

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH UNIQUE CHALLENGES:

Youth In Foster Care and/or Experiencing Homelessness

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Washington Student
Achievement Council



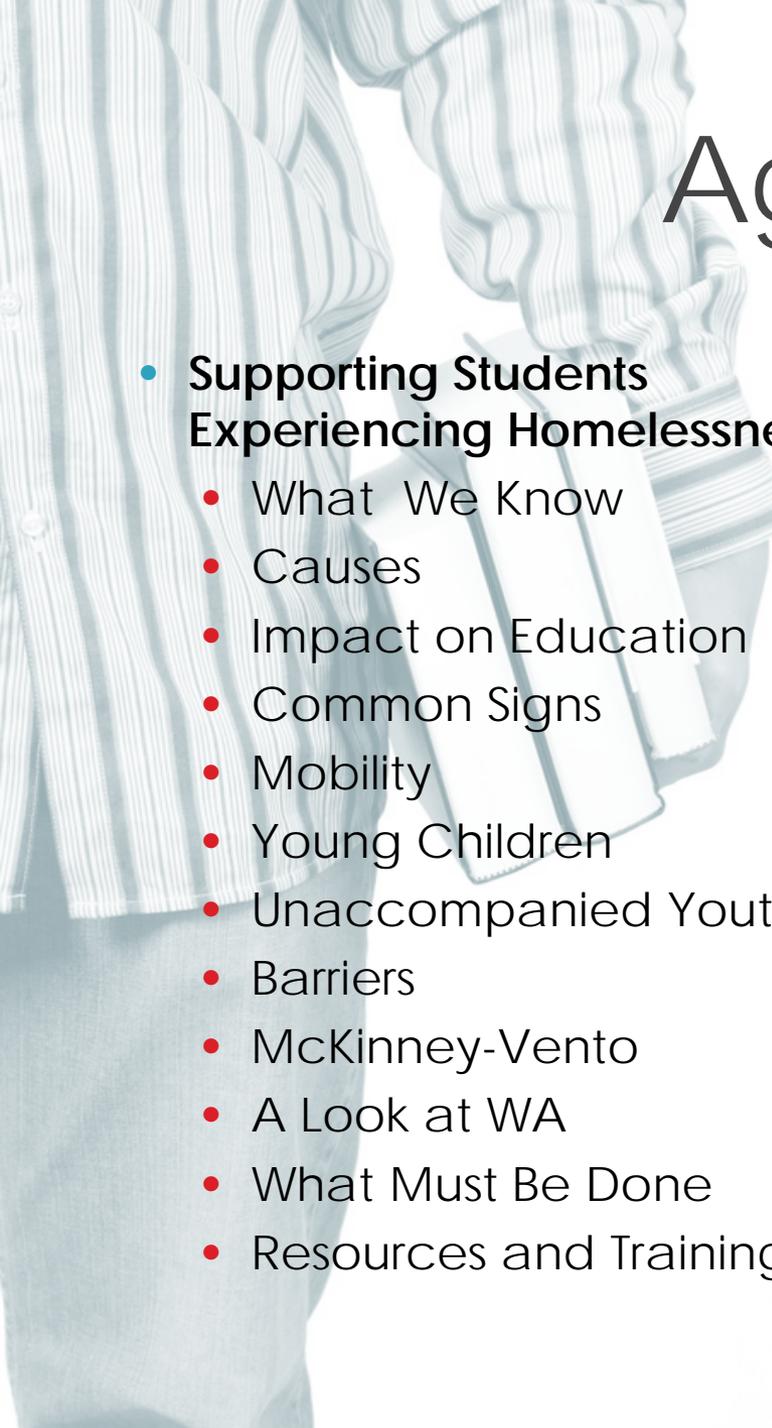


February 21, 2013

EXPERT PRESENTERS:

