



## MCKINNEY-VENTO LAW INTO PRACTICE BRIEF SERIES

### Rural Transportation for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

#### This National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) brief:

- provides strategies to improve transportation access for children and youth experiencing homelessness (CYEH) in rural communities;
- addresses how to build strong partnerships to ensure consistent transportation services in rural communities; and
- explains how to leverage federal and local funds to support sustainable transportation options, including community-based strategies, in rural communities.

## INTRODUCTION

Access to reliable transportation remains one of the most persistent challenges facing CYEH in rural communities across the United States. Rural areas often span vast geographic distances—sometimes requiring bus routes of over 50 miles—and typically lack any public transit infrastructure. Weather conditions, unpaved roads, and seasonal accessibility further complicate transportation in rural communities. These challenges can make it difficult for highly mobile students to consistently attend and participate in school and extracurricular activities.

It is important to note that one of the requirements of [Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#) (McKinney-Vento Act) is to ensure equitable access to education and related support services for CYEH.

#### THE MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT DEFINITION OF HOMELESS

(McKinney-Vento Act section 725(2))

The term “homeless children and youth”—

- A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and
- B. includes –
  - i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
  - ii. children and youths who have 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;
  - iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
  - iv. migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

For more information on eligibility determinations, see NCHE's webpage of resources on [Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Services](#).

Specifically, the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program under the McKinney-Vento Act allows for the provision of transportation home from the school of origin after extracurricular activities when the lack of transportation would otherwise prevent a CYEH from participating. This provision ensures that students are not forced to miss these important experiences simply because they cannot take the regular school bus.

Serving approximately one in five public school students, rural schools frequently operate with fewer resources and face unique barriers such as staff shortages, long bus routes, and limited access to support services (ED, 2025). These challenges are compounded for CYEH, who may live in remote or unstable housing situations. According to the latest data from the U.S. Department of Education, over 1.3 million students were identified as experiencing homelessness during the 2022-23 school year, with rural districts reporting some of the highest identification rates relative to their total student populations (NCHE, 2024). For these students, school stability is critical—not only for their academic success but also for their emotional and social well-being.

## FEDERAL DEFINITION OF A RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) classifies all territory in the U.S. into four types: City, Suburban, Town, and Rural. The federal definition of a rural school district is based on the NCES's classification system. Under this system, rural districts are classified into three subtypes:

- **Rural - Fringe:** Territory outside an urban area that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more, as well as territory outside an urban area that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban area with a population of less than 50,000.
- **Rural - Distant:** Territory outside an urban area that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more, as well as territory outside an urban area that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban area with a population of less than 50,000.
- **Rural - Remote:** Territory outside an urban area that is more than 25 miles from an urban area with a population of 50,000 or more and is also more than 10 miles from an urban area with a population of less than 50,000 (NCES, 2024).



## RURAL EDUCATION AND HOMELESSNESS: KEY FACTS

- In fall 2019, about 27,500 (28%) of U.S. public schools were in rural areas (NCES, 2023).
- These schools served 9.8 million students, or 19% of total public school enrollment (NCES, 2023).
- In the same school year, approximately 162,000 students experiencing homelessness were enrolled in rural school districts across the U.S., which is almost 13% of students experiencing homelessness (NCHE, 2023).



**This brief is organized into four sections and one appendix.**

1. [The Importance of Rural Transportation](#)
2. [Strategies for State Coordinators \(SCs\) and Local Liaisons \(LLs\)](#)
3. [Rural Transportation Spotlight: Lincoln County School District, Oregon](#)
4. [Transportation Strategies for Rural Transportation Leaders](#)
5. [Appendix: Transportation Strategies for Rural School Districts](#)

## 1. THE IMPORTANCE OF RURAL TRANSPORTATION

Research studies have demonstrated a link between high mobility due to homelessness and poor school performance (Cunningham et al., 2010; Obradovic et al., 2009). Building on this evidence, transportation to the school of origin<sup>1</sup> is a cornerstone of educational stability for CYEH and a legal obligation under the McKinney-Vento Act. The Act requires local educational agencies (LEAs, often referred to as school districts) to ensure school stability by providing transportation to the school of origin and mandates that CYEH receive services comparable to those offered to their housed peers (McKinney-Vento Act section 722(g)(1)(J)(iii)(I)).

