


Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness: What Family Assessment and Planning Teams Need to Know

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Virginia's Homeless Outcomes Initiative

Governor McDonnell Issued Executive Order No.10

- ▶ Established Housing Policy Framework for the Executive Branch
- ▶ Purpose of the Housing Policy Framework:
 - ▶ Establish broad goals and policy direction related to housing policy
 - ▶ Coordinate a comprehensive and effective housing policy with other public policy areas and initiatives across multiple secretariats within the executive branch

Secretariats

Commerce
& Trade

Health &
Human
Resources

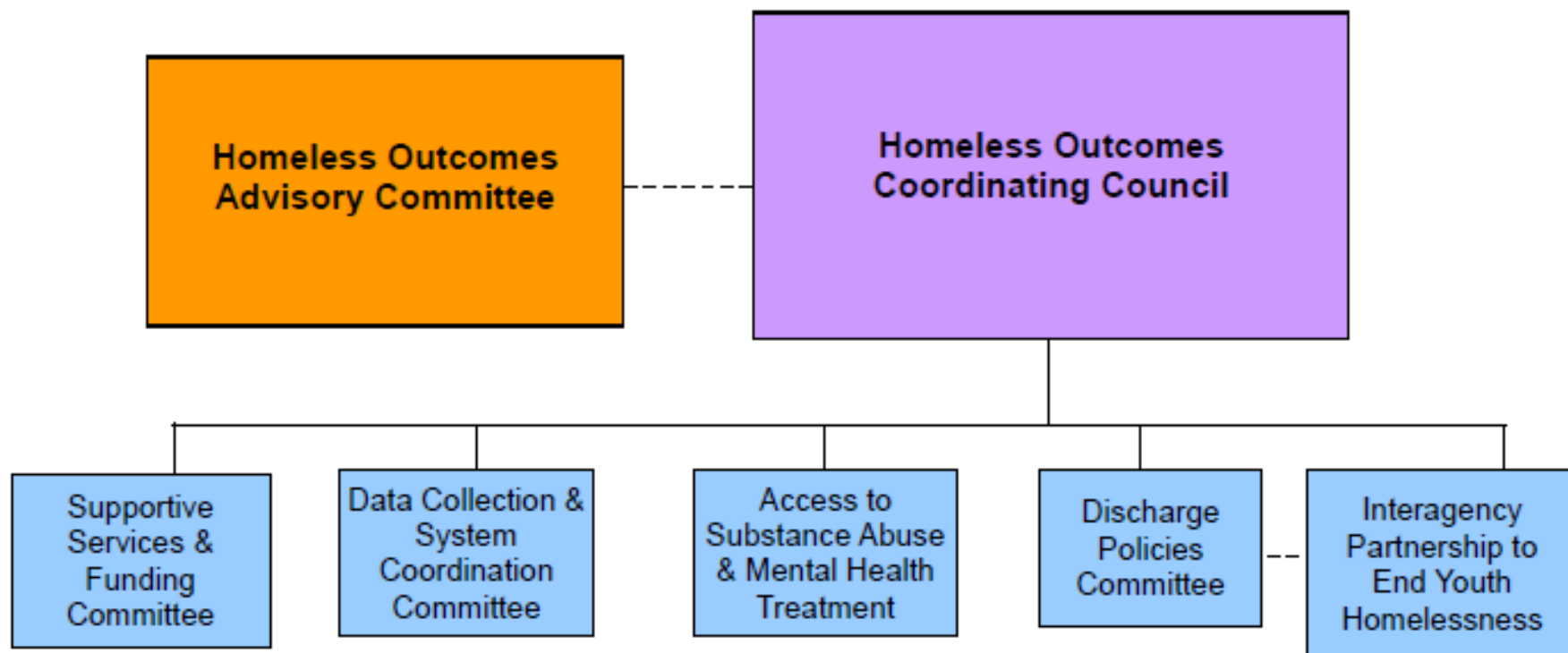
Public
Safety

Veterans &
Homeland
Security

Homeless System Transformation

- ▶ Homeless reduction efforts are a significant part of the overall state housing policy
- ▶ Governor McDonnell established a goal of reducing homelessness by 15% during his administration
- ▶ Homeless Outcomes Advisory Committee established key strategies to improve outcomes for homeless citizens
 - ▶ Increase number of permanent supportive housing units
 - ▶ Increase flexible funding and support for rapid rehousing
 - ▶ Improve statewide data collection and system coordination
 - ▶ Increase access to substance abuse and mental health treatment
 - ▶ Improve discharge policies and procedures for foster care, hospitals, mental health facilities and correctional facilities

