

The term “homeless children and youth”—

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence ...; and

(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 camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- (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 ...
- (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 purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

A homeless child is one who lacks a “fixed, regular and adequate nighttime place of abode.” In general, children or youth living in welfare hotels, transitional housing, shelters, the streets, cars, abandoned buildings, and other inadequate accommodations are considered homeless.

This includes the following groups:

Children in Shelters

Doubled-up Children (living with another family due to lack of a permanent residence)

Migratory Children (if accommodations are not fit for habitation)

Runaways (children who have run away from home and live in a shelter or inadequate accommodations, even if parents are willing to provide a home)

Throwaways (children whose parents or guardians will not permit them to live at home)

Homeless Children – What are their rights?

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, as part of the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act ensures homeless children the right to:

- a free, appropriate public education
- choose either to stay in the school of origin (school last attended or school attended when child lost permanent housing) or attend the school nearest their shelter or temporary home
- immediate enrollment even when medical records cannot be produced at time of enrollment
- receive assistance with transportation if needed
- a priority to preschool programs

LEA LIAISONS

Every LEA, otherwise known as school district, must designate an appropriate staff person as a local homeless education liaison. This person may also be a coordinator for other federal programs.

Local liaisons must ensure that:

- Children and youth in homeless situations are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
- Students experiencing homelessness enroll, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed, in school.
- Families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, Even Start, and preschool programs administered by the LEA; and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.

- Parents or guardians of students experiencing homelessness are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- Public notice of the educational rights of students in homeless situations is disseminated where children and youth receive services.
- Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the Enrollment Disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are fully informed of all transportation services provided under the McKinney-Vento Act, including transportation to the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing these services.

Local liaisons must:

- Assist homeless children and youth who do not have immunizations or immunization or medical records to obtain necessary immunizations or immunization or medical records.
- Help unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, after considering the youths' wishes, and provide youth with notice of their right to appeal an enrollment decision that is contrary to their wishes.
- Ensure that unaccompanied youth are enrolled in school immediately pending the resolution of any dispute that may arise over school enrollment or placement.
- Collaborate and coordinate with State Coordinators for Homeless Education and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to children and youth in homeless situations.

Build A Network of Services

Being able to provide necessary services for homeless students is often a struggle. To meet specific needs you will find it helpful to identify assess these and connect them with available services.

- Identify Needs
- Identify Participants
- Grow Your Community
- Build Awareness
- Provide Education & Training
- Projects/curriculum
- Collaboration & Cooperation

<p>Identify Needs:</p> <p>Education _____ School Records _____</p> <p>Special Education _____ Title I _____</p> <p>Local Policies _____ Housing _____</p> <p>Clothing _____ Laundry _____ Food _____</p> <p>Hygiene _____ Immunization _____</p> <p>Physicals _____ Counseling _____</p> <p>Transportation _____ Legal _____</p> <p>Domestic Violence _____</p> <p>Private Sector _____</p>	<p>Search for Solutions:</p> <p>Housing Agencies _____ Shelters _____</p> <p>Clothing Centers _____ Food Pantries _____</p> <p>Health Departments _____ Continuums _____</p> <p>Fraternal Organizations _____</p> <p>Churches & Ecumenical Councils _____</p> <p>Community Action Agencies _____</p> <p>Interagency Councils _____ Judicial _____</p> <p>Law Enforcement _____ Military _____</p> <p>Colleges & Universities _____</p>
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RESOURCES

Illinois State Board of Education Homeless Children and Youth Program
<http://www.isbe.net/homeless/>



National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
<http://naehcy.org/>



National Center for Homeless Education at The SERVE Center
<http://www.serve.org/NCHE/>



Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
<http://www.chicagohomeless.org/>



National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty
<http://www.nlchp.org/>



National Coalition for the Homeless
<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/>



National Center on Family Homelessness
<http://www.familyhomelessness.org/>



National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness
<http://www.studentsagainsthunger.org/>



Catholic Charities
<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/>



Child & Family Connections
<http://www.childandfamilyconnections.org/interventionlinks.shtml>



Department of Children and Family Services
www.dhs.state.il.us



Department of Human Services
www.dhs.state.il.us



Illinois Department of Healthcare & Family Services
www.hfs.illinois.gov



ILRU - Independent Living Research Utilization
<http://www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/index.html>



McDonough County Interagency Council
<http://www.socserv.org/council/>



Continuums of Care
<http://www.hud.gov/local/il/homeless/coccontacts.cfm>



Lutheran Social Services
www.lssi.org



Military Child Education Coalition
<http://www.militarychild.org/>



Operation Military Kids
<http://operationmilitarykids.org/public/home.aspx>



Illinois National Guard Family Programs
<http://www.il.ngb.army.mil/family/youth/youth.aspx>



Red Cross
www.redcross.org



Legal Aid Society
<http://www.legalaid.org>



Salvation Army
www.salvationarmyusa.org



Department of Employment Security
www.ides.state.il.us



Emergency Shelters
www.hud.gov/local/il/homeless/shelters.cfm



Illinois Community Action Association
<http://www.icaanet.org>



Institute for Children & Poverty
<http://www.icpny.org>



Family & Youth Services Bureau
<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb/>



