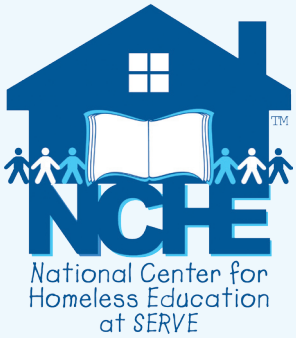
The National Center for Homeless Education's

LOCAL HOMELESS EDUCATION LIAISON TOOLKIT



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LOCAL HOMELESS EDUCATION LIAISON TOOLKIT

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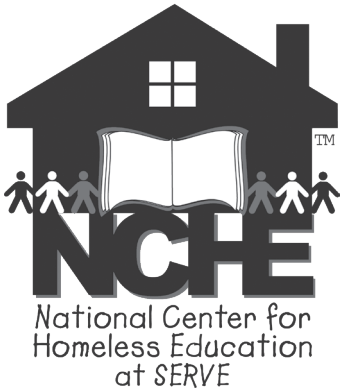
Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) at the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro provides critical information to those who seek to remove barriers to education and to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness.



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Foreword

The 2001 reauthorization of the McKinney-Vento Act required the designation of a local homeless education liaison in every school district. The local liaison has proven to be the key to the effective implementation of the Act.

State coordinators for homeless education surveyed in 2005 reported that the benefits of having local liaisons in every school district included:

- Increased identification of homeless children and youth
- Increased service provision for homeless children and youth
- Better coordination among school district programs
- Increased awareness of homeless children and youth among school and school district staff
- Increased awareness of issues related to homeless education in the community
- Better coordination between school districts and local agencies
- More effective communication between the State Educational Agency (SEA) and Local Educational Agency (LEA) with regard to homeless issues

Local liaisons must have a clear understanding of the McKinney-Vento Act, be familiar with ways to work with their school districts and communities to identify homeless children and youth, review policies and practices to ensure the school success of homeless students, and create awareness of the needs and rights of homeless children and youth in the school district and the community.

NCHE's *Local Homeless Education Liaison Toolkit*, developed in 2002 and revised in 2007, is designed to orient new local liaisons to their positions and provide them with tools, strategies, resources, and links to resources to carry out their responsibilities. It is useful in providing tips, tools, and resources to veteran liaisons, as well. The original *Toolkit* drew upon effective practices provided by homeless education coordinators and staff from across the nation. The revised *Toolkit* expands upon these practices, reflecting five additional years of learning how best to meet the educational needs of homeless children and youth. The appendices were revised to be more comprehensive and were reorganized for easy retrieval of information, both that included in the publication and that accessible by web links provided.

The *Toolkit* is available for downloaded from the NCHE website at *http://www.serve.org/nche/products_list.php#liaison_toolkit*. The *Toolkit* may be downloaded in its entirety to have as a ready resource or it may be downloaded in sections to meet specific needs. Written to be user-friendly and to provide quick access to vast amounts of information, it is a publication that every local liaison should have on hand.

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Chapters

Chapter One: Overview

Did you know that

- Homeless children and youth must have access to a public education?
- Barriers that may inhibit the ability of homeless children and youth to access schools must be eliminated?

Do you know

- What potential barriers to school enrollment, attendance, and success may exist in local policies and procedures?
- How those barriers may be alleviated?
- How many homeless students reside and/or attend schools within your school district?

The purpose of the *Local Homeless Education Liaison Toolkit* is to provide local education agencies (LEAs) with background information and sample resources to ensure the answer to the aforementioned questions can be a resounding, "Yes!"

> *In districts that operate successful programs to serve students in homeless situations, there is one common denominator: a homeless liaison. Whether funded through the McKinney program or another source, the liaison is the person who orchestrates opportunities for students and families to begin to break the cycle of homelessness.*[1]

It is anticipated that local liaisons using this resource will be able to improve their schools' and school district's effectiveness in working with homeless children and youth through identification, provision of appropriate services, and increased awareness and sensitivity among school personnel working with homeless students. The *Toolkit* provides a wealth of information on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, roles and duties of local liaisons, successful strategies and practices for building awareness and collaborating with school district and community contacts, and additional resources that can support local efforts. Case studies in every chapter enable readers to apply the information to solve problems related to issues affecting children and youth experiencing homelessness. Sample forms and handouts may be adapted to individual districts. *Toolkit* appendices provide additional resources on a variety of topics.

The *Toolkit* is intended to support local liaisons

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1 Charles A. Dana Center. 1997. *Pieces of the puzzle: Awareness, understanding, opportunity: Creating success for students in homeless situations*. Austin, TX: Author.

in fulfilling legislative requirements and offer suggestions for promising practices by addressing:

- LEAs' responsibilities to fulfill legislative requirements in educating homeless children and youth
- Potential roles and responsibilities local liaisons may assume
- Identification of homeless children and youth

The *Toolkit* provides:

- Guidance in identifying common barriers to educational access and success and creating solutions to address them
- Sample tools to develop collaborative efforts, build awareness, and meet the educational needs of homeless students
- Supplemental resources for further study and support

The McKinney-Vento Act, federal legislation in effect since 1987 (formerly the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act), has always required a designated local liaison for all LEAs with subgrant funding, and responsibilities of subgrantee local liaisons have been outlined in legislation. A local liaison is a staff person responsible for working with homeless education issues locally in a school district. In addition, U.S. Department of Education Preliminary Guidance[2] and Policy Studies Associates[3] recommended that *all* school districts assign a local liaison to "ensure that homeless children and youth enroll in and succeed in school, and that such students and their families receive the educational services for which they are eligible."[4]

The information in the *Toolkit* is consistent with the U.S. Department of Education initiative, "No Child Left Behind." The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L.107-110), the most recent revision to the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), embraces each of the following four pillars of President George W. Bush's educational reform plan:

- Accountability—Collecting data that shows results for all students
- Local control and flexibility—Designing programs based on documented needs of students
- Parental choice—Involving parents in a meaningful way in their child's education
- Doing what works—Using strategies that have data to show their effectiveness

These elements are reflected within the McKinney-Vento Act, which became effective July 1, 2002. Highlights of new provisions in the revised act for children and youth experiencing homelessness include:

- Maintaining students in their school of origin
- Providing transportation to ensure access to the school of origin
- Enrolling homeless students immediately, even if regularly required

2 U.S. Department of Education. *(1995). Preliminary guidance for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, Title VII, Subtitle B.* Washington, DC: Author.

3 Anderson, L. M., Janger, M. I., & Panton, K. L. M. (1995). *An evaluation of state and local efforts to serve the educational needs of homeless children and youth*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

4 U. S. Department of Education. (1995). p. 11.

documentation is missing

- Increasing funding for states to administer effective programs and provide greater funding to LEAs

- Requiring a local liaison in all school districts with specific responsibilities to ensure that the provisions listed above will be met[5]

Local homeless education programs that align themselves with the U.S. Department of Education initiative will produce stronger results for students and will find themselves integrated more fully with other school district programs.

Since all LEAs, regardless of subgrant funding, must designate a local homeless education liaison, resources are needed to support staff assigned this role. The *Toolkit* is intended to provide introductory information that new local liaisons will need, along with a variety of tools that have been collected and adapted from states and local programs across the country, to make the transition to this new role smoother. While geared toward school districts not receiving McKinney-Vento funds that may have less experience serving homeless students, suggestions throughout the *Toolkit* may be valuable for experienced local liaisons, as well.

5 National Coalition for the Homeless. (2002). President Bush signs Education Reform Bill. Retrieved January 8, 2002, from *http://www.nationalhomeless.org/edannouncement.html*.

Chapter Two: Homeless Education and the Law

Maria Gonzales and her seven-year-old and nine-year-old daughters have just moved into a homeless shelter. Maria visits the neighborhood school to enroll her daughters. She is given a list of required documents—items she does not have. Maria leaves, believing her daughters cannot attend the school.

Consider:

- *Should Maria be able to enroll her children?*
- *What went wrong?*
- *What should be done?*
- *What could you do to prevent this from happening in a school in your district?*

Responses to these questions are presented at the end of the chapter.

Figure 1: Brief History of the McKinney-Vento Act

1987	1990	1994	2001–2002
Stewart B. McKinney Act signed into law. Required states to review and revise residency requirements for enrollment of homeless children and youth.	McKinney Act amended. All enrollment barriers to be eliminated. Access to and academic success in school should be pursued. Allowed direct educational services with McKinney funds.	Education portion of McKinney Act included in Improving America's Schools Act (IASA). Added preschool services, greater parental input, and emphasis on interagency collaboration.	Reauthorization as the McKinney-Vento Act. Strengthened requirements to provide access and success; required local liaison in all LEAs. Signed by President G. W. Bush on January 8, 2002.

When determining how to meet the educational needs of homeless students, an early consideration of school districts is ensuring that the LEA is in compliance with federal and state legislation. Chapter 2 reviews key components of federal legislation and offers suggestions regarding what actions local liaisons can undertake to meet the legal requirements for educating homeless children and youth.

In 1987, legislation was passed to address growing concerns about the plight of individuals experiencing homelessness. This law contained emergency relief provisions for shelter, food, mobile health care, and transitional housing. At the time, the homeless population was increasing rapidly, and there were early indications of changing demographics, with women and children representing a growing portion of the homeless population. Recognizing this growing diversity within the homeless population, Congress included provisions requiring states to ensure that all children experiencing homelessness have the same rights to a free and appropriate public education as housed children. Provisions were adopted requiring states to review and undertake steps to revise residency requirements for school attendance to ensure that homeless children do not experience delays with school enrollment. After the death of its chief Republican sponsor, Stewart B. McKinney of Connecticut, the act was renamed the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 100-77). President Ronald Reagan signed it into law on July 22, 1987.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, a state coordinator for homeless education is designated for each state. Listings of state coordinators can be found on the NCHE website at http://www.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php. The state coordinator for your state can also be identified by contacting your State Department of Education.

To help meet the new requirements, states received funds to establish or designate an office of coordination for the education of homeless children and youth. In addition to other responsibilities, the state coordinator's office was given authority to gather data on homeless children in the state and develop a state plan providing for their education. These provisions sought to give states the ability to better understand the challenges facing homeless students and increase responsibility for ensuring homeless children were not denied access to a free and appropriate public education.

In 1990, educational opportunities for the nation's homeless children and youth were further enhanced. Provided with new information and data collected by state coordinators that revealed homeless children encountered significant obstacles in obtaining free and appropriate educational services, Congress amended the McKinney Act (P.L. 101-645). The Act reflected an intolerance for any barrier that prohibited the enrollment of homeless children and youth, along with a recognition that the true challenge was not simply to enroll homeless children but to promote their academic success in public school.

Specifically, the McKinney amendments required state homeless education coordinators to look beyond residency issues toward other potential barriers that keep homeless children and youth out of school. As a result, states were required to review and revise all policies, practices, laws, and regulations that might act as barriers to the enrollment, attendance, or academic success of homeless children and youth. In addition, states were responsible for assuming a leadership role in ensuring that LEAs reviewed and revised policies and

procedures that might impede the access of homeless children and youth to a free and appropriate public education.

To promote the academic success of homeless students, the reauthorization provided for direct educational services. Prior to passage of the 1990 amendments, states were prohibited from using McKinney funds to provide such services. Today, school districts that apply for and receive McKinney-Vento subgrants may use the funds to provide before- and after-school programs, tutoring programs, referrals for medical and mental health services, preschool programs, parent education, counseling, social work services, transportation services, and other services that may not otherwise have been provided by the public school program. To meet this expanded role, appropriations were increased significantly from 1987 levels.

When amended again, the education component of the McKinney Act was incorporated into the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA, Section 323 of P.L. 103-382), the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which contains many other education programs, such as Title I, Part A, and Migrant Education. As part of IASA, the McKinney Act increased legal protections for homeless children and youth to ensure greater access to the appropriate education services provided under federal, state, and local law. Under the new amendments, states were authorized to extend services funded by McKinney to preschool children. Additionally, categorical spending limits within the law were removed, giving LEAs with McKinney funds greater flexibility in developing programs to meet the educational, social, and health needs of homeless children and youth. The law stated that a homeless child may be enrolled in the school of origin (the school attended before becoming homeless or the school in which the student was last enrolled) or the school attended by other students residing in the area where the student is staying temporarily. States were charged with ensuring that school districts abide by a parent's or guardian's preference, to the extent feasible, when making enrollment decisions. Finally, the Act strengthened provisions requiring interagency coordination and collaboration between state and local education agencies and other agencies and organizations that provide services to homeless people.

In 2001, the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program was reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act and was signed by President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002. National statistics showed that over one million children and youth are likely to experience homelessness in a given year and that extreme poverty, coupled with high mobility and loss of housing, places these children at great risk for educational challenges. These data resulted in additional supports being incorporated into the law. Among the changes for the Office of State Coordinator for Homeless Education is the requirement to strengthen state support to *all* school districts by coordinating with local liaisons to ensure accountability, greater flexibility to use McKinney-Vento funds, and increases in funding. The reauthorization strengthened the policy that homeless students should be integrated with their housed peers by explicitly prohibiting the segregation of homeless students through the creation of new separate schools or separate programs within schools and by requiring the Office of State Coordinator for Homeless Education to provide technical assistance to promptly integrate homeless children and youth attending separate schools and programs into schools and programs serving non-homeless students. Clarification of who is considered homeless is addressed by describing specific situations that qualify students as homeless. Prior to this version of the law, educators were dependent upon descriptions found in the U.S. Department of Education's Preliminary Guidance. The explicit categories are described later in this chapter.

Legal Responsibilities of LEAs

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a 2001 reauthorization requirement is the need for each LEA to designate a local homeless education liaison to ensure that homeless children and youth are identified, enrolled in school, and receive appropriate services to meet with success in school. This local liaison must assist the school district in its compliance with federal and state regulations related to the education of homeless children and youth.

A list of LEA responsibilities for serving children and youth experiencing homelessness (with examples of appropriate activities) follows in Table 1. This list provides LEAs with an outline for shaping the roles and responsibilities to be assigned to local liaisons, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. (A copy of the complete McKinney-Vento Act and U.S. Department of Education Policy Guidance can be found in Appendix A.)

In addition to federal requirements, LEAs must consider any state legislation that may further shape the responsibilities of local liaisons. Local liaisons should contact their state coordinator for state-level information related to the education of homeless children and youth.

Table 1: LEA Responsibilities and Activities

Areas of Responsibility	Activities and Responsibilities to Support Area Compliance
1. Ensure access to school and appropriate services	• Designate a contact person as a liaison for homeless children and youth, ensuring that homeless children are identified, enrolled, and receive equitable access to high-quality education and support services. • Review and revise policies that may impede homeless students' access to school. • Disseminate public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth, increasing awareness of homeless children's educational rights. • Ensure identification of children and youth experiencing homelessness. • Immediately enroll homeless children and youth, eliminating delays caused by lack of records or other enrollment requirements. • Ensure that homeless children are not segregated or stigmatized because of their homelessness.

Areas of Responsibility	Activities and Responsibilities to Support Area Compliance
1. Ensure access to school and appropriate services (cont.)	• Offer services to homeless students that are offered to non-homeless students, including transportation services and educational services for which the student is eligible (e.g., Head Start; Even Start; preschool; programs for students with limited English proficiency LEP/ESL/ELL], programs for gifted and talented students, special education, etc.). • Ensure coordination between homeless education and Title I, Part A, programs. • Maintain and transfer records in a timely fashion. • Assist with immunizations. • Promote awareness among staff of the needs of students experiencing homelessness.
2. Reduce school transfers and enhance educational stability and continuity	• Keep children in their school of origin to the extent feasible, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of parents/guardians. • Ensure the right to attend school of origin extends for the entire duration of homelessness and that children who become housed during the academic year may continue their education in the school of origin for the remainder of the academic year.
3. Strengthen parental choice and involvement	• Ensure homeless parents are fully informed of the enrollment options and educational opportunities available to their children. • Provide written explanation to parents should disputes arise over school selection or school enrollment and refer parents to liaisons to mediate such disputes. • Provide homeless parents with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.

Areas of Responsibility	Activities and Responsibilities to Support Area Compliance
4. Ensure educational rights of unaccompanied youth	• Immediately enroll unaccompanied youth. • Maintain unaccompanied youth in school of origin to the extent feasible, unless this is against the youth's wishes. • Immediately enroll youth in the school to which they seek enrollment pending resolution of any disputes regarding such placement. • When applying for McKinney-Vento funding, include an assessment of the needs of unaccompanied youth in the application.
5. Ensure access to public preschool programs for young homeless children	• Inform preschools operated by the SEA or LEA of McKinney-Vento Act provisions related to young homeless children. • Develop policies and strategies to facilitate the enrollment of young homeless children in preschool programs

Impact of Other Educational Legislation

The McKinney-Vento Act states that homeless children and youth must have access to the same educational services provided to other students. In addition, other educational legislation makes reference to serving homeless students. For example:

- Head Start includes homeless preschoolers as a targeted population to be served. Background on homelessness and its impact on young children, as well as implementation guidance, can be found in a 1992 Information Memorandum from the Head Start Bureau (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Log Number: ACF-IM-92-12). Just as the legislation requires public schools to identify and remove barriers that may delay enrollment, the same requirement applies to Head Start programs.

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was amended in 2004 to facilitate the timely assessment, appropriate service provision and placement, and continuity of services for children and youth with disabilities who experience homelessness and high mobility. The reauthorized law requires greater coordination and compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act. IDEA also requires that homeless preschoolers and

all homeless children be included in the Child Find process for early identification of special education needs. For unaccompanied youth, IDEA specifically requires LEAs to appoint surrogate parents and to make reasonable efforts to complete the appointment process within 30 days.

- Title I, Part A, targets students most at risk of failing in school. A child who is homeless and attending any school in the district is eligible for Title I services. This includes schoolwide schools, targeted assistance schools, and non-Title I schools. LEAs must reserve (set aside) a portion of Title I, Part A, funds needed to provide services to homeless students in non-Title I schools that are comparable to those being received by other Title I students. In addition, in order to receive their allocation of Title I funds, the LEA must include how the district will coordinate with the McKinney-Vento Act when filing their plan with the SEA.

- The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 makes runaway, homeless, and migrant children categorically eligible for free school meals. To implement expedited procedures, school officials must work closely with the local liaison and directors of homeless shelters to ensure that children are provided free meal benefits as promptly as possible, as well as to ensure that the school food service is promptly advised when children leave the school or are no longer considered homeless. The local liaison should be familiar with the appropriate school district contacts for free and reduced price meals programs and explore opportunities to collaborate. Suggestions for such collaborative efforts can be found in Chapter 5.

See Appendix B for additional information on laws that impact the education of homeless children and youth.

Defining Homelessness

Before schools can be certain they are complying with legislation related to educating students experiencing homelessness, they must understand who can be considered homeless. The McKinney-Vento Act (Section 725) defines homeless children and youth as follows:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are:
  - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
  - Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
  - Abandoned in hospitals.
  - Awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Migratory children who qualify as

homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

- Unaccompanied youth who quality as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above. The term “unaccompanied youth” includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This would include runaways living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the streets, or in other inadequate housing; children and youth denied housing by their families (sometimes referred to as “throwaway children and youth”); and school-age unwed mothers living in homes for unwed mothers because they have no other housing available.

In determining whether or not a child or youth is homeless, the LEA should consider the relative permanence of the living arrangements. Determinations of homelessness should be made on a case-by-case basis. Note that incarcerated children and youth are not considered homeless. A helpful resource is NCHE’s *Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act* issue brief, available at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php*. (See Appendix J for additional resources.)

Many staff members within a school district may encounter homeless students while carrying out their responsibilities. In addition, the community and schools must work together to reach homeless families and unaccompanied youth and ensure they are aware of their educational rights. To fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the law successfully, the local liaison should provide training and awareness materials throughout the school district and community. (See Appendix C for additional awareness resources.)

Return to the case of Maria presented at the beginning of this chapter.

Consider:

Should Maria be able to enroll her children?

Yes, lack of records cannot delay enrollment for students experiencing homelessness.

What went wrong?

Maria did not have information about the educational rights of her children. Possibly, the school was unaware of these rights as well.

What should be done?

Basic information about the McKinney-Vento Act should be available to school personnel and homeless families.

What could you do to prevent this from happening in a school in your district?

- *Ensure an individual in the school district assumes the role of local homeless education liaison, as required by the McKinney-Vento Act.*
- *Encourage the identification of school-level contacts to work with the district liaison.*
- *Place posters in community areas and at the school where enrollment occurs.*
- *Have brochures in shelters and other community services offices explaining the educational rights of homeless children and youth.*
- *Provide staff responsible for enrollment (principals, secretaries, attendance officers, guidance counselors, etc.) with training to recognize who may be considered homeless and to comply with the enrollment requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act.*
- *Implement additional support strategies in the succeeding chapters of this Toolkit.*

Chapter Three:
Local Liaison Roles and Responsibilities

Policies and Procedures on the Local Front

Principal Phil Branton has noticed that students are arriving at his school from a recently opened shelter in the neighborhood. This is a new development, and Principal Branton has had no experience working with homeless families. Shelter workers are telling him the children can enroll even if they cannot fulfill the school district's enrollment requirements.

Consider:

- *Who can Principal Branton contact to learn about his responsibilities when enrolling students experiencing homelessness?*
- *What other information and resources might Principal Branton need to best serve these new students?*

Responses to these questions are presented at the end of the chapter.

The establishment of local homeless education liaisons addresses the questions posed in the previous scenario. All local school districts must comply with the basic requirements for serving homeless children and youth outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act. However, without an individual identified by the district to coordinate such efforts, there may be many Principal Brantons with little experience and little knowledge of the legal requirements for serving homeless students. In Chapter 2 we reviewed local requirements required by the McKinney-Vento Act. This chapter provides suggestions for local policies and procedures and outlines the responsibilities a local liaison may be assigned to ensure compliance and improve services for homeless children and youth.

Identifying Homeless Children and Youth

Look at the picture below. Can you determine which child is homeless?

Appearance alone is insufficient to identify a child or youth as homeless. There is no simple method to make such identification—that's part of the challenge schools face when attempting to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness.

Knowledge of the definition of homelessness and legal requirements will not ensure homeless children and youth have access to and receive the educational services to which they are entitled. Schools may not be aware that a family arriving at the school to enroll is homeless or that the students they serve are experiencing homelessness. Homelessness can be "invisible." Schools may not be aware of the indicators that suggest homelessness exists, and families may be reluctant to share such information.

So, how can homelessness become more visible for school personnel? Strategies include:

- Collaborating with community agencies, including shelters, to identify homeless children who require access to the public school system.
- Offering professional development opportunities to support staff in learning how to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness and their educational needs.
- Recognizing the warning signs of homelessness.
- Providing a supportive, welcoming setting for families.

Such efforts must be in place if the full intent of the law to meet the educational needs of homeless children and youth is to be realized.

This section includes tips for identification procedures. In addition, common signs of homelessness can be found in Appendix C, formatted for use as a handout or flyer.

Tips for Identifying Homeless Children and Youth

Familiarity with potential warning signs is a first step in identifying children and youth who may be homeless. Effective identification also requires additional analysis of information already being collected by the district and community outreach. Consider the following strategies suggested by local school districts:

- Post educational rights of homeless children in areas throughout the community and school areas where families will see them when they enroll. (NCHE provides free posters upon request by ordering online at *http://www.serve.org/nche/online_order.php*. Contact your state coordinator to see if your state provides a state version.)
- Disseminate brochures or flyers that explain the educational rights of homeless children; offer suggestions to ensure children are enrolled in school quickly and offer contact information for additional help. Send a supply to each shelter that accepts children in your area, department of social services, health department, and other service providers that may work with homeless families. (See Appendix C for awareness materials or contact NCHE at 800-308-2145 or *homeless@serve.org* for materials for parents and unaccompanied youth.)
- Familiarize staff with the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homelessness.
- Access student management software. Make use of the capabilities of the administrative software at your school. Sort and list students

by address and note occurrences of the same address for more than one family.

- Review mailing labels. When printing newsletters or other mailing labels, note occurrences of the same address for more than one family.

- Become familiar with local motel addresses. Look up the addresses of low-cost motels, and note when families/students list them as their own.

- Make personal contacts with the front desk staff at motels, low-cost health facilities, police stations, and other public service facilities. Ask them to notify you when they meet homeless families with children.

- Enroll a child or youth who lacks records immediately. Missing records may be an indicator of homelessness. Contact the previous school to have the records sent. Develop a procedure to assess students for placement purposes if academic records are not immediately available.

- Avoid using the word "homeless" when discussing a student's possible eligibility. Many families will not disclose that they are homeless for fear of being stigmatized; or, the family may not be aware of some of the living situations that would qualify them for services, such as living doubled-up with friends or relatives due to loss of housing.

- Use a district-wide residency questionnaire upon enrollment; the questionnaire should include checkboxes for different kinds of living arrangements, such as "home", "apartment", "shelter", "doubled-up", "in vehicle", etc. (See Appendix D for a sample residency questionnaire.) Follow up with families whose living arrangements may qualify them for services under McKinney-Vento.

- When homeless families enroll their children in school, ask if they have preschool-age children.

- Offer assistance if you think a family may be homeless.

    - Assure families that their children can enroll even if the family does not have a "regular place to live" right now.

    - If possible, take the family to a private location away from the front desk when enrolling.

    - Offer help in completing forms. Hesitation may indicate an inability to read. Have materials available in multiple languages.

    - Provide the student with supplies needed to take into the classroom.

    - Work with your school nutrition specialist to ensure that free meals are provided at school.

    - Be sensitive, patient, calm, and reassuring.

Identification processes can be made systematic through tracking with appropriate documentation. Challenges of sharing information across agencies while maintaining appropriate confidentiality (such as FERPA - the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) may require interagency agreements. Data management systems are becoming more common to assist multiple agencies that serve homeless individuals and families to share information. As these become more prevalent, districts should explore how they could participate in the process. Coordinating with the school district's data management department and contacting the local Housing and Urban

Development (HUD) office may be logical first steps in identifying the appropriate channels. Many localities have developed district-level systems for identifying and tracking homeless students, including San Antonio, Texas; Richmond, Virginia; and West Contra Costa Unified School District in California. Appendix D contains forms adapted from the documentation used by these LEAs.

The effectiveness of such a system for collecting information related to homeless status upon enrollment will require appropriate training of staff responsible for the school enrollment process, such as secretaries, guidance counselors, and principals. Such information can then be used to improve services for students experiencing homelessness such as:

- Referrals to counselors or social workers when additional services are needed
- A means of identifying mobility patterns
- A way to disaggregate achievement data

Refinements to the services being provided by the school district could then be made using data-driven decision making. (See Appendix E for further tools and information on data collection.)

Facilitating Enrollment

According to the McKinney-Vento Act, local school districts must review local policies and procedures and revise those that may act as barriers that prevent homeless children and youth from accessing the appropriate services. The law further states that homeless students must be enrolled immediately. This section identifies common barriers homeless children and youth encounter and offers suggestions for alternatives that could be incorporated into local policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act.

Review and revision of legislation, policies, and procedures have been required at the state level as well. Despite efforts to comply, some state laws and policies may continue to conflict with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act. An important reference when this occurs is the United States Constitution, Article VI, known as the Supremacy Clause, which states that federal law supersedes state law when conflicts arise. In addition, to receive funds from other compensatory programs, including Title I, Part A, states and LEAs must provide assurances that they will comply with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act.

Local school districts should contact their state coordinator's office for guidance when reviewing policies and procedures. Your state coordinator is a resource that can provide information related to state requirements and policies. In addition, the state coordinator may have additional guidance on local districts' policies and procedures tailored to your state. The national homeless education partners can also assist in determining compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act. (See Appendix P for national partner contact information.)

Please note that significant changes in policies and procedures will likely involve the cooperation of the local school superintendent, local school boards, and possibly the district's attorney. Local liaisons pursuing revisions to local policies and procedures should identify the appropriate channels and important contacts who should be involved. Support from high-ranking local administration is needed for significant changes to be acknowledged at the school level where students are served. (See Appendix F for a sample local homeless education policy that complements the McKinney-Vento Act.)

Residency Requirements

Homeless children and youth may move frequently and reside in places lacking traditional addresses. This makes residency difficult to verify. A form to assist in verifying homelessness can be found in Appendix D. In addition, federal law requires that students have the following two options for school enrollment: (a) the school of origin (that is, the school the child attended prior to becoming homeless or the school in which the child was last enrolled) or (b) the school attended by other students residing in the same area where the family is staying temporarily. (For more information, download the NCHE brief, *Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Services: Do's and Don'ts for Local Liaisons*, at http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php.)

Determining residence of homeless children and youth for enrollment purposes must acknowledge these two options. Remaining in the school of origin is considered generally to be the best option for maintaining school stability and educational continuity, if this is feasible, meaning, in the student's best interest. (For feasibility considerations, see item G-4 in the U.S. Department of Education Guidance in Appendix A. See Appendix D's sample form, *Determining Feasibility of School Placement*. Download the NCHE brief, *Guiding the Discussion on School Selection*, at http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php; this brief provides questions that school staff may use with parents to determine the best school selection option for their child.)

The wishes of the student's parents must be considered first. In the event that the school district's decision does not concur with the parents' preference, written documentation must be sent to the parents who have the right to appeal by following the state's enrollment dispute procedure.

In the event that the student is an unaccompanied youth, the wishes of the youth must be considered. An unaccompanied youth also may appeal a school district decision using the dispute resolution process.

A decision made at the school district level must be documented if a dispute occurs. The school district should be able to provide evidence that it acted in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act to serve the best interests of the student.

Residency concerns cannot delay the enrollment or attendance of a student experiencing homelessness. While disputes are being resolved, the student must be enrolled and attending the school requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, whether it be the local school or the school of origin.

Students' Documentation for School Enrollment

Frequent moves, lack of personal space, domestic violence, and many other factors can make it difficult for homeless families to maintain the documentation schools require for enrollment. Frequently, alternatives for the most common documentation or copies of originals, may be substituted. In addition, technology is useful in expediting the transmission of needed information. Phone calls and faxes can be used to quickly locate missing documentation, such as academic and special education records, immunization and health records, or birth certificates. The McKinney-Vento Act requires that the enrolling school must contact the last school attended to obtain student records. Suggestions for specific documents can be found in Table 2. While waiting for documentation, the school must enroll the student.

Guardianship and Unaccompanied

Youth

Complications in family living arrangements may prevent homeless students from being able to reside with parents due to shelter restrictions or lack of adequate space. For example, a teenage son may not be allowed to stay with his mother in a domestic violence shelter. Children and youth may be living with other relatives or friends in areas far from the parents' residence. Runaway youth or youth whose families have abandoned them may have no recognized guardian. These children and youth cannot be denied enrollment due to the lack of a legal guardian. An affidavit signed by an adult willing to act *en loco parentis* (in the place of the parent) may be considered as an option. Schools, with the assistance of the local liaison, should enroll these students immediately and work with the appropriate authorities to ensure their access to needed services. (For more information, download the NCHE briefs, *Unaccompanied Homeless Youth* and *When Legal Guardians Are Not Present: Enrolling Students on Their Own*, at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php*.)

Table 2. Potential Enrollment Barriers and Possible Solutions

Potential Enrollment Barriers	Possible Solutions
Residency requirements	■ Check state law for specific exemptions for homeless children and youth. ■ Allow alternative proof: ■ Student Residency Form (See Appendix D) ■ Hotel or motel receipt ■ Letter from shelter, community agency, or parent verifying homelessness and indicating location of residence
Original birth certificate requirement	■ Allow alternative proof: ■ Other original documents: baptismal record, passport, immigration certificate, notice of birth, or verification of birthdate from the hospital where the child was born ■ Copies of school records, birth certificate, or birthdate verification from appropriate social service agency ■ Affidavit (See Appendix D)

Potential Enrollment Barriers	Possible Solutions
Social Security card or number	■ May request number, but cannot require it. (See the Privacy Act of 1974 or Plyler v. Doe for supporting legislation.) ■ Assist family in obtaining cards or new copies, if lost, from the Social Security Administration (Social Security Hotline: 800-772-1213).
Previous school records, including special education IEPs	■ Accept parent report with phone call verification to the previous school. ■ Have records faxed from the previous school. ■ If the previous school cannot be identified, or if the student was not previously enrolled, consider creating a procedure for immediate screening and placement (See NCHE brief, *Prompt and Proper Placement: Enrolling Students Without Records,* at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php*).
Health records and immunizations	■ Accept copies, phone calls, faxes, or references in previous school records as verification. ■ If no records exist or immunizations have not been received, have the school refer the family to the local liaison to help the parents in obtaining the necessary immunizations and/or records; this is a requirement of local liaisons under the McKinney-Vento Act. ■ If appropriate, the parent or guardian may sign a "personal beliefs" exemption stating such medical services run counter to personal or religious beliefs.
Parent or guardianship verification	■ Accept an affidavit (See Appendix D). ■ Accept documentation of a court date for pending custody hearings. *Note: Schools may be required to report circumstances where guardianship has not been verified.*
Unaccompanied youth	■ Enroll the student and work with appropriate agencies to assist the student. ■ Have the adult with whom the student is staying complete a Caregiver's Authorization Form (See Appendix D).

Dispute Resolution

Each state is required to have a process for resolving disputes related to enrolling homeless children and youth in school. This process may occur when questions regarding school of origin or transportation services arise. The local liaison is frequently one of the first individuals to be informed of such a dispute and has specific responsibilities that should be outlined in the state's enrollment dispute resolution process. Contact your state coordinator for a copy of your state's procedure.

Ensuring Access to Educational Services

When students experiencing homelessness enroll in school, they will frequently require access to special school programs. The students and families should be connected with appropriate services as soon as possible. Homeless students must have access to all educational programs and services for which they are eligible. Unfortunately, the normal referral process may delay services, and if families move frequently, the process may not be complete before students move again.

Be sure to consider the following programs when reviewing local policies and procedures to decide if homeless students do have the appropriate access:

- Free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch
- Title I, Part A
- Special education
- Gifted and talented
- Transportation
- After-school and summer programs
- Head Start and other early childhood programs in the district
- ELL/ESL/LEP services

A local homeless education liaison should contact offices that provide these educational services in the school district to discuss how homeless students receive such services and to determine if any revisions in policies or procedures would ensure greater access.(See Appendix B for information on related laws.)

Suggestions to initiate collaboration with other departments can be found in Chapter 5.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Local Programs

Documenting the efforts made by local school districts in serving homeless children and youth can be formalized through a data collection and/or evaluation process. Data obtained can be used to improve programs and current efforts, document compliance and accountability, and leverage supplemental funding when sought.

A resource entitled *McKinney-Vento Data Standards and Indicators Guidebook* is available on the NCHE website at *http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php*. NCHE facilitated the development of standards for quality McKinney-Vento programs with input from state coordinators, local liaisons, national partners, and staff from the U.S. Department of Education. The standards represent a comprehensive approach to serving homeless children and youth in a school district; the indicators for each standard provide suggestions for collecting concrete, quantifiable data to determine the extent to which the standard is being met. (See Appendix E for the Standards and Indicators and other data

collection resources.)

LEA Responsibilities a Local Liaison May Fulfill

A local homeless education liaison can fulfill many roles. The local liaison can be an administrator, a professional development coordinator, a collaborator, or an outreach specialist. The local school district will need to shape the position, based on its current needs in serving homeless children and youth. These responsibilities should be revisited over time with some items being deleted and others added, depending on the composition of the community, the level of awareness established in the schools, and the level of implementation that has occurred for revised policies and procedures. Table 3 lists many of the responsibilities that a local liaison is required to fulfill. In addition, the table includes responsibilities that are suggested as good practice.

Table 3. Responsibilities for Local Homeless Education Liaisons

Issue	Responsibility	Legally Required
Policies and procedures	■ Review local policies and procedures that may impact homeless children and youth, such as school enrollment and access to school programs (This is an LEA requirement that may be assumed by the local liaison).	✓
	■ Revise local policies and procedures determined to be potential barriers for homeless children and youth (This is an LEA requirement that may be assumed by the local liaison).	✓
	■ Ensure that homeless students are identified by school personnel.	✓

Issue	Responsibility	Legally Required
Enrollment and access to educational services	■ Ensure that homeless students enroll in, and receive equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the LEA.	⚖
	■ Ensure that homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including free school meals, Head Start, Even Start, and preschool programs administered by the LEA; and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.	⚖
	■ Ensure that parents or guardians are informed of educational and related opportunities that are available to their children and are provided meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education.	⚖
	■ Assist in the resolution of disputes, ensuring that they are mediated in accordance with the state's dispute resolution process.	⚖
	■ Facilitate transportation arrangements.	⚖

Issue	Responsibility	Legally Required
Outreach	■ Ensure that the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any accompanied youth, is fully informed of all educational rights, including the right to remain in, and receive transportation to, the school of origin.	⚖
	■ Post the educational rights of homeless children and youth in all schools in the district.	⚖
	■ Post the educational rights of homeless children and youth in the community in places where homeless families and youth may receive services (e.g., shelters, public health clinics, libraries, and soup kitchens).	⚖
	■ Inform school personnel, service providers, and advocates who work with homeless families and youth about the duties of the local liaison.	⚖
	■ Collaborate and coordinate with state coordinators, community service providers, and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.	⚖
Unaccompanied youth	■ Assist unaccompanied youth in school enrollment and placement decisions, including considering the youth's wishes in those decisions, and providing notice to the youth of the right to appeal such decisions through the dispute resolution process.	⚖
	■ Ensure that unaccompanied youth are enrolled immediately in school pending the resolution of any dispute that arises over school enrollment and placement.	⚖
	■ Assist children and youth who do not have immunizations or medical records in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records. (See Appendix J for resources related to serving unaccompanied youth.)	⚖

Issue	Responsibility	Legally Required
Suggested activities to ensure district-wide compliance	■ Provide professional development for school district staff to build awareness of the educational needs of homeless students, legal responsibilities of the school, and local policies and procedures. ■ Provide outreach to community service providers through presentations, announcements, and dissemination of relevant resources. ■ Provide training for parents. ■ Distribute tutoring supplies, clothing, and other useful resources to schools. ■ Conduct a needs assessment to find out what needs to be improved in your district's efforts to serve homeless students. ■ Conduct an evaluation of your district's homeless education program.	

The list of responsibilities in Table 3 is in no way exhaustive, yet may appear overwhelming at first glance. Many of these responsibilities will require outreach and collaboration with the community, other district-level personnel, and school-level personnel. Chapters 5 and 6 contain suggestions and resources to begin such outreach and to build partnerships to meet the educational needs of homeless children and youth.

Return to the case of Principal Phil Branton presented at the beginning of this chapter.

Consider:

Who can Principal Branton contact to learn about his responsibilities when enrolling students experiencing homelessness?

- *The local homeless education liaison is the most appropriate contact for the principal. The local liaison not only has information on federal and state requirements but also can explain how these requirements are implemented at the local level.*
- *The state coordinator for homeless education can also be a useful resource, especially when discussing general information related to state/federal requirements.*
- *The national partners in homeless education. (See Appendix P for contact information.)*

Chapter Four: Strategies for Meeting the Educational Needs of Homeless Children and Youth

An advisory board for homeless education met to discuss what they could do to promote access to and success in schools for children and youth experiencing homelessness. Around the table sat individuals who worked with students in shelters, a local homeless education liaison, a classroom teacher, and several school district administrators. Ideas flowed about methods to get information to staff involved in educating students. The board members realized that building awareness was key and talked about mailings, personal contacts, training opportunities, and the successes and frustrations that they had faced. In addition to the ever-present need to build awareness was the question of how to actually meet the educational needs of children and youth. The team came to the following conclusions:

1) Get students enrolled in school.

2) Identify their individual needs.

3) Connect the students with the appropriate services.

The board members realized that homeless students are a diverse group whose educational needs vary greatly and that the community and school district had resources available that could meet many of the potential needs. The conversation returned to awareness. The academic success of homeless children and youth could be increased if staff:

- *Had information about students experiencing homelessness.*
- *Were able to identify the potential needs of homeless students.*
- *Could refer students to the appropriate school district and community supports.*

Consider:

- *Given this scenario, what steps would you recommend be taken next?*
- *Do other people need to be included in the planning? If so, who?*

Responses to these questions are presented at the end of the chapter.

The McKinney-Vento Act calls for states and localities to eliminate enrollment barriers. Chapter 3 reviewed common barriers and suggested potential remedies. Underlying any endeavor taken on behalf of students who are experiencing homelessness is the need to ensure that people understand what the law allows and how the state expects localities to implement the requirements. If compliance is to be realized and homeless children are to be served appropriately, school personnel must know what rights these children have. Building awareness across multiple levels is a major responsibility of local liaisons.

- At the school district level, the local liaison may assist the school district in identifying any existing barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth and take steps to alleviate them.

- At the school level, individuals responsible for student enrollment must be aware of the mandates in federal and state law related to students who meet the definition of homelessness.

- At the classroom level, teachers must know how to meet the needs of the highly mobile homeless students and the class as a whole.

Promoting awareness of the educational needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness among staff at all levels is needed to provide educational access and effective strategies that lead to greater success in school.

Awareness Building

A three-pronged approach to awareness building may be taken in the school district by addressing specific issues at three levels: (a) the school district/community level, (b) the school level, and (c) the classroom level. In order to build awareness, the local liaison must decide where to target such efforts, what channels to access, and what message to provide. The issue of homelessness is complex and can be overwhelming. In reality, most local liaisons have time limitations, with homeless education accounting for a small portion of the multiple responsibilities they must fulfill. Therefore, efforts must be targeted. Chapter 4 offers suggestions for building awareness and developing strategies from the school district level to the classroom level. (Appendix C contains helpful awareness materials. Appendix H contains additional resources related to collaboration. Appendix N contains useful training resources.)

What Can School Districts Do?

Become Familiar with Laws and Policies Affecting Homeless Students

School districts must have procedures to ensure that students experiencing homelessness have access to school. The local liaison is the key person to understand the McKinney-Vento Act and ways it should be implemented in the school district. The local liaison should also be familiar with other laws that affect homeless students, such as Title I, Part A; IDEA; and free school meals. In addition, the local liaison must be aware of state and local policies that either support or act as barriers to the education of homeless students. The local liaison is instrumental in creating district-wide awareness of laws and policies and in facilitating the revision of policies that pose barriers.

Conduct a Needs Assessment

Best practice suggests that a needs assessment be conducted to shape the development of an action plan. Taking the time to conduct a needs assessment and create a service plan provides

the local liaison with a clear sense of where to start and a vision of anticipated goals to be realized. Needs can be identified, grant-writing opportunities targeted, and collaboration initiated to meet the educational needs of students. In addition, if the district is considering applying for McKinney-Vento funds, a needs assessment will be required as part of the application process.

Local liaisons should work with their school district data departments. Ongoing, systematic data collection will ensure that local liaisons have the most current information to share related to the needs of homeless children and youth. (See Appendix E for resources to assist with conducting a needs assessment and collecting data.)

Since LEAs not receiving McKinney-Vento funding may have limited resources to conduct a needs assessment, the state coordinator could be contacted for basic information collected at the state level. For example, state coordinators will have information on barriers that continue to be challenging and examples of practices that have been successful at the local level. Local liaisons in nearby school districts with subgrants can be another valuable resource. The state coordinator will have contact information for such local liaisons.

Identify Community Contacts

Local liaisons will need basic information about the community related to issues impacting homeless students. For example, knowledge of the location of all shelters that accept children and youth in the school district and surrounding communities and the populations they serve is needed to build relationships with shelter workers who may assist families enrolling students. A similar approach could be used with low-income motels. It is important that the schools serving areas with shelters and hotels be informed of the existence of these residences to encourage school-level outreach.

Localities receiving HUD funds have participated in a Continuum of Care process that includes an extensive needs assessment, including the identification of existing resources, agencies, and their services. This information would be valuable when referring homeless families for services and building collaborative networks with the schools. Other potential sources for this information would be state or local interagency groups working with homeless families. Again, your state homeless education coordinator may be able to identify agencies and contacts. Students experiencing homelessness have many needs beyond those addressed by schools. Assisting families through referrals for additional services, such as housing, medical services, and social services, can increase stability and ensure students are ready to learn when they reach the classroom.

Provide Outreach to Schools and the Community

As noted in Chapter 2, LEAs, with the assistance of local liaisons, must ensure access of children and youth experiencing homelessness to school by:

- Educating school personnel about the federal, state, and local (if applicable) laws and guidelines regarding the education of students experiencing homelessness.
- Posting signs (in multiple languages, if applicable) in schools and other locations where homeless families receive services to let parents/guardians know of their student's educational rights.
- Collaborating with community organizations.

In addition, it is recommended that local liaisons:

- Contact local shelters and inform shelter directors or children's coordinators of the appropriate contact for assistance with school-related issues.
- Distribute materials about the educational needs of homeless children and youth.
- Meet district-level directors of departments such as guidance; special education; gifted education; transportation; and Title I, Part A, to identify collaborative efforts to benefit students experiencing homelessness.

Review, Revise, and Develop Local Policies and Procedures

The local liaison should ensure that local policies and procedures are reviewed and recommend changes to facilitate the enrollment and academic success of homeless students as needed. Since no requirements can act as barriers to delay enrollment, all enrollment requirements should be identified and alternatives generated that could satisfy requirements or expedite their fulfillment. For example, the McKinney-Vento Act states that a student who lacks proof of residency cannot be denied access to school. A logical substitution could be an affidavit stating where the student is currently staying at night in place of a utility bill. Chapter 3 of the *Toolkit* contains additional examples of barriers and potential solutions.

The requirement to keep a homeless student in his or her school of origin when feasible (in the child's best interest) necessitates a process to make such a determination. Schools must first consider the school of origin and the preference of the parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth. If the school disagrees with the family's or youth's preference, the school must provide written documentation of its decision and its justification. The family then has the option to follow the procedures established by the state's dispute resolution process. Having such procedures in place will support schools in collecting information to best serve their students experiencing homelessness while not delaying enrollment.

Districtwide procedures for working with students who are homeless increase the consistency of school responses. Such procedures should address the following:

- Enrollment
- School of origin
- Transportation
- Access to educational programs
- Dispute resolution (developed by the state)

Appendix J includes links to briefs that have been created jointly by the national partners in homeless education with input from state and local programs. These resources may be helpful in developing effective policies and procedures consistent with the McKinney-Vento Act. Appendix F includes a sample local policy that LEAs may use as a model to complement the law in their district.

Collaborate with Other School District Programs

The local liaison also may serve as a resource to other school district departments to ensure that students experiencing homelessness have access to the appropriate educational services. The local liaison may identify ways for the departments to use what they are already doing to assist students experiencing homelessness.

Table 4: Ensuring Access to Other Educational Programs

Department	Suggestions of What Can Be Done
Federal Programs (e.g., Title I, Part A; Title II; Safe and Drug-Free Schools; Migrant Education)	■ Look for an overlap in missions and populations to serve homeless children and youth collaboratively ■ Review the legislative requirements for these programs and their references to serving homeless students.
Special Education	■ Review provisions for homeless students with special needs in the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA. ■ Work with the school district's special education coordinator to ensure that schools expedite requests for child studies and determinations of eligibility; homeless students often move before the process is complete and, as a result, experience delays in obtaining services. Homeless children must be included in Child Find efforts. The local liaison's community contacts can assist in these efforts. The local liaison and special education coordinator should also develop a process for identifying a surrogate for an unaccompanied youth, when needed.
Staff Development	■ Offer a session on the McKinney-Vento Act and meeting the needs of homeless and highly mobile students to teachers, school counselors, enrollment staff, pupil transportation staff, and school and district administrators. ■ Provide short information "blurbs" about homeless education for school and district newsletters. (See Appendix N for helpful training resources, including online tutorials, that may be recommended to school and district staff.)
Student Support Services	■ Using district databases, track student movement within the school district and target students moving frequently to determine if homelessness is a factor. If so, stabilize the student's school placement should future moves occur. ■ Work with attendance and truancy staff to help you identify students whose homelessness is affecting attendance and generate strategies to increase regular attendance.
Transportation	■ Discuss the transportation provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act with the pupil transportation director and establish policies and procedures to arrange transportation for homeless students expeditiously. ■ Include shelters on school bus routes so that stops are located nearby, and be responsive to changes, as needed. If possible, arrange for students in shelters to be the first on and last off the bus, to avoid stigmatization.

What Can School Personnel Do?

