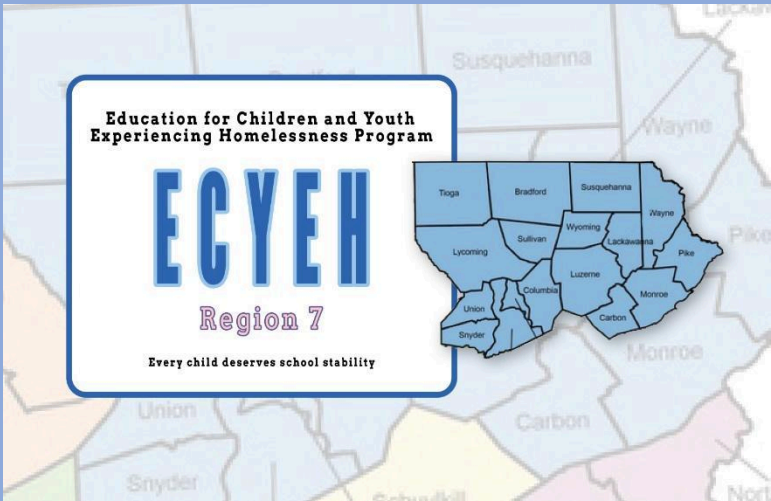


LIU ECYEH Program Region 7 Liaison Toolkit



**Serving Bradford, Carbon Columbia, Lackawanna,
Luzerne, Lycoming, Monroe, Montour,
Northumberland, Pike, Snyder, Sullivan,
Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne and Wyoming
Counties**

**Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18
368 Tioga Avenue
Kingston, PA 1870
570-718-4613
(Region 7 office)
www.ecyeh7.com**

The purpose of this toolkit is help liaisons:

- Develop an understanding of the McKinney-Vento Act
- Understand the responsibilities of being a McKinney-Vento liaison
- Assist homeless families/students in school and the community
- Break down barriers for homeless students
- Comply with all federal and state guidelines
- Find resources in their communities
- Prepare for state monitoring

“Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.”

-John Dewey

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Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program (ECYEH)

ECYEH Mission and History

On July 22, 1987, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act became public law. This was the first comprehensive federal law dealing with the problems of homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Act was reauthorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act in December 2015.

The main objective of PA's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program is to make sure homeless youth have access to appropriate education while removing barriers that homeless children face. Its goal is to have the educational process continue as uninterrupted as possible while the children are in homeless situations. Some of the other objectives of our program are to inform school districts of their responsibilities to homeless children and youth, increase awareness about the needs of homeless children, explain current legislation and policies and provide practical tips for working with homeless children.

The LIU ECYEH program serves 78 school districts, five public charter schools and three full-time career and technical schools. The Region 7 office is located in the Luzerne Intermediate Unit in Kingston, PA (Luzerne County).

Ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

These rights and protections include:

- ✓ School stability
- ✓ School access
- ✓ Support for academic success

***This is a federal law that supersedes conflicting state laws or local policies.

McKinney-Vento Act

(Reauthorized under ESSA in 2015)

Ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

These rights and protections include:

- ✓ School stability
- ✓ School access
- ✓ Support for academic success

***This is a federal law that supersedes conflicting state laws or local policies.



(Charlie was the poster boy behind the bill that eventually became the McKinney-Vento Act)

Definition of homelessness

The Act defines the term "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

This includes:

Children and youth 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; are abandoned in hospitals.

Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.

Migratory Children who qualify as homeless under federal law because the children are living in circumstances described above. The term "migratory children" means children who are or whose parent(s) or spouse(s) are migratory agricultural workers, including migratory dairy workers or migratory fishermen.

Unaccompanied homeless youth including any child who is "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." This includes youth who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, been abandoned by parents or guardians, or separated from their parents for any other reason.

Children experiencing homelessness are often highly mobile and may not stay in the same school district each night or each week. This is particularly true regarding children who stay overnight in vehicles, those who stay with different family members or friends, or those who receive services from agencies, organizations or networks that facilitate overnight accommodations in multiple school districts. These children should not be forced to change school districts every time their overnight accommodations change. Rather, these children are entitled to attend school in any school district where a parent, guardian, an adult caring for them resides or where an unaccompanied child:

- Spends the greatest percentage of his or her time
- Has a substantial connection such as where he or she is regularly receiving day shelter or other services involving any of the McKinney-Vento activities for individuals who are homeless
- Is conducting daily living activities
- Is staying overnight on a recurring basis.

This policy helps maintain continuity and school stability for homeless children in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act.

The child or youth shall continue to be enrolled in the school in which he or she is seeking enrollment until the complaint or appeal is fully resolved by a McKinney-Vento coordinator, state coordinator, through mediation or in court.

“The primary responsibility of the schools is to enroll and educate homeless children and youth in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act, which neither authorizes, nor requires schools to make judgments about the validity of why a student is not living with a parent or guardian. Determinations of eligibility should be made on the student’s nighttime living arrangement, not the circumstances that caused the student to leave home.”

~National Center for Homeless Education

Best Interest Determinations

Communication and collaboration among education and child welfare professionals is critical to support school stability and continuity for children in out-of-home care. The law requires child welfare and local education agencies to work together to promote school stability and continuity including trying to ensure children remain in the school in which they were enrolled at the time of placement when it is in their best interest. Best practice would suggest that decisions be made collaboratively between school personnel, child welfare agencies and any other individual involved in the child's case including the child, resource parent, child advocate and attorney. It is imperative that caseworkers and school district administration and staff work together to help ensure the educational progress of all students.

Under the Pennsylvania Education for Homeless Children and Youth State Plan, homeless children are defined as “children living with a parent in a domestic violence shelter; runaway children and children, and youth who have been abandoned or forced out of their home by parents or other caretakers; and school-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other available living accommodations.”

The McKinney-Vento Act states that it is the policy of Congress that state educational agencies shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and

each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youth. Specifically, the local education agency:

Must presume that keeping a homeless child or youth in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest unless doing so is contrary to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth.

Must consider student-centered factors related to a child's or youth's best interest, giving priority to the request of the child's or youth's parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth; or

if the LEA determines that it is not in a child's or youth's best interest to attend the school of origin, or the school requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, it must provide a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form that is understandable.

According to the McKinney-Vento Act, the term "**school of origin**" means the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

School Selection

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must continue the education in the school of origin or enroll the child in school in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area where the child is actually living are eligible to attend.

To the extent feasible, LEAs must keep children in their school of origin unless it is against the wishes of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.

The child's right to attend their school of origin extends for the duration of their homelessness and remainder of the year.

Provide written explanation as to why attending school of origin is not in best interest (when applicable).

If the child becomes permanently housed during the academic year, they can finish the remainder of the year in the school of origin and the district must transport.

If a child becomes homeless in between academic years, they are entitled to attend their school of origin for the following year

Written explanation to the parent required (from the LEA) if they send the child to another school, along with right to appeal.

In the case of unaccompanied youth, prioritize youth's wishes.

Placement must be made regardless if the child is with or without parent.

Presume keeping student in school of origin is in student's best interest.

Others Factors to Consider (School Selection)

- ✓ Mileage to the original school (no mileage limit)
- ✓ Age of child
- ✓ Area the family and/or child might relocate to
- ✓ Special needs
- ✓ Time of school year
- ✓ Extracurricular activities
- ✓ Other siblings
- ✓ Domestic violence (danger at school?)
- ✓ Consult with staff at original school (best interest)
- ✓ Peer relationships
- ✓ Pregnant teen and child care
- ✓ Parent/Guardian/Child choice

Transportation

LEAs are required to adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided to the school of origin.

If the homeless student moves to an area served by another LEA, the school of origin and LEA in which the student is living must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and cost of transportation.

If LEAs cannot agree upon a method, cost must be shared equally.

Distance, time of year, option available, effects of transfer, and any other transportation issues should be addressed.

Local education agencies must continue to provide transportation to and from the school of origin to formerly homeless students who have become permanently housed for the remainder of the academic year during which the child or youth becomes permanently housed.

Out of state transportation

When crossing state lines, the allocation of transportation costs should follow the McKinney-Vento Act's requirements, even for students with transportation as a related service on their IEPs. McKinney-Vento states that the two LEAs involved, must agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child

or youth with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the LEAs are unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally.

This new federal guidance on out of state transportation was issued on March 3, 2017.

Did you know?

Every year 2.5 million children experience homelessness. That is almost the entire population of Chicago. One in every 30 children experiences homelessness every year in the U.S. Children are homeless in every city and state nationwide. *–American Institute for Research*

Enrollment

LEAs must immediately enroll the child despite lack of records.