Melinda Dyer, OSPI Homeless Education
Program Supervisor, &

Dawn Cypriano-McAferly, WSAC Foster Care
Grant Program Manager



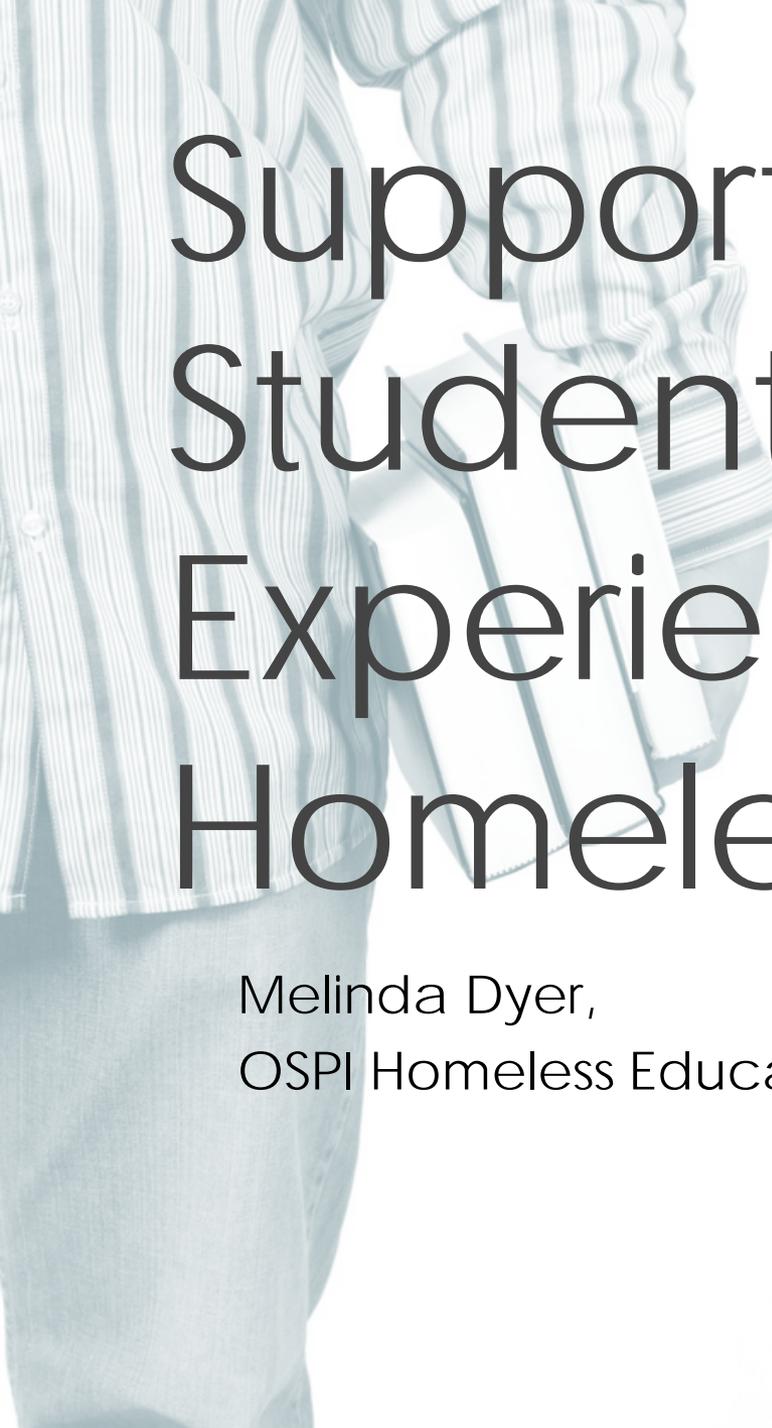
Agenda

- **Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness**

- What We Know
- Causes
- Impact on Education
- Common Signs
- Mobility
- Young Children
- Unaccompanied Youth
- Barriers
- McKinney-Vento
- A Look at WA
- What Must Be Done
- Resources and Training

- **Supporting Youth in Foster Care**

- The Connection between Homelessness and Foster care
- A Look at WA
- Common Signs
- Higher Ed Impact
- Barriers
- FAFSA
- Supportive Programs and Services
- How to Help
- Resources



Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness

Melinda Dyer,
OSPI Homeless Education Program Supervisor

What Do We Know about Homeless Children & Youth?

