



engageok | FEDERAL PROGRAMS
SUMMIT

Education for Homeless Children and Youth:

Guide to Developing an Effective School
District Homeless Education Plan

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Today's Agenda

- What is a protocol?
- What are the benefits of having a protocol?
- Strategies to develop, implement, or improve a homeless student protocol:
 - Based on McKinney-Vento Act requirements
 - Issues to consider for inclusion
 - Possible collaborators

What is a Protocol?

- Detailed plan with set of standard procedures
- Formal agreement or understanding
- Specific set of rules that all parties involved understand and follow to create a predictable, logical sequence of action
- Rules, guidelines, or customs of a group that should be observed by all parties

Why Create a Protocol?

- Ensures that all staff know who does what, when, and that will:
 - Reduce delays in enrollment and attendance
 - Improve consistency of responses within schools and school districts
 - Create more positive interactions with community organizations
 - Increase appropriate service provision and referrals
 - Enrich relationships with students and parents

What Does A Protocol Look Like

- Set of policies and guidelines for action
- Checklists for what needs to be done
- Tailored for specific role groups involved in serving homeless children and youth
- Consistent forms used throughout the LEA
- Clear roles and responsibilities
- Flexible enough to be revised and responsive to emerging issues

Who Needs to be Involved?

- Parents and unaccompanied homeless youth
- School secretaries, registrars, and enrollment staff
- School Resource Officers and attendance officers
- Program administrators (Special Ed, Child Nutrition, Title I, Migrant, Early Childhood)
- Principals and teachers
- Transportation directors and bus drivers
- Student services staff
- Shelter-based school liaisons

How is a Protocol Implemented?

- Determine what authorization or support you need from district leadership
- Decide how to include stakeholder input
- Plan for barriers you may encounter and ways to address
- Set a schedule and stick with the timeline
- Communicate protocol

Basis of the Protocol

- Liaison and LEA Responsibilities
- Identification and enrollment
- Link homeless children and youth to educational and related services
- Inform parents and guardians of their child's rights
- Provide opportunities to participate in children's education
- Post public notices
- Mediate disputes

Basis of the Protocol (cont.)

- Inform parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth of available services, including transportation
- Collaborate and coordinate with State Coordinator, community, and school personnel
- Review and revise policies that act as a barrier: enrollment, transportation, immunizations, residency, birth certificates, school records, other documentation, guardianship
- Give special attention to homeless children and youth not already attending school

Helpful Resources

- LEA Needs Assessment (LEA Toolkit Appendix 15D)
<https://nche.ed.gov/homeless-liaison-toolkit/>
- Tasks and Priorities (LEA Toolkit Chapter 20)
<https://nche.ed.gov/homeless-liaison-toolkit/>
- McKinney-Vento Standards and Indicators
<https://nche.ed.gov/?s=standards+and+indicators>
- Local Homeless Education Liaison brief
<https://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/liaisons.pdf>

Posting Educational Rights

- NCHE's educational rights posters

<https://nchehelpline.org>



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

IF YOUR FAMILY LIVES IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:

- In a shelter
- In a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation
- In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station
- Doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship

Your school-age children may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

Your eligible children have the right to:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education.
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
- Enroll in the local school, or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is your preference and is feasible.
- If the school district believes that the school you select is not in the best interest of your children, then the district must provide you with a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal its decision.
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if you request this.
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to your children's needs.

If you believe your children may be eligible, contact the local liaison to find out what services and supports may be available. There also may be supports available for your preschool-age children.

Local Liaison: State Coordinator:

NCHE

1-800-308-2145 • homeless@serve.org • www.serve.org/nche

Places to Post Educational Rights

- Homeless service providers
- Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHYA) programs/shelters
- Local human/social service agencies
- Faith-based agencies
- Food banks
- Bus stations
- Preschool programs
- After-school programs
- Public health clinics
- Weekly motels
- Laundromats
- 24-hour stores
- Literacy Council
- YMCA/YWCA
- Beauty/barber schools
- Public library
- Grocery stores

Best Practice

- Include McKinney-Vento information in district website, student handbook, and on calendar
 - Homeless education overview
 - Eligibility criteria
 - Information about family and youth homelessness
 - Causes, living circumstances, social and academic consequences
 - Contact info: Local liaison, State Coordinator, NCHE

Building Awareness

- Create an annual calendar for training:
 - School staff: include various groups
 - Community agencies and organizations
- Provide information on:
 - Family and youth homelessness
 - Education program overview
 - Eligibility
 - Role of liaison and LEA
 - More information tailored to particular audience

Building Awareness (cont.)

