



Transforming McKinney-Vento Processes: Streamlining Support and Sustainability for Homeless Students

Presented By:

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&
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McKinney-Vento/Foster Youth Liaison

I am a former foster youth and teenage mother who has overcome significant adversity, including housing instability and systemic barriers. My lived experiences fuel my passion for supporting McKinney-Vento and foster youth. As a Liaison for Rialto Unified School District, I serve 29 campuses, working to ensure vulnerable students have access to critical resources. I'm currently pursuing my degree at UC Riverside, combining my background in sociology with professional expertise to create lasting change and empower youth to succeed.

Vanessa Gutierrez Castro

McKinney-Vento/Foster Youth Liaison

I grew up with a hardworking mom and little guidance through school, switching from Spanish to English and traveling often to Mexicali, which made it hard to keep up. As a former Emergent Bilingual student, I know how tough it is to navigate the system. Now, with over four years of experience, I support foster, homeless, and bilingual students as a McKinney-Vento and Foster Youth Liaison at Rialto Unified, serving 29 schools. My mission is to help families access resources, remove barriers, and ensure every student has the tools to succeed.



OUR MISSION

As former students who have personally faced the challenges of poverty, language barriers, housing instability, and the foster care system, we are committed to empowering vulnerable youth and their families. Through advocacy, access to resources, and tailored support, we strive to break down systemic barriers and create pathways for academic success and long-term stability. Our mission is to ensure every student—regardless of their background—has the tools, guidance, and opportunities needed to thrive in school and in life.



Who are you? What is your 'why'? What's the purpose or reason behind your work with homeless students?

Briefly share with your elbow partner your answers to the questions above.



STUDENT POPULATION

Student Enrollment

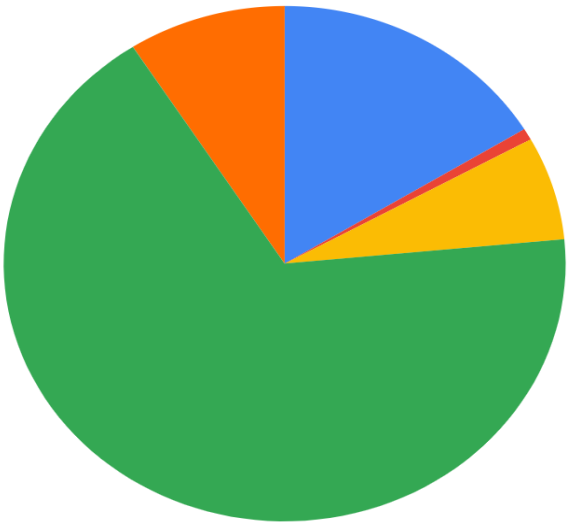
23,461

19 Elementary Schools
5 Middle Schools
4 High Schools
1 Virtual Academy
We service **29** School Sites

Race/Ethnicity	Total	Percentage
African American	1,813	7.7%
American Indian	48	0.2%
Asian	157	0.7%
Filipino	126	0.5%
Hispanic	20,377	86.9%
Two or More Races	279	1.2%
Pacific Islander	81	0.3%
White	580	2.5%

Rialto Unified School District Student Groups

- English Learners
- Foster Youth
- Homeless
- Socioeconomically Disadvantaged
- Students with Disabilities



Student Group	Total	Percentage
English Learners	4,884	20.8%
Foster Youth	217	0.9%
Homeless	1,953	8.3%
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	20,249	86.3%
Students with Disabilities	2,728	11.6%



IDENTIFICATION PROCESS: ENROLLMENT CENTER

Housing Questionnaire



The information provided below will help your child's school to determine whether you and/or your child may be eligible for specialized services and supports. This could include additional educational services through Title I, Part A and/or the federal McKinney-Vento Assistance Act. The information provided on this form will be kept confidential and only shared with appropriate school district and site staff.

Student Name	Date of Birth
School Assigned	Grade

Which of the following describes you and/or your family's current living situation? Please check all that apply.

- ☐ **Sharing housing** with other(s) due to loss of housing, economic hardship, natural disaster, lack of adequate housing, or similar reason
- ☐ Staying in a **shelter** (family shelter, domestic violence shelter, youth shelter) or Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) trailer
- ☐ Living in a car, park, campground, abandoned building, or other inadequate accommodations (i.e. lack of water, electricity, or heat)
- ☐ Temporarily living in a **motel or hotel** due to loss of housing, economic hardship, natural disaster, or similar reason
- ☐ I am a student under the age of 18 and **living apart from parent(s) or guardian**
- ☐ **None of the above**. My student and I live in permanent, adequate housing

The undersigned parent/guardian certifies that the information provided above is correct and accurate.

