

# McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

**Title X Part C**

**No Child Left Behind Act - 2001**



# Definitions of Homeless Children and Youth

- Lack fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
- Share housing (due to loss or hardship)



# Definitions of Homeless Children and Youth

- Live in hotels, motels, trailer homes, campgrounds, emergency or transitional shelters, abandoned in hospitals, awaiting foster care
- Primary nighttime residence not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation

# Definitions of Homeless Children and Youth

- Live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus, or train stations



# Definitions of Homeless Children and Youth



- Unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian)



- Migrant children who qualify as homeless because of their living situation

# McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

## Other Definitions

- Enroll and Enrollment include – right to attend classes and **participate fully** in school activities
- School of Origin – school that child or youth attended when permanently housed or last enrolled



# Transportation: The Number One Barrier

- The FY 2000 McKinney-Vento Report to Congress cited lack of transportation as the number one barrier that homeless children and youth faced in attempting to enroll in and attend school regularly.
- Researchers estimate that it takes a child from four to six months to recover academically from school transfers.

# School Barriers to Success



- Frequent mobility
- Lack of staff awareness
- Inability to complete school assignments



# McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

## Parental Options and Involvement

- Requires parents and guardians to be fully informed of the enrollment options and educational opportunities available.
- Requires parents to be informed of right to have the district transport children to the school of origin.

# McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

## Enrollment Disputes

- Admit child or youth immediately to school selected by parent/guardian or youth pending resolution of dispute
- School must provide parent/guardian or youth with written explanation of decision including statement of rights



# McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

- Comparable Services – services offered to other students in the school selected
- Transportation services
- Educational services
- Meals through school nutrition programs



# McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

## Role of Homeless Liaison

- **Assist** unaccompanied youth/parents with placement, enrollment, and knowing their rights
- **Disseminate** public notices of educational rights
- **Inform and assist** with accessing transportation
- **Mediate** enrollment disputes

# McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

## Integration of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

- Prohibits segregation of students into separate schools or separate classrooms within schools
- SEAs and LEAs must adopt policies and practices to ensure that children are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless



# Coordination with Title I

- Title I requires that districts must provide services for children and youth who live in homeless situations
- Children and youth experiencing homelessness are automatically eligible to receive Title I services by virtue of their homelessness



# Title I Requirements

- Reservation of Title I Funds - a local education agency needs to reserve funds to provide comparable services for eligible 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. - Sec. 1113



# Our District's Homeless Liaison

For any questions or concerns regarding the McKinney-Vento Act or homeless situations in our district, please contact:

## OUR DISTRICT'S HOMELESS LIAISON

Damon Lisowski

[lisowskid@whitehallsd.k12.wi.us](mailto:lisowskid@whitehallsd.k12.wi.us)

(715)538-4364 ext. 223



# DPI Education for Homeless Children and Youth Support

**Kristine Nadolski**

State Coordinator for  
Homeless Education

[kristine.nadolski@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:kristine.nadolski@dpi.wi.gov)

**(608) 267-7338**

**Susan Piazza**

State Coordinator for  
Homeless Education

[susan.piazza@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:susan.piazza@dpi.wi.gov)

**(608) 267-1284**



# Additional Education for Homeless Children and Youth Support

## National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)

Helpline: 1-800-308-2145

[homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org)

<http://center.serve.org/nche/contact.php>

## U.S. Department of Education

Education for Homeless Children and Youths

[HomelessEd@ed.gov](mailto:HomelessEd@ed.gov)

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html>

Whitehall School District  
**Student/Family Residence Questionnaire**

Your child may be eligible for additional educational services through Title I Part A, Title I Part C-Migrant, and/or Federal McKinney-Vento Assistance Act. Eligibility can be determined by completing this questionnaire.

**1. Presently, are you and/or your family living in any of the following situations? Check all that apply.**

- A. Staying in a shelter (family shelter, domestic violence shelter, youth shelter) or FEMA trailer
- B. Waiting for foster care placement
- C. Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason
- D. Living in a car, park, campground, abandoned building, or other inadequate accommodation
- E. Temporarily living in a motel or hotel due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason
- F. Living alone as a minor student(s) without an adult (unaccompanied youth)

**If you checked any box above please complete the remainder of this form and submit it to school personnel. If you did not check any box above, you do not need to complete or submit this form.**

**2. Please list all children currently living with you.**

First	Middle	Last	M/F	Birthdate	Grade	School Name

**The undersigned parent/guardian certifies that the information provided above is accurate.**

Print Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Area Code) Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Your children have the right to:

- ✓ Continue to attend school in the school attended before you became homeless (school of origin).
- ✓ Receive transportation to the school of origin
- ✓ Enroll in school without giving a permanent address and attend classes while the school arranges for a school transfer, immunization records or other documents required for enrollment.
- ✓ Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children served in these programs.
- ✓ Have enrollment disputes quickly addressed.

