



# McKinney-Vento 101

California Department of Education  
Homeless Education Program  
March 19, 2026



California Department of  
**EDUCATION**

Start by doing what's necessary; then  
do what's possible; and suddenly  
you are doing the impossible.

Francis of Assisi



# Today's Agenda

- McKinney Vento-Act
- Definition of Homeless
- Identification and Enrollment
- School of Origin (SOO)
- Equal Access
- Coordination and Collaboration
- Liaison Duties
- Resources



# ACRONYMS (1)



- California Department of Education – CDE
- California Education Codes – *EC*
- California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System – CALPADS
- Consolidated Application and Reporting System – CARS
- Department of Housing and Urban Development – HUD
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act – FERPA
- Homeless Education Technical Assistance Centers – HETACs

# ACRONYMS (2)



- Housing Questionnaire – HQ
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act – IDEA
- Local Educational Agencies – LEAs, which includes county offices of education, school districts, and charter schools
- National Center for Homeless Education – NCHE
- PowerPoint – PPT
- School of Origin – SOO
- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth – UHY
- United States Code – U.S.C.

# McKinney-Vento Act (1)

- The Education for Homeless Children and Youth program is authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) (McKinney-Vento Act).
- The McKinney-Vento Act was originally authorized in 1987 and most recently re-authorized in December 2015 by the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- The complete legislation can be found at <https://nche.ed.gov/legislation/mckinney-vento/>.



# McKinney-Vento Act (2)

- The McKinney-Vento Act requires LEAs to ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other children and youth.
- Homeless students must have access to the educational and related services that they need to enable them to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held.



# McKinney-Vento Act (3)

- LEAs are also required to review and undertake steps to revise regulations, practices, or policies that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youth.
- LEAs must collaborate and coordinate with other federal and state educational programs, including Title I, Part A.
- It is also important to note that homeless students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment.

