

# ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

Pam Kies-Lowe  
State Coordinator for Homeless Education  
[kies-lowep@michigan.gov](mailto:kies-lowep@michigan.gov)



# WHO OR WHAT IS AN UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH?

- ▶ Unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) include those who have run away from home, have been asked/forced to leave home, or who have been abandoned by a parent or guardian.
- ▶ The National Runaway Switchboard estimates that between 1.6 and 2.8 million youth annually experience a runaway/"throwaway" episode.\*
- ▶ While some of these young people may return home shortly after leaving, others will live on their own long-term or even permanently.

\* National Runaway Switchboard. [2010]. *Why They Run: An In-depth Look at America's Runaway Youth*. Retrieved August 9, 2010, from <http://www.nrscrisisline.org/media/whytheyrun/report.html>.

# HOW DO YOUTH END UP UNACCOMPANIED & HOMELESS?

- ▶ Acute family conflict
- ▶ Forced out of the home by parents
- ▶ Unwilling to continue living in an unsafe or difficult home environment
- ▶ Absence of a parent or guardian due to incarceration, deployment, or death
- ▶ Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, is often present –
  - 17 to 53 percent of the youth cite experiences of sexual abuse
  - 40 to 60 percent cite experiences of physical abuse



National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2010). *America's Homeless Youth: National Policy Update March 2010*. Retrieved August 9, 2010, from [http://www.endhomelessness.org/files/2421\\_file\\_FY\\_2011\\_Appropriations\\_RHYA\\_3.10.p](http://www.endhomelessness.org/files/2421_file_FY_2011_Appropriations_RHYA_3.10.p)

# BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

- ▶ **Often live in high-risk environments, putting them in danger of experiencing a wide variety of problems**
  - Prostitution, drug culture, human trafficking, etc.
- ▶ **Lack of financial means to live independently and safely**
  - Food, clothing, hygiene, health care and transportation
- ▶ **Limited housing options**
  - Doubled-Up: Friends or relatives who will allow the youth to stay with them for a short period of time only
  - Unsafe and inadequate housing arrangements
- ▶ **Lack of connection with adults/agencies that could help**
  - Fear of being forced to return home or placed in foster care
  - Reluctant to seek help or are unaware of available assistance



# BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS CONTINUED

## ▶ Lack of access to parental financial information and support



- FAFSA requires parents' financial information and signature(s)
- Difficulty with filling out the FAFSA

## ▶ Inability to be financially self-sufficient once enrolled

- Provide for basic needs – food, clothing, hygiene, transportation
- Maintain rigorous work schedules that impact the amount of time they can devote to their studies

## ▶ Lack of accommodations by colleges/universities



- Dormitories close during breaks at residential colleges and universities
- No alternate housing and insufficient funds to pay for housing

# COLLEGE COST REDUCTION AND ACCESS ACT (CCRAA, 2007)

- ▶ Designed to remove barriers to accessing federal financial aid for college for unaccompanied homeless youth
- ▶ Enables UHY to be qualified as “independent students” for the purposes of filling out the FAFSA
  - Removes need to provide parental financial information and signature.
  - Youth must be determined as
    - ❑ Unaccompanied and homeless, or
    - ❑ Unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting during the school year in which they apply for aid.
- ▶ “Independent student” designation is critical to enable them to complete the FAFSA



# COLLEGE COST REDUCTION AND ACCESS ACT (CCRAA, 2007) CONTINUED

- ▶ Determination of independent student status must be made by one of the following:
  - School district homeless education liaison
  - U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) emergency shelter program director/designee
  - Runaway & Homeless Youth Act program director/designee
  - College financial aid administrator
  
- ▶ Lack of guidance on and standard procedure for determining eligibility has resulted in many financial aid offices denying a youth's eligibility or requiring inappropriate information to be provided to prove independent status.
  - MI colleges are a model of this collaboration (due to the efforts of Mark Delorey, Director of Student Financial Aid at Western Michigan University)!
  - U.S. Department of Education guidance: *Application and Verification Guide* (AVG), available for downloading at



[http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/higher\\_ed.php#avg](http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/higher_ed.php#avg)

