GUIDELINES FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Local school districts should not expect children and youth to arrive at the schoolhouse door declaring their homelessness. Indeed, given the embarrassment and fear often experienced and the social context of schools, students will sometimes go to great lengths to hide their living situation. Families experiencing homelessness face many challenges. The combination of precarious living conditions, frequent mobility, and poverty creates myriad needs that are seldom able to be met by any single entity. Families often have to look to family and friends and multiple agencies (sheltering/housing, emergency assistance, food, clothing, health care, etc.) to receive the assistance they need to begin the path back to being permanently housed.

Coordination with community-based public, private, and faith-based organizations providing services to homeless families and children is a very reliable way to identify children and youth and their needs. However, key school personnel, given the specific nature of their responsibilities, relationships established with students, and/or disclosures made by students, may also be able to provide valuable insight into the identification of children and youth experiencing homelessness in local schools.

The identification process should begin by consulting with key organizations and individuals in the community and in schools. Some important community based organizations such as homeless shelters and transitional housing programs, extended stay hotels and motels, local emergency assistance agencies, Divisions of Family and Children Services (DFCS), and faith-based organizations can be excellent sources for information on the number, location, and needs of homeless students. Critical school personnel include school social workers, counselors, attendance workers, enrollment clerks, teachers, principals, and bus drivers.

Avoid using the word “homeless” in initial contacts with school personnel, families, or youth. For most people, the word “homeless” conjures up stereotypical images of adults, not children or youth in classrooms. School personnel may be unlikely to recognize students who are homeless initially but often respond affirmatively when asked if they know of students who are staying temporarily with relatives, are staying at campgrounds or in their car, are living at motels, are living with another family temporarily, or have moved several times in a year. Families and students who are homeless may not think of themselves as “homeless” because of the stigma.
By following these important steps local school districts should be able to begin to understand the causes and frequency of homelessness for families and children:

- Identify local community organizations and school personnel who serve or may have knowledge of homeless families and children.

- Consult with these agencies and individuals regarding homeless children and their educational and related support needs.

- Provide the Local Survey of Homeless Children and Youth to the organizations and individuals to complete and return to the LEA homeless liaison.

- Follow up with the organizations and individuals to verify the information provided.
**TERRELL**

**TRACKING INTAKE FORM FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

The purpose of this form is to help ensure appropriate education for each school-aged child listed. Please be assured that the information on this form will be kept completely confidential. Registration for school will not be denied if you refuse to provide the information. Please fill in as much information about each child as possible. Thank you for your assistance with this important project.

Name of School: _____________

Principal: ________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Identification Number</th>
<th>Date of Birth (MM/DD/YY)</th>
<th>Gender (M/F)</th>
<th>Ethnicity* (see codes below)</th>
<th>Current Housing** (check one) (see codes below)</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

*Ethnicity:
1 – Native American/Alaskan Native
2 – Asian/Pacific Islander
3 – African American
4 – White (not Hispanic Origin)
5 – Hispanic

**Housing:
S – Shelter
H/M – Hotel/Motel
R/F – Relative/Friend
O - **Other

**Please note below any information about children’s current housing listed above as “Other”.


**TRACKING INTAKE FORM FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete a separate form for each identified homeless student. Retain at school level. This is a local use courtesy form for use in compiling aggregate homeless student data. Report aggregate homeless student data to the LEA homeless liaison and Student Information System Coordinator.

Note: This form is for local use only and is not to be returned to the Georgia Department of Education.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Mailing Address Street, City, State, Zip</th>
<th>LEA Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### HOMELESS STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Grade Pre-K thru 12</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Disabled</th>
<th>Migrant</th>
<th>Engl. Lang-Learner</th>
<th>Rec’d Title I Part A Services</th>
<th>Asian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Black, Not of Hispanic Origin</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Amer. Indian or Alaskan Native</th>
<th>White, Not of Hispanic Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### HOMELESS STATUS

- **Homeless Status**: Check the appropriate status for the identified homeless student in your school.
  - □ Living with Family
  - □ Separated from Family
  - □ Foster Care Pending
  - □ Runaway
  - □ Unaccompanied Youth
  - □ Throwaway (Kicked out of home or abandoned. Possibly due to pregnancy, LGBT issues, family conflicts, parental mental health, or AODA issues)

- **Living Arrangements**: In a shelter
  - □ Doubled-up
  - □ In a hotel/motel
  - □ Unsheltered (on the street, car, park, campground, abandoned building)

- **Other Specify**: ____________________________

- **Mobility**
  - □ In school of origin within district?
  - □ Attend school of origin across LEA boundaries?

### District Programs this Student is Enrolled In

- **Check all that apply. Report for Pre-K thru 12 Only**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Education</th>
<th>English Lang. Learner (ELL)</th>
<th>Gifted/ Talented</th>
<th>Vocational Education</th>
<th>Student Attending Alternative School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Address of School in which Student is Currently Enrolled</th>
<th>No. of Other Schools Student Previously Attended</th>
<th>In How Many Districts</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>
### HOMELESS STUDENT TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Was transportation to the school of origin provided to this student?</th>
<th>Transportation Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Yes □ No</td>
<td>□ Additional/Extended Bus Route □ Public Transportation □ Taxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Yes, Was School of Origin: □ Within District □ Outside District</td>
<td>□ Contracted Transp. Services □ Spec. Ed. Bus/Van □ City/County Service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School of Origin** means the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled.

| □ Privately-Owned Non-Family Vehicle □ Reimbursing Family for Mileage |
| □ Other Specify  |  |

### BARRIERS FOR HOMELESS STUDENT PROGRAM

**Indicate specific barriers this homeless student experienced at point of identification.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligibility Questioned</th>
<th>School of Origin Selection</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>School Records</th>
<th>Immunization/Medical Records</th>
<th>Other Specify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Indicate any other barriers you encountered when attempting to provide services to this homeless student.

