GEAR UP New Orleans, Louisiana
Hilton New Orleans Riverside
Jan. 31 – Feb. 3, 2016

NCCEP/GEAR UP CAPACITY-BUILDING WORKSHOP

EXCEL • PROVE • MOBILIZE

Serving Undocumented, Homeless, and Foster Care Students

Serving Undocumented, Homeless, and Foster Care Students

When reinforced by strong practices, positive school experiences can offset the negative effects of neglect, separation, and lack of permanency experienced by youth that are homeless, undocumented or in foster care. By allowing students to reach their full potential, the provision of a high-quality education represents perhaps the single greatest possibility for the expansion of opportunity.

Facilitators:

- **Deltha Colvin**, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Wichita State University

Presenters:

- **Cyekeia Lee**, Director of Higher Education Initiatives, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)
- **Rick Moreno,** Director of Texas A&M International University's GEAR UP IV
- **Corinne Nilsen,** Executive Director, Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP

Meet NAEHCY

- NAEHCY is a national membership association that connects educators, parents, advocates, researchers, and service providers to ensure school enrollment, attendance and overall success for children and youth whose lives have been disrupted by the lack of safe, permanent, and adequate housing.

  www.naehcy.org

How Many Children and Youth Experience Homelessness?

2013-2014SY

- 1,360,747 homeless children and youth enrolled in public schools

- 8% increase over the previous year

- 100% increase since 2006-2007 recession

- 13% of all poor school aged children and youth

- 30% of all extremely poor school aged children and youth

- Over 90,000 unaccompanied homeless youth

Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services

- Children or youth who **lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**, including:
  - Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to the lack of adequate alternative accommodations
  - Living in emergency or transitional shelters
  - Awaiting foster care placement

Eligibility Continued

- 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

- Migratory children living in the above circumstances

- Unaccompanied youth living in the above circumstances

  For more info, see NCHE's Determining Eligibility brief at www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php

Paths To Being On Their Own

- Family conflict: blended family issues, pregnancy, sexual activity or orientation, school problems, substance abuse

- 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

Paths Continued

- 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

Higher Education and Homeless Youth

- 2-step process to determine eligibility

  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"

Financial Aid Policies and Practices for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

- Colleges Cost Reduction and Access Act
  - http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/110/hr2669/text
- Application and Verification Guide, Chapter 5, Special Populations
  - ifap.ed.gov/fsahandbook/attachments/1516AVGCh5.pdf
- FAFSA Tips for Youth Without A Stable Home
  - http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/images/dl/fafsa-tips-uhy2016.doc
- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Verification Template
  - http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/images/dl/uy_fafsa_template2016.doc

How Many UHY Access Higher Education?

2014-2015 Unaccompanied Homeless Youth FAFSA Data

Determinations made by:

- School District Liaison 21,443

- HUD funded Emergency Shelter/Transitional Housing Program 3,953

- RHYA Basic Center/Transitional Living Program 3,731

- Financial Aid Administrators 1,548

What Barriers Do Homeless Student's Face?

