

# Webinar

## Student Homelessness in Rural America

08/16/19

Rural homeless students face fundamentally different challenges than their peers in urban settings. Join us in a discussion about the best practices and challenges in identifying and supporting rural students experiencing homelessness, adding new perspectives to ICPH's report, *Student Homelessness in Rural America*.



**Alexander Guinn**  
*ICPH Policy Analyst*



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*NCHE Federal Liaison*



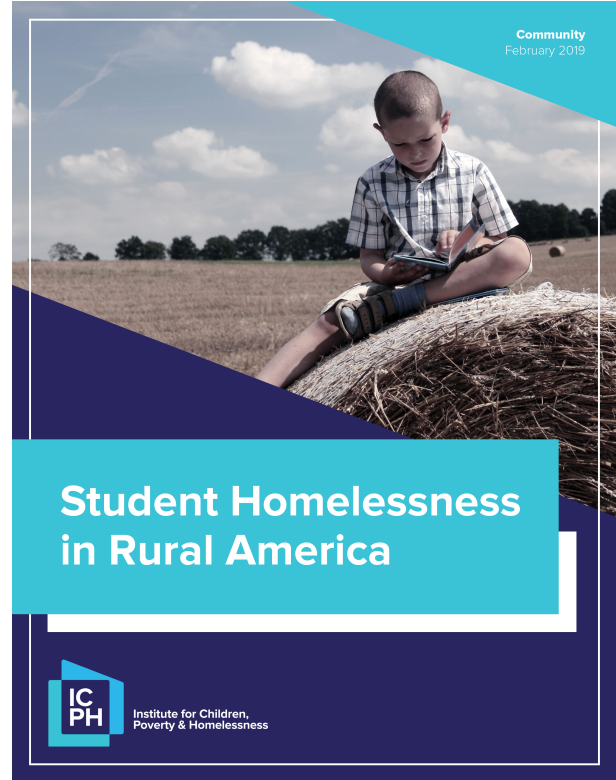
**Sandra Plantz**  
*Director of Federal Programs for  
Gallia County Local Schools*



**Angie Lyon**  
*Program Coordinator at Hope  
House Homeless Shelter*

# Alexander Guinn

ICPH Policy Analyst



# Overview

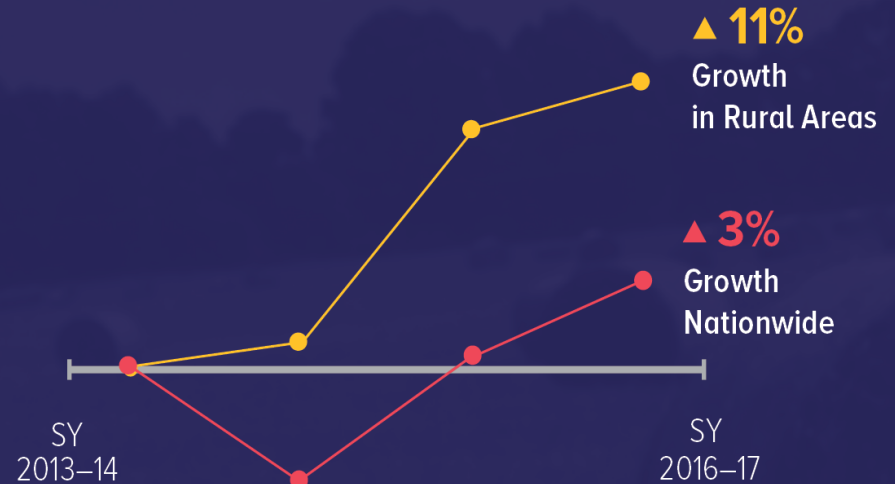
- Overall trends in rural and non-rural areas
- Which states increased the most
- How is the growth in rural areas different
- Where are rural homeless students sleeping
- Funding for rural homeless students



# Student Homelessness Growing Fastest in Rural America

- Rural student homelessness increased by **11%** to over 162,000 students
- Fewer shelters and limited access to public transportation and regular healthcare
- Disparities are likely compounded in rural areas
- Public policy on homelessness centers around metropolitan areas

Student homelessness in rural America is growing at nearly **4X** the national rate.







