McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Manual

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YSGA McKinney-Vento Homeless Manual MVH Liaison Lauren Kielbasa kielbasa@ysga.org

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Introduction

Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Pennsylvania (ECYEH)

The Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program was authorized by Title VII, Subtitle B of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act of 1987, and more recently under the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act. This was the first comprehensive federal law dealing with the problem of homelessness in America. Per the McKinney-Vento Act (for full text, go to this United States Department of Education website at (www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg116.html), Pennsylvania's primary goal for its ECYEH Program is to educate local education agencies (LEA) and other entities who work with children, youth and families, on the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness. They should also work collaboratively to eliminate barriers that may impede enrollment, attendance, or receipt of services that support academic success – including special student populations such as preschool-aged children experiencing homelessness, unaccompanied youth and out-of-school youth. The ECYEH Program provides support for activities or services that enable these children and youth to enroll, attend and succeed in school. The program is authorized to provide funds through the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) to coordinate the enrollment and delivery of services for the educational success of children and youth experiencing homelessness. This booklet is a brief overview of some important issues surrounding child homelessness – such as who they are, how they are affected by homelessness and their available educational choices and federal rights. The booklet should raise awareness regarding students experiencing homelessness.

The Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program has evolved from the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program that was established in 1988 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

One of the main goals of the ECYEH Program is to help each student experiencing homelessness have a school life that is as regular as possible.

The ECYEH Program informs local school districts of their responsibilities to children and youth experiencing homelessness, increases awareness about the needs of children experiencing homelessness, reveals and overcomes possible educational barriers, explains current legislation and policies, and provides practical tips for working with students experiencing homelessness.

Pennsylvania's network of eight regional offices ensures that the educational needs of students experiencing homelessness are met.

The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, passed in the late 1980s, was the first comprehensive federal law dealing with the problems of homelessness in America. The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act initiated the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001. This Act was revised per the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.

Visit the PDE's Homeless Education web page for additional information.

For additional information, see the ECYEH Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homeless Program - <u>https://homeless.center-school.org/</u>

Purpose

The purpose of this manual is to provide school personnel with information and procedures to ensure the effective implementation of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law that ensure children and youth who do not have permanent housing are able to go to school. It gives children and youth rights to immediately enroll in school, get transportation to school-based activities, and succeed in school.

Definition of Homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act:

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homeless children and youths as those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The law provides several examples of situations that meet the definition. This includes children and youths:

- Sharing housing due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Living in hotels, motels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate housing;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Abandoned in hospitals;
- Living in a public or private place not designated for, or normally used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar places; and/or
- living in one of the above circumstances and who are migratory.

Definitions

Enrollment: The terms 'enroll' and 'enrollment' include attending classes and participating fully in school activities [42 U.S.C. § 11434a (1)]

Homelessness: A family or student is considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento definition if they are in any of these places or situations:

- Public or private shelters
- Public or private places not designated for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations such as vehicles, parks, motels, campgrounds, etc.
- Living with a parent in a domestic violence shelter
- Living with relatives or friends due to lack of housing
- Living in transitional housing programs
- Runaway children (under 18 years of age) and children and youth who have been abandoned or forced out of their home by parents or other caretakers (unaccompanied youth). These children may be in temporary shelters awaiting assistance from social service agencies, or may live alone on the street or move from place to place among family members, friends or acquaintances
- Children of migrant families who lack adequate housing
- Children abandoned in hospitals

* Youth awaiting foster care placement include those who are placed in: emergency, interim or respite foster care; kinship care; evaluation or diagnostic centers; or placements for the sole purpose of evaluation. On a case-by-case basis, through coordination between the school and all involved agencies, it can be determined if the youth is "awaiting foster care placement." **Children in foster care are not considered homeless.**

Available Services for Eligible Students

- Connections with local resources
- Enrollment and Application approval
- Internet options
- Removal of barriers to education
- Provision of needs under Title One Eligibility Guidelines

Website Postings

Include the following items on your school website in the McKinney-Vento/Homeless:

- Identification of Homeless Liaison: Name, Address, Phone, and Email
- Privacy and Homelessness: FERPA 2016
- FAQ on Education Rights of Children and Youth in Homeless Situations
- Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care
- Grievance Procedures

School District Homeless Liaison

Per the federal law, every school district must assign a person (a liaison) to ensure that students experiencing homelessness are identified, enrolled and able to succeed in school. The liaison is responsible for identification of McKinney-Vento eligible students and supporting the needs of these students. The liaison:

- Assesses McKinney-Vento eligibility and needs of students and families experiencing homelessness
- Interprets laws relating to student homelessness
- Works as a team member to remove educational barriers
- Provides case management
- Monitors student progress
- Makes referrals to facilitate appropriate services to ensure full attendance and access to an appropriate education

Following are the homeless liaison requirements from Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act, July 27, 2016.