# TOP HIGHER EDUCATION RESOURCES

- ▶ [Application and Verification Guide excerpt](#)  
Independent student status on FAFSA for UHY
- ▶ [Making Student Status Determinations for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Eligibility Tool for Financial Aid Administrators](#)
- ▶ [Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Documentation of Independent Student Status for the FAFSA](#)  
Template for local liaisons and RHYA- and HUD-funded shelters
- ▶ [Increasing Access to Higher Education for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Information for Colleges and Universities](#)  
NCHE/NAEHCY Issue Brief
- ▶ [NCHE/NASFAA Higher Education Awareness Posters](#)





# NAEHCY HIGHER EDUCATION HELPLINE

1-855-446-2673 (TOLL FREE)

[highered@naehcy.org](mailto:highered@naehcy.org)

- ▶ **Financial Aid Administrators** seeking to assist students experiencing homelessness with accessing financial aid
- ▶ **Higher Education Professionals** seeking to link homeless students with the supports they need to succeed in college
- ▶ **High School Counselors** seeking to assist homeless students with applying to and finding resources to pay for college
- ▶ **State Coordinators for Homeless Education and Local MV Liaisons** seeking to understand what educational rights students experiencing homelessness have in regards to college access & what support options may be available to them
- ▶ **Shelter Staff and Service Providers** seeking to connect youth they are serving with resources to access higher education
- ▶ **Unaccompanied Homeless Youth** who want to attend college but aren't sure what options are available to them to assist in paying for it
- ▶ **Parents of students experiencing homelessness** who wish to understand what supports may be available to their children to help them attend college



# Education Policy for Foster Youth

Department of Human Services

**Ann Rossi**



# Why Poor Outcomes for Youth from Foster Care?

- Foster youth have an average of one to two home placement changes per year while in out-of-home care.
- This leads to a high rate of school mobility, with foster youth attending an average of 6 different schools.



# Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008

- Main provisions:
  - Extended payment for foster care/adoption to 21.
  - Required better coordination of health care services, including mental health and dental services.
  - Required that, 90 days prior to a youth's emancipation, the caseworker develop a personalized transition plan as directed by the youth.
  - Required that a case plan include a plan for ensuring the educational stability of the child in foster care.



# Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008

- Education provisions:
  - Child welfare agencies must include within the case plan assurances of the educational stability.
  - DHS must ensure that child welfare agencies:
    - Consider appropriateness of school and proximity to school of origin when making foster care placements.
    - Work with schools to ensure child remains in the school in which the child is enrolled at time of placement.



# Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008

Best interest factors foster care workers need to consider regarding school placement include:

- The parent's or guardian's and child's school of preference.
- Educational input from school personnel and educational liaison.
- The child's:
  - Social and emotional state.
  - Academic achievement/strengths/weaknesses.
  - Continuity of relationships.
  - Special education programming.
  - Extra-curricular activity participation.
  - Distance/travel time to and from current school/new placement and the impact on the child.
  - Supportive relationships and/or services.
  - Length of anticipated stay in placement and the permanency plan.



# Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008

If remaining in same school is not in the best interest of the child, the case plan must include assurances the child welfare agencies have worked with the schools to:

- Provide immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school; and
- Provide all of the educational records of the child to the school.



# Uninterrupted Scholars Act

- The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) was designed to provide important protections to parents and students, but was not written with students from foster care in mind.
- As a result, it unintentionally created obstacles for students from foster care to receive needed educational support.
- The NEW Uninterrupted Scholars Act addresses these barriers.





# Uninterrupted Scholars Act

- Amends FERPA to allow child welfare agencies to access education records

Without a court order

*and*

Without a parent signature.

- Workers must be requesting information for the purpose of changing schools or general foster care case planning.



# Uninterrupted Scholars Act

- Michigan changes:
  - Joint memo sent to both child welfare agencies and education agency staff in March 2013.
  - Developing a joint request form to be used by child welfare and education staff to access education records for children and youth in foster care.



# Uninterrupted Scholars Act

Child welfare workers:

- Any time a child/youth enters care or changed school placements, a request for educational records must be sent to school of the former school requesting at minimum:
  - Grades.
  - Attendance.
  - Most recent IEP.
  - Any disciplinary records.
- A copy should be sent to the receiving schools M-V liaison so they are aware of a new student.
- Request should be done as soon as school placement change is determined.
- This does not give foster parents rights to information.



# Youth In Transition (YIT)

- Federal Funding called “Chafee.”
- Allocated to States who then allocate to counties.
- Counties manage their own allocation.



