Project HELP

Ensuring the educational rights and protections due under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to all students experiencing homelessness
What is the McKinney-Vento Act?

- President Reagan passed McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act in 1987.
- The Act entitles homeless school-aged children access to the same, free, appropriate public education that is provided to non-homeless youth.
- President Obama expanded law through Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2016.
- Every Local Education Agency (School District) must have a liaison to advocate for students experiencing homelessness.
Who is eligible for services?

➔ The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children and youth as individuals who lack a “fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”

➔ A fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.

➔ A regular residence is one that is used on a regular, nightly basis.

➔ An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

➔ The definition includes children and youth living in homeless shelters, transitional housing programs, cars, parks, empty buildings, bus or train stations, campgrounds, and motels. Children living in substandard housing also meet the definition.
Who is eligible for services?

➔ Doubled-up Students

Examples of students who are doubled-up:

Living in shared housing (i.e., living with relatives, friends or close associates in housing where the child’s parent’s name is not on lease, mortgage or bills) due to eviction, violence, inadequate housing, natural disaster or destruction of home, parent/guardian abandonment

Moving to multiple homes or are “in-between” homes – non-stable housing

Hardship (financial, loss of employment, illness, etc.) that forces families or youth to share housing temporarily
Living Doubled-Up

➔ Children who live doubled-up frequently live in very crowded conditions, experience chronic hunger, sleep deprivation, inadequate personal hygiene, and unmet medical or psychological needs.

➔ Unlike students who live in shelters or transitional housing, children who live doubled-up face uncertain rules and routines, do not have the same access to outside supports such as counseling, medical and dental care, and adequate nutrition.

➔ Students may experience significant hygiene challenges due to crowded living. They may not have a chance to shower and lack clean clothes.

➔ Most homeless students living doubled-up hide their living situation due to stigma. Parents often keep the living situation a secret out of fear that their children will have to change schools or fear of losing their children to CPS due to extreme poverty.
Who is eligible for services?

➔ Homeless Unaccompanied Students (“Unaccompanied Youth”)

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

This includes, but is not limited to:
- Runaways
- Couch surfers
- Abandoned by parents (e.g., fleeing, incarceration or given to other relatives)
Legal Expectations – McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Enrollment

The following items are applicable to those students enrolling under McKinney-Vento and Foster Care guidelines:

1.) Immediate enrollment – No delay in enrollment
2.) Right to attend school-of-origin (last school attended) or zoned school (school assigned to address) *Foster care students are eligible to attend the highest school grade level and are not eligible to enroll into feeder school.
3.) Right to enroll immediately without documentation normally required of non-homeless or foster care students
4.) Right to receive free school meals
5.) Right to receive Title I assistance, Pre-K enrollment
6.) Right to receive school-of-origin transportation (see next slide)
Legal Expectations – McKinney-Vento and Foster Care Enrollment (Transportation Guidelines)

➔ Districts must provide transportation to and from their school of origin, at a parent’s or guardian’s request (or at the liaisons request for unaccompanied youth). **Transportation is available to school of origin if school is over two miles away.**

➔ Districts must also provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students.

➔ Transportation request forms need to be submitted to campus liaison for scheduling.
   - In-district transportation takes 3-5 business days.
   - Out-of-district transportation takes 5-7 business days.

- Project HELP refers Sp.Ed. students for transportation. Scheduling is handled by the campus coordinator with the Accelify program.

- Once transportation is ready, PHELP Liaison will contact parent or student.
### Identified Students Experiencing Homelessness by Living Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doubled-up</td>
<td>86,718</td>
<td>135,392</td>
<td>89,121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel/Motel</td>
<td>7,782</td>
<td>19,942</td>
<td>8,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>11,118</td>
<td>19,797</td>
<td>10,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsheltered</td>
<td>5,559</td>
<td>56,174</td>
<td>5,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Homeless Students in Texas Public Schools

- **2016-17**: 111,177
- **2017-18**: 231,305
- **2018-19**: 114,055

We attribute the 2017-18 increase in identification due to the impact of Hurricane Harvey. When we compare 2016-17 and 2018-19 identification data, there is a 2.59% increase. Overall Texas student enrollment increased 1.36% during the same period.
2017-2018 Project HELP data

