



McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

## SCHOOL STAFF RESOURCE



Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction  
By The SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro

# WASHINGTON STATE MCKINNEY-VENTO EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM SCHOOL STAFF RESOURCE

## OVERVIEW

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The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, reauthorized in 2015 by Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, provides for the delivery of services to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools. Every school district or LEA is required to implement the McKinney-Vento Act, including appointing a local homeless liaison who is responsible for ensuring that homeless children and youth are identified, enrolled immediately in school, and linked to services.

School administrators, teachers, and support personnel encounter children and youth experiencing homelessness every day and play a critical role in ensuring that these children and youth are identified and served. As school personnel, you are often the ones who develop trusting relationships with students and families and can be the eyes and ears to identify vulnerable students and ensure that they are linked to services and support.

This booklet will guide school personnel in ways to support homeless families, children, and youth. Included are a summary of requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and state legislation, the role of the local liaison, and both general strategies for school personnel and strategies for specific role groups to help homeless students enroll in school, attend regularly, and succeed academically. Also included are links to additional information and resources.

## STATE CONTACT INFORMATION

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## RESOURCES

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Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/HomelessEd/default.aspx>

Washington State Public School Homeless Liaisons  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/HomelessEd/ContactList.aspx>

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)  
<http://center.serve.org/nche>

NCHE State Profile Pages – Washington State  
<http://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StateID=56>

NCHE Homeless Education Helpline  
1-800-308-2145  
[homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org)

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHYC)  
<http://www.naehcy.org>

## ABOUT THE EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH (EHYC) PROGRAM

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The Education for Homeless Children and Youth program addresses challenges that homeless children and youth face in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Through the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act, state educational agencies (SEAs) must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a preschool education, as non-homeless children and youth. States and school districts or local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to undertake steps to remove educational barriers for children and youth in homeless situations.

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## McKINNEY-VENTO REQUIREMENTS FOR LEAs

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An understanding of the requirements that LEAs must carry out to serve homeless children and youth will enable you to know both what you must do to follow the law and what you should do to help homeless children and youth succeed in school.

Following is a summary of the McKinney-Vento Act's requirements for LEAs in serving homeless children and youth:

The law requires State Plans to ensure that LEAs

- give homeless children and youth opportunities to meet the state's challenging academic standards;
- identify homeless children and youth;
- resolve disputes promptly;
- increase the awareness of all school personnel of the needs of homeless children and youth;
- enable homeless children and youth to participate in federal, state, and local nutrition programs for which they are eligible;
- ensure that preschool-aged homeless children have access to public preschool programs;
- identify unaccompanied homeless youth and youth separated from public schools and link them to appropriate secondary education and support services;
- remove barriers to receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school;
- remove barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs, if available;
- address problems resulting from enrollment delays caused by requirements for immunizations or other required health records; residency requirements; lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documents; guardianship issues; or uniform or dress code requirements;
- revise policies to remove barriers to identification and school retention of homeless children and youth, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences;
- ensure that homeless children and youth are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their homelessness;

- provide transportation, at the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, to and from the school of origin; and
- ensure that school counselors advise homeless youths to prepare for college. [42 U.S.C. § 722(g)(1)]

The law also mandates that LEAs

- continue a child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, according to his or her best interest, or enroll the child or youth in any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area where he or she is living are eligible to attend;
  - The term "school of origin" means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool.
  - "School of origin" includes the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools when a child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin.
- immediately enroll a child or youth even if he or she is unable to provide records normally required for enrollment or has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness;
- contact the last school attended to obtain relevant records if enrolling a homeless child or youth;
- assist with obtaining immunization records, other health records, or immunizations, if needed.
- make any record ordinarily kept by the school available when a child or youth enters a new school or school district;
- conduct disputes over eligibility, school enrollment, or school selection according to the LEA's and SEA's dispute resolution policy, providing written notice to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with the school district's decision and instructions for how to initiate a dispute; and
- treat information regarding a student's living situation as a student educational record and not directory information. [42 U.S.C. § 722(g)(3)]

## RESOURCES

- Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015  
<http://center.serve.org/nche/legis/essa.php>

## MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT DEFINITION OF HOMELESS

The term “homeless children and youth”—

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and

(B) includes—

(i) children and youth who are sharing the housing 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 shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;

(ii) children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

(iii) children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

(iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described above.

