



NYSTEACHS

NEW YORK STATE TECHNICAL AND EDUCATION
ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

Unaccompanied Youth



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

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INFO BY TOPIC LIAISONS NEWS POSTERS & BROCHURES **TRAININGS** GRANTEES PARENTS & FAMILIES FAQ 800-388-2014

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

- New York State Technical and Education Assistance Center for Homeless Students
- Funded by the New York State Education Department and housed at Advocates for Children of New York
- Provide technical assistance on homeless education issues. Our services include:
- **Infoline / 800-388-2014 / info@nysteachs.org**
 - Website (www.nysteachs.org)
 - Web-based Trainings
 - Outreach Materials



NYSTEACHS

NEW YORK STATE TECHNICAL AND EDUCATION
ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

Goals

Attendees will:

- Understand the **definition of unaccompanied youth**;
- Identify key protocols to ensure **unaccompanied youth have full access to a supportive school environment**; and
- Outline steps to ensure all **unaccompanied youth are assisted with college prep**.

Today's Topics

Prevalence of Youth Homelessness

McKinney-Vento Definition of Unaccompanied Youth and McKinney-Vento Services

Strategies for Working with School Staff, Families, and Youth

Consent for Special Education & Additional Common Consent Issues

Risk factors for experiencing young adult homelessness

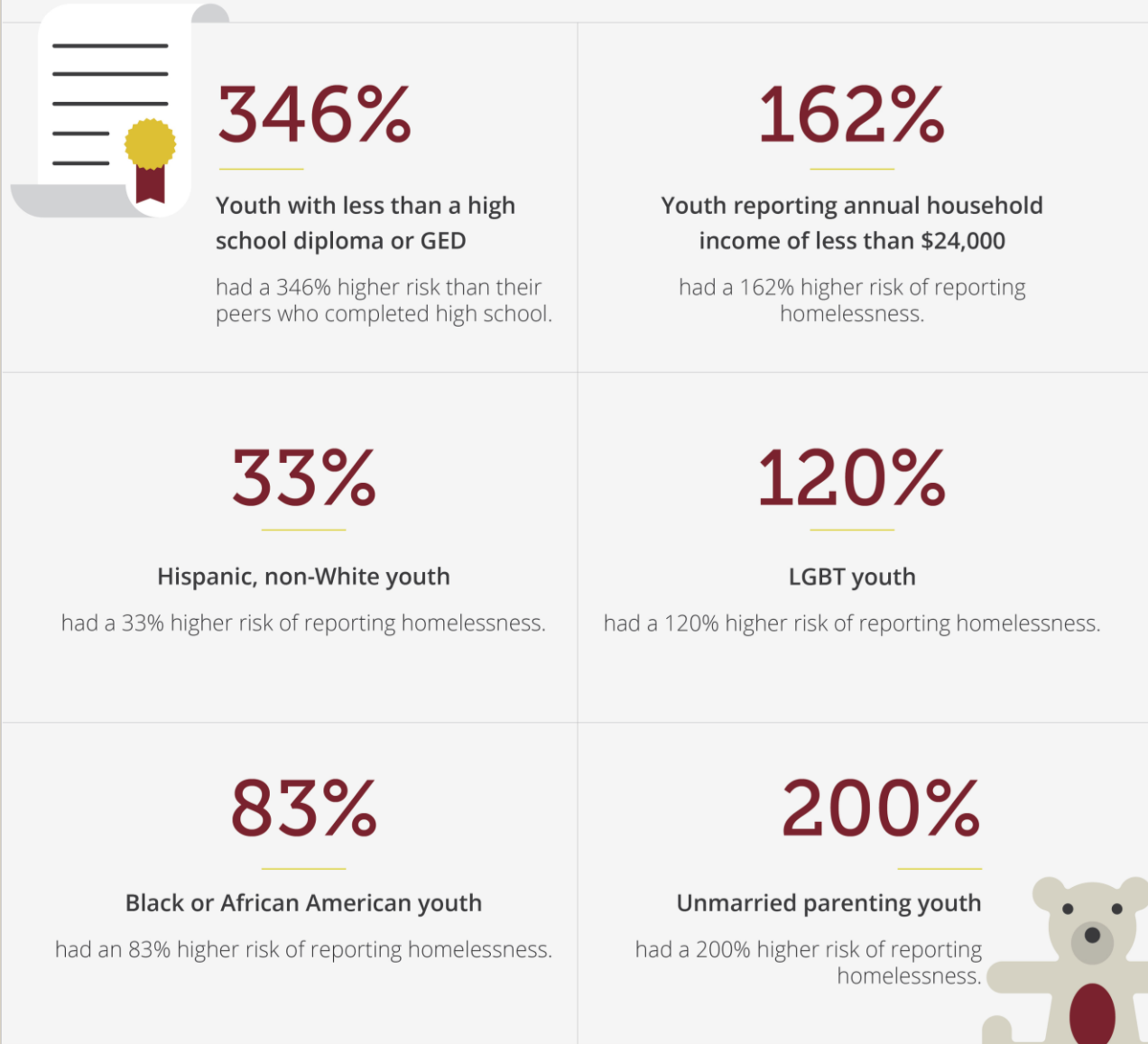
- Infographic from a report from Chapin Hall and Voices of Youth Count, [Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America](#)

