Districts and schools have special legal obligations to students experiencing homelessness as defined by 42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2) in subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. These obligations extend to students in unstable living situations (doubled up with other people, couch surfing, in motels, homeless shelters); inadequately housed students (those without utilities or in substandard housing); and unaccompanied youth.

**Definition of Homeless Children & Youth**

Under McKinney-Vento, homeless children & youth:

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(1) of this title); and

(B) includes—

(i) 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 adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;

(ii) 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 (within the meaning of section 11302(a)(2)(C)1 of this title);

(iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 6399 of title 20) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this part because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

These students’ needs and rights are unique and should not be conflated with the needs of economically disadvantaged, special education and ESL students. Given a likely dramatic increase in the number of students meeting the definition of homeless since the COVID-19 pandemic, districts and schools must make affirmative and aggressive efforts to identify newly homeless children. Once identified, districts and schools must ensure equitable access to education for students experiencing homelessness as they prepare for the new school year.

This guide serves as a framework for basic legal compliance, as well as best practices. At a minimum, districts and schools should:

- Identify a Homeless Liaison.
- Ask each student their housing status during the enrollment process.
- Provide legally required services and waivers for fees related to birth certificates, class materials, extracurricular activities, field trips and before-/after-school programming to identified students.
- Ensure that any distance learning offered is available to identified students. If learning requires devices and wifi access, both must be provided.

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1. 42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)
2. 42 U.S.C. §§ 11432(g)(6)(A)(i)
5. 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(I)
7. 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(E)(i)
Designating a Homeless Liaison and Preparing for Success

Per federal law, each LEA must ensure there is a Homeless Liaison currently in place with adequate capacity to identify McKinney-Vento students and ensure their enrollment, full participation, and equitable access to services.

- Use a simple tool to assess liaison capacity, such as the assessment developed by School House Connections. (Copy can be found in Forms and Resources.)
- Use COVID-19 relief funding (CARES Act funds), Title I, Part A funding, and any McKinney-Vento sub-grant funding to increase liaison capacity. This money can be used to specifically fund the costs of services outlined in this guidance.
- Designate school site-level liaisons to increase the districts' and schools' overall capacity to respond to homelessness.
- Many schools and districts are reporting increased staff turnover due to COVID-19 and economic stressors.
  - Please contact the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (ECHY) State Coordinator, Dana Malone, dana.malone@state.nm.us for the required online training available to ensure new liaisons are adequately prepared to for their duties.
  - There are many great on-line resources to support training for school staff or community partners. All staff including teachers, coaches, bus drivers, maintenance workers, administrators and cafeteria staff can be instrumental in identifying students eligible for McKinney-Vento services. (See Forms and Resources for link to School House Connection for training resources.)

Case Study: Española School District

School Site-Level Liaisons: Helping Students Experiencing Homelessness Succeed in Schools

In Española, NM, Anna Vargas Gutierrez, the District HOPE and Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD) Liaison for the Student Services and Wellness department oversees the McKinney-Vento program.

Since she took over the program a couple of years ago, identification of students experiencing homelessness went from about 10 per year to over 100 per year. Prior to her taking over the program, “kids were not being identified,” she said.

To help support students and families experiencing homelessness and increase identification, Ms. Vargas Gutierrez applied for and was awarded a McKinney-Vento sub-grant from PED. She has used these funds to support stipends for five people who were already employed in the district.

The folks receiving the stipends are social workers or staff who know the kids and commit to doing extra work off school hours.

Between the five staff, they cover all the schools in the district. Expectations include checking in with students every week, helping ensure families are accessing resources, and providing case management.

Most of the students in Española experiencing homelessness are living “doubled-up”. That means they have moved in with other families. Currently, there aren’t any homeless shelters in Española. Some students experiencing homelessness may be served by organizations in Taos and Santa Fe, but students prefer to stay in the Española valley and sleep on couches of friends, neighbors or family members.

With the help of the extra staff, identification of students experiencing homelessness within the district has increased and more children experiencing homelessness are getting the supports they need to succeed in school. This utilization of funding also supports long term sustaining of the program and assurance that training and this service to students continues.
Identifying Students Eligible for McKinney-Vento Services

The Homeless Liaison and other school staff must reach out to known or suspected McKinney-Vento students now, to help them prepare for reentry during the next school year.

