



# NYSTEACHS

NEW YORK STATE TECHNICAL AND EDUCATION  
ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

# High School Students Experiencing Homelessness



November 10, 2020

Presented by the New York State Technical and Education Assistance Center for Homeless Students (NYS-TEACHS)

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## Trainings

NYS-TEACHS provides free trainings and webinars for school districts, social service providers, and other professionals about the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

You can:

- ◆ Register for an upcoming event in [New York City](#) or [New York State](#) (outside NYC)
- ◆ View [training materials from past events](#) and watch recorded webinars
- ◆ Download materials to present a [turn-key training](#)

### THINGS TO DO

[New York State Event Registration](#)

[New York City Event Registration](#)

[Annual Workshop Archive](#)

[Webinar Archive](#)

[Turn-Key Presentations](#)

 REMINDERS



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# NYS-TEACHS



**NYSTEACHS**

NEW YORK STATE TECHNICAL AND EDUCATION  
ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

- Funded by the State Education Department; housed at Advocates for Children
- Provides technical assistance on homeless education issues
- Infoline: (800) 388-2014
- Website: [www.nysteachs.org](http://www.nysteachs.org)
- Trainings (Currently all virtual)

# Agenda



# Goals

- Participants will **reflect on the unique needs** of high school students experiencing homelessness.
- Participants will understand activities they must accomplish in order to provide high school students experiencing homelessness with **individualized college counseling** and support.



## Did You Know?

In 2018-19, **36,531** high school students were identified as homeless at schools in New York State.

*Source: SIRS data, unduplicated, 2018-19*

# High School Students

**Do you work directly with high school students experiencing homelessness in your district/school?**

- A. No, none are identified
- B. No, such students are identified but I do not have much interaction with them
- C. Yes, sometimes
- D. Yes, regularly



# McKinney-Vento Act, New Guidance and Resources

*The McKinney-Vento Act is still in effect. For new guidance related to the COVID-19 pandemic and education, look to NYSED and NYS-TEACHS.*

Federal Law: **McKinney-Vento Act**

New York State **Education Law Section 3209**

NYS **Commissioner's Regulations Section 100.2(x)**

COVID-19 Updates:

- [\*\*NYSED's Coronavirus Guidance and News\*\*](#)
- [\*\*NYS-TEACHS COVID-19 Newsfeed\*\*](#)



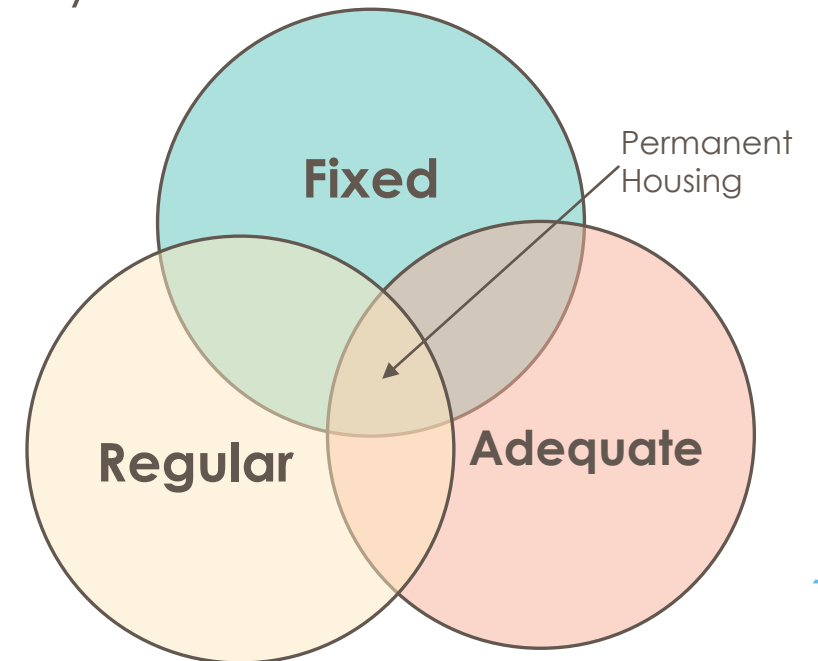
# Who is covered by the McKinney-Vento Act?

**Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.**

- About 2/3 of New York students share the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason (“doubling up”)
- About 1/4 of New York students live in emergency or transitional shelters

See:

- [NCHE Brief: Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services](#)
- [NYS-TEACHS FAQs: Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento](#)
- [NYS-TEACHS Training Archive: 10/13/20 Eligibility Webinar](#)



What is the definition of a *Homeless Unaccompanied Youth*?

