

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

FOR EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

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Lunch + Learn: Campus Connections for Education Professionals

January 28, 2025 | Berks County Intermediate Unit, Reading, PA

AGENDA	
11:00 am – 1:00 pm	Welcome and Introductions
	Transitioning to Higher Education: Youth Experiencing Homelessness and Foster Care
	Higher Education Requirements for Local Education Agencies
	Financial Aid for Youth in Foster Care
	Financial Aid for Youth Experiencing Homelessness and Helping Youth Successfully Transition to Higher Education Guest Speaker: Jillian Sitjar, SchoolHouse Connection
	Campus Support Programs and Other Resources



ASSESSMENT TOOL:

STUDENTS IN

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Assessment Tool for Local Education Agencies:

Supporting MKV, ESSA, and Act 1 Students in Accessing Higher Education

Local Education Agencies (LEAs), including public school districts and public charter/cyber charter schools, are required to provide specific support for students experiencing homelessness/McKinney-Vento-eligible students (MKV students), students experiencing foster care/Every Student Succeeds Act-eligible students (ESSA students), and students who have experienced educational instability/Act 1-eligible students (Act 1 students). LEAs may utilize this assessment tool to examine their current practices and to establish improvement plans.

For more information about MKV, ESSA, and Act 1 eligibility, visit: https://sites.google.com/berksiu.org/ecyeh.

A. Local Education Agency Responsibilities

1a. Older ESSA students are given opportunities to discuss college and career pathways, including the PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program *(created by Act 16 of 2019)*.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

2a. Act 1 students in grades 9-12 are provided with an individualized graduation plan that outlines all necessary courses.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

3a. Unaccompanied MKV students are informed of their status as independent students under the Higher Education Act of 1965 *(20 U.S.C. § 1087vv)* and receive assistance verifying this status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

B. Identification and Referral

1b. Our LEA has procedures for identifying and referring MKV, ESSA, and Act 1 students for educational services within the school.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

2b. Our staff is well trained on the LEA's process for identifying and referring MKV, ESSA, and Act 1 students and is aware of the LEA liaison(s).

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

3b. Our LEA has procedures to support MKV, ESSA, and Act 1 students who are transitioning to higher education.
Current Practices: **Needs Improvement:** **Priority:** Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐
4b. Our LEA has procedures to identify MKV students who are unaccompanied youth and eliminate their educational barriers.
Current Practices: **Needs Improvement:** **Priority:** Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐
5b. Our LEA staff maintain confidentiality and the use of sensitive language when working with MKV, ESSA, and Act 1 students.
Current Practices: **Needs Improvement:** **Priority:** Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

C. Reaching High School Graduation

1c. MKV and ESSA students are supported in establishing and meeting goals to reach graduation.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

2c. Act 1 students are assigned and aware of a point of contact who will assist in developing a graduation plan.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

3c. MKV, ESSA, and Act 1 students are provided with credit recovery options when needed.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

4c. MKV, ESSA, and Act 1 students are regularly contacted to offer support, break down any educational barriers, and ensure they are on track for school success.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

D. Post-High School Planning

1d. MKV and ESSA students interested in attending college are supported in taking the ACT/SAT exams when required for enrollment and are made aware of any available fee waivers.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

2d. MKV and ESSA students are provided opportunities to learn about higher education options through campus visits, meetings with college representatives, online research, and more.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

3d. Our LEA partners with local colleges and universities. LEA staff is aware of higher education support programs for students experiencing homelessness and foster care.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

E. Financial Aid Awareness and Application

1e. Our LEA provides workshops on completing the FAFSA and other scholarship/grant opportunities.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

2e. Unaccompanied MKV students know of their ability to apply for the FAFSA as independent students.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

3e. Unaccompanied MKV students are proactively provided letters verifying independent student status for applying for the FAFSA, regardless of the student's post-high school plans.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

4e. ESSA students are made aware of all possible financial aid supports including (1) potential independent student status for the FAFSA, (2) PA Chafee Education and Training Grant, and (3) PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver, when applicable.

