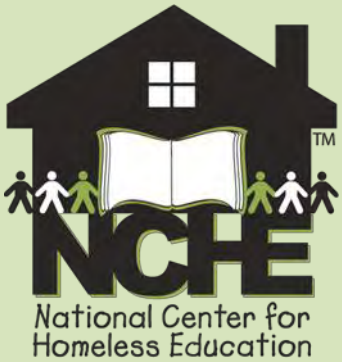
The National Center for Homeless Education's

Homeless Liaison Toolkit



2013 Edition

Homeless Liaison Toolkit

Diana Bowman, Director
Christina Endres, Program Specialist
Jan Moore, Program Specialist

June 2013

National Center for Homeless Education

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

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
P.O. Box 5367 Greensboro, NC 27435
NCHE Helpline: 800-308-2145
Email: homeless@serve.org
NCHE Website: http://www.serve.org/nche

The content of this publication does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Education; nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. This document was produced with funding from the U.S. Department of Education under contract no. ED-04-CO-0056/0002.

Permission granted to reproduce this document.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Overview and History....1-1

Chapter 2 Local Educational Agency and Homeless Liaison Responsibilities....2-1

Chapter 3 Identification of Students Experiencing Homelessness....3-1

Chapter 4 Determining Eligibility....4-1

Chapter 5 Enrolling Homeless Students....5-1

Chapter 6 School Selection....6-1

Chapter 7 Transportation....7-1

Chapter 8 Dispute Resolution....8-1

Chapter 9 Unaccompanied Homeless Youth....9-1

Chapter 10 Working with Parents....10-1

Chapter 11 Collaboration....11-1

Chapter 12 Training and Awareness....12-1

Chapter 13 Data Collection and Requirements....13-1

Chapter 14 Subgrants....14-1

Chapter 15 Managing the Work....15-1

Chapter 16 Related Legislation....16-1

Chapter 17 Additional Resources....17-1

References R-1

Appendices

Appendix 1.A History of the McKinney-Vento Act....1-A-1

Appendix 2.A Homeless Liaison Responsibilities....2-A-1

Appendix 2.B Quick Guide to Important Sections of the McKinney-Vento Act.....2-B-1

Appendix 2.C Understanding My Homeless Education Program.....2-C-1

Appendix 3.A Sample Residency Form.....3-A-1

Appendix 4.A Legal Definition of Homelessness.....4-A-1

Appendix 5.A Missing Documents.....5-A-1

Appendix 5.B Sample Caregiver Form.....5-B-1

Appendix 6.A School Selection Checklist for Decision-Making.....6-A-1

Appendix 7.A Sample Parent Contract.....7-A-1

Appendix 8.A Written Enrollment Decision Notice.....8-A-1

Appendix 8.B Dispute Review Guide.....8-B-1

Appendix 9.A Unaccompanied Youth Eligibility Flowchart Part 1.....9-A-1

Appendix 9.A Unaccompanied Youth Eligibility Flowchart Part 2.....9-A-2

Appendix 10.A Suggested Guidelines for a Parent Agreement.....10-A-1

Appendix 11.A McKinney-Vento Law and Guidance Related to Collaboration.....11-A-1

Appendix 11.B Collaborations Required by Law.....11-B-1

Appendix 11.C Basic Tips for Collaboration.....11-C-1

Appendix 12.A Presenter Tips.....12-A-1

Appendix 12.B Common Signs of Homelessness.....12-B-1

Appendix 14.A McKinney-Vento Subgrant Authorized Activities.....14-A-1

Appendix 15.A Template of Quadrants to Determine Priorities.....15-A-1

Appendix 15.B Top Five List.....15-B-1

Appendix 15.C School Level Point of Contact Information.....15-C-1

Appendix 15.D Needs Assessment Worksheet and Summary.....15-D-1

Appendix 15.E Sample Barrier Tracking Form.....15-E-1

Tables

Table 1.1 Brief History of the McKinney-Vento Act.....1-3

Table 2.2 Understanding the Homeless Education Program in My LEA.....2-7

Table 2.3 Key Role Groups and Agencies to Contact.....2-9

Table 8.1 Common Disagreements.....8-4

Table 8.2 Diffusing Disputes: Issues and Strategies.....8-10

Table 10.1 Challenges and Strategies for Working with Homeless Parents.....10-3

Table 11.1 Levels of Collaborative Effort.....11-C-3

Table 14.1 Guiding Questions for McKinney-Vento Subgrant Expenses.....14-3

Table 15.1 Covey's Quadrants.....15-2

Chapter One: Overview and History

Section 1.1 Why the *Toolkit*

Did you know?

- Homeless children and youth must have access to a public education?
- Barriers that may inhibit the ability of homeless children and youth to enroll in and succeed in school 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?
- What school districts or local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to do to ensure rights and services for homeless children and youth?

Every LEA must know this information in order to carry out the mandates in Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in 2001. (Throughout the *Toolkit,* we will refer to the law as the McKinney-Vento Act.) The 2001 reauthorized version of the McKinney-Vento Act requires all LEAs to designate a local liaison as responsible for working with homeless education issues in each LEA.

This *Toolkit* provides clear and specific explanations of the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act and includes practices, procedures, and tools gathered from effective local homeless education programs since the 2001 reauthorization of the law. New local homeless liaisons, as well as experienced liaisons, will be able to use the *Toolkit* to understand the law and learn ways to improve their programs. It serves as both an orientation manual for new local homeless liaisons and as a ready reference for both new and experienced liaisons.

Section 1.2 Educational Challenges of Homeless Children & Youth

For the first time, schools across the nation identified over 1 million children and youth who experienced homelessness during the 2010-2011 school year (NCHE, 2013). In a nation with economic challenges and shrinking public resources, the number of homeless children and youths has steadily increased over the past 10 years. (For a publication that summarizes data on homeless children and youth submitted to the U.S. Department of Education, see Section 1.5 Useful Links.)

Homeless children and youth face many educational barriers due to the disruption and trauma of not having a fixed, regular, and adequate place to live. Most face educational disruption due to changing schools as they move from one temporary location to another. Homeless children and youth also have higher incidences of illness, depression, and exposure to violence than their stably housed peers. Specific educational challenges faced by homeless students include

- not being identified for services;
- difficulty enrolling without records, or without a parent or guardian present for unaccompanied homeless youth;
- difficulty attending school regularly;
- a lack of stable transportation;
- frequent school changes;
- falling behind in school;
- not accruing credits on time;
- a lack of basic needs including food, clothing, and adequate housing;
- stress, depression, trauma; and
- embarrassment and stigma related to their housing conditions.

Many homeless youth are also *unaccompanied*, meaning they are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Being both homeless and unaccompanied leaves youth fending for themselves in a world where they are vulnerable to a myriad of potentially life-threatening dangers and temptations.

For all these reasons, school can often be the one place of stability, safety, and support in the tumultuous lives of these students.

Section 1.3 History of the McKinney-Vento Act

The first federal law to directly impact the education of students experiencing homelessness was enacted in 1987 as part of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The McKinney Act, which originally contained 15 programs designed to address the needs of homeless persons, contained a subtitle with the purpose of ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness could enroll in school without barriers. Since the initial passage, the homeless education law has been reauthorized three times with stronger and more specific requirements for state educational agencies (SEAs) and LEAs to ensure the immediate enrollment, school stability, and academic support needed to increase the educational success of homeless children and youth.

Table 1.1 provides a brief history of the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act. For a more extensive history, see Appendix 1.A.

Table 1.1 Brief History of the McKinney-Vento Act

1987	1990	1994	2000	2001-2002
Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act signed into law	McKinney Act amended.	Education subtitle of McKinney Act included in Improving America's Schools Act (IASA).	Name of law changed to McKinney-Vento Act	Reauthorized as part of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; signed into law in January, 2002.
Required states to review & revise residency requirements for enrollment of homeless children & youth.	Required removal of enrollment barriers. Access to & success in school set as goal. Allowed educational services with McKinney funds.	Added preschool services, greater parental input, & emphasis on interagency collaboration.	Name of law changed to honor former legislator.	Strengthened requirements to provide access & success; required local liaison in all LEAs.

Section 1.4 Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program at the U.S. Department of Education (ED) is overseen by a federal coordinator. The McKinney-Vento Act authorizes ED to provide grants to SEAs to ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool education, as is provided to other children and youth [42 U.S.C. § 11431(1)].

The grants, which are based on a proportion of a state's Title I federal allocation, are used to

- carry out the policies in the Act;
- provide activities to ensure that homeless children and youth can enroll in, attend, and succeed in school;
- establish an Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youth;
- carry out the state plan for serving homeless children and youth;
- create 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 youth [42 U.S.C. § 11432(d)].

SEAs must distribute no less than 75% of their annual McKinney-Vento allocation to local school districts in subgrants, and can retain the rest for state level activities. (A few minimally funded states can reserve up to 50% of their allocation.) Subgrants are awarded competitively to LEAs based on their need and the quality of their application. Currently, approximately 22% of LEAs across the nation receive McKinney-Vento subgrants (NCHE, 2013).

As noted above, every SEA has a State Coordinator for homeless education whose responsibilities are to carry out the activities specified in the law. Contact information for State Coordinators can be found on the website for the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) at: http://center.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php. Among other responsibilities, State Coordinators support local liaisons by providing technical assistance about state and federal policies as well as administering the subgrant process that provides funding to LEAs.

In addition, all SEAs are required to submit annual data to ED on homeless children and youth enrolled in school and to conduct monitoring of all LEAs to assess compliance with the provisions in the McKinney-Vento Act.

Whether they receive a subgrant or not, all LEAs are required to implement the provisions in the McKinney-Vento Act.

ED established a national technical assistance center in 1997 to better assist both SEAs and LEAs with implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro provides a wealth of resources, including a comprehensive website, a toll-free helpline (800-308-2145), online and onsite trainings, and informational resources, including the *Homeless Liaison Toolkit*.

A profile of the EHCY program is updated annually. It is available at the website provided in Section 1.5 Useful Links.

Section 1.5 Useful Links

McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act
http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/11431

Education for Homeless Children and Youth Non-Regulatory Guidance
http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/guidance.pdf

Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program: Analysis of Federal Data Collection and Three-Year Comparison
http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_data.php

Federal EHCY Program Profile
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/ehcy_profile.pdf

National Center for Homeless Education
www.serve.org/nche

State Coordinator Contact Information
http://center.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php

Section 1.6 Resources and Tools for Chapter One

Appendix 1.A History of the McKinney-Vento Act

Appendix 1.A History of the McKinney-Vento Act

1987	1990	1994	2000	2001-2002
Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act signed into law.	McKinney Act amended.	Education subtitle of McKinney Act included in Improving America's Schools Act (IASA).	Name of law changed to McKinney-Vento Act.	Reauthorized as part of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001; signed into law in January, 2002.
Required states to review & revise residency requirements for enrollment of homeless children and youth.	Required removal of enrollment barriers. Access to & success in school set as goal. Allowed educational services with McKinney funds.	Added preschool services, greater parental input, and emphasis on interagency collaboration.	Name of law changed to honor former legislator.	Strengthened requirements to provide access & success; required local liaison in all LEAs.

In 1987, Congress passed legislation 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 the growing diversity within the homeless population, Congress included a subtitle in the Act requiring states to ensure that all children experiencing homelessness have the same rights to a free and appropriate public education as housed children. Adopted provisions required states to review and undertake steps to revise residency requirements for school attendance in order 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

original law was renamed the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 100-77). President Ronald Regan signed it into law on July 22, 1987.

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 its other mandates, the law gave State Coordinators the 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 free and appropriate public educations.

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. The amendment (P.L. 101-645) reflected increased 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 1990 amendments required State Coordinators for homeless education to look beyond residency issues toward other potential barriers that kept 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, and success of homeless children and youth. In addition, states were responsible for assuming a leadership role in ensuring that local educational agencies (LEAs) review and revise 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. To meet this expanded role, appropriations were increased significantly from 1987 levels. Today, school districts that apply for and receive McKinney-Vento subgrants may use the funds to provide before- and after-school programs, tutoring, referrals for medical and mental health services, preschool programs, parent education, counseling, social work

services, transportation, and other services that may not otherwise have been provided by the public school program.

During its next amendment, the education subtitle 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 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 the McKinney Act to preschool children. Additionally, categorical spending limits within the law were removed, giving LEAs with McKinney subgrants 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 resided temporarily. The revisions to the law placed greater emphasis on the role of parents, charging states with the responsibility of ensuring that school districts abide by a parent 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 educational agencies and other agencies and organizations that provide services to homeless people.

Bruce Vento, a Democrat from Minnesota who had been one of the original sponsors of the federal legislation and one of its strongest proponents, died in October of 2000. Later that same month, Congress put forward an amendment to the law that renamed it to honor Congressman Vento in addition to Congressman McKinney. President Clinton signed it before the month ended and the law became what we know it as today, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Congress reauthorized the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act again in 2001 as a part of the No Child Left Behind Act and President George W. Bush signed it on January 8, 2002. National statistics at the time showed that over one million children and youth were likely to experience homelessness in a given year and that extreme poverty, coupled with high mobility and loss of housing, placed these children at great risk for

educational challenges. As a result of the data, additional supports were incorporated into the law. Changes included a shift in focusing primarily on LEAs that received subgrants to a requirement for State Coordinators to strengthen 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 State Coordinators to provide technical assistance to promptly integrate homeless children and youth attending separate schools and programs into schools and programs serving non-homeless students. The newest version of the law clarified who is considered homeless by describing specific situations that qualified students as homeless, beyond the more general requirement of lacking fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Prior to the amendments passed at the beginning of the millennium, educators were dependent upon descriptions found in the U.S. Department of Education's Preliminary Guidance (1995).

It is important to note that the federal law regulating the education of homeless children and youth is a subtitle of the larger McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act originally enacted in 1987. The larger, more comprehensive law, of which EHCY is a part, originally contained 15 programs designed to address the needs of homeless persons, as noted earlier. The 1990 reauthorization of the McKinney-Vento Act marked the last time the EHCY subtitle and the other programs for homeless persons authorized by the law were reauthorized at the same time. The other programs addressed by the McKinney-Vento Act, including federal shelter programs, continued to evolve over time as well, with their most recent reauthorization taking place as a part of the HEARTH Act of 2009. More information about those programs can be found online at http://www.hudhre.info/hearth/. Additionally, while the McKinney-Vento Act provides the core mandates for the public education of homeless children and youth, several other federal laws have been amended over time to reflect those core mandates. Examples include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Head Start Act, and the College Cost Reduction and Access Act. More information on those laws can be found in Chapter 16 Related Legislation.

Chapter Two: Local Educational Agency and Homeless Liaison Responsibilities

Section 2.1 Local Educational Agencies' Responsibilities Defined in the McKinney-Vento Act and Non-Regulatory Guidance

Local educational agencies (LEAs) are instrumental in ensuring the rights and services guaranteed in the McKinney-Vento Act are implemented throughout the school district. All LEAs must follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, whether or not they have a McKinney-Vento subgrant.

Section 2.1.1 LEA Requirements in the McKinney-Vento Act

The McKinney-Vento Act provides a number of LEA requirements for serving homeless children and youth in 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3). The tasks outlined in the law are summarized below.

Universally, LEAs must

- designate a staff person to carry out the duties described in the McKinney-Vento Act as the local homeless liaison;
- continue the student's education in the school of origin or a local public school that stably housed students in the area are eligible to attend; and
- make school placement decisions based on the best interest of the child or youth.

Best interest provisions require LEAs

- to keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, to the extent feasible, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the student's parent or guardian;
- to provide a written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal, to the parent or guardian of a homeless student or to an unaccompanied homeless youth, if the LEA sends the child to a school other than the one requested; and

- to ensure, in the case of an unaccompanied homeless youth, that the local liaison assists in placement or enrollment decisions and considers the views of the youth.

Regarding enrollment and records, LEAs must

- immediately enroll the child or youth, even without records that are normally required;
- contact the school last attended for relevant records;
- assist with obtaining immunizations or immunization records; and
- make records available in a timely fashion when the child or youth enrolls in a new school or LEA.

To mediate enrollment disputes, LEAs must

- enroll the child or youth in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending the resolution of the dispute;
- refer the child, youth, parent, or guardian to the local liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process; and
- ensure liaisons assist an unaccompanied youth during the dispute process.

Comparable services provisions require

- LEAs to provide services comparable to those received by non-homeless students.

Coordination provisions require LEAs

- to coordinate with local social service and housing agencies.

Section 2.1.2 LEA Requirements Mandated for Inclusion in Education for Homeless Children and Youth State Plans

States may have additional policies that LEAs are responsible for implementing related to the education of homeless children and youth. Every state educational agency (SEA) is required to have a state plan that includes further LEA responsibilities that the state enforces. State Coordinators in each state can provide information on any additional requirements.

Section 11432(g) in the McKinney-Vento Act describes state plan components that can impact LEAs, including requirements for state plans to assure that

- homeless children and youth are provided opportunities to meet the same state academic achievement standards as all other students;
- homeless students are identified and their special needs assessed;
- disputes are resolved promptly;
- activities take place to heighten the awareness of school personnel of runaway and homeless youths;
- homeless children and youth participate in nutrition programs;
- homeless children have access to the same public preschool programs as non-homeless children;
- homeless youth, both enrolled and not currently enrolled in public schools, are identified and provided equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services;
- eligible homeless children and youth have opportunities to participate in before- and after-school care programs;
- enrollment delays caused by immunization and medical records requirements, residency requirements, birth certificates or other records requirements, guardianship issues, or uniform or dress code requirements are eliminated;
- the SEA and LEAs will develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youth;
- homeless children are not segregated or stigmatized;
- local liaisons are appointed in every school district; and
- transportation is provided, at the request of a parent or guardian (or liaison in the case of an unaccompanied homeless youth), to and from the school of origin.

In addition, LEAs are required to submit data on their homeless students to the SEA on an annual basis for the Consolidated State Performance Report.

Section 2.1.3 Standards for Quality McKinney-Vento Programs

To further clarify the responsibilities of LEAs, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) included Standards and Indicators for Quality McKinney-Vento Programs in its Non-Regulatory Guidance (2004). The Standards and Indicators were developed by a task force led by NCHE that included State Coordinators, local liaisons, federal administrators of related programs, and

representatives from national organizations that address the needs of homeless children and youth. The Standards and Indicators, grounded in the law and reflecting good practices, provide a snapshot of what an effective homeless education program should address. (See Chapter 15 Managing the Work for more information on assessing needs and evaluating the homeless education program.)

The Standards, revised in 2006 and listed below, provide liaisons with a set of targets to ensure the LEA is carrying out activities and providing the range of services offered by quality McKinney-Vento programs.

STANDARD 1	All homeless students identified and enrolled at the time of the state assessment take the state assessment required for their grade levels.
STANDARD 2	All homeless students demonstrate academic progress.
Standard 3	All children in homeless situations are identified.
STANDARD 4	Within one day of an attempt to enroll in school, homeless students are in attendance.
STANDARD 5	All homeless students experience stability in school.
Standard 6	All homeless students receive specialized and comparable services when eligible.
STANDARD 7	All preschool-aged homeless children enroll in and attend preschool programs.
STANDARD 8	All homeless unaccompanied youth enroll in and attend school.
Standard 9	All parents (or persons acting as parents) 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.
Standard 10	LEAs help with the needs of all homeless children and youth through collaborative efforts both within and beyond the LEA.

Section 2.2 Homeless Liaison Responsibilities

The local liaison is the key to ensuring homeless children and youth receive the services they need. Required in all LEAs regardless of subgrant status, the

liaison is the primary contact between homeless families, school and LEA staff, shelter workers, and other service providers.

In 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(6)(A), the McKinney-Vento Act lists the responsibilities of the local liaison. The law states local liaisons will ensure that

- homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other agencies;
- homeless children and youth enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, school;
- homeless families, children, and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start programs and preschool programs administered by the LEA, as well as referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services;
- 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;
- public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated where they receive services, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens;
- enrollment disputes are mediated according to local, state, and federal policies; and
- 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.

The Non-Regulatory Guidance (ED, 2004) lists the following activities that liaisons must conduct in carrying out their responsibilities:

- assist homeless children and youth with enrolling in school and accessing school services;
- help homeless children and youth obtain immunization or medical records;
- inform parents, school personnel, and others of the rights of homeless children and youth;
- work 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;

- help to coordinate transportation services for homeless children and youth; and,
- collaborate and coordinate with the State Coordinator and with community and school personnel responsible for providing education and related support services to homeless children and youth.

Section 2.3 Become Familiar with the Liaison Role

The local liaison role can be filled by a variety of personnel. This person can be an administrator, a professional development coordinator, a school social worker, or an outreach specialist. The LEA will need to shape the position based on its current needs in serving homeless children and youth. Moreover, the LEA must provide the liaison with sufficient time and capacity to carry out the required duties to ensure that the LEA is in compliance with the law. Chapter 15 Managing the Work contains good practices instrumental to helping liaisons prioritize tasks.

Over time, the liaison's responsibilities should be revised to reflect the following: the number of children and youth identified, trends in poverty and homelessness, the amount of support from community agencies and other entities serving homeless families and youth, the level of awareness in both the schools and community of homeless student needs and related legal requirements, and the level of implementation that has occurred in the LEA. This will allow the district to appoint the liaison with the skills and knowledge most likely to meet the needs of homeless children and youth.

Appendix 2.A Homeless Liaison Responsibilities summarizes the key duties of the local liaison.

Section 2.3.1 Review the McKinney-Vento Act & Non-Regulatory Guidance

Local liaisons should be familiar with the exact language of the McKinney-Vento Act. While the law may not be easy reading, having certain sections committed to memory, or at least at your fingertips, will assist you with teasing out nuances regarding implementation when questions arise. Appendix 2.B Quick Guide to Important Sections of the McKinney-Vento Act provides a compilation of key portions of the law for easy reference.

Section 2.3.2 Learn about Your LEA's Services for Homeless Children and Youth

As a new local liaison, it is important to learn as much as possible about your LEA's implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. Table 2.2 Understanding the Homeless Education Program in My LEA provides questions and possible sources for answers that will help you understand your LEA's approach to serving homeless children and youth. Appendix 2.C Understanding My Homeless Education Program provides a worksheet to help you record responses to the questions.

Table 2.2 Understanding the Homeless Education Program in My LEA

Question	Source
Who is the State Coordinator for the homeless education program in my state? What technical assistance and training does the State Coordinator provide to LEAs?	NCHE Website; SEA Homeless Education Website
How much time is allocated to the local homeless liaison position? What additional staff support is in place?	Supervisor
How many homeless children and youth did the LEA identify last year?	CSPR Report, LEA Data Manager
Are the numbers identified increasing or decreasing? By how much?	CSPR Report, LEA Data Manager
Does the LEA have a McKinney-Vento subgrant? If so, what are the approved activities to serve homeless children and youth? What are my reporting responsibilities? How long will the LEA receive funds through this grant?	McKinney-Vento Subgrant Application
How much money is set aside for services for homeless children and youth through Title I, Part A? How was the amount of these funds determined? How were these funds spent last year? How may they be accessed?	Title I Coordinator, Consolidated Application
What are the challenges to implementing the McKinney-Vento program in the LEA?	Phone and Email Logs, Documentation on Disputes
What local policies and procedures are in place to support services for homeless children and youth? What policies or procedures create barriers to the education of homeless children and youth?	LEA Policy Handbook, School Board Policies, Phone and Email Logs, Documentation on Disputes, LEA Program Coordinators (Tutoring Programs, Nutrition, Special Education, English Language Learning, Migrant)

Question	Source
What data must be collected on homeless children and youth, and what procedures are in place to collect and report this data?	CSPR Report, LEA Data Coordinator
How many homeless children and youth were transported to their school of origin in the past year? What are the procedures for arranging transportation?	Pupil Transportation Director, Student Files
What McKinney-Vento compliance issues have been identified in my district?	SEA Monitoring Reports
What is the local dispute process for the McKinney-Vento program, and who is involved in the process other than the liaison?	Written Dispute Policy
What homeless education awareness activities have taken place in the LEA? What groups in the district and community have been involved? Were the activities effective?	Meeting Agendas and Notes
Which community agencies collaborate with the LEA to serve homeless children and youth?	Meeting Agendas and Notes, Phone and Email Logs
Are posters on McKinney-Vento services displayed in all schools? How long ago were posters and other awareness materials placed in each school in the LEA?	Observation in Schools, Budget or Fiscal Office

You may not be able to find answers to all these questions immediately. Nevertheless, whatever information you do find will help orient you to the role of the local liaison. Moreover, these questions will guide you in

- keeping abreast of challenges, processes, and procedures related to serving homeless children and youth in the LEA;
- fostering conversations with others involved in serving homeless children and youth in the LEA and community; and
- establishing files of information that can be passed along to a liaison who might succeed you in the position or other staff members who support the program.

Section 2.3.3 Contact Key Personnel and Agencies

Many new local liaisons feel overwhelmed by the scope of their responsibilities. However, keep in mind that many people, programs, and agencies exist to assist liaisons in serving homeless children and youth. As a new liaison, you should connect with certain key people soon after you assume your position. Chapter 11 Collaboration and Chapter 9

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth provide more details and strategies for linking homeless students to services and establishing collaborations with external agencies.

Table 2.3 Key Role Groups and Agencies to Contact provides a list of people and agencies to contact and the information and services they may provide.