Districts and schools should identify as many homeless students as possible by using school registration as an opportunity to ask questions about housing status. The following question added to online and printed registration materials would not only ensure maximum identification of homeless students, but help districts and schools better support the unique needs of those students.

Where do you sleep at night?

Please check ALL the boxes for places you have slept over the past year.

- Staying temporarily with friends, relatives or other people (“couch-surfing”) WITH a parent
- Staying temporarily with friends, relatives or other people (“couch-surfing”) NOT with a parent
- At a shelter, WITH a parent
- At a shelter, NOT with a parent
- In transitional housing or an independent living program, WITH a parent
- In transitional housing or an independent living program, NOT with a parent
- At a motel or in a camper or 5th wheel, WITH a parent
- At a motel or in a camper or 5th wheel, NOT with a parent
- In a car, tent, park, bus or train station, abandoned building, shed, chicken coop, or other public place, WITH a parent
- In a car, tent, park, bus or train station, abandoned building, shed, chicken coop, or other public place, NOT with a parent
- At my home, in my bed

Given the challenges of mobility, deep poverty, and trauma, keeping in touch with students and families experiencing homelessness can be a challenge in the best of times. With schools and early childhood programs closed, and students and families moving even more frequently due to COVID-19, maintaining connections is even more difficult.

The following offers some strategies that liaisons, schools, and early childhood programs should use to keep in touch.⁷

- Augment the local educational agency homeless liaison’s capacity to do outreach.
  ▶ Increase liaisons’ dedicated hours to homeless-related activities, such as through increasing the Title I, Part A homeless set-aside.
  ▶ Enlist other school staff, such as counselors, principals, paraprofessionals, social workers, and teachers, to reach out to students experiencing homelessness.
- Use all available means of communication to reach families and students: Email, phone, texting, regular mail, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, GroupMe, home visits, etc.
- When families and students don’t respond, don’t give up. Reach out to emergency contacts and other students to ask if they have updated contact information, or if they can find students on social media and urge them to contact the school. Be mindful of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). A student’s status as eligible for McKinney-Vento is confidential.
- Once you connect with a parent or youth, stay in touch on a regular schedule. Use “check-in” forms to guide weekly conversations with students and families. Begin by telling students they’re missed, and then inquire about supports they might need to stay safe, healthy, and engaged in school.
  ▶ Use the weekly check-in form (found in Forms and Resources) to guide the conversation.
- Set up a phone hotline for assistance with any needs or connect families with existing hotlines.

⁷Keeping in Touch with Students and Families Experiencing Homelessness During School Closures from the SchoolHouse Connection
Useful Phone Numbers

**CORONAVIRUS**

- **Coronavirus Health Hotline**—call for any health-related questions about the Coronavirus: 1-855-600-3453
- **Coronavirus Information Hotline**—call if you have any questions about school closures, job issues, eviction notices, etc.: 1-833-551-0518

**HOUSING**

- **Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) Emergency Housing**: 1-800-444-6880

**FOOD ASSISTANCE HOTLINES**

- Seniors who need groceries should call: 1-800-432-2080
- If you need assistance obtaining food for school-age children call: 1-505-827-6683
- **SNAP Benefits**: 1-800-283-4465
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children**—questions on food or formula availability: 1-505-469-0929
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children**—general questions: 1-866-867-3124

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CASE STUDY: DEMING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**Connecting to Families Where They Are**

Deming, like other rural communities in New Mexico, has its own unique challenges when it comes to meeting the needs of their students. This district located in the U.S./Mexico border region has strong ties to their neighbors in the south. The district boasts a culturally diverse population that includes international and migrant students and their families. After the coronavirus pandemic hit, Glenda Sanchez, Homeless Liaison for the Deming School District, and her team started to think of ways they could connect and help families in need. They knew many families in their community used an online shopping site to buy and sell various items, so they posted messages in Spanish about the McKinney-Vento and migrant program on the local sites. About 90 people responded to her initial message. Her team was able to interview and qualify families for these programs over the phone. Through this simple yet creative method, they were able to qualify an additional 40 students for the McKinney-Vento program.

