



Federal Policy Update on Child and Youth Homelessness

March 26, 2025

General Housekeeping



This webinar will last one hour



Please type questions into the Q&A box



Session is being recorded



Certificate issued for attendance



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About

About SchoolHouse Connection



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

Learn more:

schoolhouseconnection.org

Join our Newsletter:

<https://bit.ly/4brxboR>

About National Network for Youth

NN4Y is on a mission to transform systems so that no young person in America experiences homelessness.



NN4Y works with youth who have experienced homelessness and youth service providers from across the country to prevent and end youth, young adult, and young parent family homelessness and human trafficking. Together, we envision a future in which all young people have a safe place to call home, with endless opportunities to achieve their fullest potential.

WEBSITE: <https://nn4youth.org>

NEWSLETTER SIGN UP: <https://nn4youth.org/subscribe/>

Webinar Agenda

1. Share the latest information on:
 - Executive Orders
 - Executive Actions
 - Congressional Actions
2. Share effective actions to inform and influence policy in this volatile environment

Executive Orders and Executive Actions

Checks and Balances of Executive Orders



EXECUTIVE

EXECUTIVE ORDER: AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT DECLARING GOVERNMENT POLICY

- The purpose of an executive order is to provide instructions to government agencies and departments on how to implement and enforce legislation
- In recent years, executive orders have been used more broadly to guide agencies and departments on how to operate within specific policy areas

OTHER GOVERNMENT BRANCHES PROVIDES CHECKS



JUDICIARY

- Courts can declare an executive order unconstitutional if it exceeds the executive authority granted by law
- Judges may also suspend the enforcement of an executive order until a final ruling is issued



CONGRESS

- Congress can pass legislation to revoke or modify powers previously granted to a president
- If the president vetoes such legislation, Congress can override the veto with 2/3 majority vote in both chambers

Executive Order on Dismantling the U.S. Department of Education

[See SHC's FAQ on the
Executive Order](#)

Executive Order signed on March 20, 2025 directs the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to “take all necessary steps, to the maximum extent appropriate and permitted by law, to facilitate the agency’s closure and return authority over education to the States and local communities while ensuring the effective and uninterrupted delivery of services, programs, and benefits on which Americans rely.

“To the maximum extent appropriate and permitted by law”

- Executive orders do not and can not supersede or change federal laws - i.e. McKinney-Vento and many other education protections remain in place.
- Only Congress can eliminate ED entirely (60 votes are needed in U.S. Senate)

What are ED's Legal Responsibilities for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth?

Section 724 of the McKinney-Vento Act

specifies ED's core legal responsibilities for homeless children and youth.

- Reviewing state plans and administering grants to state educational agencies (SEAs then administer grants to local educational agencies)
- Providing support and technical assistance to SEAs upon request and where documented barriers persist
- Conducting evaluation, dissemination, and technical assistance activities
- Collecting and disseminating data
- Publishing guidelines and a report to Congress

**“... return
authority for
education to
states and to
local
communities..
”**

- The federal government cannot and does not dictate curricula and other core education functions.
- Prior to federal law (McKinney-Vento Act), homeless students often could not enroll in school because of state and local enrollment requirements, lack of transportation, or identification by liaisons.
- Only a few states have comprehensive independent McKinney-Vento-like protections in state code (IL, NY); others simply reference McKinney-Vento; only a few states provided any dedicated funding for homeless students (CO, ME, WA).

“...while ensuring the effective and uninterrupted delivery of services, programs, and benefits on which Americans rely...”

- On March 11, ED fired 1,300 employees, one-third of its workforce; together with early retirements, half of ED's staff is gone.
- Most fired staff were in the Office of Civil Rights, Federal Student Aid, and the Office of General Counsel
 - 42 FSA workers (out of 570 who were fired/retired) have since been reinstated.
- The Institute for Educational Sciences, including the National Center for Education Statistics' staff and data contracts, were almost totally eliminated.

