



Unaccompanied Youth and the FAFSA

Southern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

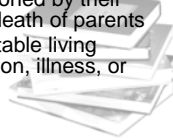


February 9, 2009



Why are Youth Homeless on Their Own?

- ✓ Over half of callers to Runaway Hotline report being physically abused at home; over one-third report sexual abuse; over two-thirds report that at least one of their parents abuses drugs or alcohol
- ✓ Other youth are thrown out of their homes because they are pregnant, gay or lesbian, or because their parents believe they are old enough to take care of themselves
- ✓ Some children and youth are abandoned by their parents, or are on their own due to death of parents
- ✓ Some children and youth are in unstable living situations due to parental incarceration, illness, or hospitalization



Why are Youth Homeless on Their Own? Continued

- ✓ Over half of youth living in shelters report that their parents either told them to leave, or knew they were leaving and did not care
- ✓ Some youth become homeless with their families, but, due to lack of space in doubled-up or motel situations, end up homeless on their own
- ✓ Natural disasters cause youth to be separated from family during their homelessness
- ✓ Aging out of foster care into homelessness; running away from foster care placements due to abuse in the foster home, or to reconnect with siblings and family



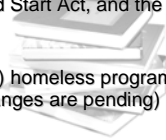
How many youth experience homelessness on their own?

- ✓ 1.6-1.7 million youth each year
- ✓ Public schools identified and enrolled 679,724 children/youth in 2006-2007 (includes children in intact families)
- ✓ Homelessness is increasing due to economic downturn, housing crisis, etc



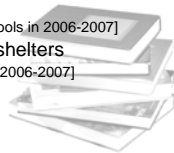
Where Do Homeless Youth Live?
Defining Homelessness

- ✓ The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) include a definition of homelessness that matches the definition of homelessness in the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which governs public schools
- ✓ Identical definition is in the Child Nutrition Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Head Start Act, and the Violence Against Women Act
- ✓ Housing and Urban Development (HUD) homeless programs use a more restrictive definition (but changes are pending)



McKinney-Vento (and CCRAA and HEOA)
Definition of Homelessness

- ✓ **Children and youth who** lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence—
 - 7 Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
[61% of students identified by public schools in 2006-2007]
 - 7 Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
[Motels: 7% of students identified by public schools in 2006-2007]
 - 7 Living in emergency or transitional shelters
[24% of students identified by public schools in 2006-2007]



McKinney-Vento (and CCRAA and HEOA)
Definition of Homelessness, Continued

- ✓ Awaiting foster care placement (state and local interpretations vary)
- ✓ Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live
- ✓ Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, etc.
- ✓ Migratory children living in above circumstances

Unaccompanied Youth: A youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian who also meets the definition of homeless

McKinney-Vento cite: 42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)



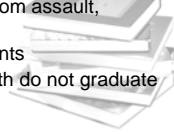
Homeless Definition:
Why So Broad?

- Shelters are often full; shelters may turn youth away, or put youth on waiting lists
- Shelters do not exist in many suburban and rural areas
- Eligibility conditions of shelters often exclude families with boys over the age of 12, or unaccompanied minors
- Motels may not be available, or may be too expensive
- Youth may fear adult shelters
- Shelters often have 30, 60, or 90 day time limits
- Families/youth may be unaware of alternatives, fleeing in crisis, living in over-crowded, temporary, and sometimes unsafe environments



Impact of Homelessness

- ✓ Higher rates of acute and chronic illness, depression and anxiety; experiences of trauma and loss
- ✓ For unaccompanied youth, lack of support from any caring adult
- ✓ Unaccompanied youth are frequently victimized. As many as half have been assaulted or robbed; one in ten runaways reports being raped
- ✓ According to the National Runaway Switchboard, 5,000 unaccompanied youth die each year from assault, illness, or suicide
- ✓ Perform lower on academic assessments
- ✓ 75% of unaccompanied homeless youth do not graduate



Barriers to Education

- ✓ High mobility: 41% will attend at least two different schools; 28% will attend three or more
- ✓ Unaccompanied youth: lack of a parent or guardian to sign forms
- ✓ Lack of school records and other paperwork
- ✓ Lack of stable housing
- ✓ Emotional crisis / mental health issues
- ✓ Employment - need to balance school and work
- ✓ Lack of transportation
- ✓ Lack of school supplies, clothing
- ✓ Fatigue, poor health, hunger
- ✓ Credit accrual policies, attendance policies
- ✓ Concerns about being captured by authorities
- ✓ Low expectations by family, school



Educational Rights Under The McKinney-Vento Act

- ✓ Broad mandate for all school districts to remove barriers to school enrollment and retention by revising policies and practices
- ✓ Remain in the school of origin (if in best interest)
- ✓ Transportation to the school of origin
- ✓ Immediate enrollment
- ✓ Access to programs and services
- ✓ Access to dispute resolution procedures



