Developing Policies and Procedures to Identify and Serve Out-of-School and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

SchoolHouse Connection

Overcoming Homelessness Through Education

Educating Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Wednesday October 24, 2018
What do you hope to learn today?
SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education. We provide strategic advocacy and technical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

- Website: http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org
- Newsletter
- Federal and state policy advocacy
- Q&A from our Inbox
- Webinars and implementation tools
- Youth leadership and scholarships
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Definition

Definition:

A child or youth who meets the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness and is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. 11434a(6)
Why?

- Abuse and neglect (Runaway Safeline Data)
- 20-40% sexually abused
- 40-60% physically abused
- Domestic violence
- Deep poverty and lack of affordable housing
- Parental substance abuse and mental illness
- Family homelessness (nearly one-quarter of unaccompanied youth)
- Death of a parent or caregiver (over one-third of unaccompanied youth)
- Prior experiences of foster care (nearly one-third of unaccompanied youth)
- Told to leave at 18th birthday (family economics)
“Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America,” Chapin Hall, University of Chicago, Voices of Youth Count
Schools Nationwide are Identifying More Homeless Students

1.3 million students during 2015-2016 school year
Specifically, Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>U.S. Department of Education Homeless Student Data SY2012-SY2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SY2012-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Children and Youth Identified as Homeless and Enrolled in Public Schools (PreK-12)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,219,818</td>
<td>1,301,239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Identified and Enrolled in Public Schools (K-12)</strong></td>
<td>78,654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Homelessness is Hidden, Including in Schools

Chapin Hall, University of Chicago, Voices of Youth Count,
- At least 700,000 unaccompanied adolescents (ages 13-17) – 1 in 30
- Public schools: 111,753 unaccompanied homeless youth
- This suggests that for every unaccompanied youth identified by schools, we miss at least five.

Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Centers for Disease Control
- Student reported rates of homelessness are significantly higher than school reported numbers, in all YRBS states/districts – sometimes twice as high or more.
“I went to a high school where the location and community had high poverty tax, so most of the people were wealthy. I was able to piggyback off of that, but that also meant that my experience was invisible.”
Figure 4. Youth Homelessness Affects Rural and Urban Areas Alike

Rates of youth experiencing homelessness were similar in rural and nonrural areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young Adults 18-25</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth 13-17</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lack of Education is Strongly Correlated with Youth Adult Homelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subpopulation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED</td>
<td>346%</td>
<td>346%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT youth</td>
<td>120%</td>
<td>120%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic, non-White youth</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American youth</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried parenting youth</td>
<td>200%</td>
<td>200%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Child/Family Homelessness

Adult Homelessness

Youth/Young Adult Homelessness
Education can Protect Against Homelessness

- Children in quality preschool programs are more likely to graduate from high school and own homes.
- 99% of the jobs created since the Great Recession have gone to workers with at least some postsecondary education.
- High school and college graduation are linked to other important indicators of health and well-being.
Schools as the Hub for Connection and Success

- Schools may be the only service provider in the community (no shelters in most places).
- Schools may be the most consistent component of a student’s life, and their best source to connect with caring adults for help and support.
- Education is the one of the best interventions to prevent future homelessness.
“Graduating from high school was devastating. I lost my entire support system.”
Transition from High School to College

• Start outreach as soon as freshman year.
• Create checklist to review each time you meet
  – Be aware of deadlines
• ACT/SAT fee waivers
• Help students fill out the FAFSA
  – Scholarship options
• Host a college tour
• Be aware of state laws offering tuition/fee waivers
• Partner with college access programs and higher education supports
  – Pathways to Partnership
  – Summer Bridge
Resources

● SchoolHouse Connection: http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/
● Hidden in Plain Sight: http://www.americaspromise.org/report/hidden-plain-sight
● National Center on Homeless Education: https://nche.ed.gov
● National Network for Youth: http://www.nn4youth.org
● DVDs for awareness-raising: vimeo.com/pjulianelle
  ○ “The McKinney-Vento Act in Our Schools”
  ○ “Education and Homelessness: Young Children to Young Adults”
Resources

- Higher Education Tip Sheets
- Pathways to Partnerships
- FAFSA
- Youth-facing Guides
- Webinars
- State Laws

https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/learn/higher-education/
SchoolHouse Connection Scholarship Program

- Deadline November 9, 2018
- Eligible students:
  - Born on or after November 9, 1998
  - Entering college for the first time during the 2019-2020 school year.

https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/youth-leadership/scholarship-program/
Contact Information

Jillian Sitjar - Higher Education Program Manager, SchoolHouse Connection - jillian@schoolhouseconnection.org
Homeless Practices at the Elizabethtown Area School District

Jennifer Kenny, MSW, LSW
EASD Home & School Visitor
Identification

- Registration flag
- Any staff member → Jenn Kenny (streamline)
- ECYEH form (aligned to website) sent to primary contacts, immediate implementation of services
- Coordination with Counselors/school staff
- Coordination with community agencies
- Student Outreach – teaching about poverty in classes
- Annual outreach in August to re-identify
Education/Professional Development

- Annual Staff Notices – online
  - Links to M-V Act, PDE, BEC, ECYE Region site, training manual for new employees
- Monthly “BearTracks” staff newsletter
- Staff Meetings/In-Service Days
- BCIU staff (also online for EASD staff) & Follow-up information
- Individualized with staff as needed
Awareness

- Posters in prominent areas (Every School, Registration, District Office, Nurse, ECHOS, Library, Winter Shelter)
- EASD website “Homeless Services” under Student Supports tab
- ECYEH Grant – promo items for community events, registration area, main offices
- Collaborations with local agencies
Reducing Barriers

- No computer/internet
  - Info on Website, Virtual Backpack, Text, Mailed
- Transport to register & ongoing related needs
- Transportation of homeless students (Faithful Transport, Coordinator role creativity)
- Social Work Supplies Budget
- Basic needs – food, clothing, hygiene, supplies, etc.
- Mental health needs
- Staff/Community collaborations – Share along the way!
- Creativity by all
Unique in Etown

- Winter Shelter & history
- ECHOS – *Elizabethtown Community Housing & Outreach Services*
- Community Place on Washington
- Ministerium/Churches That Care
- Elizabethtown HUB
Assisting Unaccompanied Youth

Dr. Dave Lehman
Conemaugh Valley School District
Cambria County - Region 6
The student?

- If the student had not been attending a school:
  - Why they want to come back to school?
  - What are their intentions?

- Ask the student about previous experiences
  - What was the last grade they completed?
  - Testing to see where they are

- Talk about goals

- Who can they turn to for support

- Consequences for not following through
Programs we offer:

- Credit recovery
  - Lunch Recovery Program - students are in a monitored lunch completing assignments
- On-line learning
  - Done in conjunction with attending in-school classes
  - Learning Lamp (Program offered to students)
- Connecting with a peer tutor
- Tutoring
  - Teachers during study hall and other times throughout the day
  - After school tutoring/test support
Other supports:

- Talking with student on regular basis
  - Building a support team
    - Principal
    - Guidance
    - Teachers
    - Peers
    - Regional Coordinator (if possible)

- Connecting the Regional Coordinator, when applicable
  - What can they do?