- Homelessness is **found in every community**
- Homelessness **is increasing**. Now over 1 million school aged children and youth nationally. (Source USDE)
- **Not just “street youth”** but also elementary children and very young children, (“accompanied” as well as “unaccompanied”)



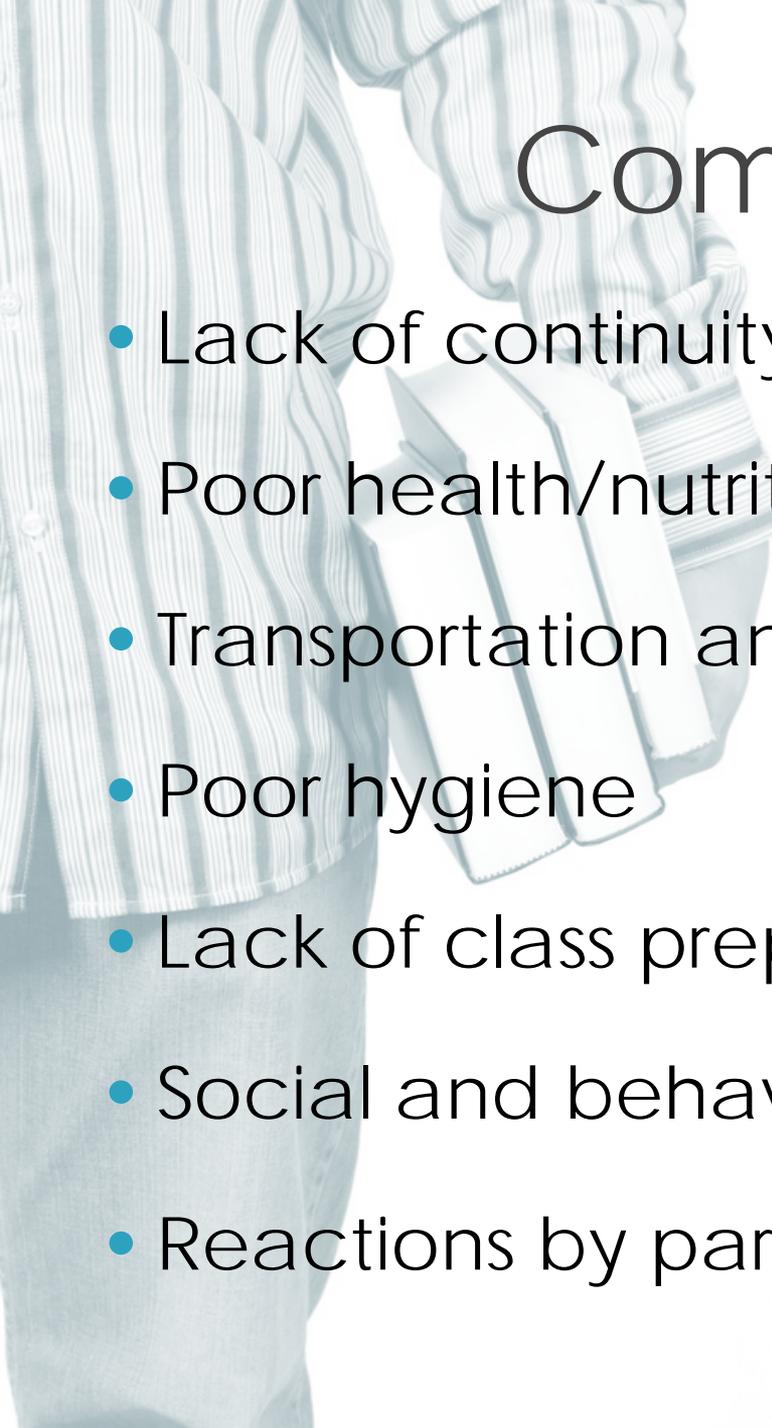
Causes

- Redevelopment and gentrification
- Generational poverty
- Health issues/expenses
- Domestic violence
- Foreclosure
- Natural and other disasters
- Abuse/neglect (Unaccompanied Youth)



Impact on Education

- Health problems
 - Developmental delays
 - Higher rate of absenteeism
 - Negative impact on academic achievement
 - Higher rate of dropping out
- 