Parent/Guardian Name (Print)	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
Street Address	City	State
Zip Code	Phone Number	

Your child or children may have the right to:

- Immediate enrollment in the school they last attended (school of origin) or the local school where you are currently staying, even if you do not have all the documents normally required at the time of enrollment.
- Continue to attend their school of origin, if requested by you and it is in the best interest.
- Receive transportation to and from their school of origin, the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children, including free meals and Title I.
- Receive the full protections and services provided under all federal and state laws, as it relates to homeless children, youth, and their families.

Please list all children currently living with you.

Name	Birthdate	Grade (if applicable)	School (if applicable)

If you have any questions about these rights, please contact your school site's homeless youth representative. If you have trouble contacting them, you may contact the Rialto USD McKinney-Vento & Foster Youth Liaisons at 909-873-4336.

- The Enrollment Center will identify (NEW or Reactivate) students as McKinney or Foster upon enrollment; and provide the Foster and Housing Questionnaire.
- The Registration Center will identify students as McKinney-Vento upon enrollment and add the Program Code and Dwelling Type in Synergy.
- If the student needs services, they must be directed to the school site representative at their assigned school.



SCHOOL SITES REPRESENTATIVE LIST

SITE	McKinney-Vento Rep	Foster Youth Rep
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS		
BEMIS	Jacqueline Blakeney/Amanda Urista	Monte Stewart/Amanda Urista
BOYD	Laura Bleeker	Alberto Camarena
CASEY	Jessica Agramonte-Montiel	Sergio Amaro
CURTIS	Ruvisel Jaimes	Owen Ross
DOLLAHAN	Joy Bryson/Rosio Trevino	Elizabeth Alegre-Punchur
DUNN	Vanessa Gomez/Jenise Bush	Ignacio Avila
FITZGERALD	Rose Jarbigian/Veronica Pizarro	Kimberly Rosas
GARCIA	Myra Citron/Gladys Quiel	Gilbert Pulido/Myra Citron
HENRY	Rocio Espinoza	Natasha Jones
HUGHBANKS	SADDMY MILIAN COSTELLO	DANIELLE OSONDUAGWUIKE
KELLEY	Birdie Valencia	Aldo Velasco
KORDYAK	Krystal Rojas	Jessica Artiga
MORGAN	Chad Rickard/Carmen Ramirez	Jeremiah De La Cruz
MORRIS	Janet Mendez	Karla Guzman
MYERS	Charlotte Pinks	Diocelina Van Belle
PRESTON	Lupita Ordonez	Erica Bennett/David Yang
SIMPSON	Alma Banuelos	Ramona Rodriguez
TRAPP	Claudia Centeno/Elvira Sierra	Claudia Centeno/Berenice Gutierrez
WERNER	Maria Soto/Christina Massengale	Tami Butler
MIDDLE SCHOOLS		
FRISBIE	Mercedes Anderson	Claudia Centeno
JEHUE	Lori Pevoteaux	Carolyn Eide
KOLB	Rosa Acker	Tina Lingenfelter
KUCERA	Patricia Sandoval	Michelle Nellon
RIALTO MS	Melissa Kromas/Vanessa Gaheta	Ricardo Garcia-Felix
HIGH SCHOOLS		
CARTER	Maria Zavalza/Guillermina Torres	Lanaja Sankey/Adam Bailey
EISENHOWER	Jeffrey Prentice/Joshua Sanchez/Noelany Aguayo	Jeffrey Prentice
RIALTO HS	Stephen Piggue/Bertha Garcia	Stephen Piggue
MILOR	Edwin Carranza	Kyla Griffin
ZUPANIC	Elena Tembrina	Keira Kingdom
OTHER		
BOB MURPHY	Eric Johnson	Eric Johnson
CWA	Vanessa Gutierrez/Anay Garcia	Frank Camacho
TRANSPORTATION	Raven Cleveland	Raven Cleveland



SCHOOL SITES REPRESENTATIVE DUTIES

- Annually, each school-site administrator will designate a McKinney-Vento & Foster Representative(s).
- Housing Questionnaire should be completed every time there is a change of living situation.
- Have your Records Clerk follow up with the students CUM Folder.
- Review and verify Monthly CALPADS Report at the school site that are sent out by the district liaisons.
- OLR Registration summer before the new school year begins and in January
- The McKinney-Vento Representative will conduct an interview with the parent and accurately complete the McKinney-Vento-Foster Youth referral.
- Have the ADDRESS on the Referral reflect information on Synergy.
- Input the CODE (McK/Foster) on the STUDENT NEEDS SCREEN.
- If the student has shared information that they are homeless, please make sure you contact the guardian.