Over the course of a year -

- *1 in 10 young adults aged 18-25 are unaccompanied and homeless*
- *At least 1 in 30 youth aged 13-17 are unaccompanied and homeless*

Figure 5. Youth at Greater Risk of Experiencing Homelessness

Statistics describe the relative risk of certain groups of young adults, 18-25, having reported “explicit homelessness” in the last 12 months.

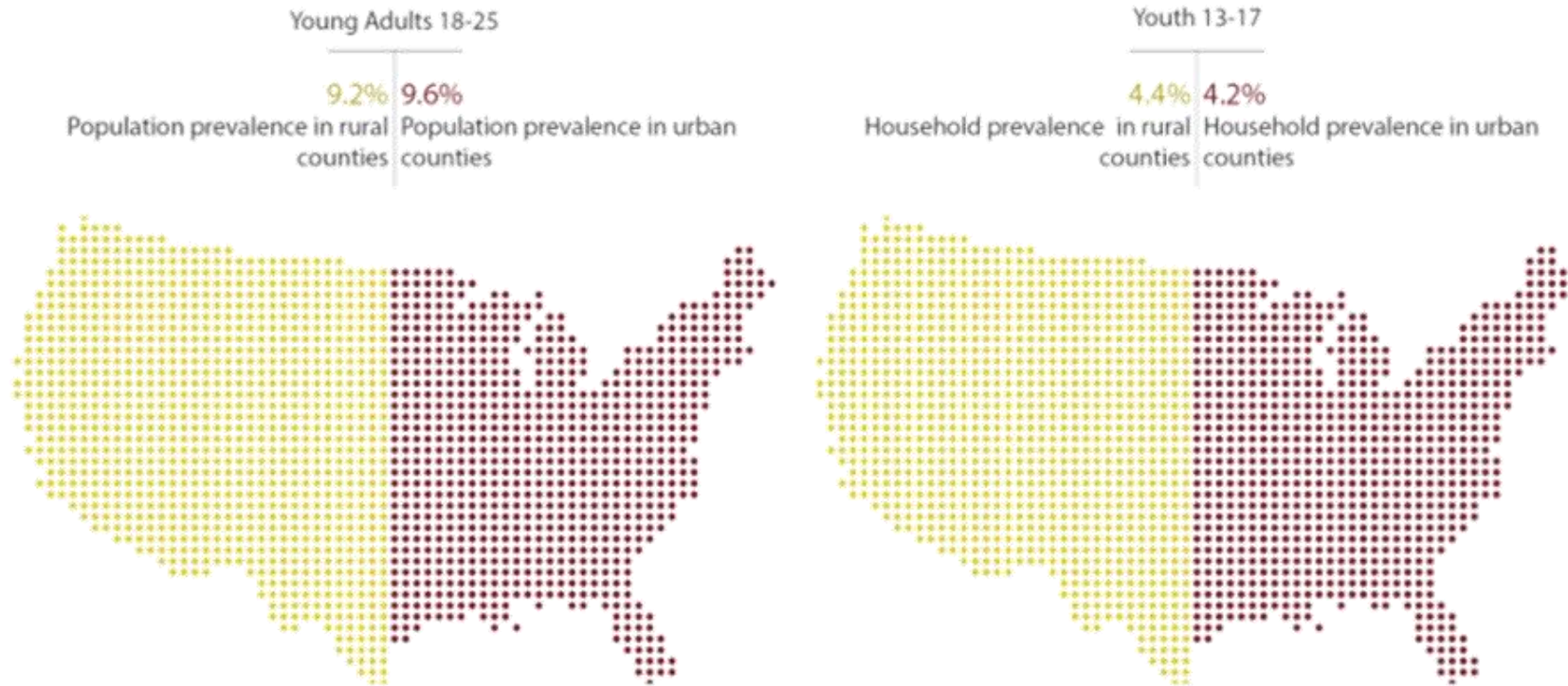


What leads to youth homelessness?



