

TRANSPORTATION TO SCHOOL OF ORIGIN

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act enables students experiencing homelessness to remain at their school of origin for school stability. If transportation is a barrier for the students experiencing homelessness to attend school regularly, the LEA is obligated to provide assistance to remove this barrier and support the youth experiencing homelessness to be at school every day and on time. The liaison must ensure that families experiencing homelessness are informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin, if needed.

- Always base transportation assistance upon what is in the best interest of the student.
- The request for transportation assistance may be made by the family or by the homeless liaison for an unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.
- The LEA may refer to transportation criteria already implemented within the LEA such as a certain mileage from the school, maximum amount of travel time, etc.
- If the LEA's established transportation policy becomes a barrier for a student experiencing homelessness to access services, the barrier must be removed.
- If the student's temporary residence is outside of the LEA, the LEA's of residence and attendance must share the responsibility of how these services will be provided or the cost will be shared equally.
- Each LEA will determine the mode of transportation that can be provided to meet this need. Title I or other federal funds *may* be utilized to fund the cost of transportation for a student experiencing homelessness to and from their school of origin.
- Transportation must be available to student experiencing homelessness to attend summer school, athletic programs and other extracurricular activities, if it is a barrier for the student to attend.
- An LEA is not required to provide transportation services to allow a student experiencing homelessness to attend a school or another LEA, unless otherwise required under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act or other federal law.
- If the youth experiencing homelessness does not meet the criteria for transportation via McKinney-Vento, an LEA may, at its discretion, provide transportation services to the student to attend a school or an LEA.
- **An LEA is not required to provide transportation to a *former* homeless child who has an Individual Education Program (IEP) that does not require transportation as a related service and, who changes residence but remains in his or her school of origin, unless the IEP team determines that transportation is a necessary related service, or the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires transportation to be provided.**
- **Once the student gains permanent housing, the LEA is obligated to provide transportation until the end of the current school year to support school stability as he or she transitions into his or her permanent living situation.**

TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES

- Prior to implementation of the transportation service, request the parent to sign an affidavit to ensure the parent understands that the assistance is being provided to ensure the student attends school regularly and on time. An example of this statement is:

“I, _____, need assistance from NAME OF LEA as I have no alternate means to deliver my child to school. I agree to have my child attend school every day and on time. I also agree to notify the NAME OF LEA if our situation changes or we no longer require this assistance. I understand that my child must meet the eligibility criteria for transportation assistance and I must comply with sign-in and supervision requirements”.

- Coordinate with local housing authorities and placement agencies to try to house students near their school of origin.
- Re-route school buses (including special education, magnet school and other buses), and ensure that buses travel to shelters, transitional living programs, and motels where students experiencing homelessness are currently staying.
- Collaborate with other shelter staff, other LEA liaisons, school staff and pupil transportation staff to ensure multiple avenues can be reviewed and strategized, and resources pooled to address this issue. Develop formal or informal agreements with LEAs where homeless children cross-LEA boundaries.
- Utilize transportation systems used by public assistance agencies.
- Communicate with all local transit systems and see if the LEA can qualify for additional discounts on fares. Various transportation lines issue slide card passes for travelers, including student bus passes. Provide passes or tokens for public transportation, including passes for parents or guardians, especially when providing transportation for younger students. Safety is vital to any transportation plan.
- Connect with “para-transit” systems operating within the LEA’s boundaries. These systems may be underutilized or open to an agreement for service with the LEA, and may be a valuable resource to meet the transportation needs of youth experiencing homelessness at a diminished cost.
- Use approved van or taxi services. As a safety measure, contract with companies that fingerprint drivers.
- Purchase gas vouchers or reimburse parents for gas, and verify regular school attendance.
- Use early and late school buses for access to extracurricular activities.
- Use community and faith-based donations for transportation costs and pursue inter-agency solutions.

Coordinate with local police and other community agencies for donations of bicycles each month that may be given to a youth experiencing homelessness to get to school each day.