacks or is at imminent risk of lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or whose parent or legal guardian is unable or unwilling to provide shelter and care and includes a homeless individual as defined under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.”

Indicators a student might be an unaccompanied homeless youth:

- Overly concerned about how to complete documentation needed for the institution that requires parental signatures
- Difficulty providing an address
- Giving vague answers about their living situation
- Stressed about where they will be living during the summer
- Hunger
- Wearing the same clothes repeatedly
- Exhaustion
- Expressing feeling like their only option is to drop out of school

TO AID STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, EACH INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL DESIGNATE AT LEAST ONE STAFF MEMBER TO SERVE AS A LIAISON TO ASSIST HOMELESS STUDENTS ENROLLED AT THE INSTITUTION.



HOUSE LIAISON

The designated staff member may be employed in the office of financial aid, in campus housing services, or in any other appropriate office or department as determined by the institution.



HOUSE LIAISON

Under 110 ILCS 131/10 (a)
the liaison designated shall offer assistance and
resources to any homeless
student or student enrolled at the institution.

The liaison shall have the
following responsibilities:



HOUSE LIAISON



To understand provisions pertaining to the financial aid eligibility of homeless students, including eligibility as an independent student under the federal Higher Education Act of 1965.

HOUSE LIAISON



To identify services
and resources that are
available to and appropriate
for a homeless student

HOUSE LIAISON



To assist homeless students or students in care in applying for and receiving federal and State financial aid and available services.

HOUSE LIAISON



To track and monitor the graduation rate and retention rate of homeless students and students in care enrolled at the institution.

HOUSE LIAISON



To publish on the institution's website information about the services and resources available through the institution's liaison, as well as contact information for local, State, and federal services.

HOUSE LIAISON



To develop a plan to provide access to on-campus housing or to suitable off-campus housing between academic breaks to homeless students or students in care enrolled at the institution.

HOUSE LIAISON



- To act as an intermediary between a homeless student or student in care and the office of financial aid, student support services, and campus housing services.
- To connect a homeless student or student in care to a local continuum of care program.

HOUSE LIAISON



To train the institution's employees to identify students experiencing homelessness and to refer those students to the liaison.

EACH INSTITUTION THAT PROVIDES ON-CAMPUS
HOUSING FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED AT THE INSTITUTION
SHALL:



HOUSING

Grant priority for on-campus housing to students experiencing homelessness and students in care who are enrolled at the institution, including but not limited to, access to on-campus housing that remains open during academic breaks, and waive fees for the on-campus housing during academic breaks

HOUSING

Allow students experiencing homelessness and students in care who are enrolled part-time at the institution to access on-campus housing.



HOUSING

Provide information about the availability of on-campus housing to students experiencing homelessness and students in care.



HOUSING

Provide information about the services and assistance offered by the institution regarding homelessness in financial aid and admission packets and on the institution's website.



HOUSING

Collaborate with the State Coordinator for McKinney-Vento Homeless Education and the contact liaisons to facilitate the efficient transition of homeless students from secondary to postsecondary education



HOUSING

Provide homeless students and students in care information about support services, including financial aid, on-campus and off-campus housing, food and meal plan programs, and counseling services, and other resources and any other relevant information to assist these students.



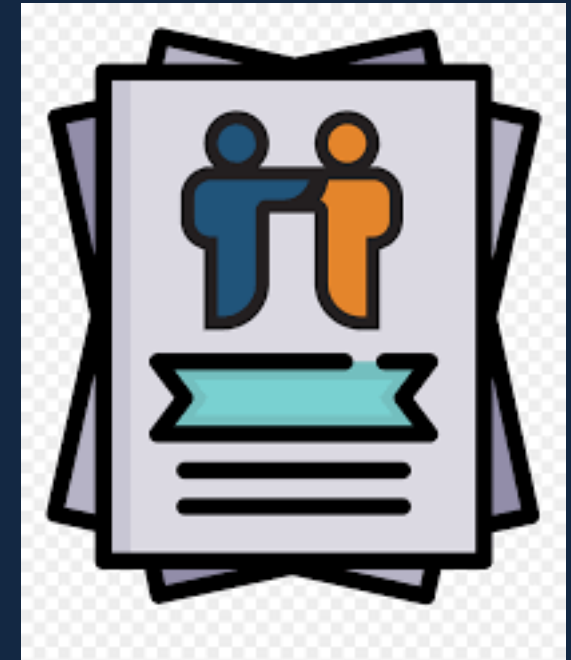
Best Practice

BEST PRACTICE IS FOR INFORMATION TO BE SHARED WITH ALL STUDENTS ABOUT RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.



Best Practice

IT IS CRITICAL THAT STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS ARE AWARE OF RESOURCES ON CAMPUS. USE VARIOUS METHODS SUCH AS, EMAILS, FLYERS, POSTERS, SCHOOL WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS, AND APPROPRIATE AND SAFE IN-PERSON VISITS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.



Best Practices

CREATE A LIST OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE
THROUGH THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY THAT
CAN BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS.



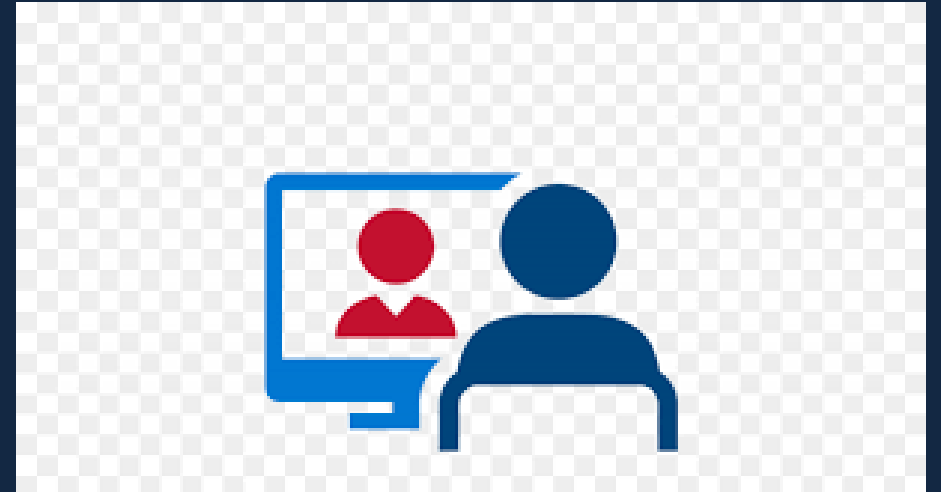
Best Practices

ESTABLISH A CONTACT PERSON WITH DEPARTMENTS AT THE SCHOOL AND LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS SUCH AS FOOD PANTRIES, YOUTH DROP-IN CENTERS, HOUSING AND CASE MANAGEMENT.



BEST PRACTICES

Record or host webinars that discuss resources and assistance with financial aid for students experiencing homelessness and faculty and staff that are interested in learning how to support their students.



BEST PRACTICES

- Schools should consistently collect and update contact information of students experiencing homelessness.
 - This includes current address, phone numbers (including cell and alternate phone numbers), email address, and emergency contact information.
 - Schools should reach out to students to update this information monthly.



CONTACT INFORMATION

Alyssa Phillips

aphillips@chicagohomeless.org

872.588.6800



ACCESSING DCFS POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS

Kim Peck
Downstate Administrator
DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services

DCFS POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS

- Youth in College/
Vocational Training
(YIC/ VT)
- Education & Training
Voucher (ETV)
- DCFS Scholarship (YIS)
- Tuition & Fee Waiver

YOUTH IN COLLEGE/VOCATIONAL TRAINING (YIC/VT)

- DCFS must have court ordered legal responsibility for the youth; a placement for youth in care.
- Monthly board payment of \$1,577 for up to 5 consecutive years, once Bachelor's Degree is earned or through age 25; whichever occurs first.
- Reimbursement for books not covered by financial aid grants.
- One time startup funding to be used for living expenses

YIC REQUIREMENTS

- **Submit a complete application (CFS-449). It is a one-time application and must be completed by the case worker**
- **Student needs to fulfill the following requirements to continue in the program.**
 - Submit a schedule of classes every semester showing a minimum of 12 credit hours or full time status.
 - Submit final grades for the semester they just completed showing a minimum of 2.0 term GPA at full time status.
 - If unable to maintain full time status, student must contact YIC coordinator prior to dropping below full time status.

