

# THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN RUNAWAY & PREVENTION RESPONSE

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22ND**  
**12:30PM EST/11:30AM CST**



[www.schoolhouseconnection.org](http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org) | [@SchoolHouseConn](https://twitter.com/SchoolHouseConn)

# About SchoolHouse Connection

SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education. We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

## Your SchoolHouse Connection Team



Erin



Jillian



Leconte



Alleanne



Patricia



Barbara



Jordyn



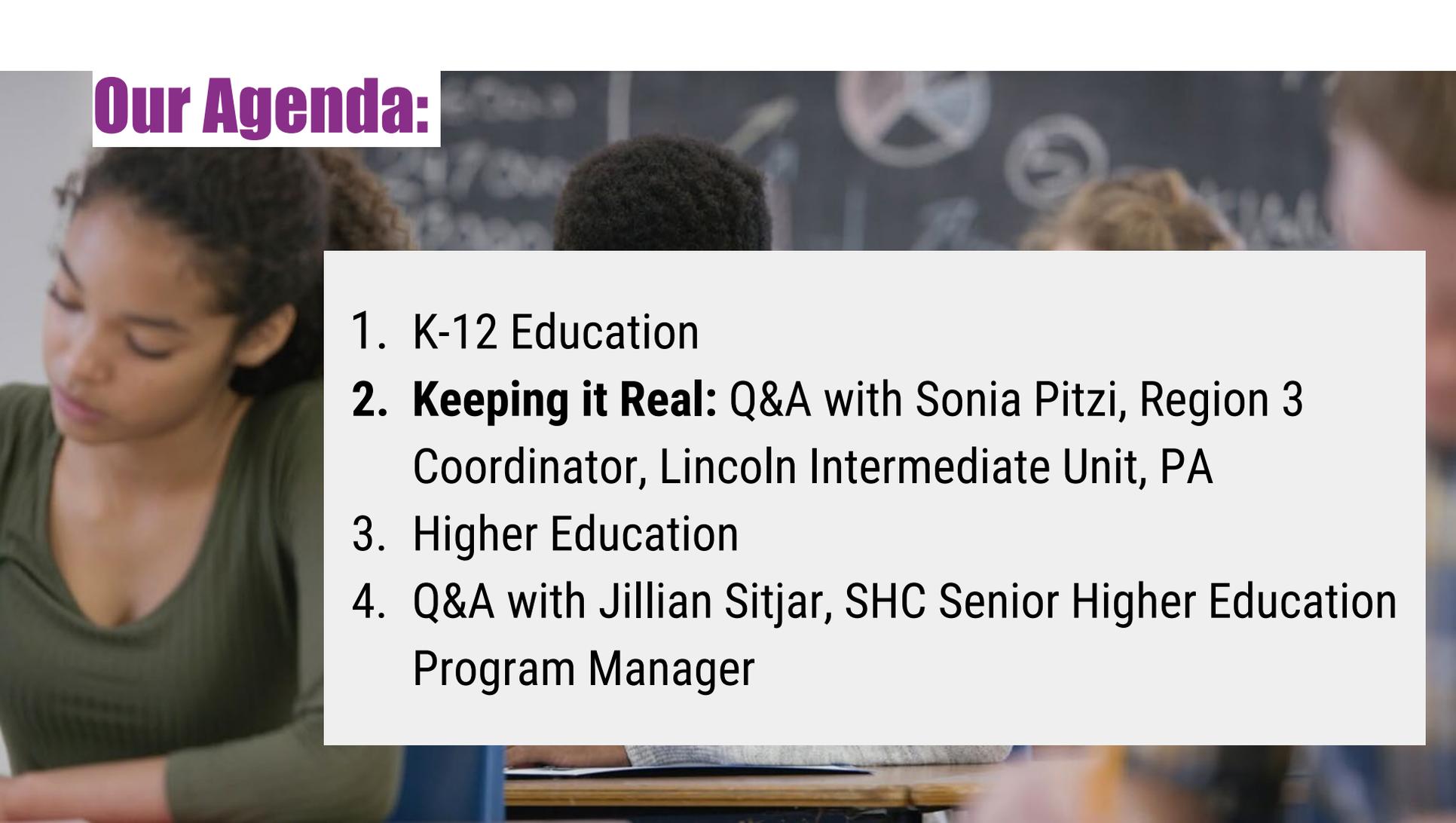
## [Website](#)

