

Transporting Students Experiencing Homelessness

Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY)

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Federal Programs Division
Grants Unit

Presenter:

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McKinney-Vento Act



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McKinney-Vento Act

Definition of Homeless Students

❑ Individuals whose nighttime residence is NOT:

- Fixed—stationary, permanent, and not subject to change
- Regular—used on a predictable, routine, or consistent basis
- Adequate—sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in the home

(42 U.S.C. §11434A(2)(B)(i))

Can the student go to the SAME PLACE (fixed) EVERY NIGHT (regular) to sleep in a SAFE AND SUFFICIENT SPACE (adequate)?



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The Homeless definition includes children and youth who are:

- ❑ Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
- ❑ Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations;
- ❑ Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- ❑ Abandoned in hospitals;



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Homeless also includes children and youth who are:

- ❑ **Awaiting foster care placement;**
- ❑ **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/train stations, or similar settings;**
- ❑ **Migratory – who qualify as homeless living in circumstances described above.**



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Definition of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY)

- ❑ **Unaccompanied = not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian; in practical terms, this means the youth does not live with the parent or guardian.**

- ❑ **2-Step Process:**
 1. **Does the student's living arrangement meet the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless?**
 2. **Once homelessness is determined, is the student unaccompanied?**



McKinney-Vento Act

- ❑ **Unaccompanied youth have the same rights as other students experiencing homelessness.**

- ❑ **Unaccompanied youth have run away from home, been thrown out of their homes, and/or been abandoned by parents or guardians. These young people are separated from their parents for a variety of reasons:**
 - **Over half report being physically abused at home.**
 - **Over one third report sexual abuse.**
 - **Over two-thirds report that at least one of their parents abuses drugs or alcohol.**



Data Collection



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Data Collection

□ Georgia – homeless children and youth identified by LEAs:

- FY13 = 35,764
- FY12 = 35,048
- FY11 = 31,384
- FY10 = 27,338
- FY09 = 23,724
- FY08 = 15,700



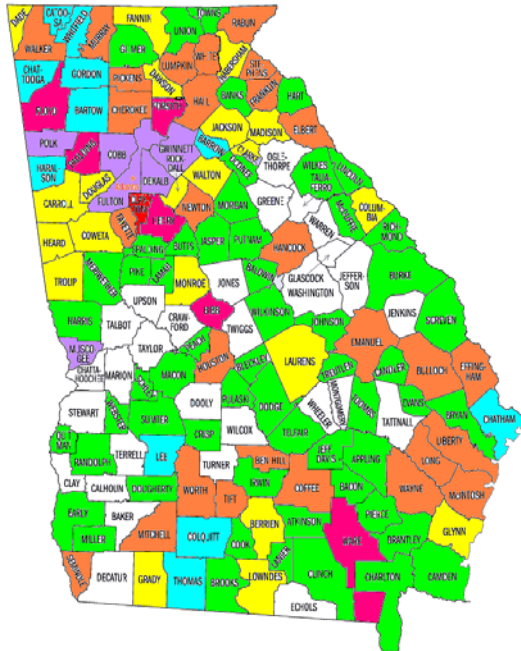
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GaDOE Student Information System (SIS)

Data Collection:

Homeless Enrollment by County Identified in SIS

City School Districts
Atlanta Public Schools
Bremen City
Buford City
Calhoun City
Carrollton City
Cartersville City
Chickamauga City
Commerce City
Dalton City
Decatur City
Dublin City
Gainesville City
Jefferson City
Marietta City
Pelham City
Rome City
Social Circle City
Thomasville City
Trion City
Valdosta City
Vidalia City



1-50
 51-149
 150-299
 300-500
 501-1000
 1001-1999
 2000+

White Background = 0
 Homeless Students
 Reported State Total =
 35,048



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Transportation



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Transportation

- ❑ Comparable services
- ❑ Removal of Barriers
- ❑ Prompt Provision of Transportation
 - Immediate enrollment
 - During disputes
- ❑ School of Origin (In order to counteract educational disruption caused by mobility)
 - The school last attended
 - The school attended during the initial episode of homelessness
 - The zoned school where currently located



Transportation

- ❑ School selection decision should consider the following feasibility factors:
 - Age of student
 - Distance of commute (NOT COST; rather, impact on student's education)
 - Safety
 - Need for special instruction (e.g. special education and related services)
 - Length of anticipated stay in temporary location
 - Time remaining in school year
 - Wishes of parent/guardian and student



Transportation

- ❑ Local homeless education liaisons must ensure that the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, or any unaccompanied homeless youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school selected.



