

Accessing Higher Education Without Parental Support:



Apply for free legal aid online at MontanaLawHelp.org or call/text Kaia, YHDP Coordinator, at (406) 594-1971

Federal education laws have been passed to help youth experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity access higher education.

There are two laws that address higher education access for unaccompanied, homeless youth:

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) enables unaccompanied homeless youth to qualify as “independent students” on the FAFSA, meaning they don’t need parental financial information or signatures.

The FAFSA Simplification Act reduces barriers for students to access FAFSA funds. You will need your status as an independent student to be verified by a school district homeless liaison, shelter staff, or a college financial aid administrator.

Who qualifies for support under these laws?

Youth who qualify have run away or have been asked to leave home by a parent or guardian.

No matter the reason you may be living on your own and responsible for yourself, you have the option to seek opportunities after high school. Whether a four year university, attending community college, or a certificate training program, help is available.

Who do I contact if I need help accessing higher education?

If you are still enrolled in high school or recently graduated, you need to contact your school district's Homeless Education Liaison. By law, each school site must have a liaison to help you access support. Find yours at opi.mt.gov.

Please contact us for additional information and assistance.

Find resources here on: The National Center for Homeless Education website

What other supports are available?

The majority of university and college campuses already have built-in supports. There may be departments named Student Support Services and/or Education Opportunity Centers. These are the offices where you can find connections to resources and additional information on what your school has to offer.

Tribal communities may have additional supports. If you are a tribal member living in a tribal community, call MLSA for advice on your specific situation.

How can MLSA help me?

MLSA provides FREE legal information, forms, advice, and representation to eligible clients.

MLSA's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) Coordinator can provide you with referrals to agencies in your community and link you with free civil legal assistance.

Have more questions about your legal rights? Visit: MontanaLawHelp.org