Youth Homelessness Affects Rural and Urban Areas Alike

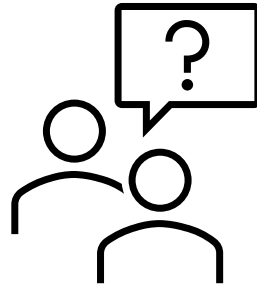
Rates of youth experiencing homelessness were similar in rural and nonrural areas.



Urban / Rural Youth Homelessness

NYS-TEACHS' COVID-19 Survey

Responses from over 650 Liaisons, other school staff, and service providers statewide.



36% indicated they ***do not know*** whether unaccompanied homeless youth have access to the services and supports they need during the COVID-19 pandemic.

→ This was highest rate of uncertainty among the topics.

Having trouble reaching a student?

Tips from Liaisons

Try asking someone close to the student – like a counselor or coach – to reach out.

Try asking a friend of the student if they can message the student you are trying to reach on social media to pass along your message to call you back.

Try reaching out to emergency contacts provided by the youth.

Make sure to explain in emails or voicemails the reason why you are reaching out. The student may be worried about being in trouble.



Resource Alert! These tips are included in our [Check-In Checklist](#)

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Did you know?

Any school-age child or youth can be an unaccompanied youth.

In 2017-18, about 7% of identified homeless students in NYS were homeless unaccompanied youth.

<https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/>



Who is covered by the McKinney-Vento Act?

Includes:

- **Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason**
- **Living in emergency or transitional shelters**
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Living in a public or private place not designed for sleeping
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, etc.
- Migratory living in circumstances described above

True or False?

Any youth living apart from his/her parents is considered to be homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act.

- A. True
- B. False

Homeless Unaccompanied Youth: Defined

**Lacks a fixed, regular and
adequate nighttime residence**



**Not in the physical custody of a
parent or guardian**

Scenario: Jessica



- Jessica is a 16-year-old high school junior.
- She left her parents' home in School District A to live with her boyfriend's family in School District B.
- Conflicting info from Jessica/parents about why she left home.

What information would you need to determine whether Jessica is an unaccompanied homeless youth?

What if...

What if the student's parent /guardian says they can return home?

An offer to return home does not disqualify a youth from McKinney-Vento eligibility.

What if...

What if the student's parent/guardian continues to provide the student with financial support?

Financial support from a parent does not disqualify a youth from McKinney-Vento eligibility.

School Selection and Best Interest Decision-Making



- **School selection: Youth** (in the case of unaccompanied youth) must designate a school and school district where they would like to attend.
- **Best interest decision-making:** After the **unaccompanied youth** makes their designation, the school district must decide whether the designation is in the best interests of the student and must presume that keeping the student in the same school is in the student's best interests unless the youth disagrees.

Poll

Can a school require a caregiver to get legal guardianship in order to enroll a homeless student in school?

- a. Yes
- b. Yes, if the student is in elementary school.
- c. Yes, if the student is trying to enroll in a new district.
- d. No. School districts must enroll youth in school even if they do not have guardianship documents.

Access to Services and Supports



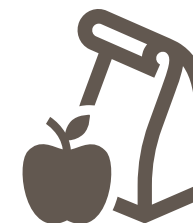
Immediate Enrollment



Transportation



Title I



Free Meals



When school is remote/hybrid, use our [Check-In Checklist](#) to support your needs assessments.

Awarding Partial Credits

SchoolHouse Connection's Checklist: Awarding and Accepting Partial Credits

STEP TWO

Calculating and Awarding Partial Credit

Partial credits can be entered manually on the student's transcript or clearly explained in notes for the receiving school. If the student is unable to enroll in an equivalent course at the new school for any reason, partial credits are essential to prevent the student from falling behind on graduation requirements. Credits are not awarded without some clear basis for the calculation, whether it is attendance, grades, or other strategies outlined below.

