



NRC-FAHE: National Research Collaborative for Foster Alumni and Higher Education

WELCOME!

The National Research Collaborative for Foster Alumni and Higher Education (NRC-FAHE) is a network of researchers and practitioners whose aim is to improve practice and influence policy related to foster care youth/alumni and higher education by creating and advancing a clear research agenda and facilitating communication and collaboration among interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners to promote postsecondary access and retention of youth in care and foster care alumni. The NRC-FAHE promotes innovative ways to use research and best practices to inform and influence policy making and values practice-informed research and the voice of youth in care and foster care alumni in improving access and outcomes in higher education.

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Introduction and Welcome

Welcome back to school everyone! In the spirit of the new academic year, I am pleased to kick off the 16th issue of our NRC FAHE newsletter and our new webinar season! All the details on our webinar series and how to register to participate are included in the announcements section of this newsletter. In this issue, we begin with a showcase of the Fostering Scholars Program out of the University of Nevada Los Vegas. Our article highlight for this issue comes from Beth Sapiro, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work and Child Advocacy at Montclair State University in New Jersey, who recently published a qualitative study of a collection of student interviews on their experiences navigating help seeking in the *Journal of College Student Retention*. A lot has been happening in the policy space with the opening of the new school year. As part of the back-to-school activities congress five bills that would directly impact students from foster care at our institutions across the country; these proposals include new federal dollars for the development and maintenance of campus support programs, new investments in mental health supports on college campuses, expansion of Medicaid eligibility for kinship students who existed the system into a legal guardianship, targeted dollars for the students in foster care to participate in summer youth employment programs, and new supports for students on campus who have been adjudicated as minors and served through the juvenile justice system. Moving these bills in the next two years will be a challenge being that the President recently signed into law the [Fiscal Responsibility Act](#) (FRA) in June of 2023- an agreement to lift the federal debt ceiling until 2025 in exchange for capping federal spending programs at fiscal year (FY) 2023 levels

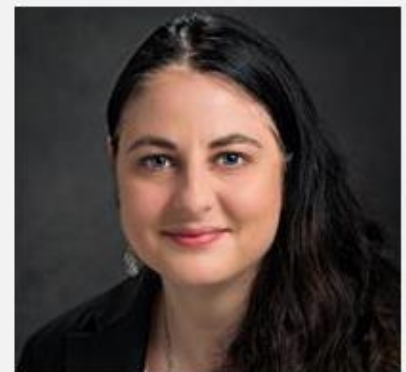
in FY2024 and allowing an only 1% increase in spending in FY2025. The bill also rescinds unspent COVID-19 relief funds, imposes more burdensome work requirements on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients. Important for the NRC FAHE community to know is The FRA adds new exceptions to the able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) time limit for individuals experiencing homelessness, veterans, and individuals who are 24 years of age or younger and in foster care on their 18th birthday (or higher age if the State offers extended foster care to a higher age).

Keeping energy in the advocacy community will be important so that these bills don't get forgotten and failed to get reintroduced when the FRA sunsets in FY 2026. State specific efforts are not bound by these federal restrictions, and there is much to be done at the state level. The policy section of this newsletter highlights new efforts from Colorado and Washington to support college going students from foster care. Finally, the executive branch released new guidance August 4th, 2023, on how states should be implementing the new provisions outlined in the FAFSA Simplification Act. Please review these guidelines and support your students to ensure they are taking full advantage of these new financial aid resources.

I went to end this column today reminding you of all the ways in which you can maximize your membership with the NRC FAHE. We maintain a library with the latest research on foster care and higher education access and retention. Please use that library to guide your research and program

planning efforts. We can network PhD students interested in working on FAHE related dissertation topics with experienced researchers in the field. We can support campus support programs to locate researchers to partner with to support program evaluation efforts. The advocacy work we do on the hill federally is only as strong as the engagement of our members, and we need your help to have those conversations with your elected officials. We are a place to showcase your research either through this newsletter or through one of our webinars. Please take advantage of all the NRC FAHE has to offer you!

