



# Pennsylvania Association of Financial Aid Administrators

## Working with special populations

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# Food Housing Insecurity in Higher Ed

Data from GAO report & 2015 Survey

*2015 survey at 10 community colleges across U.S.:* Source: [www.wihopelab.com](http://www.wihopelab.com)

- 20% had very low levels of food security
- 13% were homeless
- 39% were housing insecure but not homeless

While the Departments of Education (Education) and Health and Human Services (HHS) administer programs that can help them with college, Education data from 2009 (the latest available) indicate that a lower percentage of foster youth complete a bachelor's degree within 6 years (14 percent) compared to other students (31 percent). Education has begun to collect data on homeless youth and plans to have some college completion information by 2017. Education data also show that homeless and foster youth who attend college pursue an associate's degree to a greater extent than other students. Source: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/680/677324.pdf>

# Pathways: Why your student may need a determination while in college?

- ☐ Family conflict: blended family issues, pregnancy, sexual activity or orientation, school problems, substance abuse
- ☐ Abuse and/or neglect within the home
- ☐ Parental incarceration, illness, hospitalization, or death
- ☐ Lack of space in temporary situations or shelter policies that prohibit adolescent boys
- ☐ Child welfare issues
  - ☐ Running away from a placement
  - ☐ Aging out of the system
  - ☐ Significant correlation between involvement with the child welfare system and experiencing homelessness as an adult

# Different statuses; Similar Needs

- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: students under the age of 24 who are not in the care of their parents and are lacking adequate fixed nighttime residence.
- Unaccompanied Foster Youth: Students under the age of 24 who meet qualifications for UHY, but are marked independent due to response on FAFSA.
- Independent student via appeal: May or may not be at-risk of being homeless

# Real Life Scenarios in PA

Jessie leaves her home and tells her high school counselor that she doesn't get along with her parents. Jessie stays at her friend's house until graduation and then she hopes to go to college. Jessie's counselor does not want to classify her as an UHY, stating that "it was her choice to leave home."

**Does Jessie qualify as an UHY even though she chose to leave home?**

Yes. Determinations of eligibility should be made on the student's nighttime living arrangement, not the circumstances that caused the student to leave home.





# Real Life Scenarios in PA

Devon is a high school senior kicked out of his parent's house. He is currently living in a men's shelter, hoping to attend college after graduation.

**Is Devon an UHY?**

Yes. Devon is eligible to complete his FASFA as an independent student.



# FAFSA Process:

- Students who are eligible foster youth will answer “yes” to their specific question unless they do not meet age requirement: automatic independent student.
- Students who need an appeal to be independent will “reject”; and follow-up with a request for how to complete the appeal.
- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth may need a determination from a FAA if they do not have one from HS liaison.

# FAFSA Dependency Questions

**Step Three (Student):** Answer the questions in this step to determine if you will need to provide parental information. Once you answer "Yes" to any of the questions in this step, skip Step Four and go to Step Five on page 8.

46. Were you born before January 1, 1992? .....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
47. As of today, are you married? (Also answer "Yes" if you are separated but not divorced.) .....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
48. At the beginning of the 2015-2016 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"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
49. Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training? See Notes page 2. ....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
50. Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces? See Notes page 2. ....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
51. Do you now have or will you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016? .....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
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, 2016? .....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
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 9. ....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
54. As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you an emancipated minor? See Notes page 9. ....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
55. As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you in legal guardianship? See Notes page 9. ....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
56. At any time on or after July 1, 2014, 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 9. ....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
57. At any time on or after July 1, 2014, 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 9. ....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>
58. At any time on or after July 1, 2014, 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 9. ....	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>



# FAFSA continued

## Notes for questions 56–58 (page 5)

Answer **"Yes"** if you received a determination at any time on or after July 1, 2014, that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or at risk of being homeless.

- **"Homeless"** means lacking fixed, regular and adequate housing. You may be homeless if you are living in shelters, parks, motels or cars, or are temporarily living with other people because you have 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.
- **"Unaccompanied"** means you are not living in the physical custody of your parent or guardian.
- **"Youth"** means you are 21 years of age or younger or you are still enrolled in high school as of the day you sign this application.

