



ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION: STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Cal State University Basic Needs Initiative

February 7, 2018



OBJECTIVES

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Overview

Causes and impact of homelessness

Barriers to homelessness

Barriers of higher education access

College access for homeless and unaccompanied homeless youth

SOME POSSIBLE CAUSES OF HOMELESSNESS

Divorce/Family
Issues

PTSD/Depression

Loss of Job

Poverty

Lack of
Affordable
Housing

Foreclosure

Serious Illness/
Disability

Loss of a Loved
One

Domestic
Violence

Natural Disaster

Addiction

Eviction

UNITED STATES

- 1.3 million youth experiencing homelessness in K-12 system, 2.3% of all school-age children will experience homelessness, ¹ *Approximately 20-40% of unaccompanied homeless youth identify as LGBTQ* – compared to 5-10% of the general youth population in the U.S.²

CALIFORNIA

- Over 300,000 children experience homelessness each year, 23% of homeless students in the nation ³

LA COUNTY

- 71,727 homeless students, *25% of the homeless students in CA* ⁴

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates.

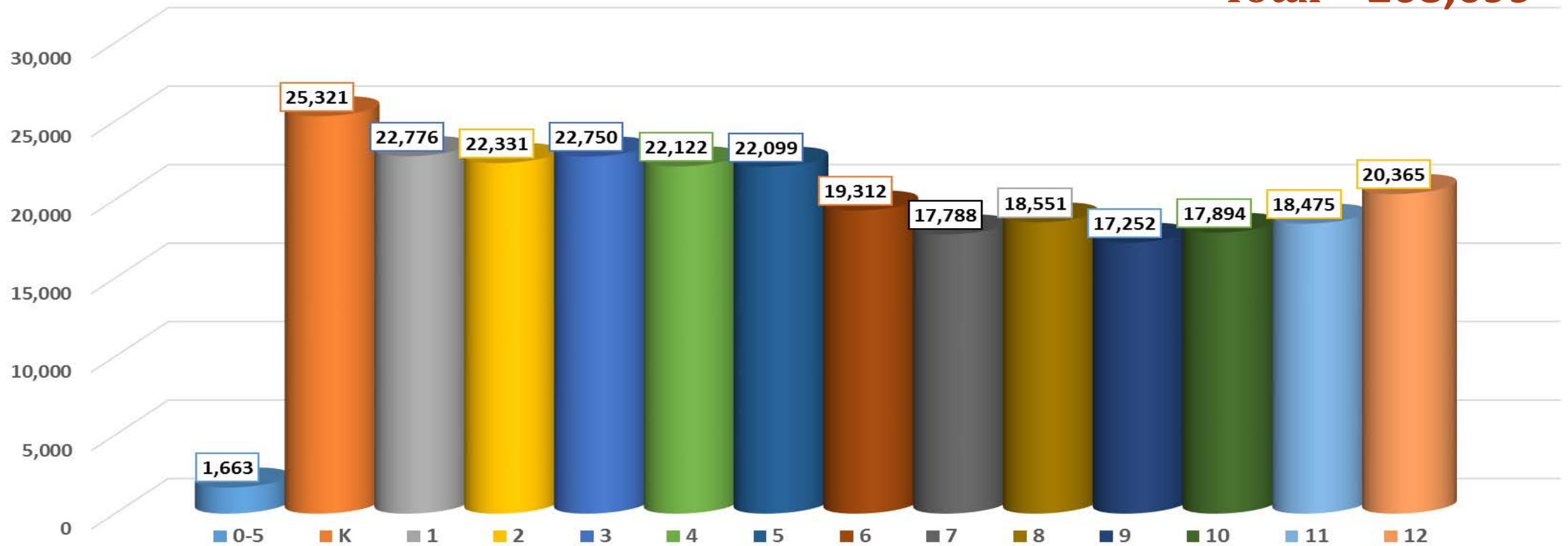
² Safe horizon, www.safehorizon.org ; 2014

³ CA Homeless Youth Project, California's Homeless Students, A Growing Population; September 2014

