


To Graduation and Beyond Revisited:

Achieving Postsecondary Access for Homeless High School Students



May 9, 2013
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay
Tampa, Florida


2012 - 2013 FASFEP/ECTAC SPRING
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FORUM

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Session Outline

- Dealing with application expenses
 - College entrance exam fees
 - College application fees
- Seeking financial aid and scholarships
 - The FAFSA for “accompanied” homeless students
 - The FAFSA for “unaccompanied” homeless students
- Florida Fee Exemption
 - Fee Exemptions
- Creating a Local Network: Highlights from Santa Rosa County and Polk County School Districts

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Raise of Hands


What do you consider your current knowledge level to be regarding college access for homeless students?



1. Expert
2. Average
3. Beginner
4. Ummm, what’s college access?

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College Admissions Checklist



- Take college entrance exam(s) (SAT and/or ACT)
- Complete and submit college applications
- Complete and submit the FAFSA
- More information is available from the College Board:
 - "Applying 101"
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying>
 - "Financial Aid 101"
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid>



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Other Considerations

- Encourage the student to consider a variety of institutions with different "price points"
 - A student may not be able to afford a particular institution, but other good college options may be available
 - A student may start at a community college and transfer to a four-year college at a later time, but would benefit from having a solid and informed transition plan
 - Consider housing options if looking into a school without dorms

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Fee Waivers

ACT
SAT





College Entrance Exam: The ACT

- To qualify for an ACT fee waiver, the student:
 - Must be enrolled in high school in the 11th or 12th grade
 - Must be a U.S. citizen (*if testing abroad*) or be testing in the U.S., Puerto Rico, or a U.S. territory
 - Must meet one or more of the following indicators of economic need:
 - Student is receiving free/reduced lunch
 - Family income is below the USDA reduced-price lunch level
 - Student is enrolled in TRIO or a similar program
 - Family lives in subsidized housing or receives public assistance
 - Student is experiencing homelessness
 - Student is living in a foster home
 - Student is a ward of the state or is an orphan

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College Entrance Exam: The ACT

- Student can use the waiver to take the ACT up to two times
- The waiver is sent to high schools each summer; students must access the waiver from the school counselor, not from ACT
- The waiver must be signed by the student and school counselor
- The waiver covers the basic test fees, including sending the test score(s) to up to four colleges; does not cover late registration fees or change fees
- Additional information is available at <http://www.actstudent.org/faq/feewaiver.html>
- A sample 2012/2013 fee waiver is available at <http://media.act.org/documents/feewaiver.pdf>

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College Entrance Exam: The SAT



- To qualify for an SAT fee waiver, the student must:
 - Be enrolled in high school in the 11th or 12th grade (SAT) or in grades 9-12 (SAT Subject Tests)
 - Be a U.S. citizen (*if testing abroad*) or be testing in the U.S., Puerto Rico, or a U.S. territory
 - Meet one or more of the following indicators of economic need (same as for the ACT)
 - Student is receiving free/reduced lunch
 - Family income is below the USDA reduced-price lunch level
 - Student is enrolled in TRIO or a similar program
 - Family lives in subsidized housing or receives public assistance
 - Student is experiencing homelessness
 - Student is living in a foster home
 - Student is a ward of the state or is an orphan

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College Entrance Exam: The SAT

- The waiver must be obtained from the student's high school counselor or an authorized agency, not from the College Board
- To be valid, the waiver must be completed by the high school guidance counselor
- The student can receive up to four waiver cards: Up to 2 waivers for the SAT and 2 waivers for SAT Subject Tests





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College Entrance Exam: The SAT

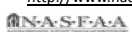

- The waiver covers the basic test fees, including sending the test score(s) to up to four colleges; up to four Request for Waiver of College Application Fee forms, and a \$40 discount for the Official SAT Online Course; does not cover late registration fees or change fees
- College application fee waivers should be included with the students' college applications and sent to colleges included in the *Directory of Colleges Cooperating with the SAT Program Fee-Waiver Service*
- Additional information is available at <http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-fee-waivers>

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College Application Fees



- College Board Program (*mentioned on previous slide*)
- National Association of College Admission Counseling (NACAC) form
 - To be completed with the help of the high school counselor
 - For graduating high school seniors entering college in the fall
 - Based on income and/or the counselor's knowledge of the family's circumstances
 - Same eligibility criteria as the ACT and SAT waiver programs
- Additional information from the College Board: <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/guidance/applications/fee-waivers>
- Additional information from NACAC: <http://www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/feewaiver/Pages/default.aspx>

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College Application Fees

- Most colleges follow the College Board's and NACAC's guidelines for determining application fee waiver eligibility; however, individual institutions may have their own fee waiver policies that vary
- Some colleges do not charge application fees for students that apply online
- NCHC does not recommend using McKinney-Vento subgrant funds or Title I-A set-aside funds to pay for college entrance exam, or college application fees, as waivers are available


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Questions?



