Guidelines for California Community College Homeless Youth Liaisons

2018
Guidelines for California Community College Homeless Youth Liaisons

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INTRODUCTION

Students in higher education are increasingly struggling to meet basic needs such as stable housing or food security.\textsuperscript{1,2,3} The issue is gaining attention at both the state and federal levels, as recent research shows that an increasing number of students on college campuses are simply unable to make ends meet. College students are facing housing insecurity at a rate of 51 percent, while a 2016 study showed that 62.7 percent of Los Angeles Community College District students experienced some level of food insecurity.\textsuperscript{4} In California’s community colleges, over 90 percent of faculty and staff see homelessness as an issue their students are facing, yet only 15 percent of those faculty and staff feel capable and equipped to respond.\textsuperscript{5}

In partial response to these findings, the California State Legislature recently passed Assembly Bill 801. Among other stipulations, AB 801 mandates that each California community college identify a liaison to support homeless students as they enroll in and matriculate through the college. Therefore, it is important for California community college faculty, staff, administrators, and other services providers to understand how to recognize students that may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, and to understand how to connect those students to resources and support. AB 801 also requires the designation of a foster youth liaison. Information about that requirement can be found at http://extranet.cccco.edu/Divisions/StudentServices/FosterYouthSuccessInitiatives.aspx.

The following pages will provide a starting point for faculty and staff to gather and understand information regarding students in California’s community colleges who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Information provided will include recommendations on how campus-based Homeless Youth Liaisons can support students, considerations for identifying and verifying homeless youth students on community college campuses, and some resources available to students experiencing homelessness.

\textsuperscript{5} Internal California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office Survey. (September 2016).
The handbook is designed to assist Homeless Youth Liaisons and their colleagues on California’s community college campuses with a baseline set of information and guidance to support homeless youth students. Topics covered will include general information such as:

**Understanding homelessness** in California, particularly as it relates to youth and young adults

**Legislation** regarding homeless youth and unaccompanied youth, particularly the McKinney-Vento Act and AB 801

**Financial aid guidelines** for homeless youth, such as filling out the FAFSA and understanding unaccompanied and/or independent student status

**Verification** of homeless youth status according to AB 801 guidelines

**Engaging with community resources** that may be available to homeless youth students

**Best practices** for supporting homeless youth on California’s community college campuses

While each student is unique and each situation will likely require an individual response, this handbook is designed to give general information that will help guide Liaisons towards the best approach. Please refer to the frequently asked questions (FAQ) at the end of the handbook to find answers to specific questions.
Definitions of Homelessness, Homeless Youth, Unaccompanied Youth

There are many definitions of homelessness that vary across federal, state, and local agencies and across different programs. We will address the definition utilized by AB 801 as well as the distinctions used to determine eligibility for independent status when completing the FAFSA or California Dream Act Application.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

In education, the most commonly used definition of homelessness was established by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento), which was originally signed into law in 1987 under the Reagan administration. This was the first piece of federal legislation to address the needs of the homeless, particularly regarding the establishment of homeless shelters and other types of support for homeless individuals in general.

In particular, Title IX of McKinney-Vento outlines special regulations and mandates for homeless children and youth regarding their primary through post-secondary education. Subtitle VII-B of McKinney-Vento, per Title IX, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, was enacted to safeguard the educational rights for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This law broadly defines homeless children and youth under Subtitle VII-B in Sec. 725, which is as follows:

Table 1. McKinney Vento “Homeless Children and Youth” Definition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The term “homeless children and youth”—</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) includes —</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings...

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

(All definitions are contained, exactly as written here, in McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 725(2); 42 U.S.C. 11435(2))

McKinney-Vento guidelines also define the term “unaccompanied youth,” which includes youth in homeless situations who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Guidance provided by the U.S. Department of Education further states,

“children or youth who have run away from home and live in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, the streets, or other inadequate accommodations are considered homeless, even if their parents have provided and are willing to provide a home for them” (U.S. Department of Education Preliminary Guidance for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, Title VII, Subtitle B (June 1995), 22-3).

Children and youth who are experiencing homelessness and are apart from their parents, such as young people fleeing violence in the home, are considered “unaccompanied” homeless youth. More information about the relevance of this distinction when it comes to dependent FAFSA status will be discussed in the section titled “Financial Aid and Homeless Youth Status.”

