

# **Building Points of Contact**

## *McKinney-Vento and Foster Care*

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Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

# Meet Your Presenters



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# Vision, Mission, and Values

- Develop equity-based policies to **empower educators**
- Focus on the Whole Child
- **Collaboration** and service
- Examine policies and practices that result in disparate outcomes
- Understand historical contexts
- **Engage learners**
- Ensure ALL students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed.

# Tribal Land Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the Indigenous people who have stewarded this land since time immemorial and who still inhabit the area today, the Steh-Chass Band of Indigenous people of the Squaxin Island Tribe.



# Who is Here Today?



# Why Washington State is Unique!

Washington is currently the only state where *“each K-12 public school in the state must establish a building point of contact in each elementary school, middle school, and high school”* for both McKinney-Vento and Foster Care students.



## **RCW 28A.320.142 (2019)**

Unaccompanied and homeless youth—Building point of contact—Duty of district liaison for students experiencing homelessness.

- Each K-12 public school in the state must establish a building point of contact in each elementary school, middle school, and high school.
- Appointed by the principal of the designated school and are responsible for identifying homeless and unaccompanied homeless youth and connecting them with the school district's liaison for students experiencing homelessness.
- School district homeless student liaison is responsible for training building points of contact.
- OSPI shall make available best practices for choosing and training building points of contact to each school district.

# **RCW 28A.320.148 (2021)**

## Foster care liaison—Building point of contact

- Each K-12 public school in the state must establish a building point of contact in each elementary school, middle school, and high school.
- Appointed by the principal of the designated school, in consultation with the district foster care liaison.
- Responsible for coordinating services and resources for students in foster care.
- Must collaborate with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)
- The district foster care liaison is responsible for training building points of contact.
- OSPI shall make available best practices for choosing and training building points of contact to each school district.



# District Liaison and Building Point of Contact

## Foster Care

Each school district must designate a [District Liaison](#) and a [Building Point of Contact](#) in each school.

- Foster Care and Building Point of Contact **Toolkits** on the [Foster Care Resources and Training](#) page
- [RCW 28A.320.148: Foster care liaison—Building point of contact.](#)

## McKinney-Vento

Each school district must designate a liaison and a point of contact in each school.

According to state legislation, each K-12 public school in the state of Washington must establish a McKinney-Vento and Foster Care building point of contact in each elementary school, middle school, and high school. These points of contact are responsible for identifying students experiencing homelessness or foster care and connecting them with the respective school district liaisons. (RCW 28A.320.142)

# Who is Who?

## LEA Liaison or Building Point of Contact?

- **Building Points of Contact** may be better-suited for some duties, such as identification, enrollment, school-based supports, and referrals to outside services.
- **LEA Liaisons** may be better-suited to lead on other duties, such as best interest determinations, federal and state compliance, data collection, transportation, dispute resolution, creating community partnerships, and trainings.

# McKinney-Vento Capacity

The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act requires every local educational agency (LEA) including school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, and special education local plan areas to designate an appropriate person as liaison for children and youth experiencing homelessness (LEA liaison).

Often liaisons have multiple roles. It is not uncommon in smaller districts for the homeless liaison to be the special services director, an attendance liaison, a school counselor, a principal, a district secretary, or even the superintendent.

# Foster Care Capacity

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires every local educational agency (LEA)/school district to designate a point of contact (i.e. liaison) to serve students in foster care and provide coordination with the local/state child welfare agency.

Often liaisons have multiple roles. It is not uncommon in smaller districts for the foster care liaison to be the special services director, an attendance liaison, a school counselor, a principal, a district secretary, or even the superintendent.

It is also common for the McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Liaison to serve in both roles.

# Examples of Building Points of Contact

- School level administrators
- Family resources coordinators
- Counselors
- School social workers
- Registrars or clerical staff
- Other student support roles

# Designating Building Points of Contact

## Qualities to Consider

- Representation Matters - Racial Equity, Lived Experience
- Meaningful relationships with students, families, and staff
- Passion for the work
- Community connections

# Why Do We Need Building Points of Contact?

- Lead
  - Lead efforts in identifying students and families experiencing homelessness and who are in foster care
- Ensure
  - Ensure that students who qualify for McKinney-Vento and or foster care are connected to the districts homeless/foster care liaison
- Help
  - Help to train and educate school district staff on the McKinney-Vento Act and foster care and the impact
- Provide
  - Provide building level supports

# McKinney-Vento Liaison Duties

The local liaison serves as the district's lead homeless education contact and is required to fulfill the duties of the position as established in the Act [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)].

