

CCEH Workshop Summary

From the 2018 National Conference on Ending Homelessness



Improving Cross-Program Outcomes Through Education and Homeless Service Collaboration

A summary of this workshop by CCEH's Carl Asikainen.

Partnerships with schools and school communities by homeless service providers often allows a faster identification of families in housing crises and links to assistance and resources. These partnerships at the school community level can begin at early childhood, like through Head Start or other pre-school, and continue through middle and secondary school.

Early Childhood

- Coordination with Head Start can occur many different ways. Communities have offered dedicated Head Start slots to children experiencing homelessness.
- Transportation has been included in some areas to help access Head Start equally.
- Pre-school has been included as a 'school of origin' determination in the new ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act 2015) which means that a student experiencing homelessness has the right to attend the pre-school they were affiliated with before the housing crises.
- Many districts have developed tutoring services for homeless students in different forms. In San Bernardino, CA, there is a 'schools on wheels' program that travels to shelters to work with students beyond the school day.

K-12

- Data sharing between school districts and service providers (HMIS) can occur. This allows districts to identify families that otherwise might not have come forward for assistance. Washington DC school district has an MOU with Department of Education.
- Districts have worked in instances to use some of the transportation monies on housing for families.
- State statute in California dictates how students involved in the Foster Care system must receive credit accrual.
- ESSA (Title 1, Part A) directs McKinney Vento supports for students in any stage of foster care.
- Services offered in schools should reflect the experience and needs of students in crises. Schools can and should offer showers, washers and dryers, and extra lockers for storage.

Higher Education

- California has a Single Point of Contact model within the higher education system that is originated by state statute.
- There are waivers available for homeless students to be able to take ACT, SAT and participate in AP classes.
- Counselors at high schools should be prepared for a warm hand-off to college contacts for a student with a history of or currently experiencing homelessness.
- Students involved with Child Protective Services/Foster Care typically have more resources through these programs than the McKinney Vento program offers.
- College mentoring for Foster Care youth should start early. We should explore supporting a mentoring group for 8th graders in Foster Care that is focused on college entrance and success.