Strategies to Support Smooth Transitions to Higher Education

October 20, 2023 | 1:00 - 2:15 pm Eastern
General Housekeeping

- Webinar will last 1 hour and 15 minutes
- Audio is muted - please ask questions through Q&A
- Session is being recorded
- Follow-up email after the session will include the recording, powerpoint, and resources
Today’s Learning Objectives:

1. Learn more about Georgia’s EMBARK program and Kennesaw State University

2. Learn how K-12 systems can support college transition with ARP-HCY funds

3. Take away actionable strategies for how K-12 and higher education partners can support active recruitment of homeless and foster youth
Agenda:

1. Introductions
2. Importance and Need for Higher Education
3. Examples of using ARP-HCY funds for transition best practices
4. Georgia EMBARK Best Practices
5. Q&A
6. Kennesaw State University Best Practices
7. Resources/Q&A
About SchoolHouse Connection

SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education.

We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

WEBSITE: schoolhouseconnection.org

NEWSLETTER: schoolhouseconnection.org/sign-up

- Federal and state policy advocacy
- Q&A from our inbox
- Webinars and implementation tools
- Youth leadership and scholarships
Need for Higher Education
Higher Education: Why it Matters for Homeless Youth

Some form of postsecondary education is necessary for jobs that pay enough to lift out of poverty and afford housing - 80% of “good jobs” are held by workers with at least some postsecondary education.

Higher education appears to be a protective factor against youth homelessness. A 2019 study shows four year college enrollment to be nearly four time higher for young adults without experiences of homelessness in the prior month.

New data links financial aid and upward mobility. In WA, all students who came from families with household incomes below $63K saw their economic status rise within three years of earning a degree and entering the labor force.
Download the Report:

1. Visit this link - bit.ly/3HsXsqL
2. Scan the QR Code

“Working Harder Just to Be Seen and Heard:”

Barriers to Financial Aid for Homeless and Foster Youth
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determinations by School District Liaisons

Source: U.S. Department of Education, About FAFSA Data on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY)
The FAFSA Simplification Act: Major Policy Wins

Large changes are coming to the 2024-2025 FAFSA, including a delay until December, from the FAFSA Simplification Act.

Significant improvements for homeless and foster youth were included and implemented last year (23-24 FAFSA) with guidance from ED in April 2023.

View this resource to learn how to stay proactive and stay up-to-date with the changes.

- Create a FSA ID (parents also need to create one if dependent). You need name, DOB, SSN. It may take up to 3 days for the account to be accessible
- Receive UHY/foster determinations if necessary
- Research scholarship opportunities
KNOW ANY COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENTS WHO'VE EXPERIENCED HOMELESSNESS?

Help them apply to the SchoolHouse Connection Scholarship Program. The scholarship includes:

- $2,500 Award
- 1-on-1 Support
- 3 All-Expenses-Paid Trips!

APPLY NOW AT SCHOOLHOUSECONNECTION.ORG/SCHOLARSHIP
ARP-HCY Best Practices for Transitions to Higher Education
● **Official guidance** from the U.S. Department of Education released on September 12, 2023

● **Clarifies and expands use of ARP-HCY funds.**

● Please circulate to superintendents, school business officers, and other administrators involved in spending decisions.
New Federal Guidance On Using ARP-HCY to Support Postsecondary Transition

- Assisting youth and their parents/guardians with completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and many other college readiness and college access activities, adding staff hours to provide such assistance.
- Paying for college application expenses such as registration fees, preparation materials, entrance and placement exams, and other fees associated with college applications.
- Hiring graduation coaches or paying stipends to counselors to conduct transcript audits to help award partial credits and ensure students are on track for graduation.
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How to Access ARP-HCY Funds

If you are a liaison, collaborate with your business office to utilize ARP-HCY funds to meet student needs.

If you are a community partner or work in higher education, reach out to your local McKinney-Vento liaison. Funds can be used to contract with community based organizations.

If you are unsure that you have funds, or if you have other questions, reach out to your state coordinator here.
EMBARK Georgia
The Embark Georgia statewide network serves post-secondary professionals and institutions to ensure connectivity, share best practices, and provide information exchange among youth, community based stakeholders, and K-12 educators in support of students who have experienced foster care and/or homelessness.
Meet the Team

Directors
David Meyers, M.S.W
Lori Tiller, Ph.D.

Coordinators
Jason Bedgood
Arden Bakarich

Public Relations
Catherine Elrod
What is **Embark**?

**Local: Campus Support Programs**

Campus Support Programs are located at many of the USG and TCSG campuses across Georgia. All campuses have a Designated Point of Contact (DPOC), and what develops on that campus is different for each one.

**Statewide: Embark Georgia Network**

The Embark Georgia statewide network serves post-secondary professionals and institutions to ensure connectivity, share best practices, and provide information exchange among youth, community-based stakeholders, and K-12 educators in support of students who have experienced foster care and homelessness.

**National: FAAN (Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide)**

Embark Georgia is one of 19 states across the country who serve as the backbone support (i.e., coordinating body) for a collaborative effort to increase equity in postsecondary education attainment for students who have experience in foster care.
The Embark Georgia statewide network serves post-secondary professionals and institutions to ensure connectivity, share best practices, and provide information exchange among youth, community-based stakeholders, and K-12 educators in support of students who have experienced foster care and/or homeless.
Embark Georgia

**Mission:** to increase college access and retention for youth who have experienced foster care or homelessness.

**Strategies:**
- Relationship building
- Information sharing
- Supporting Designated Points of Contact (DPOC)
- Fostering the growth of campus-based programs across Georgia campuses.

