



LAUSD
UNIFIED

NATIONAL HOMELESS YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH

*TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOL STAFF &
COMMUNITY PARTNERS*



NOVEMBER



Information Sheet for LAUSD Support Staff and Community Partners

Statistics

Youth experiencing homelessness is a national crisis that has continued to grow over the years. Nationally, 3% of all school-age children will experience homelessness; 1 in 30 youth ages 13 to 24 and 1 in 10 young adults aged 18 to 25 in the United States experience some form of homelessness over the course of a year.³ Just alone in the 2023–2024 school year, Los Angeles County Office of Education identified nearly 60,000 homeless students from infancy through grade 12, which is a number that has continued to increase since the 2021–2022 school year.³ In addition, studies have found that youth experiencing homelessness may face many challenges in their education. Students facing housing insecurity are eight times more likely to be asked to repeat a grade.¹ In addition, families in transition move two to three times during a school year, which greatly affects a student's academic achievement.² Given these alarming statistics, the Los Angeles Unified School District Homeless Education Office has developed this toolkit to provide the history of National Homeless Youth Awareness Month, the goals of the Board resolution, and create an awareness of the challenges faced by students experiencing homelessness.

History

On July 11, 2007, the United States Congress established November as **National Homeless Youth Awareness Month**. Since then, the resolution has been adopted by many national organizations and school districts across the country. Last 2023–2024 school year, the [Los Angeles Unified Board of Education approved the recognition of November as Homeless Youth Awareness](#), in which the district pledged to recognize the unique challenges of youth experiencing homelessness and committed to remove barriers to success for homeless youth. The resolution was authored by Board Member Dr. George J. McKenna III and co-sponsored by all board members in attendance.

Goals

The resolution was written to bring attention to the preponderance of homeless youth attending schools within the LAUSD. The goal of the National Homeless Youth Awareness Month is to encourage discussion pertaining to supportive strategies to end homelessness among students, parents, district employees, and community members. This toolkit contains ideas and activities that will help bring social awareness to the issue and engage stakeholders in ending youth homelessness.

1.The National Center on Family Homelessness. America's Youngest Outcasts 2010

2.Dr. Joy Rogers of the Loyola University Department of Education, Education Report of Rule 706 Expert Panel

3.Los Angeles County Office of Education. (2024). [Adoption of Board Resolution No. 20 to Recognize November 2024 as National Homeless Youth Awareness Month Los Angeles, CA.](#)



2024 NATIONAL HOMELESS YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT

National Homeless Youth Awareness Month Activities for the Month of November

School Staff

- **Collect Items for LAUSD Homeless Education Office (November 1st – November 8th)**
Organize a drive for school supplies, hygiene kits, or canned goods. Review the Homeless Education Office School Supply Drive Toolkit as a framework to collect either school supplies, hygiene items, or canned goods! (see attached).
- **Wear purple on Friday during the month of November (November 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th)**
Ask students and staff to support National Homeless Youth Awareness Month by wearing purple on Fridays in November. (see attached flier and post around school campus).
- **Poster Contest (Make announcement November 6th)** Send out notices to students via the applicable learning system (e.g., Schoology, Google Classroom, etc.) informing students there will be a poster contest the week of November 14th. Create different categories: Most Creative, Most Inspiring, and Social Impact. Display all entries virtually during lunch and have students cast their ballot for the winners. Make an announcement on November 15, 2024 congratulating the winner of the poster contest and display the poster on the school website during the last weeks of November (25th – 29th).
- **Essay Contest (November 4th)** During the week of November 4, 2024, send out a memo to classroom teachers informing them of the essay contest, deadline, and prizes, if any. Make sure to include an essay prompt for example: What change would you make to homeless services in LA County if you were in Congress? Or What can you do in your community to address issues related to homelessness? Remember to display posters/flyers virtually on your website or Schoology. Make an announcement on November 15, 2024 congratulating the winner of the essay contest.
- **Write letters in support of current or more services for Homeless Youth to city officials, school board, or congress (Week of November 11th)** Invite students to join in a letter writing campaign during their advisory period or after school to write letters in support of more homeless services and/or initiatives.

