



## **Four Homeless Liaisons' Strategies to Support Immigrant and Migrant Students Experiencing Homelessness**

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An increasing number of families and youth are arriving in the U.S. from other countries, many without stable housing.

SchoolHouse Connection recently published [Strategies for Supporting Immigrant and Migrant Students Experiencing Homelessness](#) to help answer questions about eligibility for services under the McKinney-Vento Act, as well as strategies for best serving these students. This companion resource provides strategies and ideas from four local educational agencies (LEAs) across the country on supporting immigrant, migrant, and undocumented children and youth experiencing homelessness.

### **New Philadelphia City Schools, Ohio: Removing Literacy Roadblocks**

New Philadelphia City Schools utilizes a Spanish-speaking interpreter to enroll students in school. Recognizing that students and families may speak Spanish as a second language and speak an indigenous language as a first language, the interpreter provides both a translated housing questionnaire and a verbal explanation of the questionnaire. The interpreter understands that translating a residency questionnaire is a great way to connect with families; however, relying on translations isn't always the best way to identify students. During the verbal interview with the family, the interpreter is able to explain the meaning of "doubled up" and the services under McKinney-Vento, and remove the literacy roadblocks to identifying students who are homeless.

*Laurie Hall, Federal Programs Coordinator  
New Philadelphia City Schools, Ohio*

### **Middletown Public Schools, Rhode Island: Using Technology**

In Middletown Public Schools, the Homeless and Family Liaison realized the disconnect between school and home as result of language and technology barriers. The Liaison worked to build bridges by using technology with which families were more familiar, such as WhatsApp instead of email. Through WhatsApp, the Liaison shares pictures, sends flyers,

and arranges meetings with teachers. Connecting families to the school community through more familiar technology helped to build trust, which led to increased support from the Liaison with food, clothing, and housing.

*Megan Mainzer, Homeless and Family Liaison  
Middletown Public Schools, Rhode Island*

### **Greeley-Evans School District 6, Colorado: Identification, Collaboration and Cultural Competency**

In Greeley-Evans School District 6, the Students in Transition Liaison connects with McKinney-Vento and migrant families and students to ensure educational stability. The enrollment process has become an important part of the identification process, and screens for both migrant and McKinney-Vento status. School staff collaborate with regional education offices to refer families to each other for their respective program identification. With this collaboration, the regional office and district staff are better able to meet the needs of students. Providing culturally responsive services is a crucial component to identification. For example, students and families may place high value on small talk, story telling, connecting about family, or hospitality. Understanding these values is important in order to build meaningful connections and to help students and families feel heard.

*Thomas Lyman, Students In Transition Liaison  
Greeley-Evans School District 6, Colorado*

### **Bastrop Independent School District, Texas: Understanding Educational Systems**

In Bastrop Independent School District, the Homeless/Foster Parent & Family Engagement Liaison emphasizes the importance of understanding the intersections between homelessness and migrant, immigrant, and refugee status in order to meet the unique needs of these students and families. Students and parents who move due to migratory or immigrant status may not understand school expectations or the U.S. school system; as a result, they may find themselves unknowingly violating code of conducts, truancy laws, etc. Collaborating with other district programs such as Migrant and Bilingual Education improves identification, and helps students and families to navigate the school system. Some families also may be seeking asylum due to violence, or being victims of a crime; they may need additional support. Community, trauma-informed practices, and communication are essential to provide the support that students need to be successful.

*Norma Mercado, Homeless/Foster Parent and Family Engagement Liaison  
Bastrop Independent School District, Texas*

Read more about Norma's story in the [New York Times](#)