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Kentucky Selected for Program to End Youth Homelessness

KY BoS CoC, KHC, and Partners for Education at Berea College Selected to Participate in Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP)

FRANKFORT, Ky.— The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently announced ten Continuum of Care communities selected to participate in the [Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program](#) (YHDP), an effort that will help these communities develop methods intended to end youth homelessness. The Kentucky Balance of State Continuum of Care (KY BoS CoC), in partnership with Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC) and Partners for Education at Berea College (PFE), was one of the ten selected out of 130 applicants nationwide. The KY BoS CoC will receive \$1.9 million to develop and provide housing options for youth experiencing homelessness in the federally designated Southeastern Kentucky Promise Zone (Promise Zone)—an eight-county area in the Appalachian region made up of Bell, Clay, Harlan, Knox, Leslie, Letcher, Perry, and Whitley counties. The Promise Zone experiences rates of poverty and youth homelessness significantly above state and national averages. The ten communities selected by HUD will collaborate with a broad array of partners including a youth advisory board, the state’s Department for Community Based Services, local school districts, youth service providers, and workforce development agencies. These communities must each develop a coordinated community plan to prevent and end youth homelessness to submit to HUD within six months. Once HUD approves a community’s plan, the community will begin to access funding for specific projects. They will also participate in a program evaluation to inform the federal effort to prevent and end youth homelessness going forward. These ten communities will serve as leaders in the nation on the work of ending homelessness among young people with the Kentucky project providing useful insight from the rural perspective.

KHC serves as the collaborative applicant and lead agency for the KY BoS CoC, the planning body responsible for coordinating efforts and over \$8 million in federal funding to prevent and end homelessness in 118 counties across the Commonwealth. Fayette and Jefferson counties each have their own CoC systems and federal funding streams.

“KHC is thrilled to continue its commitment to creating and preserving affordable housing opportunities across the state, and in the Promise Zone area specifically, through this unique partnership,” said Kathryn Peters, executive director of KHC. “Being selected as one of ten communities nationally to participate in this important demonstration project is both an honor and a vitally important opportunity to address youth homelessness in one of our most vulnerable areas of the state.”

Partners for Education at Berea College will serve as the lead agency for the YHDP and will be responsible for developing the coordinated community plan in partnership with KHC, the KY BoS CoC, and local stakeholders. “The Promise Zone puts a face on rural poverty and emphasizes the dire need for place-based, community-oriented strategies to address youth homelessness in rural America, especially in areas like ours with persistent poverty and declining employment due to the significant loss of coal jobs,” said Dreema Gentry, executive director of PFE. “Without a doubt there is a community commitment to addressing youth homelessness in our area. This demonstration grant provides some of the vital resources needed in order to ensure that all young people in the Promise Zone are safe and supported.”

For more information about YHDP, please visit the [YHDP website](#).

About **Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC)**: KHC, as the state housing finance agency, invests in quality, affordable housing solutions to help Kentucky families have a safe place to call home. Having a home and a stable environment gives families the opportunity to thrive. KHC offers an array of programs designed to meet unique needs of many Kentuckians who are unable to acquire housing easily. These programs serve homeless and special needs populations.

KHC also offers mortgage loans and down payment assistance, foreclosure prevention, energy and weatherization programs, administers the Section 8 program for rental vouchers for counties without a public housing authority, and works in partnerships with many agencies and developers to create and preserve affordable housing. Learn more at www.kyhousing.org.

About **Partners for Education**: Partners for Education at Berea College uses a place-based, student-focused approach to improve educational outcomes in Appalachian Kentucky. We braid services and align funding streams to optimize results. Through a suite of programs, including GEAR UP, i3 and the first rural Promise Neighborhood, Partners for Education leverages \$25.8 million annually to serve 35,318 young people and their families. Learn more at <https://www.berea.edu/pfe/>.

About the **Southeastern Kentucky Promise Zone**: The Southeastern Kentucky Promise Zone was designated on January 7, 2014 by President Barack Obama as the first rural Promise Zone in the nation. With this designation, the partners in the eight-county (Bell, Clay, Harlan, Knox, Leslie, Letcher, Perry, and Whitley counties) Promise Zone will engage the communities in a collaborative, comprehensive process aimed at improving the overall quality of life in the region. Learn more at <http://www.kypromisezone.com/>.