



21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) and McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) Programs: Building Collaborative Connections

As a 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) professional, you provide a safe environment for learning outside of the typical school day, particularly for students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. Your program is uniquely positioned to support those faced with risk, such as students experiencing homelessness. To support you in this work, we've packed this takeaway with actionable ideas and resources shared during a webinar cohosted by the 21st CCLC National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC) and the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) on Sept. 4, 2025.

Key Takeaways

- **Defining homelessness** – According to the McKinney-Vento Act, section 725, “homeless children and youths” refers to “individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.” This includes those living in emergency or transitional shelters, or in shared housing as a result of a financial emergency or natural disaster.
- **Education for Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) program** – Like 21st CCLC, EHCY is a formula grant program administered by the the U.S. Department of Education (Department). EHCY funds serve to identify students experiencing homelessness and ensure they're able to enroll in and attend school.
- **Cross-functional collaboration** – 21st CCLC and EHCY programs have meaningful opportunities to work together to fill the gaps for students experiencing homelessness. For instance, through coordinated referrals, each program can make sure the students it serves are aware of the other program's offerings.
- **Targeted academic support** – Students experiencing homelessness often miss school. 21st CCLC programs can help close learning gaps through tutoring and remedial activities. EHCY and 21st CCLC shared the goal of increasing school-day attendance and engagement.
- **Safe and supportive environment** – 21st CCLC programs can offer students experiencing homelessness a safe space with caring adults where they can build healthy relationships, develop social skills, and discover or explore their interests.

Guest panelists:

- *Mr. Mike Adler, OST Director, Lake County School District (Colorado)*
- *Paula Gumina, Highly Mobile Student Programs Manager, Colorado Department of Education*
- *Julie Ratekin, Technical Assistance Lead, NCHE*





Resources

- [Collaborative Connections: 21st CCLC and McKinney-Vento EHCY Programs](#) – This fact sheet from the 21st CCLC NTAC can help State and local 21st CCLC and EHCY program leaders understand their shared priorities, identify opportunities for coordination, and engage in strategic collaboration.
- [National Center for Homeless Education \(NCHE\)](#) – NCHE is the technical assistance (TA) center for the Department’s EHCY program. It provides training and TA to support the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- [National Homeless Education Data](#) – This filtered set of Department data shows the number of students enrolled in public schools in 2022-23 who were experiencing homelessness.
- [NCHE Helpline](#) – This helpline, which can also be reached by phone at 305-306-8495, is available to anyone who works with and supports children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.

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