IDENTIFICATION PROCESS: ONLINE VERIFICATION

OLR Verification Process 2025-2026

Most parent submissions will be auto-accepted when there are no changes made, with the exception of McKinney-Vento/Foster, Health Conditions/Medication, and Address updates. The verification will be made by the corresponding staff role, Secretary for address updates, the Health Clerk/Nurse for health conditions/medications, and McKinney/Foster Liaisons for homeless information.



1. Start by searching for the Registration Queue in quick launch.
2. Make sure you change focus year to 2025-2026.
3. In the Registration Queue screen you will see the Registrations tab.
4. In the OLR Setup drop down, you will see Verification for existing students. There is also an option for New Student, those are not to be processed, parent probably submitted wrong verification. School staff can delete those and guide the parent to select the correct option.
5. You will also see the Total Pending Registrations.
6. There will be a message that reads Review Required Prior to Accept for Any Registrations with Critical Changes.
7. You will now see the Registration Flags. Those flags include Foster, McKinney, Health, and Address.
8. The flags will be listed for each student in the columns. Depending of your role, you will be verifying that submission. For example, a health flag, health clerk or nurse will accept.
9. If you see that there are more than one flag checked, you must follow the next process.
10. In the Note column, you can click on the OLR:Auto-Accept... hyperlinked text.

OLR Verification Process 2025-2026


11. A Registration Note window will display. This is where the person that is reviewing will enter the notes under their specified role. In this example, both the secretary and McKinney liaison will need to review before accepting.
12. Depending who is reviewing first or second, Reviewed By and Date is required. If one has no note, then the other must just enter their note and leave in the queue. You don't accept this OLR until both updates have been processed. If both have been reviewed then the last one to review can accept.
13. You can click on Save to proceed back to the queue.

14. To review and accept you will see the Actions Column in the far right of the Registration Queue list.
15. From the drop down select Review.
16. There will be a popup window with the OLR that parent submitted. You will then click on the Review button.
17. You can then scroll all the way to the bottom.
18. You will see the Student Documents submitted by parent. Depending on your role you can print or access your document from here. A copy of this document is automatically added to the student profile in the document tab once it has been accepted.
19. Click on Done to return to the review screen. You can close that window and return to the Registration Queue.
20. The last step is to go to the Actions column and from the drop down select Accept. You have now completed the OLR Verification process in Synergy.

INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

**Rialto Unified School District**
McKinney-Vento 
REFERRAL

McKinney-Vento Referral

agarciao@rialtousd.org [Switch account](#) 


* Indicates required question

Email *

Your email

Date: *

Date

mm/dd/yyyy 

School: *

Your answer

Guardians Name: *

Your answer



- The McKinney-Vento Representative will conduct and interview with the parent and accurately complete the McKinney-Vento-Foster Youth referral.
- Have the ADDRESS on the Referral reflect information on Synergy.
- Input the CODE (McK/Foster) on the STUDENT NEEDS SCREEN.
- Once resources have been provided The McKinney- Vento Representative will submit the referral to the district's Foster Youth Liaison, for further follow up.
 - Transportation
 - Housing
 - Clothing
 - Shoes
 - Toiletries
 - Backpack & School Supplies
- Thus far we have received 364 referrals 2024-2025 school year



McKINNEY-VENTO PADLET : ON THE GO RESOURCES

[illegible]



The **Kindness Connection** is a clothing tree designated for the families and children of Rialto Unified School District.

Kindness Connection





TRANSPORTATION SERVICES



We provide two reliable transportation options to ensure our homeless youth students have consistent school access to education:

- Rialto Unified School District Transportation:
 - Supports student participation in **all academic and extracurricular activities**, including:
 - Zero Periods
 - 7th Period
 - Think Together (After School Program)
 - Senior Events
 - After School Tutoring
- EverDriven (Third-Party Contract):
 - Offers door-to-door pick-up and drop-off for students with unique transportation needs.

Our goal is to remove transportation barriers so every student can attend school consistently and participate fully in their educational journey.

