

Students experiencing homelessness are significantly more at risk of losing services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are questions and answers that will help Local Education Agencies (LEAs) serve these students during these uncertain times. Additional trainings and resource documents are forthcoming from the Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth (TEHCY) Program.

1. Who in the LEA serves students experiencing homelessness? Where can I find this information?

Every LEA has a designated local homeless liaison in place through the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to facilitate the identification, enrollment, and academic success for students experiencing homelessness. Local Homeless Liaisons should take the lead on providing services and outreach to homeless students and families at this time. The statewide directory of local homeless liaisons can be found on the [Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth \(TEHCY\)](http://Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth (TEHCY)) webpage. Contact the local homeless liaison for program services and resources available in the LEA's area.

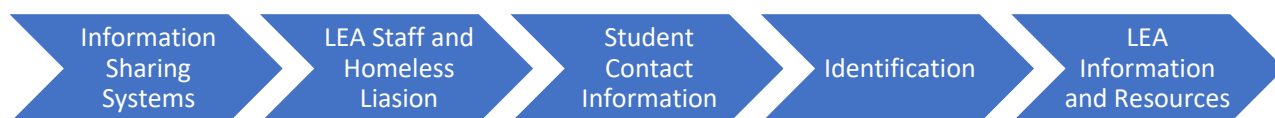
2. What should LEAs consider when planning communication and outreach for students experiencing homelessness?

LEAs should collaborate with their homeless liaisons to review current strategies in place for school staff, parents, and students to communicate while schools building are closed. Consider the following when developing a communication and outreach plan:

[LEA Information-Sharing Systems for Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)

Homeless liaisons should have access to contact records (e.g. phone numbers, physical addresses, and email addresses) for students, parents, and guardians.

Homeless liaisons should communicate student contact information for identified McKinney-Vento eligible students with LEA staff. LEA information-sharing systems should be utilized to identify students who have lost their housing during COVID-19 and disseminate LEA and homeless education program information and resources.



Homeless Liaisons should consider LEA approved social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) and non-traditional methods of communication (e.g. LEA hotline, Google Voice,

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meal and technology distributions, etc.) to connect and share LEA homeless education program information, services, and resources with students, parents, and guardians.

Update your LEA webpage to include the following:

- Homeless Liaison contact information
- Program services available to students and families and how to access them
- McKinney-Vento Posters (digital format can be accessed on the [TEHCY COVID-19 Resource page](#))
- LEA and community resources

Information-Sharing Systems - LEA Instructional Continuity Planning

Homeless liaisons should be included in LEA Instructional Continuity planning meetings, trainings, and follow-up communications. Information-sharing systems should be in place between LEA staff and homeless liaisons to communicate any at-home curriculum resources, supports, progress monitoring, challenges, and barriers specific to students experiencing homelessness.



Information-sharing systems should also be utilized to identify students who are most at-risk academically (e.g. unaccompanied youth, students dually identified for other special programs or services, etc.).

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act FERPA

Ensure LEA policies regarding privacy and sharing of personal information of students and families experiencing homelessness are in place and have been provided to all LEA staff. For more information please visit: [FERPA FAQ](#)

3. How can LEAs collaborate with their homeless liaison to ensure that the unique needs of students experiencing homelessness are being addressed in their instructional continuity plan?

LEAs, in collaboration with their homeless liaison, should determine what services and supports will be provided when:

- Teachers cannot contact students, parents, or guardians
- Students, parents, or guardians were unable to complete landscape surveys
- Internet access is limited
- Students do not have access to instructional devices, materials, or coursework packets
- Technology support is needed
- Housing instability may impede instructional continuity services and supports
- Instructional gaps are identified

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Possible solutions to consider:

- Provide the designated campus contact a list of identified McKinney-Vento students
- Organize coursework packets and supplies
- Give flexible coursework deadlines
- Collaborate with school staff (counselors, social workers, coaches, etc.) to check in with students, parents, or guardians

4. What can LEAs do to support students living in shelters?

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LEAs, in collaboration with their homeless liaison, should develop information-sharing systems with shelter staff to assist in the following:

- Completion of Student Residency Questionnaire (SRQ)
- Date of entry and exit from shelter
- LEA Technology paperwork, distribution sites, and hours
- Current or updated contact information
- Student and family updates, concerns, and academic and basic needs
- LEA meal site information

LEAs, in collaboration with shelter staff, should ensure safety protocols are established for dissemination of technology, packet coursework, food, and other supplies. Students experiencing homelessness can remain in their school of origin.