DCFS SCHOLARSHIP

- **Competitive Scholarship; Must award a minimum of 53.**
- **Monthly stipend of \$1,557 up to 5 consecutive years or through age 25.**
- **One time startup funding to be used for living expenses**
- **Illinois Medical Card**
- **Reimbursement available for books not covered by financial aid grants**
- **Tuition & Mandatory fee waiver if attending Illinois state funded community colleges or universities – school uses MAP and other tuition specific funds before applying the DCFS waiver.**

DCFS SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS

- **DCFS must have court-ordered legal guardianship for the applicant, the applicant must have aged out of DCFS care at age 18 or older, or the department must have had legal guardianship for the applicant immediately prior to an adoption or guardianship being finalized.**
- **Submit a complete application. It is a one-time application if awarded the scholarship.**
- **A complete application must be submitted within application period -- January 1st to March 31st)**
- **Student needs to fulfill the following requirements to continue in the program.**
 - Submit a schedule of classes every semester showing a minimum of 12 credit hours or full time status.
 - Submit final grades for the semester they just completed showing a minimum of 2.0 term GPA at full time status.
 - If unable to maintain full time status, student must contact YIS coordinator prior to dropping below full time status.

TUITION & FEE WAIVER

- **Department must have court ordered legal guardianship of the applicant, must have aged out of DCFS guardianship at 18 or older, or the department must have had legal guardianship prior to adoption or guardianship being finalized**
- **Applicant must have high school diploma from an accredited institution, high school equivalency certificate, or met State criteria for high school graduation before the start of the school year for which applicant is applying for waiver**
- **Applicant must have filed FAFSA**

HOW TO ACCESS TUITION & FEE WAIVER

Complete and submit Tuition and Fee Waiver program application CFS-438-A to DCFS.TuitionWaiver@illinois.gov. The individual student can do this and does not require case worker to do so

Submit grades and schedule each term once accepted into the program to continue

EDUCATION & TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV)

- Youth for whom DCFS is legally responsible or who aged out of care at age 18 or older OR achieved permanency at age 16 or older through either guardianship or adoption.
- Up to \$5,000 to cover Cost of Attendance items such as tuition, fees, books, supplies, uniforms, equipment and/or transportation not covered by other grants or scholarships.
- Funding available through age 25 or 5 years as long as the student is continuing to make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in the program.
- Award is based on Cost of Attendance and other grants/scholarships
- Computers allowed ONLY if schools include a computer in their Cost of Attendance and there is funding left after tuition and fees are paid (students do not receive \$5000 AND a computer).
- Student may attend any school that is listed as currently accredited at <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/search.aspx>

HOW ACCESS ETV FUNDING

Submit a complete CFS-449-3 package Once a year directly to DCFS.ETVCoordinator@illinois.gov.



ETV program does not require full time status; however, the student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Laura Gutiérrez

Post-Secondary Education Specialist

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Kim Peck

Downstate OETS Administrator

Kim.Peck@illinois.gov

Nashun Avery

Post-Secondary Education Specialist

Nashun.Avery@illinois.gov

DCFS.ETVCoordinator@Illinois.gov

[Post-Secondary Education Services \(illinois.gov\)](https://www.illinois.gov/post-secondary-education-services)

DCFS Website > Brighter Futures > Education Resources for Youth in Care > Post-Secondary Education Services



VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Laura Gutierrez

OETS Post-Secondary Education Specialist

Each Wednesday 3:00-5:00 pm

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m32c4e7e619de1abc0a9950ce1ff6f02c>

Nashun Avery

OETS Post-Secondary Education Specialist

Each Monday 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=mf32c05d23836984bb71849d511bb18f7>



FOSTER PROGRESS

Our Agenda

1. Intro to Foster Progress
2. Intro to foster care
3. The barriers to college completion
4. Recommendations for mitigating barriers

A teal speech bubble with a white outline, pointing towards the bottom-left corner. It contains the text "Thank you!" in white.

**Thank
you!**

Foster Progress

Empowering youth who have experienced foster care to attain a college degree and transition into adulthood successfully through mentoring, advocacy, and educational opportunity.

Mentoring &
Scholarships

Traverse

Training &
Advocacy

Y-CAP

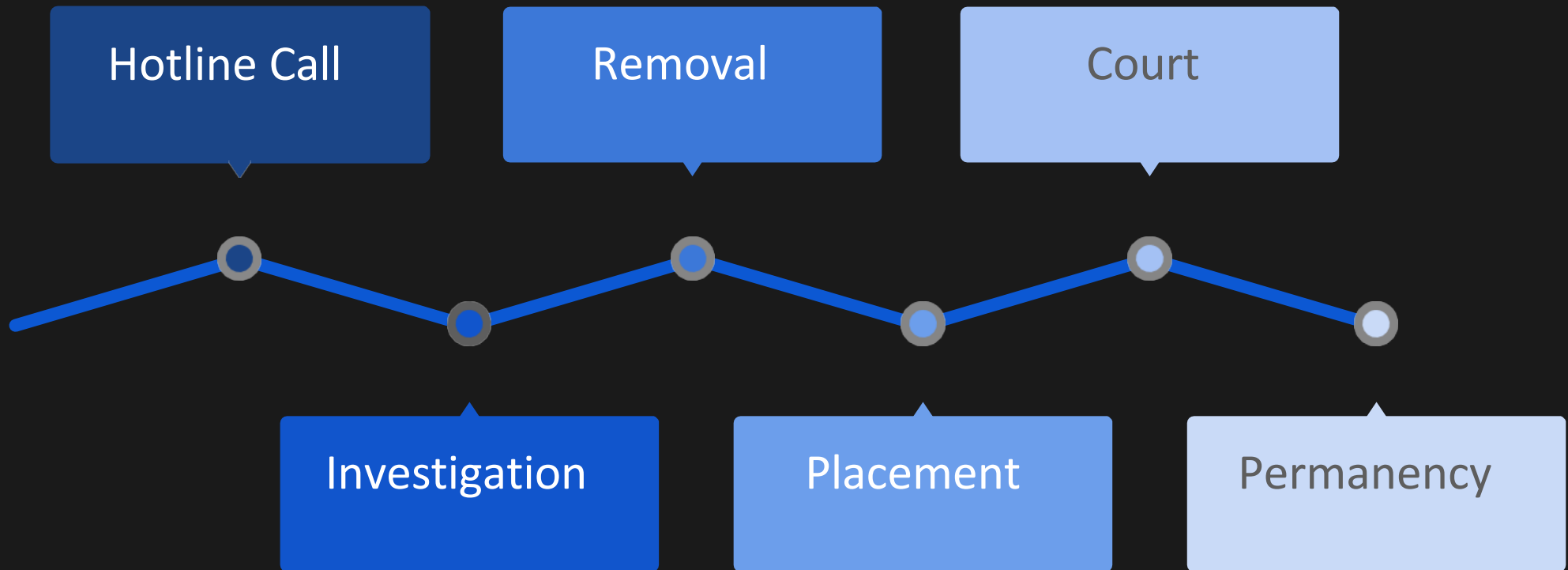
Y-CAP

Youth in Care
College Advocate Program

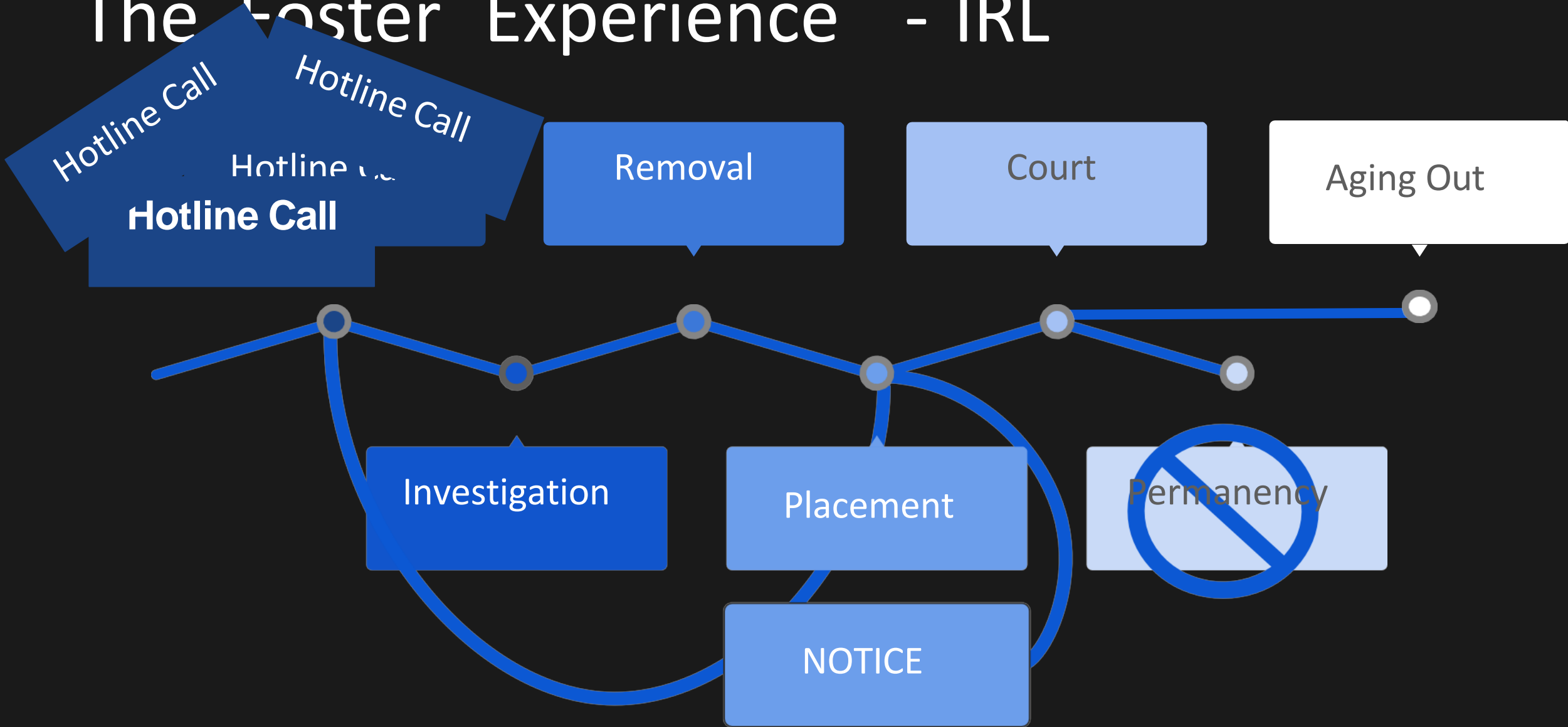
Peer advocates on college campuses running supportive groups for youth who have experienced foster care