Some very good news

At the current time:

- Federal homeless education program staff were retained at ED (i.e. have not been fired).
- The national homeless education technical assistance center (National Center for Homeless Education) contract is in place (i.e. has not been cancelled)

What's Happened Since the Executive Order to Dismantle ED was Signed?

Two lawsuits have been filed: a [lawsuit](#) by Education Law Center and [another lawsuit](#) by Democracy Forward.

The President announced that special education and school nutrition programs will move to the Dept. of Health and Human Services, and that student loans will move to the Small Business Administration (SBA).

- SBA announced a 40% reduction in staff the same day.
- These moves are likely to be litigated as well.

Executive Order to Dismantle ED: What Happens Next?

- [H.R. 899](#) would terminate the U.S. Department of Education. It is a straightforward repeal of the Department in its entirety, meaning all its functions would no longer be permitted.
- A [Senate bill from last year](#) repeals McKinney-Vento, Title I Part A, and other federal programs; moves some ED programs to other agencies; and creates block grants.
- Last week, Senator Cassidy (R-LA), Chair of the Senate HELP Committee, [stated that he will submit legislation](#) to enact the President's Executive Order.

Action Needed

Please use [our email template](#) to urge your Members of Congress to oppose any legislation that would repeal or defund the McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program or the Title I Part A program, and that would eliminate ED.

But we'll need more than emails - virtual meetings, site visits, and media will help us cut through the noise (stay tuned for more later in the presentation).

Related: State block grant waiver requests

- At least three governors (IA, FL, TN) want to consolidate elementary and secondary education (ESEA) programs into a block grant. IA has requested a waiver from ED to do this.
- Limited waiver authority exists for some ESEA programs, but the McKinney-Vento Act's EHCY program is not part of ESEA, and cannot be waived or block granted. See [ESEA Waivers 101](#).
- When services for homeless students are allowed, but not required, most states/LEAs do not target funds to homeless students (we saw this with the CARES Act in the pandemic).

**Despite the chaos,
federal early care
and education
protections and
funding are still in
place.**

These guardrails for children and youth are only as good as the people willing to stand behind them, implement them, and ultimately fight for them.

Federal Policies Still in Place

- The McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) subtitle
- Title I Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Act.
 - LEA requirements to reserve funds for homeless students
 - Educational access and stability for children and youth in foster care
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
- Plyler vs. Doe
- Head Start Act
- Child Care and Development Block Grant
- Higher Education Act (FAFSA, TRIO, GEAR UP)

Helpful Resources

Federal Protections



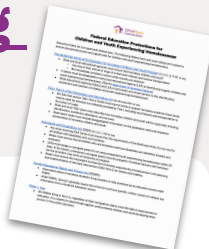
What it does :

Summarizes the core education protections for K12 students experiencing homelessness

Who it is for :

State and local educational agencies, community partners, advocates

Protecting EHCY



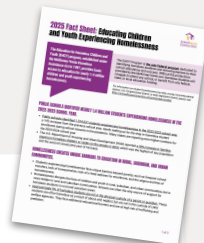
What it does :

Explains the EHCY program for policymakers across the political spectrum

Who it is for :

Legislators, legislative staff, local elected officials and policymakers

2025 EHCY Facts



What it does :

Provides the latest data on student homelessness, basic EHCY information.
Downloadable/editable.

Who it is for :

Broader education as well as policymakers

Executive Order: Dismantling USICH

- EO issued earlier this month to **dismantle USICH** and six other federal agencies "to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law."
- **USICH Exists in Federal Law:** Established by Congress in 1987 under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, USICH is codified in 42 U.S. Code Subchapter II, making full elimination without legislative action legally challenging.

