State Coordinators' Handbook

Section E. Technical Assistance for LEAs

Section E. Technical assistance for LEAs

McKinney-Vento requires that every LEA designate a local homeless education liaison. Section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) states:

> "Local educational agencies will designate an appropriate staff person, who may also be a coordinator for other Federal programs, as a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths, to carry out the duties described in paragraph (6)(A)"

You should have an accurate list of local homeless education liaisons and have strategies in place to determine whether liaisons have the knowledge and skills needed to perform the role adequately. This section of the ***State Coordinators' Handbook*** will assist state coordinators in ensuring that LEAs receive the support they need to carry out their responsibilities under the McKinney-Vento Act.

We just used our regular McKinney-Vento policies that we already had. I can't think of any new policies I'd want, because I think McKinney-Vento really addresses the issues of homelessness. So it really helped out with enrollment without a parent, immunizations, and…transportation. We set up enrollment centers at the Reliant Astrodome. We had all the forms students needed to enroll, and we had the special education people doing ARD [Admission, Review and Dismissal] meetings right on-site, so the kids got to school with a current IEP [Individualized Education Program]. We were looking at graduation requirements to make sure we got high school students in the right classes. As soon as records came, if we needed to adjust, we put them in the right class.
Quote from Houston Independent School District, Houston, TX. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs, Education for Homeless Children and Youth Programs. (2007). *In Their Own Words: Schools and Students Overcoming Adversity*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved 6-28-10 from http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/itow.pdf

E.1 Overview/ensuring local liaisons in every LEA

State coordinators have identified the appointment of LEA contacts as a best practice in reaching out to local school districts for many years. As cited in the 2006 ***Report to the President and Congress On the Implementation of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act,*** when asked what changes to the EHCY program in 2002 were most transformational, many in the field mentioned the requirement to designate a local liaison. The liaison provides a single point of contact and a vehicle for communicating changes in policy and practices and for identifying challenges faced at the local level. When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita displaced children across the country in 2005, the McKinney-Vento EHCY structure of state coordinators and local liaisons provided a powerful network of support which was easily tapped to reach children and their families.

Because this network of support and communication is such a critical component, some initial and enduring questions that state coordinators must address include:

- Who are the local homeless liaisons?
- How are changes in local staff reported?
- Where is their contact information maintained?

Keeping an updated and accurate list of local homeless education liaisons will assist you in establishing and maintaining an infrastructure for routine and effective communication and in determining whether all LEA homeless liaisons have the knowledge and skills needed to perform the role adequately. Maintaining effective communication is critical to all aspects of your EHCY program and should be given high priority as you build your EHCY network. Some states have data management systems in place that support the maintenance and quick update of local liaison contact information. If yours does not, it is well worth your while to develop your own database/spreadsheet to keep your list as accurate as possible.

In keeping with the specific legislative requirement, here are a few suggestions to ensure that all LEAs have an appointed liaison:

- Post liaisons and their contact information on your state's website. This provides a public vehicle that can be accessed by other schools and agencies in your state and as a resource for other state coordinators and their liaisons as children travel across state lines.
- Be sure to update your list at least annually.
- Send a back-to-school packet of materials (posters, family brochures, training announcements, some new resource as a "gift") to the liaison annually with a request for updated contact information in the cover letter. Remind liaisons that the information is posted on the state's website.

- If your liaisons are referenced by other programs in their applications, check for consistency. For example, the homeless liaison may be identified in the Title I, Part A application to describe the coordination between McKinney-Vento and Title I. Follow up with any LEAs that indicate different names from the ones in your database to verify that you have accurate information about who is actually managing liaison responsibilities.
- Note any changes that come to your attention as you communicate with the field and update your files as soon as possible.
- LEA monitoring can be a means to ensure that a liaison is appointed. Schedule a phone monitoring with LEAs who have not communicated needed information.

The law requires that the LEA designate an "appropriate staff person." Only a small percentage of LEAs have full-time staff dedicated to homeless education. The smaller the school district, the more likely it is that the liaison responsibilities will be added to a long list of duties held by one person at the district level. A variety of other roles are often combined with the liaison responsibilities. School social workers, or the supervisor for these personnel, can be a natural fit given the skill of social workers in networking to provide community supports. A federal program administrator, such as a Title I coordinator, also can be a logical connection to provide the coordination across school-based programs. In addition, staff members who work with truancy, collaborate with local community service boards, or early childhood programs have been effective homeless liaisons. It is appropriate to include a question about the appropriateness of the designation in your LEA monitoring. Sometimes when localities review the requirements and monitoring questions, roles are shifted.