- Identification of homeless children and youths
- Preschool-aged homeless children, including clarification that liaisons must ensure that these children and their families have access to and receive services, if eligible, under LEA-administered preschool programs, including Head Start, Pact C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities) and other preschool programs administered by the LEA
- Collaboration and coordination with other service providers, including public and private child welfare and social services agencies; law enforcement agencies; juvenile and family courts; agencies providing mental health services; domestic violence agencies; child care providers; runaway and homeless youth centers; providers of services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act; and providers of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing, including public housing agencies, shelter operators, and operators of transitional housing facilities
- Professional development and technical assistance at both the State and local levels
- Removing enrollment barriers, including barriers related to missed application or enrollment deadlines, fines, or fees; records required for enrollment, including immunization or other required health records, proof of residency, or other documentation or academic records, including documentation for credit transfer
- School stability, including the expansion of school of origin to include preschools and receiving schools and the provision of transportation until the end of the school year, even if a student becomes permanently housed

- Privacy of student records, including information about a homeless child or youth's living situation (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act/FERPA prohibits an LEA from disclosing personally identifiable information from students' education records without the consent of a parent or eligible student, unless an exception to FERPA's general consent rule applies p. 7, A-6, of the U.S. Department of Education's Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, July 27, 2016)
- The dispute resolution process
- Complete all form requirements for the state data base at https://egd.aiu3.net/ecyeh/Default.aspx# and ensure veracity and efficacy of identified information.
- The liaison also acts as a resource to school staff to inform, facilitate and support appropriate services.

Immediate Enrollment

It is important to remember that the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires the immediate enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness, even in the absence of records, normally required for enrollment. School districts' enrollment policies and practices must ensure that no barriers exist for these students/families.

Denying immediate enrollment to a student experiencing homelessness violates federal law and may place the student in danger in certain circumstances.

School Choice/School of Origin

According to federal law (see http://center.serve.org/nche/legis/mv.php), 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: "(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; (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 non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend." The federal law defines "School of Origin" as the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parent(s) or has been temporarily placed elsewhere. These families or youth are presently unable to establish "homes" on a permanent basis.

Transportation The McKinney-Vento Act requires every state and its LEAs to 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 in accordance with the following, as applicable. If the homeless child or youth.

 continues to live in the area served by the LEA in which the school of origin is located, transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the LEA in which the school of origin is located [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J) (iii)(I)].

2) begins living in an area served by another LEA but remains enrolled in the school of origin, the LEA of origin and the LEA 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 LEAs are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii)].

To counteract the educational disruption caused by students' mobility, the McKinney-Vento Act provides these students with the right to continue attending the school of origin, or enroll in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the same attendance area are eligible to attend, according to the student's best interest (BID). When determining a student's best interest, the following factors should be considered:

- 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

It is important to also consider the wishes of the parent/guardian and the student. Parents and youth should be informed of their school of origin rights and the available transportation services or other transportation options. The liaison can help set up transportation through coordination within the district and between other school districts.

Dispute Resolution Process

PDE must ensure that LEAs comply with requirements set forth in the McKinney-Vento Act including ensuring immediate enrollment, providing written notice to families concerning school selection, enrollment decisions and providing enrollment and pendency in the school of choice while a dispute is being resolved. PDE has developed procedures for the resolution of disputes regarding enrollment, school selection, homeless status and complaints of non-compliance with legal requirements pertaining to the education for homeless children and youths (for further information, visit www.education.pa.gov/homeless to see the Education for Homeless Youth Basic Education Circular, 42 U.S. §11432(g)(2)(A)), under Basic Education Circulars on the home page).

There are two dispute levels:

Level 1 – A dispute raised with an LEA, where a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth initiates the dispute. The LEA must issue a written disposition of the dispute within 20 business days after the liaison is notified of the dispute. The disposition is provided to the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth to explain the basis for the decision and advise the parent, guardian or youth of the right to appeal. All LEAs must inform families of the basis of their decision regarding enrollment or school selection, notify families of their right to remain in their school of choice pending resolution of the dispute, and explain the procedures for challenging the decision of the LEA.

Level 2 – A complaint filed with a McKinney-Vento Coordinator when a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth is dissatisfied with the LEA's disposition of a dispute or raising any issue of McKinney-Vento Act noncompliance files a complaint or appeal with a McKinney-Vento regional or site coordinator or with the state coordinator. For a list of coordinators, visit http://homeless.center-school.org. The child or youth remains in the school in which he or she is seeking enrollment until the complaint or appeal is resolved or until a disposition from a McKinney-Vento coordinator is received. Any dispute raised by a homeless family or youth via telephone, letter or any mode of communication is treated as a complaint.

Supporting Opportunities for School Success

In general, children who are homeless do not perform as well in school, have lower achievement scores, and more academic failure than housed students. These children need the stability of school and rely on academic support provided to them. These students often change schools frequently.

This can impact learning as students must adjust to new environments, new curricula, and new teachers and classmates, while still learning the same information other students are expected to master. The loss of a home can be traumatic, leaving children and youth with tumultuous feelings that can impact their social and intellectual well-being. Limited access to food, medical care and basic school supplies can also impact performance in the classroom.

The following strategies and programs can support students' academic success:

- Access to Head Start and preschool programs administered by the local education agency or within the community
- Academic support such as tutoring, afterschool programs and summer programs
- Referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
- According to federal law and PDE policy (see www.education.pa.gov/homeless), for enrollment of students:
- Educational agencies shall ensure that each homeless child has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youth. Homeless students may reside in shelters, hotels, motels, cars, tents or be temporarily doubled-up with a resident family because of

