McKinney-Vento Annual Fall Training

Melissa Woody, McKinney-Vento Program Training Supervisor

9/22/2026
Day 1



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



Vision

All students prepared for post-secondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

Mission

Transform K–12 education to a system that is centered on closing opportunity gaps and is characterized by high expectations for all students and educators.

We achieve this by developing equity-based policies and supports that empower educators, families, and communities.

Values

- Ensuring Equity
- Collaboration and Service
- Achieving Excellence through Continuous Improvement
- Focus on the Whole Child

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Equity Statement

Each student, family, and community possesses strengths and cultural knowledge that benefits their peers, educators, and schools.

Ensuring educational equity:

- Goes beyond equality; it requires education leaders to examine the ways current policies and practices result in disparate outcomes for our students of color, students living in poverty, students receiving special education and English Learner services, students who identify as LGBTQ+, and highly mobile student populations.
- Requires education leaders to develop an understanding of historical contexts; engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision-making; and actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools.

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Annual Fall Training

- Welcome and Introductions
- McKinney-Vento
- Washington State Data
- McKinney-Vento Definitions
- Who McKinney-Vento Covers
- McKinney-Vento Liaisons
- Job Duties and Provisions
- Strategies
- Funding
- Resources

Throughout the webinar you will see that pages have an *indicating the corresponding Program Review items.

Tribal Land Acknowledgement

I respectfully acknowledge that I am on the homelands of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, whose people have lived on and cared for since time immemorial. I recognize the continued presence, culture and contributions that are continued to be made today. I also want to provide a thank you for the opportunity to live and work on these lands.

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe are known as the Forever People, Cowlitz means Seekers of the Medicine Spirit.

Our Story | The Cowlitz Indian Tribe

Welcome

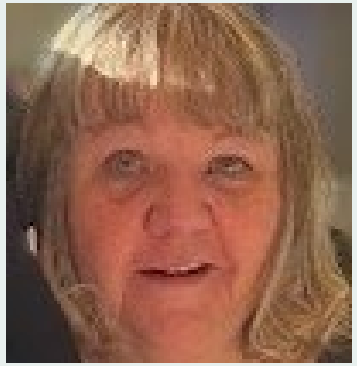
The Homeless Education team aims to provide access to training, knowledge of the McKinney-Vento law, grant guidance, technical assistance and support to all local educational agencies (LEAs) with a common goal of removing barriers for students experiencing homelessness.



Who is the Homeless Education Team?



Keith Woodruff
Homeless Education of Children and Youth Assistant Director



Jill Kawulok
Education of Children and Youth EGMS Supervisor



Vivian Rogers Decker
Homeless Student Stability Program Supervisor



Melissa Woody
McKinney-Vento Training Supervisor



Lydia Lemon
Homeless Education of Children and Youth In-Training Administrative Program Specialist

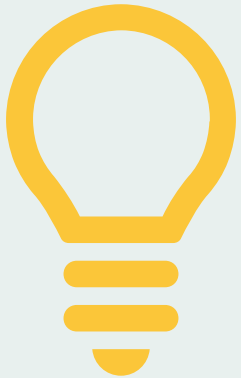
McKinney-Vento

The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law that provides important educational rights and services to PreK-12 children and youth experiencing homelessness.



