



National Center for  
Homeless Education

# Strengthening and Sustaining Your Homeless Education Program through School-Community Partnerships

Thursday, June 26, 2025, 2:00-3:30 PM ET

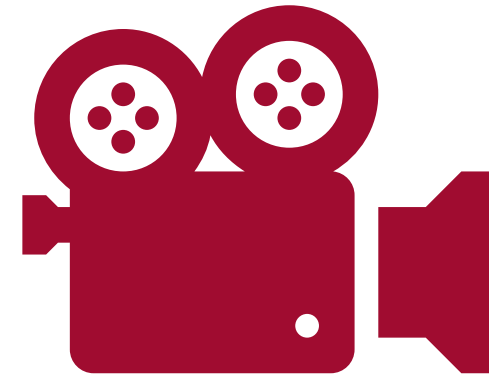
*Presented by NCHÉ Staff and Local Partner Spotlight Panelists*

*Feel free to “say hello” in the chat while others join.*

# Webinar Logistics

- This webinar is being recorded and will be posted to the NCHE website at <https://nche.ed.gov/>
- The webinar recording and materials also will be sent to webinar attendees following the webinar
- All attendees are muted
- Attendees may turn on or disable closed captioning
- Please use “Q&A” to submit questions
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# About NCHE



The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) is the technical assistance (TA) center for the U.S. Department of Education's Education for Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) Program.

NCHE provides training and TA to State Coordinators, local liaisons, community partners, parents, students, and other stakeholders to support the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

NCHE is managed by Team Safal: Safal Partners, ICF, and Pearl Strategies.



Visit the NCHE Website at <https://nche.ed.gov/>.

# Meet Your Presenters

Leading us through  
today's session



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Senior Administrator, Homeless  
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American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation is being provided by Keturah Lewis and Angela Queen; the interpreters will be "spotlit" along with presenters



# Webinar Objectives

- 1 Provide an **overview of statutory requirements** that establish a framework for cross-systems collaboration to support the academic and non-academic needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness (CYEH)
- 2 Present **effective strategies and tools** for building successful partnerships and frameworks that remove barriers to educational and housing stability for CYEH
- 3 Highlight **promising practices and examples** of effective collaboration between school and community partners to address the interconnected issues faced by CYEH

# Webinar Agenda

- **Making the case:** Exploring the benefits of school-community partnerships, the research base in support of partnerships, and statutory requirements for collaboration
- **Understanding the landscape:** “Inventorying” key school and community partners
- **Key partnership features:** Exploring characteristics of strong partnerships, understanding partnerships along a spectrum, and navigating partnership challenges
- **“Partnership starter pack”:** 5 key steps for success
- **Collaboration in action:** School-community partnership spotlights
- **Q&A and interaction throughout**

# Making the Case

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# Who Are School and Community Partners?

- **School partners** include a variety of education stakeholders and programs, including the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program; Title I, Part A program; early care and education program; school social workers and other specialized instructional support personnel; and other programs and stakeholders serving CYEH and their families
- **Community partners** include a variety of community-based stakeholders and programs, including non-profit organizations that provide housing and wraparound services, homeless coalitions, civic organizations, clinics, and other programs and stakeholders serving CYEH and their families





**Why is it important for school and community partners to work together in support of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness?**

# Why Partner?

While priorities and approaches to supporting children, youth and families experiencing homelessness differ across school and community partners, **there is common ground to be found and leveraged**

- ✓ No one system can meet all the needs of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness
- ✓ Research demonstrates the value of housing, education, and supportive services in preventing and ending homelessness
- ✓ School and community partners often work with the same children, youth, and families
- ✓ Many authorizing statutes require partnerships between school and community partners
- ✓ Many school and community partners have allowable usages of funds that are complementary or overlapping

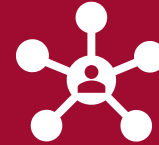
# People's Needs Span Multiple Domains



Safe and Stable  
Housing



Education and  
Employment



Permanent  
Connections



Social-Emotional  
Wellbeing

Source: Chapin Hall, [\*Measuring Up: Youth-level Outcomes and Measures for System Responses to Youth Homelessness\*](#)

# The Research: Risk Factors

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



**346%**

Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED had a 346% higher risk

**120%**

LGBT youth had a 120% higher risk

**162%**

Youth reporting annual household income of less than \$24,000 had a 162% higher risk