Even if localities have full-time liaisons, having only one staff person trained to comply with EHCY can leave gaps in services when liaisons are sick, on vacation, or out of the office fulfilling other roles. Consider opening liaison training to other staff. This can build local capacity and bring more personnel with an interest in homelessness to your attention. As the liaison role is better understood, as local structures and staff change, or as the needs of children in the community change, rethinking who would be an appropriate staff person can occur. How we orient new liaisons (or re-orient) can set the tone for effective state-local collaboration.

E.2 Orienting local liaisons

Once you know *who* has been designated as liaisons, a logical second group of questions will be, "How do I know that the liaisons understand their responsibilities? How do I ensure that they can fulfill their legal responsibilities?" Just as there is a lot of information to wade through as a new state coordinator, liaisons are confronted with an expanse of resources that could be overwhelming without a guiding hand. Consider these actions:

- Create a generic "welcome" packet for new liaisons that includes:
    - Contact information for the state coordinator, including state website
    - Checklist of liaison responsibilities. These responsibilities are mentioned specifically in the law, and are described in the ***NCHE Local Homeless Education Liaison Toolkit*.**
    - Schedule of upcoming trainings (state conferences, national conferences and webinars)
    - Suggested training resources. NCHE offers self-paced, online, and recorded trainings. For liaisons who are unfamiliar with McKinney-Vento, recommend the NCHE Webinar, McKinney-Vento 101 as a primer.
    - Copy of The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Subtitle B of title VII. (Use the formatted version found in Appendix A of ***NCHE's Toolkit for Local Homeless Education Liaisons*.** When providing technical assistance, using the *Toolkit* version allows the state coordinator to direct the liaison to a certain page in the law that is easier to locate than a legal section citation.)
    - Copy of any state code/policy related to homeless education
    - Contact list of liaisons throughout the state
    - Template of important contacts in the state and locality the liaison should have (see Appendix E-1 for a sample)
    - Copy of current monitoring protocol
- Design a McKinney-Vento Scavenger Hunt for new liaisons, encouraging them to contact you when items cannot be found. Some good items to include:
    - Local homeless education policy

- Title I, Part A description of coordination with McKinney-Vento, including reservation of funds
- Processes for identifying students as homeless, immediately enrolling students, ensuring free meals at school, obtaining school of origin transportation
- McKinney-Vento subgrant application (if applicable)
- Local Homeless Education Liaison Toolkit or any state-developed resources you provide to your liaisons.
- NCHE family brochures
- The "Top Five" list, such as the one created by Colorado's state coordinator for local liaisons. See Appendix E-2 for a blank template and the Colorado sample.

E.3 Creating a network of support for local liaisons

State coordinators can create a variety of supports available for local liaisons. Here a few to consider:

- Support regional liaison collaboration. Issues such as inter-district transportation or unaccompanied homeless youth can be the impetus for a regional meeting that can evolve into a regular opportunity to meet, share challenges, and brainstorm solutions.
- Identify "senior" liaisons that can field questions or provide training when the state coordinator is not available.
- Appoint a mentor to new liaisons.
- Connect liaisons with any outsourced technical assistance to another agency, intermediate education units, or universities that work with the state coordinator.
- Consider having a state-level listserv for liaisons.
- Create an email list of all local liaisons so you can forward important information quickly.

E.4 Conducting professional development (tools and resources)

Legislative requirements for state coordinators [Section 722(f)] include the provision of technical assistance to local education agencies to ensure their compliance with the requirements of Section 722(e)(3) and paragraphs (3) through (7) of subsection (g). The recent federal monitoring indicator 2.2 for the McKinney-Vento program addresses this requirement specifically, requiring documentation/evidence of activities such as:

- Providing ongoing technical assistance to LEAs to ensure appropriate implementation of the statute
- Monitoring changes in staffing of LEA Liaisons
- Assisting new liaisons in learning their new responsibilities
- Providing training and technical assistance to LEAs to ensure that community agencies are aware of the rights of homeless students

E.4.1 Identification of technical assistance needs of LEAs and liaisons

Ensuring LEA compliance with the statutory requirements of McKinney-Vento requires an assessment of LEA capacity and a plan for addressing areas of concern. A useful first step in planning and delivery of technical assistance to LEAs is to analyze any available needs assessment efforts already initiated. As more importance is placed on data-based decision making, and as ED strengthens accountability measures relative to the prudent use of federal funds, it becomes more imperative that a focus on the collection of needs assessment and program evaluation data is given high priority. NCHE has published ***Educating Homeless Children and Youth: Conducting Needs Assessments and Evaluating Services - A Guide for SEAs, LEAs, and Local Schools*** to support needs assessment and program evaluation in building EHCY programs. State coordinators are finding this Guide to be useful, not only in collecting state level data, but also in assisting LEAs to collect data needed to inform program decisions at the local level. ED suggests that needs assessments should be updated annually, while subgrantee LEAs need to do this more comprehensively at least once every three years. Important decisions about programming and resources (e.g., the determination and use of Title I, Part A funds for homeless students) should also be based on systematic collection of accurate data.