Table 2.3 Key Role Groups and Agencies to Contact

Person or Agency to Contact	Information or Services Provided
State Coordinator for Homeless Education	Your State Coordinator will be able to link you to essential training for your position, add you to a distribution list for local liaisons to receive routine communication, and link you with other local liaisons for support.
LEA Title I Coordinator	The Title I Coordinator will be able to explain what Title I services are provided to homeless children and youth and how Title I, Part A set-aside funds are spent.
Coordinator for Special Education	The Coordinator for Special Education will explain how children who are homeless and highly mobile can be evaluated and provided services in a timely way even though they may move in and out of the district; also, you should ask to review IEPs for homeless children and youth and attend IEP meetings for these students.
Director of Pupil Transportation	Establishing ongoing communication with the Director of Pupil Transportation will ensure that you work together as partners to arrange transportation for homeless students expeditiously.
Director of Child Nutrition	The Director of Child Nutrition will explain procedures to ensure homeless children and youth are provided free meals. This happens as soon as the nutrition program is provided the names of students identified as homeless as well as the date they became eligible. The Director of Child Nutrition should also notify liaisons of any barriers to providing free meals immediately.
District Data Manager	The District Data Manager can explain the process for the annual collection and submission of data on homeless students. This person is also a great resource for accessing data about the needs of homeless students that can be used to create awareness among school personnel and community members.

Person or Agency to Contact	Information or Services Provided
Community Housing or Homeless Programs (Housing and Urban Development - HUD - Programs)	Programs that receive funding from HUD are mandated to coordinate with local liaisons. Contacting these agencies and cultivating relationships will help you • understand the "big picture" of homelessness in your LEA • establish ongoing communication that can assist you with identifying homeless children and youth and linking them to services • explore collaborative relationships for resource sharing
Shelter Providers	Shelter providers play a key role in helping to identify homeless children and families and referring them to schools. Providing them with your contact information and awareness posters will assist in establishing ongoing communication.
Head Start	Head Start is mandated to prioritize services for young homeless children and to coordinate with local liaisons. Collaborating with the Head Start program in your LEA will assist you with identifying homeless students and exploring collaborative opportunities.

Section 2.3.4 Keep Key Documents on Hand

As the primary persons responsible for ensuring the LEA fully implements the McKinney-Vento Act, liaisons must field questions from parents, school staff, community partners, and sometimes even members of the media. They must also provide training in both the LEA and community. In order to quickly and accurately answer questions, liaisons should keep information readily available in either electronic or hard copy files. This practice also facilitates consistent answers to questions, reducing the likelihood of mistakes during extremely busy times.

The following documents and information are particularly useful to keep on hand:

- the McKinney-Vento Act,
- the 2004 *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Non-Regulatory Guidance* published by ED,
- issue briefs published by NCHE entitled *Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act* and *Guiding the Discussion on School Selection*,

- LEA and SEA dispute resolution policies,
- LEA policies related to the enrollment and education of homeless children and youth,
- memoranda and communications from the State Coordinator,
- a copy of the LEA's McKinney-Vento subgrant proposal,
- homeless education program monitoring reports,
- barrier tracking logs (phone and e-mail),
- LEA Consolidated State Performance Report and related data, and
- community contacts for homeless families.

2.3.5 Learn about Key Issues and Best Practices

The field of homeless education is a moving target; new trends and issues are continually emerging and new laws and policies are developed by various programs and agencies on an ongoing basis. Local liaisons have a wealth of resources to assist them with keeping current in the field. Key supports include information, technical assistance, and training provided by the office of the State Coordinator for homeless education.

In addition, note the resources offered by the following two organizations:

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE): NCHE is the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center in the area of homeless education. NCHE provides a comprehensive website, webinars and onsite trainings, and publications that are updated on a regular basis. NCHE also hosts a listserv that provides updates, announcements, and links to resources. A Helpline to assist those who serve homeless children and youth with understanding and implementing the law is available via both phone (800-308-2145) and email (homeless@serve.org).

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY): NAEHCY is a leader in advocacy and policy development regarding homeless education. NAEHCY provides publications and activities to keep members abreast of emerging issues and proposed policy changes. NAEHCY hosts an annual conference that brings State Coordinators, local liaisons, shelter and service providers, researchers, and advocates together to learn and network.

Section 2.4 Useful Links

The McKinney-Vento Act **http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html**
Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non-Regulatory Guidance **http://center.serve.org/nche/m-v.php**
Standards and Indicators for Quality McKinney-Vento Programs **http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/st_ind.php#2006**
Issue Brief: ***Local Homeless Education Liaisons*** **http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/liaisons.pdf**
Issue Brief: ***Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services under the McKinney-Vento Act*** **http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det_elig.pdf**
Issue Brief: ***Guiding the Discussion on School Selection*** **http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/sch_sel_checklist.pdf**

Section 2.5 Resources and Tools for Chapter Two

Appendix 2.A Homeless Liaison Responsibilities
Appendix 2.B Quick Guide to Important Sections of the McKinney-Vento Act
Appendix 2.C Understanding My Homeless Education Program

Appendix 2.A Homeless Liaison Responsibilities

Legally Required Activities
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.

Legally Required Activities
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).

Legally Required Activities
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.

Suggested Activities
Provide professional development for school district 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 pupil transportation 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.
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 district's 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.

Appendix 2.B Quick Guide to Important Sections of the McKinney-Vento Act

You should read and revisit frequently the following definitions in the law:

Enrollment

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

Homeless

The term 'homeless children and youths'

(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 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 …

(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) [42 U.S.C. § 11434a (2)].

Unaccompanied Youth

The term 'unaccompanied youth' includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian [42 U.S.C. § 11434a (6)].

School of Origin

… 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 [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(G)].

In addition, you should be very familiar with sections of the law on:

School Enrollment

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 homeless

(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 [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(A)].

Transportation to the School of Origin

… 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…

(I) If the homeless child or youth is 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 [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(1)(J)(iii)].

Segregation and Stigmatization

> … 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 [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(1)(J)(i)].

The 2004 Non-Regulatory Guidance (ED) includes feasibility criteria to consider when determining if remaining in the school of origin is in the child's best interest. You should be familiar with the criteria included in Question G-4:

> *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?*
>
> 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 the 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.

Appendix 2.C Understanding My Homeless Education Program

Question	Source	Notes
Who is the State Coordinator for the homeless education program in my state? What technical assistance and training does the State Coordinator provide to LEAs?	NCHE Website; SEA Homeless Education Website	
How much time is allocated to the local liaison position? What additional staff support is in place?	Supervisor	
How many homeless children and youth did the LEA identify last year?	CSPR Report, LEA Data Manager	
Are the numbers identified increasing or decreasing? By how much?	CSPR Report, LEA Data Manager	
Does the LEA have a McKinney-Vento subgrant? If so, what are the approved activities to serve homeless children and youth? What are my reporting responsibilities? How long will the LEA receive funds through this grant?	McKinney-Vento Subgrant Application	

Question	Source	Notes
How much money is set aside for services for homeless children and youth through Title I, Part A? How was the amount of these funds determined? How were these funds spent last year? How may they be accessed?	Title I Coordinator, Consolidated Application	
What are the challenges to implementing the McKinney-Vento program in the LEA?	Phone and Email Logs, Documentation on Disputes	
What local policies and procedures are in place to support services for homeless children and youth? What policies or procedures create barriers to the education of homeless children and youth?	LEA Policy Handbook, School Board Policies, Phone and Email Logs, Documentation on Disputes, LEA Program Coordinators (Tutoring Programs, Nutrition, Special Education, English Language Learning, Migrant)	
What data must be collected on homeless children and youth, and what procedures are in place to collect and report this data?	CSPR Report, LEA Data Coordinator	
How many homeless children and youth were transported to their school of origin in the past year? What are the procedures for arranging transportation?	Pupil Transportation Director, Student Files	

Question	Source	Notes
What McKinney-Vento compliance issues have been identified in my district?	SEA Monitoring Reports	
What is the local dispute process for the McKinney-Vento program, and who is involved in the process other than the liaison?	Written Dispute Policy	
What homeless education awareness activities have taken place in the LEA? What role groups have been involved? Were the activities effective?	Meeting Agendas and Notes	
Which community agencies collaborate with the district to serve homeless children and youth?	Meeting Agendas and Notes, Phone and Email Logs	
Are posters on McKinney-Vento services displayed in all schools? How long ago were posters and other awareness materials placed in each school in the LEA?	Observation in Schools, Budget or Fiscal Office	

Chapter Three: Identification of Students Experiencing Homelessness

As the first of the homeless liaison responsibilities outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act, identification of students in homeless situations is one of the core duties for a liaison and one that is likely to require a significant amount of the liaison's time. Identifying all students experiencing homelessness is critical as it allows liaisons to help students who may have difficulty with enrollment, allows liaisons to connect students to educational support and community services, and increases the likelihood that homeless students will overcome the extra educational challenges they face.

Section 3.1 The Definition of Homelessness

The McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act provides a definition of homeless children and youth to be used by state and local educational agencies (LEAs) in 42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(2). It defines homeless children and youth to be those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Under the larger umbrella of lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, the law also provides several examples of situations that meet the definition. The examples include children and youth

- 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;
- abandoned in hospitals;
- awaiting foster care placement;
- 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;
- living in one of the above circumstances and who are migratory according to the definition in Section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

When considering if a student meets the criteria in the definition provided by the law, it is important to remember that the list provided is a guide and more situations may exist that meet the criteria than are actually listed. However, liaisons must always rely on the criteria outlined in the law of lacking fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence as the ultimate test of whether a student's housing meets the definition. For more on the specific nuances related to eligibility criteria for students, see Chapter 4 Determining Eligibility.

Section 3.2 The Role of the Liaison in Identifying Homeless Students

While it is true that local liaisons themselves will and should identify many of the homeless students in a LEA, the actual charge in the law is for local liaisons to ensure that homeless students are identified "by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies" [42 U.S.C. § 1143(g)(6)(A)(i)]. The language in the law means two important things. First, local liaisons are not expected to go it alone and bear the sole responsibility for identifying students. Second, collaboration with other educational programs and even agencies outside the LEA is not only encouraged, but it is expected. The collaborations involved in ensuring students in homeless situations are identified may be very informal or be structured around formal activities and relationships.

Section 3.2.1 Collaboration Within the School District

Schools are as much a social environment as they are a place for learning. Since students and staff spend a large amount of time together, they often learn a good deal about each other. This kind of environment lends itself to many informal opportunities to identify homeless students. For example, a school counselor may identify a student who is homeless after she notices that a student is asking friends to help cover the lunch fee each day. On the other hand, the relaxed environment of the lunchroom can lead to students making comments that are overheard by the lunchroom staff and cause them to notice that perhaps the student is homeless. Essays written by students which reveal the nature of the students' living arrangements can leave teachers wondering what they can do to help homeless students as well. In each of these instances, the liaison can maximize his ability to identify students that qualify as homeless by establishing relationships with the other

school staff. The key in these instances and many others like them is to make sure staff members are aware of the role and identity of the liaison so that they may refer students as situations raise red flags. By providing staff groups within the school district with basic information about the liaison's role and the definition of homelessness, liaisons will achieve greater success with their objective of identifying students in need. (For more information on general collaboration requirements for services provided by the school district, see Section 15 Managing the Work.)

School staff who may be particularly helpful in meeting the requirement to identify homeless students include

- school nurses;
- front office and registration staff;
- truancy and attendance officers;
- cafeteria staff;
- bus drivers;
- school social workers and counselors;
- classroom teachers and aides; and
- administrators, such as principals or directors of special education and Title I.

While informal collaborations within the district are critical, federal education law also includes requirements for more formal collaborations that can increase homeless student identification. For example, in addition to the requirement in the McKinney-Vento Act that liaisons ensure the identification of students by school personnel, Title I, Part A, also includes requirements for collaboration, as does the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Title I, Part A requires that programs operated under its authority coordinate at the state and local levels. All districts must also have an application approved by the SEA that addresses Title I, Part A coordination with McKinney-Vento. Child Find requirements that have been in place since 1999 were updated in 2004 when the IDEA was reauthorized. They now include a specific requirement that states ensure homeless children with disabilities are identified, located, and evaluated [20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(3)(A)]. By including language in the McKinney-Vento Act regarding required collaborations, as well as in the federal laws governing other educational and related programs, the responsibility for ensuring collaborations on behalf of homeless students is shared by all the programs involved.

Section 3.2.2 Collaboration With Other Entities and Agencies

In addition to the responsibility of the liaison to work with other school personnel to identify homeless students, the McKinney-Vento Act also requires liaisons to work with other entities and agencies to identify students without fixed, regular, and adequate housing [42 U.S.C. § 1143(g)(6)(A)(i)]. By requiring collaboration with entities external to the school district, the law actually reduces the burden on LEAs and liaisons by providing them with an avenue for assistance. For example, many younger children and their parents or guardians temporarily stay at homeless shelters and are therefore easier to identify for services. Head Start programs are specifically charged with serving the students most in need, which makes them a logical partner for identifying both those students in preschool and their older siblings experiencing homelessness, who would benefit from educational services through the LEA. Communities that receive shelter funding through the Department of Housing and Urban Development also operate what is known as a Continuum of Care (CoC), which represents all stakeholders invested in serving persons experiencing homelessness. The CoC may include shelter providers, food banks, faith-based organizations, and other agencies, making it easy for a liaison to connect with a large number of organizations through one CoC.

While the law is not very specific about the types of activities that should be undertaken to ensure homeless students are identified, it does have one required activity to increase identification: that public notice about the rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated where families are likely to receive services [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(v)]. Schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens are all examples of locations where a notice of rights must be posted by the liaison. While not an exhaustive list, other places and organizations with which liaisons may want to work to post a statement of rights include

- youth organizations,
- transitional living program sites,
- day or community centers,
- Community Action Agencies,
- welfare and housing offices,
- Workforce One offices,
- homeless coalitions,
- free or low cost health clinics,

- low cost motels,
- storage facilities,
- check cashing businesses,
- laundromats, and
- public libraries.

Section 3.2.3 Strategies to Increase Identification

A variety of strategies exist to increase the identification of students who lack fixed, regular, and adequate housing. Many can be incorporated into other existing activities, reducing the amount of time and cost needed by the LEA to conduct them.

Residency questionnaires

Including a residency questionnaire with a simple statement of rights in the general enrollment and registration packet received by all students as they sign up for school is a good way to ensure the entire student population is informed. By providing the information in all the enrollment packets, no one feels singled out or stigmatized, but even those who are not homeless become more aware of things happening in the community. See Appendix 3.A Sample Residency Information Form.

Enrollment forms for programs serving at-risk students

By reviewing the forms for other educational programs, such as the school meals, Title I, or 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs, liaisons can quickly identify students who may qualify as homeless. Cooperative agreements with early childhood programs like Head Start can also lead to questions on enrollment or intake forms that result in referrals to the liaison when a homeless child is identified.

Quick reference lists

Keeping a list of local low-cost motels or shelters discretely located on the desk of enrollment staff for easy reference can help the staff recognize addresses that may indicate homelessness when students enroll.

Cooperative enrollment events

Events like Kindergarten Round-up or Head Start enrollment fairs can lead to more identified students. Many communities also host events referred to as Homeless Connect which focus on connecting persons in

need with agencies and organizations that can help them, including schools.

Awareness trainings

Strategies for raising the awareness of school staff and community members can include brief updates during regular staff meetings or more intensive workshops that target specific goals related to homelessness and educational outcomes.

Relationship building

By making personal contact with managers at low-cost hotels, social service agencies, local law enforcement, and other public service agencies, liaisons can increase the number of people on the lookout for students in need.

District website

The LEA website often contains the student handbook and other important information targeted to students and their families. It can be a great tool for increasing awareness and disseminating information about the rights of homeless students as well as listing contact information for the liaison.

Attendance hearings

Liaisons may recognize homelessness in students who are under review for attendance problems related to their homelessness which other staff may miss. By either participating in behavior review committees or by training truancy and attendance officers, liaisons will increase the identification of homeless students.

Mailing labels and transportation logs

Checking transportation or address logs may be a good way to identify students who are doubled-up due to loss of housing as liaisons may notice several families in one location. Likewise, working with the transportation department to identify any unusual transportation changes or requests can also result in the identification of homeless students.

Section 3.2.4 Special Populations

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that special attention be given to those homeless children and youth who are not already attending school [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(7)(c)]. This could include preschool students, students who have dropped out or failed to enroll, or unaccompanied homeless youth. Several tips have already been mentioned regarding early childhood or general enrollment, but liaisons should also take steps to identify those students who are deemed unaccompanied homeless youth. Unaccompanied youth are those not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian [42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(6)]. Strategies that may be useful in reaching unaccompanied homeless youth are listed below.

Involving youth

Students who may be too embarrassed to ask for assistance or otherwise trust an adult may be willing to reach out to a liaison if other youth are involved or inform them of their rights.

Surveying youth

Youth may become estranged from their families after enrolling in school; a mid-year youth survey could help identify those students not otherwise identified through enrollment questionnaires. Liaisons may also be able to work with their health services offices to include this information as a part of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRSB), a national, school-based survey to evaluate adolescent behaviors that harm health and well-being.

Targeting outreach

Notices regarding the rights of youth experiencing homelessness should be posted in places where youth may see them and be written in a youth friendly format. Working with street outreach teams for youth can also be a good way to reach youth.

Incorporating the topic

The topic of homelessness can be incorporated into the school curriculum or school convocations. This not only reaches youth who are homeless but also housed youth with homeless friends who may be willing to help connect them to liaisons. For example, students could be assigned a current events project in their civics course on the topic of homelessness.

Section 3.2.5 Useful Links

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

Section 3.2.6 Resources and Tools for Chapter Three

Appendix 3.A Sample Residency Information Form

SAMPLE RESIDENCY INFORMATION FORM

This questionnaire is in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act, U.S.C. 42 § 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 _____ Phone/Pager _____

Age _____ Grade _____ D.O.B. _____

Address _____ City _____

Zip Code _____ Is this address Temporary or Permanent? (circle one)

Please choose which of the following situations the student currently resides in (you can choose more than one):
_____ House or apartment with parent or guardian
_____ Motel, car, or campsite
_____ Shelter or other temporary housing
_____ With friends or family members (other than or in addition to parent/guardian)

If you are living in shared housing, please check all of the following reasons that apply:
_____ Loss of housing
_____ Economic situation
_____ Temporarily waiting for house or apartment
_____ Provide care for a family member
_____ Living with boyfriend/girlfriend
_____ Loss of employment
_____ Parent/Guardian is deployed
_____ Other (Please explain)

Are you a student under the age of 18 and living apart from your parents or guardians? Yes No

Residency and Educational Rights

Students without fixed, regular, and adequate living situations have the following rights:

1) Immediate enrollment in the school they last attended or the local school where they are currently staying even if they do not have all of the documents normally required at the time of enrollment without fear of being separated or treated differently due to their housing situations;
2) Transportation to the school of origin for the regular school day;
3) Access to free meals, Title I and other educational programs, and transportation to extra-curricular activities to the same extent that it is offered to other students.

Any questions about these rights can be directed to the local McKinney-Vento Liaison at [Insert phone number] or the State Coordinator at [Insert phone number].

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received and understand the above rights.

_____

Signature of Parent/Guardian/Unattached Youth *Date*

_____

Signature of McKinney-Vento Liaison *Date*

Chapter Four: Determining Eligibility

In the previous section, the discussion focused on legal requirements for liaisons and school districts related to identifying homeless students from a broad perspective, as well as general tips and strategies that the liaison can use to increase student identification. This section will also have tips and strategies, but the discussion will move deeper into the topic and examine how to determine the eligibility of individual students.

Section 4.1 Steps to Determining Eligibility

Each student has a unique housing situation; as a result, determinations regarding eligibility and services under McKinney-Vento must be made on a case-by-case basis for each student. At times, making determinations about the homeless status of a student is extremely simple as the student clearly meets the criteria of lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Unfortunately, there are also times when it can be difficult to tell if the student's housing situation meets the criteria. Regardless of the ease in identification, the process of determining a student's eligibility involves three basic steps.

1) Gather all the relevant information.
2) Analyze what you know.
3) Seek consultation as needed.

If your district uses a residency questionnaire during enrollment, you may have all the information that you need to make a housing status determination by simply looking over the information provided about the student on the form. However, many situations require the liaison to follow up with additional questions about the student's housing to get further clarification. If you need to follow up with a family or unaccompanied youth to ask additional questions, it is important to explain to the family or youth that the purpose for the questions is to determine if the student is eligible for additional educational supports. Considering the nature of the information being shared, some families or students may be hesitant to provide details. As a result, it is also important to have discussions regarding potential

Homelessness is defined as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Situations specifically described in the McKinney-Vento Act include sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, living in hotels, motels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of adequate housing, living in emergency or transitional housing, children abandoned at hospitals or awaiting foster care. It also includes a primary nighttime residence that is not designed for or ordinarily used as a sleeping accommodation for humans, living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, and migratory children living in one of the circumstances described previously. For the full definition, see Appendix 4.A Legal Definition of Homelessness.

homelessness and related services in a location that provides privacy and discretion. Similarly, it is advisable that liaisons avoid using the word homeless as some families do not realize they qualify as homeless or may be too embarrassed by the label. Using terms like families in transition, displaced, or referring to temporary housing situations can help to reduce the stigma experienced by students and their families.

Once you have gathered what seems to be all the relevant information, it is time to put the pieces of the puzzle together and determine if the student lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Remember, the student's housing must meet all three criteria to be considered permanently housed. If one or more of the three criteria (fixed, regular, and adequate) is missing, the student would be considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act's definition.

While homeless is a term that is defined in the law, the terms fixed, regular, and adequate are not. As you determine a student's eligibility to be considered homeless, it may help to consult definitions offered by standard reference dictionaries, i.e., *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* and *Ballentine's Law Dictionary*. Fixed is defined as "not subject to change or fluctuation" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition) and inhabitant is described "as distinguished from an occasional lodger or visitor" (*Ballentine's Law Dictionary*, Third Edition). The term regular is also defined by Merriam-Webster as "normal or standard." *Ballentine's Law Dictionary* further defines it as "consistent," while adequate is described as "fully sufficient and equal to what is required, as well as lawfully and reasonably sufficient" (*Ballentine's Law Dictionary*, Third Edition). In other words, if a housing situation does not clearly fall under one of the categories provided in

the definition of homelessness provided in the law, you should ask yourself if the student can go to the same place every night to sleep in a safe and sufficient space. If the answer is no, the student likely meets the criteria of lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and should be considered homeless.

Unfortunately, even after gathering good information, talking with parents or guardians, and comparing your notes to the law, it can still be difficult to tell if a student qualifies as homeless at times. In that case, you have options to get help making a determination. Much like every public school district has a liaison for homeless education, every state has a State Coordinator for homeless education. The responsibilities of State Coordinators include providing technical assistance to local liaisons, which means they can be a great resource when trying to make housing status determinations. A directory including State Coordinator contact information is on the NCHE website at http://center.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php. In addition to contacting your State Coordinator for insight, NCHE operates a helpline which liaisons can contact at (800) 308-2145 or homeless@serve.org. Another option is to reach out to other local liaisons in your area with whom you have a collaborative relationship. Regardless of which option you choose, connecting with someone else on a confusing case can ensure that students are appropriately identified and connected to resources. Do keep in mind that while consultation with others can result in benefits like further information or problem solving, it is ultimately the liaison's responsibility to make the determination regarding the student's eligibility.

Section 4.2 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.

If you encounter a confusing shared housing situation, asking some of the following questions may help you 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 electric 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?

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.

Section 4.3 Complex Conditions: Awaiting Foster Care Placement

Students awaiting foster care placement experience high levels of housing instability and school mobility, which can create academic challenges for the students. As a result, students who are *awaiting foster care* are included in the McKinney-Vento Act definition of homelessness [42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(2)(B)(i)]. Each state has the ability to develop legislation or policy regarding the term awaiting foster care, and some, like California and Missouri, have developed policy specific to the topic. As a result, it is important to consult with your State Coordinator to ensure that you have the most up-to-date information about the laws and policies for serving students who are awaiting foster care placement.

To remove a child from the home, an emergency order must be issued by a court or judge. As this emergency order only provides a temporary removal of the child from the home, a hearing must take place to determine if it is safe for the child to return home or if foster care is necessary. This first hearing is often referred to as an initial hearing, preliminary protective hearing, shelter care hearing, detention hearing, emergency removal hearing, or temporary custody hearing (Jones, 2006). It is often during this time that students may be considered awaiting foster care and covered under the homeless definition in the McKinney-Vento Act. As each situation is evaluated, the housing of children who are awaiting foster care placement should be compared to the standard of lacking fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence in order to determine if they are eligible to be considered homeless.

> *The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 is federal legislation that includes information about educational services for students once they are no longer deemed awaiting but are placed in foster care and therefore not explicitly covered by the McKinney-Vento Act. To learn more about the Fostering Connections Act, please visit the U.S. Administration for Children and Families website at:* https://www.childwelfare.gov/fosteringconnections/.

Section 4.4 Complex Conditions: 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 as the student could be one or both. When working with youth, evaluating the housing status before considering 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. More information about the rights of this subpopulation of homeless students will be discussed in Chapter 9 Unaccompanied Homeless Youth.

Section 4.5 Complex Conditions: 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.

Section 4.6 Complex 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 well-being. 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.

Section 4.7 Do's and Don'ts for Confirming Eligibility

Determining the eligibility of students as homeless can be a complicated process at times. By having a policy or a set of procedures in place, you can simplify the process and facilitate the timely enrollment of homeless students. Having policies and procedures in place ensures that your district is in compliance with the federal law and can also help your district avoid

invasive or threatening techniques that are inappropriate or damage the relationship of the school with families and the community.

The following list includes strategies to help liaisons confirm the eligibility of students as homeless.

