Linking Students with Community Resources

Megan Robertson, ASW, CPRP
Defining Terms

- Homelessness has distinct definitions
  - HUD
  - McKinney Vento / Education
- “Youth” means different things to different services
- Hidden in Plain Sight
  - Homeless youth are notoriously difficult to accurately count in a census

Definitions determine funding → services for students
The Numbers
(According to HUD)

- Long Beach (2015)
  - 385
  - 17% of total homeless population

- California:
  - Largest numbers of homeless unaccompanied youth in the country
  - 10,416 people → 28 percent of the national total.

- United States:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Homeless Youth</th>
<th>Unaccompanied Homeless Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Homeless Youth (under 25)</td>
<td>180,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Youth (under 18)</td>
<td>127,787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Youth (18-24)</td>
<td>52,973</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
Who are homeless youth?

- More than 25% of former foster children become homeless within two to four years of leaving the system.
- According to a study of youth in shelters, nearly 50% reported intense conflict or physical harm by a family member as a major contributing factor to their homelessness.
- LGBTQ-identified youth make up 20-40% of the population of homeless youth.
- Other factors: justice involvement, generational poverty, lack of affordable housing, parent/guardian deaths, substance abuse (both guardian and student), and mental health issues.
Barriers to success

- Focus on survival
  - Difficulty with futures planning
  - Distraction from learning environment
- Limited support system
- Instability
  - hygiene
- Upfront fees
- Culture clash
- Transportation
- Computer access (limits)
Empowering to overcome barriers
Connecting with the community

You’re not a social service agency, but you can empower students to connect with social service agencies.

- **Continuum of Care**

- **Faith based community**
  - Look for collaboratives

- **Apps**

- **State resources**
  - California US Interagency Council on Homelessness representative is Amy Sawyer: [amy.sawyer@ustich.gov](mailto:amy.sawyer@ustich.gov)
References & Resources

- https://www.covenanthouse.org/
- https://www.usich.gov/goals/youth
- https://www.lahsa.org/homeless-count/youth-data
- http://youth-help.org/
- http://nashcy.org/educational-resources/higher-ed
- https://ondemand.usc.edu/SSW/Play/841c427ad5994b72adc1303f77b45601d
Megan Robertson
mrobertson@mhala.org
562.277.2000