- University of Illinois at Chicago
- University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign
- Northern Illinois University
- Governors State University
- Harold Washington College
- Kishwaukee College

The Foster Experience



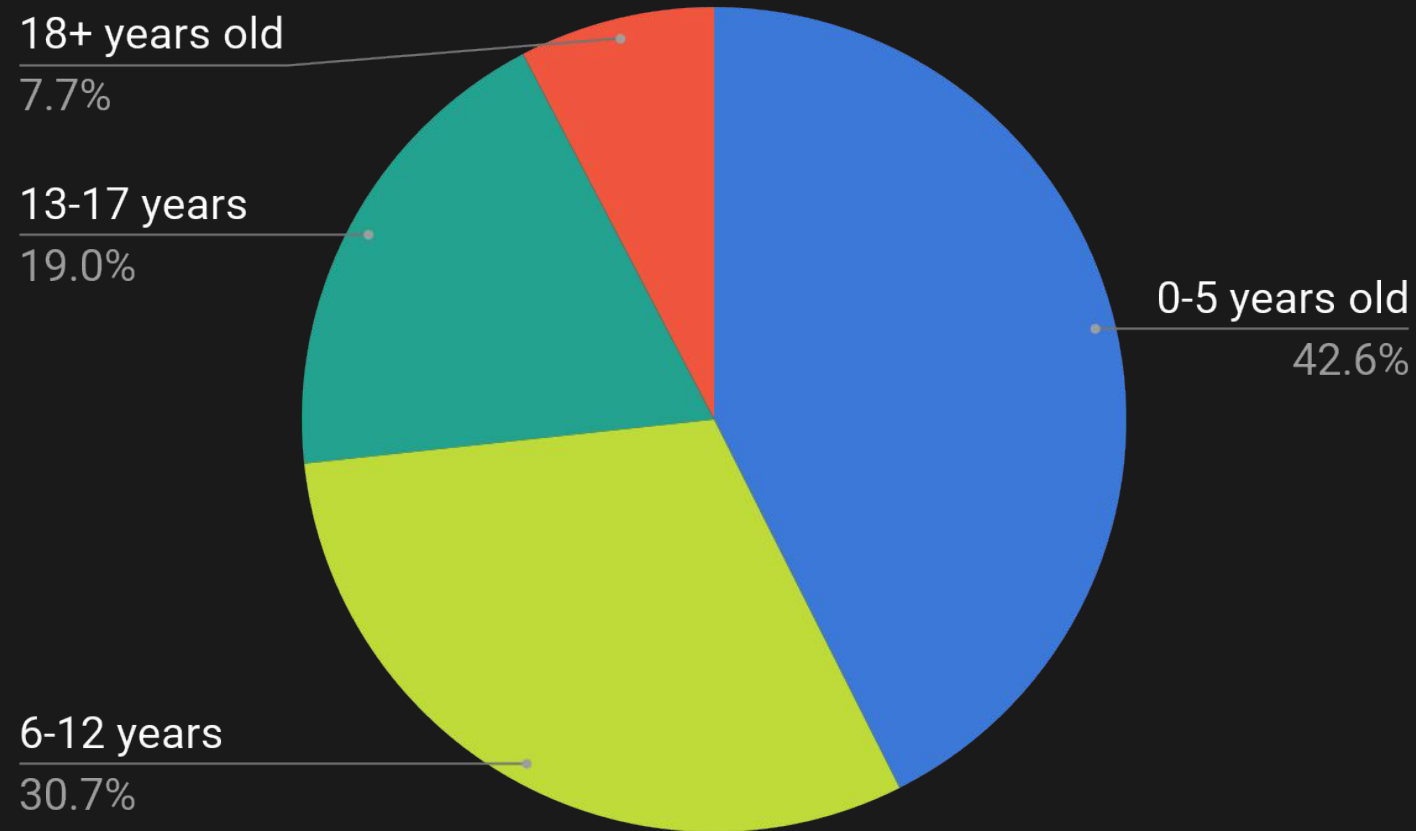
The Foster Experience - IRL



Youth in Care

There are approximately 21,000 children in foster care in Illinois.

32.3% of them, or 6,783 youth, are teens and young adults.



Aging Out



28,000 youth “age-out” of foster care each year in the US between the ages of 18-21.

In 2011, Illinois had the third highest rate in the country of youth aging out.

In 2011, around 50% of youth in Illinois exited foster care by aging out.

Outcomes for Youth Aging Out

Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of
Former Foster Care Youth at age 26, 2011



