



California
Community
Colleges



BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS:
Guidelines for California Community
College Homeless Liaisons

2021

www.cccco.edu

Guidelines for California Community College Homeless Youth Liaisons

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Homeless Student Basics	4
Higher Education and Homeless Youth	10
Other Resources Available to Homeless Youth	22
Success Stories	28
Homeless Youth Liaison FAQ	31
Sample Homeless Youth Liaison Job Description	34
References	35

INTRODUCTION

Students in higher education are increasingly struggling to meet basic needs such as stable housing or food security.^{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 at two-year institutions are facing housing insecurity at a rate of 60 percent, while those at four-year institutions are facing housing insecurity at a rate of 48 percent.



Additionally, a 2016 study showed that 62.7 percent of Los Angeles Community College District students experienced some level of food insecurity.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.⁵

In partial response to these findings, the California State Legislature passed Assembly Bill 801 in 2015-16, and later passed AB 806 in 2019. 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. While AB 801 provides services only to students who were homeless when they applied to college, AB 806 extends those same services to students who become homeless while in college. Therefore, it is important for California community college faculty, staff, administrators, and other service 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 <https://www.ccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/Student-Service/What-we-do/Foster-Youth-Success-Initiatives>

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

¹ Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, A. (2017). *Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Hungry-and-Homeless-in-College-Report.pdf>

² Wood, J. L., Harris III, F., & Delgado, N.R. (2016). *Struggling to survive – striving to succeed: Food and housing insecurities in the community college*. San Diego, CA: Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL).

³ Martinez, S., Maynard, K., & Ritchie, L. (2016). *University of California Global Food Initiative: Student Food Access and Security Study*. Retrieved from <http://www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/best-practices/food-access-security/student-food-access-and-security-study.pdf>

⁴ Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., Hernandez, A. (2017). *Los Angeles Community College District Report from Fall 2016 Survey of Student Basic Needs*. Wisconsin HOPE Lab.

⁵ Internal California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office Survey. (September 2016).

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.

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/AB 806
- **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 statutory 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.



HOMELESS STUDENT BASICS

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. In particular, the definition utilized to determine eligibility for priority registration and the California College Promise Grant is distinct from the definition used to determine eligibility for independent status when completing the Free Application for Financial Student Aid (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

The term “homeless children and youth”—

- (A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and
- (B) includes —
 - (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;

- (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime 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.⁶ 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.⁷ 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 (e.g., violence, neglect, abuse, drug activity, and other problems within the family) as a reason for homelessness. 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.⁸ Additionally, young people that identify as LGBTQ are overrepresented within the homeless youth population, as 20-40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ.



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/>

⁷ Aurand, A., Emanuel, D., Yentel, D., & Errico, E. (2017). *The GAP: A Shortage of Affordable Homes*. National Low Income Housing Coalition. Retrieved from http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Gap-Report_2017_interactive.pdf

⁸ California Homeless Youth Project. (n.d.). *Youth Homelessness In CA: A Quick Overview*. Retrieved from <http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/a-quickoverview-of-hy-inca.pdf>

- 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, 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 43 percent of former foster youth experienced homelessness while attending community college.⁹ 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 75 percent of homeless situations for young people and is included under the McKinney definition of homelessness that guides eligibility for priority registration, the California College Promise Grant (CCPG), and FAFSA independent status.¹⁰

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

⁹ Goldrick-Rab, et al., 2017. *Hungry and Homeless in College*.

¹⁰ See College and University Basic Needs Insecurity: A National #RealCollege Survey Report. (2019). https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HOPE_realcollege_National_report_digital.pdf

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 given night.¹¹ California alone makes up 38 percent of the nation's total unaccompanied homeless youth (age 18-24), with 11,370 counted homeless youth on a single night in January 2020. 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 FAFSA applicants, more than any other state in the nation.¹²

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.¹³

According to FAFSA data, over 41,243 applicants indicated that they were homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless in the 2019-2020 application cycle.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