- Use a partial credit calculation formula, such as formulas used in California or Washington.
 - A formula should not be a hard rule, but rather a guide.
- Use professional judgement, while always focusing on the best interest of the student.
 - Take extenuating circumstances into account.
- Beware of "seat time."



State and local educational agencies must review and revise policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and

When School's In-Person: Transportation from Runaway and Homeless Youth Facilities is 100% Reimbursable

- RHY facility or District may transport
- Submit RHYA Transportation Reimbursement form to NYSED
- For students in temporary housing not staying at an accredited RHY facility:
 - State Aid for transportation
 - Title I, Part A for excess costs



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Strategies for Working with...

School Staff

- Explain MV and school access
- Identify procedures for removing barriers
- Clarify policies re: sharing of info/consent

Parents

- Explain MV and school access
- Parental rights not minimized
- School access cannot be used as stick to compel student to return home

Youth

- Explain MV and MV Liaison
- Provide a consistent adult mentor (liaison, guidance counselor, coach, etc.)

What are the rights of parents/guardians?

- Parents do not lose parental rights unless explicitly revoked
- Examples of parental rights:
 - Special education consent
 - Access to education records
 - Medical decision-making



What are schools required to report?

Do schools have to contact the parents or guardians of homeless unaccompanied youth?

- **No.** But if parent/guardian contacts school, school must share information the student's educational records with them, unless their parental rights have been curtailed. School may be required to call child protective services if there is suspected abuse/neglect.
- Rights to education records transfer to youth at 18, with some exceptions.

Do schools have to contact the police when enrolling unaccompanied youth?

- **No.** Educators are mandated to report suspected abuse and/or neglect (homelessness alone *generally* is not abuse/neglect), and this reporting can be to child welfare officials, not police.
- If you have reason to suspect kidnapping, you can immediately see if the student has been reported missing at missingkids.org or 1-800-THE-LOST.

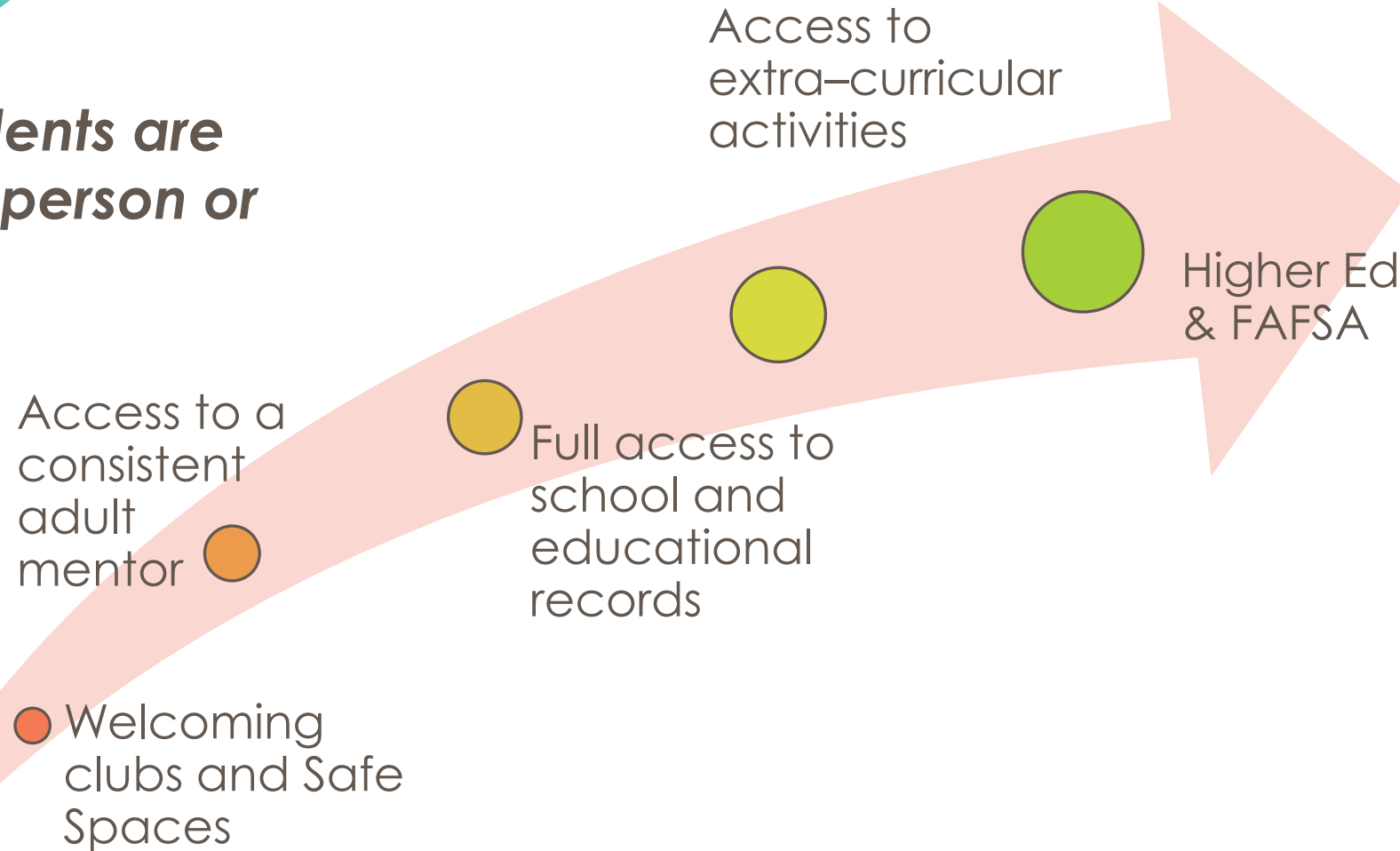
What strategies can parents use if they want their child to return home?