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Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)





Raise of Hands


Describe your experience working with unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) to access federal financial aid?

1. I have worked with UHY; our efforts were successful
2. I have worked with UHY; our efforts were met with resistance
3. I have not yet worked with UHY on financial aid issues
4. Ummm, what's an UHY?

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FAFSA Basics

- FAFSA = **Free** Application for Federal Student Aid
- The official FAFSA web address is <http://www.fafsa.gov>
- Students applying for federal aid must complete a FAFSA for each school year for which they are seeking federal aid



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FAFSA Basics

- A new FAFSA is released each January for the upcoming school year
- Example: 2013-2014 FAFSA
 - Released in January 2013
 - Valid for students attending school for Fall 2013 and Spring 2014
 - Treatment of the Summer Term depends on the school

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Calculation of Federal Aid




- EFC = Expected Family Contribution
- Based on the information submitted on the FAFSA, the U.S. Department of Education will calculate the EFC
- Dependent Student
 - Must report parent information on FAFSA
 - EFC is based on parents' and student's income and assets
- Independent Student
 - Does NOT report parent information on FAFSA
 - EFC is based on student's income and assets



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McKinney-Vento Students: Dependent or Independent?



- "Accompanied students" experiencing homelessness fill out the FAFSA as dependent students
 - Living arrangement meets the M-V definition of homeless
 - In the physical custody of a parent or guardian



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McKinney-Vento Students: Dependent or Independent?

- Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness fill out the FAFSA as independent students
 - Living arrangement meets the M-V definition of homeless
 - Not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian
 - 21 or younger or still enrolled in high school on the date he/she signs the FAFSA
 - "At risk of homelessness"--when a student's housing may cease to be fixed, regular, and adequate, for example, a student who is being evicted and has been unable to find fixed, regular, and adequate housing



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Accompanied Homeless Students and the FAFSA

- Provide information on parent income and assets and their own income and assets
- Need parent's signature
- The EFC is based on family income and assets; as such, even though they fill out the FAFSA as dependent students, homeless students from low-income families will likely qualify for a beneficial aid package
- Example: *The EFC Formula, 2013-2014* explains that, under certain circumstances, students qualify for an automatic \$0 EFC, including students who received free school meals in 2011 or 2012, **and** whose parents' 2012 income is less than \$24,000
- <http://ifap.ed.gov/efcformulaguide/attachments/091312EFCFormulaGuide1314.pdf>

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Unaccompanied Homeless Students and the FAFSA

- **Do not** need to provide information on parental income and assets
- **Do not** need a parental signature
- **Do** provide information on their own income and assets
- Independent status is not equivalent to free tuition; however, the EFC is calculated proportional to what the student can provide based on his/her resources



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Classification as "INDEPENDENT"

- Independent if **ANY** of these are true:
 - Married
 - 24 years old
 - Veteran or on active duty
 - Graduate student
 - Has a legal dependent (child/other)
 - Orphan/Ward of the court/In a legal guardianship
 - Legally emancipated minor
 - In foster care at age 13 or older
 - Unaccompanied homeless youth
 - Independent by "professional judgment" or "dependency override" as determined by the Financial Aid Administrator (FAA)

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Determiners of Independent Status for UHY

- Local homeless education liaison; for students graduating from high school who were identified as an UHY while in high school
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) shelter director or designee; for students who have received services
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) shelter director or designee; for students who have received services
- Financial Aid Administrator (FAA); for any student, but particularly those who cannot get a determination from one of the other three authorized parties

PLACE ON AGENCY LETTERHEAD

Homeless Youth Verification
For the Purpose of State Fee Exemption



Re: Name of Student: _____
 DOB: xx-xx-xxxx _____
 SSN: xx-xx-xxxx _____
 Current Mailing Address of Student (if none, please list name, phone number, and mailing address of current contact): _____

I am providing this letter of verification as a (check one):
 A McKinney-Vento School District Liaison: _____
 A director or designee of a HUD-funded shelter: _____

This is to verify that this student has been living in a homeless situation. Should you have additional questions or need more information about this student, please contact me at the number listed below. This letter is to confirm that NAME OF STUDENT.



