



Supporting the Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

**2019 Bringing It Home Conference
McKimmon Center, Raleigh, NC**

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NC Homeless Education Program Service Map (NCHEP)

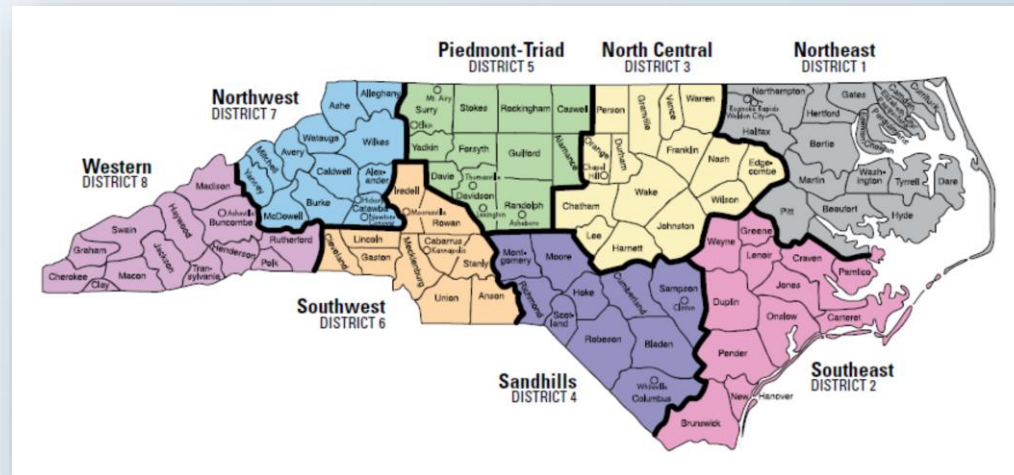
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NC Department of Public Instruction

Office of the Deputy State Superintendent of Innovation

Federal Program Monitoring and Support Division

Website: <https://hepnc.uncg.edu/> or <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/homeless/>



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NC Homeless Education Program

- Ensures that all qualified children and youth have access to the public education to which they are entitled under the Federal McKinney-Vento Act.
- Ensures that state policies are in compliance with federal law.
- Oversees all programmatic aspects of the state homeless education program.
- Under Federal Program and Monitoring Support Division with NCDPI.

NCHEP Main Responsibilities

- Provide technical assistance to all local education agencies (LEAs), including charter schools.
- Monitor all LEA and charter school homeless education programs.
- Conduct compliance meetings and trainings.
- Handle disputes on eligibility, school selection and enrollment.

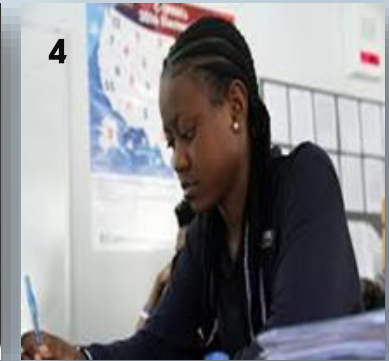
Objectives

Participants will gain an understanding of:

- Who qualifies under the McKinney-Vento Act and what services school districts are required to provide.
- The important role of the homeless liaison in providing for academic success of identified students.
- The need for collaboration to ensure academic success for identified students.

Can You Tell Who Is Homeless?

Activity



Causes of Homelessness

- Lack of affordable housing
- Poverty
- Health problems
- Domestic violence
- Natural and other disasters
- Abuse/neglect/family dysfunction
(unaccompanied youth)
- Other



Activity



You and your family have just been told you must be out of your house in 20 minutes.

You can each only take what fits into your backpack.

What will you take?

Discussion Questions

- Why did you choose the items you took and left behind?
- How did it feel to make your choices?
- How will you do without the things you left behind?
- Where will you get the things you need but no longer have?



