

North Carolina Homeless
Education Program

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth & Higher Education in NC

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NAEHCY Higher Education

- NAEHCY is a national membership association that connects educators, parents, advocates, researchers, and service providers to ensure school enrollment, attendance and overall success for children and youth whose lives have been disrupted by the lack of safe, permanent, and adequate housing.
- NAEHCY's Higher Education Initiative aims to promote college access and success for homeless youth that access higher education by
 - Providing technical assistance via the NAEHCY Helpline
 - Supporting and creating statewide higher education networks
 - Providing state and national trainings
 - Partnering with higher education associations and organizations to address physical, emotional, and academic barriers homeless students face

NC Homeless Education Program (NCHEP)

- NCHEP ensures that all children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to the public education to which they are entitled to under the Federal McKinney-Vento Act.
- NCHEP ensures that North Carolina's state policies are in compliance with federal law.
- NCHEP oversees all programmatic aspects of the state homeless education program while DPI oversees the fiscal components of the program.
- NCHEP reports to NCDPI.
- NCHEP is part of the Federal Program and Monitoring Support Division.

NCHEP Main Responsibilities

- Provide technical assistance to LEAs and charter schools on homeless education.
- Monitor all LEA and charter school homeless education programs for compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Host compliance meetings and trainings for homeless liaisons and other school personnel.
- Handle disputes as they relate to the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Collaborate on activities with the Regional Title I Administrators and other divisions within NCDPI.

Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Across the Nation

2013-2014SY

- 1,301,239 homeless children and youth enrolled in public schools
- 15% increase over last three school years
- 38 states reported an increase over prior school year
- 88,966 unaccompanied homeless youth reported
- 48,121 children ages 3-5 reported

Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in NC



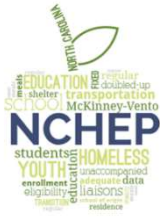
2012-2013SY

- 27,369 homeless children and youth in grades K-12 enrolled in NC school districts

2013-2014SY

- 26,923* homeless children and youth in grades K-12 enrolled in NC school districts

**Uncertified Number*



North Carolina Homeless
Education Program

News Article

<http://center.serve.org/hepnc/>

President Obama signs the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015

On December 10, 2015, the President signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Under the previous version of ESEA (the No Child Left Behind Act), the education of homeless children and youth was included in Title X, Part C. Under ESSA, homeless education is included in Title IX, Part A. For more information:

- [Text of the Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) of 2015 legislation](#)
- [Summary of Major Amendments on Homelessness and Foster Care in "The Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) of 2015"](#)
- [NAEH CY resources on the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education ACT \(ESEA\)](#)

Main Themes of the McKinney-Vento Act

- State Coordinator responsibilities
- Role of the local homeless liaison
- Identification
- School access and support for academic success
- School stability
- Child-centered, best interest decision making
- Subgrant requirements
- Posting of Educational Rights

Federal Law

The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law designed to increase the school enrollment, attendance, and success of children and youth who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.



Definition of Homelessness

Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

- **Fixed residence:** is one that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change.
- **Regular residence:** is one that is used on a regular basis (i.e. nightly)
- **Adequate residence:** is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

If a living situation does not meet all 3 (fixed, regular and adequate) then the situation is considered homeless.

Decisions should be made on a case-by-case determination.

Definition continued...

- Sharing a home due to loss of housing
- Sharing a home due to economic hardship
- Living in motels / hotels
- Living in trailer parks
- Living in a shelter
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Children awaiting a foster care placement
- Living in cars
- Living in parks
- Living in camp grounds
- Living in abandoned buildings
- Living under bridges
- Living at bus/train stations
- Migratory children
- Unaccompanied homeless youth

Unaccompanied Students Under MV

2-step process to determine eligibility

1. Does the student's living arrangement meet the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless?
2. Once homelessness is determined, is the student unaccompanied?

Unaccompanied Youth

Any student not living in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian is considered an unaccompanied youth.