Degree Attainment



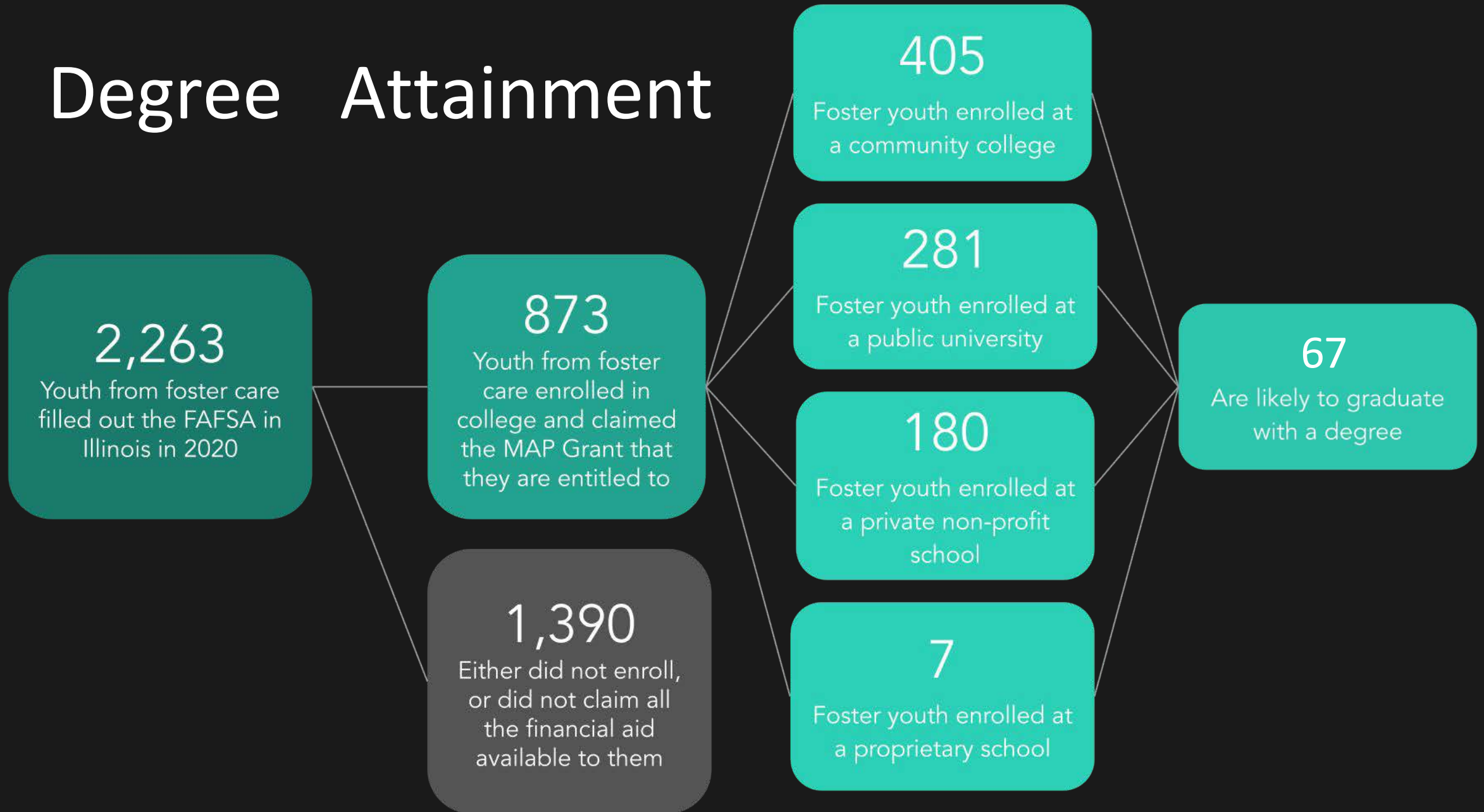
86%

Youth from foster care
who say they want to
attend college

3%

Youth from foster care
who earn a college
degree

Degree Attainment



Barriers Our Students Face

trauma

medical
issues

biases

mental/
emotional
health

educational
deficits

early
parenthood

financial
instability

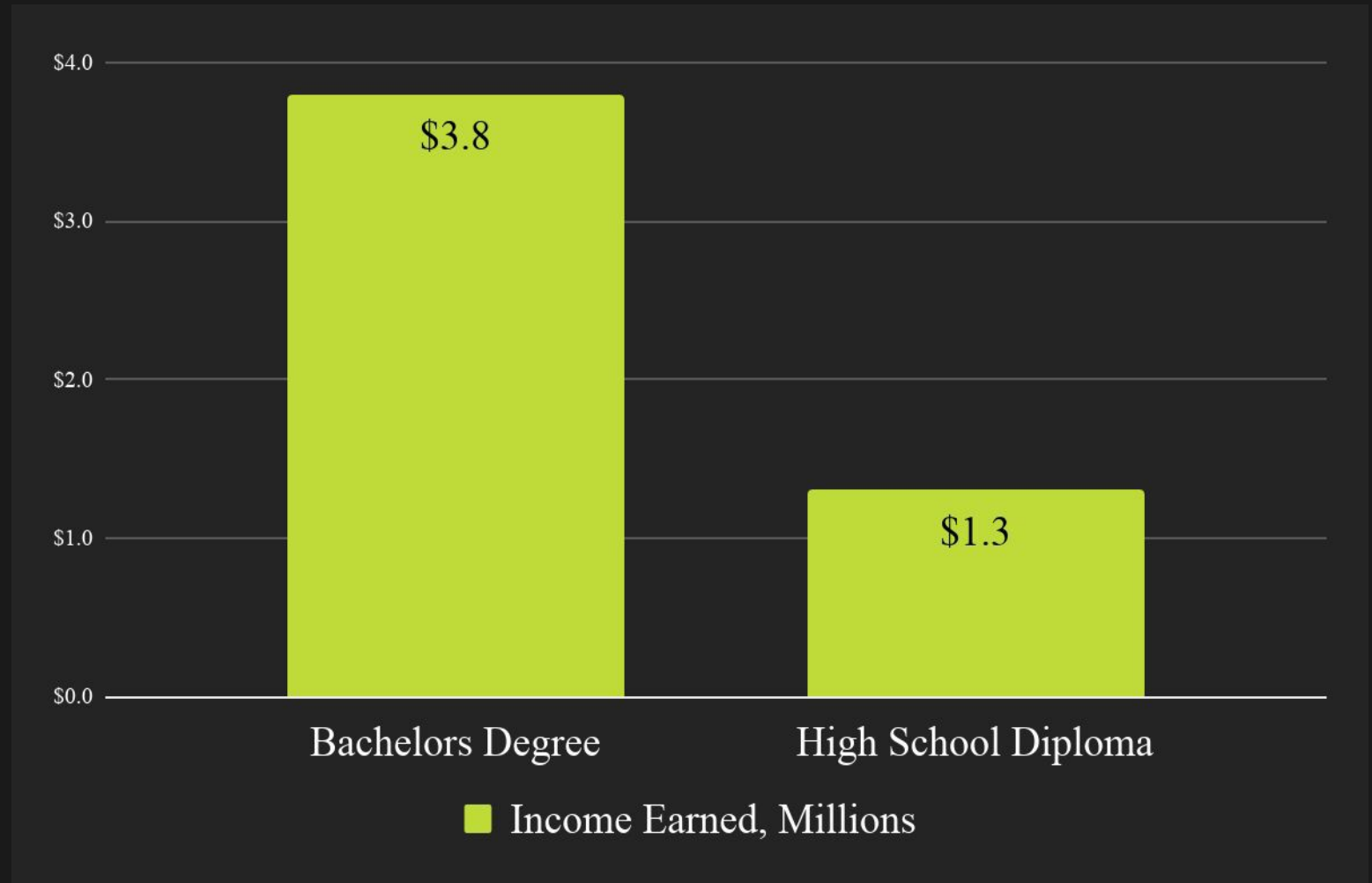
lack of
caring
adults and
family ties

housing
insecurity

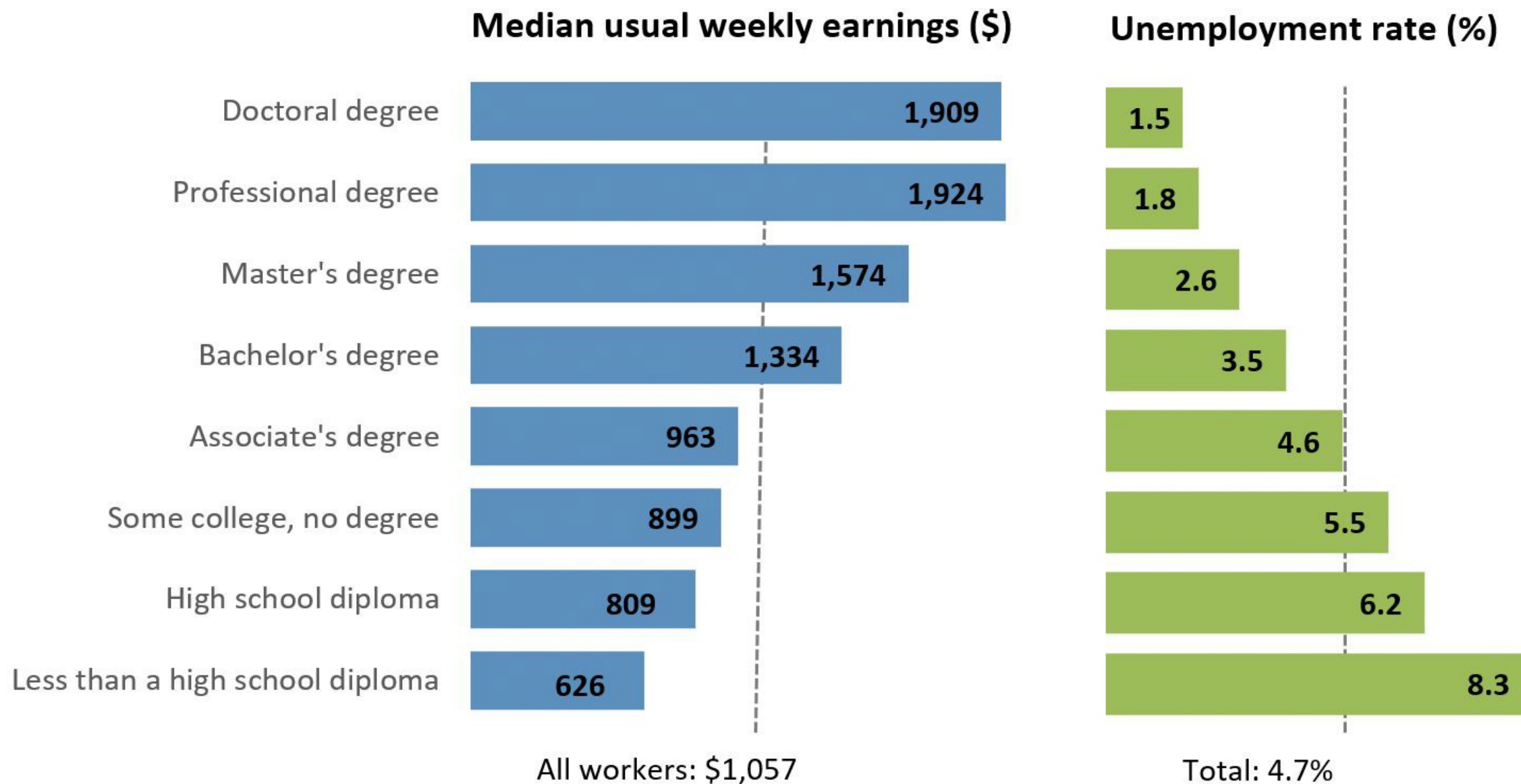
burdensome
documen-
tation

Is college worth it?