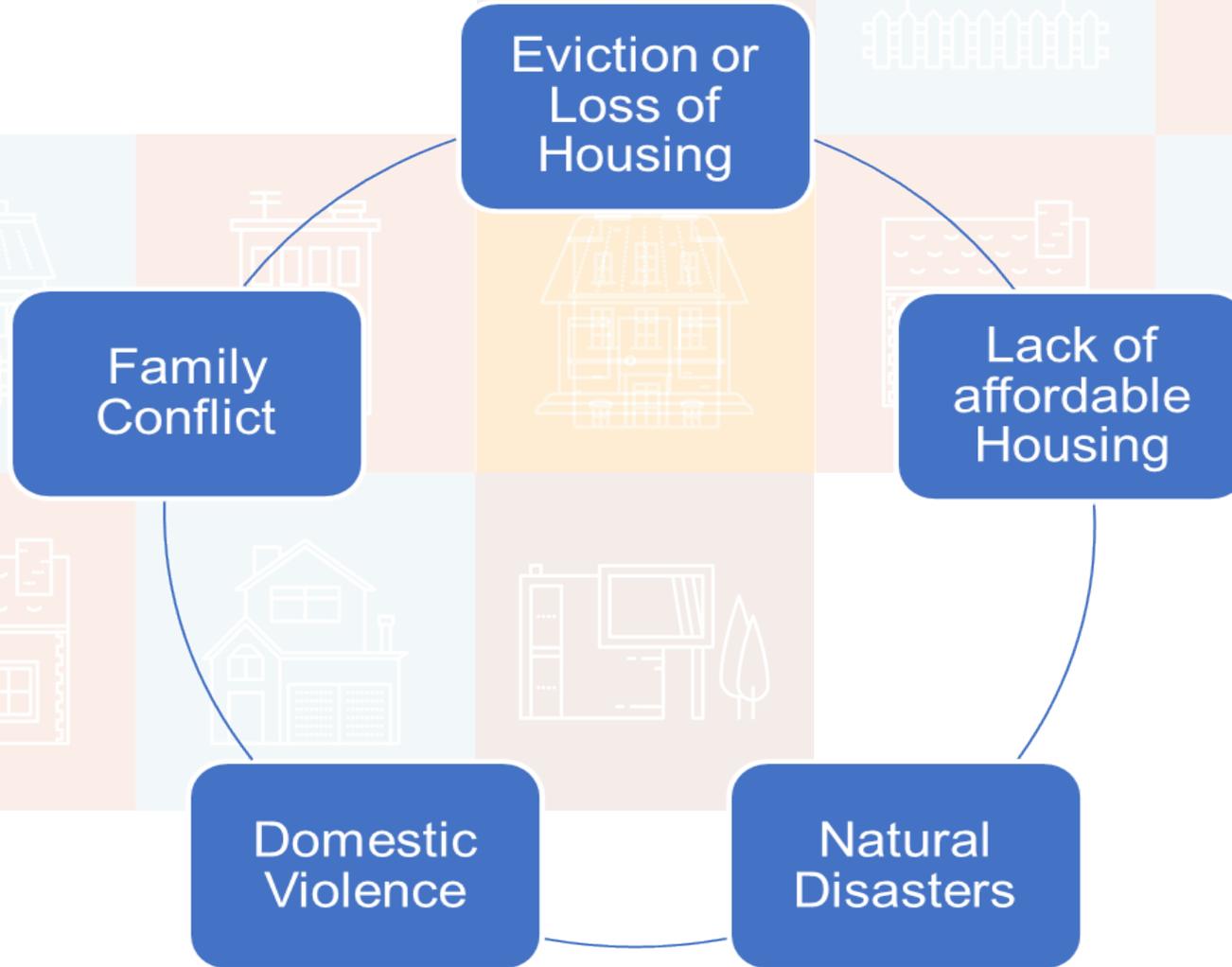


# California Education Code

- Over the years, *EC* have been amended to align to federal McKinney-Vento Act statute.
- Throughout the presentation, some *EC* sections are cited, but here are other sections that are pertinent to homeless education:
  - Sections 48412, 48850, 48852.5, 48852.7, 48859, 48915.5, 48918.1, 49073, 49076, 51421, 51421.5, 51225.1, 51225.2, and 52052



# Causes of Homelessness



# Challenges for Children and Youth

- Lack of basic resources like a safe and stable place to live, food, and clothing.
- Limited understanding of how to access available supports
- Stigma, bias, or misconceptions.
- Ongoing fatigue, hunger, or the effects of trauma.
- Parents' hesitation to share their situation due to fear.
- Lack of a parent or guardian for UHY.



# Barriers Faced (1)

- The McKinney-Vento Act addresses educational barriers and challenges that children and youth experiencing homelessness face when it relates to their right to enroll in and attend school, and provides supports needed for school success.
- Some of the barriers these children and youth face are:
  - Lack of identification.
  - Enrollment requirements.
  - Lack of school supplies and transportation.



# Barriers Faced (2)

- Poor health, fatigue, hunger, anxiety, and trauma.
- Prejudice and misunderstanding.
- Lack of awareness.
- Parents not wanting to get involved due to fear.
- Credit deficiency.
- Lack of legal guardian for an UHY



# Educational Barriers (1)

## Difficulty Accessing School

- Limited or unreliable transportation.
- Frequent moves or long distances to school.

## Barriers to Enrollment

- Missing immunization records.
- Lack of birth certificates or other required documentation.
- Limited access to basic school supplies.



# Educational Barriers (2)

## Academic Challenges

- Interrupted learning and credit deficiencies due to high mobility.
- Difficulty keeping up with coursework during periods of instability.

## Attendance & Participation Issues

- Increased tardies and absences.
- Challenges engaging in school activities due to fatigue, stress, or competing responsibilities.



# Homeless Definition (1)

- Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, which are defined as:
  - A **fixed** residence is one that is stationary, *permanent*, and not subject to change.
  - A **regular** residence is one that is used on a normal, *standard*, and consistent basis.
  - An **adequate** residence is one that is *sufficient* for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.