When school is in session, her team goes to every school in the district to introduce themselves and present an informational workshop for all staff. In the workshops, they provided examples/conditions that staff can look and listen for to make a referral to their department. She also asks each school to include information about the McKinney-Vento (homeless) program in their school newsletter. They also reach out to parents currently in the program to refer families as well.
Returning and Newly Eligible McKinney-Vento Students

Make sure there are systems in place to identify returning McKinney-Vento students, as well as students who are newly experiencing homelessness.

- Current levels of unemployment suggest imminent increases in homelessness among families who have never experienced it before, and who lack familiarity with available services and systems. As always, sensitive, trauma-informed outreach will be essential. (See "Forms and Resources" to learn more about creating trauma informed systems.)
- Embed questions and information about homelessness in all school or district outreach efforts, including: enrollment materials (see “Eliminating Barriers to Enrollment” for more recommendations on enrollment) food pick-up or delivery; mailing of learning packets; emails or other communications to all parents/students; school/district automated calling systems; and the school/district website, Facebook page, and other social media.
- Ensure that trained staff are available to connect with McKinney-Vento families and over the summer.
- Post flyers, brochures, and posters in the community where students and parents might see them, even if those locations are different due to COVID-19. For example, while campgrounds, motels, libraries and laundromats may continue to be important places to post information, grocery stores and pharmacies might be even more essential locations for such information at this time (see Forms and Resources for sample flyers).
- If your school is doing meals, post flyers in an area where families picking up meals can see them and include a flyer or brochure in to-go meals.
- Ask community partners to use an online referral form, that can be completed and submitted via a Google Doc or email, to connect families and youth to McKinney-Vento liaisons and early childhood programs for education-related needs (see "Forms and Resources" for sample referral form).
- Make sure all school, district, and program communications, including websites and social media, regularly share information about services for students and families experiencing homelessness. Many new families and youth are likely to fall into homelessness due to current economic stressors. It is more important than ever to ensure that all parents and youth know about McKinney-Vento and related rights.
- Create user-friendly websites and Facebook pages with clear information about community resources, food distribution, and distance learning, including how to obtain devices and internet connectivity.
- Many families may not self-identify as homeless or understand that living doubled-up may qualify them for services. Be creative with the questions that can help identify students and families experiencing homelessness in the COVID-19 context. Questions may include:
  ▶ Have you had an eviction deferred, and if so, when will the eviction moratorium end?
  ▶ Have you had rent, or utility payments deferred, and if so, when will those payments resume?
  ▶ Do you have a steady income? Has your work schedule been reduced?
  ▶ Do you have a working stove and refrigerator?
  ▶ Have you had utilities shut-off?
  ▶ How long have you been where you are staying currently, and how long do you think you will be able to stay there?
  ▶ Have you recently had to move in with family or friends because of financial circumstances?
Eliminating Barriers to Enrollment

Make sure the districts or schools and enrollment systems, whether online or in-person, accommodate the needs of families and youth experiencing homelessness.

COVID-19 has laid bare the inequities in access to technology of students of color, low-income students, and students experiencing homelessness. As they attempt to enroll through online systems, families and youth experiencing homelessness struggle with limited access to technology and connectivity, as well as basic enrollment barriers such as lack of information about the McKinney-Vento Act, lack of a pathway to enroll without documents, and inaccessible language. Students and families for whom English is not their first language, and those unfamiliar with online platforms and processes, will be disproportionately impacted by these barriers.

Online enrollment must not present barriers to immediate enrollment for students experiencing homelessness.

- Ensure that students experiencing homelessness are enrolled immediately, as required by the McKinney-Vento Act, whether school is online, in-person, or a hybrid model.
- Provide registrars and other enrollment personnel adequate training on the McKinney-Vento Act.
  ▶ With the anticipated increase in children and youth experiencing homelessness, training staff is more important than ever!
- Ensure online enrollment systems are accessible and understandable to parents and youth experiencing homelessness, with information about the McKinney-Vento Act. Online systems must provide a way for parents and students to enroll without typically required documents, such as proof of residency, health records, or guardianship, and an internal mechanism to refer potentially homeless students to the liaison.
- Remember the right to remain in the school of origin!
  ▶ Enrollment in a new school may not be in the best interest of students experiencing homelessness, despite changes in their living situation. It is critical that schools inform youth and families of their right to remain in the school origin and receive transportation, and of the importance of school stability, whether instruction is being provided in-person, online, or via take-home packets.
- Place McKinney-Vento information prominently on the front page(s) of the enrollment website. Use descriptive terms such as “staying temporarily,” “staying in someone else’s home,” or “in transition,” rather than labels like “homeless” that families and students may not identify with or understand.
- Explain that McKinney-Vento students can enroll without the usual documents, and provide an easy and immediate avenue for that enrollment.
- Display McKinney-Vento enrollment information and forms prominently.
- Provide contact information for the Homeless Liaison and other school staff trained on enrolling students experiencing homelessness.
- Make sure the enrollment website provides an easily accessible pathway for students experiencing homelessness to enroll without proof of residency, a parent or legal guardian, and other documents.
Ask about students’ living situations among the first questions asked of all students in both online and paper enrollment processes.