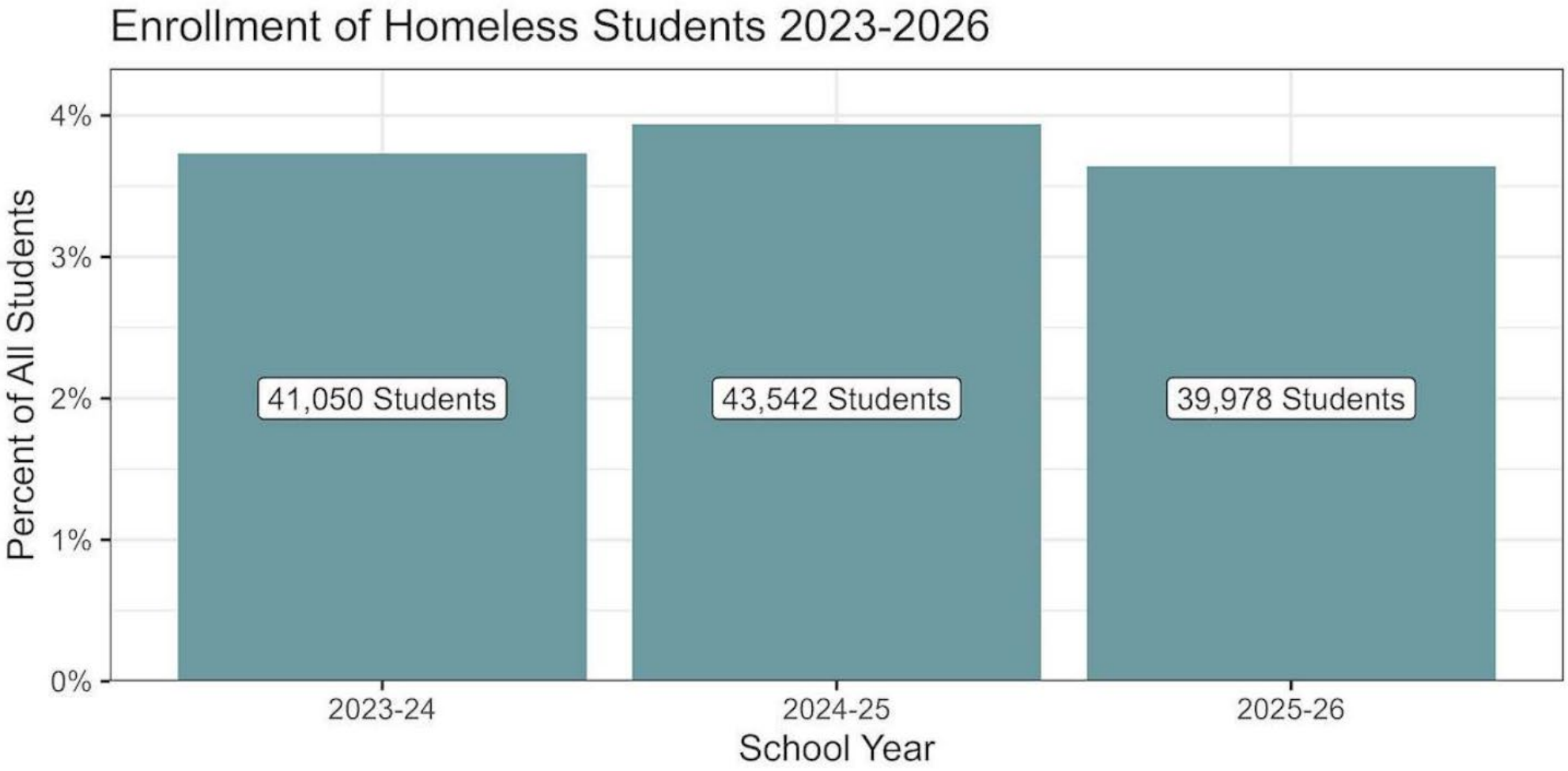
McKinney-Vento Act: Quick Reference

Some Interesting Facts

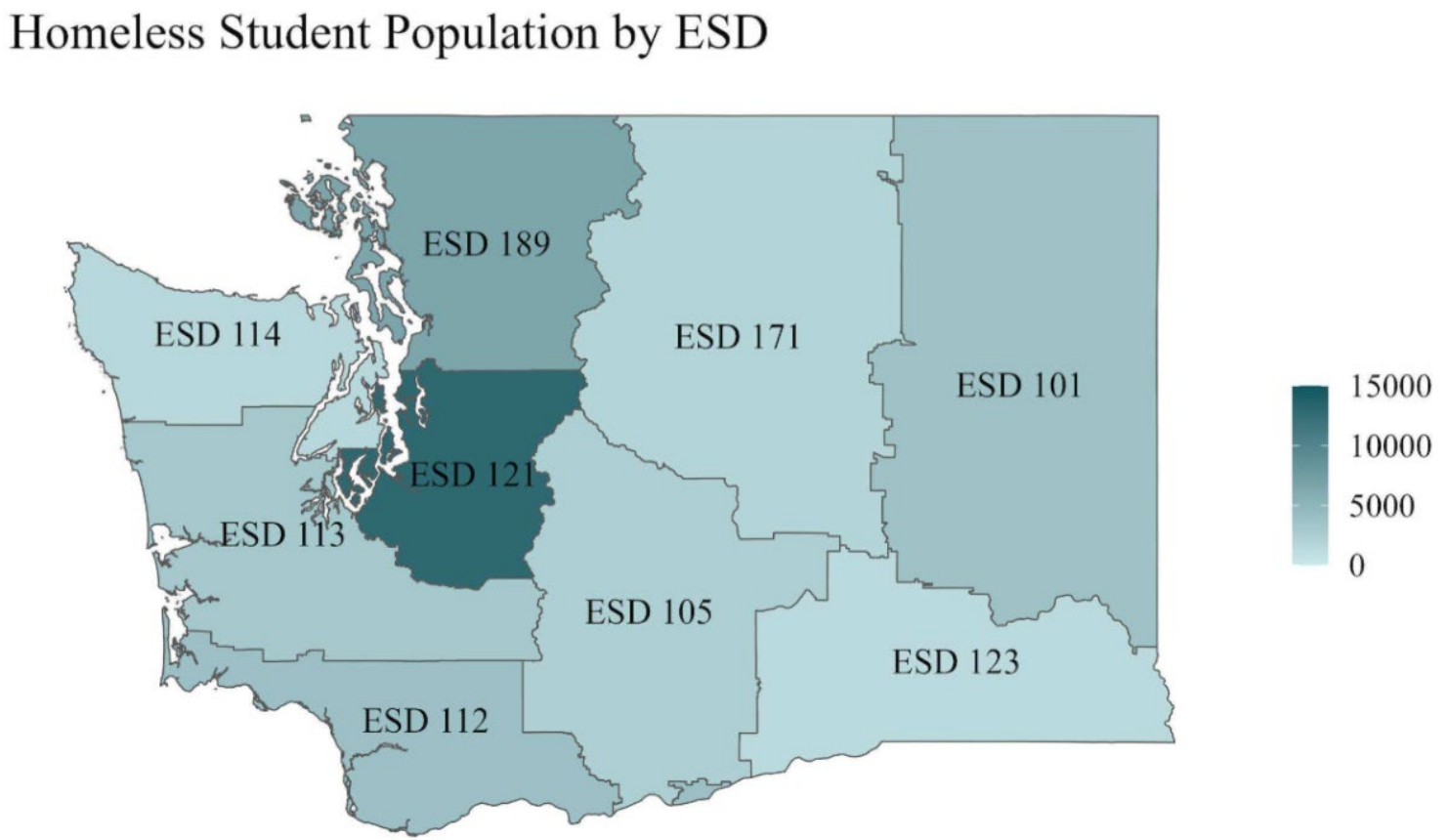


- This law was the first significant federal legislative response to homelessness.
- Ronald Reagan signed it into law in 1987, named then as the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act.
- The act is named after **Stewart B. McKinney** and **Bruce Vento**, two congressmen who championed legislation to protect the rights of homeless children and youth.
- The act has been reauthorized multiple times, most recently in 2015 under **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**, which strengthened protections and funding for homeless children.