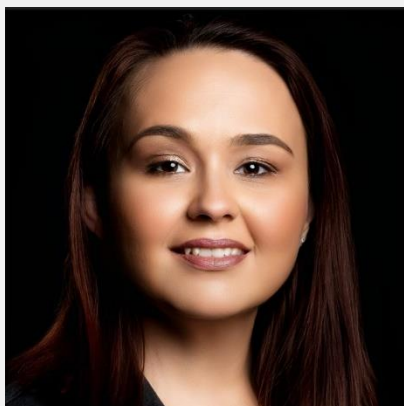
ANGELIQUE DAY, PH.D., MSW



Angelique Day, PhD, MSW, is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Washington-Seattle. Much of her research focuses on foster care youth, including examining the differences in college retention rates between foster care youth and other low-income first-generation college students, and examining "youth voice" and its impact on child welfare, [education](#) and health policy reform. Dr. Day leads the Policy Review team for the NRC-FAHE. Questions about the policy section of this newsletter can be directed to her, dayangel@uw.edu

Practice Highlight: Fostering Scholars UNLV

COLUMN AUTHORS



Heather Richardson, MSW is the Program Coordinator for Fostering Scholars at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Ms. Richardson was awarded the UNLV Community Engagement - Community Outreach Award (2023). Additionally, Ms. Richardson was recognized for "Excellence in Student Achievement" in her first year of being at UNLV.

Ms. Richardson earned her bachelor's degree in social sciences in 2004 and her Master's degree in Social Work in 2011 both at UNLV. Ms. Richardson is proud of having overcome being placed in foster care at the age of 13 and having lived out of her car during her undergraduate degree. Later, Ms. Richardson became the relative caregiver of her two sisters who were placed in care.

Ms. Richardson spent 16 years working for Clark County Family Services as both a supervisor and caseworker in the foster care system. During her time in child welfare, Ms. Richardson specialized in foster care, education, and legislation. Ms. Richardson has testified before the Nevada legislature four times to advocate for young people in care. Ms. Richardson was awarded "Caseworker of the Year" by the Foster Parent Association (now known as Foster Change).

Ms. Richardson's proudest accomplishment is having raised five college-bound children after having been in foster care herself. Ms. Richardson's favorite quote is "I am not what happened to me. I am what I choose to become."

Can you give us some background on the program and how it got started?

Heather Richardson: Our statewide initiative started in 2018 when the Board of Regents approved the statewide foster youth fee waiver. The initiative was funded by the Walter S. Johnson Foundation. Over the next few years there was talk about the need for campus-based support in Nevada. A decision was made to fund the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) as the first campus-based support program. In 2020 the award was made to UNLV, but that was mid-pandemic. There was a hiring freeze, and it took some time for UNLV to hire the program coordinator. Which I feel very blessed for, because the job had to come around at the right time for me to see it. I was working at Clark County Family Services when I saw the job post and went, this is **the** job for me, like if somebody wrote a job description for me, this was it. I was hired with UNLV in June of 2021. I spent the summer onboarding and getting to know the population, the ins and outs of higher education and UNLV. We launched the program, UNLV Fostering Scholars, in the fall of 2021. We originally had 19 students. We started to rapidly grow with the partnerships that I developed at Clark County Family Services. We are less than two years old and have had seven students graduate. Our retention rate for students is higher than the University's retention rate. We have an 86% retention rate; the University's retention rate is 81%.

How is the program funded?

The Walter S. Johnson Foundation is our primary funding source. Since I've been here, I've been fortunate to get some private donors involved to get some supplemental donations, which primarily fund our textbooks for our students and a graduate assistant position.

What is your role in the program?

I'm the program coordinator. I oversee three practicum students that are in the Master of Social Work program and a graduate assistant. The four graduate

students function as coaches. They've all gone through the Fostering Success coaching program. They work directly with students, as do I. We also recently launched as an "iFoster" AmeriCorps site. Meaning, I now oversee two undergraduate students too. To sum it up I oversee six people who work with our students and help design the programming.

Next year I've received private donor funding to have two graduate assistants, one from the social work program and then a second one as a PhD student from either public policy or public affairs that is focused solely on grant writing to help us get more funding.

Who does your program serve? And how many students does your program currently serve?

I was given full autonomy to make that decision when I first started here, and we knew we needed to set some boundaries, because I couldn't serve everyone who had experienced foster care because that population was too large, and it was just me. We set the parameters in line with FASFA, meaning students who experienced foster care after the age of 13, because we know those students were more likely to have aged out of care or have educational gaps. Although the fee waiver is only available to in-state youth, UNLV would serve anyone who experienced foster care after 13, including out of state students. In the last year we doubled the size of the program, we have 38 students today.

How do you get students involved? How do you identify students? Do they self-identify into the program, or do you do outreach?

