Webinar

In partnership with Stand Up for Kids Orange County

COLLEGE, COVID-19, AND HOMELESSNESS: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

>> Wednesday, Sept. 30 | 1 PM Eastern
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 practical 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 scholarship
PARTICIPANTS FROM THIS WEBINAR WILL:

1. **Hear** from the Stand Up for Kids Orange County College Program to learn how they’re able to help youth in their community through a three-tiered support system: basic needs, relationship building, and housing.

2. **Identify** the impact and importance of relationship building and mentorship for youth experiencing homelessness.

3. **Understand** how to build partnerships between colleges and community partners.
DEFINITIONS

HOMELESS/HOMELESSNESS:

An individual who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth - A youth under 24 who is considered homeless from the definition above and is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
16% university students
17% community college students

16% of four-year students and 17% of two-year college students respondents replied they experienced homelessness within the last year (Hope Center)
38K+ students told us that...

- Nearly 3 in 5 were experiencing basic needs insecurity.
- Food insecurity affected 44% at two-year institutions and 38% at four-year institutions.
- 15% at four-year institutions and 11% at two-year institutions were experiencing homelessness due to the pandemic.

The black/white gap in basic needs insecurity was 19 percentage points.

[Source] #RealCollege During the Pandemic | The Hope Center
Impact of COVID-19

Low Enrollment
Low FAFSA Numbers
Highlight the needs of many college students
WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT COLLEGE CAMPUSES

- Day by day changes
- Challenges with remote learning
  - Digital divide with access to laptops, hotspots, WiFi, printers, etc.
- Limited housing resources
- Social/student support
- Health resources, especially teletherapy
- Relying more on faculty/academic advisors
- FAFSA challenges
WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN SCHOOL?

Youth with lived experience said:

Connection to positive, supportive adults

Stability - difficult to meet educational needs when you can't meet basic needs

Help navigating financial aid

Knowledge of existing campus support programs and resources (social media, word of mouth, visibility: posters, flyers)
Who We Are...

Our mission is to end the cycle of youth homelessness for those aged 12-24.

• National Organization of 18 Chapters across the country. Founded in San Diego in 1990.
• Orange County Chapter founded in 2003.
• By identifying and engaging homeless and at-risk youth, we connect them with life-changing programs and resources.
• Through goal setting and accountability and healthy trusting relationships we help youth create their own paths toward self-sufficiency.
What we do...

**At-risk youth**  
(12 – 18 yrs)

- Usually at home, but housing is precarious
- Center- and school-based support
- Mentoring, tutoring, basic needs assistance (food, clothing, hygiene items)
- Goal-setting (STEM programs, Entrepreneurship Program)
- (COVID – family food & rental assistance, e-mentoring)

**Young Adults**  
(18 – 24 yrs)

- Street Outreach, Drop-in Centers
- College Student Services staff
- Basic needs, plus ID services, medical & behavioral health
- Mentoring, goal-setting, job-hunting resources
- Housing resources (Rapid Re-Housing, room rentals, sober living facilities)
Our Impact

What we provided in 2019

- 400 Total Youth Served
- 1,634 Nights of Shelter
- 3,427 Meals Provided
- 4,533 Hours of Mentoring
- 9,997 Instances of Support
College Students in Orange County, CA

• Nine community colleges, two 4-year public universities, 8 private degree-granting institutions
• Overall 200,000 college and university students
• 2017 studies – annual homelessness was 13% for CCs, 11% for Cal States, 5% for UCs.

**ESTIMATED ANNUAL COUNT OF 14,000 STUDENTS WITHOUT SAFE AND STABLE HOUSING**

(OR ABOUT 500 STUDENTS EACH NIGHT...)
California Legislation addressing College Homelessness

• AB 1228 (2015) – Priority given for campus housing, enrollment, campuses to have Single Point of Contact

• AB 1840 (2018) – Hiring preference for identified students

• Fee waivers at community colleges, on-campus cafeterias accept food stamps (CalFresh), showers available for student use

• On most campuses now - Food pantries, assistance with CalFresh (food stamps) enrollment
The Reality....

2019....
• Food pantry may be one bookcase
• Single Point of Contact may be part-time, or added role for existing staff member
• Little resources, as education is primary mission

COVID-era
• Campuses closed – reduced or no access to food pantry
• Campus infrastructure focused on course instruction, safety issues
• Support network shut down, isolation increased
OC Colleges Project – Our three supports

1. Basic Needs – food, clothing, transportation, etc.

2. Connections – College Navigators, campus staff

3. Housing Options – Apartment Support, Rapid ReHousing, Host Homes
College Navigators

- Volunteers with information on campus resources, FAFSA (Independent Student Status), transfer & admissions processes
- Provide navigation support through complex processes
- Refer to off-campus and on-campus supports
- Coordinate with mentors on student needs
Making Campus Connections

- Seek out Student Services leaders
- “Prove yourself” to them
- Listen to their needs – which supports do they need?
- Be persistent – you are NOT their priority
- Be respectful of their time
COVID-19 challenges

• Internet connectivity, free wifi
• Social Isolation
• Lack of supportive services (academic support/tutoring, ‘safe’ spaces, drop-in support)
• Less ‘free’ housing support (couch surfing, parking lots)
Referral Options for Students

• Self-referral – email notice, referral cards in SSI office, FRESH Basic Needs Hub
• MOU form (confirms student status, age, homeless or at-risk)
Rapid ReHousing

• Federal (HUD) program, up to six months housing support as TRANSITION TO PERMANENT HOUSING.

• Graduated rental assistance (100% for 2 mos, down to 0% at program end).

• Required case management (mentoring), life skills training, individualized assistance.
Additional Housing Options

• Host Homes program – spare bedroom with local family

• Apartment support – up to six months’ support for rent, mentoring, basic supplies as needed

• Sober Living Facilities – resolve substance use issues as priority
Some Success Stories

• First-time students
• Transfer issues
• Housing challenges
Resources

- Youth Homelessness in Higher Education Overview
- Tip Sheets for Helping Homeless Youth Succeed in College
- Higher Education Webinars
- Youth Connections Resources
- Back to College and Training 2020: An Editable Toolkit for Assisting Youth with Experience in Foster Care or Homelessness
- Financial Aid Page - FAFSA is out tomorrow!
- Housing Support for Homeless and Foster Youth: Implementing AB 1228
- Tips for Homeless Higher Education Liaisons | California
- 5 Guides to Help Homeless College Students in California
Questions
Contact info

Jillian Sitjar, Higher Education Program Manager
jillian@schoolhouseconnection.org

Dr. Stephanie Schneider, Project Director OC Colleges Project -
StephanieS@standupforkids.org
Twitter: @OCCollegesProj
Instagram: occcollegesproject