

Appendix 11.B Collaborations Required by Law

The McKinney-Vento Act names several collaborative partners, either by program name or by general description (e.g., local housing agencies), with which local liaisons must work to meet the needs of homeless children and youth. Information about those partners, the laws that authorize their activities and collaborations, and descriptions of services they offer are listed below.

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act

Legal Authority: 79 P.L. 396, 60 Stat. 230

This Act establishes that homeless children are categorically eligible for free meal benefits under the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. These students and families do not have to complete an application for free meals. Rather, USDA policies allow for expedited enrollment of these students to ensure they receive meals quickly. More information, including related USDA memos, is available at center.serve.org/nche/legi/cn_wic.php and www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/.

Head Start

Legal Authority: Head Start Act, 42 U.S.C. § 9801 et seq.

Related Regulations: 45 C.F.R. Parts 1301 et seq.

The Head Start program provides grants to public and private nonprofit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to economically disadvantaged children (aged three through five) and their families. Additionally, the Early Head Start program, established in 1995, serves families with children aged birth to three. Congress amended the latest version of the Head Start Act in 2007, adding many new provisions related to homeless children including

- adopting the McKinney-Vento Act's definition of homeless;
- qualifying homeless children as automatically eligible for Head Start services;
- mandating that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issue regulations that require Head Start agencies to
 - identify and prioritize homeless children for enrollment;

- allow homeless families to apply to, enroll in, and attend Head Start programs while required documents are obtained within a reasonable time frame; and
- establish coordination between local Head Start programs and local homeless liaisons.

Guidance issued by the Head Start Bureau encourages Head Start grantees to target homeless families wherever possible. A memorandum related to this is available on the NCHE website at

http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/hhs_preschool_memo.pdf.

Recommendations for increasing early childhood education services for homeless children, including collaborating with State Coordinators and local liaisons are in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Dear Colleague letter. It can be downloaded at

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ece/acf_homeless_letter.pdf.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Programs

Legal Authority: Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA), 42 U.S.C. § 5601 et seq.

The RHYA authorizes three programs that address the needs of runaway youth and youth experiencing homelessness. A brief description of the three programs is provided below.

- 1) Basic Center Programs meet the immediate needs of runaway and homeless youth by providing emergency shelter, food, clothing, counseling, and referrals for health care. These shelters can serve youth under 18 years old for up to 21 days. To learn more, see the fact sheet available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource/bcp-fact-sheet>.
- 2) Transitional Living Programs provide long-term residential services to help homeless youth ages 16 through 21 successfully transition to self-sufficient living. A fact sheet on Transitional Living Programs funded by the RHYA is available at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource/tlp-fact-sheet>.
- 3) Street Outreach Programs offer outreach, services, and referrals to youth living on the street in order to move them into stable housing and prepare them for independence. By achieving these

goals, the program also prevents sexual abuse and exploitation. The fact sheet on street outreach programs is available online at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource/sop-fact-sheet>.

In addition to the mandates in the McKinney-Vento Act that require collaboration on the part of liaisons and districts, Basic Center and Transitional Living Programs are required by the RHYA to coordinate with McKinney-Vento programs in school districts. The *Family and Youth Service Bureau Information Memorandum No. 1-2006* provides information regarding collaboration between local homeless liaisons and RHYA programs; it is available online at http://archive.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/aboutfysb/McKinney-Vento_IM.pdf.

In addition to the housing assistance provided through the RHYA, the Act also funds a national communications system, the National Runaway Safeline. The communication system helps homeless and runaway youth by providing crisis intervention, referrals, communication with youths' families, and emergency transportation home after a youth has run away. National Runaway Safeline assistance is also available for youth who are contemplating running away. While the Safeline has long been known for operating a crisis line for youth (1-800-RUNAWAY), the organization now has the option for youth to chat online with staff as well. Liaisons may benefit by visiting the Safeline website, as it has a number of publications, including a runaway prevention curriculum, which could be used to raise awareness and provide training. The website is located at <http://www.1800runaway.org/>.

Local Social Services or Human Services Agencies

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds can be used to help families avoid homelessness. The funds can be used for short-term assistance, such as rent or utility payments, without triggering the 60 month lifetime limit for assistance. As long as the funds are used to pay crisis related, non-recurring expenses, they can be used by a family more than once during a year. For example, a family could receive assistance for overdue rent, a car repair, and to bring utilities current all within the same year. A memorandum issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services discusses this issue in more detail and may be downloaded at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/resource/tanf-acf-im-2013-01>.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamp Program, helps people with low incomes buy food. Although it is a federal government program, SNAP is administered by state or local agencies. The Food Research and Action Center has information targeted specifically for homeless persons, including youth, about services available through SNAP. The information can be accessed online at <http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/snapfood-stamps/homeless-persons-rights-under-the-snapsnapfood-stamp-program/>. Please note, this program is not the same as the USDA school meals program; instead it provides meals for both families and children outside of the school setting.

The John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program serves current and former foster care youth. The goal is to help them achieve self-sufficiency through education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support, and connections to caring adults. Among other things, the program can offer vouchers to cover education and housing expenses for youth who qualify. To learn more about the program, visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/chafee-foster-care-program>.

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD currently administers seven programs dedicated to ending or preventing homelessness across the entire U.S. population. They also collaborate with other federal agencies for similar programs and administer the funding for several mainstream resource programs that provide resources to low income persons in addition to those experiencing homelessness.

Mainstream Resources

Services offered through the mainstream resource programs vary based on the goals and scope of the programs. The Section 8 Voucher Program is an example of a mainstream resource program operated by HUD. Collaboration on the part of liaisons with local operators of these programs, such as the Home Investment Partnership (HOME) Program, has led to housing opportunities for families identified as homeless by LEAs. To learn more about mainstream resource

programs, visit

<http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewMainstreamPrograms>.

Continuum of Care (CoC)

The purpose of the CoC in any community is to establish a community-wide response for ending and preventing homelessness. Federal funds are available for housing and homelessness related activities. As it is to represent the breadth and depth of a community, the CoC membership should include nonprofit homeless service providers, service providers for victims, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons.

Contacts for each CoC are provided online at the following website:

<http://www.hudhre.info/index.cfm?do=viewCocContacts>.

Each CoC is charged with identifying resources and areas of need and developing a plan for serving homeless persons in their area. This planning document will contain much of the community information that schools will need to effectively serve homeless students by providing referrals. In addition, CoCs and their agency members are required to collaborate with the school district's local liaison to ensure the educational needs of children and youth are considered. This includes placing families in shelters or other housing close to the school of origin when possible.

Communities that receive CoC funds have participated in an extensive needs assessment, including the identification of existing resources, agencies, and services. Other potential sources for this valuable information include state interagency councils on homelessness, as most states have a state level council that mirrors local CoCs.

Institutions of Higher Education

Legal Authority: College Cost Reduction and Access Act, P.L. 100-84

Financial aid administrators are directed to obtain verification of an unaccompanied homeless youth's status from liaisons, if possible, when determining the financial aid available to an unaccompanied homeless youth. A verification form for financial aid administrators can be downloaded at http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/faa_det_tool.pdf. Additionally,

liaisons can download a template verification letter to indicate a student's homeless status at http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/images/dl/uy_fafsa_verif_12.doc.