

Homeless Information Update

Fall 2016

Please note that the McKinney-Vento law has been reauthorized, changes are noted in this document and trainings are scheduled to assist in ensuring full comprehension of the law.

STATE HOMELESS EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Susannah Wayland is the Ohio Department of Education's state homeless education coordinator. She is available to assist with homeless student issues throughout the year. Susannah can be reached at susannah.wayland@education.ohio.gov or (614) 387-7725.

THE MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December 2015. The following is a listing of some of the specific requirements of this law regardless of whether a district receives a McKinney-Vento sub-grant. Please note the changes in the law are reflected in bold print.

Who is Homeless?

The term "homeless children and youth" means individuals who lack fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residences and includes the following:

1. 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 accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
2. 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;
3. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings; and
4. Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above.

Currently the definition of Homeless Children and Youth includes "those awaiting foster care placement." Reauthorization includes language indicating that as of Dec. 10, 2016, children and youth awaiting foster care will no longer be considered homeless.

Local Liaisons

The law requires local districts, community schools and other educational agencies to designate an appropriate staff person as a local liaison, whom is **able to carry out his/her legal duties** for homeless children. Assigning someone this designation through the CCIP consolidated application process meets this requirement. The person is then identified as the contact for homeless education in the CCIP address book and will receive important communication about homeless education. A district may refer to the re-authorization note below that allows for Title I funds to support a homeless liaison.

The duties of the local liaison are to ensure that:

- School personnel receive professional development and other technical assistance in identifying homeless children and youth and providing appropriate services and assistance;

- Homeless children enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools of the district or a community school;
- Homeless families, children and youth have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, early intervention (IDEA Part C) and preschool programs administered by the district or school. Additionally, they receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, substance abuse services, housing services and other appropriate services;
- The parents or guardians of homeless children receive information about the educational and related opportunities available to their children and about meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children. The parent or guardian of a homeless child or an unaccompanied youth receives complete information about all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin. This also includes assistance in accessing transportation to the school that the child has a right to attend. *Distribution of a public notice* about the educational rights of homeless children should include places where they may receive services, such as schools, family shelters, public libraries and soup kitchens;
- As homeless children and youth frequently move from school to school because of the lack of permanent housing, the local liaison must ensure that homeless youth receive credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school. This requirement includes unaccompanied homeless youth;
- Liaisons must ensure that disputes are resolved, while the student remains enrolled throughout the process. If the district determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school requested by the parent, guardian or youth, the district must provide a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth, including information regarding the right to appeal;
- Liaisons must ensure unaccompanied youth are informed of their status as independent students and may obtain assistance from the liaison to receive verification of that status; and
- Local liaisons are authorized to affirm that students meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness, to qualify for HUD homeless assistance programs.

Privacy

Information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation is treated as a student education record and shall not be deemed to be directory information.

Information about a McKinney-Vento student's living situation is a student education record subject to FERPA.

School 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 immunizations 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. The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" include attending classes and participating fully in school activities. Districts must develop, review and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations, including barriers due to outstanding fees or fines or absences. If a student does not have immunizations, or immunization or other health records or screenings, the liaison must immediately assist in obtaining them; the student must be enrolled in the interim. Enrolling schools must obtain school records from the previous school, and students must be enrolled in school while records are obtained. Schools must maintain McKinney-Vento student's records so they are available quickly.

Enrollment of Unaccompanied Youth

Immediate enrollment applies, even without parent or guardian. Liaisons must help unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, **give priority to the youth's wishes** and inform the youth of his or her appeal rights. School personnel (administrators, teachers, attendance officers, enrollment personnel) must be made aware of specific needs of runaway and homeless youth.

SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Transitioning to Higher Education

All McKinney-Vento youth must be able to receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths, and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college. Liaisons must ensure unaccompanied youth are informed of their status as independent students and may obtain assistance from the liaison to receive verification of that status.

Districts must coordinate McKinney-Vento and special education services within the district, and with other involved districts.

McKinney-Vento students are automatically eligible for free school meals. USDA policy permits liaisons and shelter directors to obtain free school meals for students immediately by providing a list of names of students experiencing homelessness with effective dates (see resources below).