Federal and state policy advocacy

Q&A from our inbox

Webinars and implementation tools

Youth leadership and scholarship

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a classroom. In the foreground, a young woman with dark curly hair is looking down, possibly at a book or paper. Behind her, other students are visible, and in the background, a chalkboard is filled with faint, illegible writing and diagrams. The overall scene suggests an educational setting.

## Our Agenda:

1. K-12 Education
2. **Keeping it Real:** Q&A with Sonia Pitzi, Region 3 Coordinator, Lincoln Intermediate Unit, PA
3. Higher Education
4. Q&A with Jillian Sitjar, SHC Senior Higher Education Program Manager

# Homelessness and Education

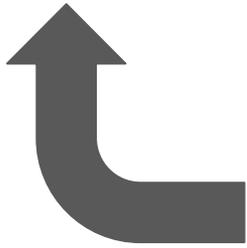
## Homelessness causes:

- Chronic health problems
- Trauma
- Mobility

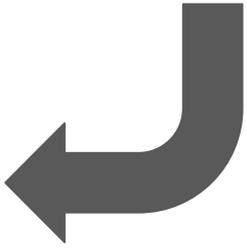


## Leading to:

- High rates of chronic absenteeism
- Double the rates of punitive discipline
- Lower graduation rates



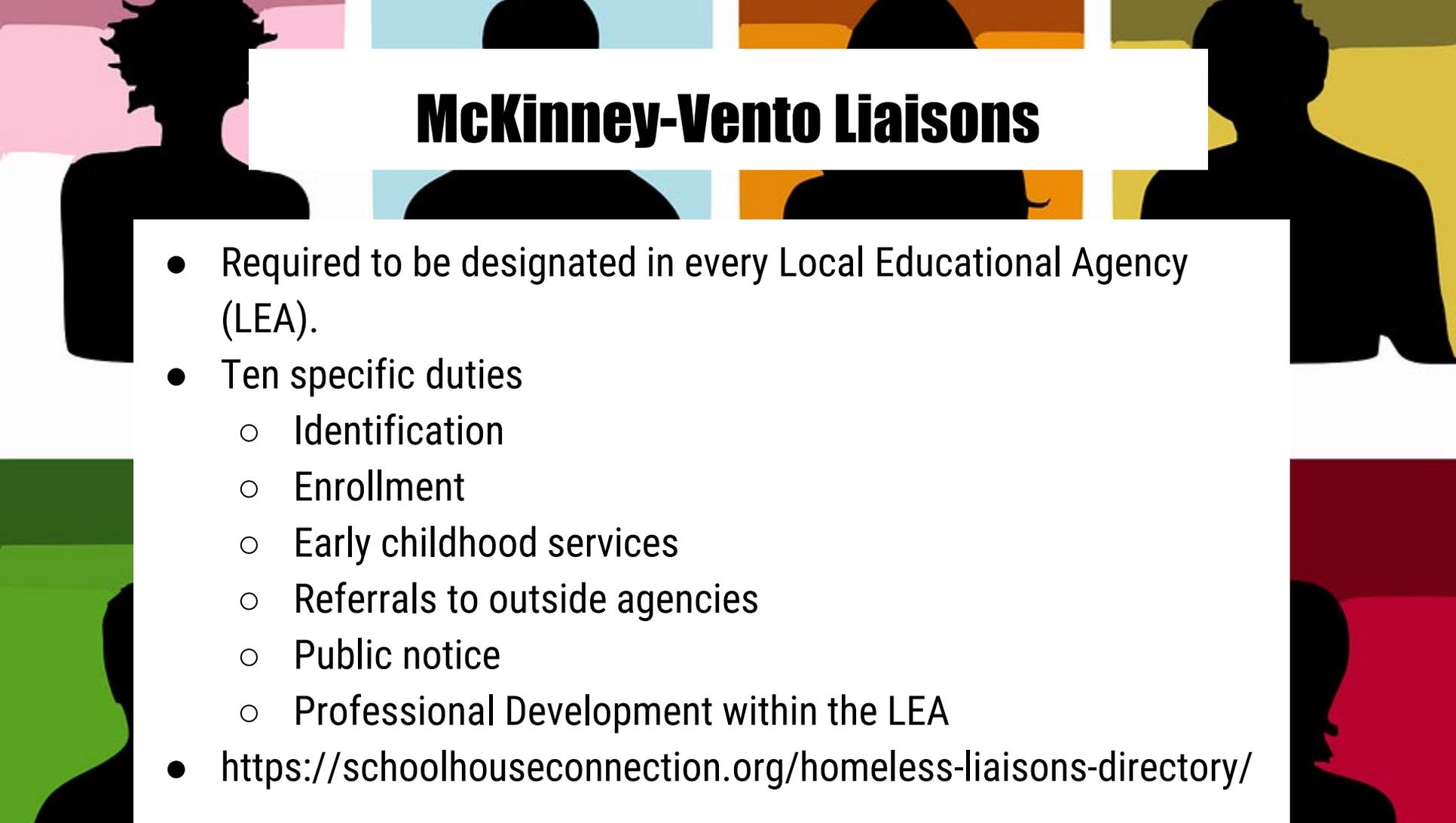
And the **lack of a high school degree** is the Greatest single risk factor for young adult homelessness. |