Design online enrollment forms and processes to accommodate McKinney-Vento situations, allowing students to enroll without proof of residency or a parent/guardian’s signature.

Set enrollment forms to automatically provide the Homeless Liaison with contact information for students who indicate possible homelessness.

Make sure the enrollment website, including McKinney-Vento information, is written in a manner understandable to all families and students and is available in multiple languages.

Keep enrollment instructions as brief as possible, and the process as simple as possible. Once the student is in school, additional follow-up can occur as needed.

- Ensure that the reading level of enrollment systems, and school and district websites overall, are at a level that allows parents with less than a high school education, and students themselves, to navigate the system easily.
- Use a free online readability checker.
- Offer an option for registrants to proceed without requesting a PIN or code.
- Create a secure page for students in homeless situations to enter information.
- Enlist bilingual school staff to assist with both online and in-person enrollment.
- Partner with community organizations that serve students and families of color and immigrants, and train them in online enrollment processes, so they can support families and students.
- Create simple videos in multiple languages, and with subtitles, that explain McKinney-Vento rights and services, identify the McKinney-Vento liaison, and clarify enrollment instructions.

Make convenient alternatives to online enrollment available for students and families who cannot access the online format, or who need personal assistance to complete the enrollment process.

- Institute enrollment options by phone if schools are closed due to a pandemic.
- Ensure that online enrollment forms include simple instructions for accessing in-person or telephonic enrollment.
- Complete the student’s enrollment in one visit, recognizing that finding the time and transportation to visit the school can be challenging for families and students experiencing homelessness.
- Ensure that all posters, brochures, and other materials that discuss enrollment of students experiencing homelessness include information about in-person enrollment, in addition to the website address for online enrollment.
- Meet with students and families at community agencies like shelters, meal sites, and motels, to help eliminate transportation and other enrollment barriers.

Safety and Health Considerations

Ensure all schools are prepared to address barriers to enrollment and retention in school, including ensuring access to COVID-related supplies such as personal protective equipment (PPE), hygiene supplies, clothing, and laundry.

- Prioritize students experiencing homelessness for resources that will be provided to all students, or to low-income students. Deliver or mail resources to students who lack transportation to pick them up.
- Expand the amount and uses of the Title I, Part A homeless set-aside as needed, to ensure it is adequate to address new barriers and increases in homelessness created by COVID-19.
- Target COVID-19 relief funding to students experiencing homelessness. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), H.R. 748 includes several new funding streams to support early care and education.
- Allowable uses of funds specifically include activities authorized under the education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act, and activities to address the unique needs of students experiencing homelessness, including how outreach and service delivery will meet their needs. Examples of allowable uses include:
• Planning for and coordinating how to provide meals and technology.
• Purchasing educational technology (including hardware, software and connectivity) for students.
• Mental health services and supports.
• Ensuring access to summer learning and supplemental after-school programs for students experiencing homelessness.

Ensure McKinney-Vento students have equitable access to all school activities, whether online or in-person. As schools begin to explore options for traditional or remote learning, careful consideration should be made to provide equitable access and support for a variety of student learning needs. Care should be taken not to exacerbate existing gaps in student achievement. Achieving equity in remote learning requires leaders to be intentional about ensuring support for student populations that often already have reduced opportunities for academic success in our traditional in-person education model.9

Mental Health

Have plans in place at each school to respond to increased trauma caused by extended shelter-in-place orders in unsafe living situations and increased economic stress.