“Enroll” and “enrollment” are defined to include attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

Enrolling school must immediately contact previous school for records (academic records, immunizations, IEP’s, etc.).

Families are given 30 days to obtain the necessary records for enrollment, with the exception of proving residency and immunizations.

Per the School Immunization Requirements BEC:

“The Department of Health’s immunization requirements do not apply to a student if one of the following occurs:

The student has not been immunized or is unable to provide records on the first day of attendance due to being **homeless**. Children experiencing homelessness are exempt of the new school immunization requirements and do not have any timeline under protection of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001.”

If the child lacks immunizations or immunization records, the school must refer them to the homeless liaison who shall help obtain what is necessary.

LEAs must have policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children.

Homeless families do not have to prove residency regarding school enrollment.

Enrollment must not be delayed because of fees owed for textbooks or any other debt the student owes.

Absences caused by homelessness must not be counted against students.

Enrollment deadlines are superseded by the McKinney-Vento Act, which requires immediate enrollment.

District policies concerning enrolling children with a criminal past would take effect if the child were seeking enrollment.

McKinney-Vento Act does not prohibit school from requiring parents to submit emergency contact information.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. 20 USC §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99. Specifically, it prohibits a school from disclosing personally identifiable information from students' education records without the consent of a parent or eligible student; unless an exception to FERPA's general, consent rule applies.

The rights to access education records and consent for their disclosure belong to the student's "parent". Those rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. 34 CFR §§99.3, 99.5. FERPA refers to these students as "eligible students."

Under FERPA, a parent or eligible student must provide a signed and dated written consent before a school discloses personally identifiable information from the student's education records, unless an exception to the consent requirement applies. 34 CFR §99.30.

Information about a student's homelessness is part of the student's education record and cannot be disclosed without consent. While a student's address may be considered directory information, in the context of a homeless student, disclosing the student's address would be considered harmful or an invasion of privacy. Therefore, homeless students' addresses do not meet the definition of

directory information. 34 CFR §99.3. Children have been forced from temporary housing when schools have disclosed their address to third parties. Families have been harassed and stigmatized by such disclosures. Further, disclosing a family's address to landlords or authorities provides the school with no useful information and has no relation to promoting the children's academic achievement.

Lunch/Breakfast

Effective July 1, 2004, Section 107 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 amended Section 9(b) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to make runaway, homeless and migrant children categorically eligible for free meal benefits under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The following are guidelines set out by PDE for implementation of this amendment.

1. Homeless, runaway or migratory children are automatically certified as eligible for free meal benefits and can begin receiving free meal benefits upon proper documentation for meals. Please note that documentation as runaway, homeless, or migratory can only be provided by a school district migrant education or homeless education staff.

2. School district migrant education or homeless education staff are responsible for providing proper documentation of a child's status to the food service directors in each school district.

Post Identification

- All School support services have been notified of student's enrollment and situation. (i.e. SAP, Trauma Informed Team, Child study, etc.)
- Guidance department is informed of student. Review of student's records, possible testing and Graduation Plan (if applicable) occur.
- LEA staff makes contact with parent, guardian and/or shelter staff. Plan is implemented for communication between both. A set method, time and date for future contact is critical. Parent is informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children.
- Liaison (or if appropriate building level assigned staff) creates plan for scheduled follow-up with student. It is important for the student to know they have support.
- Liaison (or if appropriate building level assigned staff) follows up with school support services, teachers and other staff to monitor academic, behavioral and social progress.
- Liaison (or if appropriate building level assigned staff) should determine if provided transportation is appropriate.
- Liaison (or if appropriate building level assigned staff) should continue to communicate with parent, guardian and/or shelter to be aware of changes or potential changes to living situation.

- Parent should be notified of available resources as they become available.

It is critical that consistent follow-up with both the student and the family occur. Identification and enrollment are only the beginning of the McKinney-Vento requirements and process. School Districts must ensure that liaisons and/or building level staff that works with the liaison have the capacity and the capability to provide ongoing service to McKinney-Vento students and their families.

Absences

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires states and schools to work to remove barriers to the education of homeless children and youth, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to absences. Compulsory attendance laws can be such barriers, particularly when they result in court involvement. Frequently, students in homeless situations will miss school due to their living situations. However, absences caused by homelessness must not be counted as unexcused absences, as this would create a barrier to enrollment and retention in school.

As part of a SAIC, schools and nonpublic schools should work to identify the root cause of students' absenteeism and the SAIP should address those issues, which may include homelessness and lack of transportation to and from school. If a student is a homeless student, the school should clarify which entity (school of origin, school of residence, etc.) is responsible for complying with the compulsory attendance laws. In addition, schools should consider whether it is appropriate to file citations against a person that may merely be "acting as a parent" or hosting an unaccompanied youth. These individuals often agree to provide a temporary place for a youth to sleep and may not have control over whether the child is attending school. Instead, the school could contact the county children and youth agency and attempt to eliminate barriers to attendance through that route.

Dispute Resolution Process

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, every state must develop procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths. 42 U.S.C §11432(g)(1)(C). The state must ensure that LEAs comply with requirements set forth in the McKinney-Vento Act including ensuring immediate enrollment, providing written notice to families concerning school selection, enrollment decisions and providing enrollment and pendency in the school of choice while a dispute is being resolved. 42 U.S.C §11432(g)(2)(A).

A complaint may be filed with the LEA. The LEA should use and maintain copies of PDE's "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" form (see below) which ensures that all LEAs (a) inform families of the basis of their decision regarding enrollment or school selection; (b) notifies families of their right to remain in their school of choice pending resolution of the dispute and (c) explains the procedures for challenging the decision of the LEA.

A complaint may be filed with the McKinney-Vento Coordinator. A regional or site coordinator with whom a complaint or appeal is filed must notify the state coordinator immediately (See Form). Upon being notified, the state coordinator will review the complaint or appeal and assign it to a site or regional coordinator for disposition. The coordinator to whom the appeal is assigned may contact, interview and accept documentation from any individual or LEA involved, and shall issue a

written disposition within 20 business days after the complaint or appeal has been assigned. The disposition shall be provided to the LEA and the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth involved. **The child or youth shall continue to be enrolled in the school in which he or she is seeking enrollment until the complaint or appeal is resolved or until a disposition from a McKinney-Vento coordinator is received.**

LEA ☐ Regional Coordinator ☐ State
Coordinator

Formal Dispute ☐ Legal ☐ Court

*****The burden of proof for establishing non-homelessness is on the LEA.**

Fiscal Responsibilities

Fiscal responsibilities apply to all homeless students, whether in regular or special education classes.

The educating district should apply the following criteria when determining fiscal responsibility:

A. The procedures outlined below will be followed in cases when the education of the child is provided by the district where the homeless student is temporarily living (doubled up, motel, shelter). The procedures shall also apply in cases when the district of prior attendance, where that is not the district the child attended when permanently housed, will educate the child.

1. Homeless individuals not in facilities (shelters) or institutions, as well as homeless individuals living in hotels, motels, cars, tents, doubled-up with a resident family, shall be reported and reimbursed as resident students;

2. For homeless individuals in temporary shelters, the educating school district will send a PDE-4605 Determination of District of Residence for Student in Facilities or Institutions in Accordance with Section 1306 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code to the presumed district of residence;

3. If PDE-4605 is acknowledged by the resident district, the educating district will enter the child on its rolls as a nonresident student from the acknowledging resident school district. The educating district will bill the resident district for

tuition and will report membership data according to PDE child accounting procedures; and

4. If PDE-4605 is disclaimed and a school district of residence cannot be determined, the educating school district should submit a written request to PDE's School Services Office to make a determination regarding the student's "ward of the state" status.

B. In cases when the education of the child is provided by the district of origin, including preschool children, where that is the district the child attended when permanently housed, that district will continue to educate a homeless student for the period of temporary displacement and should maintain the homeless student on its role as a resident student. When a child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, it also includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools. (Section 722(g)(3)(I)).

C. In cases when the student becomes permanently housed during the academic year and continues in the school of origin, which is not in the district of new residence, the educating district will continue to educate the formerly homeless student, if requested by the student's parent or guardian, until the end of the academic year and should maintain the homeless student on its role as a non-resident student. The educating district should advise the

new district of residence of its financial responsibility for this student and send a tuition bill.