Other Executive Actions: Agency Staff Changes

- All agencies are going through the process of downsizing and/or restructuring—some have already started.
- All agency staff have been directed to cease or highly limit external communication unless the content has been approved by a political appointee.
- Since most agencies are still in the process of appointing politicals, **expect continued delays in communication from agency staff.**

Impact at Agencies: Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- \$65 million in HUD Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) contracts have been terminated.
- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHPD)
 - FY2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was pulled from HUD's website—the agency is rewriting and will repost.
- Youth Homelessness System Improvement grants (YHSI)
 - Most YHSI grantees have signed contracts with obligated funds. HUD personnel will contact YHSI grantees if any contracts or budgets need to be modified.
 - Some YHSI TTA providers still have contracts and TTA has been restructured to virtual cohorts.
- **Continue to follow the requirements of your current contract, unless you are told otherwise by HUD staff.**

Impact at Agencies: Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- FY24 CoC contracts have not yet been signed and funds have not been obligated--March 4 was statutory deadline.
- On March 14, 2025:
 - HUD released a new contract;
 - A court issued a nationwide injunction (hold on implementation) for three parts of the DEI EO; and
 - HUD rescinded the contracts, saying they are working to revise the grant agreements to be consistent with federal law and applicable court orders.
- HUD needs to release updated contracts.
- If your contract is overdue, keep track of impact. Members of Congress want to know:
 - How much money is overdue.
 - How many people have been affected.
 - Specific impact stories.

Impact at Agencies: Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- On March 24, HUD and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) signed a [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) entitled “American Housing Programs for American Citizens.”
- HUD and DHS will begin to coordinate efforts and develop measures to ensure that only “American citizens” are housed by HUD-funded programs.
- This just happened, so we don’t know:
 - How eligibility will be determined if individuals don’t have access to vital documents, including ID, birth certificates, or social security cards.
 - How mixed-status families will be impacted.
 - How non-citizens with protected statuses will be impacted.

Impact at Agencies: Health and Human Services (HHS)

- FY 2025 RHYA NOFO: We heard the Administration on Children and Families (ACF) at HHS is working on the NOFO. It should be released this summer.
- March 24, 2025: ACF [sent a letter to state administrators](#) of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, reminding them it is prohibited to provide benefits to “illegal aliens.” This action is in line with the EO “Ending Taxpayer Subsidizations of Open Borders.”

Impact at Agencies: HHS - Head Start

March 21, 2025: ACF [sent a letter to Head Start program recipients](#), stated that Head Start funds cannot be used for any training or technical assistance or other program expenditures that promote or take part in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

- **Reminder: the Head Start Act and regulations require Head Start programs to identify children who meet the education definition of homeless, and prioritize them for enrollment. The Office of Head Start is required to provide technical assistance on homelessness.**
- SHC Resource: [Head Start Performance Standards and Homelessness](#)

Additional Executive Orders

Executive Orders **do not supersede federal laws**, and cannot change federal laws or court rulings.

- EducationCounsel maintains [an updated EO tracker and summary](#) with a particular focus on actions related to early care and education, as well as immigration/government.
- Many Executive Orders have had temporary injunctions placed on them (a temporary hold on implementing the EO).
 - [Resource](#) to keep track of which EOs are temporarily enjoined.

Executive Orders Keep In Mind

- Despite uncertainty, unless a federal agency staffer tell you directly to halt or change something about your work, you should continue your work, to the best of your ability, improving systems and serving youth experiencing homelessness.
 - See [NN4Y's EO guide for youth providers.](#)
- Be aware of which EOs might affect your program, but also be aware of which EOs have been temporarily enjoined.
- If you have legal questions or need legal support, reach out to kmeyerscott@homelesslaw.org

Congressional Action

FY 2025 Budget (2025-2026 School Year)

- Congress passed and President Trump signed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government funded until the end of the fiscal year (September 30, 2025).
- The CR maintains funding for most federal programs at their current levels, but leaves discretion for the Administration to make changes to some federal programs.
- Congressional appropriations leaders' expectation is that most programs will remain at FY 2024 levels.
- Now that the FY 2025 budget process is finalized, Congress will immediately turn their attention to FY 2026

Two Separate Budget Processes: FY2026 and Budget Reconciliation

Two processes are happening at the same time:

1. FY 2026 Appropriations: annual discretionary funding for programs (EHCY, RHYA, housing, Head Start, etc.). 2026-2027 school year.
 2. Budget reconciliation: mandatory spending on entitlements programs like SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, student loans, etc., as well as taxes.
- Congress **must** pass a FY2026 budget by September 30, 2025, in order to keep federal funding flowing.
 - The Republican-controlled Congress **wants** to pass a budget reconciliation now that they are in control of both chambers.

