

**Breakout I:**  
**Working with**  
**Disconnected Youth**

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## Introductions:

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## In this session we will discuss:

- Who are the disconnected youth
- Impact on education of disconnected youth
- How we can help
- What federal and state guidelines apply
- Success Stories
- Resources

# Who are the disconnected youth?

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# Who are the disconnected youth?

Low-income young people, ages 14-24, who are:

Homeless (also can be unaccompanied: not living in the physical custody of a parent or guardian)

In Foster Care

Teen Parents

Migrant Youth

Refugee Youth

Immigrant Youth

Children raised by relatives, other than parents

Involved in the Justice System

And are not working or not enrolled in (or at risk of dropping out of) an educational institution\*

**Approximately 5-6 million disconnected youth in the United States** according to [http://www.serve.gov/new-images/council/pdf/econ\\_value\\_opportunity\\_youth.pdf](http://www.serve.gov/new-images/council/pdf/econ_value_opportunity_youth.pdf)

# Why Are They Homeless and On Their Own?

- Parental abuse - physical and sexual
- Abandoned or neglected
- Kicked out due to sexual orientation or pregnancy
- Returned from foster care to unstable/unsafe arrangements
- Adopted from foster care, but kicked out after age 18
- Exited from foster care without adequate housing and/or supports
- Immigrant parent returned to homeland – child left behind
- Kicked out of living arrangements
- Jobless
- Students become homeless when their parents lose their living arrangements

# Data on Foster Care Youth

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**Number of Children and Youth in Foster Care on September 30, 2012**

**399,546**

**Characteristics of children and youth in foster care on September 30, 2012**

**Number**

**Percentage**

## **Age**

**Young children (age 0-4)**

131,850

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**School age children and youth (age 5-17)**

247,719

62

**Young adults (age 18-20)**

19,977

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## **Race/Ethnicity**

**White**

167,809

42

**Black**

103,882

26

**Hispanic (any race)**

83,905

21

**Other races, multiracial or unknown**

43,950

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## **Gender**

**Male**

209,764

52

**Female**

191,782

48

Source: 2013 Child Welfare Information Gateway

# Data on Homeless Youth

- Public schools have documented significant increases in youth homelessness:
  - 1,168,364 homeless students in public schools, preK-12, in 2011-2012 school year
  - 10% increase over previous year, 72% increase since the recession (2006-2007 school year)
- Applications indicating homelessness on the FAFSA (only unaccompanied homeless youth)
  - 53,705 in 2011-2012
  - 58,158 in 2012-2013

# Barriers to Educational Achievement for Disconnected Youth

- Lack of placement stability, frequent changing of foster or residential homes
- Delayed enrollment and educational gaps
- Children with special education needs do not access/receive services
- Over-representation in alternative education
- Confusion about legal rights
- Lack of basic clothing and supplies
- Impacts of abuse, neglect, and trauma

# Impact on education of disconnected youth

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Education promotes equality and lifts people out of poverty. It teaches children how to become good citizens. Education is not just for a privileged few, it is for everyone. It is a fundamental human right.

[Ban Ki-moon](#)

# Common Barriers to College Access

## K-12

- Lack of educational and career advocacy
- School dropout, truancy and disciplinary actions – lower graduation rates
- Absenteeism/enrollment interruptions - instability
- Few engaged in college prep courses or programs (AP, TRIO, GEAR UP, AVID, other)
- Records and documentation transfer and confidentiality issues (SSN card, birth certificates, etc.)
- Long terms educational impacts of abuse, neglect and trauma
- Multiple placements & changing of foster or residential homes
- Lack of basic clothing and hygiene needs
- Childcare/Child custody

# Common Barriers to Higher Education Success

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- Lack of parental income and support. On their own at a young age - survival mode dominates
- Lack of housing during holiday and summer breaks, deposits for housing
- Lack of access to medical, dental and eye care physicians and mental health services
- Barriers accessing financial aid; barriers receiving subsequent year determinations of homeless status
- A permanent address where they can receive mail
- Textbooks, housing basics (towels, sheets, pillows, dishes, etc...)
- Lack of financial literacy and budgeting skills
- Childcare
- Lack of role models, college advocates, mentors/coaches
- Lack of information about available support systems
- Struggle to balance school and other responsibilities
- Lack of good college/program fit
- Low test scores (reading, math, science)
- Lack of basic clothing and hygiene needs