**The McKinney Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act and the MMSD Board of Education Policy #4406 ensure the educational rights above for students who are homeless. If you wish to have a copy of this document, please ask the staff person helping you today to make one.**

✓ WSD staff assisting with this process: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name Signature Date

**Copies to:** 1. WSD Homeless Liaison 2. School Office

# **ANNUAL NOTICE**

## **HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

### **The McKinney-Veto Act defines homeless children and youth as:**

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are:
  - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
  - living in emergency or transitional shelters
  - Abandoned in hospitals
  - Living in 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
  - Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
  - Migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described above

If you are personally aware of or are acquainted with any children or youth who may qualify according to the above criteria, the Whitehall School District provides the following assurances to parents and guardians of homeless children and youth and unaccompanied homeless youth:

- The child or youth shall be immediately enrolled and allowed to fully participate in school, even if unable to produce records normally required for enrollment (e.g., academic records, immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, or other documentation) or has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.
- Homeless children and youths are not stigmatized or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless and have full and equal educational and related opportunities.
- Meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children including special notices of events, parent-teacher conferences, newsletters, and access to student records.
- Immediate enrollment and transportation to the school of origin. "School of origin" means the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool.
- Written explanation of any decisions related to school selection or enrollment made by the school, the local educational agency, or the State educational agency involved, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal the receive prompt resolution of such decisions.

Please contact Damon Lisowski, homeless liaison for the Whitehall School District, at 715-538-4364 or email [@lisowskid@whitehallsd.k12.wi.us](mailto:@lisowskid@whitehallsd.k12.wi.us) for the additional information about the rights and services described above.

# Whitehall School District

[www.whitehallsd.k12.wi.us](http://www.whitehallsd.k12.wi.us)



19121 Hobson Street Whitehall, WI 54773

Mike Beighley  
Superintendent/  
HS Principal  
715-538-4374

Damon Lisowski  
Elementary Principal/  
Summer School Director  
715-538-4364

Jamie Youngbauer  
Asst. HS Principal/  
Athletic Director  
715-538-4364

Beth Lisowski  
Jr. High Principal/  
Curriculum & Assessment  
715-538-4364

Vickie O'Dell  
Director of Pupil Services/  
Special Education  
715-538-4364

Dear Community Members,

Do you know a student or family that may be in need of assistance? Many families in Wisconsin have found themselves to be families in transition without a place to call home. The Whitehall School District is committed to assisting all homeless students in receiving the best education possible.

**As part of our support to the families in this community we are asking that you hang these posters in your community location.**

We appreciate your support and help in better serving students in our district. We also ask that you share the enclosed brochure if you have a family in need. You may also assist the family by completing the Whitehall School District McKinney-Vento Homeless Form and return it to Damon Lisowski at the Whitehall School District.

Included on these posters is information regarding the McKinney-Vento Act that defines homeless children and youth (twenty-one years of age and younger) as:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes children and youth who are:
  - \*sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (sometimes referred to as double-up);
  - \*living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative, \*adequate accommodations;
  - \*living in emergency or transitional shelters;
  - \*Abandoned in hospitals;
  - \*or awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

If you have any questions regarding this request please contact Damon Lisowski, Director of Student Services for the Whitehall School District at (715) 538-4364 or [lisowskid@whitehallsd.k12.wi.us](mailto:lisowskid@whitehallsd.k12.wi.us)

Thank you for your support,

Damon Lisowski

**WHITEHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS**

George Everson, President ~ Jason Molis, Vice President ~ Kristen M. Carroll, Treasurer ~ Byron Fields, Clerk  
Leah A.W. Johnson, Member, Julie Dokkestul, Member, Dan Koxlien-Member

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Vickie O'Dell  
Director of Pupil Services/  
Special Education  
715-538-4364

## Homeless Education Program Written Notification of Dispute Resolution

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To: Parent/caregiver or unaccompanied youth \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NAME HERE

In reference to : Section 722(g)(3)(E) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001.

After reviewing your request to enroll the student listed above at \_\_\_\_\_

REQUESTED SCHOOL

School, the enrollment request is: *check one.* \_\_\_ Denied \_\_\_ Accepted

This discrimination was based upon: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student is assigned to \_\_\_\_\_ Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

You have the right to appeal this decision to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (the procedure is attached). You may contact the State Coordinator for Homeless Education at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction at (608)261-6822. You may also seek the assistance of an advocate or attorney.

Sincerely,

Homeless Liaison  
Whitehall Public Schools  
(715) 538-4364

### WHITEHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

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# HOMELESS EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICY

## Procedure

### School Selection

Placement in a school shall be in the student's best interest.

- The student's education may continue in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness and/or in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year, or for the duration of the academic year, if the student becomes permanently housed during an academic year.
- The student may enroll in a school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the student is actually living are eligible to attend.

The school of origin means the school that the student attended when permanently housed, or the school in which the student was last enrolled.

In determining the best interests of the student to the extent feasible, the student will be kept in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the student's parent or guardian, for the duration of the homelessness.

In the case of unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison or designee will assist in placement or enrollment decisions considering the requests of such unaccompanied youth.

### Enrollment

The school shall immediately enroll the student/youth, even if the student lacks records normally required for enrollment. Records will immediately be requested from the previous school.