⁴ Los Angeles County Office of Education; September 2017

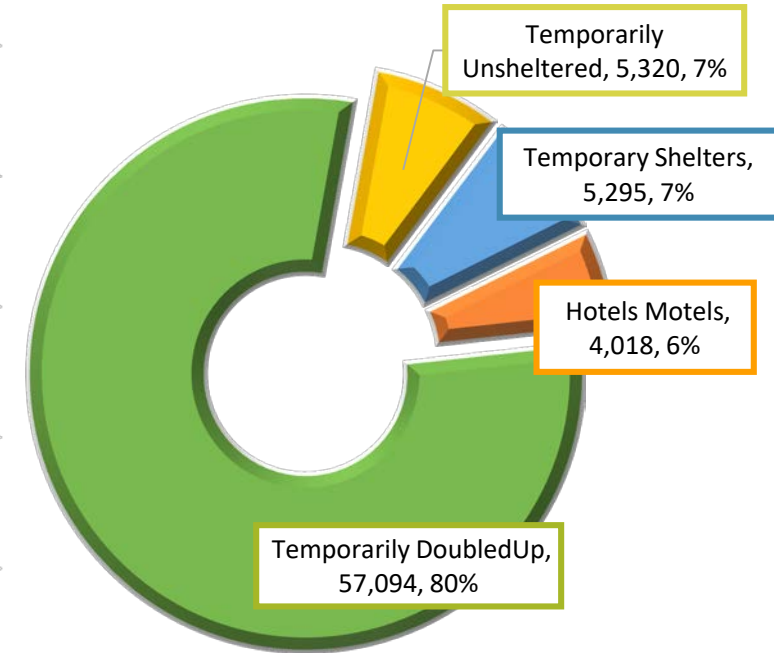
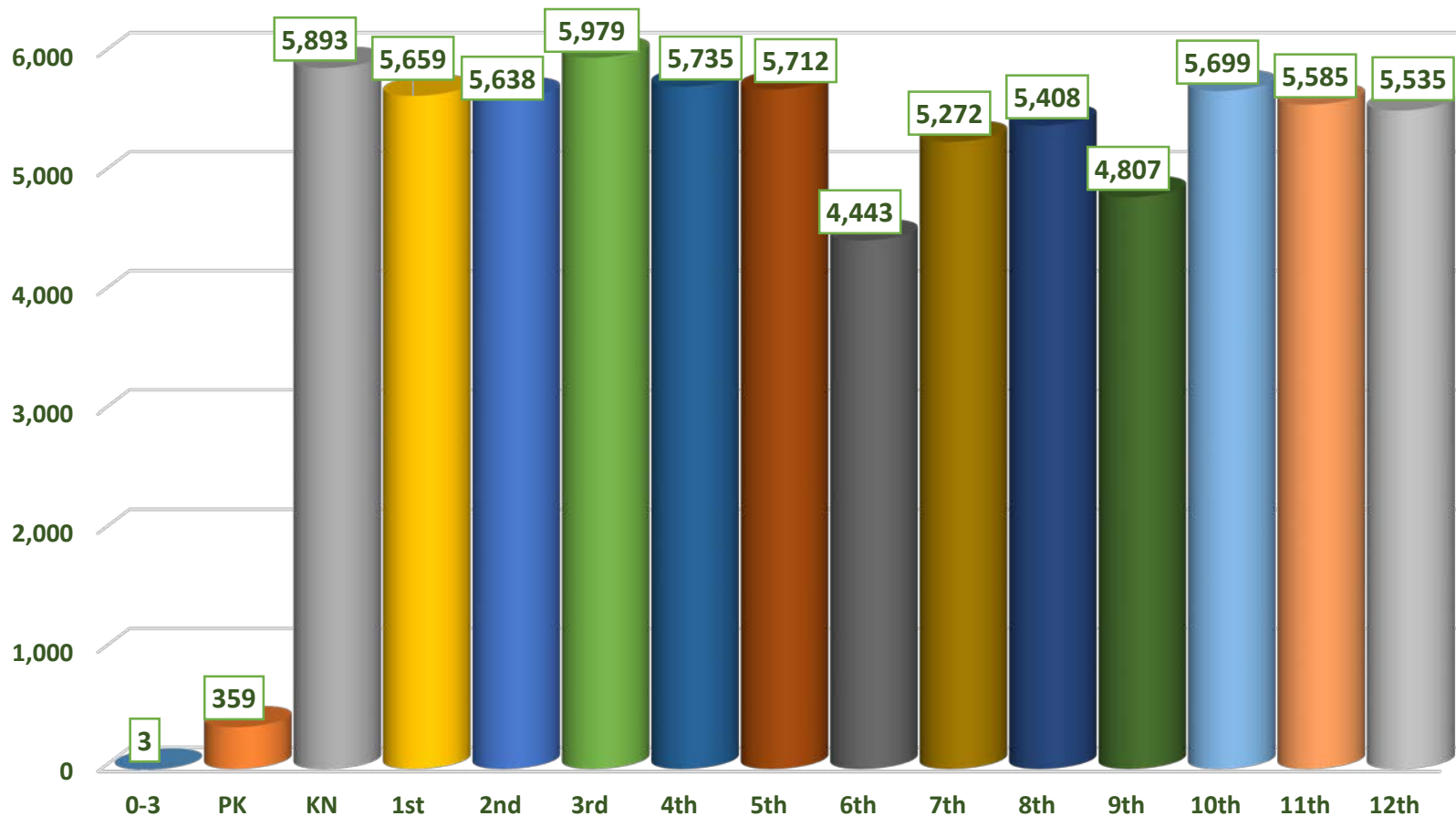
CALIFORNIA HOMELESS STUDENT COUNT 2016-2017