Unaccompanied Youth... “*On Their Own*”

- Family conflict or crisis (blended family issues, pregnancy, sexual orientation, school problems, substance abuse)
- Abuse or neglect
- Parental incarceration, substance abuse, illness, death, etc.
- Foster care issues: aging out of the foster care system; running away from a foster care placement
- Family homelessness
- Being asked to leave the home or choosing to leave home on their own
- Abandoned by family
- Lack of space in temporary situations or shelter policies that prohibit adolescent boys

Homeless Youth and Higher Education

2014-2015

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth FAFSA Data

Determinations made by:

- School District Liaison - 21,443
- HUD-funded Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing Program - 3,953
- RHYA Basic Center/Transitional Living Program - 3,731
- Financial Aid Administrators - 1,548

FAFSA DATA



Unaccompanied Youth That Reported Experiencing Homelessness in NC

2013-2014 UHY FAFSA Data

- 1,656 youth reported they were homeless on FAFSA

2014-2015 FAFSA Data

- 845 youth reported they were homeless on FAFSA

Barriers to Higher Education for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

- Lack of access to parental financial information and support
- Lack of financial means to live independently and safely
- Inability to be financially self-sufficient once enrolled in college
- Limited housing options, especially in small towns or rural areas
- Struggling to balance school and other responsibilities
- Lack of adult guidance and support
- Lack of information about available support systems

Financial Aid and FAFSA Basics

Expected family contribution (EFC):

- Families are expected to contribute to higher education costs to the extent they are able.

101

FAFSA:

- Cannot be filed before January 1 prior to the academic year in which student seeks to enroll.
- *For dependent students*, income and asset information required for both the student and a parent; parental signature required.
- *For independent students*, no parental signature nor income and asset information is needed.

UHY and the FAFSA

46. Were you born before January 1, 1993?	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
47. As of today, are you married? (Also answer "Yes" if you are separated but not divorced.)	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
48. At the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year, will you be working on a master's or doctorate program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, graduate certificate, etc.)?.....	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
49. Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training? See Notes page 9.	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
50. Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces? See Notes page 9.	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
51. Do you now have or will you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017?.....	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
52. Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2017?	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
53. At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court? See Notes page 10.	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
54. As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you an emancipated minor? See Notes page 10. ..	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
55. Does someone other than your parent or stepparent have legal guardianship of you, as determined by a court in your state of legal residence? See Notes page 10.	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
56. At any time on or after July 1, 2015, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless? See Notes page 10.	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
57. At any time on or after July 1, 2015, did the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless? See Notes page 10.	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2
58. At any time on or after July 1, 2015, did the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless? See Notes page 10.	Yes	<input type="radio"/> 1	No	<input type="radio"/> 2

2016-2017 ONLINE FAFSA

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Student Demographics School Selection Dependency Status Parent Demographics Financial Information Sign & Submit Confirmation

Homeless Circumstances

You indicated that you were homeless or at risk of being homeless and you answered "no" to all of the specific homeless questions.

However, your financial aid administrator could make a determination that you are a **homeless youth**, and do not need to provide parental information, if you meet both of the following conditions:

- **You are homeless**, which means you are lacking fixed, regular and adequate housing, which includes living in shelters, parks, motels or cars, or temporarily living with other people because you had nowhere else to go. Also, if you are living in any of these situations and fleeing an abusive parent you may be considered homeless even if your parent would provide support and a place to live; and
- **You are unaccompanied**, which means you are not living in the physical custody of your parent or guardian.

If you believe that you meet these conditions and would like to follow up with the financial aid administrator at your college, select "I am homeless or at risk of being homeless" and click **Next** to get additional information.

If you do not meet the above conditions and will be providing parental information, select "I will provide parental information" and click **Next** to continue.

- I will provide parental information
 I am homeless or at risk of being homeless

PREVIOUS NEXT

NEED HELP? SAVE CLEAR ALL DATA VIEW FAFSA SUMMARY EXIT

Help and Hints

Homeless Circumstances

Select **I will provide parental information** to continue to Parent Demographics.