Homeless Outcomes Initiative Structure



Homeless Coordinating Council

- ▶ State Homeless Coordinating Council has focused on each of the Outcomes Plan strategies
- ▶ Improved coordination across state agencies, regions and local service providers is having an impact
- ▶ A significant part of this effort has been on moving to national best practices such as rapid rehousing
- ▶ State effort has included both redirection of existing resources and new funding

Focus on Families

- ▶ Freddie Mac Foundation Grant
 - ▶ Three Years - \$1 million/year
 - ▶ Commonwealth partnered with National Alliance to End Homelessness and Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness
- ▶ Reduction of Family Homelessness in Virginia
 - ▶ Shift in Resources
 - ▶ Shift in Practice – Rapid Re-Housing
- ▶ Rapid Re-Housing Challenge
 - ▶ House families as quickly as possible over 100 days
 - ▶ October 17, 2013 – January 24, 2014

RESULTS

In 100 Days Virginia
Rapidly Re-Housed...

545 Families Statewide!

Definitions of Homelessness

HUD

A person is considered homeless only when s/he lives:

- ▶ On the street,
- ▶ In a place not meant for human habitation (e.g. cars, campsites, and abandoned buildings), in an emergency shelter,
- ▶ In transitional or supportive housing (for people coming from streets or shelter), or
- ▶ In any of the above places prior to entering a hospital/institution for short-term (30 days or less).

A person is also considered homeless if he/she is being

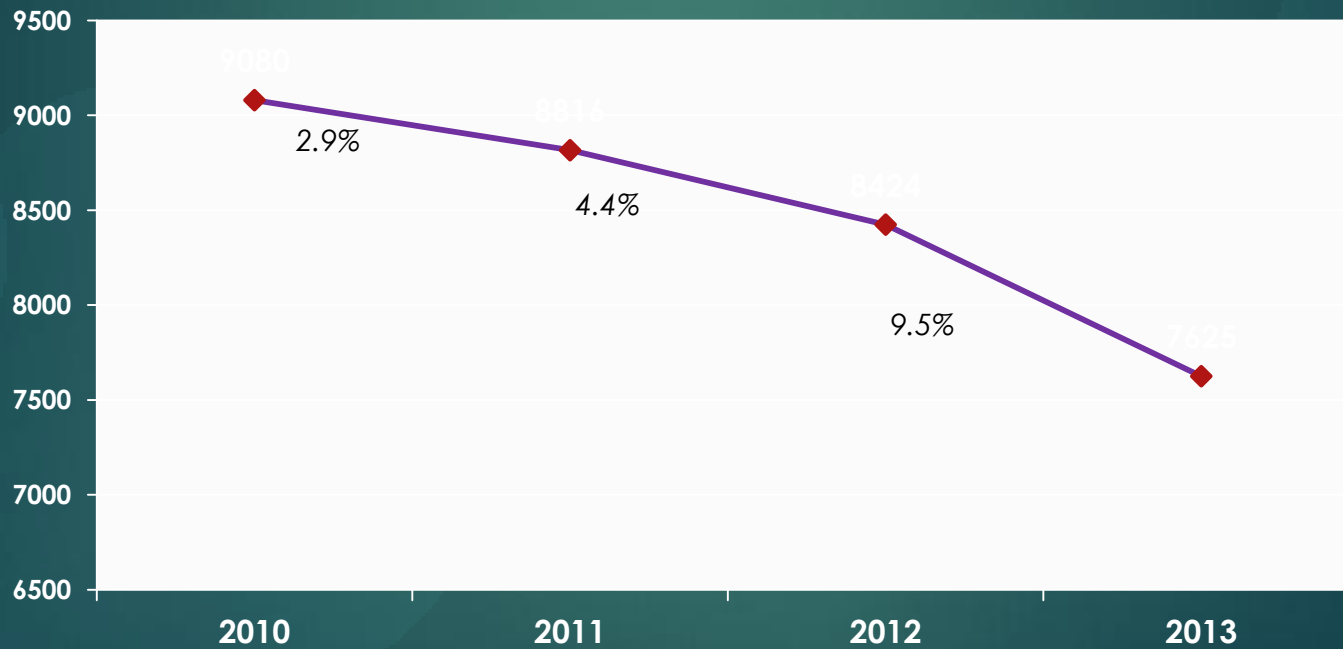
- ▶ Evicted within a week from a private dwelling, or
- ▶ Discharged within a week from an institution where they stayed long term, 31 days or more, and a housing plan is not provided as part of discharge planning.