Common Signs

- Lack of continuity in education
- Poor health/nutrition
- Transportation and attendance problems
- Poor hygiene
- Lack of class preparation
- Social and behavioral cues
- Reactions by parent, guardian, or child

School Mobility

- Students who switch schools frequently **score lower on standardized tests**; (20 points lower than non-mobile students)
- Mobility also hurts non-mobile students; study found average **test scores for non-mobile students were significantly lower** in high schools with high student mobility rates
- It takes children an average of **4-6 months to recover academically** after changing schools
- Mobile students are **less likely to participate in extracurricular activities** and more likely to act out or get into trouble
- Students who **changed high schools even once were less than half as likely as stable students to graduate**, even controlling for other factors

Young Children

- Higher rates of **developmental delays**:
 - Infants who are homeless start life needing special care **4x** more often than other babies
 - Homeless toddlers show significantly **slower development** than other children
- Higher rates of **chronic and acute health problems**
- Higher exposure to **domestic and other types of violence**

Unaccompanied Youth

- **20 to 50 %** of unaccompanied youth report being **sexually abused** in their homes, while **40 to 60 %** were **physically abused**.
- **Over 2/3** of callers to Runaway Hotline report that **at least 1 parent abuses drugs or alcohol**.
- **Over 50%** of youth living in shelters report that their parents either **told them to leave**, or knew they were leaving and did not care.

Unaccompanied Youth

- **20-40%** of homeless youth identify as **LGBTQ** (compared to 3-5% of the overall pop.).
- In '05, over 11,000 **children fled foster care** and were **never found**;
- **25-40%** of youth who emancipate from foster care **will end up homeless**.
- Many youth have been thrown out of their homes due to pregnancy.
 - **48%** of street youth have **been pregnant** or impregnated someone.
 - **10%** of currently homeless female teens **are pregnant**.

Common Barriers

- Enrollment requirements (school records, immunizations, proof of residence and guardianship)
- High mobility resulting in lack of school stability and educational continuity
- Lack of access to programs
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.
- Poor health, fatigue, hunger
- Prejudice and misunderstanding



McKinney-Vento

- Reauthorized in 2001 as part of the NCLB Act
- Main Themes:
 - *School Stability*
 - *School Access*
 - *Support For Academic Success*
 - *Child-centered, Best Interest Decision Making*

Who's Homeless

Children and youth who **lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence—**

