

# Education for Homeless Children and Youth Programs

## Homeless Liaison Handbook



NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

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## Education for Homeless Children and Youth Programs

### 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 2001, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, homeless education is now 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 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 HCY. State ESSA plans must also describe how HCY 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 homeless students. Reserved funds may be used for services customarily provided by Title I, part A including local liaisons and transportation to the school of origin. Homeless Children and Youth 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., HCY may receive Title I educational or support services from schoolwide and targeted assistance school programs). Homeless families and children 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 or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation 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 for the purposes of this part because the children are LIVING IN CIRCUMSTANCES described in 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 Programs, McKinney-Vento Assistance Act**

### **General Information**

In 1987 the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act was signed into law, requiring states to revise policies to ensure the immediate school enrollment of homeless children and youth. The McKinney Act was amended in 1990, requiring states to eliminate enrollment barriers, and provide school access and support for academic success to students experiencing homelessness. The education portion of the Act was reauthorized by the Improving America’s Schools 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 (ESSA) Act, 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 student experiencing homelessness. MVA emphasizes collaboration and parent participation as critical to the educational success of students experiencing homelessness.

## **Purpose**

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

The MVA gives student 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 students experiencing homelessness. Key duties of the NDPPI include:

- Responding to inquiries from homeless parents and unaccompanied youth,
- Providing professional development for liaisons, and
- Conducting monitoring of school districts to enforce compliance.

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

- Ensuring HCY are identified and enrolled in school,
- Ensuring HCY have full and equal access to educational opportunities to carry out academic success,
- Participate in professional development and other technical assistance provided by the state,
- Ensuring school personnel receive professional development and other support,
- Ensuring unaccompanied homeless children and youth are informed and receive verification of their status as independent students for college financial aid,
- Ensuring homeless children, youth and families receive referrals to health, dental, mental health, housing, substance abuse and other appropriate services, and
- Disseminating public notice of McKinney-Vento rights in locations frequented by parents and youth, in a manner and form understandable to them.

To receive Title VII, Part B funding, each school district submits an annual application including budget. 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 or enrollment deadlines and/or lack documentation. NDDPI and school districts must develop, review and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless student in

school, including barriers due to fees, fines, and absences. States must have procedures to ensure HCY do not face barriers to accessing academic and/or extracurricular activities.

School districts must make the best interest determinations that presume staying in the school of origin is in the best interest of the homeless child or youth. 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 immediately be enrolled in the school in which the parent, guardian or unaccompanied child or 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 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 USDE requires that NDDPI monitor the implementation of program requirements and the expenditure of federal funds. NDDPI monitors Title VII, Part B local agency programs 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 \(nd.gov\)](#)

### **Use of Funds**

Title VII, Part B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act permits the following allowable expenses for school districts:

- Tutoring, supplemental instruction and enriched educational services linked to the achievement of the same challenging state academic standards established for other children and youth,
- Expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of HCY, including needs and eligibility for programs and services,
- Professional development and other activities for educators and specialized instructional support personnel that strengthens the understanding and sensitivity to the needs of HCY, their rights and specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youths,
- Referral services to HCY for medical, dental, mental, and other health services,
- Assistance to defray excess costs of transportation for students not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding, where necessary to enable student attendance at their school,

- Developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding for preschool-aged children,
- Services and assistance to attract, engage and retain HCY, specifically those not enrolled in school, public school programs and services provided to non-homeless children and youth,
- Before and after school programming, mentoring and summer programs in which qualified individuals provide tutoring, homework assistance and supervision of educational activities,
- Payment of fees and other costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records necessary to enroll HCY in school, including birth certificates, immunization or other required health records, academic records, guardianship records and evaluations for special programs and/or services,
- Education and training to parent(s)/guardian(s) of HCY regarding the rights, resources and other activities designed to increase meaningful involvement of in the education of their child(ren),
- Development of coordination between schools and agencies providing services to HCY,
- Specialized instructional support services and referrals for such services,
- Activities to address specific needs of HCY that may arise from domestic violence and parental mental health or substance abuse problems,
- Adaptation of space and purchase of supplies for any non-school facilities made available to provide services,
- Distribution of school supplies at shelters, temporary housing facilities or other appropriate locations, and
- Extraordinary or emergency assistance need to enable HCY to attend school and participate fully in school activities.

## 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