The McKinney-Vento Act's transportation requirements extend beyond basic school access. The McKinney-Vento Act states explicitly that CYEH have the right to fully participate in school, including extracurricular activities<sup>2</sup> (McKinney-Vento Act section 722(g)(1)(F)(iii)). Extracurricular activities provide CYEH with a sense of stability, belonging, and purpose, helping them build confidence, develop life skills, and stay connected to supportive communities. When lack of transportation creates a barrier to participation in school-administered extracurricular activities, the McKinney-Vento Act requires LEAs to provide transportation to and from those activities to ensure equal access (ED, 2018, p. 29). There are multiple ways that an LEA can meet this requirement. For example, the LEA can partner with community members who volunteer to drive students to these activities. This approach to educational access is critical in rural areas where extracurricular activities may be the primary source of social connection and skill development for isolated youth.

To support this approach, McKinney-Vento Act section 712(2) requires LEAs and state educational agencies (SEAs) to regularly review and revise policies that may create barriers to identification, enrollment, attendance, or success in school, particularly those related to transportation logistics in rural settings. These statutory requirements highlight the critical role of collaboration across agencies and communities in ensuring that transportation is not a barrier to educational continuity.

In rural communities, implementing these requirements can be particularly complex. Rural areas face unique infrastructure challenges that complicate service delivery. Students may live many miles from their school of origin, public transportation is scarce or nonexistent, and backup transportation options are virtually nonexistent due to a lack of taxi services or rideshare availability.

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<sup>1</sup> The term "school of origin" refers to the school a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled, including preschool (McKinney-Vento Act section 722(g)(3)(1)(i)).

<sup>2</sup> For more information, consult NCHE's briefs [Ensuring Full Participation in Extracurricular Activities for Students Experiencing Homelessness](#) and [Extracurricular Activities and Transportation for Students Experiencing Homelessness](#).

Factors unique to rural geography magnify transportation challenges: students may live on farms or in housing across county lines; temporary housing options are often limited to a single motel or campground per county; and implementing provisions may involve coordinating long-distance routes across county lines that involve navigating unpaved or poorly maintained roads.

LEAs employ a range of transportation models to meet student needs, with LEA-operated transportation (e.g., school buses) being the most common. In this model, the LEA maintains full control over staffing, routing, and vehicle maintenance. This centralized approach offers consistency and direct oversight, which is particularly beneficial for ensuring compliance with federal and state requirements related to school transportation, such as the school of origin transportation requirements outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act. In addition to LEA-operated services, rural LEAs may also utilize contracted transportation providers or offer mileage reimbursement to families when traditional bus routes are not feasible due to geographic isolation or low student density. These alternative methods help to ensure that all students, regardless of location, have access to reliable transportation.

Another factor to consider is when CYEH cross LEA boundaries—a common occurrence in sparsely populated regions. In such cases, LEAs must coordinate transportation services to maintain uninterrupted access to education.

## 2. STRATEGIES FOR STATE COORDINATORS (SCS) AND LOCAL LIAISONS (LLS)

State coordinators (SCs),<sup>3</sup> local liaisons (LLs),<sup>4</sup> and community partners play a critical role in implementing transportation strategies that support CYEH, and practitioners in rural LEAs must evaluate and address the unique challenges that CYEH experience in their communities. Effective planning begins with a thorough needs assessment to identify service gaps and prioritize at-risk students. For a sample needs assessment tool, refer to [NCHE's Local Educational Agency Informal Needs Assessment](#).

Strong partnerships with neighboring LEAs—and, in some cases, neighboring SEAs where LEAs border state lines—are also essential for coordinating cross-LEA transportation. Such partnerships are particularly important when students must travel long distances to remain in their school of origin. Clear inter-LEA agreements and memoranda of understanding (MOUs) help define roles, responsibilities, and cost-sharing arrangements, ensuring uninterrupted transportation and alignment with federal requirements.

### EXAMPLE OF MOU



The San Diego County Office of Education developed the [Transportation of McKinney-Vento Students Across LEA Boundaries MOU](#), which outlines the legal framework and collaborative responsibilities of participating LEAs in supporting the educational rights of CYEH. In addition to summarizing the legal rights of students to remain in their school of origin and outlining shared responsibilities and cost agreements to ensure consistent access to education, the MOU defines how participating LEAs will collaborate to provide transportation across district lines.

