

# **Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program**

## **Homeless Liaison Handbook**



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## **Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program**

### **General Information**

The Education of Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program is authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et. Seq. McKinney-Vento Act) authorized in 1987. As part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2011, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, homeless education is not included in Title I, Part A.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of Title I, Part A of ESEA is to provide all children with a fair, equitable and high-quality education and to close educational achievement gaps. Title I, Part A is designed to meet the educational needs of low-achieving children in schools with the highest levels of poverty by aligning high-quality assessments, systems of accountability, teacher preparation, curriculum and instructional materials with challenging state academic standards. Title I, Part A provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (school districts) with high numbers/percentages of children from low-income families.

The state must establish procedures to identify and remove barriers that prevent students from receiving appropriate credit for full and/or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school. State report cards must include disaggregated data on the graduation rates and academic achievement of EHCY. State ESSA plans must also describe how EHCY receive assistance from school counselors to advise, prepare, and improve their college readiness.

All school districts that receive Title I, Part A funds must reserve funds to support children and youth experiencing homelessness. Reserved funds may be used for services customarily provided by Title I, Part A including local liaisons and transportation to the school of origin. EHCY are automatically eligible for services under Title I, Part A whether or not they live in a Title I school attendance area or meet the academic standards requirement of other children for eligibility (i.e. EHCY may receive Title I educational or support services from schoolwide and targeted assistance school programs). Families experiencing homelessness can also access Head Start, Early Head Start, district-administered pre-school programs and early intervention services under IDEA, Part C, if eligible.

### **Definitions**

*Adequate Living Situation* – sufficient for meeting the physical, psychological, and safety needs typically met in a home environment.

*Doubled Up* – sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.

*Enrollment* – the terms “enroll” or “enrollment” include attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

*Fixed Living Situation* – stationary, permanent, not subject to change.

*Homeless Children and Youth* – individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes:

- Children and youth who are sharing the house of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason,
- Are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations,
- Are living in emergency or transitional housing,
- Are abandoned in hospitals,
- Primary nighttime residence is a public/private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodations for human beings,
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings, and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described in the above bullet points.

*Regular Living Situation* – used on a nightly basis.

*School of Origin* – school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

*Substandard Housing* – housing that poses a serious risk to the health, safety, or physical well-being of occupants.

*Unaccompanied Youth* – youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian (see appendix A).

## **Title VII, Part B: Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

### **General Information**

In 1987 the Steward B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act was signed into law, requiring states to revise policies to ensure the immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth. The McKinney-Vento Act was amended in 1990, requiring states to eliminate enrollment barriers, and provide school access and support for academic success to children and youth experiencing homelessness. The education portion of the Act was again reauthorized by the Improving America's School Act in 1994, adding preschool services, greater parental input and a focus on interagency collaboration. During 2002, the education portion of the Act was again reauthorized by Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act, strengthening legal requirements, and requiring all school districts to appoint a local homeless liaison. In 2015, the education portion of the Act was

reauthorized by Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), expanding school of origin rights to include public preschools and receiving schools.

Title VII, Part B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance ACT (MVA) requires state educational agencies (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction – NDDPI) and school districts to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, and success in school of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

### **Purpose**

The MVA ensure each EHCY has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschool education, as their permanently housed peers, EHCY have access to the educational and related services needed to enable them to meet the same challenging state academic standards to which all student are held and EHCY are enrolled immediately and not separated from mainstream school environment.

The MVA gives students the following rights:

- Right to immediate school enrollment even when records are not present,
- Right to remain in the school of origin, if in the student’s best interest,
- Right to receive transportation to and from the school of origin, and
- Right to receive support for academic success.

### **General Guidelines**

Title VII, Part B supports each state designating a State Homeless Coordinator, and every school district designating a liaison who is able to carry out duties to support children and youth experiencing homelessness. Key duties of the NDDPI include:

- Responding to inquiries from homeless parents and unaccompanied youth,
- Providing professional development for liaisons,
- Gathering data of EHCY identified in the state and posting on the NDDPI website,
- Identifying barriers and unique needs to school participation and achievement of EHCY,
- ESSA state plan including EHCY program specifics, and
- Conducting monitoring of school districts to enforce compliance.

