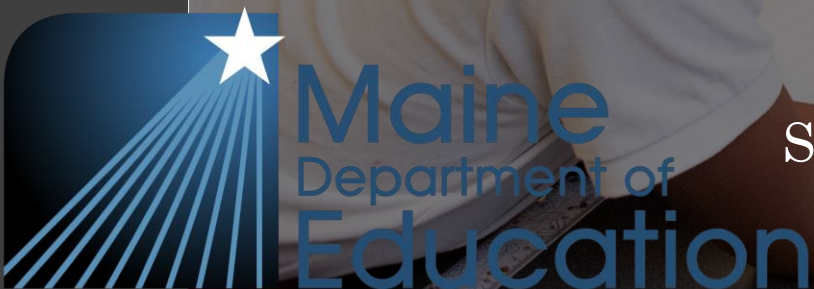


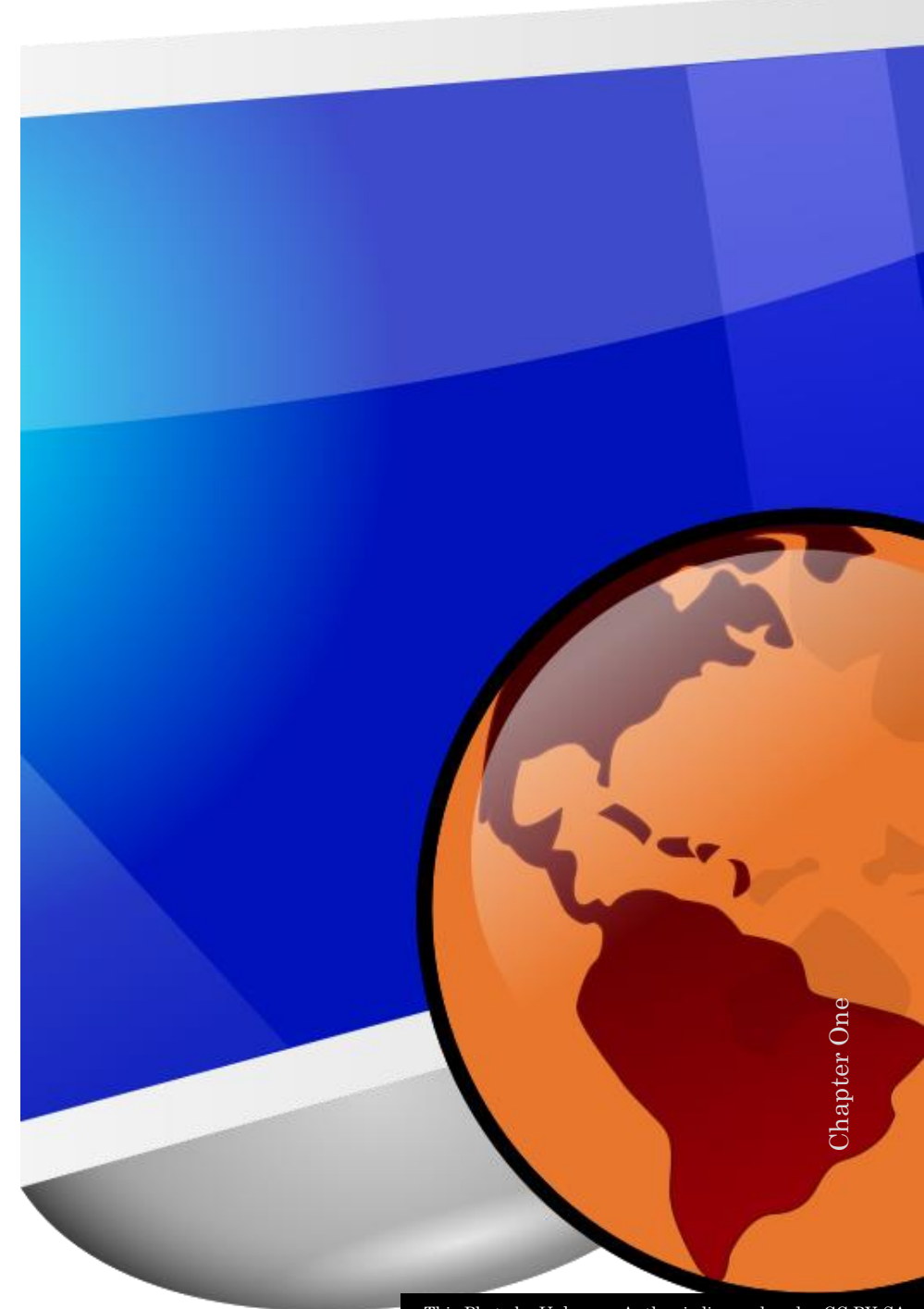
Maine Department of Education McKinney Vento Orientation School Year 2020 - 2021



Amelia Lyons
State Homeless Coordinator / Migrant Education Director

Maine Department of Education

- This is a self-paced guide to explore the basics of McKinney-Vento, using materials from the ME DOE, US DOE National Center on Homeless Education, SchoolHouse Connection, and other state DOEs
- Follow the links for additional reading materials, videos, and an assessment
- **Review of this PowerPoint and the assessment is required of each McKinney-Vento liaison in every SAU in Maine**
- Once you have completed the assessment with satisfactory scores (80% or higher), you will receive a certificate from the ME DOE
- To be in compliance with the DOE this should be completed before **October 31, 2020, or within 2 months of being assigned MV duties.**
- If you have any suggestions or questions on these materials, please share!





Learning Objectives

- At the end of this course, you will be able to:
 - Identify children and youth who meet the definition of “homeless” according to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
 - Determine what services students and families experiencing homelessness may be eligible for, based on their situations
 - Understand the educational rights of students experiencing homelessness, including protections for unaccompanied homeless youth; and
 - Help ensure that students experiencing homelessness have access to the services they need to succeed in school.

Topics

Overview and History

Local Educational Agency and Local Liaison Responsibilities

Identification of Students Experiencing Homelessness

Determining Eligibility

Enrolling Homeless Students

School Selection

Transportation

Dispute Resolution

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Working with Parents

Collaboration

Training and Awareness

Data Collection and Requirements



State Homeless Education Coordinator

- Every SEA has a State Coordinator for homeless education who supports local liaisons by providing technical assistance about State and Federal policies as well as administering the subgrant process that provides funding to LEAs.
- Maine's State Coordinator is available to assist you with any questions you may have:
 - [Amelia Lyons](#)
 - Amelia.lyons@maine.gov
 - 207-557-1787
 - Maine DOE's website for Homeless Education can be found [here](#)



Video: Homeless Students in Their Own Words (2 mins)



Chapter One: Overview & History

- The number of homeless children and youth enrolled in school has nearly **doubled** since the U.S. Department of Education began collecting the information in School Year 2004-05, with 1,263,323 students identified in School Year 2014-15.
- An inadequate stock of affordable housing, fluctuating unemployment rates, high health costs, and natural disasters combined with shrinking public resources has resulted in a steady increase of the number of children experiencing homelessness.

Overview & History

- Homeless children and youth face many educational barriers due to the disruption and trauma of not having a **fixed, regular, and adequate** place to live. Most face educational disruption due to changing schools as they move from one temporary location to another. Homeless children and youth also have higher incidences of illness, depression, and exposure to violence than their stably housed peers.
- Specific educational challenges faced by homeless students may include
 - not being identified for services;
 - difficulty enrolling without records or, in the case of an unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY), without a parent or guardian present;
 - difficulty regularly attending school;
 - lack of stable transportation;
 - frequent school changes;
 - falling behind in school;
 - not accruing credits on time;
 - lack of basic needs including food, clothing, and adequate housing;
 - stress, depression, trauma;
 - embarrassment and stigma related to their housing conditions.



Overview & History

- Many homeless youth are also *unaccompanied*, meaning they are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Being both homeless and unaccompanied leaves youth fending for themselves in a world where they are vulnerable to a myriad of potentially life-threatening dangers.
- For all these reasons, **school can often be the one place of stability, safety, and support in the lives of these students.**

Disparities

- Students who are homeless have an **18 percent chance of receiving services for a disability, which is 4 percent higher than the national average.**
- Black and Hispanic students are additionally disproportionately impacted by homelessness, with Black youth and young adults having an **83 percent higher risk of reporting homelessness compared to their white peers.**
- And students experiencing homelessness are over five times more likely to go hungry than their housed peers.

<https://www.crpe.org/thelens/students-experiencing-homelessness-are-largely-invisible-school-reopening-plans>





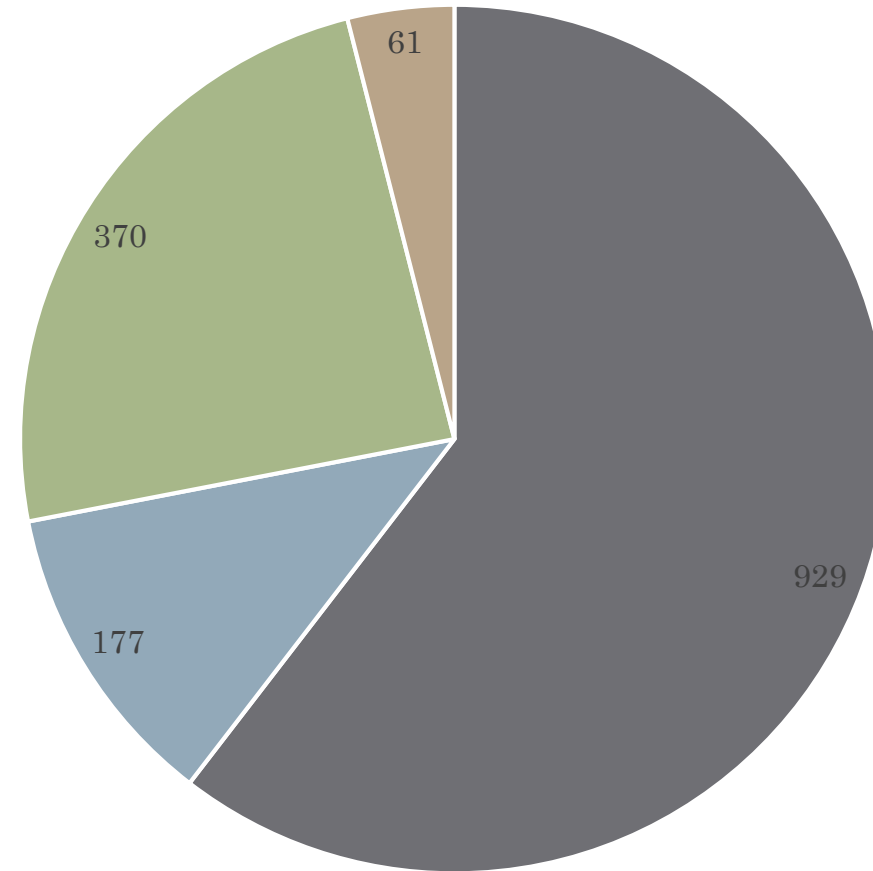
This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND

How to find MV Liaisons

- ❑ Are you listed as the MV contact for your district? Check [here](#). If this information is not up to date, work with your district to update NEO.

Student Homelessness in Maine

- From 2011 to 2020, our numbers of identified homeless students has almost doubled
- State average over the past 10 years, 1587 homeless students identified
- **Ranging between .46 % – 1.36% of student population**
- **National averages assume homeless students make up at least 3% of entire student population**



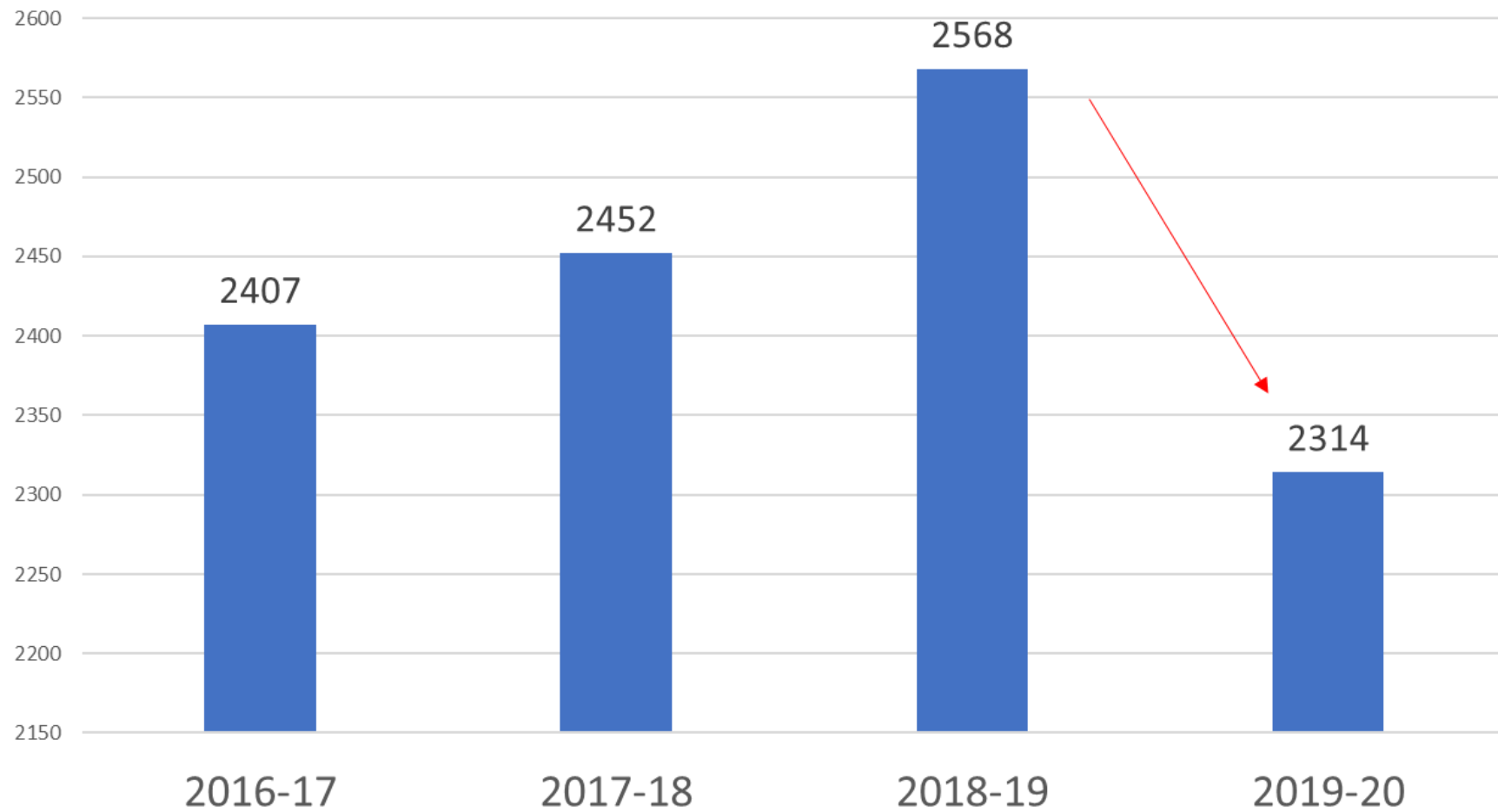
■ Doubled Up ■ Hotels/Motels
■ Shelters ■ Unsheltered