McKinney-Vento Act

- ▶ Homeless children are "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." The act provides examples of children who would fall under this definition:
- ▶ Children and youth sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason
- ▶ Children and youth living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations
- ▶ Children and youth living in emergency or transitional shelters
- ▶ Children and youth abandoned in hospitals
- ▶ Children and youth awaiting foster care placement
- ▶ Children and youth whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc)
- ▶ Children and youth living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations
- ▶ Migratory children and youth living in any of the above situations

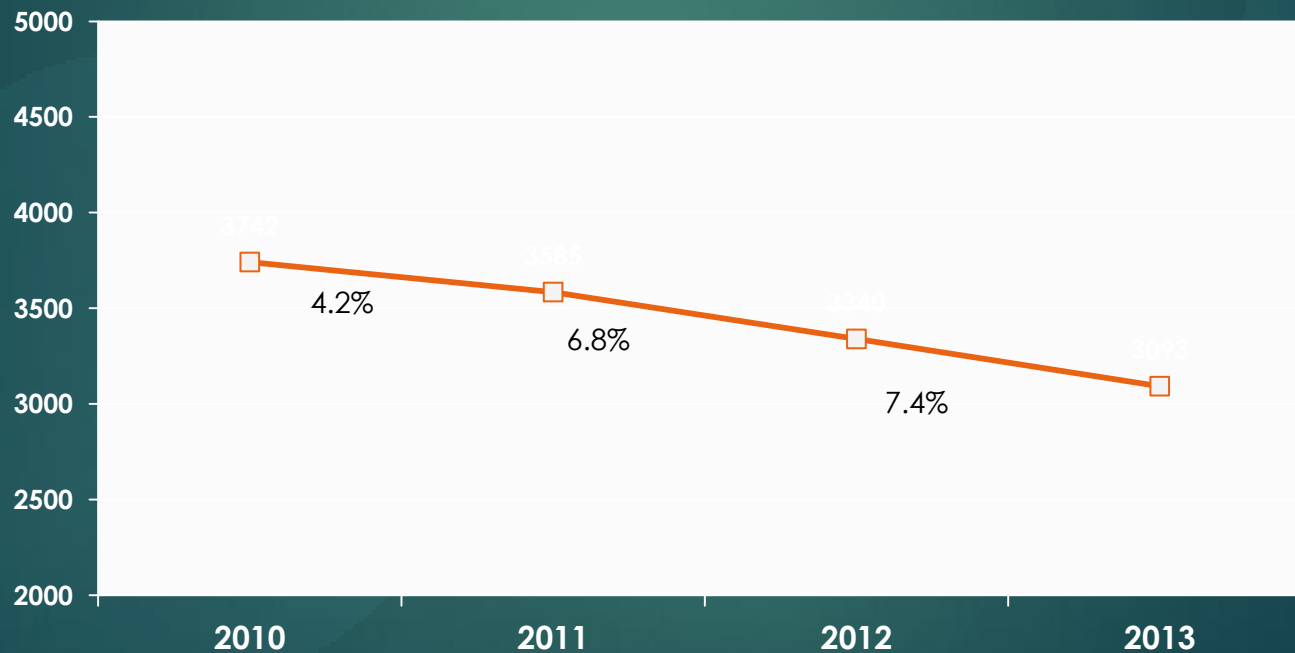
16% Reduction in Homelessness

16% Decrease in Total Homeless Individuals



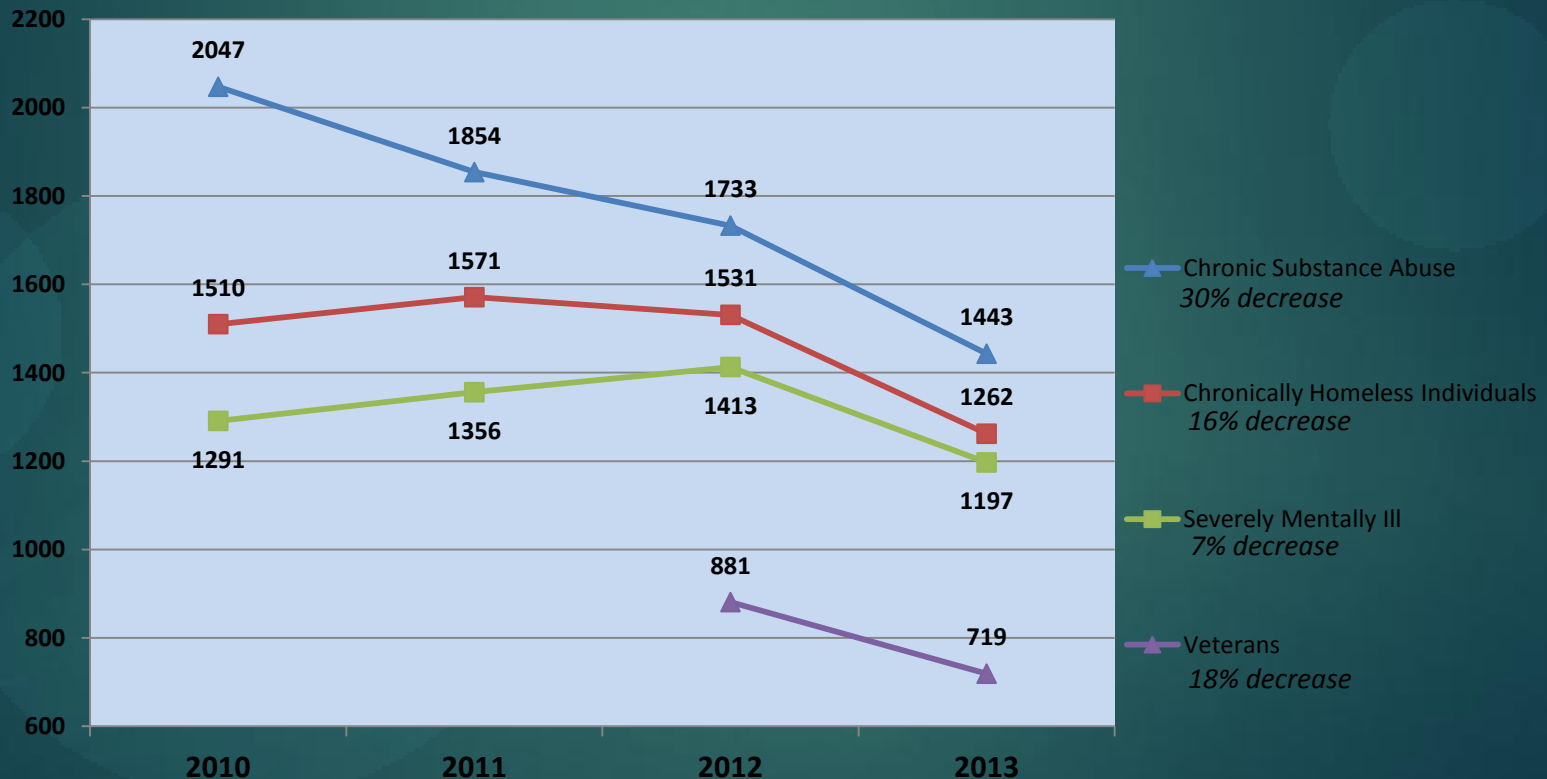
17% Reduction in Family Homelessness

17% Decrease in Persons in Households with Adults and Children



Positive Results for Other Populations

Homelessness by Subpopulation



The background is a solid teal color. It features several decorative elements: a large, semi-transparent teal circle in the lower-left quadrant; a smaller, semi-transparent teal circle in the upper-right quadrant; a very small, semi-transparent teal circle in the top-right corner; and a solid red vertical rectangle in the top-right corner.

What Works...

