

Title I and Homelessness



The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Subtitle B—Education for Homeless Children and Youth), reauthorized in January 2002, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. This brief explains how the McKinney-Vento Act intersects with Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and offers strategies for effective collaboration. Briefs on additional topics pertaining to homeless education and related laws may be found at www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php.

Title I, Part A, of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) provides financial assistance through State Educational Agencies (SEAs) to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs or school districts) and public schools with high numbers or percentages of disadvantaged children to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards. Title I is designed to support state and local school reform efforts tied to challenging state academic standards in order to reinforce efforts to improve teaching and learning for students struggling to meet state standards.

Homeless students are part of Title I, Part A's target population of disadvantaged students. However, the high mobility, trauma, and deep poverty associated with homelessness create unique educational barriers and challenges. Homelessness is associated with lower standardized test scores¹ and a higher likelihood of missing school and/or experiencing multiple transfers.² Thus, homeless students often require additional supports for academic achievement and success on state assessments.

Many challenges faced by homeless students are addressed within the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. However, Title I, Part A, is also in a critical position to play a significant role in the academic achievement of homeless children and youth. For this reason, Congress included specific provisions related to homelessness within Title I, Part A.

Automatic Eligibility

Children and youth who are homeless are automatically eligible for Title I, Part A, services, whether or not they attend a Title I school or meet the academic standards required of other children for eligibility.³ This automatic eligibility acknowledges that the experience of homelessness puts children at significant risk of academic failure, regardless of their previous academic standing.

Who is homeless?

(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 – Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act – Sec 725)

The term “homeless children and youth”—

- A. *means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and*
- B. *includes —*
 - i. *children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;*
 - ii. *children and youths 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 youths 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 for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).*

Mandatory Reservations of Funds

According to Title I, Part A, LEAs must reserve (or set aside) such funds as are necessary to provide comparable services to homeless children who are not attending Title I schools. [20 USC 6313(c)(3)]

Because homeless children and youth often face unique barriers when accessing educational programs and striving for academic success, ensuring that these students receive “comparable” services may require additional programming that is not provided to other Title I students. For instance, Title I, Part A, states that it is appropriate to provide educationally-related support services, such as tutoring, to children at shelters or other places where homeless children may live, such as motels. [20 USC 6313(c)(3)(A)] In addition, Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education states that LEAs may use reserved funds to provide homeless students with services that are not ordinarily provided to other Title I students and that are not available from other sources. The Guidance offers an example of using reserved funds to provide clothing to meet a school’s dress or uniform requirements.⁴ Hence, in determining appropriate expenditures for the funds set aside for homeless students, it is important to note that *comparable* services do not mean services that are necessarily *identical* to other Title I, Part A, services.

LEAs must establish their own methods for allocating Title I, Part A, set asides for homeless children and youth who are not attending Title I schools. Generally, these methods involve conducting a needs assessment for homeless students in the LEA or basing the set-aside amount on a formula, such as a per pupil expenditure. Determining an appropriate amount requires coordination between the LEA Title I and homeless education programs. For more information on calculating the mandatory set aside, visit www.serve.org/nche/downloads/calculating_setasides.pdf

In addition to serving homeless students not enrolled in Title I schools, U.S. Department of Education Guidance states that set asides also can be used to provide services to homeless students who *are* attending Title I schools.⁵ In determining the set-aside amount, LEAs should allow for the provision of services to homeless students who attend Title I schools that will meet the unique needs of these children above and beyond the regular Title I programs at those schools, as well as for the provision of services to homeless students who do not attend Title I schools.

Serving Homeless Students in Title I Schools

Homeless students who attend Title I schoolwide or targeted assistance schools may have unique challenges that are not addressed by the regular Title I program at these schools. These challenges may create barriers to full participation in Title I programs and defeat the overarching program goal of helping all students meet challenging state standards. For instance, students residing in shelters, motels, or other overcrowded conditions may not have a quiet place to study at the end of the day and may require extended after-school library time; or, a student who is dealing with the stress and anxiety associated with homelessness may not be able to focus on his or her studies and may benefit from school counseling services. Through Title I, Part A, or Title I, Part A, in conjunction with a McKinney-Vento subgrant, homeless students can take part in services that enable them to benefit more from a school’s Title I program.

