

Transcript of College and Career Counseling for Students Experiencing Homelessness

Lynda Becker: Good morning everyone, my name is Lynda Becker, Youth Development Coordinator with Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program at the Center for Schools and Communities. I will be your moderator for this session.

We have two presenters for our webinar today, Stacey Havlik, the author of the report that we will be reviewing, is an assistant professor of counseling at Villanova University. As a former school counselor, she specializes in training pre-service counselors and other school personnel to support their work with students. Her primary research interests include investigating issues faced by children and youth experiencing homelessness or other challenges.

Melanie Egan has worked in college admissions for 10 years and presently serves as associate director of admissions at Villa ... I'm sorry. At Villanova University. Her career has been devoted to helping perspective students and their families navigate the college search and application process.

We are pleased to provide you today with information, best practices and resources to assist you in supporting college and career readiness for students experiencing homelessness.

And now I would like to introduce Stacey and Melanie.

Stacey Havlik: Thank you, Lynda. Hi, this is Stacey Havlik. And as Lynda mentioned, we are presenting today in college and career counseling for students experiencing homelessness. So, we are tailoring this presentation to those of you working, particularly with secondary students experiencing homelessness, those who would be eligible to move to college. However, we will discuss some, we'll give you some ideas for those working with lower levels, with elementary school students, and middle school students as well.

So, briefly, as Lynda mentioned, I'm an Assistant ... This is Stacey Havlik, I'm an Assistant Professor, Villanova University. I was a former school counselor. I worked in Loudon County for a few years before I got my doctorate. And while I was at the University of Maryland, I was also a college advisor. So, I've

experienced working at the college level, but also at the middle school level as a school counselor. But, this topic comes from my experience doing research on homelessness, and school counseling, and research on counseling and liaisons working with students experiencing homelessness.

And I've also invited Melanie Egan to speak today as well to bring her expertise on the admissions process. So, I'll let her introduce herself.

Melanie Egan: Hi everyone, again, my name is Melanie Egan. I've been working here at Villanova for eight years. And I worked at Penn State University for the two years before that. And I earned my Masters in School Counseling from Villanova University a couple of years ago. So, I'm excited here to share my experiences working with students in the application process.

Stacey Havlik: So, we have a couple objectives today. We're first going to talk about the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. I believe most of you attending probably know this act very well, so I'll just briefly touch on it. We're also going to focus on the new, the reauthorization of McKinney-Vento under Ever Student Succeeds Act, particularly the college and career readiness piece. We'll discuss the benefits of going to college for students who are experiencing homelessness. Talk about challenges related to homelessness and going to college. And then finish the last part of our presentation on providing recommendations for supporting those students who are homeless going to college.

So, now we just want to do a quick poll of the audience to see who is here. So, if you could please fill out the poll and then we can tailor some of our discussions to those that are attending.

Lynda Becker: Okay. So, as you can see, we have the question who is in the audience. We would like to know if you're an LEA Homeless liaison, or you might be another school district personnel, you might be from a community-based organization or shelter staff, or you might be another kind of staff person from the community, or some other kind of organization that works with students experiencing homelessness. So, if you could fill that out. We have the answers coming in.

So, we have about 40% of you are homeless liaisons, about 50% are other school district personnel. And about 4% of you are community-based organization or shelter staff. And about 10% other. And if you have time, if you

can put in the questions box what your role is, where you're coming from, that would be great. Thank you!

Stacey Havlik:

Great. Thank you very much. So, like I said, we'll tailor our recommendations not just for school counselors, but those of you who are working with school counselors, those of you who are working directly with secondary students, or students who will eventually be eligible, or beginning to enter college.

So, since I see, we saw in the poll that half of you are school personnel and working in shelters, I want to briefly go over the Homeless, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. I won't spend too much time on this with the assumption that most of you are probably aware of the legislation. So, really quick, under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act every school is required to have, or every state is required to have a state coordinator and schools are required to have a local education liaison who ensures that the McKinney-Vento legislation is effectively implemented in the school. Students who are homeless are required to get a free and appropriate education with their peers and not a separate education from their peers. They are also allowed immediate enrollment in school. So, regardless of any missing paperwork.

I remember when I was a school counselor, I would have to register students. So, I would have to collect leases and deeds, and all sorts of different information. And so under McKinney-Vento, if I were to find out a student was experiencing homelessness, they could enroll in school right away without that paperwork.

Next, they can continue in their school of origin. So, if they move, or they're relocated during the school year they can stay at their school of origin until they are permanently housed. And lastly ... And there's other aspects of McKinney-Vento, but these are just the basic ones. Is that they can receive transportation to their school of origin if it's requested so that they can continue. And McKinney-Vento really is focused on keeping students in school and keeping them consistently attending school.

So, as I mentioned McKinney-Vento was recently reauthorized in 2015 under the Obama administration. And Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act, which replaced No Child Left Behind. And in this reauthorization, there's an important point under McKinney-Vento that really is the focus of the webinar today. And as stated here, now the McKinney-Vento legislation specifically

discusses, or points out liaisons and school counselors, so I'm going to read this statement. It says, "Liaisons and school counselors who are tasked with college preparation, should ensure that all homeless high school students receive information and individualized counseling regarding college readiness, college selection, the application process, financial aid, and the availability of on-campus supports."

So, basically, its saying that those who are working with students who are homeless in secondary levels, those who are in high school, need to provide tailored support. So, not just your one-size fits all college approaches, but tailored support to meet the unique needs of students who are homeless. And liaisons are specifically written in to inform unaccompanied students who are homeless that they can qualify for independent student status for the purpose of financial aid on the FASFA forms, and help them to attend or get documentation of that.

So, why is the college education important? If you look at this picture at the bottom on the green side and the red side, at the bottom it says, "Somebody who has less than a high school diploma is more likely to have a higher unemployment rate" in the red. And in the green, if you look on the right side is, lower median weekly earnings. So, as you go up with more education, it becomes a lower unemployment rate and higher weekly earning. So, if we look at no college at the bottom, or high school diploma second to the bottom, versus a bachelor's degree in the middle, there's a jump in weekly earnings, and a decrease in unemployment rate. So, it's particularly important for our students who are coming from homeless circumstances that a bachelor degree may bump them up in terms of their income and their unemployment. And again, this isn't the case for everyone. Certainly there are other options that don't require college. But, as it's the focus of our webinar, we're going to be focusing on college readiness.

So, as you can imagine, getting a high school degree and followed by a college degree would lead to higher attainment, increased income, and hopefully breaking cycles of homelessness for a child and for a family. So, college education can be critical for students and really could be a way of getting them out of a homeless circumstance.