- Lack of access to parental financial information and support
- Lack of financial means to live independently and safely
- Inability to be financially self-sufficient once enrolled in college
- Limited housing options, especially in small towns or rural areas
- Struggling to balance school and other responsibilities
- Lack of adult guidance and support
- Lack of information about available support systems
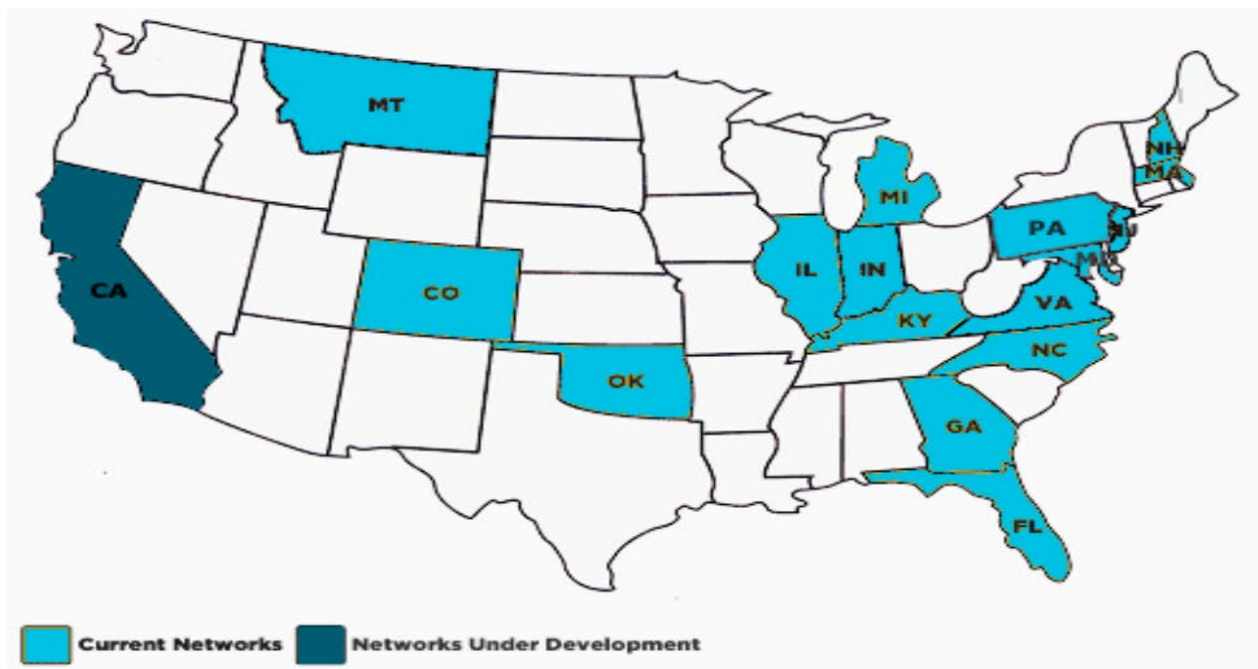
What Steps are States Taking to Assist UHY?

Statewide Networks

- Convene a meeting with local stakeholders from the McKinney-Vento K-12, Higher Education, and RHYA/HUD shelter communities as well as other local service providers and advocates.
- Allow each to share knowledge about their area of expertise:
- UHY and independent student definitions
- Financial aid
- Campus and community resources
- Build an action plan for serving UHY that makes sense for your community.

Get involved with a Statewide Network

NETWORK LOCATIONS

NAEHCY Statewide Higher Education Networks http://naehcy.org/legislation-and-policy/state-he-networks

What Steps Are Campuses Taking to Support Homeless Students?

- Over 400 campuses have created a SPOC

- A Single Point of Contact (SPOC) is a supportive college administrator on each campus who is committed to helping homeless youth (and often foster youth) successfully navigate the college-going process on campuses.

- Connect students to Admission's, Academic Advising, Financial Aid, Housing, Community Resource's, and other pertinent offices on Campus

- http://www.kennesaw.edu/studentsuccessservices/care/

How Can Secondary Education Professionals Assist Homeless Students?

- Focus on FAFSA completion!
- Inform unaccompanied youth of college options as soon as they are identified as homeless
- Make sure high school counselors know about the FAFSA policies for UHY
- Arrange for students to visit local colleges and universities
- Connect UHY to GEAR-Up, Upward Bound, other college access program's
- Know your who your State Coordinator is for Homeless Children and Youth
    - http://center.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php#map
- Use a template for verification *located at:* www.naehcy.org

How Can Post-Secondary Education Professionals Assist Homeless Students?

- Establish coordination between financial aid offices, student support services, and campus housing.
- 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 (SPOCS) in colleges/universities to help eliminate barriers to higher education access.

NAEHCY Resources

- 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 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

Questions

- Cyekeia Lee, Director of Higher Education Initiatives, NAEHCY

  clee@naehcy.org

  313-436-5949

Creating a Vision:

Assisting Undocumented High School Students
Access and Accomplish Postsecondary Success

Dr. Rick Moreno, TAMIU GEAR UP IV Director

Steps to Transitioning from Secondary to Postsecondary for Undocumented Students

9th – 12th

- NOTE: It is important to communicate with parents in their language. In the case of TAMIU most are Spanish speakers and as many are intimidated with processes they are not familiar with.