In general, school-level administrators need information to share with staff members responsible for enrolling new students. This information should include the rights of homeless children and youth to a free and appropriate public education and examples of best practices that promote compliance. Staff development may initially target district schools with the greatest likelihood of serving homeless students; however, all district schools will need information on homeless education to ensure doubled-up populations and children continuing to attend their school of origin are served appropriately, as well. Staff serving unaccompanied youth, in particular, should receive information on the challenges facing these students and ways to support their academic progress and ensure credit accrual and retrieval.

One way to disseminate information is to request a slot on the agenda of the school district principals' meeting. During a brief presentation, the local liaison can explain his/her role in ensuring student access to school and request that principals designate a homeless education contact for each school.

Local liaisons who have developed school-level contacts report that this has been a critical element of their success in reaching homeless students. With a point of contact's name, it is more likely that materials sent to the school will get to the appropriate staff and be read. The contact becomes a resource to call when problems arise. Given principals' limited time, a form the principal completes to identify such a contact and returns via intra-district mail is recommended. A flyer could be included providing general information on enrollment requirements and tips for the designated contact. A sample form for identifying a school-level point of contact is included in Appendix G.

A variety of professionals work in schools and impact the experiences of students who are homeless. Tip sheets that local liaisons can distribute to critical personnel, such as guidance counselors, school secretaries, administrators, and school nurses, are provided in Appendix L.

What Can Classroom Teachers Do?

The local liaison for homeless education can provide teacher tips for working with homeless students that:

- Heighten teacher awareness of the issues and needs associated with working with children and youth who are homeless.
- Promote sensitivity to the issue of homelessness.
- Support effective teaching strategies.
- Ensure all students participate in local and statewide assessments.

Most educators feel a connection to the students they teach. They want the best for them. However, few educators have had the experience of being homeless and may not be aware of what it is like to live in a shelter. They may not know the telltale signs of homelessness. While there are volumes of information that one could give educators, brief lists that can be read quickly and incorporated into the classroom environment with relative ease may be most useful.

When a student is identified as homeless, the teacher should be told privately and confidentially. Prior districtwide training and dissemination of information may prepare teachers for such an occurrence. Sensitivity can be nurtured in advance, but concrete strategies to meet the educational needs of homeless students may need to be revisited. Resources should be readily available for

teachers who have not had homeless students in their classes before. If school-level contacts have been identified, these contacts could have pre-made packets to share with teachers as needed. (Handouts on recognizing signs of homelessness and teacher tips for creating a successful school experience for students experiencing homelessness are included in Appendices C and L. A list of NCHE publications that focus on instructional practice can be found in Appendix N.)

What Can Parents Do?

Parents and guardians play an important role in shaping how students perceive the change in their living arrangements. Parents may be disillusioned about the school experience from their own K–12 experiences or from frustrations of trying to get their children enrolled. Families may need some tips to assist their child during this time.

- The NCHE brief, *Guiding the Discussion on School Selection*, assists parents in deciding whether to keep their child in the school of origin or transfer their child to a new school. Download the brief at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php*.

- A sample parent tip sheet can be found in Appendix L.

- A parent booklet, *What to Do to Help Your Child in School*, is available from NCHE; order online at *http://www.serve.org/nche/online_order.php* or by phone at 800-308-2145.

In addition to helping parents, these materials may be beneficial to enrollment staff, shelter staff, and teachers. For enrollment staff, the materials will help them know what kind of questions the parents may ask. For the shelter worker, the materials will assist in coaching parents who need to enroll students in school. For the teacher, the materials may identify activities that could be incorporated into the classroom. The experience will more likely be a positive one if individuals are sensitive and welcoming to the parents.

Teachers should offer to assist parents by explaining report card information such as their children's state assessment scores. This information will assist parents in making good decisions about their children's education.

Parents should be encouraged to participate in school events, such as activities of the parent-teacher organization. Assisting with transportation may help parents who are unable to come to school to be involved. For parents who are hesitant to come to the school, an informational visit to the shelter or place where the family is currently staying may reinforce that the school is interested in the well-being of their children and the input parents provide.

Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

The local homeless education liaison must support awareness building among all school district personnel. Teachers, administrators, secretaries, guidance counselors, social workers, and other staff are constantly changing, just as the homeless population seems to be in constant motion. Attending to awareness once a year will not be sufficient. Awareness must be an integral part of the local liaison's ongoing responsibilities. Using lists for quick reminders and reference will link what people need to know with what the child or youth is experiencing. (See Appendices C, L, and N for awareness, quick reference, and training materials.)

Return to the case of the local advisory board in the beginning of this chapter.

Consider:

Given this scenario, what steps would you recommend be taken next?

First, the board should be applauded for having a formal mechanism for dialogue across agencies. If they have not done so, the board may wish to:

- *Conduct a needs assessment or tap into an existing resource such as that required for Continuum of Care.*
- *Be sure schools have contact information for local shelters and low-income motels in their attendance zones.*
- *Identify contacts in other education programs homeless students may access.*
- *Provide easy-to-read reference lists to education and related professionals.*

Do other people need to be included in the planning? If so, who?

Others are probably needed, although the board already includes multiple perspectives. Some potential future participants include administrators for Title I, Part A; special education; staff development; student support services; and transportation.

Chapter Five: Developing Collaborative Efforts

It's 7:45 a.m. and Isaac Anderson, a local homeless education liaison, walks into his office as the phone rings. He is relieved the coffee does not spill as he juggles putting down his briefcase and mug. He answers the phone. A shelter director is calling to tell him a family with two middle-school-aged children arrived during the night. The mother wants the children to stay at their former school in the district. Isaac knows that he does not have any money for bus tokens to get the children to a school outside the shelter's attendance zone. The shelter director says that she will drive the children to school today, but will need assistance in the future. Isaac says that he will call her back later in the day.

Consider:

- *What does the law require?*
- *What options does Isaac have?*
- *What would happen in your school district?*

Responses to these questions are presented at the end of the chapter.

What can our local liaison in the above scenario do? Isaac wears several hats, and local liaison is just one of them. He *is* responsible for ensuring the enrollment of children and youth who are homeless, but his school district does not receive any McKinney-Vento funds. Isaac does have options. He could:

- Call the school district transportation coordinator to see if a bus could drive by the shelter and get the children to their school of origin.
- Contact the student support services coordinator to determine how that department could assist.
- Alert the school to the children's change in living arrangements so that school personnel can be sensitive to additional needs the students may have.

Finally, Isaac must ensure that the parent's preference regarding placement is followed to the extent feasible, and transportation must be arranged.

Isaac will not be able to resolve the transportation challenge alone. Relationships with other departments in the school and the community will be necessary to bring closure in this case. Chapter 5 focuses on building collaborative relationships using examples from the experiences of local liaisons.

Basic Tips for Collaboration

Identifying Potential Partners

Collaboration is a two-way street. People who work with children and youth experiencing homelessness often do so with little or no targeted financial resources. Collaboration with other departments in the school district is an essential tool to access services for homeless students. When deciding to pursue a collaborative partnership, it is helpful to:

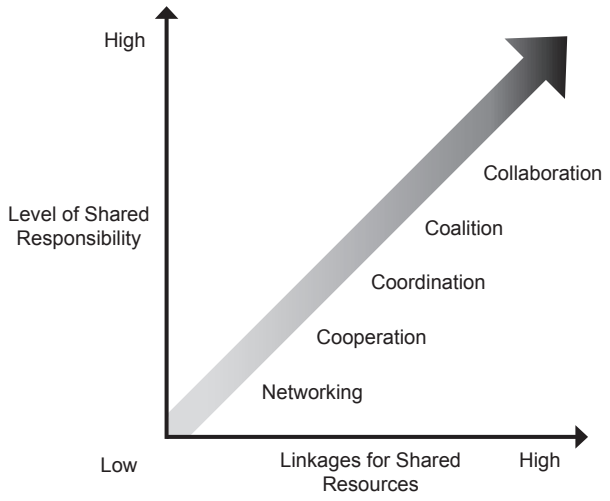
- Identify the needs of homeless students in your district.
- Know the responsibilities of other departments in your district.
- Identify areas of interest or overlap between homeless education and other departments.
- Consider how other departments can provide assistance and be sure to determine how the assistance can benefit the department, if undertaken.
- Consider how the local liaison can provide reciprocal support, if possible.

Once a potential collaborative relationship is identified, determine your key contact person in the department. Communicate regularly, and keep the issues germane to students as your focus.

Realizing the Level of Involvement Needed

Collaborative efforts is used loosely here to describe a relationship where two or more individuals or groups work on behalf of the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The degree to which the parties

Figure 2:
Building Up to Collaboration



share responsibilities and resources can vary greatly across partnerships as shown in Figure 2. Relationships can range from low-level networking to true collaboration, which by definition is the highest level of shared responsibility in which resources are integrated. Some examples of each level may be found in Table 5. When reaching out to other departments and agencies, it is important to consider the level of relationship that may be needed to realize goals and to build on existing relationships that may be expanded. When new partners are sought, consider working on lower-level relationships to build trust before attempting more complex interactions.

Table 5: Levels of Collaborative Efforts

Level	Description	Example
Networking	Making connections with individuals or groups whose purpose is related to your mission	Having copies of the transportation department's meeting minutes forwarded to you
Cooperation	Limited working together	Asking a Spanish teacher to translate a document to be used to promote the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness in the Spanish-speaking community
Coordination	Combined effort on an initiative that meets the needs of both parties	Arranging with school nurses to refer children experiencing homelessness for free or low-cost medical and dental care
Coalition	Regular communication and sharing of resources, but each group still retains control over its domain	Agreeing on a process to ensure that student services, the local liaison, and the transportation department communicate when a homeless student has a change of address to ensure that the bus transports the student to/from the location where he/she is currently staying
Collaboration	Working together and pooling resources to meet a common purpose or goal	The school and local liaison work with the parent(s) or guardian(s) to provide the best educational program for the student experiencing homelessness

Initiating the Collaboration

Once you have considered how to make collaboration a win-win opportunity for students, it is time to approach the individuals, departments, or agencies with whom the prospective partnership will be formed. Appendix H provides a sample form to identify future collaborative strategies. Suggested activities for accomplishing a collaborative partnership include the following:

- Schedule a time to meet with the individual in charge of the department or agency.
- Prepare for the meeting by identifying the key points to be discussed.
  - Explain your role as local liaison.
  - Share what is needed in the district to support children and youth experiencing homelessness.
  - Ask the individual for his/her support based on the department's or agency's responsibilities.
  - Offer concrete suggestions for actions that can be taken by department or agency staff.
  - Enter the meeting with a positive outlook and plan to leave with a specific commitment for support.

Developing the Collaboration

True collaborative relationships are often the result of growth. In fact, many collaborative agreements are sustained by building upon existing structures. While not all collaboration needs to be intense, key features of successful collaboration include the following:

- Establishing a common goal, purpose, or focus
- Communicating regularly
- Sharing resources
- Prioritizing and strategizing together

Be sure to build in opportunities to discuss and develop these features when creating and maintaining relationships with other departments and agencies. (See Appendix H for more information on collaboration.)

Working with Other Departments in Your School District

Frequently, awareness of the needs and the issues associated with homeless students by central office staff is needed. Educating fellow central office personnel on the legal requirements for the education of homeless students is an important first step. The next logical step is opening a dialogue to determine how departments can help. Crucial to working with other departments is the elimination of educational barriers for homeless students. Many departments can contribute to the access and success in school of students experiencing homelessness.

- The school board may need to address local policies that are potential barriers to enrollment, such as tuberculosis testing.
- Student support services may coordinate with homeless education programs to track intra-district transfers of homeless students.
- Student services may assist with record transfer and enrollment.
- The transportation department may allow shelters to call to arrange bus service for new children and youth at the shelter.

- District professional development provided at the start of each school year for the local school-records clerks may include homeless awareness training.

Collaboration yields understanding, new options, and coordination of resources. The key is identifying critical needs, key players, and potential actions at the start. Some departments are more likely than others to have a role to play in educating homeless children and youth. Special education and Title I, Part A, are highlighted because of legislative references to homelessness in their respective laws.

Special Education

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), amended in 2004, requires greater coordination and compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act. Local liaisons should work with special education coordinators to help establish procedures to ensure expedited assessment, appropriate service provision and placement, and continuity of services within required timelines for children who experience homelessness and have disabilities.

The child find component in IDEA includes identifying unserved young children with disabilities who are homeless. The local liaison can provide information regarding the location of homeless families in the district, thereby assisting special education directors in the outreach required for child find. Linking young homeless children who may require special education with early intervention can be a powerful way to avoid more serious learning problems when students enter school. (See Appendix B for additional information on IDEA.)

Title I, Part A

Since approximately 7% of local school districts receive McKinney-Vento sub-grants, the majority of districts must consider other resources to meet the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Title I, Part A, funding is used by many school districts to improve the academic performance of children in poverty. Students experiencing homelessness are, by definition, part of the population that Title I serves. Title I and the local homeless education liaison can work for the benefit of homeless students by ensuring that they receive comparable services whether or not they attend a Title I school in the district. LEAs must reserve (or set aside) funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to children in Title I-funded schools to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children may live.

Please note, however, that the U.S. Department of Education has stipulated that while Title I, Part A, funds can be used for educationally related services, they may not be used to fund transportation to the school of origin for homeless children and youth. Because transportation services to the school of origin are mandated under McKinney Vento, the use of Title I, Part A, or Title V funds for transportation would be considered supplanting, which is prohibited. However, Title I, Part A, funds *may* be used for transportation to the school of origin, once a student is permanently housed, for the remainder of the school year. (This is addressed in the Policy Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education in Appendix A and in the NCHE issue brief, *Title I and Homelessness*, which is available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php*.)

See Table 6 for Title I collaborative strategies identified by veteran local liaisons.

Table 6: Collaboration Between Title I and Homeless Education Programs

Goals	Potential Strategies
Increase awareness and understanding of the issues relating to homeless students and how Title I, Part A funds may be used to serve them.	■ Communicate with a variety of Title I groups by developing conference presentations, staff development events, public service announcements, and welcome packets with information for new staff. ■ Post the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness and the legal rights of homeless students in schools and administrative offices throughout the district.
Eliminate organizational and attitudinal barriers and strengthen programs.	■ Move beyond "turf issues" and emphasize common goals. ■ Partner with additional programs that support students with similar challenges, such as migrant education and special education. ■ Publicize successful Title I/homeless education collaborations (e.g. Minnesota; Oregon; Miami-Dade County, FL; Fresno, CA; and West Contra Costa, CA).
Increase communication between the Title I and homeless education programs.	■ Establish ongoing communication between the local liaison and Title I coordinator. ■ Co-locate Title I and homeless education program offices. ■ Include homeless education representation on Title I committees. ■ Identify crossover policies; supporting homeless education programs can fulfill Title I requirements, too. ■ Include homeless education and Title I collaboration in district monitoring.
Clarify and strengthen policy areas.	■ Establish policies, procedures, and guidelines to identify and serve homeless students. ■ Review needs assessment data with the Title I coordinator to determine the amount of funds to be set aside to serve homeless students. ■ Clarify how set-aside funds can be used to support homeless students.
Build leadership at the LEA level.	■ Celebrate successes. ■ Identify and emphasize a common vision and common goals within the district and community.

Collaboration to Support the Transportation of Homeless Students

Remaining in the school of origin increases school stability for homeless students. When remaining in the school of origin is feasible (meaning, in the student's best interest), school districts must provide transportation to and from the school of origin. The local liaison is instrumental in coordinating these arrangements.

Collaboration is the key to getting transportation arrangements in place efficiently and expeditiously. The local liaison should work closely with the school district pupil transportation director, including providing training to the director and transportation personnel on the McKinney-Vento Act and the needs of homeless students. Together, the pupil transportation director and the local liaison should review the transportation needs of homeless students and develop ways that the school district can need these needs.

In school districts where homeless students cross district lines to remain in the school of origin, the local liaison should collaborate with the local liaison and pupil transportation department from other school districts. Having inter-district policies, strategies, and agreements in place ensures that cross-district transportation can be implemented without delays.

Local liaisons should also explore community resources that might be available to assist with transporting homeless students. Local liaisons should initiate conversations with the department of social services, housing authorities, child welfare agencies, and juvenile justice. Many agencies have vans and buses that they are willing to use for transporting homeless students. Oftentimes, taxi companies and public bus systems are willing to provide services at a discount to homeless families. Creating awareness and buy-in for serving homeless families is the first step in establishing community collaborations.

Working with Parents and Guardians

Parents (and guardians) are logical partners in a child's education. The majority of parents experiencing homelessness want their children to receive an education. They are interested in many of the same offerings as parents of housed children, such as tutoring, after-school activities, free and reduced price lunch, and special academic services. It is clear that facilitating family involvement will increase the success of students in school, as many research studies have shown.[1] Schools need to build trust, establish communication pathways, and provide opportunities, such as offering transportation to nighttime events or parenting classes.

For families burdened with the additional stress of being homeless, greater outreach at the district and school level may be necessary. This may mean:

- Assisting with best interest decision making for school selection (See the NCHE brief, *Guiding the Discussion on School Selection*, for more information; the brief is available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php*.)

- Acknowledging the family's critical role and requesting specific types of family participation in the school; providing transportation, when needed,

1 Epstein, J. (1995) School, community, parent partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 701–712.

will increase the likelihood of family participation.

- Providing parents with report cards that include their children's performance on state assessments.
- Providing parents with information about their children's educational rights and available educational programs.
- Helping to link parents to community resources.
- Being sensitive to demands on parents' time that may conflict with job schedules or job- and house-seeking efforts.
- Being welcoming to parents when they come to the school; providing them with a tour of the school and introducing them to the child's teachers.
- Visiting parents in shelters or other places outside of the school setting.
- Communicating with parents about their children's education in their native language. The district's English as a second language (ESL) or limited English proficiency (LEP) program may be a logical collaborator.
- Using outreach workers, such as those employed in migrant education, to meet with families and introduce them to the school district.

Regardless of the approach, the end goal is the same—to get the parent(s), guardian(s), or caregiver(s) involved as partners in the student's education.

Working with the Community

Students experiencing homelessness need all the support that can be mustered. School typically occupies less than one-third of a student's day. Conducting a needs assessment (as introduced in Chapter 4) will help identify community contacts who offer services for homeless families. Both public and private resources can be used for referrals. Identifying community resources takes time. Local liaisons should start with the most common community resources and add to the list as new contacts and needs are identified. Consider the following:

- The public health office is a source for immunizations.
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) office will have a listing of communities that participate in the Continuum of Care process. Such communities have identified resources and areas of need and have developed a plan for serving persons who are homeless in their locality. If available, such a planning document will contain much of the community information that will be needed by schools. (In addition, the district may wish to be included in the Continuum of Care process to ensure that children and youth's educational needs are considered.)
- It is useful for both schools and the local liaison to know the locations of shelters in the various attendance zones that serve children.
- The location of the community food pantry (often associated with churches) will assist in meeting the physical needs.
- A listing of local dentists, optometrists,

and mental health professionals that will volunteer services can help meet the health needs of the children and youth.

- The local boys and girls clubs provide services that can benefit students.

- The United Way and The Salvation Army can assist in finding shelter for homeless families.

- Local businesses frequently welcome partnerships for community service in which they can provide resources for concrete needs.

Having a list of phone numbers and contacts for these places will be a handy reference when unexpected calls for specific services are received. The blank phone list in Appendix H may be used to create a contact list. Local liaisons should take some time with the business section of the phone book, identify potential resources, and make contact to introduce themselves and the homeless education program. The local liaison will make a homeless family's life more safe, secure, and stable by linking them to supportive resources in the community. In addition, you can be instrumental in ensuring a coordinated delivery of services by bringing community agencies together.

Collaboration Meets Many Needs

The federal law requires children and youth experiencing homelessness to be enrolled in school and receive services comparable to those received by housed students. When a local liaison receives a call, action is needed to ensure that the student has access to school and the tools for success.

There are few full-time state coordinators in the country, and most local liaisons, like Isaac, are responsible for other programs. Unfortunately, if someone is experiencing homelessness, their plight is full time. By combining efforts, services to the homeless student may be increased. By collaborating with the community and various departments in a school district, the extension of services for the child or youth can become richer, more comprehensive, and more effective.

Recall the case of Isaac, the homeless education liaison with a transportation challenge, presented at the beginning of this chapter. The afternoon has arrived, and Isaac must return his call to the shelter director.

Put yourself in Isaac's shoes. . .

What does the law require?

With the 2001 reauthorization, the law clearly states that local school districts are responsible for providing transportation to the school of origin. If the parent wishes the children to stay in the school of origin and it is feasible, transportation must be provided.

What options does Isaac have?

Isaac could work to establish relationships with:

- *Pupil transportation so that there is a bus with a nearby route that can stop by the shelter.*
- *Special education, which provides transportation to students out-of-zone for educational purposes.*
- *The district-level PTA board for funding emergency public transportation tokens for homeless students and their parents or guardians.*
- *Many varied and creative groups willing to assist, support, and reach out to homeless families.*

Isaac may seek out alternative ways of providing transportation using public transportation, taxis, and the family, possibly by providing gas vouchers to cover the cost of gas for the commute in the family car, if the family has one. Isaac may need this wide array of contacts if additional services are required to meet students' needs.

Chapter Six: Getting the Message Out

Kenion Hughes is reading over the McKinney-Vento Act to see what information needs to be shared with his school district. As the local homeless education liaison, he must identify efficient and cost-effective ways to reach staff in his large urban school district. Personnel need information to ensure homeless children and youth have access to the appropriate educational services. In addition to working with families living in shelters, Kenion recently learned that older youth are living in makeshift camps by the river and in abandoned buildings downtown. He makes a list of the people who need information about the homeless education program and finds that they include both school district personnel and community members.

Consider:

- Who might be on such a list?
- What information should be shared?
- How do you deliver information? In other words: "Get the message out!"

Responses to these questions are presented at the end of the chapter.

Vehicles for Communication

Communicating within the School District

Use interoffice systems for print materials. School districts typically have mechanisms to get information and materials disseminated to central office and satellite locations. The interoffice mail or pony system can be used to distribute print materials. (See Appendix H for a contact list template.) Having a school-level point of contact to whom materials can be addressed will increase the likelihood that information is read and, if needed, posted.

Posters and brochures informing parents of their children's right to an education are effective. Educational rights posters and booklets are available from NCHE; they can be ordered

online at *http://www.serve.org/nche/online_order.php* or by calling 800-308-2145. Some state coordinators produce posters, brochures, and announcements for use at the local level or provide originals that can be copied locally. Another alternative is an advertisement-style announcement that can be included in newsletters and other print publications. (See Appendix C for a sample.)

Employ technology. While print materials are the most conventional medium for communication, the use of electronic media has become widespread. The Internet, e-mail, and listservs are convenient and efficient ways to share information.

- ***A school district webpage*** can link to the state homeless education webpage and be used to post information germane to the school district's individual needs, policies and procedures, and contacts. Check with your state coordinator for homeless education to determine if a state website has been developed. Appendix M contains a template for creating a homeless education webpage. On the webpage, the local liaison can post common questions and answers, such as the following:
  - Who is homeless?
  - How can homelessness be determined?
  - What are the rights of homeless children and youth?
  - What can school personnel do to support homeless students?
  - What should be done if a student is missing documents the school district requires for enrollment?
  - What are critical links? Be sure to include national resources, such as NCHE, NAEHCY, and NLCHP. (See Appendix P for these organization's contact information.)
- Information can be customized to include links to local resources and key contacts in the school district and community.
- The local liaison can document communications and send messages more quickly through e-mail than by using the school district inter-office mail. Creating an e-mail distribution list will expedite the process of sending messages and will facilitate the documentation of communication.
- The listserv option is useful primarily to the local liaison who can get information, filter it, and distribute materials that the building-level contact should read. Local liaisons may wish to subscribe to the NCHE listserv to keep abreast of national issues and network with educators and service providers facing similar challenges. (E-mail NCHE at *homeless@serve.org* to subscribe.)
- ***School districts' cable television channels*** offer another option for reaching school district personnel and the community. If available, the local liaison could:
  - Prepare a brief text message about the rights of homeless children and youth to enroll in school and the importance of doing so.
  - Create a brief five- to ten-minute awareness video presentation, if production capabilities exist.
  - Arrange for use of published videos (see Chapter 7 for potential sources).

Communicating Throughout the Community

As concerns and questions arise, the local liaison is the point of contact for many shelter providers, homeless parents, and unaccompanied youth. Posters and brochures about the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness and how to access services should be available.

- Contact shelters as logical points for dissemination of information. (See Appendix C for sample resources.)
- Post the rights of homeless students to a free and appropriate education on community bulletin boards and in areas where homeless people congregate, such as laundromats, soup kitchens, food pantries, libraries, and other service organizations.
- Since many churches have outreach efforts, let the pastors know about the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness through an awareness flyer or brochure.
- Send information to the local boys and girls clubs, local HUD contact, housing authority, Salvation Army, and United Way.
- Visit shelters and other service providers so that they can connect your face to your name.
- Contact the HUD office in your area to obtain additional contacts.
- Run public service announcements (PSAs) on local television channels.
- Make awareness presentations to community service organizations.

People must be familiar with homeless education issues to identify potential solutions that meet students' educational needs. Creating awareness of the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness is a step that successful programs revisit frequently. With turnover of staff and mobility in the community, the audience continues to change and efforts to reach out must be sustained.

Consider the Need to Translate Materials

If there is a significant bilingual population in the district, translating the documents into the most common languages should be considered. For example, in Chicago, materials are printed in both English and Polish to meet the needs of the community. Larger school districts may have a system in place for translating documents. If a district lacks such resources, consider using a member of the community to provide the translation. For example, one program had its family brochure explaining educational rights of homeless children translated into Spanish by a volunteer tutor who worked in a shelter, and the chair of the Spanish department at a nearby university edited the translation.

Promoting Awareness

Building a personal presence within the school district and across the community is an effective, though time-consuming, activity to be undertaken by the local liaison. Making presentations not only promotes awareness, but also provides a personal connection with

the audience. Successful local liaisons often share stories demonstrating that building *relationships* with people in the school and community has been key to overcoming barriers and finding creative and effective solutions. A brief presentation will increase visibility for the homeless education program and begin relationship building.

Whether the presentation is made to school personnel, such as the school board, or a community group, such as the Rotary Club or shelter workers, the basic information on the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness can be highlighted. (See Appendix C for information on awareness videos about homelessness. See Appendix N for links to useful training resources.)

Getting the Word Out: A Summary

Promoting awareness of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is a continual process as personnel and the population being served shift and change. Having multiple means to get out the message increases the audience and the likelihood of reaching those who need the information most. Posters, brochures, alerts to insert in publications, and face-to-face presentations are among the vehicles that can be tapped. Experiencing homelessness is a stressful time for families, and schools have the opportunity to be a stabilizing force in students' lives. Education is a potential key in breaking the cycle of homelessness—a key that can only be utilized when staff, the community, and families know where to find it.

Return to case of Kenion, the local liaison trying to get homeless education information to the community, which was presented at the beginning of this chapter.

Consider:

Who might be on such a list?

School board, central office staff—especially those involved with educational programs and student support services—principals, teachers, secretaries, counselors, shelter workers, religious leaders, civic organizations, homeless consortia, youth advocates, truancy officers, police, social services, etc. With so many possibilities, targeting those that will have the greatest impact must be part of Kenion's planning. Knowing that older youth may be underserved and that local liaisons have special responsibilities to advocate for these youth, Kenion may wish to work more closely with youth advocates in the immediate future.

What information should be shared?

- Educational rights of homeless children and youth
- Contact information for the local liaison
- Services available through the school district
- Stories to "put a face" on the homeless children in the community

How will you get the message out in your school district and community?

Chapter Seven: Research and Resources

Mary Jo Hogan, the local homeless education liaison received a call from a teacher at Newby Elementary whose class was doing a problem-based learning unit on homelessness. The second-grade teacher asked if Mary Jo had any resources that would be helpful in facilitating the students' investigation into the topic. Mary Jo said that she would get back to the teacher. Hanging up the phone, Mary Jo thought, "Where in the world can I quickly find materials appropriate for seven- and eight-year-old students?" While pondering this question, she found she was pleased that the teacher thought to call her—it indicated that the posters in the school offices were being read. She turned her attention to the task at hand.

Consider:

- *Where can Mary Jo turn for help with this request for information?*
- *What types of resources would be helpful for this class project?*
- *What kinds of similar requests might Mary Jo anticipate in the future?*

Responses to these questions are presented at the end of the chapter.

There are numerous resources on the issues of homelessness and homeless education. An Internet search engine will give thousands of page links, ranging from statistics, to lesson plans, to advocacy groups. A trip to the children's section of a public library yields several picture and chapter books. The research and resources listed in this chapter provide a starting point for local liaisons to explore even more extensively. Organizations listed at the end of the chapter continue to develop and identify new resources and may be consulted to update the information contained here. In addition, your state coordinator for homeless education is another resource to be tapped.

Research

Research on educational issues impacting children and youth experiencing homelessness

is available in print and online. Resources range in length from briefs to books.

The Internet has a plethora of research and resources available. The NCHE website is a local first stop for research and information. Areas of particular interest may include the Information by Topic section (*http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/ibt.php*) and the Research page (*http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/research.php*). Staff at the NCHE Helpline can assist you in addressing questions related to research on homeless education and effective practices. Contact the NCHE Helpline by calling 800-308-2145 or e-mailing *homeless@serve.org*.

Building a Collection of Resources

By reading the *Toolkit*, you have already begun to establish a collection of resources to support individuals working on behalf of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Taking some time to look through the research and resources listed in Appendices O and Q will yield items that can be ordered for free or a free preview, as well as downloadable items. Start a binder or a file for the materials you collect. Many of the children's books are in local public libraries. Again, another resource is your state coordinator, who may have copies of articles. Building a collection of research and resources is a gradual harvesting process.

Return to the case of Mary Jo, who is trying to locate materials for second-graders, presented at the beginning of this chapter.

Consider:

Where can Mary Jo turn for help with this request for information?

The local shelter that works with children may have helpful materials. The state coordinator may know about programs implemented in the state or nationally to promote awareness with children. Additionally, the school's librarian may be aware of books in the collection that would be appropriate.

What type of resources would be helpful for this class project?

The teacher would probably appreciate a variety of resources so that the students' different learning styles can be accommodated. Items for the teacher might include:

- *Children's literature reading list.*
- *Information on the scale of homelessness in the local area.*
- *Lesson plans on sensitivity and awareness relating to homelessness that are accessible on the Internet.*
- *Posters available from groups such as The Institute for Children and Poverty (http://www.icpny.org/) that can be requested via the Internet.*
- *Classroom presentations by the local liaison, such as reading a book and discussing homelessness.*
- *A list of awareness videos about homelessness, which can be found in Appendix C.*

What kinds of similar requests might Mary Jo anticipate in the future?

- *Requests from teachers working with homeless youth and wondering how to provide support*
- *Inquiries from high school students that are researching the issue of homelessness*
- *Inquiries from guidance counselors who are wondering if there is anything out there to help with group sessions for students who are in various stages of transition*

Appendices

Appendix A: The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is the primary piece of federal legislation dealing with the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. It was reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act, which went into effect in January 2002.

Appendix A includes:

- The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (full text)
- U.S. Department of Education Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance, July 2004 (full text)

Additional Resources

- **NCHE McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/m-v.php***: This NCHE webpage provides links to the full text of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and related regulations, policy guidance, and federal register notices.
- **NCHE Legislative Resources webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/legis_resources.php***: This NCHE webpage provides legislative resources for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and other laws pertaining to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Reauthorized January 2002

Subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

Subtitle B--Education for Homeless Children and Youths

SEC. 721. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The following is the policy of the Congress:

(1) Each State educational agency shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths.

(2) In any State that has a compulsory residency requirement as a component of the State's compulsory school attendance laws or other laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youths, the State will review and undertake steps to revise such laws, regulations, practices, or policies to ensure that homeless children and youths are afforded the same free, appropriate public education as provided to other children and youths.

(3) Homelessness alone is not sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment.

(4) Homeless children and youths should have access to the education and other services that such children and youths need to ensure that such children and youths have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all students are held.

SEC. 722. GRANTS FOR STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTHS

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY- The Secretary is authorized to make grants to States in accordance with the provisions of this section to enable such States to carry out the activities described in subsections (d) through (g).

(b) APPLICATION- No State may receive a grant under this section unless the State educational agency submits an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(c) ALLOCATION AND RESERVATIONS-

(1) ALLOCATION- (A) Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary is authorized to allot to each State an amount that bears the same ratio to the amount appropriated for such year under section 726 that remains after the Secretary

reserves funds under paragraph (2) and uses funds to carry out section 724(d) and (h), as the amount allocated under section 1122 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to the State for that year bears to the total amount allocated under section 1122 of such Act to all States for that year, except that no State shall receive less than the greater of--

(i) $150,000;

(ii) one-fourth of 1 percent of the amount appropriated under section 726 for that year; or

(iii) the amount such State received under this section for fiscal year 2001.

(B) If there are insufficient funds in a fiscal year to allot to each State the minimum amount under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall ratably reduce the allotments to all States based on the proportionate share that each State received under this subsection for the preceding fiscal year.

(2) RESERVATIONS- (A) The Secretary is authorized to reserve 0.1 percent of the amount appropriated for each fiscal year under section 726 to be allocated by the Secretary among the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, according to their respective need for assistance under this subtitle, as determined by the Secretary.

(B)(i) The Secretary shall transfer 1 percent of the amount appropriated for each fiscal year under section 726 to the Department of the Interior for programs for Indian students served by schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior, as determined under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.), that are consistent with the purposes of the programs described in this subtitle.

(ii) The Secretary and the Secretary of the Interior shall enter into an agreement, consistent with the requirements of this subtitle, for the distribution and use of the funds described in clause (i) under terms that the Secretary determines best meet the purposes of the programs described in this subtitle. Such agreement shall set forth the plans of the Secretary of the Interior for the use of the amounts transferred, including appropriate goals, objectives, and milestones.

(3) STATE DEFINED- For purposes of this subsection, the term `State' does not include the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

(d) ACTIVITIES- Grants under this section shall be used for the following:

(1) To carry out the policies set forth in section 721 in the State.

(2) To provide activities for, and services to, homeless children, including preschool-aged homeless children, and youths that enable such children and youths to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school, or, if appropriate, in preschool programs.

(3) To establish or designate an Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths in the State educational agency in accordance with subsection (f).

(4) To prepare and carry out the State plan described in subsection (g).

(5) To develop and implement professional development programs for school personnel to heighten their awareness of, and capacity to respond to, specific problems in the education of homeless children and youths.

(e) STATE AND LOCAL SUBGRANTS-

(1) MINIMUM DISBURSEMENTS BY STATES- From the sums made available each year to carry out this subtitle, the State educational agency shall distribute not less than 75 percent in subgrants to local educational agencies for

the purposes of carrying out section 723, except that States funded at the minimum level set forth in subsection (c)(1) shall distribute not less than 50 percent in subgrants to local educational agencies for the purposes of carrying out section 723.

(2) USE BY STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY- A State educational agency may use funds made available for State use under this subtitle to conduct activities under subsection (f) directly or through grants or contracts.

(3) PROHIBITION ON SEGREGATING HOMELESS STUDENTS-

(A) IN GENERAL- Except as provided in subparagraph (B) and section 723(a)(2)(B)(ii), in providing a free public education to a homeless child or youth, no State receiving funds under this subtitle shall segregate such child or youth in a separate school, or in a separate program within a school, based on such child's or youth's status as homeless.

(B) EXCEPTION- Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), paragraphs (1)(J)(i) and (3) of subsection (g), section 723(a)(2), and any other provision of this subtitle relating to the placement of homeless children or youths in schools, a State that has a separate school for homeless children or youths that was operated in fiscal year 2000 in a covered county shall be eligible to receive funds under this subtitle for programs carried out in such school if--

(i) the school meets the requirements of subparagraph (C);

(ii) any local educational agency serving a school that the homeless children and youths enrolled in the separate school are eligible to attend meets the requirements of subparagraph (E); and

(iii) the State is otherwise eligible to receive funds under this subtitle.

(C) SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS- For the State to be eligible under subparagraph (B) to receive funds under this subtitle, the school described in such subparagraph shall--

(i) provide written notice, at the time any child or youth seeks enrollment in such school, and at least twice annually while the child or youth is enrolled in such school, to the parent or guardian of the child or youth (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth) that--

(I) shall be signed by the parent or guardian (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth);

(II) sets forth the general rights provided under this subtitle;

(III) specifically states--

(aa) the choice of schools homeless children and youths are eligible to attend, as provided in subsection (g)(3)(A);

(bb) that no homeless child or youth is required to attend a separate school for homeless children or youths;

(cc) that homeless children and youths shall be provided comparable services described in subsection (g)(4), including transportation services, educational services, and meals through school meals programs; and

(dd) that homeless children and youths should not be stigmatized by school personnel; and

(IV) provides contact information for the local liaison for homeless children and youths and the State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths;

(ii)(I) provide assistance to the parent or guardian of each homeless child or youth (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth) to exercise the right to attend the parent's or guardian's (or youth's) choice of schools, as provided in subsection (g)(3)(A); and

(II) coordinate with the local educational agency with jurisdiction for the school selected by the parent or guardian (or youth), to provide transportation and other necessary services;

(iii) ensure that the parent or guardian (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth) shall receive the information required by this subparagraph in a manner and form understandable to such parent or guardian (or youth), including, if necessary and to the extent feasible, in the native language of such parent or guardian (or youth); and

(iv) demonstrate in the school's application for funds under this subtitle that such school--

(I) is complying with clauses (i) and (ii); and

(II) is meeting (as of the date of submission of the application) the same Federal and State standards, regulations, and mandates as other public schools in the State (such as complying with sections 1111 and 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and providing a full range of education and related services, including services applicable to students with disabilities).

(D) SCHOOL INELIGIBILITY- A separate school described in subparagraph (B) that fails to meet the standards, regulations, and mandates described in subparagraph (C)(iv)(II) shall not be eligible to receive funds under this subtitle for programs carried out in such school after the first date of such failure.

(E) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY REQUIREMENTS- For the State to be eligible to receive the funds described in subparagraph (B), the local educational agency described in subparagraph (B)(ii) shall--

(i) implement a coordinated system for ensuring that homeless children and youths--

(I) are advised of the choice of schools provided in subsection (g)(3)(A);

(II) are immediately enrolled, in accordance with subsection (g)(3)(C), in the school selected under subsection (g)(3)(A); and

(III) are promptly provided necessary services described in subsection (g)(4), including transportation, to allow homeless children and youths to exercise their choices of schools under subsection (g)(3)(A);

(ii) document that written notice has been provided--

(I) in accordance with subparagraph (C)(i) for each child or youth enrolled in a separate school under subparagraph (B); and

(II) in accordance with subsection (g)(6)(A)(v);

(iii) prohibit schools within the agency's jurisdiction from referring homeless children or youths to, or requiring homeless children and youths to enroll in or attend, a separate school described in subparagraph (B);

(iv) identify and remove any barriers that exist in schools within the agency's jurisdiction that may have contributed to the creation or existence of separate schools described in subparagraph (B); and

(v) not use funds received under this subtitle to establish--

(I) new or additional separate schools for homeless children or youths; or

(II) new or additional sites for separate schools for homeless children or youths, other than the sites occupied by the schools described in subparagraph (B) in fiscal year 2000.

(F) REPORT-

(i) PREPARATION- The Secretary shall prepare a report on the separate schools and local educational agencies described in subparagraph (B) that receive funds under this subtitle in accordance with this paragraph. The report shall contain, at a minimum, information on--

(I) compliance with all requirements of this paragraph;

(II) barriers to school access in the school districts served by the local educational agencies; and

(III) the progress the separate schools are making in integrating homeless children and youths into the mainstream school environment, including the average length of student enrollment in such schools.

(ii) COMPLIANCE WITH INFORMATION REQUESTS- For purposes of enabling the Secretary to prepare the report, the separate schools and local educational agencies shall cooperate with the Secretary and the State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths established in the State under subsection (d)(3), and shall comply with any requests for information by the Secretary and State Coordinator for such State.

(iii) SUBMISSION- Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, the Secretary shall submit the report described in clause (i) to--

(I) the President;

(II) the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives; and

(III) the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate.

(G) DEFINITION- For purposes of this paragraph, the term `covered county' means--

(i) San Joaquin County, California;
(ii) Orange County, California;
(iii) San Diego County, California; and
(iv) Maricopa County, Arizona.

(f) FUNCTIONS OF THE OFFICE OF COORDINATOR- The Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths established in each State shall--

(1) gather reliable, valid, and comprehensive information on the nature and extent of the problems homeless children and youths have in gaining access to public preschool programs and to public elementary schools and secondary schools, the difficulties in identifying the special needs of such children and youths, any progress made by the State educational agency and local educational agencies in the State in addressing such problems and difficulties, and the success of the programs under this subtitle in allowing homeless children and youths to enroll in, attend, and succeed in, school;

(2) develop and carry out the State plan described in subsection (g);

(3) collect and transmit to the Secretary, at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may require, a report containing such information as the Secretary determines is necessary to assess the educational needs of homeless children and youths within the State;

(4) facilitate coordination between the State educational agency, the State social services agency, and other agencies (including agencies providing mental health services) to provide services to homeless children, including preschool-aged homeless children, and youths, and to families of such children and youths;

(5) in order to improve the provision of comprehensive education and related services to homeless children and youths and their families, coordinate and collaborate with--

(A) educators, including child development and preschool program personnel;

(B) providers of services to homeless and runaway children and youths and homeless families (including domestic violence agencies, shelter operators, transitional housing facilities, runaway and homeless youth centers, and transitional living programs for homeless youths);

(C) local educational agency liaisons designated under subsection (g)(1)(J)(ii) for homeless children and youths; and

(D) community organizations and groups representing homeless children and youths and their families; and

(6) provide technical assistance to local educational agencies in coordination with local educational agency liaisons designated under subsection (g)(1)(J)(ii), to ensure that local educational agencies comply with the requirements of section 722(e)(3) and paragraphs (3) through (7) of subsection (g).

(g) STATE PLAN-

(1) IN GENERAL- Each State shall submit to the Secretary a plan to provide for the education of homeless children and youths within the State. Such plan shall include the following:

(A) A description of how such children and youths are (or will be) given the opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic achievement standards all students are expected to meet.

(B) A description of the procedures the State educational agency will use to identify such children and youths in the State and to assess their special needs.
(C) A description of procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths.
(D) A description of programs for school personnel (including principals, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, and pupil services personnel) to heighten the awareness of such personnel of the specific needs of runaway and homeless youths.
(E) A description of procedures that ensure that homeless children and youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in Federal, State, or local food programs.
(F) A description of procedures that ensure that--

(i) homeless children have equal access to the same public preschool programs, administered by the State agency, as provided to other children in the State;
(ii) homeless youths and youths separated from the public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services; and
(iii) homeless children and youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in Federal, State, or local before- and after-school care programs.

(G) Strategies to address problems identified in the report provided to the Secretary under subsection (f)(3).
(H) Strategies to address other problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youths, including problems resulting from enrollment delays that are caused by--

(i) immunization and medical records requirements;
(ii) residency requirements;
(iii) lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation;
(iv) guardianship issues; or
(v) uniform or dress code requirements.

(I) A demonstration that the State educational agency and local educational agencies in the State have developed, and shall review and revise, policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youths in schools in the State.
(J) Assurances that--

(i) the State educational agency and local educational agencies in the State will adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children and youths are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless;
(ii) local educational agencies will designate an appropriate staff person, who may also be a coordinator for other Federal programs, as a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths, to carry out the duties described in paragraph (6)(A); and
(iii) the State and its local educational agencies will adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), to and from the school of

origin, as determined in paragraph (3)(A), in accordance with the following, as applicable:

(I) If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the area served by the local educational agency in which the school of origin is located, the child's or youth's transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the local educational agency in which the school of origin is located.

(II) If the homeless child's or youth's living arrangements in the area served by the local educational agency of origin terminate and the child or youth, though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another local educational agency, the local educational agency of origin and the local educational agency in which the homeless child or youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the local educational agencies are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally.

(2) COMPLIANCE-

(A) IN GENERAL- Each plan adopted under this subsection shall also describe how the State will ensure that local educational agencies in the State will comply with the requirements of paragraphs (3) through (7).

(B) COORDINATION- Such plan shall indicate what technical assistance the State will furnish to local educational agencies and how compliance efforts will be coordinated with the local educational agency liaisons designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii).

(3) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY REQUIREMENTS-

(A) IN GENERAL- The local educational agency serving each child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall, according to the child's or youth's best interest--

(i) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness--

(I) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or

(II) for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or

(ii) enroll the child or youth in 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.

(B) BEST INTEREST- In determining the best interest of the child or youth under subparagraph (A), the local educational agency shall--

(i) to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's or youth's parent or guardian;

(ii) provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal under subparagraph (E), to the homeless child's or youth's parent or guardian, if the local

educational agency sends such child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian; and

(iii) in the case of an unaccompanied youth, ensure that the homeless liaison designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii) assists in placement or enrollment decisions under this subparagraph, considers the views of such unaccompanied youth, and provides notice to such youth of the right to appeal under subparagraph (E).

(C) ENROLLMENT- (i) The school selected in accordance with this paragraph shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation.

(ii) The enrolling school shall immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic and other records.

(iii) If the child or youth needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the child or youth to the local educational agency liaison designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii), who shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records, in accordance with subparagraph (D).

(D) RECORDS- Any record ordinarily kept by the school, including immunization or medical records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, regarding each homeless child or youth shall be maintained--

(i) so that the records are available, in a timely fashion, when a child or youth enters a new school or school district; and

(ii) in a manner consistent with section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g).

(E) ENROLLMENT DISPUTES- If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school--

(i) the child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute;

(ii) the parent or guardian of the child or youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision;

(iii) the child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the local educational agency liaison designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii), who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as described in paragraph (1)(C) as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and

(iv) in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the homeless liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

(F) PLACEMENT CHOICE- The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

(G) SCHOOL OF ORIGIN DEFINED- In this paragraph, the term `school of origin' means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

(H) CONTACT INFORMATION- Nothing in this subtitle shall prohibit a local educational agency from requiring a parent or guardian of a homeless child to submit contact information.

(4) COMPARABLE SERVICES- Each homeless child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected under paragraph (3), including the following:

(A) Transportation services.

(B) Educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria, such as services provided under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or similar State or local programs, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency.

(C) Programs in vocational and technical education.

(D) Programs for gifted and talented students.

(E) School nutrition programs.

(5) COORDINATION-

(A) IN GENERAL- Each local educational agency serving homeless children and youths that receives assistance under this subtitle shall coordinate--

(i) the provision of services under this subtitle with local social services agencies and other agencies or programs providing services to homeless children and youths and their families, including services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.); and

(ii) with other local educational agencies on interdistrict issues, such as transportation or transfer of school records.

(B) HOUSING ASSISTANCE- If applicable, each State educational agency and local educational agency that receives assistance under this subtitle shall coordinate with State and local housing agencies responsible for developing the comprehensive housing affordability strategy described in section 105 of the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12705) to minimize educational disruption for children and youths who become homeless.

(C) COORDINATION PURPOSE- The coordination required under subparagraphs (A) and (B) shall be designed to--

(i) ensure that homeless children and youths have access and reasonable proximity to available education and related support services; and

(ii) raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness.

(6) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY LIAISON-

(A) DUTIES- Each local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths, designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii), shall ensure that--

(i) homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
(ii) homeless children and youths enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools of that local educational agency;
(iii) homeless families, children, and youths receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs and preschool programs administered by the local educational agency, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services;
(iv) the parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
(v) public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated where such children and youths receive services under this Act, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;
(vi) enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with paragraph (3)(E); and
(vii) the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, as described in paragraph (1)(J)(iii), and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school that is selected under paragraph (3)(A).

(B) NOTICE- State coordinators established under subsection (d)(3) and local educational agencies shall inform school personnel, service providers, and advocates working with homeless families of the duties of the local educational agency liaisons.
(C) LOCAL AND STATE COORDINATION- Local educational agency liaisons for homeless children and youths shall, as a part of their duties, coordinate and collaborate with State coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths.

(7) REVIEW AND REVISIONS-

(A) IN GENERAL- Each State educational agency and local educational agency that receives assistance under this subtitle shall review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youths in schools that are selected under paragraph (3).
(B) CONSIDERATION- In reviewing and revising such policies, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records and other documentation, and guardianship.
(C) SPECIAL ATTENTION- Special attention shall be given to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of homeless children and youths who are not currently attending school.