Key duties of the school district’s homeless liaison include:

- Identify homeless children and youths by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other agencies;
- Ensure homeless children and youths are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school;
- Ensure homeless families, children, and youths have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start programs, early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other preschool programs administered by the district;

- Ensure homeless families, children, and youths receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services;
- Confirm parents or guardians of homeless children and youths 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;
- Confirm public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth;
- Ensure enrollment disputes are mediated according to 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(E);
- Confirm the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied homeless youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin;
- Ensure school personnel who serve homeless children and youths receive professional development and other support;
- Ensure unaccompanied homeless youths are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards established for other students, and are informed of their status as independent students and assisted to receive verification of their status for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
- Knowledge of the exact language of the McKinney Vento Act; demonstrate sufficient time and capacity to carry out the required duties based on needs of homeless children, youth and unaccompanied homeless youth; and
- Knowledge of trends in poverty and homelessness, the amount of support from community agencies and other entities serving homeless families and youth, the level of awareness in both the schools and the community of homeless student needs and related legal requirements, and the level of implementation that has occurred in the district.

This is not an exhaustive list to the position, just what is required.

The [Title VII, Part B - Homeless - McKinney-Vento | North Dakota Department of Public Instruction](#) website provides more information with several dropdown tabs, including a school directory containing the contact information for the district homeless education liaisons.

To receive Title VII, Part B funding, each school district submits an application, including budget, every three years. The NDDPI provides technical assistance and support on the application process to school districts through various workshops and webinars.

### **Enrollment and Participation**

Homeless children and youth must be enrolled immediately, even when missing application of enrollment deadlines and/or lack documentation. Immediate enrollment in North Dakota means within 24 hours of notification to enroll. The NDDPI and school districts must develop, review and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, and retention of children and youth experiencing homelessness in school, including barriers due to fees, fines, and absences.

States must have procedures to ensure EHCY do not face barriers to accessing academic and/or extracurricular activities.

School districts must make the best interest determination that presume staying in the school of origin is in the best interest of the student experiencing homelessness. Factors to consider include, but are not limited to:

- Specific student-centered needs
  - Academic
  - Personal
    - Physical
    - Mental
    - Emotional
- Requests of the parent(s)/guardian(s) or unaccompanied child or youth,
- Reason for homelessness, and
- Transportation needs.

If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection or enrollment, the child or youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied child/youth seeks enrollment. The student remains enrolled at the school pending resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals. The student may stay in their school of origin for the duration of their homelessness and until the end of an academic year in which they obtain permanent housing, if it is in their best interest. Transportation to the school is required for the duration of homelessness and until the end of an academic year in which they obtain permanent housing.

### **Monitoring**

The United States Department of Education requires that the NDDPI monitor the implementation of program requirements and the expenditure of federal funds. The NDDPI monitors Title VII, Part B local agency programs (school districts) through various means of site visits, expenditure checks, needs assessments, office hours, etc. More information regarding monitoring may be found here: [Federal Title Programs Monitoring | North Dakota Department of Public Instruction](#)