- Academic Advising
  - Career Inventory
  - Academic readiness
  - Identify desired postsecondary
- Scholarship search
- Identify state aid
- Identify Postsecondary Resources for undocumented students (scholarship office/financial aid office/departmental scholarships)

Assessment: accuplacer/TSI

- Accuplacer.collegeboard.org

- Reading, writing, math

- Required unless student has been exempted through meeting minimum scores on SAT, ACT, or statewide high school test; have successfully completed college-level English and math courses (dual credit courses taken in high school),

Check at www.thecb.state.ts.us/DE/TSI

Academic/Career Advising Resources

- Own your own future.com
  - 7th through 12 grade planning
    (Why go to college, PREP for college,
    Find a college, Pay for college)
    Road Map to College
- Adventures in Education   www.aie.org
  - Career choices, scholarship search, and financial aid information is available for students across the U. S.
- www.mappingyourfuture.org
- **Information is available in English AND SPANISH for their parents!!**

Admissions Office/Financial aid Office

- Required documentation differs for each office

- Timeline for processed a student differs for each office

- Student's classification in the Admissions Office impacts how the student is packaged in the Financial Aid Office

- Priority deadlines for Admissions and Financial Aid awarding are different in both offices

Repository of Resources for Undocumented Students

- Media.collegeboard.com
- Lists information by Admissions, contact information, audience information is pertinent to
- Lists information above by state
- There are also Tuition Exemption forms for those from California "California Nonresident Tuition Exemption Request Form

Legislation impacting assistance for Undocumented Students

- Admission :
  - Research includes information on available college guides for undocumented students as well as a sample affidavit that these students are required to submit when applying to college. With the exception of New Mexico, Utah and Wisconsin, the sample language of an affidavit is provided.

- Financial Aid and Scholarships:
  - Research includes information on available scholarships as well as resources on the states that provide financial aid. Making information on this process available to a much wider audience can help education advocates and policymakers understand the ways and opportunities to make financial resources available to undocumented students.

Creating an academic and financial strategy for an undocumented student

- ACADEMIC: ADMISSIONS OFFICE
  - Determine which university or community college the student is interested in attending; application process and required documentation
- FINANCIAL: FINANCIAL AID OFFICE
  - Navigate link for scholarships (institutional, etc.)and the documentation that the student may be required to submit.
- **NOTE: Incomplete files will NOT be processed!!!!**

Center for American Progress: www.americanprogress.org

- https://www.luminafoundation.org/files/resources/removing-barriers-for-undocumented-students.pdf
- **Texas Legislation**
  - The Texas Legislature passed H.B. 1403 in 2001, allowing undocumented
  - students to pay in-state tuition.56
  - In 2005, the legislature passed S.B. 1528, which allowed undocumented
  - students to qualify for state financial aid.57
  - PROVIDES state by state legislation and links to assistance for undocumented students

FSA information on Undocumented Students and eligible in-state tuition

- https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/sites/default/files/financial-aid-and-undocumented-students.pdf
  - This link contains a Q&A on information about Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- www.uscis.gov/childhoodarrivals
  - A student whose parents do not have a
  - Social must print FAFSA and mail it in, as a student's parent's citizenship status does not impact a student

Financial Aid and Undocumented Students

- **As an undocumented student or DACA student, am I eligible for federal student aid?**
  - No. Undocumented students, including DACA students and Dreamers, are not eligible for federal student aid. However, you may be eligible for state or college financial aid. Most states and colleges use information collected on the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) to determine whether you are eligible for aid. NOTE: In Texas the **TASFA** is used to determine state aid such as the TEXAS Grant.

Admissions Office classifies the student

- **As an undocumented student or DACA student, am I eligible for in-state tuition?**

  - It depends. In some states, undocumented students, or specifically DACA students, are eligible to receive in-state tuition. Please check with your high school or your college or career school financial aid office

NOTE: How the student is classified by Admissions determines the student's tuition and fees

Congratulations!