SEC. 723. LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY SUBGRANTS FOR THE EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTHS

(a) GENERAL AUTHORITY-

(1) IN GENERAL- The State educational agency shall, in accordance with section 722(e), and from amounts made available to such agency under section 726, make subgrants to local educational agencies for the purpose of facilitating the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youths.

(2) SERVICES-

(A) IN GENERAL- Services under paragraph (1)--

(i) may be provided through programs on school grounds or at other facilities;

(ii) shall, to the maximum extent practicable, be provided through existing programs and mechanisms that integrate homeless children and youths with nonhomeless children and youths; and

(iii) shall be designed to expand or improve services provided as part of a school's regular academic program, but not to replace such services provided under such program.

(B) SERVICES ON SCHOOL GROUNDS- If services under paragraph (1) are provided on school grounds, schools--

(i) may use funds under this subtitle to provide the same services to other children and youths who are determined by the local educational agency to be at risk of failing in, or dropping out of, school, subject to the requirements of clause (ii); and

(ii) except as otherwise provided in section 722(e)(3)(B), shall not provide services in settings within a school that segregate homeless children and youths from other children and youths, except as necessary for short periods of time--

(I) for health and safety emergencies; or

(II) to provide temporary, special, and supplementary services to meet the unique needs of homeless children and youths.

(3) REQUIREMENT- Services provided under this section shall not replace the regular academic program and shall be designed to expand upon or improve services provided as part of the school's regular academic program.

(b) APPLICATION- A local educational agency that desires to receive a subgrant under this section shall submit an application to the State educational agency at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the State educational agency may reasonably require. Such application shall include the following:

(1) An assessment of the educational and related needs of homeless children and youths in the area served by such agency (which may be undertaken as part of needs assessments for other disadvantaged groups).

(2) A description of the services and programs for which assistance is sought to address the needs identified in paragraph (1).

(3) An assurance that the local educational agency's combined fiscal effort per student, or the aggregate expenditures of that agency and the State with respect to the provision of free public education by such agency for the fiscal year

preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made, was not less than 90 percent of such combined fiscal effort or aggregate expenditures for the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made.

(4) An assurance that the applicant complies with, or will use requested funds to comply with, paragraphs (3) through (7) of section 722(g).

(5) A description of policies and procedures, consistent with section 722(e)(3), that the agency will implement to ensure that activities carried out by the agency will not isolate or stigmatize homeless children and youths.

(c) AWARDS-

(1) IN GENERAL- The State educational agency shall, in accordance with the requirements of this subtitle and from amounts made available to it under section 726, make competitive subgrants to local educational agencies that submit applications under subsection (b). Such subgrants shall be awarded on the basis of the need of such agencies for assistance under this subtitle and the quality of the applications submitted.

(2) NEED- In determining need under paragraph (1), the State educational agency may consider the number of homeless children and youths enrolled in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools within the area served by the local educational agency, and shall consider the needs of such children and youths and the ability of the local educational agency to meet such needs. The State educational agency may also consider the following:

(A) The extent to which the proposed use of funds will facilitate the enrollment, retention, and educational success of homeless children and youths.

(B) The extent to which the application--

(i) reflects coordination with other local and State agencies that serve homeless children and youths; and

(ii) describes how the applicant will meet the requirements of section 722(g)(3).

(C) The extent to which the applicant exhibits in the application and in current practice a commitment to education for all homeless children and youths.

(D) Such other criteria as the State agency determines appropriate.

(3) QUALITY- In determining the quality of applications under paragraph (1), the State educational agency shall consider the following:

(A) The applicant's needs assessment under subsection (b)(1) and the likelihood that the program presented in the application will meet such needs.

(B) The types, intensity, and coordination of the services to be provided under the program.

(C) The involvement of parents or guardians of homeless children or youths in the education of their children.

(D) The extent to which homeless children and youths will be integrated within the regular education program.

(E) The quality of the applicant's evaluation plan for the program.

(F) The extent to which services provided under this subtitle will be coordinated with other services available to homeless children and youths and their families.

(G) Such other measures as the State educational agency considers indicative of a high-quality program, such as the extent to which the

local educational agency will provide case management or related services to unaccompanied youths.

(4) DURATION OF GRANTS- Grants awarded under this section shall be for terms not to exceed 3 years.

(d) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES- A local educational agency may use funds awarded under this section for activities that carry out the purpose of this subtitle, including the following:

(1) The provision of tutoring, supplemental instruction, and enriched educational services that are linked to the achievement of the same challenging State academic content standards and challenging State student academic achievement standards the State establishes for other children and youths.

(2) The provision of expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of homeless children and youths, including needs and eligibility for programs and services (such as educational programs for gifted and talented students, children with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency, services provided under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or similar State or local programs, programs in vocational and technical education, and school nutrition programs).

(3) Professional development and other activities for educators and pupil services personnel that are designed to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of such personnel to the needs of homeless children and youths, the rights of such children and youths under this subtitle, and the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youths.

(4) The provision of referral services to homeless children and youths for medical, dental, mental, and other health services.

(5) The provision of assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation for students under section 722(g)(4)(A), not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding, where necessary to enable students to attend the school selected under section 722(g)(3).

(6) The provision of developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs, not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding, for preschool-aged homeless children.

(7) The provision of services and assistance to attract, engage, and retain homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, in public school programs and services provided to nonhomeless children and youths.

(8) The provision for homeless children and youths of before- and after-school, mentoring, and summer programs in which a teacher or other qualified individual provides tutoring, homework assistance, and supervision of educational activities.

(9) If necessary, the payment of fees and other costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records necessary to enroll homeless children and youths in school, including birth certificates, immunization or medical records, academic records, guardianship records, and evaluations for special programs or services.

(10) The provision of education and training to the parents of homeless children and youths about the rights of, and resources available to, such children and youths.

(11) The development of coordination between schools and agencies providing services to homeless children and youths, as described in section 722(g)(5).

(12) The provision of pupil services (including violence prevention counseling) and referrals for such services.

(13) Activities to address the particular needs of homeless children and youths that may arise from domestic violence.
(14) The adaptation of space and purchase of supplies for any nonschool facilities made available under subsection (a)(2) to provide services under this subsection.
(15) The provision of school supplies, including those supplies to be distributed at shelters or temporary housing facilities, or other appropriate locations.
(16) The provision of other extraordinary or emergency assistance needed to enable homeless children and youths to attend school.

SEC. 724. SECRETARIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

(a) REVIEW OF STATE PLANS- In reviewing the State plan submitted by a State educational agency under section 722(g), the Secretary shall use a peer review process and shall evaluate whether State laws, policies, and practices described in such plan adequately address the problems of homeless children and youths relating to access to education and placement as described in such plan.
(b) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE- The Secretary shall provide support and technical assistance to a State educational agency to assist such agency in carrying out its responsibilities under this subtitle, if requested by the State educational agency.
(c) NOTICE- The Secretary shall, before the next school year that begins after the date of enactment of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, create and disseminate nationwide a public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths and disseminate such notice to other Federal agencies, programs, and grantees, including Head Start grantees, Health Care for the Homeless grantees, Emergency Food and Shelter grantees, and homeless assistance programs administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
(d) EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION- The Secretary shall conduct evaluation and dissemination activities of programs designed to meet the educational needs of homeless elementary and secondary school students, and may use funds appropriated under section 726 to conduct such activities.
(e) SUBMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION- The Secretary shall require applications for grants under this subtitle to be submitted to the Secretary not later than the expiration of the 60-day period beginning on the date that funds are available for purposes of making such grants and shall make such grants not later than the expiration of the 120-day period beginning on such date.
(f) DETERMINATION BY SECRETARY- The Secretary, based on the information received from the States and information gathered by the Secretary under subsection (h), shall determine the extent to which State educational agencies are ensuring that each homeless child and homeless youth has access to a free appropriate public education, as described in section 721(1).
(g) GUIDELINES- The Secretary shall develop, issue, and publish in the Federal Register, not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, school enrollment guidelines for States with respect to homeless children and youths. The guidelines shall describe--

(1) successful ways in which a State may assist local educational agencies to immediately enroll homeless children and youths in school; and
(2) how a State can review the State's requirements regarding immunization and medical or school records and make such revisions to the requirements as are appropriate and necessary in order to enroll homeless children and youths in school immediately.

(h) INFORMATION-

(1) IN GENERAL- From funds appropriated under section 726, the Secretary shall, directly or through grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements, periodically collect and disseminate data and information regarding--

(A) the number and location of homeless children and youths;

(B) the education and related services such children and youths receive;

(C) the extent to which the needs of homeless children and youths are being met; and

(D) such other data and information as the Secretary determines to be necessary and relevant to carry out this subtitle.

(2) COORDINATION- The Secretary shall coordinate such collection and dissemination with other agencies and entities that receive assistance and administer programs under this subtitle.

(i) REPORT- Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001, the Secretary shall prepare and submit to the President and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate a report on the status of education of homeless children and youths, which shall include information on--

(1) the education of homeless children and youths; and

(2) the actions of the Secretary and the effectiveness of the programs supported under this subtitle.

SEC. 725. DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this subtitle:

(1) The terms `enroll' and `enrollment' include attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

(2) The term `homeless children and youths'--

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and

(B) includes--

(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

(3) The terms `local educational agency' and `State educational agency' have the meanings given such terms in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.
(4) The term `Secretary' means the Secretary of Education.
(5) The term `State' means each of the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.
(6) The term `unaccompanied youth' includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

SEC. 726. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

For the purpose of carrying out this subtitle, there are authorized to be appropriated $70,000,000 for fiscal year 2002 and such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2003 through 2007.'

EDUCATION FOR
HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM

TITLE VII-B OF THE MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT,

AS AMENDED BY THE

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001

NON-REGULATORY GUIDANCE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC

July 2004

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Summary of Updates in this Guidance

This revised non-regulatory guidance for the McKinney-Vento program, which replaces the March 2003 guidance, includes new questions that address the following issues:

- Whether children awaiting foster care placement are eligible for McKinney-Vento services (Item G-10);
- Whether children displaced from their homes by a natural disaster are eligible for McKinney-Vento services (Item G-11);
- Whether an LEA must provide transportation services to homeless children attending preschool (Item H-8).

Additionally, the updated Guidance provides reorganization of some questions and minor edits to the March 2003 Guidance.

A. Introduction

A-1. What is the purpose of the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth (McKinney-Vento) program?

The McKinney-Vento program is designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Under this program, State educational agencies (SEAs) must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other children and youth. Homeless children and youth should have access to the educational and other services that they need to enable them to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. In addition, homeless students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment. States and districts are required to review and undertake steps to revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youth.

A-2. What is the statutory authority for the McKinney-Vento program?

The program is authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 USC 11431 et seq.), (McKinney-Vento Act). The program was originally authorized in 1987 and, most recently, reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

A-3. What is meant by the term "homeless children and youth"?

The McKinney-Vento Act defines "homeless children and youth" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes –

- Children and youth who are:
  - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as *doubled-up*);
  - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - living in emergency or transitional shelters;
  - abandoned in hospitals; or
  - awaiting foster care placement;

- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

A-4. How does the current McKinney-Vento program differ from the predecessor program?

The principal differences between the current McKinney-Vento program and the predecessor program include the following:

- *Express prohibition against segregating homeless students* – The statute expressly prohibits a school or State from segregating a homeless child or youth in a separate school, or in a separate program within a school, based on the child or youth's status as homeless. (*See* Section E of this guidance.)

- *Requirement for transportation to and from school of origin* (see definition in Appendix A) – The State and its local educational agencies (LEAs) must adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of the unaccompanied youth, the liaison) to and from the school of origin. There are specific provisions regarding the responsibility and costs for transportation. (*See* Section H.)

- *Immediate school enrollment requirement* – If a dispute arises over school selection or placement, an LEA must admit a homeless child or youth to the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent or guardian, pending resolution of the dispute. (*See* Section G.)

- *Changes in "best interest" determination* – LEAs must make school placement determinations on the basis of the "best interest" of the child or youth. In determining what is a child or youth's best interest, an LEA must, to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child or youth's parent or guardian. (*See* Section G.)

- *Local liaison in all school districts* – Every LEA, whether or not it receives a McKinney-Vento subgrant, must designate a local liaison for homeless children and youth. (*See* Section F.)

- *New subgrant requirements* – A State that receives an allocation greater than the State minimum allotment must competitively subgrant to LEAs at least 75 percent of its allocation. A State that receives the minimum State allotment must competitively subgrant to LEAs at least 50 percent of its allocation. (*See* Sections C and K.)

A-5. What Federal civil rights requirements apply to school districts in educating homeless children?

School districts, as recipients of Federal financial assistance and as public entities, must ensure that their educational programs for homeless children are administered in a nondiscriminatory manner. The Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

enforces Federal laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964); sex (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972); age (Age Discrimination Act of 1975); and disability (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as applied to recipients of Federal financial assistance and Title II of the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, as applied to public educational entities). For more information about the application of these laws, contact the OCR enforcement office that serves your state.

A-6. What is the purpose of this guidance?

This guidance replaces the prior nonregulatory guidance for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program. The guidance describes the requirements of the current program and provides suggestions for addressing many of those requirements. The guidance does not impose any requirements beyond those in the program statute and other applicable Federal statutes and regulations. While States may wish to consider the guidance in developing their own guidelines and standards, they are free to develop alternative approaches that meet the applicable Federal statutory and regulatory requirements.

B. Federal Awards to States

B-1. On what basis does the Department award McKinney-Vento funds to States?

The Department awards McKinney-Vento funds to States by formula. The amount that a State receives in a given year is based on the proportion of funds allocated nationally that it receives under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), for that year. For the purpose of determining allotments, the term "State" includes each of the fifty States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The minimum State allocation for fiscal year 2004 is $150,000.

B-2. Are the outlying areas and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) eligible to receive McKinney-Vento funds?

Yes. The Department is authorized to reserve 0.1 percent of each year's appropriation to award grants to the outlying areas (i.e., the U. S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands). In addition, the Department transfers, under a memorandum of agreement, one percent of each year's appropriation to the BIA for programs for homeless Indian students served by schools funded by the BIA.

C. State Uses of Funds

C-1. For what purposes may a State use its McKinney-Vento allocation?

A State may use its McKinney-Vento allocation for the following purposes:

- *State activities* - A State that receives an allocation greater than the State minimum allotment (i.e., greater than $150,000 for FY 2004) may reserve for State-level activities up to 25 percent of its allocation for that fiscal year. A State funded at the minimum level may reserve for State-level activities up to 50 percent of its allocation for that fiscal year.

- *Subgrants to LEAs* - An SEA must award funds not reserved for State-level activities to LEAs on a competitive basis.

C-2. For what purposes may a State use McKinney-Vento funds that are reserved for State-level activities?

A State may use McKinney-Vento funds that are made available for State use to support the broad array of activities conducted by the Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth. (*See* Section 722(f) of the statute and Part D of this guidance.) The SEA may conduct these activities directly or through grants or contracts.

D. Office of the Coordinator For Education Of Homeless Children And Youth

D-1. What are the primary responsibilities of the State Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth?

The primary responsibilities of the State coordinator are to:

- Develop and carry out the State's McKinney-Vento plan;
- Gather valid, reliable, and comprehensive information on the problems faced by homeless children and youth, the progress of the SEA and LEAs in addressing those problems, and the success of McKinney-Vento programs in allowing homeless children and youth to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school;
- Coordinate services on behalf of the McKinney-Vento program;
- Provide technical assistance to LEAs in coordination with the local liaisons to ensure that LEAs comply with the McKinney-Vento Act; and
- Collect and transmit to the U.S. Department of Education, upon request, a report containing the information that the Department determines is necessary to assess the educational needs of homeless children and youth.

D-2. What are the reporting requirements that State coordinators must meet?

The McKinney-Vento Act gives the Department the authority to collect from States, at such times as the Department may require, information that the Department determines is necessary to assess the educational needs of homeless children and youth. The Department will be issuing further guidance on State reporting responsibilities.

D-3. What are the State coordinator's responsibilities regarding the coordination of services?

State coordinators must facilitate coordination among the SEA, the State social services agency, and other agencies (including agencies providing mental health services) to provide services to homeless children and youth and their families. To improve the provision of comprehensive services to these children and youth and their families, coordinators must coordinate and collaborate with educators, including child development and preschool program personnel, and service providers. Additionally, State coordinators must coordinate services with local liaisons and community organizations and groups representing homeless children, youth, and families. Comprehensive services include health care, nutrition, and other social services.

Where applicable, State coordinators must also coordinate services with State and local housing agencies responsible for developing comprehensive affordable housing strategies under Section 105 of the Cranston/Gonzalez National Affordable Housing Act (Public Law 101-625). Additionally, State Coordinators may wish to coordinate housing, health and other services with the State representatives for the President's Interagency Council on Homelessness - United States Interagency Council on Homelessness · 451 7th Street SW · Suite 2200 · Washington, DC · 20410.

D-4. What are the technical assistance responsibilities of State coordinators?

State coordinators must provide technical assistance to LEAs, in coordination with local liaisons, to ensure LEA compliance on such issues as school choice and placement, enrollment policies, enrollment disputes, school records, duties of local liaisons, and reviewing and revising policies that may act as enrollment barriers. Through strong leadership and collaboration and communication with the LEA liaisons, the State coordinator can help ensure that districts will carry out the requirements of the Act. Establishing clear-cut policies and procedures at the State level and making sure districts know and understand them will facilitate the smooth and consistent implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act.

Enrollment Barriers

The school enrollment and retention barriers that homeless children and youth most frequently face are the following: transportation, immunization requirements, residency requirements, providing birth certificates, and legal guardianship requirements**.**

U.S. Department of Education's McKinney-Vento Report To Congress for Fiscal Year 2000

D-5. Is the State coordinator required to provide technical assistance only to school districts that receive McKinney-Vento subgrants?

No. The State coordinator must provide technical assistance to all school districts. The McKinney-Vento Act requires that all homeless children be given the opportunity to achieve to challenging State academic standards.

D-6. By what means should State coordinators provide technical assistance?

The State coordinator may provide a wide range of coordinated technical assistance activities. These may include State conferences, guidance documents for LEA liaisons, a State Website that addresses McKinney-Vento issues and provides a listing of State resources, a listserv, a toll-free help line, and newsletters or bulletins. Many school districts have not implemented targeted services for homeless children and youth. Therefore, State level technical assistance will be essential to familiarize new LEA liaisons with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and to provide guidance on serving eligible students.

D-7. What are examples of technical assistance that school districts may need?

Areas in which school districts and LEA liaisons may need technical assistance include the following:

- Understanding the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act;
- Establishing procedures to address problems related to enrollment and school selection;
- Resolving transportation disputes, including inter-district disputes;
- Determining LEA needs and developing a plan for services;
- Creating school district and community awareness of the needs of eligible students;
- Identifying Federal, State, and local resources;
- Identifying homeless children and youth;
- Collecting data;
- Enhancing parental involvement activities; and
- Identifying strategies for improving academic achievement.

Technical Assistance Strategies: Best Practices

Many State and local homeless education coordinators conduct extensive awareness activities. As school personnel gain a broader understanding of the needs of homeless children and youth, they are better able to implement policies and practices that ensure access to school and support success in school.

Information dissemination is often cited as a successful strategy used by State coordinators to ensure school districts understand and uphold the McKinney-Vento Act. Information dissemination activities include the publication of guidance and manuals, holding State conferences for homeless education, and providing web pages on SEA websites.

Several State coordinators reported visiting McKinney-Vento subgrantees to offer assistance with program evaluation. Technical assistance through interagency coordination is key to meeting the needs of eligible students and providing comprehensive services that are continuous and non-duplicative.

The Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program: Learning to Succeed

E. Prohibition Against Segregation

E-1. May States or districts segregate homeless children and youth in separate schools or in separate programs within a school?

No. Homelessness alone is not sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment. SEAs and LEAs must adopt policies and practices to ensure that students are not segregated or stigmatized on the basis of their status as homeless. Services provided with McKinney-Vento Act funds must not replace the regular academic program and must be designed to expand upon or improve services provided as part of the school's regular academic program.

- If a State receives funds under the McKinney-Vento program, every district in that State – whether or not it receives a McKinney-Vento subgrant from its SEA – is prohibited from segregating homeless students in separate schools or in separate programs within schools, based on the child's or youth's status as homeless.

- Schools may not provide services with McKinney-Vento funds on school grounds in settings that segregate homeless children and youth from other children and youth [except as necessary for short periods of time for health

and safety emergencies or to provide temporary, special, and supplementary services to meet the unique needs of homeless children and youth].

There is a very limited exception to the prohibition against segregating homeless students in separate schools or in separate settings within a school that applies only to four "covered counties" – Orange County, CA; San Diego County, CA; San Joaquin County, CA; and Maricopa County, AZ – if the conditions described in section 722(e)(3)(B) of the statute are met. The Department has provided separate guidance on this exception to the affected States and districts.

E-2. May a district educate homeless children at an off-site facility, such as a shelter?

No. Homeless children and youth must be educated as part of a school's regular academic program. Services must be provided to homeless children and youth through programs and mechanisms that integrate homeless children and youth with their non-homeless counterparts. Services provided with McKinney-Vento funds must expand upon or improve services provided as part of the regular school program.

E-3. May a school separate a child from the regular school program if he or she resides in a domestic violence shelter?

No, however, schools can and should take all other necessary steps to protect children who are victims of domestic violence, such as protecting children's identity in school database systems, arranging for anonymous pick-up and drop-off locations for school buses, enrolling children in a different school, sensitizing bus drivers and school personnel to the child's circumstances, training school staff on confidentiality laws and policies, and helping families to file copies of protective orders with schools. In this way, schools can address safety concerns and provide equal educational opportunities without causing further disruption in children's lives.

E-4. Are "transitional classrooms" in shelters, where children and youth receive educational services while they are being assessed or while they wait for school records, permissible under McKinney-Vento?

No. Districts are required to adopt policies that will eliminate barriers to school enrollment that may be caused by tracking, obtaining, and transferring records.

F. Local Liaisons

F-1. Is every LEA in a State required to designate a local liaison for homeless children and youth?

Yes. Every LEA – whether or not it receives a McKinney-Vento subgrant – is required to designate a local liaison.

F-2. What are the responsibilities of the local liaison for homeless children and youth?

The local liaison serves as one of the primary contacts between homeless families and school staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and other service providers. The liaison coordinates services to ensure that homeless children and youth enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically.

Local liaisons must ensure that:

- Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- Homeless students enroll in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the LEA;
- Homeless children and youth and their families receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start, and preschool programs administered by the LEA, and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services;
- Parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children, and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- Parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation services;
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act; and
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated to locations where they receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act.

In meeting these responsibilities, local liaisons must assist homeless children and youth with such activities as the following:

- Enrolling in school and accessing school services;
- Obtaining immunizations or medical records;
- Informing parents, school personnel, and others of the rights of homeless children and youth;
- Working with school staff to make sure that homeless children and youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement;
- Helping to coordinate transportation services for homeless children and youth; and
- Collaborating and coordinating with State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related support services to homeless children and youth.

Needs Assessment: Best Practices

A particularly effective tool for addressing the problems faced by homeless children and youth is implementing a needs assessment process that, in turn, can shape the development of an action plan. Taking time to identify the needs of homeless children and families and the resources the school district and community offer will enable the liaison to make informed decisions about the types of activities that will result in services to enhance opportunities for school success for eligible students. The liaison can collaborate with other programs, organizations, and agencies to set goals for homeless education programs and services and should collect data on an ongoing basis to determine progress in achieving the goals. The data will provide the foundation for the improvement of services for eligible students.

Local Homeless Liaison Toolkit

F-3. What is the relationship between the SEA and the local liaisons?

An SEA must ensure that each of its LEAs designates an appropriate staff person to serve as a liaison for homeless children and youth. The SEA should obtain from each of its LEAs, by a date specified by the State, contact information concerning the local liaisons.

Through its State coordinator, the SEA should provide guidance to LEAs to assist them in designating local liaisons and in understanding the duties and responsibilities of the liaisons. The SEA should work with LEAs and local liaisons throughout the year to ensure that homeless children and youth are receiving the services that they need in order to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school.

F-4. How can a State assist LEAs in designating local liaisons?

The State may issue guidance to LEAs that describes factors for an LEA to consider in designating its liaison. The type of person best suited to address the problems faced by homeless children and youth may vary according to the particular circumstances within a State or district. For example, in appointing a liaison, an LEA might consider the following:

- If it is likely that the LEA will have to revise local policies and procedures to address enrollment and school attendance barriers, the LEA may want to designate as a liaison an individual who is currently in a position to communicate effectively with policymakers. That person might be a director of pupil services, a local Title I coordinator, or an assistant superintendent.

- If an LEA has in place strong local policies and procedures to assist homeless students, the LEA might consider designating as a liaison an individual closer to the provision of direct services. For example, social workers, other support staff, and guidance counselors have been successful liaisons due to their skills and experience with outreach efforts in the community.

F-5. What strategies can a local liaison use to identify homeless preschoolers?

Local liaisons can identify preschool-aged homeless children by working closely with shelters and social service agencies in their area. In addition, the liaison should work with school personnel, who can inquire, at the time they are enrolling homeless children and youth in school, whether the family has preschool-aged children. The LEA liaison should also collaborate with the school district special education program. The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that highly mobile children with disabilities, such as migrant and homeless children who are in need of special education and related services, are located, identified and evaluated. Additionally, IDEA requires that homeless preschoolers and all homeless children be included in the "Child Find" process for early identification of special education needs.

F-6. How can a local liaison assist homeless families in enrolling their children in a preschool if the program has a waiting list?

The LEA liaison should work with preschool program staff to remind them how important their services are for homeless children and to inform them of how waiting lists often create barriers for homeless families who wish to enroll their children. Some preschool programs keep slots open specifically for homeless children.

Identifying Homeless Children and Youth: Best Practices

Homeless children and youth are difficult to identify for many reasons, and thus often go unnoticed by school personnel. In order to identify homeless children both in and out of school, LEA liaisons can coordinate with community service agencies, such as shelters, soup kitchens, food banks, transitional living programs, street outreach teams, drop-in centers, community action agencies (especially in rural areas, where there may be no shelters), welfare departments, housing departments, public health departments, and faith-based organizations to begin to develop a relationship on issues such as the school enrollment process, transportation, and other student services.

Where available, the LEA liaisons can engage the local homeless task force, homeless coalition, and homeless assistance "Continuum of Care" as partners in the identification of students who are homeless. LEA liaisons can develop relationships with truancy officials or other attendance officers and train them on how to recognize school absences that may be the result of homelessness.

They can provide officials with information so that they may discreetly refer eligible students to appropriate services.

LEA liaisons can use creative techniques to identify unaccompanied homeless youth while respecting their privacy and dignity, such as administering surveys to peers, using enrollment questionnaires, or providing specific outreach to areas where eligible students who are out of school might congregate. Liaisons can make special efforts to identify homeless preschool children.

LEA liaisons can provide a district-wide residency questionnaire to all students upon enrollment. Questionnaires that may suggest homelessness can be sent to the local liaison for a final determination of homeless status, and, if affirmative, lead to the provision of referrals and other assistance (*See* Example in Appendix D.)

LEA liaisons should avoid using the word "homeless" in initial contacts with school personnel, families, or youth. For most people, the word "homeless" conjures up stereotypical images of adults, not children or youth in classrooms. School personnel may be unlikely to recognize students who are homeless initially, but often respond affirmatively when asked if they know of students who are staying temporarily with relatives, are staying at campgrounds or in their car, are living at motels, are living with another family temporarily, or have moved several times in a year.

Families and students who are homeless may not think of themselves as "homeless" because of the stigma attached. Therefore, outreach posters and materials placed in shelters, campgrounds, motels, and public housing projects should describe the symptoms of homelessness (for example, different kinds of living situations) rather than simply refer to a person's "homeless" status.

Local Liaison Toolkit

G. School Placement, Enrollment, and Eligibility for Services

G-1. On what basis does an LEA make school placement determinations for homeless children and youth?

Homeless children and youth frequently move, and maintaining a stable school environment is critical to their success in school. To ensure this stability, LEAs must make school placement determinations on the basis of the “best interest” of the homeless child or youth. Using this standard, an LEA must –

(a) Continue the child’s or youth’s education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic

years or during an academic year; or for the remainder of the academic year if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or

(b) Enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

G-2. How does an LEA determine the child's or youth's "best interest"?

In determining a child's or youth's best interest, an LEA must, to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the "school of origin" unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child or youth's parent or guardian. If an LEA wishes to send a homeless child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian, the LEA must provide a written explanation of its decision to the parent or guardian, together with a statement regarding the right to appeal the placement decision.

G-3. Why is it so important to maintain a stable education environment for homeless children and youth?

Changing schools significantly impedes a student's academic and social growth. The literature on highly mobile students indicates that it can take a student four to six months to recover academically after changing schools. Highly mobile students have also been found to have lower test scores and overall academic performance than peers who do not change schools. Therefore, the McKinney-Vento Act calls for LEAs to maintain students in their school of origin to the extent feasible.

G-4. What should a school district consider when determining the extent to which it is feasible to educate a homeless child or youth in his or her school of origin?

As stated above, to the extent feasible, a district must educate a homeless child or youth in his or her school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian. The placement determination should be a student-centered, individualized determination. Factors that an LEA may consider include the age of the child or youth; the distance of a commute and the impact it may have on the student's education; personal safety issues; a student's need for special instruction (e.g., special education and related services); the length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location; and the time remaining in the school year.

G-5. What procedures must an LEA follow if a dispute arises between a school and a parent or guardian regarding placement of a homeless child or youth?

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the LEA must immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent or guardian, pending resolution of the dispute. Similar provisions apply to placement of unaccompanied youth. Inter-district enrollment disputes should be resolved at the SEA level (*See* G-9).

Homeless families and youth may be unaware of their right to challenge placement and enrollment decisions. Therefore, the LEA must provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written statement of the school placement decision and the appeal rights. The LEA must refer the unaccompanied youth, parent, or guardian to the LEA liaison, who must expeditiously carry out the dispute resolution process.

When enrollment disputes arise, it is critical that students not be kept out of school. Interruption in education can severely disrupt the student's academic progress. To avoid such disruptions, LEAs need an established process for resolving school placement disputes. Permitting students to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of disputes helps provide needed stability.

LEA homeless liaisons help ensure that disputes are resolved objectively and expeditiously. Written notice protects both students and schools by outlining the specific reasons for the school's decision. It facilitates dispute resolution by providing decision-makers with documents to guide their determinations.

G-6. In providing special services to homeless children and youth, how does a school or district avoid stigmatizing those children?

As stated above, a district or school may not segregate homeless children and youth from the mainstream school environment. Homeless children and youth are entitled to receive all of the services that are provided to their non-homeless counterparts and in the same setting as their non-homeless peers.

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate to provide additional services to homeless children and youth in a separate setting. In doing so, a district should be careful not to stigmatize these students. If a district does implement a supplemental program exclusively for homeless children, such as a shelter-based evening tutoring program, it should not be called "the homeless tutoring program" or the "shelter tutoring program." Instead, the district should use a name such as "Discovery Club" or "Homework Club" to avoid stigmatization.

Enrollment and Attendance Statistics

The Department's FY 2000 Report to Congress indicated that 87 percent of homeless K-12 children and youth were enrolled in school. However, only 77 percent attended school regularly. Less than 16 percent of eligible preschool aged homeless children were enrolled in preschool programs.

U.S. Department of Education's McKinney-Vento Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2000

G-7. What are a school's responsibilities for enrolling homeless children and youth?

A school selected on the basis of a "best interest determination" (*see* G-1 and G-2) must immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce the records normally required for enrollment (such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, birth certificates, or other documentation). The enrolling school must immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic or other records.

If a child or youth needs to obtain immunizations, or medical or immunization records, the enrolling school must immediately refer the parent or guardian to the LEA homeless liaison, who must assist in obtaining the immunizations or records. The records must be maintained so that they are available in a timely fashion when the child enters a new school or school district. To facilitate immediate enrollment, timely transfer of records from school to school should also take into account procedures for State-to-State record transfers.

The McKinney-Vento statute provides a broad mandate to States and districts to change policies or practices that act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, and school success of homeless children. It is important for them to review policies and practices on an on-going basis, so that new barriers do not prevent children from receiving the free, appropriate public education to which they are entitled.

G-8. What are some steps that LEAs can take to ensure immediate enrollment?

Homeless children and youth often do not have the documents ordinarily required for school enrollment. Enrolling them in school immediately provides these children and youth needed stability and also is a legal requirement.

To facilitate immediate enrollment, LEAs should consider the following practices:

- Train all school enrollment staff, secretaries, guidance counselors, school social workers, and principals on the legal requirements regarding immediate enrollment;
- Review all regulations and policies to ensure that they comply with the McKinney-Vento requirements;
- Develop affidavits of residence or other forms to replace typical proof of residency. Such forms should be carefully crafted so that they do not create further barriers or delay enrollment;
- Develop caregiver affidavits, enrollment forms for unaccompanied youth, and other forms to replace typical proof of guardianship. Again, such forms should be carefully crafted so they do not create further barriers or delay enrollment;
- Establish school-based immunization clinics or other opportunities for on-site immunizations;
- Collaborate with community-based or public agencies to provide school uniforms within a district and among neighboring districts;
- Accept school records directly from families and youth;

- Contact the previous school for records and assistance with placement decisions;
- Develop short educational assessments to place students immediately while awaiting complete academic records;
- Inform families and youth in a language they can understand or in an accessible format, as appropriate, of their right to attend either their school of origin or local school;
- Inform families and youth in a language they can understand or in an accessible format, as appropriate, of their right to transportation and immediate enrollment;
- Develop clear, understandable, and accessible forms for written explanations of decisions and the right to appeal; and
- Expeditiously follow up on any special education and language assistance referrals or services.

G-9. What are effective strategies for a LEA to use to resolve enrollment disputes?

An LEA should consider the following strategies for effectively resolving school enrollment disputes:

- Disputes should be resolved at the district level rather than the school level;
- When inter-district issues arise, representatives from all involved districts and the SEA should be present to resolve the dispute;
- A State-level appeal process, involving the State coordinator, should be available for appeals of district-level decisions and resolution of inter-district disputes (*See* Section 722(g)(1)(C));
- The dispute resolution process should be as informal and accessible as possible, and allow for impartial and complete review;
- Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth should be able to initiate the dispute resolution process directly at the school they choose, as well as at the district or LEA homeless liaison's office;
- States should establish timelines to resolve disputes at the local and State level;
- Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth should be informed that they can provide written or oral documentation to support their position;
- Students should be provided with all services for which they are eligible while disputes are resolved;
- Written notice should be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand. The notice should include:

    1. Contact information for the LEA homeless liaison and State coordinator, with a brief description of their roles;
    2. A simple, detachable form that parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth can complete and turn in to the school to initiate the dispute process. (The school should copy the form and return the copy to the parent, guardian or youth for their records when it is submitted);

3. A step-by-step description of how to dispute the school's decision;
4. Notice of the right to enroll immediately in the school of choice pending resolution of the dispute;
5. Notice that "immediate enrollment" includes full participation in all school activities;
6. Notice of the right to appeal to the State if the district-level resolution is not satisfactory; and
7. Timelines for resolving district- and State-level appeals.

G-10. Are children who are awaiting foster care placement eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act?

Yes. As stated in A-3, children who are awaiting foster care placement are considered homeless and eligible for McKinney-Vento services. (See Section 725(2)(B)(i) of the McKinney-Vento Act.)

Children who are already in foster care, on the other hand, are not considered homeless. LEA liaisons should confer and coordinate with local public social service agency providers in determining how best to assist homeless children and youth who are awaiting foster care placement.

G-11. Are children displaced from their housing by naturally occurring disasters eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act?

When children and their families are displaced from their housing as a result of a natural disaster, there is often a period of instability in which various private organizations and local, State, and Federal agencies provide assistance. SEAs and LEAs should determine such children's eligibility for McKinney-Vento services on a case-by-case basis. In making this determination, they should take into consideration the services that are available through these other sources.

Following a disaster, one of the LEA's first priorities is to re-open impacted schools as soon as possible and take steps to normalize school routines. LEAs should then proceed to examine whether children who have been displaced by the natural disaster are eligible for McKinney-Vento services on a case-by-case basis. In such circumstances, the Department would provide technical assistance and other assistance, as available, to help the LEA.

Transportation: The Number One Barrier

The FY 2000 Report to Congress cited lack of transportation as the number one barrier that homeless children and youth faced in attempting to enroll in and attend school regularly.

U.S. Department of Education's McKinney-Vento Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2000

H-1. What responsibilities do SEAs and LEAs have regarding providing transportation services to homeless children and youth?

SEAs and LEAs are responsible for reviewing and revising policies, including transportation policies, that may act as barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools in the State. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless children and youth are entitled to receive the transportation and other services that are available to non-homeless students.

SEAs and LEAs must adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), to or from the "school of origin" (*see* definition in Appendix A) in accordance with the following requirements:

- If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the area served by the LEA in which the school of origin is located, that LEA must provide or arrange for the child's or youth's transportation to or from the school of origin.

- If the homeless child or youth continues his or her education in the school of origin but begins living in an area served by another LEA, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the homeless child or youth is living must agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the LEAs cannot agree upon a method, the responsibility and costs for transportation are to be shared equally.

Steps to Improve Transportation for Homeless Students

Although the McKinney-Vento Act permits homeless students to remain in their schools of origin despite their residential instability, lack of transportation commonly prevents them from doing so. Given that transportation has been one of the foremost enrollment barriers, in guidance to districts, States should highlight the transportation responsibilities of LEAs under the reauthorized McKinney-Vento statute.

Additionally, highly mobile students have been found to have lower test scores and overall academic performance than peers who do not change schools. This diminished achievement hurts students and schools. States should work in concert with LEAs to develop practices and policies to ensure that transportation is provided as required under the statute. Adopting a "One Child, One School, One Year" policy and providing transportation to enable a student to remain at his/her school of origin assures that a homeless student need not change schools before the end of a current academic year.

A systematic process - with agreed-upon steps and individual roles - can help homeless students get to and from school efficiently and reliably. LEAs should –

(1) Identify one individual as the key contact regarding transportation;
(2) Develop a process to determine the best interests of the student regarding travel to a particular school;
(3) Standardize transportation-related data collection and processing;
(4) Plan for transportation emergencies with back-up support; and
(5) Identify other sources for funding or arranging transportation.

U.S. Department of Education's McKinney-Vento Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2000

H-2. How can LEAs ensure that the education of homeless students is not disrupted during inter-district transfers?

LEAs should have in place inter-district (and inter-State, where appropriate) agreements that address potential transportation issues that may arise as homeless students transfer from one district to another.

H-3. May funds under Part A of Title I or Part A of Title V of the ESEA be used to transport homeless students to and from the school of origin?

In general, LEAs may not use funds under Title I, Part A or Title V, Part A to transport homeless students to or from their school of origin. Transportation services to the school of origin are mandated under the McKinney-Vento Act's statute. The "no-supplanting" provisions in Title I and Title V prohibit those funds from being used to support activities that the LEA would otherwise be required to provide.

H-4. Who should be involved in developing and implementing transportation policies for homeless students?

School districts can best address the transportation needs of homeless and other highly mobile students through a team approach. However, based on the best interest of the student and in consultation with the parent, the LEA ultimately determines the mode of transportation. The LEA's transportation director is a key figure in the process and should work with district leadership, the local liaison for homeless students, neighboring districts, and homeless service providers to develop effective transportation policies and procedures.

Steps district directors of pupil transportation can take to support the transportation of homeless children and youth

- Communicate regularly with the district homeless liaison
- Establish procedures to receive information about the transportation needs and pickup location of homeless students
- Train bus drivers and dispatchers on the rights and needs of homeless students, as well as on the need for sensitivity and confidentiality
- Develop a bus routing system that can respond flexibly and quickly to new "pickups"
- Be aware of new motel and shelter locations and prepare to create bus stops nearby
- Support increased district commitment to provide homeless students transportation to school, as well as to before-and after-school programs.

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program: Learning to Succeed

H-5. Is an LEA required to transport homeless students to and from their school of origin, if needed, while enrollment disputes are being resolved?

Yes. The McKinney-Vento Act's transportation requirements apply while disputes are being resolved. Therefore, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), the LEA must provide or arrange for transportation to

and from the school of origin. Inter-district transportation disputes should be resolved at the SEA level. (*See* section 722(g)(1)(C).

H-6. If an LEA does not provide transportation to non-homeless students, is it required to transport homeless students?

Yes. As discussed above, the statute not only requires an LEA to provide comparable services, including transportation services, to homeless students, it also requires an LEA, at the request of a parent or guardian, to provide or arrange for transportation to and from the school of origin.

H-7. Do LEA transportation responsibilities apply to all LEAs in the State or only to those LEAs that receive a McKinney-Vento subgrant?

This requirement applies to all LEAs in the State.

H-8. Does McKinney-Vento require an LEA to provide transportation services to homeless children attending preschool?

To the extent an LEA offers a public preschool education, McKinney-Vento requires that homeless children have equal access to that preschool education as provided to non-homeless children. Furthermore, the statue requires that the services provided to homeless children be comparable to those provided to non-homeless children. Thus, if an LEA provides transportation for non-homeless preschool children, it must also provide comparable transportation services for homeless preschool children.

I. Comparable and Coordinated Services

I-1. What are an LEA's responsibilities regarding "comparable services"?

An LEA in a participating State must provide services to each homeless child and youth that is comparable to services offered to other students in the LEA. These services include public preschool programs, and educational programs or services for which a homeless student meets the eligibility criteria, such as programs for children with disabilities, programs for students with limited English proficiency, vocational education, programs for gifted and talented students, before-and after-school programs, school nutrition programs, and transportation.

I-2. What are an LEA's responsibilities regarding coordination of services for homeless children and youth?

LEAs are responsible for coordinating with local social service agencies and other service providers and programs, including programs under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.), and with other LEAs on issues such as transportation and the transfer of records. Additionally, they must coordinate with housing assistance providers. (*see* D-3.) The purpose of this coordination is to ensure that eligible students have access and reasonable proximity to available

education and related support services. It is also important to coordinate efforts in order to raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of homelessness and the challenges that homeless students face.

J. Homeless Unaccompanied Youth

J-1. Why does the McKinney-Vento Act place special emphasis on serving the needs of homeless unaccompanied youth?

Homeless unaccompanied youth often face unique barriers in enrolling and succeeding in school. These barriers include school attendance policies, credit accrual, and legal guardianship requirements. Without a parent or guardian to advocate for them and exercise parental rights, they may be denied enrollment and remain out of school for extended periods of time. Unaccompanied youth also may not understand their educational rights, or know how to acquire this information.

J-2. How do local liaisons assist homeless unaccompanied youth in accessing the educational services to which they are entitled?

Local liaisons assist unaccompanied youth in accessing educational services through such activities as:

- Helping unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, after considering the youth's wishes;
- Providing unaccompanied youth with notice of their appeal rights in a language they can understand or in an accessible format;
- Informing youth of their right to transportation to and from the school of origin, and assisting unaccompanied youth in accessing transportation; and
- Ensuring that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending the resolution of disputes.

K. Subgrants to LEAs

K-1. What portion of an SEA's McKinney-Vento allocation must be used for subgrants to LEAs?

An SEA that receives more than the minimum statutory McKinney-Vento allocation (*see* section 722(c)(i)) must subgrant at least 75 percent of its allocation to LEAs. (*See* C-1.)

An SEA that receives the minimum statutory McKinney-Vento allocation must subgrant at least 50 percent of its allocation to LEAs. (*See* C-1.)

K-2. On what basis does an SEA award McKinney-Vento subgrants to LEAs?

An SEA awards McKinney-Vento subgrants to LEAs competitively on the basis of the needs of the LEAs requesting assistance and the quality of their applications.

K-3. What information must an LEA include in its application for McKinney-Vento funds?

An LEA that seeks a McKinney-Vento award must submit to its SEA an application that contains the following information:

- An assessment of the educational and related needs of homeless children and youth in the area served by the LEA;
- A description of the services and programs that the LEA would provide;
- An assurance that the LEA meets the maintenance-of -effort requirement;
- An assurance that the LEA would use subgrant funds in compliance with section 722(g) (3) through (7) of the McKinney-Vento Act; and
- A description of policies and procedures that the LEA would undertake to ensure that its activities would not isolate or stigmatize homeless children and youth.

K-4. For how long may an LEA receive a subgrant?

An LEA may receive McKinney-Vento subgrant funds for a period not to exceed three years. An LEA may re-apply for additional McKinney-Vento funds after the initial three-year period expires. The LEA's subsequent application must meet the requirements outlined in K-3 above.

L. Local Uses of Funds

L-1. For what activities may an LEA use McKinney-Vento subgrant funds?

LEAs must use McKinney-Vento funds to assist homeless children and youth in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. In particular, the funds may support the following activities:

(1) Tutoring, supplemental instruction, and other educational services that help homeless children and youth reach the same challenging State content and State student performance standards to which all children are held. As clearly specified in the ESEA, as reauthorized by the NCLB Act, all academic enrichment programs for disadvantaged students, including programs for homeless students, must be aligned with State standards and curricula. Additionally, when offering supplemental instruction, LEAs should focus on providing services for children and youth that reflect

scientifically based research as the foundation for programs and strategies to ensure academic success.

(2) Expedited evaluations of eligible students to measure their strengths and needs. These evaluations should be done promptly in order to avoid a gap in the provision of necessary services to those children and youth. Evaluations may also determine a homeless child or youth's eligibility for other programs and services, including educational programs for gifted and talented students, special education and related services for children with disabilities, English language acquisition, vocational education, school lunch, and appropriate programs or services under ESEA.

(3) Programs and other activities designed to raise awareness among educators and pupil services personnel of the rights of homeless children and youth under the McKinney-Vento Act, and the special needs such children and youth have as a result of their homelessness.

(4) Referrals of eligible students to medical, dental, mental, and other health services.

(5) Paying the excess cost of transportation not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funds, to enable students to attend schools selected under section 722(g)(3) of the McKinney-Vento Act.

(6) Developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs for homeless children of preschool age that are not provided through other Federal, State, or local funds.

(7) Services and assistance to attract, engage, and retain homeless children and youth, and unaccompanied youth, in public school programs and services provided to non-homeless children and youth.

(8) Before- and after-school programs, mentoring, and summer programs for homeless children and youth. Qualified personnel may provide homework assistance, tutoring, and supervision of other educational instruction in carrying out these activities.

(9) Paying fees and costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records necessary for the enrollment of students in school. The records may include birth certificates, guardianship records, immunization records, academic records, and evaluations of students needed to determine eligibility for other programs and services.

(10) Education and training programs for parents of homeless children and youth regarding the rights their children have as homeless individuals and regarding the educational and other resources available to their children.

(11) Programs coordinating services provided by schools and other agencies to eligible students in order to expand and enhance such services.

Coordination with programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act should be included in this effort.

(12) Pupil services programs providing violence prevention counseling and referrals to such counseling.

(13) Programs addressing the particular needs of eligible students that may arise from domestic violence.

(14) Providing supplies to non-school facilities serving eligible students and adapting these facilities to enable them to provide services.

(15) Providing school supplies to eligible students at shelters, temporary housing facilities, and other locations as appropriate.

(16) Providing extraordinary or emergency services to eligible students as necessary to enroll and retain such children and youth in school.

L-2. Where may an LEA provide services for homeless children and youth?

To the maximum extent practicable, an LEA must provide McKinney-Vento services through programs that integrate homeless and non-homeless children and youth. The services must be designed to expand or improve services provided as part of a school's regular academic program, but may not replace services provided under the regular program.

LEAs may provide subgrant services through programs on school grounds or at other facilities. If services are provided on school grounds, the schools may use McKinney-Vento funds to provide the same services to other children and youth who are determined by the LEA to be at risk of failing in, or dropping out of, school.

As discussed in Part E of this guidance, LEAs and schools may not provide services in settings within a school that segregate homeless children and youth from other children and youth, except as necessary for short periods of time for health and safety emergencies, or to provide temporary, special, and additional services to meet the unique needs of homeless children and youth.

L-3. May a district or school provide an after-school program that exclusively serves homeless children with McKinney-Vento funds?

