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| A Home for the Holidays 2015  **Five WAYS to Help Homeless and Foster Youth during academic breaks**  Most students experiencing homelessness and students from foster care don’t have families to return to during academic breaks. Instead of enjoying the warmth of home and family, they scramble for a place to stay, often hiding their situation due to embarrassment. The fear of homelessness during breaks creates tremendous stress, preventing students from focusing on schoolwork. Be part of the solution by helping your community develop a plan for assisting these vulnerable young people to have safe, stable housing over breaks. | | |
| **1. Allow youth to stay in their residence hall.**  Some colleges and universities allow students to remain in their student residence during academic breaks, if they pay an additional fee. However, these fees may pose barriers for homeless and foster youth. Schools can allow homeless and foster youth to stay in their student residence by using housing fee waivers, financial aid, emergency grants or loans, or alternative funding sources, such as a scholarship for emergency rental needs. See [examples of current campus efforts](http://naehcy.org/sites/default/files/dl/breakhousingexamples.pdf).  **2. Open international student housing for homeless and foster youth.**  Many colleges and universities allow international students to stay in their residence during academic breaks. Without this allowance, many international students would have nowhere to stay. Like international students, many homeless and foster youth have no place to go during breaks and closures. Colleges and universities can allow homeless and foster care youth to remain in their student residence, or in the international student residence during academic breaks.    **3. Use Student Support Services dollars for housing during breaks.**  The [Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008](http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/images/dl/hea_summ.doc) allows Student Support Services programs to secure temporary housing during breaks in the academic year for homeless students and students from foster care. Colleges and universities can work with Student Support Services programs on their campuses to find the best way to utilize these dollars to house homeless and foster youth. If there are no Student Support Services programs on campus, colleges and universities may contact agencies that can supplement the cost of housing during school breaks.  **4. Create a website where youth can confidentially disclose their status and what services they need.**  An online application can help students self-identify their homelessness or foster care history and indicate what services they need, including housing during breaks. Housing, Financial Aid, and other pertinent offices can work together to better assist theses students with securing housing during breaks.  See how this has been implemented at [Michigan State University](http://www.finaid.msu.edu/fyas/AppMain.asp).    **5. Designate a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) on Campus.**  A SPOC is a point person who can help homeless and foster care youth locate on and off campus resources. Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, North Carolina and Pennsylvania have SPOCs at many colleges and universities. Campuses in other states also are implementing the initiative. To get more information about the SPOC model, please see [NAEHCY’s SPOC tip sheet](http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/dl/spoc-tips.docx), or contact Cyekeia Lee, NAEHCY’s Director of Higher Education Initiatives at [clee@naehcy.org](mailto:clee@naehcy.org).    **www.naehcy.org | www.nchcw.org**  **www.nn4youth.org | www.covenanthouse.org** | | **Five Things ways to Help Homeless and Foster Youth during breaks** |