A new venture at the University of Cincinnati this fall will provide a themed house at the Stratford Heights complex for first-generation college students who are eligible for Pell Grants.

Called the Gen-1 Theme House, the three-story house is across Clifton Avenue from UC's main campus and includes 26 beds.

Along with a mentoring program and small-group tutoring sessions, the house provides another program UC hopes will ease the transition to college for students who might need more initial support.

"I think it’s a great opportunity," said LaShayna Murray, who graduated from Taft High School last year and will live at the house this fall. "I thought it would be better to live with people who are dealing with the same things I am."

The Partner for Achieving School Success - part of UC’s College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services - is organizing the house.

It's raising money to help students pay the $511 monthly cost of the house.

They hope to raise enough to subsidize at least $300 a month for each student.

Organizers said most students who start college never finish, and the dropout rate is highest among first-year students. They said they are aiming squarely at the students most vulnerable to leaving UC early.

"We know that first-generation students have a more difficult time than those who have a mom and dad who went to college," Project Director Bob Suess said. "We also know that the students who live at home and commute here are not as successful as kids who live on campus or near campus."