Resources: Foster Care to College webpage – QR code on pg 17

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

F. Successful Transition to Post-Secondary Education

1f. MKV and ESSA students who are graduating and advancing to post-secondary education are connected to a point of contact on the campus where they will be attending.

Current Practices:

Needs Improvement:

Priority: Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

2f. Our LEA partners with various colleges and universities to encourage a campus point of contact for students experiencing homelessness.
Current Practices: **Needs Improvement:** **Priority:** Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐
3f. Graduating MKV and ESSA students are assisted in locating relevant community resources through provided materials or individualized support.
Current Practices: **Needs Improvement:** **Priority:** Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐
4f. MKV, ESSA, and Act 1 graduates are contacted over the summer before the start of their post-secondary education to assess needs and provide support for moving on to their post-graduation plans. These supports could include but are not limited to access to tutoring, a campus point of contact, resources for daily living needs, school supplies, etc.
Current Practices: **Needs Improvement:** **Priority:** Low ☐ Medium ☐ High ☐

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PA FINANCIAL AID

Pennsylvania's Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) Program

The Chafee ETG Program is a federally funded, state-administered program that provides grant assistance for eligible foster youth attending post-secondary schools that receive Title IV funding.

The PA Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) facilitates the program for the PA Department of Human Services. The maximum reward is $5,000 per academic year depending on funding and is subject to change.

To receive the grant, students must:

- Be a PA resident with a high school diploma.
- Qualify for the PA Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood.
- Have been in foster care at any point since age 16 or adopted from foster care after age 16.
- Complete the FAFSA.
- Have not reached the age of 26 by July 1 of the upcoming academic year for which Chafee ETG is received.
- Be enrolled as an undergraduate at least half-time in a college approved for Title IV funding.
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress and demonstrate financial need.
- Not default on a federal student loan or owe a refund on other Title IV aid.
- Have not received Chafee ETG for 5 years (consecutive or not).

To apply for the grant, students must:

- File the FAFSA.
- Complete the Chafee ETG Program Application for the current year. *
- Mail or fax the application to:

PHEAA
PA State Grant and Special Programs
P.O. Box 8157
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8157

Fax: (717) 720-3786

*Deadlines and applications can be found on PHEAA's website.

Pennsylvania's Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program

The FosterEd Program grants foster youth who meet Chafee ETG eligibility requirements a waiver for tuition and any mandatory fees at post-secondary schools in PA receiving Title IV funding. The waiver does not extend to room and board or meal fees.

The waiver applies to the amount remaining after all other forms of financial aid have been applied to the student's account. Students who apply for the Chafee ETG Program are automatically evaluated for eligibility for the FosterEd Program.

To receive the FosterEd tuition waiver, students must:

- Be a PA resident with a high school diploma.
- Have been in foster care at any point since age 16 or adopted from foster care after age 16.
- Complete the FAFSA.
- Qualify/apply for Pennsylvania's Chafee ETG Program.
- Have not reached age 26 by July 1 of the upcoming school year for which the FosterEd waiver is received.
- Be enrolled as an undergraduate at least half-time in a college approved for Title IV funding.
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress and demonstrate financial need.
- Not default on a federal student loan or owe a refund on other Title IV aid.
- Have not received a FosterEd waiver for 5 years (consecutive or not).

To apply for the grant, students must:

- File the FAFSA.
- Enroll in a PA postsecondary school approved for Title IV funding.
- Complete the Chafee ETG Program Application for the current year. *
- Mail or fax the application to:

  PHEAA
  PA State Grant and Special Programs
  P.O. Box 8157
  Harrisburg, PA 17105-8157

  Fax: (717) 720-3786

*Deadlines and applications can be found on PHEAA's website.

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ADDITIONAL

Additional Higher Education Resources

To access all resources throughout this workbook, scan the QR code below.

School House Connection

- Higher Education Resources and Support
- School House Connection Scholarship Program

Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) & Educational Stability for Foster Care Youth – Region 2

- Homeless Liaison Resource Library - Higher Education
- Foster Care Toolkit – Foster Care to College
- Campus Connections for Education Professionals Presentation Slides