# YIT: Funding for...

- Education – pre-college expenses
- Vocational/Employment
- Independent living Training
- Mentoring & Family Connection
- Housing – ***lifetime limit of \$1,000 for first month rent & security deposit***
- Start Up Goods –***lifetime limit of \$1,000 for start up goods***
- Medical & Health Needs
- Parenting
- Money Management
- Memberships
- Transportation



# Education: Pre-college expenses

- ACT/SAT preparation and testing.
- GED preparation and testing.
- Credit recovery/summer school.
- College applications.
- Tutoring.
- Books and supplies for specialized classes such as lab fees, special calculators, uniforms.
- Expenses for school sponsored educational field trips.
- Senior expenses
- Prom dress or prom tuxedo rental for senior prom up to \$100.





# DHS Education Planners

- 14 full-time Education Planners started in May 2010.
- Assist youth with developing both short and long-term educational goals and assist with taking the steps to reach those goals.
- Provide technical assistance and training to workers, school personnel, foster parents, youth, and others for education.
- Act as a liaison between the education system and the foster care system.
- Find a planner at [http://michigan.gov/fyit/0,4585,7-240-44289\\_45022-296562--,00.html](http://michigan.gov/fyit/0,4585,7-240-44289_45022-296562--,00.html)



# Education Planner Locations

<b>Covered Area</b>	<b>Location of Education Planner</b>
Wayne	Wayne
Macomb	Macomb
Oakland	Oakland
Genesee	Genesee
Kent	Kent
Calhoun/Kalamazoo/Branch/Hillsdale	Calhoun
Ingham/ Barry/Eaton	Eaton
Jackson/Lenawee/Monroe/Livingston/Shiawassee	Jackson
Isabella/Midland/Saginaw/Bay/Arenac/Gladwin	Bay
Berrien/Cass/St. Joseph/VanBuren	Cass
Muskegon/Ottawa/Allegan	Muskegon
Dickinson/Delta/Menominee/Marquette	Delta
Grand Traverse/Leelanau/Kalkaska/Antrim	Grand Traverse





# Campus-Based Support Programs for Foster Youth

**Aquinas College** – Fostering Success Scholarship

**Baker College of Flint** – Living Independently  
Networking Knowledge (L.I.N.K) Program

**Eastern Michigan University** – Mentorship, Access,  
Guidance in College (MAGIC) Program

**Ferris State University** – Foster Youth Initiative (FYI)

**Michigan State University** – Fostering Academic,  
Mentoring Excellence (FAME) Program



# Campus-Base Support Programs for Foster Youth

- **Saginaw Valley State University** –Fostering an Academic Successful Transition (F.A.ST.)
- **University of Michigan** – Blavin Scholarship Program
- **University of Michigan Flint** – Mpowering My Success
- **Wayne State University** – Transition to Independence (TIP) Program
- **Western Michigan University** – Seita Scholars Program



# Contact me with questions!

Ann Rossi

Department of Human Services

517-373-2851

[RossiA@michigan.gov](mailto:RossiA@michigan.gov)



# Michigan Education & Training Voucher (ETV) Program

Lutheran Social Services of Michigan

Tanya Maki



# Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

- **Part of the Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee Act)- enacted in 2004 in Michigan.**
- **Federal and State money to assist with youth aging out of care with post secondary educational and vocational programs.**
  - Amount of money per state is based on percentage of youth in care.
  - Each state matches 20% of their allocation.



# ETV Statistics

Type of School	Number of Youth Attended	Percentage of Youth for Year
Public 4-year University	283	44.6%
Private 4-year University	32	5.0%
Public Community College	264	41.6%
Trade School	55	8.7%

Number of years Received	Number of Youth	Percentage of Youth
1 year (2012 is their 1 <sup>st</sup> year)	258	40.7%
2 years	138	21.8%
3 Years	105	16.6%
4 Years	74	11.7%
5 Years	48	7.6%
6 Years	9	1.4%
7 Years	2	.03%



# ETV Fiscal Year 2013

- Provide up to \$5000 per year to assist with college and living expenses.
  - Award amount is determined on full-time or part-time status.
  - Award amount must be split between two semesters.
    - Full-time students: up to \$2000 per semester
    - Part-time students: up to \$1000 per semester



# ETV Eligibility

- **Foster youth or former foster youth.**
- **Current or former delinquency case youth placed in an eligible child care placement\* under supervision of DHS.**

\* MAY INCLUDE: licensed foster family homes, relative provider homes, group homes, emergency shelters, licensed child care institutions, pre-adoptive placements, independent living placements.