Yes. Homeless children are entitled to participate in the regular after-school program provided by the school, and schools must address all barriers to their full participation in these programs. If no after-school programs are provided by the school or the programs provided do not meet the needs of homeless children, McKinney-Vento funds may be used for after-school services for homeless children, and for non-homeless children who are at risk of failing in, or dropping out of, school.

M. Coordination with Title I, Part A of the ESEA

M-1. Are homeless children and youth eligible to receive Title I, Part A services?

Yes. Homeless children and youth are automatically eligible for services under Title I, Part A of the ESEA, whether or not they live in a Title I school attendance area or meet the academic standards required of other children for eligibility. Homeless children and youth may receive Title I educational or support services from schoolwide and targeted-assistance school programs.

A State must include in its State Title I plan a description of how the plan is coordinated with the McKinney-Vento Act. (*See* Section 1111(a)(1) of the ESEA.) Additionally, an LEA receiving Title I, Part A funds must include in its local plan a description of how the plan is coordinated with the McKinney-Vento Act. The local plan must describe services provided to homeless children.

M-2. If a homeless child becomes permanently housed during a school year, is that child eligible to receive Title I, Part A services for the remainder of that school year?

Yes. In general, a homeless child or youth that becomes permanently housed during a school year continues to remain eligible for Title I, Part A services for the remainder of that school year. This helps ensure educational stability for formerly homeless children. For example, it may be appropriate in certain circumstances for an LEA to use Title I, Part A funds to transport *formerly* homeless students to or from their school of origin for the remainder of the school year in which they become permanently housed. (However, the Title I supplanting prohibition prohibits an LEA from using Title I, Part A funds to transport homeless students to or from their school of origin. (*See* Question H-3.)

M-3. Are homeless children and youth who attend non-Title I schools eligible to receive Title I, Part A services?

Yes. An LEA must provide comparable services to a homeless student who does not attend a Title I school. An LEA must reserve funds for homeless children who do not attend participating Title I schools and may, for instance, provide support services to children in shelters and other locations where homeless children live. Services should be provided to assist homeless students to effectively take advantage of educational opportunities.

This provision applies to homeless students in public and private schools, institutions for neglected children and, where appropriate, local institutions such as local community day school programs. *See* Section 1113 of the ESEA.

SEA and LEA Title I plans must be coordinated with the plans agencies develop under the McKinney-Vento Act. LEAs can develop formulas for reserving the appropriate amount of Title I funding for homeless students, as required in Section

1113(c)(3). However, because of the Title I supplanting prohibition, Title I funds may not be used to support the costs of transporting homeless students to or from their school of origin. (*See* H-3 and M-2.)

M-4. What types of services may an LEA provide to homeless students with funds reserved under Section 1113(c)(3) of Title I?

An LEA may use funds reserved under this section to provide services to eligible homeless students in both Title I and non-Title I schools that are comparable to services provided to non-homeless students in Title I schools. Services provided should assist such children in meeting the State's challenging academic content and academic achievement standards.

An LEA has the discretion to use reserved funds to provide a homeless student with services that are not ordinarily provided to other Title I students and that are not available from other sources. For example, where appropriate, an LEA at its discretion may provide a student with an item of clothing to meet a school's dress or uniform requirement so that student may effectively take advantage of educational opportunities.

Reservation of Funds for Homeless Students

Many school districts with subgrants pool Title I and McKinney-Vento funds to support extended-day and summer activities, or to provide school supplies, tutoring and other resources.

Several States provide formulas that require all LEAs to use Title I set-asides based on shelter counts (nightly average multiplied by a district's per-pupil allocation). LEAs may adjust the amounts based on local data and needs assessments.

Several LEAs use local counts (one-month averages and one-day counts) of homeless students multiplied by Title I per-pupil allocation to compute set-aside amounts.

*Symposium on Homeless Education and Title I - Hosted by U.S. Department of Education and the National Center for Homeless Education (*NCHE) 2001

M-5. Does a State's academic assessment system need to include homeless students?

Yes. The final regulations that implemented changes to the standards and assessment requirements of Title I, Part A require States to include homeless students in their academic assessment, reporting, and accountability systems, consistent with section 1111(b)(3)(C)(xi) of the ESEA. Assessments of homeless students are to be included

in school district or in State accountability systems when students have been in a school for a full academic year. However, States are not required to disaggregate, as a separate category, the assessment results of homeless students.

As homeless children and youth fall at the low end of the poverty continuum, LEAs and States should include the assessments of homeless students in the economically disadvantaged category of disaggregation, in addition to other applicable categories (e.g., The "all student category.)".

Strategies to Facilitate Coordination and Collaboration Between Title I and the McKinney-Vento Act

- Ensure that LEA local liaisons attend Title I conferences and in-services, and that Title I coordinators attend homeless education conferences and in-service professional development.
- Ensure collaboration between local Title I coordinators and LEA local liaisons on a plan that identifies ways that Title I will serve children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- Ensure collaboration between the State Title I coordinator and the State McKinney-Vento coordinator on the State Title I plan or the State consolidated plan.
- Share Title I and Homeless Education handbooks with other program staff.
- Collect and share within and across districts concrete data on the needs of children and youth in homeless situations.
- Initiate district efforts to make organizational accommodations for eligible students, as necessary, in such areas as transportation, remaining in the school
- of origin, records transfer, class scheduling, and special services that will help them enroll, attend, and succeed in school.
- Ensure that the needs of highly mobile students are included in the school improvement plans and not addressed as a separate issue.
- Establish and widely disseminate information on district-wide policies, procedures, and guidelines to identify and serve eligible students.
- Ensure LEA homeless liaison representation on the State Committee of Practitioners.
- Include homeless parents in Title I parental involvement policies and create opportunities for homeless parents to be involved.

Symposium on Homeless Education and Title I - Hosted by U.S. Department of Education and the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) 2001

N. Education for Homeless Children and Youth Contact information

N-1. Whom do I contact for further information about the McKinney-Vento program?

For further information or technical assistance, please contact the program office (202) 260-0826 or by fax at (202) 260-7764.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* can be accessed via the Internet by visiting the U.S. Department of Education website: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

Homeless children and youth. *See* Question A-3 of the Guidance.

Unaccompanied Youth. The term *unaccompanied youth* includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This would include youth living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the streets, or in other inadequate housing and children and youth denied housing by their families (sometimes referred to as "throwaway" children and youth), and school-age unwed mothers, living in homes for unwed mothers, who have no other housing available.

If a child or youth's living situation does not clearly fall into the situations described above, the LEA should refer to the McKinney-Vento definition of "fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence" and consider the relative permanence of the living arrangements. Determinations of homelessness should be made on a case-by-case basis. Note that incarcerated children and youth and children and youth in foster care are *not* considered homeless.. In addition, the community and schools should work together to reach homeless families and unaccompanied youth and ensure they are aware of their educational rights. Developing local policies and procedures and reaching out to the community and educational staff who require information on homeless students, and the legal requirements, and supportive practices in serving homeless students, is critical to fulfill the intent of the McKinney-Vento Act successfully.

School of Origin. The *school of origin* is the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

APPENDIX B: RELATED EDUCATION LAWS

The McKinney-Vento Act states that homeless children and youth must have access to the same educational services provided to other students. In addition, other laws make reference to serving homeless students. For example:

- Head Start has added homeless preschoolers as a targeted population to be served. Background on homelessness and its impact on young children, as well as implementation guidance, can be found in a 1992 Information Memorandum from the Head Start Bureau (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Log Number: ACF-IM-92-12: http://www.nlchp.org/FA_Education/us_hhs_memo.pdf). Just as the McKinney-Vento law requires public schools to identify and remove barriers that may delay enrollment, the same requirement applies to preschool programs, such as Head Start.

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that homeless preschoolers and all homeless children be included in the "Child Find" process for early identification of special education needs. It is recommended that, when possible, the eligibility process for identifying special needs be expedited to avoid delays in services provided to eligible children caused by frequent mobility.

- Title I targets students most at risk of failing in school. A child who is homeless and attending any school in the district is eligible for Title I services. These schools include schoolwide programs, targeted assistance schools, and non-Title I schools. LEAs must reserve (set aside) a portion of Title I funds needed to provide services to eligible students in non-Title I schools that are comparable to those being received by other Title I students. In addition, in order to receive its allocation of Title I funds, the LEA must describe how the district will coordinate with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act when filing its plan with the SEA. *See* Section 1111(a)(1); Section 1112(a)(1); Section 1112(b)(1)(E)(ii); Section 1112(b)(1)(O); Section 1113(c)(3)(a); and Section 1115(b)(2)(E).

- Free and reduced priced meals – The application process for free and reduced priced meals can be expedited for students experiencing homelessness. Schools that have determined a student is homeless and is eligible for subsidized meals may make this determination without completing the full application process. Local liaisons have been identified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to assist in this effort: http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Memos/2002-04-04.pdf. Additionally, the *Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004* was signed into law (Public Law 108-265) on June 30, 2004. The Act changes the eligibility of homeless children from an administrative procedure to law.

APPENDIX C: DRAFT STANDARDS AND INDICATORS OF QUALITY*

Draft Standards and Indicators of Quality
For the Evaluation of Local Education Programs
For Homeless Children and Youth
(McKinney-Vento Programs)

***The following information is not a part of the U.S. Department of Education's Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) requirements. It is neither required nor endorsed by the Department. It is offered as part of the technical assistance and support provided to States and LEAs by the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) at SERVE**

Program evaluation is a critical element of program improvement. Although many good programs exist, what is lacking is an emphasis on using data to see if we are making a difference. It is vital to construct tools to ensure that we make continuous progress in serving homeless children and youth.

An appropriate evaluation plan compares the program of interest to a set of standards and indicators characteristic of high quality programs for homeless children and youth. Standards express general characteristics of high quality programs while indicators are subunits of the standards and describe more specific aspects of the programs.

During the summer 2001, NCHE convened a work group of State coordinators, local coordinators, representatives of national organizations, program evaluation specialists, and U.S. Department of Education staff. The group developed the following quality outcome standards and indicators for McKinney-Vento programs. SERVE Evaluation Program staff led the group through a process to develop indicators based on discussions of effective programs and practices that result in increased school enrollment, attendance, and achievement of homeless children and youth.

Reflecting the McKinney-Vento statute, the following five standards and their associated indicators were drafted to facilitate local program personnel to evaluate their programs with the results leading to effective programmatic decisions.

Standard 1. ***Within one full day of an attempt to enroll in a school, homeless children and youth will be in attendance.***

Rationale: Homeless children and youth are often denied enrollment or are enrolled but not allowed to attend school until certain requirements are met. Research shows that gaps in attendance are linked to poor academic performance; children cannot learn if they are not in school.

McKinney-Vento: The school selected in accordance with this paragraph shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, proof of residency, or other documentation. (See Sec. 722(g)(3)(C)(i) of the McKinney-Vento Act).

Standard 2. ***Homeless pre-k to 12 children and youth will have stability in school.***

2.1. Attendance rates will be at or above the relevant district average.

2.2. Students will remain in the school of origin for the period of homelessness or, if permanently housed, for the remainder of the school year, unless parents or unaccompanied youth requested transfer to another school.

Rationale: School stability and continuity in school enrollment are associated with school success including achievement, promotion, and graduation. Research studies have indicated that a child may lose 4-6 months of academic progress with each move to a new school. The importance of a child attending one school and of attending consistently (in one school or in several schools without gaps during a transition if the child must change schools) cannot be underestimated.

McKinney-Vento: The local education agency serving each child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall, according to the child's or youth's best interest continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic or during an academic year; or for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year.
(See Sec. 722(g)(3)(A)(i)(I) and (II) of the McKinney-Vento Act).

Standard 3. ***Homeless children and youth will receive specialized services when eligible.***

3.1. Eligible homeless preschool children can participate in public preschool (Head Start, Even Start, State pre-K, preschool programs for children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, meals, programs for children with limited English proficiency, and Title I pre-school programs).

3.2. Eligible homeless children and youth can receive special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, educational and related aids and services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency.

3.3. Homeless children and youth will receive appropriate services, based on assessment of individual needs, through a combination of resources, including, but not limited to Title I, McKinney-Vento, and other federally funded programs.

Rationale: Consistent with the intent of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the provision of services to the neediest of students is essential to closing the academic achievement gap between students most at risk of failure and those least at risk. Homeless students

frequently move from school to school before eligibility for specialized programs can be determined or before they can rise high enough on waiting lists to be admitted to programs. Programs must find ways to accommodate their eligibility policies and procedures to address the needs of highly mobile students.

McKinney-Vento: Each homeless child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, including the following: transportation services; educational services for which the child or youth meets the eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title I of the ESEA or similar State or local programs, educational programs for children with disabilities, and educational programs for students with limited English proficiency; programs in vocational and technical education; programs for gifted and talented students; school nutrition programs. (See Sec. 722(g)(4) of the McKinney-Vento Act).

Standard 4. Parents or persons acting as parents of homeless children and youth will participate meaningfully in their children's education.

4.1. Parents or persons acting as parents will have a face-to-face conference with the teacher, guidance counselor, or social worker within 30 days of enrollment.

4.2. Parents or persons acting as parents will be provided with individual student reports informing them of their child's specific academic needs and achievement on academic assessments aligned with state academic achievement standards.

4.3. Parents or persons acting as parents will report monitoring or facilitating homework assignments.

4.4. Parents or persons acting as parents will share reading time with their children (i.e., parent reads to child or listens to child read).

4.5. Parents who would like parent skills training will attend available programs.

4.6. Parents or guardians will demonstrate awareness of McKinney-Vento rights.

4.7. Unaccompanied youth will demonstrate awareness of McKinney-Vento rights.

Rationale: Research shows that one of the most critical indicators of academic success is the involvement of parents in their children's education. In families experiencing homelessness, parents often face many challenges to their participation in their children's education. School districts need to take extra steps to help parents in homeless families become involved in the education of their children.

McKinney-Vento: Each local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youth … shall ensure that the parents or guardians of homeless children and youth are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children. (See Sec. 722(g)(6)(A)(iv) of the McKinney-Vento Act).

Title I, Part A regarding Standard 4.2: A state assessment system shall produce individual student interpretive, descriptive, and diagnostic reports, consistent with clause (iii) that allows parents, teachers, and principals to understand and address the specific academic needs of students, and include information regarding achievement on academic assessments aligned with State academic achievement standards, and that are provided to parents, teachers, and principals, as soon as is practicably possible after the assessment is given, in an understandable and uniform format, and to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand.
(See Sec. 1111(b)(3)(C)(xii) of the ESEA).

Standard 5. Homeless children and youth in grades 3-12 will meet their states' academic standards.

5.1. Performance on standards-based assessments in reading and math will be within or above the proficient range or will show a one-for-one gain.

5.2. Rates of promotion to the next grade level will be at or above the district average.

5.3. Rates of high school graduation or equivalent will be at or above the district average.

Rationale: Consistent with the *No Child Left Behind Act*, homeless children and youth must be given the opportunity to achieve to the same high standards as all other children. Each of the preceding standards helps to provide the support a homeless child or youth needs to succeed academically.

McKinney-Vento: Homeless children and youths should have access to the education and other services that such children and youths need to ensure that such children and youths have an opportunity to meet the same challenging State student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. (See Sec. 721(4) of the McKinney-Vento Act).

Appendix D: Sample Student Residency Questionnaire*

Everyday Unified School District

*[This form was not developed nor is it endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education. It is not a required form. It was adapted for use as an example].

This questionnaire is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Act. Your answers will help the administrator determine residency documents necessary for enrollment of this student.

Sample

1. Presently, where is the student living? *Check one box:*

Section A	**Section B**
☐ in a shelter ☐ with more than one family in a house or apartment ☐ in a motel, car or campsite ☐ with friends or family members (other than parent/guardian) ***CONTINUE:*** *If you checked a box in* ***Section A****, complete #2 and the remainder of this form.*	☐ Choices in Section A do not apply ***STOP:*** *If you checked this section, you do* ***not*** *need to complete the remainder of this form. Submit to school personnel.*

2. The student lives with:
   - o 1 parent
   - o 2 parents
   - o 1 parent & another adult
   - o a relative, friend(s) or other adult(s)
   - o alone with no adults
   - o an adult that is not the parent or the legal guardian

School: _____

Name of Student_____ Male ☐ Female ☐

Birth Date_____/_____/_____ Age: _____ Social Security# [if appropriate]_____
Month / Day / Year
Name of Parent(s)/Legal Guardian(s) _____
Address_____ZIP: _____ Phone/Pager:_____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian_____ Date: _____

School Use Only - Campus Administrator's determination of Section A circumstances:

➔ *FAX to Attendance, Guidance and Counseling 777-777*

If the parent has checked Section B above, completion of form is not required. For any choices in Section A, this form must be completed and faxed to Attendance, Guidance and Counseling Department immediately after completion. All campuses must keep original forms separately from the Student Permanent Record for audit purposes during the year.
Name and phone number of a School Contact Person who may know of the family's situation:
_____ Date faxed: _____

Appendix E: Dispute Resolution Process School Sample Form*

Everyday Independent School District

. *[This form was not developed nor is it endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education. It is not a required form. It was adapted for use as an example].

Sample

School Name:_____

School Address: _____Phone: (777)_____Fax: (777)____

Student's Name:_____ I.D.#:_____ Grade: __

Current Address: _____ Current Phone:_____

Parent/Guardian/Complaining Party's Name:_____

Relationship: □ Parent □ Guardian □ Unaccompanied Youth □ Other:

Current Address: _____ Current Phone: (__)_____

Please note: Information regarding student's address, phone number, and information protected by Everyday School Records Act and can only be released to parent/guardian, the student, or to a person specifically designated as a representative of the parent/guardian.

Lives in a Shelter □ Yes □ No

Name of school that parent chooses child to be immediately enrolled in and /or transported to/from until dispute is resolved:

Is this the school of origin*? □ Yes □ No

**School of Origin means the school that the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled.*

If no, from which school was the student transferred? _____

Reason for the Complaint: _____ ___

Signature of parent/guardian/complaining party: Date:

Principal's Actions on the Complaint

Taken within __ school day(s) after receiving notice of the complaint.

Date Homeless liaison was notified of the dispute:

Action taken by principal to resolve the dispute: _

_____

Was the dispute resolved? □ Yes □ No

Explanation:

Appendix F: Dispute Resolution Process School District Sample Form*

EVERYDAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*[This form was not developed nor is it endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education. It is not a required form. It was adapted for use as an example].

Sample

Student's Name: _____ I.D.#:_____

Grade:_____

School Name: _____

District Action On Complaint

Taken within ____ school days after receiving notice of the complaint.
Did the Education Liaison resolve this dispute? □ Yes □ No

If dispute was resolved: describe the actions taken by the Education Liaison to resolve the dispute to the satisfaction of parent/guardian:

If dispute was *not* resolved to the satisfaction of the parent/guardian: provide the date that a District Education Officer convened a meeting of the parties and briefly describe the outcome of this meeting:

The following organizations are willing to provide low-cost or free legal assistance to residents of Everyday*:

Everyday Coalition for the Homeless Main Street Everyday, USA (800) 555-5555) Everyday Coalition is willing to provide to homeless children and parents free legal services regarding educational matters.

*By listing these organizations as sources of low-cost or free legal services, the Everyday Board of Education does not in so doing recommend or advocate the use of the services of the listed organizations, nor is the Board responsible for the quality of services provided by any of these listed organizations, should their services be used.

Action taken by Everyday School District to resolve the dispute (if necessary): _

_____

Was the dispute resolved? □ Yes □ No Date:
Explanation:

Appendix G: **References**

The Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program: Learning to Succeed. (November, 2002). Chapter I, Phillips, C.M.,Wodatch, J.K., & Kelliher, C.T. *Access and achievement: Reducing barriers for homeless children and youth.* Chapter II, Funkhouser, J.E., Riley, D.L., Suh, H.J., and Lennon, J.M. *Educating Homeless Children and Youth: A Resource Guide to Promising Practices.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

Local Homeless Liaison Toolkit. (January, 2003). (Pre-Publication Draft) Popp, P.A., Hindman, J.I., Stronge, J.H. National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE Greensboro, NC.

Report To Congress Fiscal Year 2000. (December, 2001). Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Symposium on Homeless Education and Title I. (Proceedings, 2001). Hosted by U.S. Department of Education and the National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE Greensboro, NC.

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Appendix B: Related Legislation

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is the primary piece of federal legislation dealing with the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness; however, there are other federal laws that contain important provisions regarding the education of children and youth in homeless situations.

Appendix B includes:

- Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004: Legislative excerpts and related U.S. Department of Agriculture memoranda
- Head Start Act: Excerpt from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Memorandum No. ACF-IM-92-12
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): NCHE IDEA issue brief with legislative references and excerpts
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act: Family and Youth Service Bureau Information Memorandum No. 1-2006
- Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act: Legislative excerpts

Additional Resources

- **NCHE Related Legislation and Guidance webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/legis_other.php***: This NCHE webpage provides links to the full text of the laws listed above and related regulations, policy guidance, and federal register notices.
- **NCHE Legislative Resources webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/legis_resources.php***: This NCHE webpage provides links to resources for more information on federal laws as they relate to the education of children and youth in homeless situations.

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 legislates the administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's school meals program and includes specific provisions for homeless, runaway, and migrant children and youth. Following are the text of the provisions of the legislation dealing with homeless, runaway, and migrant children and youth, and U.S. Department of Agriculture memoranda clarifying the implementation of these provisions.

Full Legislative Text

- The full text of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 is available at *http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Legislation/Historical/PL_108-265.pdf*.

Additional Resources

- **NCHE Information by Topic: Food and Nutrition webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/aw_food.php***: This NCHE webpage provides resources and information about supporting nutrition among students experiencing homelessness. Included are links to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Programs website, the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) website, and more.

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265)

(Excerpts related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness)

SEC 104. DIRECT CERTIFICATION.

"(5) DISCRETIONARY CERTIFICATION.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (6), any local educational agency may certify any child as eligible for free lunches or breakfasts, without further application, by directly communicating with the appropriate State or local agency to obtain documentation of the status of the child as—...

"(ii) a homeless child or youth (defined as 1 of the individuals described in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2));

"(iii) served by the runaway and homeless youth grant program established under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.); or

"(iv) a migratory child (as defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6399)).".

SEC. 107. RUNAWAY, HOMELESS, AND MIGRANT YOUTH.

"(a) CATEGORICAL ELIGIBILITY FOR FREE LUNCHES AND BREAKFASTS.—

Section 9(b)(12)(A) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (as redesignated by section 104(a)(1) of this Act) is amended—...

"(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(iv) a homeless child or youth (defined as 1 of the individuals described in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2));

"(v) served by the runaway and homeless youth grant program established under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.); or

"(vi) a migratory child (as defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6399)).".

United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302-1500

July 7, 2004

SUBJECT: Duration of Households' Free and Reduced Price Meal Eligibility Determination - Reauthorization 2004: Implementation Memo - SP 3

TO: Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Agencies
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Act) specifies that, effective July 1, 2004, households' eligibility for free and reduced price meals shall remain in effect beginning on the date of eligibility for the current school year and ending on a date during the subsequent school year, as determined by the Secretary. This provision does not apply when the initial eligibility determination was incorrect or when verification of household eligibility does not support the level of benefits for which the household was approved. In those instances, officials must make appropriate changes in eligibility. Additionally, this provision does not apply when a household is given temporary approval.

There are many provisions in the Act affecting the certification/verification process, which must be addressed through the regulatory process. However, to give school food authorities and households the advantages of this provision as quickly as possible, we are implementing this provision through this memorandum.

Beginning school year 2004-2005 and until issuance of a final regulation, school officials will determine household eligibility for free and reduced price meals in the traditional manner, at or about the beginning of the school year. Once approved for free or reduced price benefits, a household will remain eligible for those benefits for a maximum of 30 days after the first operating day in the subsequent school year or when a new eligibility determination is made in the new school year, whichever comes first. The household is no longer required to report changes in circumstances, such as an increase in income of $50 per month ($600 annually), a decrease in household size or when the household is no longer certified eligible for food stamps or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

The current free and reduced price application package includes instructions for households to report the changes in household income and household size mentioned above. We do not expect State agencies and school food authorities to make changes in their free and reduced price application materials for this school year because the enactment of this legislation is so late in the year. Any changes to the application materials now would be very burdensome to most school districts. However, school food authorities may use other means to notify households that they do not have to report changes. For example, households may be notified via the annual media/public release or notified in their notice of approval for free and reduced price school meals. The Department will revise its guidance as appropriate.

Please note that households may continue to apply for benefits any time during the school year. As noted above, this provision does not apply to households who are provided "temporary" approvals. We continue to encourage determining officials to approve households on a temporary basis when their need for assistance appears to be short-term, such as when the household reports zero income or a temporary reduction in income. A suggested time period for temporary approvals is 45 days unless otherwise stipulated by the State agency. At the end of the temporary approval, school officials must re-evaluate the household's situation.

If you have any questions, please contact Rosemary O'Connell or Barbara Semper at 703-305-2590.

STANLEY C. GARNETT
Director
Child Nutrition Division

July 19, 2004

SUBJECT: Categorical Eligibility for Free Lunches and Breakfasts of Runaway, Homeless, and Migrant Youth: Reauthorization 2004 Implementation Memo SP 4

TO: Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Agencies
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

Section 107 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Act) amended section 9(b) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to make runaway, homeless and migrant children categorically eligible for free meal benefits under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs and is effective July 1, 2004. In addition to establishing free meal eligibility, the Act also establishes a requirement for documenting a child's status as runaway, homeless, or migratory.

Previously, through guidance, the Food and Nutrition Service extended categorical eligibility for free school meals to children considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. School officials were allowed to accept statements that children were homeless from the local educational liaison for the homeless or directors of homeless shelters where the children reside. The Act now establishes in law the categorical eligibility of these children for free school meals. Please see the previously issued memoranda of April 6, 1992, *Documentation of Free and Reduce Price Meal Eligibility for Homeless Children* and of April 4, 2002, *Updated Guidance for Homeless Children in the School Nutrition Programs*, on documentation for homeless children under McKinney-Vento.

There were, however, no similar eligibility and documentation provisions for runaway youth or migrant children. At this time, we are in discussions with the Department of Health and Human Services, regarding implementation of that portion of the Act that addresses categorical eligibility for runaway youth served through grant programs established under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. We hope to provide guidance in the very near future on how to determine and document if a child is receiving services as a runaway and is therefore categorically eligible for free school meals.

For migratory children, each State Educational Agency's Migrant Education Program establishes their own process for determining if a child meets the criteria provided under Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. State Child Nutrition Agencies must contact their State Migrant Education Program to develop a plan for sharing and documenting the migratory child's eligibility for free school meals. To find the contact for your State Migrant Education Program view the following website:

- Contact Information for all State Directors of Migrant Education
  http://www.ed.gov/programs/mep/contacts.html

If you have any questions, please contact Rosemary O'Connell or Mara McElmurray at 703-305-2590.

/S/

STANLEY C. GARNETT
Director
Child Nutrition Division

United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302-1500

August 16, 2004

SUBJECT: Categorical Eligibility for Free Lunches and Breakfasts for Migrant Children

TO: Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Agencies
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

This memorandum supplements our Reauthorization Implementation Memo SP 4 (July 19, 2004) by providing additional information on identifying migrant children and on the procedures that school food authorities (SFAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) should use to coordinate with the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in order to document the categorical eligibility of migrant children for free meals.

Background on the Migrant Education Program

The MEP is authorized under Title I, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and provides grants to State educational agencies. The State educational agency, in turn, makes sub-grants to LEAs and other entities to provide supplemental educational and support services to migrant children. A major goal of the MEP is to minimize the disruption caused by migrant children's frequent moves. While the full definition of a migrant child in section 1309 of ESEA is rather complicated, in general under this definition, a migrant child is one who has moved across school district lines, within the last three years, in order to accompany or join a parent or guardian who has moved to seek or obtain temporary or seasonal work in agriculture or fishing.

Please note, however, that it is not necessary for local SFA personnel to apply the ESEA definition because there are already State educational agency and local MEP staff who are responsible for identifying (and maintaining supporting documentation) as to who is an eligible migrant child under ESEA.

Local Level MEP Contacts

Most State educational agencies sub-grant MEP funds to local operating agencies (LOAs) to provide program services. These LOAs are typically LEAs; however, in some states, the LOAs may be regional units that administer the MEP in multiple LEAs. When an LOA/LEA receives MEP funds, a MEP coordinator is usually designated. (However, in some LEAs, a Federal program director administers multiple federal programs including the MEP). Each LEA/LOA typically identifies and recruits migrant children in their geographic area and maintains a list of eligible migrant children.

Documenting Free Meal Eligibility for Migrant Children

SFAs/LEAs should work directly with their LOA/LEA MEP coordinators or, where appropriate, the State MEP director, to identify migrant children and to document their eligibility for free school meals. SFAs/LEAs must accept documentation that the children are migrant children from the LOA/LEA MEP coordinator.

Documentation of migrant status to substantiate free meal eligibility is a dated list with each child's name and the signature of the LOA/LEA MEP coordinator or the State MEP director. This documentation is in lieu of free and reduced price meal applications and must be sought, as much as possible, prior to a household completing an application. Once documentation is obtained, the SFA/LEA must notify the household as soon as possible about the child's free meal eligibility. Any application submitted on behalf of the child would be disregarded.

It is particularly important that newly arrived migrant children in the LEA be documented and certified for free meals as promptly as possible. SFAs/LEAs need to establish procedures with the LOA/LEA MEP coordinator to assure prompt notification when a new migrant child is identified.

Continuing Certification

Public Law 108-265 also amended the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish that, once a child is certified as eligible to receive free or reduced price meals, eligibility remains effective for the remainder of the school year. Our policy further allows SFAs to continue a child's eligibility from the previous year for 30 operating days into the subsequent school year or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever occurs first. Because of this and because the MEP strives to minimize a child's disruption in services and benefits, SFAs/LEAs should attempt to share the child's free meal eligibility status with the new SFA/LEA when a migrant child moves from their jurisdiction if the family knows their new location.

Please contact Rosemary O'Connell in my office if you have any questions on this guidance.

STANLEY C. GARNETT
Director,
Child Nutrition Division

United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302-1500

September 17, 2004

SUBJECT: Guidance on Determining Categorical Eligibility for Free Lunches and Breakfasts for Youth Served under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

TO: Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Agencies
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

As described in our Reauthorization Implementation Memo SP 4, *Categorical Eligibility for Free Lunches and Breakfasts of Runaway, Homeless, and Migrant Youth*, issued July 19, 2004, runaway youth served through grant programs established under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA, Public Law (PL)108-96) are now categorically eligible for free meals in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. This memorandum is a follow up to the July 19, 2004, memorandum and provides background information on the operation of programs under the RHYA and eligibility guidance for schools and school districts.

Background on the Grant Programs Established under the RHYA

The Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) is part of the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACF); of the Department of Health and Human Services. FYSB supports local communities in providing services and opportunities to young people, particularly runaway and homeless youth. FYSB does so by awarding funding that enables community agencies to offer services to young people and their families and to test new approaches to helping youth. FYSB promotes and supports youth through its three grant programs: Basic Center Program, Transitional Living Program and the Street Outreach Program. The agencies receiving grants under these three programs are referred to as either FYSB grantees, or Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) service providers.

FYSB works through ten ACF regional offices located throughout the country; each region has a Regional Youth Specialist to serve the States, territories, tribes and other grantees in their geographical area. The Regional Youth Specialists are given broad flexibility in guiding the programmatic and financial management of FYSB programs.

The 2003 Reauthorization of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program directed FYSB to coordinate with school district liaisons under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to assure that RHY are provided information about the educational services available to them and to ensure they receive support services guaranteed under the law.

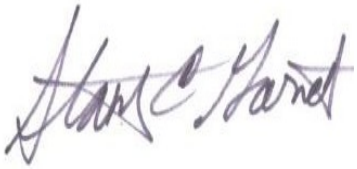
In order to better advance FYSB's directive on coordination with McKinney-Vento school district liaison, they are developing an informational memorandum for their grantees that offers suggestions on how to build stronger relationships with the liaisons and offers available resources. We will share their memorandum as soon as it becomes available.

Documenting Eligibility

The systems for coordination of information about RHY can vary from State to State and even across districts depending on the relationship between the McKinney-Vento school district liaison and the RHY service provider, and the size of the RHY caseload. In many cases, the McKinney-Vento school district liaison is already working with youth receiving services under the RHY grant programs. In these cases, school districts will be notified of a child's status as a runaway through the existing liaison channels. In some cases, schools may receive information on a youth's participation in a RHY Program directly from the RHY service provider. Documentation to substantiate free meal eligibility must consist of the youth's name, or a list of names, effective date(s), and the signature of the McKinney-Vento school district liaison or the RHY service provider(s). This documentation is acceptable in lieu of a free and reduced price meal application.

It is important that schools/school districts become familiar with their local RHY service providers and their McKinney-Vento school district liaison in order to facilitate the service of free school meals for youth in these programs. Should you have questions regarding the operation of FYSB, please contact your Regional Youth Specialist. The website for the regional offices is www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/oro/. For further information on FYSB you may want to view their web site at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/index.html.

Please contact Mara McElmurray or Rosemary O'Connell of my office if you have any questions on this guidance.



STANELY C. GARNETT
Director
Child Nutrition Division

Head Start Act

The Head Start Act legislates the administration of the federal Head Start program, which serves the child development needs of preschool children (birth through age five) and their low-income families. Following is the Head Start Bureau 1992 memorandum on serving homeless preschoolers. This memorandum establishes homeless preschoolers as a targeted population to be served in Head Start preschool programs and suggests implementation strategies for ensuring that homeless preschools have access to Head Start services.

Full Legislative Text

- The full text of the Head Start Act is available at *http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/budget/index.htm*.

Additional Resources

- **NCHE Information by Topic: *Preschool/Early Childhood* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_preschool.php***: This NCHE webpage provides resources and information about educating and supporting young children experiencing homelessness.

ACF Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Administration on Children, Youth and Families	
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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: **All Head Start Grantees and Delegate Agencies**

SUBJECT: Homeless Children and the Head Start Program

PURPOSE: To provide guidance to Head Start agencies to foster the recruitment and enrollment of homeless children and their families into the Head Start Program.

BACKGROUND: The Head Start Program is based on the premise that all children share certain needs, and that children of low-income families can benefit from the delivery of comprehensive developmental services to meet those needs. Homeless children are particularly vulnerable and need the services that a Head Start program can offer. Secretary Sullivan has challenged the Department to improve children in homeless families, which includes ensuring that Head Start is accessible and responsive to homeless children and their families.

In response to this challenge, the Head Start Bureau, in its most recent funding guidance, encourages local Head Start grantees to target homeless families wherever possible. In keeping with the philosophy of the Head Start program to adapt to the changing needs of its clientele, the first section of this memorandum provides an overview of Head Start's experience with homeless children and families as well as guidance on how to modify the Head Start program in order to effectively serve this population. The second section discusses concerns identified in a recent study conducted by Macro Systems, Inc. (1991) surrounding issues related to access to Head Start for the homeless.

INFORMATION: Being a parent and being homeless is a double challenge. Head Start can build on the strengths of these families - such as their intense desire to make a better life for their family and their commitment to and love for their children - and enable the parents(s) to increase their capacity to nurture, protect and provide for their children.

A homeless family in Head Start could be a single parent or a two-parent family, living in a rural or an urban setting. While the homeless and the housed low-income share some of the same characteristics and problems, the homeless child and family are faced with additional stresses such as losing their former community and living in a crowded shelter with little privacy, in a single motel room, or in a car. This shelter may be located far from their former home, or in a noisy, drug-infested environment, and the child may have no space to play, have lost his/her toys, books, and clothes and have no access to regular meals. Being homeless is arduous for the whole family and, unfortunately, has serious consequences for young children.

The research on the affect of homelessness on preschoolers documents the negative consequences of this condition. Homeless preschoolers are more likely to have a developmental delay in language, motor development and/or social skills (Basuk and Rubin, 1987; Koblinsky and Taylor, 1991); exhibit more aggression, shyness or sleep problems (Reinherz and Cracey, 1982; Basuk and Rubin, 1987); exhibit behaviors that warrant mental health intervention (Basuk et al., 1986, Molnar et al., 1991); have lower self-concept (DiBiase and Waddell, 1991); and show an unusual degree of ambivalence in relationships with their mothers (Phillips and Hartigan, 1984; Molnar, 1988.)

Given these problems, preschool is especially significant for the homeless child - in many cases, Head Start can offer the stability and supports needed for a child to cope with his or her situation. Research also demonstrates the importance of early childhood education for homeless children. Koblinsky and Taylor (1991) found that the more months that homeless children had attended preschool, the better they performed on the Early Screening Inventory (ESI). Molnar et al. (1991) also found that children with as little as three months of Head Start or publicly-funded daycare exhibited more age-appropriate performance on developmental tasks than children who did not have the opportunity for preschool enrollment in Head Start or publicly-funded daycare.

1. THE HEAD START EXPERIENCE AND GUIDANCE

Many Head Start agencies have already begun to serve homeless families in a variety of ways. There are both home based programs that serve families in shelters as well as center-based programs that have classrooms with both homeless and non homeless children. In the 1991 Program Information Report (PIR), 541 agencies responded that, in some manner, homeless children were being served. In addition, the Migrant Head Start program has had years of experience in working with migrant children and families. Working with migrant families poses many of the same challenges to Head Start as working with homeless families, such as issues of mobility, attendance, and medical needs. Thus, this model can offer insight into these areas for other Head Start program.

Head Start agencies relate that homeless children have one or more of the following characteristics: developmental delays; poor self-esteem; anxieties around food and possessions; behaving in an overly compliant manner with any adult person, thus making the child vulnerable to abuse; overly aware of parental responsibilities and problems; depression; and not displaying normal reactions to change. Grantees also report that homeless children were more likely that their peers to be in ill health and under immunized.

Most homeless parents have an intense desire to make life better for their families. In addition, they are committed to their children, and to maintaining the sense of family. Their efforts to achieve all this can be overwhelming to the parents and, as a result, they may have little energy to focus on the particular needs of the child. Some parents may be depressed, overly dependent on the child, or not understand the importance of an early childhood program. Other parents take their frustration out on the Head Start staff. In most cases, it will take time to develop trust and build a relationship with the parent.

The duration of a family's homelessness depends primarily on the availability of low cost housing, jobs and services for the family. Thus, for some families, a permanent home may be found quickly. Other families may move from shelter to shelter or

move back with friends or relatives before finding a home. Whatever the situation, Head Start needs to support the family during the period of homelessness, through the transition to permanent housing and after the family is housed.

Based on various Head Start grantees' experiences with homeless children, the migrant model, the current research, and the philosophy of Head Start program to adapt to the changing needs of its clientele, the following guidance is offered for working with this special population:

Strong support for the staff: Working with homeless children is difficult, even for the most skilled teachers and home visitors. The basic human desire is to eliminate all of the pain that the child has experienced. While this is a worthy goal, it is not realistic. In addition, working with parents who may not be able to be fully involved in their child's life adds to this frustration. However, setting achievable goals, i.e., providing each child (and parent) with positive experiences, and providing training and support to staff will help them in their work.

Strong mental health component: In addition to the staff, the children and the parents may have intense mental health needs. It is necessary to have the services of a mental health professional who can address the particular needs of staff, children and parents, or make arrangements with the local mental health agency for assistance. This will assure less staff burnout and better services to children and families caught in a transitory life.

Provide a safe, reassuring environment through a structured daily environment: The preschool classroom may be the only source of stability for the homeless child. To achieve this type of environment, reduce levels of stimulation in the room(s). Maintain a simple schedule for the children so each child knows what to expect throughout the day. Limit the choices (not the quantity) of toys and activities the children have, and introduce new toys gradually over the year. Plan for smaller class sizes in order for the children to receive more individual attention, and/or use more volunteers sensitive to the characteristics and needs of homeless children. Use volunteers to form smaller groups within the larger classroom or for one-on-one attention. Allow for personal areas for each individual child so that every child has a private space. These personal areas could be a cubicle or a box, decorated by the child with his or her name. Set up a quiet area for those children who may need to rest or need some privacy during the day because of all the anxiety in their life.

Mealtimes can be stressful for homeless children. Keep reassuring the children, they will get enough to eat. The Santa Clara county, California grantee has a small refrigerator in the classroom with finger foods that is available to the children to help themselves throughout the day. This can be seen as a mental health response in addressing anxieties about food.

Flexibility: While it is important to have structure for these children, flexibility needs to be built into the schedule because of the nature of homelessness. For example, programs working with homeless children must deal with children leaving unexpectedly, which is difficult to understand for both children and staff. The staff will need to incorporate activities into the schedule to help the children cope when this happens. The Beverly, Massachusetts grantee has developed a special goodbye routine which includes a song, book and discussion that is used to help the children understand this process.

Transportation: The Head Start agency should offer transportation services to its homeless families to ensure access to the program. This transportation is important to keep the child in Head Start, particularly if the child's living arrangement is unstable and the family is moved around in the search for permanent housing. It is very important to try to track and keep the child in the same Head Start program so that the child has some stability/continuity in his/her life. In addition, some Head Start agencies working with the homeless have used the transportation system to help families with food shopping and appointments with social service agencies or medical providers.

Collaborate with the community: Working with other Community and State agencies and resources are a critical role for Head Start grantees working with the homeless. In fact, it is important to recognize that the Head Start agency alone cannot address all the problems of homeless families. By teaming with other service agencies within the community, Head Start grantees can help make the community aware of the problem, participate in the solution, and offer comprehensive assistance. For example, establishing relationships with shelters/transitional housing will assist the Head Start agency with recruitment, understanding the homeless population in the particular area and the coordination of services. Strengthening the connection with the local JOBS, JTPA and literacy agencies will support the family. Working with the local housing coalition can also assist in creating affordable housing for Head Start families. To assist the grantee in establishing these linkages, an attachment has been prepared on federally supported programs for the homeless.

Parental responsibilities/involvement: The philosophy of Head Start is that the parents, even parents who are homeless, are the primary nurtures and teachers of their children. The Head Start staff should focus and build on the family's strengths, and enable the parents to build their capacity to cope with their life stresses. As a result of this support, the parents will be better able to nurture their children. In addition, the Social Services Coordinator, and Home Visitor in the home based option, should play an important role in advocating for the family and connecting them with needed services.

To further the parents' development, it is important to emphasize to them the importance of their participation in activities which will enable them to better nurture and protect their children, such as health, nutrition and education. To increase participation, it is important to design the activity around the parents' most pressing needs which may include issues of self-esteem, empowerment, and how to set and meet personal goals. The Head Start agency should also time the activity when the homeless parents will be most able to participate. The Conway, Arkansas migrant grantee developed a survey to determine the parents' needs and arrange monthly meetings based on this feedback. Some grantees meet around a meal, while others offer "door" prizes such as bus tokens, calendars and other simple, but useful items to encourage attendance. Other grantees have established parent support groups for their homeless parents. Homeless parents also need to be involved in the decision making process. This means that homeless parents should be represented on Policy Councils and their needs and concerns reflected in the daily operation of the Head Start program. The Head Start staff may need to provide special efforts in order to enable these parents to be involved such as providing transportation; finding another parent who will be a "mentor' or "buddy"; providing extra support and encouragement; and offering child care.

Make health screenings a priority for homeless families: Head Start grantees report that homeless children are under immunized and not as healthy as their peers. The lack of immunization or documentation can delay the child from actually attending the program. In the Gladstone, Oregon migrant grantee, immediate medical screenings are made a priority because of the mobility of the families. Staffs refer the family as soon as they are enrolled to a local provider for the medical appointment and provide transportation. If there are still children who have not been screened, the grantee brings medical personnel to the center. This is an ongoing activity.

Flexible hours of operation: For those agencies that operate some classrooms in which all children are homeless, the days and hours of operation should be tailored to meet their specific needs. For example, a Washington, D.C. grantee found that having early morning programs did not work for the homeless families. Because of the active night life of the motel where they were housed, the morning hours were typically the time, the children slept.

Plan for a "mixed" classroom: Since Head Start programs should not be establishing classrooms exclusively for homeless children, it is likely that there may be a few homeless children in several classrooms. Having both homeless and non homeless children in the classroom or group socialization experience will provide some stability for the program, and having both groups in a program will contribute to everyone's opportunity to learn. Thus, it is important for all staff to understand how homelessness affects preschoolers, that these children and parents will need extra support, and what resources are available in the community to assist them.

2. CONCERNS RELATED TO ACCESS TO HEAD START FOR THE HOMELESS

Under a contract with the Department of Health and Human Services, Macro Systems, Inc. examined the service system for homeless families and children and conducted site visits in five cities. One result of this study was the identification of perceived barriers to Head Start for homeless families. This section clarifies the Head Start policy in regard to these concerns.

Average Daily Attendance: Many grantees are reluctant to serve homeless children because they believe that every program must maintain an 85% average daily attendance (ADA), which may be difficult when serving homeless children.

Response: This is an incorrect interpretation of Head Start policy. The policy states that, when the ADA drops below 85%, the Head Start program must analyze the causes of absenteeism, and initiate action based on the results of the analysis. The policy also differentiates between an "excused" absence and an "unexcused" absence. An excused absence, such as an illness, does not require any special intervention. However, if it is an unexcused absence, such as one resulting from a familial problem like homelessness, the agency must institute appropriate family support for all children and families with three or more consecutive unexcused absences. Thus, the policy concerning 85% ADA is a management tool to assist the staff to investigate why children are not attending the program and, where necessary, provide support to the family to enable the child to be present. There is no requirement that 85% ADA must be maintained.

Health Screenings: Similar to the misunderstanding regarding ADA, there is a belief in some programs that if health screenings and follow-up are not provided to all enrolled homeless children, funding will be denied.

Response: Since homeless children are with the program for varying lengths of time and can be difficult to track, all of these children may not receive complete health screenings and follow-up services before they move on. This does not result in the program being out of compliance with the Performance Standards if every effort was made to provide services to the child while enrolled in the program, attendance was encouraged and supported and, where possible, efforts were made to link the family with other Head Start agencies or preschool programs in the area of their new home. The Regional Offices need to be kept apprized of these types of situations and provided with information in an ongoing, timely manner.

Recruitment: The issue of recruitment has been a problem among homeless families, either because homeless families, either because homeless families are not readily identified through the recruitment activities that grantees normally undertake or because grantees elect not to give homeless families that are identified priority for enrollment because the grantees feel they will be more difficult to serve.

Response: Recruitment must be an ongoing activity to assure that vacancies are filled promptly. This is particularly important when working with homeless children and families because of their transient nature. In addition, Head Start recruiters should not accept or reject a family solely on the recruiter's judgement of the likelihood of the child's attendance.

In order to recruit homeless children, the Head Start agency should contact staff at the local shelter, transitional housing facility, motel and any other agency that serves homeless families as well as visit places where homeless families as well as visit places where homeless families are found in the community. In addition, the Head Start agency must be sensitive to cultural, ethnic and language differences when recruiting homeless families, and should provide training to any staff involved in recruiting. Understanding this population and developing relationships with homeless providers will assist the Head Start agency to serve some of the neediest families in the community.

Waiting Lists: Long waiting lists were cited as a barrier to serving homeless families and children. In some cases, if a family becomes homeless during the year and the child is not already on the waiting list, the child may not have access to a Head Start program.

Response: Head Start agencies are expected to manage their waiting list throughout the year and place children on the list based on the priorities set by their Policy Council and Board of Directors as identified through the community needs assessment. (This assessment is to be reviewed annually.) Thus, it is critical when conducting the Community needs assessment to look at the problem of homelessness in the grantee's service area and to make it a priority for recruitment if a high incidence of homelessness in the community is determined.

To meet the needs of homeless families in the community, some Head Start agencies reserve slots for homeless children, set a percentage of slots for the homeless or give priority to these children when a space becomes available.

Full Day/Full Year Services: The lack of full day, full year services is a frequently mentioned barrier for homeless families since some homeless families need quality care for their children while they search for housing or a job, go to work or visit social service agencies.

Response: The policy of Head Start is that a grantee may provide full-day services to those children who need such services. This includes children with special needs, who are from homes where there is severe stress, and where the parent is employed, in job training or in school. Head Start funds can only be used when there are no other funds available in the community to meet the full day needs of Head Start families, and where there are no services available.

Transportation: The lack of transportation has been cited as a barrier to the homeless in receiving services and in accessing the Head Start program.

Response: Many Head Start grantees already provide transportation for their children. For those grantees which do not provide transportation and would like to serve the homeless population, the grantee should plan to provide transportation and would like to serve the homeless population, the grantee should plan to provide transportation for the children to ensure regular attendance. The Head Start agency should investigate whether other existing transportation systems, such as the public school system, can be utilized to meet this need.