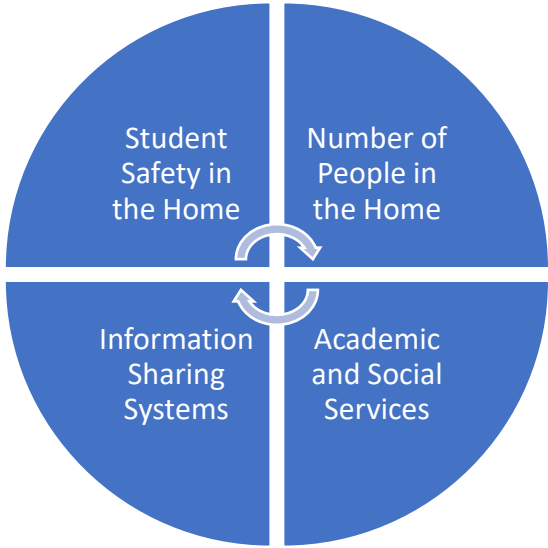
5. What can LEAs do to support students who are living in a doubled-up situation?

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Student and families in a doubled-up living situation are often the most difficult to identify. LEAs, in collaboration with their homeless liaison, should provide online McKinney-Vento training, tools, and strategies for teachers, counselors, social workers, and other staff to assist with identification and support of students and families living in a doubled-up situation.

The Homeless Liaison should develop a tool for teachers, counselors, social workers, and other staff to assess the following:

Doubled-Up Family Assessment



Collaborate with school staff (teachers, counselors, social workers, etc.) and community partners to check in with students and families who have a history of high mobility or have indicated they may have to move soon. Inform parents and guardians that their students can remain in their school of origin.

6. What can LEAs do to support students living in hotels/motels?

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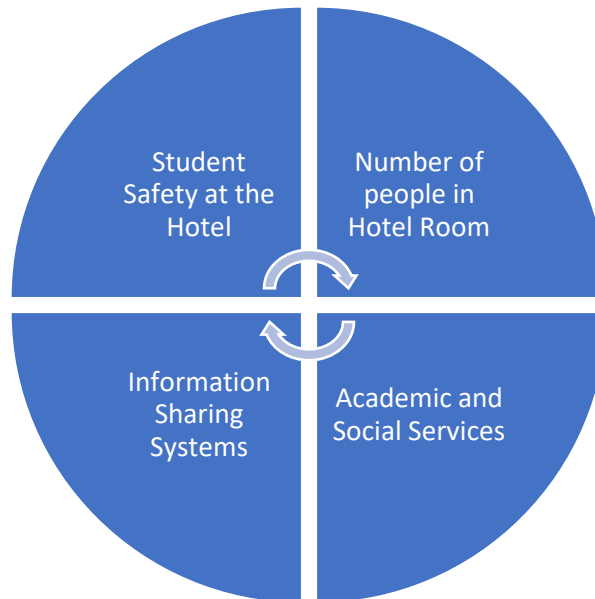
LEAs, in collaboration with their homeless liaison, should disseminate LEA and homeless education program information and resources to hotel/motel staff. Students and families who live in hotels/motels are often the hardest families with which to maintain communication.

Families who are currently residing in hotels/motels are more at-risk for high mobility due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Establishing strong communication channels and information-sharing systems with community partners, school, and hotel/motel staff are needed to mitigate high mobility of student and families residing in hotel/motels.

LEAs should collaborate with community partners to disseminate LEA and LEA homeless education program information and supplies. Inform parents and guardians that their students can remain in their school of origin.

The Homeless Liaison should develop a tool for teachers, counselors, social workers, and other staff to assess the following:

Hotel/Motel Family Assessment



Information-sharing systems should be in place between LEA staff and homeless liaisons to communicate any at-home curriculum resources, supports, progress monitoring, challenges, and barriers specific to students living in hotels/motels.