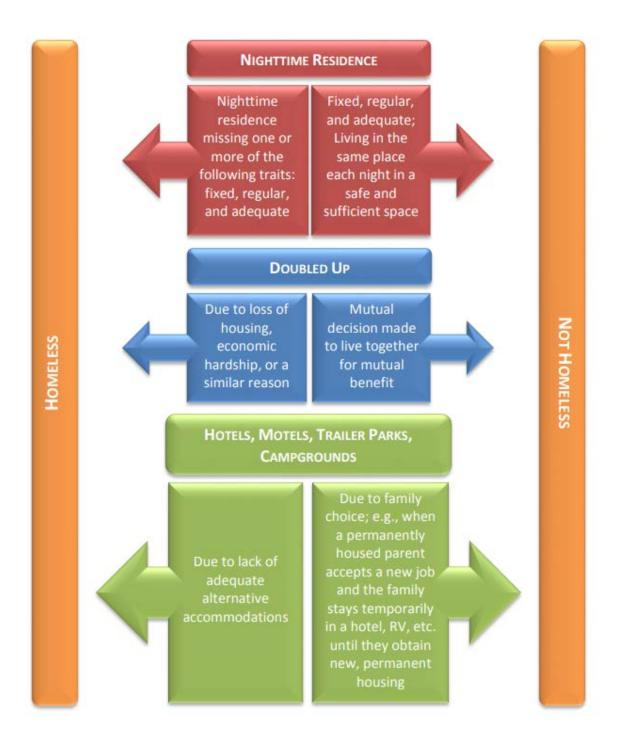
lack of housing. Homeless children and youth lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Included within the definition of homeless children and youth are those who are "awaiting foster care placement" and "unaccompanied homeless youth."

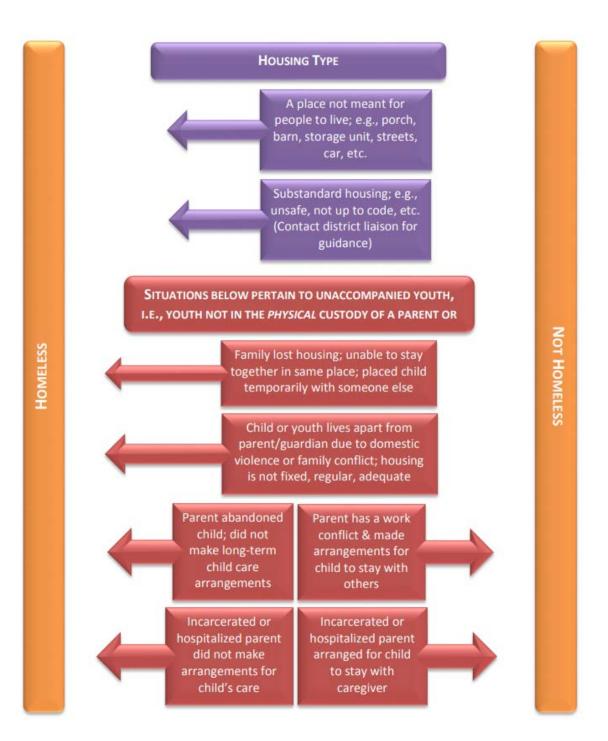
- Unaccompanied homeless youth may enroll without documents and without the help of an adult.
 Unaccompanied homeless youth includes any child who is "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian."
 Falling within this definition are students who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, or been abandoned or separated from their parent(s) or guardian(s).
- Homeless youth are entitled to immediate enrollment and their families are not required to prove residency regarding school enrollment. These students should be enrolled without delay, in the district where they are presently residing, or continue their education in the district of prior attendance.

Identification of Students Experiencing Homelessness

It cannot be emphasized enough that determining whether a particular child or youth fits the definition is a case-specific inquiry. General answers based on incomplete information or hypothetical situations will often be legally incorrect.

See Images Below:





Other Ways to Identify Students Who are Experiencing Homelessness

School employees must be aware of the silent signals students may present. These characteristics could be attributed to students with other issues as well as those students/families experiencing homelessness:

- Attendance at several schools
- More than one family at the same address
- Poor hygiene and grooming
- Hunger and hoarding food
- Vague when asked about proof of residency
- Some common statements used by homeless students/families may include:
 - "We've moved a lot."

"We're staying with relatives/friends while looking for a place."

"We're going through a bad time right now."

If homelessness is suspected, possible follow up questions:

- 1. Are you living in this household because you do not have stable housing?
- 2. Do you live in any of these situations?
- ____ sharing housing with relatives or others due to lack of housing
- ____ in a shelter or transitional living program
- ____ in a motel, hotel, park or campground due to lack of adequate housing
- ____ in a car or RV or in a public place (such as a bus station)
- ____ in sub-standard housing, such as an abandoned building
- _____ without a parent or guardian, or a teen (up to age 21) living independently
- ____ awaiting foster care placement
- ____ parents are migrant workers
- ____ in other situations that are not fixed, regular or adequate for nighttime residence
- 3. Would you be willing to talk/meet with our Homeless Liaison to discuss resources available to you?

The Importance of Coordination and Collaboration

Addressing the unique needs of students experiencing homelessness requires a coordinated and collaborative approach through which the student, the parent, the school, social service agencies and the public are aware and supportive of these families and their children. Local community agencies, service organizations, and public/private agencies on the local, county and regional levels can partner with and support LEAs in meeting the needs of students experiencing homelessness. The following are ways in which coordination and collaboration can be facilitated. Contact with the regional/site coordinator, Nicole Anderson, AIU3,(nicole.anderson@aiu3.net) ECYEH Regional Coordinator is encouraged.