### Indicate if there were any unmet needs of this homeless student in your school.

### Number of staff development and awareness in-service programs offered to school staff on the topic of homelessness:
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GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

Georgia Department of Education
(Updated August 3, 2003)
McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act
(42 US §11432(g)(1)(C)
Dispute Resolution Guidelines and Procedures

1. Disputes should be resolved at the district level rather than the school level.

2. The dispute resolution process should be as informal and accessible as possible, allowing for impartial and complete review.

3. Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth should be able to initiate the resolution process directly at the school in which enrollment is sought in accordance with PL 107-110, §722(g)(3)(A-B), as well as at the district local educational agency (LEA) homeless liaison’s office. Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth should be provided written notification of the dispute and of their right to appeal the decision of the LEA.

4. Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth should be informed that they can provide written or oral documentation to support their position, and that they can seek the assistance of advocates or attorneys.

5. Written notice should be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated and provided in a language the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand.

6. Students are to be enrolled immediately in the school of origin or in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend and are to be provided with all services for which they are eligible while the dispute is being resolved.

PROCEDURES:

- If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the child or youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which he or she is seeking enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute (PL 107-110, Section 722(g)(3)(E)). Enrollment is defined as “attending classes and participating fully in school activities.” It is critical that students not be kept out of school.

- The school must refer the student, parent, or guardian to the LEA’s homeless liaison to carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible. The homeless liaison must ensure that the dispute resolution process is also followed for unaccompanied youth.
- The LEA must provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of the school’s decision regarding school selection or enrollment, and the parent or guardian’s right to appeal that decision [PL 107-110, §722(g)(3)(E)(ii)]. The written explanation shall be complete, as brief as possible, simply stated, and provided in a language that the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth can understand.

- Each local school board must have a local rule for concerned parties to resolve any disputes in regards to providing public education to a homeless child. The local rule must provide for not less than two levels of appeal at the district level. If the dispute remains unresolved at the district level or is appealed, then the parent may request a review of the dispute by the Deputy Superintendent of Teacher and Student Support (“Deputy Superintendent”) at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). The Deputy Superintendent will review all materials and address the issues in the dispute within 10 days from the receipt of a written request for resolution. If the issue is not resolved after the Deputy Superintendent submits his or her written review, the Deputy Superintendent may assign members of the GaDOE to make an on-site visit to further clarify or resolve the issue. All disputes must be resolved within 60 days of initial presentment to the GaDOE, unless a written extension is granted.

- If the dispute remains unresolved or is appealed after the Deputy Superintendent has issued his or her decision, the State Board of Education (SBOE) will review, hear, and rule on grievances from parents, students or local boards of education. The student, parent, guardian or local board must submit the request in writing within 30 days of the decision of the Deputy Superintendent to the Office of Legal Services at the GaDOE at the following address:

  Office of Legal Services  
  2052 Twin Towers East  
  Atlanta, GA  30334  
  Tel. (404) 656-4689  
  FAX (404) 657-8376

- The request for review must set forth the district level decision, the decision of the Deputy Superintendent, and a concise statement of the reasons why the decision is being appealed. The SBOE, through the Office of Legal Services, will give each party a minimum of 10 days notice of the hearing by certified mail or personal delivery. Each party may appear at the hearing in person or by counsel, present evidence, cross-examine witnesses, and present in writing or orally summary statements of position. The SBOE may request further information from the parties and GaDOE staff. The hearing may be held by the SBOE or by a hearing officer appointed by it. The SBOE will notify the parties of its decision within 20 days of the hearing.
GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT GRANT FUNDS

LEAs must use McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act funds to assist homeless children and youth in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. In particular, the funds may support the following activities:

- Tutoring, supplemental instruction linked to challenging state content and achievement standards.
- Expedited evaluations of strengths and needs. (e.g., GATE, Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA), Title I, School Nutrition etc.)
- Professional development for educators to promote understanding, sensitivity, and the educational rights of students.
- Referral services for medical, dental, mental health services.
- Assistance to defray the excess costs of transportation.
- Early childhood education programs not otherwise provided through federal, state, or local funding.
- Services and assistance to attract, engage, and retain students in schools.
- Before, after-school, and summer programs.
- Payment of fees and other costs related to records.
- Education and training for parents about rights and resources.
- Development of coordination between schools and agencies.
- Pupil services, including violence prevention counseling, and referral for services.
- Activities that address needs that may arise from domestic violence.
- Supplies and adaptation of space for non-school services.
- Provision of school supplies, including those distributed at temporary housing and other appropriate locations.

Provision of other extraordinary or emergency assistance needed to enable school attendance.
I was contacted on __________________________ to provide data and or complete survey for the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act. I was also provided a McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act brochure.

NAME OF AGENCY

DATE

SIGNATURE OF PERSON RECEIVING FORMS