To: Parents, Teachers, and especially…

YOU made a difference in the lives of these students!

Introduction

In the U.S. today, approximately 400,000 children and youth are in foster care at any given time and each year about 20,000 of these students emancipate (i.e., age out) of foster care. A positive PK-12 education experience has the potential to be a powerful counterweight to the abuse, neglect, separation, impermanence and other barriers these vulnerable students experience. Additionally, participation in and persistence to a postsecondary credential can enhance their well-being, help them make more successful transitions to adulthood, and increase their chances for personal fulfillment and economic self-sufficiency.

National research shows that children in foster care are at high-risk of dropping out of school and are unlikely to attend or graduate from college. A coordinated effort by education agencies and child welfare agencies is necessary to improve the educational outcomes for students in foster care. Fortunately, the last few years have seen important policy, practice, and advocacy advances that address the education barriers and supports needed for these vulnerable students.

(from U. S. Department of Education website on Students in Foster Care)

In this session we will discuss:

- Who are the youth in foster care
- Barriers youth in foster care experience
- Impact on education of youth in foster care
- How we can work with youth in foster care
- What federal and state guidelines apply to youth in foster care
- Resources

Nationwide Data on Foster Care Youth

Number of Children and Youth in Foster Care on September 30, 2014		415,129
Characteristics of children and youth in foster care on September 30, 2014	**Number**	**Percentage**
Age		
Young children (age 0-4)	141,828	34
School age children and youth (age 5-17)	258,109	62
Young adults (age 18-20)	15,192	4
Race/Ethnicity		
White	174,477	42
Black	97,540	24
Hispanic (any race)	90,299	22
Other children and youth of color; race/ethnicity was unknown	52,243	12
Gender		
Male	216,645	52
Female	198,426	48

Source: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/afcarsreport22.pdf

Why are so many Youth in Foster Care?

- Parental (or other family member) abuse - physical and sexual
- Abandoned or neglected
- Kicked out of home due to sexual orientation or pregnancy
- Unstable/unsafe housing arrangements
- Immigrant parent returned to homeland – child left behind
- Family or just the child are kicked out of living arrangements
- Parents are alcoholics or drug abusers, arrested or in prison
- Parents are unable to control behavior or discipline child
- Runaways
- Parent lose jobs/income – can not support children
- Parents do not know how to be parents
- Parents become disabled

Barriers Youth in Foster Care Experience

- Lack of placement stability, frequent changing of foster or residential homes
- Delayed enrollment and educational gaps
- Children with special education needs do not access/receive services
- Confusion about legal rights
- Lack of basic clothing and supplies to go to school
- Impacts of abuse, neglect, and trauma can cause behavior problems or keep students from focusing on school
- Worried about maintaining ties with siblings or biological parents
- Mandated court appearances and doctors appointments – cause them to miss school frequently
- Embarrassment – avoid social interactions with peers

Impact on education of youth

K-12

- Lack of educational and career advocacy
- School dropout, truancy and disciplinary actions – lower graduation rates
- Absenteeism/enrollment interruptions - instability
- Few engaged in college prep courses or programs (TRIO, GEAR UP, AVID, other)
- Records transfer and confidentiality issues
- Long terms educational impacts of abuse, neglect and trauma
- Frequent changing of foster or residential homes
- Lack of basic clothing and hygiene needs
- Childcare/Child custody

Impact on education of youth

Postsecondary Education
- Lack of parental income and support. On their own at a young age - survival mode dominates
- Lack of housing during holiday and summer breaks, deposits for housing
- Lack of access to medical, dental and eye care physicians and mental health services
- Barriers accessing financial aid; barriers receiving subsequent year determinations of foster care status (i.e. tuition waivers, Pell grant eligibility)
- A permanent address where they can receive mail
- Textbooks, housing basics (towels, sheets, pillows, dishes, etc…)
- Lack of financial literacy and budgeting skills
- Childcare
- Lack of role models, college advocates, mentors/coaches
- Lack of information about available support systems
- Struggle to balance school and other responsibilities
- Lack of good college/program fit
- Low test scores (reading, math, science)
- Lack of basic clothing and hygiene needs