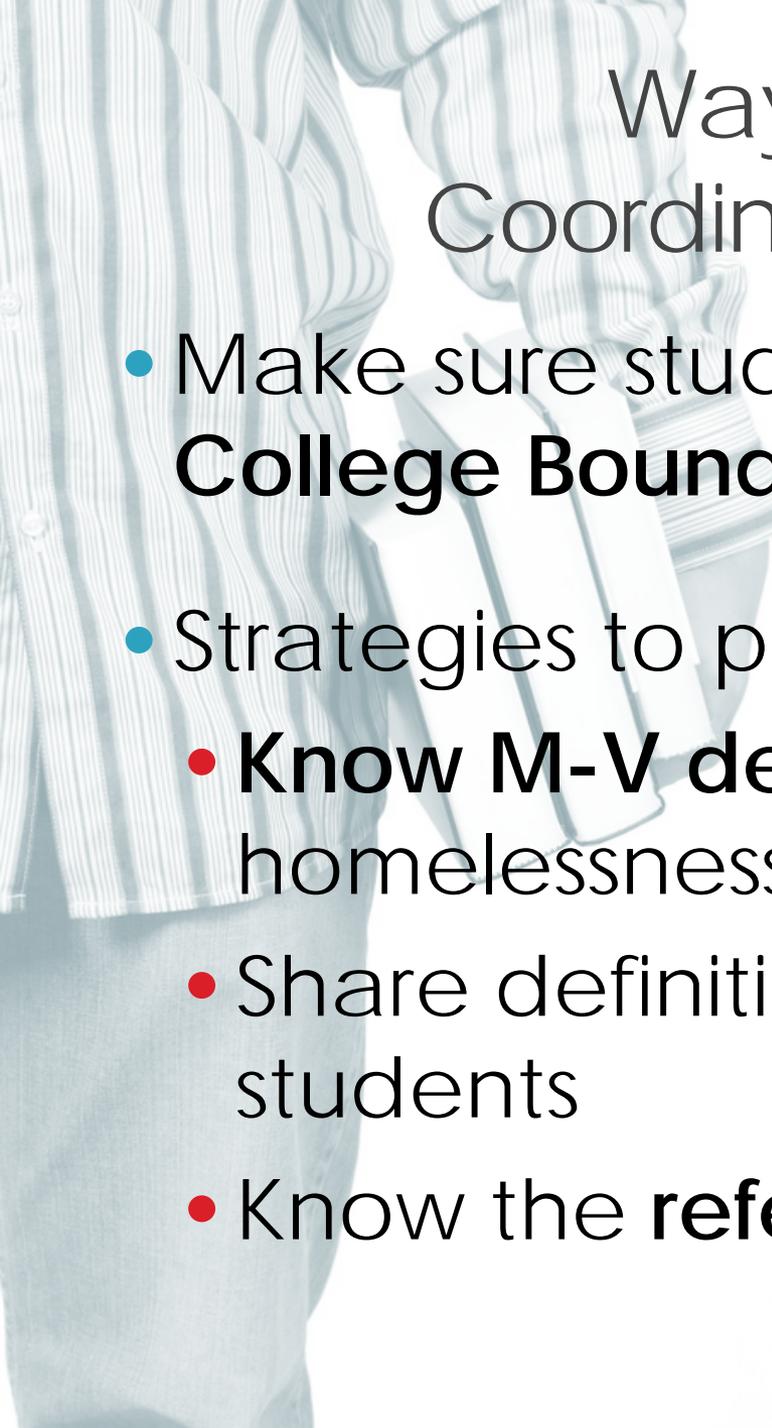
- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Awaiting foster care placement
- Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, etc.
- Migrant children living in above circumstances

Washington State

| Academic Year | Number of Reported Homeless Students |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2007-08 | 18,670 |
| 2008-09 | 20,780 |
| 2009-10 | 21,826 |
| 2010-11 | 26,049 |
| 2011-12 | 27,390 |

What Every District MUST Do:

- Designate a homeless **liaison**
- Actively **identify** homeless children and youth
- Ensure that homeless students **enroll in and have full and equal opportunity** to succeed in school
- **Link with educational services**, including preschool and health services
- Inform parents, guardians, and/or youth of **transportation and other services** available to them
- Inform parents, guardians, and/or youth of educational and **parent involvement opportunities**; including posting public notice of educational rights
- **Resolve disputes**
- **Find your Liaison:**
www.k12.wa.us/HomelessEd/ContactList.aspx



Ways GEAR UP Coordinators Can Help

- Make sure student is signed up for **College Bound Scholarship!**
- Strategies to prevent mobility:
 - **Know M-V definition of homelessness and M-V rights**
 - Share definition and rights with students
 - Know the **referral process**

What Can the Community Do?