STEPS FOR PROVIDING HOUSING RESOURCE SUPPORTS AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

1. Referral Received from the School Site
 - School site staff submit a referral indicating the family's need for housing assistance.
2. Needs Assessment & Urgency Evaluation
 - The District Liaisons evaluates the family's level of urgency and identifies the most appropriate support services.
 - A meeting is scheduled to build rapport and complete a Housing Assessment Form, collecting details about the current living situation.
3. Resource Provision
 - Based on the assessment, support may include:
 - A 90-day stay at our district contracted hotel
 - With Open Arms Referral - Financial assistance (rent, utilities, or move-in costs)
 - Employment or housing search support during temporary housing
4. Initial Contact - Third Party Housing Program
 - With Open Arms staff contacts the family to confirm the referral and set up an appointment.
5. Follow-Up & Support Continuation
 - Ongoing communication is maintained to support housing stability and ensure resource use is effective.

HOUSING RESOURCE: WITH OPEN ARMS HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

With Open Arms provides comprehensive housing navigation services for families, especially those in need of low-income or general housing support. In partnership with the Rialto Unified School District through an annual contract, the organization offers the following resources:

- Assistance with housing searches and applications
- Help obtaining or replacing vital documents such as birth certificates, Social Security cards, and California ID waivers
- Financial support including:
 - Up to \$1,000 for rental assistance or move-in costs
 - Utility assistance
 - A \$1,000 Walmart gift card (requires proof of a rental agreement)

With Open Arms Housing Referrals – Progress Update

- 43 housing referrals have been submitted
- 19 families have received rental assistance
- 2 cases are currently pending
- 22 families are in follow-up status

We are committed to continuous improvement and actively working to support the remaining families in accessing the \$1,000 assistance.



TEMPORARY HOUSING RESOURCE

Rialto Unified School District partners with WoodSpring Suites to provide short-term emergency housing for families in crisis, including those who are unhoused, living in vehicles, or recently evicted.

Program Details:

- 90-Day Stay: Families are offered up to 90 days of emergency housing. (May be extended, contingent on funding)
- Required Documentation: A district hotel contract must be completed reviewing grades and attendance. Including an indemnity waiver signed by the family.
- Accommodations:
 - Single or double rooms available
 - Each room includes a small kitchen area with a stove
 - Free Wi-Fi access provided
 - Hotel amenities

Purpose - This emergency placement is designed to give families stability and time to:

- Save for future housing
- Seek employment
- Engage with With Open Arms programs for rental assistance and long-term support.

Emergency Hotel Placements – Impact Update

- 26 hotel placement contracts submitted
- 25 families assisted
- 60 students supported through emergency housing

Rialto Unified School District continues to provide stable, short-term housing to ensure families and students have a safe place to stay during times of crisis.



SCENARIOS

Megan Williams is a third grader at Dunn Elementary School. She informed her teacher, Ms. Ramirez, that her family was evicted last night and that she no longer has clothes. Megan has a kindergarten sibling at Dunn, as well as two other siblings attending Carter High and Kolb Middle School.

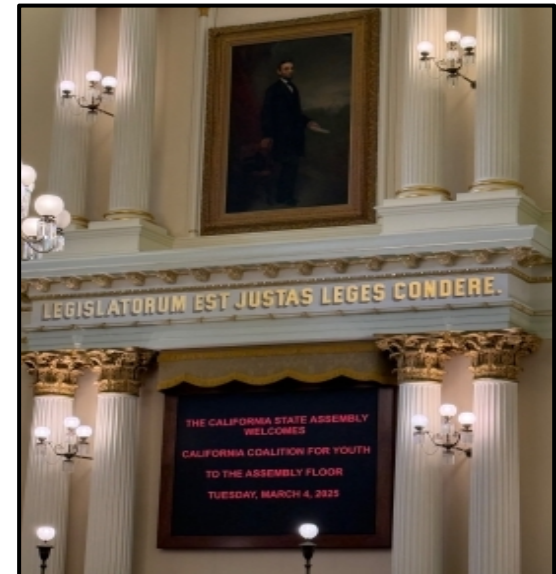
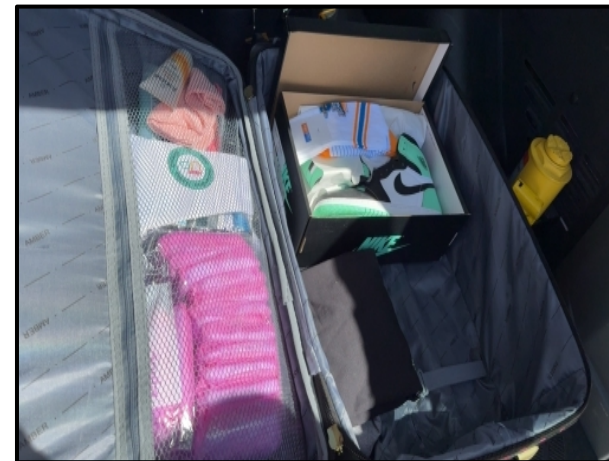
Question: What steps will you take to support Megan and her family?