Schoolwide Programs. Schoolwide Title I schools are required to do a needs assessment and develop strategies to address the needs of *all* children in the school. [20 USC 6314(b)(1)] Subpopulations of children, such as homeless, who attend these schools should have their unique needs addressed within schoolwide programs designed for all students.

Targeted Assistance Schools. Targeted assistance schools are charged with using their programming resources to help participating children meet academic achievement standards. These schools must provide services to children who have the greatest need for special assistance. The No Child Left Behind Act specifically notes that homeless children are included within the population of those designated with greatest needs. [20 USC 6315(b)] Because they frequently experience educational challenges related to mobility, family disruption, and extreme poverty, homeless students may require additional programming.

As stated in the prior section, Title I set-aside funds may support services to address the additional needs of homeless students attending Title I schools.

Coordinating and Supplementing Homeless Education Programs

Title I, Part A, funds may not be used to provide services that are *required* under the McKinney-Vento Act, such as providing transportation to and from the school of origin while a student is experiencing homelessness. However, Title I, Part A, funds may be used to coordinate, supplement, or enhance required services. [20 USC 6315(b)(3)] For example, Title I, Part A, funds may be used for transportation to the school of origin for the remainder of the school year once a child becomes permanently housed.

In addition, many LEAs have used Title I, Part A, funds to furnish salaries for local liaisons and support staff who ensure that homeless children receive necessary services. Although local liaisons are required by the McKinney-Vento Act, Title I, Part A, funds can be used to enhance the services the liaison provides, by allowing the liaison to spend more time with homeless students, providing support staff, or otherwise supplementing the services and coordination of the McKinney-Vento program. Methods of supplementing homeless education programs may vary. LEAs may consider using Title I, Part A, funds to provide those services that are authorized, but not required, under McKinney-Vento and not available through other sources such as providing expedited evaluations, referrals for medical services, after-school programming, mentoring, and/or school supplies. [42 USC 11433(d)]

Assisting With Services That Are Not Directly Related to Education

Homeless students and their families often need social services such as housing and health care. When schools assist families with these needs, it can have a positive impact on the education of the child. For instance, housing assistance that leads to residential stability would prevent school transfers or lengthy bus rides to the school of origin, which would likely lead to an increased ability to improve performance on state assessments.

Title I, Part A, requires targeted assistance programs to coordinate with federal, state, and local services programs, including programs for housing, nutrition, violence prevention, Head Start, adult education, vocational and technical education, and job training. [20 USC 6315(c)(1)(H)]

McKinney-Vento has similar requirements for State Coordinators and local liaisons. [42 USC 11432(f)(4); 42 USC 11432(g)(5)] Both programs can work together in establishing relationships with these outside agencies and use those relationships to connect homeless families with these vital programs.

Further, if funds for social services are not reasonably available from other public or private sources, then Title I, Part A, dollars may be used as a last resort to fund these services. [20 USC 6315(e)(2)] Examples provided within the law include using Title I, Part A, monies to: purchase eyeglasses; pay for health, nutrition, and other social services; or provide specialized professional development. Expenditures must be linked to the child's educational needs.

Leveraging Resources

In LEAs with McKinney-Vento subgrants, the Title I coordinator and local liaison should discuss the most effective way to leverage resources. In LEAs without McKinney-Vento subgrants, the Title I program will likely be an essential resource for providing services for homeless students. In addition, LEAs can explore non-federal funding options in the form of state grant programs, private donations, or local funds.

Suggestions for Services

After assessing the needs of homeless students, the homeless education program and Title I program staff, along with other district-level administrators, may consider funding the following:

- Before-school, after-school, and/or summer programs
- Outreach services to students living in shelters, motels, and other temporary residences to help identify homeless children and youth and advise them of available school programming
- Basic needs such as clothing, uniforms, school supplies, and health-related needs
- Counseling services
- The hiring of teachers, aides, and tutors to provide supplemental instruction to students whose achievement is below grade level
- The work of the local liaison
- Parental involvement programs that make a special effort to reach out to parents in homeless situations
- Research-based programs that benefit highly mobile students
- Data collection to assess the needs and progress of homeless and other highly mobile students



