

Title IX, Part A: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act – Education for Homeless Children and Youth

FY20 LEA Handbook



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Title IX, Part A: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

General Information

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was reauthorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to ensure the educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. ESSA strengthened the support established under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to address the needs of homeless students. Among the most notable support activities are requirements for:

- The Georgia Department of Education (Department) and LEAs to review and revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youth.
- LEAs to use the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition of homeless when identifying and determining which students are eligible for services.
- LEAs to designate a local liaison to coordinate services to ensure that homeless children and youth enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically.
- LEAs to coordinate the local plan required under Title I with the needs of homeless children and youth, including making a mandatory set-aside of funds under Title I, Part A to serve homeless children.
- The Department and LEAs to implement procedures to ensure homeless children and youth receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.
- LEA school counselors to assist and advise homeless children and youth to improve college preparation and readiness.
- LEAs to inform unaccompanied homeless youth regarding their independent status on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act guarantees to homeless children the following:

- The right to immediate enrollment in school.
- The right to attend school in school of origin or in the attendance area where the family currently resides.
- The right to receive transportation to school of origin if requested by parents and is in the best interest of the child.
- The right to comparable services as other schoolmates including transportation and supplemental services.
- The right to attend school along with children who are not homeless.

- The posting of homeless students' rights in all schools and other places around the community that low-income families and high-risk families may visit.

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Responsibilities

Title I, Part A funding requires that each LEA have a state educational agency (SEA)-approved plan coordinated with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. LEAs must include in the local plan required under Title I, Part A, a description of the services the LEA will provide to homeless children, including those services it will provide with funds set aside under ESSA Section 1113(c)(3)(A). As part of the Comprehensive LEA Implementation Plan (CLIP), LEAs must examine and describe the needs of homeless children and youth in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA). The CNA informs the activities described in the District Improvement Plan. In addition, LEAs must also provide the name and contact information for the individual(s) designated as the LEA liaison for homeless children and youth.

At a minimum, LEAs must:

- Describe the process for the identification and enrollment of homeless children and youth.
- Describe the services to be provided to homeless children and youth.
- Reserve Title I, Part A funds to provide comparable services for homeless children and youth that attend non-Title I schools, and provide educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where they live.
- Designate an appropriate staff person as an LEA Homeless liaison.
- Develop, review, and revise LEA policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations.
- Describe the process for ensuring that transportation is provided to homeless children and youth.
- Ensure that accurate data is collected on enrolled homeless children and youth.

Homeless Liaison Responsibilities

The LEA Homeless liaison is the heart of the LEA Homeless program. It is important that the Homeless liaison have some knowledge and experience in dealing with federal programs, social worker responsibilities, and counseling responsibilities. It is important that the LEA Homeless liaison has knowledge of the LEA, understands the community, has great communication skills, and has a commitment to the Homeless program.

Among other duties, the LEA Homeless liaison must ensure that:

- Homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.¹
- Homeless students enroll in—and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in—school.
- Homeless children and youth, their families, and unaccompanied youth receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, preschool programs administered by the LEA, referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.
- Parents or guardians of homeless children and youth, and unaccompanied youth are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children, and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- Parents or guardians of a homeless child or youth and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing transportation services to their selected school.
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in all schools and other places around the community.
- With the assistance of LEA personnel, implement procedures to ensure homeless children and youth receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.
- Ensure LEA school counselors to assist and advise homeless children and youth to improve college preparation and readiness.
- Inform unaccompanied homeless youth regarding their independent status on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Public Notice Requirements

Posters, brochures, and other awareness materials explaining educational rights, programs, and other related services for those families experiencing homelessness are required to be posted in the registration area of all schools and other locations where low-income and high-risk families receive services.

Data Collection Requirements

The U.S. Department of Education (US ED) requires all LEAs, with and without subgrants, to submit information to determine the extent to which homeless children and youth have access to a free, appropriate, public education under Title IX, Part A of

¹ See Appendix P: Guidelines for the Identification of Homeless Children and Youth.

ESSA. All data reported must be based on actual student enrollment. Estimated numbers are not acceptable.