Research Shows Poor Outcomes

Youth in foster care are:

- 2x more likely to be **absent** from school
- 17-18 year olds 2x more likely to have out-of-school **suspension**, 3x more likely to be **expelled**
- **Average reading level** of 17-18 year olds in foster care = 7th grade
- Likelihood of foster youth receiving **special education** 2.5 - 3.5x that of others
- 50 % complete **high school** by 18
- 2-9 % attain a **bachelor's degree**

How we can work with youth

Secondary

In addition to regular GEAR UP services:

- Be the person who aides in *putting all the pieces together.*
- Assess students' capacity to cope with their current situation/crisis
- Prioritize needs and develop an care/action plan
- Coordinate care with both formal and informal supports
- Refer students to school and community resources

First year in College

Assist students with:

- Finding job opportunities both on and off campus

- Locating organizations to offer services students may not be able to afford. (i.e. childcare, car maintenance, etc.)

- Assisting students in applying for university and community-based grants and/or scholarships

- Work with Financial Aid to determine if student is connected to all available resources

Challenges and Solutions

- **Housing at college:** *Solutions:* Housing deposits provided by college access programs, deposits waived by college, use of agency emergency fund, or students live off-campus year round.

- **Housing on breaks or summer vacation:** *Solutions:* Colleges provide housing during breaks for extra cost. Organizations or volunteers provide free housing to young college students.

- **Need for a Permanent Address:** *Solutions:* Non-profit agencies designated as address (may provide free student mailboxes inside their agency). No cost or low cost of Post office mailboxes.

- **Transportation to Doctor/Therapy appointments: Solutions:** Work with Independent Living Social Workers to arrange transportation while in college. Bus Passes. If available, transfer to student health or college counseling center.

- **Food: *Solutions:*** Financial aid, food bank, some Financial Aid offices at college have food pantries.

Challenges and Solutions

- **Medical Problems:** *Solutions:* Community Center assistance for health insurance applications, pro-bono physicals, free eye glasses and eye exams, pro-bono dentistry (combined with mentor rides or bus tickets), DSS assistance for young adults on Medicaid and heading off to college.

- **College Supplies:** *Solutions:* Provided by non-profit, service organizations or churches: bedding, backpacks, clothing, notebook, alarm clock, dictionary, flash drive, highlighters, pens, toothbrush and toothpaste, shampoo, towels and washcloths.

- **Transportation:** *Solutions:* mentor drivers and bus tickets for official appointments, medical emergencies, court dates.

- **Legal aid:** *Solutions:* Pro-bono help for criminal justice issues and foster care issues (i.e. no name on birth certificate, etc.)

- **Help with childcare:** *Solutions:* Family housing/day care/public school on campus. Shared childcare with another student. Childcare vouchers.

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Protecting the Credit of Youth

Federal law requires child welfare agencies to ensure that youth ages 16 and older in foster care receive a copy of any consumer report, commonly called a "credit report," annually until discharged from care, and to assist youth in interpreting the report and addressing any inaccuracies. The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014, signed into law on September 29, 2014, will extend the protections of this provision to all youth ages 14 and older in foster care. In a letter to child welfare directors, the Children's Bureau urges agencies to consider taking additional steps to protect children and youth from identity theft and to explore how to implement the provision to empower youth by deepening their understanding of credit, money management, and other financial issues.

Yes, people steal the identities of youth in foster care and they start their new life in debt!

What Federal and State guidelines apply?

McKinney-Vento Act

- State coordinators at State Education Agencies
- School district liaisons
- Identification of youth in foster care
- Immediate enrollment
- School stability
- Transportation
- Posting of public notice

Federal Legislation

- **FEDERAL CHILD WELFARE LAW**
  - **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act**
- **FEDERAL EDUCATION LAW**
  - **Uninterrupted Scholars Act (FERPA Amendment)**

Information can be released without parental consent to:

- "an **agency caseworker or other representative** of a State or local child welfare agency, or tribal organization… who has the **right to access a student's case plan**

- when such agency or organization is **legally responsible**, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the **care and protection** of the student

- provided that the education records, or the personally identifiable information contained in such records, of the student will **not be disclosed** … **except to an individual or entity engaged in addressing the student's education needs….**

Every Student Succeeds Act

Here are five ways Youth in Foster Care benefit from the new law:

- **Youth in Foster Care will be able to remain in their original school even if they change placements.** Schools will work together with child welfare agencies to ensure that Youth in Foster Care have school transportation.