- Do implement the use of a district-wide residency questionnaire.
- Do have parents, youth, or caregivers sign enrollment forms indicating that McKinney-Vento services are offered based on information they have provided about their living situations.
- Do use only school staff trained on the McKinney-Vento Act and homelessness to do home visits.
- Do use visits only when necessary. Do explain to the family, youth, and the homeowner why the visit is occurring. Assure them that all information will remain confidential, and conduct only the minimum investigation necessary to verify the living situation.
- Do collaborate with neighboring school district liaisons.
- Do contact previous schools to determine if the student was identified as homeless while attending that school.
- Do use caller ID to verify when parents or youth call from a hotel, motel, or shelter.
- Do talk with parents and youth about their situations, focusing on basic questions and using care and sensitivity.
- Do work with parents, youth, and caregivers to determine if they are able to provide any documents that could confirm their living situations.

Keeping interactions with families and youth positive and supportive instead of invasive and threatening is essential to keeping homeless students connected to school.

- Don't contact landlords or housing agencies to conduct investigations about a student or family as it violates the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and is unlikely to provide useful information.
- Don't conduct surveillance of students or families, such as following them, observing them from outside their residences, or talking to neighbors about their living situations.
- Don't use police officers for home visits.
- Don't require documents like eviction notices, utility bills, occupancy permits, or notarized letters from host families.

- Don't force caregivers to obtain legal custody or guardianship. The McKinney-Vento Act requires the immediate enrollment of unaccompanied youth; legal custody or guardianship cannot be prerequisites and are not appropriate in many instances.
- Don't force people into shelters or onto the streets as a prerequisite for McKinney-Vento services.

NCHE has several briefs on the topic of confirming the eligibility of homeless students that can be used to train school staff on the definition of homelessness and appropriate procedures.

Section 4.8 Useful Links

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-Vento Services: Do's and Don'ts for School Districts*** http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/verif_sch.pdf
Issue Brief: ***Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act*** http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det_elig.pdf
Issue Brief: ***Meeting the Needs of Students Displaced by Disasters: Youth on Their Own*** http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/csds_youth.pdf
Issue Brief: ***What School District Administrators Should Know About the Educational Rights of Children Displaced by Disasters*** http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/csds_admin.pdf

Section 4.9 Resources and Tools for Chapter Four

Appendix 4.A Legal Definition of Homelessness

Appendix 4.A Legal Definition of Homelessness

The education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states the following [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)]:

> The term "homeless children and youths"—
>
> (A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 11302 (a)(1) of this title); 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 11302 (a)(2)(C) [1] of this title);
>
> (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 6399 of title 20) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this part because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii)

Chapter Five: Enrolling Homeless Students

Enrolling homeless students is a core concept in the McKinney-Vento Act as the law's purpose is to ensure that every homeless child or youth has equal access to a free, appropriate, public education. The term *enrollment* is a critical part of the law and is defined as, "attending classes and participating fully in school activities" [42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(1)]. Schools are required to enroll students immediately, regardless of the point in the school year in which a homeless student presents for enrollment.

In addition to enrolling students in the general education program, local liaisons are to ensure that homeless students receive educational and related services for which the families and students are eligible. As a result, homeless students should be enrolled in any program operated by the school that is appropriate for the student's needs, such as the school meals program, services through Title I, Part A, and school transportation. It is also appropriate to give referrals to students or their families at the time of enrollment to facilitate student enrollment in community-based programs such as Head Start and other public preschool programs, or healthcare, dental, or mental health services that facilitate school attendance or success. (See Chapter 7 Transportation for more information and Chapter 16 Related Legislation and Guidance for more information on other school services.)

Section 5.1 Documents Required for Enrollment

Students experiencing homelessness often do not have documents or records that are typically required for school enrollment. The McKinney-Vento Act recognizes that students often do not have the usual documentation at the time of enrollment and requires schools to enroll homeless students even if they do not have paperwork normally required. Liaisons or other appointed staff should follow up with the family and assist them with obtaining school or medical records needed by the school. Appendix 5.A Missing Documents contains a sample form that can be used to assist district staff with obtaining records not available when students enroll.

Districts should review and revise enrollment policies to allow for reasonable flexibility regarding enrollment documentation. For example, districts often require "reasonable proof of date of birth" at the time of enrollment. While a birth certificate would obviously meet this need, other options could include medical records that include a date of birth, baptismal records, passports, or other government issued documentation. Additionally, the limited resources of homeless families can make it especially difficult for parents or guardians to make unplanned visits to the school, especially if it requires them to miss work. As a result, to the extent possible, schools should gather all necessary documents, complete required forms, and make appropriate referrals at the time of the initial visit to the school for enrollment.

Section 5.2 Placing Students in Classrooms Without Records

To maximize continuity and minimize disruption, immediate enrollment and appropriate placement decisions require a quick analysis of information available about the student being enrolled. A quick analysis of student needs can start with whatever information is readily on hand. LEAs should request records immediately from the schools that students attended previously. For those students whose records might be unavailable or possibly even damaged or missing due to a natural disaster, it is incumbent upon receiving schools to begin building new student records based on information gathered from parents, students, local district or state-level student databases, and any other reliable sources of student information. While waiting for records to arrive, phone or email conversations with teachers and school counselors may assist liaisons in determining which classroom is an appropriate placement for students. Similarly, doctors, nurses, or psychologists involved in the evaluation and development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) can also help schools determine the most appropriate classroom placement. Report cards, tests, and homework assignments provided by families or youth can be good sources of information as well.

Sample questions for parents include:

- Do you have any papers from the previous school, such as notes from teachers, homework assignments, tests, progress reports, or any other papers?

- Have you worked with your child on any recent homework assignments? If so, what were the assignments about?
- What were your child's grades like? What does your child find easy? Difficult?
- Did you ever go to a meeting at school with a lot of teachers, a doctor, or someone from the school district office?
- Did you ever sign any papers that talked about goals for your child or special school services?
- How many students were in your child's classroom?
- How many teachers were in your child's classroom?

Sample questions for students could include:

- What was your school day like?
- What were you learning in your math/history/science/language class?
- What did you find easy? Difficult?
- What were some of your recent homework assignments? Do you have any old homework assignments, tests, notes from teachers, or other papers from school?
- What was the name of your math/history/science/language class?
- Did you ever spend time alone or in a small group with a different teacher?
- Did you ever spend time alone or in a small group in a different classroom?
- What were your grades like?

Many textbooks have placement tests and chapter or unit pretests. These can often be used quickly and easily by classroom teachers to guide instructional placement decisions. Ultimately, homeless students must be placed into the classes that seem most appropriate at the time of enrollment, with adjustments made later based on new information, if necessary.

Section 5.3 Enrolling Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Due to the recognition of unaccompanied homeless youth by the McKinney-Vento Act, it is important to note that the absence of a parent or guardian is not sufficient reason to delay or deny enrollment. Unaccompanied homeless youth who are completely on their own or staying with a non-custodial caregiver must be enrolled immediately. Conditional enrollment based on

the requirement that an adult obtain legal guardianship or custodianship within a set amount of time directly contradicts the law.

Liaisons are specifically charged with ensuring that unaccompanied homeless youth are aware of the educational and related opportunities available to them. Liaisons should discuss the options for enrollment with unaccompanied youth and ensure they receive assistance with making enrollment decisions.

Caregiver forms, which outline who can act on behalf of an unaccompanied youth in educational matters, can be very helpful during enrollment and when making educational decisions for the students. As your district develops new forms or revises existing ones, language that creates enrollment barriers or delays should be avoided. See Appendix 5.B Sample Caregiver Form for an example you can adapt to meet the needs of your district.

Section 5.4 Other Considerations

In addition to the McKinney-Vento Act, other state and federal laws may dictate the process used to enroll homeless students. For example, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) outlines to whom records can be released and under what conditions, which can be especially important when enrolling students who are survivors of domestic violence. FERPA does allow for the transfer of records from one local educational agency (LEA) to another without parental consent, as long as the LEA has made a reasonable attempt to notify the parent of the disclosure or includes in the district's annual FERPA notification to parents that school records will be forwarded to enrolling schools. This allows districts to easily get records needed for unaccompanied homeless youth.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) contains specific timelines that begin as soon as students with disabilities enroll; working with the district's special education department can ensure a smooth transition for homeless students who have disabilities.

Along with working with other laws and policies, liaisons also often need to work closely with local truancy officers or state attendance officers and may want to consult with them regarding state compulsory education law, state mandated caregiver forms, and other similar issues.

Unfortunately, some students will present themselves for enrollment at a point during the semester or school year at which it would be impossible for students to accrue credits for classes under normal circumstances. In this instance, schools must still allow the student to enroll in and attend school and participate in school activities. School districts are encouraged to adopt a process for helping the student earn credits when this happens. That could include providing partial credits for completed work, providing mastery-based credits, using credit recovery programs, chunking credits, or possibly using summer school opportunities to make up for lost school time.

Section 5.5 Useful Links

Issue Brief: ***Enrollment*** **http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/enrollment.pdf**
Issue Brief: ***Prompt and Proper Placement: Enrolling Students Without Records*** **http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/assessment.pdf**
Issue Brief: ***When Legal Guardians are not Present: Enrolling Students on Their Own*** **http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/guardianship.pdf**

Section 5.6 Resources and Tools for Chapter Five

Appendix 5.A Missing Documents
Appendix 5.B Sample Caregiver Form

Missing Documents

Student Name: _____

Name of Person Completing Form: _____

Relationship to Student: _____

School District/Building: _____

Indicate which documents are missing:

___ Proof of residency
___ Proof of guardianship
___ Proof of identity
___ Birth certificate

___ Immunization records

___ School physical/health records
___ School records
___ Other (please describe): _____
_____

You are being asked to answer the following 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 (42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.) states and localities are required to address barriers to the enrollment of students meeting the definition of homeless. Your completion of this information will facilitate the enrollment of your child (or of your own enrollment if you are an unaccompanied homeless youth).

1. Please list the age, date of birth, and birthplace of the students being enrolled.

2. If the person completing this form is someone other than the parents, legal guardians, or other persons with legal custody of the student(s) being enrolled, please list the names of the parents, legal guardians, or custodians. (If you are an unaccompanied youth, please list your parents, legal guardians, or other adults who help take care of you, such as relatives, caregivers, social workers, etc.)

3. 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.?)

4. Why are you unable to present a copy of the checked items?

5. In order to help the school district locate missing information for each of the students enrolling, please give the following information:

   Last school attended (name of school, city or county, and state):

   Clinic or medical facility where immunizations or medical treatment was received (name of facility, city or county, and state):

Date Signature of Person Completing Form

Sample Caregiver Form

This form is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11432 et seq.) requirement that homeless children have access to education and other services for which they are eligible. The McKinney-Vento 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 or youth's right to receive a free, appropriate public education.

Instructions:
Complete this form for a child or youth enrolling in school 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.

Chapter Six: School Selection

The issue of school selection may come up when a student is initially enrolling, but it may also come up for a student, recently identified as homeless, who is already attending a particular school. According to the McKinney-Vento Act, students have two school placement options:

- the school of origin or
- the school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area where the homeless student is temporarily residing are eligible to attend [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(A)].

School of origin is defined as "the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled" [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(G)]. Due to the high mobility experienced by homeless students, a student may have attended another school since becoming homeless. This would mean that the student would actually have three options for school selection: the local attendance area school, the school the student attended prior to becoming homeless, or the school the student attended most recently.

The duration of homelessness that a family or unaccompanied youth experiences may be brief, or it may last a long time; as a result of this variability, the law addresses how long a student is eligible to attend the school of origin. A homeless student may attend a school of origin for the entire duration of the homelessness or until the end of any school year in which the student becomes permanently housed [42 U.S.C. 42 § 11432(g)(3)(A)(i)]. Students who become homeless over the course of a summer may also remain in their schools of origin for the upcoming school year.

Regardless of the school option chosen, the placement of students experiencing homelessness should always be based on the student's best interest.

Section 6.1 Best Interest and Feasibility

The task of choosing which school a student should attend can, at times, be a daunting one. Regardless of the choice ultimately made, the best interest of the student is the determining factor for decisions about school placement. To the extent feasible, a student should remain in the school of origin, unless doing so directly contradicts the desires of the parents, guardians, or unaccompanied homeless youth [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(B)]. Frequent school changes can have a negative impact on a student's education; by allowing a student to remain in the school of origin, the potential harm to a student's educational outcomes while homeless is reduced. However, remaining in the school of origin may not always be in the best interest of a student. For example, issues such as domestic violence or other personal safety concerns could indicate that the local attendance area school would be a better choice for school selection.

The U.S. Department of Education has provided a brief list of issues that districts should consider when determining feasibility in its Non-regulatory Guidance for the McKinney-Vento Act (G-4, 2004). Issues that should be considered include, but are not limited to,

- the student's age,
- the length of the commute to and from school and its impact on the student's education,
- personal safety issues,
- the need for special instruction,
- the anticipated length of stay in a temporary residence or area, and
- the time remaining in the school year.

All decisions about school placement must be made on a case-by-case basis given the myriad of variables involved. A checklist of issues to consider may help liaisons make determinations; Appendix 6.A contains a sample checklist that can be adapted to fit your district's needs. If a district has large numbers of homeless and highly mobile students, it may be beneficial to train several staff members to assist parents in this decision-making process.

If a district sends a student to a school other than the school requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, the school must provide a written explanation to the student's family or the unaccompanied youth. The written notice must also include information on how to appeal the LEA's decision.

More information on the resolution of such disputes will be covered in Chapter 8 Dispute Resolution.

Section 6.2 Additional Considerations

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that district policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure that no barriers to academic engagement and success exist for homeless students. As a part of your district review, it is advisable to examine your process for making best interest or feasibility determinations. For example, over time, bus routes may change, affecting the impact of the commute on students' educations.

Another important consideration is the impact of transitions on homeless students. If enrolling in a new school is in the best interest of the student, many simple things can be done at the school and classroom level to minimize the negative impact the change, while maximizing student resiliency. Liaisons should encourage teachers and principals to:

- take time to talk to and welcome students individually;
- use a get-to-know-you questionnaire or journal assignment;
- give a "welcome gift" (school supplies, school clothes, etc.);
- introduce new students to the class;
- identify faculty and peer mentors or buddies;
- keep a short, simple written list of classroom rules and procedures;
- make sure the students have a chance to have a class job or role and to participate in extracurricular activities;
- have school personnel meet with parents and students when registering;
- create an orientation video for parents, service providers, and students;
- start files and a portfolio of class work for students to take with them when leaving the school;
- establish school and classroom-level routines for incoming and departing transfers; and
- make it possible for high school students to obtain credit even if they transfer to another school in mid-semester.

For more information on smoothing transitions, see Section 6.3 Useful Links.

In addition to removing barriers and smoothing transitions, liaisons should note whether their state or local policies allow school enrollment options beyond the school of origin and local attendance area school. Many LEAs have open enrollment policies that offer additional options for school enrollment. Alternative education programs or charter schools may be available and meet a homeless student's needs. Furthermore, some homeless students with disabilities may need an alternative placement due to their Individualized Education Program. Liaisons should work with the program coordinators for these other programs or schools to ensure appropriate enrollment in the student's best interest. See Chapter 11 Collaboration for information on working with other programs.

Section 6.3 Useful Links

Issue Brief: ***Guiding the Discussion on School Selection*** **http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/sch_sel_checklist.pdf**
Issue Brief: ***School Selection*** **http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/school_selection.pdf**
Classrooms with Revolving Doors: Recommended Practices for Elementary Teachers of At-Risk and Highly Mobile Students **http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/eff_teach_elem.pdf**
Classrooms with Revolving Doors: Recommended Practices for Middle Level and High School Teachers of At-Risk and Highly Mobile Students **http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/eff_teach_mh.pdf**

Section 6.4 Resources and Tools for Chapter Six

Appendix 6.A School Selection Checklist for Decision-Making

School Selection Checklist for Decision-Making

(Adapted from the Texas Homeless Education Office)

School of Origin Considerations	Local Attendance Area School Considerations
☐ Continuity of Instruction *Student is best served due to circumstances that look to his or her past.*	☐ Continuity of Instruction *Student is best served due to circumstances that look to his or her future.*
☐ Age and Grade Placement of the Student *Maintaining friends and contacts with peers is critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation. The student has been in this environment for an extended period of time.*	☐ Age and Grade Placement of the Student *Maintaining friends and contacts with peers in the school of origin is not particularly critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation. The student has attended the school of origin for only a brief time.*
☐ Academic Strength *The child's academic performance is weak and the child would fall further behind if he/she transferred to another school.*	☐ Academic Strength *The child's academic performance is strong and at grade level; the child would likely recover academically from a school transfer.*
☐ Social and Emotional State *The child is suffering from the effects of mobility, has developed strong ties to the current school, and does not want to leave.*	☐ Social and Emotional State *The child seems to be coping adequately with mobility, does not feel strong ties to the current school, and does not mind transferring.*
☐ Distance of the Commute and Its Impact *The advantages of remaining in the school of origin outweigh any potential disadvantages presented by the length of the commute.*	☐ Distance of the Commute and Its Impact *A shorter commute may help the student's concentration, attitude, or readiness for school. The local attendance area school can meet all of the necessary educational and special needs of the student.*
☐ Personal Safety of the Student *The school of origin has advantages for the safety of the student.*	☐ Personal Safety of the Student *The local attendance area school has advantages for the safety of the student.*
☐ Student's Need for Special Instruction *The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be better met at the school of origin.*	☐ Student's Need for Special Instruction *The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met at the local attendance area school.*
☐ Length of Anticipated Stay *The student's current living situation is outside of the school of origin's attendance zone, but the living situation continues to be uncertain. The student will benefit from the continuity offered by remaining in the school of origin.*	☐ Length of Anticipated Stay *The student's current living situation appears stable and unlikely to change suddenly; the student will benefit from the developing relationships with peers in school who live in the local community.*

Chapter Seven: Transportation

Section 7.1 The Importance of Transportation for Homeless Students

Transportation is one of the biggest barriers to regular school attendance and school stability for homeless students. While many local educational agencies (LEAs) struggle to meet the McKinney-Vento requirements for transporting homeless students, the importance of enabling homeless students to continue in their school of origin or to participate fully in school without being hampered by the lack of transportation cannot be overestimated.

Section 7.2 School of Origin Transportation Requirements

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:
>
> 1) If the homeless child or youth continues to live in the area served by the LEA 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 LEA in which the school of origin is located.
> 2) If the homeless child's or youth's living arrangements in the area served by the LEA 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 LEA, 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)].

It is important to note that this requirement applies to all LEAs whether or not the LEA receives subgrant funds and whether or not the LEA provides transportation to other students (ED, 2004, H-7).

With regard to the role of the local liaison, the law states that liaisons must ensure: "…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…and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school that is selected…" [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)(vii)]. The Non-Regulatory Guidance further cements this position, by affirming the responsibility of the liaison to coordinate transportation services for homeless students (ED, 2004, F-2).

Section 7.3 Feasibility and Transportation to the School of Origin

In determining the best school for a homeless child or youth to attend (local attendance area school or school of origin), the McKinney-Vento Act states that, to the extent feasible, a school district must educate a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(B)(i)]. To assist schools and states with determining what is feasible, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) included some considerations in the 2004 Non-Regulatory Guidance:

> 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 (ED, 2004, G-4).

Note that the feasibility considerations focus on what is in the best interest of the child, including determining the impact that the distance of commuting to the school of origin might have on the child. Once the local liaison and parents agree that remaining in the school of origin is in the best interest of the child, the school district must provide transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested. An LEA may not refuse to provide

transportation to the school of origin due to lack of an available bus or other resources once this best interest determination has been made.

Section 7.4 Determining the Mode of Transportation

According to Non-Regulatory Guidance, based on the best interest of the student and in consultation with the parent, the LEA ultimately determines the mode of transportation (ED, 2004, H-4); however, it is important to ensure that the mode of transportation does not create barriers to a homeless student's education.

For example, transportation arrangements should ensure that a homeless student is able to participate for the full school day, neither arriving late nor leaving before the school day has ended. Extremely early pick-up times or public bus transfers for young children also may be problematic and should be considered carefully when arranging transportation.

The mode of transportation also should not stigmatize a homeless student or betray the confidentiality of his or her living status. Bus routes, for example, should be arranged such that students staying in homeless shelters can be picked up and dropped off in a way that does not reveal their place of temporary residence. For example, buses can make a stop at the shelter the first stop in the morning and the last stop in the afternoon.

School districts in urban areas are often able to arrange discounts for homeless students to utilize public transportation. If this option is available, you should make sure that the student is old enough to manage riding a city bus or arrange for the parent to ride the bus with the child. Additionally, when the method of transportation chosen by the district is public and the child is too young to travel alone, the district must provide transportation for the parent to and from the temporary residence when needed.

In suburban or rural areas, if parents or unaccompanied homeless youth have working automobiles, many school districts will arrange for the parents to drive their children to school (or for an unaccompanied homeless youth to drive). The LEA may provide a gas card or voucher for the parent or youth. It is important to ensure that the parent or youth understands that the amount provided to pay for gas should be spent only on transportation to and from school. The LEA should also note days when the student is not in attendance and adjust the amount accordingly.

Another consideration for determining the most logical mode of transportation includes safety policies. The McKinney-Vento Act does not override state educational agency (SEA) and LEA safety policies. If, for example, a state or district policy allows students to travel only on a yellow school bus, then the LEA must arrange bus transportation for homeless students. If students are allowed to be transported in cars or taxis, liaisons should consult with the school district attorney regarding liability and requirements for background checks for the drivers.

In addition, the local liaison should consult with the State Coordinator about any other state policies or practices related the transportation of homeless students that may be in place.

Section 7.5 Comparable Services

Homeless students have the right to services comparable to those offered to other students, including transportation [42 U.S.C. §11432 (g)(4)(A)]. For example, transportation during optional summer school is required for a homeless student if it is provided to nonhomeless students. Similarly, homeless students participating in an after-school program have a right to transportation after the program is finished for the day if other students that participate in the program receive transportation home.

Section 7.6 Reviewing and Revising Policies to Remove Educational Barriers

The McKinney-Vento Act states that SEAs and LEAs are responsible for reviewing and revising policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools [42 U.S.C. §11432 (g)(7)]. Transportation policies are included, as a lack of transportation can be a considerable barrier for homeless students. Because homeless students often experience challenges not faced by housed students, the provision of services to homeless students may need to extend beyond what is provided to regularly housed students.

LEAs must arrange transportation without delay to meet the McKinney-Vento Act's requirement that homeless students are provided immediate school enrollment, defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(1)]. This may require an interim

transportation arrangement until a bus route or other suitable transportation is established.

Section 7.7 Funding Resources

The following are available options to provide transportation services to homeless students.

LEA Transportation Funds or General Funds
Providing transportation for homeless students to and from the school of origin when requested is a LEA responsibility mandated in the McKinney-Vento Act. This responsibility exists for all LEAs, even when an LEA may not provide transportation for other students. As such, many districts rely on state transportation or general funds to provide homeless students with school transportation.

McKinney-Vento Subgrants
The McKinney-Vento Act states that LEAs with subgrants may utilize subgrant funds to cover "the excess cost of transportation" [42 U.S.C. § 11433(d)(5)]. While the law does not define this phrase, the expectation is that the LEA will cover the same level of cost for transporting homeless students as other students, before relying on subgrant funds.

The McKinney-Vento subgrant application must include an explanation of what portion of the grant will be allocated for transportation as well as an explanation of the ways other needs will be met. Keep in mind that subgrants are intended to meet a range of needs for homeless students, not just transportation needs. State Coordinators can answer questions about the McKinney-Vento subgrant application process and allowable expenses.

Section 7.8 Title I, Part A and Transportation for Homeless Students

The U.S. Department of Education determined that since the McKinney-Vento Act mandates LEAs to provide transportation to and from the school of origin, the use of Title I, Part A funds for school of origin transportation would constitute supplanting, which is prohibited. Nevertheless, according to Non-Regulatory Guidance, Title I, Part A set-aside funds for homeless students may be used for other transportation needs for homeless students,

such as transportation to enable a homeless student to participate in an educational activity after school if transportation is not otherwise available. Title I, Part A funds can provide stability to formerly homeless students by transporting formerly homeless students to the school of origin until the end of the school year in which the students become permanently housed (ED, 2004, M-2). Title I, Part A set-aside funds also may be used to provide transportation to enable parents to be more involved in their child's education. See Section 7.15 Links to Resources for the NCHE brief entitled *Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness under Title I, Part A* for more information.

Section 7.9 Collaboration within the LEA

The local liaison, LEA transportation director, and other LEA administrators should work together to develop effective transportation policies and procedures. (See Chapter 15 Managing the Work for more information on developing protocols for the LEA.) With ongoing communication and a clear delineation of responsibilities, LEAs can ensure that homeless students are provided needed transportation in an efficient and timely way and ensure all relevant parties are in the loop regarding what transportation is needed and what the most appropriate modes of transportation are.

Many districts utilize special education buses for transporting homeless students. The U. S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs allows the use of designated special education buses for transporting homeless students as long as the transportation needs of all special education students have been met.

All parties involved in student transportation should be familiar with the McKinney-Vento Act. This includes bus drivers, because they are often the first and last school personnel to come in contact with students experiencing homelessness over the course of a day; as a result, they may develop supportive relationships with the students. Drivers may assist with identifying students in homeless situations too, as they observe changes in when and where students are picked up or dropped off.

Section 7.10 Collaboration with other LEAs

When LEAs are arranging transportation across school district lines, the school personnel of all LEAs involved should discuss the mode of transportation for each student prior to initiating the transportation. Agreeing upon general guidelines for sharing the responsibility and cost of transporting homeless students among LEAs ahead of time eliminates confusion and conflicts when transportation needs to be arranged immediately for a homeless student. Some LEAs establish memoranda of agreement, while other make arrangements more informally.

Some effective collaboration practices include

- convening a regional joint McKinney-Vento training that includes pupil transportation directors, local liaisons, social workers, and bus drivers;
- convening a regional meeting each year of local liaisons and pupil transportation directors to discuss procedures for arranging transportation for homeless students and to address collaboration challenges;
- identifying a pupil transportation staff person whose primary responsibility it is to arrange transportation for homeless students; and
- establishing an electronic database for homeless students needing and receiving transportation, allowing liaisons and the pupil transportation department to immediately access current transportation commitments.

