

## **SB 568 - FAQ**

### **Reducing Homelessness Among California's College Students**

#### **How many college students are homeless in California?**

In the last two years, several studies have documented the issue of homelessness among students in California. The prevalence of homelessness and housing insecurity is greatest among students who attend one of California's 114 community colleges. A 2019 report found that 1 in 5 students had at least one episode of homelessness over a 12 month period.<sup>1</sup> While less prevalent, homelessness remains a serious issue for students attending a California State University or campus of the University of California, with reported rates of homelessness at 11% and 5% respectively.<sup>2</sup>

#### **What is causing homelessness among college students?**

While there is no single explanation, research points to a combination of three factors:

- **High cost of housing:** California tops the nation in the cost of housing, with the average home and rent cost above the national average, at 80% greater and 50% greater respectively according to a 2018 report by the California Legislative Analyst's office.<sup>3</sup>
- **Growth in cost of higher education:** The cost of higher education has also increased considerably in the last two decades, outpacing the growth in wages by over 30% in the last 10 years, according to a 2018 report by the College Board.<sup>4</sup>
- **Higher unemployment among young adults:** A final key factor is higher rates of unemployment among young adults. Relative to older workers, young adults rebounded from the 2008 Great Recession slower than older workers. As of December 2018, the rate of unemployment among young adults remains 7.2% as compared to 4.1% for the general population.<sup>5</sup>

#### **SB 568 would establish Rapid Rehousing programs at campuses of the California Community College, California State University and University of California systems.**

##### **What is Rapid Rehousing?**

Rapid Re-Housing is a solution to homelessness designed to help individuals and families to quickly exit homelessness and return to permanent housing. It was piloted in 2009 and has since received considerable investment by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. It includes three core components: housing identification, rental and move-in assistance and case management services.

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<sup>1</sup> Goldrick-Rab, S., Baker-Smith, C., Coca, V., & Looker, E. (2019). *California Community Colleges #RealCollege Survey*. The Hope Center.

<sup>2</sup> Crutchfield, R. M. & Maguire, J. (2018). *California State University Office of the Chancellor Study of Student Basic Needs*.

<sup>3</sup> <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2015/finance/housing-costs/housing-costs.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> <https://trends.collegeboard.org/sites/default/files/2018-trends-in-college-pricing.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/217448/seasonally-adjusted-monthly-youth-unemployment-rate-in-the-us/>

## **What Makes College-Focused Rapid Rehousing different from other Rapid Rehousing Programs?**

College-Focused Rapid Rehousing combines the three core elements of Rapid Rehousing (housing identification, rental and move-in assistance and case management services) with meaningful, sustained connections to post-secondary education to support retention and completion.

In addition to general case management, students are provided services tailored to meet their unique needs as students including access to tutoring and study skills development, support with balancing their academic schedule against other priorities, help with applying for and maintaining financial aid, and communication between the housing provider and on-campus support services. Providers of College-Focused Rapid Rehousing also have a unique relationship with the college in that a staff member is located on campus in order to identify students experiencing homelessness and refer them to the program.

## **What specific services does SB 568 provide homeless students?**

SB 568 would provide homeless students the core services of Rapid Rehousing, in addition to services to support their unique needs as students:

- **An assessment** of each student's housing needs, including a plan to assist them in meeting those needs;
- **Housing navigation** or search assistance including, but not limited to, recruitment of landlords, identification of shared housing opportunities, facilitation of access to on-campus housing and facilitation of reunification with family members willing to provide stable housing.
- **Housing-related financial assistance**, including rental application fees, rental assistance for up to 24 months, security deposit assistance, utility payments, moving cost assistance, and interim housing assistance while housing navigators are actively seeking permanent housing options for the student.
- **Housing stabilization services**, including ongoing tenant engagement, case management, public benefits advocacy, financial aid advocacy, credit repair assistance, employment support, life skills training, conflict mediation with landlords and neighbors and referrals to other resources necessary to stabilize housing or support the student's educational needs.