# Growth in Rural Homelessness Often Defies Other Statewide Trends

- In 15 states, rural student homelessness grew while overall student enrollment declined
- In 10 states, rural student homelessness grew while there was a simultaneous decline in non-rural districts

States Where Rural Student Homelessness Grew as Non-Rural Homelessness Declined  
SY 2013-14 to 2016-17

State	% Change in homeless students in rural areas	% Change in homeless students in non-rural areas
California	4%	-14%
Colorado	16%	-12%
Georgia	33%	-4%
Illinois	11%	-6%
Iowa	19%	-4%
Kansas	13%	-13%
Kentucky	7%	-16%
South Carolina	2%	-7%
Tennessee	39%	-7%
Wisconsin	21%	-3%

# 12 States Disproportionately Affected by Rural Student Homelessness

- In 12 states, homeless students were disproportionately represented
- In 3 of these states the the disparity was more than 10 percentage points
- The greatest disproportionality was seen in West Virginia

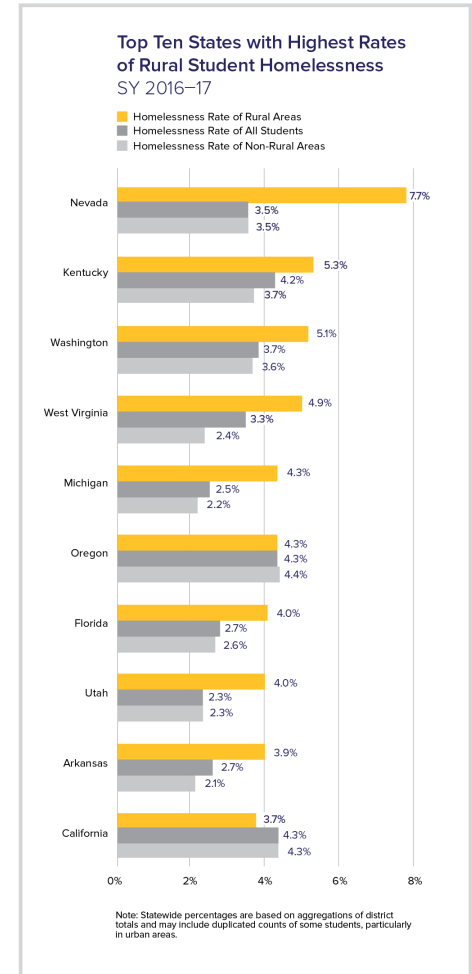
Proportion of Students in Rural Areas  
SY 2016–17

Disproportionality occurs when the percentage of homeless students in rural areas exceeds the percentage of all students in rural areas.

State	% of All Students in Rural Areas	% of Homeless Students in Rural Areas	State	% of All Students in Rural Areas	% of Homeless Students in Rural Areas
<b>United States</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>12%</b>	Missouri	20%	17%
Alabama	35%	26%	Montana	33%	19%
Alaska	25%	10%	Nebraska	23%	3%
Arizona	6%	5%	Nevada	2%	3%
Arkansas	30%	45%	New Hampshire	34%	29%
California	4%	3%	New Jersey	6%	7%
Colorado	6%	5%	New Mexico	14%	10%
Connecticut	10%	4%	New York	11%	3%
Delaware	14%	12%	North Carolina	35%	33%
D.C.	N/A	N/A	North Dakota	38%	30%
Florida	6%	8%	Ohio	21%	14%
Georgia	26%	32%	Oklahoma	28%	19%
Hawaii	N/A	N/A	Oregon	9%	9%
Idaho	23%	21%	Pennsylvania	16%	13%
Illinois	9%	9%	Rhode Island	8%	3%
Indiana	24%	15%	South Carolina	15%	15%
Iowa	32%	15%	South Dakota	40%	16%
Kansas	22%	12%	Tennessee	29%	19%
Kentucky	32%	40%	Texas	13%	13%
Louisiana	14%	5%	Utah	5%	8%
Maine	51%	31%	Vermont	55%	28%
Maryland	7%	11%	Virginia	20%	15%
Massachusetts	8%	3%	Washington	7%	10%
Michigan	18%	30%	West Virginia	35%	53%
Minnesota	18%	10%	Wisconsin	19%	10%
Mississippi	49%	35%	Wyoming	22%	23%

