



Increasing College Success for Unaccompanied & Foster Youth

November 1, 2008



EDUCATION FINANCE COUNCIL



IDENTIFYING UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

- **Educating High School Counselors & School Staff**
- ***Educating Alternative School Staff***
- **Utilize Non-profit Organizations & Community Agencies**

AWARENESS OF FINANCIAL AID ACCESS FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

- **School Counselors, Caseworkers, Transition Teams, Students, etc.**
- **Create a FAQ for them**
- **Newsletters**
- **Verification Letter**

KNOWLEDGE OF MCKINNEY-VENTO ELIGIBILITY STATUS

- **Financial Aid Administrators,
College Recruiters**
- **Create a FAQ for them**
- **Take the Training to Them!!**

FAFSA FORM

- **Complexity of the form**
- **Language of the form**
- **Verification Documents for “Independent Student” status**

Meeting Challenges

- College Access Marketing
 - Changing college-going behaviors
- Communication and understanding
 - Focus groups
 - Influencers
- Carrying the message
 - Presentations to college access and higher education staff

Demystifying Financial Aid

- Getting out the information early and to the right places
- Educating the financial aid community
 - What to ask, what not to ask
 - Providing a verification letter
- FAFSA completion
 - College Goal Sunday – 37 states
 - Understanding non-traditional family circumstances

Verification Letter

- Provided to the financial aid office
- Identifies student, person verifying homeless status
- Definitions: unaccompanied homeless youth, McKinney-Vento Act, HUD-funded shelters, and RHYA-funded shelters
- Confirmation of student's status with regard to financial aid

What About Financial Aid?

- Who needs to know?
 - Students and families
 - Guidance counselors
 - College access providers
- How do we get the information out?
 - Written materials
 - Trainings
 - Web site portals

Reaching the College Access Community

- Conferences
- Webinars
- Provide information for school newsletters
- Encourage schools to add sections on special populations to their Web sites
- Help traditional and non-traditional students to be advocates

Problems Defined

We know there's a problem...

...so what's being done to combat

- ✓ Prohibitive College Costs & Complex Financial Aid System**
- ✓ Inadequate “College Knowledge”**
- ✓ Lack of Support**

Federal Student Aid Overview

- Federal Government Has a Long History of Supporting Students
- \$143 Billion Made Available Annually
 - Scholarships, Work-Study, Grants, Loans, Tax Credits & Deductions
 - Figure doesn't include private education loans (\$19b); nonfederal aid; student support services; and financial aid and financial literacy counseling, etc.
 - *Source, College Board's 2008 "Trends in Student Aid" Report*
- Programs Administered by Numerous Entities at Federal, State and Local Levels

Federal Student Aid Cont.

Recent FAFSA Changes Will Better Support Unaccompanied and Foster Youth

New Definition of “Independent Student”

- o Previous Definition
- o Changes Made by H.R. 2269, the College Cost Reduction & Access Act (P.L. 110-84)
- o Changes Made by Higher Education Act (HEA) amendments (H.R. 4137, the Higher Education Opportunity Act – P.L. 110-315)

Federal Student Aid Cont.

Other FAFSA Resources...

U.S. Department of Education's *FAFSA4Caster*

- Online tool to help students financially prepare for college before a student's senior year of high school
- Instantly calculates a student's Expected Family Contribution
- Automatic generates a “PIN” for use on *FAFSA on the Web*; Pre-populates parts of *FAFSA on the Web*
- <http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov>

Federal Student Aid Cont.

Other FAFSA Resources...

- College Financial Aid Offices**

- College Goal Sunday**
 - <http://www.collegegoalsundayusa.org/>

- State Nonprofit Agencies & Others**
 - Listing at www.efc.org

Other Sources of Student Aid

Chafee Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV)

- Provides funds to help youth aging out of the foster care system enroll in higher education
- Makes grants of up to \$5,000 per year
- Funds may be used in addition to federal dollars, such as the Pell Grant
- Locate your state's ETV program administrator at <https://www.statevoucher.org/>

Non-Federal Sources of Aid

Orphan Foundation of America (<http://orphan.org/>)

- Administers scholarships for postsecondary education;
- Oversees Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funding in nine U.S. states;
- Provides a virtual mentoring program linking students with experienced adults through a state of the art Internet portal;
- Connects students with internships to give them valuable workplace experience;
- Sends out “care packages” three times a year to boost students' morale and give them a sense of family-like support.