- **Student experiencing homelessness:** Student who meets the McKinney-Vento definition of “homeless;” lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- **Homeless Unaccompanied Youth:** Student who meets McKinney-Vento criteria **AND** is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.



# Did you know?

Any school-age child or youth can be an unaccompanied youth if they meet the criteria.

About 7% of identified homeless students in NYS are homeless unaccompanied youth.

[NCHE NY State Profile \(SY18\)](#)

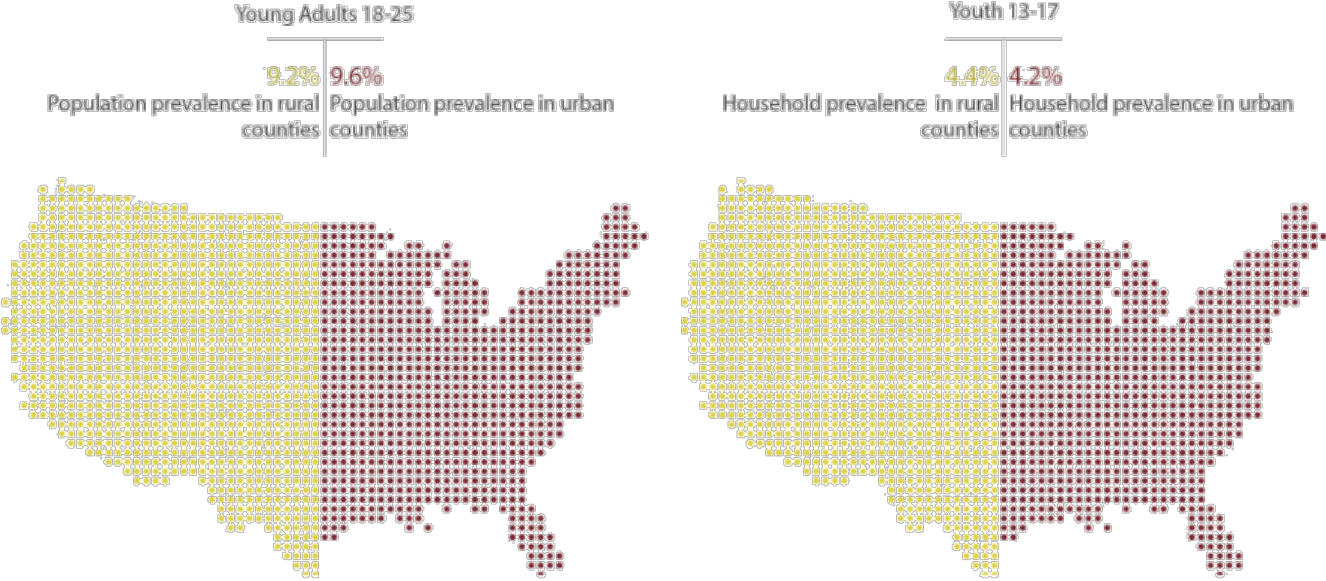


What does youth homelessness look like in your community?

### Youth Homelessness Affects Rural and Urban Areas Alike

Rates of youth experiencing homelessness were similar in rural and nonrural areas.

Image and data from Voices of Youth Count – National Estimates of Youth Homelessness



# Point Source Youth's Video Library



Point Source Youth has a [library of videos](#) related to youth homelessness and COVID-19





## Lessons Learned from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

SchoolHouse Connection analyzed YRBS data, comparing **high school students experiencing homelessness** and those not experiencing homelessness.

The report includes **action steps for schools**.



The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) was first developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1990 to assess the health risk behaviors of youth and adults in the United States. For the first time since the survey has been widely administered, the 2017 YRBS optional question list included two questions pertaining to homelessness. SchoolHouse Connection analyzed demographic and risk factor data from the YRBS in 17 states<sup>1</sup>, comparing high school students experiencing homelessness and those not experiencing homelessness. This series shares the striking and heartbreaking results of that analysis, with tangible action steps schools can take to promote safety and health for students experiencing homelessness.