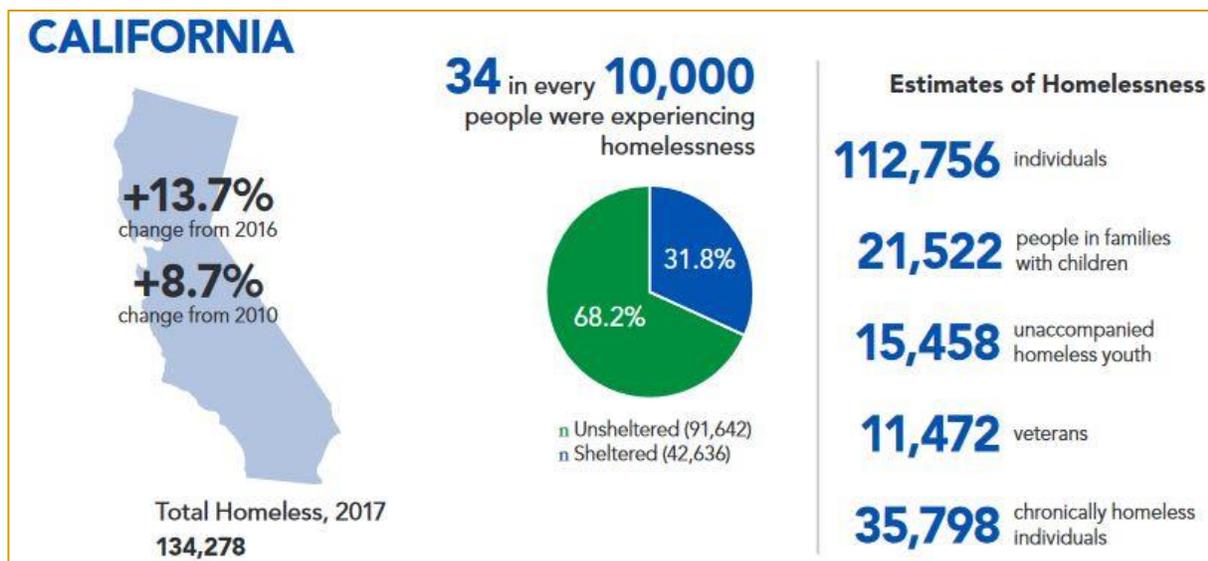
¹¹ United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development. (2017). *Part 1: Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness, The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, December 2017*. Retrieved from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>

¹² Homelessness Reported for Federal Student Aid Applicants. Retrieved from <https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/he/fafsa-homeless-2016-2017.pdf>

¹³ Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

¹⁴ SchoolHouse Connection. (April 27, 2021). "Warning Signs: 2019-20 Homelessness FAFSA Data Signals Impact of the Pandemic. Retrieved from <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/warning-signs-2019-20-homelessness-fafsa-data-signals-impact-of-the-pandemic/>

¹⁵ Goldrick-Rab, et al., 2017. *Hungry and Homeless in College*.



California Homeless Youth numbers from the 2017 HUD Point-in-Time Study

For planning purpose, understanding the number of homeless youth students that are currently enrolled in or possibly interested in enrolling at a local California community college will be important. Understanding these statistics will allow colleges to make data-informed decisions regarding the scope of the problem and can also inform planning for service implementation. Colleges should work with local K-12 McKinney Vento school liaisons to ensure that homeless students transitioning out of the secondary school system have continuity of services and are aware of benefits they may be eligible to receive at California community colleges.

It will also be important to recognize the number of new applicants that are experiencing homelessness. When a potential student either enters information into the CCCApply application system or completes the FAFSA, they have the opportunity to respond to question(s) regarding whether or not they are experiencing homelessness. Colleges can upload this CCCApply data into their student information systems to begin establishing baseline data regarding the number of students who have self-identified as being homeless. Colleges can also cross-reference and include students who have indicated that they are experiencing homeless on the FAFSA.

In addition to establishing baseline data regarding the potential need, colleges can also use this information to conduct student outreach. All students identified as homeless through either the CCCApply system or through cross- referencing FAFSA data should be flagged using CCCCO Management Information System Data Element SG16.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND HOMELESS YOUTH

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.

Providing Trauma-Informed Support to Homeless Youth

Since students' experiences of homelessness are often linked to other traumatic experiences in their lives, acknowledging and addressing trauma should be part of the services provided by a college's Homeless Youth Liaison. Homelessness and other traumatic experiences can take a severe toll on a student's sense of resilience and ability to persist through academic challenges. Students who already feel a sense of shame or stigma associated with homelessness or housing insecurity may experience compounded shame after receiving low grades or other indicators of unsatisfactory academic progress.