\* MAY NOT INCLUDE: any public or private high security facility, a public child care institution for more than 25 children, detention facilities, forestry camps, training schools, or facilities operated primarily for the detention of children, jail.

- **Unaccompanied refugee minor supervised by DHS.**
- **Must have been in care on or after 14<sup>th</sup> birthday.**
  - *If adopted from care on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.*
- **Must have a High School Diploma or GED.**
- **Must attend an accredited college, university, or training program at least half-time.**
- **Must receive their first ETV before 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.**







# When to begin the application process???

- Students need to have their high school diploma or GED **and** be enrolled in an post secondary institution.
- Students can begin the process near graduation and will remain pending until all required documents are submitted.



# How to Apply for ETV

## STEP 1:

- **Students must complete the FAFSA application. [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)**
  - Can complete as early as January for the following school year.
  - DHS 945 Verification of State/County Ward



# How to Apply for ETV

## STEP 2:

- **Complete entire ETV application**
  - Application can be found at:  
[www.mietv.lssm.org](http://www.mietv.lssm.org)
    - Or, requested from worker
    - Or, requested from ETV office (877) 660-6388



# How to Apply continued

- **Students must complete the ETV checklist by including all additional information:**
  - Copy of HS Diploma, or GED
    - Class Schedule
  - Account Summary (must indicate tuition balance)
    - Financial Aid Package
  - Acceptance Letter or; GPA if not first semester
  - Supporting Budget Documentation (lease, estimates, etc.)



# Applying for Re-determination

- **To receive an additional ETV during the same year, the student must submit the following:**
  - Re-determination Checklist
    - Budget
  - Current Class Schedule
    - Cumulative GPA
  - Receipts from previous ETV



# Distribution of ETV Award

- Student must have an immediate need for funds.
- If student owes money in tuition or wants to pay on loans, that amount is sent directly to the school.
- Remaining amount may be put towards rent, transportation, computer, and approved educational expenses.
- Awarded funds are only available during the term applied for.



# Re-Applying for ETV

- A student may be awarded twice each Fiscal Year (October 1 – September 30).
- When re-applying the next year, the student must complete the entire application process again.
- The student must include receipts to show how the previous ETV was spent.
- Student must be maintaining a 2.0 cumulative GPA or above.
- Student cannot withdraw or have an incomplete from more than 1 class each semester.
- Student continues to be eligible until 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday.



# Case Manager Services

- **Two Case Managers**
  - Amy Carey serves entire State of Michigan (excluding Southeast Michigan) and all Out-of-State youth.
  - Reco Spencer serves Southeast Michigan youth.





# Case Manager Services

- Youth are assessed in person or over the phone during application process.
- Case Manager sees identified youth during application process and as needed by the youth.
- Phone contact with all ETV recipients quarterly.
- On-going email contact and support.
- Monitors and supports students progress.
- Helps find resources.



# ETV Contact Information

- Send completed application to:

**LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES OF MICHIGAN**

**ATTENTION: ETV**

**209 E. WASHINGTON AVE., SUITE 284**

**JACKSON, MI 49201**

- Or Fax to: **(517) 789-6809**
- You can contact the ETV office by email at:
  - [tmaki@lssm.org](mailto:tmaki@lssm.org) Tanya Maki, ETV Coordinator
  - [rspen@lssm.org](mailto:rspen@lssm.org) Reco Spencer, ETV Case Manager
  - [acare@lssm.org](mailto:acare@lssm.org) Amy Carey, ETV Case Manager
- Phone: **877-660-6388**



# Financial Aid

Mark Delorey

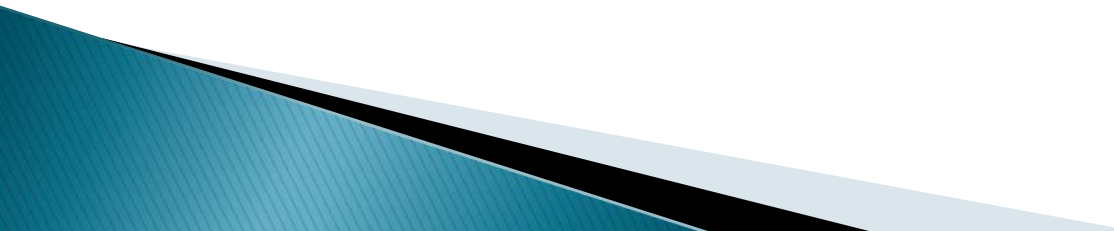
Director of Financial Aid

Western Michigan University

[mark.delorey@wmich.edu](mailto:mark.delorey@wmich.edu)