The Stars are Aligned

System Transformation

Moving from Reactive to Proactive Approach

- ▶ Federal Level – HUD New HEARTH Act
 - ▶ Opening Doors – Federal Plan
- ▶ State Level – DHCD shifted resources & approach
 - ▶ Homeless Outcomes Advisory Committee Report (Virginia's Plan)
- ▶ Local/Regional – Continuum of Care Consortia also shifting priorities and working more collaboratively
 - ▶ 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness

Housing: A Key Component to Improving Families' Outcomes

Strong & Stable Families

- ▶ Employment
- ▶ Education
- ▶ Preventing the removal of children

Utilizing Mainstream Resources

TANF & Rapid Re-Housing Pilot Projects

- ▶ Identify model strategies currently operated by local departments of social services (DSS) in Virginia
- ▶ Encourage other local DSS offices across the state to implement similar strategies
- ▶ Explore using TANF and/or other resources differently to improve homeless families' housing/employment outcomes
- ▶ Ensure TANF and/or other resources are reaching homeless families
- ▶ Collect data that demonstrates how using TANF Diversionary Assistance and other existing resources for rapid re-housing is effective



Project HOPE- Virginia

Virginia's Education for Homeless
Children and Youth Program





Project
HOPE
VIRGINIA

[Web](#)

EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Virginia Department of Education
Coordinated by The College of William and Mary


Causes and Impact of Homelessness

• Causes

- Poverty
- Substance Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Mental Illness
- Affordable Housing
- Physical Illness
- Economic crises
- Natural disasters

• Impact

- Absenteeism is greater
- Developmental delays occur at 4 times the rate reported for other children
- Learning disabilities identified at double the rate
- Twice as likely to repeat a grade




McKinney-Vento Homeless
Assistance Act
Education for Homeless Children
and Youth (EHCY)
Program

Title X, Part C
2001 Reauthorization of the
Elementary and Secondary
Education Act

McKinney-Vento Act, EHCY

- ▶ Reauthorizes the Stewart B. McKinney Act, originally enacted in 1987
- ▶ Provides states with funding to support local grants and statewide initiatives
- ▶ Requires educational *access*, *attendance*, and *success* for homeless children and youth



The child's classroom may be the **only** place where the child can experience quiet, interact with children his/her age, and experience success...

*School is the most **normal** activity that most children experience collectively...For homeless children it is much more than a learning environment. It is a place of safety, personal space, friendships, and support.*

Oakley & King, 2000

Defining homelessness for EHCY

- An individual who lacks a **fixed, regular,** and **adequate** nighttime residence, including children and youth :
 - *sharing housing* due to loss of housing or economic hardship
 - living in *motels, hotels, trailer parks,* or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate housing
 - living in emergency or *transitional housing* (What about housing first?)

Defining (cont'd)


Including children and youth :

- abandoned in hospitals
- *awaiting foster care*
- having a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations

Defining (cont'd)

- living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations
- *migratory students* meeting the description
- *unaccompanied youth* meeting the description of homeless

Fixed, Regular, and Adequate

- 
- ▶ **Fixed:** Stationary, permanent, and not subject to change
 - ▶ **Regular:** Used on a predictable, routine, or consistent basis (*e.g., nightly*)
 - ▶ **Adequate:** Sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments

Can the student go to the SAME PLACE (fixed) EVERY NIGHT (regular) to sleep in a SAFE AND SUFFICIENT SPACE (adequate)?

McKinney-Vento EHCY Requirements

- Appoint a local homeless education *liaison* in every LEA
- For Virginia liaisons, visit:
 - www.wm.edu/hope
- Provide outreach and coordination to identify students

EHCY Requirements (cont'd)

- Enroll students *immediately* in local school OR
- Maintain student enrollment in the *school of origin* when feasible and in the student's best interest
 - Includes transportation
 - Even across school division lines