FY2026 Budget Next Steps

President's Budget To Be Released

- This is usual kickoff to the annual funding process. Expected in May.
- This is a framework of the current Administration's priorities; no Congress has ever adopted a President's budget in whole
- Given the Executive Order to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, expect to see recommendations for steep cuts, realignment, and other impacts to the education portion of the President's budget proposal.

Committee Action: House Appropriations Committee Chair, Rep. Tom Cole has stated that he plans to usher all 12 appropriations bills through Committee by the end of April, which is an ambitious goal.

Reconciliation is the top focus of Congressional Republicans, which will likely impact the timeline of work on FY2026.

FY2026 Budget: Opportunity for Bipartisan Support for Homeless Programs

A bipartisan “Dear Colleague” letter is now circulating in the House of Representatives, calling for:

- \$200 million in funding for the McKinney-Vento Act’s Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program, and
- \$304 million for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) programs

The House letter is authored by Congressman Danny K. Davis (D-IL), Congressman Don Bacon (R-NE), and Congressman Jimmy Panetta (D-CA).

Congressional Action

FY2026 Budget: Take Action

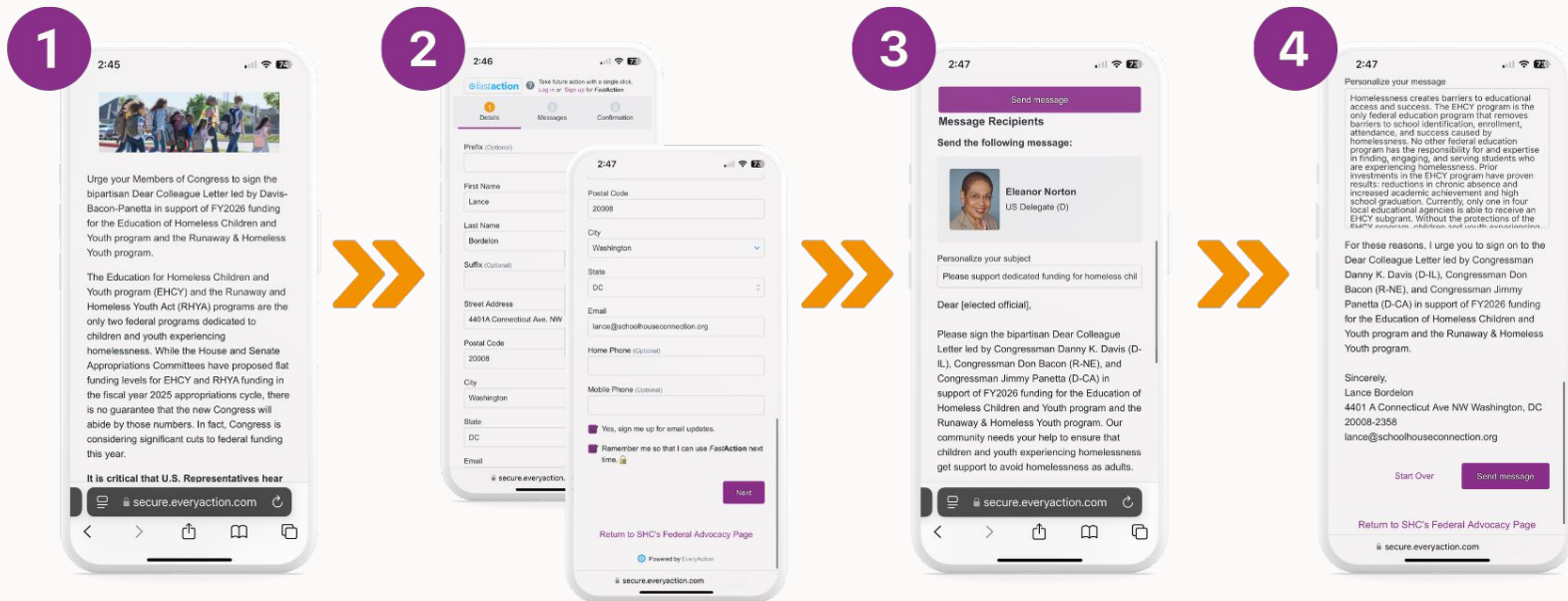
**This year, more than ever,
we need a strong showing of support.**