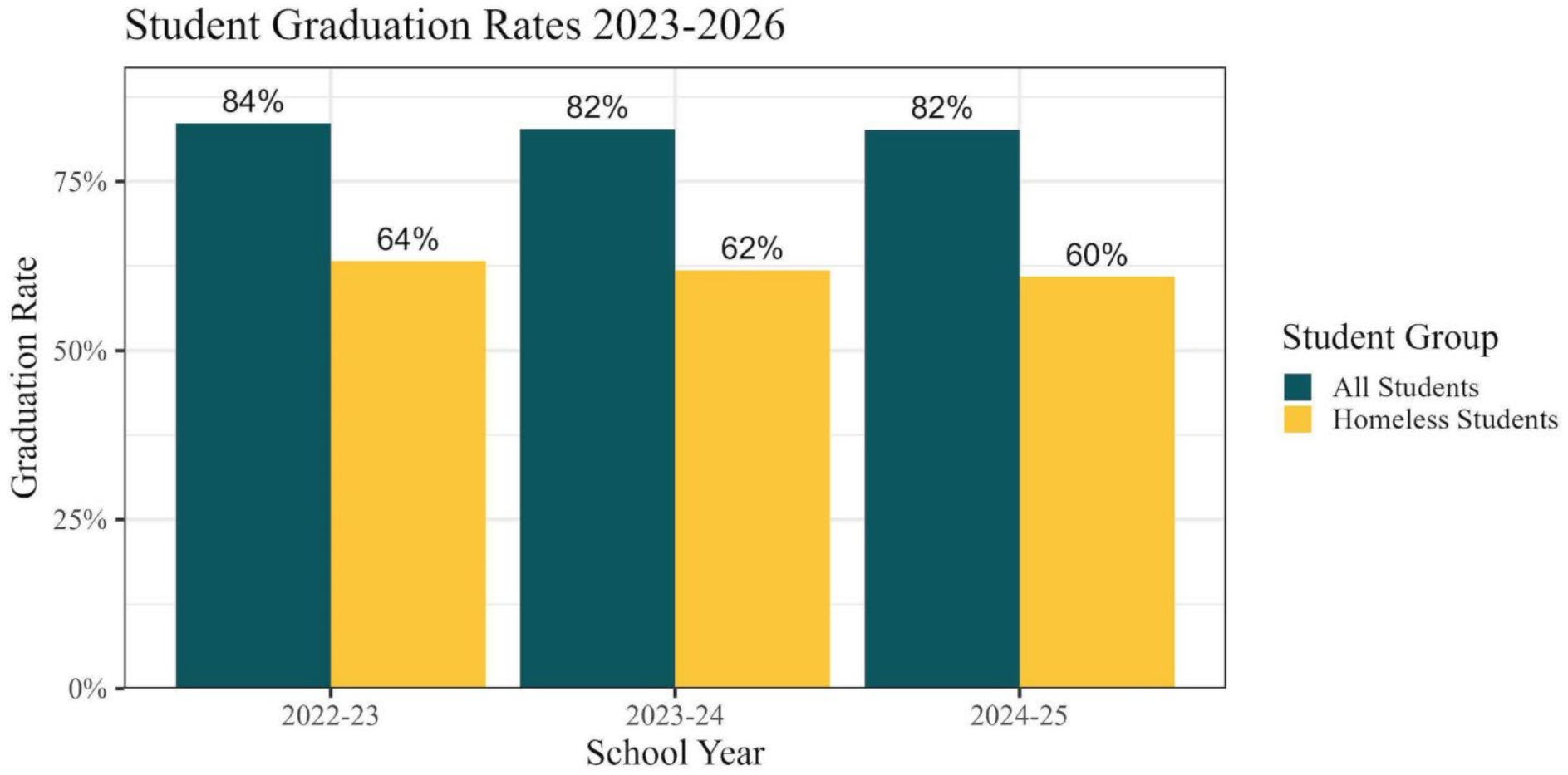
Washington State Data



Regional Washington State Data



Washington State Data-Graduation



Important McKinney-Vento Definitions



McKinney-Vento Definitions

"**Homeless children and youth"** means children and youth who lack a **fixed**, **regular**, and **adequate** nighttime residence, including those who are sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; staying in motels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to the lack of an adequate alternative; staying in shelters or transitional housing; or sleeping in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or similar settings. 42 U.S.C. §11434a(2).