Most interdistrict disputes can be prevented through good communication and efforts to agree upon transportation arrangements. In the instance in which an interdistrict disagreement about transportation services occurs, the Non-Regulatory Guidance states that interdistrict transportation disputes should be resolved at the SEA level (ED, 2004, H-5). The McKinney-Vento Act's transportation requirements apply while disputes are being resolved [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(C)].

Section 7.11 Community Collaborations

Local liaisons should establish cooperative relationships with community agencies that serve homeless families, youth, and children. A community-

wide commitment to assist homeless families with children and unaccompanied homeless youth can result in resource sharing, including transportation resources. Many LEAs have been able to arrange transportation using shelter or other social service agency vans. Some public transportation systems donate bus passes or other transportation services to school districts for use by homeless students. Community foundations are often willing to contribute to meeting the transportation needs of homeless students as well. Collaboration with housing providers can also reduce transportation costs by encouraging housing partners to consider school proximity when making shelter or other housing placements.

Section 7.12 Transportation to Preschool Services

According to the Non-Regulatory Guidance (ED, 2004), transportation for preschool children experiencing homelessness falls under the comparable services requirement. That is, if an LEA provides transportation for nonhomeless preschool children, it must also provide comparable transportation services for homeless preschool children (ED, 2004, H-8). Conversely, if the LEA does not typically provide transportation for preschool children, it is not mandated to provide transportation for homeless preschoolers. However, a district can always go beyond what is required in the law, and since transportation for homeless preschool children is not a requirement for school districts, Title I, Part A funds could be used without violating supplanting requirements.

Section 7.13 Working with Parents

Parents who are experiencing homelessness generally appreciate being included in decisions involving the education of their children and should be part of the conversation on developing any plans for transporting their children to and from the school of origin. Moreover, parents should be provided with clear expectations for their role in carrying out the plan, such as committing to getting their children to a bus stop on time, notifying the transportation department when a child will not be attending school to avoid unnecessary trips, or following procedures for utilizing gas vouchers. Appendix 7.A provides a sample transportation contract between an LEA and homeless parents that can be adjusted to meet the needs of an LEA.

Section 7.14 Links to Resources

Issue Brief: ***Transporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/transportation.pdf

Monograph: ***Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness: Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin***
http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/incr_sch_stab.php

Issue Brief: ***Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness Under Title I, Part A***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/titlei.pdf

Tip Sheet: ***Transportation for Homeless Children and Youth: Strategies for Rural School Districts***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/rur_trans.pdf

NCHE Website Information by Topic: Transportation
http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_transport.php

NCHE Website Sample Forms and Materials, Including Interdistrict and Parent Agreements:
http://center.serve.org/nche/forum/transp.php

Section 7.15 Resources and Tools for Chapter Seven

Appendix 7.A Transportation Memorandum of Understanding

[Insert School District Name]

TRANSPORTATION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Dear Parent/Guardian/Student,

Your child(ren) or you, as an unaccompanied homeless youth, are currently eligible for the McKinney-Vento program. Per the McKinney-Vento Act, transportation will be provided to your child(ren) or you, as an unaccompanied youth, to and from school.

The following describes our agreement with you regarding transportation:

Pick-Up
Students must be at the bus stop at the time provided by the transportation department. Drivers can wait no more than [X] minutes from your scheduled time.

Drop-Off
An adult pre-approved by parents and guardians must be present at the bus stop to pick-up students too young to be left unsupervised. The transportation department will provide the time that the adult must be present for pick-up of students; parents and guardians must notify the liaison or the transportation department if an adult other than the parent or guardian will be picking-up the student.

Communication of Absences
If a student is going to be absent from school and therefore does not need transportation for part or all of a day, parents or guardians must call and inform the designated driver no later than [X] a.m. on the day of the absence so the driver can adjust the route accordingly.

Driver's Name: [Insert]
Contact Phone Number: [Insert]

Violating the Pick-up, Drop-off, or Absence agreement more than [Insert number] times could result in the loss of transportation services or other consequences.

Behavioral Expectations
Students and parents are expected to follow the [Insert District Name] policies for behavior. Disciplinary actions for students who violate the behavior policies will be followed as they are for any student in the district.

If [Insert District Name] fails to provide the agreed upon transportation services, the liaison should be contacted. Your liaison is [Insert Name] and may be reached at [Insert Contact Info].

If a student's residence changes, the transportation department must be contacted by [Insert Time] to allow for transportation to be arranged. Transportation requests and changes may take up to [insert number] days to be routed, so temporary transportation may be provided while routing is arranged. The transportation department may be contacted at: [insert info].

Please sign below to acknowledge that you understand and agree with these expectations and terms.

Date	Parent/Guardian/UHY Name (Printed)	Signature

Date	Name of Liaison (Printed)	Signature

Chapter Eight: Dispute Resolution

8.1 Purpose of Dispute Resolution Policy

Parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness and schools or school districts may disagree on issues related to enrollment and school selection. In most cases, parties can resolve these issues before entering into a formal dispute; however, there are times when an informal resolution is not possible and a formal dispute resolution must be pursued.

Formal dispute resolution

- ensures that each party's views are represented,
- enables the facts of the case to be considered objectively, and
- allows students to attend school while bringing the disagreement to closure.

While no one enjoys conflict and what often appears to be the "zero-sum" outcome of a dispute, a dispute resolution process is an important tool to protect the rights and best interests of homeless children and youth, as well as those of the local educational agency (LEA). Therefore, the McKinney-Vento Act requires each state educational agency (SEA) to include a written procedure for resolving disputes in its state plan for homeless education.

In addition, LEAs are required to have a dispute resolution process in place. While each district is allowed to design its own process as long as basic requirements are included, it is important for LEAs to coordinate with the state dispute resolution policy. This allows parents and district personnel to clearly understand the terms, expectations, and process whether the dispute is settled at the local or state level. Coordination also allows LEAs to draft policies that meet the requirements of the law without doing extensive policy drafts as much of what is in the state process should apply at the local level, thus saving liaisons valuable time. Moreover, it is good practice to have a written dispute resolution policy for homeless education at the LEA level that coordinates with and reinforces the state dispute resolution policy to facilitate efficient and expedient resolutions to disputes.

8.2 What the McKinney-Vento Act Requires

When a dispute arises under the McKinney-Vento Act, the law requires the following minimum procedures:

1. The child or youth "shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute" [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E)(i)]. In disputes involving unaccompanied homeless youth, the local liaison must ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth are immediately enrolled in school [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(E)(iv)]. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) emphasizes the importance of the requirement for enrollment during the dispute process in the 2004 Non-Regulatory Guidance:

   > When enrollment disputes arise, it is critical that students not be kept out of school. Interruption of 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 [G-5].

   While disputes are pending, students have the right to participate fully in school and receive all services which they would normally receive. This includes transportation services, as indicated by the Non-Regulatory Guidance:

   > The McKinney-Vento Act's transportation requirements apply while disputes are being resolved [2004, H-5].

2. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth must be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the right of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision any time the student is denied enrollment in a requested school [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E)(ii)]. In the case of an unaccompanied homeless youth, the notice explaining the decision and the right to appeal are provided directly to the youth [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(B)(iii)].

3. The child, youth, parent, or guardian must be referred to the local liaison, who will carry out the dispute resolution process as quickly as possible [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E)(iii)]. The local liaison must be familiar with the state's McKinney-Vento dispute resolution process and follow all procedures outlined therein.

8.3 Common Topics for McKinney-Vento Disputes

The McKinney-Vento Act mandates basic protections and procedures to follow when a dispute arises "over school selection or enrollment in a school" [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E)]. Therefore, the protections and procedures must be available to address any dispute about whether a student has the right to enroll in a particular school, whether based on eligibility, best interest, school selection, or immediate enrollment. The law also defines enrollment as "attending classes and participating fully in school activities" [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(1)]. Therefore, McKinney-Vento dispute procedures apply to any dispute arising under the Act, including disputes over questions such as:

Eligibility
Does the child or youth requesting enrollment meet the definition of homeless such that immediate enrollment is required, regardless of missing school records, proof of residency, immunization and other health records, guardianship records, or other documentation?

School Selection
Is it in the best interest of the child or youth to continue attending the school of origin or to enroll in the local attendance area school?

Participation
Is the child or youth attending classes immediately, even if the school has not yet received school records, including special education records, immunization or other health documents? Is the student provided full participation in school activities? Is enrollment granted immediately in any public school that non-homeless students who reside in the same area as the homeless child or youth are eligible to attend?

Transportation
Is the school district required to provide transportation to a student in a particular situation? Does the transportation provided permit the child to

attend classes and participate fully in school activities?

In some instances, a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness may disagree with the LEA on an issue that does not fall under the McKinney-Vento Act. For example, a parent, guardian, or youth may disagree on an issue more appropriately addressed through the special education program, or the conflict may center on a desire to attend a school other than the local attendance area school or school of origin. In these cases, the local liaison should help the parent, guardian, or youth understand the scope of the McKinney-Vento Act and help make connections to other programs and resources that could better address the expressed needs and wishes. In order for the local liaison to make these types of referrals, the liaison must thoroughly understand the McKinney-Vento Act to ensure that the parent, guardian, or youth is not denied legitimate rights to dispute a McKinney-Vento issue.

If you have any doubt about whether McKinney-Vento applies to the request of a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, you are urged to contact your State Coordinator to discuss the request. If you incorrectly deny the right to dispute the LEA's decision, you run the risk of being cited for noncompliance by the state homeless education office.

Table 8.1 Common Disagreements is a list of conflicts that regularly occur and are either related to the McKinney-Vento Act or may appear to be McKinney-Vento dispute resolution issues at first glance. Note that these examples are for illustrative purposes only. Actual cases will have nuances not captured in the abbreviated descriptions offered in the table.

Table 8.1 Common Disagreements

Type of Conflict	Examples
McKinney-Vento dispute resolution conflicts	• Disagreement about remaining in school of origin • Disagreement about immediate enrollment in school of residency • Disagreement about homeless status when student was appropriately identified as homeless previously (e.g., doubled-up in same location for two years)
Conflicts not appropriate for dispute	• School failed to inform of educational

Type of Conflict	Examples
resolution, but which are McKinney-Vento compliance issues	rights under McKinney-Vento • Student is not provided free meals • Systemic non-compliance by an LEA which requires state intervention (e.g., failure to identify homeless students; lack of outreach and coordination within schools and community)
Issues which do not implicate McKinney-Vento compliance, but address services which are allowable or beneficial	• Preschool student could benefit from school of origin transportation • Additional activities could enhance homeless identification (e.g., using a residency questionnaire) • Summer school could improve student's academic performance but is not required to pass a course or grade
Conflicts not related to McKinney-Vento status	• Student wishes to enroll in a school that is not an option for students in the residency area and is not a school of origin • Parent disagrees with the services being offered in an Individualized Education Program • Student never lost housing

8.4 Important Considerations Before, During, and After the Dispute Resolution Process

Attending to details before a dispute occurs, during the mediation, and after a dispute is resolved will ensure the LEA is prepared to carry out the process in the fairest and most objective manner possible while also reviewing each case for lessons learned to improve the process.

8.4.1 Before a Dispute Occurs

Make sure the LEA dispute process is streamlined and accessible to homeless parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth. The LEA is required to have written procedures to ensure that all LEA staff members involved know their responsibilities and ensure barriers to initiating the dispute process are eliminated.

Most parents and youth experiencing homelessness have limited resources, little to no ability to secure attorneys or advocates, and are dealing with the extreme stressors of homelessness. Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth must receive clear and simple information about

- their right to appeal decisions,
- how to initiate the appeal,
- how the process will unfold,
- who in the LEA and SEA they can contact with questions, and
- the timeline for the process.

Schools should provide this information in writing, but the local liaison should explain the process orally to ensure that parents, guardians, and youth understand.

In addition, the Non-Regulatory Guidance recommends that parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth be able to initiate the dispute resolution process directly at the school they choose or at the local liaison's office [2004, G-9]. It is important to offer both options as most homeless families and youth struggle with transportation. They may not have a way to travel to a particular office to initiate the dispute process. The need to travel may delay them initiating the dispute. If timelines are short, the families or youth may be unable to initiate the dispute within the required timeframe. To eliminate transportation barriers, parents, guardians, and youth should be provided maximum flexibility to initiate the dispute and submit appeals documents at the most convenient school or district office.

The paperwork necessary to initiate a dispute should be minimal to eliminate barriers to parents, guardians, and youth accessing the process. The written notice, for example, could include a space where the parent, guardian, or youth indicates whether he or she agrees with the decision. Indicating a disagreement should trigger a conversation about the dispute process and an immediate referral to the liaison.

8.4.1.1 Written Notice

The Non-Regulatory Guidance states, "Written notice protects both students and schools by outlining the specific reasons for the school's decision. It facilitates the dispute resolution by providing decision-makers with documents to guide their determinations (2004, G-5)… Written notice should

be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand" (2004, G-9).

Specifically, the Non-Regulatory Guidance suggests that written notices contain the following elements:

- contact information for the local liaison and State Coordinator, with a brief description of their roles;
- a simple, detachable form that parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth can complete and submit to the school to initiate the dispute process (the school should copy the form and return the copy to the custodial parent, guardian, or youth for their records when it is submitted);
- a step-by-step description of how to formally dispute the school's decision;
- notice of the right to "be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute," including the right to participate fully in all school activities;
- notice of the right to appeal to the state if the district-level resolution is not satisfactory; and
- timelines for resolving the district-level and state-level appeals (2004, G-9).

For an example of a form providing written notice, see Appendix 8.A Written Enrollment Decision Notice.

8.4.2 During the Dispute

Once a parent has initiated a dispute, the LEA is obligated to carry out the dispute process as objectively and quickly as possible. The dispute process allows the LEA and the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth (or local liaison on behalf of the youth) to present all case-related facts and documentation to a third party. In some states, the documentation is first reviewed by someone at the LEA level, and then provided at the state level.

It is critical that you are familiar with the process in your state and carry it out as specified. You should have the state dispute resolution policy and the LEA dispute policy on hand to guide you through the process.

8.4.2.1 Getting the Facts: Legal and Reasonable Steps

When a dispute arises under the McKinney-Vento Act, particularly when regarding eligibility, an LEA may wish to look further into the situation of the family or youth to compile evidence to support its position. *It is absolutely critical that all such efforts be grounded in sensitivity and respect, keeping the academic well-being and best interest of the child or youth in the forefront.* Invasive or threatening techniques to confirm eligibility or explore the situation of a family or youth violate the McKinney-Vento Act, may violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), humiliate families and youth, and may put temporary housing arrangements in jeopardy.

For cautions and good practices in obtaining information on families and youth experiencing homelessness, see the NCHE issue brief, *Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services: Do's and Don'ts for LEAs* (a link to the brief is included in Section 8.6).

To assist with confirming eligibility for McKinney-Vento services, many LEAs have developed residency forms with informative, yet sensitive, questions to help determine eligibility and gather information. Visit the NCHE webpage to see examples of state and LEA forms developed for this purpose: http://center.serve.org/nche/forum/eligibility.php.

8.4.2.2 Providing Information Relevant to a Dispute

The local liaison should keep thorough documentation of interactions with a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, and be prepared to provide this information to the designated third party in an organized fashion.

The following documentation may be reviewed during the dispute process:

- a clear, concise description of the issue (e.g., what the parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth are disputing, such as why the parent feels his child fits the definition of homeless or feels his child should attend a certain school, and why the LEA disagrees);
- a timeline of contacts between the school and the parent, guardian, or youth;
- copies of emails between the school or LEA and the parent, guardian, or youth;
- a log of phone contacts and meetings between the school or LEA and

the parent, guardian, or youth;
- a description of what the LEA has done to follow the dispute policy; and
- any written documentation or information the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth (or local liaison on behalf of the youth) has provided.

8.4.2.3 Helping Parents or Guardians with the Dispute Process

Parents or guardians often need help to know what information to provide, how to obtain it, and how to present it. If they receive help in providing appropriate information, the case will proceed more efficiently.

Schools and LEAs may inform parents or guardians that they can seek the assistance of advocates, attorneys and other service providers with whom they are working, such as counselors. You may wish to provide a list of local attorneys and advocates who have a thorough knowledge of the McKinney-Vento Act and are willing to work with parents or guardians.

Parents or guardians may have difficulty meeting deadlines. It is important to inform them of deadlines in the dispute process, and determine with them if there is a need to be flexible with the deadlines. In the event that parents are unable to write statements to explain their case, the LEA should make arrangements to obtain their statement orally. Reaching out to parents or guardians in this way ensures they are not disadvantaged in the dispute process due to logistical challenges or their inexperience with interacting with an organization in a formal way.

Once a decision is rendered on the dispute, the local liaison should ensure that all parties involved are apprised of the decision and arrangements are made to carry it out in the most efficient way possible. In the event that the decision is not made in favor of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, it is considered a good practice to discuss the decision with this person, develop strategies to implement the outcome, make the outcome as palatable as possible, and ensure that the best interest of the student is kept at the forefront.

8.4.3 After the Dispute

Dispute resolution is usually a complex process, and every case is unique. It is beneficial to debrief each case to determine lessons learned that can be used to improve the process and policy for future disputes. The local liaison is encouraged to review aspects of the process that worked efficiently and what could be improved after each dispute is resolved. Liaisons should discuss needed changes with all LEA and school staff involved, as well as with the State Coordinator.

Appendix 8.B Dispute Review Guide is a worksheet to help you review a disputed case and identify what needs to be done differently next time.

8.5 Prevention is the Best Solution

Many disagreements between a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth and the LEA can be avoided. Diffusing disagreements through better communication can eliminate the need for a formal dispute.

Table 8.2 Diffusing Disputes: Issues and Strategies provides a chart of issues that arise, and strategies that, when used to address them appropriately, can diffuse disagreements.

Table 8.2 Diffusing Disputes: Issues and Strategies

Issue	Strategies
The school or LEA is not compliant with implementing the McKinney-Vento Act.	If a school or LEA is not implementing the McKinney-Vento Act and is creating barriers to the education of homeless children and youth, then parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth have a legitimate grievance that should be brought to the attention of the local liaison or State Coordinator. To avoid this type of dispute, ensure that all LEA and school staff members are familiar with the McKinney-Vento Act and understand their responsibility to implement it.
A parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth desires an action or service that is not covered in the McKinney-Vento Act, such as wanting to attend a school other	The local liaison should explain the law to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, and provide the provisions of the law to clarify the issue. Referrals to other programs should be made, if appropriate.

Issue	Strategies
than the school of origin or the school in the local attendance area of the temporary residence.	
A parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth becomes angry and behaves inappropriately when expressing disagreement.	LEA and school staff should be trained to understand the trauma faced by homeless families and ways to de-escalate trauma responses. (See Chapter 10 Working With Parents for more information.)
A parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth wants a certain service or outcome and attempts to use a designation of homeless to get it.	When parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youth appear to be "manipulating the system," LEA and school staff should attempt to determine exactly what they want and see if there are other programs or ways to provide the service or outcome.
A parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth feels disrespected by the school or LEA and wants the school district to be punished.	Parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth should be treated with respect at all times. When parents are sent to multiple offices to address an issue, when they are confused about how to get services for their children or what services are available, or when they receive a notice in the mail that their child is going to be disenrolled from school, they are likely to become angry and feel mistreated by the school or LEA. They will want justice and retribution to become part of the dispute. LEA and school staff should have face-to-face conversations with the parent to foster an understanding of the law and process. Oftentimes, direct communication will develop rapport and trust with parents and make them more willing to be a partner in determining what can and cannot be done.
A parent brings a lot of grievances to the table, some of which may not be relevant to a McKinney-Vento dispute.	It is important to help the parent "keep the main thing the main thing." Be very clear as the dispute process is initiated what issue the dispute will address (e.g., determining eligibility for homelessness) and what extraneous issues being aired will not be addressed (e.g., a principal who treated a child unfairly). While both are serious grievances, the focus of your work is on the issue relevant to the McKinney-Vento Act.

8.6 Useful Links

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***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/verif_sch.pdf

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

Section K of the State Coordinator's Handbook focuses on the topic of Dispute Resolution
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/handbook2/k.pdf.pdf

8.7 Resources and Tools for Chapter Eight

Appendix 8.A Written Enrollment Decision Notice
Appendix 8.B Dispute Review Guide

Written Enrollment Decision Notice

This form is to be completed by the school when an enrollment request is denied.

Date: _____

Name of person completing form: _____

Title of person completing form: _____

Name of school: _____

In compliance with 42 U.S. C. § 11432(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 Enrollment Decision Notice

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. _____ (Please initial.)

Appendix 8.B Dispute Review Guide

Case:
Date Initiated:
Date Resolved:
Summary of Dispute:
Resolution:

Before			
Issue	✓	**What Went Well**	**What Needs Improvement**
All school and LEA staff were trained in the McKinney-Vento Act.			
The local liaison was familiar with the state and local homeless dispute resolution policy.			
All school and LEA staff knew what was required when a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth initiated a dispute.			
Timelines were clear and reasonable.			
The written notice document was reviewed for appropriateness.			
School and LEA staff members were trained in ways to diffuse disagreements and to treat parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth respectfully.			

During			
Issue	✓	**What Went Well**	**What Needs Improvement**
The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth was provided written notice of the LEA's decision.			
Local liaison or school staff explained the dispute process.			
The local liaison implemented the dispute process according to LEA and SEA policies.			
Local liaison ensured that parent or guardian was able to meet deadlines or was provided assistance or flexibility, and addressed other barriers for the parent to implement the process.			
Parent or guardian was referred to advocate or attorney for assistance.			
Local liaison assisted unaccompanied youth with the process.			
School immediately enrolled and provided full services to child in the school that the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth desired once appeal was received.			
Local liaison obtained information and documentation in appropriate ways.			
Local liaison compiled sufficient information and documents for the State Coordinator or other third parties.			
All necessary parties were apprised of the resolution and their role in its implementation.			

The local liaison discussed the outcome and worked with the school or complainants on strategies to implement the resolution while keeping the best interest of the child at the forefront.			

After			
Issue	✓	**What Went Well**	**What Needs Improvement**
The local liaison reviewed the case with all parties involved at the LEA and SEA level for lessons learned.			
Appropriate changes in procedures and policies were implemented.			
Additional training needed by staff was provided.			

Dispute Policy Improvement Action Plan

What Needs to be Done	Person Responsible	Deadline

Chapter Nine: Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Section 9.1 Overview

Homelessness is a devastating circumstance for any child or youth, but being both homeless and separated from a parent or guardian often puts youth in inadequate and unsafe living situations and makes them at risk for school failure or dropping out. Schools and local educational agencies (LEAs) face many challenges in meeting the needs of these youth.

Many barriers affect the ability of unaccompanied homeless youth to enroll, attend, and succeed in school. These barriers often include

- a lack of stable housing;
- an inability to take care of basic needs resulting in fatigue, poor health, poor hygiene, and hunger;
- a lack of school supplies and clothing;
- emotional crises or mental health problems;
- a lack of support from a caring adult;
- concerns about being reported to child welfare and law enforcement agencies;
- employment that interferes with attendance and school work;
- missing school records and other paperwork;
- a lack of transportation;
- difficulty accumulating credits due to school mobility; and
- irregular school attendance.

The local homeless liaison must ensure that these youth are provided services under the McKinney-Vento Act and linked to services within the LEA and the community to meet their needs.

Section 9.2 Definitions: Unaccompanied Youth and Homeless

An *unaccompanied youth* is defined in the McKinney-Vento Act as a "youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian" [42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(6)].

This definition can be used to describe youth who are residing with a caregiver who is not a parent or guardian as well as youth who are living without the care of an adult.

An unaccompanied homeless youth must fit the definitions of both homeless and unaccompanied in the McKinney-Vento Act to receive assistance under the provisions in the law. That is, an unaccompanied homeless youth is a youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian *and* lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

> *Only those youth who are both unaccompanied and homeless qualify for assistance under the McKinney-Vento Act.*

While many unaccompanied youth are homeless, not all are. The flowchart in Appendix 9.A illustrates when an unaccompanied youth may be considered homeless (and eligible for McKinney-Vento services) and when the youth may not be considered homeless.

There is no lower age limit for unaccompanied homeless youth. Children as young as kindergarten age or even preschool age may be considered unaccompanied. The upper age limit, as with all McKinney-Vento eligible students, is the upper age limit for public education. The upper limit varies from state to state, according to the state's age limits for public education, but is often 21 to incorporate mandates for public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

McKinney-Vento eligibility determinations are based on the youth's current living situation, not the circumstances that caused the student to leave home. An unaccompanied homeless youth is eligible for services regardless of whether the student was asked to leave the home or chose to leave due to conditions in the home. While it can be easy to consider the reason a youth left home frivolous—that the youth has a perfectly good home or that the youth simply needs to abide by the rules set by the student's parents – there may be other circumstances that warrant the youth being out of the home at this time. Sometimes the "rest of the story" is never known by school staff as the youth may not be willing to disclose uncomfortable or embarrassing details. Ultimately, regardless of your understanding of the full details that

led to a student being unaccompanied and homeless, your responsibility under the McKinney-Vento Act is to ensure the student has an equal opportunity to attend and succeed in school.

It is important for the local liaison to reinforce in trainings with school staff that the school's primary responsibility is to enroll and educate homeless children and youth in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act. Judgments regarding why a youth left home fall outside the purview of the public education system. Schools are required to enroll any unaccompanied youth who fits the definition of homeless.