# Statewide Rates of Student Homelessness Mask Local Dynamics

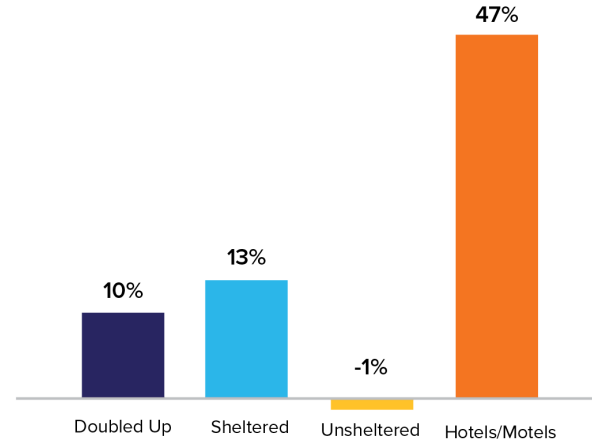
- Nationally 2.8% of all students were identified as homeless
- 2.1% for rural students and 2.9% for non-rural students
- 8 of 10 states had rates higher than in their non-rural areas
- An additional 6 states not in the top ten also had rates higher than in non-rural areas



# Rural Homeless Students Are Less Likely to Sleep in Shelter

- Rural homeless students were more likely to sleep doubled-up
- 83% of rural homeless were doubled-up compared to 75% in non-rural areas
- Only 8% of rural homeless students were in shelter; 15% in non-rural
- Demand for shelter also increased, with 13% more rural homeless students in shelter

Change in Where Rural Homeless Students Stay  
SY 2013–14 to 2016–17



# Rural Students Less Likely to be in Districts that Received Federal Homeless Funding

- **42% of rural homeless students were covered by subgrants, compared to 67% of non-rural students**
- **In 28 states, rural homeless students covered was less than half the homeless students covered in non-rural districts**
- **8 states did not allocate subgrants to any rural districts**

State	% Rural change in homeless students since SY 2013-14	% Rural homeless students covered by subgrant	% Non-rural homeless students covered by subgrant
United States	11%	42%	67%
Nebraska	200%	0%	88%
Montana	145%	20%	87%
Minnesota	77%	17%	56%
Idaho	67%	0%	63%
Wyoming	52%	20%	55%

# Rural Areas are Underfunded and Underserved



- Homeless and low-income children are more likely to have health and mental health issues than their housed peers
- There are also a lack of PCPs and mental health professionals in rural areas
- Rural areas are also less likely to have access to computers or internet
- This lack of access is a significant barrier for rural homeless students



# Identification is Key

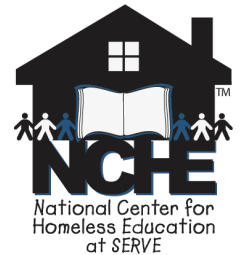


- The first step is to ensure that all children are identified and counted
- Also, the identification of all available resources within communities
- The unique challenges faced by rural areas are obstacles in addressing the issue
- Only by placing more attention on the local dynamics of homelessness can we effectively target solutions to address it

