



National Center for Homeless Education  
Supporting the Education of Children and  
Youth Experiencing Homelessness  
<http://nche.ed.gov>



BEST PRACTICES IN INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION BRIEF SERIES  
**Supporting In-School and Out-of-School Youth Experiencing Homelessness  
Through Education and Workforce Partnerships**

**This NCHE brief**

- provides an overview of education and workforce programs that serve youth experiencing homelessness, and
- suggests strategies for cross-system collaboration among these programs to support youth experiencing homelessness.

**INTRODUCTION**

This brief is designed for educators, including State Coordinators for Homeless Education and local homeless education liaisons, adult education and career and technical education (CTE) program providers, and providers of U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) youth programs, including the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth formula program, Job Corps, and YouthBuild. It provides a brief overview of education and workforce programs that may serve youth experiencing homelessness, and suggests strategies for cross-system collaboration to support these youth. Briefs on additional homeless education topics are available at <http://nche.ed.gov/briefs.php>.

**THE VALUE OF EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT TRAINING**

The value of education and employment training for equipping young people, including those experiencing homelessness, to compete in the labor market and afford housing is indisputable:

**McKINNEY-VENTO DEFINITION OF HOMELESS  
42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)**

The term “homeless children and youth”—

- A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and
- B. includes —
  - i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
  - ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings...;
  - iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
  - iv. migratory children...who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

- Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED have a 346% higher risk of experiencing homelessness than youth with at least a high school degree (Morton, Dworsky, & Samuels, 2017).
- People with higher levels of education have lower levels of unemployment (U.S. Department of Labor [DOL], 2018) and higher lifetime earnings (DeVol, 2016, p. 2; Social Security Administration [SSA], 2015).

Not only do people with higher levels of education reap the benefits as individuals, but regional economies do, as well. (DeVol, 2016, p. 3). Simply put, an educated workforce increases regional prosperity (p. 3). A higher income also supports a person’s ability to secure and maintain stable housing (Aurund et al, 2018), which reduces a person’s risk of experiencing or returning to homelessness. By partnering together, education and workforce programs help support upward economic mobility for young people and the communities in which they live.

## KEY EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PARTNERS SERVING YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

### THE EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH (EHCY) PROGRAM

**Overview:** Under the [EHCY Program](#), States receive funds to support the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

**Authorizing Statute:** [Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#) (McKinney-Vento Act), as amended

**Key Supports:** Immediate school enrollment, student-centered best interest school selection, school-of-origin transportation, assistance with credit accrual, and support for the transition to higher education

**Key Stakeholders:** Under the McKinney-Vento Act, States must designate a [State Coordinator for Homeless Education](#) (State Coordinator) to oversee the implementation of the Act in school districts throughout the State, and districts must designate a local homeless education liaison (local liaison) to oversee the implementation of the Act in schools throughout the district.

**Collaboration Requirements:** State Coordinators and local liaisons must collaborate with a variety of educators, service providers, and community agencies in

order to improve the provision of comprehensive education and related services to children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness [42 U.S.C. § 11432(f)(4); 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(5)(A)]. Further, States and school districts must ensure that students experiencing homelessness do not face barriers to accessing career and technical education [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(F)(iii)].

**Youth Experiencing Homelessness:** Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children and youth experiencing homelessness according to the [McKinney-Vento definition](#) are eligible to receive EHCY services according to each young person’s need.

### CARL D. PERKINS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) PROGRAM

**Overview:** Under the Perkins CTE Program, states, secondary school districts, area career and technical schools, and post-secondary institutions receive funds to operate CTE programs.

**Authorizing Statute:** [Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act \(Perkins Act\)](#), as amended

**Key Supports:** CTE programs offer students the knowledge, skills, and hands-on experience necessary to compete for well-paying, in-demand jobs in fields such as health care, agriculture, and technology.

**Key Stakeholders:** The state-level agency responsible for administering the Perkins grant convenes a broad range of stakeholders to develop the State Perkins CTE plan. CTE programs may be offered at the local level in middle schools, high schools, career and technical schools, community and technical colleges, and other post-secondary institutions that offer subbaccalaureate degrees.

