

WCSD Procedures McKinney Vento

What is meant by the term “homeless children and youths”?

McKinney-Vento Act¹⁰ defines “homeless children and youths” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes—

- Children and youths who are: - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled-up”); - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; - living in emergency or transitional shelters; or - abandoned in hospitals;
- 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;
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

For what activities may an LEA use McKinney-Vento subgrant funds? The LEA will use McKinney-Vento funds to assist homeless children and youths in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. In particular, the funds may support the following activities:

1. Tutoring, supplemental instruction, and other educational services that help homeless children and youths reach the same challenging State academic standards the State establishes for other children and youths. As clearly specified in the ESEA, all academic enrichment programs for disadvantaged students, including programs for homeless students, must be aligned with State standards and curricula. Additionally, when offering supplemental instruction, LEAs should focus on providing services for children and youths that reflect scientifically based research as the foundation for programs and strategies to ensure academic success.
2. Expedited evaluations of eligible students to measure their strengths and needs.

These evaluations should be done promptly in order to avoid a gap in the provision of necessary services to those children and youths. Evaluations may also determine a homeless child or youth's possible need or eligibility for other programs and services, including educational programs for gifted and talented students; special education and related services for children with disabilities under Part B of the IDEA; special education or related aids and services for qualified students with disabilities under Section 504; early intervention services for eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities under Part C of the IDEA; programs for English learners; career and technical education; meals through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program²²; and other appropriate programs or services under the ESEA.

3. Professional development and other activities for educators and specialized instructional support personnel that are designed to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of such personnel to the needs of homeless children and youths, the rights of such children and youths under the McKinney-Vento Act, and the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youths. 4. Referrals of eligible students to medical, dental, mental, and other health services. 5. Assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funds, to enable students to remain in their schools of origin.

6. Developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs for preschool-aged homeless children that are not provided through other Federal, State, or local funds. If the LEA preschool program has space, preschool age students experiencing homelessness will be enrolled, even if they missed the enrollment deadline. If the LEA does not have space the homeless liaison will coordinate with other agencies: HeadStart, local daycares, etc. **(updated March 5, 2024)**

7. Services and assistance to attract, engage, and retain homeless children and youths, particularly homeless children and youths who are not enrolled in school, in public school programs and services provided to non-homeless children and youths.

8. Payment of fees and costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records necessary to enroll homeless children and youths in school. The records may include birth certificates, immunization or other required health records, academic records, guardianship records, and evaluations for special programs and services. 9. Education and training for parents and guardians of homeless children and youths

about the rights of, and resources available to, such children and youths, and other activities designed to increase the meaningful involvement of parents and guardians of homeless children or youths in the education of such children or youths.

10. Coordination between schools and agencies providing services to homeless children and youths in order to expand and enhance such services. Coordination with programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act must be included in this effort.

11. Specialized instructional support services, including violence prevention counseling, and referrals for such services.

12. Programs addressing the particular needs of homeless children and youths that may arise from domestic violence and parental mental health or substance abuse problems.

13. Providing supplies to non-school facilities serving eligible students and adapting these facilities to enable them to provide services. 14. Providing school supplies, including those to be distributed at shelters or temporary housing facilities, or other appropriate locations.

15. Providing extraordinary or emergency services needed to enable homeless children and youths to attend school and participate fully in school activities. (Section 723(d)(16)).

On what basis does an LEA make school placement determinations for homeless children and youths? Homeless children and youths frequently move, and maintaining a stable school environment is critical to their success in school. To ensure this stability, LEA will make school placement determinations on the basis of the “best interest” of the homeless child or youth based on student-centered factors. Using this standard, the LEA will – (a)

Continue the child’s or youth’s education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; and for the remainder of the academic year even if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or (b) Enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

How does an LEA determine the child’s or youth’s “best interest”? In determining a child’s

or youth's best interest, the LEA will presume that keeping the homeless child or youth in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the youth. When determining a child's or youth's best interest, the LEA will consider student-centered factors, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless children and youths, giving priority to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth. We encourage an LEA to also consider the school placement of siblings when making this determination.

What if the LEA determines that it is not in the child's or youth's best interest to attend the school of origin or school requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth? If, after conducting the best interest determination and considering student-centered factors, the LEA determines that it is not in the child's or youth's best interest to attend the school of origin or school requested by the parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth, the LEA will provide the child's or youth's parent or guardian or the unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.

This written explanation will also include information regarding the right to appeal and should be provided in a timely manner.

What are an LEA's responsibilities for enrolling homeless children and youths? The LEA has an ongoing obligation to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless, children and youths. A school selected on the basis of a best interest determination (see I-2 and I-3) will immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce the records normally required for enrollment (such as previous academic records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, proof of guardianship, birth certificates, or other documentation), has missed application or enrollment deadlines during a period of homelessness, or has outstanding fees. The enrolling school will also immediately contact the school last attended by the child or youth to obtain relevant academic or other

records. In addition, an LEA should ensure that homeless students are attending classes and participating fully in school activities immediately upon the student being identified as eligible for McKinney-Vento rights and services.

If a child or youth needs to obtain immunizations or other required health records, the enrolling school will immediately refer the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to the local liaison, who will assist in obtaining the immunizations, screenings, or immunization or other required health records. Any records ordinarily kept by the school—including immunization or other required health records, academic records, birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs—will be maintained so that they are available in a timely fashion when the child enters a new school or school district. To facilitate immediate enrollment, timely transfer of records from school to school should also take into account procedures for inter-State record transfers.

Is an LEA required to transport homeless students to and from the school of origin while enrollment disputes are being resolved? Yes. The McKinney-Vento Act's transportation requirements apply while disputes are being resolved. Therefore, at the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, the LEA will provide or arrange for adequate and appropriate transportation to and from the school selected by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth. Inter-district transportation disputes should be resolved at the SEA level.

What types of services may an LEA provide to homeless students with funds reserved?

Title I, Part A funds may be used to provide a wide variety of services to homeless students. In addition to providing services to assist homeless students in meeting the State's challenging academic standards, Title I, Part A funds may be used to provide services to homeless children and youths, including those in Title I schools, that may not ordinarily be provided to other Title I students. For example, to help homeless students effectively take advantage of educational opportunities, an LEA may use Title I, Part A funds to provide, where appropriate.

Two principles govern the use of Title I, Part A funds to provide such services to homeless students. First, the services will be reasonable and necessary to assist homeless students to take

advantage of educational opportunities.

Second, Title I, Part A funds will be used only as a last resort when funds or services are not available from other public or private sources, such as the USDA's National School Lunch Program and Breakfast Program, public health clinics, or local discretionary funds (sometimes provided by the PTA) used to provide similar services for economically disadvantaged students generally.

Are homeless children and youths who attend non-Title I schools eligible to receive Title I, Part A services? Yes. the ESEA, the LEA will reserve sufficient

Title I funds to provide services to homeless students who attend non-Title I schools that are comparable to those provided to students in Title I schools. These services may include providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where homeless children live. Services should be provided to assist homeless students to effectively take advantage of educational opportunities. In addition to serving homeless children and youths who attend non-Title I schools, the homeless set-aside may be used to provide services to homeless students in Title I schools that are not ordinarily provided to other Title I students.

For additional guidance, please visit

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcyguidance072716.pdf>