Non-Federal Sources of Aid

Always look into other sources of support...

Apply for State Sponsored Aid

U.S. Department of Education Clearinghouse for State Student Aid

http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/programs/erod/org_list.cfm?category_cd=sgt

Talk to School Financial Aid Officers

Talk to State Nonprofit Agencies

Talk to Community-based organizations

Improving College Readiness

Student Financial Assistance

Means Nothing

if Students Are Unprepared for College

College Readiness Cont.

U.S. Department of Education's [College.gov](https://college.gov)

Students can learn:

- how college will open the doors of opportunity;
- about the steps needed to become college ready; and
- how to access information on paying for college

Also allows students to create a “I’m Going” college profile that that can be sent to supporters, added to Facebook or other websites, and used in other capacities.

College Readiness Cont.

TRIO & GEAR UP Programs

- Background & Purpose
- Changes Made by H.R. 4137, the Higher Education Opportunity Act – P.L. 110-315)
 - TRIO and GEAR UP to identify and provide services to homeless and foster youth
 - Staff development training includes provisions to recruit and provide services to homeless and foster youth
 - Student Support Services will foster a climate to provide support and success
 - Demonstration program authorized to provide temporary housing during campus breaks

College Readiness Cont.

College Access Challenge Grant Programs

- New program
- Intended to foster partnerships among federal, state and local governments and philanthropic organizations through matching grants aimed at increasing the number of low-income students in postsecondary education.
- Learn more about your state's program at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/cacg/awards.html>

College Readiness Cont.

Start a Collaboration...

Talk to Your Local...

College Financial Aid Officers

State Nonprofit Agencies

Community-based organizations

Other Resources

Helpful Websites to Bookmark...

U.S. Department of Education, Federal Student Aid Website

- Available in English at <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/index.jsp>
- Available in Spanish at <http://www.ed.gov/espanol/bienvenidos/es/index.html?src=gu>

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

- Available in English at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>
- Available in Spanish at http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/es_ES/index.htm

FAFSA4Caster

- <http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov>

Other Resources

College Goal Sunday

- <http://www.collegegoalsundayusa.org/>

TRIO/GEAR UP

- Department's Website: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html>
- Council for Opportunity in Education – National Association that Represents TRIO programs: <http://www.coenet.us/>

National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

- www.nasfaa.org

Education Finance Council

- EFC website www.efc.org
- EFC's College Resource Center www.efc.org/collegecenter
- EFC's Financial Literacy Homepage www.efc.org/finlit

Other Resources Cont.

Casey Family Programs (<http://www.casey.org>)

- **[It's My Life: Postsecondary Education and Training](#)**, a guide that gives professionals the recommendations, strategies and resources to improve their work preparing young people for college access and success.
- **[It's My Life: Financial Aid](#)**, a guide intended for those primarily interested in helping young people find funding sources for college or vocational training.
- **[Supporting Success: Improving Higher Education Outcomes for Students from Foster Care](#)**, a guide that provides program development tools for college counselors, administrators, professors and staff to help these education professionals define a plan for improving their institution's support for students from foster care.
- **[Casey Life Skills – Education Supplements](#)**, provides four levels of education-focused self assessments with Level II targeting high school students and Level IV for students in a postsecondary education and training program. These assessments provide students and caregivers and their advocates with valuable information pertaining to school success.

Other Resources Cont.

National College Access Network (NCAN)

<http://www.collegeaccess.org/>

KnowHow2Go Campaign

<http://www.knowhow2go.org/>

Pathways to College Network

<http://www.pathwaystocollege.net/>

National Center on Homeless Education

<http://www.serve.org/nche>

National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs (NCHELP)

www.nchelp.org

Other Resources Cont.

National Network for Youth

www.nn4youth.org

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

<http://www.nlchp.org>

Foster Care Alumni of America

<https://www.fostercarealumni.org/>

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