The more Representatives who sign on to this bipartisan letter, the greater the show of support for enacting higher funding levels in the FY 2026 budget.

Please ask your U.S. Representative to sign on to the letter. Please personalize your message, and offer to provide a copy of the letter and more information on the numbers and needs in your community or state.

- **Talking Points About EHCY**
- **Talking Points About RHYA**

Taking Action Takes Only Two Minutes



Tap
this link
or scan
the code



Enter your
contact info

You'll see your
legislator(s) with a
message from SHC
already ready!

But don't forget to
make it personal.
Tailor your message
for greater impact.

Budget Reconciliation

What It Is:

- Budget reconciliation is used to pass budget-related laws. This makes it easier for the party in power to change government spending and tax policies without needing support from the other party.
- Provisions must have a direct impact on the federal budget over a 10 year period.
- **Under discussion:** Increased spending for border/immigration and defense; tax cuts for certain populations.
Offset by: Cutting Medicaid, SNAP, and student loan repayment programs.
 - See [list of potential \\$5 trillion cuts](#) from House Budget Committee.

Budget Reconciliation

Current Status:

- The House and Senate have two different blueprints (*budget resolutions*) for budget reconciliation.
- The House and Senate must agree to the same blueprint before reconciliation can move forward.
- There will likely be a lot of time before the House and Senate can agree on and pass a final reconciliation bill, meaning **there is still time to advocate against the cuts.**

Budget Reconciliation

Why It Matters:

- Large tax cuts—a primary goal of this reconciliation—means less federal revenue. Less federal revenue could mean cuts to federal entitlement programs like SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, student loans.
- There is already too little funding for these programs—further cuts could seriously impact children, youth, and families across the country.

Expected Timeline for Budget-Related Action

March

- EHCY/RHYA FY 2026 letter is circulated - ACT NOW

April

- President's Budget Released
- Budget reconciliation votes in the House and Senate
- Appropriations Committee Hearings on FY 2026

May

- Further votes on reconciliation
- Continuing to work on FY 2026

SHC and NN4Y Trackers

Why It Matters:

- [SHC's Live Tracking of Major Actions](#)
- [SHC Federal Policy Page](#)
- [Read NN4Y's latest blog posts](#)
- [Sign up for NN4Y's Newsletter to stay up-to-date](#)

Effective Strategies

What Can You Do?

- These battles will not be won or lost in Washington DC – now more than ever, local impact data, stories, voices, and engagement are needed.
- But given the intense level of agitation across all issue areas, we need to find ways to:
 - Cut through the noise
 - Engage as strategically as possible

A Note on Advocacy

- You don't need to be a policy wonk or understand the finer points of the legislative process to engage policymakers and their staff.
- Speak to what you do, speak to what you know, speak to what is on your mind and in your heart.
- Above all, speak in whatever way you can, because silence right now is the greatest threat to children, youth, and families.

What Members of Congress Need to Know

- How many children and youth experience homelessness in your community/state, or have been identified? (See [data profiles](#))
- What does your program or agency do to assist them?
- If you get federal funding, how do you use it?
- What are some of the positive outcomes that you've seen - i.e. what is the impact of the funds?
- What would be the impact of funding cuts, or other policy changes (like repealing McKinney-Vento)?
- Why does it matter? (link to trafficking, drop out rates, unemployment, future homelessness)

In-District Advocacy

In-district advocacy is engaging with your U.S. Representatives and their staff when they are in their home districts and states rather than in DC. Constituents can provide real-world context to policy issues, making them more tangible for lawmakers and increasing the likelihood of meaningful action.