Remember to get the approval of your school administrator and have fun!



Join us in our
fight to end youth
homelessness!

PURPLE FRIDAYS

Wear purple
on Fridays in
November!



2024 NATIONAL HOMELESS YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT

National Homeless Youth Awareness Month Activities for the Month of November

Community Partners

- **Display the LAUSD National Homeless Youth Flyer (October 25th)** Once you receive permission from your supervisor, print the LAUSD National Homeless Youth Poster found in this toolkit and display it around your office or on your agency website.
- **Collect items for LAUSD Homeless Education Office or other homeless service providers (November 1st – 8th)** Organize a drive for school supplies, hygiene kits, or canned goods. Review the Homeless Education Office School Supply Drive Toolkit as a framework to collect either school supplies, hygiene items, or canned goods! (see page 10 and 11)
- **Wear purple on Fridays during the month of November (November 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th)** During a staff meeting, ask co-workers to wear purple on Mondays during the month of November. (see attached flyer and post around the office)
- **Organize a group of co-workers to Sponsor-a-Family through the LAUSD Homeless Education Office (go to www.homelesseducation.lausd.net for details; deadline to sign up is 12/2/2024)** Get a team together and visit the Homeless Education Office website for more information to review the Sponsor-a-Family guidelines.
- **Recognize employee with the most donations (November 20th)** Send a certificate to the employee who was able to gather the most donations for the LAUSD Homeless Education Office campaign drive.



2024 NATIONAL HOMELESS YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT

Recommended Videos

- There are 1.3 million homeless students in the U.S., and the instability of their lives makes it difficult for them to keep up in school. [Homeless Students - In Their Own Words](#)
- California saw a 9% increase in unhoused students in the state in the 2022 school year. [187,000 | California homeless youth increasing as school enrollment rates drop - YouTube](#)
- Just miles away from some of the wealthiest zip codes in the country, a growing RV encampment in Marin County, California symbolizes the national housing crisis. [Mile-long RV encampment symbolizes growing housing crisis in Bay Area - YouTube](#)
- Homeless Youth Conference-Can you hear me now? ["Are you okay?" Homeless Youth Shares His Story - YouTube](#)
- In this video, our host Roselyn questions the issue of homelessness in L.A. County. Guest speaker is Marina, Associate Director at LAHSA [Let's Help - Homelessness in L.A. - YouTube](#)
- **Pursuit of Happiness (movie, 2006)** The movie is based on Chris Gardner's nearly one-year struggle with homelessness. A series of circumstances left Gardner jobless and homeless at age 30, living in a bathroom at a San Francisco train station with his son. Despite the negative situation, Gardner continued to fight toward his goal of becoming a broker and would eventually become a self-made millionaire.
- **The Soloist (movie, 2009)** Los Angeles Times columnist, Steve Lopez, discovers Nathaniel Ayers, a mentally ill, homeless street musician who possesses extraordinary talent. Inspired by his story, Lopez writes an acclaimed series of articles about Ayers and attempts to do more to help both him and others in similar homeless situations. Lopez's good intentions run headlong in the hard realities of the strength of Nathaniel's personal demons and the larger social injustices facing the homeless. They must find a way to conquer their deepest anxieties and frustrations to support Nathaniel's transition out of homelessness.
- **All Together Now (2020)** An optimistic, talented teen clings to a huge secret: she is homeless and living on a bus. When tragedy strikes, can she learn to accept a helping hand? This is a movie about some of the realities of difficult home life situations and difficulties of being an unaccompanied homeless student.



National Organizations

- **The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)** is a national membership association dedicated to educational excellence for children and youth experiencing homelessness. Through state and federal policy and technical assistance to members, students, and the public, NAEHCY works to change systems so all children and youth can learn, succeed academically, and achieve their dreams. <http://www.naehcy.org/>
- **SchoolHouse Connection** is a national organization promoting success for children and youth experiencing homelessness, from birth through higher education. The organization engages in strategic advocacy and provide technical assistance in partnership with early care and education professionals (including school district homeless liaisons and state homeless education coordinators), young people, service providers, advocates, and local communities. <https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/>

Contribution of recommended videos and organizations provided by J. Kottke, LA County Office of Education, October 2024.



