

Checklist for Unaccompanied Youth On the Road to College



Before Enrolling in College

- **Unaccompanied youth may be able to receive federal Title IX funds to help with school supplies and clothing while still in high school.** High school districts are also required to provide these students transportation to approved shelters or group homes. Ask your school counselor about these services.
- **Check out fee waivers.** Fee waivers are available to cover the cost of taking the SAT/ACT. Also, many colleges will waive their admissions application fees. Ask your school counselor for help in obtaining these.
- **Find out if you are eligible to register as a "McKinney-Vento" student.** McKinney-Vento registration assures that you will be considered an independent student for financial aid purposes and will therefore receive additional financial aid resources. Your high school counselor will help you with this process.
- **Think about managing the cost of college.** Financial aid can make a college education possible even when a student doesn't have family support. However, keep in mind that very few colleges give students a "full ride." If you are left owing a balance to the school after your aid package and you need to find a loan, realize all student loans (except for Federal Direct) will most likely require a "co-signer." A co-signer is someone with an established credit history who is willing to assume all the risks of taking a loan with you. There are ways to go to college more affordably, but you may need to talk to your school counselor or NHHEAF's Center for College Planning (CCP) to familiarize yourself with these options.
- **File the FAFSA during the winter/spring of your senior year.** The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) qualifies you to receive federal student aid, including Pell grants and Federal Direct Loans, and also possibly more financial aid from the college. It can be accessed at www.fafsa.ed.gov. NHHEAF's Center for College Planning will help you file your FAFSA for free. Can't make it to Concord? Ask your school counselor if we are coming to your high school and see us there!

When Choosing Between Colleges:

- **Ask about deposits.**
 - o Most colleges require a deposit for housing and/or enrollment by May 1. Ask the admissions office if you may postpone paying these fees until you receive your financial aid (which will be posted to your account once classes begin).
- **Prioritize a way to live affordably.**
 - o If you are considering a two-year college, try to locate one that offers housing. Many community colleges do not have housing on campus, but there are some that do! In New Hampshire, community colleges are adding campus housing, like NHTI - Concord's Community College.
 - o Thinking about living off campus? By applying for financial aid, you may receive funds that could be used to assist with housing costs. However, consider how you will get to campus each day as transportation is crucial, but may be expensive.
 - o Consider a more urban area. Urban areas have stronger public transportation systems, which might help you to commute to campus.
 - o After your freshman year, apply to be a resident assistant in the dorms, as you may receive discounted housing.
- **Remember colleges aren't open 24/7, year-round.**
 - o Ask the college if they provide temporary housing for unaccompanied students during Thanksgiving break, winter break, and spring break. If you can't stay on campus, think about where you will live during these times. What options do you have for summer housing?
 - o Ask the college if you can enroll in summer courses and live on campus so that you have housing year-round.
- **Sometimes getting there is the problem.**
 - o Many unaccompanied students enroll in college and then do not attend because they have no way to get to school to move in. How will you get to college when you begin each year and semester? How will you pay for the cost of transportation?
- **Consider what else you will need to be successful.**
 - o Check out the computer lab. Many colleges have computer labs that students can use so that you don't have to buy a computer. Go and see the lab. How many computers are available on campus? What hours are they open? What are printing costs, if any? Knowing this information can help you plan accordingly.
 - o Consider using an online electronic storage system. You can use online storage systems such as Google Docs to store any important personal documentation or files.
 - o Get supported. Ask if the college has a "Single Point of Contact" (or "SPOC") who can serve as a point of reference for you as you navigate college life. Also, visit the counseling center, which may have support groups and special resources for unaccompanied students.
 - o Use academic resources. Each college has free academic support centers that can provide you with resources to help you in your studies including a writing center and tutors.
- **Health Insurance is probably not optional.**
 - o Ask each campus you visit about their specific policy regarding health insurance as most colleges require that you have it. Many colleges offer a low-cost health care option for students. Consider this when you are calculating the cost of college. And remember, if health insurance is required, your bill will include these expenses.

Resources for Unaccompanied Youth on the Road to College

State and National Resources:

State:

New Hampshire Local Homeless Education Liaisons – these school liaisons can assist you in getting a McKinney- Vento designation so that you are opened up to more financial aid and resources. See your school counselor to find out who your district liaison is or contact the state coordinator Lynda Thistle Elliott at Lynda.ThistleElliott@doe.nh.gov, 603.271.3840 or 603.271.6579.

Home for Hope – resources for homeless youth in New Hampshire www.home4hope.com. 603.641.9441 x251

NHHEAF's Center for College Planning – a free resource in the state of New Hampshire to help you with college applications, financial aid, and scholarship searching www.nhheaf.org. 1.888.7.GRADUATE, x119

NAECHY Higher Education Help Line – 1.855.446.2673 (toll-free), www.naehcy.org/educational-resources/helpline, highered@naehcy.org

1-800-RUNAWAY – crisis center for runaway and homeless youth. You can call them and they will help you find resources in your area. They also have a message service to parents if you want to pass info on to your parents but don't want to talk to them.

National:

National Center for Homeless Education – provides links to resources for higher education http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/higher_ed.php

Scholarships and Grants:

Contact your high school counselor for local scholarship information.

The NHHEAF Network Organizations – www.nh93.com, 888.7.GRADUATE, x119. A database of local and regional scholarships.

The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation – www.nhcf.org, 603.225.6641. A community foundation which distributes more than \$5 million in grants and loans each year. Apply for the NHCF Statewide Student Aid Program by April 15th (fee waivers available by request).

The New Hampshire Coalition to End Homelessness – www.nhceh.org, 603.641.9441 x259. Annual "Hope Starts Here" scholarship, ranges from \$500 to \$2000. Applications due by May 1st.

LeTendre Scholarship Fund – www.naehcy.org/letendre-scholarship-fund/about-the-fund, 757.221.7776. Scholarships offered through the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

According to the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, a person is considered homeless who "lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence." This includes people living in shelters, cars, motels/hotels, and campgrounds, or living with friends or relatives temporarily because they lack permanent housing.

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