Total = 268,699



****There are so many homeless students across the county that every classroom of 24 students could include one.**

LOS ANGELES COUNTY HOMELESS STUDENT COUNT 2016-2017



TOTAL = 71,727

POST SECONDARY DATA: NATIONAL AND LOCAL

- 1 in 10 students in CSU system in unstable housing ¹
- 1 in 5 were food insecure
- 20% student in CC system were unstably housed; 75% food insecurity ²
 - 8% pushed out of home
 - 4% evicted
 - 6% stayed in location not meant for a person to sleep (e.g. abandoned building, car, etc)
 - 65% cant afford food
- 33,000 students at 70 community colleges in 24 states ³
 - 2 out of 3 students food insecure
 - 13-14% housing insecure
- 29% of former foster youth are homeless in CC ²
 - ONLY 2% finish college

¹<http://cahomelessyouth.library.ca.gov/docs/pdf/collegesupportsreportpdf4-27-17.pdf>

²<http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-homeless-community-college-20170628-story.html>

³<http://wihopelab.com/publications/hungry-and-homeless-in-college-report.pdf>

- *Homelessness is associated with an 87% increased likelihood of dropping out of school.*

- There is no research YET on post-secondary outcomes for students experiencing homelessness!

Youth who have experienced homelessness



**“Could someone help me with these?
I’m late for math class.”**



MCKINNEY VENTO OVERVIEW: MAIN THEMES



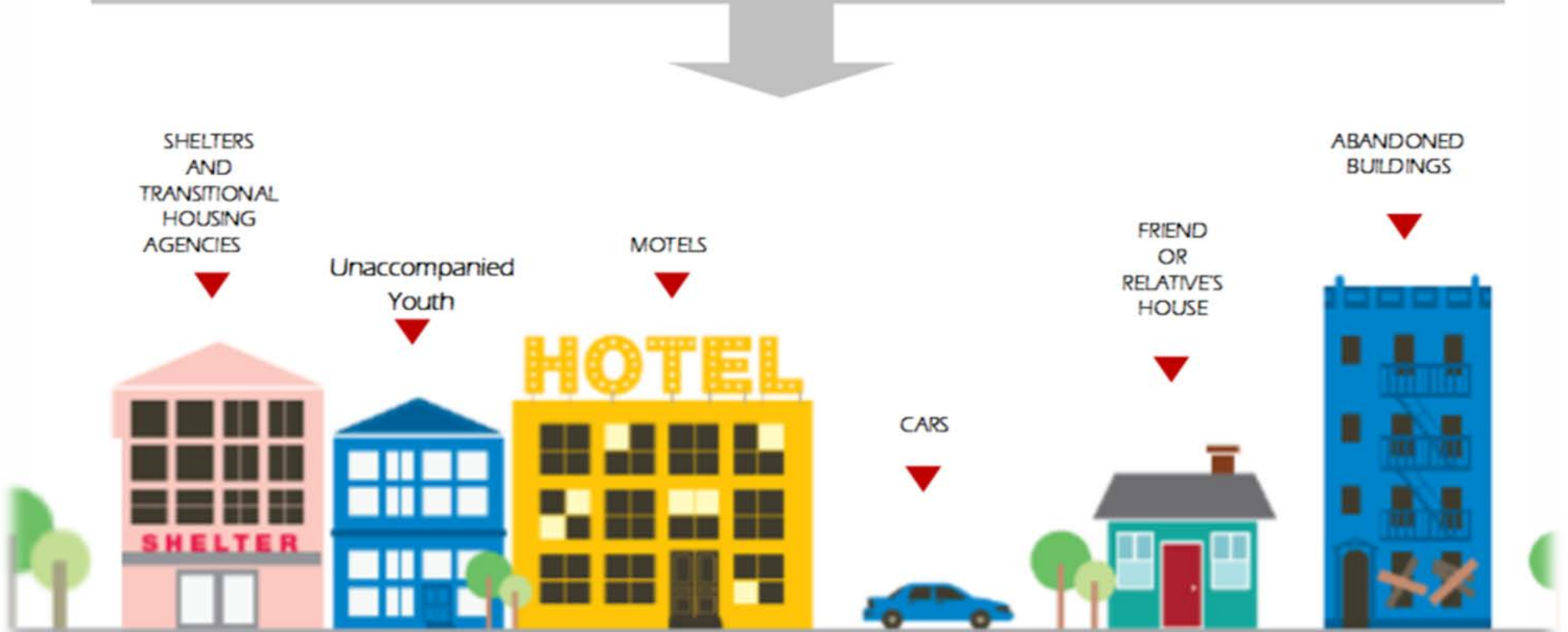
DEFINITION OF A HOMELESS STUDENT

The McKinney-Vento Act defines a "homeless" student as one who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and may include:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (“doubling or tripling up”)
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to the lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or a similar setting
- Abandoned, runaway or pushed-out youth or migratory children living in any of the above circumstances

***The Act applies to children between 0 to 22 years of age due to early head start and special education service provisions*

THERE IS A COMMON MISCONCEPTION THAT THE HOMELESS LIVE ON THE STREETS. THE TRUTH IS MORE LIKE THIS:



PATHS TO BEING ON THEIR OWN

- Ran away or pushed out...family conflict such as blended family issues, pregnancy, sexual activity or orientation, school problems, substance abuse, etc.
- Abuse and/or neglect within the home
- Parental incarceration, illness, hospitalization, or death
- Lack of space in temporary situations or shelter policies that prohibit adolescent boys
- Child welfare issues
 - Running away from a placement
 - Aging out of the system
 - Significant correlation between involvement with the child welfare system and experiencing homelessness as an adult

DETERMINATION OF UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

- 2-step process to determine eligibility as an unaccompanied homeless youth
 - 1) Does the student's living arrangement meet the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless?
 - 2) Once homelessness is determined, is the student unaccompanied?
- Unaccompanied = "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian"

Note: The Higher Education Act includes the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless and unaccompanied

- It is very difficult for LEAs to track UHYs as they may not report their homeless status for fear of being returned to unsafe family environments or taken into the custody of the child welfare system.

BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS

Lack of access to parental financial information and support