A little bit of everything. I do outreach. I build relationships with those that are most likely to refer, which means our Department of Family Services' Independent Living program and our Clark County Step Up program which manages youth 18 to 21 who aged out of foster care. I meet regularly with Step Up case workers so that they know we exist. Then I get referrals for young people that are interested in attending UNLV. We

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help the potential student with the admissions process and the FASFA process so they're not alone in that process. I also get young people who contact us directly. There is a foster care graduation that's held by Clark County Family Services, which I attend. I am also part of a court panel for young people that have an Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (OPPLA) as a permanency option when other options such as reunification, relative placement, adoption, or legal guardianship have been ruled out. I attend court hearings where OPPLA is the permanency goal, so I can educate young people about their educational benefits and that Fostering Scholars exists at UNLV.

Which components of your program do you feel like you're especially unique or impactful?

I'm able to keep the student to coach ratios low by utilizing graduate students who have gone through the coaching training. Our students receive personalized support from their coaches while still knowing I'm involved. I still have regular contact with every student. Each coach has about eight students. Using social work graduate students is a mutually beneficial relationship and is a way for us to staff a program without a lot of expense. And it gives graduate students a great learning opportunity.

We're also unique because currently we don't have a scholarship model. A lot of campus-based support programs like Guardian Scholars have a scholarship component where they offer students a scholarship to be engaged in the program. We don't have those financial resources, yet. Students are engaging with our program completely voluntarily. We have a decent engagement rate, meaning students find the program beneficial.

What impact has the program had on the students?

There are currently no students on satisfactory academic progress probation. Additionally, our GPA for our second to fifth year students, is cumulatively 3.2. We have a heavy freshman class. We had 15 students join us last year or last fall. Freshmen are notorious for having a rough first year, which impacted our cumulative GPA for the program. But we still ended up with a 2.85. Young people in this population are known for having closer to a 2.2 GPA. Our students are really engaged and doing really well.

What changes to laws or policy would you like to see?

I would like to see the maximum age for our state's fee waiver changed, there shouldn't be a cap. I have a few students who just aged out of the waiver and now they're looking at having to pay for the rest of their education, which they worked really hard for. It forces students to transition to University, try to keep a roof over their head, all while aging out of the system. Most traditional students have difficulties graduating within 6 years. As a campus, we have a lot of non-traditional students and taking a gap in the middle is pretty normal. I myself am a former foster youth and I didn't graduate until 27. Our young people often need to take a break and we shouldn't force them to have to finish when a lot of times they're having mental health issues or financial struggles and they can't focus on school. We're losing students by forcing them to finish by 26.

What future goals do you have for the program?

I hope our program gains more community-based support, whether that's through private donor funding or state funding. We are currently funded by a foundation out of California. I'd really like to see the community in Nevada get involved. These are our community's

children. They belong to our community, and we really need to step up to put them through college. We could also then give scholarships to students so they're not choosing between having to work to put food on the table or go to a class. I'd also really like to get a mentorship program launched. I think that our scholars would do well with a mentor. You can never have enough positive adults in your life, that's a protective factor for this population.

What advice if any do you have for other campus-based support programs?

As a newer program, it's hard for me to give advice to other programs. I would say the one thing that I feel has worked really well for us is building a strong relationship with our school of social work and not being afraid to rely on the school social work students. I can't say it enough. It has worked really well for us, my two graduating students got student of the year in their program, which I'm really proud of. We're a small program, and two of my three students got student of the year. I think that speaks heavily to our program and the experience that they get here.

Any final thoughts?

I think having people with lived experience in foster care who have graduated college is a really important component. Having folks with lived experience share that they have been in their place that have persevered. I know students enjoy when I tell my story. We often focus on the deficits, like that only three to 10% of former foster youth get their degrees. When youth hear the positive things, it reminds them they are strong and have the strength to succeed. Right now, we're rolling out the Clifton strengths assessment to our students because I think it's important for students to really find their strengths and be able to harness them. Especially since they've come from such a deficit-based system.

Student Highlight: Fostering Scholars UNLV

COLUMN AUTHORS



Toni Duncan was the peer and community educator, for the 2022-23 academic year. Toni is a full-time student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), with an anticipated graduation date of December 2023. She is majoring in criminal justice, with the goal of attending law school. As a returning college student with experience in foster care who has attended two NSHE institutions (UNLV and the College of Southern Nevada), a parent, and self-sufficiency advocate, Toni is very passionate about supporting her peers who have experienced foster care with their postsecondary education, parenting, and basic needs. Toni has two wonderful kids who keep her busy and motivate her in everything she does. In her spare time, Toni enjoys painting, fishing, working on cars, photography, and cooking.