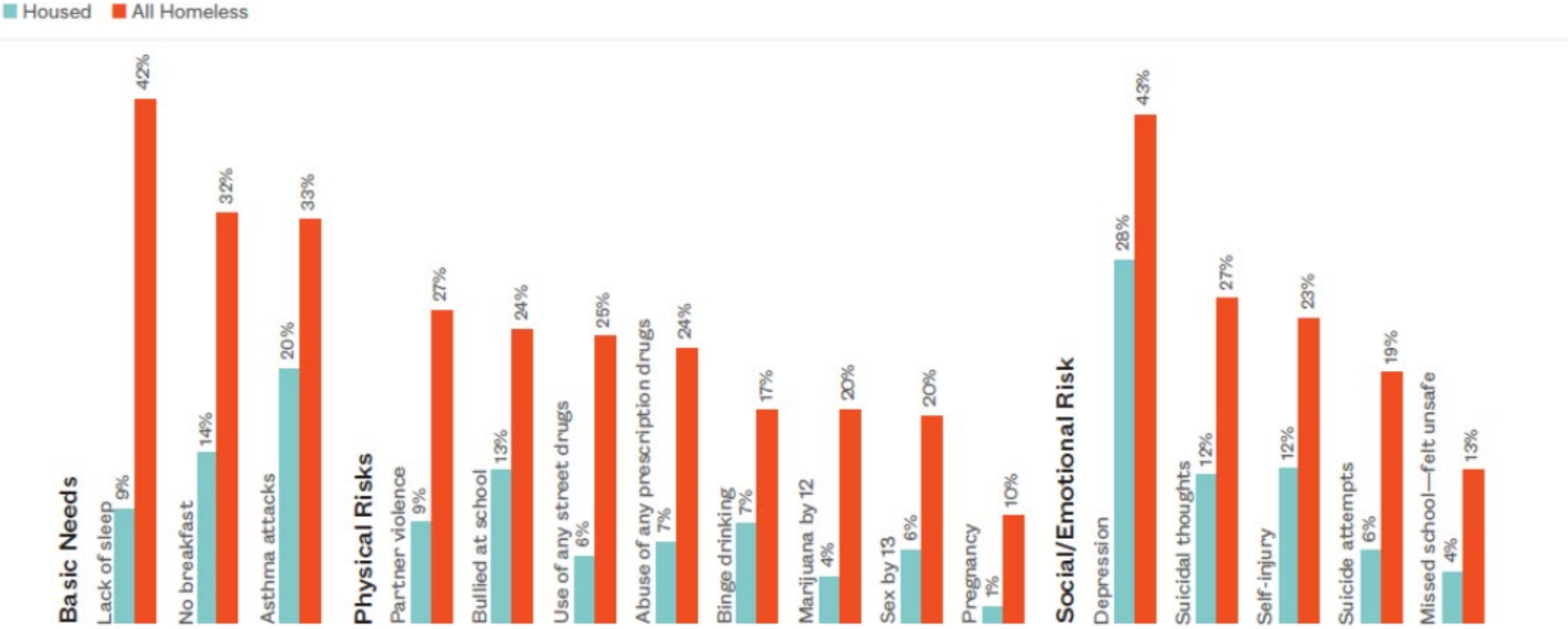
SchoolHouse Connection's analysis of YRBS data found that young people experience homelessness at an even higher rate than currently reported by the U.S. Department of Education. The YRBS indicates that 4.9% of high school students surveyed in the 17 states experienced homelessness at some point during the 2016-2017 school year.



Survey results show:

**4.9% OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS AT SOME POINT DURING THE 2016-2017**

# Health Outcomes for Homeless High Schoolers



# Graduation & Dropout Rates

2018-19 **4-Year  
Graduation Rate  
Data** (August)

Students who experienced  
homelessness:  
**Homeless**

Students who did not  
experience homelessness:  
**Not Homeless**

**Graduation Rate**

**61%**

**84%**

**Dropout Rate**

**17%**

**6%**



[Statewide data from NYSED](#)

[District rates](#): Navigate to District > High School Graduation Rate

# Removing Barriers

Immediate enrollment, **even if students have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.**<sup>1</sup>



LEAs must remove **barriers due to fees, fines, and absences.**<sup>2</sup>



Students who meet the relevant eligibility criteria **must not face barriers to accessing available academic and extracurricular activities.**<sup>3</sup>



**Credit must be provided for full or partially completed coursework completed while attending a prior school.**<sup>4</sup>



*42 U.S.C. § 11432[g][3][C][i]; U.S. Department of Education's Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, Question I-5.*

*2: 42 U.S.C. § 11432[g][1][I], Non-Regulatory Guidance, Questions A-4, I-5, I-6*