7. May LEAs deny enrollment to students who are homeless while schools are transitioning to virtual instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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Homeless students must be permitted to enroll as any other student and cannot be excluded from enrollment for lack of documentation.

8. How can LEAs identify students who recently lost their housing since school closures occurred due to COVID-19?

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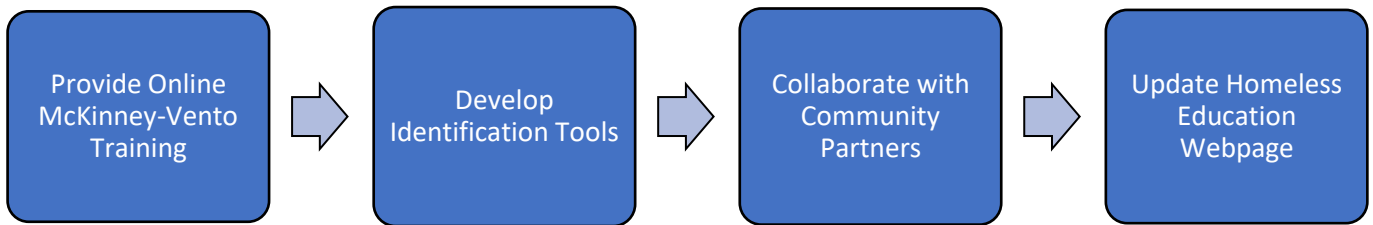
LEAs, in collaboration with their homeless liaison, should review current strategies in place to identify students experiencing homelessness. Consider the following when developing identification strategies and best practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Identification Strategies and Best Practices

Provide online McKinney-Vento training to teachers, counselors, social workers, and other staff to assist in the identification of students and families during COVID-19. Develop identification tools that will provide teachers with increased awareness of indicators and to recognize risk factors of students experiencing homelessness. Teachers often have the most contact with students and parents.

Utilize LEA information-sharing systems to facilitate prompt identification and services for newly identified students and families. Provide shelter staff with Student Residency Questionnaires (SRQ)s, LEA homeless education program information, and resources to students and families. Collaborate with food pantries, local faith-based charities, and other community partners to disseminate homeless education program information.

The LEA’s homeless education webpage should include homeless liaison contact information and program services. LEAs should also post the *New TEHCY McKinney-Vento Posters* on their webpage. Digital format can be accessed on the [TEHCY COVID-19 Resource](#) page.



School staff should notify their homeless liaisons if a student has moved outside of their attendance zone. Inform parents and guardians that their students can remain in their school of origin.

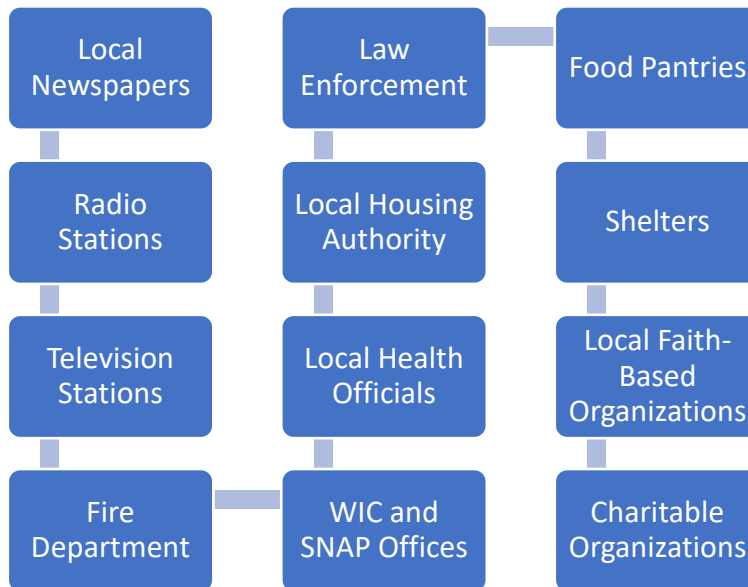
LEA-Created Example: [Arlington ISD – Families in Transition \(FIT\)](#) website includes a FIT staff directory by campus, local community resources, and student outreach services.