The term "enroll" and "enrollment" are defined to mean attending school and participating fully in school activities.

### Residency

A homeless student is a resident if the student is personally present somewhere within the district with a purpose to remain but not necessarily to remain permanently.

The student shall be considered a resident when living with a parent, guardian, or person in loco parentis not solely for school purposes or for participation in extracurricular activities

Homeless students who do not live with their parents or guardians may enroll themselves in school.

The address listed on the enrollment forms becomes proof of residency. If residency is questioned by the LEA, immediate enrollment will occur with homeless liaison following up to determine residency.

### Comparable Services

Each homeless student or youth shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected, such as:

- Preschool programs
- Transportation services
- Educational services for which the student meets eligibility criteria such as ELL or Special Education programs.
- Programs for at-risk students
- Programs for gifted and talented students
- School nutrition programs
- Title I programs
- After-school programs
- Tutoring programs
- Summer school programs

### **Transportation**

At the request of the parent, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the local agency liaison or designee, transportation will be provided for homeless students to the school of origin for the duration of the homeless status.

Once permanent housing is found, the family has a choice to stay in the school they are attending, school of origin or attend the school where they found housing. If a family chooses to stay in the school of origin, transportation will be discontinued.

Permanent housing is defined as any signed lease or long-term approved living situation.

In the case where the school of origin and current residence are different, local educational agencies, the two school districts will agree on a method for transportation and share costs.

### **Homeless Liaison or Designee**

The homeless liaison or designee shall ensure that:

- Homeless students are voluntarily identified by school personnel and through coordination with other entities and agencies.
- Homeless students enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in schools in the district.
- Homeless families, students receive educational services for which they are eligible and referrals to other appropriate services.
- The parents or guardians of a homeless student and any unaccompanied homeless youth is informed of the educational and related opportunities available to them and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of the student/youth.
- Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in such public places as schools, meal sites, shelters and other locations frequented by low-income families.
- The homeless liaison assures that compliance with all policies and procedures and mediates enrollment disputes.
- The parents or guardians of a homeless student or youth, and unaccompanied youth, are informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin.
- Ensures the coordination of services between WASD and other homeless family service providers.
- Assistance is provided to students who do not have immunizations, or immunization or medical records, to obtain necessary immunizations, or immunization or medical records.



- Students are not segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
- Programs for homeless students are coordinated with other federal and local programs.

### **Disputes**

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the student shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute.

Disputes should be resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Appeals will go to the District Administrator or his/her designee. The parent or guardian of the child or youth, or unaccompanied youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the appealed decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal the decision to the Office of Coordinator for Education of Homeless Children and Youths in the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. In the case of unaccompanied youth, the Whitehall Area School District Homeless Liaison shall also ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

**Cross References:** Student Nondiscrimination, 411.2 and 411.2-Rule  
School Admissions, 420 and 420 Rule

**Legal References:** Wisconsin State Statute 18.13  
PI9, Wisconsin Administrative Code  
Title IX, Education Amendment of 1972  
Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964  
Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973  
American with Disabilities Act of 1990  
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act  
Civil Rights Act of 1991  
McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act

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## HOMELESS EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICY

Students of homeless individuals and unaccompanied homeless youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian) residing in the District shall have equal access to the same free appropriate public education including comparable services, as provided to other students and youth who reside in the District. Homeless students and youth shall not be required to attend a separate school or program for homeless students and shall not be stigmatized by the school personnel.

### Definition of homeless Students and Unaccompanied Youths

The term "homeless students and unaccompanied youths" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence due to economic hardship. It includes students and youths who are:

- Living in an emergency shelter or transitional housing.
- Abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings.
- "Double up" living with friends or family due to the loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason.

Migratory students and unaccompanied youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) may be considered homeless if they meet the above definition.

Homeless status is determined in cooperation with parents or in the case of unaccompanied youth, the local educational agency liaison. Homeless status may be documented through a variety of Whitehall Area School District forms such as the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction PI-Q03-8 Rev.8/05 or through direct contact with WASD.

The Whitehall Area School District does not discriminate against students on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental emotional or learning disability or handicap in its education programs or activities. Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with established procedures.

#### WHITEHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

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**Whitehall School District**  
*McKinney-Vento*  
*Information Gathering Questions for Identification*

The following questions are designed to assist the School Community Outreach to gather information that is relevant for determining whether or not a student qualifies for assistance under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; to determine the extent to which a student is living in a fixed, regular, and adequate living situation. Please remember these questions are simply guidelines to help open discussion about housing arrangements.

**Fixed Location**

1. Why are you staying in your current place?
2. Where were you living right before this place? Why did you leave?
3. Is this a permanent situation or just temporary?
4. Are you looking for another place to live?
5. Do you have to move out soon?
6. Are you staying with friends/relatives just for a little while?
7. Did you and your friends/relatives decide to move in together and share expenses for the long term? Or is this a temporary situation for you?
8. Did friends/family have this home before you moved in?
9. Are you all sharing the home equally, or are you more like guests in the home?
10. Are all families that live in the home contributing equally for cost of rent, utilities, etc.?
11. Could your friends/relatives ask you to leave if they wanted to?
12. Where would you go if you couldn't stay where you are?
13. Is your family on a waitlist for shelter services?

