A Message from
the California Head Start State Collaboration Office

Stephanie Myers, CHSSCO Director

The California Head Start State Collaboration Office (CHSSCO) partners with various California state agencies to support Head Start grantees. The California Department of Education (CDE) houses several partners with which the Collaboration Office works. One of the CDE statewide partners is Homeless Education. The CHSSCO and the CDE Homeless State Coordinator have been working together to coordinate state-level efforts and share best practices on how the field works with and for families who experience homelessness.

The purpose of this final Bridges e-journal is to share ways in which a few Head Start grantees work with local Homeless liaisons and other programs to provide services and resources for the homeless population. This document also provides resources and information for programs to share with staff members and local partners.

The new Head Start Program Performance Standards were released in September 2016. The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth provides a Summary of Final Head Start Regulations Related to Homeless on its Web site; the summary presents specific regulation requirements and the final rule sections. Additionally, the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, or ECLKC, offers a wealth of information about homelessness. The ECLKC Web site provides a starting point and ample information, including tools, tips, resources, and lessons that provide a comprehensive picture of what it means to serve children and families who are experiencing homelessness.
A Message from the California Head Start Association

Esmirna Valencia, President

California has the largest population of homeless students in the country and twice the rate of homeless students as the national average, and the numbers are growing (Hyatt, Walzer, and Julianelle 2014). According to kidsdata.org, more than 2,300 children in California (ages zero to five) experienced homelessness in 2014.

Homeless children usually suffer from poor nutrition and are often separated from their parents. They generally lack access to medical care, including immunizations, which places them at greater risk for exposure to infectious disease. After 18 months of homelessness, toddlers can begin to show developmental delays. All of these factors and more can lead to major development delays, including emotional and behavioral challenges.

In 2015, more than 2,100 homeless children in California were served by Head Start and Early Head Start programs, providing services that are absolutely critical for keeping children safe and healthy. Head Start offers comprehensive services such as health, nutrition, mental health, and services to children with special needs, as well as family and community engagement.

Through commitment to these comprehensive services, the California Head Start Association continually builds the foundation for Head Start children and families to develop a path out of poverty and become the future teachers, doctors, members of Congress, school superintendents, business people, and professionals that so many of our children and parents have become as a result of the Head Start opportunities they were afforded.
In the United States, more than 1.6 million children are homeless. According to the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, 51 percent of all children in U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) homeless shelters are under the age of six, and nearly 50,000 homeless children between the ages of three and five were enrolled in public preschool programs during the 2013–14 school year—which is only about 3.6 percent of all students identified as homeless by public schools. In that same year, California identified 310,002 enrolled homeless children and youths in its public school system. It is believed that Early Start served only 2 percent of the homeless population for children from birth to age three. Identification of and services to homeless children (ages zero to five) is one of California’s biggest concerns.

Preschool is essential to all children, and especially to homeless children—those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Homelessness can include families who live in shelters, motels or hotels, automobiles, parks, and so on, as well as those who are “doubled up” (forced by economic hardship to stay with friends or extended family members). There are many causes for homelessness, such as:

- lack of affordable housing;
- poverty;
- health problems;
- domestic violence;
- natural and other disasters;
- abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

Many homeless children and their families face barriers that can limit their access to early childhood programs, including Head Start programs. Barriers may include lack of transportation, a shortage of classroom slots, lack of awareness, and enrollment requirements.

On September 1, 2016, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued the first comprehensive revision of the Head Start Performance Standards since the release of the original standards in 1975. One of the revisions included requiring Head Start programs to conduct community needs assessments at least once during their five-year grant period. These needs assessments must use data that include children who are experiencing homelessness, in collaboration with, to the extent possible, McKinney-Vento liaisons. Another revision was to require Head Start programs to annually review and update the community assessment to reflect any significant changes, including rates of family and child homelessness.

In 1987, the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act (Act) was authorized to provide stability, access, and support for academic success for homeless children and youths, including preschool-age children. Since then, the
Act has been reauthorized several times to strengthen provisions and offer further clarification to services and support of homeless children and youths.

The Act requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to ensure that homeless children have access to preschool programs through coordination with social service agencies, child development programs, early intervention programs, and other preschool programs. The Act also requires preschool programs to:

- enroll homeless children, even if the parent or guardian cannot provide the paperwork normally required;
- offer comparable services, including transportation, to homeless preschoolers;
- coordinate and collaborate services with local educational agencies (LEAs) and other service providers.