Section 9.3 McKinney-Vento Act Provisions for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Unaccompanied homeless youth are ensured the same educational rights that the McKinney-Vento Act provides for other homeless students, which include the right to:

- enroll immediately, even if they do not currently have paperwork normally required for enrollment [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(C)];
- attend either the local attendance area school or the school of origin, with the placement decision based on the student's best interest [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(A)];
- remain in the school of origin for the duration of the homelessness or until the end of the school year in which the student becomes permanently housed [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(A)];
- receive transportation to and from the school of origin [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(1)(J)(iii)];
- receive educational services, such as free school meals, Title I services; and participate in gifted and talented programs, vocational education, alternative education, and any other services comparable to what housed students receive [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(4)(B)]; and
- not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(1)(J)(i)].

In addition to the provisions that apply to all homeless students, the McKinney-Vento Act includes the following provisions specifically for unaccompanied homeless youth:

- Unaccompanied homeless youth shall be immediately enrolled without proof of guardianship [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(1)(H)(iii)];

- During a dispute over school selection or enrollment, unaccompanied homeless youth shall receive a written statement explaining the school's decision, the youth's right to appeal the decision, and a referral to the local liaison [42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(3)(E)].
- Local liaisons shall assist unaccompanied homeless youth in
    - selecting a school of attendance and enrolling in school [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(B)(iii)],
    - requesting transportation to and from the school of origin [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(1)(J)(iii)]; and
    - enrolling in school immediately while disputes are resolved [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(J)(3)(E)(iv)].

Section 9.4 Identifying Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Identification of unaccompanied homeless youth can be challenging because they often do not readily identify themselves to school personnel. Many youth feel there is stigma related to their situation and avoid telling others about it. Youth are often afraid they will be treated differently by school personnel or by other students if "found out" or that they will be reported to child welfare or law enforcement.

Some helpful strategies to identify unaccompanied homeless youth include:

- Posting outreach materials where youth congregate, including laundromats, parks, campgrounds, skate parks, youth clubs or organizations, and 24-hour stores.
- Developing outreach materials specifically targeted to homeless youth. (See Section 9.12 Useful Links for youth specific materials that can be obtained through the NCHE website.)
- Using means of communication that are comfortable for youth, such as websites, email, the school district Facebook page, or Twitter.
- Enlisting other students to help spread the word about services offered to homeless youth.
- Making the school a welcoming and supportive place for youth.
- Building trusting relationships with unaccompanied homeless youth.
    - Informing youth of their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act.
    - Conducting conversations with youth in an office or other area that allows for confidentiality.
    - Listening to their concerns and wishes; withholding judgment.

- Keeping in mind the challenges that unaccompanied homeless students are facing as you work with them, offer support as you are able; sometimes, youth perceive providing a small packet of school supplies or hygiene items as a caring gesture.
- Encouraging unaccompanied homeless youth to stay in school and advocating for their educational success.
- Informing youth in advance about the circumstances under which you may be required to alert child welfare or law enforcement and helping youth understand how this process may affect them.

Section 9.5 Enrolling Without Parents or Guardians

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that schools enroll unaccompanied homeless youth immediately, even without a parent or guardian, and remove any barriers to enrollment. Because the McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law, the immediate enrollment provision overrides any local policies that may be a barrier to enrolling unaccompanied homeless youth. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) recommends three common methods for enrolling unaccompanied homeless students:

- the student enrolls him or herself,
- a caregiver enrolls the student, or
- the local liaison enrolls the student.

To meet the requirement of removing barriers for enrollment and attendance, schools should develop policies related to enrolling a youth without a parent or guardian. The Non-Regulatory Guidance (ED, 2004) suggests developing caregiver affidavits and enrollment forms for unaccompanied homeless youth, along with other forms to replace the typical proof of guardianship required at enrollment (G-8). A sample caregiver form can be found in Appendix 5.B.

Despite the absence of parents or guardians for unaccompanied youth, schools will still be able to acquire student records, as parent or guardian consent is not required in order to transfer student records to an enrolling school, according to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). (See 9.12 Useful Links for more information on FERPA.)

A school district cannot require a caregiver to obtain legal guardianship at any point prior to or following an unaccompanied homeless student's

enrollment. A school district also cannot discontinue a student's enrollment due to an inability to identify a caregiver, guardian, or parent following enrollment or an inability to produce guardianship or other paperwork. Section 9.12 Useful Links contains a link to the NCHE brief, *When Legal Guardians Are Not Present: Enrolling Youth on Their Own*, which may be helpful to liaisons enrolling unaccompanied homeless youth.

The following strategies may assist liaisons helping unaccompanied homeless youth obtain missing medical and related records:

- Birth certificates can be ordered online through state departments of health. Requests for birth records should be submitted to the state in which the student was born. For information on where to obtain vital records in a particular state, visit www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm.
- An application for original or replacement social security cards can be obtained by visiting www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/. The website also provides information about documents that must be provided with the application as proof of identity.
- Many states now have an online immunization registry that can be accessed by doctors' offices and other approved medical providers. This can make it easier to obtain immunization records for highly mobile students who may have limited ability to obtain medical records from another county or state. The following link provides helpful information about where to find missing immunization records: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/immuniz-records.htm#where.
- Unaccompanied homeless youth who need to request a copy of their birth certificate, social security card, or other government-issued record may not have a stable address to which the records can be sent. Allowing the student to use the school address can expedite the process of obtaining original or certified copies for the student.

In addition to policies and procedures regarding unaccompanied homeless youth at the time of enrollment, LEAs should address other potential barriers to full participation in school, including determining who can sign for excused absences and field trip participation and how to consent for medical services. Liaisons should be familiar with state and local laws and policies related to minor medical consent. Your State Coordinator should be able to provide you with sources for this critical information.

Section 9.6 Understanding State and Local Laws and Policies for Reporting Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

States and localities across the nation have a variety of laws and policies related to youth on their own. These laws and policies specify under what circumstances youth must be reported to child welfare or law enforcement. While all states require school staff and social workers to report abuse, most do not require that runaway youth be reported.

Contact your State Coordinator about your state's requirements, and also discuss recommendations for how to implement these laws and policies in ways that will be least likely to cause the youth to avoid self-disclosure when they are on their own or to drop out of school. The ultimate goal is to keep youth in school where adults can be available to guide them and link them with services. Unaccompanied homeless youth often do not have anywhere to go when not at school, which leaves them on the street and at risk for life threatening situations such as human trafficking.

In states where reporting runaway youth is mandatory, some LEAs work with local law enforcement or child welfare agencies to agree upon a window of time before the LEA must report runaway youth. This allows more information to be gathered about a youth's circumstances and determine what may be in the student's best interest.

Section 9.7 In-school Support for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Unaccompanied homeless youth often have unique barriers to their education that derive from not having stable housing, basic needs, or adult guidance. Consider the following strategies to stabilize them and help them succeed in school:

- Identify the basic needs that are not met for food, clothing, and housing and provide referrals for assistance.
- Provide access to the school athletic department for shower and laundry facilities, and storage space for belongings.
- Allow flexible assignment deadlines when necessary to prevent unaccompanied homeless youth from being penalized for their inability to meet deadlines due to unstable living circumstances.

- Implement policies to assist with accumulating credits toward graduation, such as chunking credits, implementing mastery-based learning, and providing partial credits for completed coursework.
- Consider alternative education programs that allow flexible school hours or have paid work components for youth who need to work for subsistence.
- Link them with an adult who cares about their well-being and will check in with the youth on a regular basis. These adults can serve many roles in the school, from administrators to custodians. They must be someone who can relate to the youth and whom the youth trusts.

Section 9.8 Handling Disciplinary Situations for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

The McKinney-Vento Act does not provide immunity from normal school disciplinary guidelines. Homeless students are subject to the same rules as their housed peers. However, when behaviors are directly related to a student's homelessness (such as, in some instances, being tardy or absent), the youth should not be penalized, as the law states that homeless students cannot be stigmatized on the basis of their homelessness.

Local liaisons should be familiar with the educational challenges that unaccompanied homeless youth face and assist them to overcome their challenges. Sometimes, basic assistance is all that is needed, such as providing an alarm clock to prevent tardiness or resources and supplies to complete assignments; other times, the youth should be connected with community resources for services such as counseling for behaviors that impact the classroom.

Liaisons should become aware of how trauma can impact the behavior of unaccompanied homeless youth and provide trauma-informed interventions. Section 9.12 Useful Links provides a link to a resource from the National Center on Family Homelessness called the *Trauma Informed Organizational Toolkit for Homeless Services*, which may be valuable to liaisons.

Section 9.9 Extra-curricular Activities

For many unaccompanied homeless youth, participation in extra-curricular activities is a critical way to engage in school and connect with other students. Extra-curricular activities help build self-esteem and give students a sense of purpose and accomplishment.

The McKinney-Vento Act defines enrollment as "attending classes and participating fully in school activities" [42 U.S.C. § 11432(1)]; this includes extra-curricular activities offered through the school. The Act charges state educational agencies (SEAs) and LEAs to develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools. As a part of this requirement, schools should waive activity fees and deadlines for participation. Local business sponsors and school alumni may help with defraying activity costs. School-based organizations, such as parent organizations and booster clubs, also often assist with athletic, band, and other expenses.

For more information, review the NCHE brief, *Ensuring Full Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities for Students Experiencing Homelessness*. (See Section 9.12 Useful Links.)

Section 9.10 Linking with Community Resources

Liaisons should become familiar with community resources for unaccompanied homeless youth, including runaway and homeless youth shelters, and more general resources for housing and shelter, food assistance, transportation, and physical and mental health services. Developing partnerships and coordinating with agencies serving youth to determine eligibility for services and referral processes will streamline the youth's access to services. Chapter 11 Collaborations has more information about forging partnerships to benefit homeless students.

Section 9.11 Helping Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Prepare for College

Local liaisons play a key role in ensuring that unaccompanied homeless youth are aware of opportunities beyond public school and that they are prepared to take the next steps to apply and enroll in post-secondary

education. Liaisons can work with school guidance counselors to make certain that students are aware of their options after high school and have the opportunity to participate in college visit days with their peers. Liaisons should make sure that homeless students have the help they need to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) stipulates that unaccompanied youth determined to be homeless by a local liaison, Runaway and Homeless Youth Act funded shelter, Housing and Urban Development program, or college financial aid administrator may apply for federal financial aid as independent students. Unaccompanied homeless youth can complete the FAFSA without a parent or guardian's signature, and the parent or guardian's income is not considered when determining an independent student's need for financial aid. See Section 9.12 Useful Links for an NCHE brief related to this topic. More resources to assist with higher education access and financial aid for unaccompanied homeless youth are also available through the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

Section 9.12 Useful Links

Issue Brief: ***Ensuring Full Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities for Students Experiencing Homelessness***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/extra_curr.pdf

Issue Brief: ***Increasing Access to Higher Education for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Information for Colleges and Universities***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/higher_ed.pdf

Issue Brief: ***Maximizing Credit Accrual and Recovery for Homeless Students***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/credit.pdf

Issue Brief: ***Unaccompanied Homeless Youths***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/youth.pdf

Issue Brief: ***When Legal Guardians Are Not Present: Enrolling Youth on Their Own***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/guardianship.pdf

Higher Education Initiative **National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth** ***http://www.naehcy.org/educational-resources/helpline*** **or (855) 446-2673**
Family Education Rights and Privacy Act **http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html**
Trauma Informed Organizational Toolkit for Homeless Services **National Center on Family Homelessness** **http://www.familyhomelessness.org/media/90.pdf**
Youth Rights Poster: http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/he_poster.php
Informational Booklet: ***Surviving on Your Own: Information for Youth on How Schools Can Help*** **http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/youth_booklet.php**

Section 9.13 Resources and Tools for Chapter Nine

Appendix 9.A Unaccompanied Youth Eligibility Flow Chart

Unaccompanied Youth Eligibility Flowchart

HOMELESS:
SHOULD be enrolled as UHY under MV

Is the student residing with someone who is not a parent or court-appointed legal guardian?

NOT HOMELESS:
SHOULD NOT be enrolled as UHY under MV

Why is the student with this person?

Family was evicted; cannot find housing all together; parent placed child temporarily with a friend or relative

Parent transferred for work; plan for student care & support in place so student can stay to finish school

NEED MORE INFORMATION

Student left home due to danger or extreme conflict; student was put out of home by parent for a similar reason

Student moved in with a friend, relative, or coach to play sports, be in the band, attend a magnet school, etc.

The family was homeless prior to the parent's incarceration or the caregiver arrangement is not fixed, regular, and adequate

Parent is incarcerated and a relative or friend agreed to care for the child

Student did not change residences, caregiver moved in; parent made arrangements for the student prior to incarceration

The family lost housing; the parent placed the child temporarily with a friend or relative

Parent enrolled the student and then left the area

Parent's work schedule was problematic, so the child stays with relatives for school

NOTE: The information contained in this flowchart is intended to serve as a general guide. All McKinney-Vento eligibility determinations should be made on a case-by-case basis weighing the individual circumstances of each student. To be eligible for McKinney-Vento services as an unaccompanied homeless student, the student must meet the criteria of both homeless and unaccompanied.

Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility of Unaccompanied Youth

1. **Is the student residing with someone who is not his/her parent or court appointed guardian?**

   If yes, continue to the next question. If no, the student may be homeless, but is not unaccompanied.

2. **Does the student meet the definition of homeless under McKinney-Vento?**

   These are sample questions that can be asked to determine McKinney-Vento eligibility. Reminder: *homeless* is defined as "lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."

   - Why is the student living with someone who is not his/her parent/guardian?
   - Is the student placed in this residence as a temporary plan for housing because the entire family became homeless?
   - Did the student leave home because of severe family conflict?
   - How long can the student continue living where he or she is?
   - Does the student have his or her own space/bedroom in the residence?
   - Does the student have adequate privacy?
   - Can the student come and go as needed?
   - Where would the student live if not able to live there?
   - What are the expectations of the student while staying there?

A student who is considered homeless (lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence) and unaccompanied (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) can be registered as an unaccompanied homeless youth under the McKinney-Vento Act.

A student who is not homeless, even though residing with a person other than the parent or court-appointed guardian, does not qualify as an unaccompanied homeless youth under the McKinney-Vento Act.

Based on a flowchart provided by Virginia Beach Public Schools

Chapter Ten: Working with Parents

Section 10.1 McKinney-Vento and Parental Rights

The McKinney-Vento Act accords parents and guardians experiencing homelessness the right to have their voices heard on what they believe is in the best interest of their children. The law requires local homeless liaisons to provide parents and guardians information on the McKinney-Vento Act and on the process for disputing decisions of the local educational agency (LEA) when they disagree on enrollment and best interest determinations for their children.

Section 10.2 Challenges in Working with Homeless Parents

While most parents experiencing homelessness are cooperative and trust that school administrators, teachers, and staff have the best interest of their children in mind, some may be uncooperative and even confrontational. Homelessness puts parents under inordinate stress. As the local homeless liaison, it is important to keep this in mind and work with parents in ways that build trust and empower them to work with you to enable their children to succeed in school.

Section 10.3 Working with Parents Who Have Experienced Trauma

Many homeless parents have experienced trauma, which predisposes them to losing control of their behavior when they experience things that trigger emotions or situations related to the trauma. Common trauma triggers for homeless parents include

- a sense of being ignored or not being heard,
- a sense of being disrespected,
- a sense of being viewed as wrong or incompetent,
- a feeling of being threatened or pushed against a wall (literally or figuratively),
- the perception of being denied what they deserve or having things taken away,
- one too many requests or requirements, and

- being touched.

A seemingly innocent comment or subtle body language can trigger a counterproductive response on the part of a traumatized homeless parent.

Typical trauma responses include

- flight (parents will minimize the seriousness of their challenges or those of their children and avoid taking responsibility);
- fight (parents will become aggressive and confrontational, and may even become verbally or physically abusive); and
- freeze (parents will become passive and nonresponsive).

See Section 10.6 Useful Links for a list of resources on trauma.

Section 10.4 Developing Rapport Through Communication

Communication is critical for developing trust with parents. Good rapport enables liaisons to establish a working relationship with parents that results in good educational decisions for children. The following tips will help you develop positive, productive relationships with parents.

- Keep impersonal communication, such as letters and emails, to a minimum; conduct face-to-face conversations whenever possible.
- Provide a welcoming environment.
- Conduct sensitive conversations in a private and comfortable place.
- Avoid using the word "homeless;" avoid charged and judgmental language.
- Talk to them about their living situation; be sensitive and discrete.
- Ask them about their needs.
- Assure them that their children are welcome in your school and that you have their best interest in mind.
- Empower and encourage parents; discuss solutions to challenges with them.
- Discuss things about which they feel positive.
- Listen! Listen! Listen!

Section 10.5 Strategies for Working Together

Table 10.1 Challenges and Strategies for Working with Homeless Parents identifies some of the more common challenges in working with parents and provides some strategies for addressing the challenges.

Table 10.1 Challenges and Strategies for Working with Homeless Parents

Challenges	Considerations	Strategies
Parents and their children have unmet basic needs.	• Parents may be new to an area and not know what resources are available.	• Encourage parents to advise you of their needs and assure them that you are willing to link them with available services. • Keep a list of community resources and contacts on hand (and in print form). • Keep a few donations on hand, such as hygiene items, gift cards, snacks, folders to store student records. (See Section 10.6 for a link to NCHE's Parent Packs.) solicit donations through community partnerships. • Use bus tokens to assist parents with getting to agencies from your office.
Parents are mistrustful and confrontational.	• Parents may have become disillusioned by agencies in the "helping" field. • Parents may fear having their children taken away. • Parents are passionate about getting what's best for their children and may feel any means justifies the end. • Parents may lack diplomacy skills. • Parents may bring a history of bad school experiences to their meeting with you. • Parents may have experienced trauma and may react with aggressive behavior.	• Be honest and respectful in dealing with parents, and understand that building trust takes time. • Center conversations on what is best for their children while acknowledging their passion. • Discuss concrete solutions for what their children need and ways these solutions can be implemented; establish a tone of thinking things through together. • Model good communication behavior by remaining calm and respectful; keep the conversation focused and moving toward solutions. • If the conversation gets out of hand, set boundaries; if necessary "take five" or set a time to continue the discussion later.

Challenges	Considerations	Strategies
Parents miss deadlines and meetings or do not follow through with expectations.	• Sometimes, parents experience basic logistical challenges to meeting deadlines for tasks. • Parents may be under so much stress that they cannot follow through with expectations without help. • A lack of follow through is a classic trauma response (flight or freeze). • Parents may need guidance and structure to meet expectations.	• Determine if there is a simple solution to parents' lack of follow through, such as a need for an alarm clock, reliable transportation, or access to a phone. • Give parents responsibilities for helping their children be successful in school, but try to match the level of responsibility to what they can successfully handle at this time. • Try to determine what is triggering a trauma response (fight, flight, or freeze), and see if you can eliminate this trigger. • Develop parent compacts or agreements that both the parents and the liaison sign and agree to follow; specify the benefits and consequences for all parties. (See Appendix 10.A for guidelines on developing a parent agreement.) • Set goals and break them into attainable benchmarks to show progress.
Parents are hopeless and helpless.	• Parents may have experienced so much failure that they feel they have no chance of success and no assets to build on. • Working with service systems can reinforce a client mentality that causes parents to feel helpless. • Parents may carry with them the sense that they have failed their children and suffer embarrassment and self-degradation.	• Acknowledge something you observe that is positive: "It's obvious that you want your child to do well in school," or "You've overcome a lot of challenges to provide for your children in these difficult circumstances." • Ask for parents' input in any discussions regarding their children: "Your son is having a lot of difficulty in math; what do you think that comes from? What type of help do you think would work best for him?" • Share something you have observed in their child that indicates that he or she is resilient and can succeed.

Challenges	Considerations	Strategies
Parents have poor skills in assisting with their children's education.	• Parents may not have had success in school and lack experience in knowing how to help their children be successful. • Parents may not have space or supplies in their temporary living circumstances to help their children with educational activities. • Parents may be so overwhelmed that they are emotionally unavailable to their children.	• Link parents with school or community parenting classes, especially if transportation and childcare are available. • Provide a basic parenting handbook, such as NCHE's *What You Need to Know to Help your Child in School*. (See Section10.6 Useful Links.) • Reinforce the importance of regular attendance and school stability; ask parents to inform you if they are planning on moving and ensure they understand their children's right to remain in the school of origin and receive transportation. • Model good parenting skills when you meet with parents; note something positive that their child did in school or some talent that their child is exhibiting; discuss good disciplinary practices that they can provide at home to reinforce improving behavior at school when needed. • Send home notes with the children frequently about something positive they did in school. • Provide parents with supplies to assist their children in their temporary living space or provide space either before or after school for the parent to work with children on homework or school activities. • Invite parents to serve as tutors in the classroom or to be involved at school with their children's activities. • Invite parents to participate in parent groups at the school, such as the Parent Teacher Association.

Section 10.6 Useful Links

Trauma Resources from NCHE's Information by Topic Webpages **http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sps_resilience.php**
NCHE Parent Packs **http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/parent_pack.php**
NCHE Parent Handbook: ***What You Need to Know to Help Your Child in School*** **http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/parent_booklet.php**

Appendix 10.A Suggested Guidelines for a Parent Agreement

Parents experiencing homelessness often struggle with having "one more thing" added to their plate, and in the face of chaotic circumstances may be unable to carry out responsibilities or follow through on tasks in an organized fashion. A written agreement is a tool designed to enable parents to address an educational challenge for their children and understand the responsibilities of the school and their responsibilities as well.

When a school or school district needs to establish a written agreement with a homeless parent to address an educational challenge, the local liaison should develop the agreement in consultation with the parent. The intent of such agreements is to clarify expectations and responsibilities of the school and the parent while providing a helpful structure to hold both parties accountable. The school or school district should offer support and encouragement to parents in carrying out the agreement, while also taking steps to ensure the regular attendance and participation of the student, in keeping with the student's best interest, should the parent not follow through with his or her part.

An effective parent agreement is one that includes:

1. A clear statement of the challenge under consideration that is impacting a child's education, such as irregular attendance or lack of homework completion.
2. A description of the responsibilities and activities the school or school district will undertake to address the challenge. (Be specific about the activities and timeline, including beginning and end date.)
3. A description of the responsibilities and activities the parent must undertake to address the challenge. (Be specific about the activities and timeline, including beginning and end date and interim check-ins if needed.)
4. A description of what the school or school district will do if the parent does not carry out the responsibilities or activities.
5. A description of what recourse the parent has if the school does not carry out its responsibilities.
6. Signatures from the school or school district staff member and the parent indicating that they agree to follow the terms of the agreement.

Chapter Eleven: Collaboration

Section 11.1 Purpose

Cross-system collaboration has become far more common with the increased needs of homeless families and decreased availability of resources. Developing good working relationships with programs internal to the local educational agency (LEA) and with agencies outside the LEA increases the likelihood that homeless children, youth, and families will be identified and provided assistance to obtain educational and other needed services.

Section 11.2 What the McKinney-Vento Act Requires

Overall, the McKinney-Vento Act places a strong emphasis on collaboration as a means of meeting the needs of homeless students. Local liaisons and LEAs are required to serve homeless children and youth by coordinating with school personnel and community service agencies. Issues and activities that must be addressed through coordination and collaboration include

- identifying homeless students;
- facilitating transportation services;
- obtaining school and other records;
- identifying and implementing services appropriate for students who are homeless due to awaiting foster care placement;
- providing education and related services for all homeless students, including access and reasonable proximity to the services; and
- raising the awareness of school personnel and service providers about the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness (ED, 2004, F-2, I-2, G-10).

Appendix 11.A McKinney-Vento Law and Guidance Related to Collaboration provides key excerpts of the mandates that focus on collaboration.

Section 11.3 Collaborative Partners

Your State Coordinator may help you identify agencies to contact in order to develop collaborative partnerships. Some parts of the law and related guidance refer to specific programs as required partners (e.g., Head Start), while others refer to general services and types of organizations. To meet the needs of homeless students, liaisons must have a diverse network of collaborative partners, as students experiencing homelessness have many needs beyond what schools have the ability to address on their own. Assisting families through referrals for additional services, such as housing, medical, dental, and social services, can increase stability and ensure students are ready to learn when they reach the classroom.

The following are examples of community partners that could be extremely helpful to liaisons in meeting the needs of homeless students:

- community food pantries;
- local health professionals who will volunteer services to help meet dental, health, and mental health needs;
- local Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, United Way, Salvation Army, and other shelter providers;
- local businesses and business associations involved in community service; and
- postsecondary education institutions.

Appendix 11.B Collaborations Required by Law provides more information about organizations and programs specifically named in the McKinney-Vento Act as mandated partners for collaboration related to the education of homeless children and youth.

In addition to programs or organizations outside the LEA, the following are examples of programs within the LEA that offer services and are required to collaborate on behalf of homeless students:

- Title I, Part A;
- special education;
- USDA school nutrition;
- gifted and talented;
- vocational education; and
- alternative education. (See Section 16 Related Legislation for information on collaborating with specific programs.)

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

- Local liaisons should attend Title I conferences and in-services, and Title I Coordinators should attend homeless education conferences and in-service professional development.
- Liaisons should work with Title I coordinators on a plan that identifies ways that Title I, Part A will serve children and youth experiencing homelessness. The plan should also be reflected in the district's Title I application for funds.
- Title I and homeless education handbooks should be shared with other program staff.
- The homeless education program should collect concrete data on the needs of homeless children and youth and share the data within and across districts.
- The LEA should initiate efforts to make organizational (cross-program) 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.
- Title I school improvement plans should include the needs of highly mobile students.
- Information on district-wide policies, procedures, and guidelines to identify and serve eligible students should be established and widely disseminated.
- The State Committee of Practitioners should include LEA homeless liaison representation; liaisons willing to participate should discuss opportunities to do so with their state office for Title I.
- Title I parental involvement policies should include homeless parents and create opportunities for homeless parents to be involved.