• Screen for trauma when school restarts, either in person or online. Simple, well-researched instruments include UCLA’s COVID-19 Screen for Child/Adolescent PTSD and the Structured Trauma-Related Experiences and Symptoms Screener.
• Invite community mental health providers to support students virtually and/or on-site at schools.
• Implement trauma-informed training and practices available from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, ACES Aware, or similar resources. A recent review of programs with proven track records, many of which offer free tools and free online training, can help schools get started.
• Adopt positive school discipline practices school- and district-wide.

Traditional, punitive discipline practices include detention, suspension, and expulsion. These approaches are based on the assumption that punishment will compel students to change their behavior. In practice, they contribute to the “school-to-prison pipeline” and further isolate children who often are in dire need of positive relationships and support.10 They also have civil rights implications, as students of color are disproportionately subjected to punitive discipline, particularly African American and Native American students.11

In contrast, positive school discipline adopts a trauma-informed approach to strengthening the capacity of both school staff and students to reduce and prevent inappropriate and disruptive behavior. It recognizes that seeking to uncover and address the root causes of a student’s behavior is more effective than punishment. Positive school discipline is integrated into school policies, programs, and practices and applied system-wide. It often includes restorative justice practices that focus on repairing harm through inclusive processes that engage all stakeholders. (See Forms and Resources for link to School House Connection’s Tips for Implementing Positive School Discipline for Students Experiencing Homelessness.)

Create robust community collaborations so families and students can receive additional services that support educational success.

• Connect with community agencies providing food, health care, mental health care, shelter, and housing to families or youth, to find out what is available and how your students and families can access it.
• Use referral forms that can be completed and submitted online, or emailed to the liaison, for providers to connect families and students with liaisons.
• Utilize current resource guides or create an on-line resource list that families and youth can access on a mobile device, and that community partners can update directly, such as through a Google Doc.


Virginia Department of Education Return to School Plan
Useful Phone Numbers

• AGORA NM Crisis Center: 505-277-3013
• Alcoholics Anonymous: 505-266-1900
• Child Abuse Hotline: 505-841-6100 or dial #SAFE from a mobile phone (note: #SAFE cannot receive text messages)
• Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-773-3645
• Gambling Addiction: 1-800-522-4700
• National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-24-ACHILD
• National Child Abuse Prevention Line: 1-800-CHILDREN
• National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
• National Domestic Violence Hotline (Español): 1-800-942-6908
• National Domestic Violence Hotline—TTY, text telephone for deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired): 1-800-787-3224
• National Hopeline Network: 1-800-SUICIDE
• National Runaway Switchboard: 1-800-637-0701 Ext. 118
• National Sexual Assault Hotline: 1-800-656-HOPE
• National Teen Dating Abuse Help: 1-866-331-9474
• Native American Professional Parent Resources: 505-345-6289
• New Mexico Crisis and Access Line: 1-855-662-7474 or 1-855-227-5485 (TTY)
• New Mexico Healthcare Worker and First Responder Support Line: 855-507-5509
• New Mexico Legal Aid: 505-633-6694
• New Mexico Rape Crisis Center: 505-266-7711
• New Mexico Substance Abuse Helpline: 1-855-505-4505
• Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222
• Pull Together: 1-800-691-9067
• Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners: 505-883-8720
• Spanish-Language Suicide Hotline: 1-866-331-9474
• Suicide 24/7 Emergency Line: 575-758-1125
• Suicide Text Line: 741741
• University of New Mexico Mental Health: 505-272-2800

In rural areas in particular, connect with faith communities, civic organizations, and youth groups that might be able to share McKinney-Vento information with families and offer support or funding for basic needs and distance learning equipment.

Access to Distance Learning

If distance learning will be part of reopening, schools must be prepared to ensure students experiencing homelessness can access the internet, devices, meals, academic support, and adult mentorship.

• Prioritize students experiencing homelessness for devices and connectivity that will be provided to all students, or to low-income students. Deliver devices with meals or via U.S. mail when families and students cannot reach pick-up locations.

• Provide students with unlimited high-speed data, including through hotspots and cellphone data and minutes, to ensure students can complete all assignments and stay connected with liaisons, teachers, mentor Prioritize students experiencing homelessness for resources that will be provided to all students, or to low-income students. Deliver or mail resources to students who lack transportation to pick them up.

• Expand the amount and uses of the Title I, Part A homeless set-aside as needed, to ensure it is adequate to address new barriers and increases in homelessness created by COVID-19.

