

FACT SHEET

HOUSING FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS ACT

In the United States, 3.5 million young adults ages 18 to 25 experience homelessness each year.¹ Of these individuals, over one million (29 percent) experienced homelessness while enrolled in college or another educational program.² In a 2021 report that surveyed 195,000 students at two- and four-year higher education institutions, 48 percent reported experiencing housing insecurity and 14 percent reported experiencing homelessness within the past year.³

Too often, college students must choose between stable housing and completing their education. Due to an eligibility limitation for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, **full-time college students who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness, including veterans, are not eligible for LIHTC rental housing.** Full-time student exceptions are made for former foster youth, students who are married, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families recipients. However, full-time students who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness are not exempt.

Young people who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness face many barriers in qualifying for and enrolling in postsecondary education. But supporting young people in completing their postsecondary education is essential to breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness. Jobs that offer a livable wage increasingly require at least some postsecondary education, and securing a job with a livable wage increases long-term economic and housing stability.

- Students who live in dorms during the school year may not have access to stable housing when those dorms close for the holidays or the summer.
- Experiencing homelessness as a college student can negatively impact GPA and graduation rates.
- Unhoused students are absent at twice the rate of stably housed students.

Knowing that experiencing homelessness as a young person increases the likelihood that homelessness will extend into adulthood, it is critical that we ensure that every young person is stably housed. Expanding LIHTC's eligibility would significantly decrease the number of college students who experience homelessness each year. It could also prevent young people from ever experiencing homelessness while attending college full-time.

¹ Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National Estimates*. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/ChapinHall_VoYC_NationalReport_Final.pdf.

² *ibid.*

³ The Hope Center. (2021). *The Hope Center Survey 2021: Basic Needs Insecurity During the Ongoing Pandemic*. The Hope Center at Temple University. <https://hope.temple.edu/sites/hope/files/media/document/HopeSurveyReport2021.pdf>.

Fixing the LIHTC “student rule” is critical to preventing and ending young adult homelessness

LIHTC provides tax incentives to developers to build or rehabilitate affordable housing units with roughly 3.7 million units in operation in 2023. Currently, the program does not allow tenants enrolled in the program to be full-time students. If students pursue a part-time education, they risk losing out on scholarships and grants available to full-time students only. The original intent of the rule was to prevent LIHTC funding from being used to construct student housing for students who have temporarily low-incomes at the expense of low-income families with long-term needs. However, current law provides no exception for homeless or formerly-homeless students.

The Solution: Pass the Housing for Homeless Students Act

This bipartisan, bicameral legislation is a no-cost solution that would **increase affordable housing access for homeless youth and veterans**. The bill creates a limited exception to the LIHTC "student rule," allowing homeless or formerly homeless individuals to live in affordable LIHTC units while enrolled as full-time students.

Supporting Organizations:

- | | |
|---|--|
| All4Ed | National Alliance to End Homelessness |
| American Association of State Colleges and Universities | National Association of Counsel for Children |
| American College Health Association | National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs |
| American Council on Education | National Black Justice Coalition |
| American Federation of Teachers | National Center for Housing and Child Welfare |
| Campus Compact | National Center on Adoption and Permanency |
| Center for Higher Education Policy and Practice | National Coalition for the Homeless |
| Center for Law and Social Policy | National Health Care for the Homeless Council |
| Child Welfare League of America | National Network for Youth |
| Coalition on Human Needs | New America Higher Education Team |
| Council of Administrators of Special Education | SchoolHouse Connection |
| EdTrust | Swipe Out Hunger |
| Family Promise | The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs |
| First Focus Campaign for Children | The Institute for College Access and Success |
| Forum for Youth Investment | Today’s Students Coalition |
| Foster Care Alumni of America | Youth Law Center |
| Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide | Youth Village |

Darla Bardine (darla.bardine@nn4youth.org) or Trinady Maddock (trinady.maddock@nn4youth.org) at National Network for Youth or TJ Lucas (tj@schoolhouseconnection.org) at SchoolHouse Connection.