Brief History of the McKinney-Vento Act

1987	The Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act is signed into law, requiring states to review and revise residency requirements for the enrollment of homeless children and youth.
1990	The McKinney Act is amended, requiring states to eliminate all enrollment barriers, and provide school access and support for academic success for students experiencing homelessness; McKinney funds may now be used to provide direct educational services for eligible students.
1994	The education portion of the McKinney Act is included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), adding preschool services, greater parental input, and emphasis on interagency collaboration.
2002	The Act is reauthorized as the McKinney-Vento Act (Title X, Part C of ESEA), strengthening legislative requirements and requiring all school districts to appoint a local liaison to ensure the law is implemented effectively at the local level.
2015	Reauthorized in 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Works hand-in-hand with Title IA and other federal education programs. \$85 million authorized funding to SEAs. Largest percentage increase of all federal education programs. Program implementation October 1, 2016.

McKinney-Vento Act: It's The Law



The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law designed to increase the school enrollment, attendance, and success of children and youth who lack a **fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence**.

McKinney-Vento Act: It's The Law

- State and local policies must not contain barriers to enrollment and retention of eligible students.
- Federal law supersedes state or local law or practice when there is a conflict (U.S. Constitution, Article VI).
- Reauthorized through the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015.

Main Themes of the Act

- School access
- School stability
- Support for academic success, including academic accrual
- Child-centered, best interest decision making
- Role of the local homeless liaison
- Subgrant requirements
- Transportation
- Preschool
- Higher Education
- Collaboration



McKinney-Vento Rights

- Immediate enrollment
 - “Enrollment” - attending classes and participating fully in school activities
- Remain in the school of origin, if in the student’s best interest during the duration of their homelessness and to the end of year
- Receive transportation assistance, when requested
- Receive appropriate educational services comparable to other students
- Receive free school meals

ENROLL NOW!

Definition of Homelessness

Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Fixed

Permanent;
Stationary;
Not subject to
change

Regular

Used on a routine
basis

Adequate

Home setting
meets both
physical and
psychological
needs

Example Situations...

Sharing a home due to loss of housing*

Sharing a home due to economic hardship*

Living in motels/hotels*

Living in trailer parks*

Living in a shelter

Abandoned in hospitals

Living in substandard housing*

Living in cars/parks

Living in camp grounds*

Living in abandoned buildings

Living under bridges

Living at bus/train stations

Migratory children*

Unaccompanied homeless youth*

*Not included in the HUD definition of "homeless."

McKinney-Vento Identifications

2016 – 2017SY US Public Schools

1.354 million

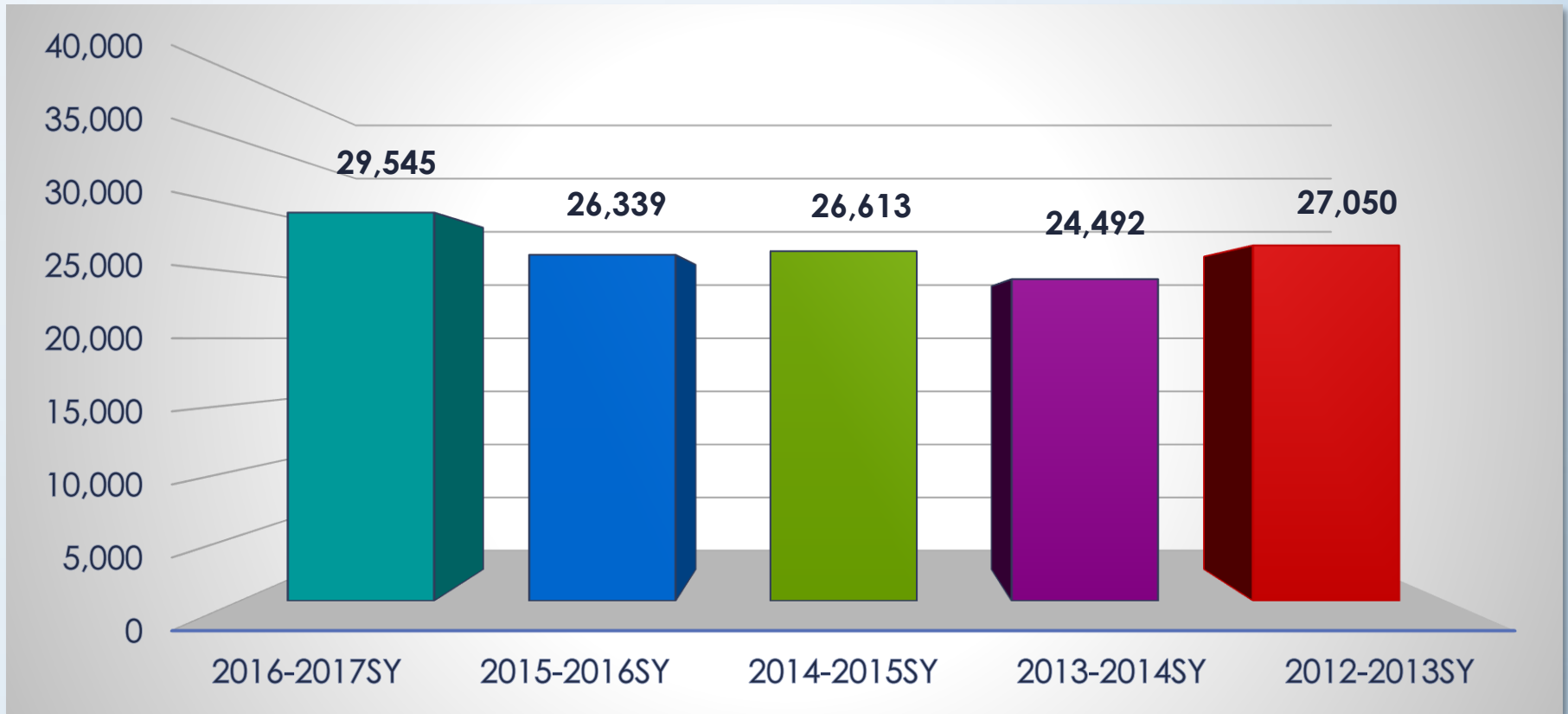
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2017 – 2018SY NC Public Schools: **30,544**

