Topic: HomeRoom Network Community of Practice
Session 2- Establishing a Solid Collaboration with the Local Homelessness Response System
Date: 4/12/2022
Time: 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm EST

Materials
- **Presentation Slides:https://cohhio.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/HomeRoom-Network-Session-2.pdf**
- **Recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pmvq66-26to**
- **Jamboard:https://jamboard.google.com/d/1904b8iGfiv4C1bKHR5Fq6DZWOJ1OBY2axE74U9vJ804/edit?usp=sharing**
- **Guide to Community of Practice: https://cohhio.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Guide-to-Community-of-Practice-3.25.2022-2.pdf**
- **HomeRoom Network 2022-2024 Calendar: https://cohhio.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/22-24-HomeRoom-Network-Calendar-3.29.2022.pdf**
- **All Communities of Practice 2022-2024 Calendar: https://cohhio.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/22-24-COP-Calendar.LB_.pdf**
- **Guide to Technical Assistance: https://cohhio.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Guide-to-Technical-Assistance-3.29.2022-1.pdf**

1. Objectives
   a. Learn the basics of the homelessness system
   b. Learn the benefits of system coordination
   c. Learn the action steps needed to establish and/or enhance coordination with the homelessness system
   d. Learn resources to address student homelessness
2. Activity
   a. Jamboard
3. COHHIO Course to HOME Reminders
   a. COHHIO is a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to ending homelessness and promoting decent, safe, fair, affordable housing for all, with a focus on assisting low-income and special needs populations.
   b. COHHIO Course to HOME Team
      i. Lisa Brooks- Youth Housing Initiative Director
      ii. Ami Diallo- Youth Housing Initiative Specialist
      iii. Deanna Perdana- Youth Housing Initiative MSW Intern
      iv. Evelyn Garon- Youth Housing Initiative Specialist
   c. Local Expert Wisdom Panel
      i. Karen McHenry- Homeless & Missing Youth Program Director
      ii. Aubre Jones- Community Shelter Board Outreach & Youth System Manager
   d. CoP Agreements
      i. Check-in and check-out

        ii. Listen for understanding

       iii. Expect and accept non-resolution

       iv. Practice "both/and" thinking

       v. Be aware of intent and impact

       vi. Make space, take space

       vii. Safe terms:

          1. ELMO

          2. Ouch

  e. CoP Principles

       i. We recognize that all communities and districts are unique but have some shared challenges and can learn from each other's experiences

       ii. We embed student and family leadership in decision-making, designing, and implementing strategies

       iii. We ensure strategies and approaches improve equity, including racial & LGBTQ+ equity

       iv. We are solution-oriented and creative in our planning and problem solving

       v. We promote peer support and shared learning opportunities

       vi. We explore, develop, and integrate best practices at the core of our approaches

       vii. COHHIO is here to facilitate the conversation and share knowledge learned from working with communities, not to own the space

4. General Overview of Homelessness System

  a. Defining Homelessness

       i. McKinney-Vento law defines homelessness as "individuals who do not have a fixed, regular, and adequate home because they have lost their own home"

       ii. This includes individuals who:

          1. Lost their own home due to financial hardship or similar reasons

          2. Share the housing of others

          3. Live in hotels, motels, campgrounds, or trailer parks that are not viewed as year-round homes due to lack of accommodations/utilities

          4. Live in emergency shelters or have been abandoned in hospitals

          5. Live in cars, parks, or public spaces

  b. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Homeless Definition

       i. Category 1- Literally Homeless

          1. Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence

             a. Primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place NOT meant for human habitation

        b. Primary nighttime residence is a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements

        c. Primary nighttime residence is an existing institution where the individual or family has resided for 90 days or less <u>and</u> who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering said institution

  ii. Category 2- Imminent Risk of Homelessness

    1. Individual or family who will immediately lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that:

        a. Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance

        b. No subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u>

        c. The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing

  iii. Category 3- Homeless under other Federal statues

    1. Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:

        a. Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes

        b. Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application

        c. Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the preceding 60 days <u>and</u>

        d. Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of tome due to special needs or barriers

  iv. Category 4- Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence

    1. Any individual or family who:

        a. Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence

        b. Has no other residence <u>and</u>

        c. Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing

c. Continuum of Care (CoC)

  i. In Ohio, we have 9 CoCs

    1. Balance of State (BoS)- 80 non-urban counties

        a. Divided into 16 regions

    2. 8 individual urban CoCs

  ii. CoCs are charged by HUD, and other state departments, to create a continuum of services to prevent and end homelessness

        iii. CoCs are an epicenter for receiving funds directly from the federal government

   d. Coordinated Entry (CE) System
       i. Schools are one of multiple entities listed as a "primary identifier" for people experiencing homelessness
          1. Schools can make direct referrals to the Coordinated Entry System
       ii. The purpose of CE is to prioritize and connect families referred to direct service
       iii. After the family has obtained permanent housing, the school's role is to ensure the family has any educational supports needed to retain said permanent housing

   e. Problem Solving
       i. Help people determine if it's possible for them to stay anywhere else that's safe, other than a shelter, the street, or somewhere unsafe
       ii. Link with financial assistance that is available to the individual or family; other assistance that may help, like mediation services or legal aid
       iii. Most people have been doubled up – staying temporarily with friends or family
       iv. Look for any and all safe, appropriate housing options that can be accessed immediately AND longer-term