- PINS Diversion Programs
- Counseling/Family Mediation
- Local Youth Bureau
- Other community resources



Removing Barriers for Unaccompanied Youth

Whether students are attending in-person or remotely...




Providing Referrals for Youth

NYS-TEACHS Referral Templates

- Four templates, including **YOUTH REFERRALS**
- **COVID-19 Reminder:** Reach out to all referrals to confirm services, availability, protocols

YOUTH REFERRALS

 **HEALTH & WELLNESS**


Consenting to Your Own Health Care: this NYCLU guide explains your healthcare rights. nyclu.org/sites/default/files/thl.pdf

Ok2Talk: an online resource and support system for teens to get mental wellness resources at ok2talk.org/

Find a Substance Abuse Treatment Provider: oasas.ny.gov

Vaccines: To get free vaccines, contact the [local county health department](#) or call the NYS Vaccines for Children Program at **1-800-543-7468** for more information about other providers.

- If you aren't living with a parent or guardian, a *person in parental relation* can consent to your immunizations. Call NYS-TEACHS (800-388-2014) with questions.

 **LGBTQ+ RESOURCES**

GLSEN: find resources for LGBTQ+ youth and register or find your school's GSA, at glsen.org

The Trevor Project: find support and resources on sexual orientation, gender identity, and more, at thetrevorproject.org/resources/trevor-support-center/

Safe Horizon's Streetwork Project (NYC): provides resources and a community for LGBTQ+ youth. Visit safehorizon.org or call the Hotline at **1-800-708-6600**.

LGBT National Help Center: find online or over the phone support, peer-support, and local resources at glbthotline.org

If you are in crisis, please seek help immediately. Call **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** to reach a 24-hour crisis center, call 911, or go to the nearest emergency room.

True or False?

High school guidance counselors must give verification of independent student status to all 12th graders identified as homeless.

- a. True
- b. False

Five Strategies to Help Homeless Youth Transition to College During COVID-19

New resource from SchoolHouse Connection

April 2020

SchoolHouse
Connection

FIVE STRATEGIES TO HELP HOMELESS YOUTH TRANSITION TO COLLEGE DURING COVID-19



For many high school students, the COVID-19 outbreak has created uncertainty about the prospects of pursuing higher education. According to a recent poll by the [Art & Science Group](#), about 1 of every 6 four-year-college-bound students appears to be at the point of giving up on the idea of attending a college or university in the fall. In another recent [survey](#), 69% of high school seniors surveyed foresee COVID-19 impacting their higher education financial situation and, therefore, their ability to pursue college.