# Research Shows Poor Outcomes

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Disconnected youth are:

- 2x more likely to be **absent** from school
- 17-18 year olds 2x more likely to have out-of-school **suspension**, 3x more likely to be **expelled**
- **Average reading level** of 17-18 year olds in foster care = 7th grade
- Likelihood of foster youth receiving **special education** 2.5 - 3.5x that of others
- 50 % complete **high school** by 18
- 2-9 % attain a **bachelor's degree**

# How we can help

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[A Starting Point Video](#)

# What documents may be needed?

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Birth Certificate – showing date of birth and citizenship  
Social Security Card  
High school diploma/GED certificate – showing date of completion  
Medical and Dental card  
Insurance (health, disability, life...)  
Immunization records  
List of current prescriptions – and prescribing doctor  
Proof of residency (high school transcript with address?)  
Tax Returns – Federal and State (if required)  
Naturalization/Immigration/Citizenship paperwork  
Passport  
Will  
Resume  
Automobile Title/Registration and Insurance  
Driver's license

# Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and the FAFSA

- Independent student status on FAFSA since 2009
- Determinations made by:
  - School District homeless liaison
  - RHYA-funded shelter director or designee
  - HUD-funded shelter director or designee
  - College financial aid administrator

Note: Many Youth have experienced denial of the Pell Grant. It is worth the time to double check the data that was entered. If a link to the IRS website is available, consider advising the youth to use this link. In addition, many colleges have an exception form that can be filled out to explain special circumstances.

# Application and Verification Guide

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- Provides guidance for Financial Aid Administrator's to make a determination of a student's homeless status
- Student can use college's administrative address as mailing address
  - UHY may be 21 or younger or still enrolled in high school on the date he/she signs the FAFSA
  - Dependency override required for 22-23 year olds
  - 24 or older is automatic independent status
- FAA verification
  - Not required unless there is conflicting information
  - Documented interview (even via phone) is acceptable
  - Should be done with discretion and sensitivity (Some information may be confidential)
  - Guidance recommends consulting with local liaisons, State Coordinators, NCHE, school counselors, clergy, etc.

# The Case Manager/Advisor

- The person who aides in *putting all the pieces together*.
- Assess students' capacity to cope with their current situation/crisis
- Prioritize needs and develop an care/action plan
- Coordinate care with both formal and informal supports
- Refer students to on and off campus resources

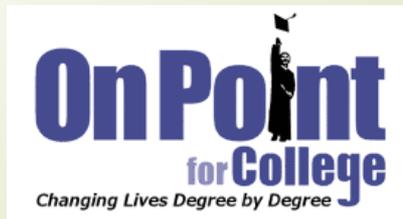
Assists students with addressing their financial needs by:

- Finding job opportunities both on and off campus
- Locating benevolent organizations to offer services students may not be able to afford. (i.e. childcare, car maintenance, etc.)
- Assisting students in applying for university and community-based grants and/or scholarships
- Work with Financial Aid to determine if student is connected to all available resources

# Challenges and Solutions

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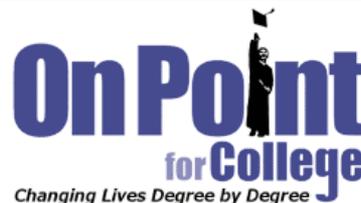
- ▶ **Housing at college: Solutions:** Housing deposits provided by college access program, deposits waived by college, emergency fund, off-campus for homeless.
- ▶ **Housing on breaks or summer vacation: Solutions:** Private college provides free housing to chronically homeless young adults, Rescue Mission volunteer dorm, public housing empty unit, special dorm for housing challenged at college, free gap housing in apartments, pay for one credit course to stay on campus, get a job on campus over the summer.
- ▶ **Need for a Permanent Address: Solutions:** Department of Social Services defined On Point as a permanent address for chronically homeless. This solves mail issues (delivered to On Point and carried to students at college once a month), Medicaid, certificates of residency which typically deprive homeless use of \$1000 of grant aid.



