

HOMELESS EDUCATION AND FOSTER YOUTH

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WHAT WE SEE

Tony is a freshman who has lived apart from his family for five years, sometimes with friends and relatives, sometimes on the street. He enrolled in college and lives in a dorm. He has no financial support outside of a small scholarship that will cover tuition for one year. It's Christmas break, and the dorms are closing. He has nowhere to go and no money for food or lodging for the break. He's embarrassed to ask for help.



WHAT CHALLENGES DO HOMELESS STUDENTS FACE?

- ⊙ Financial difficulties
- ⊙ Housing
- ⊙ Basic needs
- ⊙ Juggling school and employment
- ⊙ Falling behind in school and attendance problems due to mobility
- ⊙ Lack of adult guidance
- ⊙ Lack of transportation
- ⊙ Invisibility



WHAT BARRIERS DO THEY FACE BEFORE ENROLLING?

- ⊙ Lack of support to attend admissions and financial aid programs, completing the FAFSA; no access to parent financial information
- ⊙ Lack of college access information in shelters, foster homes, social service departments
- ⊙ Unaware of services and fee waivers (ACT and SAT, for example)
- ⊙ Low expectations



HOW MANY HOMELESS YOUTH?

- ◎ 10% of all children living in poverty
- ◎ 1.6-1.7 million youth run away each year
- ◎ Over 1 million homeless children and youth enrolled in school in 2009-2010; over 18,000 in NC



WHY ARE THEY HOMELESS?

- ① Family conflict
- ① Domestic violence, abuse, neglect
- ① Lack of affordable housing; youth can't stay with families in shelters
- ① Parents deceased, incarcerated, deployed
- ① Poverty – mean income of homeless families is 46% of the poverty threshold
- ① Aging out of foster care



WHERE DO THEY STAY?

- ◎ Pie chart from Beth - NC



WHAT WORKS IN DEFEATING HOMELESSNESS?

Education!



WHAT IS THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT?

- ◎ Title X, Part C of ESEA (NCLB)
- ◎ Ensures the rights of homeless children and youth to a free, appropriate public education
 - ◎ Immediate enrollment without records
 - ◎ School stability
 - ◎ Support for academic success
 - ◎ Local liaison in every school district



HOW DOES MCKINNEY-VENTO HELP UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH WITH COLLEGE?

- ◎ Services and support during high school
- ◎ Ensures full participation in school activities, including college preparation activities
- ◎ Local liaison can be advocate for the student
- ◎ Local liaison can collaborate with college student support and financial aid administrators
- ◎ Broad definition of homeless covers many unstable and temporary living situations



WHAT IS THE MCKINNEY-VENTO DEFINITION OF HOMELESS?

Children 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, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- ☉ Living in emergency or transitional shelters



McKINNEY-VENTO DEFINITION (CONT.)

- ⊙ Awaiting foster care placement (not defined in law; state and local interpretations vary)
- ⊙ Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live
- ⊙ Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- ⊙ Migratory children living in above circumstances
- ⊙ Unaccompanied youth living in the above circumstances



WHO IS A HOMELESS UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH?

- ◎ A youth who meets the definition of homeless and is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian
 - ◎ Runaway
 - ◎ Throwaway
 - ◎ Couch surfing



HOW TO DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY

- Case-by-case determination
- Get as much information as possible (appropriate information, appropriate means)
- Look at the McKinney-Vento definition (specific examples in the definition first, then overall definition)

NCHE's Determining Eligibility brief is available at http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det_elig.pdf



GETTING HOMELESS STUDENTS CONNECTED

- ◎ Mapping Your Future
 - ◎ Web-based college preparation tool
 - ◎ Middle school through loan repayment

- ◎ Career Ship
 - ◎ Matches interests with careers

- ◎ Show Me the Future
 - ◎ Web-based game
 - ◎ Financial literacy skills



HEOA 2008 HOMELESSNESS

- ◎ TRIO programs must “identify and make available services..including mentoring, tutoring, and other services provided...”
to:
 - ◎ Youth in foster care
 - ◎ Youth who left foster care after age 13
 - ◎ Homeless children and youth
- ◎ All three groups are automatically eligible to participate in Talent Search, Upward Bound, Student Support Services, and Educational Opportunity Centers



HEOA 2008 HOMELESSNESS

- ◎ Talent Search, Upward Bound, Student Support Services and Educational Opportunity Center funds may be used to provide programs and activities specially designed for:
 - ◎ Homeless children and youth
 - ◎ Foster youth
 - ◎ English language learners
 - ◎ Students with disabilities
 - ◎ Other disconnected students



PARTICIPATING IN GEAR UP

- ① Homeless students and unaccompanied youth are not required to obtain parental signatures in order to participate in a GEAR UP program.
- ① The school district liaison is able to verify that a student is homeless or an unaccompanied youth.



HEOA 2008 HOMELESSNESS

- ① Entities not using a cohort approach for GEAR UP must prioritize homeless children and youth and youth in foster care as priority students.
- ① Entities using a cohort approach for GEAR UP should include homeless children and youth and youth in foster care as priority students.



APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

- ◎ FAFSA
 - ◎ Federal and state aid
- ◎ Independent Status
 - ◎ Does not require parents' income information
- ◎ Verification Letter
 - ◎ Unaccompanied homeless youth verification for the purposes of federal financial aid
- ◎ FAFSA Day
 - ◎ www.cfnc.org



FAFSA QUESTIONS

- 56) At any time on or after July 1, 2009, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless?
- 57) At any time on or after July 1, 2009, did the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless?
- 58) At any time on or after July 1, 2009, did the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?



VERIFICATION LETTER

I am providing this letter of verification as a (check one):

- A McKinney-Vento School District Liaison
- A director or designee of a HUD-funded shelter:

- A director or designee of a RHYA-funded shelter:

- A financial aid administrator:

As per the **College Cost Reduction and Access Act** (Public Law 110-84), I am authorized to verify this student's living situation. No further verification by the Financial Aid Administrator is necessary. Should you have additional questions or need more information about this student, please contact me at the number listed above.



RESOURCES

- ⊙ Casey Family Programs <http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/ProvidingEffectiveFinancialAid.htm>
- ⊙ National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth: www.naehcy.org (Legislation and Policy – Higher Education)
 - ⊙ FAFSA Tips for Unaccompanied Youth Without Stable Housing
 - ⊙ Helping Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Access College Financial Aid
 - ⊙ Higher Education Act Reauthorization: Homeless and Foster Youth
 - ⊙ Income Tax and the FAFSA for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth



CITIZENSHIP AND FINANCIAL AID

- ◎ Only U.S. citizens or eligible noncitizens can receive federal student financial aid. Those who change from noncitizen to citizen should update their status with the SSA. Otherwise, they will have to provide citizenship before receiving aid.
- ◎ Noncitizens may be eligible for state or institutional aid and should complete the FAFSA to apply for that aid.
- ◎ <http://www.ifap.ed.gov/sfahandbooks/attachments/0506Vol1Ch2.pdf>



CHALLENGES

- ① Laws do not adequately address many circumstances of homeless students
- ① Need additional people and organizations authorized for verification
- ① More training on homeless students and the law needed for college access providers
- ① Lack of networks and knowledge of resources to assist service providers



REMEMBER TONY?

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HOW COULD HE BE SUPPORTED?

- ① What needed to happen in the transition from high school to college?
- ① How could homeless youth be better identified on campuses?
- ① What resources should be available on campus?
- ① How should access to financial aid be facilitated?



A SYSTEMIC APPROACH

- ① Colorado task force
- ① Ground work in NC
- ① Suggestions from the audience?



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