

# The Hope Chest Virginia

A quarterly newsletter from Project-HOPE VA

August 2023

## Back to School Edition

### Upcoming Training Events

NAEHCY Conference “Let the Bright Spots Grow” – November 11 – 14, 2023 – New Orleans, LA

[Register Here](#)

Project HOPE-VA State Conference 2024 – Save the Date!

March 4-6, 2024, Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, VA

(Reminder – Using ARP-HCY Funding for state and national conferences is allowable!)

Charlie Check-Ins for Homeless Liaisons - Get the latest McKinney-Vento updates and have your questions answered during this check-in with the State Coordinator. New one-time registration now required for the 23-24 school year.

August 22, 2023 at 10:00 am

September 26, 2023 at 10:00 am

October 24, 2023 at 10:00 am

November 28, 2023 at 10:00 am

Regional McKinney-Vento Trainings - These trainings are free and open to all school staff and community partners. Liaisons - feel free to invite your supervisors, school counselors, school social workers, and anyone who works with McKinney-Vento (administrative assistants, case managers, or your backups), as well as local shelter/housing or other community partners. Mark your calendars for a MV 101 near you!

September 14, 2023 • Staunton, VA • 9:30 am - 3:30 pm • [Register Here](#)

September 27, 2023 • Williamsburg, VA • 9:30 am - 3:30 pm • [Register Here](#)

October 4, 2023 • Fairfax, VA • 9:30 am - 3:30 pm • [Register Here](#)

October 19, 2023 • Blacksburg, VA • 9:30 am - 3:30 pm • [Register Here](#)

Available any time - [Online McKinney-Vento: Beginner Course](#)

[Back-to-School Tips for Identification](#)

As the new school year begins, it is important to regularly review the methods used for identification in your division. In addition to including questions around temporary housing in your formal enrollment process, consider the following tips for identifying students experiencing homelessness:

### Develop a Training Calendar

McKinney-Vento liaisons are required to train all school staff on local procedures for identifying and supporting students experiencing homelessness. You can use this template to develop a training calendar for the whole school year to plan targeted training with various school staff audiences.

### Evaluate your Referral Process

Evaluate your division's referral process. How do YOU find out about students who may be experiencing homelessness at registration or at other points in the school year? Whether you use a Google Referral Form or a dedicated email address for receiving referrals, it is important to keep this process simple so that school staff can quickly connect the family and student to the liaison's office. Make sure to communicate this process regularly to all school staff.

## ARP-HCY Resources

### **Raising Classroom Awareness on Homelessness:**

Use your funds to purchase books for raising classroom awareness on homelessness.

Amazon.com- [Idea Lists by Project HOPE-VA](#)

### **SchoolHouse Connection Series:**

[Flexing the Flexibility of ARP-HCY Funding](#)

**SchoolHouse Connection ARP-HCY Office Hours** with presenters from U.S. Department of Education, September 12 @ 3 pm.

Click here to register.

Hope Hero: Sarah Schmidt

We had the pleasure of interviewing Assistant Superintendent and Homeless Liaison of Richmond County Public Schools, Sarah Schmidt. Sarah's passion for serving students experiencing homelessness is remarkable and the impact she continues to have on students in Richmond County is even more profound. In our conversation with Sarah, she emphasizes the importance of making a personal connection and building relationships with students and families. Click this link to view the interview. [Link](#).

**Spotlight: Manassas Park City Schools Family Market**

Kelly Brown, Supervisor of Student Services and Homeless Liaison in Manassas Park City Schools (MPCS) is tapping into an already impactful community event to further identify families in her division who may be in need of McKinney-Vento services. For the last nine years, MCPS has hosted a monthly family market at a designated school where families can grocery shop for free throughout the school year. A majority of food is donated by the Capital Food Bank. Sonia Carias, a Community Liaison in MPCS, coordinates with a contact from the CFB at the start of each school year and establishes a calendar for this monthly event. She uses headcounts from previous markets to determine the amount of food donations needed.

Sonia reaches out to local high school groups as well as the local fire department to recruit volunteers to help break down pallets and organize food donations. She also encourages school staff members to volunteer to help with distributing food to families during the market. Sonia emphasizes the importance of consistently marketing this event to the community. Two weeks prior to each market, Sonia posts the upcoming event on the division's social media outlets and website while also informing parents through PowerSchool. With between 240-270 families regularly attending, the family market is often paired with other events such as a vaccine clinic and a coat drive.

While the family market begins at 4 pm, families start to line up for the event as early as 3pm. As families wait, Sonia and other MPCS Family Liaisons are able to have personal conversations with each parent while they stand in line. This is an effective way to identify McKinney-Vento eligible students among these high-need families. "Personalization is so important in their conversations," Kelly emphasized. In the upcoming school year, Kelly plans to further train Family Liaisons around McKinney-Vento procedures for identification to better identify families who may be showing signs of homelessness.

## Underserved Populations: Spotlight on Pregnant and Parenting Teens

Parenting youth are 3x more likely to experience homelessness than their non-parenting peers.\*

We also know that infants and young children experiencing homelessness are more likely to experience cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral delays than young children who are housed. Further, the longer these children remain homeless, the more lasting the negative effects of these delays.\* To better address the needs of parenting youth and, as a result, the needs of their young children, consider the following recommendations from Voices of Youth Count\*\*:

Connect pregnant and parenting youth with prenatal and postpartum care in nontraditional settings.

Explore opportunities for family reunification, relationship building, and service engagement with pregnant or parenting youth.

Design programs that recognize the importance of the relationships pregnant and parenting youth have with partners and coparents.

Develop the capacity of both homeless youth service providers and homeless family service providers to serve all young parents who are homeless regardless of their gender, age, or marital status.

Assess the risk for homelessness among pregnant and parenting youth and refer high-risk youth for appropriate services when they are identified.

\*[www.schoolhouseconnection.org](http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org), “Early Childhood Homelessness: An Overview,” Feb. 2020.

\*\*<https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/pregnant-and-parenting-youth-experiencing-homelessness>