Transportation

- Local educational agencies (LEAs) must provide students experiencing homelessness with transportation to and from their schools of origin, if requested by a parent or guardian, or if requested by the local liaison on behalf of an unaccompanied homeless youth.



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Transportation

- ❑ If the student's temporary residence and the school of origin are in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange the student's transportation to and from the school of origin.
- ❑ If the student is living outside of the school of origin's LEA, the LEA where the student is staying and the school of origin's LEA must determine how to divide the responsibility and cost of providing transportation, or they must share the responsibility and cost equally.



Transportation

- In addition to providing transportation to the school of origin, LEAs must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students. (e.g. After school activities, summer school)



Transportation

LEA Transportation or General Funds

- ❑ Providing transportation to and from the school of origin for homeless students when requested is an LEA responsibility mandated in the McKinney-Vento Act.
- ❑ This responsibility exists for all LEAs, even if the LEA does not provide transportation for other students and/or does not receive McKinney-Vento subgrant funding.
- ❑ As such, using LEA transportation or general funds to provide transportation for homeless students is an acceptable, and often necessary, option.



Transportation

McKinney-Vento Subgrant Funds

- ❑ SEAs (GaDOE) must distribute a portion of their State McKinney- Vento allocation to LEAs through a competitive subgrant process.
- ❑ LEAs that receive a subgrant may use these funds to “defray the excess cost” of providing transportation to students experiencing homelessness.
- ❑ While the law does not define “excess cost,” the expectation is that the LEA will cover the same level of cost for transporting homeless students as is covered for other students before relying on subgrant funds.



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Transportation

Title I, Part A Set-aside Funds

- ❑ According to Title I, Part A, each LEA must reserve funds as necessary to provide services to homeless children who are attending a school that is not a Title I, Part A school.
- ❑ These set-aside funds may be used to provide a range of services and supports; however, these funds may not be used to provide transportation to and from the school of origin while a student is homeless.
- ❑ The U.S. Department of Education determined that since the McKinney-Vento Act mandates that LEAs provide transportation to and from the school of origin, funding the provision of this service through Title I, Part A would constitute supplanting.



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Title I, Part A Set-aside Funds

- ❑ Despite the supplanting restrictions, Title I, Part A set-aside funds may be used for other transportation needs for homeless students, such as transportation to enable a formerly homeless student to continue attending the school of origin until the end of the school year in which he or she becomes permanently housed.
- ❑ Title I, Part A set-aside funds also may be used to provide transportation to enable parents to be more involved in their child's education and to enable students to participate in extended day programming with an academic focus.

LEAs must consult with the GaDOE Title I Area Specialist for approval of Title I, Part A homeless set-aside expenditures. LEAs must prove that all proposed expenditures, notwithstanding those related to transportation, are reasonable and necessary.



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Transportation

Collaboration among LEA Departments

- ❑ Collaboration between the LEA's homeless education and transportation programs is critical to ensuring that transportation for homeless students is provided in a prompt and efficient manner.
- ❑ The LEA's transportation director should work with the local homeless liaison, district leadership, neighboring districts, and homeless service providers to develop effective transportation policies and procedures.
- ❑ In addition, school bus drivers should be trained on the McKinney-Vento Act's requirements concerning homeless students.
- ❑ The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) allows the use of special education buses for homeless students as long as the transportation needs of all special education students have been met.



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Transportation

Interdistrict Collaboration

- ❑ In cases where it is determined to be in a student's best interest to attend the school of origin, but the student is living in another LEA, the LEA of origin and the LEA in which the student is living must agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing transportation to and from the school of origin.
- ❑ If the LEAs are unable to reach an agreement, the responsibility and costs for transportation must be shared equally.



Transportation

Community Collaboration

- ❑ Local liaisons should establish cooperative relationships with community agencies that serve homeless families, youth, and children.
- ❑ A community-wide commitment to assist homeless families with children and unaccompanied homeless youth can result in resource sharing, including transportation resources.
- ❑ Many LEAs have been able to arrange transportation using shelter or other service vans.
- ❑ Some public transportation systems donate bus passes or other transportation services to school districts for use with homeless students.
- ❑ Community foundations often are willing to contribute to meeting the needs of homeless students, including transportation needs.