Collaborations Between Homeless and Title I Programs

The No Child Left Behind Act requires that both state and LEA Title I plans be coordinated with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. [20 USC 6311(a)(1); 20 USC 6312(a)(1)]

Coordination of services results in the most effective use of resources, ensuring that the needs of students experiencing homelessness are addressed in a comprehensive and integrated fashion. Local liaisons, who are required to be appointed in every LEA, and district Title I coordinators should communicate and collaborate on an ongoing basis to identify the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness, review resources, and plan ways to address needs. Collaboration results in a “win-win” situation: homeless students achieve to high standards, and overall student achievement in the LEA increases.

The following are strategies to help facilitate collaboration between Title I and McKinney-Vento:

- Develop systems to facilitate cross program collaborations on state and local plans for both McKinney-Vento and Title I.
- Articulate clearly how the local liaison will be able to access Title I, Part A, set-aside funds.
- Provide Title I and McKinney-Vento personnel with cross program trainings and materials.
- Collect and share data across programs on the needs of homeless and other low-income students along with information on effective programs to address these needs.
- Involve homeless education personnel in the creation of schoolwide Title I programs, targeted assistance programs, and plans for school improvement. This would ensure that the needs of homeless students are addressed within those plans.
- Locate Title I and homeless education program offices near one another.
- Ensure local liaison representation on the Committee of Practitioners.
- Include homeless parents in Title I parent involvement policies and create opportunities for homeless parents to be involved.

Homeless Children and State Assessments

According to Title I, Part A, regulations, states must include homeless students (as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act) in their academic assessment, reporting, and accountability systems. [Title I, Part A, Regulation 200.6(d)] States are not required to disaggregate the assessment results of homeless students as a separate category, but LEAs and states should include assessments of homeless students in the economically disadvantaged category of disaggregation in addition to other applicable categories.⁶

Endnotes

1. *Texas Education Agency, A Study of Student Mobility in Texas Public Schools: Statewide Texas Educational Progress Study Report No. 3. (1997); Russell Rumberger, "Student Mobility and Academic Achievement," ERIC Digest (June 2002).*
2. *Homes for the Homeless and the Institute for Children and Poverty, Homeless in America: A Children's Story (Part One) 10 (1999).*
3. *U.S. Department of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, July 2004, M-4.*
4. *U.S. Department of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, July 2004, M-4.*
5. *U.S. Department of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, July 2004, M-4.*
6. *U.S. Department of Education, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non Regulatory Guidance, July 2004, M-5.*

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Related Excerpts from Legislation and Guidance

M-4. What types of services may an LEA provide to homeless students with funds reserved under Section 1113(c)(3) of Title I?

An LEA may use funds reserved under this section to provide services to eligible homeless students in both Title I and non-Title I schools that are comparable to services provided to non-homeless students in Title I schools. Services provided should assist such children in meeting the State's challenging academic content and academic achievement standards.

An LEA has the discretion to use reserved funds to provide a homeless student with services that are not ordinarily provided to other Title I students and that are not available from other sources. For example, where appropriate, an LEA at its discretion may provide a student with an item of clothing to meet a school's dress or uniform requirement so that student may effectively take advantage of educational opportunities.

U.S. Department of Education,
Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non-Regulatory Guidance (July 2004)

“STATE PLANS.

(a) PLANS REQUIRED.—

- (1) IN GENERAL.—For any State desiring to receive a grant under this part, the State educational agency shall submit to the Secretary a plan, developed by the State educational agency, in consultation with local educational agencies, teachers, principals, pupil services personnel, administrators (including administrators of programs described in other parts of this title), other staff, and parents, that satisfies the requirements of this section and that is coordinated with other programs under this Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, the Head Start Act, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.”

20 USC 6311(a)(1)

“LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PLANS.

(a) PLANS REQUIRED.—

(1) SUBGRANTS.—A local educational agency may receive a subgrant under this part for any fiscal year only if such agency has on file with the State educational agency a plan, approved by the State educational agency, that is coordinated with other programs under this Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and other Acts, as appropriate...

(b) PLAN PROVISIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to help low-achieving children meet challenging achievement academic standards, each local educational agency plan shall include—...

