



Richard Bland College

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) have equitable access to admission, financial aid, housing, academic support, and student services at [Institution Name]. The institution is committed to removing barriers that prevent homeless and housing-insecure students from enrolling, persisting, and completing their education.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy:

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY) means a student who:

- Lacks fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
- Is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

This includes students who are:

- Living in shelters, motels, cars, parks, or other temporary settings
- Doubled up due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- Fleeing domestic violence, abuse, or unsafe housing
- At risk of homelessness

Definitions are consistent with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the Higher Education Act.

Policy Statement

Richard Bland College shall:

1. Remove barriers to enrollment and retention for UHY.

2. Ensure financial aid dependency determinations are made promptly and sensitively.
 3. Provide priority consideration for housing and support services.
 4. Protect the privacy and confidentiality of students experiencing homelessness.
 5. Designate a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for homeless and foster youth. This point of contact is the Financial Aid Director
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Financial Aid Determination Procedures

A. Independent Student Status

In accordance with the Higher Education Act, UHY may qualify as independent students for federal financial aid purposes.

The Financial Aid Office shall:

- Accept documentation from:
 - High school or district homeless liaisons
 - Directors of shelters or transitional housing programs
 - Runaway and homeless youth program directors
- If documentation is unavailable, the Financial Aid Director will conduct a documented determination interview.
- Avoid requiring parental contact or unnecessary documentation.
- Make determinations in a timely manner (within 5–10 business days where feasible).

B. Renewal

Once a student is determined to be an unaccompanied homeless youth, the institution will **not** require re-verification in subsequent years unless conflicting information arises. The financial aid office will document the tracking screen with the code “**UHY**”

5. Housing Support

The institution shall:

- Provide priority access to on-campus housing.
 - Waive housing deposits or allow payment plans when feasible.
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6. Academic and Student Support Services

The institution will provide access to:

- Academic advising tailored to housing-insecure students
 - Mental health counseling services
 - Emergency grants or short-term financial assistance
 - Food pantry or meal support programs
 - Transportation assistance where feasible
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7. Confidentiality

All information regarding a student's homeless status shall be handled in accordance with applicable privacy laws and institutional policy. Disclosure is limited to personnel with a legitimate educational interest.

8. Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed at least every three years and updated as necessary to ensure compliance with federal and state law.

9. Request for Consideration

If a student is unaccompanied or at risk of experiencing homelessness, they should contact the Financial Aid Office. A form will be sent to the student to complete. Once the form is submitted, the student must provide any required supporting documentation.

Students may contact the Financial Aid Office by phone at (804) 862-6260 or by email at financialaid@rbc.edu.