More recently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law in 2015 and made additional changes to the Act. One of the biggest changes was the addition of preschool to the “school of origin” definition. The term “school of origin” refers to the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool. LEAs and preschool programs are to continue the child’s education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, according to the child’s best interests. Furthermore, transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the LEA and/or LEAs.

Most of the Act’s provisions require LEAs to assist and support homeless children, youths, and their families, including children from zero to five years of age.

LEAs are required to designate a homeless liaison to assist with identification, enrollment, accessibility, and success in school, including preschool programs. A list of these liaisons is posted at the CDE Homeless Education Web page.

Close coordination among early childhood programs, homeless education liaisons, and shelter providers can help families access the best early childhood programs for their children. So it is important for Head Start programs to know the liaison assigned to their school district, as well as the liaison at the county office of education (COE). Most COE liaisons offer technical assistance, professional development, and coordination opportunities that can involve Head Start.

Liaisons have many responsibilities. They must ensure that homeless children, youths, and their families have access to and receive educational services for which families, children, and youths are eligible, including services through Head Start and Early Start programs under the Head Start Act, early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and other preschool programs administered by the LEA. Liaisons also need to ensure that homeless children and their families have access to other types of programs, and they must work to remove any barriers to enrollment and retention. Other responsibilities include:

- disseminating public notices of educational rights;
- informing parents or guardians about educational opportunities;
- ensuring that homeless families, children, and youths receive educational services;
- assisting children and youths who have not received appropriate immunizations.

The effects and impacts of homelessness on children, especially younger children, are significant. Young homeless children experience more developmental delays than children who are housed. For these homeless children, preschool programs play an essential role in meeting the children’s academic, emotional, and social needs.

During pregnancy, homeless women encounter obstacles to their pregnancies, such as poor nutrition, chronic and acute health problems, lack of prenatal health care, and even substance abuse. Homeless infants often experience low birth weight, poor nutrition, lack of health care, lack of routine, and exposure to disease and illness. As they get older, homeless toddlers react to continual stress through insecurity, fear, distrust, and irritability. They can also start to show significant developmental delays in a variety of areas, and they typically cry more easily; have intense reactions to minor events; are depressed, withdrawn, anxious, or aggressive; and hoard food and possessions.

As a result of these difficulties, it is important for educators to collaborate to help overcome barriers and increase participation of young homeless children in quality early care and education programs. Educators need to be open-minded, supportive, and nonjudgmental. There are many benefits to early intervention strategies, including early identification of homeless children’s developmental delays and disabilities. Head Start programs offer homeless children positive experiences with peers and other nurturing adults, and they connect families with schools, agencies, and service providers.

There are so many ways for Head Start and early intervention programs to...(Continued on page 5)
**Homelessness … (Continued from page 4)**

support and serve homeless children and their families. They can initiate interagency communication and collaboration among various agencies, including LEAs and their liaisons; train family advocates, staff, and outreach workers to assist with building awareness and understanding of homeless issues; enroll homeless children immediately, even if documentation is lacking, with flexible policies and procedures to reduce barriers; and reach out to the community at large and homeless shelters in particular to coordinate, collaborate, and best serve this most vulnerable population.

The intent of this edition of Bridges is to provide valuable information; suggest best practices; facilitate collaboration among schools, service provider agencies, and early childhood programs; and increase the enrollment for and provision of services to families with young children who are experiencing homelessness. This edition showcases several programs throughout California to demonstrate collaboration, coordination, and compliance.

For additional information on homeless education, please visit these Web sites:

- [CDE Homeless Education Web page](#)
- [National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth](#)
- [National Center for Homeless Education](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection](#)

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**Berkeley Unified School District’s Support for Homeless Families with Preschool Children**

*Dr. Susan Craig, Director of Student Services and McKinney-Vento Liaison, Berkeley USD*

*Sophina Jones, MA, PPS, McKinney-Vento Counselor, Berkeley USD*

There are two shelter programs within the city of Berkeley for homeless families with children: the Berkeley Food & Housing Project and Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS). Both offer emergency and transitional housing services for women and children. BOSS is the primary organization, and under its umbrella is Harrison House. Likewise, both programs offer sheltering to support families in emergency housing for up to 18 months and support families who have moved into transitional housing or independent living. Additionally, the Berkeley Food & Housing Project and BOSS assist with permanent housing and case management. Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) works hard to ensure there is support for families in BUSD schools who are eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act. These schools include three early childhood education (ECE) programs or preschools, 11 elementary schools, three middle schools, one comprehensive high school, and one continuation high school. Thanks to the urging of several homeless families four years ago, BUSD’s Board approved a full-time McKinney-Vento counselor to directly support families through case management, advocacy, and housing support, in addition to the district’s McKinney-Vento liaison, who is also the director of Student Services. The impact of having a full-time, dedicated staff person in addition to the McKinney-Vento liaison (which is a state-mandated position required in all California school districts) to provide support to homeless families cannot be overstated.