Students who doubt their ability to succeed in college may be less likely to seek support services in the first place (the section below, "Tips for Verifying Homeless Youth Status," can help with this outreach issue). Additionally, traumatized individuals may either blame themselves for their situations or fear that institutions, such as colleges, will blame them for being underprepared to engage in their studies. Students with a history of trauma may be slower to develop trusting relationships with adults if such relationships were a source of trauma in the past, and therefore patience and flexibility are key when working with these students.

Colleges and their Homeless Youth Liaisons can help homeless youth feel safer and more supported by acknowledging that what goes on outside the classroom has a profound effect on how students engage inside the classroom. One way to accomplish this in a student services setting is to avoid asking homeless youth to repeat the details of their situations to multiple staff members across different offices. Discussing the details of their housing situation can re-traumatize homeless or housing-insecure students. Interacting with one designated point of contact could reduce the potential for re-traumatization.

Additionally, trauma-informed support encourages a strengths-based perspective rather than a deficit perspective. Highlighting the strengths of the homeless youth they encounter might help Homeless Youth Liaisons build trust-based relationships with students. This might involve celebrating an academic, personal, or institutional achievement. Trauma-informed approaches have been shown to help students persist through their college education, and the resulting academic engagement has also been shown to heal some of the effects of trauma on the brain.¹⁶

Support for Homeless Youth in California Pursuing Higher Education: Assembly Bills 801 and 806 (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

¹⁶ Cole, S. F., Eisner, A., Gregory, M., & Ristuccia, J. (2013). *Creating and advocating for trauma-sensitive schools*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Advocates for Children.

Craig, S. E. (2016). *Trauma-sensitive schools: Learning communities transforming children's lives, K-5*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- 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)

On July 31, 2019, AB 806 was signed into law as a follow-up to AB 801. AB 801 was set to expire on January 21, 2020, but AB 806 extended the operations of AB 801 indefinitely. Additionally, while AB 801 only applied to students who had been homeless prior to the point of college application, AB 806 expanded the definition of “homeless youth” to include students who became homeless while in college.

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). Additionally, AB 806 amends this definition to include students who became homeless while in college, rather than limiting the definition to those students who experienced homelessness in the 24 months preceding their college application.

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 community 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 re-verified in subsequent years (this is different from the traditional criteria for FAFSA, where an unaccompanied homeless youth would need to be re-verified yearly. However, upcoming changes to financial aid rules effective for the 2023/2024 academic year will no longer require annual verification).

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. A Homeless Youth Liaison or Foster Youth Liaison.



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. Many students who meet the definition do not identify themselves as homeless and so questions that can help to reveal a student's housing circumstances are often more helpful than asking a student about homelessness. Try questions and phrases such as:

- "I need to ask you a few questions to determine if your current housing situation meets the criteria to help you gain access to special benefits."
- "This conversation is completely confidential, and I won't share your information with anyone else unless you give me explicit 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 the 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. 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 California Code of Regulations § [58621](#)).

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.

*Has the Financial Aid Office verified that you have been without a residence in the last 24 months (homeless)?
If you have been homeless but not verified, check “Yes” and contact the Financial Aid Office.* Yes No

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.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> CCPGT-A | <input type="checkbox"/> CCPG-B | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Classification | RDP | <input type="checkbox"/> Student is not eligible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TANF/CalWORKs | | <input type="checkbox"/> Veteran | <input type="checkbox"/> National Guard | <input type="checkbox"/> Student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GA | <input type="checkbox"/> CCPG-Homeless | | Dependent | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SSI/SSP | <input type="checkbox"/> CCPG-C | <input type="checkbox"/> Medal of Honor | <input type="checkbox"/> 9/11 Dependent | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Dep. of deceased law enforcement/fire personnel | | |

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 CCPG 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 Determinations
- 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