**33%**

Hispanic, non-White youth had a 33% higher risk

**83%**

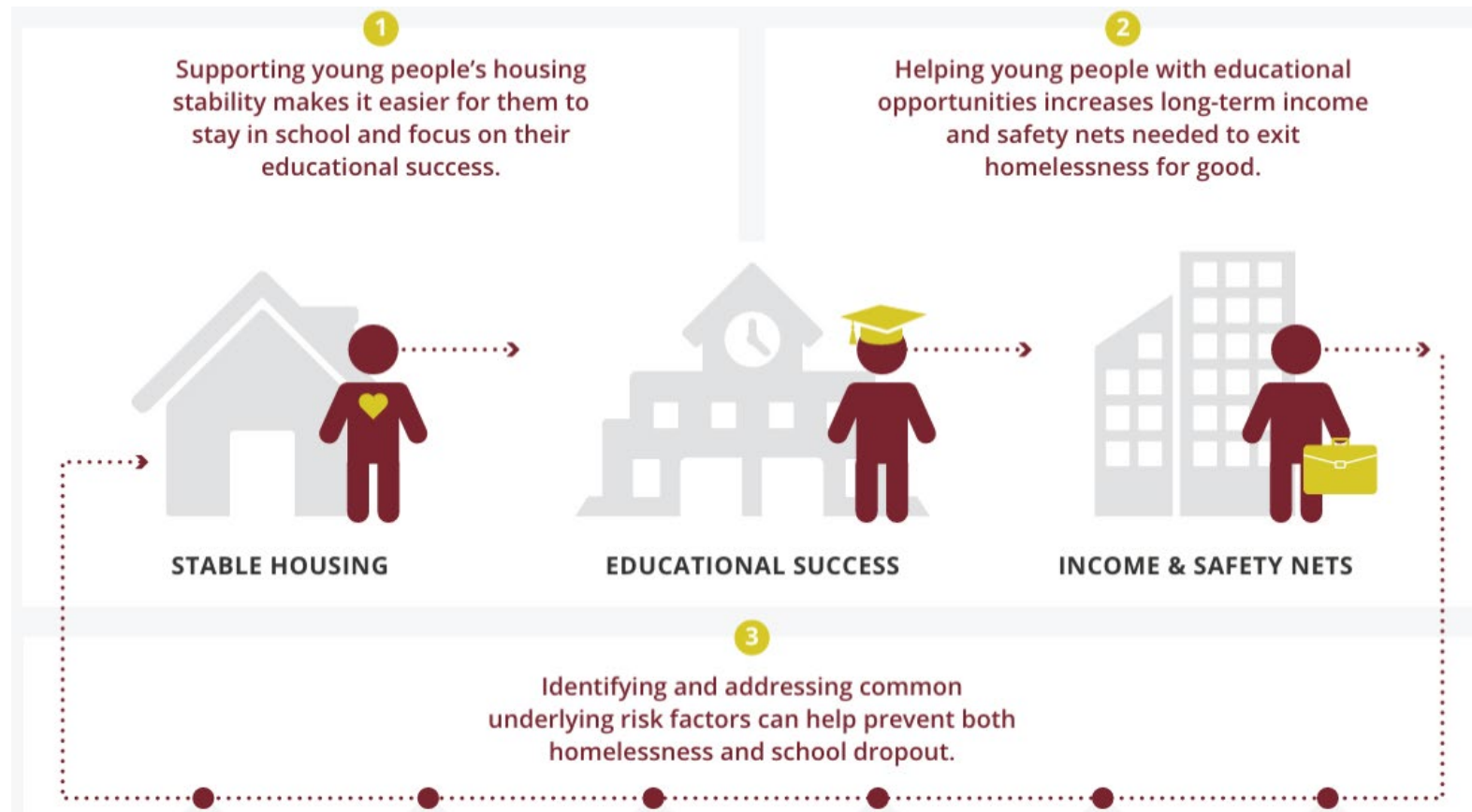
Black or African American youth had an 83% higher risk

**200%**

Unmarried parenting youth had a 200% higher risk



# The Research: A Bidirectional Relationship



We need systemic solutions that address education and homelessness together

# Impacts of Homelessness in Early Years

The youth–adult pathway is the most common pathway to homelessness, with **35% of people experiencing homelessness as an adult having experienced homelessness in their formative years.**

Questions or Comments?