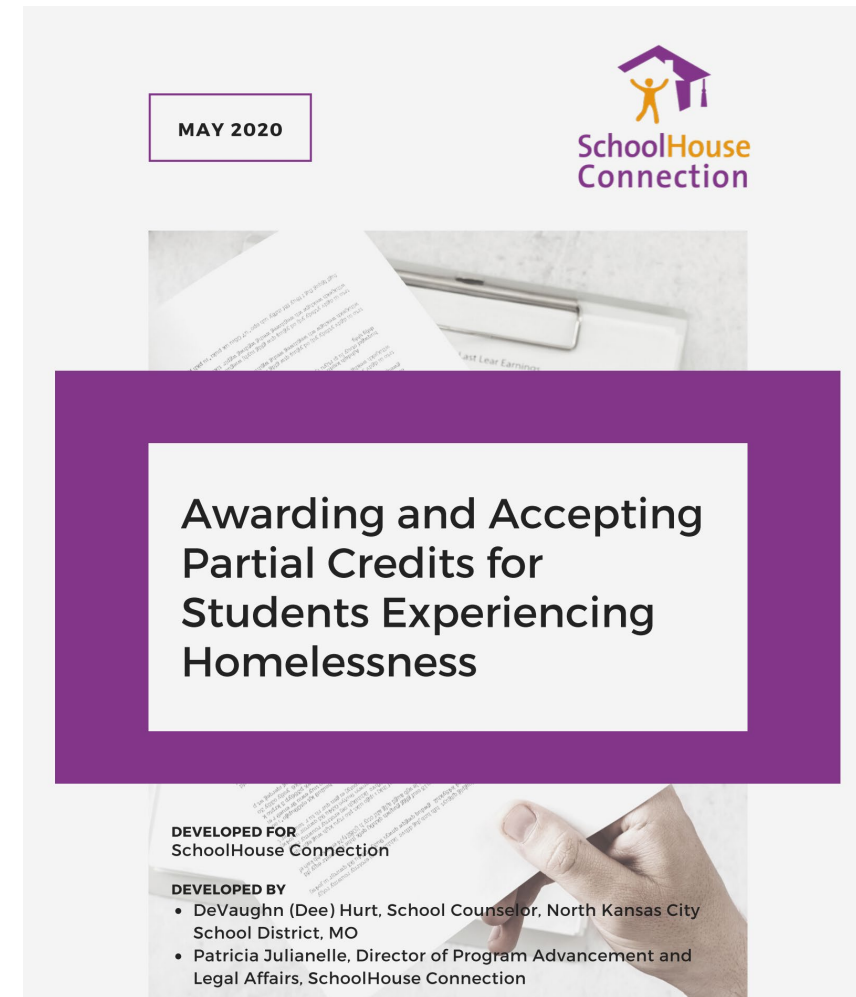
*3: 42 U.S.C. § 11432[g][1][F][iii], Non-Regulatory Guidance, Question I-6*

*4: 42 U.S.C. § 11432[g][1][F][ii], Non-Regulatory Guidance, Section o*

## SchoolHouse Connection Brief: Awarding and Accepting Partial Credits

This May 2020 brief includes checklists to help LEAs with these processes:

- Step One: Immediate Enrollment
- Step Two: Calculating and Awarding Partial Credit
- Step Three: Accepting Partial Credits




ESSA McKinney-Vento  
#03-2018

# NYSED Field Memo

Reviews requirements & strategies for implementing the following:

1. Ensuring that youth experiencing homelessness receive **individualized college counseling**;
2. Ensuring that all **unaccompanied youth who are homeless receive verification** of their independent student status for the purposes of federal and state financial aid;
3. Ensuring that **LEA personnel working with students in temporary housing are trained**.

TO: District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Public Schools  
Charter School LEA Administrators  
McKinney-Vento Liaisons

FROM: Ira Schwartz, Associate Commissioner Office of Accountability 

SUBJECT: College Counseling and Access for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

DATE: April 25, 2018

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This Field Memo provides important information and resources for local educational agencies (LEAs) regarding their obligations to support students in temporary housing better access higher education as a result of recent changes to the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

A college degree is more important than ever in securing employment and can be critical to a youth escaping poverty and homelessness. Indeed, while the number of jobs held by persons with some post-secondary education has increased by 11.5 million since the end of the recession, the growth in employment for students with only a high school diploma has been less than 100,000. Today, 65% of those who are employed have some post-secondary education.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, young college graduates earn about \$17,500 more annually than young adults who only have a high school diploma.<sup>2</sup>

# Answer in Questions Window

What are some of the unique needs of high school students experiencing homelessness in your community?