Common Signs of Homelessness

Lack of Educational Continuity

- Attendance at many different schools
- Missing records needed to enroll
- Inability to pay fees
- Gaps in skill development
- Mistaken assessment of abilities
- Poor organizational skills
- Poor ability to conceptualize

Poor Health/Nutrition

- Missing immunization and medical records
- Unmet medical and dental needs
- Respiratory problems
- Skin rashes
- Chronic hunger or food hoarding
- Fatigue (may fall asleep in class)

Transportation and Attendance Problems

- Erratic attendance and tardiness
- Numerous absences
- Lack of participation in afterschool activities
- Lack of participation in field trips
- Inability to contact parents

Poor Hygiene

- Lacking shower facilities/washers, etc.
- Wearing clothes several days
- Inconsistent grooming

Lack of Personal Space after School

- Consistent lack of preparation for school
- Incomplete or missing homework
- Unable to complete special projects
- Lacking basic school supplies
- Loss of books and supplies on regular basis
- Elevated concern for safety of belongings

Social and Behavioral Concerns

- A marked change in behavior
- Poor/short attention span
- Poor self-esteem
- Extreme shyness
- Unwilling to form relationships with peers and teachers
- Difficulty socializing at recess or lunch periods
- Difficulty trusting people
- Aggression
- “Old” beyond years
- Overly protective of parents
- Clinging behavior
- Developmental delays
- Fear of abandonment
- School phobia (afraid to leave parent)
- Anxiety, especially late in the school day

Reactions or Statements by Parents, Guardians, or Students

- Exhibiting anger or embarrassment when asked about current address or living situation
- Avoidance of questions relating to current address or living situation
- States about staying with grandparents, other relatives, friend or in motels and campgrounds
- Statements such as:
 - “I don’t remember the name of the last school.”
 - “We’ve been moving around a lot.”
 - “Our address is new; I can’t remember it.”
 - “We’re staying with relatives until we get settled.”
 - “We’re going through a bad time right now.”

Developmental Delays

- Due to the instability of their daily lives, homeless children are four times more likely

than other children to have developmental delays.

- Over 75% under five years of age have at least one major delay, most commonly in speech.
- Over 44% have two delays (second most common is lack of fine motor control).
- Over 38% exhibit emotional and/or behavioral problems (short attention span, sleep disorder, withdrawal, aggression, inappropriate interaction with adults).

***American Academy of Pediatrics*

- Homeless children are more likely to have low birth weight
- Lack essential immunizations (little access to health care)
- Poor nutrition leading to health problems
- Academic performance is hampered both by their poor cognitive development and by the circumstances of their homelessness, such as constant mobility
- More likely to score poorly on math, reading, spelling, and vocabulary tests
- More likely to be held back a year in school

Difficulties for homeless students

- Ashamed of where they live

- Teased by other students about homelessness, hygiene and inabilities
- Misunderstood by parents
- Difficulty adjusting to new school
- No place to do homework
- Developmental delays augment feelings of failure

Challenges for Teachers

- Student attended many different schools with different teaching methods
- No school records
- Need to assess educational needs without prior records
- Student may move soon
- Other students react negatively
- Student might have difficulty trusting
- Inability to contact parents
- Parents often emotionally unavailable
- Homework completion can be difficult

Academic Standards/Services

- Homeless children must have access to the education and other services they need to

ensure they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state student academic achievement standards

- Homeless children are to be provided services comparable to those received by other students (including special education services, vocational programs, gifted and talented programs, school nutrition, GED, etc.)
- Homelessness alone is not sufficient reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment

Credit Accrual and College Readiness

States must have procedures to identify and remove barriers that prevent youth from receiving

appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies.

Local liaisons must ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth have opportunities to meet the same State academic achievement standards as the State establishes for other children and youth, including by implementing procedures to remove barriers that prevent homeless youth from receiving credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school. Schools must describe how homeless youth will receive assistance from school counselors to advise, prepare, and improve their readiness for college.

Local liaisons must ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth informed of their status as independent students for college financial aid and may obtain assistance to receive verification for the FAFSA.

Preschool Children

- State plans must include procedures that ensure that homeless children have access to

public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or LEA, as provided to other children.

- Liaisons must ensure homeless families and children can access early intervention services under IDEA Part C, if eligible.
- The definition of school of origin includes preschools.
- Homeless liaisons have a responsibility under the McKinney-Vento Act to identify and refer younger children to early learning programs
- Homeless children are prioritized for enrollment under the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007
- Preschool children should be identified by the LEA liaison including those in pre-K counts programs

TRAUMA AND HOMELESS CHILDREN

How Does Trauma Enter the Lives of Homeless Children?

- The Impact of Trauma on Learning
- How Can We Provide Trauma-Specific Services to People Experiencing Homelessness?

How Does Trauma Enter the Lives of Homeless Children?

- Homeless children are sick at twice the rate of other children. They suffer twice as many ear infections, have four times the rate of asthma, and have five times more diarrhea and stomach problems.
- Homeless children go hungry twice as often as non-homeless children.
- More than one-fifth of homeless preschoolers have emotional problems serious enough to require professional care, but less than one-third receive any treatment.
- Homeless children are twice as likely to repeat a grade compared to non-homeless children.
- Homeless children have twice the rate of learning disabilities and three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems of non-homeless children.
- Half of school-aged homeless children experience anxiety, depression, or withdrawal compared to 18 percent of non-homeless children.
- By the time homeless children are eight years old; one in three has a major mental disorder.
- These are not only challenges in themselves but may act as “secondary adversities”, putting a child at greater risk for trauma reactions and making recovery difficult.

The Impact of Trauma on Learning

Academic Performance

Trauma can impact many foundations for learning:

- Ability to read verbal/nonverbal cues
- Ability to process oral and written information
- Sequential organization
- Memory
- Understanding of cause/effect relationships
- Sense of self and perspective taking
- Identification and differentiation of emotions
- Using language to relate to people (vs. instrumental)
- Understanding mental states and feelings of others
- Ability to feel empathy

Classroom Behavior

Common behavioral adaptations to trauma include:

- Aggression
- Defiance
- Withdrawal
- Perfectionism
- Hyperactivity, reactivity, impulsiveness
- Rapid and unexpected emotional shifts

Relationships

Trauma can undermine a child's ability to form positive relationships with adults and peers

- Difficulty interpreting verbal/nonverbal information; difficulty reading faces and gestures
- Lack of insight into relationships
- Poor sense of self and perspective taking
- Difficulty identifying emotions---self and others
- Lack of trust
- Decreased motivation to relate to others

How Can we Provide Trauma-Specific Services to Children Experiencing Homelessness?

- Assessing whether a child's development is progressing appropriately or has been interrupted by trauma
- Screening for children's history of traumatic experiences
- Creating the administrative infrastructure to support training that will assist in understanding and addressing trauma
- By promoting wider awareness of the role of trauma in precipitating family homelessness

TITLE I, Part A: Homeless Set-aside Guidance on Allowable and Unallowable Expenditures

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

Note: Two principles govern the use of Title I, Part A funds to provide services to homeless students.

- First, the services must be reasonable and necessary to assist homeless students to take advantage of educational opportunities.
- Second, Title I, Part A funds must be used only as a last resort when funds or services are not available from other public or private sources, such as public health clinics, or local discretionary funds used to provide similar services for economically disadvantaged students.

Allowable expenses:

- Academic services/supports(after school programs, tutoring, credit recovery)
- Clothing items/uniforms/shoes, meeting school requirements

- Conferences/in-service training
- Counseling services
- Educational material/books
- Fees (AP testing, college applications/entrance exams, GED, SAT/ACT, or other fees necessary to participate in the general education program)
- Food items
- Gift cards
- Graduation caps/gowns
- Tutoring
- Yearbooks
- Transportation
- Health needs (medical appointments, glasses, hearing aids, immunizations, medication)
- Hygiene items
- Identification documents (birth certificates)
- Outreach services to students living in shelters, motels and other temporary residences)
- Parental and family engagement activities
- Salary/benefits (homeless liaison, reading specialist)
- School activities/events (after school clubs, field trips, prom tickets, school pictures, sports)
- School supplies/backpacks
- Wi-Fi/Hot spots for students

Not allowable:

- Cannot supplant other state or local funds
- Rent
- Utilities
- Clothing for parents

Duties of the LEA McKinney-Vento Liaison

What are the responsibilities of the local liaison for homeless children and youths?

The local liaison serves as one of the primary contacts between homeless families and school

staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and other service providers. Every LEA is required to designate a local liaison. (Section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii)). The liaison coordinates services to ensure that homeless children and youths enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically.