McKinney-Vento Definitions 1

- **Fixed-** stationary, permanent, not subject to change.
- **Regular-** used on a predictable, routine, and consistent basis.
- **Adequate-** Lawfully and reasonably sufficient to meet physical and psychological needs typically met in a home environment.
- **Doubled-Up**- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.
- **Substandard Housing**- A dwelling unit that is either dilapidated or unsafe, thus endangering the health and safety of the occupant, or that does not have adequate plumbing or heating facilities.

McKinney-Vento Definitions 2

- **Unaccompanied Youth"-** includes homeless children and youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. 42 U.S.C. 11434a(6).
- "**Unaccompanied Homeless Youth"-** must meet the definition for BOTH Homeless Youth and Unaccompanied Youth. (See slide 40)
- **Immediate Enrollment**- Students who qualify under McKinney-Vento must be enrolled immediately even if they are unable to provide paperwork normally required for enrollment 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C)(i)(I).

McKinney-Vento Definitions 3

- **School of Origin**- The school of origin is the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool. (Section 722(g)(3)(I)(i)). When a child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools (such as when an elementary school feeds into a middle school). (Section 722(g)(3)(I)(ii)).
- **Barriers-** Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, a "barrier" refers to any obstacle or impediment that prevents a homeless child or youth from enrolling in or remaining in school, or from participating fully in school programs and activities.

Who Does McKinney-Vento Cover?



https://nche.ed.gov

McKinney-Vento Covers…

- Children living in "motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to lack of alternative accommodations."
- Children living in "emergency or transitional shelters."
- Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc.).
- Children living in "cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations…."

https://nche.ed.gov

McKinney-Vento Liaison

Every local education agency (LEA) must designate a liaison for students experiencing homelessness who is able to carry out the duties described in the law. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(ii).



Who Might a McKinney-Vento Liaison Be?

- McKinney-Vento Liaison
- Counselor
- Administrator
- Foster Care Liaison
- Career Advisor

Often people wear many hats!! Can you think of others who may also be the McKinney-Vento liaison?

Policy, Job Duties and Provisions



McKinney-Vento Liaison and Policy

Every district must have a designated homeless liaison, who can carry out the duties described in the McKinney-Vento Act.

**10.4 Program Review*

Every district needs to have developed, reviewed, and revised policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youths in schools.

**10.1 Program Review*

Identification



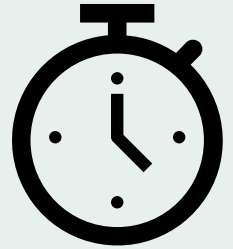
Ensure homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other agencies.

Some examples:

- Provide housing questionnaires to all families.
- Train staff to recognize signs of homelessness.

**10.9 Program Review*

Immediate Enrollment



Schools must 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.

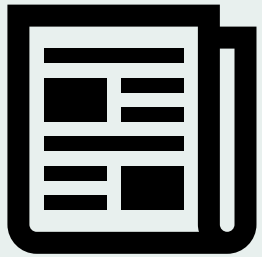
Students must be attending classes and participating fully in school activities immediately upon the student being identified as eligible for McKinney-Vento rights and services.

**10.6 Program Review*

Ensure Access

Ensure homeless families, children, and youths have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start programs, early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other preschool programs administered by the LEA.

It is important that students who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities. This includes outstanding fines or fees or absences must not present barriers to enrollment for homeless students.



**10.6 Program Review*

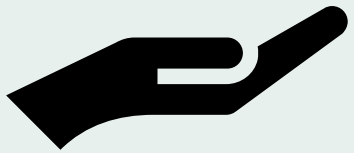
Inform and Provide

Inform and provide families and youth with meaningful opportunities to fully participate. This includes all opportunities available to all children.

Includes ensuring that homeless families, children, and youths receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs and preschool programs administered by the LEA. McKinney-Vento Section 722(g)(6)(A)(iii)

Participate in open houses, or back to school nights.

**10.8 Program Review*



Refer Homeless Families

Ensure homeless families, children, and youth receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.

