



Five Best Practices for Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs offer a beacon of hope and opportunity for all students, including those experiencing homelessness. Yet, the unique challenges these students face – housing instability, food insecurity, and emotional stress – can create significant barriers to their success in CTE. By implementing effective support systems, we can empower students experiencing homelessness to thrive in CTE and build a brighter future.

Here are five best practices to guide you in supporting students experiencing homelessness in your CTE programs:

- 1. Remove Enrollment Barriers:** Embrace open access. Eliminate unnecessary paperwork and fees, ensuring immediate enrollment as the [McKinney-Vento Act](#) requires. Allow flexible entry points, even after deadlines, and develop alternative entrance requirements like work experience or portfolio assessments.
- 2. Bridge the Resource Gap:** Go beyond the curriculum. Ensure students can access technology, transportation, and other essential resources for success. Offer flexible work schedules and attendance policies to accommodate employment needs. Connect them with community resources and support services like housing assistance and mental health counseling.
- 3. Foster a Welcoming Environment:** Build a culture of empathy and understanding. Train faculty and staff on the challenges faced by students experiencing homelessness. Advocate for their needs within the school community and provide opportunities for peer support and mentorship.
- 4. Collaborate and Connect:** Partner with community organizations, shelters, and transition programs. Share resources and expertise to create a seamless support system for students. Work with school counselors and teachers to promote early awareness of CTE programs and develop strategies for smooth transitions into CTE.
- 5. Embrace Continuous Improvement:** Regularly evaluate your practices and adapt them to meet evolving needs. Gather feedback from students, families, and community partners. Stay updated on best practices and resources and commit to ongoing learning and improvement.

Supporting students experiencing homelessness in CTE programs is an investment in their future. By implementing these best practices, you can empower them to overcome challenges, unlock their potential, and earn the skills and qualifications needed to build a stable and fulfilling future. By collaborating with community partners, mobilizing resources, and creating a truly inclusive learning environment, you can ensure that "Your Career and Technical Education program becomes a source of inspiration and stability, guiding every student toward success.

Resources: [Missed Opportunities: Education Among Youth Experiencing Homelessness in America](#) • [Making Good on the Promise: Improving Equity In and Access To CTE Programs for Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)