The McKinney-Vento counselor meets with staff and families in transition from the Berkeley Food & Housing Project and Harrison House regarding outreach and consulting for new families’ transition into the shelter once or twice a year. It helps to communicate with those families in order to respond to questions they may have regarding their children’s educational services in BUSD, and also to provide a warm handoff between the shelter and the district. Both shelters have been informed to send families to the BUSD district office for enrollment (the district has a central enrollment process for all families) and

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Berkeley Unified ... (Continued from page 4)

to have an intake meeting with the McKinney-Vento counselor. This personalized enrollment process, which includes a meeting with the McKinney-Vento counselor, helps to make enrollment as painless as possible and provides an opportunity for immediate connection to services that are needed. Within BUSD’s programs, the district’s McKinney-Vento counselor supports families in early education through BUSD’s three ECE programs; the counselor works with the ECE programs to ensure homeless families are given priority and access to schools with transportation.

Additionally, ECE staff communicate with the district to refer parents or guardians who are in temporary housing for McKinney-Vento services. The McKinney-Vento counselor also visits the three ECE programs to provide education for the enrollment process into K–12 education. ECE staff and BUSD’s McKinney-Vento staff work together to bring in parents so that the enrollment process is not overwhelming. Both parties want to make sure that this is one less stressor in the lives of homeless families.

The best practice for ECE programs and BUSD is to maintain lines of communication between the McKinney-Vento counselor and newly arriving families who are living in transition. Both agencies need to openly share and discuss families in transition so that families feel ease and comfort in the educational system.

The McKinney-Vento counselor works hard to engage with families, maintain community partnerships to inform families about new and changing situations in the community, work with families and students one on one, and support students’ academic success. Additionally, the McKinney-Vento counselor attends individualized education program (IEP) meetings and Student Attendance Review Team (SART)/School Attendance Review Board (SARB) meetings (for K–12 students who are frequently absent from school); provides classroom observations and counseling; and accesses supports for tutoring, mentoring, career building, and transportation. Attendance is often an issue with families who are struggling to find shelter. The presence of the McKinney-Vento liaison and the McKinney-Vento counselor at the SART/SARB meetings for homeless families is crucial for connecting the families with services and assuring them that they are not being stigmatized or penalized for their life circumstances. The counselor also provides job development, graduation planning (including provision of caps and gowns), and prom tickets to high school students who are eligible for services under McKinney-Vento.

Housing Difficulties

Families in transition experience frequent and significant life disruptions. This affects school attendance, mental health, and the overall stability of the students. It is so important for the community not only to build a community, but to build supportive relationships with the homeless. Homeless families have voices, too. They often work hard to find housing, but housing lists in Berkeley and the surrounding areas are frequently full, and the opportunities for families are few. Housing is difficult to find. Why is that? Families are working, going to school to build a better future for their children, and yet housing is not available. In the Bay Area, housing is a huge issue because of gentrification and the extremely high cost of renting or owning a property. Additionally, in Berkeley, families who seek housing are forced to compete for low-cost housing with thousands of students who attend UC Berkeley. The opportunities for low-cost housing are minimal. BUSD’s McKinney-Vento counselor has reached out to the multitude of builders in the community, and little or nothing is available for the homeless. In the rare instances when there are available housing units for low-income families, there is a lack of multiple units. This is terribly discouraging for homeless families who are already distressed.

The most difficult cases that District McKinney-Vento staff have seen are the families who have no place to sleep at night or are sleeping in a car. Most homeless families are doubled up with friends or family members and have a desperate need to find their own comfortable places to live. In addition to extrinsic barriers, such as a lack of affordable housing, families have barriers in their own lives—for example, difficulty making appointments or contacting agencies that will offer them the support they need. While parents or guardians are made aware of the support of the McKinney-Vento counselor, who informs them of their rights, many families fear legal repercussions from sharing information with “the system.” At times this includes an initial reluctance to open up to the McKinney-Vento counselor. This fear is heightened in families with undocumented immigrants, many of whom reside illegally in the stable at a local horse-racing track, afraid of deportation despite the recent passage of a district policy ensuring that BUSD is a sanctuary district for undocumented immigrants.