# Homeless Definition (2)

- Examples of homelessness include children and youth living in:
  - Shared housing due to economic hardship.
  - Motels or hotels.
  - Public or private places not designed for sleeping.
  - Trailer parks or campgrounds.
  - Cars, parks, and abandoned buildings.
  - All shelters, including emergency or transitional shelters.



# Homeless Definition (3)

- Additional examples of homelessness include children and youth who are:
  - Abandoned in hospitals.
  - Migratory children and unaccompanied youth who qualify as homeless.
  - Living in substandard living conditions – please consider such things as health and safety concerns, number of occupants per square foot, the age of occupants, and state and local building codes.



# Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

- An UHY is a youth that is not in the custody of their parent or guardian AND meets the definition of homelessness.
- Homeless Education Liaisons must help UHY choose and enroll in a school, give priority to the youth's wishes and inform the youth of their appeal rights.



# Identification and Enrollment (1)

- LEAs are required to identify, enroll immediately, and serve homeless children and youth.
- LEAs can identify through the initial registration process, along with a variety of other ways, such as:
  - Using the CDE developed HQ:  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/housingquestionnaire.pdf>.
  - HQ Guidance:  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/guidanceforquestionnaire.dOCX>.



# Identification and Enrollment (2)

- LEAs must ensure that educational rights are posted:  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/homelesspostereng.pdf>.
  - Some of the locations should include schools, shelters, public libraries, and food pantries.
- View CDE's Identification Strategies PowerPoint (PPT) at:  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/ehcyidstrategies.pptx>.



# Identification and Enrollment (3)

- Once LEAs have identified students, they must be enrolled immediately, regardless of documentation.
- Homeless students are not required to have all documents necessary for enrollment at the time they are seeking enrollment. This can include school records, health records, proof of residency, guardianship, or other documents.
- Homeless students are to be enrolled, and complete enrollment requirements with the support of the homeless liaison in a timely manner.



# Identification and Enrollment (4)

- In addition, LEAs must develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, and retention of children and youth in homeless situations, including barriers due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences.
- Enroll and enrollment means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
- *EC* Section 48850 aligns to the same provisions relating to immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth.



# Identification and Enrollment (5)

- Lastly, any school records for students experiencing homelessness transferring from one LEA to another LEA should be transferred promptly and, in a manner that is consistent with the FERPA.
  - This will ensure that the records are made available in a timely manner when a child or youth enters the new LEA.



# Preschool Enrollment

- Homeless liaisons are required to identify preschool-aged children experiencing homelessness through outreach and coordination activities with outside agencies.
- They also required to ensure access to Head Start, early intervention (IDEA, Part C), and other preschool programs administered by the LEA.
- Coordination with social service agencies, child development programs, early intervention programs, and other preschool programs is key to serve and support the younger children.



# Charter School Enrollment

- Charter schools that are LEAs or schools within LEAs must implement the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act to ensure that homeless students have access to and can succeed in their education.
- Services include those both for students who become homeless while attending a charter school as well as for homeless students who wish to enroll in a charter school.
- Charter school grants under Title IV, Part C, must work with charter schools on recruitment and enrollment practices to promote inclusion of all students, including eliminating any barriers to enrollment for foster youth and UHY.