**Regular Location**

1. Do you stay in the same place every night?
2. Do you have a key to the place where you are living?
3. Do you move around a lot?
4. How long have you been at that place? How long do you plan to stay?
5. How long did you live in your last place?

**Adequate Location**

1. How many people are living in the home? How many bedrooms/bathrooms does it have?
2. Are you and your children sharing a room? How many people are staying in one room?
3. Are you and your children sleeping in a private area like a bedroom, or a public area like a living room?

4. Does the home have heat/electricity/running water?
5. What condition is the home in? Does it keep out rain and wind? Is it safe? Is it warm and dry? Do the windows have glass panes?
6. Can you come and go as you please?

### **Information Gathering Questions for Identification**

Does the child or youth's living situation fit into one of the specific examples of homelessness listed in the law? Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.

1. "Sharing the housing of other persons...." implies that the student is staying in another person's home. Some pertinent questions to help determine if this is the case would include:
  - a. Does the student have any legal right to be in that home?
  - b. Can the student be asked to leave at any time with no legal recourse?
  - c. Is the living situation intended to be temporary or long-term?
  - d. Did the student move into the home as an urgent measure to avoid being on the street or in another precarious situation?
  
2. "...due to loss of housing..." implies that the student has no personal housing available. Did the student or family lose their previous housing due to:
  - a. An eviction or an inability to pay the rent or other bills?
  - b. Destruction of or damage to the previous home?
  - c. Abuse or neglect (such as in the case of a youth who leaves or is asked to leave the home)?
  - d. Unhealthy conditions, such as an inadequate physical environment, infestations, drug or alcohol abuse in the home, or domestic violence?
  - e. The absence of a parent or guardian due to abandonment, the parent's or guardian's incarceration, or another reason?
  
3. "...economic hardship..." includes cases where limited financial resources have forced families or youth to leave personal residences and share housing due to an inability to pay rent and other bills. The way that the shared housing came about and the intention of the residents are significant. For example:
  - a. If economic hardship such as an accident or illness, loss of employment, loss of public benefits, or condition of poverty forces a family or youth to share the housing of others temporarily, the children and youth are eligible for McKinney-Vento services.
  - b. A long-term, cooperative living arrangement among families or friends that is fixed, regular, and adequate should not be considered a homeless situation, even if the parties are living together to save money.

### **Unique Situations**

1. Is this hospital stay crisis-based or is it a planned medical event?
2. Is this incarceration sudden and unexpected? Did you know in advance of this incarceration?
3. Is the child in foster care or group home on a temporary basis until a long-term placement is found?
4. Who has primary physical custody of the child? Does that person meet the definition of homeless?

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Whitehall School District does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of age, sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability, Federal law prohibits discrimination in education and employment on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability.

**Whitehall Public Schools  
Homeless Education Program**

## **Student Placement Dispute Form**

A homeless child or youth has the right to remain at his or her school of origin (public school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the public school in which the child or youth was last enrolled) or to attend any public school that other students who live in the attendance area are eligible to attend. If the student is eligible to attend more than one school, parents/caregiver or unaccompanied youth will have the option of choosing the school. A student is eligible to attend a school only if the student meets the requirements of the school program and there is a seat available at the student's grade level.

When a dispute arises over school placement, this form is to be completed by the parent/caregiver or unaccompanied youth. The Homeless Coordinator, in consultation with the parent/caregiver or unaccompanied youth, can also complete the form. A Homeless Coordinator can be contacted at (715) 538-4364.

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Person filing dispute \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to student \_\_\_\_\_

I may be contacted at: Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I have been provided with a copy of the Student Assignment Form indicating the school placement. Check one.  Yes  No

School Assigned \_\_\_\_\_

School requested \_\_\_\_\_

Please write a brief explanation of your dispute.

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

PARENT/CAREGIVER OR UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

**Return this completed form to the Homeless Education Program at Central Services.  
If turned in at the school, school staff must call the office at (715) 538-4364.**

Note: The student will attend the requested school until the dispute is resolved.

Homeless Coordinator signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of the form must be given to the parent/caregiver or unaccompanied youth. The form will be faxed to both the assigned school and the requested school by the Homeless Coordinator. The parent will receive written notification of the dispute resolution within five business days.

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Director of Pupil Services/  
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## Homeless Education Program

### Student Placement Dispute Process

A homeless child or youth has the right to remain at his or her school of origin (public school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed, or the public school in which the child or youth was last enrolled) or to attend any public school that other students who live in the attendance area are eligible to attend. If the student is eligible to attend more than one school, parents/caregivers or unaccompanied youth will have the option of choosing the school. A student is eligible to attend a school only if the student meets the requirements of the school program and there is a seat available at the student's grade level.