In closing, BUSD understands the need for extra supports for families who are living in homelessness. The difficulties these families face in trying to find employment that pays a living wage and suitable housing are stressful and overwhelming. The families in BUSD feel comforted by having an array of support services available to them, including a full-time McKinney-Vento counselor who provides personalized support for families through the educational process, transportation assistance, tutoring, mentoring, and emergency supplies. All of these supports help to ease the isolation and stress that accompany homelessness.
In Contra Costa County, the County Office of Education and Head Start programs are partnering to serve and support young children and families who experience homelessness. The partnership is based on a shared vision and purpose to provide quality early childhood programs to our most vulnerable population and ensure a strong foundation for families while they are in transition.

Guided by the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act and the Head Start Act, Contra Costa County’s Head Start programs and school districts are heavily focused on identifying homeless children through outreach, recruitment, and coordination with community agencies. The county’s objective is to improve access to quality child care and educational services for children who experience homelessness.

The Community Services Bureau (CSB), a division of the Contra Costa Employment and Human Services Department, provides comprehensive services for approximately 2,100 children (ages zero to five) and their families each day at 15 Head Start sites in the county, including one school-district site. During the 2015–16 program year, CSB served 51 homeless children, and it has 15 homeless children enrolled for the 2016–17 program year. The CSB is the largest provider of Head Start programs in Contra Costa County.

The Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) coordinates two programs that work directly with CSB: the Homeless Education for Children and Youth program and the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Quality Matters program. The Homeless Education program receives grant funding from the California Department of Education to coordinate the Homeless Education Consortium (consisting of 12 school districts) to provide technical assistance and outreach and to support districts in identifying and supporting homeless children. This program funds a part-time staff member to coordinate with district preschools, Head Start programs, K–12 education, and postsecondary institutions to support the continuum of educational services and supports for homeless children and youths. Additionally, the program works directly with service providers and shelters to provide information and resources for families, as well as with the Contra Costa County Council on Homelessness to advocate for youth services.

As an active participant in the QRIS Quality Matters program, CSB works closely with the CCCOE to support continuous quality improvement activities at CSB sites which have achieved Tier 4 and Tier 5 ratings according to the Quality Continuum Framework Rating Matrix. QRIS participation requires each site to determine three annual goals to elevate quality; the goals must be realistic, attainable, and time-bound. Site Quality Improvement Plans focus on three core elements of quality: Core Element 1 (Child Development and School Readiness); Core Element 2 (Teachers and Teaching); and Core Element 3 (Program and Environment). Family engagement is a critical element of quality early learning services; ensuring that all families are supported and connected to the local preventive and intervention services is a high priority.

The CSB and CCCOE programs work together on a shared commitment to support families and their transition. This is
Educational Services ... (Continued from page 7)

accomplished by combining resources and collaborating on professional development and recruitment efforts.

**Coordinated Resources and Services**

- CSB has a clerk dedicated to processing enrollment referrals and completing a pre-application screening process to identify family needs. This enables supportive services to begin prior to enrollment. The wait-list ranking system then systematically prioritizes children who are experiencing homelessness.

- Families who are provided with supportive services receive an individualized approach, including family meetings, case management, and a joint assessment of needs.

- CSB provides support through the family partnership agreement, parent meetings, home visits, mental health referrals, and other services.

- Individualized support and family meetings take place to support homeless families and ensure continued enrollment so that children can maintain attachment to their teacher, school, and site staff during transition.

- If transportation is a barrier, CSB refers the family for community-based transportation services. CCCOE also supports transportation to the school of origin by providing bus passes or gas cards, either directly or through coordination with a shelter case manager.

- Successful preschool-to-kindergarten transitions are supported for families through A Road Map to Kindergarten© (RMTK), a parent guide with 16 important steps that all parents need to know when preparing their children for kindergarten. RMTK was designed to promote meaningful conversations among parents, educators, and community members about the importance of planning for and facilitating children’s smooth transitions into kindergarten. The guide includes language about the McKinney-Vento Act to inform families of their rights. All CSB sites provide the RMTK guide to all families with preschool children.

- CSB staff works with homeless families to provide transfers to other centers or, if necessary, to coordinate transfers to other Head Start agencies.

**Staff Professional Development**

- CSB staff participate in an Annual Refresher Training for Site Supervisors and Comprehensive Services Staff.

- All managers, clerks, and assistant managers complete a Family Development Credential Program to ensure sensitivity and a strength-based approach to working with families.

- CCCOE provides training and technical assistance to school-district homeless liaisons and shelter program staff

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Educational Services ... (Continued from page 8)

and case managers (from SHELTER, Inc., Winter Nights, and STAND!). This training and assistance focuses on education for homeless youths and early intervention services available through CSB.