Employ strategies to help with referrals:

- Help obtain documents such as birth certificates. Since the McKinney-Vento Act mandates immediate enrollment, students must be allowed to participate fully in school activities while necessary documents are gathered.
- Build relationships with local health care providers to help youths obtain required health insurance and examinations. School nurses may be able to assist.

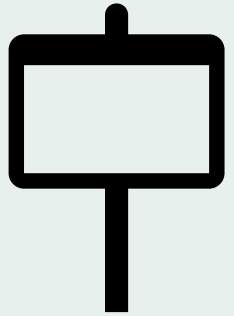
*10.6 Program Review



Public Notice of Educational Rights

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, and unaccompanied youths in a manner and form understandable to them. This includes schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, and more.

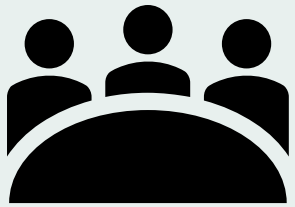
*10.10 Program Review



Disputes

- If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, the LEA must immediately enroll the homeless student in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.
- Have a policy and procedure in place that mirrors that of the one on the OSPI website.

*10.2 Program Review



Transportation-Fully Inform Families and Youth

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.

*10.3 Program Review



Unaccompanied Youth

Ensure unaccompanied homeless youths are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards established for other students, and are informed of their status as independent students and assisted to receive verification of their status for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

*10.7 Program Review



What is the Definition of an Unaccompanied Homeless Youth?

An unaccompanied youth is a child or youth not in the physical custody of (not living with) a parent or guardian. To be eligible for services, the youth **must** also meet the definition of homeless.



Knowledge Check

Laura is sixteen years old. She left home and is staying at her girlfriend's house in a different school district from where she was attending school. She said that she can't stand her new stepdad because he is always yelling at her. She wants to enroll in the same school as her girlfriend. The front office staff is trying to determine if Laura is an unaccompanied homeless youth under the McKinney-Vento definition.

What do you think?

1. Is Laura living in a situation that is fixed, regular, and adequate?
2. Is Laura in the physical custody of a parent or guardian?

Questions to Consider:

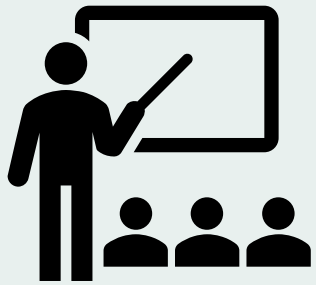
1. Is the youth living in a situation that is not fixed, regular, and adequate? *Then experiencing homelessness.*
2. Is the youth living in a situation that is stable and part of a plan that all parties agree to? *Then not experiencing homelessness.*

Note: that it doesn't matter why the youth left home; you should focus on the living situation to determine whether an unaccompanied youth is homeless.

Professional Development

Ensure school personnel who serve homeless children and youths receive professional development and other support. It is best practice to provide district wide professional development twice a year.

*10.5 Program Review



Does the Circumstance *Increase or Decrease* the Likelihood of Homelessness?

Consider each of the circumstances:

- Poverty (high or low)
- Unemployment (high or low)
- Wages (high-wage jobs or low-wage jobs)
- Jobs (new jobs coming to the community, jobs leaving)
- Support services (well-funded or poorly funded)
- Affordable housing (lack of affordable housing or sufficient)
- A natural or human-caused disaster
- Pandemic or epidemic
- Childcare (lack of childcare or sufficient)
- Graduation rate (high or low)
- Families with post-secondary education (high or low)
- Civic engagement (high or low)
- Non-profits and churches active in social issues (sufficient or few)
- Awareness of poverty and homelessness (high or low)

Strategies

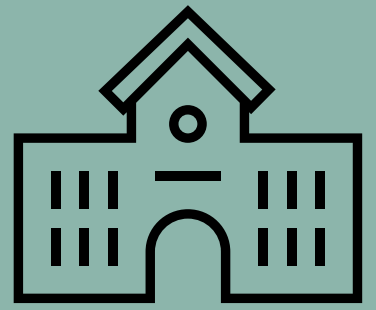
- Participate in all professional development and technical assistance offered by your Region.
- Plan your activities over time and prioritize what is needed most to support your students who are experiencing homelessness.
- Develop written procedures and protocols for identifying, enrolling, and serving homeless students.

