Supporting Academic Success of Students Experiencing Homelessness

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NC Homeless Education Program
NC Homeless Education Program

• Ensures that all qualified children and youth have access to the public education to which they are entitled under the Federal McKinney-Vento Act.

• Ensures that state policies are in compliance with federal law.

• Oversees all programmatic aspects of the state homeless education program.

• Under Federal Program and Monitoring Support Division with NCDPI.
NCHEP Main Responsibilities

• Provide technical assistance to all local education agencies (LEAs), including charter schools, lab school, etc.

• Monitor all LEA and charter school homeless education programs.

• Conduct compliance meetings and trainings.

• Handle disputes on eligibility, school selection and enrollment.
Objectives

Participants will gain an understanding of:

• Who qualifies under the McKinney-Vento Act and what services school districts are required to provide.

• The important role of the homeless liaison in providing for academic success of identified students.

• The need for collaboration to ensure academic success for identified students.
Can You Tell Who Is Homeless?
Consider this......

Could you ever be affected by a hurricane, flood, tornado or other natural disaster?

Do you live in a household with only one wage earner?

Could you ever suffer from a long-term illness or accident without proper health benefits or other compensations?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consider this......</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Could a down turn in the economy or a change in your local economy cause you or your family to lose a job?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has there ever been any form of domestic violence or abuse in your family?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are housing costs in your area increasing faster than wages are increasing?</td>
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Causes of Homelessness

- Lack of affordable housing
- Poverty
- Health problems
- Domestic violence
- Natural and other disasters
- Abuse/neglect/family dysfunction (unaccompanied youth)
- Other
A Student’s Perspective...

Video: Hear Us
www.hearus.org
The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law designed to increase the school enrollment, attendance, and success of children and youth who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.
McKinney-Vento Act: It’s The Law

• State and local policies must not contain barriers to enrollment and retention of eligible students.

• “Enrollment” is defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

• Federal law supersedes state or local law or practice when there is a conflict (U.S. Constitution, Article VI).

• Reauthorized through the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015.
Main Themes of the Act

- School access
- School stability
- Support for academic success, including academic accrual
- Child-centered, best interest decision making
- Role of the local homeless liaison
- Subgrant requirements
- Transportation
- Preschool
- Higher Education
McKinney-Vento Rights

• Immediate enrollment
• Remain in the school of origin, if in the student’s best interest
• Receive transportation assistance, when requested
• Receive appropriate educational services comparable to other students
• Receive free school meals

ENROLL NOW!
Definition of Homelessness

Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

**Fixed**
- Permanent;
- Stationary;
- Not subject to change

**Regular**
- Used on a routine basis

**Adequate**
- Home setting meets both physical and psychological needs
Example Situations...

- Sharing a home due to loss of housing
- Sharing a home due to economic hardship
- Living in motels / hotels / trailer parks
- Living in a shelter / bus or train stations
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Living in cars / parks / under bridges
- Living in camp grounds & abandoned buildings
- Migratory children
- Unaccompanied homeless youth
- Human trafficking
- Other situations meeting the McKinney-Vento definition
McKinney-Vento Identifications
2016 - 2017SY

US Public Schools: 1.354 million*

2017 – 2018SY Data Has Not Been Released
NC McKinney-Vento Student Counts

Please Note: SY 2017-2018 unduplicated data has not been released yet.

*Unduplicated Student Counts
NC Prosperity Zones 2017 – 2018SY

Northwest 6.46%
Western 7.00%
Northeast 3.93%
Southeast 7.63%
North Central 24.99%
Southwest 24.88%
Sandhills 5.88%
Pied-Triad 19.24%

*Duplicated Student Counts
Homeless Liaison Responsibilities

- Identification
- Enrollment
- Access to Services
- Referrals
- Parental Information
- Public Notice
- Disputes
- Transportation Services
- Professional Development
- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
- Collaboration
NC Primary Nighttime Residency 2017 – 2018SY

*Duplicated Student Counts
Determining Eligibility Considerations

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

Step 1: Get the facts.
Step 2: Analyze the facts.
  – Does the living situation fit into one of the specific examples of homelessness listed in the law?
  – Does the living situation fit another type of situation that is not fixed, regular, and adequate?