Ensure homeless children and youths are identified

Ensure homeless children and youths are enrolled

Ensure homeless families, children, and youths have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible

Inform the parents or guardians of homeless children and youths of the educational and related opportunities

Ensure homeless families, children, and youth receive referrals to health care services

Ensure public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians of homeless children and youths

Ensure enrollment disputes are mediated according to 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E).

Ensure the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied homeless youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin

Ensure unaccompanied homeless youths are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards established for other students. Including FAFSA information

Ensure school personnel who serve homeless children and youths receive professional development and other support.



# McKinney-Vento Building Point of Contact Responsibilities

- School based supports
- Enrollment
- Food pantry
- Refer to healthcare and provide hygiene products
- Refer to housing
- Help waive fees



# Foster Care Liaison Duties

Ensure that children in foster care are enrolled in, and regularly attending school

Serve as the primary contact person for child welfare and case workers

Manage best-interest determinations and transportation cost disputes

Facilitate the transfer of records and immediate enrollment

Facilitate data sharing with child welfare agencies, consistent with FERPA

Develop and coordinate local transportation procedures

Attend training and professional development opportunities to improve district implementation efforts

Make sure every school has a Building Point of Contact and coordinate with them

# Foster Care

## Building Point of Contact Responsibilities

- Work closely each week with the school district Foster Care Liaison to identify the students in foster care in the building.
- Check with nutrition services to make sure the student is receiving free meals (no application needed).
- Fees and Fines – check students' account regularly to see if there are any outstanding fees and fines. Let the district Foster Care Liaison know about any fees and fines so they can work with the DCYF caseworker to have the fees and fines paid.
- Connect with student and build a relationship with them.
- Monitor attendance, academics, and discipline incidents.
- Support student needs such as extra-curricular activities, counseling, post-secondary prep, and school events.

# Washington State Student Data 2023-2024

1,100,059	Number of students enrolled in Washington
41,050	Number of students who are experiencing homelessness in Washington
3,317	Number of students who are in DCYF dependency in Washington State

# Foster Care or McKinney-Vento?

In 2015, with the authorization of [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#), the phrase "awaiting foster care" was completely removed from McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act. ESSA includes separate provisions for students in foster care, which are very similar to McKinney-Vento. Aside from the exceptions noted below, students in foster care do not qualify as McKinney-Vento eligible.

## So which program is the right one for your student's situation?

Foster Care	McKinney Vento
<p>In WA, students under the placement and care authority of the Division of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) or Tribal Child Welfare including students in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster homes</li> <li>• Relative placements</li> <li>• Group homes</li> <li>• Emergency shelters</li> <li>• Residential facilities</li> <li>• Childcare institutions</li> <li>• Pre-adoptive homes</li> <li>• Trial-return-home placement</li> </ul> <p>Unaccompanied Refugee Minors are also eligible</p> <p>The U.S. Department of Education issued its <a href="#">Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care</a></p> <p><a href="#">OSPI Foster Care Education Site</a></p>	<p>Students experiencing homelessness, defined by the McKinney-Vento Act as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." This includes children and youth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing housing or "doubled-up"</li> <li>• Living in motels, hotels, and campgrounds</li> <li>• Living in emergency or transitional shelters</li> <li>• Abandoned in hospitals</li> <li>• Accommodations not ordinary to be used by human beings</li> <li>• Living in cars, trains stations and similar settings</li> <li>• Migratory children and youth living in any of the above situations</li> </ul> <p>The U.S. Department of Education has issued its <a href="#">Non-Regulatory Guidance for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">OSPI Homeless Education Site</a></p>
Exceptional Situations	
<p>There are occasions when a student in foster care may also qualify as experiencing homelessness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student was identified and served under MV prior to placement in foster care,</li> <li>• Student has run away from their foster care placement,</li> <li>• Student is placed in a shelter<sup>1</sup>, or</li> <li>• Student is placed with a family who also meets the definition of homelessness according to the McKinney-Vento Act</li> </ul> <p>These students should be dually qualified for both foster care and McKinney-Vento.</p>	

Still confused and need assistance? Email [FosterCare@k12.wa.us](mailto:FosterCare@k12.wa.us) or [HomelessEd@k12.wa.us](mailto:HomelessEd@k12.wa.us)

DCYF: Reach out to your school district [Foster Care Liaison](#) or [McKinney Vento Liaison](#)