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

Section 11.4 Benefits

Establishing and building collaborations can be a daunting task for liaisons with multiple responsibilities. However, coordinating services and working with other programs and agencies can lead to substantial benefits for both homeless students and liaisons alike. Appendix 11.C Basic Tips for Collaboration contains some considerations for partnerships at every level of development. Some of the benefits that liaisons can reap by incorporating partnerships into their daily work include the following:

- Knowledge of basic information about the community related to issues impacting students and available services, such as knowledge of the locations of all the shelters that accept children and youth in the area and familiarity with the staff at these institutions, can expedite enrollment and connections to transportation.
- Familiarity with low-income motels and their managers can facilitate enrollment for students and increase the identification of students who might otherwise be overlooked.
- Connections with local agencies can lead to a simple list of phone numbers and contacts for local resources, which can be a handy reference when liaisons or school staff members receive unexpected calls for specific services.
- Supportive resources in the community can make homeless families' lives safer, more secure, and more stable when liaisons link families to them. In this way, liaisons can be instrumental in ensuring a coordinated delivery of services by bringing community agencies together.
- Training cafeteria and school nutrition staff on homelessness can increase the identification of homeless students and their access to basic needs.

While the preceding list provides some general examples of the benefits that can result in working with other programs, the following information provides some real life examples of successes achieved by liaisons and their partners.

- A liaison in Colorado created a partnership with city HOME program administrators. The project provided transitional living and other housing assistance to families identified as homeless by the school district while repurposing vacant housing in the area.

- A liaison in Montana established a relationship with a local restaurant that provided meals to homeless unaccompanied youth.
- A district in North Carolina worked with the local mental health agency to provide intensive counseling and crisis services to students.
- Arizona schools worked with Title I to ensure that formerly homeless students received transportation to their schools of origin for the rest of the school year after they obtained permanent housing.
- A district in Arkansas collaborated with several volunteers, seamstresses, and donors to provide items to juniors and seniors for prom. While not a basic need, the project allowed students to fully participate in school activities by attending an event in which they would be unable to participate otherwise.

11.6 Useful Links

Early Childhood and Family Homelessness Resource List
U. S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/acf_homeless_resource_list.pdf

Tip Sheet: *Strategies for Increasing Early Childhood Services for Homeless Children*
U. S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/acf_homeless_strategies.pdf

Section 11.7 Resources and Tools for Chapter Eleven

Appendix 11.A McKinney-Vento Act and Guidance Related to Collaboration
Appendix 11.B Collaborations Required by Law
Appendix 11.C Basic Tips for Collaboration

Appendix 11.A McKinney-Vento Law and Guidance Related to Collaboration

McKinney-Vento Act Excerpts

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 [42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(6)(C)].

Coordination

(A) IN GENERAL - Each local educational agency serving homeless children and youths …shall coordinate—

(i) the provision of services under this part 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 part shall coordinate with State and local housing agencies responsible for developing the comprehensive housing affordability strategy described in section 12705 of this title 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 [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(5)].

McKinney-Vento Non-Regulatory Guidance Excerpts

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 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…

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

- 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 (ED, 2004).

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…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 (ED, 2004).

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

Yes…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 (ED, 2004).

Appendix 11.B Collaborations Required by Law

The McKinney-Vento Act names several collaborative partners, either by program name or by general description (e.g., local housing agencies), with which local liaisons must work to meet the needs of homeless children and youth. Information about those partners, the laws that authorize their activities and collaborations, and descriptions of services they offer are listed below.

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act

Legal Authority: 79 P.L. 396, 60 Stat. 230

This Act establishes that homeless children are categorically eligible for free meal benefits under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. These students and families do not have to complete an application for free meals. Rather, USDA policies allow for expedited enrollment of these students to ensure they receive meals quickly. More information, including related USDA memos, is available at center.serve.org/nche/legi/cn_wic.php and www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/.

Head Start

Legal Authority: Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9801 et seq.
Related Regulations: 45 C.F.R. Parts 1301 et seq.

The Head Start program provides grants to public and private nonprofit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to economically disadvantaged children (aged three through five) and their families. Additionally, the Early Head Start program, established in 1995, serves families with children aged birth to three. Congress amended the latest version of the Head Start Act in 2007, adding many new provisions related to homeless children including

- adopting the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless;
- qualifying homeless children as automatically eligible for Head Start services;
- mandating that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issue regulations that require Head Start agencies to
    - identify and prioritize homeless children for enrollment;

- allow homeless families to apply to, enroll in, and attend Head Start programs while required documents are obtained within a reasonable time frame; and
- establish coordination between local Head Start programs and local homeless liaisons.

Guidance issued by the Head Start Bureau encourages Head Start grantees to target homeless families wherever possible. A memorandum related to this is available on the NCHE website at http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/hhs_preschool_memo.pdf.

Recommendations for increasing early childhood education services for homeless children, including collaborating with State Coordinators and local liaisons are in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Dear Colleague letter. It can be downloaded at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/acf_homeless_letter.pdf.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Programs

Legal Authority: Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA), 42 U.S.C. § 5601 et seq.

The RHYA authorizes three programs that address the needs of runaway youth and youth experiencing homelessness. A brief description of the three programs is provided below.

1) Basic Center Programs meet the immediate needs of runaway and homeless youth by providing emergency shelter, food, clothing, counseling, and referrals for health care. These shelters can serve youth under 18 years old for up to 21 days. To learn more, see the fact sheet available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource/bcp-fact-sheet.
2) Transitional Living Programs provide long-term residential services to help homeless youth ages 16 through 21 successfully transition to self-sufficient living. A fact sheet on Transitional Living Programs funded by the RHYA is available at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource/tlp-fact-sheet.
3) Street Outreach Programs offer outreach, services, and referrals to youth living on the street in order to move them into stable housing and prepare them for independence. By achieving these

goals, the program also prevents sexual abuse and exploitation. The fact sheet on street outreach programs is available online at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource/sop-fact-sheet.

In addition to the mandates in the McKinney-Vento Act that require collaboration on the part of liaisons and districts, Basic Center and Transitional Living Programs are required by the RHYA to coordinate with McKinney-Vento programs in school districts. The *Family and Youth Service Bureau Information Memorandum No. 1-2006* provides information regarding collaboration between local homeless liaisons and RHYA programs; it is available online at http://archive.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/aboutfysb/McKinney-Vento_IM.pdf.

In addition to the housing assistance provided through the RHYA, the Act also funds a national communications system, the National Runaway Safeline. The communication system helps homeless and runaway youth by providing crisis intervention, referrals, communication with youths' families, and emergency transportation home after a youth has run away. National Runaway Safeline assistance is also available for youth who are contemplating running away. While the Safeline has long been known for operating a crisis line for youth (1-800-RUNAWAY), the organization now has the option for youth to chat online with staff as well. Liaisons may benefit by visiting the Safeline website, as it has a number of publications, including a runaway prevention curriculum, which could be used to raise awareness and provide training. The website is located at http://www.1800runaway.org/.

Local Social Services or Human Services Agencies

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds can be used to help families avoid homelessness. The funds can be used for short-term assistance, such as rent or utility payments, without triggering the 60 month lifetime limit for assistance. As long as the funds are used to pay crisis related, non-recurring expenses, they can be used by a family more than once during a year. For example, a family could receive assistance for overdue rent, a car repair, and to bring utilities current all within the same year. A memorandum issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services discusses this issue in more detail and may be downloaded at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/resource/tanf-acf-im-2013-01.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamp Program, helps people with low incomes buy food. Although it is a federal government program, SNAP is administered by state or local agencies. The Food Research and Action Center has information targeted specifically for homeless persons, including youth, about services available through SNAP. The information can be accessed online at http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/snapfood-stamps/homeless-persons-rights-under-the-snapsnapfood-stamp-program/. Please note, this program is not the same as the USDA school meals program; instead it provides meals for both families and children outside of the school setting.

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program serves current and former foster care youth. The goal is to help them achieve self-sufficiency through education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support, and connections to caring adults. Among other things, the program can offer vouchers to cover education and housing expenses for youth who qualify. To learn more about the program, visit http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/chafee-foster-care-program.

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD currently administers seven programs dedicated to ending or preventing homelessness across the entire U.S. population. They also collaborate with other federal agencies for similar programs and administer the funding for several mainstream resource programs that provide resources to low income persons in addition to those experiencing homelessness.

Mainstream Resources

Services offered through the mainstream resource programs vary based on the goals and scope of the programs. The Section 8 Voucher Program is an example of a mainstream resource program operated by HUD. Collaboration on the part of liaisons with local operators of these programs, such as the Home Investment Partnership (HOME) Program, has led to housing opportunities for families identified as homeless by LEAs. To learn more about mainstream resource

programs, visit
http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewMainstreamPrograms.

Continuum of Care (CoC)

The purpose of the CoC in any community is to establish a community-wide response for ending and preventing homelessness. Federal funds are available for housing and homelessness related activities. As it is to represent the breadth and depth of a community, the CoC membership should include nonprofit homeless service providers, service providers for victims, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons.

Contacts for each CoC are provided online at the following website: http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewCocContacts.

Each CoC is charged with identifying resources and areas of need and developing a plan for serving homeless persons in their area. This planning document will contain much of the community information that schools will need to effectively serve homeless students by providing referrals. In addition, CoCs and their agency members are required to collaborate with the school district's local liaison to ensure the educational needs of children and youth are considered. This includes placing families in shelters or other housing close to the school of origin when possible.

Communities that receive CoC funds have participated in an extensive needs assessment, including the identification of existing resources, agencies, and services. Other potential sources for this valuable information include state interagency councils on homelessness, as most states have a state level council that mirrors local CoCs.

Institutions of Higher Education

Legal Authority: College Cost Reduction and Access Act, P.L. 100-84

Financial aid administrators are directed to obtain verification of an unaccompanied homeless youth's status from liaisons, if possible, when determining the financial aid available to an unaccompanied homeless youth. A verification form for financial aid administrators can be downloaded at http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/faa_det_tool.pdf. Additionally,

liaisons can download a template verification letter to indicate a student's homeless status at http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/images/dl/uy_fafsa_verif_12.doc.

Appendix 11.C Basic Tips for Collaboration

Identifying Potential Partners

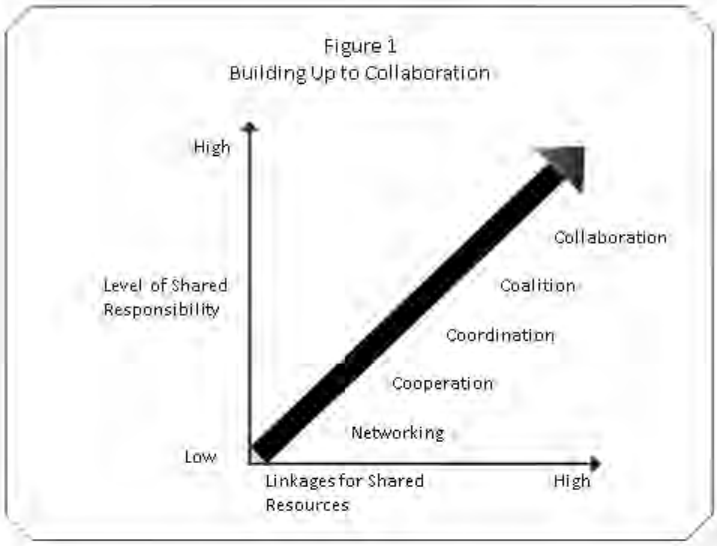
Collaboration is a two-way street. People who work with children and youth experiencing homelessness often do so with little or no targeted financial resources. Collaboration with other programs in the school district and community agencies is an essential tool to access services for homeless students. 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 programs and community agencies in your district;
- identify areas of interest or overlap between homeless education and other programs and agencies;
- consider how other programs and agencies can provide assistance and be sure to determine how the assistance can benefit them, if undertaken; and
- consider how you can provide reciprocal support, if possible.

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

Realizing the Level of Involvement Needed

The term *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 share responsibilities and resources can vary greatly across partnerships, as shown in Figure 1.



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. When reaching out to other programs and agencies, it is important to consider the level of relationship that may be needed to realize goals and to build on

existing relationships. When new partners are sought, consider working on lower-level relationships to build trust before attempting more complex interactions.

Initiating the Collaboration

Once you have considered how to make collaboration a win-win opportunity for students, it is time to approach the individuals, programs, or agencies with whom the prospective partnership will be formed.

Suggested activities for accomplishing a collaborative partnership include the following:

- Schedule a time to meet with the individual in charge of the program 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 program's or agency's responsibilities.
- Offer concrete suggestions for actions that can be taken by program 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; and
- prioritizing and strategizing together.

Be sure to build in opportunities to discuss and develop these features when creating and maintaining relationships with other programs and agencies.

Collaboration Meets Many Needs

Most local liaisons have other responsibilities in addition to serving homeless children and youth. Unfortunately, if someone is experiencing homelessness, their plight is full-time. Combining efforts increases services to homeless students while reducing the time needed by the liaison to provide the services. By collaborating with the various school district programs and community agencies, the provision of services to the child or youth can become richer, more comprehensive, and more effective.

Table 11.1 Levels of Collaborative Effort

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	Working together on a limited basis	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 and from the location where the student 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

Chapter 12: Training and Awareness

According to the McKinney-Vento Act, the local homeless liaison is responsible for:

- ensuring that school personnel identify homeless children and youth through coordination with other entities and agencies and [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)(i)];
- ensuring that homeless students and their families receive educational services, including Head Start and other preschool programs, referrals to health care, mental health, and dental services, and other appropriate services [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)(iii)];
- coordinating and collaborating with the State Coordinator for homeless education as well as community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youth [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(C)].

In order to successfully meet these responsibilities, all liaisons must provide information and resources to school district personnel and community partners. Awareness raising activities should be designed to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of personnel to the needs of homeless children and youth, their rights, and their specific educational needs [42 U.S.C. § 11433(d)(3)]. Districts that receive a McKinney-Vento subgrant may use those funds to provide professional development for educators and pupil services personnel.

Section 12.1 Designing Professional Development Opportunities

Professional development enhances the skills and knowledge of individuals and is delivered through a variety of methods. It can include informal methods, such as sharing information in district meetings, or more formal learning, such as structured training and courses. Information that assists professionals with using the skills and abilities they already possess is considered basic professional development, while advanced professional development helps staff acquire new information and skills.

As liaisons create professional development opportunities that focus on the issue of homeless education for school district staff and community partners, it is important to keep in mind some important tenets of adult education. In general, adult learners

- are selective and self-directed,
- bring a wide variety of experiences to the educational setting,
- focus on practical solutions and applications of information,
- need an opportunity to participate or apply new information, and
- assimilate information more effectively when the learning process includes a discussion.

Keeping these tenets in mind, it is critical to consider the needs of the various members of the audience as liaisons provide professional development and related activities. For example, district administrators may be most concerned with academic measures for homeless students, while registrars may focus on enrollment requirements. Furthermore, community partners may need to know information about how to best work with school systems to meet both academic and other basic needs. Effective training and awareness activities meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness by meeting the continuing education needs of district staff and community stakeholders, regardless of their roles.

Appendix 12.A Presenter Tips has some additional hints for developing presentations. Appendix 12.B Common Signs of Homelessness can be used as a handout to increase the basic awareness of homeless students for audiences with less familiarity with the topic.

Section 12.2 Training Materials and Resources

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) has several types of materials and resources available to help liaisons provide training and raise awareness in their school communities. These resources may be obtained by visiting the NCHE Training Resources webpage at: http://center.serve.org/nche/web/s_p.php.

Homeless Education Briefs

NCHE homeless education issue briefs discuss selected issues pertaining to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and suggest strategies for implementation. In addition to being topic specific, many are also

tailored to particular audiences to maximize impact.

Online Training Videos

These videos give a brief introduction to key issues covered by the McKinney-Vento Act, and offer self-paced learning.

Recorded NCHE webinars

Another option for self-paced learning, pre-recorded webinars are updated regularly to ensure they provide comprehensive information related to different aspects of the law.

Downloadable Presentations

PowerPoint presentations designed by NCHE staff and partners are available for liaisons to download for use in their own local training sessions. The slides are customizable so that local data and contact information may be easily included.

In addition to these self-paced learning options, NCHE also offers free, monthly webinars. These webinars focus on various aspects related to implementing the McKinney-Vento Act and are open to any stakeholder in the education of students experiencing homelessness. The schedule of monthly offerings may be accessed online at http://center.serve.org/nche/web/group.php.

In addition to the resources developed by NCHE, the website contains samples of training and related materials created by state and local homeless education programs. The materials can be accessed by visiting http://center.serve.org/nche/forum/training.php. Additional materials are added as they become available, so liaisons should re-visit the webpage as they plan training opportunities each year.

Finally, liaisons can access a variety of materials for use in local training sessions by visiting the School Personnel Resources page of the Information by Topic section of the NCHE website at http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/educ_schpers.php.

Section 12.3 Resources and Tools for Chapter Twelve

Appendix 12.A Presenter Tips
Appendix 12.B Common Signs of Homelessness

Presenter Tips

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; allow 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 do not spend time during the presentation taking lots of notes that are already available.

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 New Roman, Helvetica, or Arial);
- selecting a large font size (22 point or larger), and
- including no more than 6 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 published material, know the title, author, and source information—people always ask.
- Provide your 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 benefits,
- benefits to their students,
- mandatory attendance requirements, and
- personal interests.

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 ensure this is to offer participants something they can immediately try when they get back to school. It should be fairly easy to implement with few, if any, materials needed.

Adapted from Project HOPE-Virginia materials

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 Educational Continuity

- Attendance at many different schools
- Missing records needed to enroll
- Inability to pay fees
- Gaps in skill development
- Mistaken assessment of abilities
- Poor organizational skills
- Poor ability to conceptualize

Poor Health/Nutrition

- Missing immunizations & medical records
- Unmet medical & dental needs
- Respiratory problems
- Skin rashes
- Chronic hunger or food hoarding
- Fatigue (may fall asleep in class)

Transportation & Attendance Problems

- Erratic attendance and tardiness
- Numerous absences
- Lack of participation in afterschool activities
- Lack of participation in field trips
- Inability to contact parents

Poor Hygiene

- Lacking shower facilities/washers, etc.
- Wearing clothes several days
- Inconsistent grooming

Lack of Personal Space After School

- Consistent lack of preparation for school
- Incomplete or missing homework
- Unable to complete special projects
- Lacking basic school supplies
- Loss of books and supplies on regular basis
- Elevated concern for safety of belongings

Social and Behavioral Concerns

- A marked change in behavior
- Poor/short attention span
- Poor self-esteem
- Extreme shyness
- Unwilling to form relationships with peers & teachers
- Difficulty socializing at recess or lunch periods
- Difficulty trusting people
- Aggression
- "Old" beyond years
- Overly protective of parents
- Clinging behavior
- Developmental delays
- Fear of abandonment
- School phobia (afraid to leave parent)
- Anxiety, especially late in the school day

Reactions or Statements by Parents, Guardians, or Students

- Exhibiting anger or embarrassment when asked about current address
- Avoidance of questions related to current address
- Statements about staying with grandparents, other relatives, friends, or in motels & campgrounds
- Statements 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 right now."

Adapted from flyers developed by the Illinois & Pennsylvania Departments of Education. For more information on homeless education, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at: http://www.serve.org/nche.

Chapter Thirteen: Data Collection & Requirements

Section 13.1 Why Data Matters

Regardless of whether you love or hate working with data, there are several reasons why it is important to collect and analyze data related to the education of homeless children and youth. At the most basic level, collecting data is important because the McKinney-Vento Act requires it to be collected and provided to the federal government [42 U.S.C. § 11432(f)(1), 42 U.S.C. §11432(f)(3)].

Additionally, local educational agencies (LEAs) that compete for subgrant funds must provide needs assessment information as part of their subgrant applications. Applications must reflect

- the needs of the students the subgrants will serve and
- a demonstrated need for the funds [42 U.S.C. §11433(b)].

In considering subgrant awards, state educational agencies (SEAs) may look at an LEA's needs assessment data to consider

- the number of homeless children and youth enrolled in the LEA and
- the LEA's ability to meet the needs of the students when selecting districts that will receive funds (42 U.S.C 11433(c)].

Data also help districts improve the quality of services provided to homeless students. In addition to addressing unmet needs in a district, the quality of subgrant applications and proposed activities must be considered as a part of the review process [42 U.S.C. § 11433(c)(1), 42 U,S.C. § 11433(c)(3)]. By providing data that address the success of interventions already taken or that address remaining needs, districts can strengthen both their interventions and their subgrant applications.

Furthermore, requirements under Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act mandate that LEAs set aside funds to serve homeless students [20 U.S.C. § 6313(c)(3)(A)]. While some states and LEAs

use a formula to calculate the amount of funds to set aside, all districts that receive Title I, Part A funds must coordinate activities to support the education of homeless students with McKinney-Vento activities and describe those activities in their district plans, which require data [20 U.S.C. § 6312(b)(1)(E)(ii)]. State academic assessment systems also must include data on the educational outcomes of homeless students for accountability purposes [20 U.S.C. § 6311(b)(2)(C)].

Section 13.2 What Data to Collect

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) outlines which data to collect regarding the education of homeless children and youth in a tool called the Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR). The CSPR includes data reporting for several federal education programs; questions related to homeless education are in Section 1.9. To assist State Coordinators with the data requirements found in the CSPR, the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) publishes an annual data collection guide that may be helpful for local homeless liaisons. The data collection guide can be downloaded from the NCHE website at: http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/fed_data_coll_guide.php.

Some information requested by the CSPR pertains to all public school districts in the state, while other questions only pertain to districts that receive subgrants. The portion of the CSPR related to the education of homeless children and youth addresses

- the number of LEAs that do and do not receive subgrants;
- the number of homeless students enrolled in public schools by grade level;
- the primary nighttime residence of homeless students;
- the number of homeless students in subgroups enrolled in school; (including students who are limited English proficient, unaccompanied homeless youth, students with disabilities, and migratory students);
- the number of homeless children and youth served (subgrant districts only);
- the number of homeless students in subgroups served (subgrant districts only); and
- the academic performance of homeless students in reading, math, and science.

Section 13.3 How to Collect and Submit Data

Collecting data about homeless education requires collaboration both within the district and with the State Coordinator. In the fall of each year, typically in the months of November and December, ED opens the CSPR tool to allow State Coordinators to submit required data from the previous school year. In order for State Coordinators to submit the mandated data to the federal government, SEAs likewise request data from LEAs and typically require LEAs to complete their data submissions in the late spring or early summer to coincide with the end of the school year. Most LEA data are submitted to the SEA by a designated person within the district, regardless of the program type. The liaison must work with the responsible individual to ensure that the data submitted are accurate and reflect the work of the district to serve homeless students. SEAs use data collection systems that are electronic and require very little to no actual paper reports. Some states may have a secondary data collection process for districts that receive subgrants. The State Coordinator can provide liaisons with information about how and when the LEA should submit data.

As no two state or LEA data collection systems are exactly alike, it is important to know with whom the liaison should work to collect and submit data, as well as which questions to ask about the way data should be collected, stored, and submitted. All liaisons are encouraged to work with their State Coordinators, in addition to any local district staff involved in reporting, to make sure all required information is submitted in a timely manner. Important questions to ask include:

- Does the district have a data reporting technician? Who is that person or are those persons?
- Are there additional data, which the primary data system is unable to collect, that the liaison is responsible for submitting to the SEA? What are those data? What is the process for submitting those data?
- How does the LEA collect and store data? Does it use a web-based or other electronic student information system? Does it rely on spreadsheets?
- What is the deadline for submitting data to the SEA? Does the LEA have additional internal deadlines to allow administrators to review the data before the final submission to the SEA?

- What steps does the LEA take to ensure the data submitted are accurate? Are there any steps required by the SEA to ensure data are accurate?
- Can the LEA correct data that have already been submitted? Are there additional deadlines for corrections?
- In addition to the annual data collection requirements outlined by ED that apply to all LEAs, does the SEA require additional information on student outcomes for homeless students in any particular area, either through improvement plans or subgrant applications?

Section 13.4 Using the Data

As previously mentioned, academic and related data can be used to improve program activities and academic results for homeless students. In addition to the data that must be collected to satisfy components of the McKinney-Vento Act, other state and federal programs also require data to be collected. By comparing data from those programs to the data from the McKinney-Vento program, LEAs can learn a great deal about homeless students in their school settings.

With the advent of electronic data systems and unique student identifiers, LEAs can easily analyze data from various required program areas. Unique student identifiers are numbers that are either generated randomly when a student enrolls in public school for the first time or are generated based on a set of characteristics unique to the student. (Unique student identifiers used by public school systems are not the social security number of a student.) Regardless of the number of times a student changes schools or districts within a single state, they keep the same student identifier number until high school completion, which allows for a comprehensive snapshot of a student's academic performance. If a student moves out of the state but later returns, they are re-assigned the same number they had prior to leaving the state. Ultimately, all student data submitted to the SEA are based on the student identifiers. This allows liaisons to request interdisciplinary data from data technicians in their LEA without requiring additional data collections.

Other data available at the LEA level includes

- the number of suspensions and expulsions,
- reasons for expulsions,
- attendance rates,

- participation in gifted and talented programs,
- the number of students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and the disabilities addressed by the IEP,
- poverty rates,
- the number of students who graduated,
- types of diplomas earned,
- the number of students who dropped out,
- reasons cited by students for dropping out,
- participation in advanced placement courses,
- performance in advanced placement courses,
- participation in school meals, and
- the number of students served by Title I, Part A.