With the passage of AB 132 in July 2021, all colleges are now required to establish a basic needs center with a dedicated basic needs coordinator. While this individual is likely to be the first contact for many students experiencing homelessness, it is a best practice to also designate a Homeless Youth Liaison in the Financial Aid Office. However, communicating the availability of such a resource to students, staff, and faculty can be a challenge. Methods for publicizing the presence of a Homeless Youth Liaison include:

- Adding an interest question to a college’s application, such as: “Are you interested in checking your eligibility for monthly food assistance or housing services?”
- Pop-up messages in a college’s content management system and classroom presentations could also inform students, faculty, and staff of basic needs resources.
- Developing language for inclusion in course syllabi and disseminating to faculty.
- Apps that alert students when there is free food on campus can also aid basic needs initiatives.
- Once the basic needs center is established on campus, publicizing its location at on-campus resource fairs can also connect students with services.

Campuses should keep the Chancellor’s Office informed of staffing changes regarding personnel associated with the Basic Needs Initiative so that publicly available rosters can be kept up to date and accurate.

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 or otherwise qualify for independent status.

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), if a student has been verified by one of the first three entities listed above, the Financial Aid Administrator may not request additional documentation (even if they disagree with an authority's determination that a student is homeless), unless they have documented conflicting information. A documented phone call with, or a written statement from, one of the authorities is sufficient verification (per AVG). This determination of a student's housing status involves only the question of whether the current housing status qualifies as homeless; questions about the circumstances that led to a student's homelessness may not be asked.

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, through the 2023/2024 award year, 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://schoolhouseconnection.org/sample-form-letters-to-determine-the-independent-student-status-of-unaccompanied-homeless-youth>

Table 2. Dependency status questions on the 2020-21 FAFSA (unaccompanied homeless youth for independent status)

Student Homelessness Filter Question

Student Demographics ✓ School Selection ✓ Dependency Status **✎** Parent Demographics Parent Financials Student Financials Sign & Submit Confirmation

STUDENT INFORMATION

On or after July 1, 2020, were you homeless or were you self-supporting and at risk of being homeless? ?

Yes No

Source: <http://www.studentaid.gov>

Student Homelessness Questions

Student Demographics ✓ School Selection ✓ Dependency Status **✎** Parent Demographics Parent Financials **Student Financials** **L** Sign & Submit Confirmation

STUDENT INFORMATION

At any time on or after July 1, 2020, did you receive a determination from any of the entities listed below that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless, or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless? Check all that apply, or check **None of the above**. ?

Your high school or school district homeless liaison

The director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

The director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program

None of the above

Site Last Updated: Sunday, September 27, 2020 Download [Adobe Reader](#)

2010 fafsa.gov. All rights reserved.

Changes to Financial Aid and Homeless Youth Status on the 2023/2024 FAFSA

New rules will go into effect for the 2023/2024 FAFSA award year, some of which will have important implications for unaccompanied homeless and former foster youth.

The following updates will affect unaccompanied homeless youth:

- FAFSA will no longer re-verify unaccompanied students' homeless status every year. Unaccompanied students who have already been verified as homeless will be presumed homeless in subsequent years as well, in order to avoid intrusive and re-traumatizing verification processes.
- The list of officials qualified to verify a student as unaccompanied and homeless will expand to include: "school district homeless liaisons; the director or a designee of a director of 'an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving individuals who are experiencing homelessness'; the director or a designee of a director of a program funded under a TRIO or Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for an Undergraduate program ('GEAR UP') grant; and a financial aid administrator at another institution who previously made a determination."¹⁷
- If the authorized entities listed above verify that an unaccompanied student is homeless, financial aid administrators must accept that decision, unless they can provide conflicting information regarding the student's status.
- If an unaccompanied homeless youth cannot access any of the verifying authorities listed above, a financial aid administrator must make the designation themselves. However, it is important to remember that financial aid administrators cannot use information about why the student is homeless as part of their decision-making process. They must confine their verification to whether the student is unaccompanied and homeless, and not why.
- Status determinations must be made as quickly as possible.