### **Use of Funds**

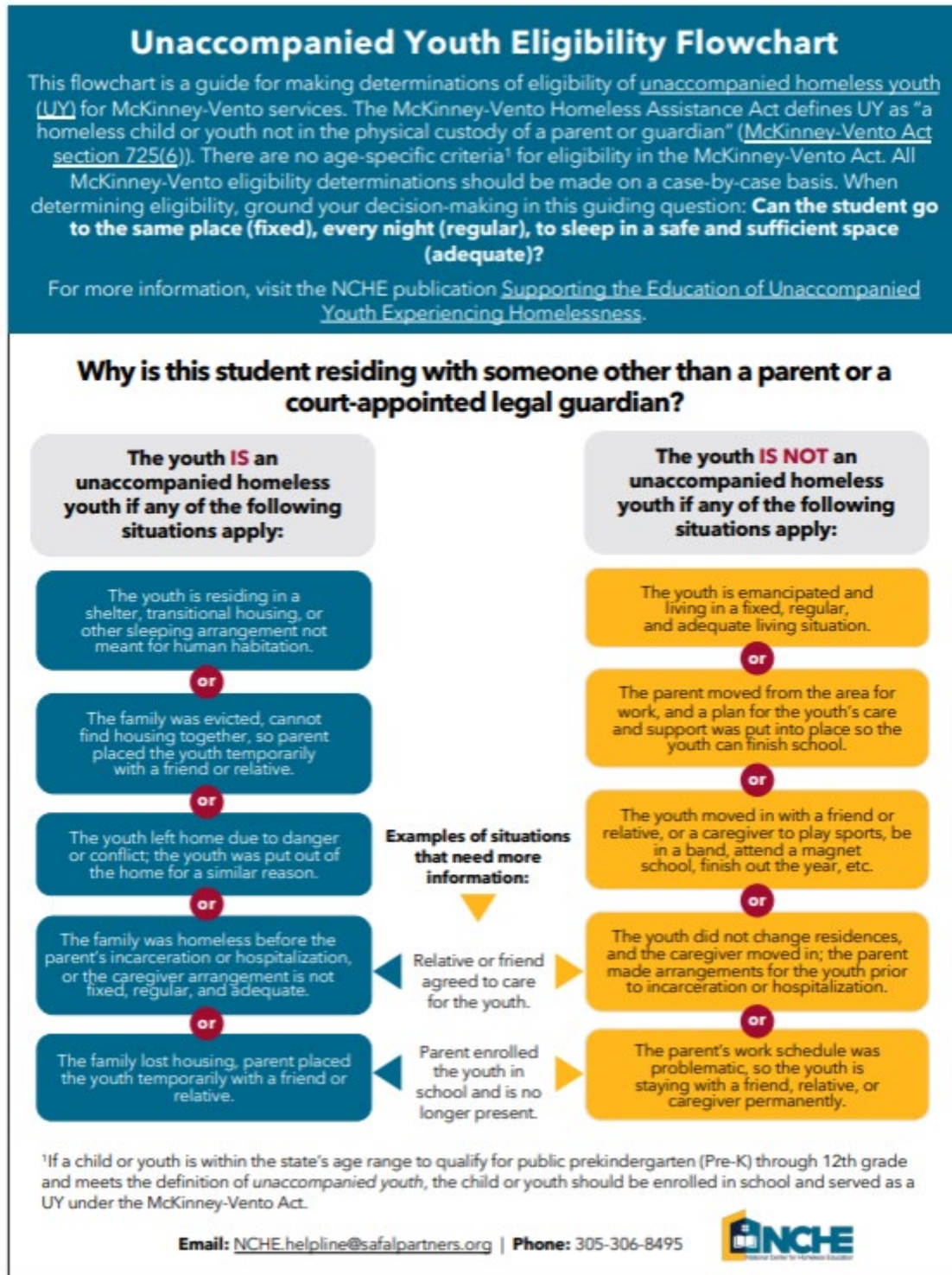
Title VII, Part B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act permits allowable expenses for school districts. A list of allowable expenses may be found here: [Title VII, Part B - Homeless - McKinney-Vento | North Dakota Department of Public Instruction](#), under Homeless Children and Youth Grants Allowable Uses of Funds.

