

Supporting Homeless and Foster Care Students Under Title I Quick Reference Guide - LEA Strategies to Support the Education Stability of Homeless Students



Overview:

Under the *Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015* (ESSA) the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento) was reauthorized. Students who are “awaiting foster care” were removed from the definition of homelessness and are now considered students in foster care. Similar, though not identical, rights for students in foster care were added to Title I, Part A of ESSA. High mobility and interrupted education are characteristics that both students in foster care and students who are homeless experience. ESSA strives to ensure their educational stability by providing programming, services, and funding through Title I that cover the ordinary and non-traditional needs of these students. This Quick Reference Guide (QRG) is intended to highlight some key strategies districts can use under Title I to support educational stability.

Collaboration:

1. Both the Title I foster care provisions and McKinney-Vento require collaboration across programs and agencies to address the unique needs of students experiencing homelessness and students in foster care.
2. Title I directors, foster care points of contacts (POCs), and homeless liaisons should work together to assess the needs of these students and how best to ensure their access to Title I programming.
3. Given that these students experience high mobility and are impacted by conditions beyond their control (such as: availability of local resources, changes in state policies, housing/placements abuse/neglect, the economy, etc.), it is essential that district staff be aware of and communicate changing needs on a regular basis.

Access to Title I Programming

Students who are homeless must have access to all of a district’s Title I programs they need, even if they attend a non-Title I school.

This may be accomplished by:

1. bringing the Title I specialists, tutors, or resources to the non-Title I school, or
2. by providing comparable non-Title I programming for the students in their school.

Non-traditional needs

The needs of homeless students that are not ordinarily covered, such as eyeglasses, school uniforms/clothing, or food, may be funded through Title I.

Covered students

Homeless students - Lack fixed regular and adequate nighttime residence and may be living in shelters, campgrounds, parks, cars, hotels, or sharing the housing of others due to economic hardship, loss of housing, or a similar reason. Unaccompanied homeless youth, preschoolers, and migrant children in these living arrangements are all included.

Foster Care students - are in 24-hour out-of-home care away from their parent/legal guardian, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) has care and placement responsibility.

District Staff

ESSA mandates the following positions and requires collaboration among them within the district. At the district level, the same person may serve in both roles.

Homeless Education Liaison – is designated by the superintendent and is responsible for identifying and ensuring the rights of homeless students are extended. Liaisons must also build awareness in the school community and coordinate with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on training, monitoring and federal reporting requirements.

Foster Care Point of Contact (POC) – is responsible for collaborating with DCF on best interest determinations, and ensuring the enrollment and educational rights of students in foster care by establishing policies and procedures.

II. Reservations

1. Should be reasonable and necessary and used as a last resort.
2. Districts must use a needs assessment to determine ordinary and non-traditional needs.
3. Funding must allow for sufficient time and intensity to impact academic outcomes.

Title I, Part A Homeless Reservation	Title I, Part A District Reservation for Foster Care Students
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Required if a district has reported any homeless students and is not using alternative funding to support students who are homeless;2. Must describe funding source (Title I or other), amount, and activities on Title I reservation tab in the consolidated ESSA application;3. May be used to cover comparable Title I services in non-Title I schools;4. May be used to fund non-traditional supports and materials that alleviate barriers to learning;5. May fund the Homeless Liaison position;6. May fund transportation to and from the school of origin. CAUTION – do not supplant state homeless transportation funding.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. May fund the Foster Care POC position; and2. May fund transportation to and from the school of origin. <p>For more information about this topic and much more go to: SchoolHouse Connections https://schoolhouseconnection.org/mckinney-vento-act</p>

Calculating Appropriate Reservations

Districts must rely on a needs assessment to determine an appropriate level of funding to meet needs of who are homeless. Title I applications must indicate the method used to determine the reservation amount, whether Title I funding or alternative sources are used to meet needs. Suggested methods include:

- Multiply the per pupil expenditure by the average number of students in the subgroup;
- Determine the percentage of all students that fall in the subgroup and use an equal percentage of the *total* Title I funds;
- Use an amount to cover a specific need as stated in the needs assessment (i.e., a tutor, homeless liaison, POC); or
- If the district is a McKinney-Vento grantee, match the funding level of the grant.

Allowable Expenses

The following is a list of appropriate uses of Title I funds. This list is not exhaustive, however, as the district's needs assessment may indicate other uses.

- Homeless liaison and/or foster care POC
- Transportation to and from the school of origin (not already covered with state funding)
- Food
- School clothing, uniforms, and required gym clothes
- School supplies including backpacks, notebooks, pencils
- Immunizations, medical and dental services
- Eyeglasses and hearing aids
- Counseling services related to the anxiety of homelessness or foster care
- Outreach services to students living in shelter, motels, and other temporary shelters
- Extended learning time including before/after school programming, Saturday, evening, or summer school
- Tutoring at school or in shelters
- Parental involvement of homeless families
- Educational fees including general education fees, AP testing, college entrance exams and HiSET/GED testing

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The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way; they are intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.