So, there are some challenges of college readiness for students experiencing homelessness. And some of the research shows that students who are homeless report indications of wanting to pursue a college degree at a lower rate than their peers who are consistently housed. And there are plenty of reasons for this. They may be first generation and maybe they're not aware of college, or they haven't had support from their family because of awareness of college. And so, they may be less likely to want to attend or report attending. Or, maybe because of their homeless circumstances they may feel that they're not eligible. Or academically they may feel they're not eligible. Or financially they may feel like they can't go to college.

Interestingly, a new, a recent study came out showing that students who were previously homeless and those who entered college can remain homeless when they enter college, and may face food insecurities. So, there are high rates, especially in community colleges of food insecurity and homelessness that continues in the college atmosphere. So, just because they graduate, it doesn't mean that they get housed right away.

Next, they may be confused about the admissions process. So, there's research that shows that students who have experienced homelessness maybe are unaware of the admissions process, interview process, financial aid, and need additional supports. Because, as I mentioned, and I'll say this several times during this webinar, is a lot of students who are homeless are also first generation. And so, if you're first generation student, you may not have had that background of college preparation that another student who's parents went to college may have. So, students who are first generation or students who are homeless maybe less prepared because they haven't had that support, those supportive services, or support of many family environment in terms of college going as they've started to prepare for secondary options or post-secondary options.

But, there is a bright side. Research also shows that students experiencing homelessness see college as a really important option for them. And that they see college as an opportunity to get out of a homeless circumstance. So, they recognize that it is valuable to go to college after they finish high school and they can see that as a path for them. There's also opportunities for students who are homeless. There are fee waivers, which we'll discuss. There's opportunities for grants, different types of financial aid. And so it is possible for a student who is

homeless to attend college despite what they may see if they haven't been exposed or had college counseling or preparation.

Along with this, I've done research on school counselors who work with students experiencing homelessness. And I've found that school counselors report being under prepared to support students experiencing homelessness. So, although they see college as ... Those students experiencing homelessness may see college as important, as I mentioned, they may be under prepared because they're not getting that supportive service. So, if a school counselor, or counseling professional, or an advisor at the high school level isn't aware of the unique challenges that a student who is homeless may experience, then they may not tailor their services. So, my research has found that although counselors are providing really good college supports, they aren't tailoring those services necessarily to support students who are homeless. And because of their unique circumstances, they may need extra, additional supports that they don't get and they hurt their opportunities to move to college.

And the other, there was also a recent study, which I didn't include on here that school counseling websites often don't have information about college included specifically for students who are homeless. So, if a family has access to the internet and is going online to find information about college going opportunities for students, particularly those that are homeless, they may not be able to access that through the school website. If you do a quick Google search though, you can find plenty of students who have experienced homeless and were successful in college. So, I just did a couple ... I have a couple here that you can see. That there are plenty of opportunities for students to be able to go to college, to be successful in college, and have careers afterwards. So, these are just a couple that I found, recent articles of students who were able to, who are resilient and were able to be successful after high school.

Okay. So, I'm just going to take a minute break and see if there's any questions or comments before we move on to the next section. And you can type them in.

Lynda Becker:

So, Stephanie, there aren't any ... I'm sorry, Stacey, I keep doing that. There are no questions so far that have come in. There are people that responded after the poll in terms of their, what their role is, and that kind of thing. So, we have a lot of school counselors, and high school social workers, etc. So, if anyone has any questions now, you can put those into the question's pane. Is there any question

that anyone has at this point? We will offer an opportunity later and at the end of the webinar for questions. We'll give it a minute.

Okay. There is one that came in. So, Tykesha, said that she's sorry she may have missed this last point. Why would they face homelessness and food insecurity while in college? Would campus housing and meal plans be a barrier?

Stacey Havlik: Yeah. I think that's a great question. And I think often times, it depends on where you go to college. And Melanie will talk about that shortly. And I think this speaks to what we're going to talk about in terms of strategies and ensuring that a student who is homeless goes, is entering a university where they can be successful. A lot of this research, the recent research is looking at community colleges. So, they may not have those necessary resources. Whereas, other universities may have food banks, year round housing, and different opportunities. It just depends on where the student ends up going.

Lynda Becker: Yes. Housing is definitely a big barrier for students, especially over the holiday breaks. And we hear that a lot. Another question was, would this webinar be re-broadcasted at a later date? And the answer is, no it won't be re-broadcasted, however, everyone who registered and/or participated today, as well as all homeless liaisons and shelters across the state that are in our directories will receive an email afterwards that has a link to the recording of this webinar. So, it will be recorded.

And Stacey, I have another question as well. This is from Trisha. And what resources should be on the website for homeless students? So, she must mean a school district or LEA website, what do you think should be on there?

Stacey Havlik: Right. Yeah. That's another great question. And as Melanie talks more about financial aid, I think that's the big piece, is financial aid. And fee waive ... Information about fee waivers, information about scholarships, definitely information about just in general McKinney-Vento and the definition of homelessness, and who would qualify. So, if a student is homeless, or if a family has access to internet and they go online, they can find that out about themselves that they may not know. But, in terms of college, certainly a section for low income students. I mean, you may not have that labeled as low income students, but you have that opportunity so the family could look and see that there are opportunities for fee waivers, opportunities for scholarships, grants,

information about how to qualify for financial aid as an unaccompanied homeless minor if they are under the age of 22.

And so, all of those. But, that financial aid piece, I think, is the critical piece. Because when we're talking about going to college, if they can see that college is an option, particularly in terms of financial aid, then they can ... Then they build that self-efficacy related to college. And the student themselves may go on the website to look and find that information.

Lynda Becker: Thanks, Stacey. And one final question that's come through so far, is do private schools and universities have to honor the letter proving homeless status? And I actually don't know the answer to that question.

Stacey Havlik: Do you know the answer to that?

Melanie Egan: Well, isn't that at the FASFA level?

Stacey Havlik: Yeah.

Melanie Egan: So, yeah.

Stacey Havlik: Yes. So, Melanie said that yes ... Because, that's set at the FASFA level, so they should do that. Because that would be their financial aid through FASFA.

Lynda Becker: Okay. Terrific. There are no other questions that I see at this point, so just remember, at any time you folks can put a question in the question's pane and we will have another opportunity to answer questions for you later.

Stacey Havlik: Thank you. Okay, so we mentioned college readiness and now we want to talk about specific strategies. So, when we say college ready, what does that mean? And I like to say, and I've read this several places, that when you're preparing students, you're preparing them not just for K-12, but K-16. And K-16 means, that from kindergarten through 12th grade, you're assuming that students are going to be prepared to go to college, whether they eventually choose to go to college is up to them. There is certainly other options in terms of professional training programs. There are military options. But, you want to ensure that every student could be ready for college, and that those options are simply options if they choose, because that's what they're interested in.

