

College Application Information for Homeless Youth

Application Waivers

Students who qualify as homeless youth can receive price reductions and waivers for AP exams, ACT/SAT entrance exam fees, and college applications.

College Board is responsible for administering AP and entrance exams and has information on how to get this cost waived. CB also provides up to 4 requests for waiver of college application fee for qualified students.

FAFSA

A student who is homeless and unaccompanied is exempt from providing parental data on his/her FAFSA. Under the Higher Education Act, youth who meet the definition of “independent student” can apply for federal aid without parental information or signature. Students who are considered independent students also are eligible to receive considerably more financial aid than dependent students. A letter from The Homeless Education Department can be written as documentation for the “Homeless Unaccompanied Youth Status”

Students who are homeless and dependent can fill the FAFSA out with their parent’s information included. They will most likely receive a good amount of aid due to their living/financial situation.

I have been working closely with Pam Grzybowski, Financial Aid Specialist at FCC to assist homeless youth attending FCC. They are aligning with The McKinney Vento Act. Her information is:

Pamela Grzybowski
Financial Aid Specialist
Financial Aid Office; J-304
Phone: 301-846-2474
FAX: 301-624-2886

If a Homeless Unaccompanied Senior needs additional assistance with filling out The FAFSA and/or scholarships, please let me know and we can hire someone through the tutoring program to assist with this.

Below is some information with more detailed information copied from:

<http://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/homeless-students-guide/>

Financial Aid, FAFSA® & Homeless Students

Filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) is an important step most incoming college freshman looking to find help paying for school must complete. For students who are homeless, in foster care, or live in similar special circumstances, the application process isn't as straightforward as merely turning in the form, however.

Because most financial aid applications will typically assume a student is a dependent, there are a few extra steps that must be taken to prove otherwise. Students in these situations must prove their independence to financial aid administrators, who will then make the determination regarding their dependency status. To do so:

1. Students must fill out the [FAFSA® forms](#)
2. During the application process, students should indicate on the form that they fall under the “special circumstances” category and cannot provide their parents’ information.
3. Students should immediately follow up with their school’s financial aid office to determine if any additional documentation or information is needed. Some examples that financial aid offices may require include:
 - Personal statement describing the situation
 - Any applicable court or legal documentation
 - Letters from teachers, social workers, counselors or clergy members

Unaccompanied homeless youth under the age of 22 are considered independent and may fill out the forms without parental information. It is important to note that students are not considered automatically independent until they reach the age of 24, and a dependency status appeal must be made each year until that time.

Additional Resources for FAFSA® & Special Circumstances: [NAEHCY’s Dependency Status Appeal FAQs](#) [FAFSA® Tips for Unaccompanied Youth Without Stable Housing](#) [Dependency Status Information from the Office of Federal Student Aid](#)

Avoiding Application Fees: Waivers & Aid

Beginning with SAT testing in high school, eligible students who demonstrate financial hardship may obtain waivers for testing fees. Once a student has obtained a fee waiver for the SAT, four additional waiver reports are automatically available to them, free of charge. These may be applied to college applications at participating institutions.

To qualify for SAT and college application fee waivers, a student must meet at least one of the following guidelines:

- Eligibility or enrollment in the National School Lunch Program
- Annual family income meets [Income Eligibility Guidelines](#)
- Public assistance received by student/family
- Student is a ward of the state or has orphan status
- Student lives in subsidized housing, in foster care or is homeless
- Student or family is enrolled in a government air program for low-income individuals

To apply for the SAT waiver, high school juniors and seniors should visit their school's counseling office to obtain the application forms.

Scholarships for At-Risk Students

[Dell Scholars Program](#). Through the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, the Dell Scholars Program provides \$20,000 to winners over the course of six years, in addition to tutoring, networking and technology resources. The scholarships are awarded based on demonstrable financial need and at-risk status.

[Frank W. Ross Memorial Scholarship Fund](#). In association with the [Pride Foundation](#), this scholarship aims to provide funding for educational opportunities for low-income, at-risk or homeless LGBTQ youth. Recipients are encouraged to pay it forward in the spirit and memory of Ross.

[Gates Millennium Scholars](#). Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, GMS provides scholarships for low-income, minority students. The 1000 annual scholarships may be awarded to

African American, Hispanic, Native American, native Alaskans and Pacific Islanders and will supply winners a full-ride scholarship to college.

[Horatio Alger Association](#). The Horatio Alger National Scholarship Program provides up to \$22,000 in scholarship funds to students who demonstrate critical financial need and who have “faced and overcome great obstacles in their young lives.” Students from all 50 states are eligible, and winners also receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C. to attend the National Scholars Conference.

[National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth \(NAEHCY\)](#). A minimum of two \$1,500 scholarships are awarded annually to students who are currently struggling with or who have experienced homelessness in the past. Scholarships may be put toward tuition, fees, books and prep courses, and are given out in October of each year.

[O Wines Opportunity for Success Scholarship](#). Next open in the 2016-17 academic year, this scholarship awards \$20,000 over four years to low income, in-need, capable female students who have filled out their FAFSA® forms and have a minimum of 3.2 GPA.

[Simon Youth Foundation](#). SYF has awarded more than \$9.6 million to at-risk youth pursuing secondary education since 2000. Many of the foundation’s scholarship winners will be the first generation in their families to graduate college, and may apply the funds to the two- or four-year institution of their choice.

[U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#). By providing funding to schools, the Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students program provides scholarships to full-time students of health profession and nursing programs coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Interested applicants should check with their schools to determine if they participate in the program, and apply through the financial aid office.

[Volunteer of America](#). The VOA eastern Washington and northern Idaho chapter has two scholarships designated specifically for homeless students and those formerly homeless who are pursuing secondary education. Scholarship recipients in the Crosswalk program also receive mentoring and education to help them reach their goals in all facets of their lives, from time management to building confidence.

[Winners for Life](#). WFL offers scholarships each year for at-risk and underprivileged teens looking to pursue an education. The foundation grants 50 scholarships each year to at-risk youth; interested students may find application information through their school's financial aid offices.