

Supporting McKinney-Vento Homeless Education

Local School District Liaison Duties, Roles and Responsibilities

In Ohio, each child is challenged to discover and learn, prepared to pursue a fulfilling post-high school path and empowered to become a resilient, lifelong learner who contributes to society. Equity is the greatest imperative and number one principle in Ohio's strategic plan, [Each Child, Our Future](#). Students experiencing homelessness may face additional barriers and need greater access to whole child supports to be successful.

Like *Each Child, Our Future*, the [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) (ESSA) prioritizes the educational stability for vulnerable populations by requiring districts and community schools to have designated points of contact for each vulnerable population. Having a point of contact for students experiencing homelessness can increase collaboration, facilitate supports for students and families and streamline communication between partners. Ohio's ESSA plan requires every district and community school to identify a liaison for students experiencing homelessness.

The local homeless liaison should be a person who is approachable, accessible and able to carry out the duties in a trauma-informed and culturally competent manner. It is not the responsibility of the family or student to identify themselves as meeting the definition of homelessness, but rather it is the role of the liaison to ensure district personnel are trained to be aware of the signs of homelessness and notify the liaison.

The following is a list of provisions the local homeless liaison must ensure:

- Sensitive identification, eligibility/best interest determination and education about McKinney-Vento educational rights;
- Immediate enrollment with full and equal opportunity to succeed;
- Access to supportive educational services, including Head Start, early intervention (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part C) and public preschool programs;
- Access to free school meals and other food benefits;
- Referrals to physical, behavioral and mental health services;
- Opportunities are provided, supported and encouraged to increase family/caregiver engagement;
- Public posting in the district and community of the educational rights of students and families experiencing homelessness;
- Facilitated and mediated enrollment disputes;
- Needs of the unaccompanied youth are supported, including receiving partial credit and providing information about their status as independent students for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and verification status;
- Transportation services;
- Professional development for all school personnel.

Additional McKinney-Vento resources and supports are available on the Ohio Department of Education's [McKinney-Vento Resources for Awareness](#) webpage. For questions, contact homelesseducation@education.ohio.gov.