School administrators can help the school board and local community to become more sensitive to the condition of homelessness. Principals can introduce the family and child to teachers, counselors and other staff, and give a tour of the school – this sets the tone for further parent involvement in the school. The office manager and enrollment staff can assist parents in filling out registration forms, with awareness that some parents may lack literacy skills. Teachers can discretely make accommodations for required homework, arrange tutoring, or provide or arrange for needed school supplies. The school nurse can contact the student's previous school to obtain immunization records and health records, or

receive verification by phone. Counselors, social workers, home and school visitors and school psychologists can help know the local community resources to make referrals for families in areas like housing, food, clothing and counseling; as well as making standard forms and information available about key school programs at each shelter. This includes materials on the school calendar, lunch and breakfast programs, and admission/withdrawal. Schools' transportation staff can arrange for children to be able to attend the school of origin if in the student's best interest, arrange bus stops to pick up students at the shelter first and drop them off last to ease the embarrassment of living at the shelter. Shelter personnel can be aware of school activities and schedules and help families and students fully participate in school functions.

Everyone involved with the student should observe warning signs for possible homelessness:

- A lack of educational continuity (many school moves)
- School attendance and transportation problems
- Poor health and nutrition
- Poor hygiene
- Lack of privacy and personal space after school
- Social and behavioral concerns
- Reactions or statements by the parent, guardian, child or youth

SERVING STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS WITH SET-ASIDE FUNDS

Title I, Part A requires school districts to reserve sufficient Title I funds to provide services to students experiencing homelessness that are comparable to those provided to students in Title I schools. These services may include providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children experiencing homelessness may live [20 U.S.C. 6313(c)(3)(A)].

Homeless set-aside funds may be used to provide comparable services to students experiencing homelessness who do not attend a Title I school, but also may be used to provide services to students experiencing homelessness, including those attending Title I schools, that are not ordinarily provided to other Title I students, including funding the local liaison position, and funding transportation to and from the school of origin [ED, 2017, p. 40, 20 U.S.C. § 6313(c)(3)(C)(ii)].

ALLOWABLE USAGES OF SET-ASIDE FUNDS

Two principles govern the usage of homeless set-aside funds:

1. The services must be reasonable and necessary to assist students experiencing homelessness to take advantage of educational opportunities (ED, 2017, p. 41).

2. The funds must be used only as a last resort when funds or services are not available from other public or private sources (ED, 2017, p. 41).

With these principles in mind, allowable usages of set aside funds may include, but are not limited to:

- items of clothing, particularly if necessary, to meet a school's dress or uniform requirement;
- clothing and shoes necessary to participate in physical education classes;
- student fees that are necessary to participate in the general education program;
- personal school supplies;
- birth certificates necessary to enroll in school;
- immunizations;
- food;
- medical and dental services;

- eyeglasses and hearing aids;
- counseling services to address anxiety related to homelessness that is impeding learning;
- outreach services to students living in shelters, motels, and other temporary residences;
- extended learning time (before and after school, Saturday classes, summer school) to compensate for lack of quiet time for homework in shelters or other overcrowded living conditions;
- tutoring services, especially in shelters or other locations where homeless students live;
- parental involvement specifically oriented to reaching out to parents of homeless students;

SCOPE, INTENSITY, AND TYPE OF SERVICES

Due to the many and varied needs of students experiencing homelessness, the Title I, Part A services provided to these students may need to be greater in scope and intensity, and/or different in nature than those normally provided to non-homeless students. For example, a student experiencing homelessness who is participating in tutoring as part of a targeted assistance program also may need counseling services due to exposure to domestic violence or other trauma that may be affecting learning. Alternatively, a district may provide an article of clothing to a student experiencing homelessness in order to allow the student to meet the school dress code. These additional services that may go beyond what is provided to all Title I, Part A students are allowable, given that they are supplemental to the regular school program, but also ensure that the student can effectively take advantage of educational opportunities.

DETERMINING TITLE I, PART A SET-ASIDE AMOUNTS

Determining an appropriate homeless set-aside amount requires coordination between the school district's Title I, Part A and McKinney-Vento programs. The set-aside may be determined based on an assessment of the needs of students experiencing homelessness within the district, considering both the number and needs of these students [20 U.S.C. § 6313(c)(3)(C)(i)]; this assessment may be the same as the needs assessment conducted as part of the district's McKinney-Vento subgrant application process [42 U.S.C. § 11433(b)(1)]. Further, the set-aside must be determined based on the total Title I, Part A allocation received by the district, and reserved prior to any allowable expenditures or transfers by the district [20 U.S.C. § 6313(c)(3)(B)]. Districts should establish their own methods for determining their homeless set-aside while working with the State offices for Title I and McKinney-Vento, as appropriate. When determining the set-aside amount, the Title I director and local liaison should partner to gather and review relevant data in order to ensure that sufficient Title I, Part A funds are reserved to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness. As a reminder, in determining the set-aside amount, districts should allow for the provision of services to meet the unique needs of homeless students who attend Title I, Part A schools that are above and beyond services provided through the regular Title I, Part A programs at those schools, in addition to the provision of services to Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness under Title I, Part A 5 NCHE INFORMAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOL NCHE's Local Educational Agency Informal Needs Assessment resource provide school districts with a series of questions, organized by topic, that may be used to determine the status of their district's services for children and youth experiencing homelessness, and to identify where to focus efforts to meet the most critical needs of these students. This resource may be helpful for determining the amount of your district's Title I, Part A homeless set-aside, and how these set-aside funds will be used. Visit https://nche.ed.gov/pr/needs-assess.php for more information. homeless students who do not attend Title I, Part A schools. Once a district has identified the needs of students experiencing homelessness to be addressed, the amount of funds necessary to provide services should be determined. In addition to planning interventions based on student needs, planned services should be of sufficient time and intensity to impact students' academic outcomes.

