



# Supporting Refugee Students Experiencing Homelessness Through Leveraging District and Community Partnerships



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# Objectives

- Through a **trauma-informed approach**, participants will gain strategies to engage refugee students experiencing homelessness as they adjust to a US school
- Explore **building partnerships** with community agencies and school district staff to leverage wrap-around services
- Participants will take away **strategies** to support refugee youth experiencing homelessness at the school site or district level



# Building an Understanding

## Plyler vs. Doe (1982)

- Ensures **all** students, who reside in the US, regardless of immigration status, have a constitutional right to a free public education until 12th grade
- The Court explained that "**education** has a **fundamental role** in maintaining the **fabric of our society** and provides the basic tools by which individuals might lead economically **productive lives** to the benefit of us all."
- [US Courts](#)



# Building an Understanding

Youth and young adults are **346%** more like to become homeless if they don't attain a HS diploma or equivalent (GED)

Lack of diploma is the strongest predictor of homelessness in adulthood

[Voices of Youth Count, an initiative of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago](#)



# Building an Understanding

**Refugees** - a person who has been ***forced to leave*** their home country to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. There is an immigration plan set up before the family arrives in the US.

Once in the US, refugees are given the temporary case management support of refugee resettlement agencies.

Examples of resettlement agencies:

- International Rescue Committee
- Catholic Charities
- Jewish Family Services
- La Maestra
- Alliance for African Assistance



# Additional Populations

**An asylum seeker** - a person who has left their country and is **seeking protection** from **persecution** and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim, **apply within 1st year in the US.** [IRC - Asylee](#)

Asylum claims can be formally submitted based on **persecution** of:

- Race
- Religion
- Nationality
- Membership to a certain social group
- Political opinion

**Asylee** - a person who has gone through the legal process to seek asylum in the US and has been granted asylum.

- [Collaborative deck Asylee Orientation July 2021.pptx.pdf \(sf-cairs.org\)](#)
- [U.S Citizenship & Immigration Services - Asylum](#)



# Additional Populations

**Humanitarian Parole** - a person who has been granted **temporary** legal status to enter the US for a temporary period, typically in response to an emergency in one's home country. [USCIS - Humanitarian](#) [USCIS - Humanitarian Eligibility](#)

Can submit work authorization application [USCIS - Employment Resources](#)

**United for Ukraine** - <https://www.uscis.gov/ukraine> [NOVA Ukraine](#)

**Temporary Protected Status** - US Homeland security may grant **temporary** protected status to individuals from certain countries, if conditions in the country meet specific requirements such as armed conflicts, or natural disasters. [USCIS - TPS](#)

- Examples TPS - El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Sudan [USCIS - TPS Eligibility](#)
- Can submit work application

**Note:** It is possible to apply for and have **multiple statuses** at the same time



# Additional Populations

**Unaccompanied Undocumented Minor** - a youth who crosses into the US without a parent, or legal guardian.

- Federal law requires that the Office of Refugee Resettlement provide shelter, food and medical care to unaccompanied undocumented minors until they are released to a sponsor who has passed a background check.
  - [Office of Refugee Resettlement - UUM](#)

**Unaccompanied Youth** - a youth not in the presence of parent or legal guardian (*court appointed*), and experiencing homelessness/at-risk of experiencing homelessness (McKinney Vento).





# Journey to the US

**Refugee camps** - temporary facilities built to provide immediate protection and assistance to people who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, persecution or violence. While camps are not established to provide permanent solutions ... they offer food, water, shelter, medical treatment..

<https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/camps/>

**Journey from South & Central America** - may be on foot through difficult terrain and/or by cargo trains. Individuals may become the victims of crime and/or face other dangerous conditions.



# Journey to the US

## Triple Trauma Paradigm for Refugees

1. Trauma from home country
2. Trauma from journey to US
3. Trauma from resettlement in US



Local or global events may trigger a variety of trauma responses

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7534369/>



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# McKinney Vento Considerations

Lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.

- Shared housing (doubling up) due to economic hardship
- Motels or hotels (Air B&Bs)
- Public or private places not designed for sleeping

Families and children who are refugees ***may also meet*** the McKinney Vento definition of homelessness.