The McKinney-Vento Act requires each state to have a K-12 homeless student coordinator on a statewide level, and each Local Educational Agency (LEA), or school district, to have a dedicated homeless education liaison. This liaison is tasked with educating their districts about homelessness; how to identify homeless students; and how to ensure that the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness are upheld, such as staying in a school of origin or timely enrollment. AB 801 mirrors this legislation and calls for California’s public higher education systems to have homeless youth liaisons on their campuses who will address the needs of homeless students that are attending, or that would like to attend, college in California. More information about the role of a homeless youth liaison and the support offered by AB 801, as well as information about how to verify homeless student status and eligibility requirements for certain benefits provided by AB 801, will be discussed in Section 3.
How and Why College Students Become Homeless

While sometimes difficult to measure and define, researchers have identified several common causes for homelessness among college students:

1) **Parental job loss.** Many students, even low-income students, still rely on parental assistance in paying for school-related fees. Families who are already in a lower income bracket can very quickly end up in a homeless or near-homeless situation when one parent loses a job. A 2012 report by the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation reported 20 percent of unemployed homeless parents had just lost their jobs within the last six months.

2) **Lack of affordable housing.** For Californians in particular, finding affordable housing can be very difficult, especially for young college students who do not have stable and consistent employment. Currently, there are no states in the nation where a full-time minimum wage employee can afford a one-bedroom apartment at fair market rate, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Therefore, students often find themselves doubled-up, couch-surfing, sleeping in cars, or in other living situations that fall under the definition of homelessness.

3) **Family or parental conflicts.** Youth overwhelmingly point to family conflict and breakdown as a reason for homelessness, such as violence, neglect, abuse, drug activity, and other problems within the family. For many young people, living in shelters or staying temporarily with friends is a safer and more desirable alternative than living at home with their parent or guardian. Additionally, young people that identify as LGBTQ are overrepresented within the homeless youth population, as 20-40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ.

4) **Exiting foster care or juvenile detention.** Former foster youth have a much higher risk of experiencing homelessness since many foster children lose familial connections while in care. As foster children age-out of the foster care system,

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6 Dunning, A. Homeless Youth and Higher Education: Resources, Programs and Awareness for College Students in Need. Affordable Colleges Online. https://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/homeless-students-guide/


they may have not been provided with a solid plan or adequately prepared for independent life as an adult. A recent survey shows that up to 30 percent of former foster youth experienced homelessness while attending community college. Youth exiting the juvenile justice system are also at elevated risk for becoming homeless when they transition out of systems without appropriate support plans in place. Many times, youth exiting correctional facilities do not have a stable place to go and end up homeless. A study of homeless youth in Minnesota found that 46 percent of the homeless youth surveyed had previously been in a correctional facility.

The most common type of living situation for homeless youth is known as “couch-surfing,” where homeless youth temporarily move around between different homes of friends, relatives, or acquaintances for short periods of time, without being on the lease agreement. Many young people in these situations do not consider themselves homeless, yet this type of homeless experience accounts for approximately 86 percent of homeless situations for young people and is included under the McKinney definition of homelessness that guides eligibility for both AB 801 and FAFSA independent status.

Data and Statistics of Homelessness and Homeless Youth

Due to the nature of homelessness, it is difficult for researchers to collect and track data around homelessness. Oftentimes homeless individuals are moving from place to place, camping out, staying with friends, etc., and do not end up being documented by researchers and data collectors. Many homeless individuals do not consider themselves homeless and therefore may exclude themselves from counts or surveys.

Gathering accurate data, especially with homeless youth that are no longer enrolled in a public K-12 institution, is a challenge. Many young people are wary of perceived repercussions of identifying as homeless or may mistrust the law or authorities, and therefore do not place themselves in situations where they are counted as homeless. Other times, homeless or unaccompanied youth are not engaged in activities like enrolling for school where they could self-identify as homeless.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) conducts point-in-time estimates of homelessness for unaccompanied homeless youth. These counts include unaccompanied young people under the age of 25. The total estimates of unaccompanied youth from the HUD single point-in-time count is 40,799 homeless youth nationwide on a single

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given night. California alone makes up 38 percent of the nation’s total unaccompanied homeless youth (age 18-24), with 15,548 counted homeless youth on a single night in January 2017. The state with the second highest number of unaccompanied homeless youth was New York, at 2,829. California also has one-tenth of all unaccompanied homeless youth Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) applicants, more than any other state in the nation.

A nationwide 2017 study shows that 1 in 10 young adults ages 18-25 experienced some form of homelessness over the past 12 months. That is approximately 3.5 million young adults ages 18-25 that have experienced some form of homelessness recently.

According to FAFSA, over 150,000 applicants indicated that they were homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless in July 2014. A 2017 multi-state study by the Wisconsin HOPE Lab found that an estimated average of 14 percent of community college students experienced homelessness in the previous 12 months.

![California Homeless Youth numbers from the 2017 HUD Point-in-Time Study](https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf)

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Barriers Homeless Youth Face in Higher Education

Homeless youth face multiple barriers when it comes to success in higher education. Not only do finances play a role, but the emotional and mental well-being required to focus and learn in a college setting is significantly compromised while experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness does not occur in isolation, and many students experiencing homelessness are also facing economic crises, food insecurity, impacts of abuse or neglect, lack of a supportive and caring adult, mental health challenges, and other issues that impact their wellness. Homeless students need support systems in place to address the various barriers that they face alongside homelessness.