**Collaboration Requirements:** The Perkins Act requires that states must develop the State Perkins CTE plan in consultation with State Coordinators for Homeless Education (20 U.S.C. § 2342). Programs applying for Perkins CTE funding must consult with representatives from local agencies that serve youth experiencing homelessness when developing the local application and the required local needs assessment (20 U.S.C. § 2354).

**Youth Experiencing Homelessness:** Under the Perkins Act (effective July 1, 2019) youth experiencing homelessness according to the [McKinney-Vento definition](#) are included in the definition of *special populations* (20 U.S.C. § 2302). The “special population” designation is given to groups of people who may face unique barriers to accessing and succeeding in CTE

programs; as a result, special populations are entitled to receive a variety of supplemental supports to ensure that they have equal access to and opportunity to succeed in CTE programs.

### **THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) YOUTH FORMULA PROGRAM**

**Overview:** Under the [WIOA Youth Program](#), States and local areas receive funds to deliver a comprehensive array of services to help prepare in-school and out-of-school youth ages 14-24 for post-secondary education and employment opportunities, attain educational and/or skills training credentials, and secure employment with career/promotional opportunities.

**Authorizing Statute:** [Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)

**Key Supports:** [14 program elements](#), including tutoring, dropout prevention, post-secondary education preparation and transition activities, integrated education and workforce training, mentoring, and supportive and follow-up services (20 CFR § 681.460)

**Key Stakeholders:** Under WIOA, States must establish a State workforce development board (WDB) and local communities must establish a [local WDB](#). Other key partners include [local WDB youth councils](#), [local youth program providers](#), [local education and training program providers](#).

**Collaboration Requirements:** When developing their [Unified or Combined WIOA State Plan](#), States must seek input from education partners, including the state agency responsible for secondary education, institutions of higher education, and career and technical education schools. In designing WIOA youth programs, local WDBs must work with school districts and programs that serve youth experiencing homelessness to ensure the participation of local eligible youth [20 C.F.R. § 681.420(c)]. Further, the U.S. Departments of Labor (DOL) and Education (ED) specifically recommend that local WDBs collaborate with school district EHCY programs and local Perkins Career and Technical Education Programs (ED & DOL, 2017, p. 2).

**Youth Experiencing Homelessness:** Under the WIOA Youth Program, youth experiencing homelessness according to the [McKinney-Vento definition](#) are eligible to receive services for both in-school youth (ISYs) [29 U.S.C. § 3164(a)(1)C)(iv)(IV)] and out-of-school youth (OSYs) [29 U.S.C. § 3164(a)(1)(B)(iii)(V)]. Under WIOA, ISYs must be considered low-income to receive services; youth experiencing homelessness meet the

WIOA definition of low-income given their [categorical eligibility for free school meals under the Child Nutrition Act](#). It is important to note that a youth who is an OSY at the time of WIOA program enrollment, but subsequently enrolls in school, is considered an OSY throughout his/her program participation for the purposes of the WIOA 75% OSY expenditure requirement (20 C.F.R. § 681.240).

### **ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Overview:** The Adult Education Program supports adult education and literacy activities for individuals ages 16 and older who are not enrolled in school or required to be enrolled in school, and who are basic skills deficient, lack a secondary school diploma or its equivalent, or who are English language learners.

**Authorizing Statute:** The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), as amended

**Key Supports:** AEFLA programs offer basic skills instruction, instruction to prepare individuals for a high school diploma or its equivalent, English language acquisition activities, family literacy activities, integrated English literacy and civics education, workforce preparation activities, and integrated education and training.

**Key Stakeholders:** States competitively award funds to organizations with demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities, such as school districts, community- and faith-based organizations, community and technical colleges, and others.

**Collaboration Requirements:** The Adult Education Program is included in the state's Unified or Combined WIOA State plan. States must consider comments from [local WDBs](#) in their review of funding applications from eligible providers, as well as an applicant's coordination with other available education, training, and social services resources in the community.

**Youth Experiencing Homelessness:** Youth experiencing homelessness according to the [McKinney-Vento definition](#) are considered individuals with barriers to employment whose participation and outcomes in adult education programs must be [reported annually](#).

### **JOB CORPS**

**Overview:** Job Corps is the nation's largest residential education and vocational training program for economically disadvantaged youth ages 16-24.