Local liaisons must ensure that:

- Homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- Homeless children and youths are enrolled in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the school or schools of the LEA;
- Homeless families and homeless children and youths have access to and receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs), early intervention services under Part C of the IDEA, and other preschool programs administered by the LEA;
- Homeless families and homeless children and youths receive referrals to health, dental, mental health, and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services;

- Parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in locations frequented by parents and guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians and unaccompanied youths;
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act including issuance of letter of denial of enrollment and notification of letter of appeal;
- Parents and guardians and unaccompanied youths are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin and are assisted in accessing transportation services;
- School personnel receive professional development and other support
- Unaccompanied youths are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youths, are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of

the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) (20 U.S.C. 1087vv), and their right to receive verification of this status from the local liaison.

Key duties of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison:

- Develop, modify and review LEA policies and procedures.
- Use housing questionnaire, (Intake Form) to document enrollment of homeless students.
- Develop system of data records of homeless students, including monitoring academic records, attendance information, graduation rate, etc.
- Use state system for data input.
- Be familiar with privacy rights of homeless students and families, ensure FERPA rights of all.
- Develop, revise and distribute materials, handouts and other related documents for student, parents, staff and community.
- Coordinate McKinney-Vento issues and activities among LEA administrators.
- Implement dispute procedure when necessary, assure issuance of letter of denial and inform student and parent of right to appeal and process.
- Construct and revise as needed, LEA website, handbook and other documents.
- Coordinate and manage Title I set aside funds with business office.

- Coordinate immediate free lunch and breakfast for homeless students with food service staff.
- Communicate with other LEA's (liaisons) on issues involving homeless students. Specifically, transportation, academic records and student best interest determinations.
- Establish ongoing communication with parents and keep them informed of student progress and school activities. Encourage parental involvement.
- Engage in community activity to identify unenrolled youth.
- Perform outreach with local entities such as shelters and agencies.
- Coordinate, distribute and seek donations and support for homeless students and families.
- Coordinate and communicate with regional PA ECTEH office.
- Attend trainings and seminars on regional and state level.

What the Staff Can Do

- Make contact with the parents and invite them to participate in school activities
- Do not bring special attention to the fact they are homeless in front of other children
- Learn more about conditions from where the family is coming

- Work closely with staff and administration when behavioral and/or medical needs are observed
- Be sensitive to needs of homeless children, but maintain consistent, high expectations
- Be aware homeless students often live in noisy, crowded conditions (tuning out)
- Try not to take away possessions or Physical Education as a disciplinary measure
- Be aware some assignments/projects may be difficult for the student (Things involving family, house, internet access, etc.)
- Communicate with shelter/agency and know community resources
- Be aware that involvement in fundraisers, or getting permission slips or other papers signed and returned, may also be difficult for these children.
- Discuss privately with the student what accommodations exist for doing homework and make necessary arrangements
- Inform liaison of situation (be aware of procedure)
- Do not penalize students who are being late as they may not have reliable transportation
- Stabilize the child's basic needs (food, shelter, clothing, medical care, basic hygiene)
- Administer brief educational assessment to determine level of academic ability
- Ensure that all needs and services are documented, as the child's stay in your school may be time limited and their next school will

need that information to determine appropriate placement and current needs.

- When the student is ill and must be sent "home," remember that the place he or she is living in may not be stable or quiet. A parent may not be at home in the shelter during the day, so contact the shelter staff and/or district homeless liaison to ensure appropriate arrangements for the student.

PA Basic Education Circular

Education for Homeless Youth

42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.

DATE OF ISSUE: February 3, 2010

DATE OF REVIEW: December 10, 2016

August 19, 2015

September 1, 2011

PURPOSE

In 1987, Congress passed the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, (subsequently renamed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) to aid homeless persons. The Act defines the term "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. On December 10, 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was enacted, amending McKinney-Vento.

PROCEDURES

This Basic Education Circular (BEC) explains the categories of children who are "homeless" and entitled to the protections of the federal law. These categories include:

- (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; 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;
- (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings;
- (iv) "migratory children" who qualify as homeless under federal law because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii)

above. The term "migratory children" means children who are (or whose parent(s) or spouse(s) are) migratory agricultural workers, including migratory dairy workers or migratory fishermen, and who have moved from one school district to another in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain (or accompany such parents or spouses in order to obtain) temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work; and,

(v) "Unaccompanied homeless youth" including any child who is "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." This includes youth who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, been abandoned by parents or guardians, or separated from their parents for any other reason. Communication and collaboration among education and child welfare professionals is critical to support school stability and continuity for children in out-of-home care. The law requires child welfare and local education agencies to work together to promote school stability and continuity including trying to ensure children remain in the school in which they were enrolled at the time of placement when it is in their best interest. Best practice would suggest that decisions be made collaboratively between school personnel, child welfare agencies and any other individual involved in the child's case including the child, resource parent, child advocate and attorney. It is imperative that caseworkers and school district administration and staff work together to help ensure the educational progress of all students.

Under the Pennsylvania Education for Homeless Children and Youth State Plan, homeless children are defined as “children living with a parent in a domestic violence shelter; runaway children and children, and youth who have been abandoned or forced out of their home by parents or other caretakers; and school-aged parents living in houses for school-aged parents if they have no other available living accommodations.”

The McKinney-Vento Act states that it is the policy of Congress that state educational agencies shall ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youths 42 U.S.C. § 11431. Specifically, 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g) (3) (A) indicates that the local educational agency (LEA) shall, according to the child’s best interest: In accordance with Section 722 (g) (3) (B) (ii), the local educational agency:

(I) must presume that keeping a homeless child or youth in the school of origin is in the child’s or youth’s best interest unless doing so is contrary to the request of the child’s or youth’s parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth;

(II) must consider student-centered factors related to a child’s or youth’s best interest, giving priority to the request of the child’s or youth’s parent or guardian, or (in the case of an unaccompanied youth) the youth; or

(III) if the LEA determines that it is not in a child’s or youth’s best interest to attend the school of origin, or

the school requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, it must provide a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form that is understandable.

According to the McKinney-Vento Act the term "school of origin" means the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g) (3) (G).

I. Homeless Students Residing in Shelters, Facilities or Institutions

Section 1306 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code (24 P.S. §13-1306) deals with the public school admission of nonresident students living in shelters, facilities or institutions. Implementing regulations for Section 1306 are found in Section 11.18 of the State Board of Education regulations. 22 Pa. Code § 11.18 (a) addresses the public school admission of nonresident children who live in an institution, shelter or custodial care facility:

(a) The board of school directors of a school district in which there is located a licensed shelter, group home, maternity home, residence, facility, orphanage or other institution for the care or training of children or adolescents shall admit to the district's public schools school age children who are living at or assigned to the facility or institution and who are residents of the district or another school district in this Commonwealth.

22 Pa. Code § 11.18, as it applies to homeless children and youth, includes within the definition of "licensed shelter" those facilities which provide

temporary shelter for a specified, limited period of time. Therefore, children in temporary shelters and children who "lack a fixed, regular, adequate night time residence" – homeless children – are entitled to free school privileges from either the school district in which their person or the shelter is located or the school district of origin.

II. Homeless Students Not Residing in a Shelter, Facility or Institution

Homeless students may reside in hotels, motels, cars, tents or temporarily doubled-up with a resident family because of lack of housing. In determining residence and in the case of homeless children, equating "residence" and "domicile" (home) does not apply. They are presently unable to establish "homes" on a permanent basis. Homeless families are not required to prove residency regarding school enrollment. These students should be enrolled without delay, in the district where they are presently residing or continue their education in the district of prior attendance.

Children experiencing homelessness are often highly mobile and may not stay in the same school district each night or each week. This is particularly true regarding children who stay overnight in vehicles, those who stay with different family members or friends, or those who receive services from agencies, organizations or networks which facilitate overnight accommodations in multiple school districts. These children should not be forced to change school districts every time their overnight accommodations change. Rather, these

children are entitled to attend school in any school district where a parent, guardian, an adult caring for them or where an unaccompanied child:

- Spends the greatest percentage of his or her time; or
- Has a substantial connection such as where he or she is regularly receiving day shelter or other services involving any of the 16 McKinney-Vento Activities (42 U.S.C. 11433(d)) for individuals who are homeless;
- conducting daily living activities; or
- staying overnight on a recurring basis.

This policy helps maintain continuity and school stability for homeless children in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act.

The child or youth shall continue to be enrolled in the school in which he or she is seeking enrollment until the complaint or appeal is fully resolved by a McKinney-Vento coordinator, state coordinator, through mediation or in court.

