

Challenges and Successes in Meeting the Educational Needs of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Pennsylvania's Region 4 & 5 ECYEH Coordinators
Virginia State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children & Youth
Applesseed Network
National Center for Homeless Education



The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center



The Center is one of ten equity assistance centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Center provides technical assistance and training services FREE of charge and/or ^{JS2} via contract to school districts in the areas of:

- Race
- Gender
- National Origin/English Language Learning

Slide 2

JS2

Can it just be and?

Jill Salisbury, 3/10/2014

Objectives

By the end of this webinar, participants will:

- Gain an understanding of common challenges and potential solutions to educating students experiencing homelessness;
- Increase awareness of the unique challenges unaccompanied homeless youth face;
- Increase knowledge of several regional and statewide approaches to strengthen the ECYEH;
- Learn about national best practices and resources.

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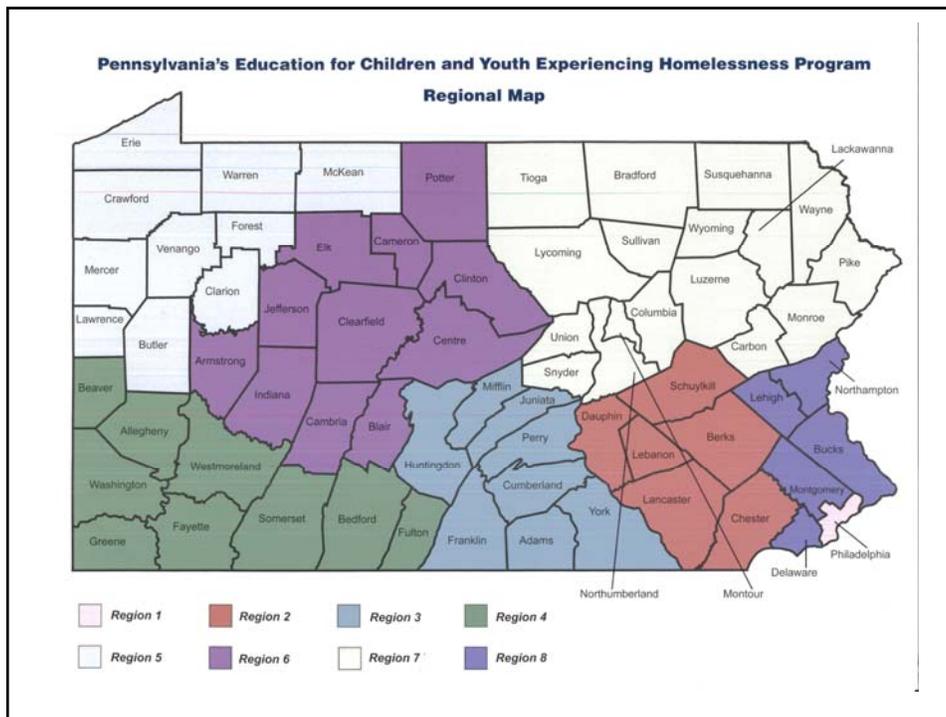
Rural and Urban Homelessness



Pennsylvania's Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (ECYEH)

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Rural Vs. Urban



RURAL

- Living in cars, parks, campgrounds, barns, tents, hunting cabins; run down homes often without running water or heat, windows are gone, roof covered with tarps; often doubled-up with other families
- Stable populations (do not move as frequently)
- More families identified
- Homeless is a “hidden” issue – people are under a roof
- Less likely to accept or seek our services
- Fewer resources available

URBAN

- More people living in shelters and transitional housing, due to greater availability.
- Transient populations (families will move in and out of locations)
- More single adults identified
- Homelessness is a more “visible” issue – people sometimes on the streets
- Open to & often seeking services
- More resources and funding available

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Challenges for Rural Communities:

- Sense of isolation
- Fewer dollars when funding decisions are based on population
- Less public awareness due to “invisibility” of homeless
- Local attitudes: Denial and blame
- Less existing research about what works in rural areas



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Challenges for Urban Communities

- Transportation
- More transitional and shelter programs, but also greater number of homeless individuals looking for services
- Age limits for children in shelters, leading to separation of families
- Limited extended family support



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Strategies for Identification:

- Providing education and training to key support staff within districts:
 - Building secretaries
 - Guidance Counselors
 - Principals
 - Nurses
 - Bus Drivers
 - Home & School Visitors
 - Behavioral Support Staff



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Strategies, continued...