Struggling to balance school and other responsibilities

Lack of financial means to live independently and safely

Inability to be financially self-sufficient once enrolled in college

Lack of adult guidance and support

Limited housing options, especially in small towns or rural areas

Failure to meet state residency requirements

Lack of information about available support systems

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT: HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE CONNECTIONS

- All McKinney-Vento youth must be able to receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths, and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college
- Liaisons must ensure unaccompanied youth are informed of their status as independent students and may obtain assistance from the liaison to receive verification of that status

UNACCOMPANIED AND HOMELESS YOUTH: FAFSA COMPLETION

College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007

46. Were you born before January 1, 1993?	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
47. As of today, are you married? (Also answer "Yes" if you are separated but not divorced.)	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
48. At the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year, will you be working on a master's or doctorate program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, graduate certificate, etc.)?	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
49. Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training? See Notes page 9.	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
50. Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces? See Notes page 9.	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
51. Do you now have or will you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017?	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
52. Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2017?	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
53. At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court? See Notes page 10.	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
54. As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you an emancipated minor? See Notes page 10. ...	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
55. Does someone other than your parent or stepparent have legal guardianship of you, as determined by a court in your state of legal residence? See Notes page 10.	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
56. At any time on or after July 1, 2015, 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? See Notes page 10.	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
57. At any time on or after July 1, 2015, 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? See Notes page 10.	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2
58. At any time on or after July 1, 2015, 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? See Notes page 10.	Yes <input type="radio"/> 1	No <input type="radio"/> 2



ONLINE FAFSA COMPLETION

The screenshot displays a web-based FAFSA completion interface. On the left is a vertical toolbar with icons for various editing tools, categorized into 'Group', 'Vector', 'Web', 'Colors', and 'View'. A vertical blue bar with the word 'STUDENT' is positioned to the right of the toolbar. The main content area is titled 'Homeless Circumstances' and contains the following text:

You indicated that you were homeless or at risk of being homeless and you answered "no" to all of the specific homeless questions.

