

# Partnering with Schools to Support Homeless Children and Youth

*A Presentation by the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities,  
the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth,  
and the National Center for Homeless Education*

**CLPHA**

**NAEHY**  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE EDUCATION  
OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH



Tuesday, May 27, 2014

# Agenda

- Overview and Introductions
- Family and youth homelessness, its impacts on education, and related federal law
- Collaboration between housing authorities and school districts
- Focus on San Bernardino partnership
- Lessons for partnering
- Q & A

# Webinar Organizers

- Council of Large Public Housing Authorities (CLPHA)
- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)
- National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)

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# Our Presenters



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# Family and Youth Homelessness

- Causes and prevalence
- Impacts on education
- Related federal law

# Causes of Homelessness

- Lack of affordable housing
- Poverty – the mean income of homeless families is 41% of poverty
- Health problems (addiction, mental health)
- Domestic violence
- Natural and other disasters
- Abuse/neglect/failure of child welfare system (unaccompanied youth)

# Prevalence – Numbers and Trends

- 1,168,364 homeless students in public schools, preK-12, in 2011-2012 school year
- 10% increase over previous year, 72% increase since the 2006-2007 school year
- The Youth Risk Behavior Survey shows higher prevalence (8% of high school students in Philadelphia indicated homelessness)
- 52% of children in HUD-funded homeless shelters are under the age of five

# Impact of Homelessness on Education

- In 2011-2012, less than half of homeless students who were tested met state proficiencies
- Homelessness during infancy and toddlerhood linked to child welfare involvement and early school failure; more developmental problems
- Achievement gaps between homeless and low-income elementary students persist, and may even worsen, over time
- Higher drop-out and lower graduation rates

# Barriers to Education

- Lack of awareness; under-identification
- High mobility resulting in lack of school stability and educational continuity
- Poor health, fatigue, hunger
- Prejudice and misunderstanding
- Enrollment requirements (school records, health records, proof of residence and guardianship)
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.

# Overview of McKinney-Vento Act

- State Coordinators at State Education Agencies
- School district liaisons at every school district; Identification is a key responsibility
- School stability – transportation
- Immediate enrollment
- Posting of public notice
- \$65 million appropriation – less than one in five school districts receives sub-grant funds
- Title I, Part A – required reservation of funds

# Eligibility: Definition of Homeless for Schools, Head Start, Higher Ed, Nutrition

Children who **lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**—

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason [75% of identified homeless students in 2011-2012]
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations [Motels: 6% of identified homeless students in 2011-2012]

# Who is Eligible, continued

- Living in emergency or transitional shelters [15.5% of identified homeless students in 2011-2012]
- Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Migratory children living in above circumstances
- Awaiting foster care placement

# Collaboration Between Housing Authorities and School Districts

- Collaborations are built on recognition and understanding of respective missions:
  - Education is a key to escaping poverty and homelessness
  - Stable housing is a key ingredient for academic achievement

# Promising Partnerships

- Grand Junction, Boulder, and Jefferson County, CO – HOME funds directed to homeless families identified by school liaisons; comprehensive services provided by agencies
- Johnson City, TN – Zero bedroom units reserved for unaccompanied homeless youth; case management through child welfare; school
- Oakland, MI – Families verified by liaison receive homeless preference for Section 8

# Focus on San Bernardino Partnership

- Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino
- San Bernardino City Unified School District

# History of the Collaboration

- Senator Dianne Feinstein tasked the housing authority, on behalf of the County and City of San Bernardino, to house unsheltered children.
- The housing authority reached out to the school district to partner on identifying these children in the City of San Bernardino.
- Family Resource Collaborative was established. Coalition included county schools, government, and nonprofit organizations, including Phillip Mangano, Executive Director of the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness under President Bush and President Obama.
- These partners brainstormed ways to address this issue because unsheltered children—those living on the streets—were slipping through the cracks of other county services.
- The Housing Authority Board of Commissioners declared a state of emergency and integrated that emergency into the Continuum of Care efforts.