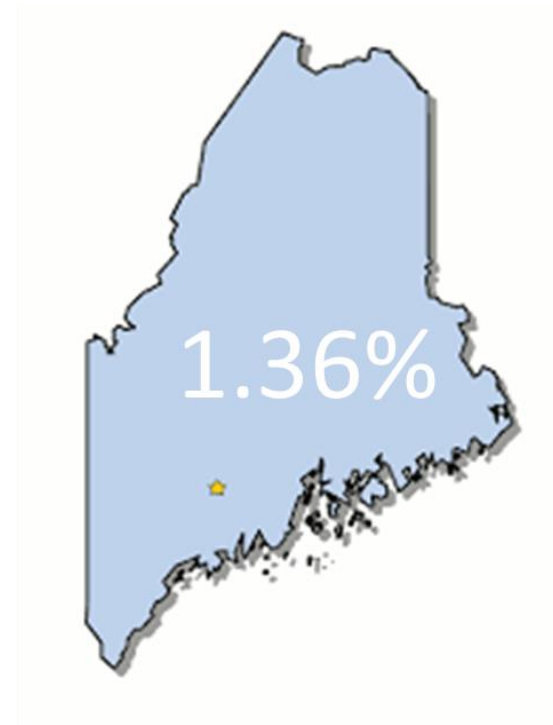
Child Poverty in Maine

- 44% of students in Maine are eligible for free lunch
- Approximately 70,000 Mainers (5.3 percent) live in “deep” or “extreme” poverty – or with an income below 50 percent of the poverty level
- While approximately 15% of white children lived in poverty, the rate was over 40% for children from Maine’s tribes and over 53% for children from Maine’s black or African American families
- Poverty remains notably worse in certain parts of the state. In rural areas like Washington and Somerset Counties, for example, close to 27% and 22% of children were growing up in poverty in 2017, respectively

https://www.mekids.org/site/assets/files/1241/kidscount_2019.pdf

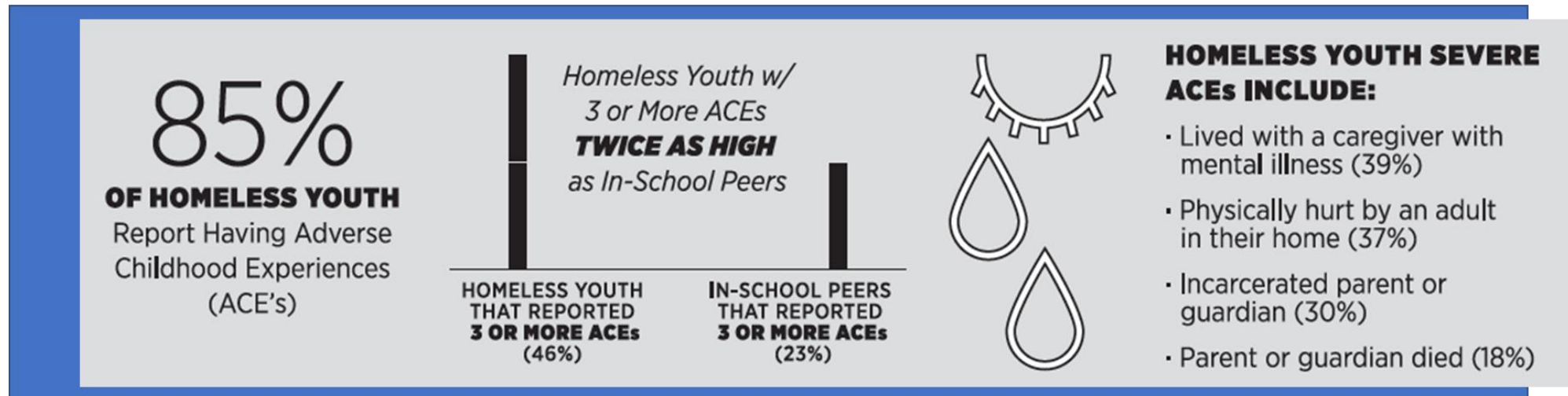
Change in Maine's Homeless Enrollment Count, SY2017-2020



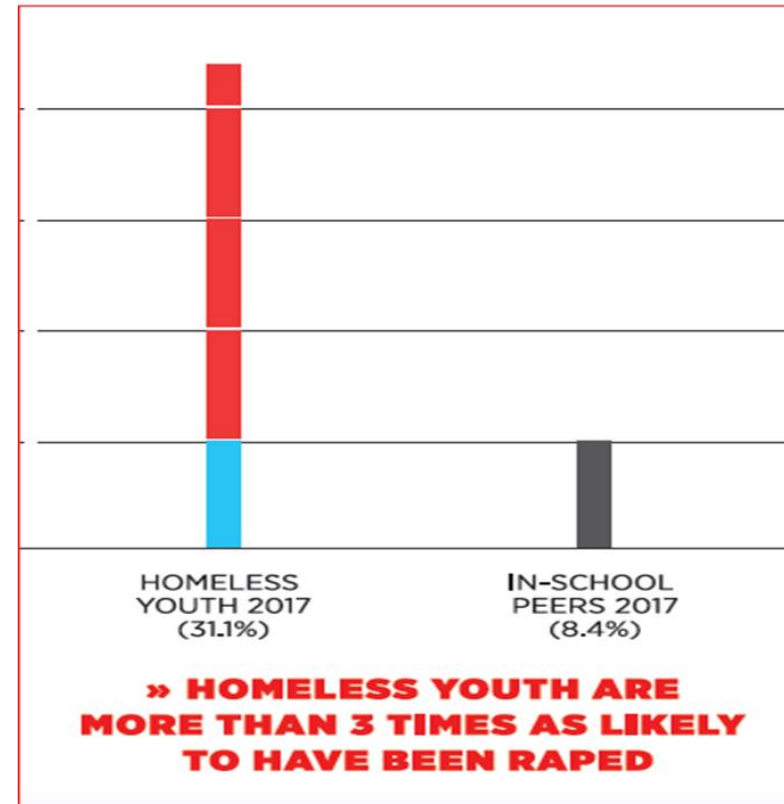
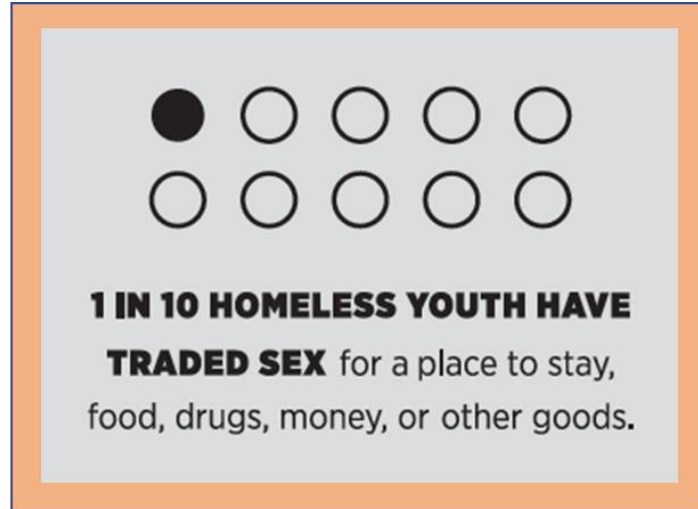


US: SY2018, NCHE. Percent of students reported homeless.

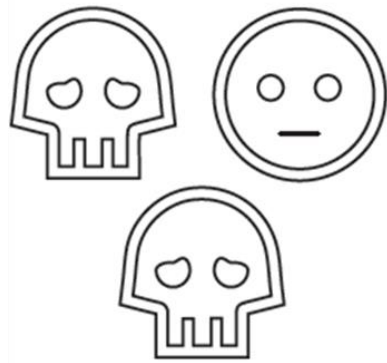
Graphics from MHYRBS follow: ACEs (3 slides), diversity (2), and attendance (1)



Graphic and data extracted from the 2017 Maine Homeless Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report (MHYRBS), www.newbeginnings.org



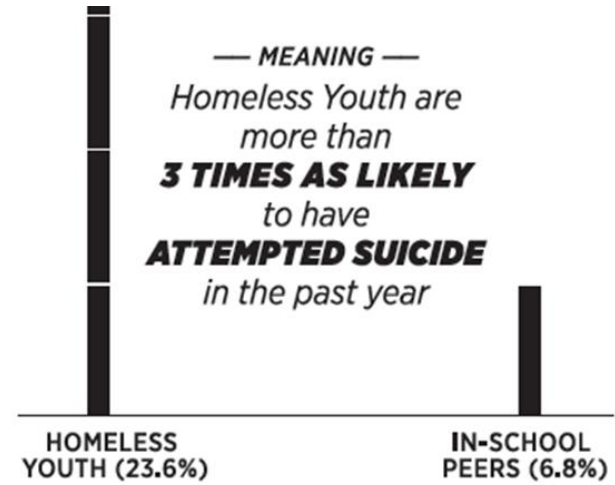
Graphic and data extracted from the 2017 Maine Homeless Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report (MHYRBS), www.newbeginnings.org



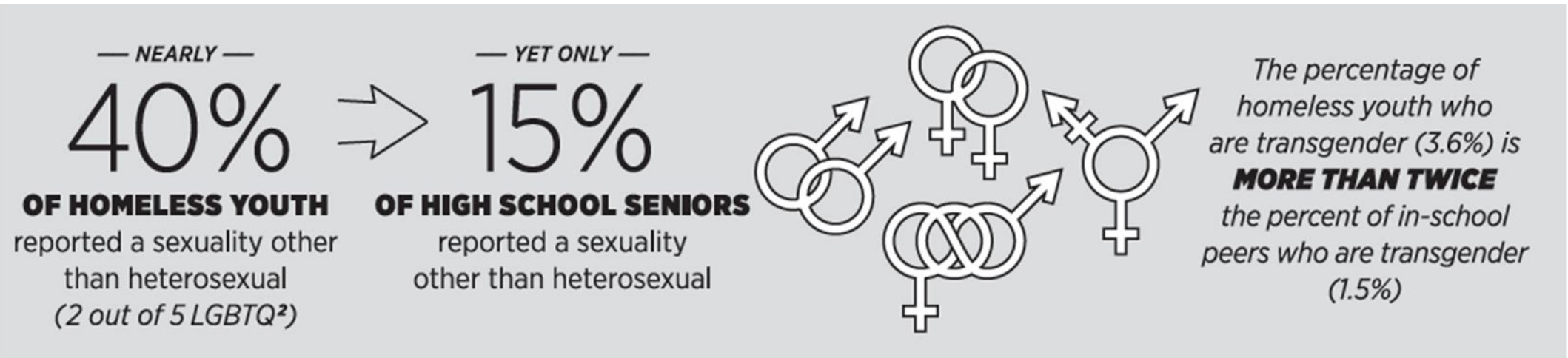
$\frac{2}{3}$ of Homeless Youth had made a **SUICIDE ATTEMPT** (67%) in the past year

A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE
2012 (26.6%) → **2017** (34.9%)

Suicide rates went up more than 30% nationally since 1999³

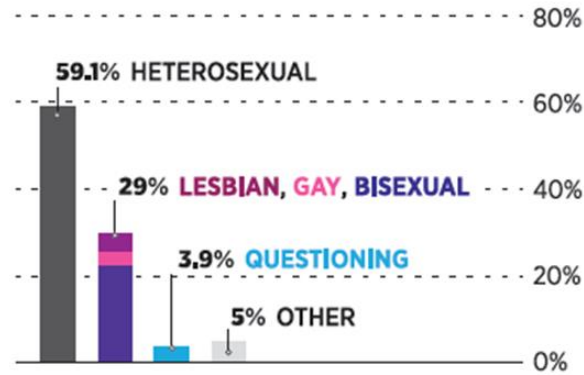
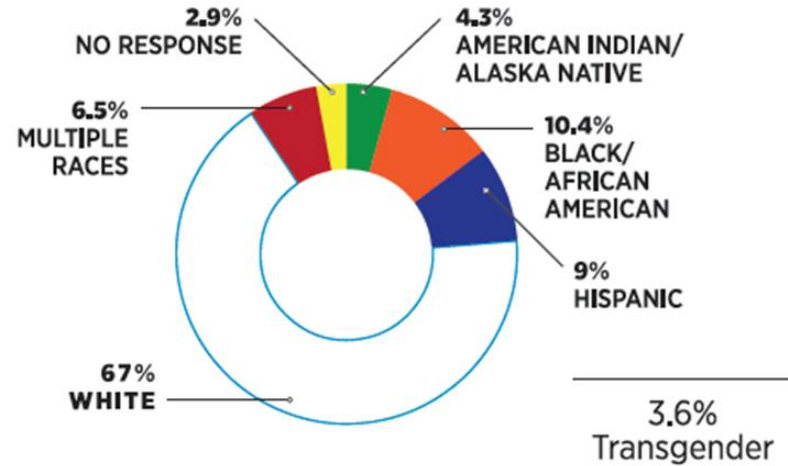


Graphic and data extracted from the 2017 Maine Homeless Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report (MHYRBS), www.newbeginnings.org

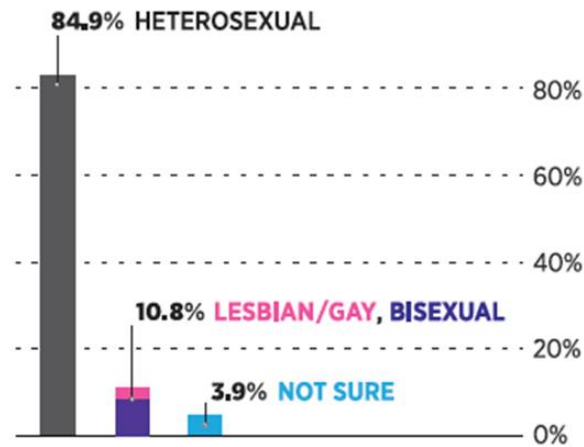
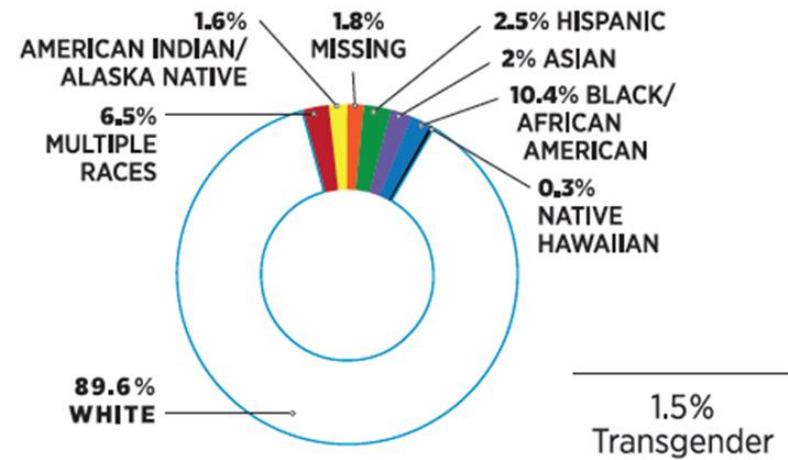


Graphic and data extracted from the 2017 Maine Homeless Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report (MHYRBS), www.newbeginnings.org

» HOMELESS YOUTH DIVERSITY



» IN-SCHOOL YOUTH DIVERSITY



Graphic and data extracted from the 2017 Maine Homeless Youth Risk Behavior Survey Report (MHYRBS), www.newbeginnings.org

Optional Additional Materials



[READING: REVIEW
CHAPTER ONE HERE](#)



[VIDEO: HOMELESSNESS IN
OUR SCHOOLS \(13 MINS\)](#)

Video: Supporting Homeless Students (5 mins)



