



# **UNDERSTANDING HOMELESS EDUCATION MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT**

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# DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

Definition of Homelessness in the McKinney-Vento Act [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)]:

The term “*homeless children and youths*”

(A) Means individuals who lack a

- *fixed* (stationary, permanent, not subject to change),
- *regular* (used on a nightly basis), and
- *adequate* (sufficient for meeting the physical, psychological and safety needs typically met in a home environment) nighttime residence; **AND**

## **DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS**

(B) Includes -

- (i) 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 campus grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;  
are living in emergency or transitional shelters;  
are abandoned in hospitals;
- (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;

## **DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS**

- (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 purposed of this part because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

# DEFINITION OF UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

**Definition of Unaccompanied Youth experiencing homelessness  
in the McKinney-Vento Act [42 U.S.C. § 11434a]:**

The term “*unaccompanied youth*” includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.



# IDENTIFICATION

- Another major step in identification is district personnel.
- Signs of homelessness to watch for include, but are not limited to:
  - Hunger/food insecurities;
  - Backpack full of personal belongings (usually lack adequate school supplies);
  - Medical and/or dental issues unaddressed/unintentional injuries or illness;
  - Economic exclusion/economic insecurities;
  - Talking about not wanting to go home or vague stories about living conditions that carry negative connotations;

# IDENTIFICATION

- Wearing the same clothes/wearing clothes that are not consistently clean;
- Struggles with personal hygiene;
- Chronic tardiness and/or absences;
- Frequent moves from school to school, often multiple times a school year;
- Failure to complete homework on time or at all;
- Difficulty reaching parents/guardians, including failure to sign notes, permission slips, etc.



# BSD PROCESS OVERVIEW

- Once a student is identified, the District's Homeless Liaison follows the process for students experiencing homelessness.
  - The BSD school administration include a Housing Questionnaire in the enrollment packet.
  - The School Registrar reviews the Housing Questionnaire for any family that has self-identified as homeless.
  - If a Housing Questionnaire indicates a student is homeless, the housing questionnaire is sent to the BSD homeless liaison who then contacts the school to discuss student living status with school liaison.
  - The BSD Liaison or the TMCS School Liaison complete data collection form on each student identified as homeless with the parent/guardian/caregiver.
  - The school of origin is identified and if different from TMCS discussion held on Best Interest of student in their school selection.
  - Transportation to and from school is discussed with parent/guardian/caregiver.
  - If form completed by TMCS School Liaison, the form is sent to BSD Homeless Liaison and School Registrar. If form is completed by the BSD Homeless Liaison, the data collection form is sent to TMCS School Liaison and School Registrar.
  - The BSD Liaison ensures the student is immediately enrolled and missing enrollment documents are secured.
  - The BSD Liaison reviews the data collection form and provides for student needs.
  - The BSD Liaison provides the family with packet of resources to include contact numbers of community agencies and applications for housing and health insurance.
  - The BSD Liaison works with school personnel to collect data on the homeless students to include educational progress and graduation status.

# **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT AND HOMELESS LIAISON**

- Identify students experiencing homelessness;
- Ensure immediate enrollment;
- Collaborate with Title I;
- Post educational rights;
- Inform parents, guardians, or youth of their educational rights;
- Support youth who are unaccompanied;

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DISTRICT AND HOMELESS LIAISON (CONT.)**

- Connect students with educational services and other services;
- Review policies and procedures;
- Ensure disputes resolved promptly;
- Ensure information/advice on preparing and improving readiness for college;
- Provide professional development;
- Attend professional development; and
- Collect data.

# RESOURCES

- Title I
  - Requires set-aside money for homeless students.
  - Automatic eligibility for funds if homeless.
  - Free and Reduced Meals
- Local
  - Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians
  - TMBCI Food Pantry
  - TMBCI Housing Authority
  - TMBCI Little Shell Youth Shelter
  - TMBCI Hearts of Hope Shelter

# RESOURCES

- Helpful websites:
  - Belcourt School District #7 (kl2.nd.us); <https://www.belcourt.kl2.nd.us>
  - National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth – National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (naehcy.org)
  - National Center for Homeless Education
  - McKinney-Vento (nd.gov)
  - School Connections; <https://schoolconnections.org>

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### ***Belcourt School District Local Liaison:***

- Debbe Poitra-477-6471, ext. 3299

### ***ND DPI Homeless Coordinator:***

- Jen Withers — 701-328-3544

### **BSD School District School Liaisons**

- TMCES: Brook Scott, ext. 3257 or Linda Gunville, ext. 3335
- TMCMS: Alexis LaRocque, ext. 3269 or Jared Azure, ext. 3309
- TMCHS: Bev Davis, ext. 3656