

Skagit ACI School District Coordinating Protocol

This document outlines protocols for coordinating with Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley, Burlington-Edison, and La'Connor School Districts to ensure that any unaccompanied young people (12-21) experiencing homelessness presenting within schools are quickly and accurately identified as such and included in Skagit County's By Name List (YBNL) as of June 2023.

Identification

Unaccompanied youth and young adults are identified as experiencing homelessness if they are staying in a place not meant for human habitation (street/sidewalk, abandoned building, car/van, etc.), in a temporary housing program for individuals experiencing homelessness (emergency shelter, transitional housing, host home, etc.), in a temporary placement with family/friends, or are otherwise unsafely and unstably housed. Identification as homeless refers to a youth's current overnight sleeping location which may be the result of either choice or circumstance. Unaccompanied refers to young people that are experiencing homelessness without their older adult family, but does include young parents that head a household of young children.

Students in Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley, Burlington-Edison and La'Conner School Districts who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence are defined as experiencing homelessness under both the McKinney Vento and Anchor Community Initiative definition of homelessness, and are eligible to receive McKinney Vento services. Unaccompanied youth and young adults ages 12-21 in these situations should be referred to and accounted for on *Skagit County's Youth and Young Adult By Name List (YBNL)*.

Under the McKinney Vento Act, district McKinney-Vento Liaisons are required to track all young people experiencing homelessness and ensure they receive equal access to an education and are connected to services they need and want. Youth are identified as experiencing homelessness through an annual registration and efforts to advance their understanding of services and rights, including:

- Educational Tools for School District Staff to discuss housing service & system navigation.
- Opportunity, based on need, for specific training.
- Flier for students experiencing homelessness to connect directly to housing services

Connection to Services

Inclusion of any student identified as experiencing or at-risk of homelessness in *Skagit County's YBNL* does not refer to school district staff providing personally identifying information of students in violation of the *Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)* or any other applicable laws or regulations governing the confidentiality of students' educational records.

Unaccompanied young people referred through self-referral forms, direct referral from McKinney Vento Liaisons or school support staff will be connected directly to YMCA or

NWYS Outreach Staff. Students referred will have the opportunity to consent to being accounted for on Skagit County's YBNL and understand service support available to them. Data of those consenting will be accounted for on *Skagit By Name List* through entry in the OTSACI Project within our *Homeless Management Information System*.

Key school staff, including McKinney-Vento Liaisons, school counselors, and school social workers, will be invited to participate in training to be certified to directly access flexible funds to resolve unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults housing crises. All young people that access the *Homeless Prevention and Diversion Fund* (HPDF) in Skagit County will be enrolled in HMIS and be captured on the By Name List (YBNL).

McKinney Vento & School Supports:

School support staff, including McKinney Vento Liaisons, Counselors and Social Workers will refer unaccompanied students who have been identified as experiencing homelessness within Mount Vernon, Sedro-Woolley, Burlington-Edison and La'Conner School Districts to housing navigation and stabilization services. A referral form will be filled out by school staff and sent to their point of contact within NWYS.

Within 72 hours of receipt of the referral form, outreach staff will contact the young person to coordinate services and collect their personal identifying information for entry into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) which will include them in the Youth By-Name List (YBNL). In WA state, unaccompanied youth 13 years or older can give consent for the collection of his or her personally identifying information for entry into HMIS.

Self-Identification & Referral:

Students who choose not to disclose their housing situation with school staff may self-identify and self-refer themselves to housing navigation services online. QR codes posted in schools will directly link to a self referral form on student's basic & housing needs. Surveys are entirely optional, and only ask the most basic information needed for outreach workers to contact the student.

Submitted surveys will be sent directly to youth-specific serving staff, who, within 72 hours of receipt of the self- referral form, will contact the young person to coordinate services and collect consent for their personal identifying information to be entered into the *Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)* which will include them in the *Youth By-Name List (YBNL)*.

If the student is self-referring, the YMCA will provide identifying information to the school IF the student agrees to sign a written release of information.

