Research Roundup: The Empirical Basis for Current Bills Supporting College Success for Foster Youth and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Wednesday, July 20, 1PM Eastern
Today’s Agenda

- Introductions
- Overview of Federal Bills
- Research Roundup
- Resources
- Q&A
Briefing Hosts

In collaboration with the Office of Representative Danny Davis

Senator Patty Murray is an honorary co-host
Panelists

Rashida Crutchfield, California State University, Long Beach

Amy Dworsky, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

Mary Haskett, North Carolina State University at Raleigh

Angelique Day, University of Washington
Federal Bills To Support Youth with Experience in Foster Care and Homelessness

**The Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth Act**
- (S 3616/HR 6666) (Murray, Portman, Clark, Young)

**The Fostering Success in Higher Education Act**
- (HR 6669/S3605) (Davis, Krishnamoorthi, Casey, Brown, Smith)
Areas Addressed by Bills

- Access to housing, including during breaks
- Access to campus-based services
- Financial aid access
- College access and transition
- Data collection
Priority for on-campus housing during and between academic terms. (HEASHFY)
Friend’s couches, ya know, a couple nights in my car. Thankfully it was warm enough to where I’m not freezing to death in the...when I stayed at a certain friend’s house and her roommate was kind of getting annoyed I was there, and I didn’t want to overstay my welcome...and I had left that day before showering, and so it really hit me like I don’t have a place to shower... Something I would never want to wish upon anybody to go through.
Prevalence of Homelessness

- 10.9% of CSU students report being homeless
- 18% of African American and first-generation college students experienced homelessness (a higher rate than any other group)
Housing and Well-being

- Conditions of housing location impact health
  - Environmental hazards
  - Access to resource
- Housing conditions and design
  - Conditions in the home impact physical and mental well-being
  - Housing designed to support well-being
- **Housing status impacts health**
  - Negative impact of housing instability
Research Highlights

Qualitative study of students experiencing homelessness

- Students were at particular risk of homelessness when residence halls closed over school breaks

Pilot project over Thanksgiving break

- More than 700 students opted to remain in their dorm room
1. Designate liaisons to assist homeless and foster youth (HEASHFY)
2. Require colleges to include voluntary questions on admissions applications about students’ status as homeless and foster youth (HEASHFY)
3. Invest $150 million a year to establish or expand statewide initiatives to assist foster and homeless youth in enrolling in and graduating from institutions of higher education (FSHEA)
Liaisons

Designating liaisons to assist homeless and foster youth and include liaison name and contact information

- Survey of 49 liaisons at higher education institutions in four states
- 47% of liaisons were listed as point of contact for students experiencing homelessness
- Most liaisons were professional in financial aid
- 80% of liaisons devoted 10% or less of their time to liaison duties
Identification

- Require colleges to include voluntary on admissions applications about students’ status as homeless and foster youth
- Reliance on self-referrals and FAFSA is not enough
  - Gross underestimate of number of homeless students on campus
CAMPUS SUPPORT PROGRAMS

• Provide wraparound services and supports to help young people who are or were in foster care succeed in school and graduate.

• Typically address students’ academic, financial, housing, and social/emotional needs
Supporting College Students Transitioning Out of Foster Care: Formative Evaluation of the Setia Scholars Program

- Analyzed program and WMU administrative data
- Conducted interviews and focus groups
Coaching and the student-coach relationship are essential to student success

Need to focus on a broad array of issues that affect students beyond academics

Institutional support is critical to program success and sustainability

Program participants may be less academically prepared for college and need more support than their peers

Participants want to be treated like their peers
California State University (CSU) 3 Phase Study
• Prevalence study of 23 CSU campuses to assess food, housing, and financial security

Assessing and Evaluating Practice
• Research with 6 CSU basic needs programs
  Cal Poly Humboldt, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, CSU Dominguez Hills, CSU Long Beach, CSU Monterey Bay, San Francisco State University

• Evaluation of College Focused Rapid ReHousing
  10 campuses (8 CSUs and 2 California Community Colleges)

• Exploring campus-based basic needs responses during COVID-19 with 4 CSU campuses

In response to the infusion of California state funding, recommendations based on findings observed across multiple CSU basic needs security studies were developed:

**Transforming and Institutionalizing Basic Needs Supports in California Higher Education:**
Recommendations for the California Higher Education Basic Needs Community
Case Management
“Single Point of Contact”

