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