

# STATE OF NEW YORK

4247

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

## IN SENATE

February 7, 2023

Introduced by Sen. GOUNARDES -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to providing assistance to students experiencing homelessness

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. Title 7 of the education law is amended by adding a new  
2 article 116 to read as follows:

### ARTICLE 116

#### HOMELESS STUDENT HOUSING ACCESS AND ASSISTANCE

##### Section 5800. Definition.

6 5801. Designation of liaison officers, regional contacts, and  
7 campus contacts to assist students experiencing home-  
8 lessness.

9 5802. Access to housing for students experiencing homelessness.

10 5803. Priority enrollment.

11 5804. Assistance with college fees for students experiencing  
12 homelessness.

13 § 5800. Definition. For the purposes of this article, the term  
14 "students experiencing homelessness" shall mean students who at any time  
15 during the current school year or the twenty-four months immediately  
16 preceding their enrollment in college have been "homeless children or  
17 youth" as such term is defined under 42 U.S.C. Section 11434a, and  
18 includes students who reside in a student housing facility maintained by  
19 a college during an academic term but who are homeless between academic  
20 terms.

21 § 5801. Designation of liaison officers, regional contacts, and campus  
22 contacts to assist students experiencing homelessness. 1. The state  
23 university of New York and the city university of New York each shall  
24 hire at least one full-time equivalent staff member to act as a liaison  
25 officer for current and incoming students experiencing homelessness.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets  
[-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD06611-03-3

1 2. The liaison officer shall:

2 (a) have knowledge of and expertise in federal and state financial aid  
3 eligibility of students experiencing homelessness, including their  
4 eligibility as independent students under Section 1087vv of the federal  
5 Higher Education Act, support services, including health services, hous-  
6 ing resources offered by the college and external housing resources,  
7 including housing navigation services and existing housing programs for  
8 homeless or low-income individuals or families, meal plan and food  
9 programs and assistance, counseling services, academic supports, and  
10 other resources available to students at the university, and best prac-  
11 tices to identify and serve students experiencing homelessness, with the  
12 goal of maximizing their enrollment, retention, and success in college;

13 (b) create systems for students experiencing homelessness to access  
14 support services and other resources available to the students at the  
15 university; coordinate with the state university of New York and the  
16 city university of New York on innovative programming aimed at increas-  
17 ing access, enrollment, attendance and success in college for students  
18 experiencing homelessness, including pilot initiatives as outlined in a  
19 pilot program to increase enrollment, attendance, and success in college  
20 for students experiencing homelessness;

21 (c) provide professional development and other technical assistance  
22 activities to ensure campus contact persons for current and incoming  
23 students experiencing homelessness at the university. Institute best  
24 practices to identify students experiencing homelessness and have infor-  
25 mation about financial aid, support services, and best practices  
26 described by paragraph (a) of this subdivision;

27 (d) provide professional development and other technical assistance  
28 activities to professors and university staff working in the areas of  
29 financial aid, housing, student services, and teaching and academic  
30 support regarding the characteristics, needs, strengths, and identifica-  
31 tion of students experiencing homelessness;

32 (e) complete necessary administrative tasks and data collection  
33 related to students experiencing homelessness, including developing,  
34 administering, and analyzing the results of a survey annually, collabo-  
35 ratively with campus contacts designated pursuant to subdivision four of  
36 this section, social work interns, and other essential staff, to collect  
37 data on student access to resources needed to address homelessness  
38 across the state university of New York and the city university of New  
39 York; and

40 (f) make available an annual report of the survey administered pursu-  
41 ant to paragraph (e) of this subdivision on the websites of the state  
42 university of New York and the city university of New York.

43 3. The state university of New York and the city university of New  
44 York each shall require professors and university staff to attend at  
45 least one training per year offered by the liaison officer for current  
46 and incoming students experiencing homelessness.