- CCCOE also provides technical assistance with completion and processing of Child Development Permit applications for all CSB staff, and Temporary County Certificates if necessary. Additionally, professional growth advising services are available for CSB staff as requested.

- The Local Planning and Advisory Council for Early Care and Education (LPC), which is housed under the CCCOE, coordinates and sponsors QRIS-aligned and content-focused professional development trainings, seminars, and symposia available to all CSB teaching staff and site supervisors. Professional development topics include (but are not limited to) Trauma-Informed Care; Strengthening Families: Five Protective Factors; Successful Kindergarten Transitions; and School–Family–Community Partnerships.

Collaborative Recruitment and Community Awareness Efforts

- CSB and CCCOE participate in the annual Project Homeless Connect event, a one-day, one-stop event coordinated by the Contra Costa County Health Services Program that offers a variety of services to those experiencing homelessness.

- CSB collaborates for outreach with the Nurse Family Partnership, Children and Family Services, and directly at Crossroads High School, where young mothers, including those experiencing homelessness, are provided Early Head Start services.

- CCCOE provides year-round staff development and technical assistance services to CSB staff by presenting at regional CSB cluster meetings and by hosting more than 50 professional development offerings in Contra Costa County. These professional development offerings support specialized content knowledge seminars for teachers, site supervisors, and parents.

- CCCOE presents annually at Head Start parent meetings to provide awareness to parents around McKinney-Vento and homeless education rights.

- CSB receives referrals from service agencies, including the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP), Contra Costa Public Health, and SHELTER, Inc.

- For families that have school-age children with younger siblings, CCCOE advises school-district liaisons to refer families to Head Start programs.

- CCCOE makes presentations to community-based organizations, service providers, and school administrators and staff to increase referrals of homeless children to early childhood programs.

- The CCCOE’s County Homeless Education Liaison is a member of the Contra Costa Council on Homelessness and serves as an advocate for youth education rights, including those related to early education programs.

- CSB is represented on the Local Planning and Advisory Council for Early Care and Education through CSB’s staff appointment to the Public Agency seat category. It is also a key partner of the QRIS initiative in Contra Costa County.

- During the month of November, which is designated as Homeless Awareness Month, CCCOE coordinates with the Council on Homelessness to increase public awareness of issues surrounding homelessness. Recently, the County Board of Education also passed a resolution recognizing November as Homeless Youth Awareness Month and is further developing a media campaign to share information with the public and school districts regarding homelessness.

With the recent national focus on aligning federal rules for preschool, Head Start, and child care programs, there is a renewed sense of importance to removing barriers and better supporting youths who experience homelessness. The Contra Costa County Office of Education, the Local Planning and Advisory Council for Early Care and Education, and CSB Head Start programs will use this as an opportunity to build on existing efforts and continue to collaborate to ensure that families who experience homelessness are aware of and have access to quality early childhood programs.
You can ENROLL in school!

Even if you have:

• Uncertain housing
• A temporary address
• No permanent physical address

You are guaranteed enrollment in school by the federal McKinney-Vento Act and California state law if you live:

• In a house or apartment with more than one family due to loss of housing or economic hardship
• With friends or family because you are a runaway or an unaccompanied youth
• In substandard housing (without electricity, water, or heat)
• In a shelter (family, domestic violence, or youth shelter or transitional living program)
• In a motel, hotel, or weekly rate housing
• In an abandoned building, in a car, at a campground, or on the streets

You can enroll in school immediately even without the documents normally required for enrollment, such as:

• Proof of residency
• Immunization records or other required health records
• School records
• Legal guardianship papers

Your child may:

• Participate fully in all school activities and programs for which he/she is eligible.
• Receive transportation to and from the school of origin if you request it.
• Continue to attend the school in which he/she was last enrolled even if you have moved away from that school’s attendance area.
• Qualify automatically for school nutrition programs.

Your responsibilities are to:

• Make sure your child gets to school on time and ready to learn.
• Stay informed of school rules, regulations, and activities.
• Contact the homeless liaison for assistance in removing barriers to your child’s education.
• Attend parent/teacher conferences, Back-to-School Nights, and other school-related activities.

For questions about enrolling in school or for assistance with school enrollment, contact:

• Your local school district homeless liaison:
• Your county homeless liaison:
• Your homeless state coordinator:

   Leanne Wheeler
   State Coordinator
   California Department of Education
   1430 N Street, Suite 6408
   Sacramento, CA 95814
   Phone: 1-866-856-8214
¡Tú puedes INSCRIBIRTE en la escuela!