- Add content to registration **AND** withdrawal forms that would “flag” potentially homeless families.
 - Check lists of potential living situations
 - Know addresses of shelter, churches, “safe” houses, campgrounds, hotels/motels
 - Avoid the word “homeless”
 - Follow up with interview



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Strategies, continued. . .

- Establish relationships with outside entities:
 - Churches
 - Social Service Agencies
 - Foster Care Providers
 - Shelters
 - Fire Department
 - Police
 - Red Cross
 - Salvation Army
 - Hotel/Motel owners
 - Food Pantries
 - Campground owners



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Strategies, continued. . .

- Focus training on teaching staff to assist with identification of existing homeless students
- If the district has multi-district classrooms, educate those staff as well
- Provide in-service to Vo-Tech and Alternative Education staff that serve your district
- Display information related to educational rights in key places and in basic language and multiple languages
- Educate families and parents within district



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Strategies, continued. . .

- Build on community spirit: Rural families often will take in students and help provide for them; staff and other students provide rides and other assistance
- Build on the small town mentality: “We take care of our own”
- Create District-wide McKinney Vento plans that outline the district’s strategy to identify homeless students and respond to needs



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Project HOPE-Virginia



Patricia Ann Popp, Ph.D.
State Coordinator

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Virginia Department of Education
Coordinated by The College of William and Mary

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Virginia Model

- At The College of William and Mary School of Education
- Part of VDOE's Student Services Division
- 132 LEAs (school divisions)
- No regional administrative entities
- Subgrants awarded via RFP process based on need and quality of application

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Greatest Challenge



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Successful Structure/Activities

- University Base
- HOPE Advisory Board
- Awareness & Training Initiatives
- LEA Monitoring

College Connections

- Outsourced to The College since 1995
- College has responsibility for all state McKinney-Vento duties
- Access to researchers & graduate assistants
 - “HOPEfuls”
 - Interest in writing & research
- Homeless education issues addressed in coursework

HOPE Advisory Board

- Strategic planning
- Assist with state level disputes
- Membership
 - Regional representation
 - Subgrant and nonsubgrant liaisons
 - Shelter providers
 - School principal/transportation director
 - SEA members
 - Title I State Representative
 - Supervisor

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Awareness and Training

- Supplemental Grants
- Publications
 - Information briefs
 - Semiannual newsletter
- Web site
 - www.wm.edu/hope
- Training
 - Statewide conference
 - Regional trainings
 - Other conferences



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LEA Monitoring

- He who gets monitored pays attention to McKinney-Vento
- ALL LEAs included
- Initial monitoring on-site with SC
- Now on-site or phone, still with SC
- Recommendations implemented

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Markers of Success

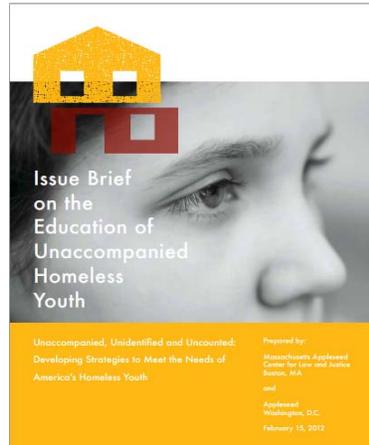
- Shift from, “We don’t have any” to “How can we assist these students?”
- No ED monitoring findings
- Visibility



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Appleaseed Network



Edwin C. Darden, J.D.
Director of Education
Law and National
Network Collaboration

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Joint Project with MA Appleaseed

Key Question:

What remains as a gap in services under McKinney-Vento?