Families experiencing Doubled-up homeless status are the most frequent occurrence and are often harder to identify.
Student Identification Steps:

When parent(s), legal guardian(s) or unaccompanied youth completes all enrollment paperwork, make certain to adhere to the following:

1.) Have parents complete all enrollment forms (including SRQ) completely*
2.) Email your PHELP liaison or fax the following forms, as applicable: SRQ, Transportation Request Form, and Form 2085-E
3.) Change of address forms should be directed to the Office of Student Services
4.) Overrides can be done only by personnel in the Office of Student Services

*Students can be identified at any time during the school year and must be recertified every 12 months to receive services
Every enrolling student needs to complete an SRQ

If student is claiming homelessness, immediately enroll

At enrollment, the student is NOT required to present:

- Proof of residence
- School records from previous school
- Immunization records upon enrolling (has up to 30 days)
- Identification (e.g. birth certificate or Social Security card)
- If unaccompanied, parent/guardian approval of enrolling
 ➔ Students who are wards of the state, in foster homes, residential homes, treatment centers, or juvenile justice placements are considered in Foster Care/Substitute Care as a ward of the state of Texas.

➔ Foster care students have similar rights as Mckinney Vento students CPS and the LEA (school-district representatives) will work in coordination to implement procedures for school-of-origin enrollment and other services.

The following 2085-E form, along with the SRQ, MUST be submitted to Project HELP:
Project HELP support services:

→ Enrollment assistance
  ◆ Project supervisors must ensure that students who are experiencing homelessness are to be enrolled immediately. Requiring missing paperwork or any other delay to enrollment is a violation of the McKinney-Vento Act.

→ Free lunch
  ◆ The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 expanded federal child nutrition programs to assist homeless, migrant, foster, and runaway children and youth by providing automatic eligibility for free school meals.

→ Transportation
  ◆ Attendance Area
  ◆ School of origin –
    ● Local education agencies (LEAs or school districts) must keep homeless children and youth in the school of origin, to the extent feasible, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian (or in the case of an unaccompanied homeless youth, against the youth’s wishes)

→ School supplies
  ◆ School supplies are provided to ensure continuity of education regardless of financial and housing obstacles.

→ Assistance and support services
  ◆ Project HELP maintains partnerships with our many community resource collaborators.
Project HELP utilizes Social Capital to help families:

Although direct financial resources are not always available within the district, Project HELP is proud to partner with local organizations and individual donors to support families and meet their needs.

These connections and partnerships are vital in supporting families in a meaningful and lasting way.

Social Capital: Connections, networks, or relationships among people AND the value that arises from them that can be accessed or mobilized to help individuals to succeed.
School of origin is defined as the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

Students can continue attending their school of origin the entire time they are homeless and until the end of any academic year in which they become permanently housed.

If a student becomes homeless in between academic years, he or she can continue attending the school of origin for the following school year.

Enrollment and transportation services are guaranteed to a Project HELP student’s school of origin or school zoned for residence.
Project HELP contacts:

Project HELP
Student Support Services
Campbell Elementary School
2613 Rogers Ave. Room 207
Austin, TX 78722
Office: 512-414-3690
Fax: 512-414-0761

Rosie Coleman, Coordinator and Homeless Liaison
rozie.coleman@austinisd.org
414-0114

Howard Hooper, Project Supervisor
howard.hooper@austinisd.org
414-0760

Brandi Ramirez, Project Supervisor
brandi.ramirez@austinisd.org
414-0758

Lupe Ochoa, Project Supervisor
lupe.ochoa@austinisd.org
414-6748

Laurie Lopez, Clerk
laurie.lopez@austinisd.org
414-3691
Vertical Team Liaison Assignments
Reference information and identification forms:

AISD Project HELP: https://www.austinisd.org/project-help

SRQ’s and Transportation requests: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PPi8uUT812JosBc5sxNMNB8lLc44Z5Ne?usp=sharing

2085E: http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/site_map/forms.asp


TEHCY: https://www.theotx.org/