The following updates will affect former foster youth:

- FAFSA will no longer re-verify the status of former foster youth every year. Former foster youth students who have already been verified as foster youth will be presumed independent in subsequent years as well, in order to avoid intrusive and re-traumatizing verification processes.
- "If an institution requires documentation that a student was in foster care when the student was age 13 or older, the financial aid administrator must accept any of the following documents (in the absence of documented conflicting information): a court order or official State documentation that the student received Federal or State support in foster care; a documented phone call, written statement, or verifiable electronic data match, which confirms the student was in foster care at an applicable age, from a State,

¹⁷ See "New FAFSA Policies for Homeless and Foster Youth" (2021), SchoolHouse Connection.

county, or tribal agency administering a program under part B or E of title IV of the Social Security Act, a State Medicaid agency, or a public or private foster care placing agency or foster care facility or placement; a documented phone call or a written statement from an attorney, a guardian ad litem, or a Court Appointed Special Advocate that confirms that the student was in foster care at an applicable age, and documents the person's relationship to the student, or verification of the student's eligibility for an education and training voucher under the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program under section 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677)."¹⁸

- Status determination must be made as quickly as possible.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

Assembly Bill 2416 was signed into law on September 29, 2020, in order to add the experience of homelessness to the list of acceptable reasons to appeal a loss of financial aid due to unsatisfactory academic progress. Typically, colleges set benchmarks that students need to meet in order to qualify for financial aid, including grade point average and progress toward their degree. Students who do not meet those benchmarks may lose financial aid but are allowed to appeal the school's decision to revoke financial aid. Death of a family member or serious illness are common reasons for such appeals to result in the successful reinstatement of financial aid eligibility.

However, until AB 2416, homelessness was not conventionally designated as a special circumstance that would warrant an appeal. The trauma and instability associated with the experience of homelessness often causes a student's grades to drop below the minimum grade point average needed to maintain satisfactory academic progress, so including homelessness as a common ground for appeal is crucial for supporting students' persistence toward their degrees.

¹⁸ See "New FAFSA Policies for Homeless and Foster Youth" (2021), SchoolHouse Connection.

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 nighttime 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 nighttime residence: cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations
- Includes migratory children who otherwise meet this definition

	AB 801/AB 806	Financial aid
Benefits	Priority registration and California College Promise Grant	Independent status for calculation of financial aid eligibility
Homeless definition	Meets McKinney Vento definition above currently or at any point within 24 months prior to college application.	At any time after July 1 of the application year the student is an unaccompanied youth who <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> meets the McKinney Vento definition above OR <input type="checkbox"/> is self-supporting and at risk of being homeless A student living in one of these situations and fleeing an abusive parent may be considered homeless even if the parent would provide support and a place to live.
Age limit	Under 25	Under 24
Expiration of Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Years from date of admission to post-secondary institution or upon reaching age 25 <input type="checkbox"/> Once homeless youth status is verified, it remains in place over breaks in enrollment <input type="checkbox"/> Status is not transferrable to another district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> New determination must be made each year
Authorized to verify	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A homeless service provider which includes a governmental or non-profit agency receiving government funding to provide services to homeless persons, an attorney, a McKinney homeless liaison, a human services provider funded by the state to provide homeless services, health services, behavioral health services, public assistance or employment services, or a law enforcement liaison. 2. Director of federal TRIO or GEAR programs or designee 3. Financial aid administrator of post-secondary institution 4. College homeless or foster student liaison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A school district homeless liaison <input type="checkbox"/> An emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development <input type="checkbox"/> A runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program <input type="checkbox"/> A financial aid administrator If determination is made by a FAA, they may rely on third party verification OR a documented interview with the student. Third party verification can come from a range of sources including homeless shelters, TRIO, GEAR UP, other financial aid administrators at other institutions, college or high school counselors, mental health professionals, social workers, mentors, doctors, and clergy. Written statements are acceptable, however a documented phone call with a relevant authority is also considered sufficient verification.
References	California Education Code 66025.9 CCCCCO Guidance Memo - SS 17-07	20 USC 1087vv 2017/2018 Application and Verification Guide (pp 28, 115-116) Dear Colleague Letter GEN 15-16 (July 29, 2015)

Homeless Definition Crosswalk created by John Burton Advocates for Youth

OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO HOMELESS YOUTH

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.

California Community College Homeless and Housing Insecure Pilot Program

This pilot program uses funding provided by the California State Legislature to support rapid rehousing efforts for homeless and housing-insecure students. Participating campuses have established partnerships with community organizations that are equipped to support homeless students in securing housing.