- Declining economy: Fewer shelters, many do not take youths, pushed out of families
- Too many youth defy existing models of identification and data collection
- Data is needed to develop good policy

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Defining the Population

- School-aged youth
- Acting day-to-day without parent or guardian
- Living without shelter or fixed night-time residence where he or she receives appropriate care and supervision



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Vulnerability of the Population

- Constantly on the move makes it difficult to be academically successful
- Irregular sleep and dietary patterns
- Higher rates of depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Greater likelihood of being victimized



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A Counting Problem

- 575,000-1.6 million unaccompanied homeless youth
- Schools are the primary venue for identifying homeless youth.
- Most common method is HUD's Point in Time (PIT)
- Population is mobile and fluctuates
- Because of minor status, might intentionally evade counting

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Barriers

- State laws often define “mandatory reporters” who must notify officials of unaccompanied homeless youth; Teachers sometimes among them
- Eleven states make running away from home a crime (including West Virginia)
- McKinney and Runaway Homeless Youth Act have differing definitions

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Appleseed Recommendations

- Eliminate homelessness as a criminal offense
- Develop temporary shelter and transitional housing for homeless youth
- State governments should provide more robust training to school officials on identification and outreach
- Reconcile discrepancies between state, federal and policy definitions of unaccompanied homeless youth

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How Schools Can Help

- Ensure proper training of school staff and identify a McKinney-Vento liaison
- Assure proper identification and intervention of students in need of assistance
- Seek to work with social service agencies and the advocacy community on solutions
- Push for changes in law and policy that will allow students to focus on education

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How Schools Can Help, continued

- Recognize that students are “pushed” from their homes for a variety of reasons
- Establish good record-keeping on which students are in need of McKinney services
- Explore whether public policy of mandatory reporting is advantageous or detrimental

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Resources Available from the National Center for Homeless Education



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National Center for Homeless Education

- U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program
- Provides support for state coordinators, local liaisons, service providers, parent and students experiencing homelessness
- Participates in national discussions and initiatives
- Over 15 years of experience providing support to the field



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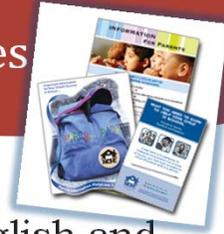
NCHE Services and Resources

- Information
 - Website, publications, reports, briefs, awareness materials, federal updates, data
- Networking
 - Listserv, State Coordinator meetings, national working groups, national collaborations
- Training
 - Webinars, on site at conferences
- Direct Technical Assistance
 - Helpline (phone and email)

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Awareness Resources



- Educational Rights Posters (English and Spanish)
 - To order:
http://center.serve.org/nche/online_order.php
- Awareness Materials on “Resources by Topic” Section of the Website
 - http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/aw_homeless_ed.php (Homeless Education Awareness)
 - Briefs, videos, links to other organizations

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Training Resources

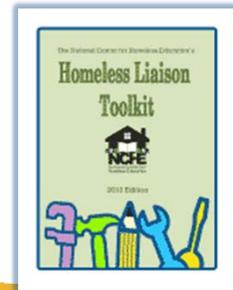
- Briefs: <http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/briefs.php>
 - Law into Practice (Determining Eligibility, Enrollment, Transportation)
 - Best Practices in Homeless Education series
- Webinars:
<http://center.serve.org/nche/web/group.php>
 - Approximately 4 per month
 - MV basics and special topics (Human Trafficking)
- Online Tutorials:
http://center.serve.org/nche/web/s_p.php

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Handbooks and Toolkits

- *Homeless Liaison Toolkit*, 2013 Edition
http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/liaison_toolkit.php
 - 17 chapters that provide requirements and good practices on topics including
 - Enrollment
 - School selection
 - Transportation
 - Disputes
 - Collaboration
 - Unaccompanied homeless youth
 - Working with parents



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Sample Forms and Materials

- Included as part of “Resources by Topic” listings on the website
<http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/ibt.php>
 - Residency forms for enrollment
 - Transportation agreements
 - Written notice for disputes
 - Awareness materials (posters in different languages)
 - Caregiver forms

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Customized Technical Assistance

- Helpline (800-308-2145, homeless@serve.org)
 - Explaining the McKinney-Vento Act
 - Processing scenarios with local liaisons and state coordinators
 - Assisting parents with enrollment challenges
 - Providing suggestions on good practices



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Services to Help You Keep Up

- NCHE staff posts federal updates and upcoming events on the listserv; to join listserv: <http://center.serve.org/nche/listserv.php>
- NCHE updates the website weekly with new reports, memos; homepage features announcements
- NCHE works closely with the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) and provides updates on its activities, such as the annual NAEHCY conference

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NAEHCY Conference: www.naehcy.org

Only national conference that focuses specifically on educating homeless children and youth: Pre-k, K-12, Higher Education



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