

# **POLK COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE**

## **EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

### **Policy:**

All CoC- and ESG-funded projects shall ensure all children and unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school, or in early childhood programs, and are connected to appropriate education related services in the community.

### **Procedure:**

- 1.) At least one staff person in each CoC-and ESG funded program shall be familiar with the rights of parents and unaccompanied youth, and the responsibilities of local school districts contained in both the Code of Iowa and federal law pertaining to the education of homeless children and youth.
- 2.) Within 24 hours of entering a program, or by the next school day, parents should be assisted in enrolling their children in school or early childhood programs, and unaccompanied youth should be assisted in enrolling in school.
  - 2.1) Assistance should include discussing with parents and unaccompanied youth about their education rights, including the right to:
    - Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
    - Continue to attend the school they had been attending prior to moving into the shelter, with transportation provided by the school district; or to enroll in the school in the local attendance area where the shelter is located.
    - Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to your children's needs.
  - 2.2) Inform unaccompanied youth of their rights to enroll in school without a parent or legal guardian.
  - 2.3) Provide parents and unaccompanied youth with brochures or other information that summarizes their educational rights, as well as contact information for the school liaison and/or state homeless education coordinator.
  - 2.4) Place posters about educational rights in places where parents and unaccompanied youth can see them
- 3.) If resistance is met at the neighborhood school level to enrolling children and youth, or obtaining transportation to/from school, the local liaison for the school district should be contacted immediately so that as little time as possible lapses in school attendance.
- 4.) When a family or unaccompanied youth exits a HUD homeless program, ensure that the family or youth knows that they continue to have educational rights for at least the remainder of the school year.
- 5.) At least one time per year, the Polk County Continuum of Care shall convene a meeting of CoC- and ESG-funded programs, and the liaisons from school districts most attended by children and youth served by these programs, where education and early childhood issues may be discussed in more depth.