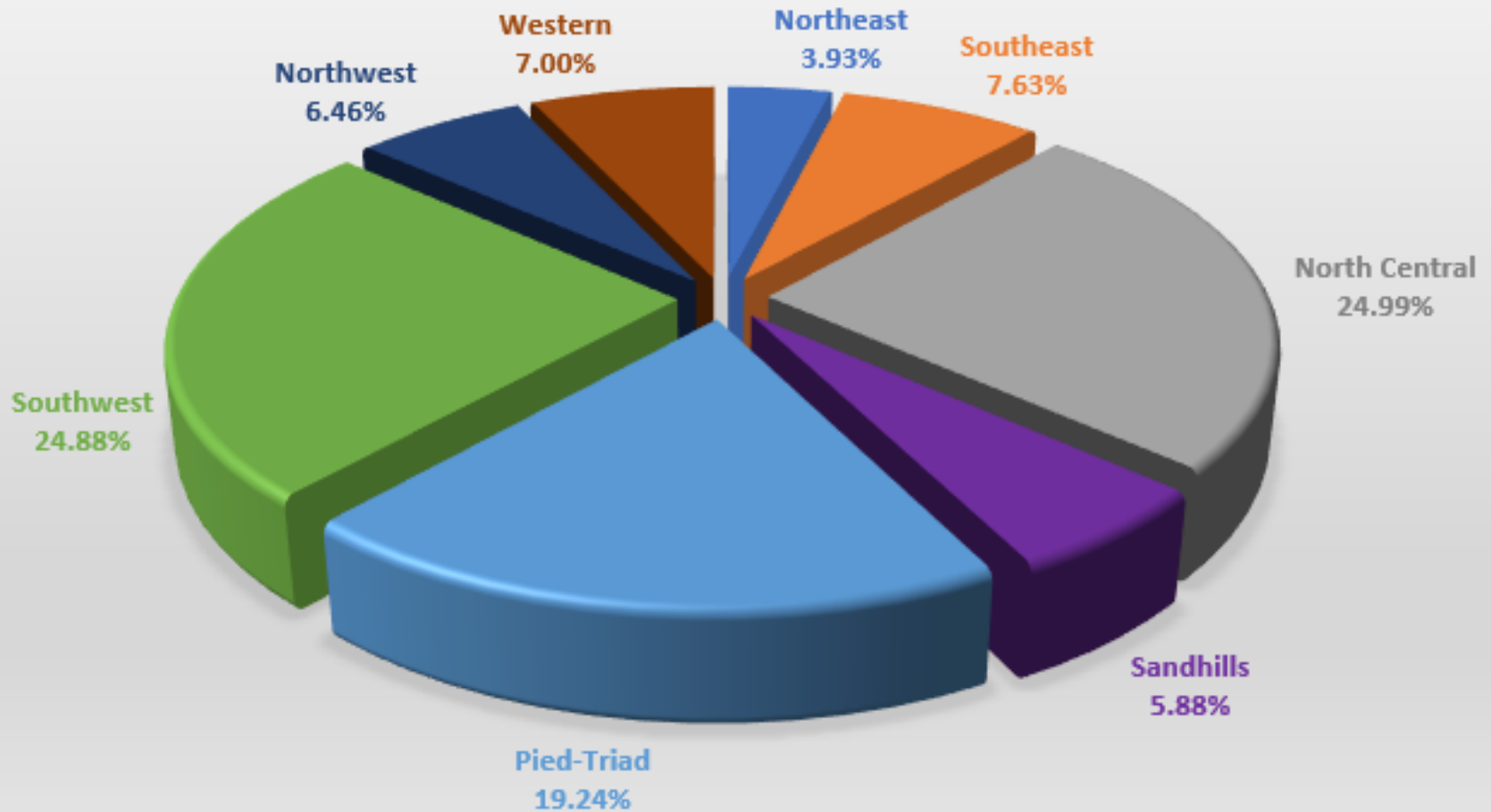
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NC McKinney-Vento Student Counts