Answer **"No"** if you are not homeless or at risk of being homeless, or do not have a determination. You should contact your financial aid office for assistance if you do not have a determination but believe you are an unaccompanied youth who is homeless or are an unaccompanied youth providing for your own living expenses who is at risk of being homeless.

The financial aid administrator at your college may require you to provide a copy of the determination if you answered **"Yes"** to any of these questions.

# 2017-18 FAFSA Changes

- First, the Department will change the text of the FAFSA on the Web to be more supportive of unaccompanied homeless students beginning with the upcoming 2017-18 FAFSA, which will come online this fall. Additionally, the Department will remove the definition of “youth” starting with the 2018-19
- FAFSA that comes online next year, which will allow 22- and 23-year-old applicants who indicate that they are homeless or at risk of being homeless access to a much smoother process for determining their independent status.

# Making the determination: UHY

- You are not required to verify the answers to the homeless youth questions unless you have conflicting information
- A documented phone call with, or a written statement from, one of the relevant authorities is sufficient verification when needed
- It is not conflicting information if you disagree with an authority's determination that a student is homeless
- Because of the sensitive nature of these situations, if an institution has no conflicting information about the status of the student the institution should not request additional documentation, proof, or statements. Doing so may appear as if the FAA is asking applicants to explain, clarify, or justify their circumstances, instead of simply providing documentation of their homeless status

# Difference between Appeals & UHY determinations

## Overrides on the paper FAFSA

COLLEGE USE ONLY

D/O ☐ 1

Homeless  
Youth  
Determination ☐ 4

FEDERAL SCHOOL CODE

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FAA Signature

1

A homeless youth determination is not a dependency override or a case of professional judgment.

# UHY status is not renewable

Section 480(d)(1)(H)-Definition of independent student:

Has been verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as either an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth (as such terms are defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act), or as unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting, by-



# Identifying Students:

- Foster Youth Comment Code:
- UHY Comment Code:
- Rejected FAFSA Forms
- On-campus training: referrals.
- Single Point of Contact Model.
- Provide guidance on website.

A screenshot of a FAFSA form, dated July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. The form is titled 'FAFSA' and 'Federal Student Aid'. A large, bold, red 'REJECTED' stamp is placed diagonally across the center of the form, indicating that the application was not accepted.

# PHEAA Process for State Grant Funding

- PHEAA Guardian form: Only available to Financial Aid Staff with PHEAA login information currently.
- Recommended that FAA send determination for UHY and any other materials collected for proof of independent status with form.
- Process needs to be completed each year.

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**PHEAA**  
State Grant and Special Programs  
Phone: 1-800-885-7382 Fax: 717-720-3788  
P.O. Box 8157, Harrisburg, PA 17106-8157

**2016-17 GUARDIAN FORM**  
(NOTE: Deadline for returning this form to PHEAA is April 1, 2017.)

Print Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Account Number \_\_\_\_\_  
OR  
Student's Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_  
2016-17

Complete each of the items below as they pertain to your parents (this also includes adoptive parents if you were adopted prior to age 13) have the appropriate person(s) sign the form, and return the requested information to Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency, P.O. Box 8157, Harrisburg, PA 17106-8157 within 30 days. If you are unable to respond within 30 days, please note that no information can be accepted after April 1, 2017. (If this letter is dated after March 1, 2017, you MUST respond within 30 days for your information to be considered.) If you do not submit information regarding parents, this form will be considered incomplete.

1. Your mother's full name, Social Security Number and present address.  
a. Name-SSN: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Address: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your father's full name, Social Security Number and present address.  
a. Name-SSN: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Address: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Indicate the last time you resided with your parent(s) (month/day/year).  
a. Mother: \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Father: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Indicate the total amount of support (support includes: money, housing, food, clothes, car, medical and dental care, college costs, insurance coverage, etc.) which you received or will receive from your parent(s) during:  
a. Mother: 2015: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ 2016: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
b. Father: 2015: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ 2016: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
5. Indicate the last date (month/day/year) you received financial assistance from your mother and/or father.  
Mother: \_\_\_\_\_ Father: \_\_\_\_\_

PHEAA conducts its student loan servicing operations commercially as American Education Services and for federally-oriented loans as FedLoan Servicing.