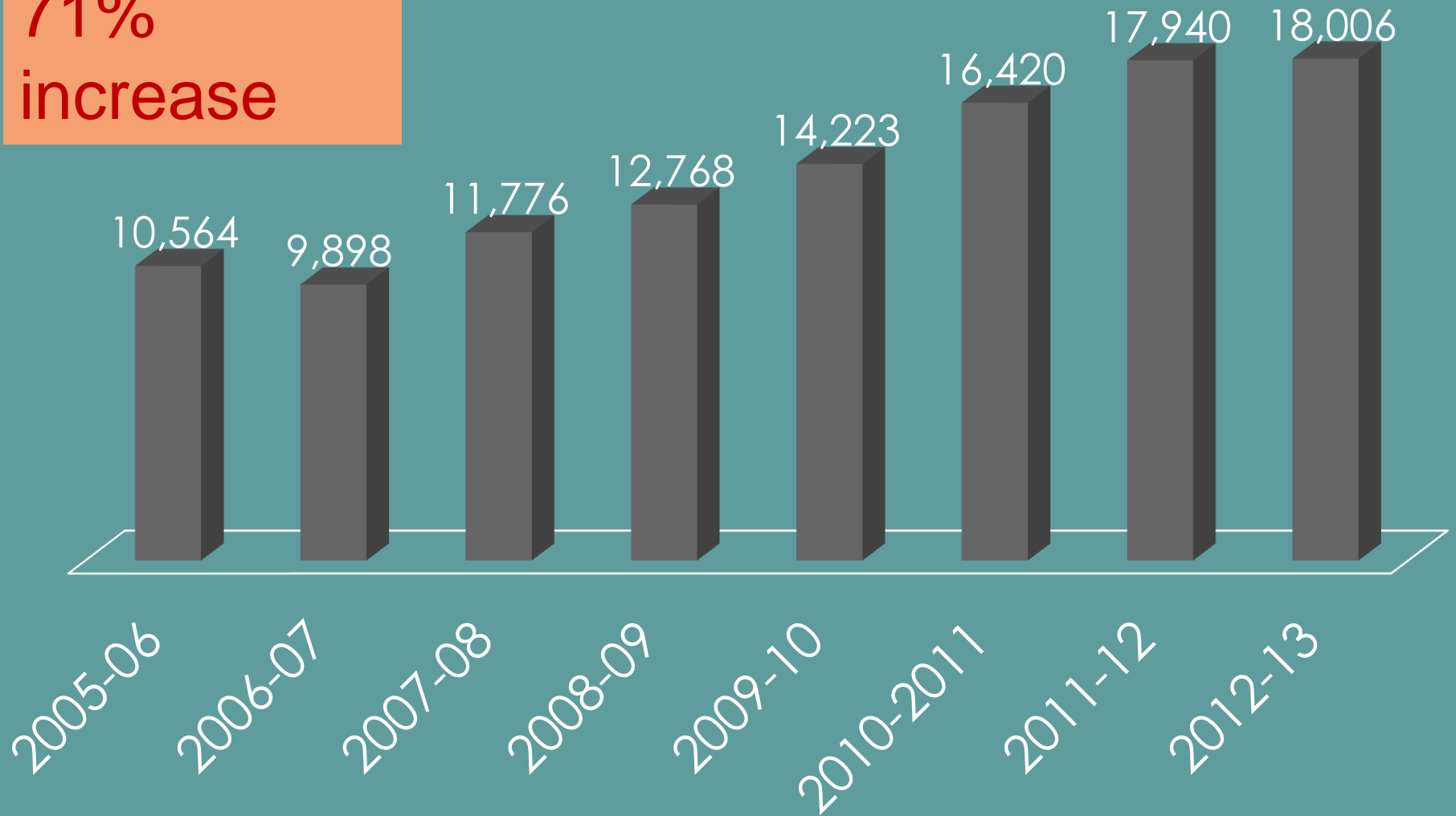
**Get the student enrolled and
keep the student enrolled!**