Services Available:

If students consent to services, Outreach teams can provide the following services:

- Coordinated entry assessment;
- Diversion from the homeless crisis response system;

- Assistance in locating and applying for identification and other documentation needed for housing placement, including birth certificates, social security cards, and licenses;
- Other connections to needed services such as legal assistance, employment, education, non-cash benefits, domestic violence support, mental health, and chemical dependency services;
- Transportation or accompaniment to potential housing options and necessary appointments;
- Case management to maintain engagement, support independence;
- Housing needs including physical shelter, rental assistance, moving supports, furniture, blankets/bedding, and reconnection to family;
- Supports for pregnant young people and those with dependents;
- Mentorship, LGBTQ+ supports, academic support and enrollment, resume building and assistance with employment searches and:
- Food, clothing, hygiene items, beds, bedding, and other necessities.

A diversion-first approach will be utilized to collaboratively problem-solve with students to resolve their housing crisis. This may include the use of flexible financial assistance as needed to maximize opportunities for youth choice in the types of housing they want to pursue. Where safe and appropriate, this may include providing supportive services and flex funding to families hosting unaccompanied youth to maintain housing stability.

Homeless Prevention and Diversion Fund:

Key school staff, including McKinney-Vento Liaisons, school counselors, and school social workers, will be invited to participate in training to be certified to directly access flexible funds to resolve unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults housing crises. All young people that access the Homeless Prevention and Diversion Fund in Skagit County will be enrolled in HMIS and be captured on the By Name List (YBNL).

Cross-System Collaboration Review

Coordinating protocol, including methods for identification of unaccompanied young people experiencing homelessness, organizational partnerships and Memorandums of Understanding with local School Districts should be reviewed and evaluated annually. The review process should be informed by the Youth Action Board and include any barriers illuminated by the Improvement Team and those involved in case conferencing.



Referral Form for School District Staff:

Date: _____

School District (*check one*)

- Anacortes Mount Vernon Burlington Edison Conway
 Concrete Sedro Woolley LaConner Other _____

Person Making Referral Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please check all boxes that describes the situation of the student:

- This student is an unaccompanied youth between the ages of 12-24 who is not with their parents/guardians and is staying with family or friends.
- This student reports that they are safe and able to continue living in the current housing situation.
- This student has informed me that they are unsafe or unable to stay where they are and are seeking permanent housing.
- This student reports that they are safe and able to stay where they are but is unsure for how long.
- This student reports that they are safe/stable but school district staff is unsure about the safety/security of the situation.
- This student has been connected to their school's homeless liaison for McKinney Vento services

Would this young person like assistance?

- This young person declines this referral to housing assistance and the homeless liaison has provided them with your agency's contact information in case they change their mind.
- This young person would like assistance and by signing below gives the Single Point of Entry (SPOE) permission to contact them. This signature also gives the school district staff listed above the authority to release information regarding the student's housing situation to the AGENCY and its housing partners for the purpose of housing.

Student's name: _____

Student's Signature _____ Date: _____

How can we contact you?

Phone _____ Email: _____



ARE YOU A YOUNG PERSON IN NEED OF HOUSING SUPPORT?

**SCAN THIS QR
CODE TO GET
CONNECTED TO
SUPPORT RIGHT
NOW!**

**Are you having trouble
finding safe and stable
housing?**

**Are you at risk of losing your
housing?**

Homelessness and housing services are available to young people age 12-24 across Skagit County, including young people that aren't or can't stay with their families. The QR code form will connect you with outreach workers from The Skagit Valley Family YMCA and Northwest Youth Services.

If you are a K-12 student, your McKinney-Vento Liaison can get you access to support to keep you stably housed and attending school.

Updated 1/16/2023



Skagit County Referral Flier Form

[QR code links to service form at NWYS](#)

This form is also available in Spanish

Today's Date : _____

Date of Birth* _____

Where are you staying? _____

Is it safe? YES NO

What county are you most often in?*

Whatcom Skagit Island Whatcom/Skagit
Skagit/Island

First and Last Name* _____ What pronouns do you use today? _____

Choose the identity most applicable

Transgender Nonbinary Cisgender Other Prefer not
to say

Please explain any communication or translation needs.

Phone or email address*

Alternative Contact (ex. Facebook or Instagram account, place/time to meet you, etc.)

Is it safe to say NWYS is calling?

YES NO

Is it safe to leave a message?

YES NO

What services are you interested in today? Check all that apply

- Basic needs (clothing, food, restrooms, resting space, laundry, showers)
- Housing support
- Move-in or rental assistance for your current rental
- Employment and/or education support
- LGBTQ+ identity support
- Mental health support
- Activities, making friends, peer support
- Legal advice

Is there anything else you would like to talk to a staff member about?