### **References**

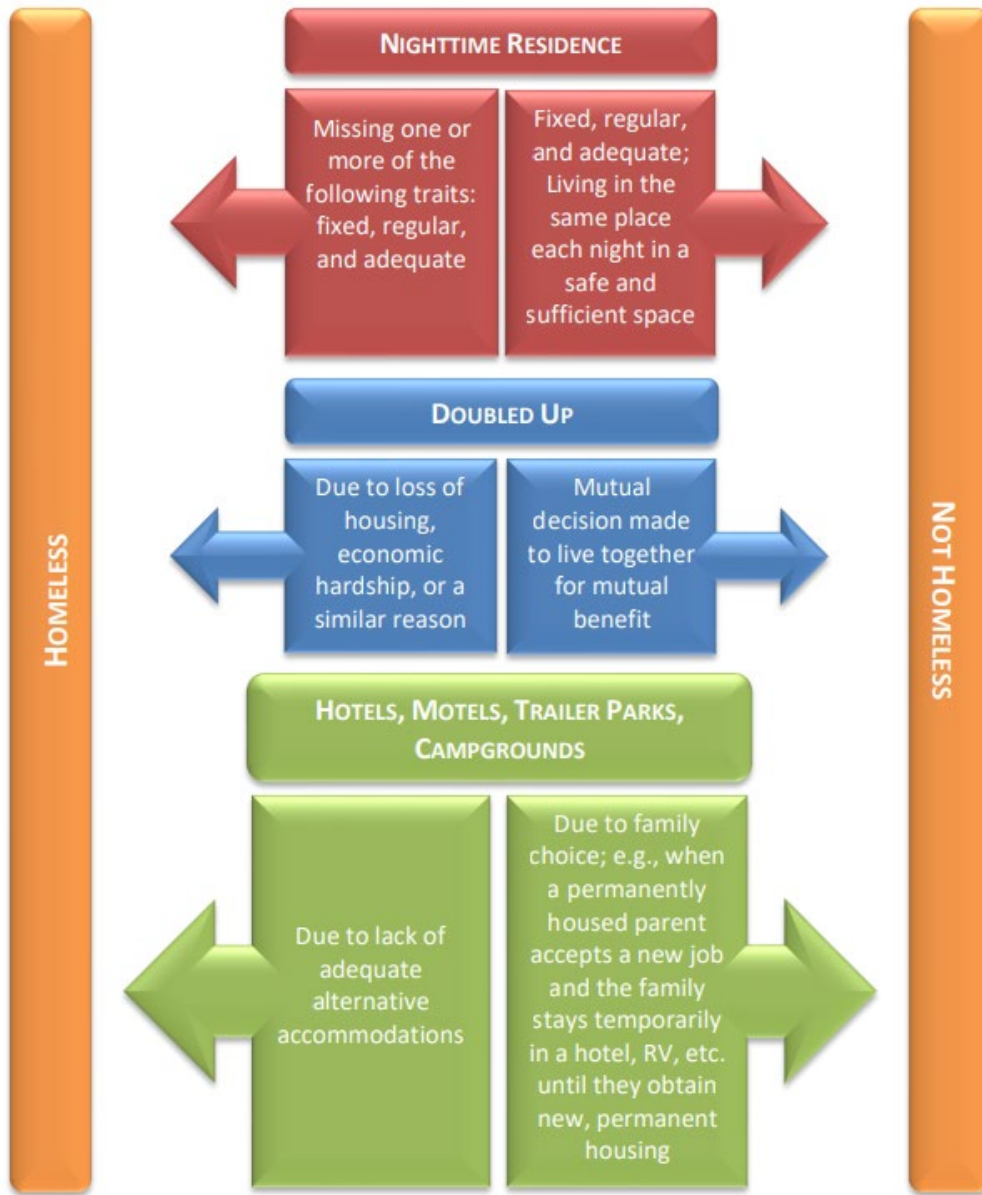
[www.nche.ed.gov](http://www.nche.ed.gov)

[www.schoolhouseconnection.org/mckinney-vento-act](http://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/mckinney-vento-act)

## Appendix A – Unaccompanied Youth Eligibility Flowchart



## Appendix B – McKinney-Vento Eligibility Flowchart



Appendix C – McKinney-Vento Transportation Flowchart

**McKinney-Vento Transportation Flowchart**