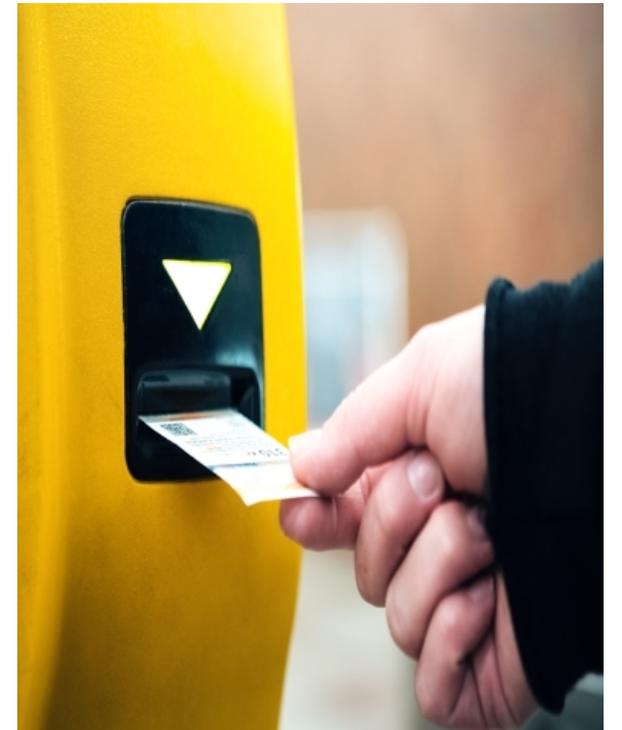
# Enrollment Reporting Requirements

- All LEAs are required to report the number of homeless students enrolled during a school year through the CALPADS, annually.
- CALPADS is the longitudinal data system used to maintain individual-level data including student demographics, course data, discipline, assessments, staff assignments, and other data for state and federal reporting.
- It is important to upload as often as an LEA can to ensure homeless students are identified and receive services.



# Questions and Table Talk

- How does your LEA identify and enroll homeless students?
- What are some of the barriers they might face?
- Questions, comments, strategies?



# School of Origin (1)

- 42 U.S.C. Section 11432(g) and *EC* Section 48852.7 define SOO as the school the child/youth attended when permanently housed, the school last enrolled, or a school that the homeless child/youth has a connection to in the last 15 months.
  - This includes preschool and feeder school patterns.
- Students can stay in their SOO the entire time they are homeless and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing.



# School of Origin (2)

- *EC* Section 48852.7 aligns to this provision and allow a homeless youth, now permanently housed, to remain in their high school through graduation, if:
  - It is in the best interest of the student; and
  - It is parent/guardian or UHY requested.
- If a student is sent to a school other than that requested by a parent, guardian or UHY, the LEA must provide a written explanation to the parent or guardian of its decision and their right to appeal.



# Best Interest Determination (1)

In determining best interest, the LEA shall:

- Presume that keeping the student in the SOO is in the student's best interest, unless contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.
- Consider student-centered factors, including the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety.
- Give priority to the request of the parent/guardian.
- Give priority to the UHY's request.



# Best Interest Determination (2)

- If the LEA determines that it is not in the student's best interest, the LEA, in conjunction with the liaison, must provide a written explanation of the reasons for its determination, in a manner and form understandable to such parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, including the right to appeal.



# Equal Access

- Gifted and Talented Education
- Special education
- Migrant education
- English learner programs
- Transportation
- Vocational education
- Title I, Part A
- State Meal Program
- Before and/or after school programs
- Higher Education



# Policies (1)

- Policies should be put into place to ensure identification, enrollment, and access to educational services and supports.
- LEAs are required to develop and implement local policies that support identification, enrollment, and retention, including UHY.
- The policies should also include how the LEA removes barriers due to fees, fines, and absences.
- Credit accrual and full participation in academic and extra-curricular activities should be addressed as well as school stability, transportation, privacy, and collaboration.



# Policies (2)

- LEAs and their liaisons must implement those policies.
- *EC* Section 51225.1 is aligned to these requirements, as well.
- Policies should be reviewed and revised often, especially after state and federal laws have changed pertaining to homeless children and youth.



# Transportation (1)

- Local liaisons must ensure that the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the SOO, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school selected in accordance with the best interest determination.
- In addition to providing transportation to the SOO, LEAs must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students in the school.