An individual with a Bachelor's degree will earn 84% more than someone with a high school degree over their lifetime.

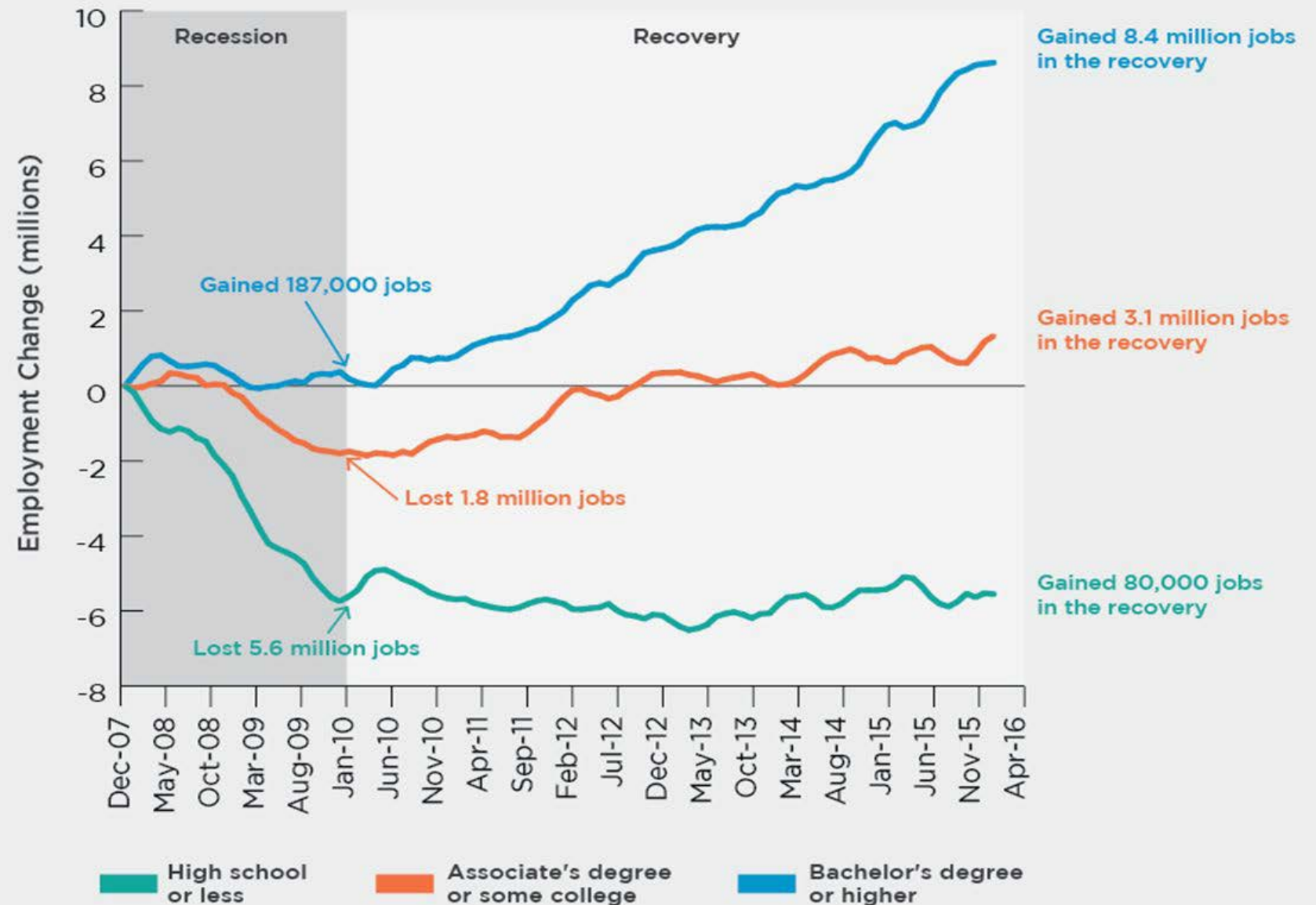


Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2021



Is college worth it?

Figure I. Workers with a Bachelor's degree have added 8.4 million jobs in the recovery, but workers with high school diplomas or less added only 80,000 jobs after losing 5.6 million jobs in the recession.



Research from Dr. Jennifer Geiger



**JANE ADDAMS
COLLEGE
OF SOCIAL WORK**

Creating Pathways to College for Youth in Care

- Providing information and connections to youth, their caregivers, and DCFS/child welfare workers EARLY and FREQUENTLY
- Creating a culture of postsecondary education and training and normalizing this experience
- Organizing documents, knowing options (schools/programs), financial aid, social supports, and living arrangements
- Developing a plan and executing it (know what's expected, what are deadlines)



**JANE ADDAMS
COLLEGE
OF SOCIAL WORK**

What Can Workers Do?

- You are the gatekeepers of opportunity! Don't be stingy!
- Have hope - remember that youth may surprise you.
- Plant the seed of inspiration. Your words matter.
- Practicalities: Make sure youth have access to to their documents, write their letter documenting their status as youth in care, fill out appropriate applications in a timely way, etc.



Barrier: Finances

- No/limited income
- Inadequate Financial Aid
- Insufficient or incorrect information about accessing financial aid
- No financial safety net
- No supportive adult
- Small fees are insurmountable
- Student loans may be inadvisable

Solution: Financial Aid

- Liaisons and Peer Advocates become experts in financial aid and advise students on accessing it
- Generous Financial Aid packages, not including loans - inclusive of different populations, flexible, quickly accessible
- Easy access to emergency funds
- Correct, thorough, easily digestible information at students' fingertips
- Quick pathways to high earning jobs

Barrier: Lack of Support

- Protected, confidential status
- No/limited permanent family support
- No one to turn to for emotional support or advice
- No ride to campus on move in day
- No one to celebrate successes

Solution: Foster Connections

- Create opportunities to self-disclose status to others, such as “Meet & Greet”
- Identify a Foster Liaison on campus
 - Multi-pronged marketing (flyers, website, social media, announcements, etc.)
- Establish a Y-CAP Program on your campus

Barrier:

Housing Insecurity

Youth at this age are typically living in one of three places:

- With foster parents
- ILO - Independent Living Options
- TLP - Transitional Living Program

When they move to on-campus housing, they join a program called “Youth In College” which is a different “placement.”

Solution:

Housing Stability

- Provide campus housing
- Keep housing open during breaks
- Create a “home for the holidays”/host family program like you may have for international students (staff, faculty, alumni, community members)
- Flexible financial aid that can be applied to housing

Barrier: Burdensome Documentation

- Birth certificate
- State ID/Driver's License
- Proof of Wardship/Status as Foster Youth
- Required questions about parent/guardian
- Independent Status on the FAFSA
- Tax Transcript/Verification of Non-Filing

Youth often don't have access to these documents or understand what they are and how to find them.

Solution: Minimize Requirements

- When possible, have staff verify students' status in foster care.
- Only require what is federally mandated
- Train staff to use plain language, not technical terms, and to give clear instructions on where to find documents
- Require verification only one time
- Don't call something "mandatory" if it's not

Stay in touch!



FOSTER PROGRESS



773.793.0951



info@foster-progress.org



www.foster-progress.org



facebook.com/fosterprogress



twitter.com/fosterprogress



instagram.com/foster_progress

Further Reading

[Campus Coaches Make Crucial Difference to Foster Youth in College](#), [Youth Today](#)

[College Campus Support Programs Are Strong Model of Services Helping Foster Youth](#), [Youth Today](#)

Getting by and getting ahead: Social capital and transition to college among homeless and foster youth, [Children and Youth Services Review](#)

[Increasing Competency, Self-Confidence, and Connectedness Among Foster Care Alumni Entering a 4-Year University: Findings from an Early-Start Program](#), [Journal of Social Service Research](#)

Experiences and outcomes of foster care alumni in postsecondary education: A review of the literature, [Children and Youth Services Review](#)

Developing an on-campus recruitment and retention program for foster care alumni, [Children and Youth Services Review](#)

Break

Working with Special Student Populations

November 8, 2023

Tommy Semanic

Professional Development Specialist

Before we begin...

- View recorded sessions <https://www.isac.org/pd/on-demand-webinars.html>

Agenda

1. Unaccompanied & Homeless Youth
2. Students in DCFS/Foster Care
3. RISE Act
4. Resources

Unaccompanied & Homeless Youth

Who are Students Experiencing Homelessness?