Students experiencing homelessness may feel a sense of shame or stigma attached to their current situation and be reluctant to seek help. The Homeless Youth Liaison can help make the student feel more comfortable and reinforce the student’s potential by providing empathetic and practical support.

Support for Homeless Youth in California Pursuing Higher Education: Assembly Bill 801 (Bloom)

The Success for Homeless Youth in Higher Education Act, Assembly Bill 801 (AB 801), was signed into law on September 21, 2016, and amends Sections 66025.9, 69614.5, 69561 and 76300 of, and adds Section 67003.5 to, the Education Code, relating to postsecondary education. AB 801 provides certain benefits to homeless youth students in a California Community College.

AB 801 implements the following:

- Requires a Financial Aid staff member, or staff in another appropriate office or department, to function as a Homeless Youth Liaison
- Requires the Homeless Youth Liaison to inform current and prospective homeless youth students about financial aid and other assistance available to homeless youth
- Provides priority enrollment to verified homeless youth
- Adds verified homeless youth to the group of persons who are automatically eligible for a California College Promise Grant (formerly known as the Board of Governors, or BOG, fee waiver), as long as they meet the minimum academic and progress standards
• Places homeless youth, as defined, within the scope of California Student Aid Commission’s Community College Student Financial Aid Outreach Program and the Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP)

AB 801 defines homeless youth as follows:

(2) “Homeless youth” means a student under 25 years of age, who has been verified at any time during the 24 months immediately preceding the receipt of his or her application for admission by a postsecondary educational institution that is a qualifying institution pursuant to Section 69432.7, as a homeless child or youth, as defined in subsection (2) of Section 725 of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 11434a(2)) (see Table 1 for the McKinney-Vento definition).

Once a student is verified as a homeless youth, they will retain that status for a period of six years or until they reach age 25, whichever comes first. Therefore, students do not need to be re-verified every year if they are consistently enrolled in the college where they were verified. If a student enrolls in a different college, they will have to be re-verified at the new college. To be re-verified at a different California college campus, the Homeless Youth Liaison at the new college can simply call the Homeless Youth Liaison at the previous college and confirm that the student had been verified at that institution. Please see information on how to verify homeless youth students in the next section.

**Tips for Understanding the AB 801 Homeless Definition**

• Any student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence meets the McKinney-Vento definition. In addition to those in homeless shelters or sleeping on the street, in cars, or other places not meant for human habitation, it includes students who are “couch surfing.”

• A student does not need to be an “unaccompanied” youth to qualify for priority registration. Youth who are currently, or who were previously, homeless in the custody of parents or guardians still qualify (this is different from the criteria for independent status for financial aid).

• Once a student is verified as a homeless youth, they retain that status for a period of six years or until they reach age 25, whichever comes first, and do not need to be reverified in subsequent years (this is different from the criteria for FAFSA, where an unaccompanied homeless youth would need to be reverified yearly).
Verifying a Student's Homeless Status

AB 801 requires verification of homeless status from one of the following:

1. A homeless services provider as defined in paragraph (3) of subdivision (d) of Section 103577 of the Health and Safety Code. This includes: a government or nonprofit agency receiving government funding to serve homeless persons, an attorney, a K-12 homeless liaison, school social worker, a social services or human services provider funded to serve homeless children or youth, or a local law enforcement officer designated as a liaison to the homeless population.

2. The director of a federal TRIO program or GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) program, or a designee of that director.

3. A financial aid administrator for an institution of higher education or their designee.

4. Proposed legislation to add the Homeless Youth Liaison or Foster Youth Liaison as persons who can verify is pending. If approved by the legislature, Liaisons will be able to verify a student as homeless youth status beginning January 1, 2019.

Tips for verifying Homeless Youth Status: it is important to be sensitive when conducting an interview to determine the status of a homeless student. Your role in this conversation is to simply find out if the student is considered homeless under the guidelines defined by AB 801, not to have the student explain or justify their circumstances. Try questions and phrases such as:

- “I need to ask you a few questions to determine if you meet the criteria for ‘homeless’ status, which could help you gain access to special benefits.”
- “This conversation is completely confidential, and I won’t share your information with anyone else unless I get your permission.”
- “What is your current housing situation? Do you stay in the same place every night?”
- “Could your friend/relative that you are currently staying with ask you to leave if they wanted to? Where would you go if they asked you to leave?”
- “Do you relate to any of these arrangements described here (in the McKinney Vento definition)?”

Consider using phrases such as “in a temporary living arrangement” or “without stable housing” and remember the McKinney-Vento definition refers to a “fixed, regular, and adequate” housing arrangement.
**Priority Enrollment and California College Promise Grant (BOG Fee Waiver)**

Students that meet the criteria for homelessness per AB 801 are eligible for priority enrollment through the sunset date of January 1, 2020. Once verified as eligible, students should receive a priority enrollment status that is equal to that which is provided to California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS), Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), Foster Youth, and Veteran students.