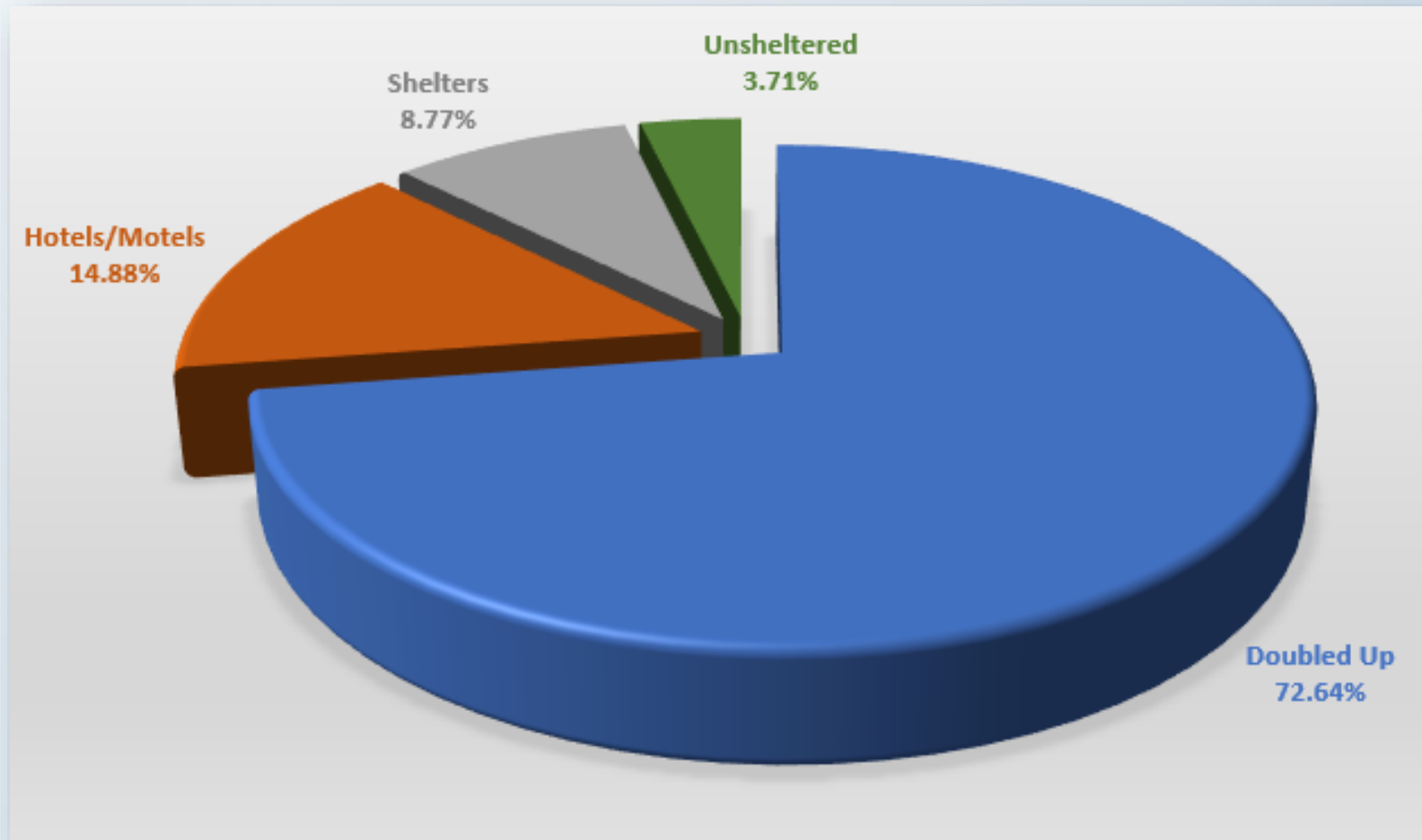
*Unduplicated Student Counts

NC Prosperity Zones 2017 – 2018SY



*Duplicated Student Counts

NC Primary Nighttime Residency 2017 – 2018SY



*Duplicated Student Counts

Homeless Liaison Responsibilities

- Identification
- Enrollment
- Access to Services
- Referrals
- Parental Information
- Public Notice
- Disputes
- Transportation Services
- Professional Development
- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
- Collaboration



Determining Eligibility Considerations

Can the student go to the SAME PLACE (*fixed*) EVERY NIGHT (*regular*) to sleep in a SAFE AND SUFFICIENT SPACE (*adequate*)?

Step 1: Get the facts.

Step 2: Analyze the facts.

- Does the living situation fit into one of the specific examples of homelessness listed in the law?
- Does the living situation fit another type of situation that is not fixed, regular, and adequate?

Step 3: Seek additional guidance.

Determining Eligibility “Doubled Up”

McKinney-Vento defines “doubled up” as “sharing the housing of others **due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason.**”

Questions to consider:

- Why did the family move in together?
 - Did a crisis occur?
 - Was this a mutual plan?
- Where would the family live if they weren't doubled-up?
How permanent is the living arrangement?
- Is the living arrangement fixed, regular, and adequate?
- Other questions...

Determining Best Interest

- Presume that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student's best interest. *11432(g)(3)(B)(i)-(ii)*
- Consider student-centered factors, such as impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, safety, etc.
- Give priority to the request of the parent/guardian/unaccompanied homeless youth.



School Selection



- **School of Origin:** the school attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled.
 - Public preschools are included in “school of origin.”
- **School of Residence:** any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend

School Selection and Stability

- Attend either school of origin, if in the student's best interest, or the local attendance area school.