# Transportation (2)

- LEAs must provide transportation to and from the SOO, including until the end of the year when the student obtains permanent housing, at the request of a parent or guardian (or at the liaison's request for UHY).
- If the LEA of origin and the LEA of residence cannot agree on who will pay the costs, the two LEAs must share the costs. Transportation and Homeless Education PPT at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/homelessdandtrans.pptx> and a sample Transportation Agreement at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/transportationmou.pdf>.



# College and Career Readiness

- All homeless youth must be able to receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college.
- Liaisons must ensure UHY are informed of their status as independent students and may obtain assistance from the liaison to receive verification of that status.
- Homeless Education and School Counselors PPT at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/homelesschoolcounselor.pptx>.



# Dispute Resolution (1)

- If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment in a school:
  - The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute (including all available appeals).
  - The parent, guardian, or UHY must be provided a written explanation of decisions made and how to appeal the decisions.



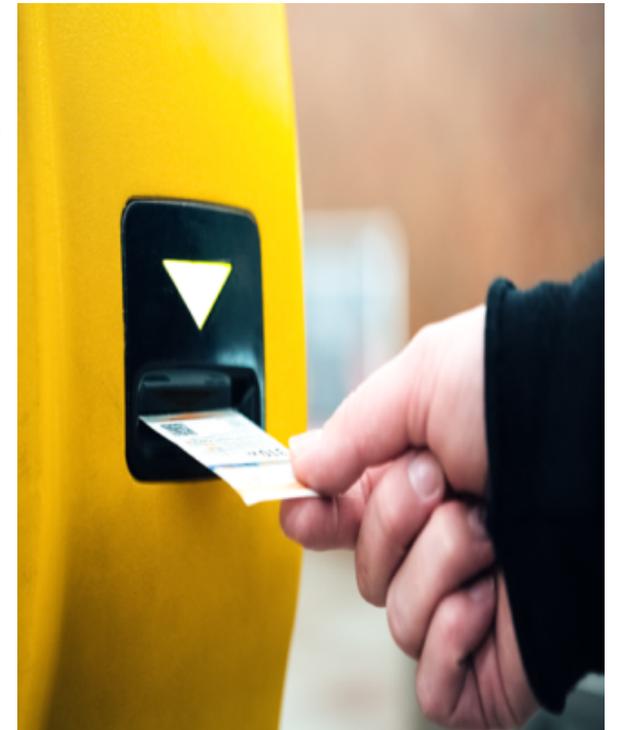
# Dispute Resolution (2)

- If the dispute is appealed at the district level, then the appeal will be referred to the county office of education, and if dispute is appealed, again, then it is referred to the State Coordinator at the CDE.
- You can find information about California's Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Process at the CDE Resources for Homeless Children and Youth web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/disputeresolutionletter2020.docx>.



# Questions and Table Talk

- When was your Homeless Education Policy last reviewed and approved?
- How do you ensure that homeless students are receiving comparable services?
- Questions, comments, strategies?



# Coordination within the LEA

- LEAs must coordinate McKinney-Vento services with a variety of programs within the LEA such as Title I, Part A; Special Education; Migrant Education; Transportation; Food Services; and Data.
- Information about a homeless student's living situation is a student education record subject to the FERPA and should be kept within the LEA's boundaries.



# Coordination with Title I, Part A (1)

- Homeless children are automatically eligible for Title I services, regardless of their current academic performance and their school of attendance.
- State report cards must disaggregate achievement and high school graduation data for homeless students.
- Local plans must be coordinated with McKinney-Vento programs and describe the services provided to homeless students, including any reserved funds, to support their enrollment, attendance, and success.



# Coordination with Title I, Part A (2)

- All LEAs that receive Title I, Part A funds must reserve (set-aside) the funds necessary to provide homeless children services comparable to services provided in Title I, Part A schools.
- The reservation amount must be based on the total LEA allocation prior to expenditures, may be determined based on a needs assessment, and should involve the liaison.



# Coordination with Title I, Part A (3)

- Some of the allowable uses of these funds include:
  - Providing comparable services to homeless children and youth despite their school of attendance.
  - Services not ordinarily provided to other students
  - Providing transportation to the SOO and to fund the liaison.