Colleges offering the Homeless and Housing Insecure Pilot Program:

- Antelope Valley College
- Barstow College
- Butte College
- Cerritos College
- Gavilan College
- Imperial Valley College
- Long Beach City College
- Los Angeles Southwest College
- College of the Redwoods
- Riverside City College
- San Diego City College

- Fresno City College
- Victor Valley College
- Modesto College

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

<https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/california/homeless/shelters>

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:

Every community also has an entity that oversees services for homeless individuals in the county, known as the “Continuum of Care” body. Creating a relationship with your local Continuum of Care can help facilitate referrals to broader community services for homeless individuals and families. Below is a list of these contacts for each region along with additional homeless services resources.

- **Northern California Area Continuum of Care Coordinators**
<https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/california/homeless/continuumcare/ncalcoc>
- **Southern California Area Continuum of Care Coordinators**
<https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/california/homeless/continuumcare/scalcoc>
- **Central Valley Area Shelters and Community Housing**
<https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/states/california/homeless/shelters/cvshelter>
- **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-NMD)

THP-NMD provides supportive housing to youth ages 18-21 who are in extended foster care (non-minor dependents). THP-NMD provider directory:

<https://jbay.org/resources/thp-nmd-provider-roster>

THP-Plus provides up to 24 months of supportive housing to former foster youth, ages 18-24.
THP-Plus provider directory:

<https://jbay.org/resources/thp-plus-provider-roster>

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:

<https://jbay.org/resources/ilp-roster>

Food Resources

Utilizing a community food bank is a practical way for homeless youth students to access food and nutrition. The majority of 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). Students who are a part of the following programs may not have to meet the 20-hour work requirement:

- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)
- College Disabled Student Programs Services (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; if a student is participating in specified student support programs; or if a student qualifies for Work Study. For information regarding CalFresh student eligibility exemptions, please refer to [All County Letter 20-08](#). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, two temporary exemptions from the student eligibility rule were established and are listed in [ACL No. 21-11](#). These exemptions are for students **eligible** to participate in Work Study or who have an Expected Family Contribution of zero.

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, 2021, to September 30, 2022.*

Monthly Income Limits		Maximum Monthly Allotment	
Number of people in household	Gross Monthly Income	Number of people in household	Maximum CalFresh Allotment ¹⁹
1	\$2,024	1	\$234
2	\$2,744	2	\$430
3	\$3,464	3	\$616
4	\$4,184	4	\$782
5	\$4,904	5	\$929
6	\$5,694	6	\$1114

¹⁹ Note that Maximum CalFresh Allotment amounts have been increased due to COVID-19 through September 2021. See <https://ehsd.org/benefits/calfresh-formerly-known-as-food-stamps/>.

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 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. See the additional resources below for more details on how to access these.*
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—let the student know this so they 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.*

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.

Cerritos College, Los Angeles County, CA

Cerritos College built a housing development named “The Village” exclusively for homeless students between the ages of 18-25. The Village partners with Jovenes, Inc.—a Los Angeles nonprofit serving homeless and housing-insecure youth—to provide safe and secure housing services to Cerritos students who are facing homelessness.

The Village is located within walking distance to Cerritos College and includes seven townhomes that can house up to 28 students. Townhomes feature both free and affordable housing options. Jovenes, Inc. can also provide subsidized rent options for students.

Imperial Valley College, Imperial, CA

Imperial Valley College’s student housing communities include 12 travel trailers and 26 tiny homes located in El Centro, with nearby public transit options.

Eligibility requirements include:

- being homeless, a former foster youth, or experiencing housing insecurity
- having an updated Comprehensive Student Education Plan (CSEP) on file
- completion of at least 12 units at Imperial Valley College, but no more than 70 units
- enrollment in 9 units per semester
- referral by a Student Equity and Achievement (SEA) Counselor

Skyline College, San Bruno, CA

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.

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.

San Diego Mesa College, San Diego, CA

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.

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.

Southwestern College, Chula Vista, CA

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 Building 2000 and Room 554, year-round. Eligibility:

- SWC Students with a valid SWC identification card
- No eligibility forms or proof of income are necessary

Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, CA

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](#).