# Rights of Refugee Students Experiencing Homelessness

- Immediate enrollment in school (without paperwork)
- Full participation in all school activities
- Free meals at school
- Tangible supplies: school supplies
- School of origin
- Lost materials

## McKinney-Vento Laws



**Even if you have:**

- Uncertain housing
- A temporary address
- No permanent physical address

**You are guaranteed enrollment in school by the federal McKinney-Vento Act and California state law if you live:**

- In a house or apartment with more than one family due to lack of housing or economic hardship
- With friends or family because you are a runaway or an unaccompanied youth
- In substandard housing without electricity, water, or heat
- In a shelter facility, domestic violence, or youth shelter or transitional living program
- In a motel, hotel, or weekly rate housing
- In an abandoned building, in a car, at a campground, or on the streets

**You can enroll in school immediately even without the documents normally required for enrollment, such as:**

- Proof of residency
- Immunization records or other required health records
- School records
- Legal guardianship papers

**Your child or you:**

- Participate fully in school activities and programs for which he/she is eligible
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin if you request it
- Continue to attend the school to which he/she was last enrolled even if you have moved away from that school's attendance area
- Qualify automatically for school nutrition programs

**Your responsibilities are to:**

- Make sure your child gets to school on time and ready to learn
- Stay informed of school rules, regulations, and activities
- Contact the homeless liaison for assistance in removing barriers to your child's education
- Attend parent/teacher conferences, Back-to-School Nights, and other school-related activities

**You can ENROLL in school!**

**For questions about enrolling in school or for assistance with school enrollment, contact:**

<b>Your local school district homeless liaison:</b> Michelle Simpson, Ed.D. Program Manager Office of Children and Youth in Transition San Diego Unified School District 2000 Normal Street, Annex 1314 San Diego, CA 92101 Phone: 619-724-7326	<b>Your county homeless liaison:</b> Suek Terry, MPH Coordinator, Homeless Liaison Foster Youth & Homeless Education Services Phone: (619) 491-1900 San Diego County Office of Education Office: 602-208-2062 www.sdcoug.edu	<b>Your homeless state coordinator:</b> Jessica Wheeler State Coordinator California Department of Education 1400 N Street, Suite 9408 Sacramento, CA 95811 Phone: 1-800-852-6214
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# Facilitating Immediate Enrollment

- **Building relationships with local resettlement agencies & community groups**
  - Explaining & re-explaining McKinney-Vento law
    - Kids can go to school even in temporary living situations
- Having a clear understanding of a family's housing situation
  - Apartment with a lease?
- Can ask resettlement agency if they have someone who can help interpret?



# Facilitating Immediate Enrollment

## Building relationships & Notifying school sites

- Warm handoff
- Explaining & re-explaining McKinney-Vento law
  - Train new school site enrollment staff & counselors
- Without papers & flexible timeline for immunizations
  - Email legislation
- Housing Questionnaire [HETAC –Questionnaire](#)
- **Interpretation resources**
  - Contract with local interpretation organization
  - Pocket Talks, Google Translate, Say Hi Translate



# Getting to know refugee students & families

## Considerations:

- **Educational backgrounds of refugee students will vary**
  - Some students may have a **strong** educational background
  - **SLIFE** - students with limited or interrupted formal education, gaps
  - **Modified Diploma** (Modified Diploma - High School)
    - **Regardless of whether or not they have had a formal education**, “students should be enrolled in the grade level based upon their **date of birth**”
    - “Class of” must be changed to reflect appropriate grade level
    - Modified diploma includes refugee students who entered into SDUSD as 11th or 12th graders or have a change of placement after 10th grade year
- **Educational backgrounds of parents will vary**
  - Ability to read & write in home language
  - Digital literacy skills will vary



# Getting to know refugee students & families

## Considerations:

- **US Education System**
  - Different countries grade/graduate youth differently
    - Grades, citizenship, sports eligibility, PE, grad requirements, attendance (*reminders*)
  - Discipline
  - Parents as partners
- **Options after high school**
  - Create a college going culture
- **Trauma & social-emotional skills**
  - Different trauma responses
  - Current events may affect students differently



# Welcoming Students

- **New student welcome checklist**
  - School tour, map, lunch, pictures of important people
- **Classmate Buddy**
- **Integrate student as much as possible into class**
- **Interpretation/translation devices**
- **Newcomer questions [Newcomer Sample Check-In Questions](#)**



# Welcoming Parents

- **School rules & policies**
  - Attendance, grading periods, homework
- **School Staff Members**
- **Parent information portal**
  - Technology literacy
  - Updated phone numbers, email addresses
- **Family Engagement Opportunities**



