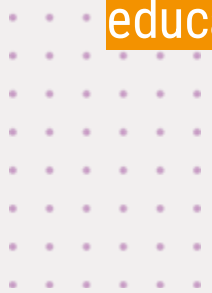SchoolHouse Connection

The Role of the Liaison

December 4, 2023

About SchoolHouse Connection

SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education.

We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

WEBSITE:
schoolhouseconnection.org

NEWSLETTER:
schoolhouseconnection.org/sign-up

- Federal and state policy advocacy
- Q&A from our inbox
- Webinars and implementation tools
- Youth leadership and scholarships

Learning Outcomes

→ Participants will enhance their knowledge of the duties of the liaison in implementing McKinney-Vento.
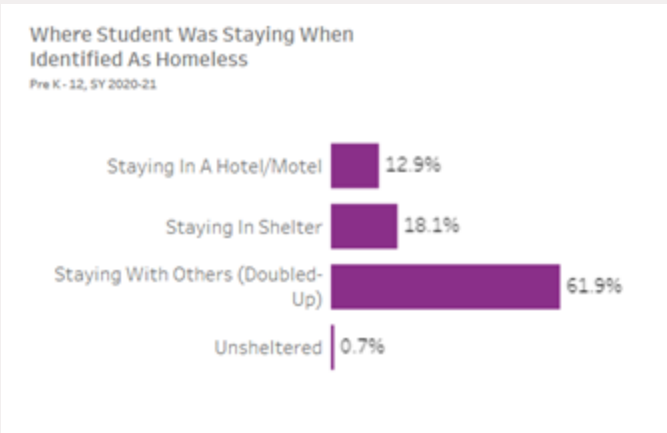
→ Participants will learn strategies and best practices for implementing McKinney-Vento.

→ Participants will increase their knowledge of available funding sources to support local McKinney-Vento programs.

Rhode Island Data 2020-2021

Where Student Was Staying When Identified As Homeless
Pre K - 12, SY 2020-21

Staying In A Hotel/Motel	12.9%
Staying In Shelter	18.1%
Staying With Others (Doubled-Up)	61.9%
Unsheltered	0.7%

Source: Child and Youth Homelessness in the United States: Data Profiles

→ 1,109 (0.8%) PreK-12 Children identified as experiencing homelessness

→ 1,058 Children ages 0-6 are estimated to be experiencing homelessness
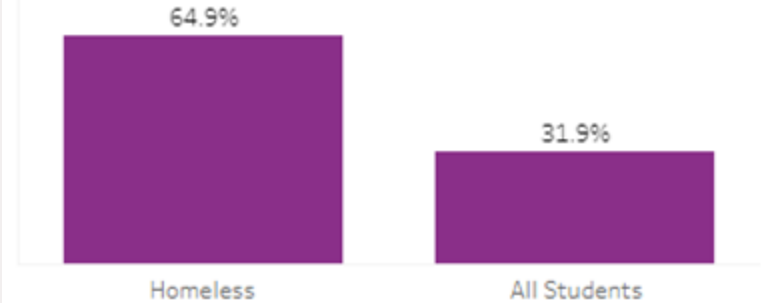- 6.7% of all children ages 0-6 experiencing homelessness were enrolled in Head Start

→ 1.9% are unaccompanied homeless youth

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Rhode Island Data 2020-2021

Chronic Absenteeism Rate
Pre K - 12, SY 2020-21

64.9% Homeless

31.9% All Students

High School Graduation Rate
SY 2018-19 (most recent year available)