Fresh Success

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 community-based organizations 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: <https://www.cccstudentmentalhealth.org/resource/homeless-youth-liaisons-directory>
- **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 eligible 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 residence 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.

*Has the Financial Aid Office verified that you have been without a residence in the last 24 months (homeless)?
If you have been homeless but not verified, check “Yes” and contact the Financial Aid Office. Yes No*

- **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 18), 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 and 806 definitions require a student to be homeless at some point during the 24 months prior to college application or at any point after college application, whereas through the 2022/2023 FAFSA, 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. Through the 2022/2023 FAFSA, 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



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 the 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 Governors Fee Waiver

REFERENCES

1. Aurand, A., Emanuel, D., Yentel, D., & Errico, E. (2017). *The GAP: A Shortage of Affordable Homes*. National Low Income Housing Coalition. Retrieved from http://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/Gap-Report_2017_interactive.pdf
2. Burt, M. (2007). Understanding Homeless Youth: Numbers, Characteristics, Multisystem Involvement, and Intervention Options. Retrieved from <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/47046/901087-Understanding-Homeless-Youth-Numbers-Characteristics-Multisystem-Involvement-and-Intervention-Options.PDF>
3. California Homeless Youth Project. (n.d.). *Youth Homelessness In CA: A Quick Overview*. Retrieved from <http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/a-quickoverview-of-hy-inca.pdf>.
4. Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., & Hernandez, A. (2017). *Hungry and Homeless in College: Results from a National Study of Basic Needs Insecurity in Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Hungry-and-Homeless-in-College-Report.pdf>
5. Goldrick-Rab, S., Richardson, J., Hernandez, A. (2017). *Los Angeles Community College District Report from Fall 2016 Survey of Student Basic Needs*. Wisconsin HOPE Lab.
6. Homelessness Reported for Federal Student Aid Applicants. Retrieved from <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Homeless-FAFSA-2021.03.docx>
7. Hyatt, S., Walzer, B., & Julianelle, P. (2014). *California's Homeless Students: A Growing Population*. Retrieved from http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/CaliforniasHomelessStudents_AGrowingPopulation.pdf
8. Martinez, S., Maynard, K., & Ritchie, L. (2016). *University of California Global Food Initiative: Student Food Access and Security Study*. Retrieved from <http://www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/best-practices/food-access-security/student-food-access-and-security-study.pdf>
9. Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.
10. National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE). (2016). *Federal Data Summary: School Years 2014-15 to 2016-17*. Retrieved from <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Federal-Data-Summary-SY-14.15-to-16.17-Final-Published-2.12.19.pdf>
11. Nellis, A., and Hooks Wayman, R. (2009). *Back on Track: Supporting Youth Reentry from Out-of-Home Placement to the Community*. Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Coalition. Retrieved from https://www.njjn.org/uploads/digital-library/resource_1397.pdf
12. Pilnik, L. (2016). *Issue Brief: Youth Homelessness and Juvenile Justice: Opportunities for Collaboration and Impact*. Coalition for Juvenile Justice. Retrieved from http://juvjustice.org/sites/default/files/resource-files/policy%20brief_FINAL.compressed.pdf
13. SchoolHouse Connection. (February 21, 2017). "This is How I'm Going to Make a Life for Myself:" An Analysis of FAFSA Data and Barriers to Financial Aid for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth. Retrieved from <https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Formatted-FAFSA-Report.pdf>
14. Title X, Part C, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. 20 USC 6301. (McKinney-Vento Act). Retrieved from <http://center.serve.org/nche/legis/mv.php>
15. United States Department of Education Preliminary Guidance for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, Title VII, Subtitle B (June 1995), 22-3.
16. United States Department of Education. (2017). Filling Out the FAFSA Form: Dependency Status. Retrieved from <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/filling-out/dependency>.
17. United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Community Planning and Development. (2017). *Part 1: Point-in-Time Estimates of Homelessness, The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress, December 2017*. Retrieved from <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf>
18. Wood, J. L., Harris III, F., & Delgado, N.R. (2016). *Struggling to survive – striving to succeed: Food and housing insecurities in the community college*. San Diego, CA: Community College Equity Assessment Lab (CCEAL).