**Activities:**
- Embark Conference
- Regional Coalitions
- Summer Pre-collegiate programming
- Development/Support of DPOCs and Campus Programming
- Research & Evaluation
Partnering with Admissions

- Early recruitment
- One day on campus
- Meet with students and professors
- Campus Tour
- Lunch in Dining Hall
- Optional additional tours of dorms and amenities
Partnering with Admissions
History of Summer Programming

First offered at UGA in 2011 – developed partnership with DFCS to recruit and get their blessing
Focus on youth in foster care
Designed to be a college exposure opportunity
Program and activities have evolved and structure has remained consistent with five days and four nights on campus
Utilize college student mentors as supportive staff/interpreters for participants
In 2023 partnered with the University System of Georgia to offer multiple programs across the state
2023 Summer Programming Info

East Georgia State College
- June 6-8
- 7 participants

University of Georgia
- June 11-15
- 25 participants

Dalton State College
- June 12-15
- 16 participants

Valdosta State University
- June 21-23
- 16 participants

South Georgia State College
- June 22-25
- 5 participants

Savannah State University
- June 25-30
- 16 participants

- Application opened March 7th
- Application closed May 10th
- 60% of applications submitted post-deadline
- Total Applicants: 87
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Interest in Multiple Programs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rising 10th Grade</td>
<td>26% of applicants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rising 11th Grade</td>
<td>31% of applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising 12th Grade</td>
<td>28% of applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rising College</td>
<td>15% of applicants</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Total Participants: 64
- 58% of applicants expressed interest in attending multiple programs
- 19 participants attended 2 programs
Summer Program Activities

Goals: raise student understanding of college options, increase knowledge of admissions process, connect with other students, mentors, and resources, immerse students in college life to remove intimidation and increase excitement.

Example Academic Activities:
- ETV Overview
- Campus Tours
- Time Management
- Scholarship Academy
- Financial Aid 101
- Campus Housing 101

Example Enrichment Activities:
- Bull River Marine Tour
- Rewind Savannah Theater
- Challenge Ropes Course
- Motivational Speakers
- Escape Room
- Bowling

“I wasn’t really thinking about college, but now I will consider it.”
Key Lessons Learned

Most Important:
• 45% thought the financial aid and scholarship information was the most important information
  • “It was definitely helpful. I actually feel better about paying for it.”
• 27.5% indicated the self-love and leadership skills were the most important things they learned

Most Enjoyed:
• Opportunities for connection: talking with peers and collegiate mentors and teambuilding activities
• Motivational Speakers
• Physical Activities

Suggestions:
• Look for ways to build activity, movement, and participation into academic content to combat dislike of “anything that involved sitting on a chair for at least 1 hour”
• Consider an “opt-in” strategy for physically strenuous activities
What’s next in 2024

RFP and application in development now
Expand the number of programs offered and the number of youth who participate
Provide technical assistance to prospective programs
Continue to help and guide program design
Lead the evaluation efforts across all programs
Contact Information

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Athens, GA 30604
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www.fanning.uga.edu
706 542-1108
Questions?
Kennesaw State University
KSU CARE Services

Our mission is to provide access to food, temporary housing, and other supportive services to foster students’ realization of a healthy, stable, and dignified life academically and professionally. Furthermore, to serve as a model of professional excellence and effectiveness by upholding core values of social justice, equity, economic sustainability, and mutual partnership.
ASCEND Scholars
  - Recruited out of high school
  - Experienced homelessness or foster care while in high school

Recruitment, Retention, Progression, and Graduation
  - Living Learning Community
  - Bridge Week
  - Workshops
  - Cultural Enrichment
  - Mentor Program
  - Peer Leaders
  - Individual Success Planning
  - Safety Net
  - FAMILY
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>22/23</th>
<th>21/22</th>
<th>20/21</th>
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<tr>
<td># Active Students</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average GPA</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA 3.0 or Higher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA 3.0 or Higher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Year Students</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETENTION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic 1st-2nd Year</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETENTION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program 1st-2nd Year</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>55%</td>
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PARTNERSHIPS/COLLABS

- Direct Outreach
- 1:1 Meetings with Prospective Students
- Prospective Student Day
  - Fall Event: Oct 23rd
  - Spring Event: Planning...
- Marietta City Schools
  - Drivers Ed Program
- Future Plans:
  - ASCEND Scholar Peer Leaders to connect with prospective high school students to assist with application, getting connected on campus, etc.
ADVICE TO YOU....

- K-12 meet with area colleges to discuss how to partner
- Assist with fees/costs during the application process:
  - Application and/or Orientation Fees
  - Campus Housing reservation fees
  - Open Houses, Campus Tours, and/or Admissions’ Special Events
The ASCEND Center, a national program evaluation and training center, is focused on increasing the capacity of college personnel to identify and connect student populations seeking assistance meeting basic needs to resources on and off campus; capacity that is not otherwise provided by the state or by the colleges or universities themselves. Basic Needs are defined as food, water, shelter, and safety.
Get Connected With Us

Kennesaw State University
Division of Student Affairs
Campus Awareness, Resource and Empowerment Services

470-578-5260
careservices@kennesaw.edu
@ksu_care
@Kennesaw State CARE
care.kennesaw.edu
Kennesaw Campus
1000 Chastain Road
Kennesaw, GA 30144

Marietta Campus
1100 South Marietta Pkwy
Marietta, GA 30060
Resources

- SHC Higher Education Page
- FAFSA Page
- Youth Leadership and Scholarship Program
- Georgia EMBARK
- Kennesaw State University
Let’s Connect!

Facebook: SchoolHouse Connection

Facebook Group: Homelessness & Education - A SchoolHouse Connection Group

Instagram: @SchoolHouseConnection

X: @SchoolHouseConn

Linkedin: SchoolHouse Connection

YouTube: @SchoolHouseConnection
Questions
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