



HOUSING SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS AND FOSTER YOUTH: IMPLEMENTING AB 1228

California has enacted a number of laws to support college students experiencing homelessness, including through housing. In 2009, state law (AB 1393) provided priority access to on-campus housing for former foster youth. In 2015, homeless youth were added to the statute, through the enactment of [AB 1228](#). This brief examines some of the most common challenges in implementing AB 1228 and provides tips for addressing them. It was informed by interviews with eight California State University (CSU), three University of California (UC) institutions, and two California Community Colleges (CCC).

Under [AB 1228](#):

1. UC campuses (subject to a resolution by the Regents of the University of California) and CSU campuses, that maintain student housing facilities, must give priority access to housing to current and former homeless and foster youth and to provide housing, if open during academic breaks, at no additional cost.
2. California Community Colleges (CCC) that maintain student housing facilities are requested to give priority for housing to current and former homeless youth and foster youth and to provide housing, if open during academic breaks, at no additional cost.
3. In addition, CCC, CSU, and UCs are requested to develop a plan to ensure that current and former homeless youth and foster youth can access housing resources as needed during and between academic terms, at no additional cost.

Implementation Challenges and Tips for Addressing Them

1. Lack of Awareness

California institutions have been required (or for CCC, requested) to provide priority access to on-campus housing for former foster youth since 2009. Almost all CSUs and UCs and many CCs have campus support programs designated for former and current foster youth, such as the Guardian Scholars Program or NextUp. The existence of these programs has facilitated the implementation of this requirement. However, many institutions appear to be unaware of the changes to the law, which now includes former and current homeless youth, who share very similar experiences to foster youth.

In our research, homeless and foster higher education liaisons were often the individuals who first become aware of AB 1228, learning about it from webinars, conferences, or mailing lists. Other institutions learned about the policy change through their Legal Departments.

Tip #1: Ensure that AB 1228 is fully implemented to offer housing support for both former and current homeless and foster youth.



Tip #2: Creating campus homeless and foster youth task forces are a great way to ensure that various departments stay up-to-date on new policies, trainings, and implementation tools. Task forces should include members from key campus partners, such as housing, legal, homeless and foster higher education liaisons, Educational Opportunity Programs (EOP)/Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOP, financial aid, the Dean of Students or Vice President of Student Affairs, case management staff, and others who are in a position to support homeless and foster youth.

Example: UC Davis created a [Basic Needs Advisory Board](#). The board addresses student concerns about food security, mental health, and availability of affordable housing. Members of the board are responsible for keeping up-to-date on policies, ensuring that the institution is in compliance, and sharing best practices. The board consists of key partners, including Student Housing and Dining Services, Financial Aid, Counseling, and students themselves.

Tip #3: Most colleges follow a strategic plan that outlines action to be taken on the institution's top priorities. These plans may have been created prior to the enactment of AB 1228, or before the basic needs initiatives. Including homeless and foster youth, and specifically implementation of AB 1228, in an institution's strategic plan can help raise awareness and ensure action. Strategic planning should include a basic needs assessment, and an opportunity to hear from students themselves about their needs.

Example: The College of the Redwoods GROVE (Growth Resource Outreach Valued and Empower) Program created a five-year plan to address food and housing insecurity on their campus that has been included in the College's annual plan and President's goals. This shows College of the Redwoods' institutional commitment to supporting students experiencing homelessness. For more information, see SchoolHouse Connection's archived webinar [here](#).

2. Identification of Students Experiencing Homelessness

Students experiencing homelessness or from foster care must be identified if they are to benefit from housing support. Some institutions have robust [Guardian Scholars Programs like at San Diego State](#) that are able to more readily identify youth from foster care. However, it is often more challenging for institutions to identify youth experiencing homelessness. Many institutions struggle to identify this invisible population, and rely solely on student self-disclosure or referrals from the campus community.

Tip: Institutions can create multiple identification strategies for homeless and foster youth. In addition to referrals from campus offices and community agencies, they can partner with faculty to include a note about homeless and foster support in their syllabus and resources available to support them. To learn more ways that colleges are identifying youth experiencing homelessness, see SchoolHouse Connection's [Identification Tip Sheet](#).

Example: Skyline College uses information obtained from the systemwide application platform, [CCCApply](#), to identify students experiencing homelessness. The homeless higher education liaison



and financial aid administrator send an introductory email offering support to all students who disclose that they are homeless.

3. Limited Housing on Campus

Campuses might not have enough physical space to house all students who want to live on campus, including foster and homeless students, who have nowhere else to go. Campuses may have live-on requirements for first-year students, but after that first year, students are expected to find off-campus housing. AB 1228's requirement to give priority housing to current and former foster and homeless youth is a critical provision to ensure access to available housing.