So, college ready means that they have aspirations to attend college. They also have that concept of self-efficacy. So, they believe that they can go to college. And they believe in the outcome of going to college. They have an academic plan that isn't just freshman through senior year, it's that 9th grade through 16. So, it includes those four years of college and what that might look like. So, it doesn't end in 12th grade, there's a path that would lead them to college. So, when you're working with students that are thinking about what types of math that they would need to enter freshman year at certain colleges, and that would begin even as early as elementary or middle school.

Also, involvement in extra-curricular activities. And I think this speaks particularly true to students who are experiencing homelessness. So, if activities require transportation, maybe having to apply for grant funding to get transportation or finding ways to get the district to support transportation for students so that they can stay afterwards.

College ready also means understanding college selection and admissions processes. And as we mentioned, students experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are first generation, meaning that their parents did not go to college, may not be as aware of that process. So, that's the job of educators, or those working with students to ensure that they're aware of those different aspects of college going.

College ready also means engaging in college and career assessment. So, understanding what majors are available, what colleges are available to students, and what interests might align with different majors.

Planning for financing college, as I mentioned, the student experiencing homelessness who doesn't necessarily have that understanding of college, and they automatically assume that they cannot afford college. And that's not true, as Melanie will talk about different options for students. And last is, and I think this is a big one, is preparing students for that transition. So, again not just assuming that students not just being happy that they graduate, and they can finish, and they got into a college, but making sure that they go into a college that's a fit for them. As we mentioned, students are going to colleges, they're still homeless, they're still, they don't have food. So, making sure that they're prepared for that transition, and they're going to a college that's going to be a fit, and they can find success there.

So, research does show that college counseling is beneficial for students. There is a fairly recent study that showed that students from low income backgrounds, who had multiple contacts with the school counselor in 10th and 12th grade were more likely to enter four year institutions, than peers who only had one visit. So, I think this really speaks to the importance of seeing a school counselor, a college counselor, if you're working outside of the school encouraging students to see their counselor multiple times. Particularly, this is 10th and 12th grade, but I think it's important even much earlier on, starting elementary school, going through middle school, and high school and finding ways to connect. Because then they can build that self-efficacy and that belief that they can go to college.

Then other research shows that school counseling and high schools positively impact student outcome. So, students who see ... Who have better school counselor to student ratios and have more students who have more contact with school counselors tend to have higher graduation rates. They have higher percentages of students taking the ACT and higher scores on the ACT. So, there's a lot more research as well, but I just picked these two studies that show that contact with the school counselor is critical for students, and individual contact.

So, often times school counselors will go to a classroom and they'll do college and career readiness preparation for students. But, also encouraging students who may be in unique situations, like a student who is homeless, to have more individual contact with the counselor as well.

So, now we're going to talk about specific strategies when you're working with and providing counseling and advisement for students who are experiencing homelessness, in terms of their college readiness, their college selections. So, how do you tailor that process to pick a college that's a fit? How do you help students apply to college? Discussing financial aid with them. And then finally talking about transition support. So, as I mentioned, the importance of not just ... I think our role, or all of our roles, whether you're a liaison, school counselor, or whether you're working in a shelter, it's not just "let's get them to graduate high school." That's certainly important, but it's ensuring that they're successful in college and a career after they graduate.

So, the first piece is college readiness. And I think the biggest piece of this, is relationship building. So, that a student, as I mentioned, the importance of

meeting a school counselor is in meeting with professionals who can help with college preparation. But, if you build that relationship first, they'll be more comfortable. Students will be more comfortable to come to you, discuss college going, discuss they're plans, not be afraid to share their background or share information maybe about their housing circumstances that they might not share with someone else, that's important information to know when they're going to college.

So, I mentioned self-efficacy several times. Building a culture, so whether it's the school district, whether it's a after school program, whether it's a community-based program, there is a college, building that college going self-efficacy early and often. So, that begins in elementary school, thinking about having programs where students are, or atmospheres where students are able to see themselves going to college. This is early and often throughout the curriculum, and recognizing that they can go.

Having high expectations for students. I think often times students maybe from a homeless background, or if they're academically not doing well, they kind of get written off, or maybe they have behavioral issues. But, believing in students and having those high expectations regardless of maybe their background, or where they come from is critical so that they can gain that self-efficacy and belief in themselves.

I mentioned relationship building and trust building. This is critically important when you're doing college counseling and college support. Because a student who, maybe, they haven't identified as homeless or maybe they have identified, but unless they have that trust with you, they may not be comfortable sharing things about their income, or talking about the need for financial aid. But, if you have that trust built, they may be more comfortable.

Next is academic planning and goal setting. So, a student who is homeless and maybe transient, or has missed certain parts of the curriculum because they've moved, or they've had high absences, this is important to start early on thinking about their academic planning for K-16. How are we going to get them to college? And how are we going to set goals along the way each year? And including, maybe, enrichment or supplementary programs when necessary. So, if a student is missing a lot of school, how do you make up that time and ensure that they are prepared for college? Because, I think that's a big issue with

students who are homeless, who have high absence rates, is that academically they may be challenged in college. Because, they may not have had that preparation at the high school level.

Next, and again I mentioned, in terms of college readiness that extra curricular involvement. So, finding ways for students to get involved so that they are more competitive applicants and that they can show that they have a range of different opportunities, this also is important for career development. So, involving them in different activities may help build leadership skills. It could expose them to different areas that they may not normally have been exposed. So, different careers that they've not experienced, and so maybe it expands their interest.

And lastly, under college readiness, is conducting college and career assessments, as I mentioned, is important so students know. Often times students from backgrounds where, maybe they're first generation, or they've grown up living in and out of shelters, or with families who haven't gone to college. They may not be exposed to different types of careers and so they may not be aware of all of the different opportunities available in terms of different majors, in terms of different jobs that they could. So, by doing these types of assessments, interest inventories, or assessments in terms of college fit, they may, it could expand their world view and see different opportunities that may be of interest.

Okay. Now I'm going to turn the presentation over to Melanie for the next few slides just so she can talk more specifically about college selection and financial aid.

Melanie Egan:

Okay. So, some of the things I'm going to say are certainly going to overlap with what Stacey's research found. I'm definitely mostly going to be speaking from experiences that I've had over the time in admissions, and a little bit of research that I did for this presentation.

So, first the college selection process, a lot of the factors shouldn't just be started to be considered during a student's senior year. Ideally this process is going to become part of the fabric of their high school career. Kind of getting them onboard with the idea of college early on in the process is going to really, hopefully motivate the student to achieve in high school, to understand the connection between their academic performance in the classroom during their time in high school to the options that they're going to have whenever they're

ready to apply for college. So, students who are transient, or are transferring from schools, or maybe had a year that was off because of some extenuating circumstance that they were experiencing, knowing that that doesn't end their opportunities for college. Just keeping that college going culture going.