# Education and Homelessness

- McKinney-Vento Act
- Passed in 1987; last updated in 2015 as part of Every Student Succeeds Act

**Goal:** Ensure identification, enrollment, and success in school, including preschool, for children and youth experiencing homelessness

The background of the slide features several black silhouettes of people's heads and shoulders, set against a grid of colorful rectangular blocks in shades of pink, light blue, orange, yellow, green, and red. The silhouettes are positioned around the central text area, with some appearing to be in profile and others facing forward.

# McKinney-Vento Liaisons

- Required to be designated in every Local Educational Agency (LEA).
- Ten specific duties
  - Identification
  - Enrollment
  - Early childhood services
  - Referrals to outside agencies
  - Public notice
  - Professional Development within the LEA
- <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/homeless-liaisons-directory/>

# Q&A with Sonia Pitz, Region 3 Coordinator, Lincoln Intermediate Unit, PA - Part 1

- Tell us a little bit about your role, and the liaisons in the school districts in your region.
- What does runaway and homelessness look like in your area right now?
- How schools can help prevent runaway and homeless episodes? What are some of effective prevention measures you implement or have seen implemented?
- How can schools respond to runaway and homelessness? What are some of the most effective strategies you've seen and done?
- What advice do you have for community-based service providers who wish to improve their partnerships with schools?

# American Rescue Plan

## Homeless Children and Youth ARP HCY Funding

Appropriation specifically for children and youth experiencing homelessness = **\$800 Million**

ED retaining \$1 million = **\$1 Million**

Rest has gone out to states and DC in two batches

**\$199,750,000**  
In the spring (“ARP Homeless I”)

**\$599,250,000**  
In the summer (“ARP Homeless II”)



## HOW TO USE ARP FUNDS TO IDENTIFY AND SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



<https://schoolhouseconnection.org/how-to-use-arp-funds/>

# What? LEA Allowable Uses for ARP-HCY

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1. Any expenses that are reasonable and necessary to facilitate the **identification, enrollment, retention, and educational success** of children and youth experiencing homelessness
2. [Any purposes permitted by the EHCY program](#)
3. Connect students and families to enrichment programs
4. Provide wraparound services (academic supports, trauma-informed care, social-emotional support, and mental health services)
5. Purchase needed supplies (e.g., PPE, eyeglasses, school supplies, personal care items)