# Agenda





# NYS-TEACHS College Access Checklist

- Checklist includes information about:
  - Identification and college prep
  - College applications
  - Financial aid
  - Supporting students in college

## McKinney-Vento Liaison Checklist: Supporting College Access



The following checklist is designed to help school districts and liaisons meet their obligations under the federal McKinney-Vento Act, which requires that:

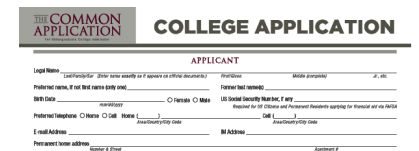
- Liaisons ensure that school personnel working with students who are homeless **receive professional development**;
- School districts ensure that youth who are homeless don't face barriers to accessing academic and **extracurricular activities** and are provided with transportation if needed;
- School districts award full or **partial credit for coursework** satisfactorily completed at a prior school;
- School districts ensure that youths who are homeless **receive college counseling**;
- Liaisons ensure that unaccompanied youth who are homeless are told that they can apply for federal financial aid as independent students and are given **verification of their independent student status for purposes of the FAFSA**; and
- Liaisons ensure that youth are referred to **housing services**.



ACTION	THIS HAPPENS IN MY DISTRICT	DO or DELEGATE	TIMELINE	NEXT STEPS
<b>SECTION 1: Identification and College Prep</b>				
(1) Provide <b>training to high school guidance counselors and college counselors</b> about their role in identifying students experiencing homelessness and supporting them access college.	Yes _____ No _____ Unsure _____	Do _____ Delegate _____ *if delegate, who?	Ongoing	
(2) Ensure that students who are MV eligible: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have <b>course schedules that put them on track to graduate</b>,</li> <li>• have access to <b>summer school</b> if needed,</li> <li>• are provided with <b>partial credit</b> for</li> </ul>	Yes _____ No _____ Unsure _____	Do _____ Delegate _____ *if delegate, who?	Ongoing	

# Waivers for Testing Fees & College Applications

- High school students experiencing homelessness are eligible for fee waivers:
  - **SAT fee waivers** cover registration fees for up to two SATs and up to two SAT subject tests. If student uses this program, college application fees may also be waived up to four times.
  - **ACT fee waivers** covers one registration fee.
  - **Advanced Placement (AP)** has no limit on waivers per student.
  - **College Application fees**: Fee waivers for up to four Request for Waiver forms available if student qualifies for SAT fee waiver. College application fee waivers also available through the [National Association of College Admission Counseling \(NACAC\)](#).




# Applying for Federal Financial Aid with the FAFSA

- **To be eligible for federal aid, a student must:**
  - Be a U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen
  - Have a valid Social Security Number
  - Register with the Selective Service if the student is a male between 18-25
  - Maintain satisfactory academic progress
  - Have a high school diploma/equivalent or home-school
  - Demonstrate financial need (for most programs)
- **The FAFSA is the form students and families complete to apply for federal student aid**
  - For college attendance year July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022:
    - Student can submit FAFSA October 1, 2020 – June 30, 2022
    - Based on 2019 income and tax information

## Do I have to provide my parents' information on the FAFSA?

- Youth who meet the definition of **“independent student”** can complete the FAFSA without parental income information or signature.
  - Homeless unaccompanied youth** may qualify.

### Do I Have to Provide My Parents' Information on the FAFSA® Form?



All applicants for federal student aid are considered either “independent” or “dependent.”

INDEPENDENT STUDENT	DEPENDENT STUDENT*
If you answer <b>YES</b> to ANY of these questions, then you may be an independent student. You may not be required to provide parental information on your <i>Free Application for Federal Student Aid</i> (FAFSA) form.	If you answer <b>NO</b> to ALL of these questions, then you may be considered a dependent student and may be required to provide your parents' financial information when completing the FAFSA form.

- 1 Will you be 24 or older by Jan. 1 of the school year for which you are applying for financial aid? For example, if you plan to start school in August 2021 for the 2021–22 school year, will you be 24 by Jan. 1, 2021 (i.e., were you born before Jan. 1, 1998)?
- 2 Are you married or separated but not divorced?
- 3 Will you be working toward a master's or doctorate degree (such as M.A., MBA, M.D., J.D., Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)?
- 4 Do you have children who receive more than half of their support from you?
- 5 Do you have dependents (other than children or a spouse) who live with you and receive more than half of their support from you?
- 6 Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training?
- 7 Are you a veteran of the U.S. armed forces?
- 8 At any time since you turned age 13, were both of your parents deceased, were you in foster care, or were you a ward or dependent of the court?
- 9 Are you an emancipated minor or are you in a legal guardianship as determined by a court?
- 10 Are you an unaccompanied youth who is homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

From [StudentAid.gov](https://StudentAid.gov)

# FAFSA: Homeless Unaccompanied Youth qualify as *Independent Students*

- Student must be **determined to be unaccompanied and homeless after July 1 of the year prior to FAFSA application** (e.g. After July 1, 2020 for the 2021-22 FAFSA).
- FAFSA's [Application and Verification Guide](#) describes guidelines in detail.