- 1 out of 30 teens experience homelessness
- LGBTQ+ students are more than twice as likely to experience homelessness
- Students may have a distrust of adults and their support
- 93% of students have couch surfed (moving from one person's couch to another)
- 35% of students have experienced a loss of a parent
- Students are identified in multiple ways:
 - Teacher, counselor, or self-identification

Definitions for FAFSA

- **Homeless:** Means lacking fixed, regular, and adequate housing, which includes living in shelters, parks, motels, hotels, public spaces, camping grounds, cars, abandoned buildings, or temporary living with other people because you had no where else to go. Also, living in any of these situations and fleeing an abusive parent, maybe considered homeless even if the parent would otherwise provide a place to live
- **Unaccompanied:** Means not living in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

Note: homelessness, on its own, does not qualify a student as being independent for federal student aid purposes

Dependent Other Circumstances

The screenshot shows the FAFSA 2024-25 interface for Student Raya Tran. At the top, the FAFSA logo and form year are on the left, the student's name is in the center, and 'Save' and 'FAFSA Menu' buttons are on the right. A progress bar below the header shows five steps: 1. Personal Circumstances (active), 2. Demographics, 3. Financials, 4. Colleges, and 5. Signature. The main heading is 'Student Other Circumstances'. Below it is a green-bordered box containing the question: 'At any time on or after July 1, 2023, was the student unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?'. There are two radio button options: 'Yes' (unselected) and 'No' (selected). At the bottom, there are 'Previous' and 'Continue' buttons.

FAFSA[®] FORM 2024-25 Student Raya Tran Save FAFSA Menu

1 Personal Circumstances 2 Demographics 3 Financials 4 Colleges 5 Signature

Student Other Circumstances

At any time on or after July 1, 2023, was the student unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Previous Continue

Other Circumstances



Student Other Circumstances

At any time on or after July 1, 2023, was the student unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Did any of the following determine the student was homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?

Select all that apply.

☐ Director or designee of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving those experiencing homelessness

☐ The student's high school or school district homeless liaison or designee

☐ Director or designee of a project supported by a federal TRIO or GEAR UP program grant

☐ Financial aid administrator (FAA)

☒ None of these apply.

Requesting a Homeless Youth Determination

- Not to be confused with a dependency override for unusual circumstances
- If the student does not have a determination, the FAA may make a case-by-case determination
- Renewal applicants with an eligible unaccompanied homeless youth determination on their 2023-2024 FAFSA, will have their answers to these questions carried over and pre-populated
 - Renewal applicants must still affirm that their previous answers to the dependency questions are still applicable

NEW! Provisionally Independent Student

- Designation for students who believe they may qualify as an independent student based on an unusual circumstance
- These students will:
 - Be able to submit the FAFSA
 - Receive an estimate SAI and Pell Grant
- A school's financial aid office will make the final determination based on documentation submitted
- These students will not be required to answer to answer information about their parent(s)

Determinations for Unaccompanied and Homeless Youth

- The list of people who can provide a determination has been expanded
- The following sources are:
 - Homeless District Liaison
 - Financial aid office from a different school that for the same or prior award year
 - Director or designee of a:
 - Transitional or emergency shelter
 - Street outreach program
 - Homeless youth drop-in center
 - Program serving individuals experiencing homelessness
 - Program supported by federal TRIO or GEAR UP grant

High School Homeless District Liaison

SCHOOL WELLNESS

HOMELESS LIAISON CONTACT INFORMATION

Public school districts must enter the name and contact information of their appointed McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison. This information may be used to contact the District Homeless Liaison to assist with immediate enrollment into the district and identification of McKinney-Vento eligibility. McKinney-Vento eligible students must be immediately enrolled and fully participating in school.

[Back](#)

District / ROE Name ▼	Type	District / ROE Address	District / ROE Phone	Homeless Liaison / Email Link
A-C Central CUSD 262	District	PO Box 260 Ashland, IL 62612-0260	217-476-8112	Mr. Dan Williams
Abingdon-Avon CUSD 276	District	507 N Monroe St Ste 3 Abingdon, IL 61410-1285	309-462-2301	Tina Stier
ACE Amandla Charter School	District	6820 S Washtenaw Ave Chicago, IL 60629-1826	773-535-7150	Shawnda Sullivan
Addison SD 4	District	222 N JF Kennedy Dr Addison, IL 60101-6602	630-458-2425	Charles Wartman
Adlai E Stevenson HSD 125	District	2 Stevenson Dr Lincolnshire, IL 60069-2824	847-415-4000	Sarah LaFrancis
Akin CCSD 91	District	21962 Akin Blacktop Akin, IL 62890-1304	618-627-2180	Terri Dean
Albers SD 63	District	PO Box 104 Albers, IL 62215-0104	618-248-5146	Mike Toeбен

Obtaining Determination from a Homeless District Liaison

- Training for Homeless District Liaisons is similar across the board
 - Completed through the Regional Office of Education
- The interview of the student is meant to gauge the situation and their circumstances
 - Interview can feel intrusive
- If a student has been given a designation before senior year, a student must go through a renewal process each year

Reminder: Even with a designation for McKinney-Vento, this does not mean the students meets the criteria to answer yes for purposes of the FAFSA

Director of an Emergency or Transitional Housing Funded by HUD



[Home](#) / [State Information](#) / [Illinois](#) / [Homeless](#) / [Shelters](#) / [Shelters Outside Chicago](#)

HOMELESS SHELTERS

Shelters	Address	Phone
American Red Cross	727 N. Church Street Rockford, Illinois 61103	(217) 963-8471
American Red Cross Second Chance Shelter East St. Louis	240 N. 6th. St East St. Louis, Missouri 62201-3001	(618) 482-5662
BCMW Community Services, Inc.	909 E. Rexford Centralia, Illinois 62801	(618) 532-7143
Beds Plus	P.O. Box 2035 LaGrange, IL 60525	(708) 354-0858
Carver Community Action	P.O. Box 28 235 East Main Galesburg, Illinois 61402-0028	(309) 342-0158
Catholic Charities 60100th Street North Chicago	671 S. Lewis Avenue Waukegan, Illinois 60085	(847) 782-4000

Director of a Runaway or Homeless Youth Basic Center or Transitional Living Program

IDHS > About IDHS > Divisions > Family & Community Services > Organization > Youth Intervention Services > Homeless Youth >

Homeless Youth Agencies and their Sites

(24-Hour National Runaway Hotline - 1-800-RUNAWAY or www.1800RUNAWAY.org)

Homeless Youth (HY) Provider List

Site Name: 360 Youth Services

Address: 1305 Oswego Rd.

Naperville, IL 60540

Telephone: 630-961-2992

Website: www.360youthservices.org

Site Name: Aunt Martha's Health and Wellness Center, Inc.

Address: 19990 Governors Hwy

Olympia Fields, IL 60461

Telephone: Admin. Office: 708-747-7100; South Suburban Cook - 708-679-8100; Midlothian - 708-943-7813; Joliet - 815-768-8750; Park Forest - 708-679-8000; Kankakee - 815-937-0100

Website: www.Auntmarthas.org

Site Name: Children's Home & Aid Society of Illinois

Address: 2133 Johnson Road

Granite City, IL 62040

Telephone: 618-452-8900

Website: www.childrenshomeandaid.org

Students Experiencing Homelessness

May not consider themselves homeless

May be confused about their postsecondary options and accessing financial aid for college

Do not want to be seen as a burden to their peers or individuals offering support

Often unaware of available support services during high school

Require additional support as they transition into their postsecondary option

Students in DCFS/Foster Care

Foster Care Question on FAFSA

- Students are asked if at any time since they turned 13 if they were in the foster care system

1 Personal Circumstances 2 Demographics 3 Financials 4 Colleges 5 Signature

Student Personal Circumstances

Select all that apply.

☐ The student is currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training.

☐ The student is a veteran of the U.S. armed forces.

☐ The student has children or other people (excluding their spouse) who live with them and receive more than half of their support from the student now and between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025.

☐ At any time since the student turned 13, they were an orphan (no living biological or adoptive parent).

☐ At any time since the student turned 13, they were a ward of the court.

☐ At any time since the student turned 13, they were in foster care.

☐ The student is or was a legally emancipated minor, as determined by a court in their state of residence.

☐ The student is or was in a legal guardianship with someone other than their parent or stepparent, as determined by a court in their state of residence.

☐ None of these apply.