While San Diego County is not typically considered rural, this MOU offers a valuable model for rural LEAs, which often face unique challenges such as geographic isolation, limited public transportation, and higher per-student transportation costs. MOUs can help rural LEAs formalize inter-district collaboration, clarify cost-sharing responsibilities, and establish efficient transportation plans before needs arise, ultimately reducing delays and ensuring prompt access to education.

The goal of this agreement is to ensure that no student is denied access to education due to a lack of transportation, and that LEAs work together efficiently and equitably to uphold the rights guaranteed under federal law.

<sup>3</sup> Every SEA is required to designate a state coordinator for homeless education who oversees the implementation of the EHCY grant program in LEAs throughout the state (McKinney-Vento Act section 722(d)(3)).

<sup>4</sup> Every LEA is required to designate a local homeless education liaison who oversees the implementation of the EHCY grant program in schools throughout the LEA (McKinney-Vento Act section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii)).

Funding transportation for CYEH in rural areas requires a strategic blend of federal resources and local planning. The EHCY program provides competitive subgrants to LEAs that can be used for a range of authorized activities, including transportation services (McKinney-Vento Act section 723(d)(5)). LEAs receiving subgrants may use these funds to defray the excess cost<sup>5</sup> of transporting CYEH. The excess cost is the difference between what an LEA normally spends to transport a student to school and the cost of transporting a homeless student to school. If the LEA provides transportation through a regular bus route, there is no excess cost. If the LEA provides special transportation only for the homeless student (e.g., through a private vehicle or transportation company), the entire cost can be considered excess. If the LEA must reroute buses to transport a homeless student enrolled in one of its schools, the additional cost of this rerouting can be considered an excess cost.

Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (ESEA section 1113(c)(3)(C)(ii)(II); McKinney-Vento Act section 722(g)(1)(J)(iii)) also provides an important funding stream. LEAs are required to coordinate with McKinney-Vento programs and reserve Title I funds—commonly referred to as the "homeless set-aside"—specifically to support CYEH. These funds may be used to provide services not ordinarily available to other students, including transportation to and from the school of origin. In addition to covering excess transportation costs, Title I funds may be used to support the arrangement of additional transportation providers for CYEH or other services that address transportation challenges in rural LEAs. For more information, refer to NCHE's brief [Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness under Title I, Part A](#).

Cost-effective and flexible transportation solutions are especially important in rural areas. Approaches such as gas cards, mileage reimbursement, and reasonable car repairs offer practical ways to directly support eligible students. These approaches are allowable under the EHCY program and related funding sources, such as Title I. Some LEAs have collaborated with local gas stations to offer discounted fuel cards for qualifying families. These strategies not only promote school attendance but also enable access to employment, healthcare, and other essential services. The [appendix](#) provides strategies intended to support rural LEAs in developing creative, flexible, and student-centered transportation solutions for CYEH.

Additional funding sources can further support transportation efforts. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds may be used to provide transportation for CYEH with disabilities if transportation is included as a related service in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Title IV, Part B of the ESEA, which authorizes 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC), can also support student transportation in before- and after-school programs. For more information

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<sup>5</sup>According to [Section J of the Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance](#) (Questions J-7 and J-8), when LEAs arrange special transportation for CYEH (rather than rerouting existing buses), the entire cost of these arrangements may count as excess cost eligible to be defrayed by subgrant funds.

regarding IDEA and the McKinney-Vento Act, refer to NCHE's brief [\*Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness Who Have Disabilities: Federal Provisions to Increase Access and Success\*](#). For more information regarding the 21st CCLC and McKinney-Vento Act EHCY programs, refer to the Collaborative Connections Fact Sheet [\*21st CCLC and McKinney-Vento EHCY Programs\*](#).

Finally, partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs), including nonprofits, faith-based groups, and social service agencies, can enhance transportation capacity. These organizations often have existing infrastructure, funding streams, or volunteer networks that can be leveraged to provide or supplement transportation for CYEH. This includes transportation not only to and from school during regular hours, but also for participation in after-school programs, extracurricular activities, and other educational opportunities. In some cases, CBOs may also be eligible to apply for grants or receive donations specifically earmarked for transportation assistance, expanding the reach and sustainability of these efforts. Local liaisons in rural LEAs should involve CBOs in their needs assessment routines to ensure that community partners are aware of student needs and resource gaps within the LEA.