Needs assessments are conducted in many similar fields of education and social services for homeless children and youth and there are many ways to conduct one. The LEA Needs Assessment Worksheets and Summaries from the Guide can provide the state coordinator with critical information about common and unique needs that should be addressed through local liaison training and technical assistance. Once the needs assessment process is completed and results are analyzed, a plan of action to deliver technical assistance can be customized to benefit the local liaison, the LEA, and the broader homeless community network. For state coordinators and local liaisons with severely limited time due to multiple roles, the Guide describes strategies to make the process manageable without compromising the value of needs assessment and program evaluation efforts.

Additional strategies to determine LEA needs for technical assistance include review of any available monitoring reports, end of year subgrant reports, CSPR data, and technical assistance logs maintained by the state coordinator. (See Appendix E-3 for sample forms.) Here are some questions to consider as you analyze the technical assistance needs of liaisons:

1. Is the LEA identifying appropriate numbers of homeless children and youth? Do the numbers appear to be aligned with poverty data, number of students eligible for free/reduced meals, size of Title I, Part A allocation, number of students identified as homeless in previous years, nearby localities, and reported by other agencies? Are these data available to you through Title I or other programs?
2. Are there any identified (or emerging) compliance issues apparent in technical assistance logs and monitoring reports?
3. Has there been significant turnover among homeless education staff?

Here are some strategies to consider as you develop plans to meet those needs:

1. Develop strong relationships with local liaisons built on mutual trust.
2. Monitor the amount of liaison time allocated to McKinney-Vento responsibilities. For example, homeless liaisons assigned to multiple programs might have diminished capacity relative to EHCY and need additional supports to carry out their responsibilities. Be prepared to communicate with supervisors if there are capacity concerns related to compliance or program quality issues.
3. Consider whether the liaison position has the authority needed to effect change, and again, whether communication with the supervisor would be supportive.

4. Develop a packet of information to be shared with superintendents, and/or other program administrators to clarify the responsibilities of the liaison.
5. Conduct a quick survey of basic information from each LEA demonstrating that someone is addressing all requirements; require the signature of the person held accountable.
6. Make LEA needs assessment mandatory; analyze results to determine gaps.
7. Get to know local issues; look for patterns across regions; provide technical assistance to groups with common needs.
8. Review Consolidated or Title I, Part A Plans – determine whether updates or revisions are needed regarding the planning for a strong EHCY program.
9. Use a state map of LEAs, to analyze identification results with reference looking at potential indicators, such as:
    a. Number of homeless students identified relative to surrounding districts
    b. Economic indicators relative to surrounding districts
    c. Number of homeless students identified relative to the size of Title I allocations (how many districts with large Title I allocations are reporting low numbers?)
    d. Economic indicators (e.g., poverty data, foreclosures, etc.)
    e. Number and location of homeless shelters
10. Use mentoring or buddy assignments to pair needy liaisons with knowledgeable mentor liaisons.
11. Provide targeted technical assistance to struggling LEAs through site-visits when necessary; follow up communications should be routine and systematic until pressing issues are resolved, or significant improvement has been achieved.

E.4.2 Provision of training for LEAs and liaisons

In planning LEA training, it is helpful to organize the content according to (1) what is necessary for compliance, (2) what a quality program that goes beyond compliance looks like, and (3) what characteristics define a robust, mature, model homeless education program. The overall plan should include several different models, depending on the target audience and identified needs. Some suggested models include:

- Training for all liaisons – what everyone needs to know
- Training for non-grantee liaisons, especially targeting those with less experience and/or emerging understanding of the statutory requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act
- Training modules for other school and agency personnel that is role specific
- Issue-focused training for specific issues, problems, situations
- Advanced training for experienced liaisons
- Multi-program training opportunities, such as state or federal homeless conferences or other seminars that include homeless education issues

When determining topics for training, use the following questions as you make decisions about content:

- How many liaisons have already received basic McKinney-Vento training?
- Are there updates from the national homeless network, state homeless education program, or other programs or agencies that need to be provided?
- If you survey local liaisons, what topics do they identify as needs for training?
- Are experienced liaisons willing to share their expertise in a training event?
- Would sharing model programs or best and promising practices be helpful?

