FAFSA 101 for Liaisons & Providers

Thursday, October 22, 2020 | 1:00 – 2:00PM ET

Website: www.schoolhouseconnection.org
Facebook: SchoolHouse Connection
Twitter: @SchoolHouseConn
Instagram: @SchoolHouseConnection
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

HELLO!

I am Jordyn Roark
Director of Leadership and Scholarships
jordyn@schoolhouseconnection.org
About SchoolHouse Connection

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 scholarships
Overview

You will:

1. Learn about the process of applying for the FAFSA as an unaccompanied homeless youth
2. Learn the importance of relationship building between liaisons and community partners to prepare students for subsequent years.
3. Have the opportunity to ask questions to presenters about applying for financial aid.
FAFSA

A form you fill out to receive financial aid from the government to help pay for college.

- The FAFSA is free
- The FAFSA is available on October 1st
- The FAFSA covers the period from July 1st - June 30th
- You must fill out the FAFSA every year you’re applying for college
At any time on or after July 1, 2020, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

At any time on or after July 1, 2020, did the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

At any time on or after July 1, 2020, did the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?
For Accompanied Homeless Youth

If you are experiencing homelessness with your family, you will need to fill out the FAFSA with your parental family income. Most likely, your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) will be 0, meaning you will receive the most amount of aid awarded to you. You do not need to provide a determination letter to prove you’re experiencing homelessness.

For Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

If you are an unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY), you do not need to include your parental income or signature on the FAFSA. Instead you will need a UHY determination letter from an authorized entity to mark you as an independent student.

**Authorized Entities:**
- McKinney-Vento Liaison
- HUD/RHYA Shelter Provider
- Financial Aid Administrator
Authorized Entities

High School Liaison

If you were identified as homeless in high school by a McKinney-Vento liaison or another high school staff member who knew about your homelessness, you might have received a determination letter in high school. Your liaison can write a letter for you each year of college if you continue to meet the definition of an unaccompanied homeless youth, and if the liaison knows enough about your situation to make a determination.

With HUD/RHYA Shelter

- If you stayed at a shelter, you may be able to request a letter from this shelter. Shelters that are HUD-funded or a youth or transitional program are authorized to write a determination letter.

- If the shelter was not HUD or RHYA funded, you may ask the shelter to write a letter as a supporting document that can be used for your interview with the financial aid administrator.
If you do not have, and cannot obtain, a determination letter from the people above, your financial aid administrator must make a determination based on the definitions of unaccompanied and homeless, or unaccompanied, self-supporting, and at risk of homelessness. Financial aid administrators can make a determination based on a documented interview with you. The goal of this conversation is to determine if you meet these definitions, not to determine or assess the reasons why you are experiencing homelessness.
Meet our Panelists

Debra Albo-Steiger

- I am the District Homeless Liaison of the Homeless Education Program which we call Project UP-START.
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools is the fourth largest school district in the nation.
- We served about 9,500 students during the 2019-2020 school year with just over 400 who were identified as UHY.

Devin Floyd

- I am the Director of Community Partnerships/Care Coordinator at Educate Tomorrow
- Educate Tomorrow provides holistic support services to families and youth who are currently in or aged out of foster care and/or are experiencing housing instability. We connect our families to internal and community resources to eliminate barriers hindering academic, social and economic growth.
- In 2013 Educate Tomorrow partnered with Miami Dade College and their Single Stop program to start a full time program dedicated to serving former foster, adopted and homeless students on campus, linking them to support both on campus and in the community.
If You Need Extra Help

We recognize that the **FAFSA is complicated** and both you and your students might come across some issues.

If your students have issues completing the FAFSA and obtaining documentation, please reach out to us at [info@schoolhouseconnection.org](mailto:info@schoolhouseconnection.org) for advocacy assistance.

We encourage you to proactively reach out to your students to assist them in getting their determination letters. This provides time to resolve potential issues without delaying their aid.

Don’t give up! This process can be tiresome, but stay positive and resilient. Stay connected with a supportive network and email us if we can provide assistance.
Questions
Resources

- FAFSA Application
- Financial Aid Page
  - Financial Aid for Youth Who Are Homeless and On Their Own
  - FAFSA Analysis Report
  - Sample Form Letter
  - Homeless Definition
- Five Strategies to Help Homeless Youth Transition to College During COVID-19
“Don’t Let Homelessness Stop Your Education”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-cPu05d2Fz8
Contact Information

Jillian Sitjar - jillian@schoolhouseconnection.org
Jordyn Roark - jordyn@schoolhouseconnection.org
Debra Albo-Steiger - debalbo@dadeschools.net
Devin Floyd - devin@educatetomorrow.org