



Guidelines

The following can be used as a guideline to completing the mapping tool and assessment of the resources available to housing-insecure students on a college campus. Read the following section descriptions for further clarification on the value of the elements included in the mapping tool and where one can locate the resources on campuses.

A. TRAINING AND RESOURCES TO ADDRESS HOUSING INSECURITY

Colleges and universities offer training to faculty and staff and provide guidance on how to have a conversation with their students about housing insecurity, the appropriate language to use during such conversation, and additional resources to direct students to either on or off campus. Resources available to assist faculty and staff can include access to informational material about the needs of housing insecure students in higher education, instructions and example dialogues addressing how to approach a housing insecure student, and contact information to connect students with other professionals that offer assistance.

Where to find information on training and resources available to faculty and staff: Dean of Students, Provost or Senior Officer for Faculty Affairs, Faculty Teaching and Learning Center

B. PROGRAMMING & PARTNERSHIPS TO ASSIST SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

This section of the mapping tool assesses if a campus has specific offices and programming to support groups of students that face unique challenges and may be vulnerable to housing insecurity. If students are supported by offices and programs dedicated to meeting the needs of these groups, the students will have the space to focus on achieving housing security. Specific populations within the student body that are vulnerable to housing insecurity include, but are not limited to, veterans, individuals that were formerly in the foster care system, first generation students, DACA and undocumented students, students with families, students that are single parents, survivors of domestic and sexual violence, members of the LGBTQI+ community, and individuals that were formerly incarcerated.

If the needs of students within these populations exceed the resources available on-campus, colleges and universities refer students to community organizations that may offer additional resources. For example, if a student veteran needed assistance that

extended beyond the resources provided at the Veterans Services Office on campus, staff may refer the student to the Veterans Support Organization in the community.

Where to find information on programming and partnerships to assist specific populations: Student Affairs, SPOC, TRIO Programming, Financial Aid Services, Health Center, Counseling Center

The following three sections (section C, section D, and section E) apply only to colleges and universities that offer on-campus housing options to students. If your campus does not offer on-campus housing, proceed to section F.

C. BREAK HOUSING

Students that live on-campus during the academic year may not have a safe, secure, and stable environment to return to when campus is closed. Circumstances that prohibit students from having a consistent home environment to return to during breaks include financial difficulty, lack of familial acceptance, and interpersonal conflict resulting in violence. The stress and anxiety for students that search for housing options during break periods can be tremendous and negatively affect academic performance. Colleges and universities can address this student need by offering on-campus housing options when the college or university closes. Break periods may include fall break, Thanksgiving, winter break, Easter, spring break, and summer break.

Where to find information on break housing options for students: Residential Life, Student Affairs, SPOC

D. HOUSING CONTRACTS

In order to meet the needs of nontraditional students and students without a secure home, colleges and universities provide alternative options for on-campus housing. Housing contracts may be designed for students with families, providing programming and space for students to live with their partner and children. Additionally, there are 9-month housing contracts available to students that include housing during break periods occurring during the academic year. Further, 12-month housing contracts provide students with on-campus housing for the entire academic year and the summer break.

Where to find information on alternative housing contracts: Residential Life, Student Affairs, SPOC

E. ON-CAMPUS SHORT-TERM HOUSING

In cases of immediate emergencies, students may approach faculty or staff on campus to inquire about on-campus dorm rooms that are available for short-term stays. Spaces may be offered to students for free or for an additional fee.

Where to find information about on-campus short-term housing options: Residential Life, Student Affairs, SPOC, Counseling Center, Health Center

F. EMERGENCY HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS

Colleges and universities may foster partnerships with community organizations that provide emergency shelter, long-term transitional housing, and other services to housing insecure students.

Where to find information on emergency housing partnerships: Residential Life, Student Affairs, SPOC, Financial Aid, Counseling Center, Health Center

G. SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT (SPOC)

Under the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act it is law that unaccompanied homeless youth receive additional support during their elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education. In order to support unaccompanied youth, campuses have a member of the college or university staff act as a single point of contact (SPOC). The SPOC is responsible for helping unaccompanied youth navigate the college or university experience and often has connections with other offices on campus that can offer students assistance. Such offices include Admissions, Academic Advising, and Student Affairs.

Where to find information on the SPOC: Student Affairs, Financial Aid Services, TRIO Programming, Admissions, Academic Advising, Health Center, Counseling Center

H. EMERGENCY FUND

An emergency fund is available for students facing a financial challenge that prohibits them from continuing and completing their post-secondary education. There are stringent requirements for circumstances and situations in which a student is eligible to receive aid from the emergency fund. Often times, student situations are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Where to find information on the emergency fund: Financial Aid Services, Dean of Students, Student Affairs, TRIO Programming

I. INFORMAL SUPPORT OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Faculty and staff are integral parts of a college or university community. Colleges or universities can address the specific needs of housing-insecure students using online forums or listservs and mobilizing the community to help a student in need. Often times these channels of communication are informal.

Where to find information on forums or listservs that function as informal support of a university community: Faculty, staff

J. INCLUSION OF NON-INSECURE STUDENTS

Including other students in raising awareness and understanding the needs of housing-insecure students is a powerful way to mobilize a campus community. Student groups may organize and advocate for their fellow students in need. Additionally, students may engage in volunteer opportunities that serve populations facing housing insecurity, broadening their understanding of the issue. Colleges and universities can also offer courses discussing housing insecurity and homelessness.

Where to find information on student groups that discuss housing insecurity: Student Affairs

Where to find information on volunteer opportunities for students: Civic Engagement Office,
Student Affairs

Where to find information on courses on housing insecurity and homelessness: Course Catalog, Faculty

K. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL SERVICES

Financial Services

Under the College Cost and Reduction Act of 2007, youth (18-24) that are unaccompanied and homeless, or unaccompanied, self-supporting, and at risk of being homeless, are able to file their FAFSA and seek independent student status. Such status allows student to apply for federal financial aid without their parent or guardian's information. Prior to the College Cost and Reduction Act, individuals who were not in contact with their parents or guardians or not able to access the appropriate information to complete the FAFSA faced tremendous barriers in receiving financial aid. Thus, it is critical that financial aid administrators are familiar with the protocol and how to verify students' independent status.

Where to find information on how to assist students in filing for independent status: Financial Aid Office, SPOC, TRIO programming

Some staff at colleges and universities are dedicated to helping students achieve the financial stability needed to find stable housing by assisting students in raising their credit scores, building a credit history, finding low-interest loans, and opening a second-chance checking account. When providing students with the tools, resources, and guidance to raise their credit scores, students become better candidates in housing applications.

Where to find information on programs that provide financial coaching to students:
Financial Aid Office, SPOC, TRIO programming

Legal Services

Some students face housing insecurity as a result of landlord tenant disputes. Thus, staff in colleges and universities have developed partnerships with community organizations that provide legal aid, such as Community Legal Aid in Massachusetts. Professionals from the organization visit college campuses and offer one-on-one consultations.

Where to find information about legal services available to students in landlord tenant disputes: SPOC, TRIO Programming