How did you get connected with the Fostering Scholars?

Toni Duncan: When I first started school I was at UNLV (University of Nevada, Las Vegas) then I dropped out a bunch of times. Next, I decided to try CSN (College of Southern Nevada). I went back and forth for a while between going and dropping out. While I was at CSN I was trying to get information about the state fee waiver. Through this I met Jim Hammond, who was an academic advisor, he took me under his wing

and supported me while I was at CSN. Once I was able to get in contact with Jim he was able to help me finish at CSN, because it's a 2-year college I then transferred back to UNLV. Then he gave me Heather Richardson and Laura Obrist's information and told me about the Fostering Scholars program and said that UNLV would be able to support me in more ways than CSN was able to.

How has your experience with Fostering Scholars been?

It has been life changing! It's opened so many worlds that I didn't even know were possible. It's given me the support that I needed to be strong enough to push through the last couple of years of school. Having support, people to talk to, and the wrap-around services that they offer has made it so much easier to be able to focus on going to school.

What aspects of the program do you feel were most impactful for you?

It's hard to say what is the most impactful when they do so much. Everything from helping with household supplies for me and my children to connecting me with financial aid that I didn't know about. Also being a supportive and listening ear. Everyone that runs the program has been able to help me to get to my last semester of college.

If I had to pick something, it would be the "Take What You Need Program." The "Take What You Need Program" has almost everything you could think of: from toothpaste, toothbrushes, pots, pans, clothing, shoes. They even have professional clothing. There are laundry supplies, personal hygiene products, diapers and wipes. If you have kids, children's clothes. I've seen

children's toys and then the range of food that's there is really helpful too. It helps a lot.

What program elements would you like to see expanded or replicated at other universities?

I would love to see more genuinely caring people like Heather Richardson and Jim Hammond. They have the perfect amount of experience and knowledge and compassion. You can't really replicate people, but if you could there would be so many students that would benefit from having people like them in their corner. Every now and then you meet someone who loves their job and goes above and beyond to make sure that they're helping everyone that they can. That was Jim; from calling routinely to check on me, to following up, "Hey! Did you get your books yet? Did you apply for your FAFSA? Did you know the FAFSA is right around the corner?"

I would also say the "Take What You Need Program" and having the on-campus support is really helpful. If more colleges had a dedicated person that is there to help support folks with foster care experience I think the percentage of foster care students that graduate would increase.

The textbook support too. You never know how much textbooks are going to be each semester. Being able to reach out to a program and say, these are my classes, and then be provided with all your textbooks or access codes is a huge relief. There were times I wouldn't be able to afford all of my books in the first week of school, so I would get bad grades for the first couple of weeks of school until I was able to one by one gather all the books I needed.

What recommendations do you have for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers?

For researchers, I would say, look into how helpful programs like this are. With more research programs will have more backing to support their growth. Speaking with other students in the Foster Scholar's program I think we all generally have the same consensus that without the program we don't know how far we'd make it in school.

For practitioners. I would say, to remember why you do what you do. I know sometimes in life we get stressed out and jobs start to feel like just a job. But people like Heather, I think she's able to look at us, and remember what it was like whenever she was in our shoes. Sometimes we get so removed that we forget that we were there before. It's just really refreshing to be able to talk to somebody that's older and that is truly a support system for us.

For policymakers. I would ask them to create more programs like Fostering Scholars and change the age requirements that are placed upon most of the scholarships. Most of us that have experienced foster care don't have a straight path through college. Aging out of foster care in the

middle of your first semester of college, and then suddenly navigating how to be on your own, mentally, financially, and how to be an adult. It's pretty brutal, and different from the average student's path to college. Many of us drop out to focus on surviving. Then by the time we figure out how to survive and have an ability to navigate everything, most of us are no longer eligible for a lot of the scholarships that we're designed to help us. I think it would be better to have the financial support modeled after the Pell Grant, which goes off the number of semesters instead of an age frame, then it would be more feasible for students to utilize the resources.

Anything else you would like to share?