With a firm handle on the content of training needed, you are ready to begin planning for the most effective delivery of training. A wide variety of formats and venues should be considered as decisions are made regarding delivery methods.

- Written briefs, newsletters, memos, emails and other written communication can provide the basic legislative requirements of McKinney-Vento.
- Webinars and other distance learning vehicles are increasing in popularity, especially as travel restrictions, or challenges related to climate/geography limit on-site training opportunities.
    - NCHE offers frequent webinars. Liaisons can register here.
    - NCHE can assist state coordinators in customizing a webinar for a specific state.

- Conference calls provide an excellent venue to communicate important but briefer information to a large number or wide geographic area at one time.
- Online Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are an emerging structure that allows liaisons separated by physical distance to learn together.

- Liaison workshops can be held in a variety of ways
  - Regional meetings with LEAs clustered geographically
  - Compliance meetings with LEAs clustered according to issues or identified needs
  - Single LEA teams to allow intensive work with team of people representing several different role groups within LEA
  - Trainings linked to other program meetings or trainings
- Conferences
  - State homeless education conference
  - Pre-conference workshop targeting a specific group (regional cluster, or needs/issue based)
  - Homeless liaison strand at state Title I conference
  - NAEHCY Conference – plan ahead to convene a meeting of liaisons from your state who are attending
  - Coordinate with other programs and agencies holding conferences; ask to be included on the agenda

Keep in mind that developing LEA expertise does not have to be a one-person show. Many states have developed ways of sharing the responsibility. Some states are building a regional infrastructure to strengthen statewide implementation of homeless programs, with subgrant funds or state level activity funds allocated to "lead" LEAs who share some of the training and technical assistance responsibilities with the office of the state coordinator. Some state coordinators have identified experienced local liaisons to assist with training and mentoring of other liaisons, following a train-the-trainer model. These same experienced liaisons/mentors often are asked to make presentations at state and/or regional conferences, workshops, compliance meetings, etc. To the extent that SEA support is provided in adequate measure, these regional strategies can lead to productive partnerships in the development of local expertise that builds strong programs.

Regardless of the delivery method, systematic follow up is the key to determining the effectiveness of your training efforts, and to the maintenance and generalization of new knowledge and skills. Successful state programs approach training as an ongoing process, not an event. The ongoing nature of the process is supported by a systematic follow up through routine communication with liaisons. These communications can be casual or formal, via phone, email, or conference call, and can serve as important segments of a desk review component of your monitoring process.

Some examples of follow up communications include: (1) quick surveys of changes that have occurred since training; (2) conference calls discussing challenges related to training topics; (3) discussion of local policies/regulations that remain barriers to the education of homeless students; and (4) electronic bulletin board, or listserv for sharing success stories.

Despite thoughtful planning and preparation, the provision of training and technical assistance to local liaisons is likely to have its challenges. Click here for Appendix E-4, *Potential Pitfalls and Possible Solutions for Liaison Training.*

E.4.3 More on professional development

The importance of understanding effective professional development for adult learners cannot be overstated. Much has been written about effective professional development for teachers, and while some concepts do not translate easily to the administrative perspective needed when supporting liaisons, many key considerations are applicable. The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) is the largest non-profit professional association committed to ensuring success for all students through staff development and school improvement. Resources can be found at http://www.nsdc.org.

The following eight questions, originally proposed by Marijane Suttor[1] in relation to

[1] Suttor, M. Effective professional development. Retrieved on April 18, 1010 from http://www.helium.com/items/1158158-professional-development-for-schools?

professional development for teachers, have been adjusted to refer to homeless liaisons. These questions will help you determine if your plan will produce effective professional development:

1. Does it further LEA or school goals and objectives? Look for ways to demonstrate that the information you are providing is aligned with other state and local initiatives. Homeless education does not operate in a vacuum. Make connections between the work of liaisons and student achievement, attendance and truancy, healthy schools, etc.
2. Is it something that the liaison can use? Liaisons often wear multiple hats; even when liaisons' time is dedicated solely to McKinney-Vento, the needs outpace the time. In other words, be sure there is a usable "take away" from any professional development activity offered. Ask yourself, "If I were a liaison, what would I do with this information tomorrow?"
3. Do liaisons have input? Adults need input in designing professional development choices. These are the people that are in the trenches; they are the ones that know what is genuinely useful. Do not leave liaisons out of the planning aspect of professional development. The voice of liaisons in identifying critical challenges and emerging trends at the local level can be tapped if you use an advisory board to guide your EHCY program planning.

