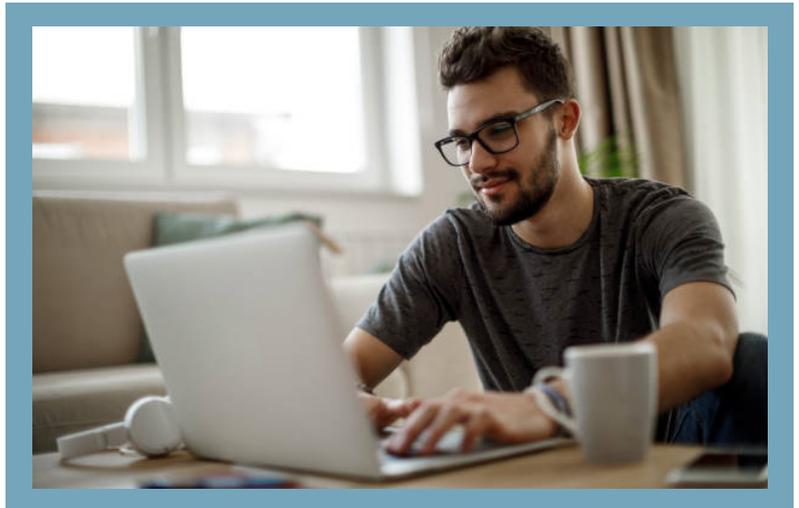


National Center for Homeless Education

<https://nche.ed.gov/>



State Homeless Education Websites: Statutory Requirements and Recommended Practices

This tip sheet:

- provides information on state educational agency homeless education website elements required under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and
- recommends best practices for developing an SEA homeless education website that meets statutory requirements in a user-friendly manner.

Introduction

For more than two decades, state educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) have maintained homeless education websites featuring information and data about their students experiencing homelessness. Yet, it was only with the 2015 reauthorization of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act) [42 U.S.C. §11431 et seq.], as amended by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, that federal law required each SEA to publicly post two specific pieces of information: an annually updated count of the number of homeless children and youth identified in the state [42 U.S.C. §11432(f)(1)(A)],¹ and an annually updated contact list of local homeless education liaisons (local liaisons) in LEAs [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(B)]. While the statute does not require that these two pieces of information be

¹ The identified student count should be updated annually to reflect the latest certified statewide homeless student enrollment total verified by the U.S. Department of Education; this verification usually occurs within one year after the school year or reporting period closes on June 30.

McKinney-Vento SEA Website Requirements

(statutory excerpts)

State coordinators for homeless education shall:

- gather and make publicly available reliable, valid, and comprehensive information on the number of homeless children and youths identified in the state, which shall be posted annually on the state educational agency's website [42 U.S.C. §11432(f)(1)(A)]; and
- publish an annually updated list of local homeless education liaisons within the state on the state educational agency's website [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(B)].

housed on the SEA website in a particular location or manner, E-6 in the U.S. Department of Education’s (ED) [Education for Homeless Children and Youths \(EHCY\) Program Non-Regulatory Guidance](#) recommends that each SEA have a homeless education website where this information can be easily located (U.S. Department of Education, 2018, p. 13).

Additionally, Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [20 U.S.C. §6301 et seq.], as amended, now requires that SEA and LEA annual report cards include certain homeless-specific data elements [20 U.S.C. §1111(h)(1); 20 U.S.C. §1111(h)(2)]. To verify compliance with this, ED staff check SEA websites for the annually updated performance data and graduation rates for homeless students.

This tip sheet shares recommendations for SEAs to consider as they seek to design a website that not only complies with statutory requirements but also meets the needs of the children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.

Considerations for the Homeless Student Data Count

To ensure both statutory compliance and ease of use for web visitors, SEAs may wish to reference the following checklist of considerations when posting the annually updated homeless student count to the SEA website:

- Is the homeless student count posted on the SEA’s homeless education/McKinney-Vento program website, even if it is also posted on a different SEA website and/or included in the annual state report card?
- Is the homeless student count easy to locate, including through a simple search using the SEA website search feature?
- If the SEA has a website focused on broader data elements, does the website also include the homeless student count?
- Is the homeless student count presented in a way that is easy to understand, for example, by using a data visualization tool such as a graph, chart, dashboard, and/or map?

In addition to the statutorily required student count, SEAs may wish to make additional data points, such as homeless student academic achievement, available on their homeless education websites.

