

**Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE)**  
**Supports for Students Experiencing Homelessness and Unstable Housing**

**Implementation of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

The federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act addresses educational barriers and challenges created by homelessness by guaranteeing students experiencing homelessness the right to enroll in and attend school, and providing supports needed for school success. The law places the responsibility for ensuring the rights of homeless students on states and school districts. McKinney-Vento eligible students have the right to:

- receive a free, appropriate public education;
- enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment, or having missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness;
- enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents;
- continue attending the school of origin, or enroll in the local attendance area school if attending the school of origin is not in the best interest of the student or is contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth;
- receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested by the parent or guardian, or by the local liaison on behalf of an unaccompanied youth; and
- receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to each student's need.

To help ensure that all students in homeless situations are identified and supported, the Department works with schools to:

- raise awareness throughout the district/community on definition of homeless, rights required under the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and the role of the local liaison;
- conduct community assessments that include data on homelessness in the area; levels of poverty among families; trends in foreclosures, evictions, and the availability of affordable housing; and student mobility;
- review and revise (if appropriate) local policies and procedures to ensure they comply with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;
- provide targeted outreach through information sharing and gathering activities such as a housing questionnaire in enrollment packets to screen for possible McKinney-Vento eligibility;
- posting notices of the rights of students experiencing homelessness in the community in places where families and youth in homeless situations are likely to see them; and
- share McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act information (eligibility and services) in student handbooks and on school district websites.

Some common ways schools support the education of homeless students include: accessing free school meals; setting-up specialized transportation, if required; assisting with obtaining records and school health requirements for enrollment; assessing the children's academic needs and provide tutoring or other supports; ensuring the children have needed school supplies, backpacks, uniforms, clothing and other basic needs; waiving fees and removing barriers to students' participation in extracurricular activities; and, linking with community services.

### **CSDE ARP ESSER Plan for Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY)**

The Department received federal USDE approval of the ARP ESSER Plan for Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) on December 17, 2021. We have issued \$186,000 in existing McKinney-Vento funding and are in the process of issuing ARP-HCY grants to districts to assist in identifying and providing supports to students experiencing homelessness

#### **Focus: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act eligible students**

- Identification of students
- Provision of wrap-around services
- Ensuring full participation and engagement in school

#### **Funding:**

- ARP-HCY I: \$1.3 Million in competitive funding for LEAs
- ARP-HCY II: \$4.1 Million in immediate entitlement funding to LEAs

### **Public Outreach Campaign**

The Department is developing a comprehensive public outreach and awareness campaign focused upon the legal rights and supports for students experiencing housing instability and homelessness.