   To meet the needs of adult learners, structure sessions to have a variety of activities. Periods of lecture should be followed with questions and answers, and there should be opportunities for individual and small group work and reflection.

   Have real-life scenarios available for problem solving activities. Collect your technical assistance requests to create mini-case studies that can be discussed with small groups and build sessions around frequently asked questions. Allow seasoned liaisons to describe their programs and approaches to resolving challenges. This is an interactive way to review basic content and legislative requirements and model decision-making and problem-solving strategies that can be applied to novel situations liaisons may encounter. (Don't just give the liaison a fish; teach him how to catch fish.)
4. Do liaisons have choices? There is no one "right" way to learn. Providing liaisons with a menu of options is more likely to meet the individual needs of liaisons than a "one-size-

fits-all" approach to professional development. If possible, target state-level McKinney-Vento funds that can be used to reimburse liaisons who pursue professional development to cover travel and other expenses. Reimbursement or honorariums could be tied to giving back through a workshop, conference presentation, webinar, or newsletter article to be shared with other liaisons.

5. Will there be buy-in? State coordinators are required to offer technical assistance and training; however, the local liaison does not have a similar mandate to attend training. LEA monitoring provides state coordinators with a vehicle to ask questions about training in which the liaison has participated and McKinney-Vento subgrantees can be required to participate in certain activities offered by the state coordinator. Generating staff buy-in is the only way to have effective professional development. Liaisons must see a connection between the skills and knowledge provided in professional development, their responsibilities, and the effect fulfilling such responsibilities has on students. Incorporate a variety of messages in your professional development. Some people want to know, "What does the law say I have to do?" Others want to know, "Why will this make a difference for the children I serve?" Still others may want to know, "How can I 'sell' this message in my community?" Whether the motivation is heart, head, or bottom line, include something for everyone. Have poignant stories, be able to offer assistance for compliance and continual program improvement, have facts and figures to support your suggestions and challenge common misconceptions.
6. Is time given for liaisons to implement the professional development? Provide or request that liaisons bring their local data to training. This will require additional pre-planning, but offers a more personalized way to approach the information you are discussing. If liaisons recognize the professional development as a tool that helps them do their work, impact is more likely.
7. Is there follow up and accountability? "One shot" professional development can be ineffective if there is no follow-up. It is a dead end. Annual reports for subgrantees and local homeless education program monitoring are logical accountability measures. It is OK to assign "homework" as long as it is meaningful. Consider a menu of options that

could include sharing updates with a partner in the training or sending updates on issues via listserv or newsletter. Ongoing professional development can be nurtured by follow up conference calls after a workshop, webinars, videoconferencing, blogs, or other electronic communication.

8. Is there an evaluation? Professional development must include evaluation to determine how effective it was and how well liaisons are incorporating the training. Surveys should be conducted and there should be a plan to evaluate whether it is a successful program. Evaluating professional development should be an ongoing practice.

E.4.4 Some final thoughts

The task of providing training and technical assistance across an entire state, whether small or large, can be a daunting task. It is important to recall that the information being communicated is critical to assist local school districts in compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act and to ensure that our ultimate goal, supporting children and youth who are experiencing homelessness to access and to succeed in school, is achieved. Face-to-face opportunities to share successes and challenges can personalize the process and allow for two-way communication. The state coordinator can gain insights from presentations to local personnel, and local personnel need opportunities to clarify confusing issues.

Depending on the state, a state coordinator may want to consider a train-the-trainer model and work with veteran local homeless education contacts to train other local liaisons regionally to limit travel expenses. Regardless of methods of delivery, many training materials are available on the NCHE website, which houses a variety of documents describing best and promising practices, and most notably offers a collection of training tools developed by veteran state coordinators, your peers. Some state coordinators invite NCHE staff and other national partners to present at state trainings. Click here for Appendix E-5, *Quick Tips for Presenters*, a helpful resource for training of presenters.

E.5 Developing a homeless education website

With the nearly universal access to the Internet among LEAs, state homeless education websites have become an essential repository of information about a state's homeless education program, as well as a portal to link to a myriad of additional information and resources. NCHE's 2010 survey of state coordinators indicated that 94 per cent of state coordinators (35 respondents) use a homeless education website frequently to communicate with local liaisons.