Incluso si:
- Tu situación de vivienda es incierta
- Tienes una dirección temporal
- No tienes una dirección física permanente

La ley federal McKinney-Vento y las leyes del estado de California te garantizan la inscripción en la escuela si vives:
- En una casa o departamento con más de una familia debido a la pérdida de tu vivienda o a dificultades económicas
- Con amigos o familiares porque huyiste de tu hogar o eres un menor no acompañado
- En una vivienda precaria (sin electricidad, agua o calefacción)
- En un refugio (para familias, víctimas de violencia doméstica o jóvenes, o un programa de vivienda temporal)
- En un motel, hotel o vivienda que se paga semanalmente
- En un edificio abandonado, automóvil, campamento o en la calle

Puedes inscribirte en la escuela de inmediato incluso sin los documentos que normalmente se piden para la inscripción, como:
- Prueba de residencia
- Registros de vacunación y otros registros médicos
- Registros escolares
- Papeles de tutela legal

Tu hijo puede:
- Participar plenamente en todas las actividades y programas escolares para los que reúne los requisitos.
- Recibir transporte de ida y vuelta a su escuela de origen si lo solicitas.
- Seguir asistiendo a la escuela en la que estuvo inscrito por última vez, incluso si se mudó fuera de la zona de asistencia de esa escuela.
- Reunir los requisitos automáticamente para participar en los programas de nutrición escolar.

Es tu responsabilidad:
- Asegurarte de que tu hijo asista a la escuela a tiempo y listo para aprender.
- Mantenerse informado de las reglas, normas y actividades de la escuela.
- Contactar al enlace designado para las personas sin hogar para obtener ayuda para eliminar las barreras a la educación de tu hijo.
- Asistir a reuniones entre padres y maestros, las noches de regreso a la escuela y otras actividades relacionadas con la escuela.

Si tienes preguntas acerca de la inscripción en la escuela o para obtener ayuda con la inscripción, contacta a:
- El enlace designado para las personas sin hogar ("homeless liaison") de tu distrito escolar local:
- El enlace designado para las personas sin hogar de tu condado:
- El coordinador de las personas sin hogar de tu estado:

Leanne Wheeler
Coordinadora Estatal
Departamento de Educación de California
1430 N Street, Suite 6408
Sacramento, CA 95814
Teléfono: 1-866-856-8214

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The Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) Head Start Program serves the neediest children and families in the cities of Long Beach and Signal Hill. At the core of outreach efforts to find and serve families experiencing homelessness are the close working relationships with community agencies. For example, a representative from Goodwill Industries has been elected as a community representative on the Head Start Policy Council. Goodwill’s participation facilitates a reciprocal relationship; as the organization learns about the Head Start program goals, achievements, and services, Goodwill shares its expertise in a collaborative decision-making process. This partnership results in outreach for Goodwill and provides Head Start families with access to services offered by Goodwill, such as transportation assistance, education services, and job training. When families who are experiencing homelessness enroll in the Head Start program, they gain a fast-track access to Head Start’s expansive network of community partnerships. Through these partnerships, families receive much-needed resources to help them cope with the circumstances that led to their homelessness.

Another key partner in serving homeless families and children is the LBUSD Division of Student Support Services, which coordinates services to students who are homeless for the entire district. The Division of Student Support Services also provides assistance to all 85 school sites in the district regarding child welfare, attendance, the School Attendance Review Board, foster youths, home hospital instruction, custody, enrollment, residency, and 504 plans.

The LBUSD Head Start Program and the Division of Student Support Services have a long-standing relationship. Some of the collaborative work between the departments includes referrals to and from each program. For example, when a family enrolled in Early Head Start or Head Start indicates that they are homeless, the Head Start Family Services Liaison notifies the family of services available to them. Similarly, if a family with a school-age child is assisted by the school district’s multiservice center and there is a preschool-age child or infant, a referral is sent to the Head Start program.

Many of the community partners that provide services to homeless families are part of a group called the Villages at Cabrillo Collaborative (VACC), which was organized by Century Villages at Cabrillo (CVC). The Villages at Cabrillo campus is a 27-acre residential community designed to break the cycle of homelessness. Formerly used as housing for the Long Beach Naval Shipyard, the campus was conveyed to CVC, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and affiliate of Century Housing, in 1997 under the McKinney-Vento Act for the benefit of the homeless. Since that time, Century Housing has served as steward of the property, protecting, preserving, and enhancing this critical community asset. Over the past 19 years, the Villages at Cabrillo has housed more than 1,300 residents, including more than 550 mili-

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tary veterans and an increasing family and child population.