Students verified as homeless are also automatically eligible for the California College Promise Grant (formerly known as the BOG fee waiver). Students receiving the California College Promise Grant must also meet minimum academic and progress standards, unless exempted from this requirement due to dual status as a current or former foster youth (per SB 906).

The California College Promise Grant uses the question below for students to self-identify as homeless and requires the financial aid administrator to verify homeless status.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has the Financial Aid Office verified that you have been without a residence in the last 24 months (homeless)?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you have been homeless but not verified, check “Yes” and contact the Financial Aid Office.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Once homeless status is verified by the Financial Aid Administrator, the California College Promise Grant is classified as “CCPG-Homeless” under the “Office Use Only” section of the application form.

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<tr>
<th>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</th>
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<tr>
<td>☐ CCPG-A</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ TANF/CalWORKs</td>
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<td>☐ GA</td>
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<td>☐ SSI/SSP</td>
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<td>☐ CCPG-B</td>
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<td>☐ Special Classification</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Veteran</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ National Guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Dependent</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ RDP</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Student is not eligible</td>
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<td>☐ Student is not eligible</td>
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<td>☐ Student is not eligible</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ CCPG-C</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Medal of Honor</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ 9/11 Dependent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Dep. of deceased law enforcement/fire personnel</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It is important to understand the varied pathways through which students qualify for the California College Promise Grant, and determine which route is most beneficial for the student. Be aware that homeless youth may be better off if determined for a California College Promise Grant eligibility under methods A, B, or C. Students who qualify for method A, B, or C with $0 Expected Family Contribution may be eligible for the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) if they meet the additional EOPS eligibility criteria, and these students may qualify for other federal, state, and campus programs. Qualifying for the Promise Grant under the homeless designation will not automatically qualify these youth for other programs that rely on means testing or need analysis to qualify. Decide with your student which path would be the most beneficial and suitable for them during the financial aid process.
Role of the Homeless Youth Liaison

AB 801 requires that each college designate a Homeless Youth Liaison. The Homeless Youth Liaison can assist any homeless student in verifying eligibility for AB 801 status, help with applying for and receiving federal and state financial aid, and provide other available services. In addition, the Homeless Youth Liaison can assist homeless youth students, regardless of their AB 801 eligibility, by facilitating connections or providing referrals to the following:

- **Admissions and Records**
  - Priority enrollment
  - Class enrollment

- **Financial Aid**
  - FAFSA or California Dream Act Application
  - California College Promise Grant (BOG fee waiver)
  - Other forms of financial aid (scholarships, Chafee Grant, etc.)

- **Placement Testing**
- **Academic Advising and Counseling**
- **Student Support**
  - EOPS, DSPS, Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI), Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support (CAFYES/NextUp), etc.

- **Tutoring**
- **Community Resources and Social Services**
  - CalFresh and other forms of public benefits
  - Programs for foster youth, including Independent Living Programs (ILP) and transitional housing programs (THP-Plus)
  - Food banks
  - Shelters and housing programs
  - Mental health services
  - Physical health services
  - Clothing and school supplies
  - Shower facilities (all community colleges with existing shower facilities must grant access to those showers for homeless students, even if they are not taking physical education classes)

- **Other services available on your campus or in your community**
Financial Aid and Homeless Youth Status

Financial aid is paramount to the success of a homeless youth student. An important part of the role of the Homeless Youth Liaison is to assist and support students in understanding the processes related to financial aid. Homeless Youth Liaisons should also thoroughly explain to students the various forms of financial aid, as it is critical for homeless youth students to maximize as much non-loan-based aid as possible.

In many cases, a homeless youth student may be eligible for classification as an independent student for purposes of the FAFSA. An independent student who is not living with their parent or guardian does not need to provide parental income information or a parent signature on the FAFSA.

However, if a student is experiencing homelessness with his or her family and is still living with the family as a unit, that student would not apply for independent status on the FAFSA, although they could still qualify for a California Promise Grant and the priority registration based on AB 801 guidelines. This student would include parental income and require a parent signature on the FAFSA, unless they are over age 24.

To qualify as an independent student, an unaccompanied homeless youth (not residing with their parents) can have their status verified by any of the following entities:

- A local homeless education liaison (K-12)
- A Runaway and Homeless Youth Act-funded shelter or transitional housing program
- A HUD-funded shelter or transitional housing program
- A designated Financial Aid Administrator at the institution where the student primarily attends

According to the FAFSA Application and Verification Guide (AVG), as long as a student has verified status from one of the entities listed above, the Financial Aid Administrator does not need to verify the answers to the FAFSA (even if they disagree with an authority’s determination that a student is homeless), unless they have documented conflicting information. If a Financial Aid Administrator or institution does not have conflicting information, no additional documentation is required. A documented phone call with, or a written statement from, one of the authorities is sufficient verification (per AVG).