47 4. The liaison officer for the state university of New York shall hire  
48 one part-time adjunct staff to serve as regional contacts in each of ten  
49 economic development regions. Regional contacts shall supervise the  
50 campus contacts in their regions and support the liaison officer to  
51 ensure that students experiencing homelessness are identified, informed  
52 of services available to them, and able to access support services and  
53 other resources available in the region.

54 5. The liaison officer for the city university of New York shall hire  
55 five part-time adjunct staff to serve as regional contacts. Regional  
56 contacts shall supervise the campus contacts in their regions and

1 support the liaison officer to ensure that students experiencing home-  
2 lessness are identified, informed of services available to them, and  
3 able to access support services and other resources available in the  
4 region.

5 6. Each college shall designate and may provide a stipend to, at least  
6 one person, who may be an employee of the college or an undergraduate or  
7 graduate level student of any college who is completing an internship as  
8 part of obtaining a degree in social work or a related field, to act as  
9 a campus contact person for current and incoming students experiencing  
10 homelessness.

11 7. The campus contact person shall:

12 (a) institute best practices to identify current and incoming students  
13 experiencing homelessness, including:

14 (i) posting flyers, posters, and other written materials about the  
15 rights of students experiencing homelessness, using understandable and  
16 culturally competent language, in locations on campus and in the commu-  
17 nity where students experiencing homelessness are likely to see them;

18 (ii) posting using understandable and culturally competent information  
19 about the rights of students experiencing homelessness on college  
20 websites and social media;

21 (iii) collaborating with student organizations and organizations  
22 providing food, housing, or other services on campus and in the communi-  
23 ty; and

24 (iv) sharing information about the rights of students experiencing  
25 homelessness and the process to refer students who may be experiencing  
26 homelessness to the campus contact with professors and other campus  
27 staff;

28 (b) provide students experiencing homelessness with information  
29 regarding their federal and state financial aid eligibility, including  
30 their eligibility as independent students under Section 1087vv of the  
31 federal Higher Education Act, and assistance to such students to ensure  
32 they are able to apply for and receive federal and state financial aid  
33 and all available on and off campus services for which they are eligi-  
34 ble;

35 (c) provide students experiencing homelessness with information  
36 regarding support services, health services, housing resources offered  
37 by the college and external housing resources, housing navigation  
38 services and existing housing programs for homeless or low-income indi-  
39 viduals or families, meal plan and food programs and assistance, coun-  
40 seling services, academic supports, and other resources available to the  
41 students at the college;

42 (d) participate in professional development and other technical  
43 assistance activities offered by the liaison officer; and

44 (e) contact liaisons designated under 42 U.S.C. Section  
45 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii) as necessary to facilitate successful transitions  
46 from secondary to postsecondary education for students experiencing  
47 homelessness.

48 § 5802. Access to housing for students experiencing homelessness. Each  
49 college shall:

50 1. prioritize students experiencing homelessness for access to exist-  
51 ing housing resources offered by the college, as needed, during and  
52 between academic terms, including granting them first priority for hous-  
53 ing facilities that remain open for occupation during the most days in a  
54 calendar year; and

55 2. develop a plan to connect students experiencing homelessness with  
56 external housing resources when existing housing resources offered by

1 the college are not available, including through working with existing  
2 housing programs for homeless or low-income individuals or families.

3 § 5803. Priority enrollment. Each college that administers a priority  
4 enrollment system shall grant priority in that system for enrollment in  
5 classes to students experiencing homelessness.

6 § 5804. Assistance with college fees for students experiencing home-  
7 lessness. For students experiencing homelessness, each college shall:

8 1. waive administrative fees and fees based on enrollment, including  
9 health and wellness, student activity, consolidated services, and tech-  
10 nology fees, that are not fully covered by a student's financial aid  
11 package; and

12 2. defer the payment of any fee or deposit, including housing fees and  
13 deposits, that are covered by a student's financial aid package until  
14 the college receives the aid, such that students will not incur late  
15 fees on payments delayed while awaiting disbursement of financial aid.

16 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to the  
17 academic year next succeeding the date on which this act shall have  
18 become a law.