

## STATE LAWS THAT SUPPORT COLLEGE STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



State legislatures have been actively supporting college students experiencing homelessness over the past few years. State legislation can provide a variety of critical supports, including homeless liaisons on college campuses, housing priority and/or housing support programs, enrollment, tuition and/or fee waivers, and in-state tuition. Below is a summary of existing state laws, including legislation SchoolHouse Connection

helped pass with partners in Nevada and Tennessee in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

### **Homeless Liaisons on College Campuses**

➤ **California [AB 801](#) (2016) (Ca. Educ. Code §67003.5)**

Each post-secondary educational institution must designate a staff member to serve as the Homeless and Foster Student Liaison, responsible for informing students about financial aid and other assistance available to them and assisting them to apply for and receive federal and state financial aid and available services.

➤ **Louisiana [HB 906](#) (2016) (La. Rev. Stat. §§17:3399.21 – 22)**

Each public post-secondary education institution in the state must designate a Homeless and Foster Student Liaison within its financial aid office. The liaison is responsible for applying federal financial aid rules related to youth experiencing homelessness (or who have experienced homelessness at any time over the six years prior to enrollment), and youth who were in foster care for at least six months between ages 16 and 18.

➤ **Maine [LD 866](#) (2020) (20-A MRSA §10014)**

Each public state post-secondary educational institution may designate a Homeless Student Liaison, who must have expertise in the financial aid eligibility of homeless students and in identifying services for homeless students, and who shall assist homeless students in applying for federal and state financial aid and available services.

➤ **Tennessee [HB 1000](#) / [SB 763](#) (2019) (anticipated Tenn. Code Ann. §49-7-172)**

Each post-secondary institution in the state must designate a Homeless Student Liaison, who will assist students experiencing homelessness in applying for and receiving financial aid and available services.

➤ **Nevada [AB 461](#) (2019) (sections to be added to Nev. Rev. Stat. Chapter 396)**

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<sup>1</sup> Please contact Patricia Julianelle at [patricia@schoolhouseconnection.org](mailto:patricia@schoolhouseconnection.org) to share information about other state laws assisting college students experiencing homelessness, or to request SchoolHouse Connection's help on state law advocacy in your state.

A Liaison for Post-Secondary Education for Homeless Pupils is created in the Nevada System of Higher Education. The Liaison must be knowledgeable about students experiencing homelessness. If funds are available, the Liaison may hire staff, and shall: conduct an annual analysis of post-secondary students experiencing homelessness; develop a database to track their graduation and retention; develop a model for college and career readiness for students experiencing homelessness; collaborate with high schools; establish connections with financial aid, student support, and campus housing offices; refer students to mentoring programs; increase awareness among instructors and other staff; maintain a resource database and provide it to financial aid and student support offices; coordinate with food and clothing banks or establish them on campuses; and establish a plan for housing students experiencing homelessness when campus housing is not available.

## **Housing Priority**

### ➤ **California [AB 1228](#) (2015) (Ca. Educ. Code §§76010, 90001.5, 92660)**

University of California and California State University campuses that maintain student housing facilities *must*, and community college campuses that maintain student housing facilities *are requested to*:

- Give priority for housing to current and former homeless youth and foster youth;
- Give first priority for housing open during school breaks or year-round to current and former homeless youth and foster youth; and
- Provide housing to current and former homeless youth and foster youth during academic breaks at no extra cost.

In addition, California State University, University of California, and community college campuses 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.

### ➤ **Louisiana [HB 906](#) (2016) (La. Rev. Stat. §17:3399.24)**

A public post-secondary education institution that offers student housing may develop a plan to provide access to housing resources during and between academic terms for current and former homeless and youth. The plan also may give them priority for housing placement and offer placement in housing facilities that remain open during the most days a year.

### ➤ **Maine [LD 866](#) (2020) (20-A MRSA §10014)**

Each public state post-secondary educational institution must give priority for available housing resources to homeless students who are enrolled full-time, including but not limited to priority for housing facilities that remain open during academic breaks, and develop individual housing plans for such students.

### ➤ **Tennessee [HB 1000](#) / [SB 763](#) (2019) (anticipated Tenn. Code Ann. §49-7-172)**

Each post-secondary institution in the state that offers housing resources must develop a plan to provide students experiencing homelessness access to housing resources during and between academic terms. The plan must include granting students experiencing homelessness first priority in

housing placement and placing those students in housing that remains open the most days of the year.

### **Priority Enrollment**

➤ **California [AB 801](#) (2016) (Ca. Educ. Code §66025.9)**

The University of California, California State University, and each community college that offers priority class enrollment shall grant priority enrollment to current and former homeless youth and foster youth.