Links to LAUSD Homeless Education Office Resources and Materials

- **Homeless Education Office**

[The Homeless Education Office Website](#)

[Homeless Education Office Brochure](#)

[Homeless Education Office Directory](#)

[Coordinated Entry System \(CES\) Directory](#)

- **Homeless Education Office Tips**

[Tips for Parents/Guardians](#)

[Tips for School Admins](#)

[Tips for School Teachers](#)

[Tips for School Counselors](#)

[Tips for School Office Staff](#)

[Tips for School Nurses](#)

- **Homeless Education Office Resource Guides**

[Region North Resource Guides](#)

[Region East Resource Guides](#)

[Region West Resource Guides](#)

[Regions South Resource Guides](#)



2024 NATIONAL HOMELESS YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT

Links to Additional Tools and Materials

- **National Homeless Youth Awareness Month Resolutions**

[National Homelessness Youth Awareness – Congress](#)

[Resolution LAUSD Board of Education – Resolution](#)

- **Latest Homeless Data for LA County**

[2024 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Overall Results for LA County](#)

[2024 Homeless Count By Service Planning Area](#)

- **Useful Links**

[LGBTQ Information](#)

[National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Hollywood](#)

[Homeless Youth Partnership](#)

[Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority](#)

[California Homeless Education Technical Assistance Center \(HETAC\)](#)

Follow this link to access a “Reading Rainbow” video on discussing the many challenges homeless students face: [PBS SoCal Insider LAUSD Homeless Education](#)



2024 NATIONAL HOMELESS YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT

| NOVEMBER 2024 | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 Launch National Homeless Youth Awareness Month Announce NHYAM Host a supply drive to collect school supplies, hygiene items or canned goods | 2 Donate gently used or new toys to a family shelter near you |
| 3 Collect school supplies and have them available for students' experiencing homelessness | 4 Download NHYAM toolkit from HEO website Display LAUSD National Homeless Youth Awareness Month Poster | 5 Begin supply drive Announce Homeless facts and poster/essay contest | 6 Advertise poster/essay contest | 7 Organize a group of co-workers to Sponsor-a-Family, for more information visit HEO website | 8 Designated day to wear purple | 9 Learn about mental illness and how it affects the homeless population |
| 10 Donate gently used or new books to a shelter where children stay | 11 VETERAN'S DAY NO SCHOOL Invite students to engage in writing letters to local, county and state officials | 12 Learn how different faith communities help families experiencing homelessness | 13 Learn about the medical needs of the homeless and the effects of being homeless has on health. | 14 LAUSD Operation School Bell Universal Day of Giving | 15 End supply drive Write letters to City, School Board or Congress Members | 16 Learn how domestic violence create homelessness |
| 17 Collected blankets and give them to a local shelter | 18 Arrange delivery of school supplies, hygiene items, or canned goods | 19 Learn about why people become homes & how housing changes homelessness | 20 Recognize employee with the most donations | 21 Learn about the homeless resources in your community & make a list that can be shared | 22 Announce Poster/Essay Contest Winners Designated day to wear purple | 23 Collect socks and give them to a local homeless shelter |
| 24 Learn how to stay involved as National Homelessness Awareness Month ends | 25 No class in session Display student posters on website thru 11/30 | 26 No class in session Learn about 211 and the services they provided to homeless families in Los Angeles | 27 No class in session Learn about the kinds of items that the homeless lack, which we take for granted every day | 28 No class in session | 29 No class in session Designated day to wear purple. | 30 Learn about foster youth who are aging out of the foster system only to become homeless |



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Other Possible School Activities

School Supply Drive

There are thousands of homeless students identified in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Their parents struggle to meet their basic needs like food and shelter. The added financial burden of purchasing back to school supplies is extremely difficult for these families.

Without access to school supplies, students begin the year at a disadvantage. New supplies can boost a child's self-esteem and help a student feel motivated and ready to learn.