III. School Placement

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that, "local educational agencies will designate an appropriate staff person, who may also be a coordinator for other federal programs, as a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youth." This person has the following responsibilities:

1. Identify homeless children and youths with assistance by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.

2. Inform parents or guardians of educational rights and related opportunities available to their children, including Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs), early intervention services under Part C of the IDEA, other preschool programs administered by the LEA, and provide them with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
3. Disseminate public notice of the educational rights of homeless students where children and youths receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act (such as schools, family shelters and food pantries).
4. Mediate enrollment disputes in accordance with the Enrollment Dispute section.
5. Inform the parent or guardian of a homeless child, youth and any unaccompanied youth, of all transportation options, including to the school of origin, and assist in accessing these transportation services.
6. Liaisons are required to ensure that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement.
7. Liaisons are required to assist children and youths who do not have documentation of immunizations or medical records to obtain necessary immunizations or necessary medical documentation.
8. Understand the guidance issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) for the education of homeless students and be ready to explain the BEC related to homeless education to school district staff.

9. Get to know the best resources in their community to assist families with referrals for things such as shelter, counseling, food and transportation.
10. Distribute information on the subject of homeless students and arrange staff development workshops and presentations for school personnel, including office staff.
11. Provide standard forms and information about enrollment procedures and key school programs to each shelter in their district.
12. Become familiar with the various program materials that are available from PDE.
13. Ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in locations frequented by parents and guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchen, in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth.
14. Liaisons must collaborate with a school district's special education program to ensure that homeless children who are in need of special education and related services are located, identified and evaluated. This is a requirement under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which mandates that highly mobile children with disabilities, including homeless children, be identified and served. Liaisons should also ensure that homeless youths who have or may have disabilities have a parent or a surrogate parent to make special education or early intervention decisions. In the case of unaccompanied homeless

youth, if a student is disabled or may be disabled and the youth does not have a person authorized to make special education decisions, the following people can be temporary surrogate parents: staff in emergency shelters; transitional shelters; independent living programs; street outreach programs; and state, local educational agency or child welfare agency staff involved in the education or care of the child. This rule applies only to unaccompanied homeless youth.

15. Liaisons should also identify preschool-aged homeless children by working closely with shelters and social service agencies in their area. In addition, the liaison should inquire, at the time they are enrolling homeless children and youths in school, whether the family has preschool-aged children.

16. Liaisons can identify unaccompanied homeless youth while respecting their privacy and dignity by providing specific outreach to areas where eligible students who are out of school may congregate.

17. Liaisons ensure that unaccompanied youths are enrolled in school, and have opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic standards as the state establishes for other children and youths, are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) (20 U.S.C 1087vv), and their right to receive verification of this status from the local liaison.

Appropriate school placement arrangements, based on the child's best interest, should be implemented through the cooperative efforts of the

respective chief school administrators. Each case presents a unique set of circumstances and, therefore, requires an individualized response. In all cases, the LEA shall comply, to the extent feasible, with the request made by a parent or guardian regarding school selection, shall attempt to minimize disruptions and shall maintain the highest possible degree of continuity in programs for all homeless students. The choice regarding placement shall be made regardless of whether the child or youth lives with the homeless parents or has been temporarily placed elsewhere.

Homelessness alone is not a reason to separate students from the mainstream school environment. Homeless children and youths should have access to education and other services that they need to ensure that they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state student performance standards to which all students are held.

In determining the best interest of the child or youth under McKinney-Vento Act, the LEA shall:

(I) Continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness when a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; and for the remainder of the academic year even if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or

(II) Enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

The selected school shall immediately enroll the child or youth in school, even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency or other documentation. Section 722 (g)(3)(C) (i)(II) requires that a school selected based on a homeless child's or youth's best interest must immediately enroll such child or youth even if he or she has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.

The terms "enroll" and "enrollment" are defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities. The enrolling school must immediately contact the last school attended to obtain relevant records.

In order to ensure immediate enrollment, in accordance with Section 722 (g)(6)(A)(ix), the LEA liaison is required to: train school enrollment staff about the legal requirement that homeless children and youths be immediately enrolled and provided transportation; review school regulations and policies to ensure that they comply with the McKinney-Vento Act requirements; inform families and youth, in a language they can understand, of their rights; develop clear, understandable and accessible written explanations of decisions and the right to appeal; and expeditiously follow up on any special education or language assistance needs presented by a student.

IV. School/Health Records

The educating district should immediately enroll and begin to provide instruction. The receiving school district may contact the district of origin for oral confirmation that the child has been immunized. Oral confirmation between professionals is a sufficient basis to verify immunization with written confirmation to follow within 30 days. The instructional program should begin as soon as possible after the enrollment process is initiated and should not be delayed until the procedure is completed. The law specifies that information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation shall be treated as a student education record, and shall not be deemed to be directory information. (Section 722 (g)(3)(G)). According to federal law, "(iii) If the child or youth needs to obtain immunizations, or immunization or medical records, the enrolling school shall immediately refer the parent or guardian of the child or youth to the local educational agency liaison designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii), shall assist in obtaining necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records, in accordance with subparagraph (D)" 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(c)(iii).

V. Title I

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (reauthorized December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act) mandates that funds be reserved to serve homeless children. Title I states, "A local educational agency shall reserve such funds as are necessary to provide services comparable to those provided to children in schools

funded under this part to serve homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children may live." Under Title I, homeless children are eligible for services if they are attending schools served by an LEA.

VI. Transportation

The state and its LEAs are required to adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the liaison), to and from the school of origin. If the homeless student continues to live in the area served by the LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation. If the homeless student moves to an area served by another LEA, though continuing his or her education at the school of origin, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the student is living must agree upon a method to apportion responsibility and costs for transportation to the school of origin. This includes students enrolled in public school Head Start and Early Head Start education programs. If the LEAs cannot agree upon such a method, the responsibility and costs must be shared equally. Distance, time of year, options available, the effects of a transfer, etc., should all be addressed. The provision of transportation to the school of origin is based on a students' status as homeless. The provision to remain in the school of origin during the remainder of the academic year is offered to provide for school

stability. Local education agencies must continue to provide transportation to and from the school of origin to formerly homeless students who have become permanently housed for the remainder of the academic year during which the child or youth becomes permanently housed. (Section 722(g)(3)(A)(II)).

VII. Fiscal Responsibilities

Fiscal responsibilities apply to all homeless students, whether in regular or special education classes.

The educating district should apply the following criteria when determining fiscal responsibility:

A. The procedures outlined below will be followed in cases when the education of the child is provided by the district where the homeless student is temporarily living (doubled up, motel, shelter). The procedures shall also apply in cases when the district of prior attendance, where that is not the district the child attended when permanently housed, will educate the child.

1. Homeless individuals not in facilities (shelters) or institutions, as well as homeless individuals living in hotels, motels, cars, tents, doubled-up with a resident family, shall be reported and reimbursed as resident students;

2. For homeless individuals in temporary shelters, the educating school district will send a PDE-4605 Determination of District of Residence for Student in Facilities or Institutions in Accordance with Section 1306 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code to the presumed district of residence;

3. If PDE-4605 is acknowledged by the resident district, the educating district will enter the child on its rolls as a nonresident student from the acknowledging resident school district. The educating district will bill the resident district for tuition and will report membership data according to PDE child accounting procedures; and

4. If PDE-4605 is disclaimed and a school district of residence cannot be determined, the educating school district should submit a written request to PDE's School Services Office to make a determination regarding the student's "ward of the state" status.

B. In cases when the education of the child is provided by the district of origin, including preschool children, where that is the district the child attended when permanently housed, that district will continue to educate a homeless student for the period of temporary displacement and should maintain the homeless student on its role as a resident student. When a child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, it also includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools. (Section 722(g)(3)(I)).

C. In cases when the student becomes permanently housed during the academic year and continues in the school of origin, which is not in the district of new residence, the educating district will continue to educate the formerly homeless student, if requested by the student's parent or guardian, until the end of the academic year and should maintain the homeless student on its role as a non-resident

student. The educating district should advise the new district of residence of its financial responsibility for this student and send a tuition bill.

VIII. Categorical Eligibility under the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs

Effective July 1, 2004, Section 107 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 amended Section 9(b) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to make runaway, homeless and migrant children categorically eligible for free meal benefits under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The following are guidelines set out by PDE for implementation of this amendment.