[42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)]

The term “unaccompanied youth” includes a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)]





## STATE LEGISLATION RELATED TO HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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### **SB 6074 IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS**

- Requires the office of the superintendent of public instruction to
  - report certain data for homeless students to the governor and the legislature;
  - develop or acquire a short video that provides information on how to identify and provide services to homeless students; and
  - provide to each school district, best practices for choosing and training school district-designated homeless student liaisons.
- Requires school districts to
  - encourage all school staff to annually review the video;
  - encourage every homeless student liaison to attend trainings provided by the state; and
  - include information about services and support for homeless children in existing materials that are shared with students at the beginning of the school year or at enrollment.
- Requires school districts to report annually to the superintendent of public instruction, dropout rates of homeless students.
- Requires the state institute for public policy to calculate an annual estimate of the savings resulting from any change in the extended graduation rate compared to the prior school year.

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=6074&year=2013>

### **HB 1682 IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS (HOMELESS STUDENT STABILITY AND OPPORTUNITY GAP ACT)**

- Requires the office of the superintendent of public instruction to create a competitive grant process to evaluate and award state-funded grants to high-need school districts to increase identification of homeless students and the capacity of districts to provide support, which may include education liaisons, for homeless students.
  - Districts receiving grants must measure during the academic year how often each student physically moves,

- what services families or unaccompanied youth could access, and whether or not a family or unaccompanied youth received stable housing by the end of the school year.
- School districts may not use the funds allocated through this grant to supplant existing federal, state, or local resources for homeless student supports, which may include education liaisons.
  - Requires the department of commerce, in consultation with the office of the superintendent of public instruction, to administer a grant program that links homeless students and their families with stable housing located in the homeless student's school district.
  - Requires principals of middle and high schools that have identified more than ten accompanied homeless youth to establish a building point of contact to identify homeless and unaccompanied youth and link them to the local homeless liaison.
  - Encourages schools to use a variety of communications each year to notify students and families about services and support available to them if they experience homelessness.
  - Encourages all school staff to annually review the video posted on the Washington State Education of Homeless Children and Youth Office website.
  - Authorizes a school nurse, a school counselor, or a local homeless liaison to provide informed consent for health care for a patient under the age of majority when
    - a) consent is necessary for nonemergency outpatient primary care services, including physical examinations, vision examinations and eyeglasses, dental examinations, hearing examinations, and hearing aids, immunizations, treatments for illnesses and conditions, and routine follow-up care customarily provided by a health care provider in an outpatient setting, excluding elective surgeries;
    - b) the patient meets the definition of a "homeless child or youth" under the federal McKinney-Vento homeless education assistance improvements act of 2001; and
    - c) the patient is not under the supervision or control of a parent, custodian, or legal guardian.

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=1682&year=2015>

## HOW THE LOCAL HOMELESS LIAISON CAN HELP

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The LEA's local homeless liaison plays a key role in implementing the McKinney-Vento Act and supporting school administrators, educators, and personnel in their efforts to identify homeless children and youth and ensure that they are enrolled in school immediately, attend regularly, and succeed academically.

The local liaison in your LEA will

- conduct outreach in the community to identify homeless children and youth, including displaying educational rights posters in places where homeless families are likely to go;
- develop policies and procedures for serving homeless children and youth so that you will know when to make a referral and what services will be provided;
- provide posters on the educational rights of homeless children and youth for display in your school;
- provide you with awareness information and training on the needs of homeless children and youth and the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act (provide training to the building point of contact, when appointed);
- provide customized technical assistance on specific situations related to a homeless child or youth in your school;
- provide information on effective practices in serving homeless children and youth;
- revise LEA policies that pose barriers to the education of homeless children and youth;
- facilitate the McKinney-Vento dispute resolution process when a disagreement occurs between the LEA or school and a homeless parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth over eligibility, school enrollment, or school selection;
- communicate with the State Coordinator to keep updated on laws, policies, and resources related to serving homeless children and youth, and communicate these to you;
- collect data on homeless children and youth to provide to the state and U.S. Department of Education, and provide information on numbers and trends of homeless children and youth in the LEA;
- coordinate with programs such as Title I, special education, child nutrition, and pupil transportation to ensure that homeless children and youth are linked with services expeditiously;
- develop and maintain community collaborations and business partnerships to increase resources for homeless children and

youth and to make referrals for services, such as health care, dental services, mental health and substance abuse assistance, housing, and preschool;

- identify local clinics, physicians, dentists, eye doctors, and psychological counselors who will treat homeless families and unaccompanied youth at low or no cost; and
- arrange with local clinics or physicians to provide physicals for school sports participation.



## GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

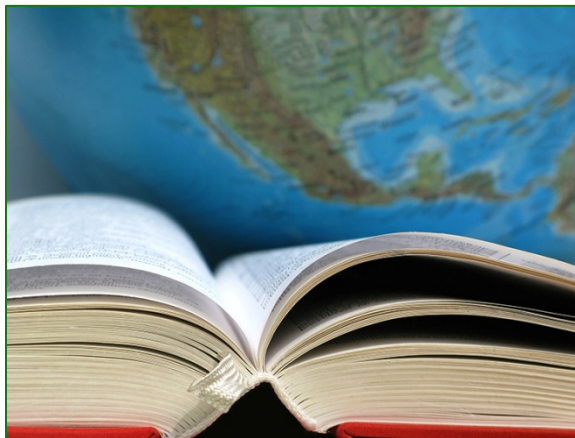
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- Have contact information for the local homeless liaison on hand and contact him or her to learn about LEA procedures and policies regarding homeless students.
- When you identify a student who is or may possibly be experiencing homelessness, contact the local liaison right away to ensure that the student is linked to all needed services.
- Participate in trainings to increase your awareness of the needs of homeless students and provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act to address their needs.
- Become familiar with trauma-informed services, understanding that many homeless children and youth have experienced tremendous loss, stress, and in many cases, domestic violence.
- Be on the lookout for indicators that a child or youth may be experiencing homelessness, such as
  - chronic hunger or fatigue;
  - stress and concern about family or where they will go after school;
  - erratic attendance at school;
  - changes in behavior;
  - poor grooming or clothing that draws attention or is worn for several days in a row; or
  - reluctance to part with belongings while at school.
- Encourage the student and build hope for the future.
- Discuss a child's or youth's possible homelessness with him or her or with parents or guardians in a discrete, respectful way, avoiding using the word "homeless." You should use terms like "living in a temporary situation" or "not having a stable place to live."
- Do not disclose information about a student's living situation to anyone other than the local liaison and to other school administrators and school staff only as needed.
- Ensure that the child or youth feels welcome in the school and classroom and has genuine connections to caring adults.

### RESOURCES

- NCHE Training Resources (Webinars and Self-Paced Trainings)  
[http://center.serve.org/nche/web/online\\_tr.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/web/online_tr.php)

- NCHE Potential Warning Signs of Homelessness  
<http://center.serve.org/nche/nche/warning.html>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network  
<http://www.NCTSNet.org>
- National Center on Family Homelessness "Understanding Traumatic Stress in Children"  
<http://www.air.org/resource/understanding-traumatic-stress-children>
- Washington Information Network 211: accessible by phone at 211 or online at <http://win211.org>  
(The Washington Information Network can connect families, schools, community organizations, and shelters to the services needed to assist homeless children and youth.)
- Washington State Education of Homeless Children and Youth Office website: [www.k12.wa.us/homeless/default.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/homeless/default.aspx)



## STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS

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- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
- Make the classroom a welcoming place for homeless students.
  - Assure the student that you care.
  - Connect a newly enrolled student with other students, such as a lunch buddy.
  - Inform the student of extracurricular activities that may be of interest, and arrange participation.
  - Do not hold homeless students accountable for situations over which they have no control, such as not having a place to do homework or not being able to pay fines.
  - Do not disclose the student's living situation.
- Encourage the student, and hold him or her to high expectations.
- Discuss with the homeless student what his or her school challenges are and connect the student with services or make appropriate accommodations.
  - Adjust assignments so students not living in permanent settings can complete them. (A student living in a hotel room or who has limited supplies may not be able to carry out science activities or bring in newspaper articles or information from the Internet.)
  - Provide a time and place before, during, or after school for a student to complete assignments.
  - Arrange tutoring, supplemental instruction, or counseling expeditiously because many homeless students will be in your school for only a short period of time.
- Assist other students in understanding family homelessness and treating their peers with kindness and respect.
- Look for any signs that other students are teasing or bullying a student who may be experiencing homelessness, and intervene or report the students to the principal.
- Assess students frequently so that you can determine progress even if the student is in your class only a short time.
- Communicate with a student's parents or guardians about their concerns or ways to help their child or youth be more successful in school.
  - Contact the parent or guardian if the student is absent or exhibits concerning behaviors.

- Personal contact (in person or by phone) is often more effective than sending a letter or email.
- Do not take away students' possessions; homeless students may need the security of having their belongings nearby.
- Before you receive a new student:
  - Prepare a list of your class rules and routines, and post the class schedule.
  - Prepare a new student folder with information for parents and guardians.
  - Maintain a supply of materials for students.
  - Prepare a "get-to-know-you" activity when a new student arrives.