Homeless Policy Dispute Resolution Procedures

Districts are required to have a school board of education-adopted homeless policy. It is highly recommended that the district include a dispute resolution procedure within this policy. A recommended [McKinney-Vento Dispute Resolution Procedure](#) is available for district use.

If a district determines that it is not in the student's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent, guardian or youth, the district must provide a written explanation of the reasons regarding the determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth, including information regarding the right to appeal

TITLE I PART A SET ASIDE FUNDS

All districts that receive Title IA funds must reserve (set aside) the funds necessary to provide homeless children services comparable to services provided in Title IA schools. Amounts must be based on the total district allocation prior to expenditures or transfers and may be determined based on needs assessment and should involve the liaison. Children and youth who are homeless are automatically eligible for Title I Part A services, whether or not they attend a Title I Part A school or meet the academic standards required of other students for eligibility. The funds can be used for educationally related support services, including preK. The funds can be used to provide services that are not ordinarily provided to other Title I Part A students. Additionally, the funds may be used to fund the McKinney-Vento homeless liaison and to cover the excess costs of providing transportation for homeless students to the school of origin.

Head Start and Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA)

Please note that serving students experiencing homelessness is in the reauthorization of both Head Start and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Both acts include a definition of homelessness that matches the definition of homelessness in the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which applies to all schools.

Preschool and Feeder School

School of origin is defined as the school attended when permanently housed or school in which last enrolled, including a preschool. It also includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for feeder school patterns, when the student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin.

Best Interest Consideration/School Stability

In determining best interest, the district 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. The district shall consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education health and safety. The district shall give priority to the parent/guardian's request. The district shall give priority to the youth's request (in case of an unaccompanied youth).

Transportation

Districts must provide transportation to and from the school of origin, including 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). If staying in the same district, that district must provide or arrange transportation to the school of origin. If crossing district lines, both districts must determine how to divide the responsibility and share the cost, or they must share the cost equally. Districts also must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students. Districts must eliminate barriers to the **identification**, enrollment and retention of students experiencing homelessness (including transportation barriers)

Awareness Training

All districts are required to conduct an awareness training to ensure that ALL personnel know the McKinney-Vento law and to refer questions or concerns to the local liaison. Federal Programs monitoring will include this training as part of the checklist, therefore maintenance of documentation about this training is needed. Many districts have a "testing" portal for staff trainings that have a McKinney-Vento training program. This also is a way to ensure that 100 percent of staff have received training.

Compliance Tracking System

The requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act are part of the compliance review system. It is important the district and building leadership conduct awareness training on the McKinney-Vento law and the requirements (see resources for training). It also is important that all buildings, and frequently visited community locations, have posters displaying the contact information for the district liaison and the state coordinator.

Resources are available from the National Center on Homeless Education. Districts will find review items within the federal programs self-survey addressing these requirements. Additionally, homeless items are in the desk review and the on-site review. Please take the time to make sure all buildings have information posted with current liaison contact information, that the district has and understands the dispute resolution procedure and that all staff members receive a briefing in the proper procedures when suspecting possible homeless situations. Please keep supporting documentation for all items included in the compliance review.

Professional Development Opportunities/Bidders Conference

A series of training opportunities will take place during the school year. Included are the following:

National Conference

The annual conference of the **National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth** will take place from Oct. 29 through Nov. 1, 2016. The conference will take place in Orlando, Florida. For more information, click <http://naehcy.org/conference/about-2016-conference>

Statewide Conferences- Meetings

The Ohio Association of Administrators of State and Federal Programs Fall Coordinators conference will take place at the Hyatt Regency at The Greater Columbus Convention Center on Oct. 24-26, 2016. A session will be presented focusing upon the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

21st Century/McKinney-Vento Statewide Summit

SUMMIT	REGION	LOCATION	REGISTRATION	WHO/TIMES
Feb. 1-3, 2016	Central	Hilton Columbus, Easton Town Center	Register for the 21 st CCLC Summit	Mandatory for all grantees. -Managers and treasurers (1 day) Grantees arrive the evening of Feb. 1 to attend Brown Bag Sessions.

