CREATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR SUPPORTING HOMELESS COLLEGE STUDENTS IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Thursday, October 24, 2019 \ 1:00-2:15 PM ET
HAVE A QUESTION?
This webinar is for you. Enter your questions in the questions pane and click ‘Send’.

RECORDING & HANDOUTS
An archive of this webinar and all materials will be posted here.

If you’ve signed up for this webinar, you will receive a link to the recording in an email after the webinar is over.
HELLO!

I am Jillian Sitjar
Program Manager, Higher Education
jillian@schoolhouseconnection.org
SchoolHouse Connection works to **overcome homelessness through education**. We provide strategic advocacy and technical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

- **Website**
- Federal and state policy advocacy
- Q&A from our inbox
- Webinars and implementation tools
- Youth leadership and scholarships
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. **Hear from three professionals** at UMass Boston who serve as an emergency committee to create support for students experiencing homelessness;

2. Learn about the **challenges homeless and housing insecure students face** living in an urban city and the creative solutions that UMass Boston professionals are using to meet housing needs, such as the Nesterly app; and

3. **Identify how a basic needs office/hub** can specifically reach and support students experiencing homelessness.
WHY HIGHER EDUCATION

Jobs
Over 95% of jobs created since 2010 have gone to college-educated workers.

Beyond High School
By 2020, 65% of all jobs will require education beyond high school.

Afford Housing
Postsecondary education is necessary for a job that pays enough to afford housing and avoid homelessness.

Cost
The cost of attending college has skyrocketed over the last several decades with federal pell grants not keeping pace.

Health & Well-Being
High school and college graduation are linked to other important indicators of health and well-being.
14% university students
18% community college students

14% of four-year students and 18% of two-year college students respondents replied they experienced homelessness within the last year (Hope Center)
University of Massachusetts- Boston

Office of Urban And Off-Campus Student Support Services (U-ACCESS)

Off-Campus Living

Dean of Students Office
General Introductions

Valerie Lamour, U-ACCESS Program Coordinator

Patrick Joseph Jr., Off Campus Living Program Coordinator

Caitlin Farr, Case Manager
UMass Boston

- **16,164** Students in Fall 2019
- Located in Boston’s Dorchester neighborhood on Columbia Point Peninsula.
- We are 1 of 35 colleges and universities in the Boston area and 1 of 30 public schools in the state, but the only 4 year public university in Boston.
- We opened our first Residence Halls in Fall 2018. Two buildings that are a Public/Private partnership.


Our Students

- 59% of undergraduates are first-generation college students, many of immigrant parents.
- 42% of freshmen were age 20 or older; 73% of seniors were age 24 or older.
- 51% of freshmen and 36% of seniors indicated they were students of color (African American, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, Other, or multi-racial).

- 51% of freshmen and 33% of seniors speak a language other than English at home or with family.
- 14% of freshmen and 15% of seniors were foreign nationals.
- 32% of freshmen and 55% of seniors reported working more than 20 hours a week off campus.

https://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/career_services/employers/about_our_students
Housing in Boston

Average Cost of Rental Housing (spaces that include 2-3 bedrooms)*
- Boston (Dorchester) $2,800-$3,000
- South of Boston (Quincy) $2,000-$2,300
- North of Boston (Malden) $2,000-$2,300

Summary: high cost, low availability. Many adults with single income cannot afford to buy and often need to rent with multiple roommates.

Other challenges: Limited number of studio/1 bedrooms, accessibility issues, lack of apartment complexes, realtor fees, roommates, & transportation (prices, reliability, etc.).

*these prices are based on the Off-Campus Living housing website (offcampushousing.umb.edu). Averages may vary on other sites.
Office of Urban and Off-Campus Support Services (U-ACCESS)

**Vision:** U-Access students are empowered to effectively engage in the fight against the systems of poverty, pursue economic security, and successfully achieve their academic goals at UMass Boston.