For the purposes of FAFSA, if the student does not have written documentation of homeless status from one of the entities listed above, a designated Financial Aid Administrator at the institution where the student primarily attends may also determine homeless status. This determination can be based on third-party verification or a documented interview with the student. For FAFSA, a new determination for unaccompanied homeless youth (independent) status must be made each year, unlike the AB 801 guidelines where the verification lasts for six years or up until age 25.
A template of a verification form for purposes of FAFSA unaccompanied homeless youth status is available from the National Center for Homeless Education and the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, and can be found by following this link: https://nche.ed.gov/pr/faa_tool.php

Table 2. Dependency status questions on the 2017-18 FAFSA (unaccompanied homeless youth for independent status)

Source: http://www.studentaid.gov
Homeless Definition Crosswalk

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines a homeless student as follows. (42 U.S.C. Sec. 11434a(2)).

(A) Students who lack fixed, regular and adequate night time residences
(B) Includes the following
- sharing housing due to loss of housing due to economic hardship or similar reason
- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; emergency or transitional shelters; or abandoned in hospitals
- sleeping in public place not intended for or adequate for night time residence: cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations
- includes migratory children who otherwise meet this definition

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<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>AB 801</th>
<th>Financial aid</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homeless definition</td>
<td>Met McKinney Vento definition above</td>
<td>At any time after July 1 of the application year the student is an unaccompanied youth who</td>
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<td>within 24 months prior to college</td>
<td>• meets the McKinney Vento definition above OR</td>
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<td>application.</td>
<td>• is self-supporting and at risk of being homeless</td>
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<td>A student living in one of these situations and fleeing an abusive parent may be considered</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>homeless even if the parent would provide support and a place to live.</td>
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<td>Age limit</td>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>Under 24</td>
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<td>Expiration of Status</td>
<td>• 6 Years from date of admission to</td>
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<td>reaching age 25</td>
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<td>• Status is not transferrable to</td>
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<td>Authorized to verify</td>
<td>1. A homeless service provider which includes a</td>
<td>• A school district homeless liaison</td>
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<td>governmental or non-profit agency</td>
<td>• An emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S.</td>
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<td>receiving government funding to</td>
<td>Department of Housing and Urban Development</td>
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<td>provide services to homeless</td>
<td>• A runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program</td>
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<td>persons, an attorney, a McKinney</td>
<td>• A financial aid administrator</td>
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<td>Vento homeless liaison, a human</td>
<td>If determination is made by a FAA, they may rely on third party verification</td>
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<td>services provider funded by the</td>
<td>OR a documented interview with the student.</td>
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<td>state to provide homeless services,</td>
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<td>services, public assistance or</td>
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<td>employment services, or a law</td>
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<td>enforcement liaison</td>
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<td>2. Director of federal TRIO or</td>
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<td>GEAR programs or designee</td>
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<td>3. Financial aid administrator of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>post-secondary institution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References
- California Education Code 55025.9
- CCCCCO Guidance Memo - SS 17-07
- 20 USC 1087vv
- Dear Colleague Letter GEN 15-16 (July 29, 2015)
Housing Resources

It is important to maximize other resources available within the community around your campus. Some resources are available to youth experiencing homelessness, but resources vary by county. Below are links to information for housing solutions for homeless youth. Please check with your county’s social service offices to follow up on availability of services. It is recommended that each college create and maintain a list of local resources.

Shelters and Emergency Housing in California (Provided by U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development)


National Homeless Shelter Directory

http://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/

2-1-1 California

2-1-1 California is a statewide network consisting of county databases of resources and information regarding service providers or community agencies, such as emergency housing, public benefits, transportation, or health care. This is a 24/7 service. Simply dial 211 from your telephone to be connected, or go online to the 2-1-1 webpage to find resources in your county. 2-1-1 is not currently available in all counties, please check the website for availability. www.211california.org

Resources by Region:

Northern California Area Continuum of Care Coordinators


Southern California Area Continuum of Care Coordinators


Central Valley Area Shelters and Community Housing


Covenant House (youth age 18-24; locations in Los Angeles, Oakland, Berkeley)

http://covenanthousecalifornia.org/

Sacramento Area Homeless Resources
http://www.211sacramento.org/211/online-database/categories/homeless/

San Diego Area Homeless Resources  
http://211sandiego.org/resources/basic-needs/shelter-homeless-services/

San Francisco Area Shelters  
http://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/cgi-bin/id/city.cgi?city=San%20Francisco&state=CA

Transitional Housing Placement Programs (THP-Plus, THP+FC)

THP+FC provides supportive housing to youth ages 18-21 who are in extended foster care. THP+FC provider directory:  


Independent Living Program (ILP)

ILP offers training and services to assist current and former foster youth to achieve self-sufficiency and independence. ILP providers can assist by linking foster youth to resources such as housing or education. ILP provider directory:  
http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/SSSP/FYSI/ILP%20Coordinators%20Contact%20List.pdf

Food Resources

Utilizing a community food bank is a practical way for homeless youth students to access food and nutrition. Some community college campuses offer small food pantries on campus for students to access food at no cost. Check to see if your campus operates an on-campus food pantry and encourage homeless youth students to utilize this resource.

