

McKinney Vento Handbook



Food Service Staff

2017-2018

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

OVERVIEW

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

- 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

STRATEGIES FOR FOOD SERVICES STAFF

- Look for indicators that a child or youth may be experiencing homelessness, such as someone who does not have lunch or money to purchase a meal, seems extraordinarily hungry and wants more food than is provided in the regular meal, or begs food from his or her peers, and refer this student to the local homeless liaison.
- Build positive relationships with students, and listen for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness; make referrals to the local liaison.
- Ensure that homeless students are able to receive free meals immediately upon identification, without the need for paperwork beyond a referral from the local liaison or shelter director, as required by law.
- Maintain students' confidentiality regarding their living situation.
- Do not implement practices that stigmatize homeless students or others receiving free meals, such as creating a special line or a different colored ticket.

RESOURCES

- NCHE "Access to Food for Homeless and Highly Mobile Students"
<http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/nutrition.pdf>