# EDUCATION, RURAL HOMELESSNESS, AND LESSONS FROM YHDP



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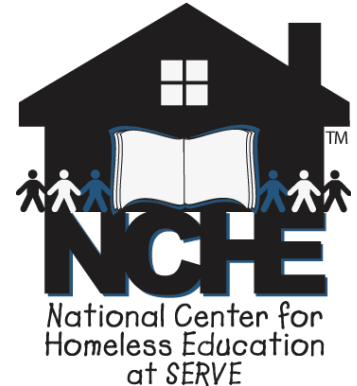


# GET TO KNOW NCHE

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The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) serves as the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program

- Website: <http://nche.ed.gov>
- Helpline: 800-308-2145 or [homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org)
- Products: <https://nche.ed.gov/resources/>
- Webinars: <https://nche.ed.gov/group-training/>
- Listserv: <https://nche.ed.gov/resources/> (click *Listserv* tab)
- Twitter: [@NCHEducation](https://twitter.com/NCHEducation) | Facebook: [facebook.com/NCHEducation](https://facebook.com/NCHEducation)



# YOUTH AT HIGHER RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



**346%**

Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED had a 346% higher risk

**162%**

Youth reporting annual household income of less than \$24,000 had a 162% higher risk

**83%**

Black or African American youth had an 83% higher risk

**120%**

LGBT youth had a 120% higher risk

**33%**

Hispanic, non-White youth had a 33% higher risk

**200%**

Unmarried parenting youth had a 200% higher risk



 Findings from Voices of Youth Count, an initiative of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago | [voicesofyouthcount.org](http://voicesofyouthcount.org) 

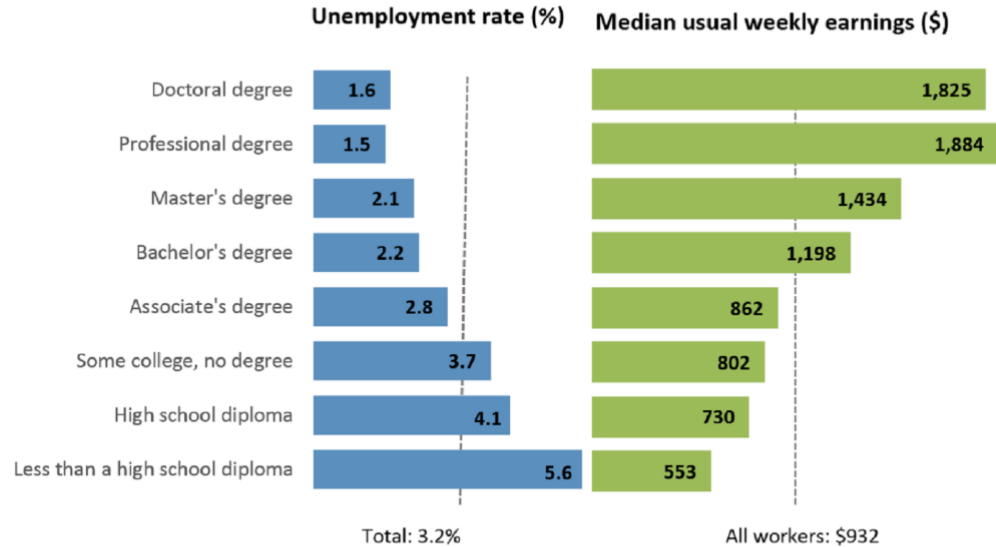
Source: [http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ChapinHall\\_VoYC\\_1-Pager\\_Final\\_111517.pdf](http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ChapinHall_VoYC_1-Pager_Final_111517.pdf)