Costs: Serving homeless children and families may be more costly due to their greater mental health, social services, transportation and medical needs.

Response: Homeless children may need to be in a classroom with fewer children or require special services. The child and the family may need more individualized services which may mean bringing on new staff or training staff to develop stronger case management skills. In addition, the staff may need extra support in their work with homeless families since staff burn out is frequently reported by grantees. Collaborating with other agencies or professionals in the provision of services may keep costs down and provide much needed services. When this is not possible or services are not available through community/public agencies, higher costs are acceptable as long as the grantee can provide sufficient justification in its application.

In some cases, programs may wish to consider serving fewer children in order to meet higher costs. Such changes should be discussed with the program's Regional Office. In addition, programs should consider using the Quality Improvement Funds to address such costs.

Conclusion: Head Start is committed to meeting the needs of homeless children and families. Homeless children can and are benefitting from the Head Start experience. Their lives, and the lives of the other children and the staff. It is hoped that this guidance, the attached references and the federally supported homeless program listings as well as the knowledge already gained from the Head Start community will provide other Head Start agencies with the resources and support necessary to serve this special population.

Wade F. Horn, Ph.D.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law whose purpose is to improve the education of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, including those experiencing homelessness. Following is the NCHE IDEA issue brief with legislative references and excerpts of the portions of the law that pertain to the education of students experiencing homelessness.

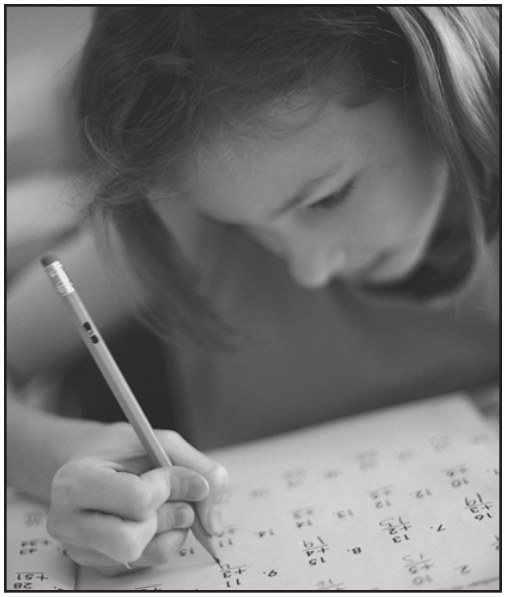
Full Legislative Text

- The full text of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is available at *http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html#law*.

Additional Resources

- **NCHE Information by Topic: *Special Education* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_spec_ed.php***: This NCHE webpage provides resources and information about educating young children with disabilities who are experiencing homelessness.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004: Provisions for Homeless Children and Youth with Disabilities



Who is Homeless?

(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 – Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act – Sec 725)

The term "homeless children and youth"—

A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence…; and

B. includes —

i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;

ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings…

iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

iv. migratory children...who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Over 1.35 million children and youth experience homelessness each year (Burt & Laudan, 2000). These children and youth face educational challenges that include a lack of basic necessities, such as food, clothing, and medical services; discontinuity of education due to mobility; and trauma caused by the chaos, poverty, and instability of their family's circumstances or, in the case of unaccompanied youth, their own circumstances.

Children and youth who are homeless face additional educational challenges when they have disabilities. Studies indicate that children who are homeless are twice as likely to have learning disabilities and three times as likely to have an emotional disturbance as children who are not homeless (Better Homes Fund, 1999).

Yet children and youth who are homeless and have disabilities may not receive the special education services for which they are eligible. Barriers to access these children and youth face include:

- Not being identified as needing special education services
- Difficulty with diagnosis due to mobility and other stressors
- Lack of timely assessment, diagnosis, or service provision
- Lack of continuity of services due to school transfers
- Lack of timely or efficient records transfer when enrolling in a new school
- Lack of an available parent or surrogate to represent the child or unaccompanied youth

Federal Response

Two federal laws that address the needs of homeless children and youth with disabilities are the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act

The McKinney-Vento Act, reauthorized in 2002 as part of the No Child Left Behind Act, ensures access to a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for children experiencing homelessness. (See the sidebar for the definition of "homeless children and youth".)

The McKinney-Vento Act mandates:

- Immediate school enrollment and full participation in all school activities for eligible children, even when records normally required for enrollment are not available [Sec. 722(g)(3)(C)]

- The right of children and youth experiencing homelessness to remain in their school of origin (the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled) [Sec. 722(g)(3)(A)]

- Transportation to the school of origin [Sec. 722(g)(1)(J)(iii)]

- Access to programs and services, including special education services, preschool services, free school meals, Title I services, services for English language learners, vocational/technical education, gifted and talented services, and before- and after-school care [Sec. 722(g)(4)]

- The appointment of a local homeless education liaison in every school district to ensure that homeless children and youth are identified and given full and equal access to all educational services for which they are eligible in order to succeed in school [Sec. 722 (g)(6)(A)]

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

The purpose of IDEA, amended in 2004, is to ensure that all children with disabilities receive a FAPE, including special education and related services, to prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living [Part A, Sec. 601(d)(1)(A)]. Special education is defined as specially designed instruction, provided at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability [Part A, Sec. 602(29)]. (See the sidebar for the definition of "child with a disability.")

To be eligible, the child must have a disability and require specialized instruction to benefit from school. Special education instruction may take place in a general education classroom, special education classroom, specialized school, home, hospital, or institution [Part A, Sec. 602(29)(A)] and may include academic or behavioral support, speech and language pathology services, vocational education, and many other services. Related services may include transportation, physical therapy, psychological services, social work services, and counselling. Also included are certain medical services, parent counselling and training, recreation, and other support services if students need them to benefit from a special education program [Part A, Sec. 602(26)]. Eligibility and services are determined through evaluation and the development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) [Part A, Sec. 614(d)]. Students who have not graduated from high school are eligible through age 21 [Part A, Sec. 612(a)(1)(A)]. Services are available to individuals with disabilities beginning at birth through Part C, Infants and Toddlers. Children under three are served under an Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP) [Part C, Sec. 636].

Federal Guarantees for Children Who are Homeless and Have Disabilities

The McKinney-Vento Act and IDEA mandate protections and services for children and youth who are homeless and children and youth with disabilities. Moreover, both the McKinney-Vento Act and IDEA address serving children and youth who are homeless and have disabilities, ensuring that their complex and unique needs are met.

In reviewing the needs of homeless children and youth with disabilities, educators should bring to bear the full range of both laws to optimize the educational access and success of these children. It is important to note that the two laws do not operate exclusively of one another, nor does one law supersede the other.

The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA in particular includes amendments that reinforce the timely assessment, appropriate service provision and placement, and continuity of services for children and youth with disabilities who experience homelessness and high mobility. Coordination and compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act are mandated specifically. The general requirements for a FAPE, evaluations, and IEPs are unchanged.

Following is a listing of the amendments in the reauthorized IDEA and implementing regulations from the U.S. Department of Education as related to the education of homeless children and youth with disabilities, pointing out the changes from prior law.

Definitions

- IDEA now mentions specifically and observes the McKinney-Vento definition of "homeless children and youth".[1]

- The definition of "parent" has been changed, so that the statute now contains a similar definition to that contained in the federal regulations since 1999, with the notable addition of foster parents to the list of persons considered to be "parents." For the purpose of special education, "parents" now include biological, adoptive or foster parents, guardians, surrogate parents, individuals legally responsible for the child's welfare, or individuals acting in the place of a parent and with whom the child lives (specifically including grandparents, stepparents or other relatives).[2]

- IDEA now contains a definition of "ward of the state. "[3]

Identification

- The Child Find requirements in the statute now include a specific requirement that states ensure that homeless children with disabilities are identified, located, and evaluated. (This requirement has been in federal regulations since 1999.)[4]

Coordination/Compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act

- Any state receiving IDEA funds must ensure that the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act are met for all homeless children and youth with disabilities in the state.[5]

- IDEA requires every state receiving IDEA funds to maintain a State Advisory Panel to advise the State Educational Agency (SEA) on unmet needs in the state; to comment publicly on proposed rules and regulations; to advise the SEA on self-evaluation, data reporting and ensuring compliance; and to improve service coordination. IDEA now requires states to include state and local McKinney-Vento personnel on the Panel, as well as a representative of the state child welfare agency responsible for foster care.[6]

Evaluations and IEPs

- IDEA now requires Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to complete initial special education evaluations within 60 days of a parent's request, or within time frames established by the state.[8]

- IDEA now specifically requires LEAs to ensure that assessments of children who change LEAs during the school year are coordinated with prior schools "as necessary and as expeditiously as possible, to ensure prompt completion of full evaluations." [8]

- IDEA states specifically that the same time frame for completing initial evaluations applies if a

child changes LEAs while the evaluations are pending, unless the new LEA "is making sufficient progress to ensure a prompt completion of the evaluation, and the parent and LEA agree to a specific time when the evaluation will be completed."[9]

- When children with current IEPs change LEAs during the school year, the new LEA is now specifically required to provide the children with a FAPE immediately, "including services comparable to those described" in the previous IEP, in consultation with the parents. The LEA can then either adopt the old IEP or implement a new IEP. If the LEA is in a new state, the LEA can conduct new evaluations, if determined necessary, and develop a new IEP; but the LEA must still provide a FAPE, including services comparable to those described in the previous IEP, until the evaluations are completed and the new IEP is implemented.[10]

- To facilitate the provision of a FAPE for students who change LEAs during the school year, IDEA now specifically requires enrolling schools to obtain the child's records from the previous school promptly, and previous schools to respond to such records requests promptly.[11]

Unaccompanied Youth

- IDEA now requires each public agency to ensure that the rights of unaccompanied homeless youth are protected.[12]

- The definition of "parent" includes individuals acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives. The regulations specify that "include" means that the items named are not all of the possible items that are covered, whether like or unlike the ones named. Thus, both relatives and non-relatives of unaccompanied homeless youth may be considered a parent if they are acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent and the youth is living with them.[13]

- For unaccompanied youth, IDEA specifically requires LEAs to appoint surrogate parents, and to make reasonable efforts to complete the appointment process within 30 days.[14] In the interim, LEAs are to appoint temporary surrogate parents for unaccompanied youth. Temporary surrogates may be appropriate staff members of emergency shelters, transitional shelters, independent living programs, street outreach programs, the State, the LEA, or another agency involved in the education or care of the child, as long as the staff member has adequate knowledge and skills and does not have a personal or professional interest that conflicts with the interest of the youth.[15]

- For wards of the state, IDEA now does not require an LEA to obtain parental consent for an initial evaluation, if the LEA cannot find the parent, the parent's rights have been terminated, or a judge has removed the parent's educational decision-making rights and appointed another person to represent the child.[16]

- For wards of the state, IDEA now explicitly permits judges to appoint surrogate parents. [17]

Services

- IDEA now allows LEAs to use up to 15% of their grants to develop and implement programs to intervene with K-12 students who have not been found eligible for special education but who need additional academic and behavioral support, with an emphasis on primary grades.[18] (This provision should assist children experiencing homelessness with overcoming barriers to accessing services expeditiously.)

Resolution of Disputes

- When requesting a mediation or due process hearing under IDEA, families and youth experiencing homelessness do not need to provide a residencial address; only available contact information is required.[19]

Infants and Toddlers (Part C)

- Any state receiving a Part C grant must make early intervention services available to homeless infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.[20]

- States must ensure that appropriate early intervention services using scientifically based research are available, to the extent practicable, to homeless infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.[21]

- States must ensure the meaningful involvement of homeless families and wards of the state in the planning and implementation of the Part C program.[22]

- In the report accompanying Part C, Congress stated that states should conduct public awareness programs about the Part C program in homeless family shelters, health service offices, public schools and the child welfare system.[23]

- Any state receiving a Part C grant must establish a State Interagency Coordinating Council, which must include a representative of the State McKinney-Vento Coordinator and the state child welfare agency responsible for foster care.[24]

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Special Education Agencies

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC): *http://www.cec.sped.org*

IDEA Partnerships: *http://www.ideapractices.org*

National Association for State Directors of Special Education: *http://www.nasdse.org*

U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs: *http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP*

National Partners in Homeless Education

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
Contact: Diana Bowman, Director, 800-755-3277, *dbowman@serve.org*
Web Address: *http://www.serve.org/nche*
NCHE, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is a national resource center, providing valuable information, training, and materials to educators and community members seeking to address the educational needs of homeless children and their families. These materials are made available to the public at no charge and include such items as educational rights posters, parent packs, training resources, and homeless education issue briefs.

U.S. Department of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program
Contact: Gary Rutkin, Coordinator, 202-260-4412, *gary.rutkin@ed.gov*
Web Address: *http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html*
The Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program oversees the education of homeless children and youth in our nation's public schools, including the granting of McKinney-Vento funds and the monitoring of their usage. Program Coordinator Gary Rutkin, working with other U.S. Department of Education officials and national partners, provides official guidance to states and school districts on implementing the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act.

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)
Contact: Barbara Duffield, Policy Director, 202-364-7392, *bduffield@naehcy.org*
Web Address: *http://www.naehcy.org*
NAEHCY, a national grassroots membership association, serves as the voice and social conscience for the education of children and youth in homeless situations. NAEHCY brings together educators, parents, advocates, researchers and service providers to ensure school enrollment and attendance, and overall success for children and youth experiencing homelessness. NAEHCY accomplishes this through advocacy, partnerships, and education. NAEHCY also hosts an annual national conference on homeless education, which brings together educators and service providers to learn about best practices and new developments within the field.

The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP)
Contact: Joy Moses, Education Staff Attorney, 202-638-2535, *jmoses@nlchp.org*;
Web Address: *http://www.nlchp.org*
NLCHP's mission is to prevent and end homelessness by serving as the legal arm of the nationwide movement to end homelessness. To achieve its mission, NLCHP pursues three main strategies: impact litigation, policy advocacy, and public education. NLCHP strives to place homelessness in the larger context of poverty. By taking this approach, NLCHP aims to address homelessness as a very visible manifestation of deeper causes: the shortage of affordable housing, insufficient income, and inadequate social services. NLCHP provides guidance and produces high-quality publications on legal issues pertaining to homelessness and poverty.

The National Network for Youth (NN4Y)
Contact: Bob Reeg, Director of Public Policy, 202-783-7949 x3109, *bob.reeg@verizon.net*
Web Address: *http://www.nn4youth.org*
NN4Y is the leading advocacy organization for runaway and homeless youth. NN4Y seeks to promote opportunities for growth and development for youth who face greater odds due to abuse, neglect, family conflicts and disconnection from family, lack of resources, discrimination, differing abilities, or other life challenges. NN4Y achieves this through advocacy on national policy related to at-risk youth, and through the provision of training, technical assistance, consultation services, and publications on the issue of supporting and protecting at-risk youth.

This brief was developed by:

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
800-308-2145 (toll-free HelpLine)
http://www.serve.org/nche

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NCHE is supported by the U.S. Department of Education
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs.

Every state is required to have a State Coordinator for the Education of Homeles Children and Youth, and every school district is required to have a local homless education liaison. These individuals will assist you with the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. To find out who your State Coordinator is, visit the NCHE website at *http://www.serve.org/nche*.

For further information on the McKinney-Vento Act and resources for implementation, call the NCHE HelpLine at 800-308-2145 or e-mail *homeless@serve.org*.

Local Homeless Education Liaison:

Endnotes

[1] "HOMELESS CHILDREN.—The term 'homeless children' has the meaning given the term 'homeless children and youths' in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a)."
Section 602(11); 34 C.F. R. §300.19

[2] "PARENT.—The term 'parent' means—
(A) a natural, adoptive, or foster parent of a child (unless a foster parent is prohibited by State law from serving as a parent);
(B) a guardian (but not the State if the child is a ward of the State);
(C) an individual acting in the place of a natural or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare; or
(D) except as used in sections 615(b)(2) and 639(a)(5), an individual assigned under either of those sections to be a surrogate parent."
Section 602(23)
"(a) Parent means—
(1) A biological or adoptive parent of a child;
(2) A foster parent, unless State law, regulations, or contractual obligations with a State or local entity prohibit a foster parent from acting as a parent;
(3) A guardian generally authorized to act as the child's parent, or authorized to make educational decisions for the child (but not the State if the child is a ward of the State);
(4) An individual acting in the place of a biological or adoptive parent (including a grandparent, stepparent, or other relative) with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare; or
(5) A surrogate parent who has been appointed in accordance with section 300.519 or section 639(a)(5) of the Act.
34 C.F.R. §300.30

[3] "WARD OF THE STATE.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'ward of the State' means a child who, as determined by the State where the child resides, is a foster child, is a ward of the State, or is in the custody of a public child welfare agency.
(B) EXCEPTION.—The term does not include a foster child who has a foster parent who meets the definition of a parent in paragraph (23)."
Section 602(36); 34 C.F.R. §300.45

[4] "(a) IN GENERAL.—A State is eligible for assistance under this part for a fiscal year if the State submits a plan that provides assurances to the Secretary that the State has in effect policies and procedures to ensure that the State meets each of the following conditions:…
(3) CHILD FIND.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—All children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities who are homeless children or are wards of the State and children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated and a practical method is developed and implemented to determine which children with disabilities are currently receiving needed special education and related services."
Section 612(a)(3)(A); 34 CFR §300.111

[5] "(a) IN GENERAL.—A State is eligible for assistance under this part for a fiscal year if the State submits a plan that provides assurances to the Secretary that the State has in effect policies and procedures to ensure that the State meets each of the following conditions:…
…(11) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR GENERAL SUPERVISION.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—The State educational agency is responsible for ensuring that—…
(iii) in carrying out this part with respect to homeless children, the requirements of subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) are met."
Section 612(a)(11)(A)(iii); 34 CFR §300.149(a)(3)

[6] "(a) IN GENERAL.—A State is eligible for assistance under this part for a fiscal year if the State submits a plan that provides assurances to the Secretary that the State has in effect policies and procedures to ensure that the State meets each of the following conditions:…
…(21) STATE ADVISORY PANEL.—
"(A) IN GENERAL.—The State has established and maintains an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the State.
(B) MEMBERSHIP.—Such advisory panel shall consist of members appointed by the Governor, or any other official

authorized under State law to make such appointments, be representative of the State population, and be composed of individuals involved in, or concerned with, the education of children with disabilities, including—
…(v) State and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.);
…(x) a representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care; …
(D) DUTIES.—The advisory panel shall—
(i) advise the State educational agency of unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities;
(ii) comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities;
(iii) advise the State educational agency in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the Secretary under section 618;
(iv) advise the State educational agency in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in Federal monitoring reports under this part; and
(v) advise the State educational agency in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities."
Section 612(a)(21); 34 CFR §300.167, §300.168(a)(5), §300.169

[7] "EVALUATIONS, PARENTAL CONSENT, AND REEVALUATIONS.—
(1) INITIAL EVALUATIONS.—
…(C) PROCEDURES.—
(i) IN GENERAL.—Such initial evaluation shall consist of procedures—
(I) to determine whether a child is a child with a disability (as defined in section 602) within 60 days of receiving parental consent for the evaluation, or, if the State establishes a timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted, within such timeframe; and
(II) to determine the educational needs of such child."
Section 614(a)(1)(C)
¨The initial evaluation—
(1) Must be conducted within 60 days of receiving parental consent for the evalution; or
(2) If the State establishes a timeframe within which the evalution must be conducted, within that timeframe….¨
34 CFR §300.301(c)

[8] "(b) EVALUATION PROCEDURES.— …
…(3) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.—Each local educational agency shall ensure that—…
(D) assessments of children with disabilities who transfer from 1 school district to another school district in the same academic year are coordinated with such children's prior and subsequent schools, as necessary and as expeditiously as possible, to ensure prompt completion of full evaluations."
Section 614(b)(3)(D)
"Each public agency must ensure that—
(5) Assessments of children with disabilities who transfer from one public agency to another public agency in the same school year are coordinated with those children's prior and subsequent schools, as necessary and as expeditiously as possible, consistent with section 300.301(d)(2) and (e), to ensure prompt completion of full evalutions."
34 CFR §300.304 (c)(5)

[9] "EXCEPTION.—The relevant timeframe in subparagraph (i)(I) shall not apply to a local educational agency if –
(I) a child enrolls in a school served by the local educational agency after the relevant timeframe in clause (i)(I) has begun and prior to a determination by the child's previous local educational agency as to whether the child is a child with a disability (as defined in section 602), but only if the subsequent local educational agency is making sufficient progress to ensure a prompt completion of the evaluation, and the parent and subsequent local educational agency agree to a specific time when the evaluation will be completed."
Section 614(a)(1)(C)(ii)
¨(d) Exception. The time frame described in paragraph (c)(1) of this section does not apply to a public agency if—
…(2) A child enrolls in a school of another public agency after the relevant timeframe in paragraph (c)(1) of this section has begun, and prior to a determination by the child's previous public agency as to whether the child is a child with a disability under section 300.8.
(e) The exception in paragraph (d)(2) of this section applies only if the subsequent public agency is making sufficient progress to ensure a prompt completion of the evaluation, and the parent and subsequent public agency agree to a specific time when the evaluation will be completed."
34 CFR 300.301 (d) – (e)

[10] "(d) INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS…
(2) REQUIREMENT THAT PROGRAM BE IN EFFECT.—
…(C) PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN WHO TRANSFER SCHOOL DISTRICTS.—
(i) IN GENERAL.—
(I) TRANSFER WITHIN THE SAME STATE.—In the case of a child with a disability who transfers school districts within the same academic year, who enrolls in a new school, and who had an IEP that was in effect in the same State, the local educational agency shall provide such child with a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in the previously held IEP, in consultation with the parents until such time as the local educational agency adopts the previously held IEP or develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP that is consistent with Federal and State law.
(II) TRANSFER OUTSIDE STATE.—In the case of a child with a disability who transfers school districts within the same academic year, who enrolls in a new school, and who had an IEP that was in effect in another State, the local educational agency shall provide such child with a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in the previously held IEP, in consultation with the parents until such time as the local educational agency conducts an evaluation pursuant to subsection (a)(1), if determined to be necessary by such agency, and develops a new IEP, if appropriate, that is consistent with Federal and State law."
Section 614(d)(2)(C)(i)
"(e) IEPs for children who transfer public agencies in the same State. If a child with a disability (who had a previous IEP that was in effect in a previous agency in the same State) transfers to a new public agency in the same State, and enrolls in a new school within the same school year, the new public agency (in consultation with the parents) must provide FAPE to the child (including services comparable to those described in the child's IEP from the previous public agency), until the new public agency either—
(1) Adopts the child's IEP from the previous public agency; or
(2) Develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP that meets the applicable requirements in section 300.320 through 300.324.
(f) IEPs for children who transfer from another State. If a child with a disability (who had an IEP that was in effect in a previous public agency in another State) transfers to a public agency in a new State, and enrolls in a new school within the same school year, the new public agency (in consultation with the parents) must provide the child with FAPE (including services comparable to those described in the child's IEP from the previous public agency), until the new public agency—
(1) Conducts an evaluation pursuant to section 300.304 through 300.306 (if determined to be necessary by the new public agency); and
(2) Develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP, if appropriate, that meets the applicable requirements in section 300.320 through 300.324.
34 CFR §300.323 (e)-(f)

[11] "(ii) TRANSMITTAL OF RECORDS.—To facilitate the transition for a child described in clause (i)—
(I) the new school in which the child enrolls shall take reasonable steps to promptly obtain the child's records, including the IEP and supporting documents and any other records relating to the provision of special education or related services to the child, from the previous school in which the child was enrolled, pursuant to section 99.31(a)(2) of title 34, Code of Federal Regulations; and
(II) the previous school in which the child was enrolled shall take reasonable steps to promptly respond to such request from the new school."
Section 614(d)(2)(C)(ii); 34 CFR §300.323 (g)

[12] "(a)Each public agency must ensure that the rights of a child are protected when—…(4) The child is an unaccompanied homeless youth as defined in section 725(6) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(6))…."
34 CFR §300.519(a)

[13] See endnote 2, Section 602(23)(C); 34 C.F.R. §300.30.
"Include means that the items named are not all the possible items that are covered, whether like or unlike the ones named."
34 C.F.R. §300.20

[14] "TYPES OF PROCEDURES.—The procedures required by this section shall include the following:
…"(2)(A) Procedures to protect the rights of the child whenever the parents of the child are not known, the agency cannot, after reasonable efforts, locate the parents, or the child is a ward of the State, including the assignment of an individual to act as a surrogate for the parents, which surrogate shall not be an employee of the State educational agency, the local educational agency, or any other agency that is involved in the education or care of the child. In the

case of—…
(ii) an unaccompanied homeless youth as defined in section 725(6) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(6)), the local educational agency shall appoint a surrogate in accordance with this paragraph.
(B) The State shall make reasonable efforts to ensure the assignment of a surrogate not more than 30 days after there is a determination by the agency that the child needs a surrogate."
Section 615(b)(2)
"(a) Each public agency must ensure that the rights of a child are protected when—…(4) The child is an unaccompanied homeless youth as defined in section 725(6) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(6))….
(b) The duties of a public agency under paragraph (a) of this section include the assignment of an individual to act as a surrogate for the parents. This must include a method—
(1) For determining whether a child needs a surrogate parent; and
(2) For assigning a surrogate parent to the child."
34 CFR §300.519(a)-(b)

[15] "Unaccompanied homeless youth. In the case of a child who is an unaccompanied homeless youth, appropriate staff of emergency shelters, transitional shelters, independent living programs, and street outreach programs may be appointed as temporary surrogate parents without regard to paragraph (d)(2)(i) of this section, until a surrogate parent can be appointed that meets all of the requirements of paragraph (d) of this section."
34 CFR §300.519(f)
"Section 300.519(f) allows LEAs to appoint a temporary surrogate parentsfor a child who is an unaccompanied homeless youth, without regard to the requirement in §300.519(d)(2)(i) that a surrogate parent not be an employee of any agency involved in the education or care of the child. Thus, a temporary surrogate parent for an unaccompanied homeless youth may include State, LEA, or agency staff that is involved in the education or care of the child…. Section 519(f) specifically allows the appointment of a temporary surrogate parent without regard to the non-employee requirements in §300.519(d)(2)(i). There are no similar exceptions for the requirements in §300.519(d)(2)(ii) and (iii). Therefore, temporary surrogate parents for unaccompanied homeless youth must not have a personal or professional interest that conflicts with the interest of the child the surrogate parent represents, and must have the knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the child, consistent with§300.519(d)(2)(ii) and (iii), respectively."
71 Fed. Reg. 46712 (August 14, 2006)

[16] "(iii) CONSENT FOR WARDS OF THE STATE.—
(I) IN GENERAL.—If the child is a ward of the State and is not residing with the child's parent, the agency shall make reasonable efforts to obtain the informed consent from the parent (as defined in section 602) of the child for an initial evaluation to determine whether the child is a child with a disability.
(II) EXCEPTION.—The agency shall not be required to obtain informed consent from the parent of a child for an initial evaluation to determine whether the child is a child with a disability if—
(aa) despite reasonable efforts to do so, the agency cannot discover the whereabouts of the parent of the child;
(bb) the rights of the parents of the child have been terminated in accordance with State law; or
(cc) the rights of the parent to make educational decisions have been subrogated by a judge in accordance with State law and consent for an initial evaluation has been given by an individual appointed by the judge to represent the child."
Section 614(a)(1)(C)(iii); 34 CFR §300.300(a)(2)

[17] "(2)(A) …In the case of—
"(i) a child who is a ward of the State, such surrogate may alternatively be appointed by the judge overseeing the child's care provided that the surrogate meets the requirements of this paragraph…."
Section 615(b)(2)(A)(i); 34 CFR §300.519(c)

[18] "EARLY INTERVENING SERVICES.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—A local educational agency may not use more than 15 percent of the amount such agency receives under this part for any fiscal year, less any amount reduced by the agency pursuant to subsection (a)(2)(C), if any, in combination with other amounts (which may include amounts other than education funds), to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening services, which may include interagency financing structures, for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade 3) who have not been identified as needing special education or related services but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment.
(2) ACTIVITIES.—In implementing coordinated, early intervening services under this subsection, a local educational agency may carry out activities that include—

…(B) providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports, including scientifically based literacy instruction."
Section 613(f); 34 CFR §300.226(a)-(b)(2)

[19] "TYPES OF PROCEDURES.—The procedures required by this section shall include the following:
…(7)(A) Procedures that require either party, or the attorney representing a party, to provide due process complaint notice in accordance with subsection (c)(2) (which shall remain confidential)—
(ii) that shall include—
(I) the name of the child, the address of the residence of the child (or available contact information in the case of a homeless child), and the name of the school the child is attending;
(II) in the case of a homeless child or youth (within the meaning of section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)), available contact information for the child and the name of the school the child is attending…."
Section 615(b)(7)(A)(ii); 34 CFR §§300.507-508(b)(4)

[20] "In order to be eligible for a grant under section 633, a State shall provide assurances to the Secretary that the State—
(1) has adopted a policy that appropriate early intervention services are available to all infants and toddlers with disabilities in the State and their families, including Indian infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families residing on a reservation geographically located in the State, infants and toddlers with disabilities who are homeless children and their families, and infants and toddlers with disabilities who are wards of the State"
Section 634(1)

[21] "(a) IN GENERAL.—A statewide system described in section 633 shall include, at a minimum, the following components:…
(2) A State policy that is in effect and that ensures that appropriate early intervention services based on scientifically based research, to the extent practicable, are available to all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families, including Indian infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families residing on a reservation geographically located in the State and infants and toddlers with disabilities who are homeless children and their families."
Section 635(a)(2)

[22] "ASSURANCES.—The application described in subsection (a)—…
(7) shall provide satisfactory assurance that policies and procedures have been adopted to ensure meaningful involvement of underserved groups, including minority, low-income, homeless, and rural families and children with disabilities who are wards of the State, in the planning and implementation of all the requirements of this part."
Section 637(b)(7)

[23] "The Conferees intend that the public awareness program include a broad range of referral sources such as homeless family shelters, clinics and other health service related offices, public schools and officials and staff in the child welfare system."
Report page 68 (290)

[24] "IN GENERAL.—The council shall be composed as follows:…
(K) OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH.—Not less than 1 member shall be a representative designated by the Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths.
(L) STATE FOSTER CARE REPRESENTATIVE.—Not less than 1 member shall be a representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care."
Section 641(b)(1)(K) and (L)

Runaway and Homeless Youth Act

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) is administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The RHYA program provides funding for basic center programs, transitional living programs, and street outreach programs that serve runaway and homeless youth. Following is the Family and Youth Service Bureau Information Memorandum No. 1-2006, which states that Basic Center and Transitional Living programs must coordinate with local homeless education liaisons to ensure that runaway and homeless youth are provided with information regarding the educational services available to them.

Full Legislative Text

- The full text of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act is available at *http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/aboutfysb/RHYComp.pdf*.

Additional Resources

- **NCHE Information by Topic: *Unaccompanied Youth* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_youth.php***: This NCHE webpage provides information on supporting unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.

Family and Youth Services Bureau
Information Memorandum

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Family and Youth Services Bureau
Washington, DC 20447

No. 1-2006 **Date: 01/09/2006**

TO: FYSB Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Grantees

SUBJECT: Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program coordination with the McKinney-Vento School Act (Subtitle B or title VII; 42 U.S.C. 11432 et seq). For statutory language on the McKinney-Vento School Act, visit the Department of Education site: http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html.

PURPOSE: To inform the nation's Runaway and Homeless Youth grantees about the McKinney-Vento provision in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974), as amended by the Runaway, Homeless and Missing Children Protection Act of 2003, Public Law 108-96.

REFERENCES: P.L. 108-96 (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/aboutfysb/RHYComp.pdf)

BACKGROUND: On October 10, 2003, the President signed the Runaway, Homeless and Missing Children Protection Act, which reauthorized the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act through Fiscal Year 2008. Under the reauthorization, Basic Center and Transitional Living programs must ensure **coordination with school district liaisons** under the **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act,** so that runway and homeless youth are provided with information regarding the educational services available to them. (Section 312 and 322).

The **McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act** applies to "unaccompanied youth" defined as youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, which includes youth who have run away from home or are homeless. The Act removes barriers to school enrollment for unaccompanied youth such as waiving documentation requirements (i.e. proof of immunization) or adopting more lenient attendance policies. The Act requires that states address enrollment delays for youth without guardians and take steps to enroll such youth in school immediately. Some states allow unaccompanied youth to enroll independently or allow the service agency to sign for them in the role of caregiver.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act states that it is the responsibility of the school district liaison to: "assist unaccompanied youth in placement and enrollment decisions, explain the youth's right to appeal school decisions, ensure the youth is immediately enrolled in school while appeals are pending, and ensure the youth has access to transportation to school" (42 U.S.C. §§11432). Liaisons are obligated to identify and ensure that RHY/unaccompanied youth have a smooth transition into school and receive the support services they are guaranteed under law. However, states have different timelines for meeting these objectives and may also define these needs differently than service providers. A check of the related state requirements and regulations may be necessary.

TIPS FOR STRONGER COORDINATION

Introduce the agency and the services provided to the liaison. Work on building a strong collaborative relationship, since this person will be a strong advocate during the intake process. Discuss issues regarding youth guardianship, case management and existing policies that may pose a barrier to receiving timely educational services. Decide how to introduce the youth to the school and how to best represent the student's interests in the educational planning process.

To identify the school district liaison contact your state coordinator. A list of state coordinators is attached. This information can also be found online at http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/sccontact.pdf.

Be an advocate for the student in school. Periodically visit with the school administrators, teachers and counselors to educate them about the homeless/runaway/throwaway youth population. Encourage school personnel to contact the McKinney-Vento liaison for additional guidance. This will ensure that the school is aware of and sympathetic to the issues facing RHY students. It can also establish a resource where schools will feel comfortable making referrals to the agency for assistance. Visits and participation also help programs to learn more about how the schools in your district operate. For example, do they require school uniforms? Can these be made available to temporary students?

Learn the specific state laws for providing educational services. Most states will serve youth until a high school graduation or equivalent and up to at least age 18 (older in some states). For special education students, federal law guarantees access to services until age 22 (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IDEA). A youth who needs special education services cannot be denied access; however someone who is legally responsible for the youth will have to authorize services. To accommodate this process the RHY program should work with the student to identify an adult relative or legal representative.

Inform young people upon intake about their rights to an education and how they can access educational services. They should know that

they are eligible for immediate school enrollment in their district school or school of origin if feasible. This should include their right to attend their school of origin or local school, rights to transportation to/from school, the right to participate fully in school activities, and the right to appeal school enrollment decisions.

Be aware of alternative school options for youth such as vocational education, credit-for-work programs and flexible school hours. Your school district liaison can explain specific programs in your area.

Consider additional ways that you can support the educational needs of the young people in case. Many RHY centers and programs provide tutoring, onsite classes or enrichment, transportation to schools, advocacy for navigating the system and encouragement toward completion of their education. For Transitional Living Programs, education enrollment and/or completion or GED attainment may be a requirement for enrolled youth.

ATTACHMENTS:

Information for School-Aged Youth poster, Dept. of Education. Call 1-800-308-2145 to order additional copies. This publication is also available in Spanish.

State Coordinators List, National Center for Homeless Education, http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/sccontact.pdf

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
Web Address: www.serve.org/nche
NCHE, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is a national resource center, providing valuable information, training, and materials to educators and community members seeking to address the educational needs of homeless children and their families.

U.S. Department of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program
Web Address: www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html
The Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program oversees the education of homeless children and youth in our nation's public schools, including the granting of McKinney-Vento funds and the monitoring of their usage.

INQUIRIES:

Inquiries should be directed to your Lead Regional Youth Specialist:

Maryellen Connors – Region I; (617) 565-1119

Junius Scott – Region II; (212) 264-2896

Gary Koch – Region III; (215) 861-4022

Ruth Walker – Region IV; (404) 562-2901

Bill Clair – Region V; (312) 535-0166

Ralph Rogers – Region VI; (214) 767-2977

Dale Scott – Region VII; (816) 426-2295

Al Martinez – Region VIII; (303) 844-1172

Deborah Oppenheim – Region IX; (415) 437-8426

Steve Ice – Region X; (206) 615-2210

Harry Wilson

Associate Commissioner

Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act

Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) provides financial assistance through SEAs to LEAs and schools with high numbers or high percentages of low-income children to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Following is the text of Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act that deals with supporting children and youth experiencing homelessness with Title I, Part A, funds.

Full Legislative Text

- The full text of Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act is available at *http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html*.

Additional Resources

- ***Homeless Education and Title I: Collaboration and Compliance*; available for viewing at *http://servepres.serve.org/p79332226***: This online audiovisual training explains the relationship between the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act. Concepts covered include comparable services, the mandatory reservation of funds, and strategies for collaboration between the programs.
- ***Title I and Homelessness* brief; available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php***: This brief identifies the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act that deal with the provision of services to children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- **U.S. Department of Education Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance, Section M; available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/guidance_jul2004.pdf***: Section M of the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance deals with the coordination of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program and the Title I, Part A, program.
- **NCHE Information by Topic: *Title I, Part A,* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_titlei.php***: This NCHE webpage provides information on using Title I, Part A, funds to support the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act (Public Law 107-110)

(Excerpts related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness)

SEC 111. STATE PLANS

"(a) PLANS REQUIRED.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—For any State desiring to receive a grant under this part, the State educational agency shall submit to the Secretary a plan, developed by the State educational agency, in consultation with local educational agencies, teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, administrators (including administrators of programs described in other parts of this title), other staff, and parents, that satisfies the requirements of this section and that is coordinated with other programs under this Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, the Head Start Act, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

SEC 112. LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PLANS

"(a) PLANS REQUIRED.—

"(1) SUBGRANTS.—A local educational agency may receive a subgrant under this part for any fiscal year only if such agency has on file with the State educational agency a plan, approved by the State educational agency, that is coordinated with other programs under this Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and other Acts, as appropriate.

"(b) PLAN PROVISIONS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to help low-achieving children meet challenging achievement academic standards, each local educational agency plan shall include—…

"(E) a description of how the local educational agency will coordinate and integrate services provided under this part with other educational services at the local educational agency or individual school level, such as—...

"(ii) services for children with limited English proficiency, children with disabilities, migratory children, neglected or delinquent youth, Indian children served under part A of title VII, homeless children, and immigrant children in order to increase program effectiveness, eliminate duplication, and reduce fragmentation of the instructional program;…

"(O) a description of the services the local educational agency will provide homeless children, including services provided with funds reserved under section 1113(c)(3)(A);

SEC 113. ELIGIBLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS

"(c) ALLOCATIONS.—...

"(3) RESERVATION.—A local educational agency shall reserve such funds as are necessary under this part to provide services comparable to those provided to children in schools funded under this part to serve—

"(A) homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children may live;

SEC 115. TARGETED ASSISTANCE SCHOOLS

"(b) ELIGIBLE CHILDREN.—...

"(2) CHILDREN INCLUDED.—...

"(E) HOMELESS CHILDREN.—A child who is homeless and attending any school served by the local educational agency is eligible for services under this part.

Appendix C: Awareness Materials

One of the main roles of the local homeless education liaison is to ensure that school district personnel and community members, including those eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, are aware of the Act and its provisions. An important component of awareness is the ability to recognize the signs of homelessness.

Appendix C includes:

- Common Signs of Homelessness Flyer
- NCHE educational rights poster, for parents (8 1/2 x 11, black and white)
- NCHE educational rights poster, for youth (8 1/2 x 11, black and white)
- NCHE Homeless Education Awareness Flyer

Additional Resources

- **NCHE awareness products; available for ordering at *http://www.serve.org/nche/online_order.php***:
  - **Educational Rights Poster**: This poster explains who qualifies as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and lists the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Place these posters in your school or community to generate public awareness. Available in youth and parent versions and in English and Spanish.
  - **Homeless Education Awareness Folder**: This sturdy, laminated folder provides an attractive way to inform colleagues and potential donors about the issues central to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Customize the information presented by filling the folder with the resources most pertinent to your audience.
  - **NCHE Brochure**: This brochure explains the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness and provides information about NCHE's mission and services, including the NCHE homeless education helpline.

- **Parent Brochure**: This brochure explains the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness and informs parents about ways in which they can support their children's education during times of mobility.

- **NCHE homeless education issue briefs; available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php***:
  - ***Introduction to the Issues* brief**: This brief provides an overview of the main issues within the field of homeless education. It is a good general resource, but is also particularly helpful for introducing new people to the field or introducing the issue to those outside of the field.
  - ***Who is Homeless?* brief**: This brief provides the definition of "homeless", as stated in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and offers strategies for determining homelessness by the definition.

- **NCHE Information by Topic: *Awareness Videos* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/aw_video.php***: This webpage lists video resources that help create awareness of the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the plight of homeless people, including families with children, in the United States.

Common Signs of Homelessness

Note: While these are considered common signs, please recognize that they only offer general guidance. There is significant variability within the school-age homeless population. Individual students may differ significantly from the following general characteristics.

Lack of Continuity in Education

- Attendance at many different schools
- Lack of records needed to enroll
- Inability to pay fees
- Gaps in skill development
- Mistaken diagnosis of abilities
- Poor organizational skills
- Poor ability to conceptualize

Poor Health/Nutrition

- Lack of immunizations and/or immunization records
- Unmet medical and dental needs
- Respiratory problems
- Skin rashes
- Chronic hunger (may hoard food)
- Fatigue (may fall asleep in class)

Transportation and Attendance Problems

- Erratic attendance and tardiness
- Numerous absences
- Lack of participation in after-school activities
- Lack of participation in field trips
- Inability to contact parents

Poor Hygiene

- Lack of shower facilities/washers, etc.
- Wearing same clothes for several days
- Inconsistent grooming

Lack of Personal Space After School

- Consistent lack of preparation for school
- Incomplete or missing homework (no place to work or keep supplies)
- Unable to complete special projects (no access to supplies)
- Lack of basic school supplies
- Loss of books and other supplies on a regular basis
- Concern for safety of belongings

Social and Behavioral Concerns

- A marked change in behavior
- Poor/short attention span
- Poor self-esteem
- Extreme shyness
- Unwillingness to risk forming relationships with peers and teachers
- Difficulty socializing at recess
- Difficulty trusting people
- Aggression
- “Old” beyond years
- Protective of parents
- Clinging behavior
- Developmental delays
- Fear of abandonment
- School phobia (student wants to be with parent)
- Anxiety late in the school day

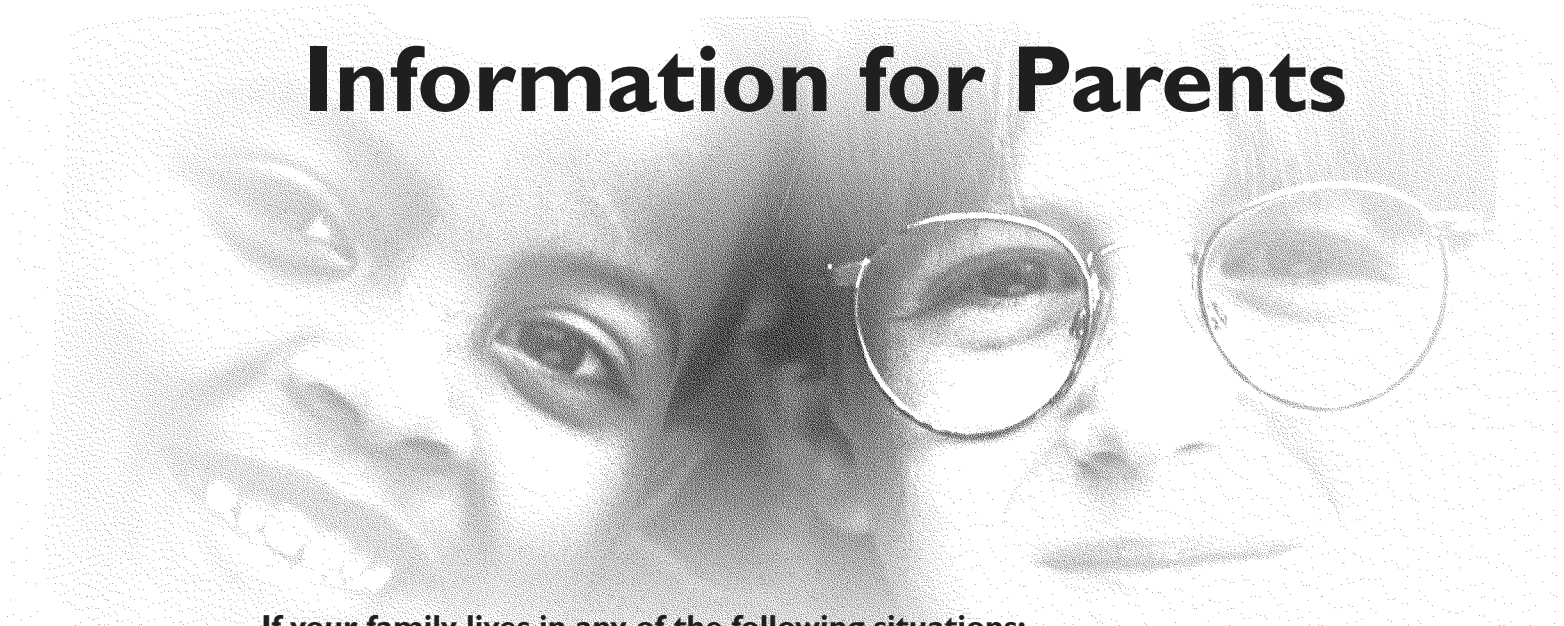
Reaction/Statements by Parent, Guardian, or Child

- Exhibiting anger or embarrassment when asked about current address
- Mention of staying with grandparents, other relatives, friends, or in a motel, or comments, such as
  - “I don’t remember the name of the last school.”
  - “We’ve been moving around a lot.”
  - “Our address is new; I can’t remember it”
  - “We’re staying with relatives until we get settled.”
  - “We’re going through a bad time.”

NCHE National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE

Common signs adapted from flyers developed by the Illinois and Pennsylvania Departments of Education. For more information on homeless education, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at *http://www.serve.org/nche*.

Information for Parents



If your family lives in any of the following situations:

- In a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground
- On the street
- In an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or
- Doubled up with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing

Then, your preschool-aged and school-aged children have certain rights or protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

Your children have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where you live or how long you have lived there. They must be given access to the same public education, including preschool education, provided to other children.
- Continue in the school they attended before you became homeless or the school they last attended, if that is your choice and is feasible. If a school sends your child to a school other than the one you request, the school must provide you with a written explanation and offer you the right to appeal the decision.
- Receive transportation to the school they attended before your family became homeless or the school they last attended, if you or a guardian request such transportation.
- Attend a school and participate in school programs with children who are not homeless. Children cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve a dispute over enrolling your children.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children served in these programs.
- Receive transportation to school and to school programs.

When you move, you should do the following:

- Contact the school district's local liaison for homeless education (see phone number below) for help in enrolling your child in a new school or arranging for your child to continue in his or her former school. (Or, someone at a shelter, social services office, or the school can direct you to the person you need to contact.)
- Contact the school and provide any information you think will assist the teachers in helping your child adjust to new circumstances.
- Ask the local liaison for homeless education, the shelter provider, or a social worker for assistance with clothing and supplies, if needed.

Local Area Contacts:

State Coordinator:

If you need further assistance, call the National Center for Homeless Education at the toll-free HelpLine number:

1-800-308-2145

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Information for School-Aged Youth

If you live in any of the following situations:

- In a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground
- On the street
- In an abandoned building, trailer, or other inadequate accommodations, or
- Doubled up with friends or relatives because you cannot find or afford housing

Then, you have certain rights or protections under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act.

You have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where you live or how long you have lived there. You must be given access to the same public education provided to other students.
- Continue in the school you attended before you became homeless or the school you last attended, if that is your choice and is feasible. The school district's local liaison for homeless education must assist you, if needed, and offer you the right to appeal a decision regarding your choice of school if it goes against your wishes.
- Receive transportation to the school you attended before you became homeless or the school you last attended, if you request such transportation.
- Attend a school and participate in school programs with students who are not homeless. Students cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay school enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any other documents required for enrollment.
- Enroll and attend classes in the school of your choice even while the school and you seek to resolve a dispute over enrollment.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other students served in these programs.
- Receive transportation to school and to school programs.