• Target COVID-19 relief funding to students experiencing homelessness.

• Ensure McKinney-Vento students have equitable access to all school activities, whether online or in-person.

• Plan to meet learning challenges beyond basic connectivity and devices, such as providing portable chargers for students without access to electricity; offering in-person or virtual supplemental academic support; and maintaining mentorship relationships with youth experiencing homelessness without a parent or guardian, in particular.

• Provide insurance for devices provided to McKinney-Vento students, recognizing the increased risk of theft and breakage due to unstable and unsafe living situations.
Make sure your schools are ensuring that families and students have access to electronic devices and internet connectivity.

- Extend the practices that became common with school closures by providing students with tablets or laptops, mobile hotspots, prepaid cell phones, and other devices and connectivity. Title I, McKinney-Vento, and other funds can help meet those costs. Many corporate foundations and philanthropic organizations also are offering grants for technology assistance.
- Coordinate with community agencies to provide on-site computer stations and assistance with both online and in-person enrollment.
- Create mobile enrollment stations by equipping buses with laptops, internet, and staff at peak enrollment periods; buses can park in areas where homeless families and/or unaccompanied youth are concentrated.

Forms and Resources

- **Schoolhouse Connection**: connect to training, documents, and relevant news about students experiencing homelessness and their families.
  - Back-to-School Training Resources
  - Positive School Discipline Practices for Students Experiencing Homelessness
- The **National Center for Homeless Education** (NCHE): operates the U.S. Department of Education’s technical assistance and information center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program.
  - Homeless Liaison Toolkit
  - Training, Webinars, Materials, and Issue Briefs
  - For assistance with an issue related to the education of a child or youth experiencing homelessness, contact the NCHE homeless education helpline toll-free at (800) 308-2145 or homeless@serve.org.
- The **National Child Traumatic Stress Network**: learn more about trauma and trauma-informed care
  - Trauma-Informed Care
  - Creating Trauma-Informed Systems
  - Schools Support for Traumatized Children
- **Aces Aware**: an initiative led by the Office of the California Surgeon General and the Department of Health Care Services to give medical providers training, clinical protocols, and payment for screening children and adults for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
  - ACEs Training
  - General Information, Policy Guidance, Materials
- **International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies** (ISTSS): clinicians and researchers from advocating for the field of traumatic stress.
  - UCLA Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Assessment Tool, Brief COVID-19 Screen for Child/Adolescent PTSD (Spanish and English)
- **New Mexico Human Services Department, Behavioral Health Services Division**: mental health and substance abuse state authority
  - Isolation, Grief, Loss and Trauma During COVID-19
  - Network of Care for Behavioral Health
- **NMPED Forms**
  - McKinney-Vento Liaison Assessment (see pg 11)
  - Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program Weekly/Bi-weekly Check-in Form
  - Referral Form for Community Partners
Assessing the Capacity of Districts’/Schools’ McKinney-Vento Liaisons for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Under the McKinney-Vento Act as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, every local educational agency must designate a liaison for homeless children and youth. Liaisons must be “able to carry out” 10 specific duties13.

The U.S. Department of Education Non-Regulatory Guidance states that districts and schools “should allocate sufficient time for... liaisons to do their jobs effectively and should support them in fulfilling their duties as outlined in the law and in making timely decisions.” To determine the time needed to carry out the liaison’s duties, the Department directs districts and school administrators to review the legal requirements for the position.

The chart below outlines the 10 legal requirements of McKinney-Vento liaisons14.