Century Housing plays an important role as owner, developer, manager, and community development backbone, but the defining feature of the Villages is the cooperation of more than 20 nonprofit and government agencies that have convened to pursue collective impact—namely, the recovery and transformation of persons and families in need. These nonprofit and government agencies comprise the VACC, of which the LBUSD’s Director of Student Support Services serves as a member. The VACC consists of organizations that are either located within the Century Villages at Cabrillo or within the boundaries of the City of Long Beach, forming a one-stop center for families. VACC agencies assist tenants who are struggling with substance abuse; provide emergency shelter for individuals and families, and supportive transitional and permanent housing for veterans; and secure funding and resources that support their collective vision of ending homelessness.

Many VACC partners have been recognized locally and nationally. For example, during the summer of 2015, the Mary McLeod Bethune Transitional Center, which is operated by the LBUSD Division of Student Support Services, earned a national Recognition of Excellence award from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for creating “an innovative facility to serve and educate homeless children.” The award was presented during a luncheon marking the 40th anniversary of the federal Community Development Block Grant program. Through partnerships with the CVC, Boeing, and Verizon, LBUSD has provided assistance to approximately 400 homeless students each year at the Bethune Center. These students receive referrals for health exams, tutoring, and mental health counseling; hot meals; transportation; and necessities such as backpacks, hygiene packs, and school uniforms, supplies, and books.

During the 2016–17 school year, the Head Start program joined the work of the CVC by utilizing the community room as a socialization space for the Early Head Start program. By holding the socializations within the CVC, families can participate in Early Head Start while having easy access to the other services provided by the CVC. CVC case managers and Early Head Start home visitors work closely to ensure that each family is progressing toward its housing, educational, and health goals. When the family is ready to transition out of the CVC community, Early Head Start and Head Start services ensure continuity of support services. For example, linking families with Early Head Start’s other community partners—such as Job Corps, the Adult School, or Goodwill—can help families access adult literacy, job readiness, and vocational training programs that will help the family move toward greater independence. When family members secure a job or enroll in school, Early Head Start and Head Start services are available to help families make these transitions. The services give families peace of mind that their children are well taken care of.

Although these partnerships have been very beneficial in reaching and serving homeless families, LBUSD staff know that there is much more work to be done to reach even more families who experience homelessness. More than 5,000 homeless children attend LBUSD schools, and that is why the district has been working hard to expand services to this population. Through recent duration funding for Head Start and Early Head Start, LBUSD will open two classrooms on the Bethune multipurpose center located at the CVC campus. The district has also started to collaborate with Children Today, a community child development program that focuses on serving homeless children and families. If awarded the Early Head Start expansion grant, Children Today will become an Early Head Start child-care partner. Like the LBUSD Early Head Start program, Children Today strives to foster long-term stability and success in children and families. This is accomplished through the provision of trauma-informed child development and family support services. These services address the unique needs of children who are homeless or victims of maltreatment by focusing on the children’s physical, psychological, and emotional safety.

The staff members of LBUSD are very proud of the collaborations forged in the district and the surrounding community. Through collaboration and a shared vision, the district is dedicated to making a difference for the children and families in the Long Beach area.
According to the American Institutes for Research (2014), approximately one in 30 children experience homelessness in California. The number of children living in homeless situations has increased consistently since 2010. In rural areas such as Tehama County, homelessness presents unique challenges to programs such as Head Start. Rural communities tend to have fewer shelters, and homeless families are less likely to live on streets or in vehicles, as is common in urban areas (National Coalition for the Homeless 2007). Tehama County has only one homeless shelter: a facility designated for women who are working through drug or alcohol addiction. The only other assistance available to homeless people in the county is provided by churches during winter months. Typically, families in rural areas who are living in homeless situations stay with other family members or share living quarters with other families. These types of living arrangements are most common in rural areas and make homelessness “invisible.”

There are several issues that arise when working with these invisible homeless people. The first is the concept of homelessness itself. Families who have a roof over their heads and are in a “safe” space do not usually perceive themselves as homeless. Misconceptions about homelessness are pervasive; homelessness is often equated with those who are living on the street or otherwise “unsheltered” (National Advisory Committee on Rural Health and Human Services 2014). In Tehama County, these misconceptions are common in the general community, starting with the local school system.