Select **I am homeless or at risk of being homeless** to get additional information.

College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA)

Independent student status for unaccompanied homeless youth and self-supporting youth at risk of homelessness

- Can apply for financial aid without parental signature or consideration of parental income

- Must be determined by:
 - Local homeless liaison
 - RHYA-funded shelter director or designee
 - HUD-funded shelter director or designee
 - College financial aid administrator

Verification of Status Form

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Documentation of Independent Student Status for the FAFSA:

- Can be used by any of the four verifiers.
- Copy should be on file with the school, one with student, and one sent to college/university.
- Valid for only one academic year from the district homeless liaison.

Application and Verification Guide

- Updated *Application and Verification Guide* released in **2015**
- Borrows language from NCHE's brief *Determining Eligibility* located at:
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det_elig.pdf
- Homeless youth status determination is not considered a case of professional judgement
- It is not conflicting information if the FAA disagrees with an authorities determination
- Institutions are not required to verify answers to homeless youth status questions unless there is conflicting information
- Student can use mailing address of friend or relative where they can receive reliable mail, or they may use an address on campus if they receive permission

2015-16 Application and Verification Guide

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.
 - Child welfare reports are not necessary.
- Guidance recommends consulting with local homeless liaisons, State Coordinators, NAEHCY, school counselors, clergy, etc.

U.S. Department of Education Dear Colleague Letter

- Issued July 29, 2015
- Clarifies institutional and applicants roles and responsibilities related to Title IV dependency determinations for unaccompanied homeless youth
- Brings awareness that institutions are unnecessarily restricting applications aid
 - Should not focus on “why” student is homeless, instead should focus on the evidence that student is a UHY or self-supporting student facing the risk of being homeless
- Indicates that applicants under the age of 24 who are UHY, or self supporting and at risk of becoming homeless qualify for a homeless youth determination

Role of the Financial Aid Administrator (FAA)



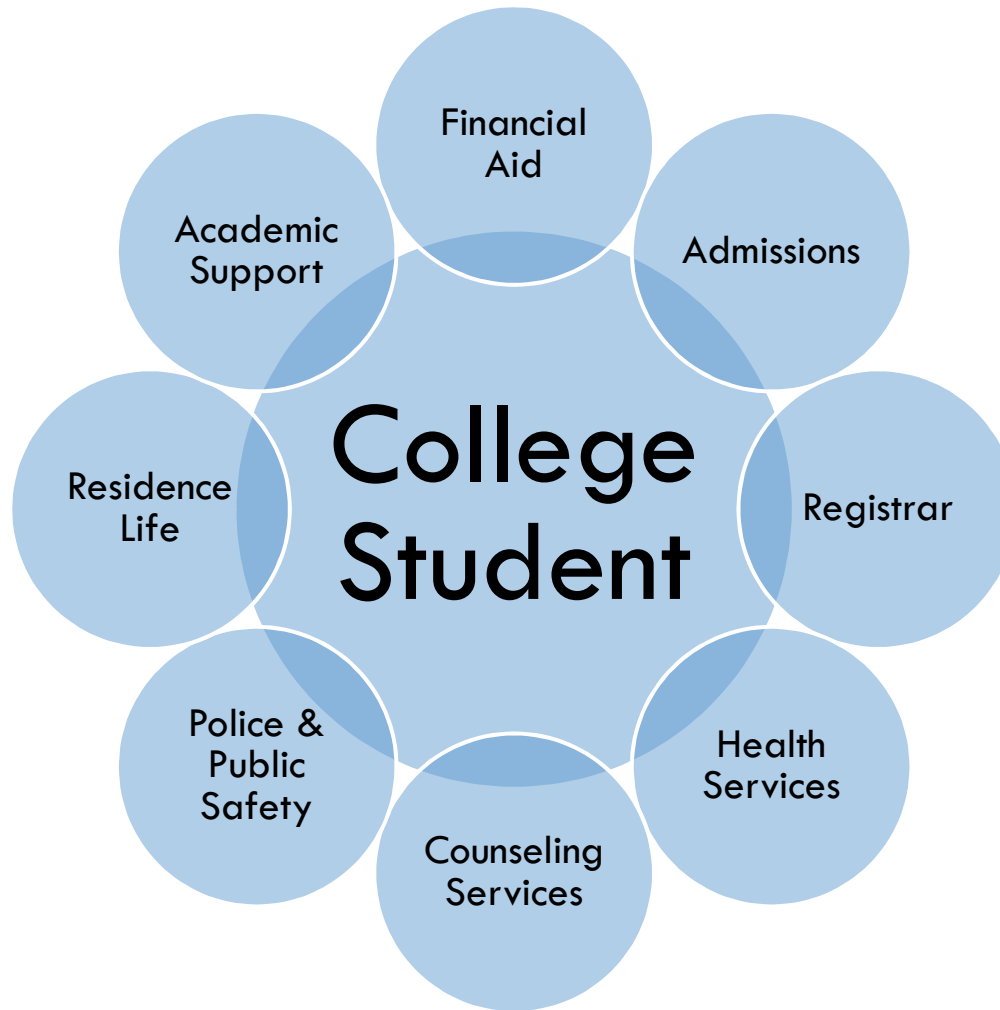
According to the *Application and Verification Guide*, if a student does not have, and cannot get, documentation from a local liaison, RHYA provider, or HUD provider, a FAA must make a determination of homeless/unaccompanied status.