# FAFSA: Unaccompanied and *At-Risk* of Homelessness

- Youth who are unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting are also considered independent students.
  - **Unaccompanied:** not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian
  - **At risk of homelessness** (e.g., a student who is being evicted and hasn't found another permanent place to live), and
  - **Self-supporting**



# FAFSA: Verifying Independent Status

- **Who can verify?**
  1. **McKinney-Vento Liaisons**
  2. Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) shelter director (for youth who have received RHY shelter services)
  3. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) shelter director (for youth who have received HUD shelter services)
  4. Financial Aid Administrator (for youth who can't get verification from any of the above)
- Independent Student Status must be verified in the year in which student applies for aid.

**Reminder:**  
*Independent Student  
Status Verification is a  
Liaison Responsibility*

McKinney-Vento Liaisons **must inform homeless unaccompanied youth of their status as independent students** for college financial aid on the FAFSA and must give them verification of their independent student status.



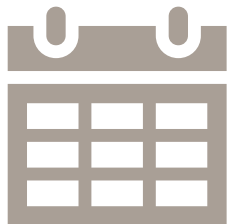


# FAFSA: Subsequent Year Determinations

McKinney-Vento Liaisons have the **option** to make subsequent year determinations for homeless unaccompanied youth **if they have access to the information necessary to make such a determination.**

*McKinney-Vento Guidance, Question Q-2,*

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcyguidance072716.pdf>



# FAFSA: Sample Verification Letter

Verification Letter template  
created by **SchoolHouse Connection**

**Questions from students about working with their school Financial Aid Administrators?** See resources from NCHE and SchoolHouse Connection

### Independent Student Status of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determination for the 2021-2022 FAFSA.<sup>1</sup>

To Whom It May Concern:

I am providing this letter to convey my determination that after July 1, 2020, [NAME OF STUDENT] was

- an unaccompanied homeless youth, as defined by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act and the U.S. Department of Education’s July 29, 2015, Dear Colleague Letter.
  
- an unaccompanied, self-supporting youth at risk of homelessness.

Student’s SSN:

Student’s DOB:

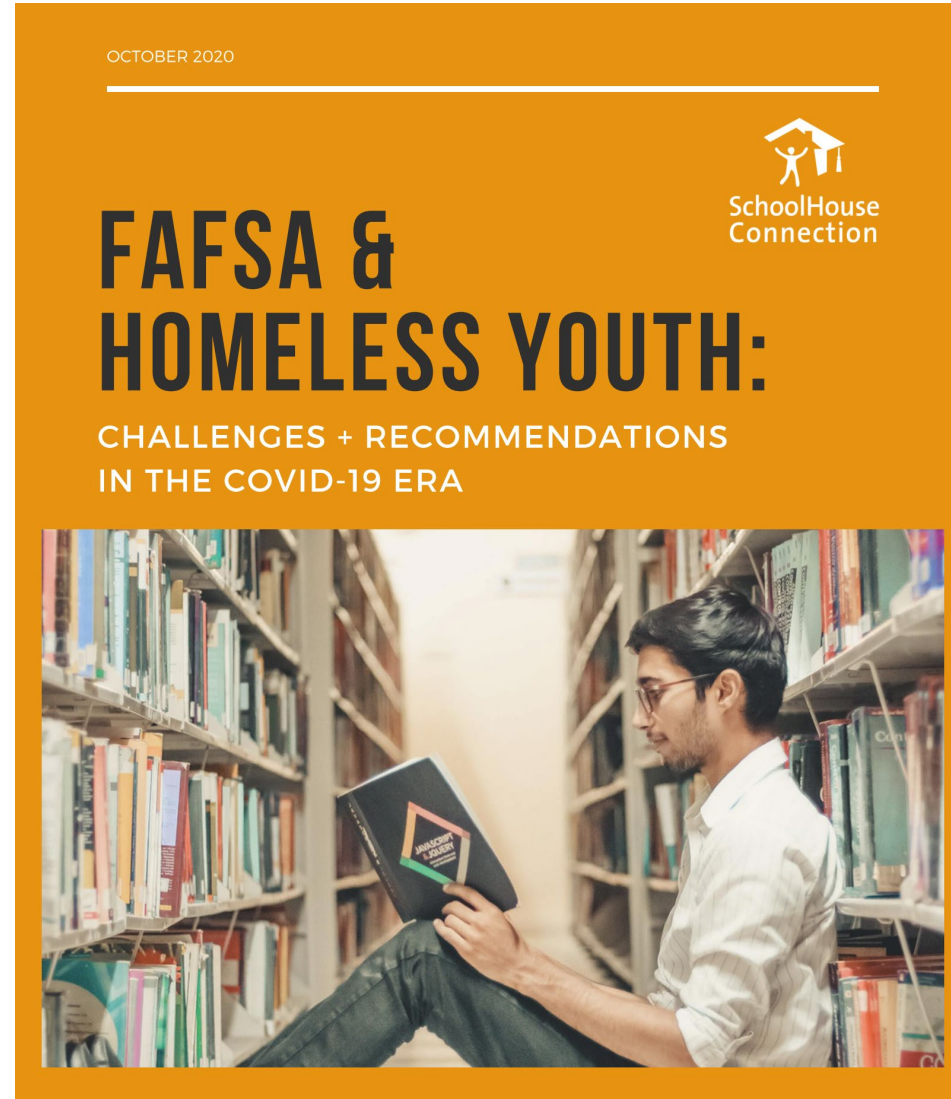
Student’s Mailing Address: *[if the student does not have a stable address, you may list the name, phone number and mailing address of a friend or relative, or the school]*