National Numbers

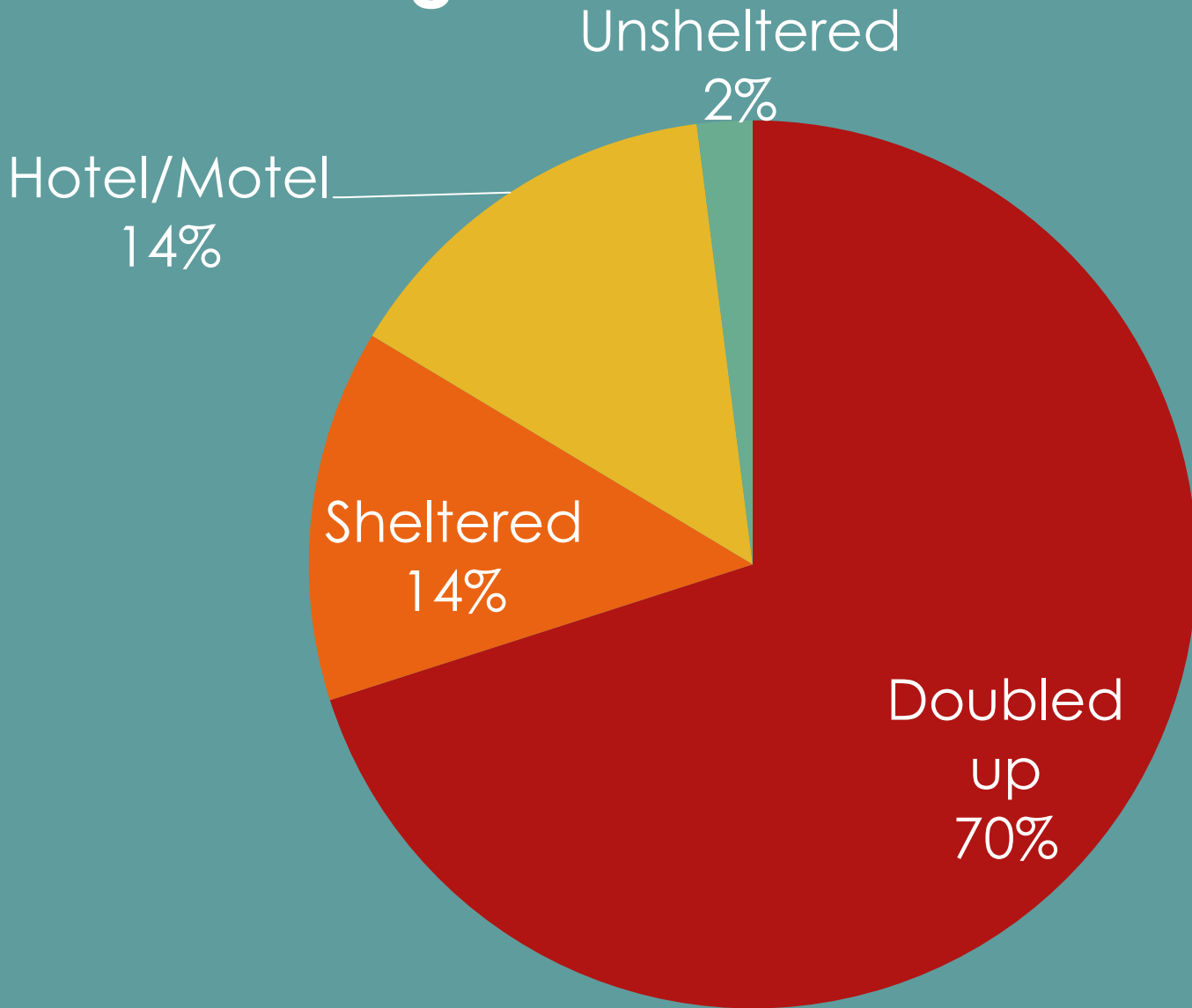
- Approx. one-third are families
 - ▶ 1.6 million children – one in 45 experience homelessness (NCFH)
 - ▶ **1,168,354** in SY 2011-12, a 24% increase over three years (VA – 27%)
 - ▶ [NCHE State Profile Pages](#)

Students Identified as Homeless Total Enrolled in Virginia Schools

71%
increase



Virginia 2012-13 Initial Primary Nighttime Residence



These little piggies...

are homeless.

Pat Van Doren It's About the Children www.hearus.us

Young Children



- ▶ Nationally, more than half of all sheltered children were under age 6
- ▶ Virginia, 45% of children in homeless shelters under age of five. (3470 of 5552 in 2010)

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- ▶ 6-7 risk factors: 90-100% chance of a developmental delay
- ▶ Experiences build brain architecture
- ▶ 7-8 ACE: 3:1 odds of adult heart disease
- ▶ Homelessness does not equal toxic stress
- ▶ The KEY is how the child is buffered



Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Who are Unaccompanied Students?

- ▶ 2-step process

- 1) Does the student's living arrangement meet the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless?
- 2) Once homelessness is determined, is the student unaccompanied?