**Mission:** U-Access helps UMass Boston students meet their basic needs so they can achieve academic success. This office also provides leadership development and inspires student agency in mitigating systemic poverty.
Office of Urban and Off-Campus Support Services (U-ACCESS)

**CASE MANAGEMENT**
Comprehensive benefits screening with trained Case Manager

**FOOD PANTRY**
Provides 3 full days of emergency food, including produce and other perishable items

**MEAL AND SNACK PROGRAMS**
One snack per client per day; Free pizza Tue, Wed, Thu at noon

**SNAP APPLICATION ASSISTANCE**
Complete or receive help for a SNAP application with a staff member or CM
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMERGENCY SUPPLIES</strong></td>
<td>Pick up toiletries or school supplies once a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOCKER OR LAPTOP RENTALS</strong></td>
<td>Rent from a limited number of on-campus lockers or laptops for a semester/academic year</td>
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</table>
| **HOUSING ASSISTANCE**        | *Emergency and permanent*  
Work with a staff member or CM to find stable living conditions |
| **FINANCIAL COUNSELING**      | Receive one-on-one financial advice from qualified staff members or interns |
Office of Urban and Off-Campus Support Services (U-ACCESS)

LEGAL CONSULTATIONS
Receive free legal advice from actual lawyers at Justice Bridge

YEAR-ROUND TAX PREPARATION*
Receive free tax preparation through IRS trained volunteers
*open to non-clients as well

RESOURCE REFERRALS
Work with staff or CM to receive personalized referrals to help meet needs or answer specific questions
*Office of the Dean of Students
*UHS Counseling Center
Alternative Housing Options

There are many cases where students are not always able to afford signing a lease for a standard apartment available for 12 months.

In scenarios like this, we usually will offer the following as suggestions:

- Having multiple roommates in some of the managed properties nearby
- Subletting current apartment if it is too expensive
- Nesterly
- Homestays in the area
Working as a Team: The Off-Campus Living, U-ACCESS, CARE Intersection

Case management in the Dean of Students Office at UMB

Transitioning from CARE Team to resource specific meetings

CASE STUDY--- Helping Jessica
Things we encourage students to do

- Splitting rent with roommates
- Becoming an Residential Assistant
- Commuting from Home living a little further outside of the city, but close enough to MBTA train stations or any other form of public transportation
Limitations/Challenges

- Inevitably must have roommates
- Limited emergency housing options
- Public/Private partnership
- Boston is expensive!
- No safety net
- Putting school before basic needs
- “The UMB Bounce”
- Financial literacy
Future Solutions

Future UMB Emergency Housing Strategies

- Hotel Voucher Program
- Renting a room in the UMB residence hall
- Renting a room in nearby apartment complex
- Ongoing conversations about renovating current campus property to include emergency housing

K House Scholars Program

- Current pilot of housing partnership with Department of Higher Education, Boston Metro Housing, JRI case management organization and 3 other local colleges
- K House provides permanent housing to full-time 11 students experiencing homelessness
Thank You!
Find us at the Exhibit Tables!

See you at NAEHCY’s 31st Annual Conference!

November 2-5 \ Washington, DC

5 Sessions:
● What’s Hot on the Hill(s): Federal and State Policy Advocacy
● Education Leads Home: A National Campaign on Student Homelessness
● Lessons of College Liaisons: Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness
● NC's Focus on Access to Quality Child Care for Children Experiencing Homelessness
● Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles
Youth Leadership and Scholarship - Application Open

Scholarship open to applicants:
- Born on or after November 11, 1999
- Entering college for the first time in the 2020-21 school year
- Who have experienced homelessness within the last 6 years

DC Summit
Leaders in policy, advocacy, and mentorship

https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/youth-leadership/scholarship-program/
THE FAFSA!

SchoolHouse Connection

4 Things You Can Do To Help Homeless and Foster Youth

Resources

- Tip Sheets for Helping Homeless Youth Succeed in College
  - Including one on housing
- Higher Education Webinars
- The Hope Center Report - College and University Basic Needs Insecurity
Questions
Contact Information

Jillian Sitjar - Jillian@schoolhouseconnection.org

Caitlin Farr - Caitlin.farr@umb.edu

Patrick Joseph - Patrick.joseph@umb.edu

Valerie Lamour - Valerie.lamour@umb.edu