A special orientation meeting for recipients of McKinney-Vento sub-grantees will take place on Sept. 22, 2016. The orientation meeting will take place at The Nationwide Conference Center. Further information will be shared with sub-grant recipients prior to the meeting.

ORIENTATION	REGION	LOCATION	REGISTRATION	WHO/TIES
Sept. 22, 2016	Central	Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center, 100 Green Meadows Dr. South, Lewis Center, OH 43035. Phone # 614-880-4300 Toll-free # 866-233-9393	Register In STARS	Mandatory for all sub-grantees. -Program managers or a representative. Registration 9-10 a.m.

Regional Training Opportunities

The Ohio Department of Education Office of Federal Programs will be offering a series of regional training opportunities focusing upon various federal program requirements. Included will be a review of basic requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act that apply to all LEAs. Please note that there will also be session dedicated for an in depth look at the changes to the M-V law. It is highly recommended that local homeless liaisons attend one of these session offer throughout the state. You may register through **STARS** for these trainings.

REGIONAL MEETINGS	REGION	LOCATION	REGISTRATION	WHO/TIMES
Sept. 19, 2016	North Network ESC of Cuyahoga County	6393 Oak Tree Blvd. Independence, OH 44131 Counties Invited: Cuyahoga, Lake, Geauga, Lorain	Register in STARS	
Oct. 5, 2016	Stark County ESC Center COG Room ***Different location	2100 38 th Street NW Canton, OH 44709 Counties invited: Stark, Holmes, Wayne Contact Jim Nicodemo 330-445-2270 Monica.plauger@email.sparcc.org	Register in STARS	

REGIONAL Meetings	REGION	LOCATION	REGISTRATION	WHO/TIMES
Oct. 6, 2016	Hamilton Area	RIC Auditorium 110 Great Oaks Dr. Cincinnati, OH 45241 513-771-8840 Counties Invited: Adams, Clinton, Brown, Butler, Clermont, and Hamilton	Register in STARS	
Oct. 7, 2016	Central Network ESC of Central Ohio	2080 Citygate Dr. Columbus OH 43219 614-445-3750 Counties invited: Franklin, Licking, Delaware, Madison, Pickaway, Fairfield, and Union	Register in STARS	

Bidders Conference

The Ohio Department of Education will be hosting a series of bidders' conferences in January 2017 in order to prepare and inform those districts that may be interested in competing for additional funds to support the homeless population. Please see the dates below. Districts with 49 or more homeless students are eligible to apply for the funds.

BIDDERS CONFERENCE	REGION	LOCATION	REGISTRATION	WHO/TIMES
Jan. 18, 2017	Southwest	Roberts Convention Center 123 Gano Rd. Wilmington OH 45117 P#: 937-283-3200	Register in STARS	Optional AM Session 10 a.m.-noon PM Session is 2-4 p.m.
Jan. 11, 2017	Central	Mansfield Convention Center 24 N. Main Street, Mansfield, OH 44902 P#: 880-642-8282	Register in STARS	Optional AM Session 10 a.m.-noon PM Session is 2-4 p.m.
Jan. 25, 2017	Northwest	Sawmill Creek Resort 400 Sawmill Creek Dr. Huron/Sandusky, OH 44839	Register in STARS	Optional AM Session 10 a.m.-noon PM Session is 2-4 p.m.

Resources

Please refer to the Ohio Department of Education, [McKinney-Vento Resources for Awareness website](#) for additional resources.

To assist local liaisons in meeting these responsibilities, a brochure titled [A Parent's Guide to the Rights of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#) is available. The guide includes an overview of the McKinney-Vento program and links to external resources.

Other helpful links from the National Center for Homeless Education include:

- [Local Homeless Education Liaisons](#)
- [Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Services: Do's and Don'ts for Local Liaisons](#)
- [Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Services: Do's and Don'ts for School Districts](#)
- [Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act](#)
- [Liaison Tool Kit](#)

The links above may be helpful for training district personnel, as well as the following: [Videos: Awareness Videos on Homelessness and Homeless Education](#).

For more information, see the National Center for Homeless Education [Who is Homeless?](#) fact sheet and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) from the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty.

Food Services

- [National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth](#)
- National Center for Homeless Education's [brief on Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness under Title I, Part A/downloads/briefs/nutrition.pdf](#)