# Current San Bernardino City Unified School District Statistics

- City of San Bernardino population = 213,293
- Number of students in district = 49,206
- Number of homeless students identified in district = 3,028
  - Unsheltered = 89 (2013 Point-in-Time Count identified 65 unsheltered children in the County.)
  - Temporary homeless = 90
  - Living in hotels/motels = 97
  - Doubled up with other families = 2,756
- Some families believe being homeless is a crime, and therefore, don't report it. Others don't want to be stigmatized.

# Barriers of Homeless Students/Families

- Permanent residency
- Transportation to school
- Irregular school attendance
- Medical and dental concerns
- Social stigma
- Access to services

# No Child Left Unsheltered

- After declaring an emergency, the Housing Authority changed their local policies to prioritize housing unsheltered children first above all others.
- This program aims at permanently ending the tragedy of unsheltered children by providing enough homes to house these children and their families.
- To qualify, a family must be defined as currently unsheltered (i.e., living in a place not fit for human habitation), chronically homeless, and must be able to verify their San Bernardino County residency over the past 24 months.
- Children and their families are housed at a Public Housing site in San Bernardino.
- In the future, these families will be housed through the Housing Choice Voucher Program and perhaps through cottages/small homes.
- From October 2013-date, 6 families have been housed which include 7 adults and 15 children.

# No Child Left Unsheltered

Erica and her two daughters were homeless, sleeping in her car, for three years after she lost her job. The school district learned about their situation and knew she had the potential to thrive given the right opportunity. Erica and her family were immediately housed through the No Child Left Unsheltered Program and within two weeks, Erica became employed and the family is now flourishing.

“This program changed our lives and gave us hope again,” states Erica.



# District's Concerns about the Program and Partnership

- Confidentiality
- Client/family history
- Safety – overall for everyone
- Case planning
- Environment
- Policies and procedures/the process
- Prescreening tool

# Advantages of Our Partnership

- The school district operates like a big family. Therefore, it's the best place to get accurate information on whom to serve.
- School district has homeless liaisons in place. They have the expertise in identifying and working with homeless children and their families.
- Ability to provide wrap around services for the families, including individualized case plans.
- Housing authority has housing resources in place.

# Core Components of the Partnership

- Consistent communication
- Outreach and screening of families
- Stabilization and basic needs of families (e.g., triage, permanent housing, etc.)
- Exercise flexibility in adjusting program as needed and lessons learned arise

# Lessons for Partnering

- Advice for housing authorities
- Challenges and lessons learned
- Initiating and sustaining partnerships

# Advice for Other Housing Authorities

- Change your housing authority's policies.
- Follow HUD Secretary Donovan's guidance to utilize traditional housing programs to help with eliminating homelessness (PIH Notice 2013-15).
- Form relationships with your local school districts regardless to help with homelessness, prevent truancy, job training and placement, and overall family stability.
- Follow the protocol established by both parties.

# Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Keep lines of communication open between housing authority case worker/ property manager and the district liaison, so they are apprising each other of issues, accomplishments, and working toward the same goal and direction on behalf of the client.
- School district staff needs to understand the housing program requirements and client rights and responsibilities.
- Make participation in the supportive services a mandatory component.
- A Supportive Services Agreement should be incorporated as an addendum to the lease or voucher contract.
- The initial rapid rehousing process can be overwhelming for a family in crisis and their ability to absorb information and expectations is limited at intake. Therefore, housing authority staff should do an early follow-up meeting with the family to ensure they have the opportunity to review their rights and responsibilities and ask questions.

# Future Work Together

- In the near future, the housing authority is considering including school attendance/truancies as part of program compliance, starting with families whose children are part of the No Child Left Unsheltered program and Moving to Work pilot “work” requirement.
- Affordable housing for teachers.

# Initiating and Sustaining Partnerships

- Meet with school district liaisons to learn about local numbers and needs
- Present on housing issues at state/local education conference
- Help housing authority staff learn McKinney-Vento rights so they can inform families
- Ask early childhood programs if/how they are serving homeless families

# Resources

- [Facts and Resources About the Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Guide to Partnering with Schools: Promoting Housing Stability and Better Outcomes for Students and Families](#)
- [Housing and Education Collaborations to Serve Homeless Children, Youth, and Families](#)
- [Bringing Education Home: Housing Authorities and Learning Initiatives](#)
- [Housing Authorities: Essential Partners in Ending Homelessness](#)