



Homeless Education Network (HEN) COVID-19 Resource List

COVID-19 General Resource Lists/Links

Access these for lists of services specifically geared toward helping folks through COVID-19 shutdowns; useful to review together with individuals/families experiencing homelessness:

- [Crowdsourced, comprehensive google doc compilation of resources](#); contains help for families, educators, income loss, job loss, mutual aid, food, housing, utilities, and much more.
- Mobile optimized (acts like an app), user-friendly website that maps free, easy-access goods/services in Allegheny County; has COVID-19 banner updates: www.bigburgh.com
- **Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS) is hosting a daily COVID-19 call for county service provider updates**; notes, presentations, and audio record of all previous meetings are also available. More info [here](#).
- You can also **dial 2-1-1 from any phone** to speak to a United Way representative who can help guide you to local resources you or another might need to access during the crisis

HCEF's COVID-19 Program Updates

Use these to stimulate your thinking about how your own organization/community can adapt to meet the changing needs of youth experiencing housing instability during COVID-19 changes:

- **Hope Through Learning Award** -- now accepting applications for \$2,500 scholarships available to any McKinney-Vento (at any point in their schooling, K-12) students in Allegheny County attending a post-secondary education program for the first time. More info and application form [here](#).
- [Non-digital education packets distributed to afterschool students living in shelters](#). Similar support could be provided with meals at Grab 'n Go sites as resources allow.
- **Teen Outreach Program** – Still providing virtual college/career prep, basic needs assistance, and regular check-ins to McKinney-Vento students in select high schools (UPrep, Westinghouse, Brashear, Steel Valley, Woodland Hills). Beginning to connect student with virtual tutors as able. Email cmcaneny@homelessfund.org for questions or call/text at 412-719-5630.

HEN Recommendations/Best Practices for Educating under COVID-19

Some (hopefully) helpful tips on how to best assist unstably housed students during COVID-19:

- Consult [this checklist](#) for education and childcare providers. Consider signing up for further updates from national student homelessness experts, SchoolHouse Connection [here](#).
- **Keep in constant contact**: Every student's situation will be different, and needs change quickly for students/families in unstable situations. Make sure that you are reaching out often and staying as up to date as possible on student needs.
- **Consider communication access/preference**: some students/parents will respond best to email, others to text, phone calls, google voice, Zoom, Facebook message, etc. Be flexible and creative in outreach.



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- **Utilize existing contact points, like Grab 'n Go sites:** Schools may be able to distribute more than just meals for free/reduced lunch students; print education materials, books, toiletries/hygiene products, or other physical supplies might be offered simultaneously to avoid creating new contacts that increase infection risk. **Personnel working at Grab 'n Go sites also offer a point of communication.** Keep in contact with them about what they hear from families. Consider asking them to act as informal needs assessors.
- **Foreground information/resources for unstably housed students in mass/public communications:** (Some) people can be hesitant to request what isn't highlighted. **Information about domestic violence and family support services is particularly critical,** as people are more vulnerable to trafficking during crisis times.
- **Transportation is still an issue:** Families may have difficulty making it to Grab 'n Go (or other) sites regularly; offering multiple meals they can prepare at home can ease the transportation burden.
- **Internet limitations:** Many students will struggle with online learning resources due to lack of access, but some may be able to use hotspots that are still available in school or library parking lots, without breaking social distancing. If able, **provide devices** for students who need them – some schools are beginning to refurbish old devices and offer them as needed. **If Comcast denies someone free service due to existing debts/unpaid bills, they may waive these requirements if you ask your state legislator's office to connect to the Comcast government affairs person.**
- **Parents need help:** While school is out, parents will be largely responsible for any education maintenance/progress for their students. They need proactive resources and training to set them and their children up for success. Encourage reading, provide education packets (above), etc. **Please reach out if you have successful parent training/engagement strategies that we can share with everyone!**