- ▶ Unaccompanied = “not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian”; in practical terms, this means the youth does not live with the parent or guardian

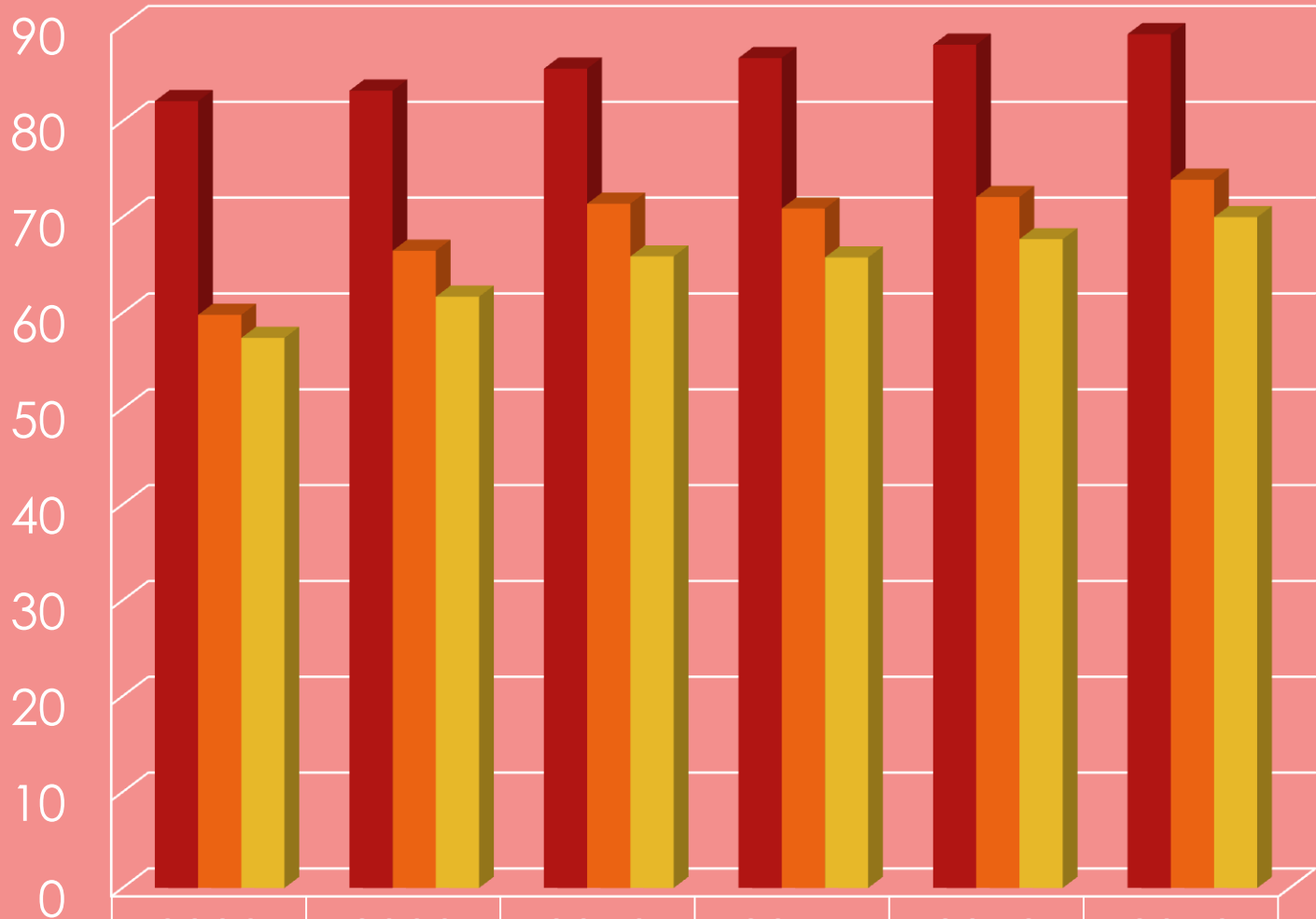
Virginia's On-Time Graduation Rate:



http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/cohort_reports/index.shtml

Virginia's On-time Graduation Rate

percentage of students



■ State	82.1	83.2	85.5	86.6	88	89.1
■ Homeless	59.8	66.5	71.4	70.9	72.1	73.9
■ Homeless Anytime	57.4	61.7	65.9	65.8	67.7	70

Resources

- ▶ NAEHCY – www.naehcy.org
- ▶ NCHE - www.serve.org/nche
- ▶ NLCHP - www.nlchp.org
- ▶ Project HOPE-VA: www.wm.edu/hope
- ▶ USED - www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html

Contact Information

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