I would like to mention one thing that isn't highlighted enough. I know a lot of girls that ended up aging out and moving directly in with boyfriends. Then things turned abusive, really quickly. We aren't taught to know the signs. Teaching youth about healthy relationships is really important. For many foster youth who age out when they turn 18 and have nowhere to go romantic relationships are a lifeline. Nine times out of ten you're going to try finding somewhere with your

romantic interest. I know young ladies who aged out and moved in with boyfriends and things got abusive. Then they had nowhere to go and didn't have access to resources. They may not even have a way to communicate to find the resources. Domestic violence prevention is something that doesn't have enough attention. My foster parents were pretty good. They let us know that there was a group of boys who would prey on the girls that came to the home because they knew that it was a foster home, and the boys would try to sex traffic the girls in the home.

If there was more education about what sex traffickers, domestic violence, and unhealthy relationships look like it might be able to help a lot of young people. I think it can be an unspoken part of what keeps us away from focusing on school.

Our Practice and Student Highlight was made possible through partnership with the [Fostering Academic Achievement Nationwide \(FAAN\) Network](#). FAAN is focused on bringing together a network of leaders from statewide foster care and higher education organizations to create pathways and remove barriers for students in foster care.



Article Highlight: “It’s Just Hard Reaching Out.”

PAPER AUTHORS



Lead Author Beth Sapiro is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work and Child Advocacy at Montclair State University in New Jersey, USA. As a clinical social worker, she has worked with adolescents and adults in school-based and community mental health programs as well as private practice. Her research centers on the intersection of trauma, marginalization, and healing in adolescent and young adult interpersonal relationships.



Svetlana Shpiegel is an Associate Professor at the Department of Social Work and Child Advocacy at Montclair State University in New Jersey. Her research focuses on the functioning of adolescents and young adults involved with the foster care system, with a particular emphasis on youth who are pregnant and parenting.

Study Summary

This research came out of a process evaluation of a campus-based support program for independent students at one university. “Independent students” are college students who pursue higher

education without financial or other forms of support from caregivers. They include alumni of the foster care system, as well as students whose parents were deceased or who had no adults providing any financial assistance for college. Our goal for the study was to better understand these students’ needs, and also clarify the campus support program’s successes and challenges. To do this, we interviewed 5 university staff associated with the program, along with 23 students. All of the students we interviewed were eligible to participate in the program, but the extent of their participation varied. Some were very involved; some had attended one or two programs; and some had never heard of the program before the interview. The interviews were conducted and analyzed by myself, my colleague, Dr. Svetlana Shpiegel, and four graduate assistants.

Key findings:

One of our main research questions was to understand how independent students make decisions around asking for help with a problem. We identified numerous factors related to help-seeking for independent students. From the perspectives of students, there were many factors that made them sometimes reluctant to ask for help. Students described themselves as preferring to try to solve problems on their own first, if possible. They identified several barriers to asking for help, including skepticism that services would actually be helpful and not wanting to burden others with their problems. Some students also mentioned that pride or feelings of shame interfered with their ability to ask for help. Students also emphasized the importance of building a genuine connection with adults on campus as a prerequisite for getting help with sensitive or personal matters. This meant that some of them were less likely to utilize campus mental health services, where they might meet with a different person each time. Several students also worried about receiving uncaring or judgmental responses to their requests for help, similar to those they had encountered in the past. While students identified a range of psychological and relational factors related to help-seeking,

the staff tended to emphasize students’ individual limitations in terms of help-seeking, such as a tendency to wait until the last minute. Both students and staff identified institutional factors that would make it easier for independent students to get help, including greater visibility for the campus support program, additional staff, and more intentional outreach.

Implications:

This research has implications for staff working in student services intended to support independent students. The decision to ask for help is often framed as a purely individual decision, but it is emotionally and relationally complex and depends on the context of the institution. Staff working in campus-based support programs need to acknowledge the ambivalence that often accompanies a need for help, particularly among students with histories in the foster care system. Reaching out to another person for assistance takes courage, especially if the person is in a more powerful position. These findings also suggest that campuses could better serve independent students by providing services through a trauma-informed lens, which can allow students time to build trust. Campuses can also better serve independent students by making sure students know about these programs and having consistent staff to provide academic advising as well as counseling and case management assistance. These findings also highlight, unfortunately, the persistence of a deficit-oriented narrative around independent or non-traditional students that focuses on lack of skills or social capital. All adults who interact with independent students should work to engage with them from a place of respecting their strengths and personal agency, affirming their dignity, and patiently building a foundation for a supportive relationship.