Also, thinking about college early on will help them make the right choices for courses that they want to take. Stacey mentioned the importance of math earlier. And certainly for college readiness and to be successful on a college campus, having an appropriate level of math is important. But, I'll also point out that very commonly most schools are going to require that students take the SATs or the ACTs. And students are going to be most successful in those exams if they have at least through pre-calculus. So, as Stacey mentioned, math gets tracked really early on in a student's experience in school. It could happen in late elementary school or in middle school. So, making sure that all students are having access to the track of math that's going get them to pre-calculus, or giving them other options of ways to take that class over the summer, or whatever it is, pre-calculus I think really should be a high goal for a student who wants to go to a college that has a level of competitiveness. It will help them succeed in the testing process as well.

So, a lot of things are going to apply to all populations that you're working with, whether it is a student that is experiencing homelessness or any other student that walks into a college counseling office. And you're going to want to find a fit for them. And so, things like, what do they want to study? Where do they want to go? What sort of atmosphere do they learn best in? What class size are they going to be most successful in? Are still very much at play for students in this particular population. But, you're also going to want to dig a little bit deeper, and encourage the student to dig a little bit deeper to find the resources that that campus offers that will make them successful not just as a student, but as a person. Are they going to be able to thrive on this campus, retain, and graduate? So, that's definitely the goal for all students, and this is certainly an at risk population that you want to make sure a campus is really going to support these students.

So, things to be on the look-out. What sort of counseling services are included with tuition at an institution? I know at Villanova, students are given x-amount of counseling sessions included as a current student. So, do they have programs like that in place? I talked about retention. Retention is just so important. Keeping

an eye on how many students return from freshman year to sophomore year will tell you a lot about the school's commitment to their students. And making sure that they have everything they need to be successful. So, looking for retention programs like, there are pre-orientation programs out there where students are offered a spot in a summer program, which is also helpful for students who are in need of housing earlier than the fall start.

So, we have some pre-orientation programs that are about six weeks before classes begin where students get a chance to sit in on classes, actually get a head start on their academic performance here, get to know campus, start to get to know faculty and staff on campus, and acclimate to the campus before the rest of the student body comes. And pre-orientation programs are also often geared towards students that may need additional academic support. So, it's a great way for students to get a leg up, and there's been a lot of success with how students who participate in these pre-orientation programs. Something like, what used to be the educational opportunity programs in seat schools, a lot of private schools have an equivalent to that program, will definitely do a lot to help students retain.

You also want to know, what are the opportunities while they're a student? Are there mentoring programs? What sort of tutoring services are available? Are there go to offices for students to seek out additional help? How proactive is the school in identifying students who are struggling and may need additional support? So, you really want to keep an eye out on schools that are going to embrace this student and do everything in their power to help the student get to the end.

So, we talked a little bit about housing and food support earlier. So, in regards to schools that offer housing, how long do they offer housing? So, is it guaranteed throughout their four years, three years? Is it only one year? And then what happens? Those are good questions to ask. Is it year round housing? There are some schools that offer year round housing. Those are probably going to be less, little bit less common. But, they do exist out there. Stacey found that Kennesaw State ... What state is that in? I don't know. Kennesaw State offers year round residence halls for homeless students. So, things like that are out there. Definitely requires additional research. But, we also mentioned housing over break. So, not every school will provide an option for students to remain on campus during break. They may completely close down their campus and have no food options, or any housing options. So, asking that question.

Villanova does have an option for students to stay on campus during winter break, our long break, as well as our fall and spring break. Sometimes it requires just notifying housing that they're going to be staying on campus, and asking does that incur additional costs, or is that included with the overall cost of attendance?

And then, food support. So, any student that lives on campus traditionally will be required to have a meal plan of sorts. But, schools that do not require housing or do not offer housing, they're definitely ... You're going to want to ask those questions about food support. So, are there pantry options? Villanova recently opened up a food pantry for students that might be food insecure. Some schools have a voucher program where they allow the meals that are leftover from students who have meal plans, that didn't use them, to be donated to students that need them. So, are there things like that to ensure that the basic needs of a student will definitely be met?

Okay. So, engaging parents as partners in the process. When parents are present, it's definitely important to try to get them to buy in to the college process. So, as we mentioned several times before, that this population does tend to be first generation. Meaning that their parents had not gone to college. And most schools would define that as anything less than an Associate's Degree or less, would be typically qualifying as first generation. But, each school has their right to define that as they see fit. But, making sure that the parents are on board with this to a degree is important, because the college search process, and the college application process certainly, it's not the easiest process. So, a student having to do this without the support of their family, or maybe having parents that don't support it in particular, would really be a stressful process for the student. And I would imagine make it less likely that they're going to follow through, through completion.

So, having this college going culture created in their schools, and then being able to have them go home to a college going culture will absolutely solidify their experience in this. And there's also a lot of decisions that need to be made, and details about their family circumstances that need to be accessed. So, having parents on board and cooperative throughout this process, making sure that they're getting access to the information they need, and helping them make really difficult decisions, is definitely going to stand to help them make it through the college selection process.

So, college visits are, I think, probably the best way for a student to identify with a campus. To see if they might feel comfortable being a student on that campus. And I think in Pennsylvania, for most part of Pennsylvania, we're really lucky that there are colleges everywhere. We're very saturated with campuses and universities. So, I would certainly encourage students to go and visit those schools that are in their local area. There's no cost to visit a campus in Pennsylvania. So, students could walk on to a rural campus, or an urban campus, or suburban campus, even if they're not interested in that particular school, just to get an idea of what it looks like to be a student on a college campus that shares features of another school that they might be interested in.

Some of you might be in school settings that are really lucky and have college representatives attending your high school to visit with students, typically in the fall, but also throughout the spring. Wanting to meet with interested students. So, that's another really great way for a student that really can't get out to visit a lot of campuses to still be able to get a chance to interact with colleges, ask questions, and start to build a relationship with the college representatives that might be part of their application process.

Another thing that, maybe, is less known is that there are a lot of colleges in the country that host fly-in programs for students. And typically those fly-in programs are targeted towards students that are underrepresented, or those socioeconomic status, or first in their family to go to college, first in their generation to go to college. So, students in the population that we're discussing today, probably will definitely be a good fit for a lot of what these programs are seeking out. But, sometimes it's hard to figure out which schools have a fly-in program? When do they have a fly-in program? Are there costs associated with the fly-in program? Typically they are very minimal to no cost to the student to attend them.