However, your financial aid administrator could make a determination that you are a **homeless youth**, and do not need to provide parental information, if you meet both of the following conditions:

- **You are homeless**, which means you are lacking fixed, regular and adequate housing, which includes living in shelters, parks, motels or cars, or temporarily living with other people because you had nowhere else to go. Also, if you are living in any of these situations and fleeing an abusive parent you may be considered homeless even if your parent would provide support and a place to live; and
- **You are unaccompanied**, which means you are not living in the physical custody of your parent or guardian.

If you believe that you meet these conditions and would like to follow up with the financial aid administrator at your college, select "I am homeless or at risk of being homeless" and click **Next** to get additional information.

If you do not meet the above conditions and will be providing parental information, select "I will provide parental information" and click **Next** to continue.

At the bottom of the main content area are two radio button options:

- I will provide parental information
- I am homeless or at risk of being homeless

To the right of the main content area is a 'Help and Hints' sidebar. It is titled 'Homeless Circumstances' and contains the following text:

Select **I will provide parental information** to continue to Parent Demographics.

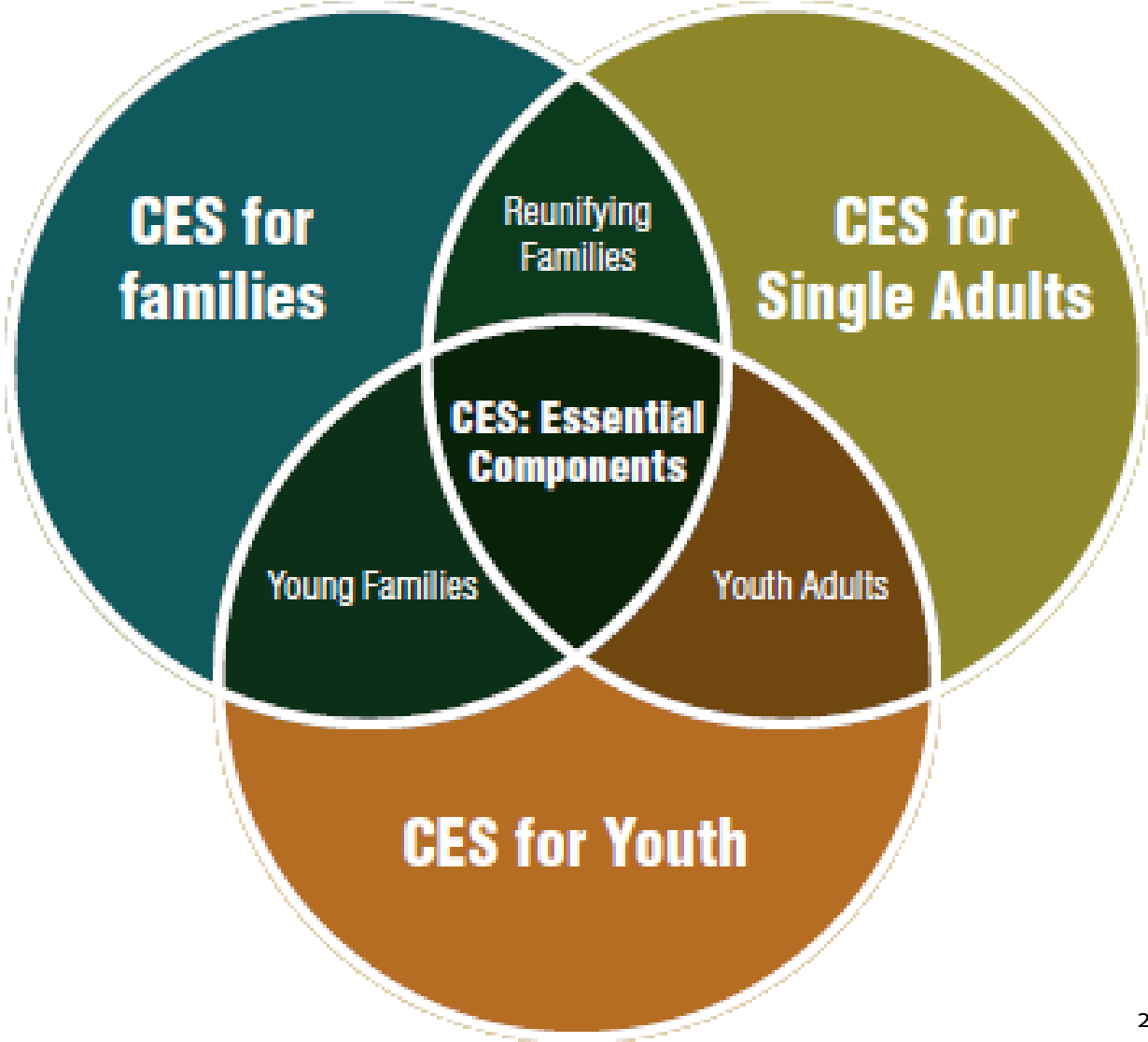
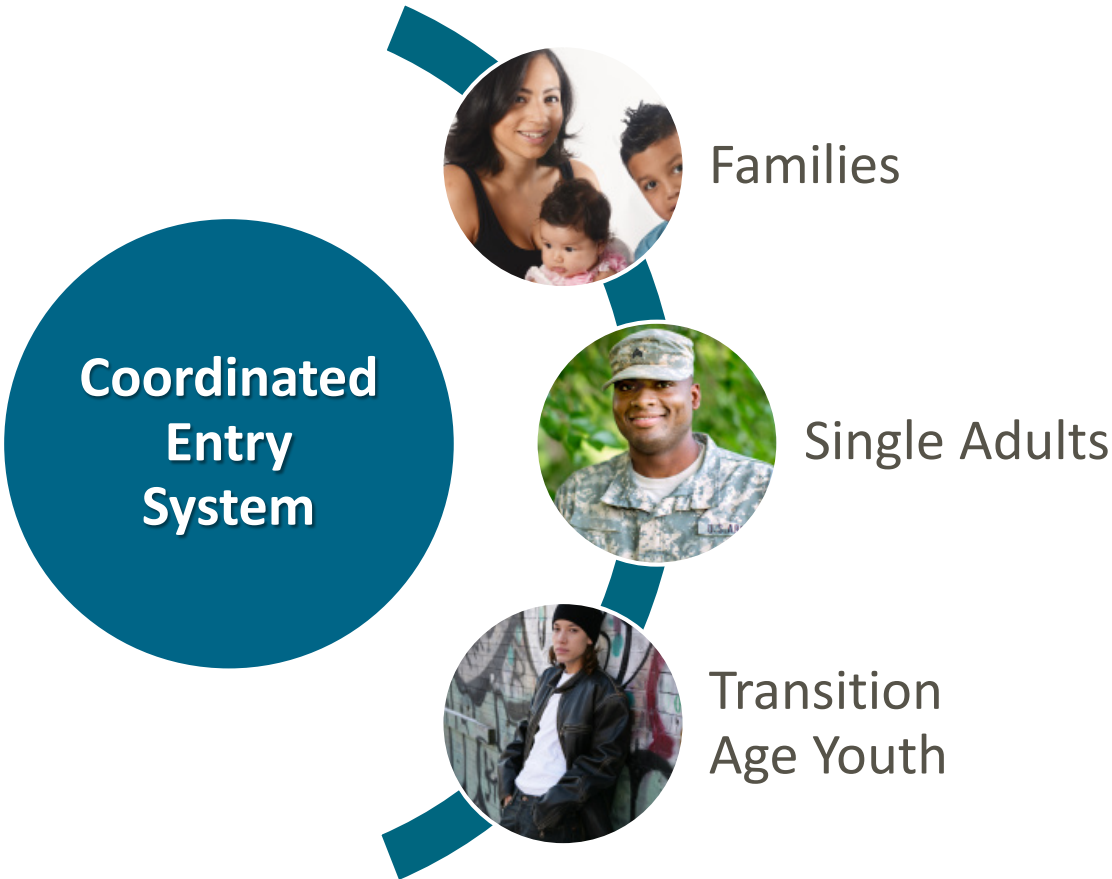
Select **I am homeless or at risk of being homeless** to get additional information.

On the far right is a sidebar with a 'Sort: None' dropdown and '0 colors' text. Below this are tabs for 'PAGES', 'STATES', and 'LAYERS'. The 'PAGES' tab is active, showing a list of pages with '01 Page 1' selected. At the bottom of this sidebar are tabs for 'STYLES', 'COLOR PALETTE', and 'SWATCHES'. The 'COLOR PALETTE' tab is active, showing a dropdown menu with 'Current Document' selected.