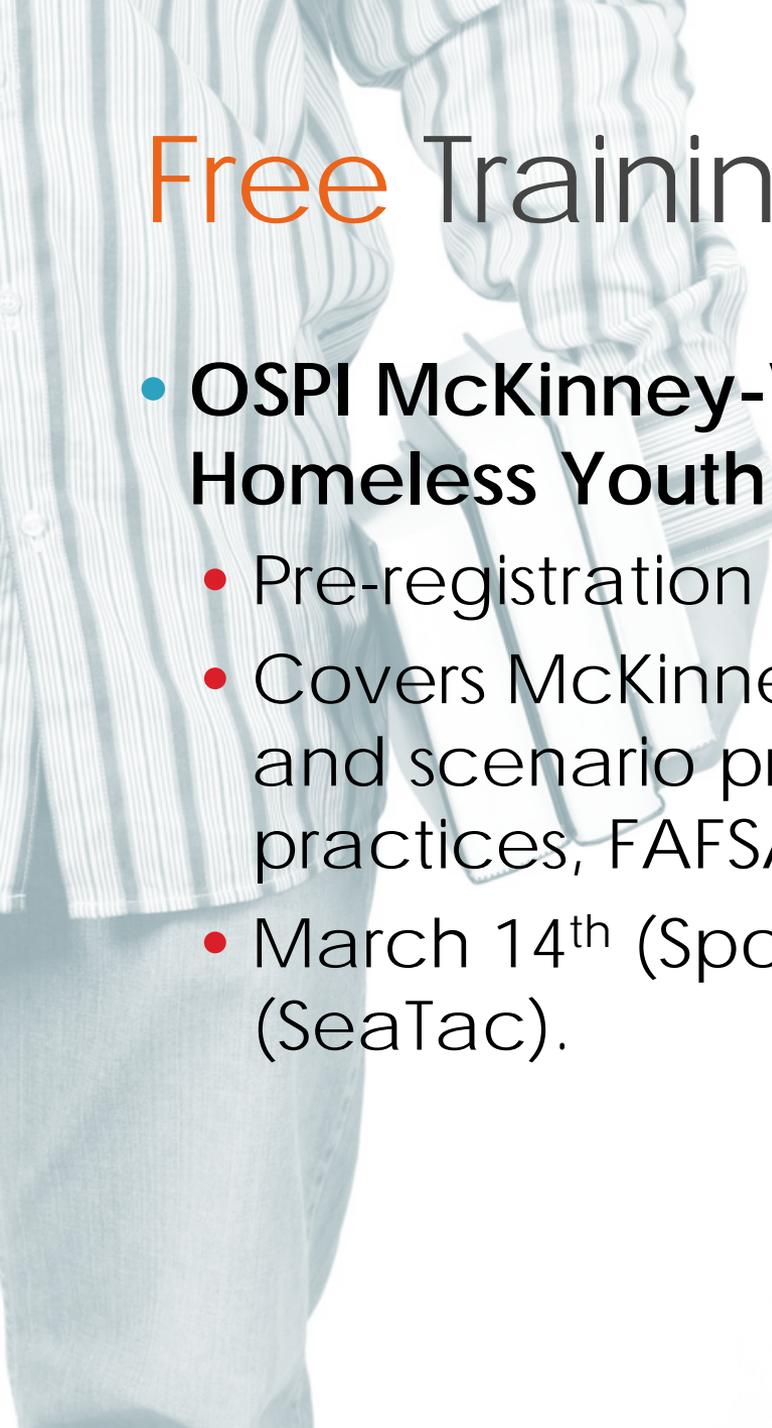
- Encourage schools to get involved with community homeless efforts
- Ask for a seat at the table...
- Become informed
- Link with reputable local, state and national efforts
- Be an advocate: www.naehcy.org
- Don't be afraid to "get political"!
- Donate to a local food or clothing bank
- Volunteer, serve, etc. at a meal site
- Volunteer your skills: counseling, legal advice and other advocacy

BE STRATEGIC...

Find out what is needed before you act

Resources

- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
• <http://www.naehcy.org>
- National Center on Homeless Education
• <http://www.serve.org/nche>
- National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
• <http://www.nlchp.org>
- National Network for Youth
• <http://www.nn4youth.org>
- Horizons for Homeless Children
• <http://www.horizonsforhomelesschildren.org>



Free Training Opportunities

- **OSPI McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Youth School Staff Training.**
 - Pre-registration required.
 - Covers McKinney-Vento 101, Situations and scenario problem solving, best practices, FAFSA, and more.
 - March 14th (Spokane) or March 15th (SeaTac).



Contact Information

Melinda Dyer, State Coordinator

Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

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www.k12.wa.us/homelessed/default.aspx



QUESTION AND ANSWER

A person wearing a light-colored, vertically striped button-down shirt is shown from the waist up, holding a white folder or binder. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, and the background is a light, neutral color. The overall image has a soft, slightly faded appearance.