### 3. RURAL TRANSPORTATION SPOTLIGHT: LINCOLN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, OREGON

[Lincoln County School District \(LCSD\)](#) serves a diverse and geographically expansive community along Oregon’s central coast, supporting approximately 4,600 students, including 892 who experienced homelessness in the 2024–25 school year. NCHE spoke with Mr. Woody Crobar, Homeless Liaison and Program Coordinator, and Ms. Natalia Aguilar, Special Programs Administrator, to learn more about how the district’s unique coastal and rural setting presents opportunities and challenges for transportation.

#### ***What unique transportation challenges does your rural district face when serving CYEH?***

One of the most significant challenges we face in Lincoln County is the sheer size of our district. Our county spans roughly 1,200 square miles—about the same size as the entire state of Rhode Island—and all of that is served by a single school district. Our schools are clustered along the coastal side of the county, which means we don’t often deal with inter-district transportation, but we do face substantial in-county travel barriers.

Because of the geography, some areas—especially East County—are quite remote, and that’s also where many of our more affordable housing options are located. This creates a situation where families experiencing homelessness may find housing far from their school of origin, leading to long transportation times. In some cases, roads that are passable by car aren’t suitable for buses, which forces us to take longer routes.

Another key challenge is staffing. We have a dedicated staff member in each of our four regional areas to build relationships with families and help navigate these decisions. However, our ability to provide transportation is also limited by the number of bus drivers we have and the complexity of the routes. For instance, last year we supported a family with six children across multiple grade levels and schools, which made coordinating transportation extremely challenging due to differing schedules and limited driver availability. Overall, our approach is highly individualized, and we work closely with families to find solutions that are both logistically feasible and in the best interest of the student.

#### ***How do you coordinate transportation services in light of these challenges?***

While we prioritize busing whenever possible, there are many situations where traditional routes are either too long or not feasible due to road conditions or scheduling conflicts. In those cases, we rely heavily on gas voucher assistance as a flexible and family-centered solution.

We have a gas card agreement system in place that allows families to receive \$25 gas vouchers based on student attendance. For example, if it takes a family four days of school attendance to use \$25 worth of gas, they can receive a new voucher after those four days. This system is managed by our regional staff—each of whom is assigned to one of our four geographic areas—who verify attendance and distribute the vouchers directly to families.

This approach not only supports transportation but also fosters regular check-ins between families and our staff. These check-ins are valuable touchpoints for building relationships, addressing barriers, and ensuring students are staying engaged in school. In many ways, the gas voucher system has become a key engagement tool, sometimes even more effective than the transportation support itself.

If a student receiving gas vouchers is not attending regularly, we revisit the transportation plan. Our agreement is attendance-based, so families must meet the attendance threshold before receiving additional support. In cases where attendance remains inconsistent, we may shift to a case management approach or explore alternative transportation options such as busing, depending on the family's circumstances. Ultimately, our goal is to remain flexible and responsive, using every tool available to reduce barriers and keep students connected to their education.

***Can you share more about how community partnerships support your transportation efforts and broader work with students experiencing homelessness?***

Community partnerships play a vital role in how we support students experiencing homelessness in Lincoln County. One of the most valuable aspects of our McKinney-Vento program is that it often serves as an early warning system. Because our definition includes families who are doubled up, we're often able to identify and support families before they reach a full crisis point—such as living in a car or becoming unsheltered. This early identification allows us to proactively connect families with resources, which can help them maintain stability and avoid deeper levels of housing insecurity.

We work closely with a range of community-based organizations, including several faith-based partners, to meet the diverse needs of our families. For example, the [Youth Emergency Housing Assistance \(YEHA\)](#) program is a key partner that has stepped in to help with urgent needs, such as paying for RV repairs for a family of six. Churches in the area contribute through targeted donations, such as hygiene products, school supplies, or general cash drives that we can use flexibly.

While we don't have formal partnerships with gas stations, we do maintain relationships with a few local stations where we regularly purchase gas cards. These cards are funded through a combination of McKinney-Vento subgrants, donations, and other grant funding. The donated funds are especially

helpful for covering unique or hard-to-categorize needs that fall outside the scope of traditional funding streams. We also use 21st CCLC funding to support McKinney-Vento transportation home from after-school programs when eligible students are enrolled.

