WEBINAR

Back-to-School 2020
Challenges and Strategies for Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness

Thursday, August 13, 2020 | 2:00 – 3:15PM ET
About SchoolHouse Connection

SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education. We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

- Website: http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org
- Newsletter: https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/sign-up/
- Federal and state policy advocacy
- Q&A from our inbox
- Webinars and implementation tools
- Youth leadership and scholarships
HAVE A QUESTION?

This webinar is for you. Enter your questions in the questions pane and click ‘Send’.

RECORDING & HANDOUTS

An archive of this webinar and all materials will be posted here.

This PowerPoint is available in your “Handouts” panel.

If you’ve signed up for this webinar, you will receive a link to the recording in an email after the webinar is over.
Today’s Agenda: Listen, Learn, Share

- Where to Find SHC Resources
- Federal Legislative Update
- Facilitated Conversation:
  - Identification
  - Outreach and Communication
  - Access to Learning
  - Health, Safety, Basic Needs
  - Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
  - Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Checklists, Guides, and Strategies
- Upcoming and Archived Webinars
- Guest Perspectives
- Policy Updates on COVID-19
- Homeless Education in the News: COVID-19 and Homelessness
- Resources from Federal Agencies and Partner Organizations
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Federal Legislative Update
COVID-19 Bills Overview

Phase 1
Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act, enacted March 6, 2020

Phase 2
Families First Coronavirus Response Act, enacted March 18, 2020

Phase 3
The CARES Act, enacted Friday, March 27, 2020

Phase 4
In progress

Current Status of “Phase IV” Coronavirus/Stimulus Legislation

- House bill, the HEROES Act, passed on a partisan basis
- No dedicated dollars for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth program (EHCY)
- $11.5 billion in HUD homeless assistance through ESG, but excludes most children, youth, families experiencing homelessness
- Action is now on Senate side: negotiations currently taking place
Emergency Family Stabilization Act, H.R. 7950/S. 3923

Sponsored by U.S. Representatives John Yarmuth (D-KY), Don Bacon (R-NE), Danny K. Davis (D-IL), Don Young (R-AK) & U.S. Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Joe Manchin (D-WV), Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ), Susan Collins (R-ME)

- Bipartisan legislation that introduces a new, flexible, emergency funding stream for community-based organizations (including schools) through the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
- Provides direct dedicated funding to meet the unique needs of families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness under the broader definition.
  - House bill provides $2 billion
  - Senate bill provides $800 million
- Funds can be used for a wide variety of emergency housing, health, education, and safety-related needs.
- Helping children, youth, and families through the systems to which they are most connected will stabilize them quicker and more effectively
Previous COVID-19 legislation, the CARES Act, permitted funds to be used for activities to support students experiencing homelessness, but did not require it. As a result, most states are not directing CARES Act dollars to homeless students. EHCY is the only federal education program that removes barriers to school enrollment, attendance, and success caused by homelessness. Without dedicated funding for EHCY, many homeless students will not be identified and connected to school. SHC is advocating for $500 million in EHCY funding in the next COVID/stimulus bill. (This was included in the Senate Democrat bill, S. 4112)
Remove Barriers to Stimulus Payment for Unaccompanied Youth

- Many unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness or from foster care cannot access stimulus payments because their parents have claimed them as dependents.

- SHC is advocating for a fix to ensure these youth are considered eligible individuals so they can access these payments.
Additional Coronavirus/Stimulus Requests Supported by SHC

**Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)**

$300 million to provide foundational support to new and existing grantees to prevent and address youth homelessness through basic centers, transitional living programs, and street outreach programs.

**Eviction Moratorium. Protecting Renters from Evictions and Fees Act, S. 4097**

- Extends the federal eviction moratorium to March 27, 2021.
- Expands the moratorium to cover substantially all renters.
- Prohibits fees, fines, and extra charges due to nonpayment of rent.
- NOTE: Does not protect families paying to stay in motels, or those staying with others.
Additional Coronavirus/Stimulus Requests Supported by SHC

**Rent Relief.** Emergency Rental Assistance and Rental Market Stabilization Act – S. 3685

- Appropriates $100 billion to the Emergency Rental Assistance Fund to provide short and medium term rental assistance, as well as fund housing relocation activities
- NOTE: does not prioritize those who meet education definition of homelessness

**Child Care.** Coronavirus Child Care and Education Relief Act– S.4112

- $50 billion to the Child Care Stabilization Fund
- Does prioritize homeless children and families who meet the education definition
Call to Action

● It is important for Members of Congress to hear from their constituents, and the time is now.
● Take action today by:

Step 1: Using this action form to personalize a template letter to be delivered to your U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives

NOTE: If you have a relationship with a Member of Congress or their staff, email them the letter directly. Ask SHC for specific contact names

Step 2: (For local, state and national organizations): Endorse the legislation by completing this sign-on form.

Step 3: Sharing as widely as possible with your networks.
Some Context for the Conversation:

Federal Education Laws Remain in Effect With Limited Waivers

Children and youth experiencing homelessness retain all educational rights under current federal law.