1. Homeless, runaway or migratory children are automatically certified as eligible for free meal benefits and can begin receiving free meal benefits upon proper documentation for meals. Please note that documentation as runaway, homeless, or migratory can only be provided by a school district migrant education or homeless education staff.
2. School district migrant education or homeless education staff are responsible for providing proper documentation of a child's status to the food service directors in each school district.

IX. Dispute Resolution Process

Pursuant to the McKinney-Vento Act, every state must develop procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths. 42 U.S.C

§11432(g)(1)(C). The state must ensure that LEAs comply with requirements set forth in the McKinney-Vento Act including ensuring immediate enrollment, providing written notice to families concerning school selection, enrollment decisions and providing enrollment and pendency in the school of choice while a dispute is being resolved. 42 U.S.C §11432(g)(2)(A).

PDE has developed the following procedures to govern the resolution of disputes regarding enrollment, school selection, homeless status and complaints of non-compliance with legal requirements pertaining to the education for homeless children and youths:

Level 1 – A dispute may be raised with a LEA.

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child or youth involved must immediately be admitted to the school in which they are seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(E)(i). PDE recommends that the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth who initiates the dispute contact the LEA liaison for individuals experiencing homelessness as soon as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. If the person initiating the dispute does not contact the LEA liaison directly, the LEA shall be responsible for contacting the LEA liaison regarding the dispute as soon as possible and referring the family or youth involved to the liaison.

The LEA liaison shall ensure that the child or youth is immediately enrolled, explain the dispute resolution process to families and help them to use

it 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(E)(iii). The LEA shall issue a written disposition of the dispute within 20 business days after the LEA liaison is notified of the dispute. The disposition shall be provided to the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth and shall explain the basis for the decision and advise the parent, guardian or youth of the right to appeal. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(E)(i).

NOTE: The LEA should use and maintain copies of PDE's "Notice of Procedural Safeguards" form (see attached) which ensures that all LEAs (a) inform families of the basis of their decision regarding enrollment or school selection; (b) notifies families of their right to remain in their school of choice pending resolution of the dispute and (c) explains the procedures for challenging the decision of the LEA.

Level 2 – A complaint may be filed with a McKinney-Vento coordinator.

If the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth is dissatisfied with the LEA's disposition of a dispute or would like to raise any issue of McKinney-Vento Act noncompliance, they may file a complaint or appeal with a McKinney-Vento site or regional coordinator or with the state coordinator. (See attached list which contains contact information for all of the McKinney-Vento coordinators in Pennsylvania). In lieu of filing an appeal with a McKinney-Vento coordinator, a parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth may elect to appeal the LEA decision directly to a court of competent jurisdiction. Participation in the appeal procedure is not required prior to taking legal action.

A regional or site coordinator with whom a complaint or appeal is filed must notify the state coordinator immediately. Upon being notified, the state coordinator will review the complaint or appeal and assign it to a site or regional coordinator for disposition. The coordinator to whom the appeal is assigned may contact, interview and accept documentation from any individual or LEA involved, and shall issue a written disposition within 20 business days after the complaint or appeal has been assigned. The disposition shall be provided to the LEA and the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth involved. The child or youth shall continue to be enrolled in the school in which he or she is seeking enrollment until the complaint or appeal is resolved or until a disposition from a McKinney-Vento coordinator is received.

The state coordinator may assist in the mediation of disputes directly and may also invite those involved to have the dispute mediated at any time in the process through the Dispute Resolution Program operated by the Commonwealth Office of General Counsel (OGC). The OGC Dispute Resolution Program is a voluntary informal process through which a trained mediator assists in reaching a mutually acceptable resolution.

Participating in mediation is not a waiver of the right to file a lawsuit nor is participation in mediation required prior to taking legal action.

NOTE: The parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth may file a complaint with the McKinney-Vento site, regional or state coordinator on the attached complaint form. However, the use of the attached

form is not mandatory. Any dispute raised by a homeless family or youth concerning school enrollment or any other right under the McKinney-Vento Act whether received via telephone, letter or any mode of communication shall be treated as a complaint.

ECYEH Intake Form



This form is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Act 42 U.S.C. 11435. The confidential information in this form will determine the services that the student may be eligible to receive.

Student/Contact Information

Student's Last Name	First Name	PPID (10 digit)
Temporary Address	Phone Number	ACT 1 Eligible (Yes/No)
Date of Birth	Gender	Grade Level
School District/Building	Parent/Guardian Enrolling Student	Relationship to Student

Precipitating Event

*Place an **X** indicating the appropriate precipitating event resulting in loss of housing*

Abandonment	☐	Left Home	☐
Act of Nature	☐	Parent/Guardian Hospitalized	☐
Death of Parent/Guardian	☐	Parent/Guardian Incarcerated	☐
Domestic Violence	☐	Parental Job Loss/Loss of Income	☐
Eviction	☐	Other Poverty-related Situation	☐

Fire		Other	
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Living Arrangement

Place an **X** in the box indicating the appropriate living arrangements

Shelter	
Transitional Housing	
Hotel/Motel	
Unsheltered (Campgrounds, car, abandoned building, park, temporary trailer, street)	
Doubled-up (living with another family)	

Name of Shelter, Transitional Housing or Hotel/Motel (if applicable)

I, _____ affirm that
the information is true and accurate.
(Parent/Guardian's Name)

I, _____ have been
advised of my rights and child's rights

(Parent/Guardian's Name)
McKinney-Vento Federal Homeless

under the
Assistance

Act.

(Signature of Parent/Guardian)
Name) (Date)

(Student's

(District Personnel Receiving Form)
(Title) (Date)

District and Liaison Information

Jeff Zimmerman
PA ECYEH Region 7 Coordinator
Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18
368 Tioga Avenue
Kingston, PA 18704
570-718-4613
www.ecyeh7.com
ecyeh7@liu18.org

1. Is the student unaccompanied? ☐ Yes
☐ No
2. Where did the student sleep last night?

3. Is the student fleeing a domestic violence situation? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Does the student have an IEP or 504 plan?
5. Has the student ever been in foster care? ☐ Yes
☐ No
6. Has the student been expelled or in a juvenile detention facility? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. If student is enrolling in the district for the first time, what school did they previously attend?
8. Did the student lack any documents upon enrollment? (Academic records, medical records, immunizations, guardianship, birth certificate, IEP)
9. Does the student have siblings that are not of school age yet?

10. Which of the following services does the student and/or family need?

- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Tutoring
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Clothing
- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Eye glasses
- ☐ Dental Care
- ☐ School supplies
- ☐ Mental Health Care
- ☐ Hygiene materials
- ☐ Life Skills Training
- ☐ Child Care/Early Childhood Program/Pre-school
- ☐ Job Training
- ☐ Medical Care (including prescriptions)
- ☐ Substance Abuse Treatment

11. List the agencies/shelters that you have referred the student and/or family. Include school supports (SAP, ESAP, Child Study)

Additional Notes:

Procedural Safeguards Notice of Denial of Enrollment

To be completed by a school whenever an enrollment or school selection request of a student experiencing homelessness is denied

Date: _____

Name and Title of School Employee Completing Form:

Requested School: _____

- The student has the right to enroll immediately in the requested or preferred school pending full resolution of the dispute.
- If the student(s) want to remain in the same school they were attending or the school they attended when they first became homeless, the student is entitled to transportation back to the prior school pending full resolution of the dispute if the placement (including any transportation involved) is feasible, reasonable and in the best interest of the student.

- **You have the right to appeal this decision.** You may do so by completing the second page of this notice (Compliant Form) or by contacting Pennsylvania's McKinney-Vento Homeless state coordinator by phone at (717) 783-6466.

- The family/unaccompanied youth can challenge the school district's decision by providing additional written material or by discussing the matter with the school, school district personnel, McKinney-Vento school district liaison or McKinney-Vento regional or site coordinator.

- The McKinney-Vento school district liaison can assist the family or youth in appealing the school district's decision. A copy of Pennsylvania's Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Complaint Form is attached.

- The family/youth can have an advocate or attorney handle the matter.

- You may also ask for help from the Commonwealth's Office of General Counsel's.

- **Dispute Resolution Program**

This is a voluntary informal mediation process through which a trained impartial mediator helps parties reach a mutually acceptable resolution. Using mediation does not wait a family/youth's right to file a lawsuit before or after the mediation.

- For more information Visit the Homeless Education on the PDE Website.

School District's Homeless Liaison involved in the decision

Name: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

Name of McKinney-Vento Regional Coordinator consulted in making this determination:

I hereby confirm that I received this notice

(Signature of parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth)

Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing

Homelessness – Dispute Letter

Date: _____

**State Coordinator
Education for Children and Youth Experiencing
Homelessness
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street, 5th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333**

Dear State Coordinator:

My name is _____ **. My**

child(ren) attend school in the

School District.

