



## McKinney-Vento Children and Youth

# NEWSLETTER

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### Unaccompanied Youth - Liaison Responsibilities

During the 2023-2024 school year, 713 students were identified as unaccompanied youth across West Virginia. Based on national data, we may be under-identifying, and thus under-serving, students that meet these criteria.

Unaccompanied Youth are defined as children or youth that meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless and are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

*As a McKinney-Vento liaison, there are specialized duties related to supporting this population:*

1. **Identification:** Ensure that unaccompanied youth are identified by school personnel and through outreach activities.
2. **Enrollment:** Facilitate the immediate enrollment of unaccompanied youth in school, even if they lack the necessary documents.
3. **Access to Services:** Ensure that unaccompanied youth have access to educational services for which they are eligible, including special education, gifted and talented programs, and school nutrition programs.
4. **Coordination:** Coordinate with local social services agencies, housing agencies, and other community organizations to provide comprehensive support to unaccompanied youth.
5. **Advocacy:** Advocate for the educational rights of unaccompanied youth and work to remove barriers to their education, such as helping students complete the FAFSA.
6. **Training and Awareness:** Provide training and awareness activities for school staff to ensure they understand the needs and rights of unaccompanied youth.

**These responsibilities help ensure that unaccompanied youth receive the support they need to succeed in school despite the challenges they face. This information can serve as a checklist for self-assessment purposes of the initiatives that are currently in place within your district to address the needs of this specialized population.**

### Title I Set-Aside Development

Liaisons should play a crucial role in the Title I Set Aside for students experiencing homelessness. As your LEA looks to determine what the set-aside will be for the 2025-26 school year, you can take the following steps to ensure that you are a part of the development process for the set-aside:

- Assist with conducting a needs assessment to determine the specific needs of homeless students and ensure that the set-aside funds are used effectively to address these needs. Tools for developing the set aside are located in the OneNote for McKinney-Vento liaisons.
- Coordinate with other school personnel and community organizations to provide comprehensive support for homeless students. This includes ensuring that services funded by the set-aside are not duplicated by other funding sources.
- Ensure that the set-aside funds are used to provide services that are reasonable and necessary to help students experiencing homelessness take advantage of educational opportunities. This can include tutoring, transportation, school supplies, and other supports. A list of the allowable uses of funds can be found [here](#).
- Utilize data, specifically looking at the identification total of students experiencing homelessness, to determine an appropriate set-aside total. This helps ensure that the funds allocated are based on accurate and current information.

Collaboration between the local federal programs office and the McKinney-Vento liaison is critical for supporting students experiencing homelessness. Additionally, during upcoming cycles of federal programs monitoring, the Office of ESEA, Improvement, and Support will assess liaison involvement in the Title I Set Aside determination. Now is an ideal time to review the system that is in place at the district level for determining the set-aside and make adjustments as needed.

While federal laws and non-regulatory guidance do not specify a fixed funding amount per pupil identified, LEAs must ensure that the Title I, Part A Homeless Set Aside adequately addresses the unique needs of students experiencing homelessness. By adhering to these guidelines, LEAs can better address the educational challenges faced by homeless students and promote their overall success.



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## Displaced Student Resources

The NCHE has recently released a handbook series to address displaced students.

Three Resources are available in the NCHE downloads section of their website.

- After the Storm: Information for Parents on How Schools Can Help After Disasters
- From the School Office to the Classroom: Strategies for Enrolling and Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness
- School as a Safety Net: Connecting Displaced Children with Educational and Support Services

[These documents](#) offer guidance on selecting the best school placements for homeless students and provide practical tips to streamline the enrollment process. They include specific strategies to assist unaccompanied homeless youth who are not in the custody of a parent or guardian.

Additionally, the documents emphasize the importance of ensuring appropriate academic placement and support, including for students with special needs. They also offer strategies to support the mental health and well-being of homeless students. The overarching goal is to minimize disruption for students experiencing homelessness, ensuring they have access to the same educational opportunities as their peers.

## Job Corps Policy Update for UHY

**What's new:** The Department of Labor has updated Job Corps policy, making it easier for unaccompanied homeless youth to enroll without parental consent.

Job Corps is the nation's largest free career training and education program, offering essential services like housing, healthcare, food, and childcare to low-income young adults aged 16–24. However, unaccompanied homeless youth previously faced enrollment barriers due to parental signature and consent requirements.

Now, unaccompanied homeless youth, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act, can enroll in Job Corps without parental consent if they provide documentation from school district homeless liaisons or other youth services personnel. Eligible youth must be U.S. citizens, legal U.S. residents, residents of a U.S. territory, or authorized to work in the United States. Additionally, a new online portal has been introduced to simplify the application process.

More information about the job process can be found here: <https://enroll.jobcorps.gov/>

## District Liaison Spotlight

### Emilie Embrey - Hampshire County Schools

Emilie is the new attendance director and lead homeless liaison in Hampshire County. Since taking on this role, Emilie has actively worked to expand the SECURE Program within her district to serve students experiencing homelessness. The program title was chosen to share information about the McKinney-Vento program in an unobtrusive way that appeals to families in transition.

In addition to rebranding her program, Emilie and her student success coaches are developing a comprehensive needs assessment to assist students. This annual check-in form serves as a resource for school personnel to gather essential information to remove barriers and support students. It also streamlines available services by organizing assistance in an easy-to-understand format that highlights both school-based and community supports.

If you are interested in looking at a few of the documents she has created, they are housed in the LEA Sample Resources section of the Microsoft OneNote notebook.