9. Which community partners should LEAs collaborate with to support outreach efforts to students experiencing homelessness?

LEAs should have their own information-sharing systems already in place to disseminate information and resources. LEAs should determine which community partners will participate and how they can support outreach efforts to students experiencing homelessness.

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Community Partners Can Include:



10. How can LEAs communicate with students and families experiencing homelessness they have been unable to contact?

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LEAs, in collaboration with their homeless liaison, should review current information-sharing systems and strategies in place to communicate with student and families. Below are communication channels to utilize during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- The Homeless liaison should consider using LEA-approved social media channels (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) and non-traditional methods of communication (e.g. LEA hotline, Google Voice, local newspapers, radio and television stations, etc.) to reach students and families.
- Collaborate with LEA staff (e.g. teachers, counselors, coaches, dropout prevention team, etc.) who have established supportive relationships with students and families.
- Collaborate with apartment complexes, motels/hotels, and shelters to post homeless education program information and resources.
- Collaborate with local food pantries, local faith-based groups, and other community partners to include LEA and homeless education program information and resources in their meal or grocery distributions.

11. Where can LEAs find additional resources to support students and families experiencing homelessness?

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The TEHCY Program has compiled a list of local, regional, state, and national resources to support students and families experiencing homelessness. The list can be accessed on the [TEHCY COVID-19 Resource](#) webpage.

12. Who can LEAs contact for guidance about COVID-19 situations that are impacting students experiencing homelessness?

LEAs can directly contact TEA at disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov. In addition, LEAs can reach out to the Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth (TEHCY) program staff with questions. Any TEHCY program specific questions or concerns can be sent to HomelessEducation@tea.texas.gov, or can contact the TEHCY Support Center at 1-800-446-3142. The TEHCY technical support team is available Monday through Friday, from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM.

13. What should homeless liaisons and school staff consider while providing instructional continuity for students experiencing homelessness?

LEAs are encouraged to work closely with school staff to assess the best medium for instructional continuity. LEAs, in collaboration with their local homeless liaison, should consider the following to ensure an equitable at-home curriculum and instruction model is developed for homeless students:

- Student’s current living situation
- Student’s unaccompanied youth status
- Student’s access to at-home technology
- Low-tech options to complete coursework
- Access to other educational resources
- Identification and services for other special programs
- Tools for progress monitoring
- Tools and resources to mitigate high mobility
- Best form of communication with homeless students and families
- Staffing with unaccompanied youth to identify unique needs

Visit TEA’s [COVID-19 webpage](#) for important updates and [instructional continuity resources](#).

14. Are there any additional resources available for LEAs and stakeholders to address the unique needs of students experiencing homelessness while schools are closed?

Yes. Listed below are additional resources to that may be useful when working with your students and families:

- [Texas Education Agency COVID-19 Support and Guidance](#)
- [Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program](#)
- [Texas Network of Youth Services \(TNOYTS\): Provider Directory](#)
- [Texas Workforce Commission COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Texas Health and Human Services COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [211 TEXAS for Community Resources](#)

- [U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness: Supporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [National Center for Homeless Education COVID-19 Resources](#)

15. What resources are available to provide meals for students experiencing homelessness while school buildings are closed?

Direct families to visit [TXSchools.gov](https://www.txschools.gov) to find nearby locations of schools offering free school meals (both breakfast and lunch-for pick up) while school buildings are closed. Select “Meal Pick-Up Locations” and enter an address to find the closest location.

Listed below are additional resources to assist with locating food pantries and food banks in your area.

- [FOODPANTRIES.ORG](https://www.foodpantries.org)
- [Aunt Bertha | The Social Care Network](#)

16. Are there resources available to provide free broadband and internet services for students experiencing homelessness while school buildings are closed?

Yes. TEA has compiled a list of cable and internet providers who will provide free broadband and internet services while schools are closed due to COVID-19. Please share the [Guidance to LEAs on Providing Internet to Students](#) information page with families, as needed.

Additional trainings and resource documents are forthcoming from the Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth (TEHCY) Program.

Please submit any questions, concerns, and/or feedback to:

disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov

Feedback will assist TEA with technical assistance and planning.