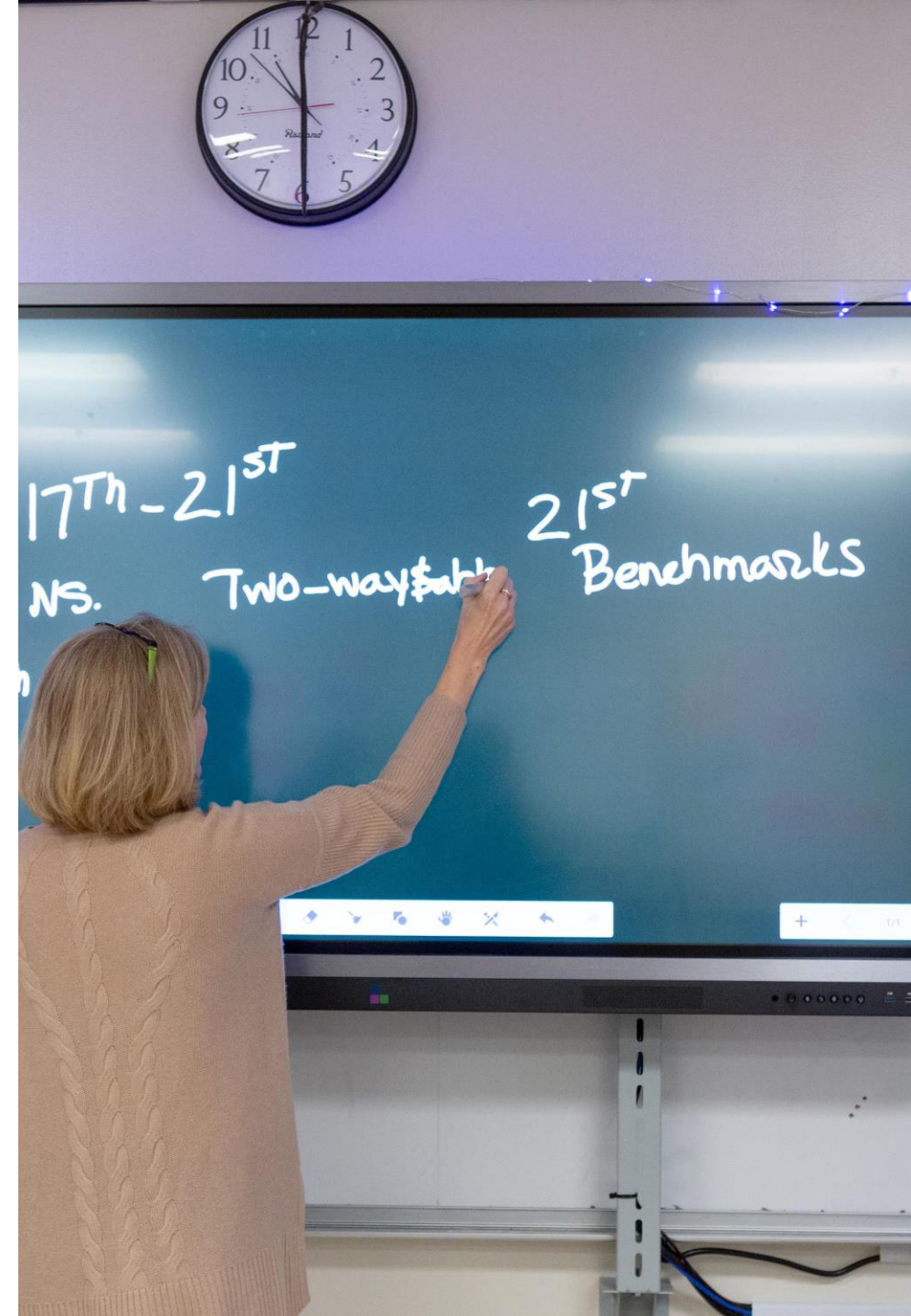
A group of people are gathered around a table in what appears to be a meeting or collaborative workspace. In the foreground, a woman with long dark hair and glasses is speaking and gesturing with her right hand. To her left, a man with a beard and glasses is looking towards her. Behind them, another man in a suit and bow tie is visible. The background features a wall with a colorful graphic that includes the word 'HAPPY'. A laptop with a 'USA' sticker is on the table in front of the woman.

Chapter Two: LEA and Local Liaison Responsibilities

LEA Responsibilities

All LEAs must follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act, whether or not they have a McKinney-Vento subgrant.

- continue a homeless child's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness and for the remainder of the academic year, if the child becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
- enroll the homeless child in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child is actually living are eligible to attend (school of residence)
- presume that keeping the child in the school of origin is in the child's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the child's parent or guardian, or (in the case of UHY) the youth;
- consider student-centered factors related to the child's best interest, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless children and youths, giving priority to the request of the child's parent or guardian or (in the case of UHY) the youth;





LEA Responsibilities [continued]

- provide a written explanation of the reasons for the LEA's decision, including information regarding the right to appeal, to the parent or guardian of a homeless student or to a UHY, if the LEA sends the child to a school other than the one requested; and
- ensure, in the case of an UHY, that the local liaison assists in placement or enrollment decisions, gives priority to the views of the youth, and provides notice of the right to appeal an LEA's best interest determination that is contrary to the youth's request
- immediately enroll the child, even without records that are normally required for enrollment or if the child has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness;
- contact the school last attended for relevant records;
- assist with obtaining immunizations or other required health records; and
- make any records ordinarily kept by the school available in a timely fashion when the child enrolls in a new school



- *If a dispute arises over eligibility, or school selection or enrollment in a school*
 - the child must be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals;
 - the parent or guardian of the child or (in the case of an UHY) the youth must be provided with a written explanation of any decisions related to eligibility, school selection or enrollment made by the school, LEA, or State educational agency (SEA), including the rights to appeal the decision;
 - the parent, guardian, or UHY must be referred to the local liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process; and
 - in the case of an UHY, the local liaison must ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in the school in which the youth seeks enrollment pending resolution of the dispute

Privacy provisions require LEAs to

- treat information about a homeless child's living situation as a student education record and not deem it to be directory

Comparable services provisions require LEAs to

- provide services comparable to those received by other students in the school

Coordination provisions require LEAs to

- coordinate with local social services agencies and other agencies or entities providing services to homeless children and their families, including services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act



A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light pink button-down shirt, is seated at a wooden conference table. She is looking towards the right side of the frame. On the table in front of her are a tablet, a smartphone, and some papers. In the background, there is a large glass-walled conference room with other people seated at tables.

Local liaison responsibilities

- Ensure that homeless children are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other agencies;
- homeless children are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, school;
- homeless families, children, and youth have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start programs, early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other preschool programs administered by the LEA
- homeless families, children, and youth receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance use services, housing services, and other appropriate services
- the parents or guardians of homeless children are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children

Local liaison responsibilities (continued)

- public notice of the educational rights of homeless children is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians of homeless children and UHY, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to parents and guardians and UHY
- enrollment disputes are mediated
- the parent or guardian of a homeless child, and any UHY, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin;
- school personnel who serve homeless children receive professional development and other support
- UHY are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards established for other students, and are informed of their status as independent students and assisted to receive verification of their status for completing the FAFSA



Understanding the Homeless Education Program in My LEA

Question	Source
Who is the State Coordinator for the homeless education program in my State? What technical assistance and training does the State Coordinator provide to LEAs?	NCHE Website; SEA Homeless Education Website
How much time is allocated to the local homeless liaison position? What additional staff support is in place?	Supervisor
How many homeless children did the LEA identify last year? Are the numbers identified increasing or decreasing? By how much?	LEA Data Manager
Does the LEA have a McKinney-Vento subgrant? If so, what are the approved activities to serve homeless children? What are my reporting responsibilities? For how long will the LEA receive funds through this grant?	McKinney-Vento Subgrant Application

<p>How much money is set aside for services for homeless children through Title I, Part A? How was the amount of these funds determined? On what were these funds spent last year? How may they be accessed?</p>	Title I Coordinator, Consolidated Application
<p>What are the challenges to implementing the McKinney-Vento program in the LEA?</p>	Phone and Email Logs, Documentation on Disputes
<p>What local policies and procedures are in place to support services for homeless children? What policies or procedures create barriers to the education of homeless children?</p>	LEA Policy Handbook, School Board Policies, Phone and Email Logs, Documentation on Disputes, LEA Program Coordinators (Tutoring Programs, Nutrition, Special Education, English Language Learning, Migrant)
<p>What data must be collected on homeless children, and what procedures are in place to collect and report this data?</p>	State Coordinator, LEA Data Coordinator
<p>How many homeless children were transported to their school of origin in the past year? What are the procedures for arranging transportation?</p>	Pupil Transportation Director, Student Files
<p>What McKinney-Vento compliance issues have been identified in my district?</p>	SEA Monitoring Reports
<p>What is the local dispute process for the McKinney-Vento program, and who is involved in the process other than the liaison?</p>	Written Dispute Policy
<p>What homeless education awareness activities have taken place in the LEA? What role groups have been involved? Were the activities effective?</p>	Meeting Agendas and Notes
<p>With whom are the primary community agencies collaborating to serve homeless children?</p>	Meeting Agendas and Notes, Phone and Email Logs
<p>Are posters on McKinney-Vento services displayed in all schools? When was the last time posters and other awareness materials were placed in each school in the LEA?</p>	Observation in Schools, Budget or Fiscal Office

Key Role Groups and Agencies to Contact

Person or Agency to Contact	Information or Services Provided
State Coordinator for Homeless Education	Your State Coordinator will be able to link you to essential training for your position, add you to a distribution list for local liaisons to receive routine communication, and link you with other local liaisons for support.
LEA Title I Coordinator	The Title I Coordinator will be able to explain what Title I services are provided to homeless children and how Title I, Part A set-aside funds are spent.
Coordinator for Special Education	The Coordinator for Special Education will explain how children who are homeless and highly mobile can be evaluated and provided services in a timely way even though they may move in and out of the district; also, you should ask to review Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for homeless children and attend IEP meetings for these students.
Director of Pupil Transportation	Establishing ongoing communication with the Director of Pupil Transportation will ensure that you work together as partners to arrange transportation for homeless students expeditiously.
Director of Child Nutrition	The Director of Child Nutrition will explain procedures to ensure homeless children are provided free meals. This happens as soon as the nutrition program is provided the names of students identified as homeless. The Director of Child Nutrition should also notify liaisons of any barriers to providing free meals immediately.
District Data Manager	The District Data Manager can explain the process for the annual collection and submission of data on homeless students. This person is also a great resource for accessing data about the needs of homeless students that can be used to create awareness among school personnel and community members.
Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Programs	Programs that receive funding from HUD are mandated to coordinate with local homeless liaisons. Contacting these agencies and cultivating relationships will help you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the “big picture” of homelessness in your LEA, • establish ongoing communication that can assist you with identifying homeless children and linking them to services, • explore collaborative relationships to share resources.
Shelter Providers	Shelter providers play a key role in helping to identify homeless children and families and referring them to schools. Providing them with your contact information and awareness posters will assist in establishing ongoing communication. To find programs in your community funded by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, visit: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/grants/fysb-grantees
Head Start	Head Start is mandated to prioritize services for young homeless children and to coordinate with homeless liaisons. Contacting the Head Start program in your LEA will assist you with identifying homeless students and exploring collaborative opportunities.

Optional Additional Resources on LEA and Liaison Responsibilities

Reading

- [Chapter Two: Local Educational Agency and Local Liaison Responsibilities](#)

Optional additional resources

- [Appendix 2.A Homeless Liaison Responsibilities](#)
- [Appendix 2.B Quick Guide to Important Sections of the McKinney-Vento Act](#)
- [Appendix 2.C Understanding My LEA's Homeless Education Program](#)
- [Example Flowchart of Services for Homeless Students](#)



Take a break

Chapter Three: Identification of Students Experiencing Homelessness



Who's tasked with identifying students?

- While it is true that local liaisons themselves will and should identify many of the homeless students in a LEA, the actual charge in the law is for local liaisons to ensure that homeless students are identified “by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies”
- Local liaisons are not expected to do the work alone and bear the sole responsibility for identifying students.
- Collaboration with other educational programs and even agencies outside the LEA is not only encouraged, but it is expected.



Collaboration in your district

- School staff who may be particularly helpful in meeting the requirement to identify homeless students include
 - school nurses;
 - front office and registration staff;
 - truancy and attendance officers;
 - cafeteria staff;
 - bus drivers;
 - school social workers and counselors;
 - classroom teachers and aides; and
 - administrators, such as principals or directors of special education and Title I.

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#)

Collaboration

the McKinney-Vento Act also includes requirements for collaboration, as does the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Title I, Part A requires that programs operated under its authority coordinate at the state and local levels

All districts must also have an application approved by the SEA that addresses Title I, Part A coordination with McKinney-Vento.

Child Find provisions in IDEA include a specific requirement that states ensure homeless children with disabilities are identified, located, and evaluated



Public Notice About the Rights of Homeless Children

- Schools,
- Family shelters,
- Public libraries,
- Soup kitchens,
- youth organizations,
- transitional living program sites,
- day or community centers,
- Community Action Agencies,
- welfare and housing offices,
- Local Career Centers,
- homeless coalitions,
- free or low cost health clinics,
- low cost motels,
- storage facilities,
- check cashing businesses, and
- laundromats.

Strategies for identification

- *Housing Questionnaires:* Including a housing questionnaire with a simple statement of rights in the general enrollment and registration packet received by all students as they sign up for school is a good way to ensure the entire student population is informed. By providing the information in all the enrollment packets, no one feels singled out or stigmatized, but even those who are not homeless become more aware of things happening in the community. [Sample Housing Information Form.](#)
- *Enrollment forms for programs serving at-risk students:* By reviewing the forms for other educational programs, such as the school meals, Title I, or 21st Century Community Learning Centers programs, liaisons can quickly identify students who may qualify as homeless. Cooperative agreements with early childhood programs like Head Start can also lead to questions on enrollment or intake forms that result in referrals to the liaison when a homeless child is identified.



Strategies for Identification

- *Quick reference lists:* Keeping a list of local low-cost motels or shelters discretely located on the desk of enrollment staff for easy reference can help the staff recognize addresses that may indicate homelessness when students enroll.
- *Cooperative enrollment events:* Events like Kindergarten Round-up or Head Start enrollment fairs can lead to more identified students. Many communities also host events referred to as Homeless Connect, which focus on connecting persons in need with agencies and organizations that can help them, including schools.
- *Awareness trainings:* Strategies for raising the awareness of school staff and community members can include brief updates during regular staff meetings or more intensive workshops that target specific goals related to homelessness and educational outcomes.
- *Relationship building:* By making personal contact with managers at low-cost hotels, social service agencies, local law enforcement, and other public service agencies, liaisons can increase the number of people on the lookout for students in need.
- *District website:* The LEA website often contains the student handbook and other important information targeted to students and their families. It can be a great tool for increasing awareness and disseminating information about the rights of homeless students as well as listing contact information for the liaison.
- *Attendance hearings:* Liaisons may recognize homelessness in students who are under review for attendance problems related to their homelessness which other staff may miss. By either participating in behavior review committees or by training truancy and attendance officers, liaisons will increase the identification of homeless students.
- *Mailing labels and transportation logs:* Checking transportation or address logs may be a good way to identify students who are doubled-up due to loss of housing as liaisons may notice several families in one location. Likewise, working with the transportation department to identify any unusual transportation changes or requests can also result in the identification of homeless students.