When a dispute arises over school placement the Homeless Coordinator, in consultation with the parent/caregiver or unaccompanied youth, will complete a student placement dispute form. A Homeless Coordinator can be contacted at (715) 538-4364. The Homeless Coordinator will submit the dispute form to the Homeless Liaison. The Homeless Liaison will make a determination and send the disputant a copy of the *Written Notification of Dispute Resolution* form. The student has the right to attend the school of choice until the dispute is resolved.

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Leah A.W. Johnson, Member, Julie Dokkestul, Member, Dan Koxlien-Member



# INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



## IF YOUR FAMILY LIVES IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:

In a shelter



In a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation



In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station



Doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship

*Your school-age children may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act.*

### Your eligible children have the right to:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education.
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
- Enroll in the local school; or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is your preference and is feasible.

\* If the school district believes that the school you select is not in the best interest of your children, then the district must provide you with a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal its decision.

- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if you request this.
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to your children's needs.

*If you believe your children may be eligible, contact the local liaison to find out what services and supports may be available. There also may be supports available for your preschool-age children.*



Local Liaison

Mr. Lisowski

State Coordinator

Karen Rice

If you need further assistance with your children's educational needs,  
contact the National Center for Homeless Education:

1-800-308-2145 \* [homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org) \* [www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)

# INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL-AGE YOUTH



## IF YOU LIVE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS:

In a shelter



In a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation



In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station



Doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship

*You may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act.*

### Eligible students have the right to:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education.
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
- Enroll in the local school; or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is their preference and is feasible.

\* If the school district believes that the school selected is not in his/her best interest, then the district must provide the student with a written explanation of its position and inform the student of his/her right to appeal its decision.

- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested.
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to the students' needs.

*If you believe you may be eligible, contact the local liaison to find out what services and supports may be available.*



Local Liaison

*Mr. L. Sawski*

State Coordinator

*Karen Rice*

If you need further assistance with your educational needs,  
contact the National Center for Homeless Education:

1-800-308-2145 \* [homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org) \* [www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)

# INFORMACIÓN PARA LOS PADRES



## SI SU FAMILIA VIVE EN CUALQUIERA DE LAS SITUACIONES SIGUIENTES:

En un albergue

En un motel o un sitio para acampar debido a la falta de una alternativa adecuada

En un parque, un edificio abandonado, o una estación de trenes o de autobuses

Compartiendo la vivienda de otras personas debido a la pérdida de su casa  
o a una dificultad económica

*Sus hijos de edad escolar podrían calificar para recibir ciertos derechos y protecciones bajo la ley federal McKinney-Vento.*

### Sus hijos elegibles tienen derecho a:

- Recibir una educación pública gratuita y apropiada.
- Inscribirse en la escuela inmediatamente, aunque falten documentos normalmente requeridos para la inscripción.
- Inscribirse y asistir a clases mientras que la escuela obtiene los documentos necesarios.
- Inscribirse en la escuela local; o continuar asistiendo a la escuela de origen (la escuela a la cual su hijo asistió cuando tenía una residencia permanente, o la última escuela en la cual estaba inscrito), si esto es su preferencia y es factible.
  - \* Si el distrito escolar cree que la escuela escogida por usted no es la mejor para sus hijos, el distrito tiene que darle a usted una explicación escrita de su posición e informarle de su derecho de apelar su decisión.
- Recibir transporte a/de la escuela de origen, si usted lo pide.
- Recibir servicios educacionales comparables a los que están provistos para otros estudiantes, según las necesidades de sus hijos.

*Si usted cree que sus hijos podrían ser elegibles, contacte al oficial para la educación de los niños y jóvenes sin hogar de su distrito escolar para averiguar los servicios y ayudas que podrían estar disponibles. También puede haber apoyo disponible para sus hijos de edad preescolar.*



Oficial para la educación de los niños y jóvenes sin hogar

Mr. Lisowski

Coordinador estatal

Karen Rice

Si usted necesita ayuda adicional con las necesidades educacionales de sus hijos, contacte al Centro Nacional de Educación para los Niños y Jóvenes sin Hogar:  
1-800-308-2145 \* [homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org) \* [www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)

# INFORMACIÓN PARA LOS JÓVENES DE EDAD ESCOLAR



## SI VIVES EN CUALQUIERA DE LAS SITUACIONES SIGUIENTES:

En un albergue

En un motel o un sitio para acampar debido a la falta de una alternativa adecuada

En un parque, un edificio abandonado, o una estación de trenes o de autobuses

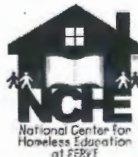
Compartiendo la vivienda de otras personas debido a la pérdida de tu casa  
o a una dificultad económica

*Podrías calificar para recibir ciertos derechos y protecciones bajo la ley federal McKinney-Vento.*

### Estudiantes elegibles tienen derecho a:

- Recibir una educación pública gratuita y apropiada.
- Inscribirse en la escuela inmediatamente, aunque falten documentos normalmente requeridos para la inscripción.
- Inscribirse y asistir a clases mientras que la escuela obtiene los documentos necesarios.
- Inscribirse en la escuela local; o continuar asistiendo a la escuela de origen (la escuela a la cual asistió el estudiante cuando tenía una residencia permanente, o la última escuela en la cual estaba inscrito), si esto es su preferencia y es factible.
  - \* Si el distrito escolar cree que la escuela escogida no es la mejor para el estudiante, el distrito tiene que darle al estudiante una explicación escrita de su posición e informarle de su derecho de apelar su decisión.
- Recibir transporte a/de la escuela de origen, si se lo pide.
- Recibir servicios educacionales comparables a los que están provistos para otros estudiantes, según la necesidad del estudiante.