# Understanding the Landscape

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# Statutory Requirements

## Public preschool through grade 12 education requirements for collaboration

### Subtitle VII-B (the education subtitle) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

- State coordinators for homeless education (state coordinators) and local educational agencies (LEAs) must coordinate with a variety of partners to improve the provision of comprehensive education and related services to children and youth experiencing homelessness (CYEH) and their families (McKinney-Vento Act section 722(f)(4))
- Local homeless education liaisons (local liaisons) must provide CYEH and their families with referrals to health care, dental, mental health and substance abuse, housing, and other appropriate services (McKinney-Vento Act section 722(g)(6)(A)(iv))

# Statutory Requirements

## Other federal statutes require collaboration with the EHCY program at the state and local levels

- [Child Care Development and Block Grant \(CCDBG\) Act](#)
- [Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act](#)
- [Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing \(HEARTH\) Act](#)
- [Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended](#)
- [The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007](#)
- [The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#)
- [The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended](#)
- [The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#)



**What other community partners do you collaborate with?**

**Do you use a partner inventory/mapping tool?**

**Other questions or comments?**

# Key Partnership Features

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# What Makes a Strong Partnership?

## Strong school-community partnerships are

- **Mutually beneficial**, with all partners receiving a return on their investment of engagement in partnership work
- **Systematic**, implemented via reliable, consistent, organized practices that are communicated across all levels of partner organizations
- **Stable**, remaining strong even as partner leadership and staff change over time
- **Effective and responsive**, addressing the ongoing and emerging needs of partners and the students and families they serve

# Navigating Differences

- Partnerships often bring together partners who approach homelessness work differently
- While these “systems culture differences” may create challenges, they can be navigated successfully with intentionality and good will



# Examples of Differences Across Systems



## Education

Primary focus: Education

Homelessness Definition:  
U.S. Department of Education  
(ED)

All eligible students receive  
needed supports



## Homeless Response

Primary focus: Housing

Homelessness Definition:  
U.S. Department of Housing and  
Urban Development (HUD)

Supports are provided based on  
vulnerability prioritization

Forthcoming NCHE resource:

*Understanding and Navigating Federal Definitions of Homelessness* issue brief

# Strategies for Navigating Partner Differences

## Engage with intentionality and good will

- Focus on opportunities rather than barriers
- Choose language carefully
- Communicate value and respect

## Leverage funding flexibilities

- Consider all available public and private funding sources and direct them strategically based on area of focus and allowable uses

## Leverage homelessness definition overlap

- Some youth or families will meet both the ED and HUD definitions of homelessness
- Consider flexibilities under HUD homeless categories 2 (at imminent risk) and 4 (fleeing danger)

## Leverage partner referrals

- Establish and implement a clear and standardized partner-to-partner referral protocol to connect CYEH and their families to the full array of services available to people experiencing all forms of homelessness

# The Role of Education in Partnerships

## Education as a PARTNER SYSTEM

- System-level planning, functioning, and coordination
- Including education partners in leadership bodies or advisory boards
- Contributing data on prevalence of youth and family homelessness

## Education as a PATHWAY

- Youth-level supports for educational access and success
- Education's return on investment is well documented and can have positive effects on many other life domains (e.g., securing living wage employment and safe and stable housing)



**What differences have you noticed  
across school and community  
partners in your area?**

**How have you navigated those  
differences?**

# Considering Partnership Along a Spectrum

Looser and lighter-touch

More formal and integrated

	<b>Networking</b>	<b>Cooperation</b>	<b>Coordination</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>
<b>Description</b>	Partners share information and communicate for mutual benefit	Partners support one another's activities but have no formal agreement in place	Partners engage in mutual initiatives, modifying their own activities to benefit the whole	With a formal agreement in place, partners work to develop enhanced system capacity
<b>Purpose</b>	Exchanging information to reach a common understanding	Networking and supporting one another's activities to achieve a common purpose	Altering activities and sharing or merging resources to achieve a common purpose or create something new	Accomplishing a shared vision with a concrete focus on impacting community benchmarks and/or client outcomes

# Community Spotlight



## Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOPE)

# School- Community Partnerships in Sacramento County, CA

1. Please share **partnership highlights** between SCOE and the Sacramento Continuum of Care. What have been your key areas of focus?
2. How have local partners **navigated differences** across the education and homeless response systems?
3. Can you walk us through an example of **how your partnership developed along the spectrum** from networking to collaboration?