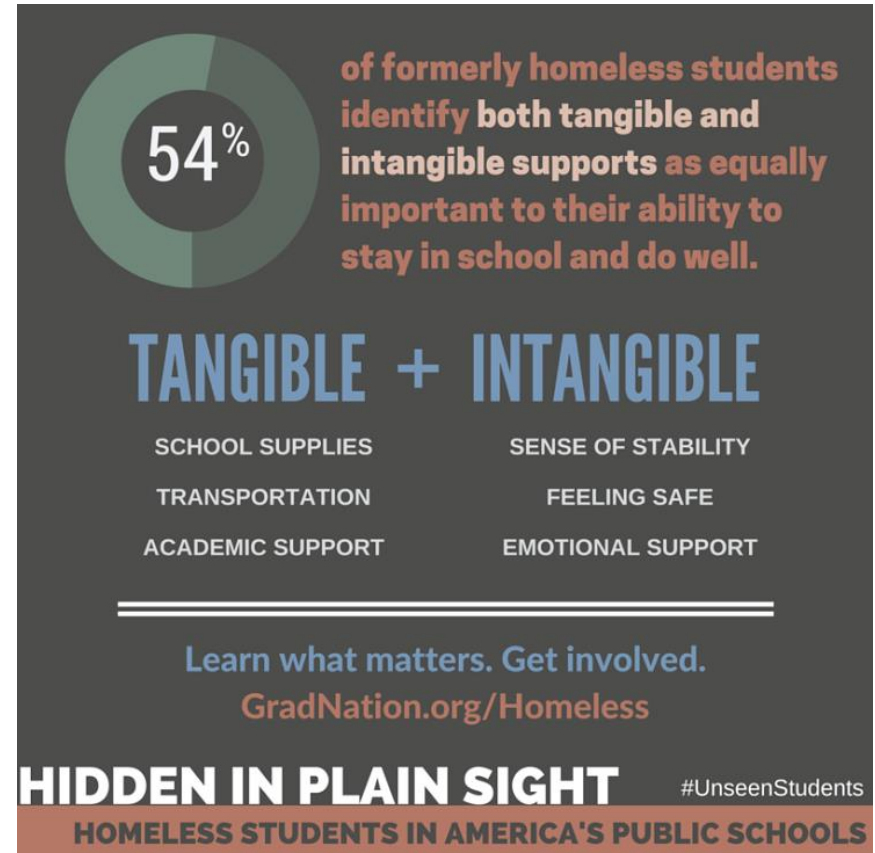
# Chafee Funding Process for Foster Youth:

- Identify foster youth early in admissions process.
- Applications for Chafee becomes available in April of each year and is due in December.
- Eligibility: see [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org).

## Barriers to success:

- Stereotypes and lack of awareness.
- Under-identification.
- High mobility resulting in lack of school stability and educational continuity.
- Enrollment requirements (school records, health records, proof of residence, guardianship).
- Poor health, fatigue, hunger.
- Emotional trauma, depression, anxiety.
- Lack of transportation.
- Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.

## Types of support:



# Food Pantries:

- College and University Food Bank Alliance hit 400 members in December, 2016.
- Partner with local county food bank.
- Swipe-out hunger
- Do your students have food available during breaks?
- Do you have housing options with kitchens? If so, can these be prioritized.



**DUB-C**  
pantry



# Resource Centers: Going beyond food

- Emergency funding for health expenses
- Business Attire
- Winter Attire
- Toiletries
- Laundry Supplies
- School Supplies
- Guidance, Outside resource information, referrals, etc.

# Housing

- Accommodations for summer, winter, and breaks?
- Partner with local transition housing options and/or shelters.
- Partner with other colleges in the area with residential halls.
- Plan ahead!

# Resources:

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[tnuccio@wcupa.edu](mailto:tnuccio@wcupa.edu)

PA ECYEH Program: Regional  
Coordinators  
<http://homeless.center-school.org/>

NAEHCY: Higher Education  
Helpline: 855-446-2673 or  
[highered@naehcy.org](mailto:highered@naehcy.org)

*“The primary responsibility of schools is to **enroll** and **educate** homeless children and youth in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act, which neither authorizes, nor requires schools to make judgments about the validity of **why** a student is not living with a parent or guardian.*

*Determinations of eligibility should be made on the student’s nighttime living arrangement, not the circumstances that caused the student to leave home.”*

~National Center for Homeless Education