Identification Strategies for UHY

- *Involving youth* : Students who may be too embarrassed to ask for assistance or otherwise trust an adult may be willing to reach out to a liaison if other youth are involved or inform them of their rights.
- *Surveying youth*: Youth may become estranged from their families after enrolling in school; a mid-year youth survey could help identify those students not otherwise identified through enrollment questionnaires. Liaisons may also be able to work with their health services offices to include this information as a part of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), a national, school-based survey to evaluate adolescent behaviors that harm health and well-being.
- *Targeting outreach*: Notices regarding the rights of youth experiencing homelessness should be posted in places where youths may see them and be written in a youth friendly format. Working with street outreach teams for youth can also be a good way to reach youth.
- *Incorporating the topic*: The topic of homelessness can be incorporated into the school curriculum or school convocations. This not only reaches youth who are homeless but also housed youth with homeless friends who may be willing to help connect them to liaisons. For example, students could be assigned a current events project in their civics course on the topic of homelessness.

Optional additional resources

Reading: Issue Brief: *Identifying Students in Homeless Situations*

Reading: Chapter Three from Toolkit

Video: How to identify homeless school students (<2 mins)

Considerations

- ☐ What is on your school and district website about MV? Would it be easy for families or other liaisons to find out that you are the district contact?
- ☐ What materials are you posting in your school buildings, community centers, shelters, food pantries? Find resources here.
- ☐ What is your housing questionnaire look like? Is it included in online enrollment? Do other community partners screen for homelessness and make referrals to you?

Take a break!



Chapter Four: Determining Eligibility

- It is important to explain to the family or youth that the purpose of the questions is to determine if the student is eligible for additional educational supports
- Have conversation in a location that provides privacy and discretion
- Avoid using the term homeless, unless the family uses it first
- Use terms like families in transition, displaced, or referring to temporary housing situations



Definition

- Homelessness is defined as lacking a **fixed, regular, and adequate** nighttime residence. Situations specifically described in the McKinney-Vento Act include
 - sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason,
 - living in hotels, motels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of adequate housing,
 - living in emergency or transitional housing,
 - or children abandoned at hospitals.

It also includes a primary nighttime residence that is not designed for or ordinarily used as a sleeping accommodation for humans, living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, and migratory children living in one of the circumstances described previously.

Definitions

- **Fixed** is defined as “not subject to change or fluctuation” and inhabitant is described “as distinguished from an occasional lodger or visitor”
- **Regular** is defined as “normal or standard” or “consistent”
- **Adequate** is described as “fully sufficient and equal to what is required, as well as lawfully and reasonably sufficient”
- In other words, if a housing situation does not clearly fall under one of the categories provided in the definition of homelessness provided in the law, you should **ask yourself if the student can go to the same place every night to sleep in a safe and sufficient space**. If the answer is no, the student likely meets the criteria of lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and should be considered homeless.



Definition – what happened to awaiting foster care placement?

- *Per Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, "awaiting foster care placement" was removed from the definition of homeless on December 10, 2016.
- Every district now has a Foster Care Point of Contact who is tasked with ensuring educational stability and best interest determinations for students in foster care.
- Do you know who the Foster Care Point of Contact is in your district?

If you're still not sure if they're eligible



REVISIT THE LIAISON
TOOLKIT



ASK OTHER MV LIAISONS
IN NEARBY DISTRICTS
THAT YOU KNOW



CALL OR E-MAIL AMELIA
LYONS, STATE
COORDINATOR



NCHE OPERATES A
HELPLINE WHICH
LIAISONS CAN CONTACT AT
(800) 308-2145 OR
HOMELESS@SERVE.ORG

Complex Conditions: Doubled Up

Doubled-up situations can be particularly confusing when making housing determinations because it can be difficult to discern fixed housing from temporary.

The law refers to this category of homelessness as “sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason”.

According to data collected by the U.S. Department of Education, **this category of nighttime residence is the type experienced by the largest number of students each year (NCHE, 2013).**

Complex Conditions: Doubled Up



If the reason the family or youth moved in with a family member or friend is clearly due to loss of housing or even job loss, it can be easy to determine that the housing fits the category of doubled-up.



Similarly, sometimes shared housing is clearly inadequate and therefore easy to identify.



It is important to keep in mind that **the reason for the lost housing is not discussed in the law** and can include a wide range of catalysts such as unpaid rent or mortgage payments on the part of the family or landlord, housing covenant violations, fires, natural disasters, and more.



Additionally, **there is no time limit on homelessness**. As long as the student fits the definition of lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, the student will be eligible for McKinney-Vento services.

If you encounter a confusing shared housing situation, asking some of the following questions may help you determine if the student is eligible for assistance under the McKinney-Vento definition

Why did the family move in together? Was it for mutual benefit or due to a crisis or other precipitating event?

Is there a plan for the household to remain intact over a long term, or is it a short term situation?

Where would the family be if they were not able to stay where they are? In a clearly homeless situation or in another apartment or house?

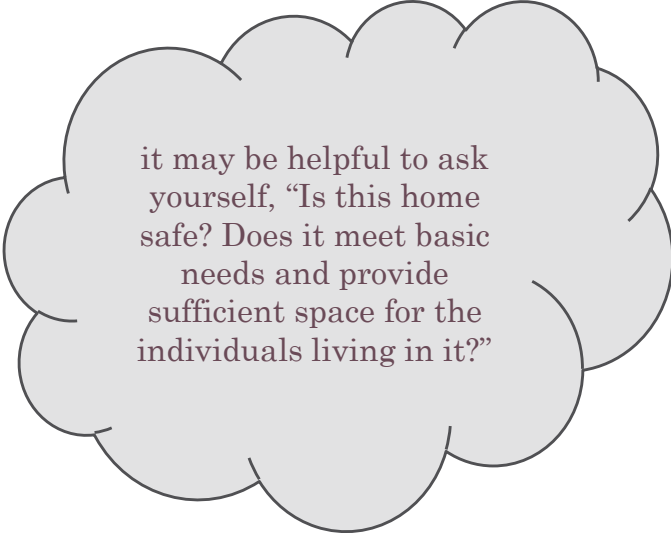
Does everyone have a bed to sleep in? Is the plumbing and electric service safe? Is the housing otherwise adequate?

Is the family being added to the lease, or have they signed a lease?

Does the homeowner or renter have a legal right to force the family to leave without cause if they choose to do so?

Complex Conditions: Substandard Housing

- Substandard housing does not have a definition in federal law or rule. This can lead to frustration on the part of liaisons making eligibility determinations, but it also allows liaisons to have flexibility in making determinations that reflect regional norms and community standards that would be difficult to capture in a single definition applied to the entire country.
- One simple consideration for liaisons is to determine **if the housing is up to state or local building codes and health and safety codes**. If it is not, the housing is probably substandard and any student residing there would likely meet the definition of homeless due to inadequate housing.
- Examples of substandard housing could include homes:
 - That are overcrowded;
 - without adequate heat, electricity, or water;
 - with unsafe heat sources or electrical service;
 - with unsafe conditions, such as holes in flooring;
 - with a kitchen or plumbing that is inoperable; or
 - condemned by housing or other government authorities.



it may be helpful to ask yourself, “Is this home safe? Does it meet basic needs and provide sufficient space for the individuals living in it?”

Do's of Determining Eligibility

Do implement the use of a district-wide residency questionnaire.

Do have parents, youth, or caregivers sign enrollment forms indicating that McKinney-Vento services are offered based on information they have provided about their living situations.

Do use only school staff trained on the McKinney-Vento Act and homelessness to do home visits.

Do use visits only when necessary. Do explain to the family, youth, and the homeowner why the visit is occurring. Assure them that all information will remain confidential, and conduct only the minimum investigation necessary to verify the living situation.

Do collaborate with neighboring school district liaisons.

Do contact previous schools to determine if the student was identified as homeless while attending that school.

Do use caller ID to verify when parents or youth call from a hotel, motel, or shelter.

Do talk with parents and youth about their situations, focusing on basic questions and using care and sensitivity.

Do work with parents, youth, and caregivers to determine if they are able to provide any documents that could confirm their living situations.

Don'ts of Determining Eligibility

Keeping interactions with families and youth positive and supportive instead of invasive and threatening is essential to keeping homeless students connected to school.

- × Don't contact landlords or housing agencies to conduct investigations about a student or family as it violates FERPA and is unlikely to provide useful information.
- × Don't conduct surveillance of students or families, such as following them, observing them from outside their residences, or talking to neighbors about their living situations.
- × Don't use police officers for home visits.
- × Don't require documents like eviction notices, utility bills, occupancy permits, or notarized letters from host families.
- × Don't force caregivers to obtain legal custody or guardianship. The McKinney-Vento Act requires the immediate enrollment of UHY; legal custody or guardianship cannot be prerequisites and are not appropriate in many instances.
- × Don't force people into shelters or onto the streets as a prerequisite for McKinney-Vento services.

Important Reminders



Can schools or anyone affiliated with the school contact a landlord, leaseholder, housing authority, or anyone else to discuss a student's or family's living situation?

No. Schools must not contact the landlords of host families or any other third party to discuss the student's or family's living situation. Residence information provided by parents, guardians, or youth to schools is part of the student's educational records and protected by federal privacy laws; sharing student and family housing information would be a violation of federal law. Such contact could also lead to the eviction of the host family. However, the Act does not prohibit schools from requiring parents, guardians, or youth to submit emergency contact information.

“If runaway youth would just follow their parents’ rules, they could live at home; why should we encourage their bad behavior?”

- Most runaway youth, especially those who stay away from home a significant length of time, have fled abusive homes for their own survival. **Studies of unaccompanied youth have found that 20 to 50 percent were sexually abused in their homes, while 40 to 60 percent were physically abused.** Severe dysfunction in the home is also common. Thirty percent of callers to the National Runaway Switchboard identified negative family dynamics as the leading reason for leaving home.
- For example, **over two-thirds of unaccompanied youth surveyed in a recent study reported that at least one parent abused drugs or alcohol**
- Many young people are not welcome in their parents’ or guardians’ homes due to their sexual orientation or identity, pregnancy, or other types of family conflict.
- **20 to 40% of homeless youth identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, questioning and/or transgender**

“If runaway youth would just follow their parents’ rules, they could live at home; why should we encourage their bad behavior?” [continued]

- **10% of currently homeless female teenagers are pregnant**
- **More than half of youth living on the streets became homeless for the first time because they were asked to leave home by a parent or caregiver.** Youth often leave home to remove themselves from an immediately painful situation, but without plans for what to do next.
- **In a recent survey of unaccompanied homeless youth in California, over half felt that being homeless was as safe as or safer than being at home. More than 60% of homeless youth report being raped, beaten, robbed or otherwise assaulted while living on the streets, and homelessness is the largest risk factor for commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of minors.**

Determining Eligibility – Optional Additional Resources

- Reading: [Chapter Four](#)
- [Video: NCHE Determining Eligibility](#) (15 mins)
- [Video: Understanding Doubled Up](#) (18 mins)

Issue Brief: Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act

https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/briefs/det_elig.pdf

Issue Brief: Meeting the Needs of Students Displaced by Disasters: Youth on Their Own

https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/briefs/csds_youth.pdf

Issue Brief: What School District Administrators Should Know About the Educational Rights of Children Displaced by Disasters

https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/briefs/csds_admin.pdf

Take a break



A photograph of two young girls standing in a library. The girl on the left is Black with long braids, wearing a camouflage t-shirt and black leggings, carrying a black backpack. The girl on the right is white with long brown hair, wearing a purple t-shirt and grey leggings, holding a purple folder. They are standing in front of a long wooden table with colorful chairs. In the background, there are wooden bookshelves filled with books.

Chapter Five: Enrolling Homeless Students

Enrollment

The term *enrollment* is a critical part of the law and is defined as, “attending classes and participating fully in school activities” [42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(1)].

Schools are required to enroll homeless students immediately, even if they have missed application or enrollment deadlines while experiencing homelessness and regardless of what point in the school year in which a homeless student presents for enrollment.

Placing students in classrooms without records

- LEAs should request records immediately from the schools that students attended previously. For students whose records might be unavailable or possibly even damaged or missing due to a natural disaster, it is incumbent upon receiving schools to begin building new student records based on information gathered from parents, students, local district or state-level student databases, and any other reliable sources of student information.
- While waiting for records to arrive, phone or email conversations with teachers and school counselors may assist liaisons in determining which classroom is an appropriate placement for students. Similarly, doctors, nurses, or psychologists involved in the evaluation and development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) can also help schools determine the most appropriate classroom placement. Report cards, tests, and homework assignments provided by families or youth can be good sources of information as well.

Sample questions for parents

- Do you have any papers from the previous school, such as notes from teachers, homework assignments, tests, progress reports, or any other papers?
- Have you worked with your child on any recent homework assignments? If so, what were the assignments about?
- What were your child's grades like? What does your child find easy? Difficult?
- Did you ever go to a meeting at school with a lot of teachers, a doctor, or someone from the school district office?
- Did you ever sign any papers that talked about goals for your child or special school services?
- How many students were in your child's classroom?
- How many teachers were in your child's classroom?



Sample questions for students

What was your school day like at your former school?

What were you learning in your math/history/science/language class?

What did you find easy? Difficult?

What were some of your recent homework assignments? Do you have any old homework assignments, tests, notes from teachers, or other papers from school?

What was the name of your math/history/science/language class?

Did you ever spend time alone or in a small group with a different teacher?

Did you ever spend time alone or in a small group in a different classroom?

What were your grades like?

Enrolling Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY)

- **The absence of a parent or guardian is not sufficient reason to delay or deny enrollment.**
- UHY who are completely on their own or staying with a non-custodial caregiver must be enrolled immediately.
- Liaisons should discuss the options for enrollment with UHY and ensure they receive assistance with making enrollment decisions, giving priority to the youth's wishes.
- Caregiver forms, which outline who can act on behalf of an UHY in educational matters, can be very helpful during enrollment and when making educational decisions for the students.



- FERPA outlines to whom records can be released and under what conditions, which can be especially important when enrolling students who are survivors of domestic violence. FERPA does allow for the transfer of records from one local educational agency (LEA) to another without parental consent, as long as the LEA has made a reasonable attempt to notify the parent of the disclosure or includes in the district's annual FERPA notification to parents that school records will be forwarded to enrolling schools. This allows districts to easily get records needed for UHY.

Optional additional resources regarding enrollment

- Reading: [Chapter Five Enrolling Homeless Students](#)
- Considerations
 - ☐ What is the enrollment process at your school?
 - ☐ Do registrars know the signs of homelessness?
 - ☐ Do they know that students have a right to immediate enrollment, even without documents?
 - ☐ Does your school have a standard caregiver form?
- Optional additional resources
 - **Issue Brief: *Enrollment***
 - **Issue Brief: *Prompt and Proper Placement: Enrolling Students Without Records***
 - **Issue Brief: *When Legal Guardians are not Present: Enrolling Students on Their Own***



Chapter Six: School Selection



According to the McKinney-Vento Act, students have the following school selection options:

- The school of origin or
- The school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area are eligible to attend (AKA district of residence)
- The *school of origin* is defined as “the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool.”
- The law also states, “When the child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the term ‘school of origin’ shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools”

School Selection

- A homeless student may attend a school of origin for the entire duration of the homelessness (which may be many years) or until the end of any school year in which the student becomes permanently housed.
- Students who become homeless over the summer may also remain in their school of origin for the upcoming school year.
- Regardless of the school option chosen, the placement of students experiencing homelessness should always be **based on the student's best interest.**

In determining the best interest of the homeless child or youth regarding school selection, the LEA must

- **presume that keeping the child in the school of origin is in the child's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the child's parent, guardian, or (in the case of an UHY) the youth;**

Determining the best interest

- consider student-centered factors related to the child's best interest, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless children, giving priority to the request of the child or parent/guardian
- if, after conducting the best interest determination the LEA determines that it is not in the child's best interest to attend the school of origin or the school requested by the parent or guardian, provide the child's parent or guardian or UHY with a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian, or UHY, including information regarding the right to appeal; and
- in the case of an UHY, ensure that the LEA liaison assists in the placement or enrollment decisions, gives priority to the views of the UHY, and provides notice of the right to appeal

Remember



Frequent school changes can cause educational disruption and additional stress for a student experiencing homelessness that result in many homeless students falling behind in school, performing poorly, and dropping out.



