

June 2023 ➤

SUMMER NEWSLETTER



COHHIO
Course to HOME.

SUMMER STRATEGIES FROM LOCAL LIAISONS



The COHHIO team asked local liaisons from the **Ohio Valley Educational Service Center** and **Washington Court House City Schools** to share some of their strategies and best practices for summer break. Here's what they shared:

OHIO VALLEY EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER

- "We purchased, through grant funding, summer outdoor science kits through Dawes Arboretum and gave them to McKinney-Vento identified students K-8th grade to continue summer science learning. The kits contained activities for students to engage with nature and explore the outdoors."
- "We partnered with Kids Read Now to continue summer learning through the purchase of books. Each K-5th grade identified McKinney Vento student was able to pick out 8 books that they could keep! Each student carefully selected out 8 books that were interesting to them and the selected books were distributed to each student before the end of school."
- "Resource folders were created that contained information on McKinney Vento and community resources. There was also information on how to replace vital documents and was contained within a sturdy, plastic file folder. Each file folder is given to identified McKinney-Vento families to help answer questions and supply helpful information should they need it."

WASHINGTON COURT HOUSE CITY SCHOOLS

- "We've implemented a mentorship program in our district that pairs a mentor with each student experiencing homelessness. Mentors meet with their students at least twice a month. Before summer break starts, we have mentors reach out to families about concerns for being out of school for the summer and any specific needs they may have so we can connect them to community resources."
- "We created a community resource guide that was included in an informational packet that was sent home to all McKinney-Vento families. This included not only information on services available, but also a calendar of free programming and events happening in the community."
- "Over the summer, we often meet with our community partners to go over what it means to be experiencing homelessness, what services they provide, who are contacts are, and what worked and didn't work about our partnership."



HIGHER HEALTH RISKS FOR STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

[READ THE RESULTS OF THE 2021 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY HERE](#)

Every year, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) collects data for the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), which analyzes health-related behaviors among U.S. high school students. In 2021, the YRBS included a question on homelessness for the first time as a result of advocacy efforts by SchoolHouse Connection. Last month, the CDC released data from the 2021 YRBS that revealed higher health risks for high school students experiencing homelessness. Major findings from the study indicate that students experiencing homelessness:

- Face a much higher risk for violence, including sexual and physical violence
- Are at higher risk for substance use
- Experience higher levels of persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness
- Are twice as likely to consider suicide and more than three times as likely to attempt suicide

These findings further emphasize the importance of identifying students experiencing homelessness and connecting them to the appropriate services and supports.

More News from the Field

Housing, Opportunities, Meaningful Engagement



The Impact of Maternity Care Deserts in Ohio

Maternity care deserts are areas where access to maternity health care services is limited or absent. Of Ohio's 88 counties, 13 meet this definition. Pregnant women and mothers in rural areas are most affected by this lack of access to care. The lack of any maternity care in those areas, coupled with barriers to access care further away, leads to poor health outcomes for mothers and babies. With pregnant and parenting youth having a 200% higher risk of homelessness than their peers, the impacts of these maternity care deserts are far reaching. [Read the full Columbus Dispatch article here.](#)

The Use of Surveillance Cameras in Public Housing

In public housing facilities across America, local officials are installing a new generation of powerful surveillance systems. The intended goal of these cameras is to reduce crime and increase resident safety; however, a Washington Post investigation found that these cameras are also being used to generate evidence to punish and evict public housing residents. If evicted, former tenants can face difficulties finding housing and employment for the rest of their lives. [Read more about what public housing residents and authorities have to say about these new surveillance systems in the full article here.](#)

The Role of School Mental Health Clinics

Nationwide, nearly 2,600 health centers operated out of schools in 2017, the most recent year with available data — more than twice the number that existed two decades earlier. Many of these free clinics offer behavioral health care, which is increasingly in demand as students' mental health challenges mount. Researchers have found that school clinics improve student grades and attendance, reduce health disparities, and lower rates of teen pregnancy and depression. Despite their positive impact, school clinics remain under-funded and hard to keep afloat. [Read more about the role of school clinics in the full article here.](#)

District

Spotlight



CINCINNATI PUBLIC SCHOOLS

With school being a key source of services, support, and childcare, summer break can be a challenging time for families experiencing homelessness. To combat these challenges, Project Connect at Cincinnati Public Schools offers six weeks of academic and enrichment programming to students ages 5 - 14 at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Throughout the program, Project Connect provides students with transportation and a variety of academic and enrichment activities, including math and reading classes, creative arts, healthy cooking classes, therapeutic groups, swim lessons, and weekly field trips to local destinations. Every grade additionally completes some kind of summer service project throughout the program. Rebeka Beach, Project Connect's McKinney-Vento Coordinator, shared the impact of these service projects on program participants: "they're used to being the recipients, but this allows them to be the ones giving back."

Project Connect additionally partners with a mobile medical practice to provide program participants with wellness checks that include vision and mental health screenings. Students identified as needing more support are referred to an appropriate provider. Through this comprehensive summer programming, Project Connect is able to mitigate summer learning loss, provide parents with the mobility to seek or maintain employment and housing, connect students to appropriate services and supports, and give students experiencing homelessness new skills and experiences.

**Know a district or
ESC whose work
needs the spotlight?
Tell Us About It !**

**Want to learn more
about Project Connect?**

Contact Rebeka Beach
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Project Connect
cincinnati public schools

Featured Resources

New FAFSA Guidance for Homeless Youth

In April, the U.S. Department of Education issued [new policy guidance on financial aid determinations for unaccompanied homeless youth](#) and unaccompanied youth who are self-supporting and at risk of homelessness. This guidance summarizes new federal financial aid processes and outlines changes that will go into effect with the 2024-2025 FAFSA.



Addressing Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is a critical issue that disproportionately affects vulnerable students, particularly those experiencing homelessness. [SchoolHouse Connection](#) has put together some strategies that schools, districts, and communities can implement to ensure students experiencing homelessness are in school.

The Gap Report 2023

The Gap report, released jointly by the Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio and the National Low Income Housing Coalition, reveals a deficit of about 270,000 rental units that are affordable and available to the 448,000 extremely low-income households in Ohio. [Read the report and see how Ohio compares to other states here.](#)

State of Homelessness: 2023 Edition Released

Last month, the National Alliance to End Homelessness released [a new report that provides an overview of homelessness on a given night in 2022](#), and analyzes trends based on sub-population, shelter status, state, and Continuum of Care. Interact with this state-by-state data to learn more about homelessness trends in Ohio.

Mental Health Resources for Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness

Youth experiencing homelessness are vulnerable to many mental health challenges. RHYTTAC has curated [a list of resources and tools](#) to assist schools and programs in increasing their knowledge and understanding of how housing instability impacts the mental well-being of youth and young adults.



Data Visualization: The Evidence on Housing First

Housing First has been thoroughly studied as an effective approach to ending experiences of homelessness. The National Alliance to End Homelessness has compiled the overwhelming volume of research and data supporting Housing First into this [data visualization](#).



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