Step 3: Seek additional guidance.
Determining Eligibility “Doubled Up”

McKinney-Vento defines “doubled up” as “sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.”

Questions to consider:

• Why did the family move in together?
  • Did a crisis occur?
  • Was this a mutual plan?

• Where would the family live if they weren’t doubled-up?
  How permanent is the living arrangement?

• Is the living arrangement fixed, regular, and adequate?

• Other questions…
Determining Best Interest

• Presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student’s best interest. 11432(g)(3)(B)(i)-(ii)

• Consider student-centered factors, such as impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, safety, etc.

• Give priority to the request of the parent/guardian/unaccompanied homeless youth.
School Selection

- **School of Origin**: the school attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled.
  - Public preschools are included in “school of origin.”

- **School of Residence**: any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend
School Selection and Stability

- Attend either school of origin, if in the student’s best interest, or the local attendance area school.

- Students can continue attending their school of origin the entire time they are homeless, and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.

- In years of transition, ‘…’school of origin’ shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools
School Enrollment

When remaining in the school of origin is not in the student’s best interest or what the parent, guardian or youth requests:

• McKinney-Vento students are entitled to immediate enrollment in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend; even if:

• Students do not have required documents, such as school records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, guardianship, or other documents.
Enrollment Cont.

• If a student does not have immunizations, or immunization or other health records or screenings, the liaison must immediately assist in obtaining them; the student must be enrolled in the interim.

• Enrolling schools must obtain school records from the previous school, and students must be enrolled in school while records are obtained.

• Remove barriers for students who have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.

• Schools must maintain McKinney-Vento student records so they are available quickly.
What If We Disagree?

If a dispute arises over **eligibility, school selection or enrollment** in a school, enrollment and attendance must continue until the dispute is resolved. 11432(g)(3)(E)

Local liaison will carry out dispute process including:

- Providing written notice of decision, including right to appeal.
- Ensuring student is immediately enrolled in requested school and provided all applicable McKinney-Vento services during dispute resolution.
Transportation

- Districts must transport students to and from school of origin, at a parent’s or guardian’s request (or at the liaison’s request for unaccompanied homeless youth).
- When outside the district of origin, both districts must determine how to divide the responsibility and cost, or they must share the responsibility and cost equally.
- School district determines the mode of transportation.
- Districts must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students.
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

**Unaccompanied Youth**

Not living in the physical custody of parent or legal guardian

- No lower age limit.

**Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**

- Upper age limit is school age defined by the state.
  - NC upper limit is 21.
- No citizenship requirement (Plyler vs. Doe).

**Unaccompanied Youth** and lacking fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence
NC Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Please Note: SY 2017-2018 unduplicated data has not been released yet.

*Unduplicated Student Counts
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Special Provisions

• Unaccompanied homeless youth do not need a parent/guardian to enroll or have access to services.

• Local homeless liaisons must support the student in making decisions and understanding his/her rights.

• Unaccompanied homeless youth have the same right to appeal as do parents/guardians.
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Special Provisions

Homeless liaison will:

- Assist in enrolling in school.
- Assist in obtaining school/medical records.
- Inform unaccompanied homeless youth of services they are eligible for under the McKinney-Vento Act.
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth….
“On Their Own”

- Family conflict or crisis
- Parental incarceration, substance abuse, illness, death, etc.
- Foster care issues: aging out of the foster care system; running away from a foster care placement
- Family homelessness
- Being asked to leave the home
- Choosing to leave home on their own
- Abandoned by family
- Other
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Enrollment Strategies

Three common methods for enrolling:

- Self enrollment
- Caregiver enrolls
- Homeless liaison enrolls

These methods also apply for unaccompanied homeless youth who wish to participate in extra-curricular activities.