Nick Vielman is a seventh grader who has been arriving late to school for the past two days. When questioned by the attendance clerk, he disclosed that he recently moved in with his grandparents because his mom relocated to another state for work. However, his grandparents are unable to drive him to school.

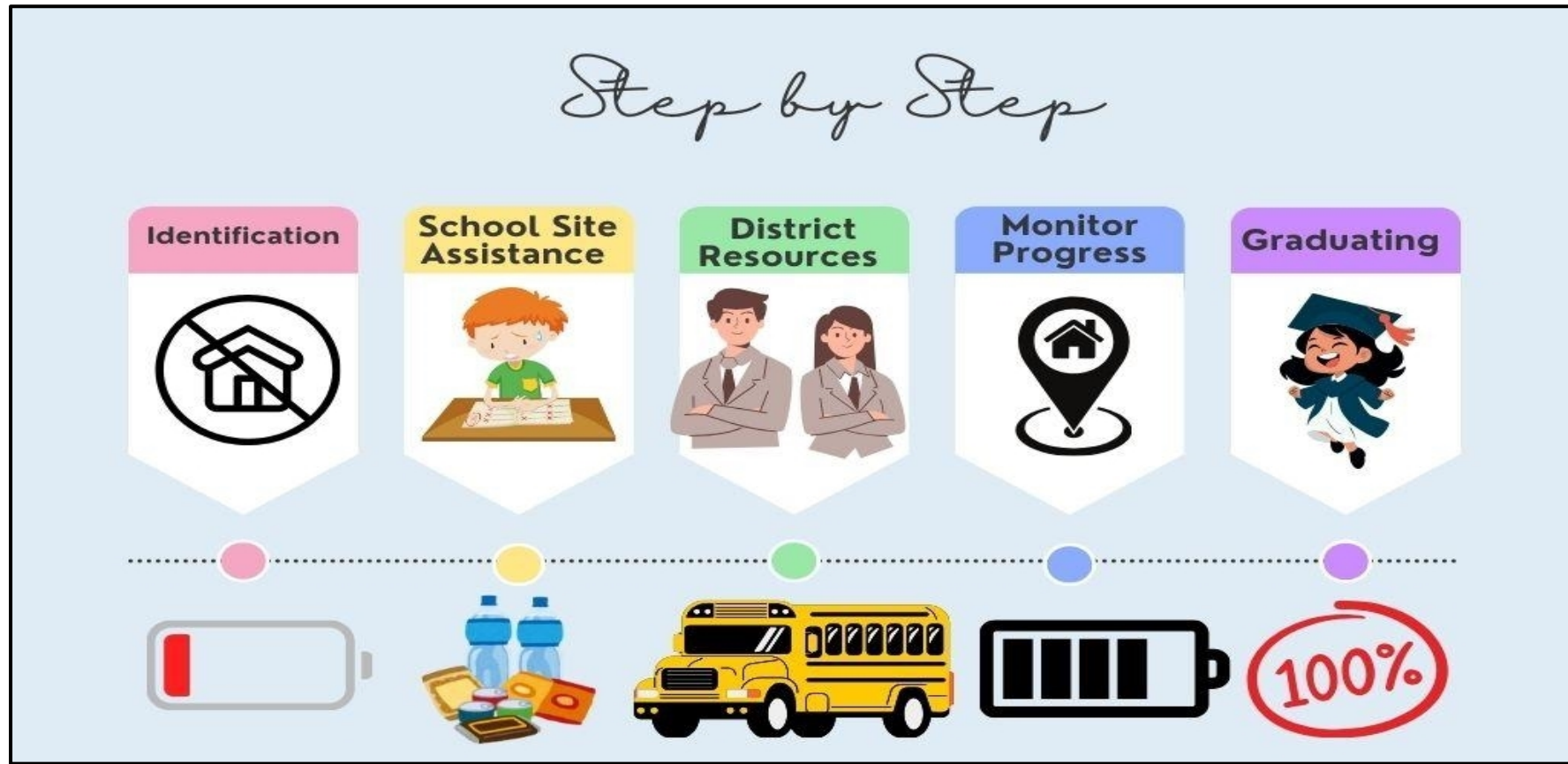
Question: What steps will you take to support Nick?



Events



BREAKING BARRIERS, BUILDING FUTURES: POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR OUR HOMELESS YOUTH & FAMILIES



THANK YOU FOR COMING!

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"A life is not important except in the impact it
has on other lives."

- Jackie Robinson

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