Unaccompanied Homeless Student Emergency Safety Plan

This Emergency Safety Plan can help you identify and connect students and families with immediate and long-term support. Before starting this form, remind the student/family that all of the questions are voluntary and they can choose what to share or not share. Whenever possible, help the student/family make referral calls and ensure they follow through with the connection.

Who is requesting support? Unaccompanied Student Family

Section 1: Determine if the situation requires an immediate safety response.

1. Are you currently living with a parent, guardian, or foster parent?

Yes No Sometimes

2. Where did you stay last night? _____

3a. How long did you stay there?

3b. Do you feel safe there?

Yes No Sometimes

4a. Where are you staying tonight?

4b. Do you feel safe there?

Yes No Sometimes

If the student does not have a safe housing plan for tonight/the weekend, move on to Section 2. If they do, skip to Referral Needs Assessment.

Section 2: Brainstorm together about possible safe housing options for the night. Use these questions to help identify safe people to stay with temporarily.

- Where have you been staying over the past few weeks?
 - Could you stay at any of those places again?
- If transportation wasn't an issue, do you have family you might be able to stay with?
- Do you think any of your friends would let you sleep over tonight?
 - How long do you think you could stay there?

If the student or family identifies someone they might be able to stay with, help them call that person and ensure that they have transportation to get there.

If the student or family can't stay with friends or family, move on to Section 3.

Section 3: Identify possible emergency shelter options.

Unaccompanied Minors (under 18 yrs. old):

[Oasis Teen Shelter](#) in Mount Vernon, run by the Skagit Valley Family YMCA, provides emergency shelter and support to 13-17 year olds.

Call (360) 419-9058 or text (360) 230-0587 to access.

[The PAD](#) in Bellingham, run by Northwest Youth Services, provides emergency shelter to 13-17 year olds. Call 24 hours at (360) 393-0116 to access.

Unaccompanied 18-24 yr. olds:

[Friendship House](#) has sober adult shelters for men and women for up to 90 days in Mount Vernon. To request a bed

- at the [Men's Shelter](#) please call 360-336-2135,
- at the [Women and Children's Shelter](#) please call 360-336-2418.

Section 4: If the student or family isn't able to access or doesn't want to access any of these options, identify immediate supports that could help be more safe in the short term. Use these questions as a guide:

1. Where are you going to try to stay tonight?
2. How will you get there?
3. What is your back up plan?
4. Who will you call if it starts to feel unsafe?
5. Is your phone charged?
6. I have these basic supplies – do you need any of them?

The flier on the next page has a QR code that students can scan to get in contact with an outreach worker from Northwest Youth Services or the Skagit Valley YMCA. If a student is not in an immediate crisis, but may be in the future, make sure they take a flier with them if it feels safe for them to do so.

Unaccompanied Student Resource Referral Needs Assessment

Are you experiencing or fleeing domestic violence?

- Yes No Unsure Do not want to disclose

*If yes or unsure, give the number for **Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services/DVSAS** or call them together at the 24 hour hotline **(888) 336 9591**. They provide confidential safety planning, support, referrals and information.*

What is your housing situation?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Possibly getting evicted or kicked out | <input type="checkbox"/> Has been evicted or kicked out |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing is not safe | <input type="checkbox"/> Literally homeless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doubled up | <input type="checkbox"/> Staying with friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> No concern about housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Staying in shelter (_____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

How long can you stay there?

- Permanently At least two weeks
 I can't stay there Unsure

Did you experience any unstable housing situations since the beginning of the school year?

- Yes No Maybe

** Remember, students eligible for McKinney Vento at any point during the year are eligible for the full year*

What kind of housing support do you think you need?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency housing support | <input type="checkbox"/> Long term housing support (up to two years) | <input type="checkbox"/> Long term housing support (more than two years) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eviction/homelessness Prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation to stay with family/friends out of state | <input type="checkbox"/> Family counseling/mediation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence shelter | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Our school has a lot of resources for people going through hard situations – would any of these help?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> After-school program/sports fees | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing/uniform | <input type="checkbox"/> Access to shower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Someone to talk to my teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with the FAFSA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laundry service | <input type="checkbox"/> Fee waiver for SAT/ACT | <input type="checkbox"/> A homeless verification letter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food (for how many? ____) | | |

McKinney- Vento students have a right to continue attending and transportation to their school of origin, immediate enrollment with or without documentation or proof of residency, sports and club fee waivers, free school lunch, access to Title I programs, prioritized enrollment in Head Start, fee waivers for the SAT/ACT, and potential college access support.