Possible methods for calculating the set-aside amount include

- determining a percentage of the district's Title I, Part A funds to reserve for the homeless set-aside;
- multiplying the number of students experiencing homelessness identified by the district by the Title I, Part A perpupil allocation;
- matching the amount of McKinney-Vento subgrant dollars received by the district, if applicable; or
- adjusting previous set-aside amounts based on past set-aside expenditures and trend data, such as the number
 of students experiencing homelessness identified, these students' academic outcomes and educational needs,
 and changes to the community's poverty levels and/or economy.

School/Health Records

The educating district should immediately enroll and begin to provide instruction. The receiving school district may contact the district of origin for oral confirmation that the child has been immunized. Oral confirmation between professionals is a sufficient basis to verify immunization with written confirmation to follow within 30 days. The instructional program should begin as soon as possible after the enrollment process is initiated and should not be delayed until the procedure is completed. The law specifies that information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation shall be treated as a student education record, and shall not be deemed to be directory information. (Section 722 (g)(3)(G)).

According to federal law, "(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), shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records, in accordance with subparagraph (D)" 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(c)(ii).

Complex Conditions

Doubled-Up

Doubled-up situations can be particularly confusing when making housing determinations, because it can be difficult to discern fixed housing from temporary. The law refers to this category of homelessness as "sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason" [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)(b)(i)]. According to data collected by the U.S. Department of Education, this category of nighttime residence is the type experienced by the largest number of students each year (NCHE, 2013).

If the reason the family or youth moved in with a family member or friend is clearly due to loss of housing or even job loss, it can be easy to determine that the housing fits the category of doubled-up. Similarly, sometimes shared housing is clearly inadequate and therefore easy to identify. However, some situations are less clear as homelessness can last from a few hours to many years and may involve a variety of circumstances. It is important to keep in mind that the reason for the lost housing is not defined in the law and can include a wide range of catalysts such as unpaid rent or mortgage payments on the part of the family or landlord, housing covenant violations, fires, natural disasters, and more. Additionally, there is no time limit on homelessness. As long as the student fits the definition of lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, the student will be eligible for McKinney-Vento services.

Not all doubled-up situations are homeless according to the law, but they do often provide a feasible option for families when shelters are unavailable or full. In the instance that a family has doubled-up with another, only the family who is temporarily staying in the housing should be considered homeless, with very rare exception. Liaisons should re-evaluate

the housing of homeless students at the beginning of each school year to verify that the student still lacks fixed, regular, and adequate housing.

**A MOW (Multiple Occupancy Waiver) may be required for families in doubled-up situations who are not experiencing homelessness.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Over time, the law has been adjusted through reauthorization to better meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness. One such adjustment includes the insertion of a definition for *unaccompanied youth* in law, along with information about rights specifically for unaccompanied homeless youth. An unaccompanied youth is a youth who is "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian" [42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(6)]. It is important to note that the definition of unaccompanied youth does not automatically indicate that the youth is homeless, but that the student is separated from the physical custody of a parent or guardian. In other words, not all unaccompanied youth are homeless. Any unaccompanied youth, however, who is residing in a situation that is not fixed, regular, or adequate, is considered a homeless unaccompanied youth. When making a determination about McKinney-Vento rights for youth, liaisons must determine if the student is both homeless and unaccompanied status can make the process less confusing. If the situation is not homeless, the youth is not afforded rights under the McKinney-Vento Act, even if the student is unaccompanied; in this instance, state or local policy will apply. It is also important to note that the definition discusses physical custody. A parent or guardian could still retain legal custody of a youth, but not have physical custody of the youth.

Pennsylvania's definition of UHY:

"Unaccompanied homeless youth" including any child who is "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." This includes youth who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, been abandoned by parents or guardians, or separated from their parents for any other reason.

Communication and collaboration among education and child welfare professionals is critical to support school stability and continuity for children in out-of-home care. The law requires child welfare and local education agencies to work together to promote school stability and continuity including trying to ensure children remain in the school in which they were enrolled at the time of placement when it is in their best interest. Best practice would suggest that decisions be made collaboratively between school personnel, child welfare agencies and any other individual involved in the child's case including the child, resource parent, child advocate and attorney. It is imperative that caseworkers and school district administration and staff work together to help ensure the educational progress of all students.

Substandard Housing

When considering the definition of homelessness, the term adequate is often associated with substandard housing. Substandard housing does not have a definition in federal law or rule. This can lead to frustration on the part of liaisons making eligibility determinations, but it also allows liaisons to have flexibility in making determinations that reflect regional norms and community standards that would be difficult to capture in a single definition applied to the entire country. One simple consideration for liaisons is to determine if the housing is up to state or local building codes and health and safety codes. If it is not, the housing is probably substandard and any student residing there would likely meet the definition of homeless due to inadequate housing. Examples of substandard housing could include homes:

- without adequate heat, electricity, or water;
- with unsafe heat sources or electrical service;
- with unsafe conditions, such as holes in flooring;
- with a kitchen or plumbing that is inoperable; or
- condemned by housing or other government authorities.

Inadequate or substandard housing can also refer to conditions that go beyond the structure of the building, such as overcrowding. As you consider if a home is adequate, it may be helpful to ask yourself, "Is this home safe? Does it meet basic needs and provide sufficient space for the individuals living in it?" If the answer is no to any part of those questions, the housing may be inadequate and indicate homeless conditions

Natural Disasters

Mental health experts consider returning to school a critical step in the healing process for children and youth whose lives have been disrupted by disasters (UCLA, n.d.). Going to school helps these students find the structure, normalcy, and routine that is essential to their health and wellbeing. Children and youth who are displaced by disasters, like other students in homeless situations, are forced to live in a variety of unstable, temporary arrangements. These arrangements include facilities set up by relief and community agencies, as well as motels, cars, campgrounds, and sharing the housing of others. Students displaced by disasters will generally meet the definition of homelessness in the McKinney-Vento Act.