- Students can continue attending their school of origin the entire time they are homeless, and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.
- In years of transition, "... 'school of origin' shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools

School Enrollment

When remaining in the school of origin is not in the student's best interest or what the parent, guardian or youth requests:

- McKinney-Vento students are entitled to immediate enrollment in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend; even if:
- Students do not have required documents, such as school records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, guardianship, or other documents.

Enrollment Cont.

- If a student does not have immunizations or other health records or screenings, the liaison must immediately assist in obtaining them; the student must be enrolled in the interim.
- Enrolling schools must obtain school records from the previous school, and students must be enrolled in school while records are obtained.
- Remove barriers for students who have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.
- Schools must provide McKinney-Vento student records in a timely manner.

What If We Disagree?

If a dispute arises over **eligibility, school selection or enrollment** in a school, enrollment and attendance must continue until the dispute is resolved. *11432(g)(3)(E)*

Local homeless liaison will carry out dispute process including:

- Provide written notice of decision, including right to appeal.
- Ensure student is immediately enrolled in requested school and provided all applicable McKinney-Vento services during the dispute resolution.



Transportation

- School districts must transport students to and from school of origin, at a parent's or guardian's request or at the liaison's request for unaccompanied homeless youth.
- When outside the district of origin, both districts must determine how to divide the responsibility and cost, or they must share the responsibility and cost equally.
- School district determines the mode of transportation.
- School districts must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students.



Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Unaccompanied Youth

Not living in the physical custody of parent or legal guardian

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Unaccompanied **AND** lacking fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence

No lower age limit.

Upper age limit is school age defined by the state.

No citizenship requirement.

NC Unaccompanied Homeless Youth



*Unduplicated Student Counts

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Special Provisions

- Unaccompanied homeless youth do not need a parent/guardian to enroll in school or have access to services.
- Local homeless liaisons must support the unaccompanied homeless youth in making decisions and understanding his/her rights.
- Unaccompanied homeless youth have the same right to appeal as do parents/ guardians.



Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Special Provisions

Homeless liaison will:

- Assist in enrolling in school and obtaining school/medical records.
- Inform unaccompanied homeless youth of services they are eligible for under the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Assist with signature issues beyond initial enrollment (i.e. extracurricular activities and school absences.
- Ensure support for access to higher education is provided.



Unaccompanied Homeless Youth.... “On Their Own”

- Family conflict or crisis
- Parental incarceration, substance abuse, illness, death, etc.
- Foster care issues: aging out of the foster care system; running away from a foster care placement
- Family homelessness
- Being asked to leave the home
- Choosing to leave home on their own
- Abandoned by family
- Other



Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Enrollment Strategies

Three common methods for enrolling:

- Self enrollment
- Caregiver enrolls
- Homeless liaison enrolls

These methods also apply for unaccompanied homeless youth who wish to participate in extra-curricular activities.

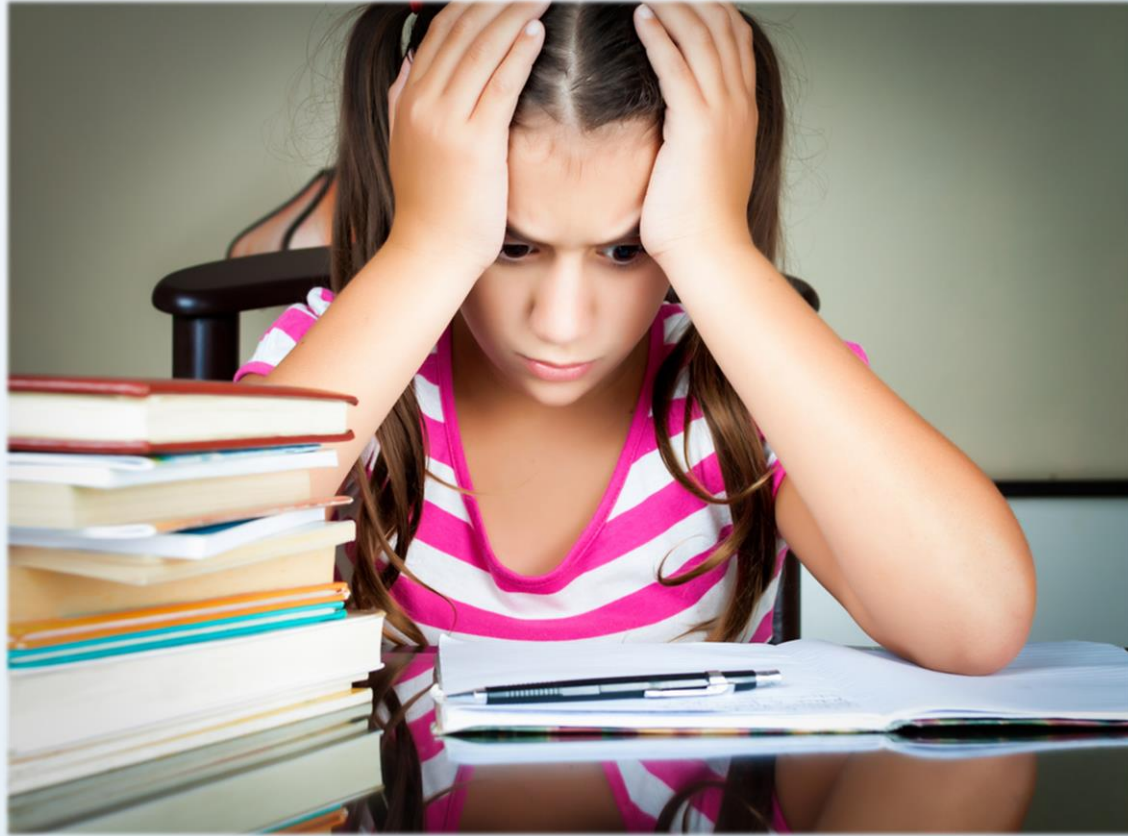
School districts cannot:

- Require a caregiver to obtain legal guardianship
- Discontinue enrollment due to lack of responsible adult or inability to produce guardianship or other paperwork.