For high school students experiencing homelessness, the impact of school closures is particularly devastating; it represents the loss of

FAFSA: Sample Verification Letter

Verification Letter
template created by
SchoolHouse
Connection

Independent Student Status of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determination for the 2018-2019 FAFSA

To Whom It May Concern:

I am providing this letter to convey my determination that after July 1, 2017, [NAME OF STUDENT] was

- an unaccompanied homeless youth, as defined by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act and the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento 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.¹ Feel free to address any questions to me at the number or e-mail address listed below.

Signature	Date
Print Name	Phone
Email	

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Consent and Info Sharing

Educational Records

- Parent has right to inspect unless student is 18 or older

Medical Care

- Parent usually has to consent for elective medical care. No parental consent required for emergency care

Absences and Field Trips

- Law does not require parental consent

School Selection

- Unaccompanied Youth with liaison

Optional Forms for UY

- Designation of Person in Parental Relation
- Caregiver's Authorization Form

<https://nysteachs.org/resources/designation-of-person-in-parental-relation-form/>

Designation of Person in Parental Relation by Parent for Purposes of Educational Decisions

Child's Name: _____ Child's DOB: ____/____/____

I, _____, am the parent of the above-named child.
Print Full Name

I understand that I may voluntarily designate another person to act for me as a person in parental relation in order to make decisions regarding my child's education. I understand that I may revoke this designation at any time by notifying, either orally or in writing, the designee or an educational provider at my child's school, or by executing a subsequent designation. To my knowledge, there is no prior order of any court in any jurisdiction currently in effect that would prohibit me from making this designation.

In accordance with Section 5-1551 of the General Obligations Law, I am designating _____ as a person in parental relation to my minor child.
Designee's Full Name

Designee's Address: _____ Apt. No.: _____

City or Town State Zip Code

Designee's Telephone Number: Home (____) _____
Work (____) _____
Cell (____) _____

Parent's Address: _____ Apt. No.: _____

City or Town State Zip Code

Parent's Telephone Number: Home (____) _____

Scenario: Dave

Dave has been raised by his Aunt since childhood. Unfortunately, Dave's Aunt recently passed away and ever since then, he has been bouncing around among different friends and other relatives. A teacher has referred Dave to the Committee on Special Education.

Who can sign the special education consent forms normally signed by the parent? Can Dave? The McKinney-Vento liaison?

Appointing a Surrogate Parent

○ Committee on Special Education must appoint a surrogate parent when:

○ No parent can be identified, or

○ After reasonable efforts, the District cannot discover the whereabouts of the parents (in NYC, two attempts at contact suffice) **or the student is an unaccompanied homeless youth, or**

○ The student is a ward of the state and does not have a “parent” or the judge has “subrogated” the rights of the parent to make educational decisions on behalf of the student (that is, the rights have been assigned to someone else)

8 NYCRR 200.1(ccc)

○ District must appoint a surrogate parent within 10 business days.

8 NYCRR 200.5(n)(3)(iii)

Scenario: Sarah

- 1. Does the district have to exclude Sarah from school if she can't get a physical/health certificate on her own?*
- 2. Is the district required to get parental consent for Sarah to get a physical or other health appraisal?*

Sarah, age 16, recently moved in with her older brother after there was a house fire in her parents' home.

Sarah enrolled in the 10th grade in the local district where her older brother lives because the commute was too far back to her district of origin.

The State Regulations requires that all 10th graders have physicals on file with the district. Sarah has been unable to get a new physical from her doctor.

Review

- Unaccompanied youth are students who **meet criteria for homelessness under McKinney-Vento** and are **not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian**.
- **Liaisons must ensure that unaccompanied youth have full access to school**, including academic and extracurricular activities. Credit must be provided for full or partially completed coursework completed at a prior school.
- **Liaisons should use a thoughtful, trauma-sensitive approach** to working with unaccompanied youth, and be sure to provide a consistent adult mentor.
- Districts must help students in temporary housing **prepare and apply for college**. For unaccompanied youth, liaisons are required to provide verification of independent student status when students are eligible.

Next Steps

Attendees will:

- Identify key protocols to ensure **unaccompanied youth have full access to a supportive school environment**; and
- Outline steps to ensure all **unaccompanied youth are assisted with college prep**;
- **Share slides and/or key resources with colleagues.**

More questions?
Check out these Q&A
documents.



- [NYS-TEACHS FAQ – Unaccompanied Youth](#)
- [NYS-TEACHS / COVID-19 Q&A](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection / Q&A From Our Inbox – Jump to "Unaccompanied Youth"](#)

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