LEA Homeless liaisons should work with their LEA to implement a system to collect the needed data on each homeless student who is identified and enrolled. This data collection can be facilitated by the use of an intake form at the time of enrollment or when a currently enrolled child becomes identified as homeless.

In Georgia, the LEA Student Information System (SIS) coordinator and liaisons have received training on the appropriate coding of homeless children and youth. The environment code indicates the type of residential environment in which the student resides during the school year. The environment code for homeless children and youth is “3,” and the environment code for homeless unaccompanied youth is “4.”

LEAs must also identify the primary nighttime residence for each homeless student identified and enrolled. The primary nighttime residence indicates the type of temporary resident in which the student resides.

Shelter/transitional housing	1
Doubled-up (due to economic hardship)	2
Unsheltered (parks, cars, abandoned housing)	3
Hotel/Motel	4

Policy Review and Revision

Annually, LEAs must review and revise any laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youth. In the review of such laws, regulations, practices, or policies, LEAs should give specific consideration to the laws regarding the following areas:

- Identification
- School Selection
- Enrollment
- Transportation
- Services
- Resolution of Disputes
- Free Meals
- Title I
- Training
- Coordination
- Preschool
- Appropriate Credit for Full or Partial Coursework Satisfactorily Completed

Please see Appendix P for a sample LEA Policy and Procedures document.

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Homeless Survey

LEAs must conduct an annual survey to identify the number, location, and educational and related support needs of homeless children and youth residing in the jurisdiction of the LEA. The LEA must use the definitions of homeless children and youth as identified in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act when identifying and determining the needs of these children. The most effective way to identify the needs of homeless children and youth is through coordination with local supports, such as the regional migratory education program staff, bus drivers, and school staff, including social workers, counselors, attendance officers, principals, teachers, enrollment clerks, etc.

The data in the Education for Homeless Children and Youth survey is a part of the LEA state reporting requirements and should be collected in the system student database. This survey is a part of the consolidated application. LEAs will be notified by electronic mail as to the date this survey is due to the Department. Directions for the completion of this survey will be included in technical assistance sessions and electronically with the survey notification letter.

Competitive Grant Application for McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Grants

The Department makes competitive grants available to local educational agencies (LEAs) with large numbers of homeless children and youth to facilitate the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in Georgia's public schools. Requests for applications from LEAs not currently receiving Education for Homeless Children and Youth grants are announced annually based on the availability of funds. Announcement notices and information are provided electronically to all LEAs. Application materials and information are posted on the Department website.

The Department provides technical assistance and support with the application process to prospective applicants statewide through workshops, webinars, and onsite support.

Completed applications are received by the Department and screened for eligibility and completeness. Applications are then reviewed and rated using the Department peer review process for competitive grants. The panel of peer reviewers is composed of representatives from LEAs, state agencies, and local agencies providing services to homeless families, children, and youth.

Upon completion of the competitive grant process conducted by the Department, the available grant funds are allocated until the funds are exhausted and the recommended grantees are sent to the State Board of Education (SBOE) for approval. Approved grantees are notified and are required to submit a budget to be approved by the state homeless education program manager using the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act “use of funds” requirements and the Chart of Accounts to account for proposed expenditures. The budget is submitted and approved through the consolidated application.

The grantees are provided technical assistance in administering the grant according to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and guidance. The grants are monitored through:

- The budget approval process that assures that the approved competitive grant is the foundation of any requests for funds.
- The annual desk or onsite McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act monitoring of each grantee.
- The annual submission of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Grant Evaluation and Continuation Report by each grantee.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Education for Homeless Children and Youth grants may be awarded annually, up to three years, to a grantee contingent upon the continuation of federal funding and the successful completion of the following:

- Onsite monitoring.
- On-time submission of the annual homeless survey.
- On-time submission of a McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act Education for Homeless Children and Youth Evaluation and Continuation Request to be rated by the Department Homeless Education office.

Indirect Costs, Budget Amendments and Carryover

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education program uses the same indirect cost, budget amendment, and carryover procedures established for Title I, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).