# SCOE Coordinated Entry Partnership

Looser and lighter-touch

More formal and integrated

Networking	Cooperation	Coordination	Collaboration
<p>The SCOE homeless liaison meets the Coordinated Access System (CAS) Director at a CoC meeting. The liaison shares shelter outreach activities. The director and liaison exchanged e-mail addresses and agreed to meet to share information about their work.</p>	<p>The CAS Director invites the liaison to present to shelter directors and front-line staff about the McKinney-Vento Act and centering the educational needs and rights of children and families when providing shelter to families and youth. Shelter directors share that they've heard from families staying at the shelter that they have a hard time enrolling students and receiving transportation support.</p>	<p>The CoC created a new initiative focused on family homelessness. The liaison became a member of the new initiative representing education. The CAS Director shared with initiative members that education navigation is a gap in services. The liaison shares the COE's McKinney-Vento brochure with instructions on how to refer students experiencing homelessness to districts and charters for assistance with immediate school enrollment.</p>	<p>The new initiative has new grant funds to support system navigation. The SCOE homeless liaison and CAS Director agree on additional ways to coordinate referrals and service delivery for children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness and enter into a contract for working together. They agree to a scope of service that includes annual training, transportation support, education referrals, and two-year funding for a .75 FTE SCOE Project Specialist.</p>

# Questions or Comments?



# “Partnership Starter Pack”

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# The “Partnership Starter Pack”

## **STEP 1**

### **Reach out and connect**

- Reach out and contact your cross-systems partners
- Share about your work and ask your partners to share about theirs

# The “Partnership Starter Pack”

## **STEP 2**

### **Listen to your partners and focus on efforts with mutual benefit**

- Seek to build a partnership where each partner receives a return on their investment of time and resources
- Move from abstract discussion to concrete action steps

# The “Partnership Starter Pack”

## **STEP 3**

### **Target touchpoints that can build early momentum**

- Focus first on “low-hanging fruit”
- Over time, take on more complex issues that may yield more impactful results

# The “Partnership Starter Pack”

## STEP 4

### **Be savvy and strategic in messaging and engagements**

- Consider how your partner might view an issue and message accordingly
- Design engagements with your partner’s interests and needs in mind

# The “Partnership Starter Pack”

## **STEP 5**

### **Continue to engage and invest**

- Establish ongoing communication with your cross-systems partners
- Discuss emerging issues and consider additional needed action

# Possible Areas of Partnership Focus

## Areas of focus for school-community partner work may include

- Needs-sensing (particularly in early conversations)
- Identifying children, youth, and families
- Referring children, youth, and families to services across programs and partners
- Delivering coordinated and comprehensive services
- Staying informed about new legislation, opportunities, funding streams, etc.
- Engaging people with lived expertise
- Maintaining a connected and active partner network

# Community Spotlight



Orange County Public Schools  
(OCPS)

# School- Community Partnerships in Orange County, FL

1. Please share **partnership highlights** between OCPS and the Central Florida Continuum of Care. What have been your key areas of focus?
2. How have local partners **navigated differences** across the education and homeless response systems?
3. Did you implement any of the **5 steps from the "Partnership Starter Pack"** as part of building your partnership? If so, what did that look like?

Questions or Comments?



# Big Session Takeaways

- What is one key takeaway from this presentation?
- What is one next step you can take to develop stronger school-community partnerships in your area?

# Additional Resources from NCHE

- [Coordinated Entry Processes: Building Mutual Engagement between Schools and Continuums of Care](#)
- [Housing and Education Collaborations to Serve Homeless Children, Youth, and Families](#)
- [Partnering to Support Educational Success for Runaway and Homeless Youth](#)
- [Supporting In-School and Out-of-School Youth Experiencing Homelessness Through Education and Workforce Partnerships](#)

# NCHE Helpline



**Operational hours:** 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM  
ET, Monday through Friday



**Phone line:** +1 305-306-8495



**Dedicated email address:**  
[NCHE.helpline@safalpartners.com](mailto:NCHE.helpline@safalpartners.com)

# Thank you! We'd love to hear from you.

- Please take ~3 min to complete our feedback form
- Link to survey:

<https://safalpartners.jotform.com/251475737309969>



As a reminder, **today's objectives** were:

1. Provide an **overview of statutory requirements** that establish a framework for cross-systems collaboration to support the academic and non-academic needs of CYEH
2. Present **effective strategies and tools** for building successful partnerships and frameworks that remove barriers to educational and housing stability for CYEH
3. Highlight **promising practices and examples of effective collaboration** between school and community partners to address the interconnected issues faced by CYEH