These partnerships expand our capacity to meet transportation needs, allow us to respond quickly and creatively to challenges, and reinforce the idea that supporting students experiencing homelessness is a shared community responsibility.

***What advice do you have to offer to other rural districts navigating similar transportation barriers?***

My biggest piece of advice is to lean into community partnerships. If your school district is struggling with transportation, chances are that other agencies in your area—whether it's behavioral health, self-sufficiency programs, or charitable organizations—are facing similar challenges. Building strong relationships with those partners can open up new solutions and resources that you might not be able to access on your own.

It's also important to get involved in local transportation planning conversations. I've joined a few regional transportation groups, not just to advocate for our students, but to help shape systems that work better for everyone. Being in those spaces allows us to bring the lived experiences of our families into the planning process, and I've found that most people in those rooms genuinely want to make things better.

Internally, it's just as critical to know who your go-to people are—those who can help you troubleshoot, brainstorm, and advocate. Whether it's within your own department or across programs, having those trusted collaborators makes a huge difference.

Ultimately, it's all about relationships—with families, with colleagues, and with the broader community. The more connected you are, the more flexible and responsive you can be. And in rural districts, where resources are often stretched thin, that kind of collaboration isn't just helpful; it's essential.

## 4. TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES FOR RURAL TRANSPORTATION LEADERS

Transportation coordinators and directors within SEAs and LEAs are essential stakeholders in implementing strategies to ensure CYEH in rural areas have consistent access to education. Their work begins with identifying service gaps and designing flexible routing solutions tailored to local geography and student needs. In rural LEAs, flexible strategies—such as centralized pick-up points (e.g., community centers, fire stations), staggered schedules, or shared routes—can help reduce travel time and fuel costs while maintaining compliance with McKinney-Vento Act requirements. In addition, LEAs can facilitate ridesharing among families by coordinating carpools through mobile apps or community bulletin boards, helping to ensure that all students have reliable access to school and related activities.

Rural transportation leaders must navigate challenges that urban districts rarely face: determining vehicle capacity for long routes that may take over two hours round trip; ensuring driver safety on isolated rural roads; maintaining vehicles in areas with limited repair services; and coordinating with volunteer fire departments or emergency services familiar with remote locations where students may be staying.

Addressing driver shortages—a persistent issue in rural LEAs, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic—requires transportation coordinators and directors to employ rural-specific staffing approaches. These approaches include hiring retired farmers familiar with local geography, partnering with local businesses that employ commercial driver’s license (CDL) drivers, or cross-training school maintenance staff as backup drivers during peak need periods. LEAs may offer incentives such as signing bonuses, flexible work hours, or training stipends to attract and retain drivers. In some cases, contracting with local or regional third-party providers can help fill service gaps, particularly when traditional school bus routes are not feasible due to distance or terrain. These strategies are increasingly important as the national school bus driver shortage remains severe, with wages stagnating or declining in many areas, further complicating recruitment and retention efforts (Hickey et al., 2024).

Transportation coordinators and directors in rural LEAs may consider alternative transportation models to meet the needs of CYEH. One widely used approach involves contracting with private transportation providers. These services operate similarly to district-run systems but are managed externally. Companies such as HopSkipDrive, Zum, Kango, and EverDriven offer specialized student transportation services.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Department of Education does not endorse any specific provider, nor does NCHE.

Rural LEAs may also benefit from partnerships with regional or community-based transportation providers that understand the unique geography and needs of their area. These providers can offer flexible, locally tailored solutions, especially when traditional school bus routes are not feasible due to distance, terrain, or staffing shortages. While public transit systems are more common in urban districts, some rural areas may have limited access to regional transit options that could be leveraged creatively. However, using public transportation for student travel may raise concerns about safety, scheduling reliability, and accessibility, particularly for younger students or those with additional vulnerabilities. Transportation leaders should assess these options carefully, balancing logistical feasibility with student well-being.

To ensure that an LEA's transportation infrastructure effectively addresses the unique challenges that CYEH face, transportation leaders in rural LEAs need to build strong, collaborative relationships with the LEA's LL. These partnerships enable transportation staff to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences and specific barriers that CYEH encounter when accessing school and related services.