**I need your help with the following problem(s). I have
checked the box that fits my situation. I
have included a brief statement in the space provided.**

**The school district would not enroll my child
(children).**

 Child(ren) couldn't begin school because they didn't have all their medical and/or school records.

 Child(ren) not permitted to stay in their current school.

 Special education testing/placement services denied or unavailable.

 School District will not provide transportation to stay in the current school.

Post Identification

The following tool is used by school personnel for follow-up on homeless students. Based on responses to the checkup questions, the frequency of follow-up should be determined on a case-by-case basis. The tool is meant to be reviewed by the LEA liaison with assistance and input from other school staff.

Post- identification and enrollment **McKinney-Vento student check-in**

- o All School support services have been notified of student's enrollment and situation. (i.e. SAP, Trauma Informed Team, Child study, etc.)
- o Determination of Act I (Student Experiencing Educational Instability) eligibility.
If eligible, building level POC assigned.
- o Guidance department is informed of student.
Review of student's records, possible testing and Graduation Plan (if applicable) occur.
- o LEA staff makes contact with parent, guardian and/or shelter staff. Plan is implemented for communication between both. A set method, time and date for future contact is critical. Parent is

informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children.

- o Liaison (or if appropriate building level assigned staff) creates plan for scheduled follow-up with student. It is important for the student to know they have support.
- o Liaison (or if appropriate building level assigned staff) follows up with school support services, teachers and other staff to monitor academic, behavioral and social progress.
- o Liaison (or if appropriate building level assigned staff) should determine if provided transportation is appropriate.
- o Liaison (or if appropriate building level assigned staff) should continue to communicate with parent, guardian and/or shelter to be aware of changes or potential changes to living situation.
- o Parent should be notified of available resources as they become available.

It is critical that consistent follow-up with both the student and the family occur. Identification and enrollment are only the beginning of the McKinney-Vento requirements and process. School Districts must ensure that Liaisons and/or building level staff that works with the liaison have the capacity and the capability to provide ongoing service to McKinney-Vento students and their families.

SAMPLE SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Education for Children and Youth Experiencing
Homelessness (ECYEH) Program
Weekly/Bi-weekly Check-in Form**

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

School: _____

Grade: _____

Current Living Situation:

**Do you need assistance with the following health, safety
and basic needs?**

Need	Yes	No	Assistance Provided
Emergency Housing			
Food			
Clothing/ School Uniform			
Health Care			
Mental Health Care			
School Related Transportation			
Transportation to food sites or to pick up learning materials or delivery of food/learning materials			
Other In School Issues			
Baby Supplies (formula, diapers, cleaning products)			
Hygiene supplies (soap, sanitizer detergent, clean clothing, showers, sanitary supplies, medicines, etc.)			
Pre-paid cell phone w/ minutes/unlimited data			
Learning accommodations for students due to			

homeless living situations.			
Appropriate mobile devices needed for online learning (access to mobile hotspots, laptops/tablets/other materials necessary to fully participate in online learning)			
Other Out of School Issues			

**Education for Children and Youth Experiencing
Homelessness (ECYEH) Program
Student/Family Contact Log**

Student Name: _____

DATE	REASON FOR CONTACT	RESULT	NOTES

Sample Handbook Statement

Following information is to serve as a model for McKinney Vento information to be included in LEA Handbooks. Recent monitoring reports suggest that more complete information be found in student, parent and faculty handbooks. LEA may have additional McKinney-Vento information available (policies & procedures, brochures, handouts, etc.).

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program

MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT: The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program is authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) (McKinney-Vento Act). The McKinney-Vento Act was originally authorized in 1987 and most recently re-authorized in December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).¹ The McKinney-Vento Act is designed to address the challenges that homeless children and youths have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, educational agencies must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other children and youths. Homeless children and youths must have

access to the educational and related services that they need to enable them to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held. In addition, homeless students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment. Local Educational Agencies are required to review and undertake steps to revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youths. The law indicates that the LEA liaison shall ensure that all homeless children, youth and families are identified through coordinated activities with other entities.

**DEFINITION OF
HOMELESS (MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT SEC.
725(2); 42 U.S.C
11435(2)):
CHILDREN WHO LACK A FIXED, REGULAR,
AND ADEQUATE NIGHT
TIME RESIDENCE:**

Doubled-up: Sharing the housing of others due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons.

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

Living in emergency or transitional shelters.

Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live.

Migratory children living in above circumstances
Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings,
substandard housing, bus or train stations, or
similar settings

Unaccompanied Youth: Children or youth who
meets the definition of homeless and not in the
physical
custody of a parent or guardian.

Residency and Educational Rights:

Students who are in temporary, inadequate and
homeless living situations have the following
rights:

- Immediate enrollment in the school they last attended or the school in whose attendance area they are currently staying even if they do not have all of the documents normally required at the time of enrollment;
- Access to free meals and textbooks, Title I and other educational programs and other comparable services including transportation;
- Attendance in the same classes and activities that students in other living situations also participate in without fear of being separated or treated differently due to their housing situations.

When a student is identified as being
McKinney-Vento eligible, staff will:

- Assist with enrollment, monitor school attendance and arrange transportation (preK-8 students)
- Provide school supplies and other school related materials as needed
- Advocate for and support students and families through school and home visits
- Set clear expectations for student behavior, attendance and academic performance
- Assist students/families access with community services
- Assist students/families with access to tutoring, special education, and English language learner resources
- Assist students so they can participate in sports, field trips, and school activities regardless of their ability to pay or to provide their own transportation.

**For additional information, contact LEA
Homeless Liaison at 000-000-0000.**

Sample Procedures

SAMPLE SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURES FOR ENROLLMENT OF HOMELESS STUDENTS

1. When contact is received by the District's Homeless Liaison from school administration, District registration office, shelter, etc., the following procedures will be followed:

- a. The District Liaison will facilitate the student's immediate enrollment in school;
- b. Contact the school administration/Child Accounting to list student as homeless;
- c. Contact parent/shelter to discuss services;
- d. Arrange for transportation;
- e. Ensure teachers and staff receive necessary information to assess education needs;
- f. Arrange for Title I, and all educational services (special ed., vo. tech, etc.);
- g. Ensure student receives free breakfast/lunch;
- h. Begin documentation of student information.
- i. Refer student to appropriate school/district programs for support (SAP, IST, Tutoring, Child Study, etc.)
- j. Ensure all parties receiving information are aware of safety and confidentiality issues and that homeless information is covered under FERPA.

2. When necessary, contact Regional Homeless Coordinator to determine if other services are required, i.e., medical, vouchers for clothing, food/supplies, housing, etc.

3. Complete administrative responsibilities:

a. Include student information on district homeless list

b. Submit student listing with District Liaison's Food Service Liaison and Federal Program Coordinator;

c. Ensure all needs and services are documented;

d. If appropriate, review course of study, graduation/promotion requirements, determine if credit recovery is necessary due to homelessness;

e. Coordinate with community service providers as needed.

Using the Student Housing Questionnaire

This form is designed to be used when a student presents at registration and DOES NOT have required documentation that the school district requires.

The responses to questions on this form are intended to aid school personnel to make an initial determination of possible homelessness and eligibility to receive services under McKinney-Vento.

If a family owns or rents their place of residence it is unnecessary to complete this form.

This form is not intended to replace other forms that may be required after homelessness has been determined.

It is also likely that a more comprehensive homeless intake form may be completed after homelessness has been determined.

Student Housing Questionnaire

This form is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Act 42 U.S.C. 11435.

The information you provide is confidential. Your child will not be discriminated against based upon the information provided.

Please complete the following questions regarding the student's housing in order to help determine services

the student may be eligible to receive.

Note to School/Homeless Liaisons: Please assist students and families in filling out this form. Do not simply include this form in the registration packet, because if the student qualifies as McKinney-Vento eligible,

the student is not required to submit proof of residency and other required documents that may be part of

the registration packet. The district cannot disclose housing status information without parental consent.

The answers to the following questions can help determine the services this student may be eligible to receive

under the McKinney-Vento Act 42 U.S.C. 11435. The McKinney-Vento Act provides services and supports for

children and youth experiencing homelessness.

If you own/rent your own home, you do not need to complete this form.

If you do not own/rent your own home, please check all that apply below.