- **Youth in Foster Care will not face as much bullying.** The new law requires schools to reduce bullying, which would mean a significant improvement in school environments for Youth in Foster Care who are often bullied.

- **Youth in Foster Care will have more access to Charter schools.** Sometimes, a Charter school is a better environment for students with diverse backgrounds.

- **Youth in Foster Care and families involved with the foster care system will have access to services through Family Engagement Centers.** To receive funding, the centers must prove that the services offered are helpful and useful for Youth in Foster Care and families involved in foster care.

- **Youth in Foster Care will continue to see improvements in their educational experiences as more information is collected and tracked.** Right now, there is not enough information about the educational experiences of Youth in Foster Care. The law requires reports to policymakers about the status of foster youth in education.

Federal and State Postsecondary Policies

Federal:
- Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)
- College Cost Reduction and Access Act (Pell Grant increases, etc...)
- Chafee Foster Care Independence Act/ETV – 16 or older
- Extended Medicaid coverage - ACA
- Carl D. Perkins Career And Technical Education Act

State (just a few):
- College tuition waivers (22 states)
- Passport to College Promise Scholarship (WA)
- California AB 194 – priority college registration
- California AB 12 – extend beyond age 18 up to age 21

Resources

Education Curriculum and Training

Casey Family Programs: Endless Dreams

A national technical assistance resource and information clearinghouse on legal and policy matters affecting the education of children and youth in foster care. www.fostercareandeducation.org

http://www.casey.org/resources/publications/directory/subject/Education_k12.htm

School-based liaisons

McKinney-Vento

State law created education liaisons (Texas, Colorado, Missouri)

Trauma-Informed Practices

Compassionate Schools Initiative (Washington)

> Provides training, guidance, referral, and technical assistance.   Not a program, but a process to cultivate a climate that benefits <u>all</u> students.

Trauma Sensitive Schools (Massachusetts)
http://www.massadvocates.org/documents/HTCL_9-09.pdf

Postsecondary Education Resources

- *Foster Care and Student Success: Texas Systems Working Together to Transform Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care* (2013). Texas Education Agency and the Supreme Court of Texas, Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families (Children's Commission), October 18. http://www.tea.state.tx.us/news_release.aspx?id=25769807807

- *Foster Youth Campus Support Programs: A Leadership Guide* (2013). California College Pathways, June. www.cacollegepathways.org/sites/default/files/training_event_files/13-7-25_fostercampus_final.pdf

- *Foster Youth: Supporting Educational Success – Trainers Guide* (2014), California College Pathways www.cacollegepathways.org/sites/default/files/campus_foster_youth_training_manual_0.pdf

- *It's my life: Postsecondary education and training* and *financial aid excerpt* (2006). Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA. http://nyccollegeline.org/resources/it-s-my-life-postsecondary-education-and-training-guide

- *Providing Effective Financial Aid Assistance to Students from Foster Care and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: A Key to Higher Education Access and Success (2009). Tracy Fried & Associates.* http://www.nasfaa.org/counselors/Resources_for_Counselors.aspx

- *Supporting success: Improving higher education outcomes for students from foster care – A Framework for Program Enhancement - Version 2.0* (2010).Casey Family Programs, Seattle, WA. www.casey.org/Resources/Publications/SupportingSuccess.htm

Questions?

Corinne Nilsen

Executive Director, Kansas Kids @ GEAR UP

Wichita State University

1845 Fairmount, Wichita, KS 67260-0110

316-978-7810

corinne.nilsen@wichita.edu

Thank you!

Thank You!

Thank you for attending the 'Serving Undocumented, Homeless, and Foster Care Students' workshop session.

- To download materials used during this session, please visit *www.edpartnerships.org/materials*