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*. 

**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

**Christina Dukes**  
NCHE Federal Liaison

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

**Angie Lyon**  
Program Coordinator at Hope House Homeless Shelter
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.
38 States Experienced Growth in Rural Student Homelessness

- In 35 states, it grew by more than the 3% national rate
- In 26 states, it grew by more than the 11% rural rate
- The largest numbers were identified in TX, GA, MI, KY, and NC
- Delaware saw the largest decline (-36%)
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>% Change in homeless students in rural areas</th>
<th>% Change in homeless students in non-rural areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>-12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>-13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 12 states, homeless students were disproportionately represented.
In 3 of these states, 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>% of All Students in Rural Areas</th>
<th>% of Homeless Students in Rural Areas</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>% of All Students in Rural Areas</th>
<th>% of Homeless Students in Rural Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.C.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idaho</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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.

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

Christina Dukes, Federal Liaison
National Center for Homeless Education
cdukes@serve.org
GET TO KNOW NCHE

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
- Products: https://nche.ed.gov/resources/
- Webinars: https://nche.ed.gov/group-training/
- Listserv: https://nche.ed.gov/resources/ (click Listserv tab)
- Twitter: @NCHEducation | Facebook: facebook.com/NCHEducation
YOUTH AT HIGHER RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>346%</td>
<td>Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED had a 346% higher risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162%</td>
<td>Youth reporting annual household income of less than $24,000 had a 162% higher risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83%</td>
<td>Black or African American youth had an 83% higher risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120%</td>
<td>LGBT youth had a 120% higher risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Hispanic, non-White youth had a 33% higher risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200%</td>
<td>Unmarried parenting youth had a 200% higher risk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“THE MORE YOU LEARN, THE MORE YOU EARN”

Data consistently show that education pays.

Source: https://www.bls.gov/emp/chart-unemployment-earnings-education.htm
# Urban vs. Rural Prevalence

Rates of youth experiencing homelessness were similar in rural and nonrural areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Urban Counties</th>
<th>Rural Counties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth 13-17</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adults 18-25</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NIGHTTIME RESIDENCE: URBAN VS. RURAL

Where youth experiencing homelessness stayed on the night of the youth count.

ABOUT YHDP

- 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

- 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

- 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

- 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
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

- NCHE Rural Homelessness webpage: https://nche.ed.gov/rural-homelessness/


- Chapin Hall Voices of Youth Count Youth Homelessness in Rural America brief: http://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/missed-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.
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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Sandra Plantz, Director of Federal Programs for Gallia County Local Schools
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Angie Lyon, Program Coordinator at Hope House Homeless Shelter
alyon@hancockhopehouse.org
Beyond Housing 2020 Conference Registration

Learn more:
www.icphusa.org/beyond-housing/