



Guidelines for Designating LEA-Level and Building-Level McKinney-Vento Liaisons

Designating school building-level McKinney-Vento contacts can be a highly effective best practice for identifying children and youth who are experiencing homelessness, and ensuring full implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. However, sometimes roles can become muddled.

These guidelines were created in response to a request from a State McKinney-Vento Coordinator who confronted challenges clarifying lines of authority and responsibility in school districts that designate school building-level McKinney-Vento contacts (in addition to the required designation of the school district McKinney-Vento liaison). The guidelines are designed to share the relevant laws, and provide a procedure to help maintain clear roles and responsibilities.

What are Key Legal Requirements for McKinney-Vento Liaisons?

- Local educational agencies must designate an appropriate staff person, able to carry out the duties described in paragraph (6)(A), who may also be a coordinator for other Federal programs, as the LEA liaison for homeless children and youths.¹
- State and the local educational agencies in the State will adopt policies and practices to ensure participation by liaisons described in clause (ii) in professional development and other technical assistance activities ... as determined appropriate by the Office of the Coordinator.²
- State coordinators and local educational agencies shall inform school personnel, service providers, advocates working with homeless families, parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, and homeless children and youths of the duties of the local educational agency liaisons, and publish an annually updated list of the liaisons on the State educational agency's website.³

¹ 42 USC §11432(g)(1)(J)(ii).

² 42 USC §11432(g)(1)(J)(iv).

³ 42 USC §11432(g)(6)(B).

What Should LEA Administrators Consider in Designating LEA-Level and Building-Level McKinney-Vento Liaisons?

1. As required by the McKinney-Vento Act, designate a LEA liaison able to carry out the duties outlined in the law (see page three for complete list of duties). The U.S. Department of Education set the following guidelines for LEA administrators designating liaisons⁴:

- Allocate sufficient time for liaisons to do their jobs effectively;
- Support liaisons in fulfilling their duties as outlined in the law and in making timely decisions;
- Review the legal requirements for the position;
- Review data indicating the prevalence and needs of homeless children and youths in the LEA (including efforts that may be necessary to improve the identification of such children and youths);
- Review past technical assistance provided to the LEA in order to determine how much time the McKinney-Vento program requires to be managed well;
- Consider the number of schools and students in the district; the number of identified homeless students as a percentage of students living in poverty; and any recent monitoring findings; and
- Discuss the time allocation with former local liaisons in the LEA, liaisons from other LEAs, or the State Coordinator to determine what is realistic and is being prioritized in a given year, for example, new data collections or monitoring visits.

2. Inform your State Coordinator of the liaison's name and contact information. Contact the State Coordinator every time there is turnover in that position.

3. Inform school personnel, service providers, advocates, parents, and students of the name and contact information of the liaison, as well as the liaison's duties. This should be done through several methods to ensure the information is easily available, such as: posting on the district website; posting on the website of each individual school; including in student handbooks; including in information provided to parents and students; and sharing with community service providers through meetings and memos.

4. As required by the McKinney-Vento Act, provide training to school personnel, including building-level liaisons, registrars, secretaries, principals, counselors, social workers, transportation teams, child nutrition staff, teachers, tutors, and others.

5. Establish and publicize a protocol for how the building-level liaisons work with the LEA-level liaison. Protocols should address how children and youth experiencing homelessness will be identified, including clear procedures for addressing gray areas with the liaison prior to sharing the determination with the family or youth. Protocols and procedures must not create barriers to the identification, immediate enrollment or retention of students experiencing homelessness.

⁴ US Department of Education (March 2017). *Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance*, p. 15.

“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 through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
- (ii) homeless children and youths are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools of that local educational agency;
- (iii) homeless families and homeless children and youths have access to and receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs)..., early intervention services..., and other preschool programs administered by the local educational agency;
- (iv) homeless families and homeless children and youths receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services;
- (v) the parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
- (vi) public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths;
- (vii) enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with paragraph (3)(E);
- (viii) the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin, as described in paragraph (1)(J)(iii), and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school that is selected under paragraph (3)(A);
- (ix) school personnel providing services under this subtitle receive professional development and other support; and
- (x) unaccompanied youths—
 - (I) are enrolled in school;
 - (II) have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youth, including through implementation of the procedures under paragraph (1)(F)(ii); and
 - (III) are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087vv) and that the youths may obtain assistance from the local educational agency liaison to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 483 of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1090).”

42 USC §11432(g)(6)(A).