Utilizing CalFresh benefits (formerly known as food stamps) is another practical and sustainable way for students to access food and nutrition.

California Association of Food Banks

This tool can connect you to food banks as well as other types of food assistance food programs and resources in your county: http://www.cafoodbanks.org/find-food-bank
CalFresh

Many students, particularly homeless students, may be eligible to receive CalFresh benefits. The Homeless Youth Liaison can assist students with the application process for CalFresh, or refer the student to the appropriate person that can help. CalFresh benefits can be used to purchase unprepared food at grocery stores and fruits and vegetables at most farmers’ markets.

In some counties, students who are identified as homeless can also redeem CalFresh benefits in on-campus cafeterias and other qualifying restaurants (see All County Letter 16-112 for more information). Being verified as homeless does not automatically qualify a student for CalFresh benefits, but students who are a part of select on-campus programs may be eligible for an exemption from the CalFresh student eligibility rule (which requires a student to work at least 20 hours per week or 80 hours per month). Many students may be eligible for exemption from the criteria that requires students to work 20 hours per week in order to qualify for CalFresh benefits. Students who are a part of the following programs may not have to meet the 20-hour work requirement:

- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)
- College DSPS
- Cooperative Agencies Resources and Education (CARE) Program
- UC McNair Scholars Program
- Puente Project
- Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement (MESA) Program
- Guardian Scholars, FYSI, CAFYES/NextUp, Chafee Education and Training (ETV) Program
- Extended Foster Care (AB 12/AB 212)

In addition, a student may also be eligible for an exemption from the CalFresh student eligibility rule if the student is receiving cash assistance from a program funded under TANF, such as a student receiving certain types of Cal Grants, or if a student qualifies for Work Study. For information regarding CalFresh student eligibility exemptions, please refer to All County Letter 17-05.

Income Guidelines

The tables below indicate the gross monthly income and the maximum amount of CalFresh benefits that can be received. Figures effective October 1, 2017, to September 30, 2018.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people in household</th>
<th>Gross Monthly Income</th>
<th>Number of people in household</th>
<th>Maximum CalFresh Allotment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$2,010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$2,708</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$352</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>$760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$5,494</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public forms of student financial aid do not count as earned income, such as Pell Grants, federal state and college work study, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), and Chafee Education and Training Vouchers.

Other educational assistance such as private scholarships, stipends, or loans may count as unearned income.

**Application Process**

The Homeless Youth Liaison can assist the student with finding a CalFresh outreach partner, on campus or in the community, who can assist with gathering and submitting the correct documentation to apply for CalFresh.

1. **Apply online or over the phone.** A CalFresh outreach partner or the Homeless Youth Liaison can assist the student with making the phone call to the County office or going to [www.students.getcalfresh.org](http://www.students.getcalfresh.org) to apply for benefits online.

2. **Gather required documentation.** The student will need the following documents in order to complete the interview process: proof of identity (driver’s license, California identification card, etc.), social security number, paycheck stubs (if employed) for the past 30 days, bank statements for all accounts, proof of shelter costs (rent or mortgage payment, utility bills, etc.).

*Tip: If a homeless student does not have an address, the student can use the campus address (make sure the student knows where to pick up mail) or qualify for free general delivery at any post office.*
*Tip: Under AB 1733, homeless persons can get a free new or replacement California photo identification card from the Department of Motor Vehicles. If born in California, homeless persons also qualify for a free certified birth certificate from the county of their birth.

3. **Complete the interview.** An eligibility worker will conduct an interview over the phone, unless the applicant requests an in-person interview. Many times, the eligibility worker will call from a blocked number, so don’t miss the call!
*Tip: Students can always reschedule the phone interview if the initial interview is scheduled at an inconvenient time.
*Tip: Many students may qualify to have their CalFresh application expedited and be eligible to receive benefits within three days. Encourage the student to disclose income amounts and as much other information as possible to the intake worker in order to expedite the process.

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**Other Resources**

Homeless youth students may also qualify for other resources in the community. It is recommended that the Homeless Youth Liaison research available resources that are specific to the region or county of the campus.