A student should always be kept in the school of origin, unless doing so
(1) directly contradicts the desires of the parent, guardian, or UHY or
(2) would negatively impact the student's achievement, education,
health, and safety.



Check out the [Interview Checklists for Supporting School Selection](#)

Considerations for BID

How permanent does the family's current living arrangement appear to be?

How deep are the child's ties to his or her current school?

How anxious is the child about an upcoming or recent move?

How strong is the child academically?

How do the programs and activities at the local school compare to those at the school of origin?

Does one school have programs and activities that address the unique needs or interests of the student that the other school does not have?

Would the timing of the school transfer coincide with a logical juncture, such as after testing, after an event significant to the child, or at the end of the school year?

How would the length of the commute to and from the school of origin impact the child's education?

Are there any safety issues to consider?

Liaisons in a receiving school should encourage teachers and principals to

take time to talk to and welcome students individually;

use a get-to-know-you questionnaire or journal assignment;

give a “welcome gift” (school supplies, school clothes, etc.);

introduce new students to the class;

identify faculty and peer mentors or buddies;

provide a short, simple written list of classroom rules and procedures;

make sure the students have a chance to have a class job or role and to participate in extracurricular activities;

have school personnel meet with parents and students when registering;

create an orientation video for parents, service providers, and students;

create a file and a portfolio of class work for students to take when leaving the school;

establish school and classroom-level routines for incoming and departing transfers; and

identify concrete ways to enable high school students to obtain credit even if they transfer to another school mid-semester.

Optional additional resources regarding school selection

Chapter Six: School Selection

Interview Checklists for Supporting School Selection

School Selection Checklist for Decision Making

Issue Brief: *School Selection*

Classrooms with Revolving Doors: Recommended Practices for Middle Level and High School Teachers of At-Risk and Highly Mobile Students

Issue Brief: Maximizing Credit Accrual and Recovery for Homeless Students

A photograph of a park path. The path is paved and leads into the distance. On the left side of the path, there are several large, rounded green bushes and a row of black metal park benches. On the right side, there are more trees and some smaller plants. In the background, a group of people is walking along the path. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and inviting.

Take a break

A child wearing a rainbow-striped long-sleeved shirt is sitting on a play mat. The mat has a grey road with white dashed lines, a blue pond with white wavy lines, and a green grassy area. A green toy train is on the road. The child is holding several wooden blocks. The text "Chapter Seven: Transportation" is overlaid in the center.

Chapter Seven: Transportation

The McKinney-Vento Act requires every state and its LEAs 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 UHY, the liaison), to and from the school of origin...in accordance with the following, as applicable:



If the homeless child continues to live in the area served by the LEA in which the school of origin is located, the child's transportation to and from the school of origin shall be provided or arranged by the LEA in which the school of origin is located.



If the homeless child's living arrangements in the area served by the LEA of origin terminate and the child, though continuing his or her education in the school of origin, begins living in an area served by another LEA, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the homeless child is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. The responsibility and any additional costs incurred for transportation shall be shared equally

- The law requires LEAs to coordinate interdistrict activities with other LEAs, specifically mentioning the coordination of transportation. It is important to note that **this requirement applies to all LEAs whether or not the LEA receives subgrant funds** and whether or not the LEA provides transportation to other students.



Best Interest for School Selection and Transportation to the School of Origin

- Note that the focus of the best interest determination is on the child. The distance of a commute or time on a bus is a consideration only as it impacts the achievement, education, health, and safety of the child. Once the local liaison and parents agree that remaining in the school of origin is in the best interest of the child, the school district must provide transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested.
- **An LEA may not refuse to provide transportation to the school of origin due to lack of an available bus or other resources once this best interest determination has been made.**

Determining the Mode of Transportation

- Transportation arrangements should ensure that a homeless student is able to participate for the full school day, neither arriving late nor leaving before the school day has ended. Extremely early pick-up times or public bus transfers for young children also may be problematic.
- The mode of transportation should not stigmatize a homeless student or betray the confidentiality of his or her living status. Bus routes, for example, should be arranged such that students staying in homeless shelters can be picked up and dropped off in a way that does not reveal their place of temporary residence. For example, buses can make a stop at the shelter the first stop in the morning and the last stop in the afternoon.
- School districts in urban areas are often able to arrange discounts for homeless students to utilize public transportation. If this option is available, you should make sure that the student is old enough to manage riding a city bus or arrange for the parent to ride the bus with the child. Additionally, when the method of transportation chosen by the district is public and the child is too young to travel alone, the district must provide transportation for the parent to and from the temporary residence when needed.
- In suburban or rural areas, if parents or UHY have working automobiles, many school districts will arrange for the parents to drive their children to school (or for an UHY to drive). The LEA may provide a gas card for the parent or youth.
- The McKinney-Vento Act does not override SEA and LEA safety policies. If, for example, a state or district policy allows students to travel only on a yellow school bus, then the LEA must arrange bus transportation for homeless students. If students are allowed to be transported in cars or taxis, local liaisons should consult with the school district attorney regarding liability and requirements for background checks for the drivers.

Comparable Services

- Homeless students have the right to services comparable to those offered to other students, including transportation.
- For example, transportation during optional summer school is required for a homeless student if it is provided to non-homeless students.
- Similarly, homeless students participating in an after-school program have a right to transportation after the program is finished for the day if other students that participate in the program receive transportation home.



Funding Sources



LEA Transportation Funds or General Funds Providing transportation for homeless students to and from the school of origin when requested is a LEA responsibility mandated in the McKinney-Vento Act. This responsibility exists for all LEAs, even when an LEA may not provide transportation for other students. As such, most districts rely on state transportation or general funds to provide homeless students with school transportation.



McKinney-Vento Subgrants The McKinney-Vento Act states that LEAs with subgrants may utilize subgrant funds to cover “the excess cost of transportation”. While the law does not define this phrase, the expectation is that the LEA will cover the same level of cost for transporting homeless students as other students, before relying on subgrant funds.



Those LEAs that chose to use McKinney-Vento subgrant funds for the excess cost of transporting homeless students need to include a justification for the expenditures based on their applications' needs. Keep in mind that subgrants are intended to meet a range of needs for homeless students, not just transportation needs.

Title I, Part A and Transportation for Homeless Students

Funds reserved for homeless students under Title I, Part A (set aside funds) may be used to provide homeless children with services not ordinarily provided to other students, including providing transportation to and from the school of origin. Liaisons should coordinate with their Title I directors to assess the needs of homeless students and determine what transportation needs can be met with the Title I, Part A reservation for homeless students. Title I, Part A funds may also be used to pay for the salary of the local homeless education liaison.

Title I, Part A set-aside funds for homeless students may be used for other transportation needs for homeless students, such as transportation to enable a homeless student to participate in an educational activity after school if transportation is not otherwise available. Title I, Part A set-aside funds also may be used to provide transportation to enable parents to be more involved in their child's education.

Collaboration within the LEA



The local liaison, LEA pupil transportation director, and other LEA administrators should work together to develop effective transportation policies and procedures. With ongoing communication and a clear delineation of responsibilities, LEAs can ensure that homeless students are provided needed transportation in an efficient and timely way, and ensure all relevant parties are in the loop regarding what transportation is needed and what the most appropriate modes of transportation are.



Many districts utilize special education buses for transporting homeless students. The U. S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) allows the use of designated special education buses for transporting homeless students as long as the transportation needs of all special education students have been met.



All parties involved in student transportation should be familiar with the McKinney-Vento Act. This includes bus drivers, because they are often the first and last school personnel to come in contact with students experiencing homelessness over the course of a day; as a result, they may develop supportive relationships with the students. Drivers may assist with identifying students in homeless situations too, as they observe changes in when and where students are picked up or dropped off.


Collaboration with other LEAs



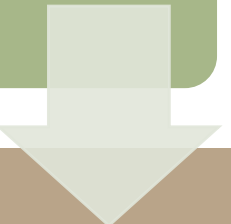
- When LEAs are arranging transportation across school district lines, the school personnel of all LEAs involved should discuss the mode of transportation for each student prior to initiating the transportation. Agreeing upon general guidelines for sharing the responsibility and cost of transporting homeless students among LEAs ahead of time eliminates confusion and conflicts when transportation needs to be arranged immediately for a homeless student. Some LEAs establish memoranda of agreement, while others make arrangements more informally. Liaisons and pupil transportation directors should review these agreements annually and revise as needed.
- Some effective collaboration practices include
 - convening a regional joint McKinney-Vento training that includes pupil transportation directors, local liaisons, social workers, and bus drivers;
 - convening a regional meeting each year of local liaisons and pupil transportation directors to discuss procedures for arranging transportation for homeless students and to address collaboration challenges;
 - identifying a pupil transportation staff person whose primary responsibility it is to arrange transportation for homeless students; and
 - establishing an electronic database for homeless students needing and receiving transportation, allowing liaisons and the pupil transportation department to immediately access current transportation commitments.
- Most interdistrict disputes over transportation can be prevented through good communication and efforts to agree upon transportation arrangements. In the instance in which an interdistrict disagreement about transportation services occurs, dispute should be resolved at the SEA level. During a dispute related to eligibility, school selection or enrollment, the child must be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is, and provided all services, including transportation as specified in the law.

Community Collaborations

Local liaisons should establish cooperative relationships with community agencies that serve homeless families, youth, and children. A community-wide commitment to assist homeless families with children and UHY can result in resource sharing, including transportation resources.



Many LEAs have been able to arrange transportation using shelter or other social service agency vans. Some public transportation systems donate bus passes or other transportation services to school districts for use by homeless students.



Community foundations are often willing to contribute to meeting the transportation needs of homeless students as well. Collaboration with housing providers can also reduce transportation costs by encouraging housing partners to consider school proximity when making shelter or other housing placements.

Working with Parents

- Parents who are experiencing homelessness generally appreciate being included in decisions involving the education of their children and should be part of the conversation on developing any plans for transporting their children to and from the school of origin.
- Parents should be provided with clear expectations for their role in carrying out the plan, such as committing to getting their children to a bus stop on time, notifying the transportation department when a child will not be attending school to avoid unnecessary trips, or following procedures for utilizing gas vouchers.
- In some instances, a written agreement that spells out the LEA's responsibilities and the parent's responsibilities is useful in holding all parties accountable.



- Reading
 - [Chapter Seven: Transportation](#)
- Optional additional resources
 - [Appendix 7.A Transportation Memorandum of Understanding](#)
 - Issue Brief: [*Transporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness*](#)
 - Monograph: [*Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness: Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin*](#)
 - Issue Brief: [*Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness Under Title I, Part A*](#)
 - Tip Sheet: [*Transportation for Homeless Children and Youth: Strategies for Rural School Districts*](#)
 - National Center for Homeless Education Website Resources: [Transportation](#) (includes sample forms and materials including interdistrict and parent agreements)

Optional additional resources
regarding transportation

A photograph of four women in a classroom or office setting. One woman is seated at a desk, smiling, while three others stand around her, looking at a laptop. The scene is dimly lit, with a dark overlay across the image. The background shows classroom elements like bulletin boards and desks.

Chapter Eight: Dispute Resolution

Dispute Resolution: What's Required

- The child “shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals”. In the case of an UHY, the local liaison must ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in the school in which they seek enrollment pending the resolution of the dispute. While disputes are pending, students have the right to participate fully in school and receive all services that they would normally receive, as the definition of enrollment includes “attending classes and participating fully in school activities.”
- The parent, guardian, or UHY must be provided with a written explanation of any decisions related to school selection or enrollment made by the school, the LEA, or the SEA involved, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or UHY to appeal such decisions. The LEA must provide a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form understandable to the parent, guardian, or UHY, including information regarding the right to appeal. In the case of an UHY, the notice explaining the decision and the right to appeal are provided directly to the youth.
- The parent, guardian, or UHY must be referred to the local liaison, who will carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The local liaison must be familiar with the state’s McKinney-Vento dispute resolution policy, and follow all procedures outlined therein.

Common Disagreements

Type of Conflict	Examples
McKinney-Vento dispute resolution conflicts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disagreement about remaining in school of origin Disagreement about immediate enrollment in school of residency Disagreement about homeless status when student was appropriately identified as homeless previously (e.g., doubled-up in same location for two years)
Conflicts not appropriate for dispute resolution, but which are McKinney-Vento compliance issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School failed to inform of educational rights under McKinney-Vento Student is not provided free meals Systemic non-compliance by an LEA which requires state intervention (e.g., failure to identify homeless students; lack of outreach and coordination within schools and community)
Issues which do not implicate McKinney-Vento compliance, but address services which are allowable or beneficial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional activities could enhance homeless identification (e.g., using a residency questionnaire) Summer school could improve student's academic performance but is not required to pass a course or grade
Conflicts not related to McKinney-Vento status	Parent disagrees with the services being offered in an Individualized Education Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student never lost housing

Before a Dispute Occurs

Make sure the LEA dispute process is streamlined and accessible. The LEA should have written procedures to ensure that all LEA staff members involved know their responsibilities and ensure barriers to initiating the dispute process are eliminated.

Most parents and UHY experiencing homelessness have limited resources, little to no ability to secure attorneys or advocates, and are dealing with the extreme stressors of homelessness. Parents, guardians, and UHY must receive clear and simple information about

- their right to dispute decisions,
- how to initiate the dispute,
- how the process will unfold,
- who in the LEA and SEA they can contact with questions, and
- the timeline for the process.

Schools should provide this information in writing, but the local liaison should explain the process orally to ensure that parents, guardians, and UHY understand.

Parents, guardians, and UHY should be able to initiate the dispute resolution process directly at the school they choose or at the local liaison's office. It is important to offer both options as most homeless families struggle with transportation. They may not have a way to travel to a particular office to initiate the dispute process. The need to travel may delay them initiating the dispute, and if timelines are short, the families or UHY may be unable to initiate the dispute within the required time frame. To eliminate transportation barriers, parents, guardians, and UHY should be provided maximum flexibility to initiate the dispute and submit appeals documents at the most convenient school or district office.

The paperwork necessary to initiate a dispute should be minimal to eliminate barriers to parents, guardians, and UHY accessing the process. The written notice, for example, could include a space where the parent, guardian, or UHY indicates whether they agree with the decision. Indicating a disagreement should trigger a conversation about the dispute process and an immediate referral to the liaison.

Written Notices

Written notices should include the following elements:

- contact information for the local liaison and State Coordinator, with a brief description of their roles;
- a simple, detachable form that parents, guardians, or UHY can complete and submit to the school to initiate the dispute process (the school should copy the form and return the copy to the parent, guardian, or UHY for their records when submitted),
- a step-by-step description of how to formally dispute the school's decision,
- notice of the right to be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute and all available appeals, including the right to participate fully in all school activities,
- notice of the right to appeal to the state if the district-level resolution is not satisfactory, and
- timelines for resolving the district-level and state-level appeals.