# “THE MORE YOU LEARN, THE MORE YOU EARN”

Data consistently show that **education pays.**

Unemployment rates and earnings by educational attainment, 2018

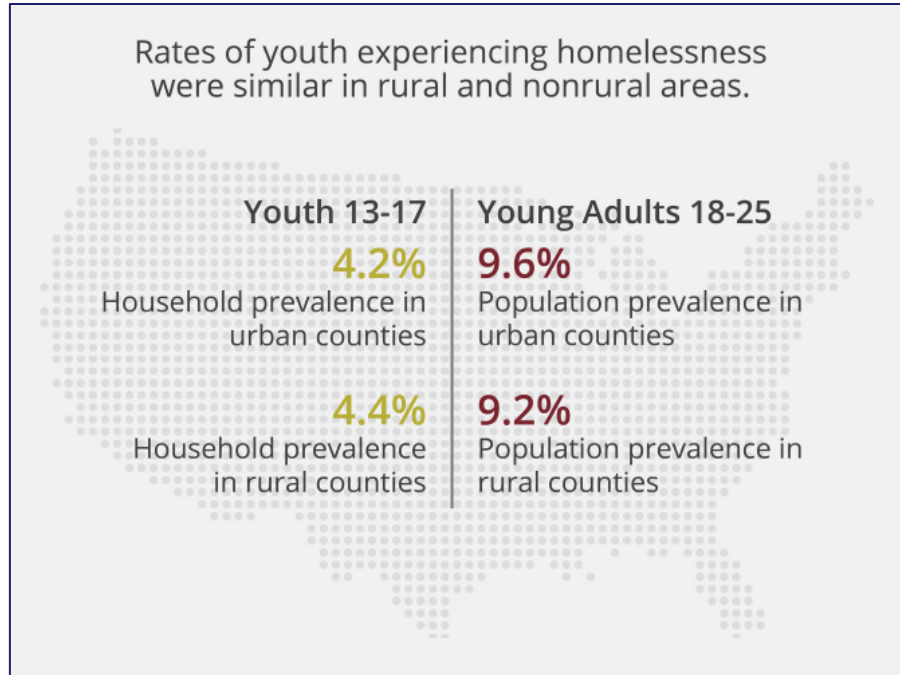


Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

Source: <https://www.bls.gov/emp/chart-unemployment-earnings-education.htm>

# URBAN VS. RURAL PREVALENCE



Source: [http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Chapin-Hall VoYC Rural-Brief 2018.pdf](http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Chapin-Hall_VoYC_Rural-Brief_2018.pdf)

# NIGHTTIME RESIDENCE: URBAN VS. RURAL



Source: [http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Chapin-Hall VoYC Rural-Brief 2018.pdf](http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Chapin-Hall_VoYC_Rural-Brief_2018.pdf)



# ABOUT YHDP

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- YHDP (Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program) is a new U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funding stream
- Recipients (CoCs) must develop and implement a Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) to prevent and end youth homelessness
- Pillars include stable housing, education and employment, permanent connections, and well-being
- Announcement of Round 3 sites is imminent, Round 4 is funded, Round 5 is part of the FY2020 federal budget negotiation

# LESSONS FROM RURAL YHDP SITES

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- The approach to addressing homelessness in rural areas must be different than in urban or suburban areas
- Rural challenges
  - No central location for basing services
  - Lack of transportation and infrastructure
  - Dispersed presence of public systems and funding

# LESSONS FROM RURAL YHDP SITES

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- Schools are a critical partner for addressing student and family homelessness in rural areas
  - One of the broadest reaching public systems that interacts regularly with children, youth, and families in homeless situations
  - Can serve as “eyes and ears” for the homeless response system
  - Mandated to support educational access and success for homeless students
  - Partnering with other systems, can help equip young people with the education and training needed to make a sustainable exit from homelessness

# YHDP LESSONS: LEVERS AND STRATEGIES

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- Consider innovations that facilitate reach across large areas
  - Divide large rural areas into regions for partnership and service delivery
  - Partner with schools to support identification, referrals, and education pathways
  - Explore innovative housing solutions
  - Combine brick-and-mortar and virtual for service delivery
  - Blend funding across programs and systems to maximize reach

# SPOTLIGHT: NEBRASKA BALANCE OF STATE

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- Coaching (systems navigation) project
  - Partnering with schools to identify students experiencing homelessness and make referrals to coaching supports
  - Blending funding allows for serving HUD- and ED-homeless students (Chafee, ETV, YHDP, state funding, etc.)
- Waiver requested to use hotel vouchers to extend the reach of housing interventions across the state