- *Potential Warning Signs of Homelessness*
<https://nche.gov>
- NCHE homeless education awareness information
<https://nche.ed.gov>

Establishing Collaborations

Work together to establish procedures for homeless children and youth to receive services:

- Title I
- Title III
- Special Education
- Migrant Education
- School counselors
- School social workers
- Preschool programs
- Truancy and attendance officers
- Transportation
- Nurses
- Food services
- Family/Parent involvement centers

Establishing Collaborations (cont.)

- Ensure efficient and timely use of referrals between schools and community organizations:
 - Information-sharing policy
 - What will/will not be shared and with whom
 - Process for requesting and sharing information
 - Memorandum of understanding (MOU)
 - Joint intake forms
- More information on collaboration at:
<https://nche.ed.gov>

During Enrollment

- Include questionnaire in all student packets:
 - List eligible living situations addressed in the law
 - Define unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY)
- Sample enrollment forms at:
 - <https://sde.ok.gov>
 - <https://nche.ed.gov>

Enrollment: Staff Procedures

- Provide policy for front office and enrollment staff that establishes:
 - Guidance on when to refer families to liaison
 - Conditions when other staff may determine eligibility
 - Expectations for confidentiality
 - Where to discuss homelessness
 - With whom to share information
 - Steps to ensure all siblings are identified
 - Expectations for noting homeless status in records

Enrollment: Staff procedures (cont.)

- Tips for talking with families
 - Display non-judgmental manner
 - Convey interest in student's well-being
 - Questions to ask or avoid
- Substitute terms for “homeless”
 - In transition
 - Living in a temporary situation
 - Displaced

Enrollment: Staff Procedures (cont.)

- Provide staff with talking points in checklist format:

- Definition of homeless
- Education rights
 - Include referrals for transportation and meals
- Options for school selection
 - Refer to NCHE's brief, *Guiding the Discussion on School Selection*

<https://nche.ed.gov/school-selection/>

BEST PRACTICES IN HOMELESS EDUCATION
Guiding the Discussion on School Selection

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act guarantees a child qualified as homeless the right to attend one of two schools: the school of origin or the local attendance area school. This brief explains the relevant legal provisions and provides a framework to assist in the decision-making process. For the McKinney-Vento (M.V.) definition of "homeless," see the panel to the left.

Which School?
The local educational agency (LEA or school district) 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 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
- 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. [M.V. 722(g)(3)(a)]

Schools Defined
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" [M.V. 722(g)(3)(G)]
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" [M.V. 722(g)(3)(A)(ii)]

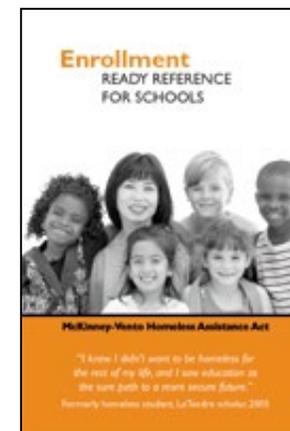
Best Interest
"Best Interest"—In determining the best interest of the child or youth under subparagraph (A), the local educational agency shall—

- 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;

Continued on the next page

Enrollment: Staff Procedures (cont.)

- Assistance for acquiring missing records
- Access to dispute resolution
 - Immediate referral to liaison
- Completed checklist with student information should be provided to liaison
- Additional Resource
 - *Enrollment: Ready reference for Schools*
<https://nche.ed.gov/enrolling/>



Enrollment Follow-up: Staff Procedures

- Missing documents and immunizations
 - Who follows up and when
 - Referral process
 - Procedures to pay for required documents, e.g., birth certificates, health records

Enrollment Follow-up: Staff Procedures (cont.)