Most state homeless education websites include at a minimum:

- Contact information for the state coordinator for homeless education
- A list of homeless education liaisons and their contact information
- A list of subgrantees and coordinator contact information
- An overview of the McKinney-Vento Act and a link to the actual law
- Homeless education state policies, including the dispute resolution policy
- Announcements of trainings and events
- A link to NCHE

In addition, many states include:

- Guidance and policy memos and updates
- Clarifying documents and briefs from NCHE and NAEHCY, including NCHE's briefs, NCHE's Toolkit for Local Homeless Education Liaisons , and NAEHCY's Frequently Asked Questions.
- Links to national organizations, such as NAEHCY, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, National Alliance to End Homelessness, National Network for Youth
- State publications and resources related to homeless education
- Forms that LEAs may use, such as those for enrollment and notification of rights
- Good practices that feature specific LEAs
- Links to posters and awareness materials
- Helpline or hotline information

State coordinators should work with their SEA's web designer to ensure that proposed information aligns with the SEA's policies and content requirements and reflects good design principles. Moreover, state coordinators must take into account the level of effort they will be able to provide to keep the website current and the frequency with which they will be able to update the site. Even a simple website can be very effective as long as it is targeted to specific needs, easy to navigate, and up to date.

The state coordinator should consider who the target audiences are for the homeless education website. A website that is a tool specifically for local liaisons would be significantly different from a website geared for a wider audience, such as homeless service providers and parents.

Periodically conducting an external review of the homeless education website will provide valuable feedback on its effectiveness and utility. In annual reviews of its website, NCHE has utilized the following statements rated on a Likert scale in an online survey of a sample of its constituents:

- The organization of the website is very logical.
- Navigability of the website is very efficient.
- The content provided on the website if of high quality.
- The information posted to the website addresses current issues in the field.
- The website is comprehensive enough to meet my needs.

State coordinators may view state homeless education websites from across the country on the NCHE website at http://center.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php . Clicking on any state on the map posted at this site will lead to a page that includes a link to each state's homeless education website.

E.6 Ensuring good data collection from LEAs

Increasingly, data on homeless students serves as a foundation for critical programmatic and budget decisions at the local and state level. Quality data provides an accurate picture of the needs of homeless children and youth and the effectiveness of the McKinney-Vento program. Therefore, state coordinators should provide information and support to ensure that the data collected in LEAs are comprehensive and accurate. As discussed earlier in this section, collecting comprehensive needs assessment data should be an ongoing effort, with annual analysis of relevant data.

Local liaisons cite many challenges in collecting data on homeless students:

- Lack of time
- Not knowing what data are required far enough in advance
- Lack of understanding of how data is input
- Lack of understanding of the terms
- Lack of coordination with district data staff
- Lack of oversight of school staff collecting data

At the state level, state coordinators should work with data CSPR and EDFacts coordinators to help them understand the federal data collection requirements for homeless education and understand the challenges LEAs face in collecting data on highly mobile and homeless students. If a cooperative relationship exists at the state level, data managers can adjust the statewide data collection system to help LEAs meet these challenges as well as train local data managers.

State coordinators should help LEAs understand the importance of data by enabling them to view their data and assisting them with using it to understand their program. State coordinators should also hold LEAs accountable for collecting data by including a monitoring indicator specific to data collection.

Many state coordinators include the topic of data collection in their LEA trainings and include LEA data managers in the trainings as well. Not only do the local liaisons and data managers learn the same information, but they have an opportunity to interact with one another and create a basis for collaboration.

As mentioned in Section C of this ***Handbook***, a useful resource for supporting LEAs in their federal data collection for homeless students is NCHE's ***Federal Data Collection Guide for the Education of Homeless Children and Youths Program.*** This guide, updated annually, includes an overview of the EDFacts and CSPR systems, general instructions and specific instructions for each question, and a glossary that clarifies terms used in the data collection questions.

State coordinators will find Appendix D in the data collection guide particularly helpful. Appendix D is a compilation of tips that state coordinators have used to assist their LEAs with federal data collection.

State coordinators should encourage LEAs to go above and beyond federal requirements for data collection to assess needs of and services for homeless students. The benefits of using data to identify gaps in services and to support requests for funding cannot be underestimated. The aforementioned NCHE publication, ***Educating Homeless Children and Youth: Conducting Needs Assessments and Evaluating Services - A Guide for SEAs, LEAs, and Local Schools*** will be a valuable tool to assist LEAs in moving their programs beyond compliance, to quality EHCY program implementation.

E.7 Developing statewide forms

Developing state forms for LEAs to use creates consistency among the LEAs and sets expectations for record keeping and documentation. Some of the more commonly used state forms include enrollment or student residency forms, written notification of enrollment decision for parents, and forms for documenting issues as they arise as barriers to identification and enrollment (barrier tracking forms). The *Toolkit for Local Homeless Liaisons* includes sample forms that can be adapted for use by all LEAs. Appendix D in the *Toolkit* includes enrollment forms (http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/toolkit/app_d.pdf); Appendix E includes assessment and data collection tools (http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/toolkit/app_e.pdf); and Appendix G includes a school level point of contact form (http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/toolkit/app_g.pdf)

In addition, the state and local resources page on the NCHE website (http://center.serve.org/nche/forum/forum.php) includes forms that state coordinators agreed to have posted so that others may use or adapt them for their state's needs.