**Authorizing Statute:** [Title I of the Workforce](#)

## Innovation and Opportunity Act

**Key Supports:** Job Corps is a year-round primarily residential program that offers comprehensive vocational training, education, and supportive services. Participants are provided room and board while they work toward learning a trade. Job Corps also helps students complete their high school education, if needed, and assists students with obtaining employment.

**Key Stakeholders:** Through contracts and agreements with the DOL, organizations operate approximately [more than 100 Job Corps centers](#) across the United States.

**Collaboration Requirements:** As part of their outreach/public education plans, Job Corps enrollment and placement service providers must distribute information to schools, employment and training programs, and social service agencies that serve youth experiencing homelessness (DOL, 2018, 1.1, R1, d6, p. 16), and work with them to promote the referral of eligible applicants (1.1, R6, a, p. 18).

**Youth Experiencing Homelessness:** Under the WIOA Youth Program, youth experiencing homelessness according to the [McKinney-Vento definition](#) are eligible for Job Corps (Exhibit 1-1, criterion 3, p. 60) provided that they meet other relevant requirements, such as age and need for education and training. Given that approximately 85% of centers provide year-round housing (DOL, 2016), Job Corps may be especially beneficial for youth struggling with housing instability.

## **YOUTHBUILD**

**Overview:** YouthBuild is a community-based pre-apprenticeship program that provides job training and educational opportunities for low-income youth ages 16-24 who have dropped out of high school.

**Authorizing Statute:** [Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)

**Key Supports:** YouthBuild participants learn vocational skills in construction and other in-demand industries, and also provide community service through the construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing for low-income or homeless families in their neighborhood. Youth split their time between the vocational training work site and the classroom, where they earn their high school diploma or equivalency degree and prepare for post-secondary training opportunities, including college, apprenticeships, and employment. YouthBuild provides program participants with support services that may include mentoring, transportation assistance, counseling,

## **PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: LATIN AMERICAN YOUTH CENTER (LAYC): WASHINGTON, DC**

[LAYC](#) works with local youth to help them make a successful transition to adulthood through the provision of housing, education, job readiness, and health and wellness services. One of LAYC's hallmark programs is its [Promotor Pathway Model® \(PPM\)](#), a long-term client management intervention model for disconnected youth facing barriers to achieving their educational, employment, and healthy living goals. *Promotores*, or guides, work one-on-one with youth to remove these barriers, encourage participation in a broad set of LAYC services, and connect them to other needed resources within the community.

[LAYC's Prince George's County Workforce Program](#) offers job training, educational supports, and case management to local out-of-school youth ages 16-24, and often makes referrals to LAYC's PPM when serving youth experiencing homelessness. Under the workforce program, youth without a high school diploma have the opportunity to work towards GED completion. Youth who wish to continue with school receive assistance from their GED Instructor to identify and apply to an appropriate post-secondary academic program and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). While all workforce program participants receive some form of case management, youth experiencing homelessness often need additional support, which triggers a referral to the PPM for more intensive and targeted case management.

LAYC's PPM began placing *Promotores* in Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) in 2014. Based on positive program outcomes, PPM presence in PGCPS has grown from 3 *Promotores* in 3 high schools in 2014 to 13 *Promotores* in 6 high schools in 2017. During the 2017-2018 school year, LAYC started a partnership with the [PGCPS McKinney-Vento EHCY Program](#), using [Title I, Part A](#) funds to place 4 *Promotores* in local high schools with the highest numbers of students experiencing homelessness.

LAYC's PPM program recently graduated its first cohort of in-school participants, and celebrated 46 young people achieving their goal of high school graduation. A 2016 randomized control trial evaluation of the PPM found that, after 18 months, participants were 33% more likely to be engaged in school and 60% less likely to have slept on the streets or in an emergency shelter (Theodos, Pergamit, Derian, Edelstein, & Stolte, 2016).

housing and other referral services, and need-based payments to help support youth to attain stable housing. **Key Stakeholders:** Through Federal grants from the DOL, local non-profit organizations and public entities operate more than [200 YouthBuild programs](#) across the United States.