As per the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (Public Law 110-84), I am authorized to document this student’s living situation and determine his/her independent student status as an unaccompanied homeless youth or unaccompanied, self-supporting youth at risk of homelessness. The financial aid office is not required to confirm this determination in the absence of conflicting information. It is not conflicting information if the financial aid administrator disagrees with my determination.<sup>2</sup> Feel free to address any questions to me at the number or e-mail address listed below.

Signature	Date
Print Name	Phone
Email	

# Overcoming barriers to accessing college

- [Recent report from SchoolHouse Connection](#) examines financial aid data and discusses recommendations for helping youth attend college
- **In 2018-19, 1,456 unaccompanied youth applied for financial aid from New York State.**
  - See [NCHE's summary of Financial Aid data](#) for students experiencing homelessness.



# FAFSA Verification

Who can verify James' homeless unaccompanied youth status for the FAFSA?

- A. McKinney-Vento Liaison
- B. RHY or HUD Shelter Director
- C. A financial aid administrator
- D. A and C
- E. All of the above



# NY State: TAP (Tuition Assistance Program)

- NY's largest grant program
- Helps eligible NY residents attending in-state postsecondary schools pay for tuition
- Based on applicant's/family's NYS taxable income
- Awards up to \$5,165 and do not need to be paid back
- Eligibility:
  - US citizen or eligible noncitizen
  - NYS resident for 12 consecutive months before term for which assistance sought for NYS school
  - Have graduated from high school in the US, earned a GED, or passed a federally approved "Ability to Benefit" test as defined by the State Education Department
  - Be enrolled as a full-time student taking 12 or more credits/semester
  - Must have completed FAFSA and listed NYS school

## Applying for a TAP Award



- File a FAFSA and list a NYS school
- After submitting FAFSA, student can file TAP by clicking on NYS resident link and completing TAP on web application
- After completion, student will receive a confirmation email within 10 days
- If student does not fill out TAP form then, must wait 3-4 days for HESC (Higher Education Services Corporation) to receive/process FAFSA. After that, student will get email directing them to link for TAP.
- [Apply for TAP website link](#)

# TAP and Independent Student Status

In order for a student under 22 to apply as an *Independent Student*, she/he must meet *basic conditions* + 1 *special condition*.