Program 1: Food
- ASI Beach Pantry
- Beach Bites App
- CalFresh
- Feed A Need

Program 2: Housing
- Emergency Housing
- Hotel Vouchers
- Beach Step Care Packages
- Outside Community Linkage
- College Focused Rapid ReHousing

Program 3: Finances
- Emergency Grant
- Reactivating Loans
- Dependency Overrides
- Gift cards to address campus closures

This program is a service of the Basic Needs Program, California State University, Long Beach.
Students who access campus basic needs supports

• *Experience less stress* and have more time for sleep and exercise

• *Work fewer hours* and have more time for unpaid internships and volunteer work that supports career path development

• *Have more money* to pay for bills like rent, food and utilities

• Are able to *purchase more and healthier foods*

• Can *enroll in more classes* and graduate sooner

• Have *more time to study*, for class prep, and visiting with professors during office hours

• Are able to *attend more of their classes*, go on field trips, and do field work
Research Found that Support is Needed in Six Key Areas
Research Shows that Campus Based Support with Liaisons and Rich Support is Effective

State based:

• Fostering Success - Michigan
• California Pathways to Success
• Passport to College – Washington
• Positive Pathways – Florida

Campus based:

• Guardian Scholars/Next Up – California
• REACH Programs – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Texas, Ohio
1. Provide accessible information on college websites about the financial aid process (HEASHFY)
2. Create an ‘ombudsman’ to intervene in determination process (HEASHFY)
3. Prioritize homeless and foster youth in Federal Work-Study (HEASHFY)
4. Require professional development and guidance to financial aid administrators (HEASHFY)
5. Provide homeless and foster youth in-state tuition rates (HEASHFY)
Research Highlights

- Prioritize homeless and foster youth in federal Work-Study positions
  - Our research indicates that students who experience homeless are likely to be working more than one job, and are almost constantly looking for additional employment.

- Require federal professional development and guidance for financial aid personnel
  - Resources available (76%) and identification and outreach (72%) were the two most requested topics for professional development
Research Shows There is Need for Leveraging and Braiding Funding

Federal and State Grants
Federal and State Agencies
Philanthropic Gifts
Private Foundations

Fundraising Events and Campaigns
Institutional Funds
Equity Funds
1. Facilitate the recruitment, participation, and retention of homeless and foster youth in the TRIO and GEAR UP college access programs (HEASHFY)

2. 25% of FSHEA state grants will be used to establish intensive, statewide transition initiatives to increase college enrollment by foster and homeless youth (FSHEA)
Using Research to Improve Postsecondary Education Outcomes of Community College Students in Foster Care

- Analyzed National Student Clearing House data linked to child welfare administrative data
- Interviewed 24 students and 5 college administrators
- Reviewed policies and programs related to postsecondary education for youth in foster care
Community college students had struggled in high school, felt unprepared for college, and transitioned to college with little professional guidance.

• Nearly all were required to complete remedial coursework.

• Students had a limited understanding of financial aid.

• Students want community colleges to provide supports that address their needs.
Include homeless and foster youth in the data collected by college access programs.
Data are Essential

Admissions
- Prevalence
- Service support preparation and delivery
- Outreach, Identification, and referral

Student Success
- Meeting appropriate needs
- Determining process barriers and facilitators
- Adjusting capacity

Evaluation
- Accountability
- Moving be monitoring
- Assessing, transformation, and growth
The ASK:

Please ask your U.S. Representative and your U.S. Senators to co-sponsor:

- The Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth (HEASHFY)
- The Fostering Success in Higher Education Act

The more co-sponsors, the more likely the bill is to be incorporated into other legislation that is moving.

Go to https://schoolhouse-connection.rallycongress.com/ctas/support-higher-education-access-homeless-foster to contact your Members of Congress and show support.
QUESTIONS
Resources

- **Support Higher Education Access for Homeless and Foster Youth**
  - [https://schoolhouse-connection.rallycongress.com/ctas/support-higher-education-access-homeless-foster](https://schoolhouse-connection.rallycongress.com/ctas/support-higher-education-access-homeless-foster)

- **Congressional Briefing | Supporting Higher Education Success for Youth With Experience in Foster Care and Homelessness**
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZZ--X2S4ZM&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZZ--X2S4ZM&feature=youtu.be)
  - [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ftO7-CKTc-V9Up_UvP-5PyfhKhDBv5uPkRpHtTqDg1I/edit#](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ftO7-CKTc-V9Up_UvP-5PyfhKhDBv5uPkRpHtTqDg1I/edit#)
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