**Birth Certificate.** A homeless individual can receive a free certified copy of his or her birth certificate (in the county in which the person was born).
https://www.housingca.org/freebirthrecordsids

**California ID.** The California Department of Motor Vehicles can give homeless individuals a California ID for free. https://www.housingca.org/photo-id-how-to-sps

**Free General Delivery P.O. Box.** A homeless individual can qualify for a free general delivery box at a Post Office. http://about.usps.com/postal-bulletin/2013/pb22375/html/updt_006.htm

**Resources from Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

- The Coordinated Entry for Youth Brief provides an overview of the four core elements: access, assessment, prioritization, and referral.
- Engaging Youth in Decision Making provides guidance on how to engage youth in project development and governance.
- Using a Housing First Philosophy When Serving Youth provides an overview of Housing First and how it applies to youth-serving projects.
- Rapid Re-Housing for Youth includes a Jump Start Tool, a set of Frequently Asked Questions, and a Checklist.
SUCCESS STORIES

The following is a selection of campuses that have systems in place that are successfully serving low-income students, including homeless students. These campuses are utilizing different avenues in order to prepare students for success through access to services and public benefits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skyline College, San Bruno, CA</th>
<th>San Diego Mesa College, San Diego, CA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The SparkPoint center at Skyline College embeds the benefits application process into an established process of accessing student services. By embedding this process, many students that otherwise may not have fully utilized the benefits available to them are able to enroll for benefits while simultaneously accessing other student services, such as academic advising or a food pantry.</td>
<td>The Mesa College Associated Student Government has a Homeless Outreach Student Transition (HOST) program. The HOST program collects and distributes food, clothing, and hygiene products, in addition to hosting a Thanksgiving dinner for students and community members who have no place to go for the holidays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SparkPoint at Skyline College also provides financial education and coaching, employment and career services, a food pantry, scholarships, and other services that assist with financial self-sufficiency and educational attainment.</td>
<td>The HOST program also assists students with purchasing books, supplies, and printing. They have distributed nearly 100 fully stocked backpacks, over $10,000 in support for books, over $3,000 in café cards, and $1,200 in copy/print cards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Southwestern College Child Development Center, Family Studies Department, and Associated Student Organization (ASO) began the Jag Kitchen Food Pantry to assist students facing food insecurity. A campus-wide effort, the Jag Kitchen is a safe and judgement-free zone that can be used by currently enrolled SWC students needing assistance.

The Jag Kitchen is located in Room 554 on the Chula Vista campus. Donations are accepted at the SWC Child Development Center Bldg. 2000 & Room 554, year-round.

Eligibility:

- SWC Students with a valid SWC identification card.
- No eligibility forms or proof of income is necessary.
The Orange Coast College Food Riders Club was established in 2010 and has recently joined the Food Recovery Network. Founded by OCC librarian Carl Morgan, the Food Riders Club volunteers collect excess food from the OCC cafeteria and deliver it via bicycles and trailers to local food pantries. OCC Food Riders have recovered over 60,000 pounds of food in six years. A handbook for program replication is available on their website.

Through a program called Fresh Success, CalFresh recipients gain education and training that will lead to better employment and a path to economic self-sufficiency. This innovative approach to CalFresh Employment & Training, which connects counties with local colleges and CBOs that have available match funds, allows for increased federal funding and innovative, job-driven approaches. Through Fresh Success, participants receive supportive services such as career counseling; interview training; job search, placement, and retention services; educational plans; academic monitoring; tutoring; and case management. Participants also receive help to reduce their financial barriers to participation, such as reimbursement for transportation, textbooks, and supplies. Fresh Success is still in the pilot stage at several community colleges throughout the state.
HOMELESS YOUTH LIAISON FAQ

• What is required of the Homeless Youth Liaison under AB 801 guidelines? The Homeless Liaison is required to inform current and prospective homeless youth about financial aid opportunities (FAFSA, etc.) and other assistance available to homeless students (varies by campus). The Homeless Youth Liaison is also responsible for ensuring that verified and eligible homeless students receive priority enrollment and for notifying the homeless student that they are eligible for the California College Promise Grant. The liaison is also required to assist these students in applying for and receiving federal and state financial aid and available services.

• Is it required that the Homeless Youth Liaison and the Foster Youth Liaison be the same individual? No, the Homeless Youth Liaison and the Foster Youth Liaison do not have to be the same individual. In fact, it is recommended that the Homeless Liaison and the Foster Youth Liaison are not the same individual, in order to be able to fully serve each student. However, it is recognized that each campus is unique, and each campus should designate the Homeless Liaison and the Foster Youth Liaison as they see fit.

• How can I find out who the Homeless Youth Liaison is on another campus? Please refer to the Homeless Youth Liaison Directory which can be found here: http://www.cccstudentmentalhealth.org/docs/basic-needs/CCC-Basic-Needs-Survey-List-of-Homeless-Youth-Liaisons.xlsx

• How do I know if a student is homeless for purposes of FAFSA or AB 801? Please see the McKinney Vento Definition in Table 1 (page 6) to determine if a student is considered homeless according to the legislation.