Current Registration Procedures-New Students

Families who complete the McKinney-Vento eligibility form during enrollment will be processed for determination of MKV status:

- Using the recommended questions, the Homeless Liaison will contact the family to determine if the family is MKV eligible.
- Using the information from the form and gathered during communications with the family, the HL will provide resources for addressing barriers to education, basic need requirements, and other needs covered under Title 1 and the McKinney-Vento set-aside budget.
- If the HL finds that the family is eligible, she will approve and flag the enrollment through SchoolMint.
- The HL will also email the YSGA Admin team as a notification.

If the family has started an application in the parent portal, enrollment will accept their app immediately. If not, enrollment will contact the parent and inform them of their next steps.

All applicants will be able to respond to MKV questions in SchoolMint.

It is possible that a parent doesn't select the homeless reason on the enrollment documents, but the family in fact qualifies. If this is the case, enrollment will flag these families after speaking with them once the application comes in so that the school counselor (HL) team can reach out.

- Any MKV related questions/communications will be sent directly to the school counselor.
- If triggered as potential MKV based off the questions in SchoolMint, the MKV form will also auto populate in IC.] Enrollment will inform families and ask them to complete if they are able and to also be on aware that the HL will be reaching out.

When enrollment receives verification from the HL that a student is MKV, the team will find out where the student is in the process:

- If there has been no application started, the enrollment team will call the parent to inform them of what they need to do in the portal to get their application in
- If their application has been started and they just need to complete it, the enrollment team will make sure they can get in to complete and call for next steps
 - If there is a MKV form on file enrollment will note that admin verified student is MKV eligible
 - If there is no form on file, the enrollment approver will just make a note that admin has confirmed eligibility

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Sample Process: Teacher/Staff Referrals

Review Notes to determine if the Liaison has already assessed the student eligibility. If the student was not eligible or not contacted and you have further evidence regarding MV status, follow the steps below:

- Teacher/Staff emails the student/family information to the Liaison.
 - Include the following information in the body of the email:
 - Student First Initial, Last Name
 - Student ID
 - Summary of living conditions or other information
 - Best phone number or preferred form of contact by family if phone contact is not available
 - Immediate student/family needs, including internet, computers, transportation to state testing
 - Reasons for believing the student/family is eligible for MKV status

Appendix

Pennsylvania Resources

Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory GuidanceEducation for Homeless Youth Basic Education CircularPennsylvania Department of Education Homeless EducationPennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness ProgramCorporation for Supportive HousingHomeless Advocacy Project of the Philadelphia Bar AssociationHomes for the HomelessHousing Alliance of PennsylvaniaNational Alliance to End HomelessnessNational Center for Homeless EducationNational Coalition for the HomelessNational Law Center on Homelessness and PovertyNational Low Income Housing CoalitionNational Network 4 Youth

Shelter Directory https://directory.center-school.org/homeless/shelter/search

Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Site Contacts

Statewide Contacts

PA Department of Education

ECYEH State Coordinator	Center for Schools and Communities	Allegheny Intermediate Unit
		Data Compilation and Evaluation
Storm Camara, State Coordinator	Lynda Becker, Youth Development	Yolanda Yugar, Evaluation Specialist
Office (717) 772-2066	Coordinator	Office (412) 394-5801
scamara@pa.gov	Office (717) 763-1661 ext.156	Fax (412) 394-4998
	Fax (717) 763-2083	yolanda.yugar@aiu3.net
Carmen Medina, Division Chief	lbecker@csc.csiu.org	
Office (717) 783-6464		
Fax (717) 783-4392	Karen Lehman, Youth Development	
Mobile (717) 515-3824	Project Manager	
cmedina@pa.gov	Office (717) 763-1661 ext.x 166	
	Fax (717) 763-2083	
	klehman@csc.csiu.org	

Regional Contacts

There are eight regional sites in operation, with the state coordinator located in Harrisburg.

Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8
School District of Philadelphia	Berks County Intermediate Unit	Lincoln Intermediat e Unit	Allegheny Intermediate Unit		ARIN Intermediat e Unit	Luzerne Intermediate Unit	Bucks County Intermediate Unit
Al Quarles, Regional Coordinator Office (215) 400-6045 Fax (215) 400-4174 Mobile (267) 784-9956 abquarles@p hilasd.org	Kristen Hoffa, Regional Coordinator Office (610) 987-8509 Fax (610) 987-8400 Mobile (610) 207-7138 krihof@berk Siu.org	Sonia Pitzi, Regional Coordinator Office (717) 718-5924 Fax (717) 718-5943 Mobile (717) 253- 4862 <u>slpitzi@iu12</u> .org	Nicole Anderson, Regional Coordinator Office (412) 394-5894 Fax (412) 394- 5873 Mobile (412) 295-5718 nicole.anderso n@aiu3.net	Seneca Highlands IU #2 Anita Danielson, Assistant Executive Director Office (814) 887- 5512 ext.131 Fax (814) 887- 2157 Mobile (814) 331-8722 adanielson@iu 9.org Riverview IU Mary Miller, Intermediate Unit Liaison Office (814) 226-7103 Fax (814) 226- 4850 mmiller@riu6. Org	Andrea Sheesley, Regional Coordinato r Office (724) 463-5300 x1235 ext.1 235 Fax (724) 463-5315 asheesley@ iu28.org	Andrew Kuhl, Site Coordinator Office (570) 718-4697 akuhl@liu18. Org Jeff Zimmerman, Regional Coordinator Office (570) 718-4613 Fax (570) 287- 5721 Mobile (570) 301-4990 jzimmerman @liu18.org	Michelle Connor, Regional Coordinator Office (215) 348- 2940 ext.136 1 Fax (215) 340-1964 mconnor@b ucksiu.org
	Melissa DeMotta, Program Specialist Mobile (484) 955-9920 Office (610) 987-8509	Melissa Gosnell, Program Liaison Office (717) 718-5944 magosnell@ iu12.org	Tracey Finn, Community Liaison Office (412) 394-1351 Fax Mobile (412) 848-5467	Northwest Tri- County IU Yvonne Teed, Site Coordinator Office (814) 734-8392			Kathy Birsa, Site Coordinator Office (215) 348- 2940 ext.x13 60 kbirsa@buck
	meldem@be			<u>yvonne_teed@</u>			siu.org