Students in Foster Care

Often hesitant to share their living situations

Often lack adult support

Require additional support as they transition into their postsecondary option

Lower rates of high school completion and employment

Less likely to earn a college degree

University Support Services for Homeless and Foster Youth

- Working with local housing authority to offer housing at a lower cost
 - Students can be closer to the university and closer to where they are employed
- Creating Scholar Programs
 - With a college coach, students can be a part of a cohort model in which they receive academic, financial and emotional support while in college
- HOUSE Liaisons
 - Each public and private institution of higher education in IL is required to designate a member of staff to serve as a liaison to students experiencing homelessness and students in DCFS foster care
- Creation of on-campus food pantries
 - Open to all students on and off campus

RISE Act

Retention of Illinois Students & Equity (RISE) Act

- Signed into law on June 21, 2019
- Provides a pathway for **eligible undocumented students** who are disqualified from federal student aid to apply for ISAC, and other state funded financial aid programs
 - Relies on criteria already in state law that's used to determine eligibility for in-state tuition at public institutions

Note: The RISE Act does not exempt students from meeting existing program eligibility criteria

Eligibility Criteria for the RISE Act

- The law defines Illinois resident, as “any person who is deemed an Illinois resident for tuition purposes”
- References same criteria from Public Act 93-0007
 1. Resided with their parent or guardian while attending a public or private high school in this State;
 2. Graduated from a public or private high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in this State;
 3. Attended school in this State for at least 3 years as of the date the individual graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma in this State;
 4. Provides an affidavit stating that they will file an application to become a permanent resident of the United States at the earliest opportunity they are eligible to do so;
 5. Has not established a residence outside of Illinois

Resources

ISAC Student Portal

The screenshot shows the ISAC Student Portal website. The top navigation bar is orange and contains the ISAC Student Portal logo, a 'Resources' link, and other navigation items like 'Toolbox', 'ISACorps', 'Program Applications & Status Checks', 'Now Playing', and 'Login'. A blue box highlights the 'Resources' link. Below the navigation bar is a large orange section titled 'RESOURCES' with the text 'Check out resources from ISAC partners to help you with financial aid, and money management.' To the right of this section is a white box with a green line-art icon of a box with plants and a link titled 'Student Resources Beyond Financial Aid' with an external link icon. Below the orange section is a white box titled 'Student & Parent Quick Links' containing several links: 'E-Message Archives (for Students & Parents)', 'FAFSA Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)', 'Federal Student Aid StudentAid.gov (includes former StudentLoans.gov, fsaid.ed.gov, and nslds.ed.gov)', 'My Federal Student Aid', 'Federal Student Aid StudentAid.gov (for parents)', 'Military Service', 'Student Resources Beyond Financial Aid', and 'IRS Tax Benefits for Education Information Center' with the IRS.gov logo. To the right of the quick links is a text block explaining that if you are an Illinois college student looking for help beyond financial aid (including resources for food, housing, medical care, child and dependent care assistance and consideration because of special circumstances), you should check out this area and find a list of food pantries on or near Illinois college campuses. A red box highlights a link to <https://www.foodpantries.org/st/illinois> with the text 'An expanded list of Illinois food pantries.'

Resources

Check out resources from ISAC partners to help you with financial aid, and money management.

Student Resources Beyond Financial Aid

If you are an Illinois college student looking for help beyond financial aid – including resources for food, housing, medical care, child and dependent care assistance and consideration because of special circumstances – check out this area. You'll also find a list of food pantries on or near Illinois college campuses.

<https://www.foodpantries.org/st/illinois>
An expanded list of Illinois food pantries.

Student & Parent Quick Links

- E-Message Archives (for Students & Parents)
- FAFSA Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)
- Federal Student Aid StudentAid.gov (includes former StudentLoans.gov, fsaid.ed.gov, and nslds.ed.gov)
- My Federal Student Aid
- Federal Student Aid StudentAid.gov (for parents)
- Military Service
- Student Resources Beyond Financial Aid
- IRS Tax Benefits for Education Information Center

Resources Beyond Financial Aid

- Food resources
 - SNAP benefits for college students - Illinois' community college students enrolled in Perkins-approved CTE programs have access to food security through SNAP
- Housing & utilities
- Medical care
- Illinois college food pantries
- Child and dependent care
- Special circumstances and professional judgment

Resources for Students Experiencing Homelessness

- IBHE HOUSE Liaisons
 - https://www.ibhe.org/HOUSE_Liaisons.html
- Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
 - <https://www.chicagohomeless.org/scholarships/>
- National Clearinghouse on Homeless Youth & Families
 - <https://rhyclearinghouse.acf.hhs.gov/funding/scholarships-homeless-youth>
- School House Connection
 - <https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/learn/unaccompanied-youth/>
- The Continuum of Care (CoC) Program
 - <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/>

Resources for Students in DCFS/Foster Care

- IL DCFS Foster Youth Programs Tip Sheets
 - https://www2.illinois.gov/dcfs/brighterfutures/independence/Documents/Getting_There_Tip_Sheets.pdf
- U.S. Department of Education Foster Care Transition Toolkit
 - <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/foster-care/youth-transition-toolkit.pdf>
- Foster Progress High School Senior Year Guide
 - <https://www.foster-progress.org/>
- Foster Care 2 Success Foster Youth College Fund
 - <https://www.fc2success.org/programs/scholarships-and-grants/>

Resources for Undocumented Students Continued

- Campus Checklist for Undocumented Students
 - www.presidentsalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2022-03-25-Campus-Checklist-for-Undocumented-Students.pdf
- The current state of DACA
 - immigrationforum.org/article/the-current-state-of-daca-challenges-await-in-litigation-and-rulemaking/

Thank You!

Questions? Contact the Professional Development team at isac.outreachtraining@illinois.gov!

Sign up for ISAC's e-Messaging service to receive the latest news and updates at www.isac.org/emessaging

About SchoolHouse Connection

SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education.



We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

WEBSITE:

schoolhouseconnection.org

NEWSLETTER:

schoolhouseconnection.org/sign-up

- Federal and state policy advocacy
- Q&A from our inbox
- Webinars and implementation tools
- Youth leadership and scholarships

Agenda

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Homelessness Overview

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act



McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law



Originally passed in 1987; last updated in 2015 as part of Every Student Succeeds Act



Applies to public school districts and public charters



Goal: Ensure identification, enrollment, and success in school, including preschool, for children and youth experiencing homelessness

Who is Considered Homeless Under Federal Education Law?

The McKinney-Vento Act definition: Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Living in a residence hall/dorm but otherwise would have no place to go

Definition: Unaccompanied Youth

A child or youth without a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

- Youth run away from home due to abuse or neglect.
- 40-60% of unaccompanied youth were abused physically at home.
- 17-25% of unaccompanied youth were abused sexually at home.
- Research links parental substance abuse and youth running away from home.
- Parents force youth out of the home due to conflicts.
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Pregnancy
- Loss of parent/caregiver
- 35% of youth experienced death of parent or caregiver

College Homelessness



Source: The HOPE Center (#RealCollege), [*The HOPE Center 2021: Basic Needs Insecurity During the Ongoing Pandemic*](#)

Recent National Center for Education Statistics data found

- 23% of undergraduate students are experiencing food insecurity
- 8% of undergraduate students are experiencing homelessness

Research on Homeless Higher Education Liaisons

What research is there on homeless higher education liaisons?

Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness: Perspectives from California's Community Colleges (2019)

- California Homeless Youth Project and ACLU Foundations of California

A Survey on Higher Education Liaisons: Role preparation and professional development needs (2021)

- Mary Haskett and Alexandra Bucceli, North Carolina State University

Key Takeaways

From California research

- 1 Homeless liaisons positions aren't adequately funded
- 2 5 greatest needs are housing, FAFSA completion, mental health, supportive services beyond school setting, CalFresh assistance with housing being the most difficult need
- 3 Majority of respondents are aware of recent legislation, but implementation is incomplete

Participants

49 liaisons

Type of Institution

- 21 at community colleges (43%)
- 19 (39%) at four-year colleges with graduate programs
- 9 (18%) at four-year colleges without graduate programs

Primary Role

- 19 identified as liaison or single/designated point of contact
- 13 identified as FA staff
- 6 identified as a counselor/advisor
- 3 as a case manager
- 7 as “other” (dean, director of student services, director of single stop)

Participants

49 liaisons

Education

- 43% had graduate degrees (e.g., higher education, counseling, English)

Experience

- 7 → 10+ years of experience
- 17 → 5-10 years
- 12 → 2-5 years
- 10 → fewer than 2 years
- 3 → no reply

Procedures

- Recruited from 4 states
- Online survey; responses anonymous; gift card drawing
- Approved by IRB
- 20% response rate



Findings & Recommendations

Estimated rates of homelessness

Estimated Rates of Homelessness on Campus

- IDK 20%
- 1-5% 55%
- >10% 11%

Basis for estimate

- 51% → number of students referred
- 38% → FAFSA data
- 11% → data on homelessness

95.5% were confident in their estimate!