Academic Responsibilities

Among many responsibilities related to McKinney-Vento students, school districts must not only ensure qualified students are identified, but that:

- Reviews are made of academic achievement and graduation rates.
- Chronic absenteeism is addressed.
- McKinney-Vento students receive college and career readiness support.
- Consult with identified students on their perceived academic needs (i.e. extended learning time, tutoring, academic accrual, etc.).



The Challenge....

Barriers to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

Poor health, fatigue,
hunger

Emotional trauma,
depression, anxiety

Stereotypes and lack
of awareness

Under-identifications

Lack of transportation

Lack of school
supplies, clothing,
etc.

High mobility resulting
in lack of school
stability &
educational
continuity

Enrollment
requirements
(records, proof of
residence,
guardianship)

Impacts of Homelessness on Children and Youth

- Higher incidence of acute and chronic illnesses, depression and anxiety.
- Early childhood homelessness is associated with poor classroom engagement and poor social skills in early elementary school.
- Achievement gaps between homeless and low-income elementary students tend to persist, and may even worsen, over time.
- A youth who experiences homelessness is 87% more likely to drop out of school.



Chapin Hall/VOYC Report: Higher Risk for Homelessness



346%

Youth with less than a high school diploma or GED had a 346% higher risk

120%

LGBT youth had a 120% higher risk

162%

Youth reporting annual household income of less than \$24,000 had a 162% higher risk

33%

Hispanic, non-White youth had a 33% higher risk

83%

Black or African American youth had an 83% higher risk

200%

Unmarried parenting youth had a 200% higher risk



How to Overcome the Challenge?



Collaborate!!



Internally & Externally

Internal Collaborations



- Title I (Mandated)
- Transportation Department
- Child and Nutrition Services (Mandated)
- Migrant/ESL Services
- Exceptional Children's Services/PBIS-IDEA
- Student Services: Psychologists, Counselors, Social Workers, and Healthful Living Staff
- 21st Century Community Learning Center
- Curriculum and Instruction Services
- Elementary and Secondary Education
- Career and Technical Education
- Auxiliary Services Department

External Collaborations



- HUD Programs (Mandated)/Housing Authority/Community Development
- CoC, United Way, Food Pantries, Churches
- Salvation Army/Local Shelters/Transitional Housing
- Department of Social Services (SNAP)
- Health Department
- Head Start (Mandated)
- Hotel and Motel Managers
- Local Business Partnerships
- Local Police Department/Sheriff's Office/Juvenile Justice
- Institutions of Higher Education (SPOCs)

Tips for Collaboration

- Learn about the education portion of the McKinney-Vento Act.
 - Contact or work with your local homeless liaison to learn about their program and the McKinney-Vento homeless definition.
- Discuss with the local homeless liaison ways to share information and resources. Consider an MOU for confidential/sensitive items such as data.
- Become familiar with the educational challenges homeless children and youth face, and the educational rights and services provided through the McKinney-Vento Act.
 - What ways can the CoC or Regional Committee support this student population?

Tips for Collaboration

- Provide information to the homeless liaison on the specific housing services available within the local community.
- Develop a protocol for case managers and local homeless liaisons to evaluate the best interest of the child in terms of making housing placements which foster academic success. Strategies may include:
 - Work with the local homeless liaison to find out more about the individual student's needed educational services.
 - Place the student and family in housing which allows continuation in the school of origin, as much as possible.

Tips for Collaboration

- Consider academic programs offered by schools when evaluating housing options for students.
- Consider multiple factors when evaluating housing placements, such as:
 - How connected is the student to his/her current school?
 - What services are in place to address the student's needs at the current school?
 - What school of attendance would serve the student best?