(269) 387-6037

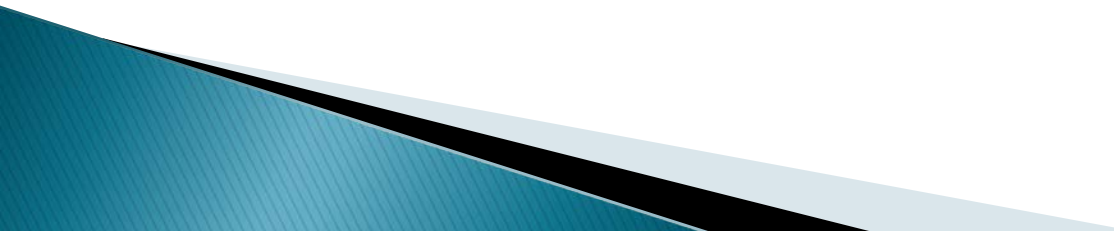
# Special Populations – Who?

- ▶ UHY – Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
  - ▶ Youth Aging Out of Foster Care
  - ▶ Ward of the State
  - ▶ Orphan
  - ▶ Emancipated Minor
  - ▶ Legal Guardianship
  - ▶ Undocumented Students
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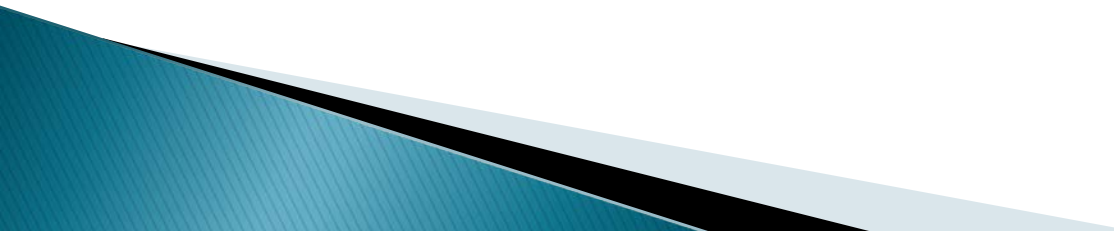
# Special Populations – What?

- ▶ Independent on the FAFSA\*
  - ▶ Additional documentation will be required
  - ▶ Extra assistance may be necessary
  - ▶ Find an advocate on campus
- \* Does not apply to Undocumented Students

# Special Populations – What?

- ▶ Special programs may be available
  - ▶ Don't let frustration lead to non-enrollment
  - ▶ Keep asking until you get what you need!!
  - ▶ The “baton pass” must be smooth
  - ▶ Communication is critical
- 

# UHY – Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

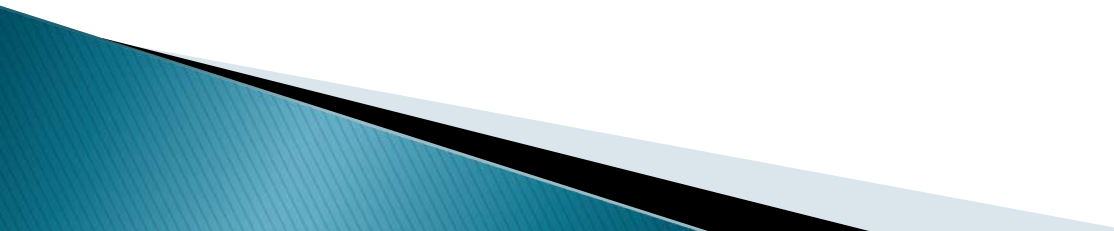
- ▶ The certification for independent status is technically only valid for one year
  - ▶ Provide documentation early (summer closure)
  - ▶ “Professional judgment” may be requested if future years
  - ▶ UHY status ends at 21, so another independent status is needed until 24
- 

