Student Homelessness: Examining the Problem

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Examining the Problem
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Questions
- How many students are impacted?
- What are we NOT doing?
- What programs are currently in place to help?
- What more can we do as a society to eliminate it?

- An estimated 56,000 college students nationwide are homeless.
- More than a third of college students don’t always have enough to eat and they lack stable housing.
- 36 percent of college students say they are food insecure. Another 36 percent say they are housing insecure, while 9 percent report being homeless.

"It really undermines their ability to do well in school. Their grades suffer, their test scores appear to be lower, and overall, their chances of graduating are slimmer. They can barely escape their conditions of poverty long enough to complete their degrees." - Sara Goldrick-Rab, professor of higher-education policy at Temple University

Issue
Colleges and universities do not come with built-in social service centers to assist homeless students and their families.

Recommendations
- Focus on outreach efforts to inform homeless students and their families of their rights.
- Actively connect homeless students to outside supports.

Barriers to Finishing Their Degree
- Securing year-round housing.
- Gaining a job to supplement financial aid packages.
- Finding reliable transportation.
- Receiving academic support.

Preston Roberson-Charles, a student at LaGuardia Community College who was homeless for two years.

Alejandro Reyes, a 23-year-old UCLA student who was homeless and living out of his car.

"At holidays I couldn’t stay at the dorms, so I had to plan out who was going to stay with, who was going to take me in, and how many days and weeks can I stay at this person’s house?" - Regina Montoya

Regina Montoya, a senior at California State University, Sacramento, struggled with housing insecurity when she started college.

UCLA has an on-campus food pantry where students can pick up items for free – no questions asked.
College and University Food Bank Alliance supports existing and emerging campus food banks and pantries.

The problem with homelessness in universities is that because we don’t want to stand out, the university has no idea that we even exist." - Alejandro Reyes