During a Dispute

- Once a parent, guardian, or UHY has initiated a dispute, the LEA is obligated to carry out the dispute process as objectively and quickly as possible. The dispute process allows the LEA and the parent, guardian, or UHY (or local liaison on behalf of the youth) to present all case-related facts and documentation to a third party. In some states, the documentation is first reviewed by someone at the LEA level, and then provided at the state level.
- It is critical that you are familiar with the process in your state and carry it out as specified. You should have the state dispute resolution policy and the LEA dispute policy on hand to guide you through the process.

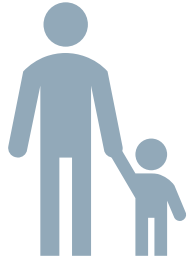
Getting the Facts: What is Legal and What is Reasonable

When a dispute arises under the MVA, particularly when regarding eligibility, an LEA may wish to look further into situation of the family to compile evidence in support of its position. *It is absolutely critical that all such efforts be grounded in sensitivity and respect, keeping the academic well-being and best interest of the child in the forefront.*

Invasive or threatening techniques to confirm eligibility or explore the situation of a family violate the McKinney-Vento Act, may violate FERPA, humiliate families, and may put temporary housing arrangements in jeopardy.

To assist with confirming eligibility for MV services, many LEAs have developed residency forms with informative, yet sensitive, questions to help determine eligibility and gather information. Visit the NCHE webpage (https://nche.ed.gov/ibt/sc_eligibility.php) to see examples of state and LEA forms developed for this purpose.

Providing Information Relevant to a Dispute



The local liaison should keep thorough documentation of interactions with a parent, guardian, or UHY and be prepared to provide this information to the designated third party in an organized fashion.

The following documentation may be reviewed during the dispute process:

- a clear, concise description of the issue (e.g., what the parents, guardians, or UHY are disputing, such as why the parent feels his child fits the definition of homeless or feels his child should attend a certain school, and why the LEA disagrees);
- a timeline of contacts between the school and the parent, guardian, or UHY;
- copies of emails between the school or LEA and the parent, guardian, or UHY;
- a log of phone contacts and meetings between the school or LEA and the parent, guardian, or UHY;
- a description of what the LEA has done to follow the dispute policy; and
- any written documentation or information the parent, guardian, or UHY (or local liaison on behalf of the youth) has provided.

Helping Parents, Guardians, or Unaccompanied Youth with Dispute Process

- Parents, guardians or UHY often need help to know what information to provide, how to obtain it, and how to present it. If they receive help in providing appropriate information, the case will proceed more efficiently.
- Schools and LEAs may inform parents, guardians or UHY that they can seek the assistance of advocates, attorneys and other service providers with whom they are working, such as counselors. You may wish to provide a list of local attorneys and advocates who have a thorough knowledge of the McKinney-Vento Act and are willing to work with parents or guardians.
- Parents, guardians or UHY may have difficulty meeting deadlines. It is important to inform them of deadlines in the dispute process, and determine with them if there is a need to be flexible with the deadlines. In the event that parents are unable to write statements to explain their case, the LEA should make arrangements to obtain their statement orally. Reaching out to parents, guardians or UHY in this way ensures they are not disadvantaged in the dispute process due to logistical challenges or their inexperience with interacting with an organization in a formal way.
- Once a decision is rendered on the dispute, the local liaison should ensure that all parties involved are apprised of the decision and arrangements are made to carry it out in the most efficient way possible. In the event that the decision is not made in favor of the parent, guardian, or UHY, it is considered a good practice to discuss the decision with this person and develop strategies to implement the outcome, make it as palatable as possible, and to ensure him or her that the best interest of the student was kept at the forefront

After the Dispute

- Dispute resolution is usually a complex process, and every case is unique. It is beneficial to debrief each case to determine lessons learned that can be used to improve the process and policy for future disputes. The local liaison is encouraged to review aspects of the process that worked efficiently and what could be improved after each dispute is resolved. Liaisons should discuss needed changes with all LEA and school staff involved, as well as with the State Coordinator.



Diffusing Disputes: Issues and Strategies

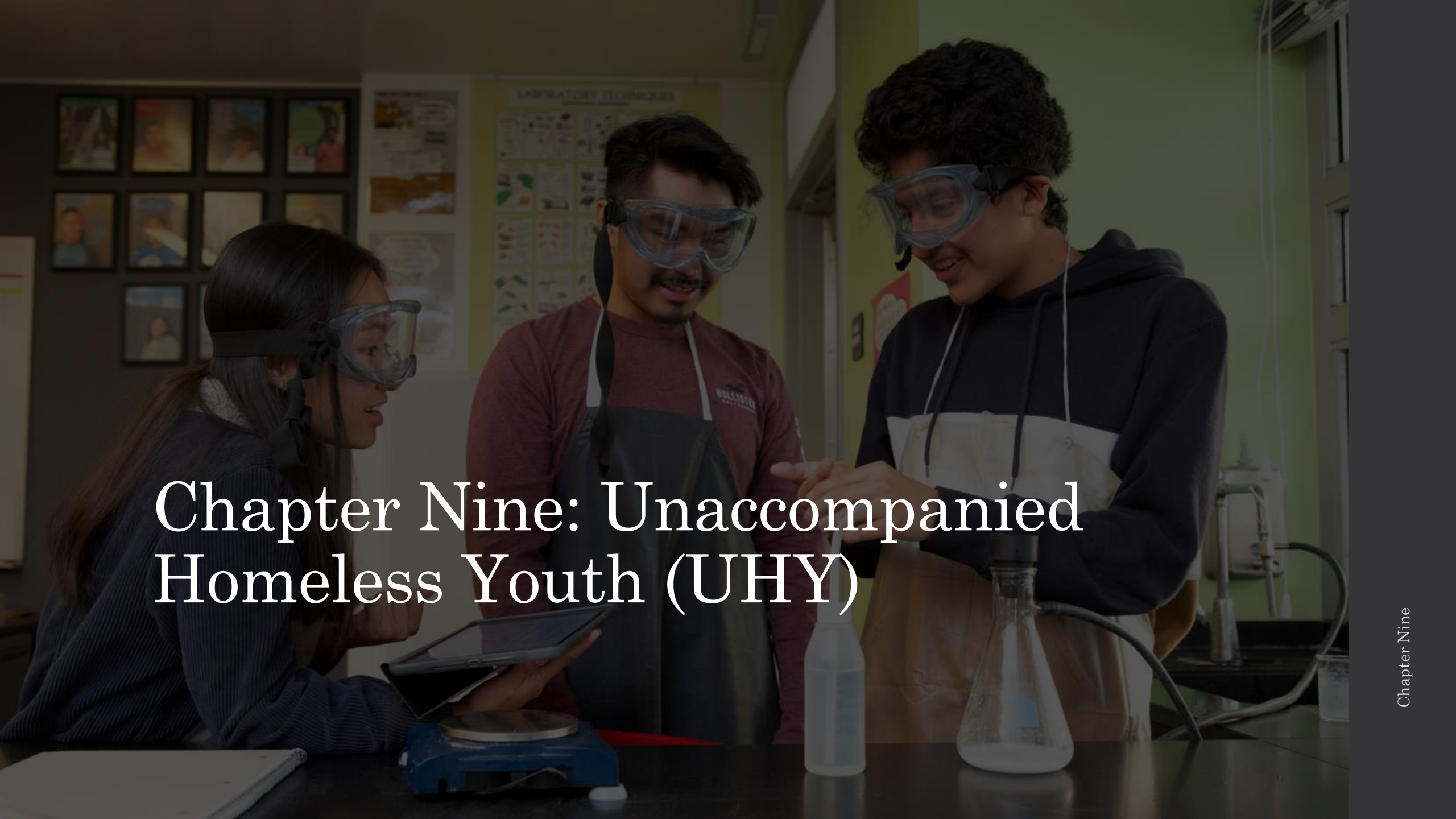
Issue	Strategies
School or LEA is not compliant with implementing the McKinney-Vento Act.	If a school or the LEA is not implementing the McKinney-Vento Act and is creating barriers to the education of homeless children, then parents, guardians, and UHY have a legitimate grievance that should be brought to the attention of the local liaison or State Coordinator. To avoid this type of dispute, ensure that all LEA and school staff members are familiar with the McKinney-Vento Act and understand their responsibility to implement it.
A parent, guardian, or UHY desires an action or service that is not covered in the McKinney-Vento Act, such as attending a school other than the school of origin or the school in the local attendance area of where they are temporarily staying.	The local liaison should explain the law to the parent, guardian, or UHY, and provide the provisions of the law to clarify the issue. Referrals to other programs should be made, if appropriate.
A parent, guardian, or UHY becomes angry and behaves inappropriately when expressing disagreement.	LEA and school staff should be trained to understand the trauma faced by homeless families and ways to de-escalate trauma responses.
A parent, guardian, or UHY wants a certain service or outcome and attempts to use a designation of homeless to get it.	When parents, guardians, or UHY appear to be “manipulating the system,” LEA and school staff should attempt to determine what exactly the parent, guardian, or youth wants and see if there are other programs or ways to provide the service or outcome.
Parents, guardians, or UHY feel disrespected by the school or LEA and want the school district to be punished.	Parents, guardians, and UHY should be treated with respect at all times. When parents are sent to multiple offices to address an issue, when they are confused about how to get services for their children or what services are available, or when they receive a notice in the mail that their child is going to be disenrolled from school, they are likely to become angry and feel mistreated by the school or LEA. They will want justice and retribution to become part of the dispute. LEA and school staff should have face-to-face conversations with the parent to foster an understanding of the law and process. Oftentimes, direct communication will develop rapport and trust with parents and make them more willing to be a partner in determining what can and cannot be done.
A parent, guardian, or youth brings a lot of grievances to the table, some of which may not be relevant to a McKinney-Vento dispute.	It is important to help the parent, guardian, or youth “keep the main thing the main thing.” Be very clear as the dispute process is initiated what issue the dispute will address (e.g., determining eligibility for homelessness) and what extraneous issues will not be addressed by the process (e.g., a principal who treated a child unfairly). While both are serious grievances, the focus of your work is on the issue relevant to the McKinney-Vento Act.

Optional
additional
resources
regarding
dispute
resolution

Chapter Eight: Dispute
Resolution

Appendix 8.A Written
Notification of Decision

Appendix 8.B Dispute
Review Guide

A photograph of three students in a chemistry laboratory. A female student on the left is seated, wearing safety goggles and a dark blue sweater, looking at a tablet. Two male students stand behind her, also wearing safety goggles and aprons. The student in the middle is wearing a maroon shirt and a dark apron, while the student on the right is wearing a dark blue hoodie and a white apron. They are gathered around a lab bench with various glassware, including a beaker and a flask. The background shows a wall with several framed pictures and a poster titled 'LABORATORY TECHNIQUES'.

Chapter Nine: Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY)


Potential Barriers for UHY

- lack of stable housing;
- inability to take care of basic needs resulting in fatigue, poor health, poor hygiene, and hunger;
- lack of school supplies and clothing;
- emotional crises or mental health problems due to experiencing trauma;
- lack of support from a caring adult;
- concerns about being reported to child welfare and law enforcement agencies;
- employment that interferes with attendance and school work;
- missing school records and other paperwork;
- lack of transportation;
- difficulty accumulating credits due to school mobility; and
- irregular school attendance.




Definition

An unaccompanied youth is defined in the McKinney-Vento Act as “a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.” **This definition can be used to describe youth who are residing with a caregiver who is not a parent or guardian as well as youth who are living without the care of an adult.** *(Also – if a child is living with a parent who has had their parental rights removed by the courts, then this student would count as UHY).*



UHY must fit the definitions of both homeless and unaccompanied in the McKinney-Vento Act to receive assistance under the provisions in the law. That is, an unaccompanied youth is a child or youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.



There are many youth who do not live in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, however, only those who are homeless are eligible for McKinney-Vento services.

Age

- There is no lower age limit for unaccompanied homeless youth. The upper age limit, as with all McKinney-Vento eligible students, is the upper age limit for public education. The upper limit varies from State to State.
- In Maine, students must be under the age of 21 at the start of the school year, July 1st



Getting the whole story?

- MV eligibility determinations are based on the youth's current living situation, not the circumstances that caused the student to leave home. UHY are eligible for services regardless of whether the student was asked to leave the home or chose to leave due to conditions in the home. While it can be easy to consider the reason a youth left home trivial—that the youth has a perfectly good home or that the youth simply needs to abide by the rules set by the student's parents—there may be other circumstances that warrant the youth being out of the home at this time. **Sometimes the “rest of the story” is never known by school staff as the youth may not be willing to disclose uncomfortable details.** Ultimately, regardless of your understanding of the full details that led to the student being unaccompanied and homeless, your responsibility under the McKinney-Vento Act is to ensure the student has an equal opportunity to attend and succeed in school.
- It is important for the local liaison to reinforce in trainings with school staff that the school's primary responsibility is to enroll and educate homeless children and youth in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act. **Judgments regarding why a youth left home fall outside the purview of the public education system.** Schools are required to enroll any UHY who fits the definition of homeless.

Unaccompanied homeless youth are ensured the same educational rights as other homeless students, which include the rights to:

- enroll immediately, even if they do not have paperwork normally required for enrollment or have missed application or enrollment deadlines
- attend either the local attendance area school or the school of origin, with the placement decision based on the student's best interest, giving priority to the youth's request
- attend either the local attendance area school or the school of origin, with the placement decision based on the student's best interest, giving priority to the youth's request
- remain in the school of origin (including the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools) for the duration of the homelessness and until the end of the school year in which the student becomes permanently housed
- receive transportation to and from the school of origin
- receive educational services, such as free school meals and Title I services and participate in gifted and talented programs, vocational and technical education, alternative education, programs for English learners, and any other services comparable to what housed students receive
- not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless

The McKinney-Vento Act includes the following provisions specifically for unaccompanied homeless youth:

Unaccompanied homeless youth shall be immediately enrolled without proof of guardianship

During a dispute over school selection or enrollment, UHY shall receive a written statement explaining the school's decision, the youth's right to appeal the decision, and a referral to the local liaison, and students must be enrolled in school immediately while disputes are resolved

Local liaisons must ensure that UHY

- are immediately enrolled in school;
- have opportunities to meet the same state academic standards as other children and youth; and
- are informed of their status as independent students for the purpose of applying for financial aid for higher education and provided verification of such status for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)



Identifying UHY

- Identification of UHY can be challenging because they often do not readily identify themselves to school personnel. Many youth feel there is stigma related to their situation and avoid telling others about it. Youth are often afraid they will be treated differently by school personnel or by other students if “found out” or that they will be reported to child welfare or law enforcement. It is essential that school personnel be made aware of the specific needs of runaway and homeless youth in order to treat youth appropriately.

Strategies for identifying UHY

- Posting outreach materials where youth congregate, including laundromats, parks, campgrounds, skate parks, youth clubs or organizations, and 24-hour stores.
- Developing outreach materials specifically targeted to homeless youth.
- Using means of communication that are comfortable for youth, such as websites, email, the school district Facebook page, or Twitter.
- Enlisting other students to help spread the word about services offered to homeless youth.
- Making the school a welcoming and supportive place for youth.
- Building trusting relationships with UHY.
- Informing youth of their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act.
Conducting conversations with youth in an office or other area that allows for confidentiality.
- **Listening to their concerns and wishes; withholding judgment.**
- Keeping in mind the challenges that UHY are facing as you work with them, offer support as you are able; sometimes, youth perceive providing a small packet of school supplies or hygiene items as a caring gesture.
- Encouraging UHY to stay in school and advocating for their educational success.
- Informing youth in advance about the circumstances under which you may be required to alert child welfare or law enforcement and helping youth understand how this process may affect them.