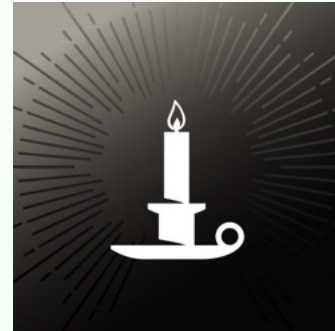
# RESOURCES

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- NCHE Rural Homelessness webpage: <https://nche.ed.gov/rural-homelessness/>
- Chapin Hall Voices of Youth Count *National Estimates* brief: <http://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/national-estimates-of-youth-homelessness/>
- Chapin Hall Voices of Youth Count *Youth Homelessness in Rural America* brief: <http://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/misled-opportunities-youth-homelessness-in-rural-america/>

# **Sandra Plantz**

**Homeless Liaison/Director of Gifted &  
Federal Programs- Gallia County Local  
Schools**





# Rural Homeless Families face many challenges



- Typically it is a generational poverty culture situation; eviction every few months; mostly doubled up families;
- Lack of Jobs
- Minimal affordable housing to no housing at all; no homeless shelters or if you do it's one shelter per county with few beds and long wait times
- No soup kitchens available, unlike urban areas
- No public transportation
- Limited number of agencies that work with homeless
- Scarcity of resources and funding
- Situational homelessness on the rise with epidemic drug usage and loss of jobs

# Transportation Challenges in Rural Areas



- Public transportation is not available for families, they have to utilize asking others for rides
- School Busing- In rural areas, we have longer commutes from home to school than school districts with smaller square miles. Typically, students have between an hour to 90 minute one-way commutes. Changing a route, to pick up a new student, can dramatically change the length of time on a route. We may have to create two-three bus transfers for a student to get them to their school of origin within district or out of district. This can make their ride time up to two or three hours one-way
- Working with others districts for homeless student to remain in school of origin is challenging as well due to: distance the bus would travel, the number of transfers for student, and coordinating pickup times. It almost pressures student/family to transfer to the new school district instead of remaining in school of origin
- Gas cards- paid with Title 1 funds, used only if family has reliable transportation, which most do not
- A couple of non-emergency drivers are for hire. This is a contract service provider. I use Title 1 funds to pay for this service

# Increasing Identification is Key



Ways that I have increased our identification of homeless in the school district:

- We centralized our enrollment of all students to the county office where the Homeless Liaison is located. I trained the registrar with McKinney-Vento law and signs of homelessness. Additionally, she will input the MV eligibility into our state reporting data system
- I have added a Student Residency Questionnaire as part of two packets:
  - Enrollment packet
  - All students beginning year packet
- I ensure the training of all staff annually (administrators, teachers, guidance, secretaries, cooks, custodians, and bus drivers are trained and asked to report)
  - Added a Homeless Referral Form- Homeless Liaison will follow-up to determine MV eligibility
- Community Agencies- I trained most in MV Law and work collaboratively with these agencies.
  - They have posters, brochures/business cards for homeless; referral forms; and intake calls will be followed up on with contacts
- The increased identification has led to more supports to homeless students and families
  - Academic, Social/Emotional, Medical, Resources, housing, etc.

# Networking Resources in Rural Areas is vital to Support Homeless Families



One thing that is great about rural areas is the small-town culture. We are a tight-knit community; we typically know each including our homeless families; we support the work of others; there is a trust factor- unless you break it; we work collaboratively to get creative solutions

- Typically there very few service providers that work with homeless population: agencies, organizations, churches, coffee shops, restaurants, and stores. So few people doing the work- but greater networking happens in rural areas, collectively people work with each other for additional supports that they can provide homeless
  - I looked to where providers are already meeting (example: Family Children First Council). You can ask to get on the agenda/be present at these meetings, create a community-wide contact list/brochure of resources for MV Liaison use and hand out to homeless families/Youth; also observe in your community the public places where people often frequent and put posters and brochures there.