E.8 Links to helpful documents

Clarifying documents and briefs from NCHE and NAEHCY, including NCHE's briefs
http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/briefs.php

NCHE's ***Toolkit for Local Homeless Education Liaisons***
http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/liaison_toolkit.php

NAEHCY's Frequently Asked Questions http://www.naehcy.org/dl/faq.pdf

Appendix D of the data collection guide, a compilation of tips that State Coordinators have used to assist their LEAs with federal data collection.
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/data_guide_08-09.pdf

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC), a non-profit professional association committed to ensuring success for all students through staff development and school improvement. http://www.nsdc.org.

Homeless education websites from other states on the NCHE website
http://center.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php

Appendix E-1. Template for Local Homeless Liaisons' Important Contacts

Contact	Phone; E-mail; Web site	Type of support
State Coordinator		
NCHE helpline	**1-800-308-2145 (toll-free) or** homeless@serve.org	Technical assistance
NCHE listserv	http://center.serve.org/nche/listserv.php	Requesting and sharing information
NAEHCY	http://www.naehcy.org	work occurring in other states, legislative updates, conference opportunities
Local		
Title I		
School Nutrition		
Transportation		
Special Education (including Child Find)		
Truancy		
Enrollment		
Preschool (including Head Start and Early Childhood Special Education)		
HUD Local Continuum of Care		
Local Shelters		
Homeless Coalition Partners		
Housing Coalition Partners		
Child Welfare Agencies		
United Way		
Salvation Army		

Top 5 of Title X

5 Documents to Read:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

5 Handouts to Distribute:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

5 People to Know in Your District:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

5 Audiences for Training:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

5 Resources to Utilize:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

5 Action Steps After this Training:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Top 5 of Title X

5 Documents to Read:

1. Local Liaison Toolkit
2. Intro to Homelessness Brief
3. Determining Eligibility Document
4. 100 FAQs of McKinney-Vento
5. Unaccompanied Youth Brief

5 Resources to Utilize:

1. Colorado Department of Education
2. Other Liaisons
3. National Center for Homeless Educ.(NCHE)
4. National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)
5. College Invest (for CO's Higher Educ. Single Points of Contact for Unaccompanied Youth)

5 Handouts to Distribute:

1. Enrollment Cards/Forms
2. Brochures/Posters/Flyers
3. Homeless Rights Handout
4. Resource Cards
5. School Toolkits

5 People to Know in Your District:

1. Title I Coordinator
2. Director of Transportation
3. Head of Enrollment
4. Head of Nutrition Services
5. October Count and Other Data People

5 (+ 1) Audiences for Training:

1. Secretaries/Registrars/Enrollment Staff
2. Title I Staff
3. Principals, Superintendents and other Administrators
4. Social Workers and School counselors
5. Teachers
6. Nurses

5 Action Steps After this Training:

1. Develop an Enrollment Form (be sure it includes data collection for unaccompanied youth)
2. Create a Training Schedule with Target Audiences (It is often helpful to have a first tier and second tier training schedule)
3. Make an appointment with your Title I Coordinator (discuss your District's Title I plan to serve homeless students and the level of reserved homeless set-asides)
4. Meet with your Data tracking folks
5. Hang posters in all school sites and community venue

Appendix E-3. Sample Technical Assistance Logs

Date		Summary of Discussion	Follow up?
To/From			
Phone #			
Division/ Program			
Issue			
Summary of Assistance/ Materials Provided			

Date		Summary of Discussion	Follow up?
To/From			
Phone #			
Division/ Program			
Issue			
Summary of Assistance/ Materials Provided			

Caller		City/ Region	
Phone #		Division	
Title/Role		Date Resolved	
Date			

- [ ] General Information
- [ ] Enrollment
- [ ] Access to Services
- [ ] Collab./Resources/Referrals
- [ ] assistance for another state
- [ ] national level assistance
- [ ] budget/project activities
- [ ] proposal preparation
- [ ] other fiscal questions

- [ ] LEA responsibilities
- [ ] local policies
- [ ] data collection
- [ ] definition of homeless

- [ ] identification
- [ ] duration of homelessness
- [ ] verify homeless/eligibility
- [ ] residency