Enrolling UHY

- The McKinney-Vento Act requires that schools enroll UHY, even without a parent or guardian, and remove any barriers to enrollment. Because the McKinney-Vento Act is a Federal law, the immediate enrollment provision overrides any local policies that may be a barrier to enrolling UHY. There are three common methods for enrolling:
 - the student enrolls him or herself,
 - a caregiver enrolls the student, or
 - the local liaison enrolls the student.
- To meet the requirement of removing barriers for enrollment and attendance, schools should develop policies for enrolling a youth without a parent or guardian.

Strategies for Supporting UHY in school

- Identify the basic needs that are not met for food, clothing, and housing and provide referrals for assistance.
- Provide access to the school athletic department for shower and laundry facilities, and storage space for belongings.
- Allow flexible assignment deadlines when necessary to prevent UHY from being penalized for their inability to meet deadlines due to unstable living circumstances.
- Implement policies to assist with accumulating credits toward graduation, such as chunking credits, implementing mastery-based learning, and offering credit recovery programs.
- Consider alternative education programs that allow flexible school hours or have paid work components for youth who need to work for subsistence.
- Link them with an adult who cares about their well-being and will check in with the youth on a regular basis. These adults can serve many roles in the school, from administrators to custodians. They must be someone who can relate to the youth and whom the youth trusts.
- Ensure coordination between the McKinney-Vento and special education programs so UHY are provided a surrogate parent if needed.

Discipline

The McKinney-Vento Act does not provide immunity from normal school disciplinary guidelines. Homeless students are subject to the same rules as their housed peers. However, when behaviors are directly related to a student's homelessness (such as, in some instances, being tardy or absent), **the youth should not be penalized**, as the law states that homeless students cannot be stigmatized on the basis of their homelessness.



Local liaisons should be familiar with the educational challenges that UHY face and assist them to overcome their challenges. Sometimes, basic assistance is all that is needed, such as providing an alarm clock to prevent tardiness or resources and supplies to complete assignments; other times, the youth should be connected with community resources for services such as counseling for behaviors that impact the classroom.



Liaisons should become aware of how trauma can impact the behavior of UHY and provide trauma-informed interventions.

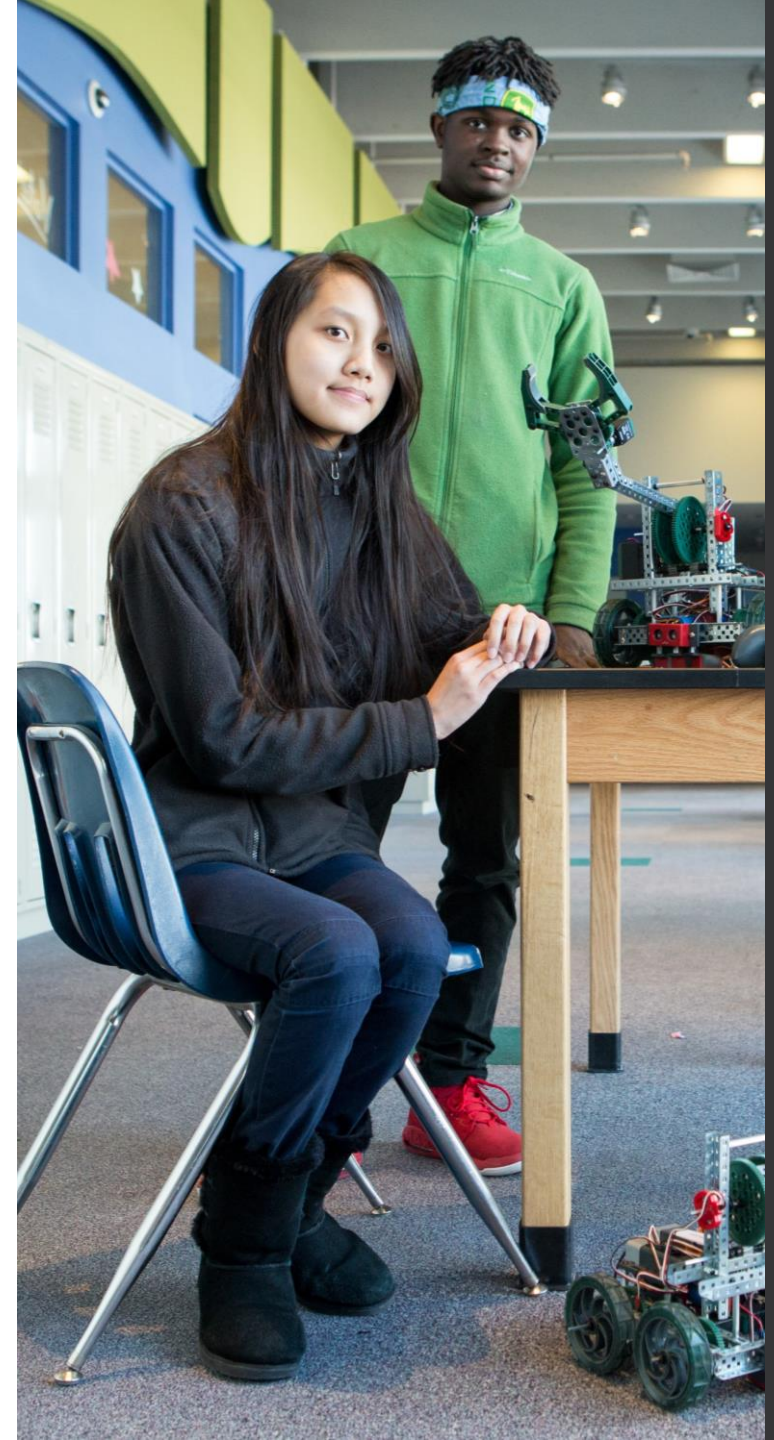


Extracurriculars for UHY

- For many UHY, participation in extracurricular activities is a critical way to engage in school and connect with other students. Extracurricular activities help build self-esteem and give students a sense of purpose and accomplishment.
- LEAs should develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools. As a part of this requirement, schools could waive activity fees and deadlines for participation for homeless children and youth. Local business sponsors and school alumni may help defray activity costs. School-based organizations, such as parent organizations and booster clubs, also often assist with athletic, band, and other expenses.

Helping UHY Prepare for College

- Local liaisons play a key role in ensuring that UHY are aware of opportunities beyond public school and that they are prepared to take the next steps to apply for and enroll in postsecondary education. Liaisons should work with school counselors to make certain that students are made aware of their options after high school, are college-ready, and have the opportunity to participate in college visit days with their peers.
- The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) of 2007 stipulates that UHY determined to be homeless by a local liaison, Runaway and Homeless Youth Act funded shelter, HUD program, or college financial aid administrator may apply for federal financial aid as independent students.
- Liaisons should make sure that these students have the help they need to complete the FAFSA, including informing them of their status as independent students and providing verification of that status. UHY can complete the FAFSA without a parent or guardian's signature, and the parent or guardian's income is not considered when determining an independent student's need for financial aid.



Optional additional resources

Reading

- Chapter Nine:
Unaccompanied
Homeless Youth

Appendix 9.A Unaccompanied Youth Eligibility Flowchart



Chapter Ten: Working With Parents

Working With Parents

The McKinney-Vento Act accords parents and guardians experiencing homelessness the right to have their voices heard on what they believe is in the best interest of their children.

The law requires local liaisons to provide parents and guardians information on the McKinney-Vento Act and on the process for disputing decisions of the local educational agency (LEA) when they disagree on enrollment and best interest determinations for their children.

Homelessness puts parents under inordinate stress. While most parents experiencing homelessness are cooperative and trust that school administrators, teachers, and staff have the best interest of their children in mind, some may be uncooperative and even confrontational. As the local homeless liaison, it is important to keep this in mind and work with parents in ways that build trust and empower them to work with you to enable their children to succeed in school.

Working with parents who have experienced trauma

Many homeless parents have experienced trauma, which predisposes them to losing control of their behavior when they experience things that trigger emotions or situations related to the trauma. Common trauma triggers for homeless parents include

- a sense of being ignored or not being heard, disrespected, viewed as wrong or incompetent, a feeling of being threatened or pushed against a wall (literally or figuratively), the perception of being denied what they deserve or having things taken away, one too many requests or requirements, and being touched.

A seemingly innocent comment or subtle body language can trigger a counterproductive response on the part of a traumatized homeless parent. Typical trauma responses include

- flight (parents will minimize the seriousness of their challenges or those of their children and avoid taking responsibility);
- fight (parents will become aggressive and confrontational, and may even become verbally or physically abusive);
- freeze (parents will become passive and nonresponsive)
- submit (parents will agree just to get along)

Communication

Keep impersonal communication, such as letters and emails, to a minimum; conduct face-to-face conversations whenever possible.

Provide a welcoming environment.

Conduct sensitive conversations in a private and comfortable place.

Avoid using the word “homeless;” avoid charged and judgmental language.

Talk to them about their living situation; be sensitive and discrete.

Ask them about their needs. A good question to ask is, “How may we be of assistance to you and your family? What would be helpful for you now?”

Assure them that their children are welcome in your school and that you have their best interest in mind. Verbalize that they are the experts on their children, they know them and their situations best.

Empower and encourage parents; discuss solutions to challenges with them.

Discuss things about which they feel positive.

Listen! Listen! Listen!

Be aware of your own triggers. Notice when you are having a reaction to what the parent, guardian or youth is saying and continue being present for them. Make sure you are always putting the needs of the family and youth first.

Challenges – Considerations – Strategies

Challenges	Considerations	Strategies
Parents and their children have unmet basic needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents may be new to an area and do not know what resources are available.• This may be the first time a family or youth has experienced financial instability and they might not know how to navigate social services systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage parents to advise you of their needs and assure them that you are willing to link them with available services. Make sure they know you are a resource they can come to whenever they need, not just at the initial assessment.• Keep a list of community resources and contacts on hand (and in print form). Make sure the resource list is current.• Keep a few donations on hand, such as hygiene items, grocery gift cards, snacks, and folders to store student records. Solicit donations through community partnerships.• Use bus tokens to assist parents with getting to agencies from your office.

Challenges – Considerations – Strategies

Parents are mistrustful and confrontational

- Parents may have become disillusioned by agencies in the “helping” field.
- Parents may fear having their children taken away.
- Parents are passionate about getting what’s best for their children and may feel any means justifies the end.
- Parents may lack diplomacy skills.
- Parents may bring a history of bad school experiences to their meeting with you.
- Parents may have experienced trauma and may react with aggressive behavior.
- Be honest and respectful in dealing with parents, and understand that building trust takes time.
- Acknowledge parents’ fear and worries. Make sure you are being supportive, not dismissive.
- Be clear about what resources are available through the LEA and which ones are available through other local resources.
- Center conversations on what is best for their children while acknowledging their passion.
- Discuss concrete solutions for what their children need and ways these solutions can be implemented; establish a tone of thinking things through together.
- Model good communication behavior by remaining calm and respectful; keep the conversation focused and moving toward solutions.
- If the conversation gets out of hand, set boundaries; if necessary “take five” or set a time to continue the discussion later.

Challenges – Considerations – Strategies

Parents miss deadlines and meetings or do not follow through with expectations.

- Sometimes parents experience basic logistical challenges to meeting deadlines for tasks.
- Parents may be under so much stress that they cannot follow through with expectations without help.
- A lack of follow through is a classic trauma response (flight or freeze).
- Parents may need guidance and structure to meet expectations.
- Determine if there is a simple solution to parents' lack of follow through, such as a need for an alarm clock, reliable transportation, or access to a phone.
- Give parents responsibilities for helping their children be successful in school, but try to match the level of responsibility to what they can successfully handle.
- Try to determine what is triggering a trauma response (fight, flight, or freeze), and see if you can eliminate this trigger.
- Develop parent compacts or agreements that both the parents and the liaison sign and agree to follow; specify the benefits and consequences for all parties.
- Set goals and break them into attainable benchmarks to show progress.

Challenges – Considerations – Strategies

Parents are experiencing hopelessness and helplessness.

- Parents may have experienced so much failure that they feel they have no chance of success and no assets to build on.
 - Working with service systems can reinforce a client mentality that causes parents to feel helpless.
 - Parents may carry with them the sense that they have failed their children and suffer embarrassment and self-degradation.
- Acknowledge something you observe that is positive: “It’s obvious that you want your child to do well in school,” or “You’ve overcome a lot of challenges to provide for your children in these difficult circumstances.”
 - Ask for parents’ input in any discussions regarding their children: “Your son is having a lot of difficulty in math; what do you think that comes from? What type of help do you think would work best for him?”
 - Share something you have observed in their child that indicates that they are resilient and can succeed.

Challenges – Considerations – Strategies

Parents have poor skills in assisting with their children's education.

- Parents may not have had success in school and lack experience in knowing how to help their children be successful.
- Parents may not have space or supplies in their temporary living circumstances to help their children with educational activities.
- Parents may be so overwhelmed that they are emotionally unavailable to their children.
- Link parents with school or community parenting classes, and transportation and childcare.
- Provide a basic parenting handbook
- Reinforce the importance of regular attendance and school stability; ask parents to inform you if they are planning on moving and ensure they understand their children's right to remain in the school of origin and receive transportation.
- Model good parenting skills when you meet with parents; note something positive that their child did in school or some talent that their child is exhibiting; discuss good disciplinary practices that they can provide at home to reinforce improving behavior at school when needed.
- Send home notes with the children frequently about something positive they did in school.
- Provide parents with supplies to assist their children in their temporary living space or provide space either before or after school for the parent to work with children on homework or school activities.
- Provide a space at school for children to keep school or project supplies where possible.
- Invite parents to serve as tutors in the classroom or to be involved at school with their children's activities.
- Invite parents to participate in parent groups at the school, like PTA. Help arrange transportation.

Optional additional resources

**National Center for Homeless Education Resources by
Topic: Trauma webpage**

https://nche.ed.gov/ibt/sps_resilience.php

**National Center for Homeless Education Resources by
Topic: Resources for Parents webpage**

https://nche.ed.gov/ibt/parent_res.php

National Center for Homeless Education Parent Packs

https://nche.ed.gov/pr/parent_pack.php

**National Center for Homeless Education Parent Handbook:
What You Need to Know to Help Your Child in School**

https://nche.ed.gov/pr/parent_booklet.php

Chapter Eleven: Collaboration



Required coordination efforts

Providing	providing services with local social service agencies and other agencies or entities providing services to homeless children, youths, and their families;
Facilitating	facilitating transportation services, transfer of school records, and other inter-district activities;
Coordinating	coordinating with housing agencies to minimize educational disruption for homeless children and youths;
Identifying	identifying homeless students;
Ensuring	ensuring that homeless children and youths have access to and are in reasonable proximity to available education and related support services;
Raising	raising the awareness of school personnel and service providers about the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness

Local Community Partner Examples

To meet the needs of homeless students, local liaisons must have a diverse network of collaborative partners, as students experiencing homelessness have many needs beyond what schools have the ability to address on their own. Assisting families through referrals for additional services, such as housing, medical, dental, and social services, can increase stability and ensure students are ready to learn when they reach the classroom.

community food pantries;

local health professionals who will volunteer services to help meet dental, health, and mental health needs; (ask your own doctor/dentist)

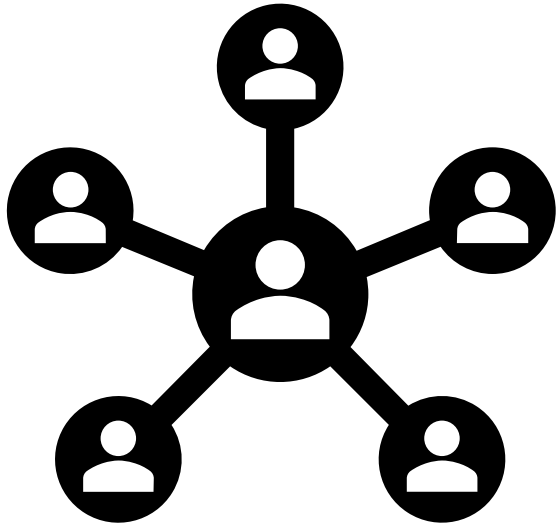
local Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, United Way, Salvation Army, and other shelter providers;

faith-based organizations;

local businesses and business associations involved in community service; and

postsecondary education institutions.