McKinney-Vento Personnel

- ✓ **Every State Education Agency has an Office of State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth**
 - 7 Collaboration responsibilities across agencies and with communities
 - 7 Technical assistance to LEAs
 - 7 Compliance
 - 7 Professional development
 - 7 Data collection and reporting



McKinney-Vento Personnel

✓ Every Local Education Agency (school district) must designate a liaison for students in homeless situations

✓ Responsibilities

- 7 Ensure that children and youth in homeless situations are identified through school and community
- 7 Ensure that homeless students enroll in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school
- 7 Make referrals for health, mental health, and other services, and ensure that homeless children receive Head Start and preschool programs administered by school districts



Local Homeless Education Liaisons (cont.)

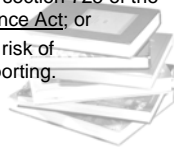
- ✓ Inform parents, guardians, or youth of educational and parent involvement opportunities
- ✓ Post public notice of educational rights
- ✓ Resolve disputes
- ✓ Inform parents, guardians, or youth of transportation services, including to the school of origin
- ✓ Collaborate and coordinate with community and school personnel



College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA)

✓ Starting in the 2009-2010 academic year:

- 7 independent student definition will also be expanded to include any applicant who has been verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as either:
 - 7 An unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth, as such terms are defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; or
 - 7 An unaccompanied youth who is at risk of homelessness and is also self-supporting.



Verification

- ✓ A local educational agency homeless liaison, designated pursuant to 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;
- ✓ The director or a designee of the director of a program funded by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act;
- ✓ The director of a program funded under subtitle B of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; or
- ✓ A financial aid administrator.



Verification, Continued

- 7 **HUD-funded Shelters:** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers funding for homeless shelters and services under Title IV of the McKinney-Vento Act. These funds are distributed to communities through a competitive grant process. For more information, see:
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/programs/index.cfm>



Verification, Continued

- 7 **RHYA-funded Shelters:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services administers the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs. These programs provide funding for Basic Centers, Transitional Living Programs, and Street Outreach Programs that serve runaway and other unaccompanied homeless youth. For more information, see:
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/youthdivision/index.htm#sub1>



Building Networks

✓ **Webinars**

- 7 Financial Aid 101
- 7 Understand homelessness

✓ **Connecting organizations**

- 7 College access programs
- 7 Financial aid, admissions, guidance counseling

✓ **Providing resources**

- 7 FAFSA Tips for Homeless Students



College Goal Sunday

✓ **Including FAFSA changes in trainings.**

✓ **Developing targeted grassroots outreach strategies to homeless youth and shelters.**

✓ **Connecting with homeless liaisons in school districts in CGS states.**

✓ **Focus groups to identify challenges and needs of homeless and foster youth.**



New Initiatives

✓ **Development of a survey to identify campus-based support services to increase degree-completion rates.**

✓ **Partnering with AACC and RCCA to understand needs of homeless and foster youth.**

✓ **Working with the FAFSA Simplification Study Group to provide focus groups at CGS sites.**



Resources

- ✓ To find local liaisons: contact the Office of State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. Most State Coordinators maintain updated lists of all liaisons (often on the State Department of Education web site)
- ✓ Contact information for State Coordinators is on the NCHE web site: <http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/sccontact.pdf>
- ✓ To find HUD-funded shelter providers in your community:

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/budget2007/index.cfm>

- ✓ To find Runaway and Homeless Youth Act service providers:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/youthdivision/programs/locate.htm>



LeTendre Education Fund Scholarship

Administered by the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

http://www.naehcy.org/letendre_app.htm

- ✓ Small scholarships for students who experienced homelessness in their school career
- ✓ Students who have not reached their 21st birthday by September 1, 2008, and who have completed less than one year of college are eligible to apply.
- ✓ Applicants may be high school juniors or seniors, students enrolled in a GED or other alternative education program, or recent graduates/GED recipients.



Resources for College Students

✓ Dream Keepers Emergency Financial Aid Program

7 Helping students from community colleges at risk of dropping out due to a financial emergency.

7 <http://scholarshipamerica.org/special-initiatives.php>



Resources for College Students

✓ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- 7 Get federal or state work-study monies or
- 7 Work 20 hours or more per week or
- 7 Have a child under the age of 12 in the home (*further rules apply*) or
- 7 Take part in job training programs operated by the government or
- 7 Are disabled
 - http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/applicant_recipients/students.htm



Resources for Professionals

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
<http://www.naehcy.org>

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
<http://www.nasfaa.org>

National Center on Homeless Education
<http://www.serve.org/nche>

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
<http://www.nlchp.org>

National Network for Youth
www.nn4youth.org



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