It is intended to serve as a quick self-assessment of the extent to which of these duties currently are able to be carried out, and a plan for building the capacity to carry them out in the future. This chart is not intended to substitute for a comprehensive needs assessment. Rather, it is a simple tool to help Districts and schools quickly identify and prioritize areas where greater capacity is needed to carry out the law.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEGAL DUTY</th>
<th>SELF-ASSESSMENT</th>
<th>PLAN FOR LIAISON CAPACITY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McKinney-Vento liaisons must ensure that...</td>
<td>0 = Not able to carry out 5 = Fully able to carry out DK = Don’t Know</td>
<td>What Needs to Happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other entities and agencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Homeless children and youth are enrolled and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Homeless families, children and youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, early intervention (IDEA Part C), and preschool programs administered by the district/school.</td>
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<td>4. Homeless families, children, and youth receive referrals to health, dental, mental health, housing, substance abuse, and other appropriate services.</td>
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<td>5. Parents and guardians are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate.</td>
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<td>6. Public notice of homeless students’ rights is disseminated in locations frequented by parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth, including schools, shelters, libraries and soup kitchens, in an understandable manner and form.</td>
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<td>7. Enrollment disputes are mediated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth are informed of and assisted in accessing transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. School personnel providing McKinney-Vento services receive professional development and other support.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Unaccompanied youth: a) are enrolled in school; b) have opportunities to meet the same challenging academic standards as other children and youth, including through receiving partial credits; and c) are informed of their status as independent students for the FAFSA and receive verification of that status.</td>
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Sample Flyers
Free copies of the following flyers may be downloaded from the National Center for Homeless Education.
Higher Education: Parent Poster (English)
IF YOUR FAMILY LIVES IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:

In a shelter

In a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation

In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station

Doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship

Your school-age children may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

Your eligible children have the right to:

• Receive a free, appropriate public education.
• Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
• Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
• Enroll in the local school; or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is your preference.

* If the school district believes that the school you select is not in the best interest of your children, then the district must provide you with a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal its decision.
• Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if you request this.
• Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to your children’s needs.

If you believe your children may be eligible, contact the local liaison to find out what services and supports may be available. There also may be supports available for your preschool-age children.

Local Liaison

State Coordinator

If you need further assistance with your children’s educational needs, contact the National Center for Homeless Education:
1-800-308-2145 • homeless@serve.org • http://nche.ed.gov
INFORMATION
For School-Age Youth

IF YOU LIVE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:

In a shelter

In a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation

In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station

Doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship

You may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

Eligible students have the right to:

• Receive a free, appropriate public education.
• Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
• Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
• Enroll in the local school; or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is their preference.

* If the school district believes that the school selected is not in his/her best interest, then the district must provide the student with a written explanation of its position and inform the student of his/her right to appeal its decision.

• Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested.
• Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to the students’ needs.

If you believe you may be eligible, contact the local liaison to find out what services and supports may be available.

Local Liaison

State Coordinator

If you need further assistance with your educational needs, contact the National Center for Homeless Education:

1-800-308-2145 • homeless@serve.org • http://nche.ed.gov
INFORMACIÓN PARA LOS PADRES

SI SU FAMILIA VIVE EN CUALQUIERA DE LAS SITUACIONES SIGUIENTES:

- En un albergue
- En un motel o un sitio para acampar debido a la falta de una alternativa adecuada
- En un auto, un parque, un edificio abandonado, o una estación de trenes o de autobuses
- Compartiendo la vivienda de otras personas debido a la pérdida de su casa o a una dificultad económica

* Sus hijos de edad escolar podrían calificar para recibir ciertos derechos y protecciones bajo la ley federal McKinney-Vento.

* Sus hijos elegibles tienen derecho a:
  1. Recibir una educación pública gratuita y apropiada.
  2. Inscribirse en la escuela inmediatamente, aunque faltan documentos normalmente requeridos para la inscripción.
  3. Inscribirse y asistir a clases mientras que la escuela obtiene los documentos necesarios.
  4. Inscribirse en la escuela local; o continuar asistiendo a la escuela de origen (la escuela a la cual su hijo asistió cuando tenía una residencia permanente, o la última escuela en la cual estaba inscrito), si esto es su preferencia.
  5. Si el distrito escolar cree que la escuela escogida por usted no es la mejor para sus hijos, el distrito tiene que darle a usted una explicación escrita de su posición e informarle de su derecho de apelar su decisión.
  6. Recibir transporte a/del escuela de origen, si usted lo pide.
  7. Recibir servicios educacionales comparables a los que están provistos para otros estudiantes, según las necesidades de sus hijos.

Si usted cree que sus hijos podrían ser elegibles, contacte al oficial para la educación de los niños y jóvenes sin hogar de su distrito escolar para averiguar los servicios y ayuda que podrían estar disponibles. También puede haber apoyo disponible para sus hijos de edad preescolar.

Si usted necesita ayuda adicional con las necesidades educacionales de sus hijos, contacte al Centro Nacional de Educación para los Niños y Jóvenes sin Hogar:
1-800-308-2145 • homeless@serve.org • http://nche.ed.gov