This is not an “exercise of professional judgment” or a “dependency override” for youth 21 and younger; this is determining the independent student status of an unaccompanied homeless youth.

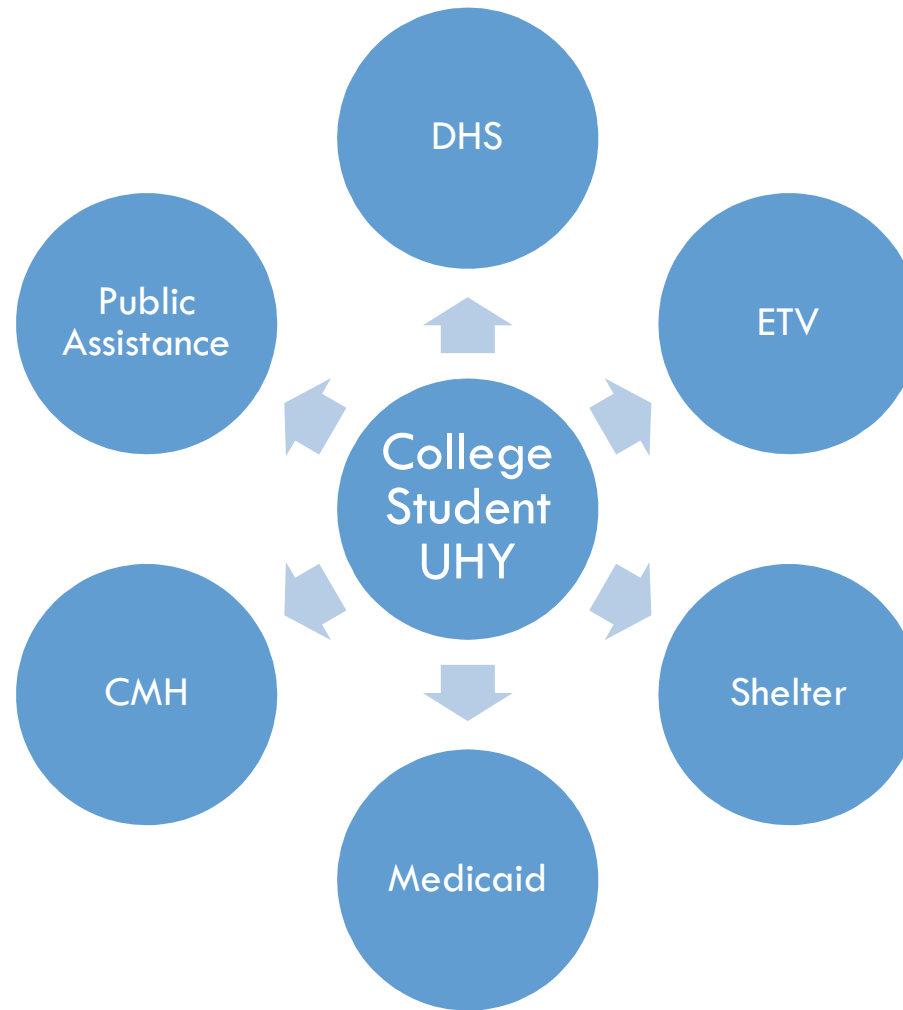
Tips for Working With FAAs

- Raise awareness about the definition of homelessness and how to apply it to the student's circumstances on a case-by-case basis.
- Share "*Making Student Status Determinations for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Eligibility Tool for Financial Aid Administrators*" located at:
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/faa_det_tool.pdf
- Advise the student to consult with local homeless liaisons if they have questions about eligibility.
- Develop strategies to help the student gather information in a reasonable and sensitive manner.