Transportation

Collaboration with Parents

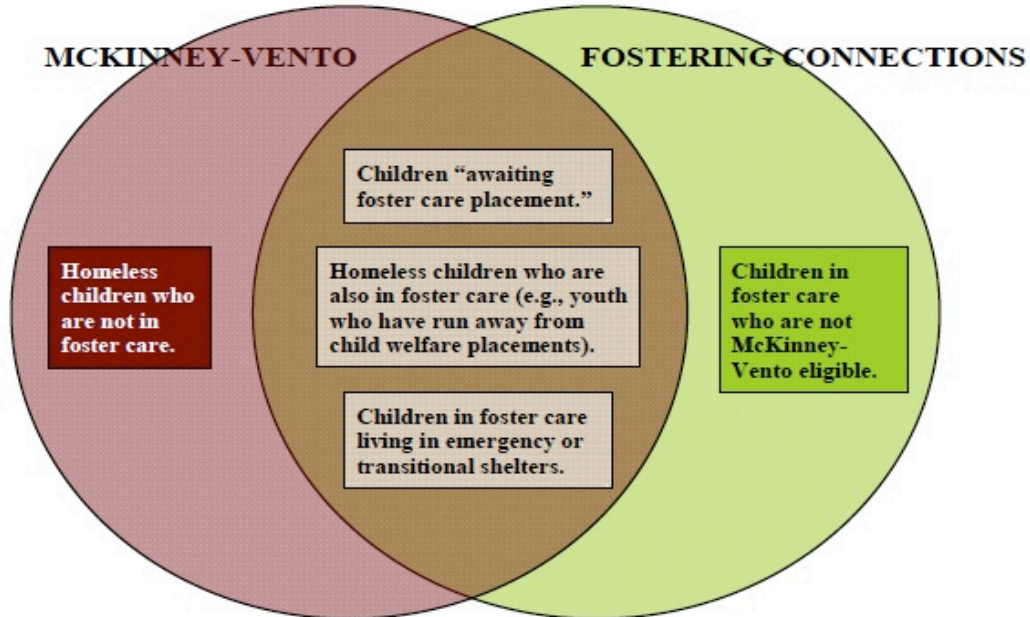
- ❑ Parents who are experiencing homelessness generally appreciate being included in decisions involving the education of their child(ren), and should be part of the conversation on developing any plans for transporting their children to and from the school of origin.
- ❑ Moreover, parents should be provided with clear expectations for their role in carrying out the plan, such as:
 - Committing to getting their children to a bus stop on time.
 - Notifying the transportation department when a child will not be attending school to avoid unnecessary trips.
 - Following procedures for utilizing gas vouchers.



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Transportation

(Related to foster care)



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Transportation

(Related to foster care)

Educational Programming, Assessment, and Consultation (EPAC)

DHS Policy 10.13 – Education Stability

- ❑ This policy was disseminated to the field on August 1, 2013.
- ❑ It provides practice guidance to direct service workers and all other field staff about Education Stability for children and youth in foster care.
- ❑ This policy specifically covers how EPAC, through its Education Support Monitors, engage case managers and provide educational consultation in the following areas:
 - Collaborations with Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)
 - Determination of Appropriateness of Educational Settings
 - DFCS contact for District Level Homeless Liaisons
 - Assist in development of RTI, IEP, and/or 504 Plans
 - Homeless and Unaccompanied Youth Referrals
 - Educational Stability Transportation Funding Request Protocol



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Transportation

(Related to foster care)

- Educational Stability is essential to a child's well-being. It is imperative that DFCS Case Managers and other direct service staff responsible for case planning, engage in the necessary steps to make best interest determinations regarding the stability of educational settings for children and youth as they enter and remain in care.



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Transportation

(Related to foster care)

- ❑ **When a child has been identified as a Homeless and/or Unaccompanied Youth, the following procedure will be followed by the Division of Family and Children Services In-take Officer(s).**
 1. When an identified homeless or unaccompanied youth has been identified to CPS/In-Take, a referral form (176) will be completed and submitted to Educational Programming, Assessment and Consultation Unit (EPAC).
 2. Referral form will be processed by EPAC (Operations Analyst) who will record the provided information in the Homeless & Unaccompanied Youth (HUY) Data System.
 3. Based upon the Local Educational Agency identified on the referral, EPAC will contact the appropriate Homeless Liaison who should then direct services for the youth under the guidelines of **McKinney-Vento**.
 4. EPAC/DFCS will periodically check-in with the Homeless Liaison to ensure services were provided to youth.



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Transportation

(Related to foster care)

Steps to Ensure Educational Stability

Educational
Stability Field
Guide

Educational
Stability
Checklist

Education
Transportation
Funding Request
Protocol



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Transportation

(Related to foster care)

□ Transportation Protocol to Support Educational Stability

- Educational Stability transportation funds should be used to support the practice of ensuring foster children and youth remain in their home school/school of origin as part of Educational Stability



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Transportation

(Related to foster care)

Transportation Options

- Foster Parent
- Public transportation/Mass Transit
- Van pools
- Taxis
- Private transportation services

Determining Factors

- Age of child/youth
- Location of placement and distance from school of origin
- Child/youth's physical and cognitive abilities
- Child/youth's developmental abilities



Transportation

(Related to foster care)

Reasonable Distance Determination

- The following considerations should be made when determining if the school of origin is an unreasonable distance from the child/youth's placement:
- Does the commute exceed one hour (one-way) or 60 miles in distance (one-way)? **REMINDER: Foster parents/caregivers can provide transportation to ensure educational stability for distances of 25 miles or less.**
 - Will the cost of the services exceed \$2,000.00 per month?