Supporting Youth in Foster Care

Dawn Cypriano-McAferly, Dawnc@wsac.wa.gov

WSAC Foster Care Grant Program Manager

Homelessness & Foster Care Connection

- **22%** of **homeless** children are **put into foster care**
- **30%** of children in foster care **could return home** if their parents **had access to housing**.
- **Approx. 27%** of homeless adults and **41% of homeless youth** report a **foster care history**.
- **25% of youth “aging out”** of foster care experience **homelessness**.
- Lack of placements for older youth
- Youth run away from placements to avoid the system

In WA State

- In Washington state, **over 10,000 school-age students** live in foster care.
- “...Whenever practical and in the best interest of the child, children placed in foster care shall remain enrolled in the schools where they were attending at the time they entered foster care.” RCW 74.13.550

Statistics in WA

- **Disproportionally** Native American, African American, or multiracial
- **2 ½ x more** likely to participate in **special ed.** programs compared to their peers
- **Over-represented in juvenile detention** centers
- Much **higher rate** of school **mobility**
- State assessment results were substantially **lower at every grade level**
- In 2010, **only 47 %** of the students in foster care **graduated**, compared to nearly 83% of peers not in foster care that year.
- **Seniors in foster care were 4x more likely to dropout.**

Common Characteristics

Like all children, students in foster care have many strengths. However, they often also experience challenges, including:

- Frequent school changes.
- Behavioral or emotional struggles.
- Inconsistent caregivers.
- Poor preparation for school and little encouragement when enrolled.
- Disabilities that qualify students for special education.

A person wearing a light blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt is holding a white folder or binder. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, with their arms and hands visible. The background is a plain, light color.

Higher Ed

Research shows that **70%** of youth who are aging out of foster care plan to attend college — but between **3%** and **11%** complete a bachelor's degree.

Barriers to Postsecondary Success

- Students enroll, then fail to make satisfactory academic progress
- Difficulty finding stable housing
- Physical and mental health
- Lack of funds or employment commitments
- Family commitments or difficulty finding childcare
- Incarceration

FAFSA FAQs

If the student is in foster care at any time after **age 13**, complete the FAFSA as an independent student

- Do not need to include parental information (even if adopted after **age 13**)

Passport to College

- Scholarship assists with
 - the cost of attending college (tuition, fees, books, housing, transportation, and some personal expenses),
 - specialized support services from college staff, and
 - priority consideration for the State Need Grant and State Work Study programs.
- Currently valued at **\$4,500**



SETuP

- WA State Supplemental Education Transitional Planning Program
 - For foster youth ages 14-18 in WA
 - Offers information and assistance with:
 - Financial Aid
 - Transportation and Housing
 - College Applications
 - Testing
 - Course Planning
 - And More

Student Support Services

Students eligible for Passport may receive additional support services from their college.

Participating colleges agree to:

- Strive to create a lasting commitment to serve alumni of care
- Designate a support staff person
- Provide students with a full financial aid package
- Work with local social services agencies for needed supports

Education and Training Voucher (ETV)

National program for youth who qualify and are likely to age out of the foster care system.

- Current and former foster youth
- Helps students in their own efforts to secure financial aid to enroll in college.
- Maximum ETV award is \$3,000.
- Can help fund tuition, fees, books, housing, transportation and other school-related costs.