*Si crees que podrías ser elegible, contacta al oficial para la educación de los niños y jóvenes sin hogar del distrito escolar para averiguar los servicios y ayudas que podrían estar disponibles.*



Oficial para la educación de los niños y jóvenes sin hogar

Mr. Lisowski

Coordinador estatal

Karen Rice

Si necesitas ayuda adicional con tus necesidades educacionales, contacta al  
Centro Nacional de Educación para los Niños y Jóvenes sin Hogar  
1-800-308-2145 \* [homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org) \* [www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)



National Center for Homeless Education  
Supporting the Education of Children and  
Youth Experiencing Homelessness  
[www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)



## MCKINNEY-VENTO LAW INTO PRACTICE BRIEF SERIES

### Identifying Children and Youth in Homeless Situations

#### INTRODUCTION

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 11431-11435, hereafter referred to as *The McKinney-Vento Act*), reauthorized in 2001 by Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act, ensures educational rights and protections for children and youth experiencing homelessness. The most critical step in ensuring the provision of needed services and supports is for local educational agencies (LEAs or school districts) to identify children and youth who are eligible under the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of *homeless*. This brief explains the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act related to the identification of homeless children and youth, explores challenges with identifying homeless children and youth, and provides strategies to increase LEA capacity to identify all children and youth experiencing homelessness.

#### MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT PROVISIONS ON IDENTIFICATION

- The McKinney-Vento State Plan must describe procedures that the state educational agency (SEA) will use to identify homeless children and youth in the state and to assess their special needs [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(B)].

#### Who is homeless?

**Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (as reauthorized by Title X, Part C of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended)**

The term "homeless children and youth"—

- A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and
- B. includes —
  2. children and youths 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; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
  3. 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...
  4. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
  5. 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).

- Every LEA must appoint a local homeless education liaison (hereafter referred to as *local liaison*) to fulfill the duties of the position established by law [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)]. One of these duties is to ensure that children and youth in homeless situations are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(i)]. Once these students are identified, the local liaison must ensure that they receive the services and supports they need in order to enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, school [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(ii)].
- Local liaisons must ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youth is disseminated in schools, family shelters, soup kitchens, and other places where these children and youth receive services [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(v)].

(See [Legislative Excerpts Related to Identification](#) below for the text of the law.)

### CHALLENGES TO IDENTIFYING HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Children and youth experiencing homelessness are difficult to identify for many reasons and often go unnoticed by school personnel. Identification challenges include the following:

- Students and parents may try to hide their homelessness because they are embarrassed or fear they will be judged or stigmatized.
- The fear of losing custody of their children often prevents homeless parents from revealing their living circumstances to school officials.
- Unaccompanied homeless youth may not report their homeless status for fear of being returned to unsafe family environments or taken into the custody of the child welfare system.
- Schools and service providers may be unaware of children and youth who are not

enrolled in school and are living in places other than shelters, such as doubled up with another family or in a hotel or motel, due to homelessness.

- Homeless families and unaccompanied homeless youth may not realize that their circumstances fit the McKinney-Vento definition of *homeless*.
- School personnel may not understand the nature of homelessness or the McKinney-Vento definition of *homeless* and may not recognize signs that a student has lost housing.

### STRATEGIES FOR IDENTIFYING CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

LEAs must make their best effort to ensure that all eligible children and youth are identified and provided the rights and services the McKinney-Vento Act guarantees. The following strategies will assist LEAs and local liaisons in developing a comprehensive and proactive approach to identifying homeless children and youth in their community.

- **Use data to determine if the LEA is under-identifying homeless children and youth.** One question that local liaisons frequently ask is whether or not the LEA is identifying all children and youth who are experiencing homelessness in the community. Because LEAs are required to collect data on homeless students annually for submission to the U.S. Department of Education, local liaisons should be able to use this data to identify trends in the number of homeless students identified and to compare the data to other data sources, such as Census poverty data, percentage of students participating in the National School Lunch Program, or data on homelessness collected by community agencies. Data comparisons such as these can help local liaisons determine whether the number of homeless children and youth the LEA identified is consistent with past years and aligns with what other data sources indicate about homelessness and poverty in

the community. If a significant discrepancy exists between LEA and other data, the local liaison should review and revise the LEA's identification strategies accordingly.

- **Create community awareness.**

Local liaisons should reach out to local agencies to collaborate on identifying homeless children and youth. Local liaisons should disseminate awareness posters with their contact information to these agencies and explain what services are available to ensure school access and support for homeless children and youth. Types of agencies appropriate for collaboration include social service providers, shelters, soup kitchens, food banks, transitional living programs, housing agencies, medical clinics, laundromats, libraries, and faith-based organizations. Local liaisons also should provide information to community youth programs and law enforcement agencies who may encounter homeless youth in need of being connected to school.