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Scenarios



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Scenario

- ❑ April was subleasing her apartment from an owner who did not pay the mortgage, causing the property to go into foreclosure. After being evicted, April and her two daughters, May and June, move to an extended-stay hotel on the opposite side of July County. Both daughters attend August Elementary School in July County. The homeless liaison provides public transportation vouchers until the bus routes can be arranged. Once the route is arranged, the liaison notifies April and gives her the logistical information regarding pick-up times and locations. April protests and insists that July County keep providing the public transportation vouchers.
 - **Are May and June eligible for McKinney-Vento?**
 - **If May and June are eligible, does April have a right to the public transportation vouchers?**
 - **If you were the homeless liaison, what would you do?**



Scenario

- ❑ Butch has an 11th grade son, Bryce, who is an all-state baseball player attending high school in Bison Burger County; however, Butch loses his job as a biochemist and has to stay with his brother's family two counties away in Bull Brisket County. The commute is 90 minutes (40 miles) each way. Bull Brisket High school does not have a baseball team, which Butch declares would ruin Bryce's chances at a scholarship. Butch demands that his Bryce stay in the school of origin.
 - **Is Bryce eligible for McKinney-Vento?**
 - **If Bryce is eligible, does he have a right to stay in the school of origin?**
 - **What factors must be considered?**
 - **If you were the homeless liaison, what would you do?**



Scenario

- ❑ Carmen has an 7th grade son, Carmelo, attending middle school in Chipotle County; however, Carmen's condo catches fire while Carmelo was cooking corn. Carmen and Carmelo move into the Comfort Inn, which is one mile outside of Chipotle County. Carmen requests transportation based on the McKinney-Vento Act; however, Chipotle County does not provide transportation to any of its students.
 - **Is Carmelo eligible for McKinney-Vento?**
 - **If Carmelo is eligible, does the LEA have to provide transportation?**
 - **If you were the homeless liaison, what would you do?**



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Strategies



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Strategies

- ❑ Convene a meeting of local liaisons and transportation directors to establish a plan that may be implemented immediately when transportation is needed for a homeless child.
 - Addressing issues of cost, responsibility, and logistics before the need occurs will prevent delays in a homeless student's school attendance.
 - Note: LEA liaisons and transportation directors in Metro Atlanta have been meeting for several years, resulting in a very efficient transportation system.
- ❑ Utilize technology, such as a transportation database, to make electronic transportation requests, maintain current records of homeless students receiving transportation, and determine what specialized bus routes have been established.
- ❑ Develop forms, such as homeless student transportation requests, parent agreements, and interdistrict transportation agreements that may be accessed easily at any school or online.



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Strategies

- ❑ Explore flexible bus routes that can be implemented easily.
- ❑ Maintain a list of shelters, hotels, motels, campgrounds, and other areas where homeless families may live so that these locations can be included in bus routes on short notice.
- ❑ Be aware that students in homeless families and unaccompanied homeless youth move frequently and transportation plans must be adjusted accordingly.
- ❑ Encourage families and youth to inform the local liaison when they are moving.
- ❑ Identify a transportation staff member who will serve as the point person to arrange transportation for homeless students.
- ❑ Be mindful of State and local policies for pupil transportation safety; McKinney-Vento does not override safety policies.



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Strategies

- ❑ If utilizing public transportation, ensure that support is provided for parents to accompany young children to and from school.
- ❑ Develop a system of providing gas vouchers/ cards or reimbursements to parents or youth who are able and willing to drive to school.
- ❑ Explore possibilities for volunteers, such as retirees, to provide transportation for homeless students. This option should be considered only if:
 - Pupil transportation safety policies would allow it.
 - Sufficient driver background checks are conducted.
- ❑ Explore economical approaches to providing transportation; brainstorm cost-saving solutions with LEA and community stakeholders.



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Questions



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Resources

- ❑ National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) Web site: www.serve.org/nche
- ❑ NCHE helpline: (800) 308-2145 or homeless@serve.org
- ❑ NCHE products: www.serve.org/nche/products/php
- ❑ National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth: www.naehcy.org



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