FAFSA BARRIERS

- Many students may not be filling out the FAFSA at all or students may not be reporting homelessness out of secrecy. Additionally, most schools do not keep data on student homelessness.
- Need help walking through the FAFSA process, especially if unaccompanied and may need help with understanding homeless verification process.
- Youth may not know how to fill out the form and can become overwhelmed by the amount of information requested
- The FAFSA requires most students to provide financial information and signatures from parents/guardians

COORDINATED ENTRY FOR ALL POPULATIONS



RECENT LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

- AB 801 (EC §§66025.9, 69514.5, 69561, 76300, 67003.5): Bloom. Postsecondary education: Success for Homeless Youth in Higher Education Act.
- AB 1228: Public postsecondary education: campus housing: priority for homeless youth
- AB 1733 (H&S §103577, VC §14902): Public records: fee waiver
- AB 1995 (EC §§76011): Williams. Community colleges: homeless students: access to shower facilities
- SB 252 (EC §§48412, 51421, 51421.5): Pupils: diploma alternatives: fees

PENDING FEDERAL LEGISLATION

HR 3740: The Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth Act (HEASHFY):

- Streamline the application and verification process for financial aid for foster and homeless unaccompanied youth
- Clarify eligibility for “independent” student status for homeless and foster youth
- Have colleges and universities designate single points of contact to assist homeless and foster youth to access and complete higher education and connect them with resources
- Have colleges and universities develop a plan to assist homeless and foster youth to access housing resources during and between academic terms
- Include homeless and foster youth in the data collected by college access programs and identify ways they can further support these students
- Ensure college access programs collaborate with child welfare agencies, homeless service providers, and school district homeless liaisons to identify, conduct outreach to, and recruit homeless and foster youth.

PENDING FEDERAL LEGISLATION

HR 3742 The Fostering Success in Higher Education Act of 2017 (FSHEA) would improve college access, retention, and completion rates for foster and homeless youth by substantially improving state capacity to support students by:

- Streamline the application and verification process for financial aid for foster and homeless unaccompanied youth
- Creating a new grant program in the Higher Education Act administered by the USDOE to provide \$150 million a year in grants to states that assist foster and homeless youth in enrolling and graduating higher education
- Establishing formula grants to states based on a state's share of foster youth and homeless youth among all 50 states and the District of Columbia, with a \$500,000 minimum grant
- Develop “institutions of excellence” committed to serving foster and homeless youth from entrance to completion via robust support services and by covering the remaining cost of attendance beyond federal and state grants
- Establish intensive, statewide transition initiatives to increase the understanding, preparation, and application of foster and homeless youth to higher education.

THOUGHTS

College campuses can provide:

- assistance and resources with less stigma than typically associated with receiving social services
- physically accessible to students experiencing homelessness
- alleviate transportation barriers that can make it difficult to access safety net programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT HOMELESS STUDENTS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

- Identification of homeless youth on your campus
 - Posters and brochures with on campus contact information
 - Create awareness among faculty and staff about UHY and the challenges they face.
- Determination of status as an independent student
 - Utilize the USDOE's Application and Verification Guide which provides instruction/guidance on determining UHYs independent status
 - Each case is unique and reviewed on its own basis
 - Incorporate a thoughtful process for the student to make the determination, don't make the student retell of past abuse, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

- Keep and track data on student homelessness.
- Establish coordination between financial aid offices, campus support services & housing
- Connect with previous school district homeless liaison if needed for verification purposes
- Allow late housing deposit payments
- Open a food and clothing bank on campus
- Consider housing options for homeless students when dorms close:
 - Leaving one residence hall open
 - Allow UHY to stay in housing for international students
 - Provide a list of “host homes” in the community
- Establish Single Points of Contact (SPOC) in colleges/universities to help eliminate barriers to higher education access