# Additional Creative Ideas to Assist Rural Homeless



- YHDP- Project in 5 counties in Southeastern OH: Helps homeless youth with emergency housing and rapid re-housing. Stabilizes them with additional supports they need to be successful.
- “CODE 10 Ministries”- area churches have come together to assist local law enforcement by establishing a non-profit to assist homeless and victims of domestic violence with after hours needs of emergency shelter/food until other social service agencies are able to assist during working hours.
- God’s Hands at Work- took an old church building & converted it into a distribution center to help anyone in need. Founders accept donations of in-kind items/food/funding
- Food/Clothing/Hygiene pantries hosted at different church locations across the county
- Snack pack program- community members support in-kind or funds to purchase shelf-stable food items to go home, from school, every weekend with students in poverty
- Through a grant opportunity from welfare office, our educational service center secured funds to offer summer school K-12, as well as an attendance incentive of \$200 online purchase of back-to-school clothing, \$40 back-to-school supplies/backpack, and haircuts. This replaced the school clothing voucher, since a store closed and we had no other stores that would accept one.

# McKinney-Vento Liaison Peer-to-Peer Network



- The network was created originally as a goal of the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP)
- I was the McKinney-Vento Local Liaison for our YHDP site, sought the support of our State Liaison for the creation of such a Regional Network. I now take the Lead on the network to coordinate meetings, agenda, distribution of information sharing, etc.
  - We are hoping to replicate the model in other regions of state
- Currently, it is comprised of five counties & twenty school districts
- We meet 2-3 times a year at a central regional location for about half a day
- We have looked at our homeless data, listed homeless topics we'd like addressed, and prioritized those. Then, the next meeting we tackle one of our topics, we have open discussions, sharing of experience/ideas and develop or offer creative solutions
- We created a regional Google Folder with resources we can all access and add to it to support the work we all do
- We can contact each other, instead of always calling our State Liaison, with questions and assist one another. This makes it easier to build relationships with others that you may need assistance from when homeless are in another district and want to go to school of origin.
- Additionally, the school districts invited their Superintendent or other administrators to participate.

# Hope House Homeless Shelter

35 E. Pierson Street  
Greenfield, IN 46140  
317-467-4991





**Angie Lyon**  
Project Coordinator



# Serving Rural Homeless Families

Hands on Experience



- Coming into shelter
  - Active crisis
  - “Burnt every bridge” / Exhausted every other option
- Transitioning into shelter living
  - Rules & structure
  - Bedtime
- Transportation
- Affordable housing
- Lack of available resources

# Schooling

## School transfers & McKinney Vento Act

- Distance from “home school”
- Enrollment
  - Records
  - Information release and sharing
- Transportation
- Implementing McKinney-Vento



# Access to Healthcare

## Pediatric & Adolescent Medical Care

- Medicaid / Underinsured / Non-insured
- Time – parents & children
- Lack of providers
- Accessing specialists
  - Complications of healthcare
- Inpatient
- Outpatient
- Transportation
- Consistency



# Access to Healthcare

## Pediatric & Adolescent Dental Care

- Medicaid
- Underinsured
- Non-insured
- Lack of providers
- Transportation
- Time – parents & children
- Follow-up and consistency



# Access to Healthcare

## Pediatric & Adolescent Mental Healthcare

- Health insurance
- Crisis assessment
- Outpatient
- In-patient
  - Limited/Non-existent
- Accessing urban resources
  - Travel / transportation
  - Time – parents & children
- Follow up & consistency



# Questions?

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# Beyond Housing 2020 Conference Registration

Learn more:

[www.icphusa.org/beyond-housing/](http://www.icphusa.org/beyond-housing/)



Bringing Family Homelessness into Focus