When you move, you should do the following:

- Contact the school district's local liaison for homeless education (see phone number below) for help in enrolling in a new school or arranging to continue in your former school. (Or, someone at a shelter, social services office, or the school can direct you to the person you need to contact.)
- Tell your teachers anything that you think they need to know to help you in school.
- Ask the local liaison for homeless education, the shelter provider, or a social worker for assistance with clothing and supplies, if needed.

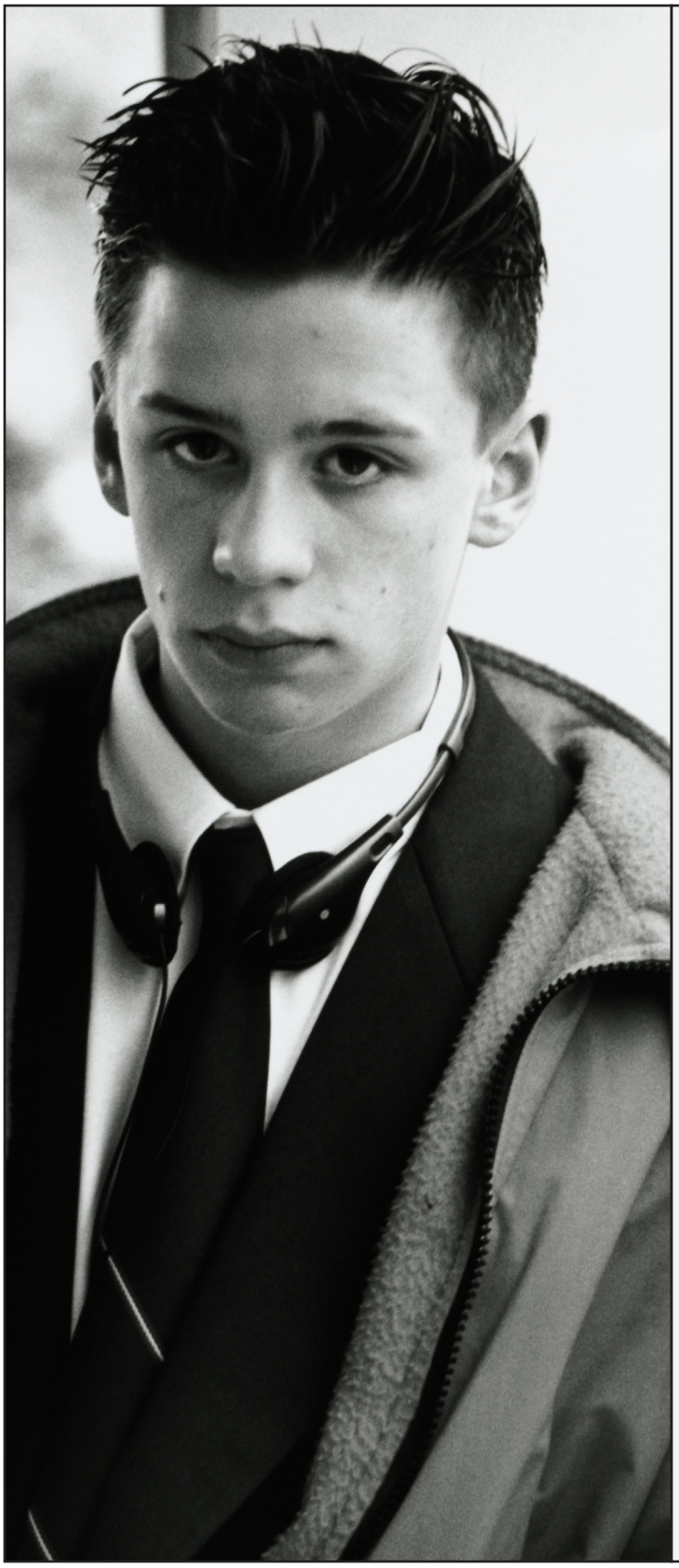
Local Area Contacts:

State Coordinator:

If you need further assistance, call the National Center for Homeless Education at the toll-free HelpLine number:

1-800-308-2145

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



This face and more than 1 million like it are homeless every year.

And it's hard to do homework when you don't have a home. Yet approximately 1.4 million children and youth will face that challenge this year.

Receiving an education is critical to breaking the cycle of homelessness in the lives of these children and youth. Federal law protects their right to a **free, appropriate public education**.

For more information on the rights of and services available to children and youth experiencing homelessness, please contact:

Local Homeless Education Liaison

Homeless Education Awareness Flyer compliments of:

National Center for Homeless Education

800-308-2145 (toll-free Helpline)

http://www.serve.org/nche

NCHE
National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE

Appendix D: Enrollment Tools

Immediate enrollment for children and youth experiencing homelessness is a key provision of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The enrollment tools contained in this appendix will assist school districts in complying with federal law by enrolling children and youth experiencing homelessness immediately, even if they lack the documentation normally required for enrollment.

Appendix D includes:

- Sample form: *Student Residency Form*
- Sample form: *Determining Feasibility of School Placement*
- Sample form: *Sample Affidavit for Missing Enrollment Documentation*
- Sample form: *Caregiver Authorization Form*
- Sample form: *Written Notification of Enrollment Decision*

Additional Resources

- **U.S. Department of Education Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance, Section G; available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/guidance_jul2004.pdf***: Section G of the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance deals with the school placement, school enrollment, and eligibility for services of children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- **NCHE enrollment tools; available for ordering at *http://www.serve.org/nche/online_order.php***:
  - **Enrollment: Ready Reference for School (enrollment foldout)**: This handy foldout pamphlet assists local homeless education liaisons and enrollment personnel in understanding the legal guidelines for the immediate school enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Its compact size and foldout format make it a great desktop reference.
  - **Parent Pack Pocket Folder**: This sturdy, laminated folder provides parents a place to keep important records and documents related to their children's education. The folder also

includes information on the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness and helpful tips about enrollment and disenrollment. Available in Spanish and English.

- **NCHE homeless education issue briefs; available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php***:
  - ***Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act* brief**: This brief offers step-by-step guidance on determining homelessness among children and youth whose living arrangements vary from the examples given in the McKinney-Vento definition of "homeless".
  - ***Guiding the Discussion on School Selection* brief**: This brief identifies the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act dealing with the homeless student's right to attend either the school of origin or the local attendance area school. It includes a helpful checklist to use when approaching the school selection decision.
  - ***Prompt and Proper Placement: Enrolling Students Without Records* brief**: This brief offers teachers, school counselors, and other school personnel valuable tools and information to assist in making sound educational decisions for the immediate placement of homeless children and youth in appropriate classroom settings.

Student Residency Form

This form is intended to address the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act (Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act). The question below is to assist in determining if the student meets the eligibility criteria for services provided under the McKinney-Vento Act. In the event that the child is not staying with his/her parent(s) or guardian(s), use the caregiver authorization form to address guardianship issues.

Where does the student stay at night?

_____ in a shelter

_____ in a motel/hotel

_____ in a car

_____ at a campsite

_____ in another location that is not appropriate for people (e.g., an abandoned building)

_____ temporarily with more than one family in a house, mobile home, or apartment (because the family does not have a place of its own)

_____ other (in an arrangement that is not fixed, regular, and adequate and is not described by the other choices)

Name of school: _____

Name of student: _____ Student's date of birth: _____

I, (name) _____
declare as follows:

I am the parent/legal guardian of (name of student) _____,

who is of school age and is seeking enrollment in (name of school district) _____
_____.

Since (date) _____, our family has not had a permanent residence.

Under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state, I declare that the information provided here is true and correct and of my own personal knowledge and that, if called upon to testify, I would be competent to do so.

Name of person completing the form: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____ E-mail address: _____

I can be reached for emergencies at: _____

Adapted from materials from the California Department of Education and the San Antonio Independent School District. As with any legal document, the local educational agency's legal counsel should be consulted.

Introduction to Determining Feasibility of School Placement

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states that once a child has been identified as homeless, residency requirements do not apply. The federal law requires that a child or youth experiencing homelessness attend one of the following:

- The *school of origin*: The school that the child last attended before experiencing homelessness or the school where the student was last enrolled.
- The *local attendance area school*: 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.

Enrollment must take place immediately.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires schools to consider the school of origin as the first option in school enrollment. Parents may choose the school of origin or the local attendance area school. The following individuals may be consulted in determining what placement is in the child's or youth's best interest:

- The homeless child or youth
- The parents or caretakers of the homeless child or youth
- Homeless shelter personnel
- Representatives of social service agencies
- Local homeless education liaisons
- School social workers
- School counselors

It is the school district's responsibility to determine the school of origin and local attendance area school and to resolve any conflict concerning the school placement that is in the best interest of the student. Whenever possible, the school district is to comply with the parents'/caretakers' wishes. If the school district and parents/caretakers do not agree on the appropriate placement, the state's dispute resolution procedure must be followed. The student should be enrolled in the school that the parents or caretakers (or the student himself/herself, in the case of an unaccompanied youth) have chosen during the resolution process. If the local attendance area school and the school of origin are in different districts and the school of origin is determined to be the best placement, the local homeless education liaisons from both districts must work together to arrange transportation. If the two districts can not reach a mutually agreed-upon arrangement, the two districts must split equally the cost and responsibility of transporting the student to the school of origin.

The following form is provided to assist in determining which placement decision would be in the student's best interest.

Adapted from materials developed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Determining Feasibility of School Placement Form

Name of student: _____

Date: _____

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, a homeless child or youth has the right to attend the school of origin or the local attendance area school, according to the best interest of the child:

- The **school of origin** is defined as:
  - the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed; OR
  - the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled
- The **local attendance area school** (local school) is defined as:
  - 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

This form will assist in determining which placement decision would be in the student's best interest.

Please provide the following information for the attendance options for the student:

School that the child or youth attended when permanently housed:

Name of school and district:

Dates of attendance:

Living arrangement at the time:

School in which the child or youth was last enrolled:

Name of school and district:

Dates of attendance:

Living arrangement at the time:

Local Attendance Area School

Name of school and district:

Current living arrangement:

1. Are the school of origin and the local attendance area school in the same school district?

Determining Feasibility of School Placement Form (cont)

2. Which school does the child/youth want to attend? Why?

3. Which school does the parent want the child/youth to attend? Why?

4. What is the distance and time spent on travel from the current residence to the school of origin?

5. If transportation is currently unavailable to the school of origin, how can it be arranged?

6. What time of year is it (at the beginning of the school year, near the end of the school year, during the summer)?

7. How long did the child/youth attend the school of origin? Were meaningful social and educational relationships established?

8. Are there specific people in the school of origin who have been providing support or assistance to the family or child/youth experiencing homelessness?

9. Are there special programs, such as gifted, bilingual, or remedial education, in which the child/youth has been participating at the school of origin?

   If yes, please describe.

   Are these special programs also available at the local attendance area school?

10. Based on a knowledge of the family's situation, how long is the family likely to remain at the current residence?

Determining Feasibility of School Placement Form (cont)

11. What is the likelihood that the family experiencing homelessness will reestablish residency in the attendance area of the school of origin?

Based on answers to the previous questions, the school district recommends the following school:

Individuals consulted to determine that this placement is in the student's best interest were:

Signature(s) of the individual(s) making the recommendation:

Adapted from materials developed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Sample Affidavit for Missing Enrollment Documentation

State: _____

School district: _____

_____ (name), based upon his/her personal knowledge, answers the following questions as noted in his/her handwriting on this and the attached page, which are propounded by duly authorized officials of the

_____ (district name) concerning a student's missing enrollment documentation for the following:

_____ Proof of residency

_____ Proof of guardianship

_____ Proof of identity

_____ Birth certificate

_____ Immunization record(s)

_____ School physical/health record(s)

_____ School record(s)

_____ Other (please describe below:)

_____

You are being asked to answer these questions because you are unable to provide the enrollment documents checked above that are required for enrollment. In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 107-110), states and localities are required to address barriers to the enrollment of students meeting the definition of "homeless". Your completion of this affidavit will facilitate the enrollment of your child(ren) (or of your own enrollment if you are an unaccompanied youth).

1. What is your full name? (name of person completing form)

2. Do you understand that giving a false or otherwise untrue answer to any of the questions in this affidavit could result in a criminal charge of perjury being brought against you? Please circle "Yes" or "No".

   Yes / No

3. What is (are) the full name(s) of the student(s) you wish to enroll in this district?

4. What are the age(s), date(s) of birth, and birthplace(s) of the student(s) being enrolled in this district?

Sample Affidavit for Missing Enrollment Doc'n (cont.)

5. Who are the parents, parents by legal adoption, legal guardians, or persons having legal custody of the student(s) being enrolled? (If you are an unaccompanied youth, please list your parent(s), legal guardian(s), or other adults who help take care of you, such as relatives, caregivers, social workers, etc.)

6. Where is (are) the student(s) currently living? Include the address and type of housing.

7. Do you have legal custody imposed by a court order or have you been designated as a court-appointed guardian for the student(s) being enrolled?

   What court entered such order and what type of case was it (e.g., custody hearing, etc.)?

8. Why are you unable to present a copy of documentation for the items checked on page 1 for the student(s) that you are enrolling?

9. To the best of your knowledge, has this student (have these students) ever been reported to any law enforcement agency as a missing child (as missing children)?

   If the response to question #9 is yes, identify by name and address the law enforcement agency to which the child was reported missing and the date of the report.

10. In order to help the school district locate missing information, please give the following information:

    Last school(s) attended (name of school, city or county, and state):

    Clinic or medical facility where the student(s) was (were) immunized or received medical treatment (name of facility, city or county, and state):

_____

Date Signature

This sample may be used to develop a state or local affidavit to facilitate the enrollment of students who are experiencing homelessness. It is recommended that the legal counsel for the state or local educational agency using an adaptation of this document be consulted.

Caregiver Authorization Form

This form is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 107-110) requirement that homeless children have access to education and other services for which they are eligible. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states specifically that barriers to enrollment must be removed. In some cases, a child or youth who is homeless may not be able to reside with his/her parent or guardian; however, this fact does not nullify the child's/youth's right to receive a free, appropriate public education.

Instructions:
Complete this form for a child/youth presenting himself/herself for enrollment while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

- To authorize the enrollment in school of a minor, complete items 1 through 4 and sign the form.
- To authorize the enrollment and school-related medical care of a minor, complete all items and sign the form.

I am 18 years of age or older and have agreed to fulfill the role of caregiver for the minor named below.

1. Name of minor: _____

2. Minor's date of birth: _____

3. My name (adult giving authorization): _____

4. My home address: _____

5. Check one or both (for example, if one parent was advised and the other could not be located):

   _____ I have advised the parent(s) or other person(s) having legal custody of the minor as to my intent to authorize medical care and have received no objection.

   _____I am unable to contact the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) at this time to notify them of my intended authorization.

6. My date of birth: _____

7. My state driver's license or identification card number: _____

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Adapted from materials produced by the California Department of Education.
As with any legal document, the local educational agency's legal counsel should be consulted.

Written Notification of Enrollment Decision

To be completed by the receiving school when an enrollment request is denied.

Date: _____

Name of person completing form: _____

Title of person completing form: _____

Name of school: _____

In compliance with section 722(g)(3)(E) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the following written notification is provided to:

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____

Name of Student(s): _____

After reviewing your request to enroll the student(s) listed above, the enrollment request is denied. This determination was based upon:

You have the right to appeal this decision by completing the second page of this notice or by contacting the school district's local homeless education liaison.

Name of local liaison: _____

Title: _____

Phone number: _____

In addition:

- The student listed above has the right to enroll immediately in the requested school pending the resolution of the dispute.
- You may provide written or verbal communication(s) to support your position regarding the student's enrollment in the requested school. You may use the form attached to this notification.
- You may contact the State Coordinator for Homeless Education if further help is needed or desired. Contact information for the State Coordinator:

You may seek the assistance of advocates or an attorney.
A copy of our state's dispute resolution process for students experiencing homelessness is attached.

Written Notification of Enrollment Decision

To be completed by the parent, guardian, caretaker, or unaccompanied youth when a dispute arises. This information may be shared verbally with the local liaison as an alternative to completing this form.

Date: _____

Student(s): _____

Person completing form: _____

Relation to student(s): _____

I may be contacted at (phone or e-mail): _____

I wish to the appeal the enrollment decision made by: _____

Name of School: _____

I have been provided with (please check all that apply):

_____ A written explanation of the school's decision.

_____ The contact information of the school district's local homeless education liaison.

_____A copy of the state's dispute resolution process for students experiencing homelessness.

Optional: You may include a written explanation in the space below to support your appeal or you may provide your explanation verbally.

The school provided me with a copy of this form when I submitted it. _____ (initial)

Appendix E:
Assessment and Data Collection Tools

Part of developing an effective homeless education program is evaluating the results of the services and support provided to the student by the program.

Appendix E includes:

- Excerpt: *McKinney-Vento Data Standards and Indicators - 2006 Revisions*
- Sample Needs Assessment: Basic School/Community Checklist

Additional Resources

- ***McKinney-Vento Data Standards and Indicators—2006 Revisions*; available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php***: This NCHE resource provides an updated version of the original five Standards and Indicators for Quality McKinney-Vento Programs developed in 2000. Reflecting provisions in the reauthorized McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and five years of effective practice, the revision includes 10 standards and proposed indicators that are comprehensive and quantifiable.
- ***Campus Self-Assessment Guide*; available for downloading at *http://www.utdanacenter.org/theo/downloads/toolkits/campus_self_assess.pdf***: This self-assessment tool from the Texas Homeless Education Office assists schools in determining the adequacy of their current services to students in homeless situations. Chapters include questions to answer to evaluate the school's homeless education program and focus on the following four areas: Awareness/Training, Identification/Enrollment, Delivery of Services, and Interagency Coordinator. Although designed for program monitoring at the school level, the guide can be adapted easily for use at the LEA level.
- **NCHE Online Forum: *Program Evaluation/Monitoring* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/forum/prog_eval.php***: This NCHE webpage provides sample evaluation and monitoring tools from states around the country. These tools can be customized to fit the specific needs of the state or district utilizing the tools.

Excerpted from the NCHE publication entitled
McKinney-Vento Data Standards and Indicators - 2006 Revisions.
The publication is available for downloading in its entirety at *http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php.*

McKinney-Vento Standards and Indicators of Quality Programs (2006 Revisions)

Student Achievement/Performance Outcomes

Standard 1: All homeless students*, identified and enrolled at the time of the state assessment, take the state assessment required for their grade levels.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
1.1: Percent of homeless students who took the standards-based assessment in math.	1.1: Number of homeless students who took the standards-based assessment in math required for their grade/ Total number of homeless students identified and enrolled (at the time the state assessment was given) who were required to take the state math assessment.	• Are these percents increasing or decreasing annually? Why? • How do these percents from last year compare with the school and/or district average? • What assumptions can be made based on this information? • What does the school, district, and/or MV program do to ensure access of all eligible students to state math and reading assessments? What improvements could be made?
1.2: Percent of homeless students who took the standards-based assessment in reading.	1.2: Number of homeless students who took the standards-based assessment in reading required for their grade/ Total number of homeless students identified and enrolled (at the time the state assessment was given) who were required to take the state reading assessment.	

* Although the term "homeless students" is used throughout Section II and III of this document, it is understood that homelessness is a temporary experience of residential loss or instability, and that the term "homeless" is not a permanent or definitional label. Therefore, it is important to note that for the purposes of streamlining the language of this document, the term "homeless students" more accurately refers to "children and youth experiencing homelessness."

Student Achievement/Performance Outcomes

Standard 2: All homeless students demonstrate academic progress.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
2.1: Percent of homeless students who met or exceeded state proficiency rates on the standards-based assessment in math.	2.1: Number of homeless students who met or exceeded state proficiency rates on the standards-based assessment in math/ Number of homeless students enrolled who took the math state assessment.	• Are these percents increasing or decreasing annually? Why? • What assumptions can be made based on this information? • How do these percents compare with the school and/or district average? • What does the school, district, and/or MV program do to ensure proficiency of all eligible homeless students on state math and reading assessments? What improvements could be made? • What does the school, district, and/or MV program do to ensure all homeless students have the academic support/resources necessary to be promoted to the next grade level or show progress toward grade-level expectations? What improvements could be made? • What does the school, district, and/or MV program do to ensure all students graduate? What could be improved? • What efforts have been made by the MV program to assist homeless students' plans for post graduation? • What strategies/activities does the district use to ensure that homeless students will show progress toward grade-level from their performance level upon enrollment for whatever period of time they are enrolled? • Is it possible for my LEA to collect graduation data on students that were identified as homeless during their high school years? During their entire career as a student (K-
2.2: Percent of homeless students who met or exceeded state proficiency rates on the standards-based assessment in reading.	2.2: Number of homeless students who met or exceeded state proficiency rates on the standards-based assessment in reading/ Number of homeless students enrolled who were required to take the reading state assessment.	
2.3: Percent of homeless students promoted to the next grade level is at or above the promotion rates of the school.	2.3: Number of homeless students promoted to the next grade level/ Number of homeless students enrolled. Then, compare that percentage with the promotion rates of the school.	
2.4: Percent of homeless students who showed progress toward grade-level expectations.	2.4: Number of homeless students who showed progress toward grade-level expectations/ Number of homeless students enrolled.	

Standard 2: All homeless students demonstrate academic progress.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
2.5: Percent of homeless students who graduated high school, or equivalent, is at or above the graduation rate of the school.	2.5: Number of homeless students who received a high school diploma or equivalent/ Number of homeless students eligible for a high school diploma or equivalent. Then, compare that percent with the graduation rate of the school.	12)? ***Note:*** It is suggested that Indicator 2.4 data be collected when homeless students are not in the school/district long enough to be assessed via the state standardized test. Schools/districts need to determine how to assess homeless children's progress toward grade-level from the time they enroll—such as, formal/informal assessment at enrollment compared with academic performance on tests or classwork at the time child disenrolled or at end of the year.

School/LEA Support Outcomes

Standard 3: All children in homeless situations are identified.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
3.1: Number of homeless students enrolled in school.	3.1: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	• Are these numbers/percents increasing or decreasing annually? Why? • What assumptions can be made based on this information? • Is it possible for my LEA to disaggregate the enrollment data into the following categories: a) students that were identified as homeless while enrolled in school and b) those that were identified as homeless when they enrolled in school? • What processes has the MV program used to ensure students who become homeless while enrolled in school are being successfully identified? What improvements could be made? Are additional or different processes needed? • What processes has the MV program used to ensure
3.2: Percent of students in LEA that are homeless.	3.2: Number of homeless students enrolled in the LEA/Number of total students enrolled in LEA.	
3.3: Number of LEA outreach activities conducted to identify students in shelters and other settings, including those living doubled up.	3.3: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	

Standard 3: All children in homeless situations are identified.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
3.4: Percent of school staff members provided professional development to enable them to identify students who may be eligible for McKinney-Vento services.	3.4: Number of school staff members provided professional development to enable them to identify students who may be eligible for McKinney-Vento services/ Number of school staff members.	homeless students who were not enrolled in school are being successfully identified? What improvements could be made? Are additional or different processes needed? • What outreach activities has the MV program used to identify students in shelters, hotel, motels, and other settings, including those living doubled up? What improvements could be made to the current outreach activities? Are additional or different outreach activities needed? • Are all school staff members expected to receive professional development or are certain staff members targeted for professional development based on their role and access to students? • What types of professional development strategies/activities has the MV program used to assist staff to better identify students in shelters and other settings, including those living doubled up? What improvements could be made to the current identification processes? Are additional or different professional development strategies/activities needed? • Are you currently collecting participant satisfaction data on the quality, utility, and relevance of professional development outreach activities? What aspects of the professional development and outreach activities are receiving the highest ratings? Why? • What aspects of the professional development and outreach activities are receiving the lowest ratings? What can be done to increase the quality, utility, and relevance of these activities?

School/LEA Support Outcomes

Standard 4: Within one full day of an attempt to enroll in school, homeless students are in attendance.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
4.1: Percent of homeless students who were enrolled on the same day they came to school to be enrolled.	4.1: Number of homeless students who were enrolled on the same day they came to school to be enrolled/ Number of homeless students enrolled in school.	***Note:*** To collect Indicator 4.1 and 4.2 data, it is often necessary to have a conversation with parents/guardians to get a detailed description of the enrollment process they experienced to ensure that indeed it was an "immediate" enrollment. • Are these numbers/percents increasing or decreasing annually? Why? • What assumptions can be made based on this information? • What school-/district-level processes has the MV program used to ensure homeless students are being immediately enrolled? If a student is not immediately enrolled, what processes are in place to document the reason for delayed enrollment? What improvements could be made to the current enrollment processes? Are additional or different processes needed? • What school-/district-level processes has the MV program used to ensure homeless students attend school on the same day of enrollment? If a student does not attend school on the same day of enrollment, what processes are in place to document the reason for delayed attendance? What improvements could be made to the current processes to ensure immediate student attendance? Are additional or different processes needed?
4.2: Percent of homeless students who attended school on the same day of enrollment.	4.2: Number of homeless students who attended school on the same day of enrollment/Number of homeless students enrolled in school.	
4.3: Average number of days between a homeless student's enrollment in school and his/her school attendance.	4.3: Total count of the days that passed between enrollment and attendance for all homeless students/ Total number of homeless students enrolled.	

School/LEA Support Outcomes

Standard 5: All homeless students experience stability in school.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
5.1: Average rate of attendance for homeless students is at or above the school average.	5.1: Total number of days homeless students were in attendance/Total number of days homeless students were enrolled. Then, compare that percent with the school's attendance average.	***Note:*** To determine Indicator 5.1, the attendance rate for each homeless student must be calculated individually based on the number of days he or she attended school versus the number of days he or she was enrolled in school. In a district with large numbers of homeless students, the average rate of attendance may be determined by selecting a sample of homeless students enrolled. • Are these numbers/percents increasing or decreasing annually? Why? • What assumptions can be made based on this information? • What are the most common barriers that prevent homeless students from attending school? • What strategies are currently in place to ensure stability in school (reduced school transfers) for homeless students? What improvements could be made? Are additional or different strategies needed? • What progress has been made by the program to achieve the target of "one child, one school, one year?" • How can the MV program assist in lowering the number of residential moves for homeless students once identified? • If all requests for transportation to school of origin are not granted, why were requests denied? What can the MV program do to alleviate the denied requests?
5.2: Percent of homeless students that remain in one school for the duration of the school year.	5.2: Number of homeless students that remained in one school for the duration of the school year/ Number of homeless students enrolled.	
5.3: Average number of schools attended by homeless students in one year.	5.3: Total count of school moves for all homeless students for one year/ Number of homeless students enrolled.	
5.4: Average number of residential moves for homeless students once identified as homeless.	5.4: Total count of residential moves for all homeless students/ Number of homeless students enrolled.	
5.5: Percent of homeless students who received transportation to the school of origin (defined by the McKinney-Vento Act) as requested by the parent or guardian.	5.5: Number of requests granted regarding transportation to school of origin/ Number of requests made by clients for transportation to school of origin.	

School/LEA Support Outcomes

Standard 6: All homeless students receive specialized and comparable services when eligible.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
6.1: Percent of homeless students who received an individual needs assessment to determine appropriate services and extra support to access services.	6.1: Number of homeless students who received an individual needs assessment/ Number of homeless students enrolled.	--Are these numbers/percents increasing or decreasing annually? Why? --What assumptions can be made based on this information? --What strategies are currently in place to ensure homeless students receive specialized and comparable services when eligible? What improvements could be made? Are additional or different strategies needed? --Are homeless students being evaluated for disabilities in a timely manner, as defined by the IDEA legislation Section 6 (12)(a)(21)? If special education services are not being provided immediately, what can be done to expedite the IEP once a homeless student is enrolled? --Do all homeless students who need services through Title I receive them? --If comparable opportunities are provided to homeless students but students decline participation, why are students declining participation? --How could the MV program document and eliminate any existing barriers? --Has the amount of funds set aside through Title I increased or decreased? How does your LEA determine set-aside amounts? What formulae (per pupil amount, percentage of free and reduced lunch) and/or evaluative tools (student achievement scores, individual assessments, etc.) are used to
6.2: Percent of enrolled homeless students with a completed special education evaluation that was conducted within 60 days of a parent request or within timeframes established by the state.	6.2: Number of homeless students with a completed special education evaluation that was conducted within 60 days of a parent request or within timeframes established by the state/ Number of homeless students enrolled whose parents requested a special education evaluation.	
6.3: Percent of homeless students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) who began receiving special education services on the day of their enrollment in school.	6.3: Number of homeless students with IEPs who began receiving special education services on the day of their enrollment in school/ Number of homeless students with IEPs who enrolled in school.	

Standard 6: All homeless students receive specialized and comparable services when eligible.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
6.4: Percent of homeless students who do not attend Title I schools who receive services through Title I, including support services in shelters and other locations where they live.	6.4: Number of homeless students who do not attend Title I schools who receive services through Title I, including support services in shelters and other locations where they live/ Number of homeless students who do not attend Title I schools.	make this determination? --How does the percent of homeless students who participated in extra-curricular activities compare to the school average? Is it similar? Why or why not? How can the MV program encourage/facilitate more participation?
6.5: Amount of funds set aside for homeless students through Title I.	6.5: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	
6.6: Percent of homeless students who had access to free and reduced price meals.	6.6: Number of homeless students who had access to free and reduced price meals/ Number of homeless students enrolled.	
6.7: Percent of homeless students who had access to one or any combination of the following services when needed/eligible: ELL, gifted and talented, and/or vocational education services.	6.7: Number of homeless students who had access to ELL services, gifted and talented, and/or vocational education services/ Number of homeless student eligible for ELL services, gifted and talented, and/or vocational education services.	
6.8: Percent of homeless students who received supplemental academic services (e.g., after school program and tutoring).	6.8: Number of homeless students who received supplemental academic services/ Number of homeless students enrolled.	

Standard 6: All homeless students receive specialized and comparable services when eligible.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
6.9: Percent of homeless students who received school and personal supplies when needed.	6.9: Number of homeless students receiving basic school and personal supplies when needed/ Number of homeless students needing basic school and personal supplies.	
6.10: Percent of homeless students who participated in extracurricular activities.	6.10: Number of homeless students who participated in extracurricular activities/ Number of homeless students enrolled.	

School/LEA Support Outcomes

Standard 7: All preschool-aged* homeless children enroll in and attend preschool programs.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
7.1: Number of preschool-aged children identified as homeless by LEA.	7.1: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	--Are these numbers/percents increasing or decreasing annually? Why? --What assumptions can be made based on this information? --What strategies are currently in place to ensure preschool-aged children enroll in and attend preschool programs? What improvements could be made? Are additional or different strategies needed? --How do these data compare to the number or percent of kids in the community that have access to preschool programs? --How many or what percent of homeless preschool students undergo a developmental assessment or screening? What assessment tools are used? --Do contacts, meetings, and correspondence result in greater identification and preschool enrollment of homeless preschool-aged children? --***Note:*** The amount and type of data available for preschool-aged homeless children will vary from district to district and will determine which indicators should be selected for data-collection purposes.
7.2: Number of preschool-aged children identified as homeless by LEA, enrolled and attending a SEA or LEA public preschool. (If public preschool is available in the district.)	7.2: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	
7.3: Number of homeless preschool-aged children identified through IDEA, Part C.	7.3: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	
7.4: Number of LEA contacts, meetings, correspondence, and/or agreements with preschools not operated by the SEA or LEA.	7.4: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	

*For this standard, preschool-aged includes infant and toddlers.

School/LEA Support Outcomes

Standard 8: All homeless unaccompanied youth enroll in and attend school.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
8.1: Number of homeless unaccompanied youth enrolled in school by LEA.	8.1: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	--***Note:*** School districts determine MV eligibility of unaccompanied youth applying the definition of homeless on a case-by-case basis. In general, most unaccompanied youth are eligible. --Are these numbers/percents increasing or decreasing annually? Why? --What assumptions can be made based on this information? --What strategies are currently in place to ensure all unaccompanied youth enroll and attend school? What improvements could be made? Are additional or different strategies needed? --If needed services opportunities are provided to homeless students, but students decline participation, why are students declining participation? How could the MV program document and eliminate any existing barriers? --If a homeless unaccompanied youth is not on grade level, what services are provided students to make up lost credits? -- How has the MV program encouraged homeless students to consider and work toward postsecondary education opportunities? What types of services are provided to assist unaccompanied youth with preparing for and/or applying for postsecondary education opportunities (e.g., SAT/ACT preparation, course selection, application process, scholarships, etc.)? What improvements could be made? Are additional or different strategies needed?
8.2: Percent of homeless unaccompanied youth informed of their rights under McKinney-Vento by LEA.	8.2: Number of homeless unaccompanied youth informed of their rights under McKinney-Vento by LEA/ Number of unaccompanied youth enrolled.	
8.3: Percent of homeless unaccompanied youth assisted with selecting the school for attendance in their best interest.	8.3: Number of enrolled homeless unaccompanied youth assisted with selecting the school for attendance in their best interest/ Number of unaccompanied youth enrolled.	
8.4: Number of LEA contacts, meetings, correspondence, and/or agreements with agencies, such as child welfare, juvenile justice, and Runaway and Homeless Youth Act shelter providers to coordinate needs of homeless unaccompanied youth.	8.4: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	

Standard 8: All homeless unaccompanied youth enroll in and attend school.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
8.5: Percent of homeless unaccompanied youth provided with access and referrals to needed services by LEA.	8.5: Number of homeless unaccompanied youth provided access and referrals to needed services/ Number of unaccompanied youth enrolled.	
8.6: Percent of homeless unaccompanied youth that are not on grade level.	8.6: Number of homeless unaccompanied youth that are not on grade level/ Number of unaccompanied youth enrolled.	
8.7: Percent of homeless unaccompanied youth provided with assistance in preparing for and/or applying for postsecondary education opportunities.	8.7: Number of homeless unaccompanied youth who were provided with assistance preparing for and/or applying for postsecondary education opportunities/ Number of unaccompanied youth enrolled.	

Collaboration Outcomes

Standard 9: All parents (or persons acting as parent s) of homeless children and youth are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
9.1: Percent of homeless students whose parents were informed of McKinney-Vento rights.	9.1: Number of homeless students whose parents were informed of McKinney-Vento rights/ Number of homeless student enrolled.	--Are these numbers/percents increasing or decreasing annually? Why? --What assumptions can be made based on this information? --What strategies are currently in place to ensure all parents experiencing homelessness are informed of their MV rights? What improvements could be made? Are additional or different strategies needed? --In what ways are homeless parents provided information and assistance in making best-interest decisions regarding school enrollment and educational stability of their children? Is it in a format that is convenient for the parent? In a level and/or language that is understood by the parent? --If homeless parents are provided opportunities to receive services comparable to those of non-homeless parents but they decline participation, why are they declining participation? How could the MV program document and eliminate any existing barriers? --If all parent requests for transportation to and from school activities are not granted, why were requests denied? What can the MV program do to alleviate denied requests? * Local liaison intervention to settle a disagreement between the parent and the school over school selection is not necessarily the same as a formal dispute process. The U.S.
9.2: Percent of homeless students whose parents were provided information and assistance in making best-interest decisions regarding school enrollment and educational stability of their children.	9.2: Number of homeless students whose parents were informed and assisted/ Number of homeless students enrolled.	
9.3: Percent of homeless students whose parents were provided written explanation of school- placement decisions, including an explanation of the right to appeal, when their child was placed in a school other than the school of origin or the school requested.	9.3: Number of students whose parents were provided written explanation of school-placement decisions when their child was placed in a school other than the school of origin or the school requested/ Number of students placed in a school other than the school of origin or school requested.	

Standard 9: All parents (or persons acting as parent s) of homeless children and youth are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
9.4: Percent of homeless students whose parents required local liaison assistance or intervention to settle a disagreement between them and school staff over school selection for their child.*	9.4: Number of homeless students whose parents required local liaison assistance or intervention to settle a disagreement between them and school staff over school selection for their child/ Number of homeless students enrolled in school.	Department of Education recommends that any intervention involving parents be documented by the local liaison. (See the Barrier Tracking form in NCHE's *Toolkit for Local Homeless Education Liaisons,* Appendix E at www.serve.org/nche in NCHE Products and Publications.)
9.5: Percent of homeless students whose parents were informed of opportunities to receive services comparable to those of non-homeless parents.	9.5: Number of homeless students whose parents were informed of opportunities to receive services comparable to those of non-homeless parents/ Number of homeless students enrolled.	
9.6: Percent of homeless students whose parents were provided with individual student reports informing them of their child's specific academic needs and achievement.	9.6: Number of homeless students whose parents were provided with individual student reports informing them of their child's specific academic needs and achievement/ Number of homeless students enrolled.	
9.7: Percent of times parents were provided transportation to school activities when requested (e.g., parent-teacher conferences).	9.7: Number of times LEA provided parents with transportation to school activities / Number of times parents requested transportation to school activities.	

Standard 9: All parents (or persons acting as parent s) of homeless children and youth are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
9.8: Percent of times parents were provided transportation to and from community activities when requested (e.g., parenting groups).	9.8: Number of times LEA provided parents with transportation to and from community activities / Number of times parents requested transportation to community activities.	

Collaboration Outcomes

Standard 10: LEAs help with the needs of all homeless children and youth through collaborative efforts both within and beyond the LEA.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
10.1: Number of collaborative contacts with federal programs (e.g., Head Start, Housing and Urban Development, Continuum of Care, staff from Runaway and Homeless Youth shelters, etc.).	10.1: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	--Are these numbers increasing or decreasing annually? Why? --What assumptions can be made based on this information? --How do you rate the quality of the collaboration with federal programs, LEA staff, community-based service providers, and other school districts? Which collaborations need to be strengthened? What can the MV program do to alleviate any existing barriers? --Aside from posters, what are other ways of disseminating information about MV legislation? --Does collaboration between Title I and the homeless education program result in a local Title I plan that addresses the needs of homeless students and establishes appropriate amounts for set-aside funds? --Does collaboration with Special Education result in timely assessment and service provision for students with special needs? --Do collaborative contacts with community service providers result in improved coordination for and service provision to homeless children? --***Note:*** "Collaborative contacts" include activities that are intended to establish and sustain long-term relationships that result in the development of agreed-upon policies and practices and comprehensive plans to address the needs of homeless
10.2: Number of collaborative contacts with Title I staff.	10.2: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	
10.3: Number of collaborative contacts with Special Education staff.	10.3: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	
10.4: Number of collaborative contacts with LEA staff (e.g., migrant education, school nutrition, pupil transportation, school enrollment, etc.).	10.4: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	

Standard 10: LEAs help with the needs of all homeless children and youth through collaborative efforts both within and beyond the LEA.		
Indicator	**Formula**	**Questions to Ask Based on Data**
10.5: Number of collaborative contacts with community service providers (e.g., shelter provision, child welfare, health, mental health, child care, housing, faith-based initiatives, etc.).	10.5: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	children and families and unaccompanied youth. Collaborative contacts may include meetings initiated or attended by the homeless local liaison, correspondence for purposes of identifying needs or planning, and/or establishing formal or informal agreements.
10.6: Number of collaborative contacts with other LEAs to which their homeless families frequently move or from which their homeless families frequently come.	10.6: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	
10.7: Percent of schools displaying McKinney-Vento posters.	10.7: Number of schools displaying McKinney-Vento posters/ Number of schools in LEA.	
10.8: Number of McKinney-Vento posters disseminated and displayed in the community.	10.8: Because this is not a percent, no formula is needed.	

Sample Needs Assessment

Basic School/Community Checklist (page 1)

In the following table, rate the extent to which your school district and community meet the unique needs of homeless families with children.

Service	Not an identified need	Need not addressed	Need addressed, needs major improvement	Need addressed, needs minor improvement	Need addressed completely
1. Tutoring/ remedial programs					
2. Special education					
3. Counseling for students					
4. School transportation					
5. Free school meals					
6. School supplies					
7. Activity fees					
8. Preschool programs					
9. Parent training/ involvement					
10. Case manage't for enrollment and social services					

Sample Needs Assessment

Basic School/Community Checklist (page 2)

In the following table, rate the extent to which your school district and community meet the unique needs of homeless families with children.

Service	Not an identified need	Need not addressed	Need addressed, needs major improvement	Need addressed, needs minor improvement	Need addressed completely
11. School coord'n with community services					
12. Prof'l dev't on homeless issues for district staff					
13. Public posting of homeless students' rights					
14. Medical services					
15. Mental health services					
16. Food and clothing					
17. Emergency shelter					
18. Transitional shelter					
19. Affordable permanent housing					
20. Domestic violence/child abuse intervention					

Sample Needs Assessment

Basic School/Community Checklist (page 3)

In the following table, rate the extent to which your school district and community meet the unique needs of homeless families with children.

Service	Not an identified need	Need not addressed	Need addressed, needs major improvement	Need addressed, needs minor improvement	Need addressed completely
21. Life skills training					
22. Substance abuse intervention					
23. Childcare					
24. Community transportation					
25. Job placement services					
26. Other _____					
27. Other _____					
28. Other _____					
29. Other _____					
30. Other _____					

Appendix F:
Sample LEA Homeless Education Policy

The McKinney-Vento Act requires all state and local educational agencies to develop, review, and revise their policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention in school of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Appendix F includes:

- Sample Local Educational Agency (LEA) Policy

Additional Resources

- **NCHE Homeless Education issue briefs; available for ordering at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php***:
  - ***Best Practices in Homeless Education* brief series**: This series discusses promising practices in the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act based on knowledge gained since the 2001 reauthorization of the Act.
  - ***Connecting Schools and Displaced Students* brief series**: This series discusses how schools can serve students displaced by disaster, many of whom are eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
  - ***McKinney-Vento Law into Practice* brief series**: This series addresses the main issues covered by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act by explaining the chief points of the law related to the brief's topic and offering strategies for implementation.
- ***The 100 Most Frequently Asked Questions on the Education Rights of Children and Youth in Homeless Situations*; available for downloading at *http://www.naehcy.org/faq.html***: This resource, created collaboratively by the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP), answers the top questions raised about the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Sample Local Educational Agency (LEA) Policy Introduction

Developed by: Patricia Julianelle, Education Staff Attorney, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

Introduction

The McKinney-Vento Act requires all state and local educational agencies to develop, review, and revise their policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention in school of children and youth experiencing homelessness. This sample Local Educational Agency (LEA) policy is designed to help school districts comply with this mandate. The policy was adapted from the existing policies of LEAs around the country, the requirements of the reauthorized McKinney-Vento Act and Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and U.S. Department of Education regulations and guidance. It is broad and specific and can be abbreviated or otherwise adapted to accommodate the needs of any LEA.

The entire LEA community can be involved in developing a new policy. Often, one person taking the lead is enough to get a new policy enacted. Strategic allies in getting LEA policies revised may include:

- Superintendent and assistant superintendents
- School board members
- Title I and other federal program directors
- School staff, including school counselors, social workers, and teachers
- The mayor
- City council members
- County government officials
- Other city and county agencies, such as departments of housing, social services, children and families, transitional assistance, welfare and/or Medicaid
- Parents and students
- Homeless coalitions
- Domestic violence coalitions and agencies
- Legal aid attorneys
- Community advocates
- HUD Continua of Care (CoCs)
- Family and youth shelter and service providers

- Faith-based organizations
- Higher education, including schools of education, law, public policy, social work, nursing, sociology, and psychology
- State legislators
- The state educational agency
- The state board of education

Ways to involve these allies in the process initially may include:

- Using the requirements and rationale of the McKinney-Vento Act as support for needing new policies
- Sharing positive results from districts that have already revised their policies
- Taking them on tours of shelters and/or schools, as appropriate
- Making direct personal contact and explaining how the policies affect real children, schools, and the LEA as a whole

For more information about revising LEA policies or state laws, contact the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty at (202) 638-2535 or *nlchp@nlchp.org*.

Sample Local Educational Agency (LEA) Policy

Homelessness exists in our community. A combination of high housing costs and poverty causes many families to lose their housing. Many young people leave their homes due to abuse, neglect, and family conflict. Children and youth who have lost their housing live in a variety of places, including motels, shelters, shared residences, transitional housing programs, cars, campgrounds, and others. Their lack of permanent housing can lead to potentially serious physical, emotional, and mental consequences. This school district will ensure that all children and youth receive a free appropriate public education and are given meaningful opportunities to succeed in our schools. This district will also follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

It is the policy of our district to view children as individuals. Therefore, this policy will not refer to children as homeless; it will instead use the term children and youth in transition. Under federal law, children and youth in transition must have access to appropriate public education, including preschool, and be given a full opportunity to meet state and local academic achievement standards. They must be included in state- and district-wide assessments and accountability systems. Our schools will ensure that children and youth in transition are free from discrimination, segregation, and harassment.

Information regarding this policy will be distributed to all students upon enrollment and once during the school year, provided to students who seek to withdraw from school, and posted in every school in the district, as well as other places where children, youth, and families in transition receive services, including family and youth shelters, soup kitchens, motels, campgrounds, drop-in centers, welfare departments, health departments, and other social service agencies.

Each year, schools that have been particularly creative or proactive in implementing this policy will be recognized publicly for the benefits they provide their students.

Sample Local Educational Agency (LEA) Policy (cont.)

Definitions

Children and youth in transition means children and youth who are otherwise legally entitled to or eligible for a free public education, including preschool, and who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, campgrounds, or trailer parks due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Children and youth who are living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.
- Migratory children and youth who are living in a situation described above.

A child or youth will be considered to be in transition for as long as he or she is in a living situation described above.

Unaccompanied youth means a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, who is in transition as defined above. The more general term youth also includes unaccompanied youth.

Enroll and *enrollment* mean attending school and participating fully in all school activities.

Immediate means without delay.

Parent means a person having legal or physical custody of a child or youth.

School of origin means the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

Local liaison is the staff person designated by our LEA and each LEA in the state as the person responsible for carrying out the duties assigned to the local homeless education liaison by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Identification

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the local liaison will identify children and youth in transition in the district, both in and out of school. The local liaison will train school personnel on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and

Sample Local Educational Agency (LEA) Policy (cont.)

youth as in transition, and procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the local liaison. The local liaison will also instruct school registrars and secretaries to inquire about possible homelessness upon the enrollment and withdrawal of every student and to forward information indicating homelessness to the local liaison. Community partners in identification may include the following: family and youth shelters, soup kitchens, motels, campgrounds, drop-in centers, welfare departments and other social service agencies, street outreach teams, faith-based organizations, truancy and attendance officers, local homeless coalitions, and legal services.

The local liaison will keep data on the number of children and youth in transition in the district; where they are living; their academic achievement (including performance on state- and district-wide assessments); and the reasons for any enrollment delays, interruptions in their education, or school transfers.

School Selection

Each child and youth in transition has the right to remain at his or her school of origin or to attend any school that housed students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend. Maintaining a student in his or her school of origin is important for both the student and our school district. Students who change schools have been found to have lower test scores and overall academic performance than peers who do not change schools. High mobility rates also have been shown to lower test scores for stable students. Keeping students in their schools of origin enhances their academic and social growth, while permitting our schools to benefit from the increased test scores and achievement shown to result from student continuity.

Therefore, in selecting a school, children and youth in transition will remain at their schools of origin to the extent feasible, unless that is against the parent or youth's wishes. Students may remain at their schools of origin the entire time they are in transition and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed. The same applies if a child or youth loses his or her housing between academic years.

Feasibility will be a child-centered determination, based on the needs and interests of the particular student and the parent or youth's wishes. Potential feasibility considerations include:

- The age of the child or youth
- The distance of a commute and the impact it may have on the student's education
- Personal safety issues
- A student's need for special instruction (e.g., special education and related services)
- The length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location
- The time remaining in the school year

Sample Local Educational Agency (LEA) Policy (cont.)

Services that are required to be provided, including transportation to and from the school of origin (see next page) and services under federal and other programs, will not be considered in determining feasibility.

Enrollment

Consistent, uninterrupted education is vital for academic achievement. Due to the realities of homelessness and mobility, students in transition may not have school enrollment documents available readily. Nonetheless, the school selected for enrollment must enroll any child or youth in transition immediately. Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including:

- Proof of residency
- Transcripts/school records (The enrolling school must contact the student's previous school to obtain school records. Initial placement of students whose records are not immediately available can be made based on the student's age and information gathered from the student, parent, and previous schools or teachers.)
- Immunizations or immunization/health/medical/physical records (If necessary, the school must refer students to the local liaison to assist with obtaining immunizations and/or immunization and other medical records. Health records may often be obtained from previous schools or state registries, and school- or community-based clinics can initiate immunizations when needed.)
- Proof of guardianship
- Birth certificate
- Any other document requirements
- Unpaid school fees
- Lack of uniforms or clothing that conforms to dress codes
- Any factor related to the student's living situation

Unaccompanied youth must also be enrolled immediately in school. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or local liaison.

