

# McKinney Vento Handbook



## Bus Drivers

2017-2018

# WASHINGTON STATE MCKINNEY-VENTO EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM SCHOOL STAFF RESOURCE

## OVERVIEW

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The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, reauthorized in 2015 by Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, provides for the delivery of services to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools. Every school district or LEA is required to implement the McKinney-Vento Act, including appointing a local homeless liaison who is responsible for ensuring that homeless children and youth are identified, enrolled immediately in school, and linked to services.

School administrators, teachers, and support personnel encounter children and youth experiencing homelessness every day and play a critical role in ensuring that these children and youth are identified and served. As school personnel, you are often the ones who develop trusting relationships with students and families and can be the eyes and ears to identify vulnerable students and ensure that they are linked to services and support.

This booklet will guide school personnel in ways to support homeless families, children, and youth. Included are a summary of requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and state legislation, the role of the local liaison, and both general strategies for school personnel and strategies for specific role groups to help homeless students enroll in school, attend regularly, and succeed academically. Also included are links to additional information and resources.

## GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

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- Have contact information for the local homeless liaison on hand and contact him or her to learn about LEA procedures and policies regarding homeless students.
- When you identify a student who is or may possibly be experiencing homelessness, contact the local liaison right away to ensure that the student is linked to all needed services.
- Participate in trainings to increase your awareness of the needs of homeless students and provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act to address their needs.
- Become familiar with trauma-informed services, understanding that many homeless children and youth have experienced tremendous loss, stress, and in many cases, domestic violence.
- Be on the lookout for indicators that a child or youth may be experiencing homelessness, such as
  - chronic hunger or fatigue;
  - stress and concern about family or where they will go after school;
  - erratic attendance at school;
  - changes in behavior;
  - poor grooming or clothing that draws attention or is worn for several days in a row; or
  - reluctance to part with belongings while at school.
- Encourage the student and build hope for the future.
- Discuss a child's or youth's possible homelessness with him or her or with parents or guardians in a discrete, respectful way, avoiding using the word "homeless." You should use terms like "living in a temporary situation" or "not having a stable place to live."
- Do not disclose information about a student's living situation to anyone other than the local liaison and to other school administrators and school staff only as needed.
- Ensure that the child or youth feels welcome in the school and classroom and has genuine connections to caring adults.

### RESOURCES

- NCHE Training Resources (Webinars and Self-Paced Trainings)  
[http://center.serve.org/nche/web/online\\_tr.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/web/online_tr.php)

## STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

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- Look for indicators on the bus route that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison. Note students who
  - appear at a new bus stop;
  - no longer appear at a bus stop without having withdrawn from school;
  - are now being dropped off/picked up by someone at a bus stop when they used to walk;
  - are requesting pick up or drop off at the address of a hotel, motel, or shelter;
  - are showing up at the bus stop inappropriately dressed for the weather; or
  - are showing uncharacteristic behavior problems.
- Build positive relationships with students.
  - Listen for indicators that a student is experiencing hunger, neglect, stress; make a referral to the local liaison and to school counselors or social workers.
  - Encourage the student to succeed and stay in school and build hope for the future.
- Listen for instances of teasing and bullying of a homeless student; intervene and report this to the student's school.
- Maintain a lost and found box and help return lost items to students; possessions are very important to homeless students.
- Inform your pupil transportation director if the bus route includes a pick up or drop off that would enable other students to identify a student as homeless, and request to adjust the route, for example, making a pick up at a shelter or hotel the first stop and drop off the last stop so that other students do not see where a homeless student is staying.
- Assist the pupil transportation director with creative routes that provide expeditious and economical transportation for homeless students to and from the school of origin.
- Inform the pupil transportation director of instances where a homeless student has not been at the bus stop arranged for him or her to be transported to and from the school of origin so that the director and local liaison can follow up with the family or youth.