Students can become homeless at any time during the school year, so school supply drives can be held throughout the year. Our students can always benefit from your support!

Here's How to Get Started!

- **Select Dates**
Select a week or even a month for people to donate school supplies. Decide if you will be hosting your own collection or working with other groups/businesses.
- **Get Help**
Enlist a group of colleagues/friends to help plan and organize the drive. Maximize your volunteers' skills and interests and put them to work! Volunteers can assist with publicizing the event, utilizing social media, creating flyers, and/or obtaining and distributing large containers/boxes to serve as donation receptacles.
- **Get the Word Out**
Customize our sample flyer with your collection date and drop-off location information. Post the flyer around your office; share it at meetings, with outside groups, through office-wide emails and on social media platforms.
- **Choose Collection Boxes**
Select collection receptacles with clear labels and strategically place them in convenient and targeted locations to make it easy for people to donate.
- **Contact our Program**
Call our LAUSD Homeless Education Office to schedule a pick-up or delivery date once your supply drive is complete. The number to contact the HEO is (213) 202-7581.



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Ideas to Increase Participation

Have fun with the collection boxes! Hold a competition for the most creative box decoration. Below are some examples of previous collection boxes:



- Set a goal for your office/group to work towards.
- Track your progress by using a “thermometer” display or a moving bus. Consider encouraging friendly competition between different groups.
- Give a “Bus Pass.” The pass can be any special opportunity, such as the chance to win a gift card, have a free lunch, or enjoy a “casual day” or “jeans day”.
- Publicize the school supply drive’s progress through a newsletter, email, or social media.
- Share photos of the collection boxes or volunteers participating in the collection.
- Host a virtual fundraiser or raffle to earn money to purchase school supplies and publicize the drive.
- Recognize volunteers verbally, or through personalized notes or photos.
- Make this an annual event!

*For additional information, please contact us:
LAUSD Homeless Education Office
121 N. Beaudry Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 202-7581*



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YOU CAN ENROLL IN SCHOOL!

Even if you have:

- Uncertain housing
- A temporary address
- No permanent physical address

You are guaranteed enrollment in school by the federal McKinney-Vento Act and California state law if you live:

- In a house or apartment with more than one family due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- With friends or family because you are a runaway or an unaccompanied youth
- In substandard housing (without electricity, water, or heat)
- In a shelter (family, domestic violence, youth shelter or transitional living program)
- In a motel, hotel, or weekly rate housing
- In an abandoned building, in a car, at a campground, or on the streets

You can enroll in school immediately even without the documents normally required for enrollment, such as:

- Proof of residency
- Immunization records or other required health records
- School records
- Legal guardianship papers

Your child may:

- Participate fully in all school activities and programs for which he/she is eligible
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin if you request it
- Continue to attend the school in which he/she was last enrolled even if you have moved away from that school's attendance area
- Qualify automatically for school nutrition programs

Your responsibilities are to:

- Make sure your child gets to school on time and ready to learn
- Stay informed of school rules, regulations, and activities
- Contact the homeless liaison for assistance in removing barriers to your child's education
- Attend parent/teacher conferences, Back-to-School Nights, and other school-related activities

For questions about enrolling in school or for assistance with school enrollment, contact:

Your school district homeless liaison:

Leticia Alvarado
LAUSD Homeless Liaison
Email: letisia.alvarado@lausd.net
Phone: (213) 202-7581

Your county homeless liaison:

Jennifer Kottke
LACOE Homeless Liaison
Email: kottke_jennifer@lacoed.edu
Phone: (562) 922-6614

Your homeless state coordinator:

Leanne Wheeler
State Coordinator
California Department of Education
1430 N Street, Suite 6408
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: 1-866-856-8214



17th Annual **Sponsor A Family**

The Homeless Education Office is Seeking Sponsors!



Help bring the magic of the season to our families experiencing homelessness.

Get together with family, friends, or coworkers and share the joy with others in need!

To donate, [click here](#) or scan the QR code:



Homeless Education Office
(213) 202-7581
<https://www.lausd.org/heo>
homelesseducation@lausd.net