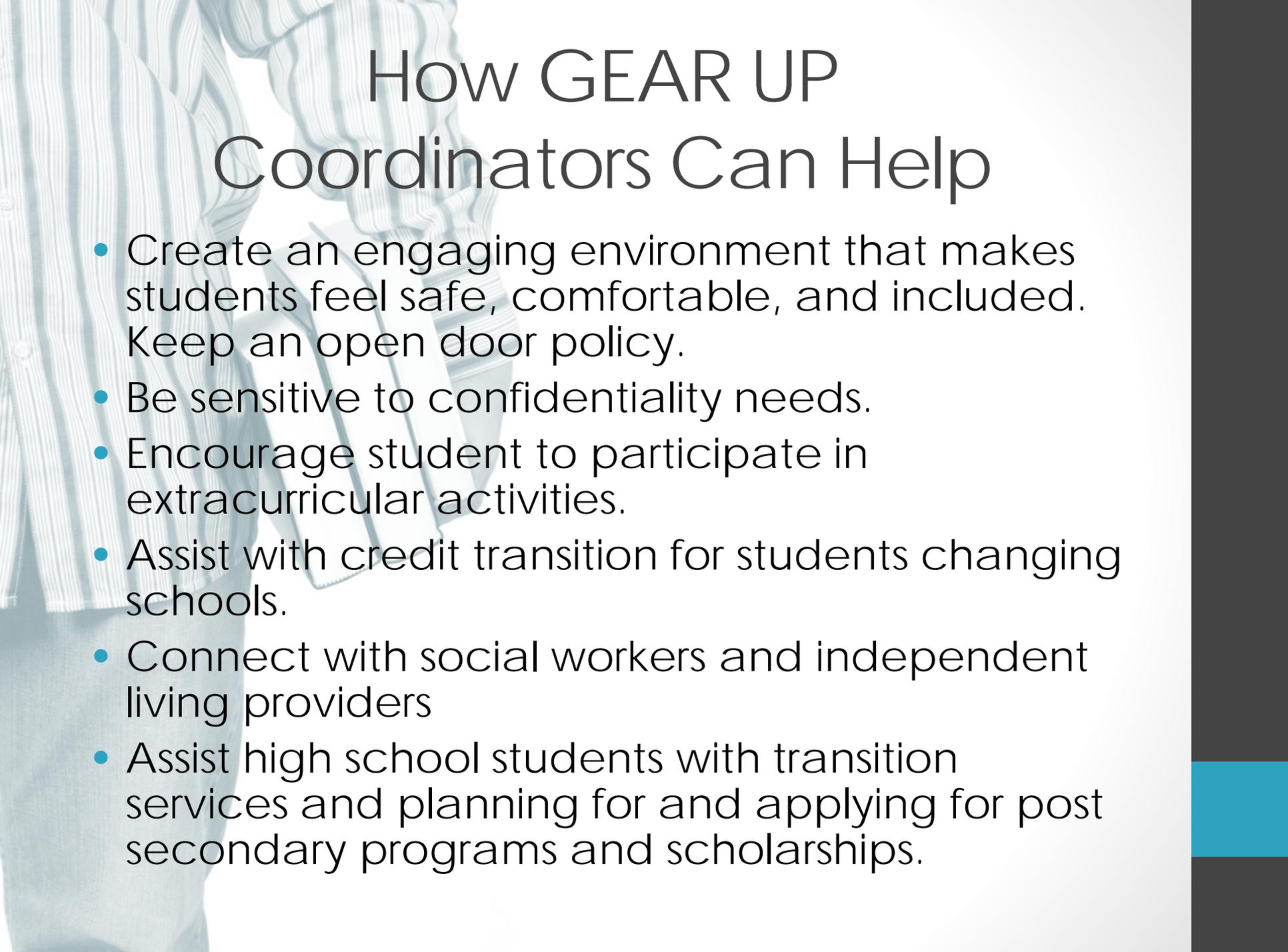
Governors' Scholarship

Privately funded scholarship administered by the College Success Foundation.

- Applicants must be graduating seniors
- Have an open dependency in WA
- Have a cumulative 2.0 GPA
- Be a resident of Washington
- Awards range between \$2,000 and \$4,000

Other Support Services

- TRIO programs must “identify and make available services...including mentoring, tutoring, and other services provided...” to:
 - Youth in foster care
 - Youth who left foster care after age 13
 - Homeless children and youth
 - All three groups are automatically eligible to participate in Talent Search, Upward Bound, Student Support Services, and Educational Opportunity Centers.



How GEAR UP Coordinators Can Help

- Create an engaging environment that makes students feel safe, comfortable, and included. Keep an open door policy.
- Be sensitive to confidentiality needs.
- Encourage student to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Assist with credit transition for students changing schools.
- Connect with social workers and independent living providers
- Assist high school students with transition services and planning for and applying for post secondary programs and scholarships.

A person wearing a light blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt is holding a white folder or binder. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, with their arms and hands visible. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Resources

- www.independence.wa.gov
- <http://www.wsac.wa.gov>
- www.collegesuccessfoundation.org
- ILSKids@dshs.wa.gov



QUESTION AND ANSWER

Thank You!