### **Financial Aid**

➤ **California [AB 2416](#) (2020) (Ca. Educ. Code §§69432.7(m); 69519(h)(6); 69731(d); 70032(k); 88931(b)(2); 78220(e)(3)(A))**

Public and private colleges and universities must consider homelessness as an extenuating circumstance for students who are otherwise unable to meet the requirements for “satisfactory academic progress” needed to maintain state-authorized student financial aid programs.

### **Tuition, Grants, and/or Fee Waivers**

➤ **California [AB 801](#) (2016) (Ca. Educ. Code §76300)**

Homeless students are exempt from paying community college student fees.

➤ **Florida [Stat. §1009.25](#) (1991)**

A student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, or who lives in a shelter or a public or private place not ordinarily used as regular accommodation, is exempt from the payment of tuition and fees for a school district workforce education program, Florida College System institution, or state university.

➤ **Maine [LD 866](#) (2020) (20-A MRSA §10014)**

Each public state post-secondary educational institution may award homeless students with grants to fully fund their tuition (less all other financial aid the student receives and is not required to repay). The availability and amount of the grant are subject to the amounts appropriated by the Legislature.

➤ **Maryland [HB 482](#) (2014) and [HB 400](#) (2016) (Ann. Code of Md. §15-106.1)**

An unaccompanied homeless youth or foster care recipient is exempt from paying tuition at a public institution of higher education, if the youth is enrolled as a candidate for a vocational certification, associate’s degree or bachelor’s degree prior to turning 25 years old, and has applied for federal and state financial aid. The exemption lasts for five years or until the student receives a bachelor’s degree, whichever comes first.

➤ **Nevada [AB 461](#) (2019) (sections to be added to Nev. Rev. Stat. Chapter 396)**

The Board of Regents may grant a waiver of registration fees and laboratory fees for homeless or unaccompanied students.

### **In-State Tuition**

➤ **Colorado [HB 16-1100](#) (2016) (Co. Rev. Stat. §§23-7-102 and 23-7-103.5)**

Unaccompanied homeless youth under 22 years old can establish residency independently (regardless of the residency of a parent/legal guardian) for the purposes of paying in-state tuition for Colorado junior colleges, colleges, and universities.

➤ **Louisiana [HB 906](#) (2016) (La. Rev. Stat. §17:3399.23)**

A public post-secondary education institution may grant resident status to a student who: currently resides in Louisiana; is 19 years old or younger at the time of enrollment; and was homeless at any time during the two years immediately preceding enrollment.

### **Work Study**

➤ **California [AB 2416](#) (2020) (Ca. Educ. Code §69956)**

Public and private colleges and universities must consider homelessness as an extenuating circumstance for students who are otherwise unable to meet the requirements for “satisfactory academic progress” needed to maintain work study eligibility.

### **Housing and Support Programs**

➤ **California [AB 74](#) (2019)**

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 are to 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. Authorized uses of funds include, but are not limited to: connecting students with community case managers who have knowledge and expertise in accessing safety net resources; establishing ongoing emergency housing procedures, including on-campus and off-campus resources; and emergency grants that are necessary to secure housing or to prevent the imminent loss of housing. Of the \$19 million, the University of California system will receive \$3.5 million, the California State University system will receive \$6.5 million, and the California Community College system will receive \$9 million.

In the 2019-20 State Budget, \$15 million was allocated to the University of California system to support meal donation programs, food pantries serving students, CalFresh enrollment, and other means of directly providing nutrition assistance to students. The funds also shall be used to assist homeless and housing-insecure students in securing stable housing.

➤ **Minnesota [SF 2415](#) (2019)**

The Office of Higher Education has \$269,000 available for both fiscal years 2020 and 2021 to award matching grants to post-secondary institutions with a demonstrable homeless student population. The funding is to be used for immediate student needs that could prevent a student from completing the term or their program, including housing, food, and transportation.

➤ **Washington [SB 5800](#) (2019) (Rev. Code Wa. §§28B.50 and 28B.77)**

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges must select four colleges to participate in a pilot program to assist students experiencing homelessness and students who were in the foster care system when they graduated high school. The State Budget included \$548,000 in the 2020-2021 biennium for this pilot. The Washington Student Achievement Council must select two universities to participate in a corresponding pilot program, subject to appropriations. The State Budget included \$278,000 in the 2020-2021 biennium for this pilot.

➤ **Washington [HB 1893](#) (2019) (will be added to RCW Chapter 28B.50)**

An emergency assistance grant program is established, subject to funding, to provide community and technical college students, including those experiencing homelessness, with monetary aid to assist with emergencies that affect their ability to attend classes.