LEE COUNTY
SCHOOL SYSTEM

Students Experiencing Homelessness: Awareness and Understanding in Determining McKinney-Vento Eligibility

Definition of Students experiencing Homelessness (Displaced)

Individuals whose nighttime residence is NOT:

- Fixed—stationary, permanent, and not subject to change
- Regular—used on a predictable, routine, or consistent basis
- Adequate—sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in the home (42 U.S.C.§11434A(2)(B)(i))

Can the student go to the SAME PLACE (fixed) EVERY NIGHT (regular) to sleep in a SAFE AND SUFFICIENT SPACE (adequate)?

The term “homeless children and youths”–

(A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); 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 (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));

(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 (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

Definition of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY)

- Unaccompanied = not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian; in practical terms, this means the youth does not live with the parent or guardian.

- 2-Step Process:

    1. Does the student's living arrangement meet the McKinneyVento Act's definition of homeless?

    2. Once homelessness is determined, is the student unaccompanied?

Identification

Potential Warning Signs of Homelessness :Reactions or Statements by Parents, Guardians, or Children

- "I don't remember the name of our previous school.“
- "We're staying with relatives until we get settled.“
- "We've been moving around a lot.“
- "Our address is new; I can't remember it."

Importance of Discretion…

• Many children and youth experiencing homelessness and their families are extremely sensitive about their housing insecurity.
• LEAs must take measures to ensure families, children and youth are not stigmatized.
• Some districts have removed “homeless” from communications and use terms like “housing insecurity, families in transition, etc.”
• Instead of using the term “homeless students,” some districts refer the “students experiencing homelessness” in order the describe the situation without labeling the youth.

Common causes of family homelessness

- Economic challenges (lack of affordable housing, poverty, unemployment/underemployment, single parenting/single income)
- Health challenges (disabilities, mental health issues, substance abuse)
- Domestic violence

Students experiencing homelessness may:

- Be unable to meet standard school enrollment requirements.
- Move around and change schools a lot.
- Be hungry, tired, and stressed.
- Not have school supplies or a quiet place to study.
- Not have access to reliable transportation.
- Not have a parent or guardian to help them (unaccompanied youth)

If you are in question or have concerns that a student may be experiencing homelessness or their residency is questionable please contact our System Registrar (Vicki Langston) or the Social Services Coordinator/Homeless Liaison (Lisa Bailey) to report your concerns.

Registrar@lee.k12.ga.us or Baileyli@lee.k12.ga.us