- ☐ In a motel
- ☐ A car, park, campsite or similar location
- ☐ In a shelter
- ☐ Transitional Housing
- ☐ Moving from place to place/couch surfing

☐ In a residence with inadequate facilities (no water, heat, electricity, etc.)

☐ In someone else's house or apartment with another family

☐ Other:

Name of Student:

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Gender: _____

Name of School:

_____ Grade: ____

☐ Student is unaccompanied (not living with a parent or legal guardian)

☐ Student is living with a parent or legal guardian

Address of current residence:_____

Phone number or contact number:

Name of Parent(s)/Legal Guardians(s) or
unaccompanied youth:

*Signature: _____

Your children have the right to:

- Continue to attend school in the school attended before you became homeless (school of origin).
- Receive transportation to the school of origin
- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address and attend classes while the school arranges for a school transfer, immunization records or other documents required for enrollment.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children served in these programs.
- Have enrollment disputes quickly addressed.

Instructions for Using Template End-of-Year Reverification Letter

The McKinney-Vento Act requires districts to provide continued enrollment and transportation for students for the duration of homelessness, the remainder of the academic year in which families become permanently housed.

McKinney-Vento designations should be revisited at the end of each year so that, for example, families who have become permanently housed are provided with assistance transferring to the new local school district at the end of the school year, and any dispute about the student's continued eligibility under McKinney-Vento can be resolved before the start of the next school year.

Communication between a school district and a parent about a student's continued McKinney-Vento eligibility should be done with sensitivity. The following are some best practices:

- Revisit McKinney-Vento determinations for all students at the end of the year and possibly earlier if information comes to light that a student's housing status has changed.
- Revisit all McKinney-Vento designations to avoid making families feel singled out, even if some situations may be clearer than others.

- Be transparent about the process from the beginning. Let families know at the time of designation that McKinney-Vento eligibility determinations for all students are revisited.
- Advance notice that the designation will be revisited may alleviate potential feelings of anxiety or mistrust that the parent may have.
- Explain to families at the time of designation that shared housing situations that were originally meant to be temporary may become permanent with the passage of time.
- Send parents the attached Reverification Template Letter and a new Housing Questionnaire in the spring semester to give them the opportunity to self-identify. Make sure that parents know that this process applies to all students designated as McKinney-Vento eligible.
- If there is a question about the student's continued McKinney-Vento eligibility, make sure it is addressed as soon as possible. If a dispute arises about the student's continued eligibility for the following school year, make sure the dispute is resolved over the summer to minimize any potential disruptions in the student's education as well as any potential disruptions to the school community.

- Please note, information about the living situation of a student who is homeless (e.g., homeless status, temporary address) is considered a part of the student's educational record and may not be disclosed as directory information. This means that school districts may not disclose the address where the student is temporarily living or the temporary housing status of a student who is homeless to a third party (e.g. landlord) without the consent of the parent.
- It is critical that liaisons ensure a smooth transition for students who are no longer McKinney-Vento eligible and connect them with supports for which they are entitled (for example, Title I services, services for English Language Learner, special education services, attendance improvement/dropout prevention services, academic intervention services, etc.). Research has shown that formerly homeless students have rates of chronic absenteeism and low proficiency rates on the statewide assessments similar to students who are currently experiencing homelessness.
- For general information about determining eligibility and navigating difficult conversations, consult the National Center for Homeless Education's "Determining Eligibility" issue brief and our Tips for Navigating Challenging Conversations.

- If you have questions about the eligibility of specific cases, please call your PA ECEH Regional Coordinator at 570 718-4613.

(Insert School District Letterhead)

Template End-of-Year Reverification Letter

Dear _____,

Each year, [School District Name] asks for updated address and housing information for students who receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act, which is a federal law that supports students in temporary housing. Your updated housing information will help us determine if [child's name/you],[is/are] still eligible for services such as continued enrollment, transportation for students temporarily living outside of the district, and other programs [list specific programs such as free meals or Title I services if the family may not otherwise qualify, or other school district interventions for students in temporary housing]. Even if you have moved into permanent housing, [your child/you] can stay in [his/her/your] current school and get transportation to that school for the rest of the school year [and next school year (only include the latter if next year is the student's terminal grade)]. The information on the questionnaire about your housing will be kept private and is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Please fill out the enclosed Housing Questionnaire and return it to us at:

(Insert School District Address)

- Please write your current address on the questionnaire.
- If your family is now permanently housed, check the box “In Permanent Housing” on the questionnaire. Some examples of permanent housing include moving into your own apartment or house, or if a temporary shared housing arrangement has changed into a long-term, adequate arrangement.
- If you check something other than “In Permanent Housing,” your child may be eligible for continued services under the McKinney-Vento Act. [School District Name] may contact you about the information you provide on the Housing Questionnaire. If you have questions about your housing status or your child’s eligibility under the McKinney-Vento Act, please contact [McKinney-Vento Liaison Name], the McKinney-Vento liaison for the district, at [phone number and email address].

Thank you for your time and consideration in helping us update our records.
Sincerely,

Student End of Year Housing Questionnaire

This form is intended to address the
McKinney-Vento Act 42 U.S.C. 11435.

The information you provide is confidential. Your
child will not be discriminated against
based upon the information provided.

Please complete the following questions regarding
the student's housing in order to help
determine continuation of services the student may
be eligible to receive in the next school year
under the McKinney-Vento Act 42 U.S.C. 11435.

Name of Student:

Date of Birth: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Name of School:

_____ Grade: _____

☐ Student is unaccompanied (not living with a
parent or legal guardian)

☐ Student is living with a parent or legal guardian
_____ Living situation is unchanged.

If you do not own/rent your own home, please check
all that apply below.

☐ In a motel

☐ A car, park, campsite or similar location

- ☐ In a shelter
 - ☐ Transitional Housing
 - ☐ Moving from place to place/couch surfing
 - ☐ In a residence with inadequate facilities (no water, heat, electricity, etc.)
 - ☐ In someone else's house or apartment with another family
 - ☐ Other:
-

_____ Living situation has changed. We now own/rent our home.

Address of current residence: _____

*Signature: _____

Resources

www.ecyeh7.com

<http://homeless.center-school.org>

www.naehcy.org

www.serve.org/nche

<http://homeless.center-school.org/HomelessDirectory/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ECYEHPA/>

<https://schoolhouseconnection.org/>

<https://sites.google.com/view/region-7-foster-website/home>

**Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth
Experiencing Homelessness Program**



Every child deserves school stability.

Even if you lack a permanent residence, students can receive help to stay in their home school district.

For immediate assistance, please scan the QR code below for the Region 7 Website or go to:

<https://sites.google.com/view/region-7-ecyeh-website/home>



The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act can help provide school stability for students who are:

- Staying with friends or family because of hardship
- Living in shelters or transitional housing
- Staying in hotels or motels because you cannot get your own home
- Living on the streets, in a car, van, tent or other nonpermanent structure
- Unaccompanied Youth

For local resources in your area, scan the QR code for the app:



For more information contact:

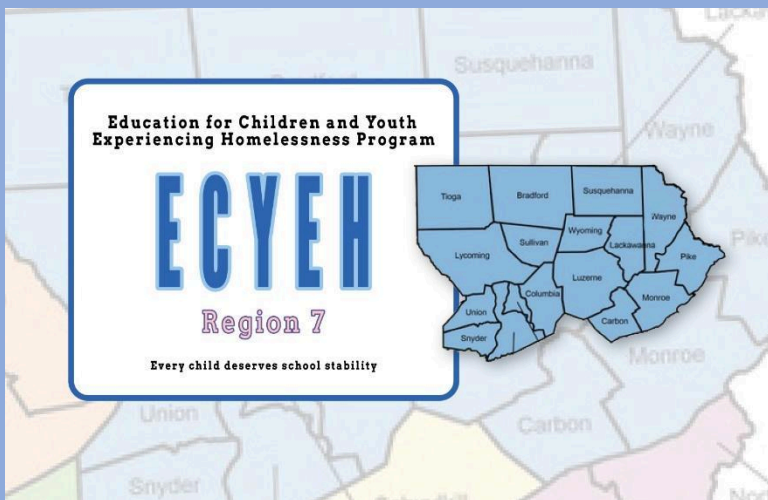
Jeff Zimmerman, Region 7 Coordinator

Luzerne Intermediate Unit

570-718-4613

jzimmerman@liu18.org

(Region 7 covers Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Lycoming, Monroe, Montour, Northumberland, Pike, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, Union, Wayne and Wyoming counties)



Jeff Zimmerman

PA ECYEH Region 7 Coordinator

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(Revised 4/15/2024)