

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Higher Education Housing and Opportunities Act.

Section 5. Definitions. As used in this Act:

"Institution of higher education" or "institution" means any publicly or privately operated university, college, community college, business, technical, or vocational school, or other educational institution offering degrees and instruction beyond the secondary school level.

"Student experiencing homelessness" or "homeless student" means an individual enrolled in an institution who lacks or is at imminent risk of lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence or whose parent or legal guardian is unable or unwilling to provide shelter and care and includes a homeless individual as defined under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. For the purposes of this definition, the term "fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence" does not include residence in an institution of higher education's on-campus housing.

"Student in care" means any person, regardless of age, who is or was under the care and legal custody of the Department of

Children and Family Services, including youth for whom the Department has court-ordered legal responsibility, youth who aged out of care at age 18 or older, or youth formerly under care who have been adopted and were the subject of an adoption assistance agreement or who have been placed in private guardianship and were the subject of a subsidized guardianship agreement.

Section 10. Housing and Opportunities that are Useful for Students' Excellence (HOUSE) liaison.

(a) In an effort to provide assistance to students experiencing homelessness, each institution of higher education shall designate at least one staff member to serve as a liaison to assist homeless students enrolled at the institution. The designated staff member may be employed in the office of financial aid, in campus housing services, or in any other appropriate office or department as determined by the institution.

(b) The liaison designated under subsection (a) shall offer assistance and resources to any homeless student or student in care enrolled at the institution. The liaison shall have all of the following responsibilities:

(1) To understand provisions pertaining to the financial aid eligibility of homeless students, including eligibility as an independent student under the federal Higher Education Act of 1965.

(2) To identify services and resources that are available to and appropriate for a homeless student.

(3) To assist a homeless student or student in care in applying for and receiving federal and State financial aid and available services.

(4) To track and monitor the graduation rate and retention rate of homeless students and students in care enrolled at the institution.

(5) To report annually to the Board of Higher Education or the Illinois Community College Board, as appropriate, the number of homeless students and students in care enrolled at the institution. The report must include the number of students who received assistance or services through the liaison and the type of service or assistance received by the student. If the information is available, the report may describe the outcome for the student as a result of the services or assistance he or she received through the liaison.

(6) To act as an intermediary between a homeless student or student in care and the office of financial aid, student support services, and campus housing services.

(7) To connect a homeless student or student in care to a local continuum of care program.

(8) To publish on the institution's website information about the services and resources available

through the institution's liaison, as well as contact information for local, State, and federal services.

(9) To develop a plan to provide access to on-campus housing or to suitable off-campus housing between academic breaks to homeless students or students in care enrolled at the institution.

(10) To train the institution's employees to identify students experiencing homelessness and to refer those students to the liaison.

At his or her discretion, the liaison may provide any additional service he or she reasonably believes is within the purview of the role of liaison.

(c) The Board of Higher Education and the Illinois Community College Board shall adopt rules, policies, and procedures to implement and administer this Act. Each Board must:

(1) provide access to a training program developed by a homeless advocacy organization;

(2) require a liaison to receive training on an annual basis;

(3) collaborate with the State Coordinator for McKinney-Vento Homeless Education and the contact liaisons designated under Section 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii) of Title 42 of the United States Code to facilitate the efficient transition of homeless students from secondary to postsecondary education and provide homeless students and

students in care information about support services, including financial aid, on-campus and off-campus housing, food and meal plan programs, and counseling services, and other resources and any other relevant information to assist these students; and

(4) issue annual reports about students experiencing homelessness and students in care enrolled at academic institutions.

(d) After 3 academic years, if the data submitted to the Board of Higher Education or the Illinois Community College Board, as appropriate, indicates that the number of students experiencing homelessness or the number of students in care exceeds 2% or more of the student body of the institution, the institution must create a position whose primary function is to carry out the responsibilities of a liaison as described in subsection (b).

(e) Each institution that provides on-campus housing for students enrolled at the institution shall:

(1) grant priority for on-campus housing to students experiencing homelessness and students in care who are enrolled at the institution, including, but not limited to, access to on-campus housing that remains open during academic breaks, and waive fees for the on-campus housing during academic breaks;

(2) allow students experiencing homelessness and students in care who are enrolled part-time at the

institution to access on-campus housing;

(3) provide information about the availability of on-campus housing to students experiencing homelessness and students in care; and

(4) provide information about the services and assistance offered by the institution regarding homelessness in financial aid packets and admission packets and on the institution's website.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect August 1, 2022.