By comparing these data to the data required by the McKinney-Vento Act, liaisons can identify areas for improvement that are unique to their LEAs. For example, while district personnel may assume that all homeless students receive free school meals, a review of the number of homeless students compared to the number of homeless students who receive free school meals may highlight significant gaps in services. A more in-depth examination of data related to homeless students can improve collaboration as well. For example, uncovering high rates of suspensions for defiance in the classroom combined with high rates of IEPs for emotional disturbances may allow homeless liaisons and special education teachers to work together to create more effective IEPs.

Additionally, other public data that are easily available, such as unemployment or poverty rates, could help liaisons and community agencies collaborate to more accurately identify homeless students when the number of students identified is low, but unemployment or poverty rates are high. This type of data examination should be used by LEAs to strengthen the school improvement plans required under state and federal law to improve outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Section 13.5 Useful Links

The Federal Data Collection Form is an appendix of the *Consolidated State Performance Report Federal Data Collection Guide for State Coordinators of Homeless Education*. The form contains all the specific data points for which State Coordinators must submit data to ED each year and may help liaisons plan their data collections. The form can be accessed online at: http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/fed_data_coll_guide.php

Districts should carefully review all data sharing policies and agreements on a regular basis to ensure they are consistent with state and federal laws that protect student records and confidentiality. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that outlines what information may be shared, by whom, and when. To ensure district policies are consistent with requirements under FERPA, liaisons can find out more by visiting http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/index.html.

Chapter Fourteen: Subgrants

Section 14.1 Overview of McKinney-Vento Subgrants

The McKinney-Vento Act requires most states to allocate at least 75% of their annual federal award to local educational agencies (LEAs) in the form of subgrants. Minimally funded states, those that only receive $150,000, are required to allocate at least 50% of their annual federal award to LEAs. The purpose of the subgrants is to facilitate the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youth. These subgrants are competitive, and awarded on the basis of both need and quality of the application.

The state educational agency (SEA) determines the time period for the grant cycle, the number of grants awarded, and the size of grants. An LEA may receive a grant for up to three years before it must re-compete to receive further grant funds. Many SEAs award regional subgrants that cover several LEAs. LEAs must be the fiscal agents for the subgrants and accountable for their implementation.

LEAs and local homeless liaisons should receive information from the State Coordinator on the subgrant competition. Each state is responsible for implementing a grant process, including the development of an application that meets federal requirements, for use by LEAs. State Coordinators also typically provide technical assistance to help liaisons completing applications with the process.

Section 14.2 Requirements for Subgrants in the McKinney-Vento Act

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that each application include

- an assessment of the educational and related needs of homeless children and youth;
- a description of services and programs that will be provided through the grant;

- an assurance that the LEA's fiscal effort in providing a public education was maintained;
- an assurance that the applicant complies with or will use requested funds to comply with the Act; and
- a description of policies and procedures to ensure that activities will not isolate or stigmatize homeless children and youth [42 U.S.C. § 11433 (3)(b)].

The LEA's need for funding and the quality of the application submitted by the LEA form the basis of awards made by the state. In determining the need for funding, the McKinney-Vento Act requires SEAs to consider

- the number of homeless children and youth enrolled in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools within the area served by the LEA;
- the needs of homeless children and youth enrolled in the LEA; and
- the ability of the LEA to meet the identified needs [42 U.S.C § 11433(c)(2).

The SEA may also consider

- the extent to which the proposed activities will facilitate enrollment, retention, and educational success of homeless children and youth;
- the extent to which the application reflects coordination with other local and state agencies that serve homeless children and youth and describes how the applicant will meet the general requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act;
- the extent to which a commitment to the education of all homeless children and youth is demonstrated, both in the application and in current practice; and
- other criteria established by the SEA [42 U.S.C. § 11433 (3)(c)(2)].

In determining the quality of the application, the McKinney-Vento Act requires SEAs to consider

- the needs assessment and the likelihood that the proposed project will meet the needs identified;
- the types, intensity, and coordination of services to be provided through the proposed project;
- the involvement of parents or guardians in the education of their children;
- the extent to which homeless children and youth will be integrated within the regular education program;

- the quality of the project's evaluation plan;
- the extent to which proposed services will be coordinated with other services available to homeless children and youth and their families; and
- other measures, such as the extent to which the LEA will provide case management or related services to unaccompanied homeless youth, that the SEA considers indicative of a high-quality program [42 U.S.C. § 11433 (b)(c)(3)].

Section 14.3 Allowable Uses of Subgrant Funds

Coordinators for the McKinney-Vento subgrant program should be familiar with the allowable uses of funds that are listed in Section 11433(d) of the McKinney-Vento Act. Appendix 14.A McKinney-Vento Subgrant Authorized Activities includes the list of allowable activities.

Section 14.4 Guiding Questions for Use of Subgrant Funds

Table 14.1 Guiding Questions for McKinney-Vento Subgrant Expenses will help liaisons determine the appropriateness of expenditures. If at any time you are unsure if an expense is allowable, you should contact your State Coordinator for clarification. LEAs should also contact their State Coordinators before making any substantial changes to an approved budget to ensure the changes are also approved.

Table 14.1. Guiding Questions for McKinney-Vento Subgrant Expenses

Foundation	Questions to Consider
The Law: Subgrants	1. Does the expense meet the intent of the law? That is, does the expense facilitate the school enrollment, attendance, or success of homeless children and youth? Moreover, is it *critical* to maintaining the enrollment, attendance, or success of homeless students or even just one homeless student? 2. Can the expense be categorized as one of the authorized activities in Section 11433(d) of the law? 3. Does this expense cover services that apply only to the homeless education program? Is it connected to the educational needs of homeless children and youth specifically? (The exception would

Foundation	Questions to Consider
	be for services provided on school grounds; these services may include a small percentage of other at-risk students.)
The Subgrant Proposal	1. Does the expense fit within goals articulated and approved in the subgrant proposal? 2. Does the expense meet a need identified as a priority, based on a comprehensive needs assessment? 3. Was the expense included and approved in the subgrant budget? 4. Is the expense necessary for efficient operation of the homeless education program? 5. Is the expense reasonable in proportion to the rest of the program budget and in proportion to the amount spent per student? Or, if this is an expense for one student, is it proportional to other program or students' needs? 6. Is the cost for this service reasonable?
The Law: Coordination and Collaboration	1. Is this expense for supplemental services and not for services that the LEA should pay for as a part of the regular academic program? 2. Is the expense for services comparable to services the LEA provides to non-homeless students and should provide to homeless students? 3. Is there evidence of coordination with Title I for use of the Title I, Part A set-aside to serve homeless students? 4. Did the LEAs make an effort to obtain this service from another source, such as business partners and service agencies? 5. Is this expense beyond the scope of the McKinney-Vento program and more appropriately covered by a community service agency?

Section 14.4 State and Local Policies for Subgrant Administration

LEAs must follow state and local policies related to grant administration, including fiscal accountability and record keeping. The subgrant proposal, once the grant is awarded, is considered a contract, and LEAs are bound to carry out the activities as proposed. If a change in the activities is needed, local liaisons (or the subgrant coordinator) must contact the State Coordinator for approval of the change and budget amendment.

As noted earlier, LEAs are accountable for the implementation of the projects proposed in the subgrant application. To that end, LEAs are required to submit end-of-year reports or program evaluation summaries. States also review subgrant activities and request evidence of adequate fiscal controls within the LEA during monitoring visits and desk-monitoring. Therefore, keeping good records of activities and expenses is of paramount importance.

14.5 Resources and Tools for Chapter Fourteen

Appendix 14.A McKinney-Vento Subgrant Authorized Activities

Appendix 14.A McKinney-Vento Subgrant Authorized Activities

The following activities and expenses are allowed under the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11433(d).

1) Tutoring, supplemental instruction, and enriched educational services linked to the achievement of the same challenging state academic content and achievement standards established for other children and youth.

2) Expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of homeless children and youth, 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, as well as vocational and technical education, and school nutrition programs).

3) Professional development and other activities for educators and pupil services personnel designed to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of the personnel to the needs of homeless children and youth, their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act, and the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youth.

4) Referral services to homeless children and youth for medical, dental, mental, and other health services.

5) Assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation for students under 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(4)(A), which is not otherwise provided through federal, state, or local funding, and when necessary to enable students to attend the school selected under 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3).

6) Developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs, not otherwise provided through federal, state, or local funding, for preschool-aged homeless children.

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, mentoring, and summer programs for homeless students 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 youth in school. This includes birth certificates, immunization or medical records, academic records, guardianship records, and evaluations for special programs or services.

10) Education and training for the parents of homeless children and youth about the rights of, and resources available to, their children.

11) The development of coordination between schools and agencies providing services to homeless children and youth, as described in 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(5).

12) Pupil services (including violence prevention counseling) and referrals for such services.

13) Activities to address the particular needs of homeless children and youth that may arise from domestic violence.

14) The adaptation of space and purchase of supplies for any non-school facilities made available to provide services under the McKinney-Vento Act.

15) School supplies, including supplies to be distributed at shelters, temporary housing facilities, or other appropriate locations.

16) Other extraordinary or emergency assistance needed to enable homeless children and youth to attend school.

Chapter Fifteen: Managing the Work

The work of the local homeless liaison can be demanding and varied. Whether you are a new or seasoned liaison, full time or part time, there are a number of strategies that you can implement to work more effectively and efficiently. The suggestions provided in this section will help you organize your work, increase your capacity, and prioritize your activities.

Section 15.1 Identify the Level of Urgency

In the course of a day, you are likely to face a number of challenges and tasks that need attention. It is important to keep in mind that not all tasks are of equal importance. Quite often, taking care of something important in a systematic and comprehensive way will prevent the issue from becoming a crisis later.

One way to approach multiple demands is to look at Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Effective People*. Covey suggests that work can be categorized into four quadrants, as illustrated in Table 15.1 Covey's Quadrants.

According to Covey, effective people try to spend as much time as they can in Quadrant II and to limit time spent in Quadrant IV. This proactive strategy of focusing on important work that is not urgent and avoiding time wasters can reduce the need to address Quadrant I issues. Prioritizing your work by determining in which quadrant the task would fall can help you decide where to spend your time. Note that a number of tasks may begin in Quadrant II but become Quadrant I if not completed in advance. For example, planning your annual data submission as a long range project may have a number of steps that, if addressed early, are important but not urgent. Without preplanning, the submission of data can "creep up on you" and become an urgent, deadline-driven project.

Appendix 15.A Template of Quadrants to Determine Priorities provides you with a table divided into the four quadrants so that you can determine on which important but not urgent activities to focus.

Table 15.1 Covey's Quadrants

	URGENT	**NOT URGENT**
IMPORTANT	QUADRANT I • Arranging transportation to the school of origin • Resolving a dispute • Connecting a homeless family to a place to stay • Responding to a time sensitive request from a legislator, the media, public, or superintendent • Meeting the deadline to submit data for the Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR)	QUADRANT II • Conducting a needs assessment to prioritize tasks • Developing local policies and procedures to remove barriers to enrollment and attendance • Providing awareness and training to school and school district staff • Developing collaborative partnerships • Preparing CSPR data collection
NOT IMPORTANT	QUADRANT III • Attending mandatory staff meetings not related to homeless students and their needs • Responding to a request for information that could easily be posted on the district website • Searching through files to compile information in preparation for a monitoring visit	QUADRANT IV • Responding to every email as it arrives in your office, rather than prioritizing which needs an immediate answer • Meeting with colleagues on issues not related to serving homeless children and youth • Attending community meetings in which you do not have a specific role

Section 15.2 Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing

In an era of limited resources and competing agendas, it is often easy to lose sight of the purpose of your work. The following two guidelines will help you keep focused when serving homeless children and youth.

1) Case-by-case determinations are a must. All homeless families, children, and youth are different, as are the circumstances that brought them into homelessness. Therefore, each child or youth's situation must be reviewed individually to determine how to apply the McKinney-Vento Act and identify appropriate services.
2) All services and decisions should be child-centered and in the best interest of the student. Every discussion and task you undertake

should focus on what is in the best interest of children and youth. Keep in mind, and remind others as often as necessary, that the goal is the success of homeless children and youth in school. Sharing the stories of children and youth when you advocate for their needs puts a face on the decisions that are made.

Section 15.3 Know the Law

Familiarity with the McKinney-Vento Act is critical for liaisons to successfully apply it. You should read the full text of the law (See 15.9 Useful Links) and keep a copy on hand to revisit on a regular basis. Some liaisons have tabbed key sections and definitions in the Act to make it easy for them to quickly find answers when questions arise. The following list provides some of the key passages to which liaisons need ready access:

- Local educational agency (LEA) responsibilities: 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)
- Local liaison duties: 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(6)
- Enrollment: 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(C)
- School selection: 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(A)
- Best interest: 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(B)
- Dispute resolution: 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(E)
- Transportation to and from the school of origin: 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(1)(J)(iii)
- Comparable services: 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(4)
- Definition of homeless : 42 U.S.C. § 11434a (2)
- Definition of unaccompanied youth: 42 U.S.C. § 11434a (2)(B)(6)
- Definition of the school of origin: 42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(3)(G)
- Definition of enrollment: 42 U.S.C. § 11434a (1)
- Authorized activities for subgrants: 42 U.S.C. § 11433 (d)

Section 15.4 Identify Your Supports

Having resources and supports at your fingertips will enable you to access help when you need it. Some liaisons call these resources their "Top Fives." Appendix 15.B Top Five List is a worksheet that will help you create your own list of key resources.

While this list should be tailored to your own needs, some resources and key contacts are recommended below.

People to Know	State Coordinator Title I Coordinator Child Nutrition Coordinator Pupil Transportation Director Data Manager Budget Manager
National Resources	National Center for Homeless Education National Association for the Education of Homeless Children & Youth National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty National Center on Family Homelessness
Documents to Keep on Hand	*McKinney-Vento Act* *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Non-Regulatory Guidance* *NCHE Homeless Liaison Toolkit* NAEHCY Frequently Asked Questions Child Nutrition Memos
Programs With Which to Coordinate	Title IA Child Nutrition Special Education Head Start Continuum of Care Child Welfare
Key NCHE Briefs	*Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act* *Guiding the Discussion on School Selection* *Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness Under Title I, Part A* *Transporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness* *Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Homeless Students*

Section 15.5 Create Capacity in Others

Making sure that school and district staff and administrators understand the needs of homeless students and their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act enables them to work more effectively with the students. Seek opportunities

to provide staff and administrators with training and information, and establish routine communication with them. Many issues can be addressed at the school site without your intervention once others are trained on basic information related to the McKinney-Vento Act. This will preserve your time for addressing more complex issues.

As you begin planning awareness and training activities, remember to schedule the activities on an annual calendar to help you prioritize. For example, in a district with a large number of new enrollment staff, training for those staff members should be conducted as soon as possible.

LEAs with a large number of schools or a part time local liaison frequently appoint a school level contact in addition to the district liaison. Assigning a point of contact in each building will make it more likely that materials sent to the school regarding homelessness will get to appropriate staff and be read. The contact becomes a resource to call when problems arise. You can work with principals to identify appropriate contacts and create a simple form for them to complete to ensure you have the correct person's contact information. (See Appendix 15.C for a sample.) School level contacts should be trained on the McKinney-Vento Act and on protocols for identifying, enrolling, and serving homeless children. They should also be provided posters and flyers to disseminate at their school and places in the community.

Section 15.6 Assess and Prioritize Needs

Most program managers agree that designing services and activities based on a needs assessment is a way to target time and resources in the most effective way. Whether you have the time and support to conduct a formal needs assessment or can only review a set of questions about homeless students in your LEA, a focused effort to determine the most critical needs of students and the existing gaps in services will help you identify important issues to address.

Based on the McKinney-Vento Act and good practice, ten standards and indicators of quality McKinney-Vento programs were developed by NCHE and included in Non-Regulatory Guidance. The ten standards provide an overview of the main areas your homeless education program should

address. The indicators are suggestions for how the standards can be measured. Section 15.9 Useful Links contains more detail regarding these measures.

Another NCHE document that will assist you in assessing the needs of homeless students in your LEA is *Educating Homeless Children and Youth: Conducting Needs Assessments and Evaluating Services - A Guide for SEAs, LEAs, and Local Schools*. (See Section 15.9 Useful Links.) This document provides a wealth of good strategies for conducting a needs assessment. It includes a worksheet for LEAs, which aligns with LEA requirements in the McKinney-Vento Act, good practices promoted in the Non-Regulatory Guidance, the standards and indicators for quality McKinney-Vento programs, and priorities established by federal monitoring. The worksheet included in the needs assessment guide is also included for your convenience as Appendix 15.D Needs Assessment Worksheet and Summary.

Needs assessments should be updated annually with new numbers and data in order to identify trends and emerging issues. Applications for subgrant funds must also include a needs assessment as part of the application.

Not only a good tool to assist you in planning your program, a needs assessment is also essential for increasing awareness and advocating for resources. It can provide direction for discussions with the Title I Coordinator and community agencies.

Section 15.7 Create a School District Homeless Education Protocol

A homeless education protocol is a written plan detailing the district's procedures for interacting and communicating with and about homeless students and families. It includes checklists for tasks; delineates clear roles, responsibilities, and timelines; and requires the use of standard forms across the district. Standardized processes ensure consistency, enable better service provision, and create opportunities for staff to develop good relationships with students, parents, and community members.

District protocols for serving homeless students are based on the responsibilities of the liaison and the LEA, including

- identifying and enrolling students;
- linking homeless students to educational and related services;

- informing parents, guardians and unaccompanied homeless youth of student rights and available services, including transportation;
- providing opportunities for parents to participate in their children's education;
- posting public notice of educational rights;
- mediating disputes;
- collaborating and coordinating with State Coordinators, community and school personnel;
- reviewing and revising policies that act as barriers, including enrollment, transportation, immunizations, residency, birth certificates, school records, other documentation, and guardianship policies; and
- giving special attention to out-of-school homeless youth.

Enrollment procedures for front office staff are a major component of any district's policy and procedure protocols. Policies for enrollment staff should establish

- conditions when front office staff may determine eligibility,
- guidance on when to refer families to the liaison,
- expectations about confidentiality and sharing information,
- steps to ensure all siblings are identified, and
- directions for noting homeless status in records.

To further simplify procedures, liaisons should provide enrollment staff with

- tips for talking with families;
- substitute terms for homeless;
- topics to cover with families in a checklist format;
- information on the definition of homelessness, educational rights of homeless students, and their options for school selection;
- steps to take to acquire missing records;
- steps to take if a dispute requires resolution; and
- a form to quickly assess student needs, including academic, basic, and other needs that can be addressed by the school or a collaborative partner.

School personnel often struggle with how to enroll and serve unaccompanied homeless youth, so policies dealing specifically with this population will be very useful. Issues to consider include who can enroll an unaccompanied homeless youth; who can make school placement decisions and under what

conditions; who is responsible for arranging transportation and how that should be done. Other important considerations include deciding whether the district will assign an unaccompanied homeless youth an advocate or rely on the liaison to assist the youth in the case of a dispute and identifying appropriate persons to sign medication logs, permission slips, class schedule changes, and notes related to attendance and discipline.

Section 15.8 Keep Program Records and Documents

The most efficient programs have records and documents that are organized and easily accessible. Not only will the local liaison be required to produce documents in local audits and state monitoring visits, but these materials provide the historical context for your program, which can be passed along to the next liaison. Some liaisons have had the unfortunate experience of coming into the position with no records and documents available to them. If you were one of these liaisons, what documents do you wish you could have had to review when you started in the position? If you were a liaison that did inherit good records from your predecessor, what documents were the most helpful to you as a new liaison? Your answers are likely the documents that are now most important for you to keep on file.

Moreover, if records and documents are kept in an organized fashion, when your program is monitored, you will save a great deal of time in compiling materials, either in hard copy or electronically.

Documents specific to your state and LEA may include

- correspondence from the State Coordinator;
- state and local dispute resolution policies;
- forms and templates related to enrollment, written notice for denial of school enrollment, and parent contracts;
- memoranda of agreement with local service providers and partners;
- Consolidated State Performance Reports;
- monitoring reports;
- contact information for community collaborators;
- Title I, Part A set-aside information;
- subgrant applications;
- needs assessments;
- records related to completed disputes and written notice provided to parents and youth;

- subgrant expenditure reports; and
- phone and email logs.

Phone and email logs, or barrier tracking logs, should include all calls from parents, administrators, and staff related to enrolling and serving homeless students. While many liaisons keep informal records of phone calls and email for a short period of time only, keeping these logs on file provides important information on what issues require more training, what policies should be changed, or which staff and schools have the greatest challenges. Barrier tracking logs are an important tool to assist you with prioritizing your activities and targeting time and resources where they are most needed. For a sample form, see Appendix 15.E Barrier Tracking Form.

Section 15.9 Useful Links

McKinney-Vento Act
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/mv_full_text.pdf

Educating Homeless Children and Youth: Conducting Needs Assessments and Evaluating Services - A Guide for SEAs, LEAs, and Local Schools
http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/na_eval.php

McKinney-Vento Data Standards and Indicators – 2006 Revisions
http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/st_ind.php#2006

Section 15.10 Resources and Tools for Chapter Fifteen

Appendix 15.A Template of Quadrants to Determine Priorities
Appendix 15.B Top Five List
Appendix 15.C School Level Point of Contact Information
Appendix15.D Needs Assessment Worksheet and Summary
Appendix 15.E Barrier Tracking Form

Appendix 15.A Template of Quadrants to Determine Priorities

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	**QUADRANT I**	**QUADRANT II**
NOT IMPORTANT	**QUADRANT III**	**QUADRANT IV**

Top 5 List

5 Documents to Read:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

5 Documents to Keep on Hand:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

5 People to Know:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

5 Audiences for Training:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

5 Resources to Utilize:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

5 Programs to Coordinate With:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Appendix 15.C School Level Point of Contact Information

The McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.) requires that every school district provide education and related services for students experiencing homelessness. In order to ensure our district remains in compliance with the law while providing an education of the highest quality to homeless students, a point of contact is needed in every building. This person will work with the local liaison to ensure students are identified and given appropriate opportunities to attend and succeed in school. To assist with these tasks, the local liaison will provide support and training for the building level points of contact.

Please identify the most appropriate building level point of contact and provide his or her information below.

School Name:

Contact Name:

Direct Phone Extension:

Email:

If you need assistance determining the most appropriate person for this role in your building, please contact the local liaison for assistance. Once the building contact is identified, **please return this form to the local liaison no later than [Insert Date Here].**

The local liaison for our district is:

[Insert Contact Information Here]

Appendix 15.D Needs Assessment Worksheet and Summary

Needs Assessment Worksheet

Issue	*Guiding Questions*	*Status/Comments*
Awareness	• What is the level of awareness/education of LEA program administrators and school personnel regarding the statutory requirements of McKinney-Vento and Title IA legislation relative to the education of homeless children and youth? • What is the level of awareness/education in other community agencies and networks, such as homeless coalitions, shelter providers, and other service providers? • Are homeless education posters displayed in each school in the community?	
Policies/ Procedures	• How often do you review/revise district policies, regulations, and practices that might be barriers to the school enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless students? • What kinds of outreach efforts are in place and by whom to target the identification of homeless children and youth in your community? • Does the LEA obtain data on homeless students from shelters? • How are homeless families informed, in a language they understand, of the educational rights of their children regarding enrollment, transportation, etc.? Is information posted in places they are likely to see? • Are shelter personnel and other service providers aware of the district's obligation to provide transportation to the school of origin? • How do you support homeless students' right to attend the school of origin when doing so is in their best interest? • What kinds of parent involvement activities and initiatives are implemented district-wide? Are supports provided to encourage and assist homeless families in being involved? • What issues/barriers are addressed consistently in calls received by the local liaison requesting information or technical assistance? • Do you provide basic services and supports, such as school supplies, fee waivers, and transportation, as needed? • Does the district have a written dispute resolution policy? Are parents provided with a copy when disputes arise?	
Identification/ Enrollment/ Access	• How many homeless children and youth have been identified as homeless in your district? • How many homeless unaccompanied youth have been identified? • How many homeless preschool-age children have been identified? (birth-3 and 4-5)? • How many homeless migrant homeless students have been identified? • How many homeless children awaiting foster care placement have been identified? • Do you enroll homeless students immediately?	