# Youth Aging Out of Foster Care

- ▶ Be sure the student applies for TIP and ETV
- ▶ The student's caseworker can provide documentation, but you may need to help
- ▶ Year round housing might be needed
- ▶ Ask college about foster care-specific support
- ▶ Search for private scholarship assistance
- ▶ Peer support can be vital



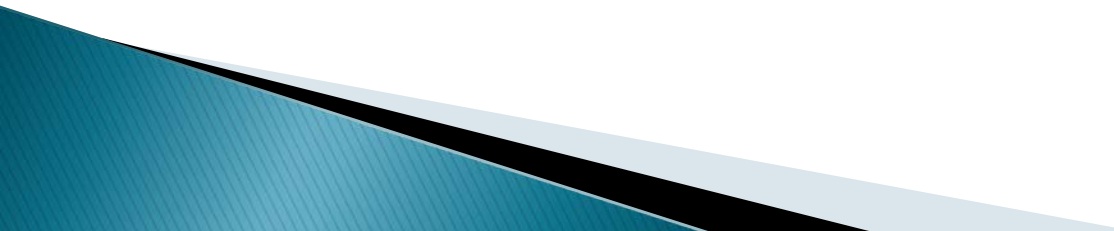
# Ward of the State

- ▶ Students may be wards for a variety of reasons
  - ▶ Can be distinct from foster care
  - ▶ Some benefits such as ETV not available
  - ▶ Documentation = court documents
- 

# Orphan

- ▶ Do not report grandparent income unless they have been adopted
- ▶ Death certificates may be requested

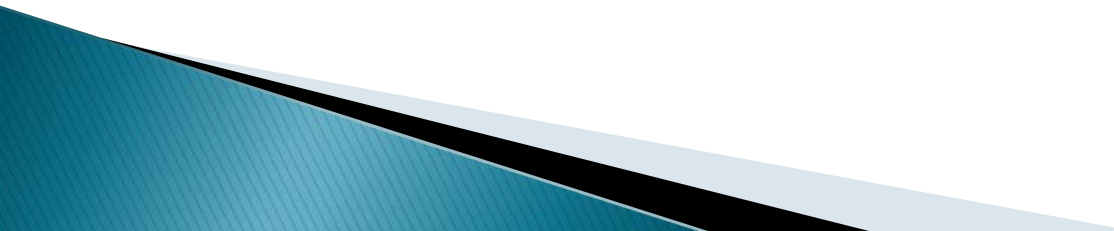
# Emancipated Minor

- ▶ Form PC100 through Probate Court
  - ▶ Copy of the final court order
- 

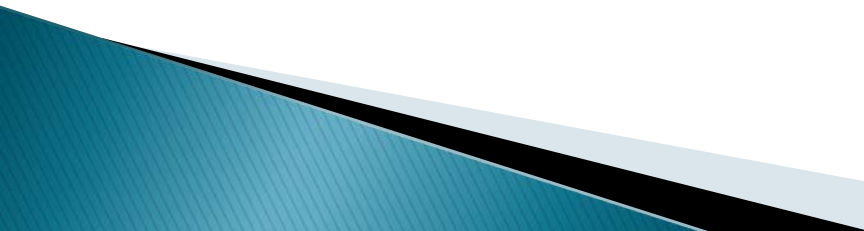
# Legal Guardianship

- ▶ Permanent separation status from parents
- ▶ Not for temporary living arrangements or travel

# Undocumented Students

- ▶ Non-citizens without immigration or visa status
  - ▶ Not eligible for federal or state financial aid
  - ▶ Cannot file a FAFSA
  - ▶ Private scholarships and loans are available
- 

# Undocumented Students

- ▶ “Plyler v. Doe” assures access to K–12
  - ▶ Some colleges block admission
  - ▶ One MI public university offers resident tuition
  - ▶ (11 states grant resident tuition)
- 

# Undocumented Students

- ▶ Development, Relief & Education for Alien Minors (**DREAM Act**) not yet law
- ▶ Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (**DACA**) is in effect:
  - Temporarily allowed to remain in the U.S.
  - Allowed to work
  - May receive a drivers license

# Undocumented Students

## Note:

- ▶ Students who are citizens or permanent residents with parents who are Undocumented can file a FAFSA and are fully eligible!



# Summary

- ▶ Documentation!!
  - ▶ Ask LOTS of questions
  - ▶ Find an ally on campus
  - ▶ Many of these students are easily discouraged
  - ▶ Don't let the student give up!
- 