There's a really helpful blog that I'll share with you. It's called, College Greenlight. And their website is, blog.collegegreenlight.com. And they have all kinds of really great resources for students that, are working with students who have high needs in terms of income, or maybe the first in their family to go to college. But, one of the things that they're really known for is compiling a list of all the schools each year that are hosting fly-in programs with links to the applications, with information about how to access those. So, that is a really kind of hidden gem in the college world that no all students are aware of that could be helpful for you.

And another just kind of side note about that blog. I'm their biggest cheerleader. Is that they also host a list, that they then keep updated every year, of all the colleges that meet 100% need, which is going to be really key for this population. 100% need, of course, is determined by the FASFA. So, they have lots of other great resources on there. Those are the two lists that I'm most familiar with. But, again that's, blog.collegegreenlight.com.

And then, I guess that kind of plays into information to include on your college counseling website. That might be a helpful website, that sense of self-efficacy for a student to be able to go fishing for themselves instead of having to make an appointment with a counselor to discuss these things will definitely go a long way. I would also encourage you to consider putting information about local college fairs that might be hosted in your area, or financial aid planning nights, workshops. And maybe even consider hosting those events at your school, or teaming up with schools in your area. A college fair, perhaps, could have some costs incurred with tables, and any sort of marketing. But, a financial aid workshop could be very little to no cost to your school.

I know that FIA is really generous in providing their expertise on college financial planning workshops. I know that our admission officers here at Villanova are very frequently going to high schools for financial aid planning workshops. So, just to have that resource for your students in your school certainly is a benefit. But, if there are schools in your area, or entities in your area hosting events like that, having that information on your website for them to be able to access is certainly a great resource.

Lynda Becker: Melanie, I'm sorry to interrupt. But, there was one question specifically about the fly-in program. And that was from Sandra, she said, could you please repeat the type of student that is best served by the fly-in program?

Melanie Egan: Sure. So, typically, fly-in programs are targeting students that are underrepresented racially, and ethnically on their college campus. They're targeting low socioeconomic status students. And their targeting first generation students. So, those are generalities. Each school has their own goals and their own strategies for their fly-ins. But, those populations are probably going to see that they're going to have the most options for participating in a fly-in program.

Lynda Becker: Thank you.

Melanie Egan: Okay. Anything else to add to that? Okay.

So, we're going to move on and talk a little bit about the application process and financial aid. So, before I dive into this, I've been working with a college preparedness bootcamp that our local affiliate, Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling hosts. And in our first year, we reserved the, it's a three day program, and we reserved the last day for discussions about financial aid. But, the next year's we really responded to the student's kind of anxiety about financial aid. And found that they really couldn't talk about the college process without first knowing that there's a way for them to go to college financially. That financial piece is such a burden on everyone, but certainly students that are coming from low income families. So, going back to that college preparing them early on, and giving them information early on, I would just add that maybe not going into the nitty-gritty of financial aid, but letting them know that there are ways to fund an education no matter who you are. And that you can have that option, will engage them more in the possibility of going to college.

So, diving into the application process and financial assistance. So, even for families who do have parents who went through the college search process, I think they would agree that college application process today is quite different than when they experienced it. So, educating families about the nuances of the college application process will certainly go a long way. Every school does their own thing. So, you can't assume that because one school has this policy that the other school has that policy. So, research is really important in this game. And keeping organized. So, offering strategies of ways to keep track of the deadlines for each school. And students when they apply to college will likely be applying online and each campus typically has a portal of sort, with a username and password to see if the application is complete, and ultimately to see their decision. So, that can get a lot of usernames and passwords, so even just simply providing a form for them to keep track of all the usernames and passwords will go a long way as well.

I also know that when I was interning in a high school, we used a lot of student's free time in their schedule. So, if they had study halls built into their schedule, during the college application process, we sent them passes and had them come into our office and we sat with them and helped them out with the application process. So, if there are any opportunities like that to actually sit down with them, applications can be very tedious. There are a lot of questions. Sometimes it can

be confusing. So, having someone who is familiar with the process to help them answer those questions certainly helps as well.

There's going to be a lot of writing involved in that college application process, whether it be through resume writing, or certainly through the college essay. I would encourage you to encourage the students to have their written pieces reviewed by someone else. I know a lot of schools, or some schools build into perhaps the 11th grade English curriculum that there is an essay, preparing for the college essay. But, if your school does not have something like that, trying to engage your faculty in being a resource for students that are getting ready to apply to college, is definitely something that you might want to consider. Colleges use the essays to get to know the student a little bit better. But, also gives us a sense of a student's ability to write, and how that might play a role in their success on our campus.

Another thing about the essay to consider is that, the students that you're working with in this population likely have a very compelling story to tell. And it's certainly within a student's right to not tell us that story. But, I would encourage you to encourage them to find a way to tell us that story and appeal to our human nature to want to make sure that everyone is cared for, and is successful. So, finding a way to express kind of the resilience and adversity they had to overcome, or they're currently experiencing and maybe tying in the school counselor recommendation letter. That's also a really great way for students to have their story told. Really allows us to understand maybe some gaps in education, or a dip in grades, and things of that nature. So, we can only help a student and advocate for them if they provide us with information to advocate on their behalf with. So, encouraging them to tell their story.

I'd also keep your ear out for local community-based organizations. I mentioned the Pennsylvania Association of College Admissions Counseling, PACAC. Those organizations sometimes host college writing, or essay writing workshops for students. They might bring in admissions counselors to meet one-on-one with the students to go over essays. They also provide, they might provide, other college preparedness programming in your area. So, keep an eye out any emails, or literature that is sent your way. And certainly keep an ... Be communicating with that to any of your families that you think might benefit from something like that.

Okay, so back to the concept of cost. So, again, I think a lot of students that are coming from low income families assume that attending college means attending a community college. And that very well may be the case, and there is certainly nothing wrong with that. But, I do want to make sure that it's known, and that your students know that attending a private university is still a possibility, and certainly a public university. So, there are a lot of resources out there to help students cover the cost of education in a way that the government sees fit. So, your going to want to familiarize them with the FASFA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. If you're not familiar with the FASFA, I would encourage you to take a look at it and see kind of what the different nuances are.

But, Stacey mentioned earlier that on the FASFA, students can identify as unaccompanied homeless youth. There's a set of criteria that's listed and students can identify as meeting that criteria by saying yes. And then students are able to go forth with that process without having to include parental information. So, that's a barrier some people are saying, "I don't know that I can even fill out the FASFA. I don't have complete information about my parents, because I'm mostly independent." So, they do account for that.

Students also can use another address on their FASFA. So, if they don't have a home address, they can work with a family member, or a friend, or whomever they feel comfortable with. And they are allowed to put an alternate address on their FASFA. So, little things like that.