- Suspected abduction
 - Enroll in school immediately
 - Contact National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
<http://www.missingkids.com> or
1-800-THE-LOST
 - Requests for information are confidential



Services: Staff Procedures

- Develop form for student needs and services
 - Academic
 - Post-secondary planning for high school students
 - Food
 - Housing
 - Health services
 - School clothing and supplies
 - Other

Services: Staff Procedures (cont.)

- Title I, Part A assistance for homeless students
 - Schedule regular meetings in advance with Title I Coordinator
 - Provide data to inform services
 - Jointly determine set-aside amount with Title I Coordinator
 - Develop process to request and access Title I, Part A funds

Follow-up with Students and Families

- Education Plan (same concept as IEP)
 - Meeting of all involved parties
 - List student needs
 - Establish how school will address needs
 - Create form (with timeline) to monitor grades, attendance, behavior referrals, etc.

Follow-up with Students and Families (cont.)

- Conversation with student
 - How often, what to look for/ask, how to follow up
- Check on family's living situation to determine eligibility for next school year
 - Who is responsible, when, and how

Records Safety and Confidentiality: Good Practices

- Records access and release
 - Who will have internal records access? How?
 - Who can release records? To whom?
 - Require signed records request form
 - Maintain log of all record requests
 - Have local liaison sign off on records sent outside district and any information released over the phone

Records Safety and Confidentiality: Good Practices (cont.)

- Ask family/domestic violence shelters and other service providers about restraining orders or custody issues affecting records release
 - Keep copy of protective order in student file
 - Attach an “alert” function to student information database to highlight restricted access
 - Provide form to “opt out” of public sharing of student directory information

Records: End of Year Reporting

- School districts must submit end of year data to State Department of Education
 - Create a process to ensure the accuracy of the data
 - Work with the district enrollment, IT and data staff
 - Consider requiring liaison approval before data is submitted to the state
 - If liaison does not enter data, ensure annual training for those who do

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY)

- Many LEAs report having informal procedures
- Written procedures may
 - Limit liability and negligence issues
 - Reduce miscommunication with youth that results in absences, inappropriate disciplinary action, and dropouts

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (cont.)

- Sample caregiver form at:

http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/toolkit/app_d.pdf

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

UHY: Policy and Procedure

- Enrollment
 - Who can enroll – youth, caregiver, or liaison?
 - Can someone besides liaison make placement decisions? Who? When?
 - Who offers and arranges transportation and other services?
- Disputes
 - Assign an advocate or have the liaison help youth

UHY: Policy and Procedure (cont.)

- Permissions
 - Medication log
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Attendance and discipline
 - Class schedule changes
 - Field trips

UHY: Policy and Procedure (cont.)

- Academic and Activity Fees
 - What and when to waive
 - Procedure for requesting payment of fees
 - Who can initiate process
- Discipline and Attendance
 - Considerations for alternate schedules
 - Considerations for absences due to homelessness
- Credit Accrual
 - How to determine credits earned
 - Credit recovery, chunking, etc.

UHY: Policy and Procedure (cont.)

- Determine safety of living situation
 - Who determines
 - Identify process for determination
 - Youth interview, home visit, etc.
 - Provide referrals for services
- Explain reporting requirements to UHY
 - Make report with full knowledge of youth

Putting It All Together

- Communicating information to people who need to know
 - Create LEA handbook with McKinney-Vento information
 - Ensure consistency across the district
 - Compensate for loss of knowledge/experience due to high turnover of school staff
 - Staff newsletters and meetings
 - School newsletters and program announcements
 - Post forms where staff can easily access

Putting It All Together (cont.)

- Additional considerations
 - Managing turnover
 - Evaluating program effectiveness
- Resource for developing handbook
 - Local Homeless Education Liaison Toolkit
 - <https://nche.ed.gov>
 - OSDE
 - <https://sde.ok.gov>

Overcoming Resistance

- Draw on administrative supports
- Utilize data to make the case for changes
- Focus on benefits to staff as well as to homeless children and youth
- Phase in changes gradually

For More Information

- NCHE website
<https://center.serve.org/nche/>
- NCHE helpline
800-308-2145 or homeless@serve.org
- State Coordinator for Homeless Education
 - Tammy Smith
405-522-3260
Tammy.Smith@sde.ok.gov

Q&A