National Runaway Safeline
<http://www.1800runaway.org>



Annie E. Casey Foundation
<http://www.aecf.org/kidscount>



CASA Court Appointed Special Advocates
<http://www.casaforchildren.org>



OUR HOME – October 2010

School and District Liaisons: Locating Community Resources

Deb Foust, Homeless Liaison Area 2, Lee/Ogle ROE #47

As a school or district liaison, effectively meeting the needs of our homeless children often involves finding resources outside of the classroom. Because each community is different, homeless liaisons need to be familiar with their own local community resources—both in the public and private sectors. Personal connections to resource agencies continue to be the best means of getting the services needed for children. Our homeless families are already under a great deal of stress, so they do not need to “go on a wild goose chase” to locate resource services. This is why it is critical that homeless liaisons know the local resources and keep current names and contact numbers. The sooner homeless liaisons are able to help address these “outside-of-the-classroom” issues, the sooner children are able to concentrate on their education.

To assist homeless liaisons in finding local resources, following are some resources that are available statewide. Many have a “search engine” that assists with locating offices that will serve local areas. More services are provided than what is highlighted, but this may help to locate the appropriate agency.

1. Catholic Charities – www.catholiccharitiesusa.org or 703-549-1390 Catholic Charities works with families in emergency situations, in the form of case management and financial help.
2. Child and Family Connections – www.childandfamilyconnections.org or 888-594-8364 This organization ensures that referrals are handled in a timely manner. Children with special needs may benefit the most from this group.

3. Department of Children & Family Services – www.state.il.us/dcfs or 800-232-3798 The Department of Children & Family Services helps with many services including: locating medical providers, foster care, and Medicaid billing.
4. Department of Human Services – www.dhs.state.il.us or 800-843-6154 This Department helps with cash, food, housing, and child care.
5. Illinois Department of Healthcare & Family Services – www.hfs.illinois.gov or 800-526-5812 The Department of Healthcare & Family Services helps with healthcare coverage and child support services.
6. Illinois Department of Public Health – www.idph.state.il.us or 800-547-0466 The Illinois Department of Public Health helps with locating vital records such as birth, divorce, and death certificates. The Department also assists with vaccinations, food, and water testing.
7. Lutheran Social Services – www.lssi.org or 847-635-4600 This organization helps with foster care, crisis intervention, counseling, and housing.
8. Salvation Army – www.salvationarmyusa.org The Salvation Army helps with disaster relief, food, clothing, furniture, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation.
9. Red Cross – www.redcross.org Red Cross helps during emergency and disasters with shelter, food, and money.
10. Medical and Dental Clinics – www.freemedicalcamps.com This site can help locate clinics closest to your area.
11. Department of Employment Security – www.ides.state.il.us or 800-244-5631 The Department of Employment Security helps with unemployment benefits and job placement.
12. Emergency Shelters – www.hud.gov/local/il/homeless/shelters.cfm This site lists shelters in your local area.

Locating Community Resources for Homeless Students

Homeless students often have many needs outside the classroom, some of which may include finding shelter, food, clothing, transportation, and counseling. The following points may help you to efficiently refer homeless families to community resources that can appropriately meet those needs.

Begin your search using personal connections to resources. For example, you may know a secretary at a church, a clerk at a resale shop, a nurse at a public health facility, or an administrator at a community-based agency. Ask them where they would refer homeless families for basic services. Be sure to ask them for the name and phone number of a helpful staff person at the resource agency.

If you do not have personal contacts in the community, directly call local organizations such as township offices, newspaper offices, police stations, and/or churches. Explain your role at school and ask them where you can find free or low-cost meals, shelter, and other basic needs. Also ask them to call you if/when they sponsor special community programs for families in need.

Check out the resources as personally as possible – make a visit or a phone call to find out what services they really provide.

Attempt to identify both public and private resources, but be aware that the services of private organizations may be available only on a temporary basis. Keep up-to-date on their existence.

Keep up-to-date on changes in resources' phone numbers, addresses, and services by calling them periodically.

Be aware that some resources do not want to become widely-known; they may be providing services with very limited supplies. Find out their philosophy from the start.

Avoid handing out resource listings that have a definite order; the first resource on the list will become overwhelmed while the final ones will be under-utilized.

Try to avoid making inappropriate referrals by carefully matching the families' needs to the service providers' resources. Be aware that the family may not have the spare time or money to spend on dead-end phone calls.

Try to locate resources for services beyond the obvious. For example, service clubs may be able to provide mentoring or tutoring, camps for children, or summer employment for youth.

The contacts you make at community agencies may become your allies in getting children into school. Ask them to call you when they "hear" about homeless families in the community.

Illinois McKinney – Vento Homeless Programs
<http://isbe.net/homeless>

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Illinois State Board of Education Homeless Education Hotline 1-800-215-6379