I'll just read a statement about kind of the unaccompanied homeless youth process. So, "Unaccompanied homeless youth under 22 are considered independent and may fill the forms out without parental information. Students are not automatically considered independent until 24. So, they must appeal each year." So, when students fill out a FASFA for a college or university, that is an annual process. They will need to re-file every single year. And a liaison can submit a letter of appeal stating that this student is independent and homeless.

Good. Okay. All right, so just even the process of considering applying for college, the cost associated with that can be overwhelming on its own. Thinking about the entrance exams, like the SAT and the ACT, AP test if they are sitting for those. And then college applications can be quite expensive as well. So, those can seem like barriers for applying to college, but I'm here to tell you that

they are not barriers and there's a lot of ways to make this, all of these costs add up to zero or close to zero.

So, I'm going to talk a little bit about fee waivers at this point. So, the college board is a, they are the ones that disseminate the SAT, as well as the AP Exams. They are a very well-known entity in the world of fee waivers. And just in my experience of reviewing files over the years, I very commonly see college board documents as a fee waiver in a student's record. So, with the SATs, as well as the ACTs, high schools and certain community-based organizations are given a pack of vouchers of fee waivers based on their population each year to disseminate with their students that meet the criteria of a fee waiver. If you're not familiar with who meets the criteria of a fee waiver, they're very clearly stated on both the college board website, as well as the ACT website. And I would suspect that they are very similar between the two in terms of what is required of a student to meet that criteria.

So, with the college board fee waiver, as well as the ACT fee waiver, they both cover two sittings of their exam. And the college board fee waiver also does cover two subject tests. So, some schools, typically more highly selective schools, might require or recommend, which we'll just call require, subject tests. So, it's great to know that students can sit for those as well. The college board fee waiver, though can also transform into a college application fee waiver. And students are granted four of those to send to four different colleges and universities. And they are very widely accepted as a form of fee waiver among colleges and universities.

But, I think what's probably becoming perhaps the most common form of fee waiver, is just by virtue of applying via the common application. So, the common application, if you're not familiar with it, is exactly as it sounds. It is an application that allows students to fill out their biographical information once and disperse it to partner schools that might be part of the common application app. So, Villanova is a common application school, as are more than 750 other colleges and universities. So, it's very likely that your going to be working with students that will apply to schools that use the common application. Now, some schools use the common application, or their own application, or the universal application. So, definitely look for efficiencies there if a student is applying for the common app already and any school offers it, you're going to want to use that.

So, built into the common app there are a list of criteria to meet a fee waiver requirements. And then a student can say, yes they do qualify for fee waiver. If a school that they attend, the high school that they attend uses NAVIANCE, then the high school counselor that's connected to their record will get an email asking to verify if the student does in fact meet the criteria for the fee waiver. The school counselor just needs to verify that and then it generates a document that is then sent along with their application to any school that they apply via the common app. So, you won't need any other fee waivers in the case of a student applying to a common application school.

If a high school does not use NAVIANCE, then the student does need to kind of coordinate with the counselor to make sure that they are sending a physical fee waiver to the colleges and universities they are applying to. So, that document generation only happens if a high school has NAVIANCE. Otherwise, they will need to send the college board fee waiver, or the ACT fee waiver, or any of those other ones I've talked about. And as a member of the common app, you agree that you will accept the common application fee waiver as a valid way to waive the application fee. So, that just started over the last, I think, two or so years. And it has been really a great way for breaking down that barrier of applying for colleges.

And then the last one that's affiliated with an organization that I'll mention, I'm not sure how well-known this one is, but there's the NACAC fee waiver. So, I've mentioned PACAC, the Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling that's a part of a national professional organization that is NACAC. And if you were to search for the NACAC fee waiver, you would find a blank PDF. That a counselor could use to fill out. And they recommend that you limit it to four colleges, but it's really just an honor system that a school counselor would fill out saying that a student does indeed meet the criteria and would qualify for a fee waiver. So, there are a lot of options out there to both make the cost of a test, or an AP test go away, and then certainly the cost of applying to colleges.

And then the last one I have here are institutional fee waivers. So, each school might offer a fee waiver for any given reason. I have heard students talk about how they got an email because of their academic credentials and a college said that if you apply, we will waive your fee, because you're a highly qualified candidate. So, there's things like that. Also, maybe some schools that if you come for a visit, they might offer you the option to waive your fee. But, probably

the one that's most relevant to this population is that, if for some reason you're not able to secure any of the above forms, most colleges, many colleges and universities will work with a school counselor one-on-one. So, sending an email to a school saying that the student you're working with is experiencing great financial hardship and will not be able to cover the cost of an application fee, might be able to render an institutional fee waiver. So, I think that there's plenty of ways for students to overcome these common cost barriers on the onset, and again help make it more likely for them to continue on the application process.

Okay. So, going back a little bit into the financial aid world. So, all schools that use federal aid are required to use the FASFA. So, the free application for federal student aid. Some private schools, Villanova included, will also require an additional application, and that is called the CSS Profile. And to be honest, I can't tell you what the CSS stands for. But, I can tell you that it's procured by the college board. And again, fee waivers could be applied to that document. The FASFA is free. The CSS profile does have a fee and fee waivers are an options. So, those are the two documents that help with school, and the federal government, and the state government to determine a student's eligibility for aid.

There are financial need based assistance, consists of things like federal loans, and Pell Grants. And those are, again, determined by a student's eligibility based on the information they provide in the FASFA. As whether or not a student applies for those. But, then there are institutional-based scholarships, or institutional-based grants. Grants, that's kind of the key thing to know about grants, are that they're typically a need based consideration. And that they don't have any requirement for students to pay them back. So, they are kind of the goal. Right? To get a a grant, whether that be a federal, or a state grant, in conjunction with a university based grant.

Scholarships, now there's really no universal way for me to describe how scholarships work at schools and universities. So, it definitely requires a lot of research. Some schools will automatically consider an applicant for a scholarship just by virtue of having completed an application for admission. While other schools will have scholarships that require additional applications, or a nomination, or potentially an interview, essay. So, even here at Villanova, we have scholarships that require all of those things, or you might automatically be considered for some other scholarships. So, we even have a variety of ways that scholarships are awarded and considered.

So, definitely make sure that as a student is selecting the schools that they're going to apply to, that they are going to the websites, doing the research, and making sure that they are dotting their 'I's and crossing their 'T's. It's very deadline driven when it comes to this whole process. But, especially when it comes to dollars that are being awarded. Students do not want to miss any deadlines when it comes to that.