## RESOURCES

- NCHE "Classrooms with Revolving Doors: Recommended Practices for Elementary Teachers of At-Risk and Highly Mobile Students"  
[http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/eff\\_teach\\_elem.pdf](http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/eff_teach_elem.pdf)
- NCHE "Classrooms with Revolving Doors: Recommended Practices for Middle Level and High School Teachers of At-Risk and Highly Mobile Students"  
[http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/eff\\_teach\\_mh.pdf](http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/eff_teach_mh.pdf)
- NCHE *Students on the Move: Reaching and Teaching Highly Mobile Children and Youth*  
[http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/st\\_move.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/st_move.php)



## STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

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- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
- Build trust with students as a caring adult; listen carefully to their wishes and concerns.
- Contact the local liaison to make referrals for the student or family for needed services within the LEA and in the community.
- Examine a student's school record for missing credits, and arrange for the student to recover credit for work partially completed.
- Ask the student what his or her interests are, in what extracurricular activities he or she participated in his or her former school, and then connect the student to appropriate activities.
- Work with the student from a trauma-informed perspective, and link the student to counseling and other supports, as necessary.
- Be aware of risky and unsafe situations in which a youth might be involved; look especially for signs that an unaccompanied homeless youth is being trafficked or is in a dangerous relationship.
- Offer support for a student's physiological needs (food, clothing), as well as his or her social/emotional needs (safety, security, and belonging).
- Help older students with life skills, such as financial literacy and healthy choices.
- Encourage the student and build hope for the future.
- Encourage students to plan to attend college.
  - Make sure they enroll in college preparatory classes.
  - Arrange for them to visit a college campus.
  - Help older youth with the college search, application, and financial aid process, including completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which allows unaccompanied homeless youth to apply for aid as independent students.

### RESOURCES

- NCHE "Maximizing Credit Accrual and Recovery for Homeless Students"  
<http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/credit.pdf>

- NCHE "Ensuring Full Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities for Students Experiencing Homelessness"  
[http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/extra\\_curr.pdf](http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/extra_curr.pdf)
- NCHE "Sex Trafficking of Minors: What Schools Need to Know to Recognize and Respond to Trafficking of Students"  
<http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/trafficking.pdf>
- NAEHCY *College Access and Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness: A Toolkit for Educators and Service Providers*  
<http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/dl/toolkit.pdf>



## STRATEGIES FOR SECRETARIES, REGISTRARS, CLERKS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

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- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
  - Learn to identify indicators of possible homelessness during the enrollment process, such as
    - a lack of records, such as a birth certificate, immunization records, school and preschool records, address verification;
    - parents who do not know the last school their child attended;
    - attendance at multiple schools;
    - a low-cost motel/hotel address on an enrollment form;
    - statements such as, “it’s a new address; I can’t remember it;” or “we’ve been having a hard time lately;” or “we move a lot and are staying with friends until we find a place.”
  - Include a housing intake form with enrollment materials with a check-off for types of living situations that would indicate homelessness.
  - Ask the family if there are preschool-aged children and include this information in your referral to the local liaison.
- Provide a welcoming environment for families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness.
  - Ensure that posters with the educational rights of homeless children and youth are posted visibly in the registration area and brochures are readily available.
  - Have sensitive conversations in a private area; allow the family or youth to fill out forms in a private area.
  - Inform homeless families, children, and youth that homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin, if in their best interest, and receive transportation to and from the school of origin; providing this information is required by law;
  - Discuss a child’s or youth’s possible homelessness with him or her and with parents or guardians in a discrete, respectful way, avoiding using the word “homeless.” You should use terms like “living in a temporary situation” or “not having a stable place to live.”
  - Discuss with the parent, child, or youth school policies and routines; provide a tour of the school.

- Enroll the child or unaccompanied youth immediately.
  - Ensure that the child or youth is placed in class on the day of arrival, and follow up with the local liaison, child nutrition staff, and pupil transportation department so that services are arranged without delay.
  - You don't have to understand or agree with the reasons why an unaccompanied youth left home; youth often will not share the full details of their home situation. Enroll an unaccompanied homeless youth, as any other homeless child or youth.
- Provide a backpack with age-appropriate school supplies and clothing, if needed.
- Contact the parent or guardian when a homeless student is absent (or contact the unaccompanied youth) to identify any challenges with attendance.
- Before a student withdraws, prepare a parent pack with photocopies of the student's records (e.g., academic, health, immunization); samples of the student's work; and contact information for teachers, school counselors, or social workers.
- Provide records immediately for a homeless student when requested by a new school to expedite appropriate placement.
  - Schools must remove barriers to enrollment due to outstanding fees or fines.