Considerations for the Local Homeless Education Liaison Directory

To ensure both statutory compliance and ease of use for web visitors, SEAs may wish to reference the following checklist of considerations when posting the annually updated local liaison contact list:

- Is the annually updated contact list easy to locate on the SEA website through a simple search using the SEA website search feature?
- Is the annually updated contact list easy to locate on the SEA homeless education website, e.g., as the first link on the page, in a clearly marked sidebar, or in another obvious location?
- Is the annually updated contact list easily accessible and posted clearly on the SEA’s homeless education/McKinney-Vento program website, even if it also is posted on a different SEA website?
- Can the annually updated contact list be accessed with a single click?
- Is the annually updated contact list labeled clearly in a way that the average web visitor would understand?
- Is the date when the contact list was last updated posted on the website?
- Can web visitors who may not be familiar with your state easily search for the local liaison contact list in multiple ways such as by county, district, name of school, city, and/or town?

Title I, Part A Reporting Requirements on Students Experiencing Homelessness for State Report Cards

Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires SEAs to make annually updated data on homeless students publicly available as part of their state report cards. The report cards must include performance data on state reading/language arts, mathematics, and science assessments and high school graduation rates of homeless students [20 U.S.C. §1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) and 20 U.S.C. §1111(h)(1)(C)(iii)(II)]. While the ESEA does not impose a deadline for annually publishing SEA report cards, most SEAs update state report card websites in the fall after the school year ends (e.g., SY 2019-20 data would be posted by December 2020). State coordinators for homeless education (state coordinators) should know where to locate this data and verify that it matches the homeless education data reviewed and submitted to ED on behalf of the SEA's McKinney-Vento program.

Other SEA Homeless Education Website Considerations

To ensure both statutory compliance and ease of use for web visitors, SEAs may wish to reference the following checklist of general considerations when designing their homeless education website:

- Does the website include the contact information of the state coordinator?
- Does the SEA website include links to the website of the [National Center for Homeless Education \(NCHE\)](#) (which operates the U.S. Department of Education's federal homeless education technical assistance center) where web visitors may access [data](#) for every state?
- Does the website include links to other organizations serving children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness?
- Does the website link to key U.S. Department of Education webpages, including the [Education for Homeless Children and Youths program website](#) and the [ED Data Express website](#)?
- Can the website be located easily through a simple search using keywords like homeless, homeless education, or McKinney-Vento in the SEA's website search function?
- Does the website provide information on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, including the rights of eligible children and youth?
- Does the website share information about the state McKinney-Vento [dispute resolution process](#), including providing a model LEA-level process?
- Does the website share information about upcoming homeless education and related training and professional development opportunities?
- Does the website link to other relevant resources for children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness (e.g., housing, public benefits, and other relevant supports)?
- Does the website share information in a manner that is easily accessible, searchable, and understandable for a variety of stakeholders, including students, parents, educators, and community partners?

Summary

While the McKinney-Vento Act only requires SEAs to post and annually update a few discrete pieces of information to their websites, it is recommended that every SEA build a homeless education website. The website should provide the McKinney-Vento statutory requirements as well as meet the specific needs of the state's children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness and the LEAs that serve them.

References

U.S. Department of Education [ED]. (2018). *Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program non-regulatory guidance*. Retrieved from <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/07/160240ehcyguidanceupdated082718.pdf>

SEA Website Examples



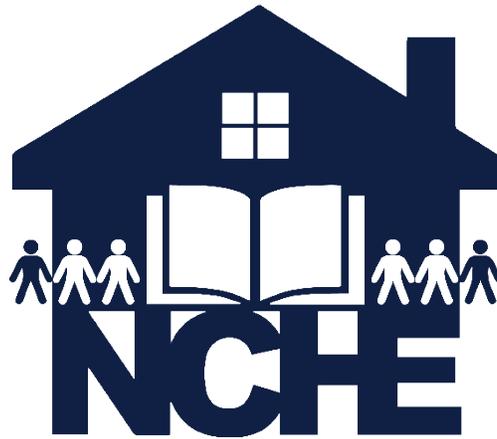
Idaho: On the Idaho State Department of Education's homeless education website, the local homeless education liaison directory is one of the first pieces of information visible to visitors. The directory is easily accessible and can be downloaded into a searchable Excel document. The website clearly highlights the required data elements related to homeless education but also provides additional information including a video on homelessness in Idaho.



Washington: The Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's website provides information on the required data elements for students experiencing homelessness. The data on the website can be downloaded as an Excel document by school district and/or by county. The website also provides a link for web visitors to access a list of current McKinney-Vento subgrant recipients.



Florida: The Florida Department of Education's homeless education website provides a substantial amount of information on McKinney-Vento. This includes the rights of students experiencing homelessness, required data elements, contact information for the McKinney-Vento program and the local homeless education liaisons as well as information on "hot topics" in the state. The website also includes Florida's McKinney-Vento goals.



This tip sheet was developed by:
National Center for Homeless Education
800-308-2145 | homeless@serve.org
<https://nche.ed.gov>

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