Transportation

Without appropriate transportation, a student may not be able to continue attending his or her school of origin. To avoid such forced school transfers, at a parent's request, transportation will be provided to and from the school of origin for a child or youth in transition. Transportation will be provided for the entire time the child or youth has a right to attend that school, as defined above, including during pending disputes. The local liaison will request transportation to and from the

Sample Local Educational Agency (LEA) Policy (cont.)

school of origin for unaccompanied youth. The length of the commute will be considered only in determining the feasibility of placement in the school of origin based on potential harm to the student, as discussed above. Parents and unaccompanied youth must be informed of this right to transportation before they select a school for attendance.

Schools and local liaisons will use the district transportation form to process transportation requests. Requests will be processed and transportation arranged without delay. If the student in transition is living and attending school in this district, this district will arrange transportation. If the student in transition is living in this district but attending school in another, or attending school in this district but living in another, this district will coordinate with the neighboring district to arrange transportation. It is this district's policy that inter-district disputes will not result in a student in transition missing school. If such a dispute arises, this district will arrange transportation and immediately bring the matter to the attention of the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. In addition to receiving transportation to and from the school of origin upon request, children and youth in transition will also be provided with other transportation services comparable to those offered to housed students.

Services

Children and youth in transition will be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the selected school, including:

- Transportation (as described above)
- Title I, Part A, services (as described below)
- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria, including special education and related services and programs for English language learners
- Vocational and technical education programs
- Gifted and talented programs
- Before- and after-school programs

The district recognizes that children and youth in transition suffer from disabilities at a disproportionate rate, yet frequently are not evaluated or provided appropriate special education and related services. To address this problem, evaluations of children and youth in transition suspected of having a disability will be given priority and coordinated with students' prior and subsequent schools as necessary to ensure the timely completion of a full evaluation. When necessary, the district will designate expeditiously a surrogate parent for unaccompanied youth suspected of having a disability. If participation of a surrogate parent in the student's education is needed prior to the appointment of a surrogate parent, the district will designate a temporary surrogate in accordance with the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). If a student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the enrolling school will

implement it immediately. Any necessary IEP meetings or re-evaluations will then be conducted expeditiously. If complete records are not available, IEP teams must use good judgment in choosing the best course of action, balancing procedural requirements and the provision of services. In all cases, the goal will be to avoid any disruption in appropriate services.

When applying any district policy regarding tardiness or absences, any tardiness or absence related to a child or youth's living situation will be excused. Our school district will follow state procedures to ensure that youth in transition and youth who are out of school are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services. School personnel will refer children and youth in transition to appropriate health care services, including dental and mental health services. The local liaison will assist the school in making such referrals, as necessary.

School personnel must also inform parents of all educational and related opportunities available to their children and provide parents with meaningful opportunities to participate in their children's education. All parent information required by any provision of this policy must be provided in a form, manner, and language understandable to each parent.

Disputes

If a dispute arises over any issue covered in this policy, the child or youth in transition will be admitted immediately to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute. The student will also have the rights of a student in transition to all appropriate educational services, transportation, free meals, and Title I, Part A, services while the dispute is pending.

The school where the dispute arises will provide the parent or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal and will refer the parent or youth to the local liaison immediately. The local liaison will ensure that the student is enrolled in the requested school and receiving other services to which he or she is entitled and will resolve the dispute as expeditiously as possible. The parent or unaccompanied youth will be given every opportunity to participate meaningfully in the resolution of the dispute. The local liaison will keep records of all disputes in order to determine whether particular issues or schools are delaying or denying the enrollment of children and youth in transition repeatedly.

The parent, unaccompanied youth, or school district may appeal the school district's decision as provided in the state's dispute resolution process.

Free Meals

Hunger and poor nutrition are obvious barriers to learning. To help ensure that children and youth in transition are available for learning, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has determined that all children and youth in transition are automatically eligible for free meals. On the day a child or youth

Sample Local Educational Agency (LEA) Policy (cont.)

in transition enrolls in school, the enrolling school must submit the student's name to the district nutrition office for immediate processing.

Title I, Part A

Children and youth in transition are automatically eligible for Title I, Part A services, regardless of what school they attend. The trauma and instability of homelessness put students at sufficient risk of academic regression to warrant additional support. The district will reserve such funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to Title I students to children and youth in transition attending non-participating schools. The amount reserved will be determined by a formula based upon the per-pupil Title I, Part A, expenditure and developed jointly by the local liaison and the Title I director. Reserved funds will be used to provide education-related support services to children and youth in transition, both in school and outside of school, and to remove barriers that prevent regular attendance.

Our district's Title I plan will be coordinated with our McKinney-Vento services, through collaboration between the Title I director and the local liaison. Children and youth in transition will be assessed, reported on, and included in accountability systems, as required by federal law and U.S. Department of Education Regulations and Policy Guidance.

Training

The local liaison will conduct training and sensitivity/awareness activities for the following LEA and school staff at least once each year: the Assistant Superintendent, principals, assistant principals, federal program administrators, registrars, school secretaries, school counselors, school social workers, bus drivers, custodians, cafeteria workers, school nurses, and teachers. The trainings and activities will be designed to increase staff awareness of homelessness, facilitate immediate enrollment, ensure compliance with this policy, and increase sensitivity to children and youth in transition.

The local liaison will also obtain from every school the name and contact information of a building liaison. Building liaisons will lead and coordinate their schools' compliance with this policy and will receive training from the local liaison annually.

Coordination

The local liaison will coordinate with and seek support from the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, public and private service providers in the community, housing and placement agencies, the pupil transportation department, local liaisons in neighboring districts, and other organizations and agencies. Coordination will include conducting outreach and training to those agencies and participating in the local continuum of care, homeless coalition, homeless steering committee, and other relevant groups. Both public and private agencies will be

Sample Local Educational Agency (LEA) Policy (cont.)

encouraged to support the local liaison and our schools in implementing this policy.

Preschool

Preschool education is a very important element of later academic success. Children in transition have experienced many difficulties accessing preschool opportunities. To facilitate preschool enrollment and attendance, the provisions of this policy will apply to preschools administered by our school district. Our district will ensure that children in transition receive priority enrollment in preschool programs operated by the district, including exempting children in transition from waiting lists.

Children in transition with disabilities will be referred for preschool services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Children in transition under age three will be referred for at-risk services under Part C of IDEA and screened to determine if referrals for additional Part C services are appropriate. The local liaison will collaborate with Head Start and Even Start programs and other preschool programs to ensure that children in transition can access those programs.

References

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§11431 – 11436.

Title I, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§6311 – 6315.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §§1400 et seq.

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, 42 U.S.C. §§1751 et seq.

June 5, 1992 Policy of the Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Add relevant state laws/regulations here:

Appendix G: School-Level Point of Contact Form

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the local homeless education liaison is responsible for ensuring that homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies. The local liaison may find it beneficial to have a school-level point of contact to assist with identifying and supporting the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Appendix G includes:

- School-Level Point of Contact Form

Additional Resources

- NCHE Information by Topic: ***School Personnel Resources* webpage**; visit ***http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/educ_schpers.php***: This NCHE webpage provides additional and more in-depth resources for educating school personnel about the needs of children and youth in homeless situations. Resources include:
  - ***Introduction to the Issues* brief**: This brief provides an overview of the main issues within the field of homeless education. It is a good general resource, but is also particularly helpful for introducing new people to the field or introducing the issue to those outside of the field.
  - ***School Nurses: It's Not Just Bandages Anymore***: This brief from Project HOPE-Virginia discusses the role school nurses can play in addressing the health needs and supporting the education of students experiencing homelessness.
  - ***School Social Workers: A Necessary Link to School Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness***: This brief from Project HOPE-Virginia discusses the role school social workers can play in assisting homeless families and their school-aged children.

School-Level Point of Contact Form

The school-level point of contact for homeless education ideally should be someone involved with student enrollment or working with students on a regular basis (e.g., a guidance counselor). Please fill in the information below and return the form via intra-school district mail by _____ (date).

School Name: _____

School-Level Point of Contact for Homeless Education _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Thank you for your time. I will be providing your school contact with more information.

Local Homeless Education Liaison Name: _____

District Mail Location: _____

School-Level Point of Contact for Homeless Education Information Sheet

What is a Point of Contact for Homeless Education?

A person in the school who can be contacted by the school district's local liaison to share information about educating children and youth experiencing homelessness.

What are the responsibilities of a Point of Contact?

- Share information sent by the local liaison with appropriate school faculty and staff members
- Share with the local liaison any difficulties that the school is experiencing in working with students who are homeless or other information, as needed

What is the time commitment?

The time commitment may be less than one hour a month if the school has few or no issues related to homeless education. If there are issues with enrolling or educating students who are experiencing homelessness, more time may be needed.

How am I going to learn more about this new responsibility?

A follow-up letter giving more details and information will be sent to all school-level points of contact once principals have designated contacts.

What basic facts do I need to know about the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness?

All children have a right to a free, appropriate public education. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Public Law 107-110) effective July 1, 2002, requires that homeless children:

- Be enrolled immediately in school, even if lacking documentation normally required for enrollment such as immunization or other health records, previous academic records, birth certificates, proof of residence, or proof of guardianship.
- Have a choice in where to enroll: their school of origin or the local school for their current residence.
- Have access to services comparable to those that housed students receive, including Title I, Part A, services.

Whom can I contact with questions about this responsibility?

Contact the school district's local homeless education liaison:

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Appendix H: Collaboration Resources

To implement the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act most effectively, collaboration among district staff and with the local community is necessary.

Appendix H contains:

- Summary: *Collaborations of Schools and Social Service Agencies*
- Collaboration Action Plan
- Useful Contacts Form

Additional Resources

- **NCHE Information by Topic: *School Personnel Resources* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_collab.php***: This NCHE webpage provides resources to assist school districts in building partnerships with community agencies to serve children and youth experiencing homelessness more effectively. Resources include:
  - ***Housing Agency and School District Collaborations to Serve Homeless and Highly Mobile Students* brief; available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php***: This brief examines several successful housing agency and school district collaborations from across the nation and explains how this type of collaboration can help reduce the frequency of family moves and promote school stability.
  - ***What Service Providers Should Know* brief; available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php***: This brief supplies providers of services to homeless children and families with a summary of the main points of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

(Excerpted from the NCHE publication entitled *Collaborations of Schools and Social Service Agencies*. This publication is available for downloading in its entirety at *http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php*.)

Collaborations of Schools and Social Service Agencies

Jan Moore, Assistant Program Specialist

National Center for Homeless Education

December 2005

Summary

Overall Lessons Learned

Although collaboration is difficult, the collaborators all agreed that it is absolutely necessary and, ultimately, working together to find solutions makes everyone's job easier. Keeping everyone on the same page is a challenge, but partnerships with diverse agencies (not just those typically involved with the homeless population) may be the only way to provide all the resources to meet the various needs of homeless children and their families.

Creating an atmosphere for open dialogue, examining situations from different perspectives, and having a willingness to change are foundational for developing positive relationships with personnel from other agencies - an imperative for effective collaboration. It is vital to know the other collaborative agencies and their staff members in order to create and maintain common focus, communicate effectively, problem solve creatively, and present requests from perspectives the other agency members understand.

There is no one-size-fits-all model for collaboration, so each collaborative group must examine its own unique situation to develop what works best. Building relationships requires consistency over time. Participants should understand there is a mutual benefit to transparency in their relationships, but everyone needs permission to make mistakes as the collaborative evolves. Members must be patient with themselves and each other as they work to build a safe environment for people to hash out issues and problems and to ask questions. Below are some ideas to consider as a collaboration takes shape:

- Only buy-in from all those involved will sustain the work.
- People will take part in what they help create, so establish the expectation that everyone will contribute.
- The common goal is focusing on the best interest of the kids, not pointing fingers at each other or advocating for a particular agency.
- Learn all you can about the other agencies (vision, mission, history, etc.) and understand their role in the collaborative.
- Provide clear goals and expectations for the relationships.

- Remember that each partner is focused on doing what's best for the kids; find a way to trust and honor each other.
- Nonprofits are competitive for funds, so they also compete for positive publicity that will help garner those funds. When working with them, be sensitive to their organizations' interests.
- Starting the collaboration with a small manageable project will build confidence to maintain momentum and undertake larger tasks.
- Secure a commitment from agency leaders to loosen their agency-specific regulations in order to meet client needs.
- Empower decision making authority within the collaborative instead of requiring each member to clear decisions through their agency channels.

Establishing honest and frank communication patterns is the basis of building trusting relationships. To ensure this:

Agree to have open and honest dialogue. This is particularly important when defining problems, recognizing differences, and deciding the specifics of how to collaborate.

Insist on strict confidentiality.

Agencies have different languages, so communicate clearly. Problems often occur because of semantics; ask for clarification about anything that is unclear.

Establish expectations and design procedures to enhance the frequency and level of communication.

Concentrating on the core vision instead of structures or processes helps collaboratives maintain focus on what they intend to accomplish instead of getting sidetracked by how they go about doing that. This opens opportunities for thinking outside the box and being creative in addressing issues and problems. It also helps the collaborative withstand changes in membership, organizational structure, etc. Each person and each agency will have their own priorities, but the collaborative must concentrate on the overall goal of the group: how to better serve children and families. To do this, collaborators advise:

- Begin with client issues and problems not preconceived solutions.
- Think outside the box; identify the needs of children and their families and search out diverse ways to fill those needs.
- Encourage participants to step back and question why things have always been done in a particular way. One of the principal stumbling blocks to successful collaboration is overcoming customs and habits.
- Take the initiative to address problems and find creative solutions; educators can ensure that the kids get lots of other services, but have failed them unless they receive a quality education.
- Involve the community to provide new perspectives on issues and problems and empower those receiving services to share responsibility for finding solutions.

Special advice for collaboratives seeking outside funding includes:

- Be knowledgeable. Spend time on the web, search data, and watch for trends. Know facts and figures so you can counter misconceptions people have.
- Be the one who believes the glass is half full.
- When approaching possible supporters, remember to ask for referrals to others who might help with funding.
- Share personal stories about the kids. Talk about how your program helps them succeed in school, graduate, attend college, etc.
- Clearly demonstrate to funding sources the value of working together.
- Be patient and persevere!

Collaboration Action Plan

Level	Strategies	People Needed	Timeline
1 Awareness			
2 Assessment			
3 Coordination of Resources			
4 Collaboration Outreach Case Management			

Adapted from Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Project UP-START, Homeless Children and Youth Program, Miami, Florida.

Useful Contacts for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Updated on: _____

Organization/Agency	Contact Person	Phone Number/ E-mail Address	Services Offered
Boys and Girls Club			
Food Bank			
Health Department			
Housing and Urban Dev't (HUD)/Housing Authority			
Medical Contacts (doctors, dentists, mental health, etc.)			
Salvation Army			
United Way			
Shelter (enter name): _____			
Shelter (enter name): _____			
Other (enter name): _____			

Appendix I: Transportation Resources

One of the key concepts within the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is that of the provision of transportation. Children and youth experiencing homelessness are entitled to receive transportation to and from the school of origin and transportation comparable to that received by housed schoolmates.

Appendix I contains:

- Executive Summary: *Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness: Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin*

Additional Resources

- **NCHE Information by Topic: *Transportation* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_transport.php***: The resources on this NCHE webpage provide information on the transportation provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and strategies for implementing these provisions.
- **U.S. Department of Education Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance, Section H; available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/guidance_jul2004.pdf***: Section H of the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance deals with the provision of transportation services to children and youth experiencing homelessness.

(Excerpted from the NCHE publication entitled *Increasing School Stability for Students Experience Homelessness: Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin*. This publication is available for downloading in its entirety at *http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php*.)

Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness: Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin

Executive Summary

Underscoring the importance of school stability for children and youth experiencing homelessness, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, requires that school districts provide transportation to enable children and youth to remain in their school of origin (the school a student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled). Although this mandate increases the complexity and expense of pupil transportation, school districts have developed resourceful strategies to provide children and youth experiencing homelessness transportation to their school of origin.

In order to provide ideas to school districts that experience challenges to implementing the mandate for transportation to the school of origin and those that seek additional implementation strategies, in 2003-2004, the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) interviewed local homeless education liaisons and pupil transportation directors from eight school districts that have instituted a variety of approaches to ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness receive transportation services to their school of origin.

Following is a summary of recommendations to school districts for providing transportation for children and youth experiencing homelessness to attend the school of origin:

1. Establish strong networks of community support.

- Initiate conversations with the department of social services, housing authorities, foster care, juvenile justice, child protective services, and public and private transportation agencies
- Create partnerships with shelters, group homes, and community agencies
- Develop memoranda of understanding to clarify roles and expectations
- Participate in local homeless coalitions or councils
- Sponsor meetings to familiarize these agencies with educational needs for children and youth experiencing homelessness and to identify strategies for collaboration
- Identify a contact in each agency with whom routine communication takes place

- Sensitize private sector businesses to the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness

2. Develop a strong partnership between the homeless education program and the department of pupil transportation.

- Develop a team approach to coordination between the homeless education program and department of pupil transportation
- Provide training to department of pupil transportation staff to increase sensitivity to and buy-in for the needs of homeless children
- Review data on homeless children and youth in the district to identify what the transportation needs are and how the current transportation system might meet those needs

3. Establish inter-district collaboration.

- Have frequent communication between local liaisons and pupil transportation directors across districts
- Designate which district has the primary responsibility to ensure that children and youth do not “fall through the cracks”
- Host collaborative cross-district meetings of local liaisons and pupil transportation directors to plan strategies and review their effectiveness

4. Establish formal procedures for equity, transparency, and consistency.

- Involve all stakeholders in the development of procedures and publicize them in the school system and community
- Establish inter-district policies and memoranda of agreement
- Review procedures periodically and revise as needed
- Develop forms for intake and record keeping
- Develop informational brochures for parents
- Develop procedures for inter-district transportation and put in place before the need arises

5. Establish policies to support federal legislation.

- Develop state and/or local policies that reinforce the McKinney-Vento legislation
- Develop state and/or local policies that clarify roles and responsibilities related to transporting children and youth experiencing homelessness to their school of origin
- Review policies from other states or districts to serve as models

6. Establish a database and system for data collection.

- Establish an electronic database that can be shared among school and school district staff,

shelters, and other agencies involved with homeless children and youth

- Attend to confidentiality issues
- Ensure regular and accurate data input
- Use data to facilitate and expedite transportation arrangements
- Use data to report on the transportation needs of homeless children and youth for advocacy and funding purposes

7. Seek economical and creative solutions.

- Seek the most economical solutions first
- Identify potential resources in the community
- Involve private sector businesses and foundations
- Plan ahead; have resources identified and procedures in place
- Be flexible with bus routes and use of special education or magnet school buses

8. Keep in mind the safety of the child or youth

- Ensure that transportation modes for transporting children to the school of origin are equally as safe as those for other children
- Follow state and local policies related to approved vehicles and drivers
- Ensure taxis and public vehicles meet the guidelines outlined in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Uniform Guidelines for Highway Safety Programs (Guideline #17: Pupil Transportation Safety, available for downloading at *http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/whatsup/tea21/tea21programs/402Guide.html#g17*)
- Screen all drivers for background checks and driving records

9. Inform policymakers of the need for school stability for highly mobile children

- Provide accurate and concrete data
- Visit the NAEHCY website (*http://www.naehcy.org*) to become aware of national advocacy efforts

Appendix J:
Homeless Education Issue Briefs

NCHE's homeless education issue briefs discuss selected issues covered in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and suggest implementation strategies. NCHE homeless education issue briefs are available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php*.

Appendix J contains:

- *Introduction to the Issues* brief

NCHE Homeless Education Issue Brief titles

- ***Best Practices in Homeless Education* series**
  - *Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Services: Do's and Don'ts for Local Liaisons*
  - *Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Services: Do's and Don'ts for School Districts*
  - *Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act*
  - *Housing Agency and School District Collaborations to Serve Homeless and Highly Mobile Students*
  - *Guiding the Discussion on School Selection*
  - *Immediate Enrollment Under McKinney-Vento: How Local Liaisons Can Keep Homeless Students Safe*
  - *Immediate Enrollment Under McKinney-Vento: How Schools Can Keep Homeless Students Safe*
  - *Immigrant and Homeless: Information for Local Liaisons*
  - *Immigrant and Homeless: Information for School District Title III Programs and Community Agencies*
  - *Prompt and Proper Placement: Enrolling Students without Records*

- ***Connecting Schools and Displaced Students* series**
  - *Meeting the Educational Needs of Students Displaced by Disasters: Youth on Their Own*
  - *What Relief Agencies Should Know About the Educational Rights of Children Displaced by Disasters*
  - *What School District Administrators Should Know About the Educational Rights of Children Displaced by Disasters*
- ***McKinney-Vento Law Into Practice* series**
  - *Domestic Violence, Homelessness, and Children's Education*
  - *Enrollment*
  - *Identifying Students in Homeless Situations*
  - *Including Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in State and Local School District Accountability Systems*
  - *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004: Provisions for Homeless Children and Youth with Disabilities*
  - *Introduction to the Issues*
  - *Local Educational Agency Liaisons*
  - *Migrant Children and Youths Experiencing Homelessness*
  - *Reauthorization at a Glance*
  - *Resolution of Disputes*
  - *School Selection*
  - *Summary of McKinney-Vento Act and Title I Provisions*
  - *Title I and Homelessness*
  - *Transportation*
  - *Unaccompanied Youth*
  - *What LEA Administrators Must Know*
  - *What Service Providers Should Know*
  - *When Legal Guardians Are Not Present: Enrolling Students on Their Own*
  - *Who is Homeless?*

Homeless Education: An Introduction to the Issues

Who is homeless?

(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 – Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act – Sec 725)

The term "homeless children and youth"—

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence…; and
(B) includes —
(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings…
(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus train stations, or similar settings; and
(iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

How many people in the United States are homeless?

People experiencing homelessness are not a static group; homelessness is a "revolving-door phenomenon". It is estimated that, over the course of a year, between 2.3 and 3.5 million people will experience homelessness, of which between 900,000 and 1.4 million will be children.[i]

What are the main causes of homelessness?

The main cause of homelessness is the lack of affordable housing. While this lack alone is often enough to cause homelessness, when combined with other factors such as low wages, unemployment, domestic violence, illness, mental health issues, and addiction, the risk of experiencing homelessness increases dramatically.

Unaccompanied youth are youth not in the physical custody of a parent of guardian. The primary causes of homelessness among unaccompanied youth are physical or sexual abuse by a parent or guardian, neglect, parental substance abuse, and family conflict.

Homelessness: A fringe issue?

Many people view homelessness as a fringe issue, affecting only "certain kinds of people" on the edges of society. This view does not reflect the changing demographics of homelessness in the United States, including a steady rise in homelessness among families with children. Consider the following questions:

- *Could you ever experience a flood, fire, tornado, or other natural disaster?*
- *Do you work in an area of the economy where your job might become obsolete?*
- *Could you ever suffer from a long-term illness or accident without proper health benefits or other compensations?*
- *Do you live in a household with only one full-time wage earner?*
- *Are you behind on any monthly bills?*
- *Are housing costs in your area increasing faster than wages?*
- *Does anyone in your family struggle with addiction or mental illness?*
- *Could you ever face extreme financial difficulty without family or close friends available to come to your aid?*

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you are not immune to homelessness. These questions are not meant to create alarm, but rather to spread awareness that people experiencing homelessness are people just like us. They desire financial stability and a secure home, but have confronted difficult circumstances without sufficient resources to overcome the situation and remain housed.

continued on the next page

Homeless with homework: Challenges faced by homeless students

Children experiencing homelessness face great challenges. High mobility, precarious living conditions, and poverty combine to present significant educational, health and emotional difficulties. Consider this:

- *At least 20% of homeless children do not attend school.*[ii]
- *Within a year, 41% of homeless children will attend two different schools; 28% of homeless children will attend three or more different schools.*[iii]
- *With each change in schools, a student is set back academically by an average of four to six months.*[iv]
- *Children experiencing homelessness often feel like outsiders and have difficulty maintaining friendships due to frequent moves. Their lives feel out of control, and they often experience anxiety and depression as a result.*
- *Many homeless children lack basic school supplies and a reasonable environment in which to do homework.*
- *Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness confront these and other challenges associated with homelessness without the support and guidance of a caring adult.*

Homeless children are truly among our nation's neediest and most at risk.

McKinney-Vento: Federal homeless education legislation

During the 1980s, the federal government recognized the magnitude of the problem of homelessness within our country and, more specifically, the increasing incidences of homelessness among families with children and unaccompanied youth. To address this issue, Congress passed the Stewart B. McKinney Act, reauthorized most recently as the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This act guarantees homeless children and youth the following:

- *The right to immediate enrollment in school, even if lacking paperwork normally required for enrollment.*
- *The right to attend school in his/her school of origin (if this is requested by the parent and is feasible) or in the school in the attendance area where the family or youth is currently residing.*
- *The right to receive transportation to his/her school of origin, if this is requested by the parent.*
- *The right to services comparable to those received by housed schoolmates, including transportation and supplemental educational services.*
- *The right to attend school along with children not experiencing homelessness. Segregation based on a student's status as homeless is strictly prohibited.*
- *The posting of homeless students' rights in all schools and other places around the community.*

While having the opportunity to enroll and succeed in school may seem like a given to many of us, the McKinney-Vento Act was enacted due to the numerous barriers homeless children faced in obtaining a free, appropriate public education. It is the mission of the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) and its partners to create public awareness of the rights of homeless children and youth and to ensure compliance with the law at the state and local levels.

continued on the next page

The role of education

The role of education in the life of a homeless child is crucial. In a life that is filled with uncertainty, school is a place of safety. Something as simple as a desk to call her own can provide a homeless child with a sense of routine and ownership. A free, appropriate public education is also a right to which homeless children and youth are legally entitled. This right put into practice has the potential to break the cycle of poverty and homelessness that may otherwise continue. For a homeless child, the importance of a stable, quality education is immeasurable.

How can I help?

After learning more about the issue of homeless education, you may be wondering how you can help. Consider the following suggestions:

- *Educate staff at your organization that come into contact with homeless children and families about the educational rights of homeless children.*
- *Collaborate with your local school district to help identify and support homeless students in your area. Every school district in the country has a Local Homeless Education Liaison, responsible for ensuring that homeless students' educational rights are observed. To find out the contact information for the liaison in your district, contact NCHE at 1-800-308-2145.*
- *Take advantage of the products and services available to you through NCHE and its partners.*
- *For other suggestions on supporting the rights of students experiencing homelessness, contact NCHE.*

National Partners in Homeless Education

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
Contact: Diana Bowman, Director, 800-755-3277, dbowman@serve.org
Web Address: www.serve.org/nche
NCHE, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, is a national resource center, providing valuable information, training, and materials to educators and community members seeking to address the educational needs of homeless children and their families. These materials are made available to the public at no charge and include such items as educational rights posters, parent packs, training resources, and "law into practice" briefs.

U.S. Department of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program
Contact: Gary Rutkin, Coordinator, 202-260-4412, gary.rutkin@ed.gov
Web Address: www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html
The Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program oversees the education of homeless children and youth in our nation's public schools, including the granting of McKinney-Vento funds and the monitoring of their usage. Program Coordinator Gary Rutkin, working with other Department officials and national partners, provides official guidance to states and school districts on implementing the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)
Contact: Patricia Popp, President, 757-221-7776, ppopp@naehcy.org
Web Address: www.naehcy.org
NAEHCY, a national grassroots membership association, serves as the voice and the social conscience for the education of children and youth in homeless situations. NAEHCY brings together educators, parents, advocates, researchers and service providers to ensure school enrollment and attendance, and overall success for children and youth experiencing homelessness. NAEHCY accomplishes this through advocacy, partnerships and education. NAEHCY also hosts an annual national conference on homeless education, which brings together educators and service providers to learn about new developments within the field.

The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP)
Contact: Joy Moses, Education Staff Attorney, 202-638-2535, jmoses@nlchp.org
Web Address: www.nlchp.org
The mission of NLCHP is to prevent and end homelessness by serving as the legal arm of the nationwide movement to end homelessness. To achieve its mission, the Law Center pursues three main strategies: impact litigation, policy advocacy, and public education. The Law Center strives to place homelessness in the larger context of poverty. By taking this approach, the Law Center aims to address homelessness as a very visible manifestation of deeper causes: the shortage of affordable housing, insufficient income, and inadequate social services. NLCHP provides guidance and produces high-quality publications on legal issues pertaining to homelessness and poverty.

The National Network for Youth (NNY)
Contact: Mishaela Duran, Director of Public Policy and Public Affairs, 202-783-7949 x3109, mduran@nn4youth.org
Web Address: www.nn4youth.org
The National Network for Youth is the leading advocacy organization for runaway and homeless youth. NNY seeks to promote opportunities for growth and development for youth who face greater odds due to abuse, neglect, family conflicts and disconnection from family, lack of resources, discrimination, differing abilities, or other life challenges. NNY achieves this through advocacy on national policy related to at-risk youth and the provision of training, technical assistance, consultation services, and publications on the issue of supporting and protecting at-risk youth.

NCHE™
National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE

P.O. Box 5367
Greensboro, NC 27435
Toll-free helpline: 1-800-308-2145
www.serve.org/nche

Homelessness can't be determined by appearance. For information on recognizing the warning signs of homelessness among students, visit www.serve.org/nche/nche_web/warning.php.

References

[i] *Burt, Martha R., What Will It Take to End Homelessness? (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2001). Available online at www.urban.org.*

[ii] *Author, Homeless Children: America's New Outcasts (Newton, MA: National Center on Family Homelessness, 1999). Available for order online at www.familyhomelessness.org/.*

[iii] Ibid.

[iv] *Dr. Joy Rogers of the Loyola University Department of Education, Education Report of Rule 706 Expert Panel presented in B.H. v. Johnson, 715 F. Supp. 1387 (N.D. Ill. 1989), 1991.*

Appendix K: Frequently Asked Questions

Questions in homeless education often cluster around certain key topics, including enrollment, determining eligibility for services, unaccompanied youth, preschool, and usage of Title I, Part A, funds. Following is a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) handout that can be distributed at training and/or awareness events.

Appendix K contains:

- Homeless Education Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) handout

Additional Resources

- ***The 100 Most Frequently Asked Questions on the Education Rights of Children and Youth in Homeless Situations*; available for downloading at *http://www.naehcy.org/faq.html***: This resource, created collaboratively by the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP), answers the top questions raised about the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Homeless Education Frequently Asked Questions

What is the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act. This legislation ensures that children and youth experiencing homelessness have full and equal access to an appropriate public education and that they experience success in school. Key components include:

Enrollment

- Schools must immediately enroll children and youth in homeless situations, even when records normally required for enrollment are not available.
- Students may stay in their school of origin, if feasible (in their best interest).
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth must be posted in every public school and in appropriate places throughout the community.
- Unaccompanied youth must be provided educational access through the support of the local homeless education liaison. (See definition under "Who is considered homeless.")

Attendance and Success

Students with appropriate support are more likely to attend school on a regular basis. Attendance is critical if school success is to be realized. School districts must provide appropriate case management to ensure students have access to all educational services to which they are eligible.

- Students experiencing homelessness must receive services comparable to those of housed students.
- Transportation to the school of origin must be provided, when appropriate.
- Social service agencies and school districts must work together to serve students.
- Families and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness must be fully informed of available enrollment options and educational opportunities.
- Schools must provide written explanations of placement decisions and the enrollment dispute process.
- Separate schools or programs for children and youth experiencing homelessness are prohibited, with the exception of several programs specifically named in the McKinney-Vento Act.

Who is Considered Homeless?

The McKinney-Vento Act (Section 725) defines a "homeless children and youth" (school age and younger) as:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, cars, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, camping grounds or similar settings due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living emergency or transitional shelters.

Homeless Education Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Awaiting foster care placement.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

How can schools verify that students are homeless?

There is no universal system of verification. Shelter providers may verify homeless status. Children and youth must be enrolled immediately when the school is informed that the family or youth is experiencing homelessness. If questions regarding homeless status based upon the definition of the McKinney-Vento Act exist, schools should contact their local homeless education liaison.

Are all families that share housing considered homeless?

No. Families that share housing, living in doubled-up settings, must still meet the McKinney-Vento definition's requirement that the living situation is due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason. Families that live together due to cultural preference, to save money, or to pool resources to provide a larger/nicer home than would be possible if living individually should not be considered homeless. Questions that may assist in making the determination of homelessness in a doubled-up situation can be found in the NCHE brief, *Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act,* at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php*.

Are children and youth who qualify for migrant services considered homeless?

The children of migrant workers should only be considered homeless if they meet the definition of homelessness cited earlier. A migratory lifestyle alone is not sufficient to be considered homeless.

Are children or youth incarcerated or in correction facilities considered homeless?

No. The U.S. Department of Education 1995 Guidance specifically excludes any child or youth who is imprisoned or otherwise detained by Act of Congress or state law from the definition of homelessness. Even children or youth who were homeless prior to incarceration, are not considered homeless while incarcerated.

Are children and youth in foster care considered homeless?

By definition, children and youth in foster care placements are wards of the state, so they are not considered homeless. Temporary or short term foster care placements may be considered homeless. "LEA liaisons should confer and coordinate with local public social service agency providers in determining how best to assist homeless children and youth who are awaiting foster care placement." (*U.S. Department of Education Draft Non-regulatory Guidance*, July 2004).

What additional guidance is available regarding the definition of homelessness and the education of homeless students?

For more information about determining homelessness according to the McKinney-Vento definition, download the NCHE brief *Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services*

Homeless Education Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

Under the McKinney-Vento Act at *http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php*.

How Quickly Must Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness be Enrolled in School?

Schools must enroll a child or youth experiencing homelessness immediately, even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. Immediately means without delay.

Must a school enroll children or youth without proof of immunizations or physicals?

Yes. The school must enroll students who do not have health records if they meet the definition of homeless. The school should refer the family or youth to the local homeless education liaison to obtain the necessary documentation. The sending school may provide a copy of the health record to the parent when the student leaves and fax a copy to the new school to facilitate this process.

Must schools enroll students in homeless situations who do not have previous school records?

Yes. Students experiencing homelessness must be enrolled in school while waiting for the previous school records to be received. Parents can request copies of critical documents such as Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs), gifted testing records, and report cards from the sending school. Parent Pack Pocket Folders, developed by NCHE, may assist in maintaining important school documents. Visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php* to learn more.

If a student in a homeless situation moves without returning books or paying fees, can a school district withhold student records?

No. A school district cannot withhold records when books or charges have not been paid.

Can a school require proof of residency (rent receipt, lease agreement, utility receipt) that prevents or delays enrollment?

No. Homeless students, by definition, lack a fixed residence and cannot be required to provide traditional proof of residency if doing so is not possible or would delay enrollment. An affidavit explaining the lack of residency proof can be completed as an alternative.

When children or youth experiencing homelessness are not living with parents or legal guardians, is the school required to enroll the child?

Yes. Guardianship cannot be a barrier to enrollment. Some students, due to family situations, may not be able to live with their family; others are not permitted by their parents or guardians to live at home. The local liaison should be contacted to assist unaccompanied youth who wish to enroll in school.

If families in homeless situations move within a school district, can students stay at the same school, even if they move out of the school's attendance zone?

Yes, the McKinney-Vento Act states, that when feasible, students have a right to stay in the school of origin. The school of origin is the school that the child attended when

permanently housed or the last school in which the student was enrolled.

Can school districts educate children and youth experiencing homelessness in separate schools (e.g., classes located on shelter sites)?

Homelessness is not a reason to separate students from their housed peers. Students in homeless situations must not be isolated from the mainstream school environment except in a few limited circumstances defined in the McKinney-Vento legislation.

What services must school districts provide to children and youth in homeless situations?

The McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to provide services to students experiencing homelessness that are comparable to services provided to other students in the school district. Homeless children and youth must have access to any educational services for which they qualify, including special education, gifted education, free and reduced-lunch programs, before- and after-school activities, and Title I, Part A, services. The students are not to be segregated or stigmatized.

Can Title I, Part A, funds be used to address the educational needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness?

Yes. According to the No Child Left Behind Act, children and youth experiencing homelessness automatically qualify for Title I, Part A, support, whether students attend schoolwide, targeted assistance, or non-Title I schools. Title I must coordinate services in order to promote the academic achievement of homeless students.

May children and youth experiencing homelessness attending non-Title I schools be served under Title I, Part A?

Yes. Title I, Part A, funds must be reserved to provide comparable services to eligible homeless children who might attend schools not receiving Title I, Part A, funding. This may include providing educationally related support services to children in shelters.

Are children experiencing homelessness eligible to enroll in preschool?

Yes. Young children who are homeless should have the same access to public preschool programs as young children who are housed. Head Start and Even Start may reserve slots for students experiencing homelessness to avoid waiting list delays that occur when children arrive after the school year has begun.

How should special education programs serve students experiencing homelessness?

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) was amended in 2004 to facilitate the timely assessment, appropriate service provision and placement, and continuity of services for children and youth with disabilities who experience homelessness and high mobility. Schools and school districts are required to complete initial evaluations within specific timeframes, ensure that assessments of children who transfer to a new school district are coordinated with prior schools, and provide children who have current IEPs and transfer to a new school district during the school year with services immediately. For unaccompanied

Homeless Education Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

youth, IDEA specifically requires LEAs to appoint surrogate parents.

What academic concerns commonly impact students in homeless situations?

Due to changing schools and the stress of being homeless, students may fall behind academically, causing learning lags and gaps that can be more than four months. Students may not have quiet places to study or access to school supplies, books, or computers. Students need to know of study halls or after-school tutoring availability. If a child was receiving special education services or was participating in gifted and talented programs, the continuity of instruction needs to be maintained.

What are some common health-related issues affecting students experiencing homelessness?

Students who are homeless are often at an increased risk of becoming ill due to their living conditions. If the students become sick, they often have no quiet place to rest. These students are more likely than their peers to get the flu, have stomach ailments, have respiratory problems, and visit the emergency room. School nurses can help by offering referrals for screenings, maintaining a clothes closet, assisting parents in filling out forms, and ensuring that students are aware of the school's procedure for participating in the free and reduced lunch program.

What are some of the other issues that commonly affect students experiencing homelessness?

Students in homeless situations often are concerned about their safety because they may not have a secure place to go after school. In these instances, students should be told about community programs, such as Boys and Girls Clubs. In addition, homeless students must also deal with the stigma associated with being homeless. They may have difficulty establishing friendships. Guidance counselors or school social workers may assist students in dealing with emotions associated with being homeless. Schools can create welcome packs for all new students containing basic information about the school and assign peer buddies to tour the school.

Homeless Education Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

For More Information and Assistance

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
P.O. Box 5367
Greensboro, NC 27453
336-315-7543
800-308-2145 (toll-free helpline)
336-315-7457 Fax
http://www.serve.org/nche

Other Helpful Contacts

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)
http://www.naehcy.org

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP)
http://www.nlchp.org

U.S. Department of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) Program
http://www.edu.gov/programs/homeless/index.html

Local Homeless Education Liaison

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Appendix L: Tip Sheets

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the local homeless education liaison is responsible for educating school district personnel regarding the educational rights of homeless children and youth. The tip sheets contained in this appendix provide an audience-specific overview of how to ensure educational access and success for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Appendix L contains:

- Tip Sheet: School Administrators
- Tip Sheet: Guidance Counselors
- Tip Sheet: School Nurses
- Tip Sheet: Teachers
- Tip Sheet: Secretaries and Enrollment Personnel
- Tip Sheet: Parents
- Tip Sheet: Pupil Transportation Directors

Additional Resources

- **Enrollment: Ready Reference for School (enrollment foldout); available for ordering at *http://www.serve.org/nche/online_order.php***: This handy foldout booklet assists local homeless education liaisons and enrollment personnel in understanding the legal guidelines for the immediate school enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Its compact size and foldout format make it a great desktop reference.
- **Parent Brochure; available for ordering or downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/online_order.php***: This brochure explains the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness and informs parents about ways in which they can support their children's education during times of mobility.

- **NCHE Information by Topic: *School Personnel Resources* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/educ_schpers.php***: This NCHE webpage provides additional and more in-depth resources for educating school personnel about the needs of children and youth in homeless situations. Resources include:
  - ***Introduction to the Issues* brief**: This brief provides an overview of the main issues within the field of homeless education. It is a good general resource, but is also particularly helpful for introducing new people to the field or introducing the issue to those outside of the field.
  - ***School Nurses: It's Not Just Bandages Anymore***: This brief from Project HOPE-Virginia discusses the role school nurses can play in addressing the health needs and supporting the education of students experiencing homelessness.
  - ***School Social Workers: A Necessary Link to School Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness***: This brief from Project HOPE-Virginia discusses the role school social workers can play in assisting homeless families and their school-aged children.
- ***Helping Young Children Grow and Learn: A Guide for Families & Shelter Providers*; available for downloading at *http://www.wm.edu/hope/infobrief/ECSE-family.pdf***: This brief from Project HOPE-Virginia will help parents and shelter providers support children's early learning. Goals of the booklet include helping those working with young children to use everyday activities to encourage learning and growth, notice any concerns in a child's development, and locate resources for more information about early development.
- ***Using the Best That We Know: Supporting Young Children Experiencing Homelessness*; available for downloading at *http://www.wm.edu/hope/infobrief/ECSE-educ.pdf***: This document, developed by Project HOPE-Virginia, explores the effects of homelessness on preschool-aged children and discusses best practices in early intervention early childhood education for young children experiencing homelessness.
- ***What Educators Can Do: Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness*; available for downloading at *http://www.wm.edu/hope/infobrief/teacherinfobrief.pdf***: This document, developed by Project HOPE-Virginia, explains the critical role that education plays in the lives of homeless students and what teachers can do to support homeless students in their classroom.

School Administrators

Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children and youth who are homeless. Common signals are attendance at several schools, poor hygiene, gaps in learning, transportation problems, poor health and nutrition, and a lack of preparedness for class. For more information, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/nche_web/warning.php*.

- Welcome the student and the family and let them know that the school is a safe and secure place.

- Make sure the student enrolls in your school's free meal program. Homeless students are automatically eligible for free school meals. For more information, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/legis_other.php*.

- Ensure that the student has every opportunity that a non-homeless student has for participation in after-school activities and in-school programs.

- Inform parents about their child's educational rights.

- Know your attendance zone, visit shelters to make contact with the shelter director, and reinforce that students will find the school safe and supportive.

- Hold school meetings, such as the PTA meeting, in neighborhood centers to increase accessibility of homeless parents to school events.

- Provide city bus tokens or other transportation assistance to get parents to school for conferences, school events, or PTA meetings.

- Encourage parents to volunteer. Discuss their interests and offer suggestions that allow them to use their expertise. Many parents will help if invited to do so.

- Support the school staff as they work with the student.

- Contact the school district's local homeless education liaison for additional support.

- Show that you care about the student!

NCHE
National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE

This tip sheet was adapted from materials from the Illinois, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia Departments of Education, and the National Center for Homeless Education. For more information about helping homeless students succeed in school, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at http://www.serve.org/nche.

Guidance Counselors

Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children and youth who are homeless. Common signals are attendance at several schools, poor hygiene, gaps in learning, transportation problems, poor health and nutrition, and a lack of preparedness for class. For more information, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/nche_web/warning.php*.

- Introduce yourself as someone who will work as an advocate for the student's success in school.

- Ask if the student participated in any after-school activities or had special classes at a previous school, then work to connect the student with similar resources, if they are available; ensure that the student has every opportunity that a non-homeless student has for participation in after-school activities and in-school programs.

- Make sure the student enrolls in your school's free meal program. Homeless students are automatically eligible for free school meals. For more information, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/legis_other.php*.

- Inform parents about their child's educational rights.

- Know your attendance zone, visit shelters to make contact with the shelter director, and reinforce that students will find the school safe and supportive.

- Offer support for the physiological needs of the student (food, clothing) as well as the social/emotional needs (safety, security, and belonging).

- Train peer buddies to orient students to the school.

- Arrange a follow-up meeting with parents a couple of weeks after enrollment; you may need to conduct the meeting by phone or visit the parent outside of the school.

- Show that you care about the student!

NCHE
National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE

This tip sheet was adapted from materials from the Illinois, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia Departments of Education, and the National Center for Homeless Education. For more information about helping homeless students succeed in school, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at http://www.serve.org/nche.

School Nurses

Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children and youth who are homeless. Common signals are attendance at several schools, poor hygiene, gaps in learning, transportation problems, poor health and nutrition, and a lack of preparedness for class. For more information, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/nche_web/warning.php*.

- Verify immunization records and, if necessary, refer the student to the local health department for any needed immunizations.

- Observe and alert the principal to any serious medical concern.

- Ask about glasses; the child may need them but not have any.

- Make sure the student enrolls in your school's free meal program. Homeless students are automatically eligible for free school meals. For more information, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/legis_other.php*.

- Assist parents with the completion of medical records.

- Remember that sending a sick student "home" may not be a safe or stable place for a child or youth who is experiencing homelessness. Help families determine options for their children, should they become ill.

- Contact the school district's local homeless education liaison so that additional services can be coordinated.

- Follow-up with students sent to obtain immunizations or physicals.

- Contact the parent or shelter if a student is absent for three or more days.

- Develop reliable, accessible resources for medical, dental, and eye care.

- Sponsor a PTA health night.

- Show that you care about the student!

NCHE
National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE

This tip sheet was adapted from materials from the Illinois, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia Departments of Education, and the National Center for Homeless Education. For more information about helping homeless students succeed in school, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at http://www.serve.org/nche.

Teachers

Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- Be familiar with common characteristics of children and youth who are homeless. Common signals are attendance at several schools, poor hygiene, gaps in learning, transportation problems, poor health and nutrition, and a lack of preparedness for class. For more information, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/nche_web/warning.ph*p.

- Assist other students in being sensitive to stereotypes of homeless people.

- Adjust assignments so that students not living in permanent settings can complete them. (For example, such students may not have a place to perform a science experiment or the resources to bring in an article about current events.)

- Make sure the student enrolls in your school's free meal program. Homeless students are automatically eligible for free school meals. For more information, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/legis_other.php*.

- Ensure that the student has every opportunity that a non-homeless student has for participation in after-school activities and in-school programs.

- Communicate with the parents about school performance.

- Connect the student with tutoring and remediation services, if needed.

- If you have a snack break, keep a store of snacks for students who don't bring one.

- Do not take away possessions. Students may need their "stuff" nearby for security.

- Hold the student accountable for what she or he can control (e.g., behavior or attitude) not what is not under the student's control (e.g., inability to watch a news program or purchase a poster board for a project).

- Discuss concerns with the guidance counselor, school social worker, school nurse, or local homeless education liaison.

- Before you receive a new student:

  - Prepare a list of your class routines and procedures.
  - Prepare a new student file with information for parents and guardians.
  - Maintain a supply of materials for students to use at school.
  - Prepare a "getting-to-know-you" activity for the class to do when a new student arrives.
  - Have the class schedule visible.

Teachers (cont.)

Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- When a new student enters the class:
  - Introduce the student to the class.
  - Assign a class buddy to assist with routines.
  - Review the academic record and closely monitor the educational progress of the student.
- When a student leaves:
  - Support the class and the student by discussing the move and having classmates write letters to the departing student.
  - Give the student a copy of the school's contact information so that letters can be written back either via e-mail or traditional mail.
- Show that you care about the student!

This tip sheet was adapted from materials from the Illinois, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia Departments of Education, and the National Center for Homeless Education. For more information about helping homeless students succeed in school, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at http://www.serve.org/nche.

Secretaries and Enrollment Personnel

Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- Learn to identify the following tell-tale signs of homelessness:
  - Chronic hunger or fatigue
  - Erratic school attendance
  - Attendance at multiple schools
  - Poor grooming and/or clothing that draws attention
  - Lack of records such as birth certificate, proof of residence, proof of guardianship, immunization or other medical records, or previous academic records; or incomplete records
  - Parent who seems confused when asked about the last school attended by the student
  - Low-income motel address on enrollment form
  - Statements from family when enrolling, such as:
    - "We've been having a hard time lately."
    - "It's a new address. I can't remember it."
    - "We move a lot and are staying with friends until we find a place."
- For more information on identifying signs of homelessness, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/nche_web/warning.php*.
- Assure families that their children can enroll if you think that they are experiencing homelessness.
- Enroll the child immediately, even if they lack records normally required for enrollment. The immediate enrollment of homeless students without records is mandated under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, P.L. 107-110. For more information, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_enroll.php*.
- Ask for the name and city of the last school attended; then call that school and ask to have the student's academic records forwarded to your school.
- Arrange for the student to take a placement test if records are not available. For more information, download the NCHE brief entitled Prompt and Proper Placement: Enrolling Students Without Records at *http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/assessment.pdf*.
- Take the family to a private place to fill out enrollment forms.
- Offer to assist with filling out the enrollment forms. hesitation may indicate an inability to read.