- ★ **Meet with legislators and their staff at their local offices.**
 - Helps to build personal relationships with legislators and their staff.
 - More likely to get face time with legislators.
- ★ **Host a site visit to show the impact of your programs and services.**
 - Seeing programs in action can be much more impactful than statistics or talking points alone.
 - Legislators and their staff can meet with more of your young people and staff.

In-District Advocacy: Upcoming Congressional Recesses

★ **U.S. Senators and U.S. House of Representatives will be back in their home states/districts the following weeks:**

- April 14th and 21st
- August 4th through the 29th
- May 26th
- September 22nd
- June 20th
- November 10th

★ **Now is the time to reach out to your Representatives to invite them to visit your program/school or schedule an in-person meeting.**

★ **Identify your legislators: nn4youth.org/legislator-lookup**

Relationship Mapping

- Members of Congress are people. They listen to spouses, children, friends, and colleagues.
- What are their stated priorities and concerns? How do those impact or connect to youth homelessness?
 - Mental health
 - Child welfare
 - Education
 - Trafficking
 - Economy
- Do you know someone who knows someone in their circle?
 - Church
 - School
 - Boards
 - State/local officials
 - Golf... etc.

Examples

My City Council member knows the Senator personally.

My board member used to work for the Representative.

The Senator's wife used to volunteer at our program.

The Power of Local News

- Members of Congress follow local news very closely
- If homelessness appears in local news, forward the article to Congressional staff with your spin on the issue and offer to meet
- Invite local media to cover your program or data. If you aren't allowed to contact press or don't feel comfortable doing so, ask a local partner to do the outreach
- Local op-eds and editorials can be impactful - and we can help you craft one!

Educating Through Meetings

- Developing relationships with Congressional staff through meetings is key - even if only to provide local/state information
- SHC can help:
 - Identify find the right staff person
 - Set up meetings for you
 - Prepare you with talking points and information
 - Accompany you and/or facilitate virtual meetings
 - Help your organize an on-site visit with your community partners and representatives and/or their staff

Contact TJ Lucas: tj@schoolhouseconnection.org

Electronic Letters

- Online/electronic letters are not a substitute for direct meetings.
- However, generating large numbers of electronic letters can be helpful in drawing attention to an issue.
- Always customizable/personalize email templates to show local or state impact, if you can.

Phone Calls

- Urgent crises: for example, the funding freeze.
- When a vote is imminent, or occurring.
- Always share your address so they know you are a constituent.

Questions or Discussion

Upcoming Webinars



Navigating Financial Aid for Refugees and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Understanding Key Differences

March 26 • 2 pm Eastern

1PM Central • 12PM Mountain • 11AM Pacific



Making the Most of the Title I, Part A Homeless Set Aside

April 22 • 2 pm Eastern

1PM Central • 12PM Mountain • 11AM Pacific



Register



Register



Save the Date: Upcoming Webinars

NN4Y Members
Policy Coffee Chat

April 9 @ 1 PM ET

NN4Y Members
**Executive Support
Session: Navigating
Anti-DEI and
Anti-LGBTQ+
Policies**

April 23 @ 2 PM ET

**Affordable Housing
Strategies for Young
People**

May 7 @ 1 PM ET

I AM HERE: Vital Document Legal Hotline for Youth

Launching in May!

**The hotline will provide resources
and assistance in obtaining:**

- State ID cards and licenses
- Birth certificates
- Social Security Cards
- Documents needed to obtain an ID/license

**Baker
McKenzie.**

NATIONAL NETWORK
 for **YOUTH**

Join us in making an impact.



NATIONAL NETWORK
 *for* **YOUTH**
collaborate • advocate • transform

Join the National Network to End Youth Homelessness

Strengthen Your Services
Expand Your Impact
Shape Policy
Share Power

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Member Today!**



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Email:

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- Important legislative updates
- Useful resources, including tips, tools, and guides
- Webinar announcements
- News related to education and homelessness



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