Please check below:
 was a homeless youth after July 1, XXXXX.
This means that, after July 1, XXXXX, NAME OF STUDENT was living in a homeless situation, as defined by Section 75 of the McKinney-Vento Act.

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Authorized Signature | Date |
| Print Name | Telephone Number |
| Title | |
| Agency | |

2012-2013 Application and Verification Guide

- Updated *Application and Verification Guide (AVG)* released in March 2012
 - Student can use the college's administrative address as his/her mailing address
 - Youth = 21 or younger or still enrolled in high school on the date he/she signs the FAFSA
 - Ages 22-23 = need a dependency override for independent status
 - Age 24 or older is automatic independent status


The Role of the FAA According to the AVG

- If a student does not have, and cannot get, a determination from a local liaison, RHYA provider, or HUD provider, a financial aid administrator must make a determination of unaccompanied homeless youth status
- If a student meets the definition of UHY, this is not an “exercise of professional judgment” or a “dependency override”; this is determining the independent student status of an unaccompanied homeless youth
- In instances where a student doesn’t meet the definition of UHY, but there are other extenuating circumstances, a dependency override or exercise of professional judgment may be appropriate

NASFAA 28 NCH

FAA Determination of Student Status

- Verification of “Yes” answers on the FAFSA is not required unless there is conflicting information
- Permits a FAA to determine a student’s status with a documented interview



NASFAA 29 NCH

FAA Determination of Student Status

- Encourages discretion and sensitivity when gathering information
 - Some information may be confidential (e.g., protected by doctor-patient privilege)
 - Child welfare and/or law enforcement reports are not necessary
- Recommends consulting with local liaisons, State Coordinators, NCH, school counselors, clergy, etc.
- Eligibility determinations may be appealed to the school or the U.S. Department of Education

NASFAA 30 NCH

Notes from the 2013-2014 PDF/Paper FAFSA

Notes for questions 55-57 (page 5)

Answer "Yes" if you received a determination at any time on or after July 1, 2012, that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or, for question 57, 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.

NAEHCY NCFE 34

Tools

- NAEHCY Template (*Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Documentation of Independent Student Status for the FAFSA*) available at http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/images/dl/uy_fafsa_verif_12.doc
- NCHE/NAEHCY FAA Tool (*Making Student Status Determinations for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Eligibility Tool for Financial Aid Administrators*) available at http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/faa_det_tool.pdf



NAEHCY NCFE 35

Questions?



NAEHCY NCFE 36

Florida Fee Exemption



Florida Exemption for Homeless Students

- Per section 1009.25, Florida Statutes, the following students **are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees**, including lab fees, at a school district that provides postsecondary career programs, Florida College System institution, or state university:
 - (f) A student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private shelter designed to provide temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

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Florida Exemption for Homeless Students

- To qualify, students need documentation from:
 - homeless shelter
 - school district homeless liaison
 - transitional living program
 - or runaway shelter
- Other documentation may be required depending on the college
- The definition of homeless status for the fee exemption differs from the definition used for purposes of the FAFSA.
 - Just because a student meets one does not guarantee the student will meet the other
- Since each college has autonomy over policies and practices, the verification process varies from college to college.
 - Verification may fall under financial aid office, registrar's office, or business office.

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Creating a Local Network:

**Highlights from
Santa Rosa County and
Polk County
School Districts**



**Santa Rosa County School District
Postsecondary Collaboration**

2010-2011
Established collaborative partnerships with:

- Northwest Florida State College
- Pensacola State College
- University of West Florida

2011-2012

- Facilitated College Day Field Trips for eligible juniors and seniors
- District Homeless Education Staff followed up with students complete FAFSA, college applications, scholarship application
- Staff, with the assistance of high school guidance counselor, monitored progress of students (college acceptance, scholarships awarded)
- Provided laptops, calculators, school supplies for college (Funded through Challenge Grant)

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**Santa Rosa County School District
Postsecondary Collaboration**

2012-2013
October

- Homeless education staff will meet annually with college representatives.
- School-based McKinney-Vento Liaison at each high school will meet individually with students face to face to see if they are interested in participating in College Day Trip.
- Student eligibility criteria (2.5 GPA and < 10 absences by Jan. 1) will be provided.
- Homeless education staff will conduct follow-up meeting with students at each high school.
- Students will complete "To Do" checklist at follow-up meeting with students.

