



“10 in 10” Orientation Tutorial for New State Coordinators

Module 2: Understanding
the Definition of Homeless



10 10-Minute Modules to Orient You to Your New Position



About the “10 in 10” Module Series



NCHE’s “10 in10” module series for new State Coordinators for homeless education

- ❑ Provides 10 short modules that cover essential topics to orient you to your new position;
- ❑ Is based on information in NCHE’s more comprehensive *State Coordinators’ Handbook* available for download at http://center.serve.org/nche/pr/sc_hb_2010.php;
- ❑ Includes links to additional resources; and
- ❑ Includes Questions to Consider and a Wrap Up to reinforce key points and help you develop your work plan.



Module 2: Overview



In Module 2, new State Coordinators will learn about

- ❑ The definition of *homeless* in the McKinney-Vento Act,
- ❑ Clarifications of parts of the definition, and
- ❑ Strategies for determining eligibility.

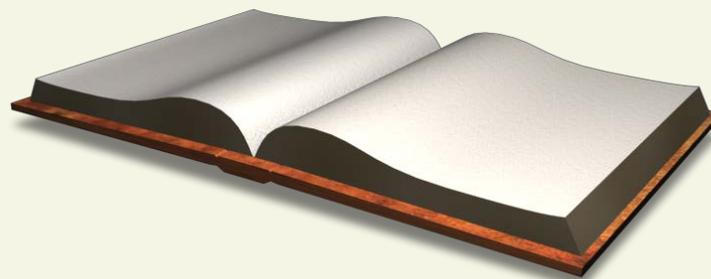




Why Review the McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless?



- ❑ Determining eligibility is one of the key tasks of local homeless education liaisons; State Coordinators must ensure that local liaisons receive the training needed for the task.





Why Review the McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless?



- ❑ In most instances, a homeless family's or unaccompanied youth's circumstances will easily fit the McKinney-Vento definition of *homeless*, but in a number of cases, local liaisons will need the State Coordinator's assistance in applying the definition to the family's or youth's circumstances.
- ❑ Occasionally, eligibility for McKinney-Vento services will be the subject of a dispute; the State Coordinator usually plays a key role in the dispute process.



The McKinney-Vento Act

Definition of Homeless



The definition of *homeless* in the McKinney-Vento Act includes children and youth who lack a nighttime residence that is

- ❑ Fixed (stationary, permanent, not subject to change),
- ❑ Regular (used on a nightly basis), and
- ❑ Adequate (sufficient for meeting the physical and psychological needs typically met in a home environment).



The McKinney-Vento Act

Definition of Homeless



The definition continues with examples of situations that are fairly common among homeless families and youth, including children and youth

- ❑ Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- ❑ Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- ❑ Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- ❑ Abandoned in hospitals;
- ❑ Awaiting foster care placement.



The McKinney-Vento Act

Definition of Homeless



The definition's examples continue with children and youth:

- ❑ With a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- ❑ Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- ❑ Who are migratory children living in circumstances described above. [42 USC §11434a(2)]



Clarification: Sharing the Housing of Others (Doubled-Up)



- ❑ Not all doubled-up situations are considered homeless.
- ❑ Note the key phrase in the example in the definition: “sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.”
- ❑ To be eligible for McKinney-Vento services, a child or youth living doubled-up must have lost housing or experienced a crisis.



Clarification: Sharing the Housing of Others (Doubled-Up)



Helpful questions to ask to determine if the living arrangement would be considered homeless:

1. Why did the family or youth move in with another family?
2. Is this a long-term arrangement?
3. Is it a situation of mutual benefit or convenience to both parties?
4. Where would the doubling-up family or youth live if not able to stay with the host family?



Doubled up: Questions to Consider



Which of the following would you consider homeless?

- A. A single mother moved in with her mother because her mother can provide after-school care for her son and because her mother is getting older and needs some help.
- B. A family lost its housing due to a fire and moved in with relatives until the house is repaired.



Doubled up: Questions to Consider



- ❑ If you selected B, you are correct. The family is living doubled up due to loss of housing, and the situation is temporary.
- ❑ The living situation in A was a choice for convenience, and would not fit the definition of *homeless*, based on the information provided. The family's situation appears to be fixed, regular, and adequate.



Clarification: Unaccompanied Homeless Youth



- ❑ An unaccompanied youth is a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. [42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(6)]
- ❑ To be eligible for McKinney-Vento services, an unaccompanied youth must fit the definition of homeless in the McKinney-Vento Act.
- ❑ Note: not all unaccompanied youth are considered homeless; an unaccompanied youth is eligible for services only if he or she lacks a living situation that is fixed, regular, and adequate.



Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Questions to Consider



Which of the following youth is eligible for McKinney-Vento services?

- A. A youth moved in with a friend's family when his parents kicked him out of their home after he disclosed that he is gay. The friend's parents said he could stay for a week only.
- B. A youth has lived with his grandmother ever since his mother was incarcerated two years ago.



Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Questions to Consider



- ❑ The youth in example A would be considered eligible as an unaccompanied homeless youth. He was kicked out of his home and his current living situation is temporary.
- ❑ The youth in example B, while unaccompanied, would most likely not be considered eligible since his living situation appears stable with his grandmother.





Clarification: Awaiting Foster Care Placement



- ❑ A child or youth in foster care is not considered homeless; a child awaiting foster care placement is considered homeless.
- ❑ Awaiting foster care placement should be defined in terms of each state's or locality's process by which a child enters the child welfare system.
- ❑ Many state homeless education programs have developed policies that clarify how the awaiting foster care placement portion of the definition will be implemented within the state; you should explore whether your state has such a policy.



Clarification: Permanent Supportive Housing Programs



- ❑ Programs funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Housing and Urban Development often provide housing for families in programs such as Rapid Rehousing or Housing First.
- ❑ To determine eligibility of families in these housing programs, review the conditions of the family's housing.
 - Is it fixed, regular, and adequate?
 - Is the lease in the family's name?
 - Are there requirements that the family must meet to remain housed?



Clarification: Permanent Supportive Housing Programs



- Common practices for determining eligibility for McKinney-Vento services:
 - If the family is receiving support for its housing, determine the children eligible through the end of the school year.
 - Revisit the determination over the summer to see if the family has assumed all responsibility for its housing; if the family is no longer receiving housing support, the children would not be eligible for McKinney-Vento services for the upcoming school year.



Determining Eligibility According to the Definition



1. Gather as much information about the family's or youth's living situation as can be accomplished reasonably and lawfully.
2. Analyze the information.
 - Determine if the living situation fits one of the examples in the definition.
 - If not, use "fixed, regular, and adequate" as guiding principles.
3. Make a determination.
 - If unsure, discuss with colleagues, another State Coordinator, or NCHE staff.



Links to Resources



- ❑ NCHE's brief – *Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services:*
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det_elig.pdf
- ❑ NCHE's webinar – *Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services:*
www.serve.org/nche/web/group.php



Wrap Up



Upon completing Module 2, you should be able to answer the following questions:

1. What are the three main criteria for determining homelessness by the McKinney-Vento definition of *homeless*?
2. Under what circumstances would a family living doubled up be considered homeless according to the McKinney-Vento definition?
3. What two conditions must a student meet to be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth under the McKinney-Vento Act?
4. What are three recommended steps for making a determination of McKinney-Vento eligibility?