Children who live in homeless situations tend to have a higher rate of learning disabilities and behavioral issues than those who are housed (Hinton and Cassel 2013). To combat these particular issues, especially the way in which homeles-
**Challenges ... (Continued from page 14)**

Ness is defined, Tehama County Head Start families complete a Child Residency Questionnaire based on the McKinney-Vento Act. This questionnaire, together with a series of follow-up questions, helps to determine whether a family is considered homeless. If requested, referral for homeless assistance may begin before the formal enrollment process is completed. Also, when a homeless family enrolls in Head Start, services provided by the county's Head Start program may include, but are not limited to, housing searches and referrals to outside agencies such as the Tehama County Community Action Agency (for housing assistance). However, because of the lack of resources in the community, such as low-income housing, few families are able to transition away from homelessness.

During the formation of the Tehama County Department of Education homeless program, it was discovered that there were many misconceptions in the community and in local agencies, including schools, about homelessness. To better serve homeless students, a survey was sent to the schools to identify the number of students living in inadequate housing or homeless situations. The majority of schools that were surveyed responded by saying they had zero homeless students. Data collected through the survey contradicted information gathered from meetings with counselors and social services that these families existed.

Misconceptions play a major role in deterring the homeless from finding shelter or even having shelter or housing provided to them. Again, misconceptions of homelessness—that homeless people are crazy, criminals, mentally ill, and so forth—led to several missed opportunities. Poor and The Homeless (PATH), a homelessness advocacy group in Tehama County, secured funding to create a permanent nighttime shelter, but politics and “not in my backyard” attitudes made it impossible to secure a location for the shelter.

However, Tehama County is starting to take steps in the right direction. The Tehama County Community Action Agency has spearheaded an annual event called Live Inspired for Tomorrow (LIFT), which consolidated Project Homeless Connect and Recycle the Warmth into one event. Recycle the Warmth started more than 30 years ago in Tehama County, providing warm clothing and blankets to those in need, free of charge. Project Homeless Connect began six years ago and offered free medical and social services to the homeless. By combining the two events, the Tehama County Community Action Agency and PATH were able to serve more people in a single venue. Tehama County Head Start participates in this annual event in two different ways. First, Head Start staff provide bilingual services to people whose primary language is not English. Second, Head Start families are brought to this event to tap into resources to which they may not ordinarily have access because of lack of transportation, time, child care, and so on. It is estimated that at least 25 percent of the county's Head Start families attend this event each year—and, according to the Tehama County Community Action Agency, more than 1,200 people were served at the LIFT event in 2015.

**Highlight of Services Provided at LIFT2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Individuals Served</th>
<th>Individuals Impacted</th>
<th>Families Served</th>
<th>Volunteers Present</th>
<th>Volunteer Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth Certificates</td>
<td>1226</td>
<td>1564</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>1574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haircuts Given</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID Cards Received</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycles Repaired</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>135</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Eye Exams</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV Tests Given</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tehama County Community Action Agency

**References**


A Look at Early Childhood Homelessness

California

TOTAL CHILDREN POPULATION UNDER 6 in 2013:
2,996,939

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER AGE 6 IDENTIFIED as HOMELESS:
268,621

CHILDREN UNDER AGE 6 EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS:
1 in 11 CHILDREN

NUMBER OF CHILDREN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS SERVED BY PROGRAMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Head Start and Early Head Start (Total Cumulative Enrollment in Head Start/Early Head Start)</td>
<td>4,134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHCY (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)</td>
<td>5,206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Development Fund</td>
<td>Available in 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUD Homelessness Early Childhood data by State (HMIS)</td>
<td>Not Available by State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting</td>
<td>Planning for 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHILDREN IN EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS

- Known Served by HS, EHS and McKinney-Vento
- Unserved Homeless

STATE STATISTICS & STATE EFFORTS

- Average number of children 18 and under who receive meals in emergency shelters daily is 1,280 (CACFP/USDA).
- More than 25 percent of children 18 and under lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013 (Children’s Defense Fund).
- Nearly one in four children (24.8 percent) under 6 years old lived below the Federal Poverty Level in 2013.
- California has an innovative partnership between First 5 California and counties to help children ages 0 to 5 and their families thrive by increasing high-quality early learning settings. In this innovative approach, children who are experiencing homelessness are one of the priority groups funded.
- In the reauthorization of Head Start by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-134), age-eligible children whose families are determined to be homeless are categorically eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start programs. California has 4,357 Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership and Expansion (EHS-CCP) slots that could expand necessary assistance to homeless children.

California has a combination of Medicaid expansion and a separate program. Current Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program covers children from up to 261 percent of Federal Poverty Level.


