# Building School-Community Partnerships
## in Support of Children, Youth, and Families Experiencing Homelessness

California Homeless Education Technical Assistance Center (HETAC)

May 2023

# Meet Your Presenters

**Susie Terry** (she)

HETAC Lead, Homeless Coordinator

San Diego County Office of Education

susanne.terry@sdcoe.net

**Christina Dukes** (she)

HETAC Consultant and TA Provider

Pearl Strategies

christina@pearlstrats.com

# About the HETAC

- The California Homeless Education Technical Assistance Center (HETAC)

  - Is funded by the California Department of Education to serve as the state's homeless education technical assistance center

  - Is operated jointly by the Contra Costa, Los Angeles, and San Diego County Offices of Education

- [Download the HETAC flyer](#) to learn more about the HETAC that serves your county

# About Today's Webinar

This webinar

- Is based on the HETAC's School-Community Partnerships: A Toolkit for Working Together to Serve Children, Youth, and Families Experiencing Homelessness

- Covers key school-community partnership topics, including

  - "Making the case" for partnership

  - Partnership considerations, strategies, and action steps

- Spotlights partnership in San Diego County

- Includes opportunities for Q&A and discussion throughout

# Webinar Logistics

- This webinar is being recorded and will be posted within one week to the HETAC website at [hetac.org](hetac.org)

- The webinar recording and materials also will be sent to webinar attendees following the webinar

- All attendees are muted

- Attendees may turn on or disable closed captioning

- Please use "Q&A" to submit questions

# "Making the Case" for Partnership

# What Do You Think?

**Please share via chat:**

Why is it important for schools and other systems (housing, homeless response, workforce development, public benefits, etc.) to partner in support of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness?

# Why Partner?

**While partner programs and systems differ,
there is common ground to be found and leveraged**

✓ No one system can meet all the needs of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness

✓ Research demonstrates the value of housing, education, and supportive services in preventing and ending homelessness

✓ School and community partners often work with the same children, youth, and families

✓ Many authorizing statutes require partnerships between school and community partners

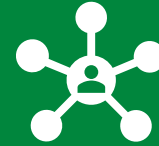✓ Many school and community partners have allowable usages of funds that are complementary or overlapping

# Needs Across Systems

**Safe and Stable Housing**

**Education and Employment**

**Permanent Connections**

**Wellbeing**

Source: U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), Four Core Outcomes in the
Framework to End Youth Homelessness

# The Role of Education in Partnerships

## Education as a PARTNER

- <u>System-level</u> planning, functioning and coordination

- Including education partners in leadership bodies or advisory boards

- Contributing data on prevalence of youth and family homelessness

## Education as a PATHWAY

- <u>Youth-level</u> supports for educational access and success

- Education's return on investment is well documented

  - Higher income

  - Ability to afford housing

  - Access to employer-paid benefits

  - Higher employment rates

# Statutory Requirements

McKinney-Vento Act requirements for collaboration include



- State Coordinators for Homeless Education and local educational agencies (LEAs) must **coordinate with a variety of partners** (homeless service providers, child welfare, early childhood, mental health, and others) to improve the provision of comprehensive education and related services to McKinney-Vento students and families

- Local liaisons must **provide McKinney-Vento students and families with referrals** to health care, dental, mental health and substance abuse, housing, and other appropriate services

# Statutory Requirements

Partner statutory requirements for collaboration include

- Early childhood program homeless provisions (federal Head Start and child care)

- Homeless response system "education assurances" in the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act

- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) collaboration requirements

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) collaboration requirements

# Leveraging Community Partners

Remember to tap into the **full range of school and community supports** to meet the needs of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness

- Housing (e.g., rental assistance, public housing authorities)

- Homeless response (Continuums of Care)

- Early care and education (e.g., child care, Head Start)

- K-12 education

- Higher education

- Connectivity (e-rate for schools and libraries, affordable connectivity program for households)

- Food (child nutrition programs, SNAP)

- Other community partners (non-profits, service providers, philanthropy, faith community, etc.)

See the HETAC's School-Community Partnerships: A Toolkit for Working Together to Serve Children, Youth, and Families Experiencing Homelessness for a template to locate and organize partner contact information

Questions? Comments?

# Partnership Considerations and Strategies

# What Makes a Strong Partnership?

**Strong school-community partnerships are**

- **Mutually beneficial**, with all partners receiving a return on their investment of engagement in partnership work

- **Systematic**, implemented via reliable, consistent, organized practices that are communicated across all levels of partner organizations

- **Stable**, remaining strong even as partner leadership and staff change over time

- **Effective and responsive**, addressing the ongoing and emerging needs of partners and the students and families they serve

# Navigating Differences

- Partnerships often bring together partners who approach homelessness work differently, including using a different definition of homelessness and focusing on a particular area of need (housing, education, etc.)