Strategies, Cont.

- Train district personnel on the McKinney-Vento Act and related policies and procedures to generate district wide awareness and effective implementation.
- Network with other LEA liaisons by sharing best practices.
- Develop relationships and/or partnerships with local service providers, faith-based organizations, food banks, housing agencies, public preschool programs, and local businesses.
- Use a trauma-informed approach when communicating with parents, guardians, and students about their needs.

Building Point of Contacts

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.

Funding



Title I, Part A, Homeless Set-Aside

State and local educational agencies have specific requirements to serve children and youth experiencing homelessness through Title I, Part A, including local requirements to reserve funds for homeless students to meet a broad range of educationally-related needs.

Homeless children and youths are automatically eligible for services under Title I, Part A of the ESEA, whether they live in a Title I school attendance area or meet the academic standards required of other children for eligibility (ESEA section 1115(c)(2)(E)).

Title I Part A: Law, Guidance, and Use of Funds | SchoolHouse Connection

Title I, Part A Allowable Use of Funds

These funds can provide a wide variety of services. Some examples may include:

- Clothing and shoes necessary to participate fully in school
- Student fees necessary to participate
- Personal school supplies such as backpacks and notebooks
- Birth certificates
- Immunizations
- Immunizations
- Food
- Medical and dental services
- Eyeglasses and hearing aids
- Counseling services to address anxiety related to homelessness that is impeding learning

Title I Part A: Law, Guidance, and Use of Funds | SchoolHouse Connection

Title I, Part A Allowable Use of Funds, Cont.

- Outreach services to students living in shelters, motels, and other temporary residences
- Extended learning time (before and after school, Saturday classes, summer school)
- Tutoring services
- Parental involvement specifically oriented to reaching out to parents of homeless students
- Fees for AP and IB testing
- Fees for college entrance exams such as SAT or ACT
- GED testing for school-age students

Title I Part A: Law, Guidance, and Use of Funds | SchoolHouse Connection

Competitive Grants

- McKinney-Vento Grant - Federal
- Homeless Student Stability Education Program (HSSEP) Grant - State



McKinney-Vento Grant

The federal McKinney-Vento Act Grant is a competitive grant available to school districts that serve students experiencing homelessness.



Funds are used to provide services and activities to improve the identification of homeless children and youths (including preschool-aged homeless children) and enable such children and youths to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school, including, if appropriate, in preschool programs.

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Homeless Student Stability Education Program (HSSEP) Grant

This grant is an additional grant opportunity available to increase districts' capacity to identify and support students experiencing homelessness.

Funds are complementary to McKinney-Vento Act dollars with greater weight given to districts that demonstrate a commitment to:

- Partnering with local housing and community-based organizations.
- Serving the needs of unaccompanied youth.

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Homeless Student Stability Education Program (HSSEP) Grant, Cont.

- Implementing evidence-informed strategies to address the opportunity gap and other systemic inequities that negatively impact students experiencing homelessness and students of color.
- Districts may access both federal and state funding to support students experiencing homelessness, however HSSEP funding must be supplemental in nature, and not supplant Title I or McKinney-Vento funding allocated for the same purpose.

Resources

- OSPI Students Experiencing Homelessness
- Homeless Education Inbox
- Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services
- Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services
- School Selection and Best Interest Determination
- Schoolhouse Connection
- Essential Tools and Support for New Homeless Education Liaisons
- OSPI McKinney-Vento-Poster-Order-Form
- OSPI Dispute Resolution Process
- One-Pager Liaison Roles and Responsibilities
- Non-Regulatory Guidance- Education
- Guidance for Substandard Housing Determination
- We Need a Little Time…
- Washington Commerce Office of Homeless Youth (OHY)
- National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)

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