- **Develop interagency partnerships.**

Some federal programs are mandated to identify and serve homeless children and youth and to coordinate with LEAs. These programs include Head Start, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C - Early Intervention program (Child Find), and housing programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Local liaisons should contact these agencies and discuss ways to coordinate referrals for homeless families with children and for unaccompanied homeless youth. A coordinated approach to serving homeless families and youth, perhaps including a memorandum of agreement, will improve the identification of homeless students and help these agencies meet their federal requirements.

- **Train school staff.**

The local liaison should train all school administrators, teachers, and support staff on a regular basis. Staff should know what indications of homelessness to look and

listen for when interacting with parents, children, and youth; how to discuss sensitive issues in a discreet and respectful way, such as avoiding using the word "homeless;" and what the protocol is for referring students to the local liaison.

NCHE offers a variety of useful resources related to awareness and identification, including a brief entitled *Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness: An Introduction to the Issues*, an online tutorial called *Homeless with Homework: An Introduction to Homeless Education*, and *Appendix 12.B Common Signs of Homelessness* in NCHF's *Homeless Liaison Toolkit*. See [Additional Resources from NCHE](#) below for links to these resources. Also, see [Appendix A: Preparing LEA Role Groups to Identify Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#) below for a list of specific school role groups, ways they may encounter homeless students, and training suggestions to assist them in identification.

- **Provide information to parents.**

The LEA should create a welcoming and supportive environment for parents to disclose their homeless situation. Strategies to accomplish this include incorporating information on the definition of *homeless* and rights and services under the McKinney-Vento Act in parent informational materials, adding this information to the school district's website, and displaying this information prominently on posters in the school where parents are likely to see them.

- **Reach out to youth.**

LEAs should ensure that youth perceive school as a safe place to disclose family challenges and homelessness. Not only will youth experiencing homelessness be more likely to seek assistance, but other youth in the school will feel more comfortable reaching out to a teacher or counselor on behalf of a student who is homeless. LEAs should consider the use of social media to create awareness of services for youth experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the local liaison should provide awareness materials for youth in places in

the community where they are likely to congregate, such as youth shelters, malls, libraries, and street outreach centers.

- **Provide tools to assist with identifying homeless children and youth, including:**
  - » **A student residency enrollment form.**

Most LEAs use an enrollment form for all students that requests information about living arrangements for the purpose of screening for possible homelessness. (Note that the forms should not use the word “homeless.”) If a parent indicates that the family is living in a situation that may qualify as homeless, the registrar or school secretary can refer the parent or youth to the local liaison for further discussion regarding McKinney-Vento eligibility. For an example of a student residency enrollment form, see *Appendix 3.A Sample Residency Information Form* in NCHE’s *Homeless Liaison Toolkit* or visit NCHE’s Enrollment webpage and look under *Sample Forms, Materials, and Policies*. See [Additional Resources from NCHE](#) below for links to these resources.
  - » **NCHE’s *Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services under the McKinney-Vento Act* brief.**

This brief provides a clear explanation of the definition of *homeless* in the McKinney-Vento Act and includes helpful questions that a school or LEA staff member can ask when trying to determine if a family or youth is experiencing homelessness. See [Additional Resources from NCHE](#) below for a link to the brief.
  - » **A list of addresses of shelters, motels, transitional living programs, and camping grounds.**

Local liaisons should provide school registrars with a list of addresses of areas in the community in which homeless families or youth are likely to reside. If the registrar notes that an enrolling student lists one of these addresses or

that a current student has changed his or her address to one on the list, the registrar can refer the student to the local liaison.

- **Be aware of disasters or catastrophic events in the community that may cause homelessness.**

A natural or man-made disaster can result instantly in many families losing their homes and experiencing significant trauma. When a disaster occurs, local liaisons should be proactive by preparing schools to enroll large numbers of homeless students and arranging for additional staff to assist with the identification and enrollment process as needed. Each student’s eligibility for McKinney-Vento services must be determined on a case-by-case basis. Additionally, local liaisons should notify agencies working with the families of how schools will enroll and serve eligible students. See [Additional Resources from NCHE](#) below for more information on disaster preparation and response for schools.

Catastrophic events include factory closings that result in widespread unemployment or other impacts of a severe economic downturn, such as foreclosures and evictions. Local liaisons should publicize the rights and services of homeless students directly to the impacted families, as well as to those who are assisting the families. Local liaisons can display posters or distribute brochures on McKinney-Vento rights in the impacted factory, or they can disseminate brochures to law enforcement officials to provide to evicted families or to bank foreclosure officials for parents who are losing their homes.