# Challenges and Solutions Continued

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- **Medical Problems: Solutions:** Community Center assistance for health insurance applications, pro-bono physicals, free eye glasses and eye exams, pro-bono dentistry (combined with mentor rides or bus tickets), Department of Social Services assistance for young adults on Medicaid and heading off to college.
- **College Supplies: Solutions:** Provided by On Point or service organizations or churches: bedding, backpacks, \$150 in clothing, notebook, alarm clock, dictionary, flash drive, highlighters, pens, toothbrush and toothpaste, shampoo, towels and washcloths.
- **Food: Solutions:** Financial aid, food bank, some Financial Aid offices at college have food pantries
- **Transportation: Solutions:** mentor drivers and bus tickets for official vacations, medical emergencies, court dates.
- **Legal aid: Solutions:** Pro-bono help for criminal justice issues and foster care issues (i.e. no name on birth certificate, etc.)



# Special Challenges:



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## Court-Involved Youth:

- ▶ **Admissions restrictions – to residence halls or to the college totally.** *Solutions:* Letters of recommendation, on-line courses.
- ▶ **Court dates.** *Solution:* bus tickets.
- ▶ **Hiring issues.** *Solution:* Band the Box Employers
- ▶ **Loss of hope while incarcerated.** *Solution:* On Point visits young adults at the justice center to encourage completion of GED, inspire them to visit us the day they are released, to complete applications or financial aid forms.
- ▶ **College policies that force long delays before a person involved in the courts can enroll.** *Solution:* advocacy and off-campus housing deposits.

Parenthood: Family housing/day care/public school on campus

Refugees/Immigrants forced to work full-time while in college:  
*Solution:* Since no grant aid is available and loans are maxed out, On Point purchases textbooks.

What Federal and  
State guidelines  
apply?

# McKinney-Vento Act (Federal)

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- State coordinators at State Education Agencies
- School district liaisons
- Identification
- Immediate enrollment
- School stability
- Transportation
- Posting of public notice

# Carl D. Perkins Act (Federal)

- The Perkins Act calls out special populations to be served in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs
- While Perkins does not address homelessness directly many states include homeless students under the “individuals from economically disadvantaged families” special populations definition and coordinate with McKinney Vento Liaisons.

# Federal Legislation

- **FEDERAL CHILD WELFARE LAW**

- **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act**

- **FEDERAL EDUCATION LAW**

- **Uninterrupted Scholars Act  
(FERPA Amendment)**

Information can be released without parental consent to:

- “an **agency caseworker or other representative** of a State or local child welfare agency, or tribal organization... who has the **right to access a student's case plan**
- when such agency or organization is **legally responsible**, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the **care and protection** of the student
- provided that the education records, or the personally identifiable information contained in such records, of the student will **not be disclosed ... except to an individual or entity engaged in addressing the student's education needs....**

# Federal and State Postsecondary Policy Advances

## Federal:

- Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)
- Chafee Foster Care Independence Act/ETV

## State:

- College tuition waivers (21 states)
- Scholarship Programs
  - Passport to College (WA)
  - NSORO (GA)
- CA AB 194 – priority college registration
- CA AB 12 & SB 1013 - Housing Placement Program (THPP)

# Success Stories

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# Success Stories

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“Angel”

Dawn Cooper

Director of College Readiness

University System of Georgia Board of Regents

“Mawut”

Ginny Donohue

Executive Director/Founder

On Point for College

“Amanda”

Corinne Nilsen

Executive Director, Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP

Wichita State University

Note: Names are changed to protect the actual disconnected youth

# Resources

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# Education Agency Examples

## Education Curriculum and Training

- ▶ Casey Family Programs: Endless Dreams

A national technical assistance resource and information clearinghouse on legal and policy matters affecting the education of children and youth in foster care.

[www.fostercareandeducation.org](http://www.fostercareandeducation.org)

[http://www.casey.org/resources/publications/directory/subject/Education\\_k12.htm](http://www.casey.org/resources/publications/directory/subject/Education_k12.htm)

- ▶ Educator Screen and Toolkit (Pennsylvania)

## School-based liaisons

- ▶ McKinney-Vento
- ▶ State law created education liaisons (Texas, Colorado, Missouri)

## Trauma-Informed Practices

- ▶ Compassionate Schools Initiative (Washington)
  - ▶ Provides training, guidance, referral, and technical assistance. Not a program, but a process to cultivate a climate that benefits all students.
- ▶ Trauma Sensitive Schools (Massachusetts)  
[http://www.massadvocates.org/documents/HTCL\\_9-09.pdf](http://www.massadvocates.org/documents/HTCL_9-09.pdf)