## **What evidence is there that Rapid Rehousing works, particularly for young adults?**

In 2016, the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development issued a comprehensive evaluation of 23 sites implementing rapid rehousing. According to the study, 'The results affirm that rapid re-housing is effective at moving families into permanent housing and that most (90 percent) of those families who were placed do not return to homelessness.' Key findings from the study include the following:

- **Exits to stable housing:** Less than 2 percent of study participants reported that they were exiting to a homeless situation

- **Housing stability:** About one-fourth (24 percent) of the study participants were living in the same unit 12 months after the study completion.
- **Lower likelihood of experiencing homelessness:** 90% of study participants did not experience an episode of homelessness within a year of exiting the program<sup>6</sup>

### **Is rapid rehousing cost effective?**

Rapid rehousing is less expensive than emergency shelter or transitional housing. One study found that the average monthly cost of rapid re-housing was \$880, significantly lower than transitional housing (\$2,706) or emergency shelter (\$4,819).<sup>7</sup>

### **Does Rapid Rehousing work for homeless students?**

Rapid re-housing has been found to be effective for college students experiencing homelessness. Since 2016, Jovenes, Inc., a housing provider in Los Angeles has partnered with four community colleges to offer College-Focused Rapid Rehousing. To date, 48 students have been housed. Of these 48 participants, 33% have graduated, 45% are currently enrolled (total 78% retention rate), and 22% withdrew from college. The retention rates exceed the overall student term-to-term retention rate at community colleges which was 70% last year. This is especially notable given that the available data on the general student population measures retention over just one year whereas the data from the Jovenes program spans two full years.

### **Is it feasible to do rapid rehousing in high-cost housing markets?**

There are many housing providers who have successfully implemented rapid rehousing programs in high-cost areas of the state. Housing providers have been utilizing this model for many years and have developed ongoing relationships with landlords who understand how the program operates and are willing to offer units. Housing programs often pair youth in 2-bedroom units, with each participant having their own bedroom as a strategy for keeping costs reasonable. The two-year maximum time frame allows ample time for programs to assist the students to increase their income over time to increase their share of the total rent.

### **How much money would each educational sector receive as part of SB 568 and how many students would it help?**

SB 568 does not specify the exact amount that would be allocated to each educational sector or to an individual campus. It does state that resources would be allocated based on demonstrated need. Given the relative sizes of the three systems and the experience of homelessness of students on those campuses, roughly 75% would likely go to the community colleges, 15% to the California state University campuses and 10% to the University of California campuses.

### **What eligibility criteria must a student meet to qualify for Rapid Rehousing?**

To qualify for Rapid Rehousing, a student would need to be enrolled at least half time and meet a federal definition of homelessness.

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<sup>6</sup> Gubits et al. (2016). Family Options Study: 3-Year Impacts of Housing and Services Interventions for Homeless Families, U.S Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

<sup>7</sup> Gubits et al., 2016.

**What definition of homelessness does SB 568 use?**

SB 568 uses a federal definition of homelessness that states an individual is homeless if that individual lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The definition specifies that this includes an individual who:

- Is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals
- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Is living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings

**Who operates the housing program created by 568? The college campus or a housing provider?**

Experienced housing providers will operate the housing program including providing housing navigation, rental assistance and ongoing case management through an agreement with the campus. The campus and housing provider operate in partnership to identify homeless students, and the housing provider offers housing and services while ensuring integration with on-campus supports. SB 568 includes funding for housing navigators on campus who can connect students experiencing homelessness to the program.

**Would the housing provided by SB 568 be on-campus housing or off-campus housing?**

SB 568 does not specify this. It is possible that the housing could be offered on-campus, but given the limited amount of capacity of on-campus housing, it is more likely that the housing provided would be offered off-campus..

**Would the campus have the authority under SB 568 to prioritize certain student populations, such as young parents?**

SB 568 does not establish a system to prioritize students for participation in the rapid rehousing program. There is nothing in the bill language that would prohibit a campus from developing a prioritization system.

**SB 568 requires students to be enrolled at least half time to be eligible for housing? What is the rationale for this requirement and what happens if a student drops below half-time? Do they lose their housing?**

SB 568 requires students to be enrolled at least half time because it is intended to be a program to address the growing issue of homelessness among college students. Additionally, research has found that students who enroll at least half time have a greater chance of completing college.

### **What is Housing First?**

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, “The Housing First approach focuses on quickly connecting people experiencing a housing crisis to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry (e.g., sobriety, treatment, or service participation requirements) while also providing necessary supports to help maintain housing and prevent a return to homelessness. Supportive services are offered based on assessed need but are not required.”