(E) a description of how the local educational agency will coordinate and integrate services provided under this part with other educational services at the local educational agency or individual school level, such as—...

(ii) services for children with limited English proficiency, children with disabilities, migratory children, neglected or delinquent youth, Indian children served under part A of title VII, homeless children, and immigrant children in order to increase program effectiveness, eliminate duplication, and reduce fragmentation of the instructional program;...

(O) a description of the services the local educational agency will provide homeless children, including services provided with funds reserved under section 1113(c)(3)(A);”

20 USC 6312

“RESERVATION.—A local educational agency shall reserve such funds as are necessary under this part to provide services comparable to those provided to children in schools funded under this part to serve—

(A) homeless children who do not attend participating schools, including providing educationally related support services to children in shelters and other locations where children may live;”

20 USC 6313(c)(3)

“(b) COMPONENTS OF A SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A schoolwide program shall include the following components:

(A) A comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school (including taking into account the needs of migratory children as defined in section 1309(2)) that is based on information which includes the achievement of children in relation to the State academic content standards and the State student academic achievement standards described in section 1111(b)(1).

(B) Schoolwide reform strategies that—

(i) provide opportunities for all children to meet the State’s proficient and advanced levels of student academic achievement described in section 1111(b)(1)(D);

(iii) (I) include strategies to address the needs of all children in the school, but particularly the needs of low-achieving children and those at risk of not meeting the State student academic achievement standards who are members of the target population of any program that is included in the schoolwide program, which may include—

(continued on the next page)

(aa) counseling, pupil services, and mentoring services;

(bb) college and career awareness and preparation, such as college and career guidance, personal finance education, and innovative teaching methods, which may include applied learning and team-teaching strategies; and

(cc) the integration of vocational and technical education programs;...”

20 USC 6314(b)(1)

“TARGETED ASSISTANCE SCHOOLS.

(b) ELIGIBLE CHILDREN FROM ELIGIBLE POPULATION

(2) CHILDREN INCLUDED.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Children who are economically disadvantaged, children with disabilities, migrant children or limited English proficient children, are eligible for services under this part on the same basis as other children selected to receive services under this part

(E) HOMELESS CHILDREN.—A child who is homeless and attending any school served by the local educational agency is eligible for services under this part.

(3) SPECIAL RULE.—Funds received under this part may not be used to provide services that are otherwise required by law to be made available to children described in paragraph (2) but may be used to coordinate or supplement such services.”

20 USC 6315(b)

“(2) COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES.—If—

(A) health, nutrition, and other social services are not otherwise available to eligible children in a targeted assistance school and such school, if appropriate, has engaged in a comprehensive needs assessment and established a collaborative partnership with local service providers; and

(B) funds are not reasonably available from other public or private sources to provide such services, then a portion of the funds provided under this part may be used as a last resort to provide such services, including—

(i) the provision of basic medical equipment, such as eyeglasses and hearing aids;

(ii) compensation of a coordinator; and

(iii) professional development necessary to assist teachers, pupil services personnel, other staff, and parents in identifying and meeting the comprehensive needs of eligible children.”

20 USC 6315(e)

“Inclusion of all students...

(d) Students experiencing homelessness.

- (1) A State must include homeless students, as defined in section 725(2) of Title VII, Subtitle B of the McKinney-Vento Act, in its academic assessment, reporting, and accountability systems, consistent with section 1111(b)(3)(C)(xi) of the Act.
- (2) The State is not required to disaggregate, as a separate category under Sec. 200.2(b)(10), the assessment results of the students referred to in paragraph (d)(1) of this section.”

34 CFR 200.6

This brief was developed by:

National Center for Homeless Education
800-308-2145 (toll-free HelpLine)
www.serve.org/nche

Spring 2006

*NCHE is supported by the U.S. Department of Education
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs.*

Every state is required to have a coordinator for the education of homeless children and youth, and every school district is required to have a liaison for homeless students. These individuals will assist you with the implementation of the

McKinney-Vento Act. To find out who your state coordinator is, visit the NCHE website at *www.serve.org/nche*.



For further information on the McKinney-Vento Act and resources for implementation, call the NCHE HelpLine at 800-308-2145 or e-mail *homeless@serve.org*.



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