Tips for Collaboration

- Ask the local homeless liaison to participate in CoC, Regional Committees and other housing programs, to explain issues related to the educational needs of homeless children and youth and inquire about how homeless children, youth and families can be better connected to services.
 - Institute a recurring agenda item in meetings focused on education.
 - Consider adding an education subcommittee.

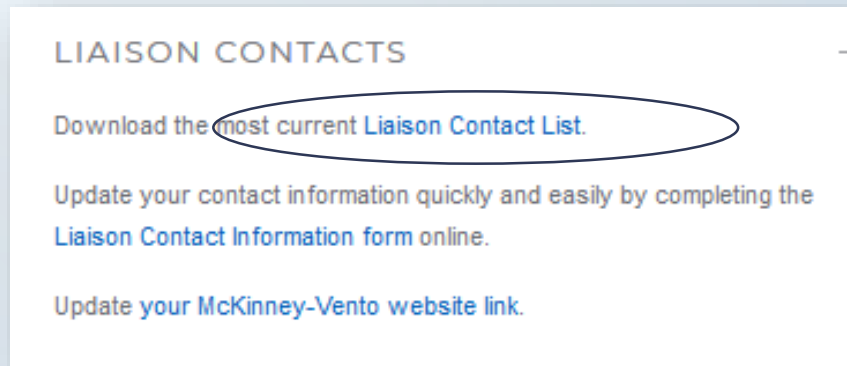
Tips for Collaboration

- Discuss with the homeless liaison how the CoC or Regional Committee and its members can assist with services that the school cannot provide, and in turn what ways the school district can reciprocate.
- Help the homeless liaison and their support team to discuss housing challenges and requirements for HUD programs and identify ways to streamline referrals to housing programs.

Getting Started!

1. Get in touch

- NC Homeless Liaison Contact Link:
<https://hepnc.uncg.edu/local-liaisons/>
 - Scroll to Liaison Contacts on bottom right
 - Click on Liaison Contact List



- NCHEP website: <https://hepnc.uncg.edu/>

Getting Started!

2. Meet regularly to exchange information.

NC BoS & CoC stakeholders should:

- Work regularly with local homeless liaisons to ensure all eligible clients are referred for eligibility consideration
- Ensure that their client's education needs are being met
- Form a child/youth subcommittee, where education and early care issues are considered

Homeless liaisons should:

- Participate in CoC or Regional Committee meetings
- Share aggregate data on the students they serve
- Be included in community needs assessments and Point-in-Time counts
- Work with CoC and Regional Committees to develop shelter, housing, and other services for families and youth

Getting Started!

3. Inform parents and youth about available services.

Homeless service providers should:

- Place educational rights posters in all their facilities.*
- Incorporate information about the HEARTH Act's education assurances into standard intake process.
- Host informational sessions about the HEARTH Act's education assurances for staff and clients.

Homeless liaisons should:

- Inform parents and youth of housing and other services provided through housing agencies.
- Have contact information and brochures available to facilitate referrals to housing agencies for additional information.

*NC education rights posters are available free of charge from NCHEP:
<https://hepnc.uncg.edu/resources/order-form/>

Getting Started!

4. Develop memoranda of understanding (MOUs).

- Protocols for student identification, service referrals, and data or information sharing. Include the following in your MOU:
 - Mutually-accepted expectations
 - Protocols
 - Parameters
 - Best practices for achieving the shared goals of Continuums of Care and school districts
 - And other points that you decide on

The Goal

Even though local homeless liaisons and Continuums of Care, Regional Committees and other housing agencies work under differing definitions of homelessness, the overall goal is the same:

To provide pathways out of homelessness!



Resources

North Carolina Homeless Education Program

<https://hepnc.uncg.edu/>

or

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/program-monitoring/homeless/>

Housing Web Page:

<https://hepnc.uncg.edu/local-liaisons/housing/>

Resources

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)

Technical Assistance Center for US Dept. of Education

Website: <https://nche.ed.gov/>

Related Issue Briefs: <https://nche.ed.gov/pr/briefs.php>

- *Local Homeless Liaisons: Understanding Their Role*
- *Housing and Education Collaborations to Serve Homeless Children, Youth and Families*
- *Coordinated Entry Processes: Building Mutual Engagement between Schools and Continuums of Care*

SchoolHouse Connection (SHC)

Website: <https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/>

Questions