- Secretary is permitted to waive various sections of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act related to assessments, accountability, state plans, and allocation of funding.
- Secretary does not have the authority to waive:
  - McKinney-Vento Act requirements
  - Title I Part A reservation of funds for homeless students
  - Requirements to serve children/youth with disabilities who are homeless
  - Independent student status for unaccompanied youth on the FAFSA
Featured Resource

Illinois State Board of Education’s
Guidance for Schools and Districts on
Supporting Homeless Students During the
2021-21 School Year
Identification

**CHALLENGES**
- Increased homelessness
- Identifying families and youth who become homeless after schools closed.
- Understanding the definition and nature of homelessness

**STRATEGIES**
- As a first step, reach out to families and youth identified as homeless last school year.
- Embed questions and information about homelessness in all school enrollment documents and outreach efforts, including online enrollment systems.
- Engage all your community partners: food banks, laundromats, legal services, faith communities, motels, campgrounds, shelters, Boys and Girls clubs, LGBTQ youth organizations, culturally-specific organizations, eviction courts, law enforcement, local TV and radio.
From the Field: New Hampshire

Increasing and adapting MV training for teachers, our major “eyes and ears” with distance learning.

Identifying Students Experiencing Homelessness During School Building Closures
From the Field:
San Antonio ISD, Texas

Making online enrollment work for MV families and students:

1. Online videos with step-by-step instructions on how to register via computer and cell phone, in English and Spanish.
2. System notes in several places that students without a permanent home do not have to supply all the documents usually needed for registration.
3. Provide a number to call for assistance and a link to an Enrollment Guide with information for homeless and foster students.
Outreach and Communication

**CHALLENGES**
- Increased mobility of McKinney-Vento families and students
- Maintaining contact with McKinney-Vento students, including unaccompanied youth

**STRATEGIES**
- Identify and target funding (Title I, federal COVID relief) for outreach: personnel, pre-paid cell phones.
- Try everything! Email, phone, texting, regular mail, Facebook, Twitter, Remind, Instagram, Snapchat, GroupMe, “curbside” home visits, etc.
- Enlist the help of other students.
- Once you connect with a parent or youth, stay in touch on a regular schedule. Use weekly “check-in” forms.
From the Field: Washington

- Posters in 9 languages
- Tips for where to post: Remember food banks, grocery stores and laundromats

Keeping in Touch with Students and Families
Experiencing Homelessness During School
Building Closures

What are your challenges and strategies?
Access to Learning

**CHALLENGES**
- Lack of internet, devices, electricity
- Lack of safe, stable environment conducive to learning
- Lack of transportation to reach internet spots or pick up devices
- Transportation to in-person school

**STRATEGIES**
- Encourage LEAs to pay for unlimited data and insurance on devices.
- Provide sufficient data and devices for every student in the family.
- Use learning models that respond to housing realities- shorter chunks of time, assignments, and credits.
- Provide one-on-one academic support.
- Prioritize MV students for safe on-site options and for transportation.
Providing earbuds/headphones for McKinney-Vento students

From the Field:
Charlotte County, FL
Health, Mental Health, Basic Needs

CHALLENGES
● Access to temporary housing for isolation/recovery/safety
● Food: access, delivery
● Access to hygiene and health products and services
● Increased mental health stressors and lack of services

STRATEGIES
● Community partners!
● USDA waivers.
● CARES Act and other federal relief $. Ask your Continuum of Care to help your families and students.
● Encourage trauma-informed care and positive school discipline practices.
● Target mental health supports to MV students, students of color, and LGBTQ+ students.
Allowing LEAs to redirect unspent 2019-2020 funds from the Safe Schools and Mental Health allocations to virtual and telephonic mental health counseling services for students who need emotional support due to COVID-19.
What are your challenges and strategies?
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

**CHALLENGES**
- Isolation
- Lack of basic needs
- Struggle to engage with distance learning
- Lack of mentorship, guidance, and academic support
- FAFSA determinations

**STRATEGIES**
- Provide youth with technology to keep in touch (pre-paid phones, mobile hotspots, headphones, devices with insurance).
- Check-in at least weekly with the youth.
- Inform and engage other allies (teachers, counselors, nurses, social workers, transportation, etc.).
- Community partners for basic needs.
- Work with seniors on college transition.
From the Field:
Pike Township, Indiana

Contacting every MV senior to make college plans, provide FAFSA verification letters, and send letters directly to each college financial aid office.
**CHALLENGES**

- Appropriate food items
- Physical safety in motels, shelters, other temporary locations
- Mental health and development
- Access to child care and other ECE programs

**STRATEGIES**

- Ask families about young children.
- Find out what your local ECE programs are offering and encourage prioritizing MV families.
- Share information about keeping young children safe in motels, shelters, and other homeless situations.
Several LEAs have developed "educational kits" to support the needs of young children birth to five years old who are not in an early learning program. Kits are provided to families at food distribution sites or deliveries. The kits include age appropriate workbooks, educational toys or projects with the supplies to complete the project, a resource list from PBS, and a communications resource list.

Five Ways to Protect Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers Experiencing Homelessness During COVID-19
What are your challenges and strategies?
Reminder: Take Action for Federal Policy
Featured Resource:
www.schoolhouseconnection.org/preparing-for-school-reopening-and-recovery
Thank you!

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Continue the conversation - https://www.facebook.com/SchoolHouseConnection/groups/