January

- Students will be provided with an example of a budget of their budget including Pell Grant and expenses for tuition, housing, food, etc.
- 30 Juniors and Seniors will attend College Day trips.
- Students will turn in a completed questionnaire at the end of the trip.

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Santa Rosa County School District Postsecondary Collaboration


February-April

- > Education Opportunity Center (EOC) Staff will met with each senior at their high school to complete FAFSA, College Applications , Scholarship Applications.
- > High School Staff and Homeless Education Staff will monitor community service hours for Bright Futures.

May-August

- > College acceptance letters and scholarship awards will be monitored.
- > Students attending college will be provided with necessary supplies (laptops, calculators, backpacks).

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Agenda

- > Intro—Jeff Benjamin (Computer Lab Bldg. 21)
 - Navigating the website—Jeff Benjamin
 - Logged onto PSC Website
 - Split into groups
 - Student Center
 - Computer Lab
 - Students received PSC backpacks with goodies
 - Tour:
 - Registration Center
 - Financial Aid
 - Pell Grants
 - Scholarships
 - Student Center—students received PSC backpacks with goodies
 - Library & Classrooms
 - Computer Lab
 - Math Lab
 - Writing Lab
 - Student Commons—Lunch
 - Question and Answer Session (Bldg 5)

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Post-College Day Student Survey

What challenges prevent you from pursuing college after graduation?

- Transportation
- High school performance and finances
- Money
- Needing to work to help my family
- FAFSA
- Attendance issues and difficulties with school work
- Pitfalls in education at some points due to adverse living conditions and socio-family related problems
- I'm dumb
- Lazy
- I don't like school, but I do plan on going to college and doing something
- Distance to school I wish to attend

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Post-College Day Student Survey

Did you feel the trip(s) to the colleges were helpful?
Why? All the students said yes!

- I felt like going to college once I attended them.
- I learned a lot of helpful information.
- They showed me how I can get financial aid.
- They answered the questions I had.
- I was given helpful information on how I could get in touch with a counselor to attend the schools and I also became interested in attending college.
- I learned what I needed for college and the steps to take to apply for financial aid.
- I was able to decide which school was best for me.
- It made college seem "attainable."
- I learned things I had no idea about regarding college.
- It showed me what the schools had to offer and made me feel like college was possible.
- I had been considering UWF for a while but did not know all the facts.
- On the trip, I learned many great things from the admissions counselor and it lead me to apply to UWF.

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Post-College Day Student Survey

What information would you like to hear more about?

- Art and computer programs
- Cost and financial aid
- Cost per semester
- How you can get to go to college for real cheap
- My cost after grants and scholarships
- Scholarships
- What do I need to do to be accepted to a college
- I would like to hear more about the nursing programs from both schools
- Off campus living
- I would have liked to see the classrooms
- More information on career paths through your degrees, credit switching between UWF and FSU
- ROTC Air Force Program they have at UWF
- More about the music program at UWF

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Post-College Day Student Survey

What your favorite part of the trip?

- The tour of the campus
- The information
- Meeting new people
- The tour allowed me to get a feel for college life
- Food, I was hungry
- Seeing the historical buildings and the benefits of living on campus
- All of it
- The food was amazing
- Hearing about the various activities during the walking tour
- Seeing the dorms
- The encouragement of the tour guides
- Lunch because it showed you can eat well and stay on campus and the library because of all the resources
- Sitting down with the admissions counselor and hearing her speak of her college experience

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Post-College Day Student Survey

*Would you recommend this trip to your peers?
Why? All the students said yes!*

- It was a lot of fun
- The information is useful to know when you get ready to go to college
- It really opened my eyes and made me want to attend college.
- It was very educational
- Definitely. So they can have the opportunity to get information they need to attend a great community college
- They will learn a lot about college and what it has to offer
- It was very helpful
- Everyone should be serious about college
- I learned a lot about college that I would not have learned had I not attended the trips


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Why We Do What We Do!

December 18, 2012

Shanna,

I have been meaning to come pay you a visit. I wanted to say THANK YOU so much for all you have done to help me out. I am currently at PSC and will be transferring to UWF. I am getting a degree in psychology! I really enjoy going to school, and I have used the laptop you helped me get SO much. I'd be lost without it.



Anyways, I really appreciate your help, and I hope that you have a wonderful Christmas!

Grateful Student

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The Journey is not yet complete!

Now that students are enrolled, how do we ensure that they are successful?