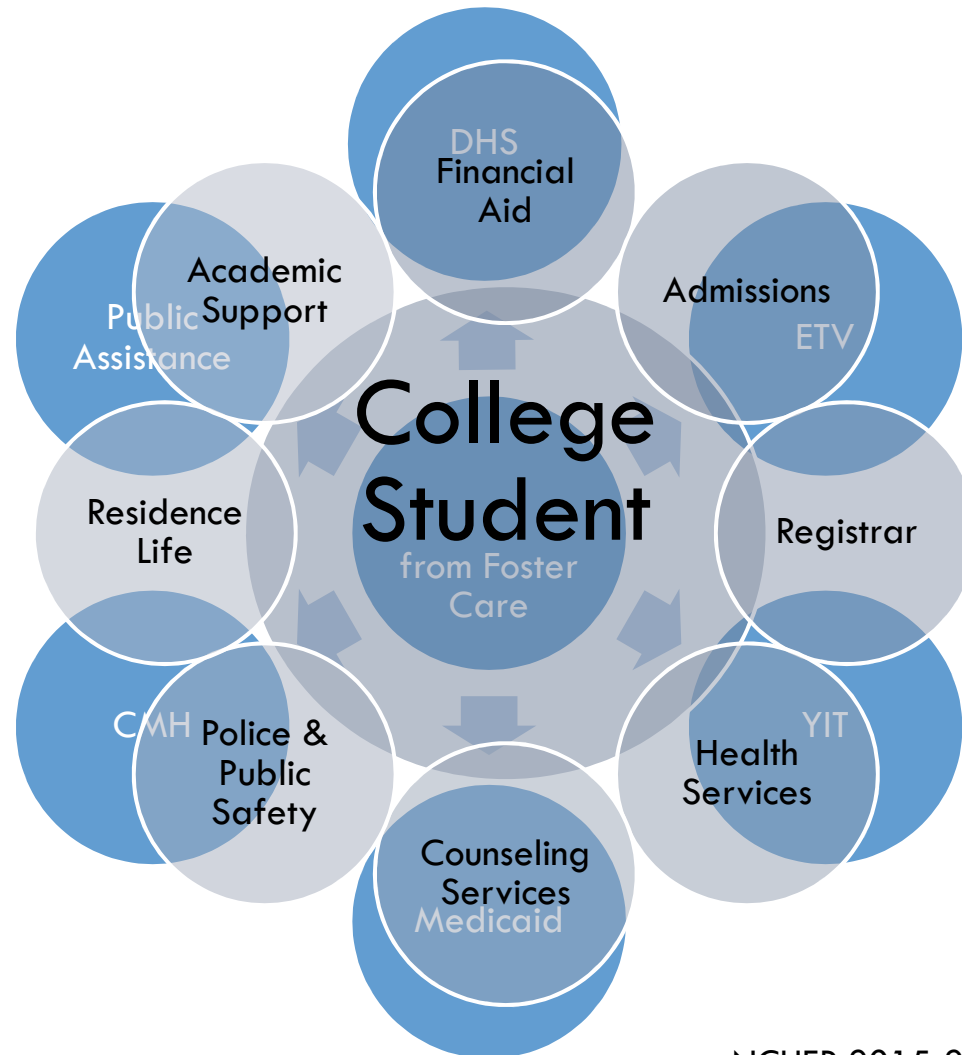
Campus Support Services



Community Support Services



Navigating Multiple Systems



Best Practices in High Schools

- Focus on FAFSA completion!
- Inform unaccompanied youth of college options as soon as they are identified as homeless
- Make sure high school counselors know about the FAFSA policies for UHY
- Arrange for students to visit local colleges and universities
- Connect UHY to Gear-Up, Upward Bound, other TRIO programs
- Use a template for verification *located at:* www.naehcy.org

Best Practices

Connect students with federal and community resources that they may be eligible for:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Funded Shelters (RHYA)
- Administration for Children and Families
 - <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/grants/fysb-grantees>

Best Practices on Campus

- Establish coordination between financial aid offices, student support services, and campus housing.
- Open a food and clothing bank on campus.
- Consider housing options for homeless students when dorms close:
 - Leaving one residence hall open.
 - Allow UHY to stay in housing for international students.
 - Provide a list of “host homes” in the community.
- Establish Single Points of Contact (SPOCS) in colleges/universities to help eliminate barriers to higher education access.

Single Point of Contact (SPOC)



A supportive college administrator on each campus who is committed to helping homeless youth (and often foster youth) successfully navigate the college-going process on campuses.

SPOC Role in Assisting Students

➤ **Admissions**

- Connect students to a counselor that can assist with applications and fee waivers.

➤ **Financial aid**

- Assist students with obtaining determinations of their unaccompanied homeless youth status, general award and scholarship opportunities.

➤ **Academic advising**

- Connect students with an advisor to develop work plans to increase retention and graduation in college.

➤ **Housing**

- Help students with on and off campus assistance and year round housing options.

➤ **Community resources**

- Connect students to needed resources available on campus and in the community.

FAFSA Day



FAFSA Day – February 20, 2016

For more information visit:

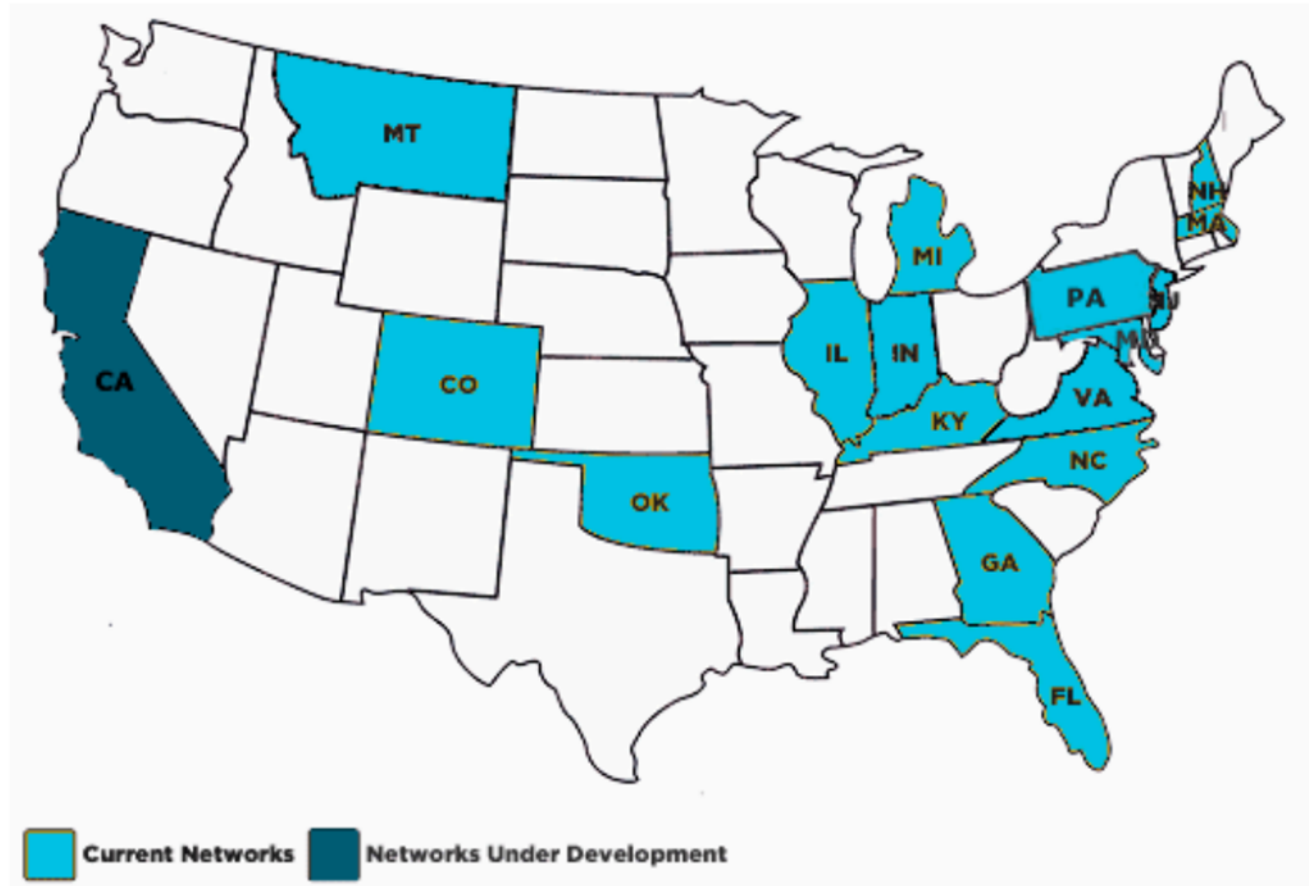
<https://www.cfnc.org/fafsaday>

Statewide Networks

- Convene a meeting with local stakeholders from the McKinney-Vento K-12, Higher Education, and RHYA/HUD shelter communities as well as other local service providers and advocates.
- Allow each to share knowledge about their area of expertise:
 - UHY and independent student definitions
 - Financial aid
 - Campus and community resources
- Build an action plan for serving UHY that makes sense for your community.

Statewide Networks

NETWORK LOCATIONS



NAEHCY Scholarship

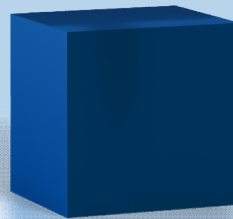
How to apply:

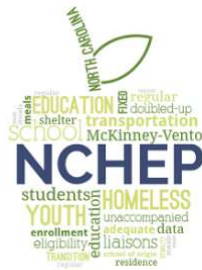
<http://naehcy.org/letendre-scholarship-fund/about-the-fund>

Applicants must submit:

- A completed application form,
- An essay about the impact of homelessness on their lives and desire to attend college,
- An official school transcript, and
- A minimum of one letter of recommendation from a teacher, counselor, or other adult who has knowledge of the applicant's qualifications and experiences.

Questions?





North Carolina Homeless
Education Program

www.serve.org/hepnc

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Local Liaisons

http://center.serve.org/hepnc/liaison_corner.php

SPOCs for College Campuses

http://www.cfnc.org/static/pdf/home/sc/pdf/SPOC_List.pdf



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NAEH CY Higher Education Hotline:

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clee@naehcy.org

<http://www.naehcy.org>

NAEH CY College Access and Success Toolkit

<http://naehcy.org/sites/default/files/dl/toolkit.pdf>

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Toolkits and FAFSA

<http://naehcy.org/tk/cl.html>

NAEH CY Podcast Series

<http://naehcy.org/educational-resources/podcasts>