- While these "systems culture differences" may create challenges, they can be navigated successfully with intentionality and good will
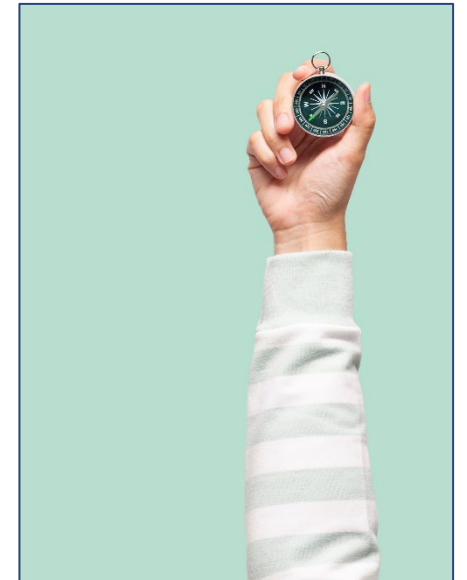
# Examples of Differences Across Systems

## Education

Primary focus: Education

Homelessness:
U.S. Department of Education (ED) definition

All eligible students receive needed supports

## Homeless Response

Primary focus: Housing

Homelessness:
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition

Supports are provided based on vulnerability prioritization

# Homeless Definition Categories

My brain hurts

## 🎓 ED Homeless Categories

- Unsheltered

- Sheltered

- Doubled-up

- Hotel/Motel

## 🏠 HUD Homeless Categories

1. Literally homeless

2. At imminent risk of homelessness

3. Homeless under other federal statutes

4. Fleeing danger

See the HETAC's School-Community Partnerships: A Toolkit for Working Together to Serve Children, Youth, and Families Experiencing Homelessness for more information on understanding different federal definitions of homelessness

Questions? Comments?

# Strategies for Navigating Definitions

## Engage with intentionality and goodwill

- Focus on opportunities rather than barriers

- Choose language carefully

- Communicate value and respect

- Recognize the challenges and constraints faced by each partner

## Explore definitional overlap

- Remember that some ED homeless households will qualify as HUD homeless households

- Seek flexibility where possible (e.g. HUD categories 2 and 4)

# Strategies for Navigating Definitions

**Leverage all available funding**

- Seek flexible funding sources

- Blend funding sources where allowable and strategic

**Leverage partner referrals**

- Connect households to supports across multiple domains through an intentional approach to partner referrals

- Leverage broader eligibility criteria across partners and programs

See the HETAC's School-Community Partnerships: A Toolkit for Working Together to Serve Children, Youth, and Families Experiencing Homelessness for more information on navigating different definitions in partnership work

# Considering Partnership Along a Spectrum

← Looser and lighter-touch      More formal and integrated →

| | Networking | Cooperation | Coordination | Collaboration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Description** | Partners share information and communicate for mutual benefit | Partners support one another's activities but have no formal agreement in place | Partners engage in mutual initiatives, modifying their own activities to benefit the whole | With a formal agreement in place, partners work to develop enhanced system capacity |
| **Purpose** | Exchanging information to reach a common understanding | Networking and supporting one another's activities to achieve a common purpose | Altering activities and sharing or merging resources to achieve a common purpose or create something new | Accomplishing a shared vision with a concrete focus on impacting community benchmarks and/or client outcomes |

See the HETAC's School-Community Partnerships: A Toolkit for Working Together to Serve Children, Youth, and Families Experiencing Homelessness for more information on partnerships along a spectrum, including partnership level features and activities in the toolkit's *Considering School-Community Partnerships Along a Spectrum*

# Sample Partnership Along a Spectrum

**Looser and lighter-touch** ←——————————————→ **More formal and integrated**

| | Networking | Cooperation | Coordination | Collaboration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Homeless-Focused Example** | The Pleasantown School District homeless liaison meets the director for the Family Place Shelter at a quarterly local homeless coalition meeting. The shelter director and liaison exchange e-mail addresses and agree to meet for coffee in a couple of weeks to share about their work. | The shelter director invites the liaison to present about the educational needs and rights at the shelter's monthly case manager meeting. The liaison shares about the importance of high school graduation for students experiencing homelessness and the challenges students experience when trying to do homework in a shelter environment. Case managers share that they've heard from families staying at the shelter that they have a hard time enrolling students in the local school. | The shelter agrees to create a designated homework room with internet access for students experiencing homelessness who are staying at the shelter. The shelter asks a local faith-based partner to donate tables and school supplies for the homework room. The liaison shares the district's homeless education program brochure with instructions on how to refer students experiencing homelessness to the program for assistance with immediate school enrollment. | The district and shelter agree on additional ways to coordinate referrals and service delivery for children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness and enter into a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) for working together. They agree to hold joint training at least annually for the district's school-level homeless education points of contact and the shelter's case managers. |