65.0% Homeless

76.7% Economically Disadvantaged

83.9% All

Source: Child and Youth Homelessness in the United States: Data Profiles

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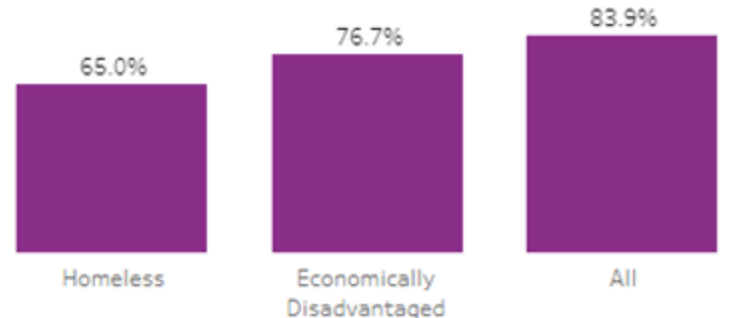
The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

→ McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law

→ Originally passed in 1987; last updated in 2015 as part of Every Student Succeeds Act

→ Applies to public school districts and public charters

→ Goal: Ensure identification, enrollment, and success in school, including preschool, for children and youth experiencing homelessness

Homelessness Defined

Under McKinney-Vento the term "homeless" children and youth means:

Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence

Fixed, Regular, and Adequate

Can the student go to the same place (fixed), every night (regular) to sleep in a safe and sufficient space (adequate)?

Fixed:
- Stationary, permanent, not subject to change

Regular:
- Used on a predictable, routine, consistent basis
- Consider the relative permanence

Adequate:
- Lawfully and reasonably sufficient
- Sufficient for meeting the physical and psychological needs typically met in a home environment

Eligibility

→ Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason (doubled up)

→ Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations

→ Living in emergency or transitional shelters

→ Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar setting

Identification

→ Ensure children and youth are identified as experiencing homelessness by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other entities and agencies.

→ Develop district wide processes to identify students, whether they are new to the district or lose housing during the school year.

→ This is the most important responsibility of the liaison!

→ First Step: Identifying Students Experiencing Homelessness

→ Next Step: Supporting Students After They've Been Identified as Homeless

Use Housing Questionnaires

→ Embed in initial enrollment process

→ Look for other opportunities during the year to resend

→ Use language that is intentional and understandable

→ Housing questionnaires should not create additional barriers to enrollment

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Enrollment

→ Ensure children and youth experiencing homelessness are enrolled and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.

→ The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" include attending classes and participating fully in school activities [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(1)].

→ SEAs and LEAs must develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, and retention

→ Enrollment must be immediate, even if they lack documents or have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness

Removing Barriers to Enrollment and Retention

Challenges

- Chronic absenteeism
- Mobility
- Trauma and related mental health struggles
- Lack of adult support
- Gaps in learning

Strategies

- Ensure access to tutoring, after-school, and summer enrichment programs by prioritizing McKinney-Vento students and providing transportation.
- Provide one-on-one academic support and regular "check-ins."
- Monitor attendance and provide interventions quickly.
- Award and accept partial credits and provide credit recovery options.
- Support trauma-informed, restorative discipline policies and practices.
- Resource: Supporting the Attendance of Students Experiencing Homelessness

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Outreach and Awareness

→ Ensure public notice of homeless students' rights is disseminated in locations frequented by parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth, including schools, shelters, libraries and food pantries, in an understandable manner and form.

→ National Center for Homeless Education Free Outreach Posters

→ Know Your Rights Flyers (editable)

→ Washington State - Parent and Youth Posters in Other Languages

→ NCHE Translations

Full Participation

→ Ensure parents and guardians are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate

→ Children and youth experiencing homelessness who meet the relevant eligibility criteria must not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, on-line learning, and charter school programs [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(F)(iii)].

→ This includes extracurricular activities

→ Full Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities for Students Experiencing Homelessness

Preschool &
Early Childhood

→ Ensure homeless children, youth, and families have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, early intervention (IDEA Part C), and preschool programs administered by the LEA.

→ Always ask about younger siblings in the home!

