

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CAMPAIGN FOR GRADE-LEVEL READING CELEBRATES ATTENDANCE AWARENESS MONTH

*TWELVE PUBLIC HOUSING AGENCIES COMMENDED AS BRIGHT SPOTS FOR
EXEMPLARY WORK ON CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM*

WASHINGTON, D.C. September 30, 2016 – The [Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#) is celebrating Attendance Awareness Month by commending 12 Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) as bright spots for their exemplary work to raise awareness in their communities about chronic absenteeism and the importance of attending school every day. This September marks the fourth annual Attendance Awareness Month campaign, a national effort spearheaded by [Attendance Works](#) to rally communities, school districts, advocates, policymakers, volunteers and funders around the importance of attendance and its role in academic achievement.

Chronic absenteeism — or missing at least 10 percent of school days in a school year — is a primary cause of low academic achievement and a powerful predictor of students who may eventually drop out of school. New data from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights Data Collection from the 2013–14 school year reveal that nearly 6.5 million students miss 18 or more days of school each year, or nearly an entire month or more. The analysis also shows that chronic absenteeism follows poverty wherever it is found in significant concentrations. Today, more than one million children from birth to age 8 are living in public housing in the United States.

“A quality education is one of the greatest gifts we can give to our children. But too many students today don’t have a safe, stable place to call home, preventing them from attending class regularly and reaching their true potential,” said U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julián Castro. “There’s no more important mission than to use housing as a platform for success and we need to make certain that our youngest residents have every opportunity that an education provides. I’m thrilled that these housing agencies have taken on this challenge and are serving as a model for other housing authorities.”

California

- HOPE SF
- Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles
- Housing Authority of the County of Marin
- Oakland Housing Authority

Florida

- Sarasota Housing Authority

Idaho

- Housing Authority of the City of Pocatello

Massachusetts

- Springfield Housing Authority

Missouri

- Housing Authority of Kansas City

Texas

- San Antonio Housing Authority

Washington

- King County Housing Authority
- Seattle Housing Authority

Wisconsin

- Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee

Visit gradelevelreading.net/publichousing to read more about the programs these housing agencies have developed to address chronic absenteeism.

Ralph Smith, managing director of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, in his letters to Secretary Castro, the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials, the Council of Large Public Housing Authorities and the Public Housing Authorities Directors Association, said, “These PHAs are bright spots doing what it takes to change the trajectory of children’s lives. We applaud them for answering the call to address chronic absenteeism and betting that low-income families can break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.”

In an effort to promote and increase the work being done across the country to improve educational outcomes of children living in federally assisted housing, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development joined forces with the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading through a memorandum of understanding signed this past April. Through the partnership, local PHAs are encouraged to work with local GLR Campaign communities to address the solutions areas that are critical to achieving reading proficiency — school readiness, school attendance and summer learning. Promoting healthy on-track development and supporting parent success are also embedded in the partnership efforts.

About the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

Launched in May 2010, the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is a collaborative effort of funders, nonprofit partners, business leaders, government agencies, states and communities across the nation to ensure that many more children from low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career and active citizenship. Since its launch, the GLR Campaign has grown to include more than 285 communities, representing 42 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands with 2,300 local organizations and 250+ state and local funders (including 130 United Ways). To learn more, visit gradelevelreading.net and follow the movement on Twitter [@readingby3rd](https://twitter.com/readingby3rd).