- Basic conditions:
  - Student has not resided and will not reside with parents for more than six weeks;
  - Student has not and will not receive financial assistance or support valued in excess of \$750 from parents; and
  - Student has not and will not be claimed as a dependent by either parent for purposes of either federal or state income tax.
- *Special Condition* relevant to homeless unaccompanied youth: student must show that there has been an **involuntary dissolution of student's family resulting in relinquishment of parents' responsibility**
  - Sworn and signed statement from a person other than student or parents (social worker, clergy, STH liaison, RHY shelter staff) relating to family circumstances
  - Statement must include specific reasons for relinquishment of parental responsibility/control (abandonment by parents, abuse, parents are non-citizens/residents)
  - Writer should state relationship to student and how s/he has direct knowledge of family circumstances
- [TAP FAQs website link](#)



# TAP, Independent Student Status, and Homeless Unaccompanied Youth



DEPENDENT STUDENT  
MAX AWARD: **\$5,165**

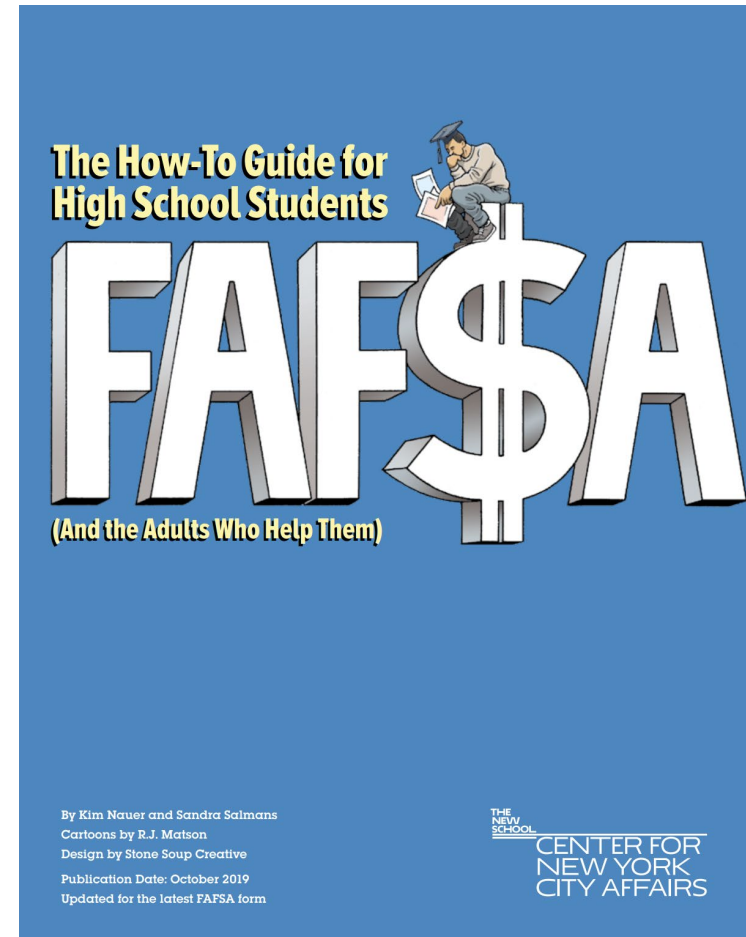
INDEPENDENT MAX  
AWARD: **\$3,025**



# How-To Guide to Share with Students

Link: [How-To FAFSA Guide from The New School – 2019](#)

Available in 10 languages



# Action Steps

- Participants will **reflect on local outcomes and barriers** affecting high school students experiencing homelessness.
- Participants will **review the NYS-TEACHS college access checklist.**
- Participants will **check in with HS students** or their counselors about removing barriers and college preparation.

**NYS-TEACHS**

800-388-2014

Email: [info@nysteachs.org](mailto:info@nysteachs.org)

Website: [www.nysteachs.org](http://www.nysteachs.org)



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# Additional Resources: Webpages

[SchoolHouse  
Connection: Higher  
Education  
Resources](#)

[National Center for  
Homeless  
Education: Higher  
Education](#)

# Financial Aid & Scholarship Resources

- Scholarships:
  - College Board: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>
  - Fastweb: [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
- More information about college financial aid:
  - Applying 101: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying>
  - Financial Aid 101: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid>

# Resources for Immigrant Students

## Financial Aid

- Q&A from [studentaid.ed.gov](https://studentaid.ed.gov) on federal financial aid for non-citizens: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/eligibility/non-us-citizens>.

## In-State Tuition

- In-State Tuition Requirements at SUNY Schools: <http://www.suny.edu/smartrack/residency/>
- In-State Tuition Requirements at CUNY Schools: <http://www.cuny.edu/financial-aid/student-eligibility/non-citizen-eligibility/>

*Continued on next slide*

# Resources for Immigrant Students

- Resources for undocumented students:
  - College Access Research & Action – [Toolkit](#)
  - New York Immigration Coalition Q& A - <http://www.thenyic.org/node/3491>
  - Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) - includes Scholarship Resources - <http://www.maldef.org/>
  - New York State Youth Leadership Council – Road to College clinics and Scholarship - <https://www.nysylc.org/college-info/>