Sapiro, B., Shpiegel, S., Ramirez Quiroz, S., Ventola, M., Nwankwo, O. H., & Munyereyi, T. (2023). “It’s Just Hard Reaching Out”: Factors Affecting Help-Seeking Behaviors among Independent College Students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 152102512311596-.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/15210251231159642>

Policy Updates

118th Congress

On September 19th, 2023, multiple bills were introduced that could have a major impact on transition age foster youth. [The Fostering Success in Higher Education \(FSHE\) Act](#) (H.R. 5562) was reintroduced. If passed, this bill would invest \$150 million annually to establish or expand statewide initiatives to assist homeless and foster youth enrolling and enrolled in institutions of higher education. These funds will establish formula grants to states based on the state's share of foster and homeless youth, with a \$500k minimum grant. Seventy percent of the grants would be used to develop Institutions of Excellence which improve access, retention and completion rates at eligible institutions. Twenty five percent of grants would be to establish intensive outreach and support to foster and homeless youth to improve access to higher education. This legislation is led by U.S. Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH). U.S. Congressman Danny Davis (D-IL-7) is leading companion legislation in the House of Representatives.

[The Foster Youth Mental Health Act](#) (S. 2836) was also introduced and would help people currently and formerly in foster care, including caretakers, navigate and access mental health resources. These resources would include mental health support, housing, childcare, and expanded health planning to ensure states have key components to ensure a comprehensive children's mental health system, including prevention, early intervention, and treatment.

[The Expanded Coverage for Former Foster Youth Act](#) (S. 2837), also introduced on September 19th, would help ensure health insurance continuity by extending Medicaid eligibility to include former foster youth who are currently ineligible. For example, it would expand eligibility for Medicaid coverage until the age of 26 for youth who were in the system by left for legal guardianship

with a kinship caregiver and those who emancipated from foster care prior to the age of 18.

September 14th, 2023 [the Opening Doors for Youth Act of 2023](#) (H.R. 5511) was introduced. This bill would provide subsidized summer and year-round employment for youth who face systemic barriers to employment and viable career options and to assist local community partnerships in improving high school graduation and youth employment rates. The act would authorize over \$2 billion over six years to develop subsidized jobs for in- and out-of-school youth ages 16 to 24. Additionally, this would authorize competitive grants for local community partnerships to establish or expand community-based systems that provide at-risk youth with comprehensive pathways to remain connected or reconnect to education and training systems. A detailed fact sheet is [available here](#).

[The Eliminating Debtor's Prison for Kids Act of 2023](#) (S. 2448) was introduced on July 20th. The bill would provide grants to states for the purpose of providing evidence-based and trauma-informed mental and behavioral health services to at-risk youth, including juveniles in secure detention or correctional facilities in the State, and for implementing pre- and post-adjudication diversion programs for at-risk youth to limit their involvement in the juvenile system. Considering [50% of foster youth](#) will encounter the juvenile justice system by the age of 17, the services provided by this bill could greatly impact transition age foster youth.

FAFSA Updates

On August 4th, 2023, a letter was shared summarizing changes from the FAFSA Simplification Act that will become effective for the 2024-2025 award year. These updates include changes to the Student Aid Index and changes to the Need Analysis Formulas, specifically the reduction of unfazed income items that will be included in the need analysis. The letter also outlines detailed Pell Grant updates. For more details on all of these

changes please reference the [guidance letter linked here](#).

The updated FAFSA will not be released until December of 2023. School House Connection has provided more information about the delay and ways to prepare to support young people in completing applications and scholarships that may become available prior to December. Recommendations from School House Connection can be [found at this link](#).

State updates

In the state of Washington SB 5256 was passed in April. This makes permanent and expands the Child Welfare Housing Assistance Program (CWHF). CWHF is currently being piloted in region 6 with plans to expand. Assistance includes housing vouchers, rental assistance, navigation support, and other services through various contracts with area providers. This will help child welfare involved people access and successfully stay in housing.

In Colorado [Senate Bill 23-082](#) was passed into law in June. This bill will create a new state-funded rental assistance program to prevent former foster youth from experiencing homelessness. The Colorado Foster Youth Successful Transition to Adulthood Grant Program Advisory Board is currently working on the primary recommendations for implementation. The advisory board approved the rules for the program in May, which will go before the State Board for [finalization in October](#). Annually the program will provide \$1.09 million in state-funded housing vouchers and \$1.44 million for case management services for homeless or at-risk of being homeless youth who have aged out of care.