# Coordination with Title I, Part A (4)

- California Department of Education and HETAC Resources: [Title I, Part A - California Homeless Education and Technical Assistance Center](#)



# Consolidated Application (1)

- Through the Consolidated Application and Reporting System (CARS), LEAs are required to indicate the reservation amount, and what Title I services were provided.
- CARS is a two-part application and reporting process for multiple state and federal, formula-driven, categorical program funds submitted by LEAs.
  - CARS Winter Release: January 15 through February 28, annually.
  - CARS Spring Release is from May 15 through June 30, annually.



# Consolidated Application (2)

- Effective coordination between these two programs (given the requirements in both programs to serve homeless children and youth) can have substantive impacts on many homeless students.
  - Title I, Part A and local liaison coordination including data sharing and resources
  - Include homeless education on LEA-level plans
- All About Data and Homeless Education PPT at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/ehcydataandhe.ppt>  
X.



# Coordination Outside the LEA

- LEAs must coordinate McKinney-Vento services with a variety of programs outside the LEA such as faith-based agencies, community-based organizations, housing agencies, etc.
- Collaboration with Community Partnerships PPT at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/documents/ehcycommunitycollaborate.pdf>.



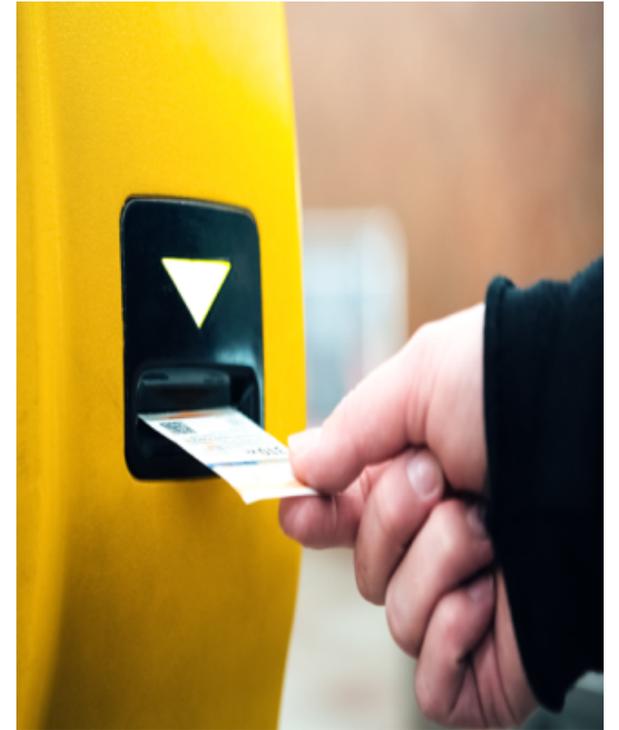
# Collaboration with HUD

- Local liaisons are authorized to affirm that students meet the HUD definition of homelessness, to qualify them for HUD homeless assistance programs by writing a letter of affirmation.



# Questions and Table Talk

- Who do you collaborate with?
- Are their programs and/or agencies that you still need to connect with?
- Questions, comments, strategies?



# Liaison Duties and Responsibilities (1)

Every LEA must designate a McKinney-Vento liaison able to carry out their legal duties. Liaisons must ensure that:

- Homeless students enroll in and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.
- Children and youth in homeless situations are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other entities and agencies.
- Access is provided to all and barriers to enrollment and retention are removed.



# Liaison Duties and Responsibilities (2)

- Public notice of educational rights is disseminated in locations frequented by parents, guardians, and UHY, in a manner and form understandable to them.
  - Posters can be accessed at the CDE's Resources for Homeless Children and Youth web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/>.
- Parents or guardians are informed of educational opportunities and transportation services.



# Liaison Duties and Responsibilities (3)

- School personnel providing McKinney-Vento services receive professional development and other support.
- Children, youth, and families have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start, early intervention (IDEA, Part C), and other preschool programs.
- Children, youth, and families receive referrals to health care, dental, mental health, substance abuse, housing, and other services.