Likewise, LLs should actively engage LEA transportation leaders in their ongoing needs assessments and planning processes. This collaboration helps expose transportation-related challenges early and fosters the development of practical, student-centered, potential solutions. By working together, transportation leaders and LLs can formulate innovative strategies that meet program requirements and address student transportation needs, enabling full participation in school and school activities.

This brief includes an [appendix](#) outlining transportation strategies specifically designed to help CYEH in rural areas access education and essential services.

## ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION RESOURCES



These resources offer practical solutions and considerations for improving access to education and essential services. For more information about providing transportation for CYEH, including sample transportation agreements, please visit the following resources:

- [Section J of the Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program Non-Regulatory Guidance](#)
- NCHE's Resources by Topic webpage, [Transportation](#)
- NCHE's *Homeless Liaison Toolkit*, [Chapter 7: Transportation](#) and [Appendix 7.A: Memorandum of Understanding](#)
- NCHE's updated [Transporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#) brief
- National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services (NASDPTS) [2000 resolution](#) supporting transportation for CYEH

## CONCLUSION

Ensuring transportation for CYEH is not only a legal mandate under the McKinney-Vento Act but also a vital component of educational stability, especially in rural areas where infrastructure challenges are more pronounced. LEAs must adopt flexible, cost-effective, and collaborative strategies to meet these needs, leveraging both internal and external resources. The success of these efforts depends on thoughtful planning, strong relationships, and a shared commitment to removing barriers to education for CYEH. By strategically aligning transportation practices with federal requirements and local realities, rural LEAs can ensure that every student—regardless of housing status—has consistent access to their school of origin and the opportunity to thrive academically.

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## APPENDIX: TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES FOR RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The following strategies were compiled by the NCHE in March 2008, and then updated in 2025, drawing on the expertise of LLs, SCs, and state pupil transportation directors participating in a learning series focused on rural transportation challenges. These strategies are intended to support rural LEAs in developing creative, flexible, and student-centered transportation solutions for CYEH. While these ideas reflect promising practices from the field, all strategies should be reviewed for alignment with your state and local laws, regulations, and LEA policies related to CYEH transportation.

### **Navigating Geographic Challenges**

- Reroute buses to pass by motels, hotels, and transitional living homes in remote areas
- Coordinate transfers at neutral locations (vocational schools, county boundaries)
- Have parents transport children to designated bus stops to reduce route distances
- Use special education buses for greater routing flexibility in difficult terrain
- Calculate mileage reimbursements for families and LEA staff willing to drive long distances

### **Addressing Driver Shortages & Staffing**

- Collaborate with special education transportation contractors
- Contract with community members (with proper background checks)
- Arrange for LEA staff to transport CYEH with proper reimbursement
- Partner with local businesses that employ CDL drivers
- Offer incentives such as flexible hours for part-time drivers

### **Inter-LEA Coordination**

- Ensure dispatchers from different LEAs communicate directly
- Build on existing relationships from special education route coordination
- Review LEA maps together to identify efficient pick-up or transfer points
- Arrange bus-to-bus transfers at LEA boundaries
- Create formal inter-LEA agreements for cost-sharing
- Solicit LEA staff by sending out an all-staff email requesting assistance to transport CYEH
- Utilize the driver's education vehicle to pick up and drop off CYEH

### **Leveraging Community Resources**

- Partner with gas stations for voucher programs
- Collaborate with faith-based organizations and community agencies
- Use shelter or community vans (with proper insurance and driver qualifications)
- Find carpooling parents in rural communities
- Emphasize a small-town mentality: "We take care of our own"
- Engage retired staff and community members, such as tribal elders, to transport CYEH

### **Cost-Effective Solutions**

- Purchase "fuel only" cards from local gas stations
- Provide mileage reimbursement based on actual attendance
- Reduce "deadhead" miles by picking up CYEH en route to other assignments
- Work with Medicare or Medicaid transportation brokers
- Coordinate with the state department of transportation programs
- Have equipment dropped off or picked up for virtual class attendance only if transportation is not feasible

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Every state is required to have a state coordinator for homeless education and every school district is required to have a local homeless education liaison. These individuals oversee the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. To find out who your state coordinator is, visit the [NCHE website](http://nche.ed.gov).

For more information on issues related to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness, contact the NCHE helpline at 305-306-8495 or NCHE. [helpline@safalpartners.com](mailto:helpline@safalpartners.com).

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