Collaboration with Federal Partners



- Head Start; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which includes child find requirements; housing programs and services funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); and programs and services funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.
- Postsecondary organizations local liaisons are authorized to verify UHY status for the purpose of applying for independent student status below the age of 24 on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Several Federal programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) use the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of "homeless children and youths." It is important for State Coordinators and local liaisons to coordinate with these programs in order to determine eligibility consistently across agencies serving the same families, children, and youths; coordinate or expedite referrals for services; and coordinate services overall for families or youths in order to improve education and other outcomes for homeless children and youth
- Other programs that do not use the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless, such as Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs and HUD-administered homeless assistance programs to develop a more detailed understanding of the needs of the homeless populations; ensure that the families they serve are familiar with their educational rights under the McKinney-Vento Act; and coordinate referrals
- Local liaisons should also reach out to policy makers and legislators to discuss local laws and policies that create barriers for homeless children and youth, such as policies that criminalize homelessness or create difficulties for homeless families to obtain affordable housing.

Sharing Data Across Agencies



- Sharing data is a foundational activity that will help each partner understand the other's program and clients or stakeholders. The 2016 guidance states that State Coordinators and local liaisons may work with their agency counterparts to set up interagency agreements for sharing relevant data to use for planning, coordination and evaluation. Such agreements must be consistent with FERPA, the confidentiality of information provisions in Parts B and C of IDEA, and other relevant Federal and State laws protecting the privacy of student and family information.

Collaboration with Title I

Strong collaboration between McKinney-Vento programs and Title I programs ensures that Title I programs include the specific needs of homeless children and youth. An LEA's Title I plan must demonstrate timely and meaningful consultation with McKinney-Vento administrators, and the local Title I plan must be coordinated with the McKinney-Vento program. The plan must include the services the LEA will provide homeless children and youth, including services provided through the homeless reservation of funds. The Title I statute states that the reservation of funds for homeless students “may be determined based on a needs assessment of homeless children and youths in the local educational agency”

Following are some recommendations for ways that local liaisons and local Title I coordinators can collaborate:

- Local liaisons should share data on homeless children and youth with Title I coordinators as a basis for determining the amount for the Title I reservation of funds for homeless students.
- Local liaisons should attend Title I conferences and in-services, and Title I coordinators should attend homeless education conferences and in-service professional development; they should present at one another's conferences or plan joint presentations.
- Liaisons should work with Title I coordinators on the LEA plan that must include ways to address the needs of homeless children and youth.
- Title I and homeless education handbooks should be shared with other program staff.
- Title I parental involvement policies should include homeless parents and create opportunities for homeless parents to be involved.

Optional Additional Resources

Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non-Regulatory Guidance

U.S. Department of Education

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcyguidance072716.pdf>

Interagency Data Disclosure: A Tip Sheet on Interagency Collaboration

U.S. Department of Education

<https://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/ehcy-interagency-data-disclosure.pdf>

National Center for Homeless Education

Resources by Topic: Collaboration web page

<https://nche.ed.gov/ibt/ibt.php>

U.S. Department of Education's

Web Page on Initiatives Supporting Homeless Children and Youth

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/supporting-homeless-students/index.html>

Title VII, Subtitle B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Education for Homeless Children and Youths)

42 U.S.C. §§ 11431-11434A

<http://uscode.house.gov>

Chapter Twelve: Training and Awareness

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hand resting on a laptop's trackpad. The laptop is dark-colored, and the keyboard is visible in the foreground. The background is a wooden desk. The overall lighting is warm and soft.

Local Liaison Responsibilities Include

ensuring that school personnel identify homeless children and youth through outreach and coordination with other entities and agencies

ensuring that homeless students and their families receive educational services, including Head Start and other preschool programs

referrals to health care, mental health, and dental services, and other appropriate services

coordinating and collaborating with the State Coordinator for homeless education as well as community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths

In order to successfully meet these responsibilities, all local liaisons must provide information and resources to school district personnel and community partners. Awareness raising activities must be designed to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of personnel to the needs of homeless children and youth, their rights, and their specific educational needs

Designing PD Opportunities

Professional development enhances the skills and knowledge of individuals and is delivered through a variety of methods. It can include informal methods, such as sharing information in district meetings, or more formal learning, such as structured training and courses. Information that assists professionals with using the skills and abilities they already possess is considered basic professional development, while advanced professional development helps staff acquire new information and skills.

Consider the needs of the various members of the audience. For example, district administrators may be most concerned with academic measures for homeless students, while registrars may focus on enrollment requirements. Furthermore, community partners may need to know information about how to best work with school systems to meet both academic and other basic needs. Effective training and awareness activities meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness by meeting the continuing education needs of district staff and community stakeholders, regardless of their roles.



Resources for training your district staff

- [Video: Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness \(5 minutes\)](#)
- [Video: Eligibility for McKinney-Vento school benefits \(3 minutes\)](#)
- [Back to School Training Resources from School House Connection](#)
- [McKinney-Vento School Staff Resource](#) (Pages 11-20)
- [Video: for registrars](#)
- [Quick Guide for counselors](#)
- [Tips for teachers](#)
- [Video: for superintendents and school board](#)
- [Video: for principals](#)

Optional additional resources

[Chapter
Twelve:
Training and
Awareness](#)

[Appendix 12.A
Presenter Tips](#)

[Appendix 12.B
Common Signs
of
Homelessness](#)

Chapter Thirteen: Data Collection and Requirements



Why Data Matters

Regardless of whether you love or hate working with data, there are several reasons why it is important to collect and analyze data related to the education of homeless children and youths. We collect data because:

The MVA requires data to be collected and provided to the federal government and for the Secretary of Education to disseminate that information to stakeholders

Local educational agencies (LEAs) that compete for subgrant funds must provide needs assessments and demonstrate a need for funds as part of their subgrant. Likewise, state educational agencies (SEAs) may consider the number of homeless students enrolled in the LEA prior to making subgrant awards

SEAs must consider the quality of a subgrant application, the appropriateness of proposed activities based on identified student needs, and past success in meeting student needs before making awards

Data collections regarding the services homeless students receive and their academic outcomes are required by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) to ensure compliance with Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Data is used to calculate the set-aside for serving homeless students under Title I, Part A.

What Data to Collect

The essential pieces of data that must be submitted to USED from ME DOE annually include:

- the number of LEAs in the state that do and do not receive subgrants;
- the number of LEAs in the state that do and do not report homeless education data;
- the number of homeless students enrolled in each grade, including preschool;
- the primary nighttime residence of homeless students enrolled in school;
- the number of homeless students enrolled in school that are a part of particular subgroups, including English learners, UHY, students with disabilities, and migratory students;
- the number of homeless children and youth served by McKinney-Vento subgrants;
- the number of homeless students served by McKinney-Vento subgrants that were also part of the four subgroups;
- the participation and performance of homeless students on reading, math, and science assessments;
- the number of homeless students that dropout or graduate;
- the number of homeless students who are served by Title I, Part A;
- the number of homeless students who meet other measures of academic achievement identified by the state.

How to Collect and Submit Data

All liaisons are encouraged to work with their State Coordinators, in addition to any local district staff involved in reporting, to make sure all required information is submitted in a timely manner. Important questions to ask include:

Does the district have a data reporting technician? Who is that person or are those persons?

Are there additional data, which the primary data system is unable to collect, that the liaison is responsible for submitting to the SEA? What are those data? What is the process for submitting those data?

How does the LEA collect and store data? Does it use a web-based or other electronic student information system? Does it rely on spreadsheets?

What is the deadline for submitting data to the SEA? Does the LEA have additional internal deadlines to allow administrators to review the data before the final submission to the SEA?

What steps does the LEA take to ensure the data submitted are accurate? Are there any steps required by the SEA to ensure data are accurate?

Can the LEA correct data that have already been submitted? Are there additional deadlines for corrections?

In addition to the annual data collection requirements outlined by ED that apply to all LEAs, does the SEA require additional information on student outcomes for homeless students in any particular area, either through improvement plans or subgrant applications?

Optional Additional Resources

Chapter Thirteen: Data Collection and Requirements

Guide to Collecting and Reporting Federal Data: Education for Homeless Children and Youth

<https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/data-guide-15-16.pdf>

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232(g)

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/USCODE-2011-title20/pdf/USCODE-2011-title20-chap31-subchapIII-part4-sec1232g.pdf>

Congratulations!
All chapters reviewed!

Maine DOE Diploma

- It is critical when students experience educational disruption, that everyone involved with the student be committed to keeping them on a pathway toward graduation.
- Occasionally, in spite of everyone's best collaborative efforts and support, educational disruptions become a barrier to meeting local graduation requirements for a student.
- The Maine Department of Education Diploma is intended to be a backstop option for such students. Students experiencing educational disruption may apply for this diploma if they cannot meet local graduation requirements but can provide evidence that they have fulfilled the following core state requirements:
 - **English** – 4 years or the equivalent in standards achievement
 - **Social Studies and History** – 2 years or the equivalent in standards achievement, including American history, government, civics, and personal finance
 - **Mathematics** – 2 years of the equivalent in standards achievement
 - **Science** – 2 years of the equivalent in standards achievement, including one year of laboratory study
 - **Fine Arts** – 1 year or the equivalent in standard achievement.
- If you believe you, or a student in your care, qualify for the Maine Department of Education Diploma, you can complete the following [application](#) and [e-mail to Beth Lambert](#).



Resources for Supporting LGBTQ Students

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/safeschools/counseling/gender%26sexuality>

Maine is one of the states that have anti-discrimination laws protecting gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (GLBTQ) youth.

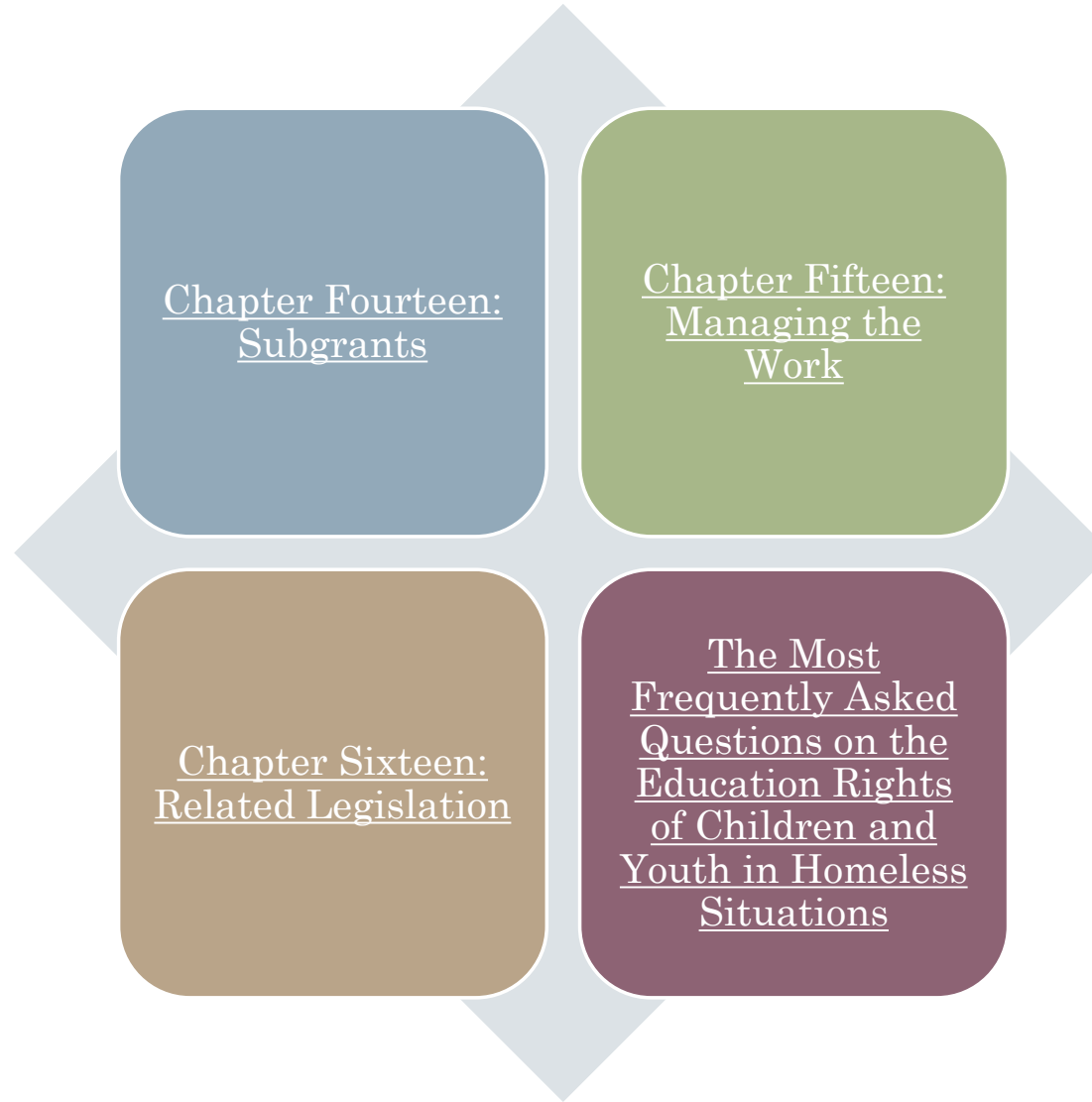
- [Gender bread Person](#): provides definitions for gender identity, gender expression, biological sex, and sexual orientation.
- [Maine Transnet](#)- transgender website providing support and resources
- [New Beginnings](#)-serving runaway and homeless youth and their families- offer training opportunities including Creating Safety for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Youth
- [Report on health risks and disparities facing gender expansive students](#) Youth whose gender expression does not fit traditional roles based on their assigned sex at birth are often referred to with terms including “gender expansive,” “gender diverse,” “nonbinary,” “gender nonconforming,” or “gender expansive”.
- [Schools in Transition- helps schools with transgender issues](#)
- [Students Rights - excellent resource including other links](#)
- [Fact sheets from 2017 MIYHS](#)

In our roles as liaisons

- We support children and youth and maintain a relationship of trust
- We do not give unsolicited advice/judgment about their situations
- We recognize we only see or hear about a small piece of the puzzle
- We maintain positive relationships with all students, as any student may end up in a homeless situation and they need to feel safe to disclose that to you/someone at school



Optional Additional Resources



[Link](#) to Liaison Assessment

Please complete prior to October 31st, 2020 (or within two months of being assigned as the MV liaison). If you get lower than 80% on the assessment, please try again. You will receive a Certificate of Completion to your email.

Thank You! Please contact Amelia with any feedback or questions.