School districts cannot:

- Require a caregiver to obtain legal guardianship
- Discontinue enrollment due to lack of responsible adult or inability to produce guardianship or other paperwork.
Internal Collaborations

- Title I (Mandated)
- Transportation Department
- Child and Nutrition Services (Mandated)
- Migrant/ESL Services
- Exceptional Children’s Services/PBIS-IDEA
- Student Services: Psychologists, Counselors, Social Workers, and Healthful Living Staff
- 21st Century Community Learning Center
- Curriculum and Instruction Services
- Elementary and Secondary Education
- Career and Technical Education
- Auxiliary Services Department
External Collaborations

- Institutions of Higher Education (SPOCs)
- CoC, United Way, Food Pantries, Churches
- Salvation Army/Local Shelters/Transitional Housing
- Department of Social Services (SNAP)
- Health Department
- Head Start (Mandated)
- Hotel and Motel Managers
- Local Business Partnerships
- HUD Programs (Mandated)/Housing Authority/Community Development
- Local Police Department/ Sheriff’s Office/Juvenile Justice
Academic Responsibilities

Among many responsibilities related to McKinney-Vento students, school districts must not only ensure qualified students are identified, but that:

• Reviews are made of academic achievement and graduation rates.
• Chronic absenteeism is addressed.
• McKinney-Vento students receive college and career readiness support.
• Consult with identified students on their perceived academic needs (i.e. extended learning time, tutoring, academic accrual, etc.)
The Challenge....
Barriers to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

- Poor health, fatigue, hunger
- Emotional trauma, depression, anxiety
- Stereotypes and lack of awareness
- Under-identifications
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.
- High mobility resulting in lack of school stability & educational continuity
- Enrollment requirements (records, proof of residence, guardianship)
Impacts of Homelessness on Children and Youth

• Higher incidence of acute and chronic illnesses, depression and anxiety.
• Early childhood homelessness is associated with poor classroom engagement and poor social skills in early elementary school.
• Achievement gaps between homeless and low-income elementary students tend to persist, and may even worsen, over time.
• A youth who experiences homelessness is 87% more likely to drop out of school.
Chapin Hall/VOYC Report: Higher Risk for Homelessness

346%  
Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED had a 346% higher risk

120%  
LGBT youth had a 120% higher risk

162%  
Youth reporting annual household income of less than $24,000 had a 162% higher risk

33%  
Hispanic, non-White youth had a 33% higher risk

83%  
Black or African American youth had an 83% higher risk

200%  
Unmarried parenting youth had a 200% higher risk
HOW YOU CAN HELP...
Actions to Support Academic Success

• Obtain contact information for the local homeless liaison

• Inform the homeless liaison of your program and contact information

• Attend trainings offered by the homeless liaison or invite the homeless liaison to provide awareness training to your staff
Actions to Support Academic Success

• Refer potential students and their families to the homeless liaison

• Display McKinney-Vento posters in afterschool locations

• Allocate afterschool slots to include McKinney-Vento students
Actions to Support Academic Success

• Develop an MOU with the school district to outline procedures for coordinating services.

• Meet quarterly with the homeless liaison on students being served.

• Share data with the homeless liaison on:
  – Attendance in the program
  – Concerns with the student
  – Accomplishments of the student
  – Parent involvement opportunities
  – Field trips or other program events
Actions to Support Academic Success

- Consult with identified students on their perceived academic needs:
  - Extended learning time
  - Tutoring
  - Academic accrual
  - Other
- Provide extra time and resources to complete assignments
- Work with homeless liaison for tutorial services
- Other
Research Shows....

Participating in an afterschool program provides:

- Improved academic achievement!
- Improved classroom engagement!
- Improved school attendance!
- Improved foundation skills!
Our Common Goal –

Provide academic supports to enable students to enter the world with the skills needed to be successful!
Resources

North Carolina Homeless Education Program
https://hepnc.uncg.edu/

National Center for Homeless Education
U.S. Department of Education’s
Technical Assistance Center for the
Education of Homeless Children and Youth
https://nche.ed.gov/
Questions