We know that there may be legislation in your state that we have not listed here. If you know of a specific effort in your state that you would like us to mention in the next newsletter, please email Angelique Day at dayangel@uw.edu

Webinars

NRC-FAHE WEBINAR: Evaluation of Two Georgia College Campus Support Programs for Students with Experience in Foster Care

Presenter: Ciara Collins, Associate at Abt Associates with her PhD from the University of Connecticut's Human Development and Family Sciences Department

Wednesday November 15th, 2023 | noon-1pm PST (3-4pm EST)

This presentation will detail the landscape of campus support programs (CSP) in the state of Georgia; discuss the process of conducting an evaluation of two of these programs, one at a 2-year technical college and one at a 4-year university; share exploratory outcomes from the evaluations; and share lessons learned for researchers and providers. The CSPs both reported creating their program using the Seven Life Domains framework, so we used this as a framework to analyze the programs. We will discuss our team's lessons learned for how researchers and program staff can work together to conduct program evaluations and ensure they are supporting students most effectively.

[Register Here!](#)

Resources

[Foster Love](#) is excited to announce their new, FREE resource for college foster care students residing in the Pacific Northwest! The Cover 2 Cover program was designed to allow students to apply for textbook assistance for the upcoming 2023 semester. Take a look at the [application](#). The goal is to allow easy access to direct funding for students and ensure their continued academic success!

The Children's Bureau has released a tip sheet providing guidance for kinship caregivers, specifically adult siblings taking care of their younger siblings in foster care or informal kinship care. This includes resources on higher education. [Check it out here!](#)

WEBINAR: Explore the Real-Life Youth Experiences of Aging Out of Foster Care

Monday, October 23rd | 10am EST (7am PST)

Join Stoops Center for Communities, Families, & Children as they interview Lisa Schelbe, Ph.D., MSW FSU College of Social Work Associate Professor, presenting valuable insights gained from writing and publishing, *Some Type of Way: Aging out of Foster Care*. Her book seeks to address the following questions currently relevant to practitioners, policymakers, and researchers:

- What are the realities of the lives of youth aging out?
- Why are they struggling?
- What are agencies and service providers doing to help?
- What should be done to help these youth negotiate the transitions out of care and into adulthood?

This webinar provides 2 CEU hours where eligible.

[Register Here!](#)

Call to Action

The Better Futures Study is a research study funded by the US Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, led by Amy M. Salazar, MSW, Ph.D. at Washington State University Vancouver and Jennifer Blakeslee, MSW, Ph.D., at Portland State University. They are currently in the process of recruiting sites.

Better Futures is a 9-month intervention that aims to prepare youth with foster care experience to pursue postsecondary education it has three components: (1) 3-day, 2-night Summer Institute where students stay in the dorms at a local college or university; (2) 9 months of one-on-one coaching; and (3) 5 workshops.

If you are interested in learning more about being a site, please reach out to Dr. Amy Salazar at amy.salazar@wsu.edu. More information about this study can be found at <https://ies.ed.gov/funding/grantsearch/details.asp?ID=5809>

How to get involved!

Are you interested in getting more involved in the work of NRC-FAHE?

- Contact us if you have a story you want to share!
 - We are always looking for campus-programs to highlight, please reach out if you would like to be featured, or would like to nominate a program.
 - Other ideas for newsletter features? We'd love to hear them at nrc.fahe@gmail.com
- Have a webinar idea? Reach out to Dr. Amy Salazar at amy.salazar@wsu.edu

Are you wondering how you can leverage NRC-FAHE in your work?

- Reference our library of peer-reviewed research and gray literature with a specific focus on the intersection of youth with foster care experience and postsecondary education.
- Reach out if you are looking to get connected! We have a large network of researchers, practitioners, and folks in policy. If you are hoping to get connected to other folks in your field or in adjacent fields, reach out. For example:
 - If you are a campus-support program looking to connect with someone in program evaluation
 - If you need to recruit folks for a research study
 - If you want to learn from others in your field
 - Not sure where to start? Start with us NRC-FAHE
- Want to be more involved in policy efforts? Continue staying up to date by reading our policy updates and reaching out to your elected officials. To find contact information for your elected officials, visit this [website](#).

Please contact nrc.fahe@gmail.com if you have any ideas or questions about how you can better utilize the NRC-FAHE network and newsletter.