

# Colorado's Single Point of Contact Model for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY)

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act reduces barriers and protects the rights of homeless children and young people allowing them to access and succeed in K-12 education. In partnership with the Higher Education Act, these programs assist unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) in graduating from high school, applying for and accessing postsecondary education and completing degrees.

## College Cost Reduction and Access Act

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) of 2007 made significant changes to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) allowing UHY to qualify as independent students for purposes of receiving federal financial aid. These changes meant UHY did not need to report parental information or have parental signatures on the FAFSA forms. As a result, they could more easily obtain the financial support needed to pursue educational opportunities.

The CCRAA lists the following four authorized verifiers of unaccompanied homeless youth status:

1. A McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison.
2. The director (or designee) of an emergency shelter program funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
3. The director (or designee) of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program.
4. A college financial aid administrator.

## Colorado Taskforce on Higher Education for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

The Colorado Taskforce on Higher Education for Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness was formed to lead a collaborative effort between: McKinney-Vento public school district liaisons; higher education financial aid, admissions and student support services staff; and public/private partners such as pre-collegiate agencies, scholarship organizations and funding partners.

The taskforce produced the following recommendations:

- Identify a safe, single point of contact (SPOC) at each college/university to serve UHY.
- Develop a streamlined process to other services within college/university sometimes referred to as a three-pronged approach (financial aid, student services and admission's offices) or "wrap-around" services for UHY.
- Centrally store personal documentation for UHY through a confidential, state-supported website accessible by the youth:

## Resources for Single Points of Contact (SPOCs)

The Colorado Department of Education maintains a list of Single Points of Contact for all public two and four-year higher education institutions and all private four-year institutions in Colorado. View the list [here](#).

When SPOCs are identified an orientation email is sent with resources to support them in their new role including:

- The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth's (NAEHCY) [College Access and Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness: A Toolkit for Educators and Service Providers](#).

A SPOC training is held once a year to go over basics of the SPOC role and facilitate the opportunity for SPOCs to network and share recommended practice.

For more information about a SPOC training please contact Paula Gumina at [Gumina\\_p@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Gumina_p@cde.state.co.us).

[www.collegeincolorado.org](http://www.collegeincolorado.org)

- Create a single form for UHY verification for use by all stakeholders.  
[http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/homeless\\_hesposcs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/homeless_hesposcs)

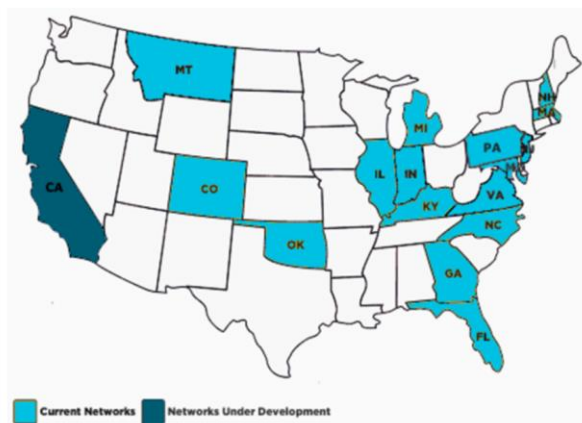
## The Single Point of Contact Model

In 2009, colleges and universities across Colorado appointed higher education homeless liaisons, also known as “Single Points of Contact” (SPOCS), to help UHY successfully matriculate into higher education and address the barriers that were getting in the way of academic advancement.

The SPOC is designed to be a safe and supportive college administrator committed to helping UHY navigate the college-going process. These liaisons help facilitate communication and get quick referrals among the number of departments and services on campuses.

Colorado's SPOC model was the first of its kind in the nation, now 16 other states are working to replicate Colorado's model.

### NETWORK LOCATIONS



In the seven years since the model was adopted in Colorado, multiple barriers have been addressed for unaccompanied homeless youth including:

- Waiving of application and other fees at higher education institutions (when possible)
- Changing the timing of housing deposits so students can pay upon receipt of financial aid
- Connecting students with other community and higher education resources such as financial literacy, peer support groups, food banks, etc.

## Where can I learn more?

- To learn more about Colorado's Single Point of Contact Model for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY) visit, [http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/homeless\\_highered](http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/homeless_highered) or contact Dana Scott at [scott\\_d@cde.state.co.us](mailto:scott_d@cde.state.co.us) or 303-866-6930
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