rl	ksiu.org	tracey.finn@ai	iu5.org	
		u3.net		
Je	ennifer			
В	Barney, Site		Midwestern	
С	Coordinator		Intermediate	
0	Office (610)		Unit	
9	987-8509			
N	Nobile (484)		Bryda Drumm,	
5	513-0002		Intermediate	
je	enbar@ber		Unit Liaison	
<u>k</u> :	<u>siu.org</u>		Office (724)	
			652-6882	
T	Tabitha		Fax (724) 652-	
К	Kramer,		6882	
	Program		Mobile (724)	
	spedialist		967-1965	
	Office (610)		bryda.drumm	
	987-8509		<u>@miu4.org</u>	
	Nobile (610)			
	603-6162		Wendy	
	<u>abkra@ber</u>		Kinnear,	
<u>k</u> :	<u>ksiu.org</u>		Regional	
			Coordinator	
			Office (724)	
			458-	
			6700 ext.x1289	
			Fax (724) 458-	
			4468	
			Mobile (724)	
			730-4859	
			wendy.kinnear	
			@miu4.org	

Useful Links & Sample Documents

NAEHCY Publication: The Most Frequently Asked Questions on Education Right of Children and Youth in Homeless Situations

http://www.naehcy.org/educational-resources/naehcy-publications

NAEHCY: FERPA and Homelessness

http://www.naehcy.org/educational-resources/ferpa

ESSA: Children in Foster Care

http://www.naehcy.org/essa-and-children-foster-care

Issue Brief: Identifying Students in Homeless Situations

http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/identification.pdf

Issue Brief: Who is Homeless?

http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/who_is_homeless.pdf

Issue Brief: Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Services: Do's and Don'ts for Local Liaisons http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/verif_ll.pdf Issue Brief: *Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Veto Services: Do's and Don'ts for School Districts* <u>http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/verif_sch.pdf</u>

The NCHE Forum has a section dedicated to sample dispute resolution policies and forms. They can be accessed at:

http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_dispute.php

Questions to help determine if the student is eligible for assistance under the McKinney-Vento definition:

Why did the family move in together? Was it for mutual benefit or due to a crisis or other precipitating event? Is there a plan for the household to remain intact over a long term, or is it a short-term situation?

Where would the family be if they were not able to stay where they are? In a clearly homeless situation or in another apartment or house?

Does everyone have a bed to sleep in? Is the plumbing and electrical service safe? Is the housing otherwise adequate?

Is the family being added to the lease, or have they signed a lease?

Does the homeowner or renter have a legal right to force the family to leave without cause if they choose to do so?

Homeless Liaison Responsibilities

Policies & Procedures

Review local policies and procedures that 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 homeless 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 homeless liaison.)

Ensure that homeless students are identified by school personnel and other partners.

Enrollment & Access to Educational Services

Ensure that homeless students enroll in, and receive equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the LEA.

Assist children and youth who do not have immunizations or medical records in obtaining the necessary immunizations or records.

Ensure that homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including free school meals, Head Start, and preschool programs administered by the LEA; as well as referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.

Ensure that parents and 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.

Carry out the resolution of disputes, ensuring that they are mediated in accordance with the state's dispute resolution process.

Facilitate transportation arrangements.

Outreach

Ensure that the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all educational rights, including the right to remain in, and receive transportation to and from, 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, Title I Coordinators, and other school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Assist unaccompanied homeless youth in school enrollment and placement decisions, while 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 homeless youth are enrolled in school immediately pending the resolution of any dispute that arises over school enrollment and placement.

Data Collection

Collect data on homeless children and youth and submit the data to the SEA for the Consolidated State Performance Report.

*Verify with your state Department of Education for state specific requirements. *

Homeless Liaison Responsibilities: Suggested Activities

Provide professional development for school staff to build awareness of the educational needs of homeless students, legal responsibilities of the school and LEA, and local policies and procedures to remove barriers and expedite services for homeless students.

Maintain ongoing communication with LEA programs, such as and Title I, to work collaboratively across programs to serve homeless children and youth.

Provide outreach to community service providers through presentations, announcements, and dissemination of relevant resources. An example of this may be having the Student Resource Coordinator team build and develop connections with community service providers in districts across the state.

Provide training for parents on McKinney-Vento rights and services and ways they can support their children's education when experiencing homelessness.

Obtain school supplies, clothing, and other helpful resources from community partnerships and distribute them to schools.

Conduct a needs assessment to prioritize activities and services to support the educational needs of homeless children and youth.

Conduct an evaluation of your homeless education program.