5. Building Blocks of System Coordination Discussion
   a. How do I connect with my CoC?
       i. Attend your CoC's Membership meetings – meetings are often detailed on the CoC website
       ii. This includes local coalition meetings across the Balance of State CoC
       iii. Ask to be added to the CoC Listserv
       iv. Invite your CoC to appropriate school events or county-wide school connections
       v. Explore the CoC website and get to know the policies and practices
       vi. Connect with your CoC Lead
          1. Balance of State: Erica Mulryan
          2. Franklin County: Steve Skovensky
          3. Cuyahoga County: Melissa Sirak
          4. Hamilton County: Kevin Finn
          5. Montgomery County: Jessica Jenkins
          6. Lucas County: Michael Hart
          7. Mahoning County: Colleen Kosta
          8. Summit County: Marquetta Boddie
          9. Stark County: Marcie Bragg
   b. Internal Agreements of Effective Collaboration

      i. Agree to listen – not just hear but listen with an open spirit. The way you disagree tells the people in the room a lot more about you than it does them. Disagree with dignity and respect

      ii. Agree to learn – we don't have all the answers. We need to learn where people in the room are coming from. Suspend judgement. Be willing to consider perspectives and approaches. This takes discipline and time. Many mindsets are a resource, not a set-back. Appreciate and respect each experience at the table. Instead of your way or no way, how about all ways? Agree to learn the language

      iii. Agree to value – agree to value what others bring to the table. Begin to understand the motivations for being at the table and buy in on the vision. Take risks, use some courage, and ask questions; you have to be able to translate what is being said. Ask them what they mean. Ask them to define things. Ask them what procedures are in place. Appreciate what they are sharing. This will help you to approach partners with understanding and gain them as an ally. Now the team can move the work forward in a manner where everyone buys in.

c. External Agreements of Effective Collaboration

      i. Agree not to be competitive – instead agree to be collaborative

      ii. Agree to be fully present – not on your phone, not coming in and out of the session

      iii. Agree to be at the table for the right reasons – don't be there to advance your career, don't be there simply because your "boss" sent you, no hidden agendas. You're there because you are bought in on the mission

      iv. Agree to use the time productively – support keeping the balance between process and accomplishment. Assist when things are leaning too much one way or the other. Avoid complaining, instead give suggestions that you're willing to lead.

d. What are the effects of committing to these agreements?

      i. You are a collaborator with integrity who is mission driven

      ii. Partners value and trust what you say

      iii. New partners are drawn to the table for the right reasons

      iv. Partners will not want to waste time because you lead with a *time is of the essence* mindset

      v. Silos begin to be addressed

e. Steps Toward Coordination

      i. Accepting that building cross-system relationships is a foundation to intentional partnership

      ii. Operationalizing the sharing and analyzing of cross-system data for program planning and implementation

      iii. Identifying students experiencing homelessness across housing and education systems

   iv. Wrapping around students identified as experiencing homelessness by schools for housing and service interventions

   v. Supporting students' educational goals through credit recovery, dropout prevention, college preparation and readiness, and higher education transition and degree completion assistance

   vi. Engaging in the local CE process with the expressed purpose of developing a comprehensive and youth-friendly and family-friendly local CE process

   vii. Participating in local Point-in-Time count efforts to ensure a comprehensive and effective count

   viii. Partnering with Child Care and Development Fund providers and Head Start programs to prioritize children experiencing homelessness for services

   ix. Identifying Flexible funds and opportunities to braid resources together to meet needs

  f. What can my district do right now?

   i. Create a district response to homelessness that is developmentally appropriate and based on positive youth development principles

   ii. Maintain written protocols for district response and broadcast them widely

   iii. Offer safe, inviting, and accessible services and serve as access points between the student and community resources

   iv. Make sure the system utilizes Trauma-Informed Care

   v. Be culturally appropriate and inclusive

   vi. Include youth partners

   vii. Request technical assistance when needed

   viii. Have a district staff on key community committees

   ix. Ensure your school is listed on community releases of information signed by family as assessment for on-going coordination

   x. Learn what your CoC tells HUD they are doing to collaborate with schools

   xi. Shelter staff have residents sign ROI to start communication with schools

   xii. School has a key contact for shelters

   xiii. Shelter has a key contact for the schools

   xiv. Schools attend Housing Placement/Prioritization meetings

   xv. Provide letters of support for grants

   xvi. Schools can provide documentation of homeless status

6. Group Discussion
   a. What are some takeaways from today's discussion?
   b. What steps can your district take in the next month to increase or strengthen system coordination?
   c. What resources does the district need to achieve this?
   d. Name a key partner you can connect with in the next month.
7. Resources & Closing

a. There are a lot of additional resources listed on the final slides of the presentation, such as:
   i. CoC website links
   ii. Ohio access point map link
   iii. Links to various provider lists
   iv. Additional HUD information
   v. And many, many more resource links that could be helpful in improving your district's coordination efforts