- Establish a safe, single point of contact at each college/university
- Identify peer and support networks
- Streamline process to include: Academic Advising, Mental Health, Admissions, Financial Aid Student Services, Mentoring Retention, Housing, Student Life, Self-advocacy
- **TRIO - Student Support Services (SSS)**

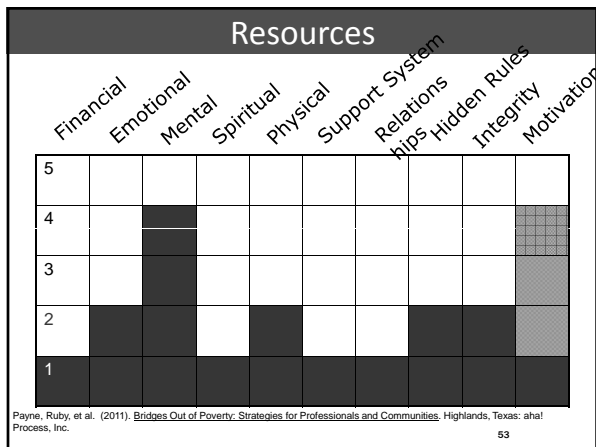
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Be Aware of the Challenges of Poverty

“Poverty is the extent to which an individual does without resources.”

Payne, Ruby, et al. (2011). *Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities*. Highlands, Texas: aha! Process, Inc.

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Recommendations

College Admissions and Financial Aid Offices:

- Reach out to your area school district McKinney-Vento Liaison
- Conduct annual College Day Visits
- Identify a McKinney-Vento Liaison in the Financial Aid/Admissions Office
- Meet annually with K-12 Homeless Education staff to review McKinney-Vento requirements for College Access and Financial Aid
- Plan January College Day visits, based on student survey results
- Incorporate formerly or current homeless youth who are attending college into the College Day visits
- Communicate regularly with school district to document student outcomes
- Provide professional development in Bridges Out of Poverty <http://www.ahaprocess.com/>

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Questions?



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Polk County

- Polk State College (PSC) Workshop
 - Breakfast and lunch provided
 - Transportation provided by Hearth (\$883)
 - Tour of campus
 - Met with important individuals in Admissions and Financial Aid
 - Completed PSC application and began financial aid process

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Polk County

- *"I never knew Polk State had so much to offer."*
- *"I'm glad I came to the workshop-I learned a lot about college that I didn't know before."*
- *"I had no clue how college was going to be or what to expect. The workshop really helped me to understand. Thank you."*
- *"I was feeling really anxious about applying to and attending college. This workshop made feel a whole lot better."*
- *"I haven't applied for a college yet, so this really helped me to understand how."*

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Polk County

- Polk State College: My Brother's Keeper Program:
 - Started as a dissertation project by a local professor two years ago to assist homeless college students
 - A college version of the Hearth Project
 - Provides access to computers, supplies, food, hygiene items, referrals, resume assistance, etc.

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Polk County

- Red Cross was awarded a grant to provide lifeguard training for several high school youth.
 - Hearth was offered 12 slots for homeless youth
 - Course cost is \$700 each for the 25 ½ hour training
 - Certificate is good for two years
 - Will increase employment opportunities

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Polk County


- Additional collaborations:
 - FDLRS Sunshine Committee: Adopt-A-Senior Project
 - Director of Operations at local restaurant chain offered employment opportunities and job interview coaching to all homeless seniors
 - Possible fire-fighting academy scholarship for one senior

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Polk County

- Additional collaborations, continued:
 - Vision and dental assistance provided through Travis Career Center
 - High school clubs adopting a homeless high school student from a different high school to provide extra support and encouragement

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RAISE OF HANDS

What is your most valuable "take-home" point from today's session?

1. Information on the FAFSA
2. Information on fee waivers for ACT/SAT requirements
3. Information on Florida fee exemptions for homeless individuals
4. Information about local networking
5. All of the above

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Additional Resources

- Additional resources are available on the NCHE handouts webpage at <http://www.serve.org/nche/web/college.php>
- State Coordinator for Homeless Education contact information may be accessed at http://www.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php
- Learn more about TRIO at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html>
- Learn more about GEAR UP at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html>

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Evaluations

Special thanks to
Christina Dukes, NCHE, and
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for use of slides from their
*Paving the Way to College for Students
Experiencing Homelessness*
presentation

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Contact Information

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FDOE Homeless Education Program
<http://www.fldoe.org/bsa/title1/titlex.asp>

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