# Liaison Duties and Responsibilities (4)

- Children and youth who do not have immunizations are assisted.
- Liaisons participate in professional development and technical assistance as determined appropriate by the State Coordinator.
- Liaisons coordinate and collaborate services for homeless children, youth, and their families.
- Liaisons collaborate with the State Coordinator, community agencies, and school personnel.



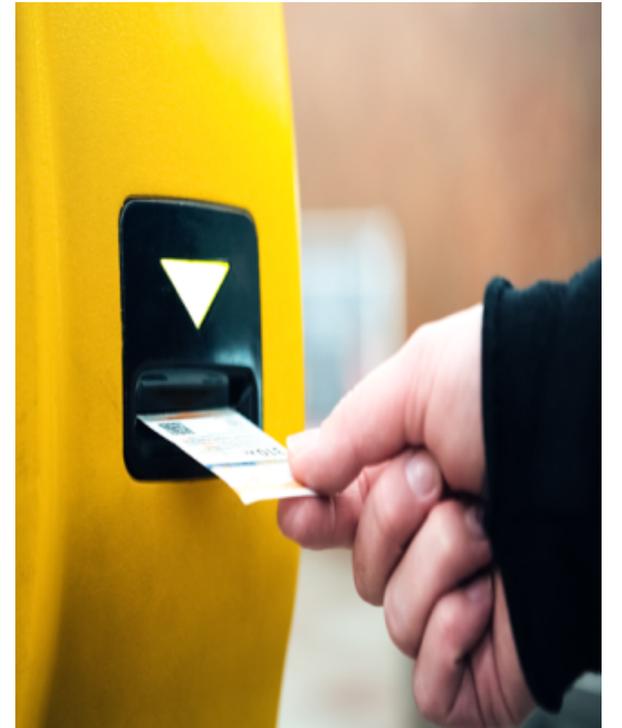
# Liaison Duties and Responsibilities (5)

- Disputes are promptly resolved.
- Assistance to access transportation is provided.
- UHY are enrolled in school and that procedures are implemented to identify and remove barriers that prevent them from receiving credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school, in accordance with state, local, and school policies.



# Questions and Table Talk

- As a liaison, what is your capacity to serve and support homeless children, youth, and their families?
- Have you been able to increase your capacity, and how?



# Liaisons and Listserv

- Join the Homeless Children and Youths Resources Listserv to receive information and updates relating to the education of homeless children and youths at the CDE's Homeless Education Resources Listserv web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/homelesslistserv.asp>.
- Listing of liaisons can be accessed at the CDE's Homeless Education web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>.



# Resources (1)

- General Homeless Education information can be found on the CDE's Homeless Education web page at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>.
- General Homeless Education email at [HomelessEd@cde.ca.gov](mailto:HomelessEd@cde.ca.gov)
- Homeless Education Technical Assistance Centers (HETACs) web site at <https://www.hetac.org/>.



# Resources (2)

- National Center for Homeless Education web site at <https://nche.ed.gov/>, which is the technical assistance center for the U.S. Department of Education.
- SchoolHouse Connection web site at <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/>, which is a national non-profit organization working to overcome homelessness through education.





**Thank you for all that you do!!!**



**Questions?**

---



# Contact Us

The CDE, Homeless Education Program Team  
Program Staff:

---

Janet Abdelsayed

[JAbdelsayed@cde.ca.gov](mailto:JAbdelsayed@cde.ca.gov)

Karmina Barrales

[Kbarrales@cde.ca.gov](mailto:Kbarrales@cde.ca.gov)

Heidi Brahms

[Hbrahms@cde.ca.gov](mailto:Hbrahms@cde.ca.gov)



**Administrator**

Deborah Avalos

General email at [HomelessED@cde.ca.gov](mailto:HomelessED@cde.ca.gov)