What kinds of community resources do you think you need that we could refer you to?

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Case Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Dental Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare Access |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug/alcohol treatment | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family reconciliation | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal support | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic needs supplies | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help accessing benefits (ie SNAP, WIC) | <input type="checkbox"/> College access support | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job Training | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | | |

Homelessness Definitions

McKinney-Vento:

Refers to students lacking a fixed, regular, adequate living situation. It Includes literal homelessness, staying in a place not meant for human habitation, staying in a shelter or transitional housing, doubled-up or couch surfing.

HUD- funded Programs:

Most programs consider couch-surfing or being doubled up to be housing instability, not homelessness. Often a person has to be literally homeless, living in a shelter or transitional housing, staying in a place not meant for human habitation, or fleeing domestic violence to be able to access permanent housing programs.

Shelters:

Can accept anyone who needs a place to stay if a spot is open, but will often try to help those showing up to find a safer option first. If students are couch- surfing or doubled up and can continue, staff will often consider that safer than shelter.
Ultimately, it is a student's choice - if there is a spot open, they can take it, and should do what feels the most safe to them.

Youth Housing Program Eligibility

Domestic Violence:

[Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services](#) of Skagit County serves all survivors of DV. Call the 24 hour hotline (888) 336 9591 to get connected to a variety of services including crisis intervention, emergency shelter and counseling.

Homelessness Prevention and Diversion Resources

[Homeless Prevention and Diversion Fund \(HPDF\)](#): Helps young people 12-24 quickly secure housing outside of the homelessness system through creative brainstorming and housing navigation combined with flexible funding. Young people are eligible if they are literally homeless, staying in shelter, in an unstable or unsafe housing situation, fleeing DV or at imminent risk of homelessness, including youth who are undocumented and in mixed status families. Contact NorthSound ACH at Mario@northsoundach.org or a trained provider to refer.

Resources for Foster/Former Foster Youth:

[Extended Foster Care](#): Students in foster care at their 18th birthday have the option to enroll in extended foster care through 21. If a student decided not to access extended foster care but is 18-21 years old, they may be able to re-enroll if they were dependent at their 18th birthday. Young people in Extended foster care must be enrolled in high school or an equivalent program; enrolled in post secondary education; participating in a program designed to remove barriers to employment; working 80 hours/week; OR have a documented medical condition that prevents them from working. [Contact the student's DCYF case worker or call 1-866-END-HARM \(1-866-363-4276\)](#). Find more info [here](#).

[FYI Vouchers](#): Provides Section 8 tenant based vouchers to youth aged 18-25th birthday for 36 months of rent payments. Eligible youth must be dependent or formerly dependent youth who are 17 exiting care within 90 days, or are 18-21 leaving Extended Foster care within 90 days. Talk with your DCYF or EFC Caseworker. Find more info [here](#).

Family Shelter: Pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness are eligible for family shelter

Coordinated Entry Housing Assessment:

Coordinated Entry is a single process to see if youth are eligible for multiple longer term housing options and assess their vulnerability. After completing the assessment, young people are required to check in at least once every 90 days to confirm they are still needing housing support, and will get a call when there is an opening for housing they are eligible for. Openings depend on if programs are full or taking placements, which changes all the time, so there may be a wait. Young people are eligible if they are literally homeless or will be losing their housing within the next 14 days. [See the Flyer here](#) for more information.

Accessing Coordinated Entry: Clients can call 211 to be connected to a Navigator, who will follow up for an appointment. Otherwise, clients can be assessed at Oasis Teen Shelter, Northwest Youth Services, or by [walking into Community Action](#) (330 Pacific Place, Mount Vernon) M-T-Th-F from 10-3.

Youth Interest Pool: The Youth Interest Pool is Northwest Youth Services' waitlist for the

housing programs they administer. Young people can choose to be on the waitlist for all of the programs or just some of them. To get on the waitlist, young people should reach out to [Northwest Youth Services](#) or call Luke at 360-319-0169 to complete the assessment, which can be over the phone or in-person. Staff will typically respond M-Th within about a day.

Young people can do both a Coordinated Entry Assessment and be in the Youth Interest Pool

Legal Supports:

Legal Council for Youth and Children has a Staff Attorney based in Skagit county that can support young people experiencing homelessness and housing instability with a variety of legal supports, including for undocumented students. [Reach them through their online referral form.](#)