

# McKinney Vento Handbook



## K-12 Counselors

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 COUNSELORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

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- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
- Build trust with students as a caring adult; listen carefully to their wishes and concerns.
- Contact the local liaison to make referrals for the student or family for needed services within the LEA and in the community.
- Examine a student's school record for missing credits, and arrange for the student to recover credit for work partially completed.
- Ask the student what his or her interests are, in what extracurricular activities he or she participated in his or her former school, and then connect the student to appropriate activities.
- Work with the student from a trauma-informed perspective, and link the student to counseling and other supports, as necessary.
- Be aware of risky and unsafe situations in which a youth might be involved; look especially for signs that an unaccompanied homeless youth is being trafficked or is in a dangerous relationship.
- Offer support for a student's physiological needs (food, clothing), as well as his or her social/emotional needs (safety, security, and belonging).
- Help older students with life skills, such as financial literacy and healthy choices.
- Encourage the student and build hope for the future.
- Encourage students to plan to attend college.
  - Make sure they enroll in college preparatory classes.
  - Arrange for them to visit a college campus.
  - Help older youth with the college search, application, and financial aid process, including completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which allows unaccompanied homeless youth to apply for aid as independent students.

### RESOURCES

- NCHE "Maximizing Credit Accrual and Recovery for Homeless Students"  
<http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/credit.pdf>