# Postsecondary Education Resources

- *Foster Care and Student Success: Texas Systems Working Together to Transform Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care* (2013). Texas Education Agency and the Supreme Court of Texas, Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families (Children's Commission), October 18. [http://www.tea.state.tx.us/news\\_release.aspx?id=25769807807](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/news_release.aspx?id=25769807807)
- *Foster Youth Campus Support Programs: A Leadership Guide* (2013). California College Pathways, June. [www.cacollegepathways.org/sites/default/files/training\\_event\\_files/13-7-25\\_fostercampus\\_final.pdf](http://www.cacollegepathways.org/sites/default/files/training_event_files/13-7-25_fostercampus_final.pdf)
- *Foster Youth: Supporting Educational Success – Trainers Guide* (2014), California College Pathways [www.cacollegepathways.org/sites/default/files/campus\\_foster\\_youth\\_training\\_manual\\_0.pdf](http://www.cacollegepathways.org/sites/default/files/campus_foster_youth_training_manual_0.pdf)
- *It's my life: Postsecondary education and training and financial aid excerpt* (2006). Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA. <http://nyccollegeline.org/resources/it-s-my-life-postsecondary-education-and-training-guide>
- *Providing Effective Financial Aid Assistance to Students from Foster Care and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: A Key to Higher Education Access and Success* (2009). Tracy Fried & Associates. [http://www.nasfaa.org/counselors/Resources\\_for\\_Counselors.aspx](http://www.nasfaa.org/counselors/Resources_for_Counselors.aspx)
- *Supporting success: Improving higher education outcomes for students from foster care – A Framework for Program Enhancement - Version 2.0* (2010). Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA. [www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/SupportingSuccess.htm](http://www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/SupportingSuccess.htm)

# Tools and Resources

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- ▶ [NAEHCY Higher Education Helpline](#)  
(855) 446-2673 (toll-free) or [highered@naehcy.org](mailto:highered@naehcy.org)  
Provides assistance with issues related to students experiencing homelessness accessing higher education.
- ▶ [NAEHCY Higher Education Podcasts](#)  
Provide succinct and readily accessible information about topics related to college access and success for young people experiencing homelessness.
- ▶ [College Access and Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness: A Toolkit for Educators and Service Providers](#)  
Includes information on understanding homeless students, assisting homeless students in choosing a school, helping them pay for application-related expenses, in finding financial aid and scholarships for school, and helping homeless students succeed in college.
- ▶ [FAFSA Tips for Unaccompanied Youth Without Stable Housing](#)  
This tip sheet provides a step-by-step guide to unaccompanied youth for filling out questions that refer to their status as an unaccompanied youth without stable housing. Guidance is given for filling out the online or paper version of the FAFSA.

# Tools and Resources

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## [Making Student Status Determinations for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Eligibility Tool for Financial Aid Administrators](#)

This form is for college financial aid administrators (FAA) who are evaluating a student's eligibility for independent student status. It provides guidance to assist FAAs in making a determination in cases where a student, seeking independent student status as an unaccompanied homeless youth, comes to the attention of a FAA and a prior status determination by a local liaison or shelter is unavailable.

## ► [Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Documentation of Independent Student Status for the FAFSA](#)

This template provides local homeless education liaisons, HUD-funded shelter representatives, and RHYA-funded shelter representatives with a sample form for verifying a student's status as an unaccompanied homeless youth for the purpose of applying for federal financial aid for higher education using the FAFSA.

# Tools and Resources

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- ▶ [Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Tip Sheet for Higher Education McKinney-Vento Single Points of Contact \(SPOCs\)](#)  
This tip sheet provides specific strategies and recommendations for how higher education SPOCs can support unaccompanied homeless youth in obtaining a college education and moving towards a stable future.
- ▶ **Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Toolkits**  
Each toolkit, designed with a specific audience in mind, contains a wealth of information about supporting unaccompanied youth in school and out, with a special focus on helping unaccompanied youth complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) when applying for aid for higher education. A toolkit is available for each of the following audiences:
  - ▶ [High School Counselors and McKinney-Vento Liaisons](#)
  - ▶ [Shelters and Service Providers](#); and
  - ▶ [College and University Financial Aid Administrators](#)

# Questions?

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Thank you!