## CONCLUSION

The identification of children and youth in homeless situations is the first step to ensuring that these students receive the services and supports needed to enroll in, attend, and succeed in school. The McKinney-Vento Act,



therefore, requires all school districts, led by the local liaison and in coordination with school personnel and other agencies, to identify students in homeless situations. Local liaisons should reach out to school personnel and community agencies on a continual basis and conduct trainings to make sure that people who encounter homeless children, youth, and families understand the McKinney-Vento definition of *homeless* and know the ways that homeless children and youth can be linked to school services. As a result, schools and communities can share a joint commitment to identify homeless children and youth and help these children and youth overcome the devastating impacts of poverty and homelessness through educational success.

children and youths receive services under this chapter, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.

42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(i)-(iii) and (v)

(g) State Plan

(1) In General – Each State shall submit to the Secretary a plan to provide for the education of homeless children and youths within the State. Such plan shall include the following: ...

(B) A description of the procedures the State educational agency will use to identify such children and youths in the State and to assess their special needs.

42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(B)

### LEGISLATIVE EXCERPTS RELATED TO IDENTIFICATION

(6) Local Educational Agency Liaison

(A) Duties – Each local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths, designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii), shall ensure that–

- (i) homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- (ii) homeless children and youths enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools of that local educational agency;
- (iii) homeless families, children, and youths receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs and preschool programs administered by the local educational agency, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services; ...
- (v) public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated where such

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FROM NCHE

- *Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness: An Introduction to the Issues* | <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/introduction.pdf>
- *Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act* | [http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det\\_elig.pdf](http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det_elig.pdf)
- Educational Rights Posters | [http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/er\\_poster.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/er_poster.php)
- *Homeless with Homework: An Introduction to Homeless Education* | <http://servepres1.serve.org/hwh>
- *Homeless Liaison Toolkit* | [http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/liaison\\_toolkit.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/liaison_toolkit.php)
- NCHE Disaster Preparation and Response webpage | [http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/dis\\_prep.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/dis_prep.php)
- NCHE Enrollment webpage | [http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc\\_enroll.php](http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_enroll.php)

### REFERENCES

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001. 42 USC §§11431–11435. (2001).

APPENDIX A: PREPARING LEA ROLE GROUPS TO IDENTIFY CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Role Group	Connection to Homeless Students	Training
Administrators and teachers	May notice if a student is suddenly falling behind in school; coming to school fatigued, hungry, or wearing the same clothes; hoarding belongings; or having uncharacteristic discipline problems	Awareness of homelessness and behaviors that might indicate trauma and crisis related to homelessness, understanding of ways to discuss homelessness with students, familiarity with protocol for referring the student to the local liaison
Social workers, counselors, and nurses	May encounter students who are experiencing academic, behavior, health, or hygiene problems that may be related to homelessness	Awareness of homelessness and behavioral, mental, and physical health problems that might indicate trauma and crisis related to homelessness; understanding of ways to discuss homelessness with students; familiarity with protocol for referring the student to the local liaison
Secretaries and registrars	Often are the first people in a school to meet a family, child, or youth who may be experiencing homelessness when enrolling a child or youth; see addresses the family lists or multiple school enrollments that could indicate a homeless situation	Understanding of the definition of <i>homeless</i> ; awareness of what a parent or child might disclose that could indicate homelessness; understanding of how to determine if a family living doubled up may be homeless; proficiency with discussing homelessness discreetly and respectfully; familiarity with protocol for referring a family, child, or youth to the local liaison
Cafeteria workers	May see a student who is not eating because he or she did not bring lunch or did not have money to buy lunch, seems inordinately hungry, is asking peers for food, is taking large portions, or hoarding food; may overhear that a student is homeless; may have a special rapport with a student who discloses homelessness	Understanding of possible indicators of homelessness related to food, proficiency in discussing homelessness with students, familiarity with protocol for referring a student to the local liaison

Bus drivers	May see a new child on the bus route living with another family, which could indicate doubling up due to homelessness; may overhear that a child is experiencing homelessness; may see uncharacteristic discipline problems from a child; may have a special rapport with a child who discloses homelessness	Understanding of possible indicators of homelessness at the bus stop or on the bus, ways to discuss homelessness with students, familiarity with protocol for referring a student to the local liaison
Truancy and attendance officials	Can detect patterns of absences that could indicate mobility or other attendance challenges due to homelessness; may talk to parents, children, or youth who disclose their homelessness	Understanding of ways that homelessness can impact attendance; proficiency with discussing homelessness with students; familiarity with protocol for referring a family, child, or youth to the local liaison

**This brief was developed by:**

**National Center for Homeless Education**

800-308-2145 (Toll-free Helpline)

<http://www.serve.org/nche>

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The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) operates the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program. NCHE is supported by the U.S. Department of Education Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs. The contents of this brief were developed under a grant from the Department; however, these contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department.

Every state is required to have a State Coordinator for Homeless Education, and every school district is required to have a local homeless education liaison. 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 [http://www.serve.org/nche/states/state\\_resources.php](http://www.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php).



For more information on the McKinney-Vento Act and resources for implementation, call the NCHE Helpline at 800-308-2145 or e-mail [homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org).



**Local Contact Information:**

**Whitehall School District**  
19121 Hobson Street Whitehall, WI 54773  
715.538.4364