# Welcoming Students - Cultural & Religious Considerations

- **Will the students need special dietary considerations?**
  - Halal, vegetarian
- **Will students need a prayer space?**
- **Are there any religious holidays that students may not be in school?**
- **Clothing considerations**
- **Consider cultural communication practices**
  - Eye contact
  - Handshakes (gender)



# School District Supports

- **Enrollment Options**

- McKinney-Vento law & rights

- **Transportation**

- Buses to shelters, hotels

- **Food & Nutrition Services**

- Special dietary considerations

- **District McKinney-Vento Liaison**

- Outreach, Case consultation

- **Counseling & Guidance**

- SEL supports, SST process

- **Special Education**

- **Interpretation & Translation Services**

- **Family Engagement**

- Refugee Subcommittee

- **Multilingual Education Department**

- **Nursing & Wellness**

- Vaccines, health care



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[SDUSD Afghan Response](#)

# Community Supports

- **Resettlement agencies**

- Projections, enrollment & problem-solving

- **Ethnically-based community organizations**

- Culturally Competent Mental Health, [Survivors](#)
- Matching refugee population to **specific program**
- Gain Trust
- Navigate US systems
- Outreach events
  - Interpreters

- **Housing shelters**

- **Legal Aid Resources**

Name	Website / Contact Info / Service Description	Population or Language Supported	Additional Information
Afghan Services (SD HHSA)	<a href="https://www.cdss.ca.gov/afghan-arrival-response">https://www.cdss.ca.gov/afghan-arrival-response</a>	Families from Afghanistan	
Afghan Culture Community Center, AD-ACCC	Mumtaz Momand, VP (619) 277-3255 <a href="mailto:Mumtazafghanaccc@gmail.com">Mumtazafghanaccc@gmail.com</a> 140 W. Park Ave. Ste 219, El Cajon, CA 92020	Families from Afghanistan (Dari and Pashto)	
California Department of Social Services & Public Health-Ukrainian Resources	<a href="https://www.cdss.ca.gov/ukraine-resources">https://www.cdss.ca.gov/ukraine-resources</a> <a href="https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/ORH/Pages/Information-for-Ukrainians.aspx">https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/ORH/Pages/Information-for-Ukrainians.aspx</a>	State Ukrainian Resource	
California Department of	<a href="#">DACA Updates &amp; More</a>		



# Community Supports

Develop partnerships with:

- **Unaccompanied youth supports**

- Youth shelters, Human & Labor Trafficking resources, [Office on Trafficking in Persons \(OTIP\)](#)

- **Local Government agencies**

- SD County Health & Human Services

- **Adult Education (ESL program, diploma completion)**

- [San Diego College of Continuing Education](#)
- Liaison for students experiencing homelessness

- **Community colleges, colleges**

- [Grossmont College - Adult Re-entry](#)



# Community Supports

Meetings & Trainings:

- **Local Refugee Forum, [SD Refugee Forum](#)**
  - Refugee Education Task Force

• **California Homeless Education and Technical Assistance Center [HETAC Resources](#)**

• **Office of Refugee Resettlement, [ORR](#)**

• **US Citizenship & Immigrant Services, [USCIS](#)**

**National Center for Homeless Education [NCHE Resources](#)**



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# Grant Opportunities

- **Federal and State grants**
  - Flexibility varies
- **Eligibility requirements for each grant and grant recipient**
  - [ORR Status & Populations](#)
- **Documentation needed**
  - I-94, employment authorization, passport special stamps
- **Reporting periods**
- **Grant writers**





# San Diego Unified School District: Grants

## Refugee School Impact Grant (Federal)

- Tutoring partnerships
- Curriculum - National Geographic
- Classroom ELD support materials
- Tangible school supplies
- Teaching Professional Development



# San Diego Unified School District: Grants

## California Newcomer Education & Wellbeing (State)

- Ethnically based community organizations
  - Case management
- Bilingual community assistant
- Outreach, tangible supplies



# San Diego Unified School District: Grants

## California Newcomer Education & Wellbeing (State)

- International Rescue Committee
  - Tutoring, in-class SEL curriculum
- Newcomer Orientation Program
  - Interpreter contract
- Communities of Practice



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# Needs Assessment Activity

- What refugee populations are you currently supporting in your school district?
- What needs have you learned this population has?
- What might be some ways to build partnerships in your school district to meet these needs?
- What might be some ways in your community that you can build partnerships to meet these needs?



# Thank you!

## Questions?

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