# What Do You Think?

**Please share via chat:**

1. Who are some of your key partners?

2. How are the partnerships going? What is going well? What are the challenges?

# Partnership Action Steps

# The "Partnership Starter Pack"

## STEP 1
## Reach out and connect

- Reach out and contact your partners across the aisle

- Share about your work and ask your partners to share about theirs

# The "Partnership Starter Pack"

## STEP 2
## Listen to your partners and focus on efforts with mutual benefit

- Seek to build a partnership where each partner receives a return on their investment of time and resources

- Move from abstract discussion to concrete action steps

# The "Partnership Starter Pack"

## STEP 3
## Target touchpoints that can build early momentum

- Focus first on "low-hanging fruit"

- Over time, take on more complex issues that may yield more impactful results

# The "Partnership Starter Pack"

## STEP 4
## Be savvy and strategic in messaging and engagements

- Consider how your partner might view an issue and message accordingly

- Design engagements with your partner's interests and needs in mind

# The "Partnership Starter Pack"

## STEP 5
## Continue to engage and invest

- Establish ongoing communication with your partners across the aisle

- Discuss emerging issues and consider additional needed action

# Engaging People with Lived Expertise

Engaging authentically with children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness in school-community partnership planning and implementation

- Centers the voice of people most impacted by homelessness in addressing it

- Elevates the perspectives of people who have lived homelessness as a credible and authoritative source of information and recommendations

- Helps correct power imbalances that occur when people who have not experienced homelessness are the main decision makers for how it is addressed

# Engaging People with Lived Expertise

Considerations for engaging lived expertise in school-community partnership may include

- **Representation:** How is our partner network ensuring representation of children, youth, and families who have been involved with or served by system partners?

- **Elevation:** How are system partners elevating the voice of people with lived expertise in partnership work, including in planning and decision-making?

For more information, visit the California HETAC's Engaging People with Lived Experience webpage

# Possible Areas of Partnership Focus

## Areas of focus for school-community partner work may include

- Needs-sensing (particularly in early conversations)

- Identifying children, youth, and families

- Referring children, youth, and families to services across programs and partners

- Delivering coordinated and comprehensive services

- Staying informed about new legislation, opportunities, funding streams, etc.

- Engaging people with lived experience

- Addressing inequities across systems

- Maintaining a connected and active partner network
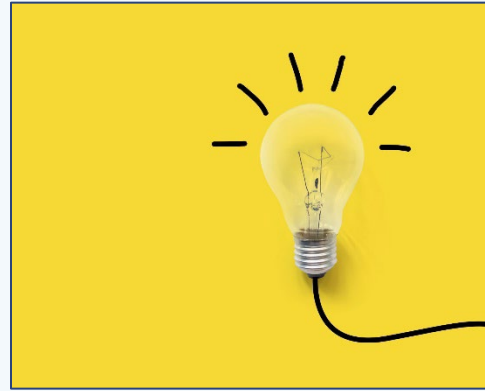
# San Diego Partnership Spotlight

# San Diego Youth Homelessness Consortium

**SDYHC**

The **San Diego Youth Homelessness Consortium (SDYHC)** is a collaborative entity made up of a variety of stakeholders, designed to increase the effectiveness of the service delivery system in San Diego County for youth experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

http://sdyhc.org/

SDYHC began in 2018 at a lunch!

- 50 member agencies

- Voice

Current structure

- Charter

- Member agreement

- Steering committee

- Work groups including data, youth voice, and the community plan

# Accomplishments: How it started

**Networking**

- Concerned stakeholders coming together and sharing information
- Recognizing an unmet need in the area, we started creating a formal structure

**Cooperation**

- Supported Runaway and Homeless Youth Month with combined events
- Provided one another with letters of support for grant applications
- Support for schools increased
  - During COVID, provided support for identifying and locating families

**Coordination**

- Emergency Solutions Grant
- Coordinated Community Plan
  - Steering committee and priorities in place

# Accomplishments: How Its Going

**Collaboration**

- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant joint applications

- Partnered on the Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness

- Provided youth engagement recommendations to the community

- Offered feedback to the Continuum of Care (CoC), City of San Diego, and County Board of Supervisors on the direction of funding awarded

  - Homeless Emergency Aid Program (HEAP); Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP); and YHDP

- Provided feedback to revise the youth scoring tool

- Partnered on the state of youth homelessness data project

Questions? Comments?

# Pause, Reflect, Discuss

What is **one key takeaway** from this presentation?

What is **one next step** you can take to develop stronger school-community partnerships in your area?

# New HETAC Partnerships Toolkit Tour

Let's take a look at the HETAC's new
School-Community Partnerships: A Toolkit for Working Together to Serve Children, Youth, and Families Experiencing Homelessness