## RESOURCES

- NCHE "Enrolling Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in School"  
<http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/enrollment.pdf>
- Virginia's Project HOPE "Secretaries and Enrollment Personnel: Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness"  
<https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/liaison/documents/toolkitAppendixL.pdf>
- NCHE Educational Rights Posters and Parent Pack Pocket Folders  
[http://center.serve.org/nche/online\\_order.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/online_order.php)

## STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL NURSES AND HEALTH ROOM ASSISTANTS

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- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
- Assist parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth with obtaining required health and medical records and completing health forms.
  - Assist them with obtaining medical information from clinics or the state Department of Health.
  - Contact the previous school to obtain immunization and health records.
  - Assist the family with arranging any needed immunizations for their child.
  - Remind registrars that homeless children and youth must be enrolled in school immediately even if immunization or health records are not available at the time of enrollment.
- Notify the principal, school counselor, school social worker, and teachers of any serious medical condition of the child or youth.
- Be familiar with the provisions of Washington State's Homeless Student Stability and Opportunity Gap Act regarding under what conditions a school nurse, school counselor, or local liaison is authorized to provide informed consent for nonemergency primary care services for an unaccompanied homeless youth.
- Request information from the local liaison regarding a referral to a physician or medical clinic for a child or youth who needs medical care.
- If a homeless student is experiencing stress, fatigue, or minor illness, allow the student to rest in the nurse's office.
- Talk to a parent or guardian about where the child or youth should go if he or she becomes ill and needs to leave school. Homeless shelters often require that families leave during the day, and homeless parents may be difficult to contact. Remember that when a homeless student is ill and must be sent home, the place he or she is going may not be stable or quiet.
- Provide hygiene items for homeless children and youth; make arrangements for them to take showers before or after school or wash their clothes in sports laundry facilities, as necessary.
- Provide a list of health care resources to homeless parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth.
- Conduct workshops at shelters or libraries for homeless parents on nutrition, hygiene, health needs, or stress reduction.

## RESOURCES

- Virginia's Project HOPE "School Nurses: It's Not Just Bandages Anymore!"  
<https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/publications/infobriefs/documents/SchoolNurse2014.pdf>
- Minors' Healthcare Rights in Washington State  
<http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org/resource/your-health-care-rights-if-youre-under-eighte?ref=uR6Jt#i392AA11E-B7CF-083D-B5DC-911ACC8EF7A7>
- HB 1682-S3 Improving Outcomes for Homeless Students (Homeless Student Stability and Opportunity Gap Act)  
<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=1682&year=2015>



## STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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- Promote a school climate that welcomes all students and supports students with the greatest needs.
- Ensure that posters and brochures on the educational rights of homeless children and youth are displayed in the school, and announce information on the rights of homeless children and youth at school assemblies and parent meetings.
- Ensure that you and all school staff are familiar with the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act that remove barriers to the school enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless students; arrange time for school staff to view the training and awareness materials on the Washington State Education of Homeless Children and Youth Office website:  
[www.k12.wa.us/homeless/default.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/homeless/default.aspx)
- If you are a principal of a middle school or high school that has identified more than 10 unaccompanied homeless youth, designate a building point of contact, as required by Washington's HB 1682-S3, who is responsible for identifying homeless and unaccompanied youth and connecting them to the local liaison.
- Ensure that all school staff and teachers are familiar with trauma-informed services for homeless families, children, and youth.
- Welcome new students.
- Invite homeless parents or guardians to be partners in their children's education, volunteer at the school, and share their ideas for improving school services.
- Ensure that homeless students have every opportunity that nonhomeless students have for academic and extracurricular activities.
- Maintain a school supply and clothing closet on site where students may obtain items as needed to be prepared for classes and avoid being stigmatized as homeless.
- Ensure that discipline policies take into account situations over which homeless students have no control, such as absences and tardies that result from a parent's or youth's car breaking down.
- Implement discipline policies that reinforce positive behaviors and personal responsibility and that keep children and youth in their classes.
- If a homeless parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth disagrees with school or district policies, discuss the issue in person to attempt to de-escalate the situation. If the individual

remains dissatisfied over an issue related to eligibility, school enrollment, or school selection, refer him or her to the local liaison to initiate the dispute process.

