

Recommendations for Transitioning Unaccompanied Homeless Youth to Higher Education

1. Identify a safe, single point of contact at each college/university to serve homeless unaccompanied youth on college/university printed materials and websites.
 - a. Single points of contact will implement a three-pronged approach within their institutions to streamline communications, facilitating open communication among admissions, financial aid, academic support services and student services/housing.
 - b. Identify peer and support networks while sharing resources and practices.
 - c. Work with the financial aid office administrator who conducts verification interviews with unaccompanied, homeless youth to conduct interviews within the same day of their college/university visits if at all possible.

2. Develop a streamlined process to other services within college/university.
 - a. Other services include:
 - i. Academic Advising/Support Services
 - ii. Mental Health
 - iii. Admissions
 - iv. Financial Aid
 - v. Learning Disability Services
 - vi. Student Services
 - vii. Mentoring Programs
 - viii. Retention
 - ix. Housing Programs
 - x. Student Life
 - xi. Self-Advocacy
 1. Financial Literacy
 2. Life Skills

3. Centrally store personal documentation for homeless, unaccompanied youth through confidential, state-supported web site accessible by the youth over their lifetimes.
 - a. Youth need the following vital documents to be admitted to higher education:
 - i. Social Security Numbers and SSN Cards
 - ii. Immunization Records
 1. Waivers are available at most colleges/universities
 2. Contact Admissions Offices for waiver forms
 - iii. Health Exams
 - iv. GED Records
 - v. Selective Service Registration

- vi. Birth Certificates
 - vii. High School Transcripts
 - viii. ACT/SAT Scores (waivers available from Admissions Offices)
 - ix. Individual Education Plan (IEP) from K-12
 - x. Taxes
 - xi. Assessments
 - xii. College Transcripts
 - xiii. Drivers License/State ID
 - xiv. Unaccompanied, Homeless Youth Documentation provided:
 - 1. Shelter Directors
 - 2. HUD Administrators
 - 3. McKinney-Vento Advocate
- b. Students require an email to effectively communicate with colleges/universities
- i. Google, Hotmail and other free email providers can help
 - ii. Colleges/Universities will also provide an email address once accepted
- c. Unaccompanied, Homeless Youth may use multiple names. Some student information systems (SIS) have fields to accommodate this but some do not. Students should use the same name throughout their educational experience.
- d. Widely distribute contact information for unaccompanied, homeless youth liaisons/single points of contact to:
- i. Colleges/University Community
 - ii. Service Providers
 - iii. Pre-Collegiate Groups
 - iv. Other Stakeholders
4. Students have three primary educational options to matriculate into higher education.
- a. High School Diploma/GED
 - b. Assessment Testing – test offered by college/university in lieu of high school diploma or GED.
 - c. Ability to Benefit – students have the option to take six hours of college credits. If they successfully pass the six credits, they can matriculate into a college-level degree program.
5. Single form for unaccompanied, homeless youth verification within same school year for use by all stakeholders.
- a. Streamline form requirements by utilizing the same form for all colleges/universities

- b. Encourage service providers to provide completed forms to youth upon check-out from their facilities or schools. This also serves as a paper trail for college officials.
 - c. Cooperation among all entities to store and accept documentation in electronic format
 - d. Accept forms collected by other colleges/universities that verify student's status.
 - e. Documentation/Form sharing among all stakeholders
6. Establish a Sub-Committee
- a. Form the single points of contact designees, a sub-committee of stakeholders to determine and promote front line strategies in working with homeless, unaccompanied youth.
 - b. This committee stays abreast of changes affecting homeless, unaccompanied youth and communicates back to their institutions.
 - c. The following Education and Training Opportunities will be provided to single points of contact and sub-committee members by the Colorado Department of Education in cooperation with CollegeInvest:
 - i. Unaccompanied Youth Orientation
 - ii. Encouraging Self Advocacy
 - iii. Scholarship Availability
 - iv. Sensitivity & Homeless Verification
 - v. Financial Literacy
 - vi. Life Skills
 - vii. Crisis Management
 - d. Sub-committee deliverables include:
 - i. Working with Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Tip Sheet/Resource Guide
 - ii. Example interview Questions for financial aid administrators to determine unaccompanied youth status
 - iii. Sustainability Plan for communication between liaisons
 - iv. Contact Resources for schools, colleges/universities
 - v. Service Resources for Students
 - vi. HUD & Shelter Contacts
 - vii. Online Resources for Students
 - viii. Frequently Asked Questions