Housing First for youth, age 18 to 24, has three four principles: immediate access to permanent housing with no preconditions, youth choice and self-determination, individualized and youth-driven supports and Persistent Engagement. For more information about each of these principals, follow this [LINK](#).

### **Why is Housing First included in SB 568?**

This is a requirement of SB 568 due to passage of SB 1380 (Mitchell) in 2016. This landmark legislation states that the Housing First model is intended for all programs receiving state funding.

### **The language of SB 568 refers to a Homeless Youth Liaison. What are these and why are they being targeted for training?**

SB 568 requires all Homeless Liaisons to receive two hours of training annually. Homeless Liaisons were established with the passage of AB 801 to address homelessness on college campuses. The legislation required the community colleges and all campuses of the California State University system to identify a single point of contact to address homelessness. SB 568 requires the Homeless Liaisons to be trained to ensure they know about the newly available housing, the requirements of the campus to receive the funding and other resources for homeless students and students at-risk of homelessness.

### **SB 568 requires homeless students to be prioritized in the distribution of financial aid.**

#### **How does the process currently occur and why will this change be helpful?**

Many financial aid offices take several weeks to process and pay out financial aid to eligible students because of the large numbers of students needing to be paid. Typically, students with the greatest need for funds because of circumstances such as homelessness are not prioritized and may not receive their funds until well into the school year. By prioritizing these students for the receipt of funds, they will be better able to address their basic needs earlier and reduce the amount of time spent homeless.

### **What is Satisfactory Academic Progress?**

Satisfactory Academic Progress is a standard that students must meet to receive state and federal financial aid, including publicly subsidized loans and work study. The U.S. Department of Education requires that all institutions receiving federal financial aid have a SAP policy that specifies what is required of students. The policy must include the following elements:

- **GPA Requirement:** This element requires student to maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA): The required GPA is set by the individual institution but must be set at no lower than 2.0.
- **Progress Requirement:** This element requires students to make progress toward their degree by completing a minimum percentage of attempted units. The minimum percentage of units attempted must be successfully completed both cumulatively and by the end of each academic year to maintain a satisfactory pace toward degree completion and remain eligible for financial aid. This percentage is set by the individual institution; it is commonly 67%.
- **Maximum Number of Attempted Units:** This element requires students to complete their degree within a maximum specified amount of attempted units. This percentage is set by the individual institution; it is commonly 150% of the published length of the program. For example, a four-year degree commonly requires 120 units and a two year degree requires 60 units; Students would only be eligible for financial aid for up to 180 units and 90 units respectively.

**How does SB 568 help homeless students maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress?**

Sb 568 helps homeless student maintain SAP, and therefore financial aid in two ways:

- **Appeals process:** SB 568 requires campuses that receive funding for rapid rehousing to establish a process appeal the loss of federal financial aid due to not meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress standards.
- **Special circumstance:** Secondly SB 568 requires that homelessness be a considered a special circumstance when considering eligibility for continued federal financial aid

**How much financial aid will helping a student maintain SAP provide?**

When a student fails to meet SAP, a student can lose as much as \$ in grant aid at a two-year college and \$25,392 at a four-year college in addition to losing access to work-study and subsidized loans. This includes each of the forms of financial aid in the table below.

<b>Form of Financial Aid</b> (Levels listed are maximum awards)	<b>Community college</b>	<b>CSU</b>	<b>UC</b>	<b>Private College</b>
Federal Pell Grant	\$6,095	\$6,095	\$6,095	\$6,095
State Cal Grant	\$1,672	\$7,414	\$14,302	\$10,895
<b>TOTAL LOST DUE TO SAP</b>	<b>\$7,767</b>	<b>\$13,509</b>	<b>\$20,397</b>	<b>\$16,990</b>

**SB 568 would require campuses to review the financial aid status of students who participate in the Rapid Rehousing program. Why?**

Students who are deemed homeless are eligible to be independent for the purposes of receipt of financial aid, rather than a dependent who is required to report the income and assets of their parents on the Free Application of federal Student Aid. As a independent student, a homeless student will qualify for additional financial aid, which can be used to stabilize his or her housing status and promote college retention.

**How much of the funding will actually go into providing housing?**

The bill authorizes each educational sector to spend up to 3% for administration and each campus may use up to 10% to implement the program requirements, such as prioritizing homeless youth in financial aid distribution and identifying and screening students. The remaining 87% must be spent on housing services.