And below we have here some outside scholarships. So, these are scholarships sponsored by companies, or organizations that are not affiliated with a particular college, and could be applied to the college that a student attends. So, some of these are ones that students that you are working with in particular might be qualifying for. But, I would also point out, just kind of on a tangent, particularly with the for the undocumented students, if you are working with an undocumented student. Sometimes university based scholarships are, students will apply to undocumented students, but they may not explicitly state that on their website. So, it definitely helps to pick up the phone or send an email, and ask questions about the specifics of the scholarships and who might qualify for them.

And I think overall a resource that I haven't mentioned that kind of is an underlying resource throughout this entire process, is building relationships with college admission officers. Because, there's a lot that I went over that you might want to know about this, you might want to research this. And it might be helpful for you to have that person in the admission office that you can connect with to ask these questions to. And to start building a relationship for the student, to get them familiar with the case that your student presents. It never hurts for an admission officer to have a connection to a student who is in the applicant pool. And that also might be very telling to you of how your student will be received on a campus. This relation of a, the relationships that you're building with the campus, are they open to being communicative with you? Are they helpful? Are they trying to be supportive in finding resources for your student? I think that tells you a lot about a campus, and how likely they will be to support your own student.

In order to build those relationships, there are a couple of different ways that you can do that. The easiest one is going to our websites. Most of us have a section that shows all of our staff and the territories that we're responsible for. So that is certainly one way. But, we do go out and travel, and attend college fairs. So, you

can attend college fairs, and start collecting business cards. We do attend high schools, several high schools, so if you are at high school where we visit, getting our contact information is helpful. But, we are generally pretty friendly, and be happy to help you in this process. And help the student in this process.

Stacey Havlik:

Thank you, Melanie. Now, I'm going to talk more about transition support, collaborative partnerships, and then we'll hopefully have a few minutes at the end to address any other questions.

So, after a student is going to college, so we get them in college, and they're ready to go, it's important to have transition support available. So, teaching students before they go to college soft skills. So, these are some of the basic skills that particularly for students who are homeless and first generation, that are important. Simple things, like how do you talk to a professor? How do you contact a professor? What's an office hour? What's a bursar's office? Things that maybe a student who has family who went to college, or they have mentors who went to college, they might be aware of those aspects. In this way then the student feels more prepared when they arrive.

You can also connect students with a mentor at the university, particularly if you have universities that are close. As we mentioned, Pennsylvania has a lot of universities. So, chances are there are nearby universities to most schools around the area. So, if you have a university, maybe it's one that they're going to, or it's a different university, but it's close to the high school. So, if you bring university students ... I know at Villanova we have a lot of students who do service learning, so they go to a lot of the area high schools, and they provide mentorship, or extra tutoring programs. So, that's a nice partnership between schools and universities, where a student who again is maybe first generation, and not exposed to a lot of students who are at the college, or are college graduates, but they would have an opportunity to have some mentorship. And maybe learn some of those soft skills, or those aspects that they may not have otherwise learned. So that they're more prepared for that transition.

And go online with the student and when they identify a school that they're going to, hopefully they've found one where they recognize the different types of supportive services. But, go online, or go do a college visit if possible to the university and find those offices where they might, the offices they might use, the people that they may connect with, and connect them before they go to the

college. So that they're more comfortable when they arrive there. And Melanie mentioned, doing transitional programs, particularly those bridge programs. So, if you have a student who maybe needs some additional support in the summertime before they go to college, finding universities who have maybe Upward Bound programs, Talent Search programs, or different types. I know at Villanova we have a lot of different summer programs for students who maybe need a little bit of a bridge or transition to college before they actually start in September. So, they provide counseling, tutoring, mentorship programs for low income students, or first generation students. And so, I think that's important when you think about college selection, as Melanie said, finding schools that have those types of programs.

So, to get this whole process started, I think it's important to think about collaborative partnerships and working together. So, having a system in place where maybe you have that college going culture that begins in kindergarten and is weaved throughout the curriculum up through high school. But, also when students get to the high school level, the counselors and liaisons are working together. So, liaisons would have a role in providing that specific information for school counselors that maybe they wouldn't necessarily be aware of with a student who is homeless and the unique circumstances of that student. The liaison may also be that one who reaches out to the admissions officer, or works in partnership with the school counselor, or the college advisor to make that phone call to the admissions officer, or to work with the student to integrate some of their story into a college essay, and help them on how they can do that. But, making others aware of, or knowing the types of scholarships that are available, and the fee waivers, particularly in the universities where a lot of students go at your high schools, but other universities as well that maybe have supportive programs, that you're aware of them that you can work with students.

So, building a system of support, liaisons, shelter workers, other supportive personnel, social workers, school counselors, can help bridge that gap between the student, between the student and the counselor. And as I mentioned, if you're not the school counselor yourself, then maybe your educating the school counselor on how to identify a student as homeless. What are the unique circumstances that a student may experience as they transition to college, as they consider different careers? And how to provide that individualized support. Because, remembering that research shows that if you have additional support at

the school level, that you may be more likely to be successful. But, that students often times get the basic support, and maybe need a more tailored support.

And I think now with the McKinney-Vento, with the new re-authorization of McKinney-Vento, under the Every Student Succeeds act, that it's kind of pushing us all to think about new ways to ensure that students who are homeless are getting these kinds of tailored approaches. So that they are able to be successful when they move on to the university level.

So, lastly for more information, there's a lot of great resources out there. The National Center for Homeless Education, as Lynda mentioned in the beginning, I recently wrote a report on college readiness for NCHE. And this report actually has some worksheets that school counselors can use, and assessments that school counselors use to ensure that students are college and career ready. So, if you go to their website, they have a wealth of resources on McKinney-Vento and different sources that you can use. But, particularly that report if you're thinking about college readiness.

Then there's the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth who also, on their website has a lot of great resources. You can certainly contact your state coordinator and your regional representative if you have questions related to McKinney-Vento, related to identifying students, or just general questions about barriers that you're meeting. Reach out them. There's the homeless liaison for your district, the directory is there. Lynda also can direct you to your regional representative if you're unsure. And then the last resource is the McKinney-Vento for Pennsylvania, and what's written in.

So, right now, we'll leave some time as we wrap up for any questions and comments. My email address is there. If you have any questions. And Melanie's email address, which I neglected to add in here is, melanie.egan@ ... Melanie, M-E-L-A-N-I-E, dot Egan, E-G-A-N, at villanova.edu. So, you can email her, or you can email myself, or Lynda for more information. And I would happy to answer your questions. So, we'll open up to questions for the last few minutes.

Lynda Becker:

And Stacey, I've had some great ones come through. So, we'll go ahead and get started on those. So, I'll just take these in the order that they came through.

This first one is from Holly, and it's a comment and a question. And it's actually a heartbreaking situation that probably happens too often. She says, "Last year I

worked hard to get a homeless special education student a total free ride for college. She didn't make it through one semester. Isn't there any requirements for colleges for students who are homeless? They get tremendous hand holding in high school, but then they get to college and they can't make it once the coordination from high school is cut."

