

FACT SHEET

HOUSING FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS ACT (H.R.7278)

In the United States, 3.5 million young adults ages 18 to 25 experience homelessness each year.¹ Of these individuals, over one million (29 percent) experienced homelessness while enrolled in college or another educational program.² In a 2020 survey of 195,000 students at two- and four-year higher education institutions, 48 percent reported experiencing housing insecurity and 14 percent reported experiencing homelessness within the past year.³

Too often, college students must choose between stable housing and completing their education. Due to an eligibility limitation for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, **full-time college students who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness, including veterans, are not eligible for LIHTC rental housing.** Full-time student exceptions are made for former foster youth, students who are married, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families recipients. However, full-time students who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness are not exempt.

Fixing the LIHTC “student rule” is critical to preventing and ending young adult homelessness

Young people who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness face many barriers in qualifying for and enrolling in postsecondary education. But supporting young people in completing their postsecondary education is essential to breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness. Jobs that offer a livable wage increasingly require at least some postsecondary education, and securing a job with a livable wage increases long-term economic and housing stability.

Knowing that experiencing homelessness as a young person increases the likelihood that homelessness will extend into adulthood, it is critical that we ensure that every young person is stably housed. Expanding LIHTC’s eligibility would significantly decrease the number of college students who experience homelessness each year. It could also prevent young people from ever experiencing homelessness while attending college full-time.

- Students who live in dorms during the school year may not have access to stable housing when those dorms close for the holidays or the summer.
- Experiencing homelessness as a college student can negatively impact GPA and graduation rates.
- Unhoused students are absent at twice the rate of stably housed students.
- HHS is bipartisan and no-cost.

Congress must pass the Housing for Homeless Students Act

National Network for Youth, Covenant House International, and SchoolHouse Connection urge Congress to include the important **Housing for Homeless Students Act (H.R.7278)** in its next tax package. This is a **no-cost fix** that would allow full-time students to access LIHTC housing, thereby positively impacting postsecondary graduation rates and job attainment among students who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness.

To learn more, please contact Darla Bardine (darla.bardine@nn4youth.org) at National Network for Youth; Maneesha Horshin (mhorshin@covenanthouse.org) at Covenant House International; or TJ Lucas (tj@schoolhouseconnection.org) at SchoolHouse Connection.

¹ Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National Estimates.* Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/ChapinHall_VoYC_NationalReport_Final.pdf.

² *ibid.*

³ The Hope Center. (2021). *The Hope Center Survey 2021: Basic Needs Insecurity During the Ongoing Pandemic.* The Hope Center at Temple University. <https://hope.temple.edu/sites/hope/files/media/document/HopeSurveyReport2021.pdf>.