Identification/ Enrollment/ Access *(continued)*	• Do you identify and remove barriers to school enrollment and success for homeless students? Are barriers specific to homeless unaccompanied youth eliminated? • How many homeless shelters are in your district? • How many school-aged children reside in homeless shelters in your district? • How many students are doubled-up with friends or family due to lack of housing? • How many homeless students are in other kinds of living situations? • How many homeless students have moved within the district, or from outside the district in the past school year? • Do you consider data relative to poverty, unemployment, foreclosures, and other economic trends in your community when assessing the accuracy of your numbers of homeless students identified and served? • Is it likely that there are homeless children and youth in the community who have not been identified and are not attending school?	
Student Success	• Is the number of homeless students included in testing increasing each year? • What percentage of identified homeless students in your district are grade-level proficient in reading and math? • Is the academic proficiency of homeless students increasing in your district? • Does analysis of proficiency data factor in length of time enrolled in the school where tested? • Does the reporting process recognize discrepancies in data as students move from school to school or from district to district? • What other indicators, in addition to academic achievement scores, do you monitor? (e.g. attendance, grade-level promotion/retention, graduation rates, disciplinary referrals, etc.)	
Collaboration – Internal	• What is the frequency of communication between the local liaison and Title IA program leaders in your district? • What kinds of decisions are made jointly between homeless education and Title IA? • How does your Title IA plan address the needs of homeless students? • How do homeless education and Title IA collaborate to address the needs of homeless unaccompanied youth? Homeless preschoolers (Birth-3 and 4-5)? Homeless migrant students? Homeless students awaiting foster care? • Are the reservation of Title IA funds, the amount, and the use determined jointly between Title IA and the local liaison? • Is a description of the Title IA reservation, and how the funds are used, included in your Consolidated Plan submitted to the state? • Is a description of the Title IA reservation included in your McKinney-Vento subgrant program description? • How many homeless students are participating in Title IA programs? (Schoolwide? Targeted Assistance? Other?) • What is the level of coordination with other program personnel	

	(transportation, nutrition, counseling, drop-out/truancy, special education) • How many homeless students are receiving special education services?	
Collaboration - External	• What is the frequency of communication between the local liaison and community agencies that serve homeless families? • What community agencies are active in the provision of services to homeless children, youth, and families in your community? • Do LEA staff members participate in collaboration with Head Start, Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs, HUD, etc.? • What community agencies collaborate with the LEA on data collection? • Are community agencies working with homeless families aware of the statutory requirements of McKinney-Vento and Title IA legislation? • What specific projects/initiatives are underway as a result of collaboration within the community network? • How would you assess the overall quality and effectiveness of community collaboration?	
Resources/ Capacity	• What resources are available to meet the unique needs of your homeless students? • Does your district receive a McKinney-Vento subgrant? If so, what supplemental services are provided with those funds? • If your district does not receive a McKinney-Vento subgrant, what supplemental services are provided and how are they funded? • What amount of Title IA funds is reserved to meet the needs of homeless students in your district? • How are these funds used? • What happens with Title IA funds that are unspent at the end of the fiscal year? • How are pupil transportation services provided by the district for homeless children and youth? • Are public transportation options provided by the district when needed? • What other LEA supports are available?	
Additional Questions for Charter Schools (if applicable)	• How many homeless students are attending your charter school? • How are services provided to homeless students in your charter school? • Are you receiving McKinney-Vento subgrant or Title IA funds? • Is technical assistance being provided to charter school personnel regarding the educational rights of, and provision of services for, homeless children and youth? How and by whom? • How are you ensuring that school administrators and staff are providing services and supports in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act?	

Needs Assessment Summary

Complete each section below based on the results of the Needs Assessment Worksheet.

1 = Many areas of concern; several compliance issues; technical assistance is needed
2 = Implementation is minimally adequate; systems, tools, and mechanisms are needed to strengthen implementation; technical assistance is needed
3 = Implementation is adequate; procedures are in place but could be improved
4 = Program is strong and robust, with model systems, tools and mechanisms in place

Awareness *(circle one)*: **1 2 3 4**

Most Important Challenges:

Further Data Needed:

Further Action Needed:

Policies/Procedures *(circle one)*: **1 2 3 4**

Most Important Challenges:

Further Data Needed:

Further Action Needed:

Identification/Enrollment/Access *(circle one)*: **1 2 3 4**

Most Important Challenges:

Further Data Needed:

Further Action Needed:

Student Success *(circle one)*: **1 2 3 4**

Most Important Challenges:

Further Data Needed:

Further Action Needed:

Collaboration - Internal *(circle one)*: **1 2 3 4**

Most Important Challenges:

Further Data Needed:

Further Action Needed:

Collaboration - External *(circle one)*: **1 2 3 4**

Most Important Challenges:

Further Data Needed:

Further Action Needed:

Resources/Capacity *(circle one)*: **1 2 3 4**

Most Important Challenges:

Further Data Needed:

Further Action Needed:

Guidance/Monitoring *(circle one)*: **1 2 3 4**

Most Important Challenges:

Further Data Needed:

Further Action Needed:

1. **Based on the summary scores above, list in order of priority the areas needing improvement:**

2. **What strengths exist to assist in addressing these areas of concern?**

3. **What general strategies will you use to address these priorities?**

4. **In what areas do you anticipate needing additional resources and/or technical assistance?**

5. **What process will you use to generate an action plan to address your most pressing issues?**

For the full document, see *Educating Homeless Children and Youth: Conducting Needs Assessments and Evaluating Services - A Guide for SEAs, LEAs, and Local Schools*
http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/na_eval.php

Appendix 15.E Sample Barrier Tracking Form

Contact Name, Phone Number, Email	Contact Role (Parent, Agency, Student etc.)	School Involved	Request Date	Response Date	Request Topic	Request Description	Response

Chapter Sixteen: Related Legislation

Section 16.1 Connecting with Related Laws

The McKinney-Vento Act provides a strong foundation for serving homeless children and youth. However, other federal laws also specifically address the needs of homeless children and youth, providing additional rights and protections for this vulnerable population. Chapter 11 Collaboration includes strategies for working with other programs while this chapter explains key tenets of, and provides links to, the actual text of the other federal laws, guidance, and memos related to the education of homeless children and youth. This chapter also provides links to NCHE briefs that summarize the laws and offer good practices.

Section 16.2 Title 1, Part A

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is designed to meet the educational needs of low-achieving children in schools with the highest levels of poverty. Homeless students are part of the target population of disadvantaged students served by Title I, Part A and are automatically eligible for services under the program, whether or not they attend a Title I, Part A school or meet the academic standards required for other students to receive services. A summary of key pieces related to the education of students experiencing homelessness follows.

- Plans implemented by Title I, Part A as part of the LEA application must describe how services for students experiencing homelessness are coordinated and integrated with the McKinney-Vento program [20 U.S.C. § 6312(b)(1)(E)(ii)].
- Targeted assistance programs are required to coordinate with federal, state, and local service programs, including housing, nutrition, and violence prevention programs [20 U.S.C. § 6315(c)(1)(H)].
- Each LEA receiving Title I, Part A funds must reserve funds as necessary to provide services to homeless children who are attending elementary, middle, or high schools that are not Title I, Part A schools, comparable to services provided to non-homeless students at Title I schools. Set-aside funds may be used to provide a wide variety of educationally related

support services to students experiencing homelessness. The services may also be provided at shelters or other locations where the students live [20 U.S.C. § 6313(c)(3(A)].

- In addition to serving homeless students not attending Title I, Part A schools, the U.S. Department of Education *Non-Regulatory Guidance for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth* program states that set-asides also can be used to provide services to homeless students who are attending Title I, Part A schools (2004, M-4).

Allowable Title I, Part A Expenditures for Supporting Homeless Students

- 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 such as backpacks and notebooks
- 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
- Fees for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate testing
- Fees for SAT or ACT testing
- Fees for GED testing of school-aged students

-U.S. Department of Education Guidance
The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)

- The intent of Title I, Part A is to supplement educational activities provided through the school with other local, state, and federal programs. Therefore, before using set-aside funds, LEAs should consider resources available through other means and leverage them accordingly. Guidance issued for the ARRA provides a list of possible services that Title I, Part A funds may support for homeless students (ED, 2009). See the text box on page 16-2 for a full list of the allowed expenses provided in the Guidance.

Section 16.2.1 Important Documents Related to Title I, Part A

NCHE Brief: ***Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness under Title I, Part A***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/titlei.pdf

Title I, Part A of the ESEA, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 et seq.
http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/chapter-70/subchapter-I/part-A/subpart-1

Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non-Regulatory Guidance
http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/guidance.pdf

Guidance: ***Using Title I, Part A ARRA Funds for Grants to Local Educational Agencies to Strengthen Education, Drive Reform, and Improve Results for Students***
http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/titlei-reform.pdf

Section 16.3 Child Nutrition and the WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 established that certain homeless, runaway, and migrant children are categorically eligible for free meal benefits under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. These students and families do not have to complete an application for free meals. Rather, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policies allow for automatic enrollment of these students to ensure they receive meals quickly.

To expedite the enrollment of homeless students in the free meals programs, liaisons should provide the following information to the program's administrator:

- the student's name or a list of student names,
- the effective date of the homelessness,

- a signature from the local liaison or the director of a homeless shelter where the student resides to indicate the validity of the information.

Once a child is certified as eligible to receive free school meals, eligibility remains in effect for the duration of the current school year and for up to 30 days after the first operating day of the subsequent school year, or until a new eligibility determination is made in the new school year, whichever comes first.

Section 16.2.1 Important Documents Related to Child Nutrition

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/nutrition_act_2004.pdf

USDA Interim Rule: ***Direct Certification and Certification of Homeless, Migrant, and Runaway Children for Free School Meals*** **(2011)**
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/regulations/2011-04-25.pdf

USDA Memorandum: ***Duration of Households' Free and Reduced Price Meal Eligibility Determination***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/usda_memo_jul_7_2004.pdf

USDA Memorandum: ***Guidance on Determining Categorical Eligibility for Free Lunches and Breakfasts for Youth Served under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/usda_guidance_sept04.pdf

Issue Brief: ***Access to Food for Homeless and Highly Mobile Students***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/nutrition.pdf

Section 16.4 The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. Specifically, it prohibits a school from disclosing personally identifiable information from students' educational records without the consent of a parent or eligible student, unless an exception to FERPA's general consent rule applies.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when the student reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student's records maintained by the school.

Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, if an LEA includes its intent to disclose records in its annual notice to parents and students, FERPA allows schools to disclose student records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

- school officials with legitimate educational interest;
- other schools to which a student is transferring,
- specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- appropriate parties in connection with financial aid for a student;
- organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- accrediting organizations;
- appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies;
- state and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law; or
- to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.

If a district did not include information about its intent to release information under the circumstances listed above, the district must make reasonable attempts to notify the parents or guardians prior to the release of the information.

Schools may disclose, without consent, directory information such as a student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards, and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (special letter, inclusion in a Parent Teacher Association bulletin, student handbook, or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Section 16.4.2 Important Documents and Links Related to FERPA

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232(g)
http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/1232g

Family Policy Compliance Office, U.S. Department of Education
FERPA information
http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/index.html

Section 16.5.1 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The purpose of IDEA is to ensure that all children with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE), including special education and related services, to prepare them for further education. Part B of IDEA addresses the special educational needs of students aged three through 21 and Part C addresses the early intervention needs of children younger than three.

The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA includes amendments that reinforce provisions in both the McKinney-Vento Act and the earlier version of IDEA. It clarifies how the law applies to the education of students experiencing homelessness by addressing issues related to timely assessments, appropriate services and placement, and continuity of services for children and youth with disabilities who experience homelessness and high mobility.

The following summarizes the IDEA provisions for students experiencing homelessness and disabilities:

- IDEA specifically mentions and observes the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless children and youth [20 U.S.C. § 1401(11)].
- Child Find requirements in IDEA include a specific requirement that all states identify, locate, and evaluate children with disabilities who are homeless [20 U.S.C. § 1412(3)(A)].
- Any state receiving funds under IDEA must ensure the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act are met for all homeless children and youth with disabilities in the state [20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(11)(A)(iii)].
- LEAs must complete initial evaluations for special education services within 60 days of a parent's request, or within the timeframe established

by the state if the state has adopted a timeframe less than 60 days [20 U.S.C. § (a)(1)(C)(i)].

- If a child changes LEAs while an evaluation is pending, the evaluation must be completed within the standard timeframe for completing initial evaluations 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 [20 U.S.C. 1414(a)(1)(C)(ii)(I)].
- LEAs must ensure that assessments of children who change LEAs during the school year are coordinated with prior schools [20 U.S.C. § 1414(b)(3)(D)].
- When children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) change LEAs during the school year, the new LEA is required to immediately provide a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in the previous IEP, in consultation with the parents [20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(2)(C)(i)(I)].
- The definition of *parent* includes individuals acting in place of a biological or adoptive parent with whom the child lives [20 U.S.C. § 1401(23)].
- For unaccompanied youth, LEAs must appoint surrogate parents and make reasonable efforts to complete the appointment process within 30 days [20 U.S.C. § 1415(b)(2)]. In the interim, LEAs are to appoint temporary surrogate parents for unaccompanied youth, who can 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 (C.F.R. §300.519(f)].
- Any state receiving an IDEA Part C grant must make early intervention services available to homeless infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families [20 U.S.C. §1434(i)].

Section 16.5.2 Important Documents Related to the IDEA

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004)
http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/20/chapter-33

Issue Brief: ***Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004: Provisions for Homeless Children and Youth***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/idea.pdf

Questions and Answers on Special Education and Guidance
U.S. Department of Education
http://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/spec-ed-homelessness-q-a.pdf

Section 16.6.1 Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (P.L. 110-351) amends parts B and E of Title IV of the Social Security Act. The Fostering Connections Act includes provisions to promote educational stability for children in foster care. As a result of the Act, child welfare agencies must consider the appropriateness of the educational setting of a child and the proximity of a placement to the school in which the child is enrolled when placing a child in foster care [42 U.S.C. § 675(G)(i)].

Case plans for each child in foster care must contain

- assurances that the child welfare agency has coordinated with appropriate LEAs to ensure that children remain in the school in which they are enrolled at the time child welfare placements are made, or
- assurances by the child welfare agency and LEAs that immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school is provided and that the new school receives all educational records, if remaining in the same school is not in the child's best interest [42 U.S.C. § 675(1)(G)(ii)].

Section 16.6.2 Important Documents Related to Fostering Connections

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act
Statutory Language and Administrative Guidance
http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/center_on_children_and_the_law/education/toolkit_appendix2012.pdf

Factsheet: ***Foster Care and Education Q & A***
http://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/migrated/child/education/publications/qa_fostering_connections_final.authcheckdam.pdf

Issue Brief: ***When Working Together Works: Academic Success for Students in Out-of-Home Care***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/wwtw.pdf

Section 16.7.1 The Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008

The Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 reauthorized the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act that enables community-based organizations and shelters to serve and protect runaway, homeless, missing, and sexually exploited youth. The Act supports funding for Basic Center programs, which provide emergency shelters; Transitional Living Programs, which offer longer-term care that helps prepare older youth for self-sufficiency and adulthood; and Street Outreach programs to serve youth on the streets.

Programs are required to increase access to education for youth and coordinate with McKinney-Vento local liaisons.

Section 16.7.2 Important Documents and Links Related to the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act

Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource/rhy-act

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Family and Youth Services Bureau
Runaway and Homeless Youth Program
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth/about

Section 16.8.1 The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) of 2007

The CCRAA includes specific provisions designed to remove barriers for unaccompanied homeless youth in accessing federal financial aid for college. The Act enables these youth to be qualified as independent students for the purpose of completing the Federal Application for Financial Student Aid, thereby removing

the need for these youth to provide parental financial information and a parent signature.

Youth must be determined as unaccompanied and homeless, or as unaccompanied and at risk of homelessness, and self-supporting during the school year in which they apply for aid. Determination of independent student status must be made by the

- LEA homeless education liaison,
- director or the director's designee of a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development emergency shelter program,
- director or the director's designee of a Runaway and Homeless Youth Act program, or
- college financial aid advisor.

Section 16.8.2 Important Documents Related to the CCRAA

College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) of 2007
http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/110/hr2669/text

Issue Brief: ***Increasing Access to Higher Education for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Information for Colleges and Universities***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/higher_ed.pdf

Template: ***Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Documentation of Independent Student Status for the FAFSA***
http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/images/dl/uy_fafsa_verif_12.doc

Information by Topic: NCHE Higher Education webpage
http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/higher_ed.php

Section 16.9.1 Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 reauthorized the Head Start program and included specific provisions on serving homeless children. Relevant to serving young homeless children, the Act

- includes a definition of homelessness consistent with the McKinney-Vento Act;

- specifies that homeless children are categorically eligible for Head Start services;
- allows Head Start agencies to serve some families with incomes up to 130% of the poverty line, but only if the agency implements procedures to meet the needs of homeless children and youth below the poverty line first; and
- requires new applicants for Head Start grants to include a plan to meet the needs of homeless children and children in foster care, including transportation needs.

Before receiving additional funds to expand their programs, existing Head Start grantees must show

- the extent to which applicants have undertaken community-wide strategic planning needs assessments involving the local liaison and organizations providing services to children in foster care, homeless children, child abuse prevention services, and protective services and
- the extent to which applicants coordinate with local liaisons.

The Head Start Act also requires the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to issue regulations requiring programs to

- ensure homeless children are identified and prioritized for enrollment;
- allow homeless families to apply to, enroll in, and attend Head Start programs while required documents are obtained within a reasonable time frame;
- coordinate with individual Head Start centers and programs on efforts to implement the education provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act.

Section 16.9.2 Important Documents Related to Head Start

Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007
http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/Head%20Start%20Act/HS_ACT_PL_110-134.pdf

Section 16.10.1 Other Related Early Childhood Education Policy

In January 2013, the U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF) disseminated a memorandum to Head Start programs, Child Care and

Development Fund (CCDF) administrators, and other programs receiving ACF funds with the goal of increasing services for homeless children. Related technical assistance documents recommended that the programs

- prioritize access to services for homeless families;
- institute policies for families who become temporarily homeless after a disaster;
- offer flexibility to homeless families related to providing required documentation for enrollment and immunizations;
- coordinate with State Coordinators and local liaisons to reach out to homeless children and families and connect them to available early childhood education resources, health and social services;
- work with homeless coalitions to ensure the unique needs of young children are represented; and
- coordinate Head Start and CCDF policies to ensure alignment, allowing the delivery of services to homeless families in a consistent and family-friendly manner.

Section 16.10.2 Important Documents Related to Early Childhood Education Policy

U.S. Health & Human Services Dear Colleague letter
Providing early care and education (ECE) services to homeless children
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/acf_homeless_letter.pdf

Fact Sheet: ***Policies & Procedures to Increase Access to ECE Services for Homeless Children & Families***
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/acf_homeless_policies_and_p edures.pdf

Fact Sheet: ***Early Childhood & Family Homeless Resources List***
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/acf_homeless_resource_list .pdf

HHS Fact Sheet: ***Strategies for Increasing ECE Services for Homeless Children***
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ecd/acf_homeless_strategies.p

Section 16.11.1 Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009

The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act of 2009 added new education-related requirements for Continuum of Care and homeless service grant applicants. Specifically, to receive funding, Continuum of Care programs must do the following:

- collaborate with local education authorities (school districts) to assist in the identification of homeless families and inform homeless families and youth of their eligibility for McKinney-Vento education services;
- consider the educational needs of children when families are placed in emergency or transitional shelter and, to the maximum extent practicable, place families with children as close as possible to their school of origin so as not to disrupt the children's education;
- establish policies and practices consistent with the McKinney-Vento Act and other laws relating to the provision of educational and related services to individuals and families experiencing homelessness (policies and practices must not restrict a youth's education rights);
- designate a staff person to ensure that children are enrolled in school and connected to the appropriate services within the community, including early childhood programs such as Head Start, Part C of IDEA, and McKinney-Vento education services. (This requirement only applies to programs providing housing or services to families or unaccompanied youth.)

Section 16.11.2 Important Documents and Links Related to the HEARTH Act

Issue Brief: ***Housing and Education Collaborations To Serve Homeless Children, Youth, and Families***
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/hud.pdf

Continuum of Care Contacts
http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewCocContacts

Chapter Seventeen: Additional Resources

Section 17.1 Importance of National Resources and Disclaimer

A wealth of expertise and resources exists in national organizations that can increase your capacity to serve homeless children and youth. The organizations listed in this section provide help with services, advocacy, and research-based information dissemination. We encourage you to explore and utilize the resources offered through these organizations.

Keep in mind, however, that each organization has its own philosophical foundation related to homelessness; perspectives reflected in resources, trainings, and other information provided by the organization may not align with those of the U.S. Department of Education or your state educational agency (SEA). The greater your familiarity with the McKinney-Vento Act, the more discerning you will be in determining the extent to which these organizations' resources will be useful for you.

Because the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) is a contractor with the U.S. Department of Education and works closely with the federal program officer for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, all NCHE publications and training materials have been reviewed and approved by the Department. Should you have any questions about resource materials from NCHE or any other organization, you are urged to contact NCHE staff or your State Coordinator to discuss the materials.

The inclusion of the organizations in the following section does not indicate endorsement of their products or materials. The intent is to familiarize you with a range of resources to supplement your work.

Section 17.2 National Resources

Institute for Children, Homelessness, and Poverty
Website: www.icphusa.org

The Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness (ICPH) is an independent nonprofit research organization based in New York City. ICPH conducts research on homeless families and those living in extreme poverty that examines the demographics of this growing population, the challenges these families face in becoming self-sufficient, and the programs that are most effective in helping them transition out of poverty. In addition to its published research, ICPH produces an array of products and materials to engage the public and support professionals working with homeless families.

Legal Center on Foster Care and Education, American Bar Association
Website: www.americanbar.org/groups/child_law/what_we_do/projects/education.html

The Legal Center on Foster Care and Education serves as a national technical assistance resource and information clearinghouse on legal and policy matters affecting the education of children in the foster care system.

The Legal Center for Foster Care and Education

- provides expertise to states and constituents,
- facilitates networking to advance promising practices and reforms
- provides technical assistance and training to respond to the ever-growing demands for legal support and guidance, and
- offers briefs and resources on the Fostering Connections Act and other laws that impact children in foster care.

National Alliance to End Homelessness
Website: www.naeh.org

The National Alliance to End Homelessness analyzes policy and proposes policy solutions. The Alliance works collaboratively with public, private, and nonprofit sectors to build state and local capacity to help communities achieve their goal of ending homelessness. In order to inform policy debates and educate the public and opinion leaders nationwide, the Alliance provides data and research to policymakers and elected officials. It offers a wide range of publications on homelessness in America, which are available for download from the organization's website.

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
Website: www.naehcy.org

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) is a leader in advocacy and policy development in the area of homeless education. NAEHCY provides publications and activities to keep its members abreast of emerging issues. An annual conference brings State Coordinators, local homeless liaisons, shelter and service providers, researchers, and advocates together to learn and network. Local homeless liaisons may find NAEHCY's Frequently Asked Questions on various issues related to McKinney-Vento implementation particularly useful (www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/images/dl/naehcy_faq.pdf).

National Center on Family Homelessness
Website: www.familyhomelessness.org

The National Center on Family Homelessness is dedicated to helping families who are homeless. The Center conducts research, and develops, shares, and implements innovative solutions to end family homelessness in America. The Center offers trainings and technical assistance materials on a variety of topics relating to homeless families, including trauma informed services.

National Center for Homeless Education
Website: www.serve.org/nche

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) is the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center in the area of homeless education. NCHE provides a comprehensive website, webinars, onsite trainings, and publications that are updated regularly to reflect the growing body of knowledge regarding homeless education. Updates, announcements, and links to resources are also provided via a NCHE hosted listserv. Assistance with understanding and implementing the law is provided to parents, caregivers, and those who serve homeless children and youth via a Helpline (800-308-2145 or homeless@serve.org).

National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)
Website: www.nctsn.org

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network was established to improve access to care, treatment, and services for traumatized children and adolescents exposed to traumatic events. NCTSN raises awareness of the impact of child traumatic stress, promotes trauma-informed services, works with established systems of care, and fosters collaboration to ensure that knowledge and skills related to the issue becomes a sustainable national resource.

National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
Website: www.nlchp.org

The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (NLCHP) provides legal expertise and support in the nationwide movement to end homelessness. Key areas of work include: impact litigation, policy advocacy, and public education. NLCHP offers a variety of publications on issues related to homelessness, poverty, and the education of homeless children and youth.

Section 17.3 Federal Programs and Resources

U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Healthy Students
Website: www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oese/oshs/aboutus.html

The Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS) administers, coordinates, and recommends policy for improving the quality and excellence of programs and activities that are designed to address drug and violence prevention, student health and well-being, and emergency preparedness. OSHS supports the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center (http://rems.ed.gov), which provides emergency management resources, training, and publications.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Families and Youth Services Bureau Help for Runaway and Homeless Youth Initiative
Website: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth

Through the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program (RHY), the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) supports street outreach, emergency shelters,

and longer-term transitional living and maternity group home programs to serve and protect young people experiencing homelessness.

FYSB supports several technical assistance initiatives, in addition to its grant programs, to support professionals working with homeless youth including the

- Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/rhyttac),
- National Clearinghouse on Families and Youth (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/ncfy),
- National Runaway Safeline (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/runaway-safeline),
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/rhymis).

Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center
Website: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc

The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center provides a wealth of information on Head Start and early learning. The website includes a locator for Head Start Programs and online training opportunities, including a series of interactive lessons for Head Start staff working with homeless families. The lessons include useful strategies; parent stories; experiences and lessons learned by Head Start and Early Head Start programs as well as LEA liaisons; sample documents; and much more. The training series on working with homeless families is available at http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/Family%20and%20Community%20Partnerships/Crisis%20Support/Homelessness/homelessness.html.

References

Ballentine, J.A. (2013) Inhabitant. In *Ballentine's law dictionary: A law dictionary without pronunciations*. (3rd ed.). Retrieved from http://www.republicsg.info/Dictionaries/1968_Ballentines_3.pdf.

Ballentine, J.A. (2013) Regular. In *Ballentine's law dictionary: A law dictionary without pronunciations*. (3rd ed.). Retrieved from http://www.republicsg.info/Dictionaries/1968_Ballentines_3.pdf.

Ballentine, J.A. (2013) Adequate. In *Ballentine's law dictionary: A law dictionary without pronunciations*. (3rd ed.). Retrieved from http://www.republicsg.info/Dictionaries/1968_Ballentines_3.pdf.

Covey, S. (2004). *The seven habits of highly effective people.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 *et seq.* (Cornell Legal Information Institute 2012).

Fixed. (2013). In *Merriam-Webster's online dictionary.* Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fixed.

Jones, W.G. (2006). *Working with the courts in child protection.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

National Center for Homeless Education. (2013). *Education for homeless children and youth program: data collection summary*. Retrieved from http://www.center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_data.php.

Regular. (2013). In *Merriam-Webster's online dictionary.* Retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/regular.

UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools. (n.d.). *Schools helping students deal with loss.* Retrieved from http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/loss(hurricane).pdf.

U.S. Department of Education. (2004*). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001: Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program non-regulatory guidance*. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/guidance.pdf.

U.S. Department of Education. (2009). *Guidance on McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Program funds made available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.* Retrieved from:

http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/guidance/homeless.pdf.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001, 42 U.S.C. § 11431 *et seq.* (Cornell Legal Information Institute 2012).