## Side by Side Comparison Provisions for Foster Care and McKinney Vento

Foster Care	McKinney-Vento
District Liaison and Building Point of Contact	
Each school district must designate a <a href="#">District Liaison</a> and a <a href="#">Building Point of Contact</a> in each school.	Each school district must designate a liaison and a point of contact in each school.
School of Origin Rights	
School of origin is the school the student was enrolled in when first placed into foster care. If a child's foster care placement changes, the school of origin would then be considered the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of the placement change.	Students experiencing homelessness are entitled to remain in their school of origin or enroll in the neighborhood school where they are currently residing. School of origin is defined as the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.
Transportation	
Districts must provide transportation to/from school of origin, even if outside of school/district boundaries.	Districts must provide transportation to/from school of origin, even if outside of school/district boundaries.
Immediate Enrollment	
Students in foster care must be <a href="#">enrolled immediately</a> , even when documents normally required are not available (e.g., immunization records, health plan, updated IEP, etc.).	Students experiencing homelessness must be enrolled immediately, even when documents normally required are not available (e.g., immunization records, health plan, transcripts, updated IEP, etc.).
Best Interest Determinations	
<a href="#">Best Interest Determinations</a> must be held prior to changing the school placement of a student in foster care.	A district must educate a homeless child or youth in their school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian.
Free Meals	
All students in foster care qualify for free breakfast/lunch.	All students experiencing homelessness qualify for free breakfast/lunch.
Title I Services	
Students in foster care are categorically eligible for Title I funding. Districts also can develop an (optional) Title I foster care set aside.	Students experiencing homelessness are categorically eligible for Title I funding and districts must develop a Title I set aside to support identification and services.
Dispute Resolutions Process and On-Time Grade Level Progression and Graduation	
<a href="#">Dispute Resolution Process</a> and <a href="#">On-time grade level progression and graduation</a>	Dispute Resolution Process and <a href="#">On-time grade level progression and graduation</a>
Fees and Fines	
DCYF is responsible for fees/fines.	Fines and fees that present a barrier to enrollment and full participation in school activities must be removed (Section 722(g)(3)(C)(i); see also 722(g)(1)(H)). They can be paid by using Title I or other funds; or they must be waived.
Attendance	
<a href="#">Monitor Attendance</a> School districts must review unexpected or excessive absences and proactively support students in foster care.	Districts are required to remove barriers to full participation in school. Absences due to homelessness must be excused.



# Resources – McKinney-Vento

- [OSPI Homeless Education Technical Assistance Email](#)
- [OSPI Homeless Education Website](#)
- [OSPI Homeless Education Resources](#)
- [RCW 28A.320.142: Unaccompanied and homeless youth—Building point of contact—Duty of district liaison for students experiencing homelessness. \(wa.gov\)](#)
- [Update or Edit Liaison Contact Information](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection](#)
- [Office of Homeless Youth \(wa.gov\)](#)
- [Foster Care or McKinney-Vento](#)





# Resources – Foster Care

- [Designating Foster Care Points of Contact](#)
- [Information for School Building Points of Contact - Foster Care](#)
- [Foster Care Building Points of Contact Checklist](#)
- [Best Practices: Foster Care Building Points of Contact](#)
- [Foster Care Liaison and Building Point of Contact Training 2024-2025 School Year](#)
- [Foster Care Resources](#)
- [Post-Secondary Resources](#)
- [Foster Care Education Legal Guidance](#)



# Scenario 1

You're the McKinney-Vento Building Point of Contact. A family just enrolled a kindergartner and fifth grader. The family qualifies under the McKinney-Vento Act. They have refused services. What do you do next.

- a. Contact the District Liaison to notify them of the new qualified family
- b. Let the family know they do not need to accept resources, that they will be identified under the act by the district liaison and that information will be kept confidential
- c. Their names are given to the school staff to enforce the services entitled to under the law
- d. Both a and b





# Scenario 2

You're the Foster Care Building Point of Contact. Your school district Foster Care Liaison sent you a copy of the School Notification Form they received from DCYF indicating that Liam, a student in your school, is now in foster care. What is the first thing you will do now?

- a. Find Liam and take some time to let him know you are there if he needs anything
- b. Check to see if he has any outstanding fees or fines
- c. Talk to the nutrition services in your building to make sure Liam gets free meals
- d. All of the above
- e. B and C

# Scenario 3

The school registrar just came to you about a student named Jane who you have a built a good relationship with. The registrar says Jane is in foster care but ran away from her placement and is living with her best friend Samantha for a few days. What is the first thing you should do?

- a. Call the Foster Care Liaison and let them know
- b. Call the McKinney-Vento Liaison and let them know
- c. Find Jane and take some time to talk with her about what is going on



Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

# Contact Us Anytime!

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