→ Early Childhood Resources

Community Referrals

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

→ Community partnerships are critical - know what services and supports are available

→ Train community providers on McKinney-Vento to ensure two-way referrals

Dispute Resolution

→ Liaisons are responsible for mediating disputes related to enrollment, school selection, and eligibility

→ Ensure children and youth are enrolled, participating fully, and receiving all services during dispute process

→ Provide a written explanation of dispute decisions in a manner and form understandable, including right to appeal

→ Carry out the dispute process as expeditiously as possible

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Transportation

→ Ensure parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of and assisted in accessing transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin

→ Review and revise district policies to eliminate barriers, including transportation

→ [Meeting the Transportation Needs of Students Experiencing Homelessness in the Pandemic and Beyond](#)

Unaccompanied Youth

→ Ensure unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school without proof of guardianship, and work to designate a caregiver

→ Work with school counselors to ensure support for post-secondary planning, including informing youth of their independent status for FAFSA completion

→ Ensure that youth receive full or partial credits for work completed at a prior school

→ Unaccompanied Youth

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Professional Development

→ Participate in training and professional development as designated by the state coordinator

→ Train community partners and organizations to build awareness and increase referrals

→ Train ALL staff at least annually

→ Utilize state-provided training resources

Offer Staff Strategies for Reframing

→ Help staff understand how certain behaviors may be indicators of homelessness

→ Provide tools to reframe the way staff thinks about the behaviors

→ Ensure all staff understand the procedure for making referrals to the liaison

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HOW TO ADDRESS TARDINESS AND ABSENCES

Available Funding Sources

For Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness

→ McKinney-Vento is an unfunded mandate

→ Title I, Part A Homeless Reservation

→ EHCY/McKinney-Vento Subgrant

→ ARP-HCY Part I and Part II

TITLE I, Part A

Title I-A Eligibility

Automatically eligible for Title I services, even if not attending a Title I school

Title I-A Reservation

- Must be used to support students to succeed in school and meet academic standards (educationally related)
- Provide services not ordinarily provided to other TI permanently housed students and not available from other sources
- Must be reasonable and necessary
- Must be used only when funds or services are not available from other sources that provide similar services

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Education For Homeless Children And Youth (EHCY) Grants

- Under the McKinney-Vento Act, SEAs must distribute EHCY grant funds to LEAs in a competitive manner

- [NCHE McKinney-Vento Subgrant Authorized Activities](#)

American Rescue Plan - Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY)

ARP-HCY Funds

- Supplemental to other funding sources (Title I-A, ESSER, state and local funds, etc)
- Expenses must be educationally related
- SEAs and LEAs are encouraged to conduct a needs assessment to determine how to best utilize funds to support students experiencing homelessness

Resources

- [Updated Guidance from ED](#) (September 2023 Dear Colleague Letter)
- [Expediting ARP-HCY Funds](#)
- [Flexing the Flexibility of ARP-HCY Funding](#)

Other Funding Sources

→ Title III

→ Title IV, Part A

→ Local Community Grants, Donations, and Philanthropy

Questions & Discussion

Additional Resources

- [Identifying Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)

- [Supporting Students After They've Been Identified as Homeless](#)

- [Awareness and Training Resources](#)

- [Meeting the Transportation Needs of Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)

- [Supporting the Attendance of Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)

- [Full Participation in Extracurricular Activities](#)

- [Resources to Support Immigrant and Migrant Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)

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📢 **PARTNER WITH US TO SHAPE ARP-HCY EFFORTS!**

Help us support your efforts by taking a <u>survey</u> about ARP-HCY!

☑ **<10 MINUTES TO COMPLETE**

☑ **DEADLINE: 11/21/23**

☑ **FOR LEA HOMELESS LIAISONS**

Take the survey!
Scan the QR code or visit https://bit.ly/47d341P

Facebook: SchoolHouse Connection

Facebook Group:
Homelessness & Education - A SchoolHouse Connection Group

Instagram: @SchoolHouseConnection

X: @SchoolHouseConn

Linkedin: SchoolHouse Connection

YouTube: @SchoolHouseConnection

Sign up for our Mailing List!

Get on the list for important legislative updates, useful resources, webinar announcements, and news related to homelessness and education.

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