## RESOURCES

- NCHE *Research Summary: Supporting Homeless Children and Youth through Proactive and Positive Behavior Management and Intervention Practices* <http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/res-pos-beh.php>
- HB 1682-S3 Improving Outcomes for Homeless Students (Homeless Student Stability and Opportunity Gap Act) <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=1682&year=2015>
- Virginia's Project HOPE "School Administrators: Tips for Ensuring Educational Access and Success for Students Experiencing Homelessness" <https://education.wm.edu/centers/hope/liaison/documents/toolkitAppendixL.pdf>



## STRATEGIES FOR FOOD SERVICES STAFF

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- Look for indicators that a child or youth may be experiencing homelessness, such as someone who does not have lunch or money to purchase a meal, seems extraordinarily hungry and wants more food than is provided in the regular meal, or begs food from his or her peers, and refer this student to the local homeless liaison.
- Build positive relationships with students, and listen for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness; make referrals to the local liaison.
- Ensure that homeless students are able to receive free meals immediately upon identification, without the need for paperwork beyond a referral from the local liaison or shelter director, as required by law.
- Maintain students' confidentiality regarding their living situation.
- Do not implement practices that stigmatize homeless students or others receiving free meals, such as a creating a special line or a different colored ticket.

### RESOURCES

- NCHE "Access to Food for Homeless and Highly Mobile Students"  
<http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/nutrition.pdf>





## STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT PERSONNEL, LIBRARIANS, SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS, PARAEDUCATORS, AND CUSTODIAL STAFF

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- Look for indicators that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison.
- Look for any signs that other students are teasing or bullying a student who may be experiencing homelessness and intervene or report the students to teacher or principal.
- Build positive relationships with students.
  - Listen for indicators that a student is experiencing hunger, neglect, stress; make appropriate referrals to school counselors or social workers.
  - Encourage the student to succeed and stay in school and build hope for the future.





## STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

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- Look for indicators on the bus route that a student may be experiencing homelessness, and make a referral to the local homeless liaison. Note students who
  - appear at a new bus stop;
  - no longer appear at a bus stop without having withdrawn from school;
  - are now being dropped off/picked up by someone at a bus stop when they used to walk;
  - are requesting pick up or drop off at the address of a hotel, motel, or shelter;
  - are showing up at the bus stop inappropriately dressed for the weather; or
  - are showing uncharacteristic behavior problems.
- Build positive relationships with students.
  - Listen for indicators that a student is experiencing hunger, neglect, stress; make a referral to the local liaison and to school counselors or social workers.
  - Encourage the student to succeed and stay in school and build hope for the future.
- Listen for instances of teasing and bullying of a homeless student; intervene and report this to the student's school.
- Maintain a lost and found box and help return lost items to students; possessions are very important to homeless students.
- Inform your pupil transportation director if the bus route includes a pick up or drop off that would enable other students to identify a student as homeless, and request to adjust the route, for example, making a pick up at a shelter or hotel the first stop and drop off the last stop so that other students do not see where a homeless student is staying.
- Assist the pupil transportation director with creative routes that provide expeditious and economical transportation for homeless students to and from the school of origin.
- Inform the pupil transportation director of instances where a homeless student has not been at the bus stop arranged for him or her to be transported to and from the school of origin so that the director and local liaison can follow up with the family or youth.

## RESOURCES

- NCHE "Transporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness"  
<http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/transportation.pdf>



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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**Washington State Education of Homeless Children and Youth Office**  
**Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction**  
[www.k12.wa.us/homeless/default.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/homeless/default.aspx)



The Washington State Education of Homeless Children and Youth office at OSPI oversees the federal McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth program. The program provides training, technical assistance, and monitoring, as well as federal funding to support school district programs that serve homeless students.

**National Center for Homeless Education**  
[www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)



The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) at The SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro operates the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth program. NCHE offers webinars and training materials, publications and briefs, and customized phone and email technical assistance through its homeless education helpline.

**National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth**  
[www.naehcy.org](http://www.naehcy.org)



The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEH CY) is a national membership association dedicated to educational excellence for children and youth experiencing homelessness. NAEHCY advocates for change through state and federal policy; provides publications and resources; and sponsors an annual conference specifically for educators, service providers, policy makers, and researchers who work in the field of educating homeless children and youth.

## STATE AND LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION

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### STATE COORDINATOR FOR HOMELESS EDUCATION

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### LOCAL HOMELESS EDUCATION LIAISON