Participate in community task forces and agency advisory committees to create awareness of the needs of homeless children and youth, identify opportunities for collaboration, and share resources.

Sample Residency Information Form

This questionnaire is in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq. Your answers will help determine if the student meets eligibility requirements for services under the McKinney-Vento Act.

Student		Parent/Guardian		
School	Phor	ne/Pager		
Age Grade	D.O.B	,	_	
Address		City		
Zip Code	Is this address	City Temporary or Permanent? (circle one)		
Please choose which	of the following situa	tions the student currently resides in (you	can choose r	nore than
one):				
House or apar	tment with parent or g	guardian		
Motel, car, or	campsite			
Shelter or othe	er temporary housing			
With friends o	family members (oth	ner than or in addition to parent/guardian)		
		check all of the following reasons that app	ly:	
Loss of housing	-			
Economic situ				
Temporarily w	aiting for house or apa	artment		
Provide care f	or a family member			
Living with boy				
Loss of employ				
Parent/Guard				
Other (Please	explain)			
Are you a student un	der the age of 18 and	l living apart from your parents or guardian	is? Yes	No
Residency and Education	<u>ational Rights</u>			
Students without fixe	d, regular, and adequ	uate living situations have the following righ	nts:	
1) Immediate enrolln	nent in the school the	y last attended or the local school where the	ney are curre	ntly
staying even if they c	lo not have all of the o	documents normally required at the time o	f enrollment	
without fear of being	separated or treated	differently due to their housing situations;		
2) Transportation to	the school of origin fo	r the regular school day;		
3) Access to free me	als, Title I and other e	ducational programs, and transportation to	o extra-curric	ular
activities to the same	e extent that it is offer	red to other students.		
Any questions about	these rights can be d	irected to the local McKinney-Vento Liaisor	n at [Insert pł	none
number]or the State	Coordinator at [Insert	phone number].		
By signing below, I ad	knowledge that I hav	e received and understand the above right	S	

Signature of Parent/Guardian/Unattached Youth Date

Signature of McKinney-Vento Liaison Date

Sample McKinney-Vento Referral Questionnaire

Student's first initial, last name: ______ Student ID: _____

Grade: _____

School:

Start with some basics:

Where are you currently living (i.e. what kind of place is it -a home, a shelter, a trailer)?

How long have you been living there?

Depending on what they answered above as well as on the McKinney Vento Eligibility Questionnaire, ask some of the following:

FIXED: "A fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change."

With whom are you staying? Why are you staying with them? Are you looking for another place to live? / Do you plan to move out soon? Why are you staying in your current place? Where were you living right before this place? Why did you leave? Where would you go if you couldn't stay where you are? Did you and your friends/relatives decide to move in together and share a home and expenses? Could your friends/relatives that you are staying with ask you to leave if they wanted to? Are you all sharing the home equally, or are you more like guests in the home?

• REGULAR: "A regular residence is one that is used on a regular [i.e. nightly] basis."

Do you stay in the same place every night? Do you have a key to the place where you are living? Do you move around a lot? How long have you been at that place? How long do you plan to stay? How long did you live in your last place?

ADEQUATE: "An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

How many people are living in the home? How many bedrooms/bathrooms does it have? Are you and your children sharing a room? How many people are staying in one room? Are you and your children sleeping in a bedroom, or in a public area, like a dining room? Does the home have heat/electricity/running water? Does it keep out rain and wind? Is it safe? Is it warm and dry? Can you come and go as you please? Additional Notes:



YOUNG SCHOLARS OF GREATER ALLEGHENY

Charter School

McKinney-Vento Program Intake Form

STUDENT NAME		Long	DE	CENDER	
STUDENT NAME	STUDENT NO.	GRA	DE	GENDER	Ethnicity:
CURRENT SCHOOL OR LAST ATTENDED	ENROLLED IN SCHOOL?	AGE		DATE OF BIRTH	African American
CURRENT ADDRESS	PARENT/GUARDIAN	No PHO	NE		
Content Abbredo	TARENTISUANDIAN				Hispanic
					Native American Other
Please list siblings or other of	hildren in the home:	-			
Name	Student No.	Grade	Age	School (if n	ot enrolled, please indicate)
			-	1	
Studentia living situation					
Student's living situation:		ubled Up1		Temp	orary Placement ⁴
Unsheltered ²	Mot	el/Hotel		🗌 Migra	nt
Unaccompanied Youth ³	🗋 Awa	aiting Foster C	are	Trans	itional Housing
	other persons due to loss				
		ain station, ab	andoned b	building, abandor	ned hospital, or other location
	leeping accommodations not living with a parent or	quardian			
4 Child temporarily place	d with relative or guardian	0			
Is your current residence a ter	moorary living situation?		П	Yes 🗌 No	
Is your living arrangement due	to the loss of housing or	economic har			
Diseas shock the following a	andaaa that are nooda	d on doning			
Please check the following so Transportation Changes	ervices that are neede	Tutorir			
Emergency Transportatio	n	After-s	chool prog		
 Clothing/Uniform School supplies 			unity reso eling Refe		
Medicaid/DSHS services	referral				t (Discipline Coordinator)
Missing enrollment record					
Birth certifica	ate 🔽	Prior acade	mic record	Is	
🔲 Immunizatio	n/medical records	Guardiansh			
Financial assistance needed for				Cost \$	
omments/Changes:					
	V				
arent/Guardian/Unaccompanied	routh Signature:				
ame			Date		
uilding/District Liaison Signatur	e:				
ame			Date	ũ.	