## LEA Allowable Uses for ARP-HCY per ED (cont.)

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6. Provide **transportation** to enable children and youth to attend classes and participate fully in school activities
7. Purchase cell phones or other technological devices to enable students to attend and fully participate in school activities
8. Pay for short-term, temporary housing (e.g., a few days in a motel) when the only reasonable option for COVID-safe temporary housing and necessary to enable students to attend school and participate fully in school activities
9. Provide store cards/prepaid debit cards to purchase materials necessary for students to participate in school activities
10. **Increase liaison and McKinney-Vento program capacity**

# Community Partnerships

- Both SEAs and LEAs are encouraged to “award contracts to community-based organizations that are well-positioned to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness in historically underserved populations such as:
  - rural children and youth,
  - Tribal children and youth,
  - students of color,
  - children and youth with disabilities,
  - English learners,
  - LGBTQ+ youth, and
  - pregnant, parenting, or caregiving students, and
- connect them to educationally-related support and wraparound services”



# **Q&A with Sonia Pitz, Region 3 Coordinator, Lincoln Intermediate Unit, PA - Part 2**

- Tell us some of the plans and uses for ARP HCY in your area, especially as they relate to runaway and homeless youth.

# Higher Education & FAFSA: Why it Matters for Homeless and Foster Youth

- Some form of postsecondary education is necessary for jobs that pay enough to lift out of poverty and afford housing.
- Higher education is also associated with better health and other indicators of well-being.
- The equity gaps laid bare by COVID-19 will only worsen if we are not intentional and proactive about helping marginalized and vulnerable young people successfully make the transition to and through higher education.
- Homeless and foster youth need financial aid to pursue higher education, but they face many unique barriers in completing the FAFSA.

## QUICK REVIEW:

# Higher Education Act & Homelessness

**Unaccompanied homeless youth under age 24** are considered independent students.

Youth who are **unaccompanied, at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting** are considered independent students.

**At risk of homelessness:**  
“When a student’s housing may cease to be fixed, regular, and adequate, for example, a student who is being evicted and has been unable to find fixed, regular, and adequate housing.” AVG-117

# HIGHER EDUCATION ACT:

## Who Can Make a Determination of UHY Status

School district  
liaisons

U.S. Department of  
Housing and Urban  
Development (HUD)  
Shelter Director or  
Designee

Runaway and  
Homeless Youth  
(RHYA) Shelter  
Director or Designee

Financial Aid  
Administrator

# Download the Sample Letters



<https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/financial-aid-for-unaccompanied-homeless-youth/>

# **Q&A with Jillian Sitjar, Senior Higher Education Program Manager, SchoolHouse Connection**

- What are some of most common FAFSA challenges that come to you from youth, and from service providers?
- What are some of the most important strategies for removing FAFSA barriers?
- Can you describe some of SHC's most popular FAFSA resources for youth and for providers?

# Resources



- [SchoolHouse Connection FAFSA Page](#)
  - Comprehensive homelessness and financial aid resources including sample verification forms, tip sheets, and more.
  - [Making Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determinations: A Tool for Financial Aid Administrators](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection Higher Education Page](#)
- Jillian - [jillian@schoolhouseconnection.org](mailto:jillian@schoolhouseconnection.org)



EDUCATION  
LEADS HOME

# EDUCATION LEADS HOME 2022

A NATIONAL CONVENING ON  
STUDENT HOMELESSNESS

MARCH 7-8, 2022 | AUSTIN, TEXAS

[WWW.SCHOOLHOUSECONNECTION.ORG/ELH2022](http://WWW.SCHOOLHOUSECONNECTION.ORG/ELH2022)

# Thank you!

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