Melanie Egan: Yeah, well I think that goes to those retention programs that we were talking about. Is there a similar support on campus that they're experiencing in high school? I think, of course, in college there's certainly a higher level of independence expected. And we want our students to grow in that way. But, especially during the first year, in that first semester, are there mentors? How proactive is that mentor relationship? Is there academic support? Is there tutoring?

Stacey Havlik: Yeah. I think that definitely speaks to certain universities are better than others in terms of that support. Some universities have wonderful supporting advising programs. Like Melanie mentioned, there's bridge programs. As well, as into special education, some schools are better than others in terms of disability support. But, yeah, it varies so much with universities that I think it's just knowing the universities. So that university may either not have had the resources, or maybe the student go to the university and didn't know how to access them. So, finding ways to help students to access those services or maybe finding a university who has more supportive programs for students. Because, not all of them are going to be as sympathetic of students who have additional needs.

Lynda Becker: Perfect. Yeah, I think that matching the college or university to the student is very important. Because, the folks in the high school know the needs of the student, and to help them find a college that's going to work for them.

Okay. The next one is from Christopher. And he says, "Generally speaking it sounds as if the best practices for students experiencing homelessness related to college and career readiness are the best practices for all students. The difference would be that we may need to be more explicit and may need to provide support more frequently, and sooner to help support those students who are experiencing homelessness. Is this accurate?"

Stacey Havlik: Yes. I think you're right on there, Christopher. I think that's so true, and as I put this together, I think this applies to ... Right, best practices, it applies to first generation students, low income students, students with disabilities, students

with special needs, students from all different backgrounds. But, you're right, I think it's just being aware of ... Being able to tailor those approaches a little bit more. Because, some students may come in and really not need ... Maybe their parents are educated on the college process and can do most of the support themselves, but knowing early on that a student may need additional support is important. And not waiting until junior year, but having that process, so they enhance self-efficacy, and enhance that outcomes expectation for students is important.

Lynda Becker: Thank you.

And Melanie, people are really interested in the fly-in program. So, Natalie wants to know, "Can you reiterate the fly-in program and the details of whom is targeted?" So, more about what it is and who they work for.

Melanie Egan: Sure. So, fly-in programs are typically overnight programs, one or two nights, where a student is given a chance to be on a campus. They're typically with a current college student host. They may, depending on when the fly-in program happens, they might go to class with them, go to lunch with them. Just kind of get a feel for the campus environment. And then fly home. So, like I said, those typically don't have much cost. Some of them might require a bit of skin in the game to become part of the program, but I'm sure that they would work with students. And those are typically geared towards students that every college and university is trying to increase on their campus, which are students of color, students from low income families, students that are the first generation in their family to go to college.

So, not every school offers these. Villanova, for example, does not offer these. You're probably not going to find a whole lot of schools in Pennsylvania that offer these. There's a lot of legislation that makes that difficult. But, there are plenty of schools that do. You'll see if you do go to that College Greenlight website, that there's a pretty lengthy list of schools of all different types, all over the country.

Lynda Becker: Thanks, Melanie. And what we'll do, is we'll put that blog website address in the email that goes with the recording for the webinar as well. And so people can have that in writing then whenever we send that out.

Melanie Egan: Great.

Lynda Becker: Okay. Another question from Julie. Another question from Julie, not another question from Julie. "Do colleges have designated homeless liaisons?" That's an interesting question.

Stacey Havlik: No. And I don't know if that's 100% true. I know in general they don't. They're not required to. I would think that possibly in maybe community settings who are becoming more aware of their homeless populations. I think with recent research, it's showing the need for additional support, that maybe some community colleges are becoming a little more savvy in having points of contact. But, yes, there's not required liaison. And I don't know if we'll see more of that as there's more awareness and more research showing the need for it, that maybe in the universities that are having increased numbers, there maybe stronger support systems hopefully in the future.

Lynda Becker: Yeah. Hopefully there are champions at various colleges that have an interest in really trying to help students who are experiencing homelessness. So, that's why you should be in contact and try to find who might be the most support for a student that you might have.

Okay. There's only one more question. And this is from Natalie. And that is, "Are the scholarships that you guys were talking about available online only? Or through the schools as well?"

Stacey Havlik: I think I'm understanding this question correctly. So, there are, the private scholarships that we mentioned, you can find online. But, there are school based university scholarships that you, that as Melanie mentioned, she can talk to this as well, there's some that really aren't advertised online. And so having that contact with the financial aid or those personal relationships, if you explain the situation, the student may fit into that type of scholarship.

Do you want to speak more to that?

Melanie Egan: Yeah. So, there's three main ways that students get funding for college. Of course there's financial aid, which is traditionally given out by the state or the government, and then sometimes schools also have a reserve of financial aid funding as well. And then there's outside scholarships, that would be the Gates Millennial Scholarship, scholarships that are sponsored by a company or an organization that are not affiliated with an institution. And my guess is that you will pretty much, primarily find that application process to at least begin online.

There's fastweb.org is a really popular website that students can use to search out different scholarships. Scholly, S-C-H-O-L-L-Y, is an app on a phone. I think it costs a dollar. Where students can input their different things about themselves, which hand do they write with, where do they live, what are they interested in studying, and it matches them with possible scholarships that they could qualify for. So, there are a lot of resources like that to help research those outside scholarships.

And then there's institution based scholarships. And schools are going to vary on how they advertise those. Like, if you look Villanova, for example, we do have most of our scholarships listed on our website. So, students can see if they meet the criteria or not, and how to apply for those. We do also email students in our applicant pool that we think might be good fits for the scholarship to encourage them to apply. But, not every school is going to subscribe to that process. Some will be more forth right with what they have offered, and others will be more of a you apply, and then we'll choose, which scholarships you meet. So, that's going to vary quite a bit, but I think the general sense is that all of this is really best done online.

Lynda Becker: Thank you. And I don't see any other questions that have come through from the participants. And it is almost 11:30, so I think we'll just wrap up. Was there anything more that you, Stacey and Melanie, wanted say as conclusion?

Stacey Havlik: No. Thank you for allowing us to present on this topic. And like we said, if you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Lynda Becker: Wonderful. Thank you. It's been great information today. And we want to thank you all for joining us. The archived recording will be available at the ECCIA website within a week, and we will send an email with the link to all the webinar registrants, liaisons, and shelter contacts. And please, when you receive the electronic evaluation via email, please take a couple of minutes to complete it, as your feedback helps us to continue to offer professional development of the highest quality. Again, thank you for joining us, and this concludes today webinar. Have a great day!