Secretaries and Enrollment Personnel (cont.)

Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- Make sure the student enrolls in your school's free meal program. Homeless students are automatically eligible for free school meals. For more information, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/legis_other.php*.

- Have copies of the school/class supply lists available.

- Provide a welcome pack with paper, a pencil, a pen, and crayons (younger grades).

- Privately and confidentially alert the child's teacher and guidance counselor of the student's living situation.

- Should the student transfer to another school, prepare a "parent pack", a 9" x 12" (laminated, if possible) mailing envelope with photocopies of the student's records (academic, social security, immunization, etc.). Share a copy with the family and be prepared to transfer the student's records to the new school quickly to expedite his/her appropriate classroom placement. Visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/online_order.php* to order NCHE Parent Pack Pocket Folders.

- Be sensitive, patient, calm, and reassuring. You can make a difference!

- For more information, contact the school district's local homeless education liaison.

NCHE
National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE

This tip sheet was adapted from materials from the Maryland Department of Education. For more information about helping homeless students succeed in school, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at http://www.serve.org/nche.

Parents

Helping Your Child Succeed in School, Even When Dealing with Homelessness

- Know your child's educational rights:
  - Enroll your child in school. You can enroll your child even if you are missing documents normally required for enrollment such as immunization records, previous school records, birth certificates, and proof of residency.
  - Let the school know where you want your child to attend school. The McKinney-Vento Act gives your child the right to stay at the same school even if the family's homeless situation means you are no longer living in the same area. This school would be called the school of origin, and school districts must let students continue attending if this is in the student's best interest. Your child also may attend any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area where you're currently living are eligible to attend.
- Keep copies of critical records such as immunizations, Social Security number, health physicals, and individualized education programs (IEPs). Ask someone you trust to keep a set of records for you if your current living arrangements make this difficult.
- Maintain high expectations for your child.
- Ask questions, such as the following:
  - Who is the local homeless education liaison? How can I contact him or her?
  - What transportation is available for my child to stay in the same school (the school of origin)?
  - If my child changes schools, who can help us transfer records quickly?
  - How can my child receive free meals at school?
  - How can my child receive free school supplies, if needed?
  - Who can help if my child needs special education services? How quickly can these services be set up?
  - What academic help is available for my child, such as Title I, Part A, programs or after-school tutoring?
  - What programs can help develop my child's talents and address his/her unique needs?
  - Are there sports, music, or other activities available for my child?
  - How can my child go on class field trips or participate in other school activities if I can't pay for them?
  - Is there a preschool program for my younger children?

NCHE™
National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE

For more information about helping your child succeed in school, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at http://www.serve.org/nche, or contact the local homeless education liaison for your school district:

_____

_____

Pupil Transportation Directors

Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- Ensure that all transportation staff members, including bus drivers and dispatchers, are familiar with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

- Train pupil transportation staff about the law and the needs of homeless children; invite input on strategies for addressing homeless children's transportation needs.

- Allow all transportation staff to express their concerns and then work to address these concerns. Unaddressed issues become barriers once you implement a system.

- Develop formal or informal interdistrict agreements for school districts that share homeless students. Convene a meeting of local homeless education liaisons and pupil transportation personnel to establish procedures; consider having quarterly meetings until the procedures are in place firmly. Conduct the meeting with a solution-based approach.

- Develop procedures that address questions such as:

  - Who will make the referral to transportation within each district?
  - Will the referral be made by phone, fax, or e-mail?
  - Who in each district transportation office will be the point person for interdistrict coordination?
  - How will varying school calendars be handled?
  - Which district discipline plan does the student follow?
  - What are the timelines for scheduling alternative routes, etc.?

- Build on existing relationships and encourage sharing ideas about how to meet the challenges of transporting homeless students. Many transportation personnel from nearby districts know one another because they attend trainings and coordinate special education routes.

- Arrange interdistrict transportation by involving dispatchers and transportation directors across districts.

- Keep track of system requirements for the pupil transportation system. For instance, if the funding for the year is based on service being performed early in the school year, work to make sure homeless students are identified prior to that funding window.

- Investigate all possibilities for funding, including from agencies outside of the school system; check with your state's department of transportation regarding your state's coordinated transportation program.

- Look into using special education and/or magnet school buses.

Pupil Transportation Directors

Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- Ensure that bus pick-up and drop-off does not stigmatize homeless students by disclosing to their peers that they are staying in shelters. Pick up students at the shelters or hotels first and drop them off last so that their peers will not see where they are staying, or consider alternate pick-up and drop-off points nearby where the students are staying.

- Be careful in domestic violence situations to minimize the risk that an abuser will be able to trace the child to the shelter or other location where he or she is staying.

- Consider electronic means for facilitating communication; for example, a web-based transportation log on a confidential website will allow key staff to have access to alternative transportation routes and changes.

- Develop a handbook for homeless parents to assist them in understanding policies regarding transportation and student rules of conduct; develop forms that parents must agree to and sign regarding expectations for them.

- Ensure that all agree that the safety of the students is paramount; transportation safety for homeless students must be comparable to that for all other students.

- Keep good data on the methods of transportation used for homeless children and the costs.

NCHE™
National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE

For more information about helping students experiencing homelessness succeed in school, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at http://www.serve.org/nche, or contact the local homeless education liaison for your school district:

_____

_____

Appendix M: Homeless Education Webpage Development

In the electronic age, the Internet provides a simple, cost-effective way to share valuable information and resources with a broad audience. Use the webpage development form contained in this appendix as a starting point for creating your own homeless education webpage. Also, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php* and click on your state to see what information is available from your state's Education of Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program that may be useful to include on your school's district's homeless education program website. Additionally, please feel free to browse the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) website at *http://www.serve.org/nche* and link to NCHE resources from your website.

Appendix M contains:

- Homeless Education Webpage Development Form

Additional Resources

- **Sample School District Local Homeless Education Program Websites**:
  - **Central Valley School District (Spokane Valley, WA)**; visit *http://www.cvsd.org/homeless_education_program.asp*.
  - **Madison Metropolitan School District (Madison, WI)**; visit *http://www.madison.k12.wi.us/hep/*.
  - **Minneapolis Public Schools (Minneapolis, MN)**; visit *http://sss.mpls.k12.mn.us/Homeless_Highly_Mobile.html*.
  - **Salem-Keizer Public Schools (Salem, OR)**; visit *http://comped.salkeiz.k12.or.us/homeless/homeless.htm*.
  - **School District of Philadelphia (Philadelphia, PA)**; visit *http://www.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/oss/servicesupport/homeless.html*.

Webpage Development Form

Basic Webpage

When creating a webpage for your school district's homeless education program, collaborate with the district's webmaster. Ask the webmaster if he/she prefers to receive the webpage content you'd like added/changed in electronic format or as a hard copy. Discuss ideas for making the webpage/website informative, visually appealing, and user-friendly. The items listed below are only the minimum that should be included in a homeless education program's website. You may choose to add other information based on local needs and resources.

Suggested Items to Include

Banner message for the top of the page: Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Have the Right to a Free, Appropriate Public Education

School district name: _____

Name of the local homeless education liaison: _____

Local liaison's telephone number: _____

Local liaison's e-mail address: _____

Name of the state coordinator for homeless education: _____

State coordinator's telephone number: _____

State coordinator's e-mail address: _____

Web address of the state homeless education website: _____

Copies of school district policies and procedures regarding the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness

Tips for administrators on working with homeless children and youth and their parents (see Appendix L)

Tips for teachers on working with homeless children and youth (see Appendix L)

Webpage Development Form (cont.)

Links to other helpful websites; suggestions include:

- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY): *http://www.naehcy.org*
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP): *http://www.nlchp.org*
- National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE): *http://www.serve.org/nche*
- U.S. Department of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) Program: *http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html*

Common Questions and Answers

Q. Who is homeless?

A. Anyone who, due to a lack of housing, lives:

- In a shelter
- In a motel
- In a vehicle
- In a campground
- On the street
- Doubled-up with relatives or friends due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason

A useful link you may want to include for more information is NCHE's Determining Eligibility for Services Under McKinney-Vento webpage at *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_eligibility.php*.

Q. Where can homeless children and youth attend school?

A. Homeless children and youth can choose to attend either of the following:

- The school of origin: the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled
- The local attendance area school: 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

Webpage Development Form (cont.)

A useful link you may want to include for more information is NCHE's School Selection: Choosing Between the School of Origin and the Local School webpage at *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_sch_select.php*.

Q. Can students experiencing homelessness be denied enrollment for lacking paperwork that is normally required for enrollment?

A. No. Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, children and youth experiencing homelessness have the right to immediate enrollment, even if lacking paperwork normally required for enrollment, such as:

- Birth certificate
- Immunization or other health/medical records
- Previous academic records
- Proof of residence
- Proof of guardianship

Enrollment tip: In instances where paperwork is lacking, the following strategies may be used:

- Birth certificate: The school district can assist in getting a copy of the student's birth certificate or accept a signed Affidavit for Missing Enrollment Documentation (see Appendix D).
- Immunization and/or other health/medical records: The school district can assist in getting copies of the student's records and/or assist in getting any needed immunizations.
- Previous academic records: The school district can contact the student's previous school/district and arrange for the immediate transfer of the student's records.
- Proof of guardianship: The school district can accept a signed Caregiver Authorization Form (see Appendix D).
- Proof of residency: The school district can accept a signed affidavit stating that the family is staying in temporary accommodations.

According to federal law, while enrollment documentation is being gathered, the homeless student's enrollment and full participation in school must continue uninterrupted.

For additional information on homeless education and for resources to link to on your website, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at http://www.serve.org/nche.

Appendix N: Training Resources

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the local homeless education liaison is responsible for:

- Ensuring that homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies.
- Coordinating and collaborating with the state coordinator for homeless education and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

Additionally, one of the approved uses of McKinney-Vento subgrant funds is:

- Providing professional development and other activities for educators and pupil services personnel that are designed to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of such personnel to the needs of homeless children and youth, the rights of such children and youth under this subtitle, and the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youth.

To carry out these tasks, the local liaison may find NCHE training resources useful.

Appendix N contains:

- Presenter Tips
- PowerPoint slides handout: Overview of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (PowerPoint presentation file is available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/training.php*.) Add this note to the PDF file of the slides handout, too.

Additional Resources

- **NCHE *Training Resources* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/training.php***: This NCHE webpage provides various types of training resources for varied audiences, including:
  - **Homeless Education Issue Briefs**: NCHE homeless education issue briefs discuss

selected issues pertaining to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and suggest strategies for implementation.

- **McKinney-Vento Online Training Presentations**: These online presentations, complete with video and audio, give brief introductions to key issues covered in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- **PowerPoint Presentations for Downloading**: NCHE staff members provide technical assistance at national, state, and local training events and make their PowerPoint training presentations available for downloading for training and informational purposes.
- **NCHE Online Forum: *Training Resources* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/forum/training.php***: Visit NCHE's online forum training resource page to see sample training resources from other states and districts that may be customized for usage elsewhere.

Presenter Tips

Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream, which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation. —John F. Kennedy

Quick Tips

Power of 3: Getting the Point Across

Many practiced public speakers ranging from pastors to politicians repeat important points three times. They introduce the points in the opening, elaborate on each during the presentation, and summarize each in the closing statements.

Time Use

Think of the presentation time being divided into three parts: an introduction, explanation/interaction, and wrap-up. In general, 25% of the time is spent on the introduction, 25% on the wrap-up, and 50% of the time on the explanation.

Handouts

- People read handouts when they get them, so give time to look over the materials before launching into your presentation or immediately asking participants to look for or do something in the handout.
- Assure participants that information on the slides is included in the handouts so they will not have to spend time during the presentation taking lots of notes.

Participant Involvement

A quick activity, demonstration of technique, or non-threatening question can enhance audience participation.

Slide Presentation

Prepare slides that all participants can see by:

- Using a plain font (such as Times Roman, Helvetica, or Arial)
- Selecting a large font size (18 point or larger)
- Including no more than 8 lines of text per slide

Movement

Limit your movement when speaking. Some participants may be very distracted if you “talk with your hands” or play with items in your pockets.

Information

- If referencing a book, know the title, author, and ISBN number—people always ask.
- Provide contact data: phone number, e-mail address, or mailing address.

Adult Learners

Adult learners are different from students in K–12 classrooms.

Adult learners are responsible for their own learning, and they seek ways to fill that need.

Adult learners are involved in workshops for a variety of reasons such as:

- Professional benefit
- Benefits to their students
- Mandatory attendance requirement
- Personal interest

Adult learners are professionals in their field and can benefit from both the presentation and the opportunity to interact with colleagues. Participants like to leave knowing how they can affect positive change. One way to do this is to offer participants something that they can try immediately when they get back to school. It should be fairly easy to implement with few, if any, materials needed.

Overview of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
www.naehcy.org
National Center for Homeless Education
www.serve.org/nche

How many children and youth experience homelessness?

- 1.35 million children
- 10% of all children living in poverty
- 733,000-1.3 million youths
- Over 40% of all children who are homeless are under the age of 5

(Source: Burt, 2001)

Causes of Homelessness

- Lack of affordable housing
- Deep poverty
- Health problems
- Domestic violence
- Natural and other disasters
- Abuse/neglect (unaccompanied youth)

Barriers to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

- Enrollment requirements (school records, immunizations, proof of residence and guardianship)
- High mobility resulting in lack of school stability and educational continuity
- Lack of access to programs
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.
- Poor health, fatigue, hunger
- Prejudice and misunderstanding

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

- Reauthorized 2002 by NCLB
- Main themes:
  - School stability
  - School access
  - Support for academic success
  - Child-centered, best interest decision making

Eligibility—Who is Covered?

- Children who **lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**—
  - Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
  - Living in emergency or transitional shelters
  - Abandoned in hospitals

Eligibility— Who is Covered? (cont.)

- Awaiting foster care placement
- Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, etc.
- Migratory children living in above circumstances

Local Homeless Education Liaisons

- Every LEA must designate a liaison for students in homeless situations
- Responsibilities
  - Ensure that children and youth in homeless situations are identified
  - Ensure that homeless students enroll in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school
  - Link with educational services, including preschool and health services

Local Homeless Education Liaisons (cont.)

- Inform parents, guardians, or youth of educational and parent involvement opportunities
- Post public notice of educational rights
- Resolve disputes
- Inform parents, guardians, or youth of transportation services, including to the school of origin

Identification Strategies

- Provide awareness activities for school staff (registrars, secretaries, counselors, social workers, nurses, teachers, bus drivers, administrators, etc.)
- Coordinate with community service agencies, such as shelters, soup kitchens, drop-in centers, welfare and housing agencies, and public health departments
- Provide outreach materials and posters where there is a frequent influx of low-income families and youth in high-risk situations, including motels and campgrounds
- Educate school staff about “warning signs” that may indicate an enrolled child or youth may be experiencing homelessness

Identification Strategies (cont.)

- Make special efforts to identify preschool children, including asking about the siblings of school-aged children
- Develop relationships with truancy officials and/or other attendance officers
- Use enrollment and withdrawal forms to inquire about living situations
- Have students draw or write about where they live.
- Avoid using the word "homeless" in initial contacts with school personnel, families, or youth

School Stability— Key Provisions

- Children and youth experiencing homelessness can stay in their school of origin or enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend, according to their best interest
- School of origin—school attended when permanently housed or in which last enrolled
- Best interest—keep homeless students in their schools of origin, to the extent feasible, unless this is against the parents’ or guardians’ wishes

Feasibility—USDE Sample Criteria

- Continuity of instruction
- Age of the child or youth
- Safety of the child or youth
- Length of stay at the shelter
- Likely area where family will find permanent housing
- Student's need for special instructional programs
- Impact of commute on education
- School placement of siblings
- Time remaining in the school year

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School Selection—Key Provisions

- Students can stay in 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
- If a student becomes homeless in between academic years, he or she may continue in the school of origin for the following academic year
- If a student is sent to a school other than that requested by a parent or guardian, the district must provide a written explanation to the parent or guardian of its decision and the right to appeal

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Research on School Mobility

- Mobile students have lower test scores and grades, are more likely to drop out, and are more likely to receive special education services (Alexander, et. al., 1996)
- Students suffer psychologically, socially, and academically from mobility; mobile students are less likely to participate in extracurricular activities and more likely to act out or get into trouble (Rumberger, Larson, Ream, and Pollardy, 1999)
- Mobility also hurts non-mobile students; study found average test scores for non-mobile students were significantly lower in high schools with high student mobility rates (Rumberger, Larson, Ream, and Pollardy, 1999)

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Transportation—Key Provisions

- LEAs must provide students experiencing homelessness with transportation to and from their school of origin, at a parent's or guardian's request (or at the liaisons request for unaccompanied youth)
- If the student's temporary residence and the school of origin are in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation; if the student is living outside of the school of origin's LEA, the LEA where the student is living and the school of origin's LEA must determine how to divide the responsibility and share the cost, or they must share the cost equally

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Transportation—Key Provisions (cont.)

- In addition to providing transportation to the school of origin, LEAs must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students
- School districts must eliminate barriers to the school enrollment and retention of students experiencing homelessness (including transportation barriers)

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Transportation Strategies

- Develop close ties among local liaisons, school staff, pupil transportation staff, and shelter workers
- Re-route school buses (including special education, magnet school and other buses)
- Develop formal or informal agreements with school districts where homeless children cross district lines
- Provide passes for public transportation
- Use approved van or taxi services
- Reimburse parents for gas

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Enrollment—Key Provisions

- Children and youth in homeless situations can stay in their school of origin (to the extent feasible) or enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend
- The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" include attending classes and participating fully in school activities

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Enrollment—Key Provisions (cont.)

- Children and youth have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if they do not have required documents, such a school records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documents
- If a student does not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the liaison must immediately assist in obtaining them, and the student must be enrolled in the interim

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Enrollment—Key Provisions (cont.)

- Enrolling schools must obtain school records from the previous school, and students must be enrolled in school while records are obtained
- Schools must maintain records for students who are homeless so they are available quickly
- Federal law supercedes state and local laws where there is a conflict [U.S. Constitution, Article VI]
- SEAs and LEAs must develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations

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Resolution of Disputes—Key Provisions

- Every state must establish dispute resolution procedures
- When a dispute over enrollment arises, the student must be admitted immediately to the school of choice while the dispute is being resolved
- Liaisons must ensure unaccompanied youth are enrolled immediately while the dispute is being resolved

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Resolution of Disputes—Key Provisions (cont.)

- Whenever a dispute arises, the parent or guardian must be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision, including the right to appeal
- The school must refer the child, youth, parent, or guardian to the liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible
- Documentation should be kept for all local liaison interventions with parents—not just formal disputes (NCLB)

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Homeless Unaccompanied Youth—Key Provisions

- Definition: youth who meets the definition of homeless and is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian
- Liaisons must help unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, after considering the youth's wishes, and inform the youth of his or her appeal rights
- School personnel must be made aware of the specific needs of runaway and homeless youth.

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Unaccompanied Youth—Strategies

- Revise LEA policies to accommodate unaccompanied youth and comply with the McKinney-Vento Act
- Train local liaisons and all school enrollment staff, secretaries, guidance counselors, principals, and teachers on the definition, rights, and needs of unaccompanied youth
- Develop caretaker forms, self-enrollment forms for unaccompanied youth, and other forms to replace typical proof of guardianship; such forms should be crafted carefully so they do not create further barriers or delay enrollment
- Become familiar with state and local policies related to unaccompanied youth

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Unaccompanied Youth—Strategies (cont.)

- Coordinate with other agencies to ensure policies do not create educational barriers
- Provide unaccompanied youth the opportunity to enroll in diversified learning opportunities, such as vocational education, credit-for-work programs, and flexible school hours
- Provide a "safe place" and trained mentor at school for unaccompanied youth to access as needed
- Permit exceptions to school policies on class schedules, tardiness, absences and credits to accommodate the needs of unaccompanied youth
- Assist with credit accrual and recovery

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Preschool-Aged Children

- Liaisons must ensure that families and children have access to Head Start, Even Start, and other public preschool programs administered by the LEA
- State plans must describe procedures that ensure that homeless children have access to public preschool programs
- U.S. HHS issued a memo in 1992 describing how Head Start grantees should collaborate and adjust their programs to serve homeless children; this memo remains in effect
- Pending changes to the Head Start Act

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Preschool—Strategies

- Keep slots open for homeless students
- Provide awareness training for preschool providers
- Collaborate with preschools not operated by the LEA or SEA (including Head Start)
- Ask parents about preschool-aged children when they enroll their school-aged children in school
- Coordinate with IDEA Child Find

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Access to Services

- Students who experience homelessness must have access to educational services for which they are eligible, including special education, programs for English learners, gifted and talented programs, voc./tech. programs, and school nutrition programs
- Undocumented children and youth have the same right to attend public school as U.S. citizens and are covered by the McKinney-Vento Act to the same extent as other children and youth (Plyler v. Doe)

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Access to Services (cont.)

- USDA policy permits liaisons and shelter directors to obtain free school meals for students by providing a list of names of students experiencing homelessness with effective dates
- The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA includes amendments that reinforce timely assessment, inclusion, and continuity of services for homeless children and youth who have disabilities

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Segregation

- States are prohibited from segregating homeless students in separate schools, separate programs within schools, or separate settings within schools
- SEAs and LEAs must adopt policies and practices to ensure that homeless children and youth are not segregated or stigmatized on the basis of their status as homeless
- Services provided with McKinney-Vento funds must not replace the regular academic program and must be designed to expand upon or improve services provided as part of the school's regular academic program

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Title I and Homelessness—Key Provisions

- A child or youth who is homeless and is attending any school in the district is automatically eligible for Title IA services
- LEAs must reserve (or set aside) funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to children in Title IA schools to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educational support services to children in shelters and other locations where homeless children may live

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Strategies for Determining the Title I Set-Aside Amount

- Review needs and costs involved in serving homeless students in the current year and project for the following year
- Multiply the number of homeless students by the Title IA per pupil allocation
- For districts with subgrants, reserve an amount greater than or equal to the McKinney-Vento subgrant funding request
- Reserve a percentage based on the district's poverty level or total Title IA allocation

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Title I—Services for Homeless Students

- Services for homeless students in both Title I and non-Title I schools comparable to those provided to non-homeless students in Title I schools
- Services that are not ordinarily provided to other Title I students and that are not available from other sources

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What We're All About

"…Through it all, school is probably the only thing that has kept me going. I know that every day that I walk in those doors, I can stop thinking about my problems for the next six hours and concentrate on what is most important to me. Without the support of my school system, I would not be as well off as I am today. School keeps me motivated to move on, and encourages me to find a better life for myself."

Carrie Arnold, LeTendre Scholar, 2002

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Appendix O: Research and Information on Homeless Education

As the field of homeless education continues to grow and develop, so does the information available on the educational challenges faced by students experiencing homelessness and the practices that support these students in overcoming these challenges. This appendix contains the *NCHE Annotated Bibliography of Homeless Education Resources: 2006*. This bibliography lists and describes a selection of publications released in 2006 that deal with issues related to the lives and education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Appendix O contains:

- *NCHE Annotated Bibliography of Homeless Education Resources: 2006*

Additional Resources

- **NCHE Information by Topic: *Research on Homeless Education* webpage; visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/research.php***: This webpage provides access to recent studies dedicated to exploring and improving the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness.
- ***Homeless Education Bibliography of Resources* (Revised Fall 2006); available for downloading at *http://www.wm.edu/hope/infobrief/bibliography.pdf***: This bibliography from Project HOPE-Virginia provides a listing of homeless education resources categorized by type of resource. Resources include articles and reports, books and chapters from child and young adult books, audiovisual materials, curricula and resource kits, and legal sources.
- ***Students on the Move: Reaching and Teaching Highly Mobile Children and Youth*; available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php***: This handbook, a joint publication of the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, synthesizes research on the education of various subpopulations of students who tend to be highly mobile and explores commonalities and differences among these groups. Subpopulations explored include migratory children and youth, children and youth experiencing homelessness, children of military families, and

students experiencing mobility on a global scale.

- ***Unaccompanied and Homeless Youth Review of Literature (1995-2005)*; available for downloading at *http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php***: This NCHE review is based on literature published between 1995 and 2005 on issues concerning unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. It provides an overview of the challenges these young people face and includes research about why they leave their homes, how they live after leaving, and what interventions are being used to assist them.

National Center for Homeless Education
Annotated Bibliography of Homeless Education Resources: 2006

The following resources released in 2006 were compiled from a variety of sources related to issues affecting homeless children, youth, and families. These include scholarly books and periodicals, governmental publications, and national organizations. Although this is not an exhaustive list, the intention was to include information that would inform, educate, and empower those who serve homeless children, youth, and families.

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2006). *2006 Kids count data book*. Retrieved June 27, 2006 from http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/db06_pdfs/entire_db.pdf

The Annie E. Casey Foundation seeks to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that meet the needs of vulnerable children and families more effectively. Its 17th annual data book provides state-by-state statistics related to the educational, health, and economic conditions of children in America. The book's focus is "Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care: Strengthening a Critical Resource to Help Young Children Succeed." It concentrates on improving early childhood development opportunities (especially child care issues) for young children living in low-income neighborhoods so more of them will start school healthy and prepared to learn and succeed.

Dedel, K. (2006, February). *Juvenile runaways*. Retrieved June 29, 2006 from the U.S. Department of Justice Web site: http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/mime/open.pdf?Item=1694

This article from the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Police Services is part of a Problem Specific Guide series designed to help police officers improve their investigation and handling of specific situations. It uses the results of research studies and interviews to explain the factors leading to runaway episodes such as why, when, and where runaways go, how long they're gone, and the issues they face while they're gone. Included in a guide to help understand the local runaway problem is a list of questions to ask, a review of strategies, and a guide to judge the effectiveness of current local responses.

Although written for police officers, many of the recommended strategies include collaboration with schools and social service agencies. The collaborative suggestions along with the background information on runaways make this a resource useful to anyone working with young people.

Engec, N. (2006). Relationship between mobility and student performance and behavior. *Journal of Educational Research, 99*(3), 168-178.

Dr. Necati Engec, Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership, at South Carolina State University, investigated the relationship between student mobility and student performance and behavior using criterion-referenced test (CRT) and norm-referenced test (NRT) data indexes from the 1998-1999 school year. Results showed that as the mobility of

students increased within the school year, their test performance on the CRT and the NRT decreased. Also, suspension rates were high for students who had changed schools within a school year. Engec concludes that students who experience single or multiple transfers within a school year should receive particular attention because they are likely to have discipline and performance problems.

Hartman, C. (2006). Students on the move. *Educational Leadership, 63*(5), 20-24.

Chester Hartman, Director of Research at the Poverty & Race Research Action Council in Washington, DC, focuses on the serious and negative consequences associated with students changing schools during the academic year. Although poor and minority students (including homeless, immigrant, and foster children) are particularly prone to higher mobility rates, there are also detrimental outcomes for stable students, as well as teachers, school administrators, and the entire educational system.

Hartman notes several best practices, including federal and local programs, and makes recommendations for state and local governments and school districts. In addition to reducing mobility, creating smoother transitions, and improving data collection, he concludes with suggestions that school districts collaborate with child welfare and housing personnel to serve highly mobile students.

Jozefowicz-Simbeni, D., & Israel, N. (2006, January). Services to homeless students and families: The McKinney-Vento Act and its implications for school social work practice. *Children and Schools, 28*(1), 37-44.

Jozefowicz-Simbeni is an assistant professor in the School of Social Work at Wayne State University. Israel is with the Department of Child and Family Studies, Florida Mental Health Institute, at the University of South Florida in Tampa. Their article examines the needs, strengths, and risk factors of homeless children and families. It summarizes key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act and cites barriers to the Act's successful implementation. Highlighting the roles and functions of school social workers (who may also be their school district's local homeless education liaison), the authors propose ways that social workers can have a significant impact on homeless children and youth through a more successful implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. They conclude with suggestions to expand the services that social workers provide followed by an evaluation of the effectiveness of those services.

Knitzer, J., & Lefkowitz, J. (2006). *Pathways to early school success: Helping the most vulnerable infants, toddlers, and their families.* Retrieved May 2, 2006, from the National Center for Children in Poverty Web site: http://www.nccp.org/media/pew06e_text.pdf

The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) identifies and promotes strategies that prevent child poverty in the United States and that improve the lives of low-income children and families. Both authors of this NCCP brief have participated in many studies and projects dealing with low-income children.

This brief is based on a meeting of policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and advocates who explored the challenges and opportunities for focusing more attention on the most

vulnerable families while continuing to expand access to supportive programs for all families with very young children. It focuses on the special challenges of helping babies and toddlers whose earliest experiences, environments, and relationships expose them to such "toxic" stress that their growing brains cannot integrate their experiences in ways that promote growth and learning. The authors describe ten strategies that can be implemented to ensure these children and families are connected with sufficiently intensive supports to promote early school success despite facing multiple barriers.

Landsman, J. (2006, February). Bearers of Hope. *Educational Leadership, 63*(5), 20-24.

Julie Landsman, a visiting professor and consultant at various schools, explores the qualities that enable teachers to work effectively with students who are homeless or living in extreme poverty. She advises creativity, flexibility, and compassionate advocacy and gives effective strategies, which include setting high expectations, believing in the students' potential, and serving as the bridge to move students from one level to the next. She says successful teachers are flexible and find ways to connect school work to students' life concerns. She then shares how teachers can find out about students' home and personal lives in a sensitive manner.

Although written for teachers, this article has practical advice for anyone working directly with homeless children and families including simple strategies for working with economically struggling students.

Mankey, J., Baca, P., Rondenell, S., Webb, M., & McHugh, D. (2006, October). *Guidelines for juvenile information sharing.* Retrieved January 2, 2007 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Web site: http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/215786.pdf

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funded a technical assistance project to assist multiple agency teams interested in enhancing their juvenile information sharing (JIS) and overcoming significant barriers such as concerns of confidentiality, privacy of information, and service fragmentation. This report is based on that project, which involved 107 multiple agency jurisdictional teams of youth service agencies from across the country.

Since achieving effective information sharing requires a significant shift in the practices of many agencies, JIS institutes new processes and procedures, requires the development and application of new knowledge and skills, and outlines steps necessary for the full collaborative effort of all agencies and personnel involved in information sharing.

National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2006, May). *Fundamental issues to prevent and end youth homelessness.* Retrieved May 30, 2006, from http://www.naeh.org/content/article/detail/1058

The work of the National Alliance to End Homelessness is based on implementing a 10-year plan to prevent and end homelessness in the United States. This updated brief on homeless youth (defined as 16-24 year olds with no family support who are living in shelters or on the street – in contrast with the McKinney-Vento definition) examines the key issues surrounding youth homelessness, including causes and characteristics of homeless youth

and their need for relationships and social networks. It focuses on housing issues and contains an introductory explanation of the youth housing continuum, a development model for stable and supportive housing for young adults and policy implications regarding youth homelessness. Also included is the Ten Essentials Your Community Needs to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness, designed by the National Partnership to End Youth Homelessness.

National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE. (2006). *Connecting schools and displaced students handbook series.* Retrieved December 20, 2006 from http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php

This handbook series explains how the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act applies to students displaced by disaster and how the Act can assist these students and their families. Each handbook in the series targets information to either parents of displaced children, educators, or relief agencies. The series includes:

- After the Storm: Information for Parents on How Schools Can Help After Disasters (A Handbook for Parents)
- Disaster Relief Agencies and Schools: Working Together to Ensure School Enrollment and Success (A Handbook for Local Liaisons and State Coordinators)
- From the School Office to the Classroom: Strategies for Enrolling and Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness (A Handbook for Local Liaisons, Enrollment Staff, and District Administrators)
- School as a Safety Net: Connecting Displaced Children With Educational and Support Services (A Handbook for Relief Agency Staff and Volunteers)

National Center for Homeless Education. (2006, January). *Guiding the discussion on school selection.* Downloaded January 13, 2006 from http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/sch_sel_checklist.pdf

Part of NCHE's Best Practices in Homeless Education series, this brief provides a framework to help determine whether attending the school of origin or the local attendance area school is in the best interest of the student. It identifies the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act dealing with each option and includes a helpful checklist to use when approaching the school selection decision.

National Center for Homeless Education. (2006, May.) *Housing agency and school district collaborations to serve homeless and highly mobile students.* Retrieved May 22, 2006 from http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/housing_collab.pdf

Another addition to NCHE's *Best Practices in Homeless Education* series, this brief aims to inform housing agencies and school districts what they can expect from participating in a collaborative relationship. It examines three extremely successful but very diverse housing agency and school district collaborations in Minneapolis, MN; Victoria, TX; and Mesa County, CO; and explains how collaboration can help reduce the frequency of family moves and promote school stability. The brief gives a description of each program, explains the roles and relationships of the involved agencies, and discusses each program's outcomes and lessons learned.

National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE. (2006, September). *Immigrant and homeless: Information for local liaisons.* Retrieved September 25, 2006 from http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/imm_lia.pdf

This brief gives an overview of issues pertaining to immigrants, including an explanation of how refugees enter this country and receive initial services funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It goes on to discuss challenges many immigrant and refugee families encounter in adjusting to life in the United States, including integrating into the public school system. Also discussed are methods to determine homelessness among these families and collaborative strategies to reduce barriers and support student integration into schools.

National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE. (2006, September). *Immigrant and homeless: Information for school district Title III programs and community agencies.* Retrieved September 25, 2006 from http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/imm_gen.pdf

Many immigrant children experiencing high mobility and poverty may be eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This brief lists some of the educational barriers facing immigrant students. It gives specific advice about how Title III and community agency personnel can collaborate with local homeless education liaisons in order to assist students who are eligible for McKinney-Vento services.

National Center for Homeless Education. (2006). *Prompt and proper placement: Enrolling students without records.* Retrieved April 18, 2006 from http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/assessment.pdf

Many homeless students lack documents normally required for enrollment, which often results in classroom/curriculum placements that promote frustration and result in failure. This document offers teachers, school counselors, and other school personnel valuable tools and information to assist in making sound educational decisions for immediate placement of homeless children and youth in appropriate classroom settings.

National Center for Homeless Education. (2006). *Standards and indicators of quality McKinney-Vento programs, 2006 revisions.* Retrieved January, 3, 2006 from http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/st_and_ind_2006_rev.doc

The Standards and Indicators of Quality were developed collaboratively by homeless education program representatives from around the country that participated in NCHE's 2001 Standards and Indicators Work Group. The standards express general characteristics of high quality homeless education programs; the indicators are specific concrete evidences that can be counted or measured in order to assess the degree to which the standard is being met. This 2006 revision was developed by NCHE in collaboration with Work Group members.

National Center for Homeless Education. (2006, April). *Title I and homelessness*. Retrieved April 6, 2006 from http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/titlei.pdf

This updated brief identifies the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act dealing with the provision of services to homeless children and youth under Title I, Part A. Although homeless students are included in Part A's target population of disadvantaged students, the high mobility, trauma, and deep poverty associated with homelessness create unique educational barriers and challenges. This brief explains how the McKinney-Vento Act intersects with Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and offers strategies for effective collaboration and implementation.

National Center for Homeless Education. (2006, February). *Unaccompanied youth.* Retrieved April 6, 2006 from http://www.serve.org/nche/products_list.php#issue_briefs

School may be the only safe and stable environment available for unaccompanied youth. Yet, without a parent or guardian to advocate for them, they often face unique barriers to enrolling and succeeding in school. This updated issue brief identifies the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act that deal with unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness and offers strategies for identifying these youth and implementing the Act to serve them most effectively.

National Center for Homeless Education. (2006, March). *When legal guardians are not present: Enrolling students on their own.* Retrieved March 6, 2006 from http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/guardianship.pdf

This NCHE brief is designed to assist with the enrollment of unaccompanied youth. It includes an explanation of the McKinney-Vento Act enrollment requirements and gives some best practice suggestions from school districts such as developing a caregiver form to replace traditional proof of guardianship, developing collaborative relationships with others serving youth, and ensuring that enrollment staff understand the rights of unaccompanied youth and procedures for their immediate enrollment. The brief concludes with a sample Caregiver's Authorization Form to request contact information from caregivers and establish their responsibilities.

National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. (2006). *Homelessness and young children: Early childhood care and education* Retrieved June 30, 2006 from http://www.nectac.org/%7Epdfs/pubs/homeless.pdf

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC), funded by the U.S. Department of Education, supports the implementation of the early childhood provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This annotated mini-bibliography from NECTAC's Clearinghouse on Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education provides resources that address the needs and educational rights of young children experiencing homelessness, as well as strategies for working with homeless children and their families in early childhood care and education programs.

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. (2006, May). *Homeless education advocacy manual: Disaster edition.* Retrieved December 6, 2006 from http://www.nlchp.org/content/pubs/DisasterAdvocacy_May06.pdf

The Law Center seeks to prevent and end homelessness by pressing for solutions that address the causes of homelessness and not just its symptoms. This NLCHP manual is designed for a broad range of advocates and families who want to address the educational needs of children and youth displaced from their homes due to a disaster. It includes information about topics such as which students are considered homeless under federal law, methods of advocating for individual students, methods of advocating for system-wide change, securing immediate school enrollments, ensuring stable school placements, and accessing necessary and beneficial services such as transportation and academic assistance.

Norris-Shortle, C., Melley, A., Kiser, L., Levey, E., Cosgrove, K., & Leviton, A. (2006, March). Targeted interventions for homeless children at a therapeutic nursery. *Zero to Three, 26*(4), 49-56.

Each of these Baltimore authors is either from the University of Maryland School of Medicine or the Kennedy Krieger Institute, a facility that offers patient care to children and adolescents with pediatric developmental disabilities and provides special education and research focused on issues related to those youth.

This article describes a study of 99 mothers and their young homeless children conducted by PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs, the University of Maryland Center for Infant Studies, and the Kennedy Krieger Institute. The research, which was conducted at PACT's Therapeutic Nursery for homeless infants and toddlers, looked at the effects of homelessness on young children's communication and play skills. It also examined difficulties in parent-child attachment, which are prevalent among many of the families with children enrolled at the Nursery. The study found that Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training (NCAST) scores in each of the main areas measured improved significantly over the course of time spent in the therapeutic nursery.

Pane, J., McCaffrey, D., Tharp-Taylor, S, Asmus, G., & Stokes, B. (2006). *Student displacement in Louisiana after the hurricanes of 2005*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Gulf States Policy Institute.

This technical report documents the short-term effects of Louisiana student movements after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in order to help guide educators and policymakers in their continued response to this disaster as well as in their planning and preparations for future events. The focus is on the students' experiences during the following academic year, the effects of the displacement on schools and their students, and the policies adopted in response to serving displaced students.

The authors found that policies and resources to help teachers manage their own hurricane-related problems and mental health needs may improve the services those teachers can provide to students. They also conclude that a national system to coordinate sharing of student information across state boundaries would benefit state and local education officials by providing better access to complete and accurate student records.

Pecora, P., Kessler, R., O'Brien, K., White, C., Williams, J., Hiripi, E., et al. (2006). Educational and employment outcomes of adults formerly placed in foster care: Results from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study. *Children and Youth Services Review, 28*(12), 1459-1481.

The authors of this study, from a variety of universities and child advocacy organizations, evaluated the intermediate and long-term effects of family foster care on adult functioning. The study, using a sample of 659 young adults from public and private child welfare agencies, showed that foster care alumni completed high school at a rate comparable to the general population, but a disproportionately high number of them received a GED; and their completion rates for postsecondary education were low. Consequently, many were in fragile economic situations, with more than one in five experiencing homelessness after leaving foster care. Positive placement history, e.g., very stable placement(s), was one factor cited that reduces significantly the number of undesirable outcomes in education. In accordance with the placement instability, nearly one-third of the alumni reported 10 or more school changes from elementary through high school.

Pecora, P., Williams, J., Kessler, R., Hiripi, E., O'Brien, K., Emerson, J., Herrick, M., and Torres, D. (2006, August). Assessing the educational achievements of adults who were formerly placed in family foster care. *Child and Family Social Work, 11*(3), 220–231.

The authors of this study (from Casey Family Programs, three universities, and an education foundation) present case records and interviews concerning educational achievements of 1087 foster care alumni in 23 communities across the country between 1966 and 1998. Because the alumni were older than most foster care follow-up studies, a more extensive picture of educational achievement was possible. High school graduation and college enrollment rates were comparable to or even greater than those of the general population, but the high number of alumni completing high school with a GED and the college dropout rates were a concern. Predictors of high school completion while in foster care, such as fewer placement changes, extracurricular activities, and independent living training, are presented, along with recommendations for improving educational and vocational preparation.

Ray, N. (2006). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: An epidemic of homelessness.* National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and National Coalition for the Homeless. Retrieved December 20, 2006 from http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/HomelessYouth.pdf

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute is a think tank dedicated to research, policy analysis, and strategy development to advance greater understanding and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Based on the task force's review of research, this 192-page report examines the causes of homelessness among lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth; summarizes research on critical problems affecting them; includes profiles of LGBT homeless youth; and analyzes the federal government's response to youth homelessness. It includes five sections contributed by social service agencies that detail some model programs they have developed to improve service delivery to LGBT homeless youth.

Stormont, M. (2006). Nowhere to turn: Homeless youth. In D. Capuzzi & D. Gross (Eds.), *Youth at risk: a prevention resource for counselors, teachers and parents (*4th ed.*)* (pp. 401-424). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

In this chapter, the author describes overall family homelessness with specifics about the consequences of homelessness for children and youth. Then, based on a case study, she offers some solutions for ending homelessness that can be addressed at individual, family, school, and societal levels. She encourages communities to design and implement interventions to ensure homeless children and youth receive a quality education. Following are intervention strategies for parents, counselors, teachers, and others, and a discussion of possible intervention adaptations for subpopulations, such as those with academic and emotional problems, single mothers, and those of different cultures. The article concludes with a discussion of research concerning youths living on the streets and some best practices in dealing with those young people.

Thrane, L., Hoyt, D., Whitbeck, L., & Yoder, K. (2006). Impact of family abuse on running away, deviance, and street victimization among homeless rural and urban youth. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 30*(10), 1117-1128.

Although various risk factors have been linked to runaway behavior, no systematic investigation of the impact of size of community on runaway behavior had been done. So, these authors from sociology departments of three U.S. universities designed this study to compare runaways from smaller cities and rural areas to their urban counterparts. Their findings indicate that adolescents exposed to neglect and sexual abuse ran away earlier and were more likely to be victimized on the street. Rural adolescents who experienced higher levels of physical abuse relied more heavily on deviant subsistence strategies and remained in abusive homes longer than their urban counterparts. The study concluded that rural youth subjected to elevated levels of familial abuse are at greater risk of deviant subsistence strategies, which increase the likelihood of street victimization.

U.S. Department of Education. (2006). 2006 Report to Congress. Retrieved March 22, 2006 from http://www.serve.org/nche/legis_resources.php#mv

This report, submitted to Congress by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), provides information on programs supported under the McKinney-Vento Act and describes activities that ED has undertaken to address the educational needs of homeless children and youth. It incorporates information received from states about their homeless education programs and the children and youth they serve. The report includes a summary of data received from states, information on barriers to the education of homeless children and youth, strategies used by school districts to remove these educational barriers, and a nationwide status report on homeless education.

Zinn, A., DeCoursey, J., Goerge, R., Courtney, M. (2006). *A Study of Placement Stability in Illinois.* Retrieved May 11, 2006 from the Chapin Hall Center for Children website http://www.chapinhall.org/article_abstract.aspx?ar=1423

Chapin Hall is a policy research center whose work centers on issues affecting children. This report details the findings from the first phase of a multi-year study examining the prevalence, nature, and predictors of placement instability in substitute care and is one of the most comprehensive efforts made thus far to examine the issue of placement instability.

The findings reveal that the average number of placements children experience could be reduced by placing them with relatives, giving them initial stability without the need for a subsequent change in placement. The authors use findings concerning workers' assessments of the causes of placement moves, recommendations for services needed to stabilize placements, and positive results of treatment foster homes to argue that foster-family-centered services may mitigate placement instability.

Appendix P:
National Partners in Homeless Education

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) partners with other national organizations to support the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The national partners in homeless education collaborate to produce publications and other resources, discuss emerging issues, provide leadership to the homeless education field, develop training resources, and host professional development events.

Appendix P contains:

- National Partners in Homeless Education Contact List

National Partners in Homeless Education Contact List

American Bar Association Legal Center for Foster Care and Education

Contact: Kathleen McNaught, Project Director
Phone: (202) 662-1966
E-mail: *mcnaughk@staff.abanet.org*
Website: *http://www.abanet.org/child/education/home.shtml*

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)

Contact: Barbara Duffield, Policy Director
Phone: (202) 364-7392
E-mail: *bduffield@naehcy.org*
Website: *http://www.naehcy.org*

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)

Contact: Diana Bowman, Director
Phone: (336) 315-7453
Toll-free Helpline: 800-308-2145
E-mail: *dbowman@serve.org*
Website: *http://www.serve.org/nche*

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP)

Contact: Joy Moses, Education Staff Attorney
Phone: (202) 638-2535
E-mail: *jmoses@nlchp.org*
Website: *http://www.nlchp.org*

Appendix Q: Resources and Services Available Through NCHE

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) provides research, resources, and information enabling communities to address the educational needs of children experiencing homelessness. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the Center serves as a clearinghouse of information for people seeking to remove or overcome educational barriers and improve educational opportunities and outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness. The Center also supports educators and service providers through producing training and awareness materials and providing training at regional and national conferences and events.

Appendix Q contains:

- NCHE Helpline and Listserv brochure

Additional Resources:

- **Homeless Education Helpline - 800-308-2145 or *homeless@serve.org***: NCHE's Homeless Education Helpline offers assistance to:
  - Community organizations and members interested in networking on behalf of homeless children and their families.
  - Parents needing contact information concerning school enrollment, transportation and other school-related issues, shelter locations, social services, health departments, and other community services.
  - People with an interest in federal and state legislation protecting the rights of homeless children and youth.
  - School personnel seeking information about homeless education programs, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, or promising practices in homeless education.
  - Shelter providers seeking assistance for homeless families with school enrollment and access to appropriate educational opportunities and services.

- **Homeless Education Listserv**: NCHE's Homeless Education Listserv provides colleagues across the nation with a forum for communicating about emerging issues in the field of homeless education, including the application of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and strategies for educating and protecting the rights of homeless children and their families. To subscribe, send an e-mail request to *homeless@serve.org*.

- **NCHE Website**: NCHE's website (*http://www.serve.org/nche*) is a comprehensive source of information on supporting the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Website highlights include:
  - Best practices and model programs
  - Disaster planning and response resources
  - Information by topic
  - Legislative information
  - Online forum with downloadable and customizable tools and resources
  - State and local resources
- **Publications and Products**: NCHE provides many publications and products to the homeless education community at no charge. For a complete listing of NCHE publications and products, visit *http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php*.

HOMELESS EDUCATION LISTSERV

Would you like to communicate with colleagues across the nation about emerging issues within homeless education? If so, the **Homeless Education listserv** is for you! The listserv is hosted by the National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE (NCHE). To subscribe to the listserv, please e-mail to ***bhartnes@serve.org***.

NCHE HELPLINE

800-308-2145, *homeless@serve.org*

Do you need information on how to help highly mobile students? Please call the NCHE helpline for fast assistance. The NCHE helpline offers assistance to:

- **Parents** needing contact information concerning school enrollment, transportation and other school related issues, shelter locations, social services, health departments, and other community services.
- **School personnel** seeking information about homeless education programs, McKinney-Vento legislation, or promising practices in homeless education.
- **Shelter providers** seeking assistance for homeless families with school enrollment and access to appropriate educational opportunities.
- **Community organizations** and individuals interested in networking on behalf of homeless children and their families.
- **All persons with interest** in federal or state legislation protecting the rights of homeless children and youth to a free and appropriate public education.

Supporting the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE
P.O. Box 5367
Greensboro, NC 27435
Phone: 336-315-7453 / Fax: 336-315-7457
E-mail: homeless@serve.org
Website: www.serve.org/nche