McKinney-Vento 101:
Implementing Homeless Education

2021-2022
Back-To-School Training
Definition of Homeless

Who is eligible for McKinney-Vento services?

Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. 11434a(2)

✓ Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.

✓ Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
Definition of Homeless

Who is eligible for McKinney-Vento services?
(continued)

- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Living in a public or private place not designed for or regularly used as accommodations.
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
  - What is substandard? Check utilities; infestations; mold; dangers
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

✓ The term *unaccompanied youth* includes a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. 42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)

✓ Liaisons must assist UHY with enrollment, school selection, & dispute resolution.

✓ Have the same right to immediate enrollment & educational services as other students.
Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

✓ There are no age limits in the McKinney-Vento Act.
✓ Eligibility is based on the student’s housing.
✓ Pathways to homelessness for unaccompanied youth:
  • 35% of youth experienced the death of at least one parent or caregiver
  • 44% of youth had been in foster care
  • 24% were homeless with their families before becoming unaccompanied
A primary focus of the McKinney-Vento Act is school access for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

McKinney-Vento students must be provided equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as is provided to other children and youth [42 U.S.C. § 11431(1)].

In order to provide equal access, LEAs must remove all barriers that could result in McKinney-Vento students missing critical learning opportunities.
Removing Barriers

- LEAs **must develop, review, and revise policies** to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment and retention of McKinney-Vento students, including barriers due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences.
  - This is a “broad, on-going requirement… with regular input from homeless parents, youth, and advocates so that new barriers… do not prevent” students from full, immediate enrollment and services.
Removing Barriers: Full Participation

- Remove barriers to academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs.
  - LEAs should anticipate and accommodate the needs of McKinney-Vento students to enter these programs and consider giving them priority on waitlists.
  - SEAs and LEAs should develop policies to expedite full participation in extracurricular activities and work with athletic associations to adjust policies to facilitate participation.
Immediate Enrollment

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

- Students do not have required documents, such as school records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, guardianship, or other documents; or
- Students have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.
School Selection

Option 1: School of Origin

• Defined as the school the students attended when permanently housed or the school the students last attended
• Includes public preschools
• Includes receiving schools
• **Try to keep the student in the school of origin for the child’s or youth’s best interest**

Option 2: Local attendance area school

• Includes any public school that non-homeless students living in the same location have the right to attend
School Selection

• Can remain in the school of origin
  ✓ For the duration of the homelessness
  ✓ Until the end of the school year in which the student obtains housing
  ✓ If the student becomes homeless over the summer & is still homeless at start of school year

  42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(A)(i)(II)

• Decisions are based on the individual student’s best interest

  42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(B)
In determining best interest, the LEA shall:

- Presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student’s best interest.
  - Unless contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.

- Consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, & safety.
  - For preschool children, consider attachment to teachers; availability and quality of services in the new area; and travel time.

- Give priority to the request of the parent/guardian.

- Give priority to the request of an unaccompanied youth.
Transportation to the School of Origin

- LEAs must provide transportation to and from the school of origin until the end of the year when the student obtains permanent housing, at a parent’s or guardian’s request (or at the liaison’s request for unaccompanied youth).
  - Even if transportation is not typically provided.

- If staying in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation to the school of origin.

- If crossing LEA lines, both LEAs must determine how to divide the responsibility and share the cost, or they must share the cost equally.
Dispute Resolution

- Disputes may be over: eligibility, school selection, or enrollment

- If enrollment is denied, a written statement must be given explaining the reason and appeal process
  - Provided in a format and language the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied homeless youth can understand

- The parent/student must be immediately referred to the liaison

- Students must be enrolled and receive services while a dispute is mediated

42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(E)
School Meals

• HCY are categorically eligible for free meals. 42 U.S.C. § 1758(b)(5)(A)(b)

• U.S. Department of Agriculture policy allows liaisons to qualify HCY

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

1. The services must be reasonable and necessary to assist students experiencing homelessness to take advantage of educational opportunities.

2. The funds must be used only as a last resort when funds or services are not available from other public or private sources.
Title I, Part A & Title IX, Part A
Set-Aside Funds

Can:

✓ 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
Title I, Part A & Title IX, Part A Set-Aside Funds

Can:

☑ Personal school supplies
☑ Birth certificates necessary to enroll in school
☑ Immunizations
☑ Food (In-School Breakfast, Lunch, and Snacks)
☑ Hygiene Products
☑ Medical and Dental Services
☑ Eyeglasses and Hearing Aids
Title I, Part A & Title IX, Part A Set-Aside Funds

Can:

✓ 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 condition
Title I, Part A & Title IX, Part A Set-Aside Funds

Can:

- Tutoring services, especially in shelters or other locations where homeless students live
- Support Homeless Liaison Position
- Hire teachers, aides, and tutors to provide supplemental instruction
- Pay for student projects and/or field trips
Title I, Part A & Title IX, Part A Set-Aside Funds

Can:

✓ Transportation

✓ Parental involvement specifically oriented to reaching out to parents of homeless students

✓ Prepaid cell phones to students (ADDED DUE TO COVID)

✓ Provide mobile hotspots and laptops/ tablets to shelters, motels, and directly to families and youth who are staying with other people. (ADDED DUE TO COVID)
Title I, Part A & Title IX, Part A Set-Aside Funds

Can:

✓ Fees for Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) testing
✓ Fees for college entrance exams such as the SAT or ACT
✓ GED testing for school-age students
✓ Provide the cost of cap and gown to wear at graduation
Title I, Part A & Title IX, Part A
Set-Aside Funds

Cannot:

✓ Provide clothing assistance for parents
✓ Pay for the cost of prom dresses or yearbooks
✓ Pay for hotels/motels
Credit Accrual

Districts must have clear procedures in place to award full or partial credit for work completed in a previous district. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(F)(ii)

Examples:

• Consult with the prior school to evaluate the work completed
• Evaluate the student’s mastery of courses & award credits accordingly
• Offer credit recovery or mastery-based courses
• Offer distance learning
Postsecondary Education

• UHY must be assisted with FAFSA verifications
  ✓ Liaisons are allowed to provide subsequent year verifications

  42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(III)

• All HCY should receive information and individualized counseling regarding
  ✓ college readiness
  ✓ college selection
  ✓ applying for school
  ✓ financial aid
  ✓ on-campus supports

Non-regulatory Guidance, Q-1
Resources

• ALSDE Homeless Education

• National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

• National Center for Homeless Education

• National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
Contact Us

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