• What if a homeless student is 25 years of age or older? Students experiencing homelessness may still be eligible for assistance, financial aid, and other programs, but they do not fall under the AB 801 guidelines and therefore are not guaranteed any of the provisions by AB 801. Students automatically are considered independent for financial aid purposes when they turn 24 and therefore their homeless status is no longer relevant when completing the FAFSA after age 23. The student can still apply for the California College Promise Grant based on income guidelines and eligibility requirements for all students in general.

• What happens when a previously verified homeless student turns 25? They are no longer eligible for the benefits of AB 801 such as automatic Promise Grant qualification or priority enrollment. However, they may still be available for the California College Promise Grant based on income guidelines, or other benefits and programs depending on what services your campus and/or community has to offer.
• **How does the homeless student apply for the California College Promise Grant?** The student should answer “Yes” to the question on the CCPG application that states, “Has the Financial Aid Office verified that you have been without residents in the last 24 months (homeless)? If you have been homeless but not verified, check ‘Yes’ and contact the Financial Aid Office.” If the student is unable to be verified, they may still apply for the California College Promise Grant as any general student would, via income guidelines and eligibility requirements rather than automatic qualification.


• **What if a student was verified as homeless at another campus, but now attends my campus?** If the student remains within the same college district, no additional verification is required. A student must be re-verified if they change districts. However, this can be as simple as verifying with the previous Homeless Youth Liaison via a documented telephone call.

• **Does a homeless youth student have to report their parental income on the FAFSA?** This depends on whether or not the student is considered “independent” as it pertains to the FAFSA questions regarding Unaccompanied Homeless Youth. If the student meets the requirements found in Table 2 (page 19), they only report their own income and do not need a parent signature. However, if the student does not meet the requirements found in Table 2 regarding Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, they may need to report parental income on the FAFSA.

• **Are the definitions of homelessness the same for priority registration and independent status on the FAFSA?**
  While the definitions both rely on the McKinney Vento definition of homelessness, there are some key differences.
  • The AB 801 definition requires a student to be homeless at some point during the 24 months prior to college application, whereas for independent status the standard is having been homeless on or after July 1 of the FAFSA application year.
  • In order to qualify for independent status, a student must be “unaccompanied.” This is not a requirement under AB 801.
  • Once verified under AB 801, homeless status remains in effect for six years or until the age of 25, whichever comes first. Unaccompanied homeless youth status for the FAFSA must be re-verified every year.
• **Who is a “homeless services provider” as defined in paragraph (3) of subdivision (d) of Section 103577 of the Health and Safety Code?**

(A) A governmental or nonprofit agency receiving federal, state, or county or municipal funding to provide services to a homeless person or homeless child or youth, or that is otherwise sanctioned to provide those services by a local homeless continuum of care organization.

(B) An attorney licensed to practice law in this state.

(C) A local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youth, pursuant to Section 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii) of Title 42 of the United States Code, or a school social worker.

(D) A human services provider or public social services provider funded by the State of California to provide homeless children or youth services, health services, mental or behavioral health services, substance use disorder services, or public assistance or employment services.

(E) A law enforcement officer designated as a liaison to the homeless population by a local police department or sheriff’s department within the state.

• **Who can I contact with questions regarding homeless students and AB 801 implementation?**

Please contact Colleen Ganley at the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. Telephone: 916.323.3865  Email: cganley@cccco.edu

Or Jessica Smith at the Foundation for California Community Colleges. Telephone: 916.325.8562  Email: jsmith@foundationccc.org
SAMPLE HOMELESS YOUTH LIAISON JOB DESCRIPTION

The Homeless Youth Liaison position is designed to provide support to current and prospective students experiencing homelessness. The Homeless Youth Liaison’s overall purpose is to improve outcomes for students experiencing homelessness.

Specific Responsibilities

- Serve as the campus expert on homeless youth education, issues, practices, and state and federal legislation that impacts homeless students.
- Have comprehensive knowledge and understanding of how to identify, outreach to, and support students experiencing homelessness.
- Be responsible for assisting students with both state and federal financial aid applications; be informed about distinctions with FAFSA application process for students experiencing homelessness, including eligibility for independent student status.
- Act as a liaison between various campus support systems and departments on campus.
- Act as a liaison between campuses, shelters, and the community on behalf of homeless students.
- Participate in trainings and professional development opportunities that enhance the support services to homeless students.
- Understand and execute the requirements outlined in Assembly Bill 801.
- Understand how to verify homeless youth according to Assembly Bill 801; understand how to provide and/or receive verification to and/or from other campuses or entities for Assembly Bill 801 and/or FAFSA processes.
- Assist AB 801 eligible students with the processes for:
  - Priority Registration
  - Board of Governor’s Fee Waiver
REFERENCES