- [ ] physical/immunizations
- [ ] guardianship
- [ ] school records
- [ ] immigration
- [ ] previous expulsion

- [ ] school of origin (SOO)
- [ ] poor attendance/misbehavior
- [ ] transportation

- [ ] M-V Subgrantees
- [ ] ARRA
- [ ] NAEHCY
- [ ] LeTendre
- [ ] foreclosure
- [ ] Research questions
- [ ] preschool
- [ ] unaccompanied youth
- [ ] foster care
- [ ] immigration
- [ ] special education/eligibility
- [ ] Title I and other federal programs

- [ ] nutrition services
- [ ] med/dent/health referrals
- [ ] mentoring
- [ ] school supplies/clothing
- [ ] tutoring
- [ ] summer school
- [ ] family violence-safety

- [ ] community-school communication
- [ ] housing support referral
- [ ] HOPE Publications/resources
- [ ] statistics/history/background
- [ ] training-regional requests/seminar

- [ ] written notification
- [ ] dispute resolution procedure

Details & Assistance, Materials, Guidance, Referrals Provided

Follow up

Appendix E-4. Potential Pitfalls and Possible Solutions for Liaison Training

Potential Pitfalls	Possible Solutions
Resistant liaisons who see their new responsibilities as a burden	– Maintain a focus on the student—most educators choose the field because they want to improve the lives of children. – Acknowledge the challenges while highlighting how compliance has the potential to improve educational experiences for all children.
Liaisons with no background in homelessness	– Include cases studies and awareness-building activities to build context. – Pair "seasoned" and new liaisons during training. – Consider separate trainings for liaisons with varying experience. – Differentiate group activities based on levels of experience.
Limited staff capacity at LEA; % FTE allocated to liaison position is not adequate	– Consider letter or other communication with liaison's supervisor/program director outlining LEA responsibilities, and the importance of compliance with McKinney-Vento and Title I requirements – Ask that the supervisor be present for local monitoring visits, and/or other site visits to LEA. – Include capacity requirement in applications for McKinney-Vento or other grants awarded by SEA.
Low attendance at trainings	– Explore possibility of assigning certification/relicensure points for participation. – Analyze convenience of times and locations. – "Piggy-back" with other training/conference events that attract the needed audience. – Explore possibility of making training attendance a state-level requirement. – Call the meetings mandatory compliance meetings. – Hold regional meetings so that LLs don't have far to travel; host webinars for the same reason.
Training sessions that tend to get derailed by discussion of individual problems and/or worst case scenarios	– Maintain a "parking lot" flipchart page of issues that can be discussed later, if time allows or addressed through subsequent mailings/trainings. – Remind participants that "worst case scenarios" are infrequent and redirect to most common situations as quickly as possible. (Seasoned liaisons who can support such comments are extremely helpful here.) – Invite problematic participants to discuss the issue with you later.

Appendix E-5. Quick Tips for Presenters

Power of 3: Getting the Point Across

Many practiced public speakers ranging from pastors to politicians repeat important points three times. They introduce the points in the opening, elaborate on each during the presentation, and summarize each in the closing statements.

Time Use

Think of the presentation time being divided into three parts: an introduction, explanation/ interaction, and wrap-up. In general, 25% of the time is spent on the introduction, 25% on the wrap-up, and 50% of the time on the explanation.

Handouts

- People read handouts when they get them, so give time to look over the materials before launching into your presentation or immediately asking participants to look for or do something in the handout.
- Assure participants that information on the slides is included in the handouts so they will not have to spend time during the presentation taking lots of notes.

Participant Involvement

A quick activity, demonstration of technique, or non-threatening question can enhance audience participation.

Slide Presentation

Prepare slides that all participants can see by:

- Using a plain font (such as Times Roman, Helvetica, or Arial)
- Selecting a large font size (18 point or larger)
- Including no more than 8 lines of text per slide

Movement

Limit your movement when speaking. Some participants may be very distracted if you "talk with your hands" or play with items in your pockets.

Information

- If referencing a book, know the title, author, and ISBN number—people always ask.
- Provide contact data: phone number, e-mail address, or mailing address.

Adult Learners

Adult learners are different from students in K–12 classrooms.

Adult learners are responsible for their own learning, and they seek ways to fill that need.

Adult learners are involved in workshops for a variety of reasons such as:

- Professional benefit
- Benefits to their students
- Mandatory attendance requirement
- Personal interest

Adult learners are professionals in their field and can benefit from both the presentation and the opportunity to interact with colleagues.

Participants like to leave knowing how they can affect positive change. One way to do this is to offer participants something that they can try immediately when they get back to school. It should be fairly easy to implement with few, if any, materials needed.