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WINTER NEWSLETTER



COHHIO
Course to HOME.

CROSS-SYSTEM COLLABORATION: PARTNERING WITH YOUR CONTINUUM OF CARE

Collaboration between schools and homeless service providers is essential to ending homelessness and reducing its effects on the lives of children and youth. Homeless education liaisons are required by law to collaborate with their local Continuum of Care and vice versa. **But what is a Continuum of Care and what does this collaboration look like?**

A Continuum of Care (CoC) is a geographically based group of representatives that carries out the planning responsibilities of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) CoC Homeless Assistance Program. CoC representatives include organizations that provide services to people experiencing homelessness, key stakeholders, and persons with lived experience of homelessness.

Ohio has nine Continuums of Care.

- Eight represent Ohio's urban counties:
 - [Cuyahoga](#)
 - [Franklin](#)
 - [Hamilton](#)
 - [Lucas](#)
 - [Mahoning](#)
 - [Montgomery](#)
 - [Stark](#)
 - [Summit](#)

The Ohio Balance of State Continuum of Care is made up of the remaining 80 non-urban counties in Ohio, divided into 17 regions.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE MATERIALS

The HomeRoom Network Community of Practice that took place on 10/10/23 features guest presentations from the directors of the Balance of State CoC and Mahoning County CoC. This session explores developing, strengthening, and sustaining multi-system coordination to maximize services for students experiencing homelessness.

- [Watch the recording](#)
- [Download the slide deck](#)

The inclusion of preK-12 programs in CoC planning can increase access to available services for students and families experiencing homelessness in your area and community capacity for effective response. Collaboration with your CoC can additionally increase student identification through cross-system referrals.

If you are not already connected with your CoC, you can get involved by:

- Attending your CoC's membership meetings - information on how to attend is often detailed on your CoC's website.
- Asking to be added to the CoC Listserv so you can stay in the know on what's going on in your community
- Inviting your CoC to appropriate school events
- Connecting with your CoC lead
- Exploring your CoC's website to understand policies and practices

If you need assistance getting connected to your CoC, reach out to us at homelesseducation@cohhio.org for support.

**HUD: The Benefits of Housing and Education
Cross-Systems Collaboration**

**NCHE Brief: Housing and Education
Collaborations to Serve Homeless
Children, Youth, and Families**

More News from the Field

Housing, Opportunities, Meaningful Engagement



Expanded Use for ARP Funds

In September, the U.S. Department of Education released a “Dear Colleague Letter” to Chief State School Officers asking States to consider adjusting their administrative procedures to expedite the use of American Rescue Plan Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) funds. This letter also contains updated and expanded guidance on allowable uses of ARP-HCY funds, including:

- Motel stays of longer than 3 days;
- Providing food assistance if necessary;
- The purchase of district vehicles for specialized transportation needs and reimbursement;
- And more.

New Funding for Youth Mental Health and Access to Care

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has recently awarded \$88 million in its effort to promote and protect mental and behavioral health. This award includes over \$40 million for Project Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education, known as Project AWARE, to help develop and support school-based mental health programs and services. Project AWARE also provides training for school personnel and other adults who interact with school-aged youth, to detect and respond to mental health challenges, and help connect them and their families to needed services.

Recommendations to Improve Student Attendance

Several state leaders have announced recommendations to improve school attendance and reduce chronic absenteeism. Chronic absence is defined as a student missing 10% or more of school hours. In the 2022-2023 school year, 26.8% of the overall student population and 61.8% of students experiencing homelessness were chronically absent in Ohio. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to read on grade level and graduate on time. These recommendations can help districts implement effective prevention and early intervention strategies to improve attendance and decrease chronic absenteeism.

District

Spotlight

ALLEN EAST LOCAL SCHOOLS

This past year, Allen East Local School District has transformed its old home economics room into a district wide “Ready Room” for students. Open to any student in need, the purpose of the Ready Room is to provide students with the supplies and facilities to feel prepared to attend and participate in school. The district used American Rescue Plan dollars to purchase a new washing machine, dryer, refrigerator, freezer, oven, and microwave for students to access as needed. The Ready Room is stocked with hygiene items supplied through a collaboration with Procter and Gamble, including soaps, razors, and other toiletries. The Ready Room additionally provides students access to a food pantry and clothes closet, including winter coats and accessories. The Ready Room is open Monday through Friday and is staffed by other students in the district, who assist patrons by doing laundry and locating supplies. In a district as small as Allen East Local, homeless education liaison Mel Rentschler says there is strong sense of community among students and “little hesitation for students to utilize these facilities staffed by their peers.” Since the Ready Room opened at the beginning of this school year, the district has been able to increase the identification of students at risk of or experiencing homelessness and provide these students with the supplies and facilities to feel comfortable and confident in their educational experience.



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

Featured Resources

Model State Statutes: Youth and Young Adult Homelessness

Informed by youth and young adults with lived experience, this [comprehensive resource](#) co-authored by the National Network for Youth, True Colors United, and other organizations covers a wealth of knowledge, insights, and proven strategies to improve the lives of youth experiencing homelessness.



Referring Young Children to Early Childhood Development Programs: Checklist for Liaisons

Homeless education liaisons have a responsibility to identify and refer younger children to early learning programs. This [new checklist from SchoolHouse Connection](#) can help you carry out this responsibility and ensure that young children experiencing homelessness are enrolled.

McKinney-Vento Homelessness Policy Checklist

This [new checklist developed by SchoolHouse Connection](#) can assist school districts in ensuring that their policies are aligned with federal law and do not create barriers to identifying, enrolling, and supporting youth experiencing homelessness.

2024-2025 FAFSA Delayed: What You Need to Know

Earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Education announced that the 2024-2025 FAFSA's release will be delayed until December 2023 in order to implement the FAFSA Simplification Act. This [resource from SchoolHouse Connection](#) breaks down what homeless education liaisons need to know about these changes.

National Summit on Youth Homelessness

Registration for the [National Summit on Youth Homelessness](#), hosted by the National Network for Youth, is now open. This hybrid event will take place February 29 - March 1, 2024 in Washington, D.C. At the Summit, you'll have the chance to learn from the National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC) as experts with lived experience.



Online Course on Trauma-Informed Outreach and Engagement

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released a [free online course](#) on trauma-informed outreach and engagement strategies, approaches, and service delivery models. This course is accredited for Continuing Education Units (CEUs) by the NASW.



THANK YOU

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