**Collaboration Requirements:** YouthBuild program applicants must describe in their application how they will work with school districts and providers of services to youth experiencing homelessness according to the McKinney-Vento definition [29 U.S.C. § 3226(b)(4)] to promote the referral of youth who are eligible to participate in YouthBuild [29 U.S.C. § 3226(c)(3)(B)(vii)].

**Youth Experiencing Homelessness:** While YouthBuild does not provide categorical eligibility for youth

experiencing homelessness, these youth are likely to be eligible given their low-income status. Further, YouthBuild programs build and/or renovate low-income housing, including homeless shelters, which may be used to house young people experiencing homelessness. While there is no specific requirement around collaboration for youth who are homeless, eligible supportive services include referrals to housing, as well as the use of need-based payments to help support youth to attain stable housing.

## GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIPS

Given statutory requirements for coordination across systems, and the benefits of aligning program efforts to provide more comprehensive supports, education and workforce partners should consider the following first steps and strategies for developing effective partnerships:

- 1. Reach out.** The first step to building a partnership is to connect with your new partner. Find contact information for education and workforce partners at the links below.  
Adult Education Program: [State Directors of Adult Education](#)  
EHCY Program: [State Coordinators for Homeless Education](#)  
EHCY Program: [Local homeless education liaisons](#) (click on the state and then the liaison directory link)  
Perkins CTE Program: [State Directors of Career and Technical Education](#)  
WIOA Youth Program: [Local workforce development boards](#)  
Job Corps: [Local Job Corps centers](#)  
YouthBuild: [Local YouthBuild programs](#) (click on the most recent grantee link)
- 2. Get to know each other.** Once initial contact is established, share information with each other about the nature of your work and the services your organization provides. Share publicly available data of relevance, and discuss how this data can inform efforts to support each other's program outcomes.
- 3. Pursue mutual benefit.** True partnerships are based on a consideration of the goals and needs of each individual partner. To this end, focus on shared goals and how your partnership can yield benefit for all involved parties, including partner agencies and the young people they serve.

### PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: LOS ANGELES PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP PILOT (LAP3)

LAP3 is one of nine communities included in [Round 1 of the federal interagency Performance Partnership Pilots for Disconnected Youth \(P3\) initiative](#). P3 gives State, local, and tribal governments the opportunity to test innovative strategies by providing them with flexibility in the application of federal rules and the use of federal funding streams to improve outcomes for low-income, disconnected youth, ages 14 to 24. LAP3 seeks to address the employment, education, and housing outcomes of 200,000+ local high school dropouts, youth experiencing homelessness, and youth involved with the foster care and juvenile justice systems.

LAP3 is part of the partnership between the City of Los Angeles' [YouthSource System](#) and the [Los Angeles Unified School District's \(LAUSD\) Pupil Services and Attendance Counselors \(PSACs\)](#). This [partnership](#) is recognized nationally as a model for integrating workforce and educational services to re-engage disconnected youth. As part of LAP3, LAUSD PSACs are co-located in 13 YouthSource Centers throughout the city. PSACs work collaboratively with YouthSource Centers to conduct student intakes and assessments, and determine appropriate interventions for students with behavioral, social, and attendance-related issues. The primary goal of PSACs is to provide students with the supports needed to overcome barriers to school attendance and academic achievement.

4. **Consider other strategic partnerships.** Education and employment agencies may wish to connect with other systems that serve youth experiencing homelessness to provide more comprehensive and coordinated supports; for example, education and employment partners may want to reach out to their area [Continuum of Care](#), which administers local U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development homeless assistance programs, and youth service providers to inquire about homeless assistance system goals focused on education and employment outcomes for youth and young adult clients. Strategic partnerships ideally include young people themselves, for example, local youth advisory boards that include young people with lived experiences of homelessness who can bring a unique perspective to the design and implementation of programs targeting in-school and out-of-school youth.

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Every state is required to have a State Coordinator for Homeless Education, and every school district is required to have a local homeless education liaison. These individuals oversee the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. To find out who your State Coordinator is, visit the NCHE website at [http://nche.ed.gov/states/state\\_resources.php](http://nche.ed.gov/states/state_resources.php).

For more information on issues related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness, contact the NCHE helpline at 800-308-2145 (toll-free) or [homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org).

**Local Contact Information:**

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box intended for local contact information.