



## National Conference for Hidden Student Populations

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<https://nchp.okstate.edu>

### Current Hidden College Student Populations

May include those who have foster care histories, justice-involved experiences, who are survivors of sexual violence or sex workers, recovering substances addicts, who face housing insecurity, who have sought/seeking abortion care, or who have undergone or are in the process of gender reassignment.

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**The Scholar-Practitioner** is a monthly publication of research summaries that targets the research-to-practice-to-research gap for U.S. scholar and practitioner advocates for hidden college student populations.

This publication reinforces the work of the **National Conference for Hidden Student Populations (NCHP)** by providing a space to share research applications for practice. **NCHP** was the first research conference dedicated to this multidisciplinary area of study.

The **NCHP 5th conference** will be held February 19 - 21, 2025. [Registration and call for proposals are now open!](#)

## Homelessness and housing insecurity among community college students

Goldrick-Rab, S., Baker-Smith, C., Cordes, S. A., & Clark, K. (2024). *Homelessness and Housing Insecurity Among Community College Students: A longitudinal evaluation of a housing choice voucher program*. (Publication April 30, 2024). Education Northwest. <https://educationnorthwest.org/sites/default/files/pdf/homelessness-among-ccstudents-report-508c.pdf>

### Summary by Christine Baker-Smith

Housing security is a challenge for students in higher education, particularly those in community colleges (Brotton, 2020; Brotton & Goldrick-Rab, 2017; Crutchfield & Maguire, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2023; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2020). Community college students are members of the communities where they attend school making their well-being during and after, inside and outside, college important (Baxter et al., 2019; Chetty et al., 2020; Haveman & Smeeding, 2006). Yet, while there are multiple programs to support housing insecure or homeless students, there have been very few studies of whether and how these supports impact student well-being or academic achievement, particularly with proper comparison of college student groups. Using a sample of 422 students attending a community college in Washington state, we examined the descriptive and causal impact of receiving a housing voucher on student well-being and academic success.

### Program Implementation and Partnership

The program was a collaboration between a community college and the local housing authority intended to leverage the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) *housing choice voucher* program. The collaboration detailed the roles and responsibilities of each partner, how many vouchers would be part of the program, and the eligibility criteria for the vouchers (which included being enrolled at the community college). The local housing authority provided the housing vouchers.

### Findings

The findings are based on regular meetings with both partners, more than 20 interviews with program staff, and a document review of all relevant documents.

- Ensuring staff have the appropriate expertise and clear roles and responsibilities is imperative. While the staff at the community college served as student support, they did not have specific expertise in addressing housing issues. This was accompanied by multiple staff changes for each partner organization which resulted in different numbers of program applications across the study period. Throughout the program, there was confusion about which organization was responsible for supporting students with the actual housing search.

- Opportunities to adjust program components in response to local conditions are necessary. The partners had semi-regular meetings, allowing them to address factors such as eligibility criteria and putting the application online in later cohorts. Another example of this work was adjusting the voucher expiration to allow for the fact that the housing search was taking longer than anticipated due to a tight housing market.

- The administrative burden of the HUD application often resulted in significant delays as students had to secure multiple pieces of government documentation to complete the housing authority application—let alone secure a lease. Ultimately only 25% of students in the study secured housing with a voucher.

### Impacts of housing

While the likelihood of receiving a voucher and subsequently securing housing was very low, the impacts for those students who did were significant. These findings are based on both the randomized controlled experiment for near-homeless students and a descriptive analysis of outcomes for students who were homeless at the time of application.

- This housing voucher program resulted in positive outcomes across multiple domains highlighting the power of housing to influence multiple areas of an individual's life and suggesting that housing is a strong policy lever for a broad range of outcomes.

- Specifically, engagement in the labor force, food security, financial stability, and academic outcomes

were higher for students in the program.

### Differences in types of housing insecurity

There are important differences in both the outcomes and baseline characteristics of homeless and near-homeless students. Overall, near-homeless students, while experiencing some level of housing insecurity, were more likely to have characteristics associated with advantage or likelihood of securing support across multiple systems as compared to the homeless students (Knoll, 2023). Students identified as near-homeless at the time of their application were more likely to be older and female, hold a high school diploma, have dependents, and have filed a FAFSA as compared to their homeless peers.

Outcomes also differ based on students' initial housing status. Seventy percent of homeless students completed a credential, transferred, or remained enrolled in college; though this outcome is only descriptive. The causal impact for near-homeless students is not as obvious, suggesting that there are other relationships between academic success and student characteristics that are not comparable in a descriptive sample. Near-homeless students, however, did have a higher probability of remaining enrolled if they were in the program and housed. However, the program does appear to have a positive influence on labor force participation and food security across both types of students.

In summary, we find encouraging evidence about the potential of

housing programs to improve outcomes for those who ultimately secure housing. However, program design and implementation are key to ensuring the broadest impact.

### References

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**NCHP**

Save the date!  
Feb 19 - 21, 2025

Register [here](#)

Call for Proposals **NOW OPEN!**

**Team Leader** - Become a team leader of a multidisciplinary research team. Deadline October 1, 2024 (notifications by November 1)

**Team Member** - Become a new multidisciplinary research team member. Deadline October 31, 2024 (notifications by December 1)

**Presentations** - Present an original empirical work or practice. Deadline January 10, 2025 (notifications by January 21)

**PDQs** - Lead a think tank discussion. Deadline January 10, 2025 (notifications by January 21)

More information: [nchp.okstate.edu](https://nchp.okstate.edu)

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