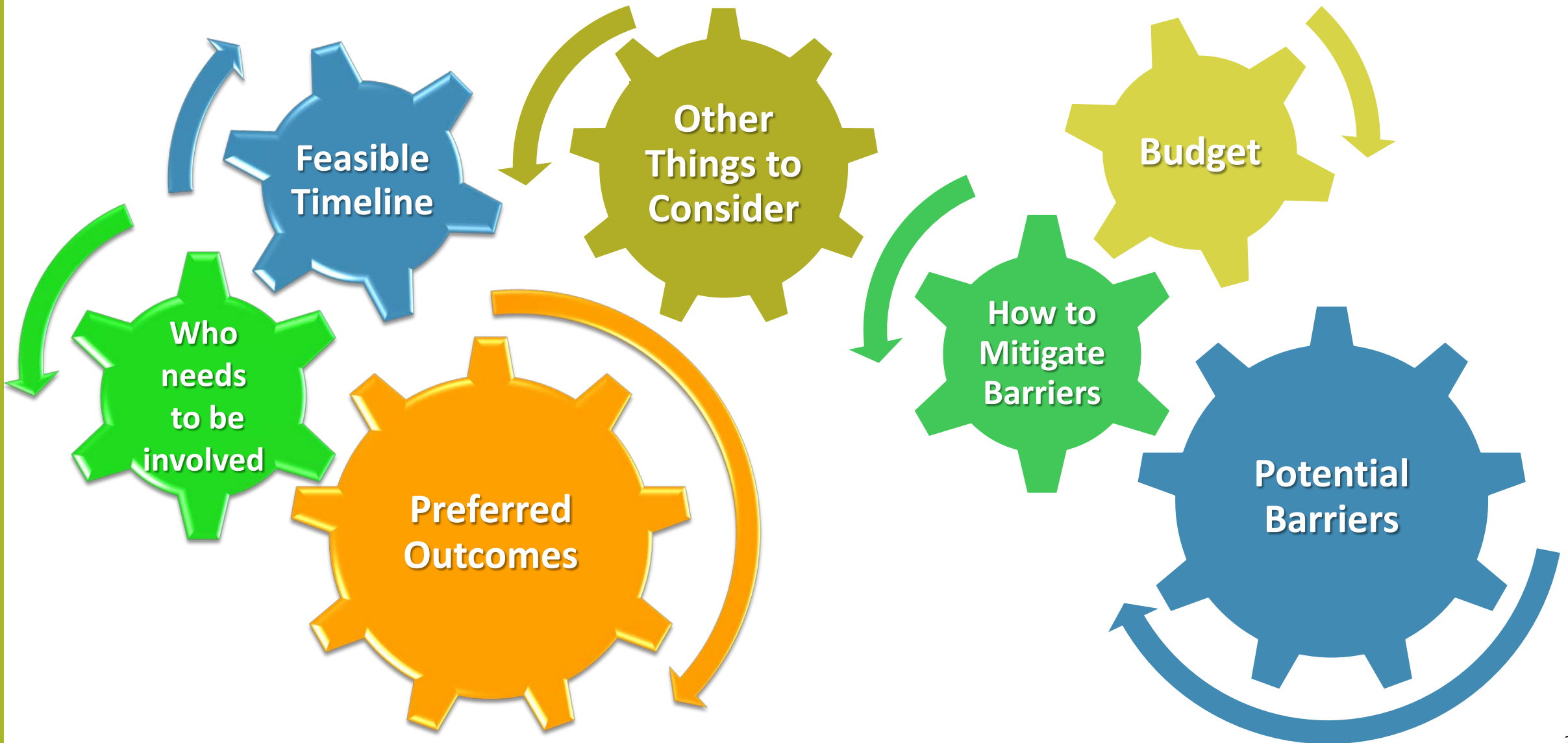
RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED

- Provide information to help homeless youth obtain information about college resources such as Pell Grants, vouchers, waivers for college admission tests, etc.
- Provide workshops on high school campuses in regard to financial aid and other programs that will assist homeless youth in enrolling into college.
- Convene a monthly/quarterly meeting with local stakeholders such as local school districts, Foster Care, Higher Education, and RHYA/HUD shelter communities as well as other service providers and advocates to share knowledge about their expertise and to build an action plan for serving homeless and UHY that is uniquely crafted for your community.
- Connect homeless and UHY with programs such as Gear-Up, Upward Bound, other TRIO programs, Campus Student Services and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services

RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION

- NAEHCY's Higher Education Webpage
 - <http://www.naehcy.org/educational-resources/higher-ed>
- NAEHCY Higher Education Helpline: 855-446-2673 or highered@naehcy.org
- Text Hotline text "NAEHCY" to 335577
- NAEHCY Statewide Higher Education Networks
 - <http://naehcy.org/legislation-and-policy/state-henetworks>
- NAEHCY Scholarship
 - <http://www.naehcy.org/naehcy-scholarship-fund/about-the-fund>
- College Access and Success Toolkit for Students Experiencing Homelessness
 - <http://naehcy.org/educational-resources/he-toolkit>

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES





CONTACT INFORMATION

Leanne Wheeler

**Consultant, Homeless Education
Coordinated Student Support Division
California Department of Education
LWheeler@cde.ca.gov**

Melissa Schoonmaker, L.C.S.W

**Consultant II, Homeless Education
Division of Student Support Services
Los Angeles County of Education
Schoonmaker_Melissa@lacoed.edu**