Findings & Recommendations

Time spent in role

In a typical week

- 73% of the liaisons assisted <6 students
- 80% of liaisons devoted very little (10% or less) of their time to liaison duties
- 53% of liaisons' contact information was not listed on the website as point of contact



Findings & Recommendations

Preparation for the role

- 55%: Institution provided appropriate guidance to assist students
- 51%: Institution adequately staffed & funded liaison role
- 25%: Received no special training
- 92%: Engaged in self-directed learning

More guidance, resources, and specialized training are needed.

Findings & Recommendations

What do students seek?

- 52% Connection to housing/shelters
- 44.8% School supplies
- 44.8% Transportation assistance
- 32.6% Counseling

- 34.6% Employment assistance
- 18.3% FAFSA completion
- 16.3% Child care assistance



Findings & Recommendations

Needs for support/training

- 39% Support for students transitioning from HS
- 46% Resources for student parents
- 72% Identifying & providing outreach

>50% interested in

- forming partnerships on & off campus
- financial aid support
- health/wellness & food resources
- related policy requirements

Findings & Recommendations

Preferred training format

- 84% online options
- 66% in-person training
- 73% connecting with others



Role of the Homeless Higher Education Liaison

Who do students *need* to be successful in school?



Connection to **positive, supportive adults**

Stability - difficult to meet educational needs when you can't meet basic needs

Help navigating **financial aid**

Knowledge of existing **campus support programs and resources** (social media, word of mouth, visibility: posters, flyers)

The Role of the Campus Liaison

Campus liaisons are designated safe and supportive college administrators who help students experiencing homelessness navigate the college admissions process and connect them to campus- and community-based supports with the goal of student retention, graduation, and overall well-being

“Buckets” of liaison work may include:

Liaising with institutional and community leaders to garner interest and support

Campus and community network and partnership building

Student outreach and identification

Helping develop and refine student service processes (intake, eligibility, distribution of resources, etc.)

Overseeing the provision of services to students

Others?
(Please share via chat or audio)

The Role of the Campus Liaison

- **Nine states** (AR, CA, FL, IL, LA, ME, MD, NV, TN) currently have laws requiring or requesting homeless higher education liaisons on campuses; SchoolHouse is working on introducing higher education liaison bills in NH and PA
- Federal legislation has been introduced in the past to require homeless liaisons on all campuses (**Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth Act**)
- The role of the liaison mimics the McKinney-Vento liaison in the K-12 system
- The liaison role has expanded to address broader basic needs issues, but should maintain a targeted focus on housing security and providing services to students experiencing homelessness in a holistic and trauma-informed way

Best Practices

Identification and Outreach

- Homeless higher education liaison (or mini liaisons)/campus support programs
 - Include contact information on centralized website
- Financial aid - [Dear Colleague Letter](#)
- Application & incoming surveys
- Clear referral systems
- Trainings ([NC State Pack Essentials Ally Knowledge Program](#))
- Tabling
- Leverage technology (social media, apps, text, email, student portals, etc.)
- Syllabus Note

“Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.”

FAFSA

- The U.S. Department of Education (ED) encourages institutions of higher education (IHEs) to coordinate with campus stakeholders, such as student organizations, financial aid administrators, faculty and staff advisors, or student life groups, to broadly inform students about the range of benefits for which they may be eligible
 - Child Tax Credit
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Affordable Connectivity Program
 - Health insurance enrollment

FAFSA

- Inform students about the 2024-2025 FAFSA changes
 - Create FSA IDs NOW (Name, DOB, SSN). Parents also need to create FSA IDs if accompanied
- Provide unaccompanied homeless youth with determination letters
 - Use this [sample form letter](#)
 - Use this [sample form letter](#) if you're in financial aid and watch this [role playing video](#)
- Partner with financial aid
- Financial aid office hours with counselors for support
- Scholarships and emergency aid



Key Takeaways of the FAFSA Provisions

- 1 Homeless and foster youth care status does not need to be redetermined. UHY and former foster youth are presumed to be independent for each subsequent year at the same institution.
- 2 Determinations must be made as quickly as practicable.

Key Takeaways of the FAFSA Provisions

3

More entities are authorized to provide UHY and foster youth determinations, including YOU as the homeless higher education liaison and FAA must accept these determinations.

- Use this [sample form letter](#)

4

FAAs must make UHY determinations for youth who cannot provide one.

Relationship Building

- Connect with K-12 McKinney-Vento liaisons to help with transition
- Financial Aid Office
- Housing/Residence Life
- Registrar
- Admissions
- Health Care Professionals
- Librarians
- Security Staff
- How are you informing your campus that you exist as the homeless liaison?

Resources

- Basic Needs Assessment
- Food
 - Swipe Out Hunger
 - Food banks/pantries (include toiletries, cleaning supplies)
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Mentorship Programs
- Emergency Housing
 - Setting a room aside, hotel/motel vouchers, Airbnb
 - Host Homes
 - Housing scholarships
- Emergency aid
- Lending library
- Clothing Closet
- Laptop and technology rentals
- Laundry & shower services

What Next?

SchoolHouse Connection's Homeless Higher Education Liaison Learning Network

- Over 90 liaisons across the country
- Informal network to share best practices and peer learning
- Sign up sheet for the 2024-2025 Network will be coming shortly

Advocacy Efforts

State Policy

- Homeless higher education liaisons
- Tuition/fee waivers/in-state tuition
- Housing support
- FAFSA completion

Federal Policy

- Fostering Success in Higher Education Act introduced Sept. 2023
- Hopefully reintroduce Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth
 - Implementation of FAFSA provisions pulled from this bill

KNOW ANY STUDENTS WHO'VE EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS PURSUING A POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION?



Help them apply to the SchoolHouse Connection Scholarship Program.

The scholarship includes:

- \$2,500 Award
- 1-on-1 Support
- 3 All-Expenses-Paid Trips!



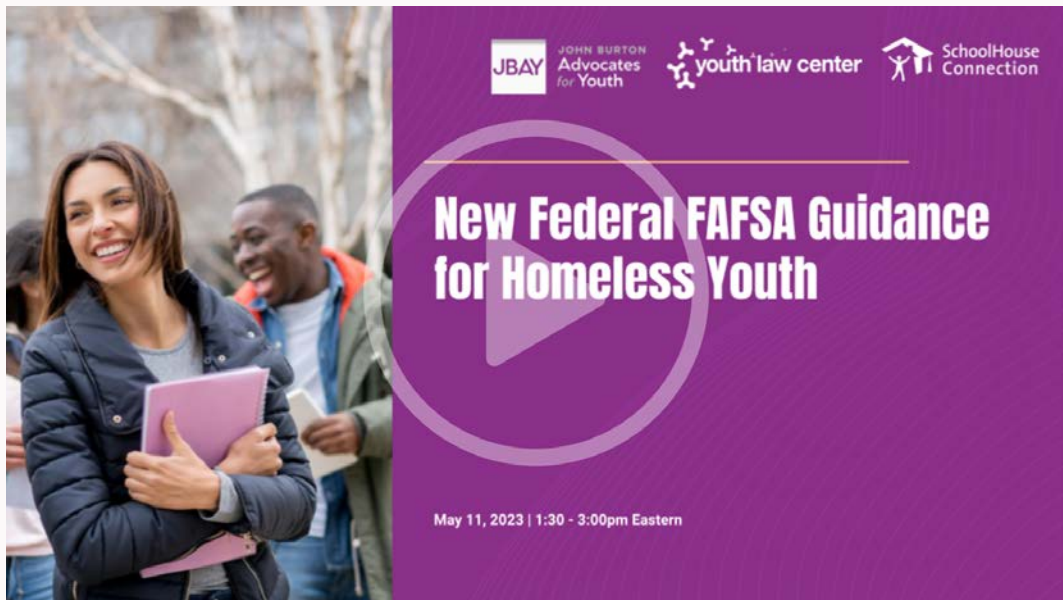
APPLY NOW AT 

SCHOOLHOUSECONNECTION.ORG/SCHOLARSHIP



**DEADLINE
NOV 24!**

Resources



Video: [New Federal FAFSA Guidance for Homeless Youth Webinar \(May 11, 2023\)](#)

- [SHC FAFSA Page](#)
 - [Sample Form template](#)
 - [Financial Aid UHY determination template](#)
- [SHC Higher Education Page](#)
 - [Tips for Helping Homeless Youth Succeed in College](#)
 - [Tips for Homeless Higher Education Liaisons](#)
- [SHC Scholarship Page](#)



Let's Connect!

Facebook: [SchoolHouse Connection](#)

Facebook Group: [Homelessness & Education - A SchoolHouse Connection Group](#)

Instagram: [@SchoolHouseConnection](#)

X: [@SchoolHouseConn](#)

Linkedin: [SchoolHouse Connection](#)

YouTube: [@SchoolHouseConnection](#)

Sign up for our Mailing List!



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Thank you!