Tip: Institutions can implement AB 1228's requirement by providing a roster of homeless and foster students to the Registrar and Housing office.

Example: Cal State LA provides housing priority to homeless and foster students. Foster youth are identified and vetted by [EOP](#) and homeless youth are identified by the [Dean of Students Office](#). This roster is sent to the housing department, and the recipients are given priority housing.

4. Housing During Academic Breaks

Many campuses close their residence halls during winter or summer break. Some institutions might allow students to stay in their rooms by charging a fee or by requiring students to take classes during summer. Under AB 1228, CSUs and UCs are required to make any housing that is open during academic breaks available at no charge. The summer term is not considered an academic break. The California Homeless Youth Project's report, [Measuring Our Success: Campus Supports for College Students Experiencing Food & Housing Insecurity](#), examines resources available to students experiencing homelessness at California's public colleges and universities. The report found that 100% of the UCs, 65% of the CSUs, and 6% of the CCCs offer the possibility of year-round student housing, but not all students are eligible to use this housing.

Tip #1: Some institutions keep their residence halls open all year, or at least one building. Homeless and foster youth should be intentionally placed in the halls that remain open all year. During the academic break, institutions can also offer free temporary housing either on campus or through a local agency. If campuses charge students to stay on campus during breaks, homeless and foster youth should have this fee waived.

Example: [CSU Bakersfield](#) offers an annual rate for housing. The annual rate includes a meal plan and semester breaks. Across the country, institutions like [West Chester University](#) in Pennsylvania, are providing students experiencing homelessness access to rooms in the residence halls and meals at no additional cost from the Office of Residence Life and Housing Services. [Georgetown University](#)



partners with the local hotel and provides free housing and access to food and laundry services for students in need.

Tip #2: Partner with local community agencies that can assist with housing or additional costs. In the [2019-20 State Budget](#), \$19 million was allocated annually to California's three public post-secondary institutions to be used to support Rapid Rehousing efforts that assist homeless and housing insecure college students. Campuses must use this funding to establish partnerships with organizations that have a tradition of helping populations experiencing homelessness to provide wrap-around services and rental subsidies for students.

Example: [Jovenes Inc.](#) utilizes Peer Navigators with local colleges, specifically East LA College, Rio Hondo College, Cerritos College, and LA Trade Tech, to provide outreach to homeless students and assess them for their housing needs. The [Bill Wilson Center](#) is partnering with San Jose State University, West Valley-Mission Community College District, and Santa Clara County stakeholders with a goal to house 100 college students experiencing homelessness in 100 days.

5. Other Housing Challenges

Other housing challenges may exist for homeless and foster students. [John Burton Advocates for Youth released a report in 2017](#) that highlights some of these additional challenges. For example, while about [26% of undergraduates](#) are parenting students, there may be limited housing options for students with children and/or partners. Other research demonstrates that pregnancy and parenthood are top risk factors for young adult homelessness. Institutions should ensure that housing options for homeless and foster students are inclusive of those who are pregnant or parenting.

Example: UC Santa Cruz offers [Family Student Housing](#) options for parenting students. [The Isabel Patterson Child Development Center at CSU Long Beach](#) serves as a family support service for the entire campus community, including faculty and staff, but prioritizes students first. For more information about parenting students, see SchoolHouse Connection's tip sheet [here](#).

Another challenge documented by John Burton Advocates for Youth is that the deadline for enrollment and housing deposits is often before financial aid is awarded. Homeless and foster youth might not have the financial resources to pay for these costs, which range from hundreds to thousands of dollars. It is important for institutions to adopt policies and practices to remove this barrier.

Example: Some institutions like [Cal State Channel Islands](#), have adopted a deposit fee referral policy that is applicable for homeless and foster students. This policy prevents students from missing payment deadlines that can impact enrollment or priority housing.

If your institution is implementing AB 1228, or otherwise finding solutions to housing for college students experiencing homelessness that you'd like to share, please contact Jillian Sitjar at jillian@schoolhouseconnection.org.

www.schoolhouseconnection.org/housing-support-for-homeless-and-foster-youth-implementing-ab-1228



Resources:

- [Tip Sheets for Helping Homeless Youth Succeed in College](#)
- [5 Guides to Support Low-Income and Homeless Youth in California](#)
- [Tips for California Higher Education Liaisons](#)
- [Measuring Our Success: Campus Supports for College Students Experiencing Food & Housing Insecurity](#)
- [Stepping Up For Foster Youth: A Policy Playbook for California's Four-Year Universities](#)