

Transporting Students Experiencing Homelessness

Kristine Nadolski and Karen Rice

Department of Public Instruction

December 10, 2019



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent

Using Microsoft Teams

- We will mute everyone while we are presenting -- please do not unmute yourself.
- If you have a camera on your computer, please turn off the video by moving your mouse over the screen and clicking on the camera icon. It should show a line through the camera.
- To be able to use the chat function, click on the chat bubble on your screen to have the chat pop up on the right side of the screen.
- You can enter full screen by clicking on the three dots and choosing Enter Full Screen.
- We are recording the webinar.
- Feel free to enter questions into the chat at any time. We will answer at the end as time allows.



Learning Outcomes

- Understand McKinney-Vento requirements around transportation for students experiencing homelessness
- Learn strategies to enhance your work with students experiencing homelessness



Homeless Liaison Responsibilities

Local liaisons must ensure that parents and guardians, and unaccompanied youths, are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin and are assisted in accessing transportation services.

[NCHE Parent Rights Brochure](#)



Transportation

- LEAs must provide transportation to and from the school of origin, including until the end of the year when the student obtains permanent housing.
 - If the school of origin and current residence are in the same LEA, that LEA must provide or arrange transportation to the school of origin.
 - If crossing LEA lines, both LEAs must determine how to divide the responsibility and share the cost, or they must share the cost equally.
- School of origin - the school where the child or youth was last enrolled and attending, or the school they attended when last permanently housed.



Sharing Transportation Costs

- Share the cost 50-50 unless another arrangement is made between LEAs.
- Reach out to the other liaison to have a conversation, before sending a bill.
- Discuss options each LEA has for transportation; one may be more cost effective for both LEAs.



Mode of Transportation

- The **mode of transportation is left to the discretion of the district**, however, the mode and the details of transportation cannot present a barrier to the child's attendance in school.
- Districts may consider other safe transportation options besides school busses, in keeping with state and local pupil transportation guidelines.
- Keep in mind there may be a stigma about showing up to school in an alternative mode of transportation - is it only the students experiencing homelessness who show up in a cab?



Enrollment and Transportation

- McKinney-Vento ensures immediate enrollment of students experiencing homelessness.
 - [Enrollment and Identification of Students Experiencing Homelessness Webinar](#)
- Transportation must be arranged promptly to ensure immediate enrollment and so as not to create barriers to homeless students' attendance, retention, and success.



Comparable Transportation

LEAs must provide students in homeless situations with transportation services comparable to those provided to other students.

- If a student is on a normal bus route, or within the LEA policy to take public transportation- those typical methods should be used.
- If a student is temporarily living somewhere that is in the LEA walk zone, that student should follow the walk zone policy.
- Exceptions do exist within offering comparable services, usually if there is an unsafe route to school or concerns for the child's safety.



Transportation for Preschool

Preschool is included in the definition of school of origin. If transportation is a barrier, the LEA(s) must provide it.

- This includes LEA administered public preschool programs (4K, Head Start, IDEA services, etc. through the LEA).
- Transportation to the school of origin must be provided even if a child who is enrolled in a public preschool in one LEA moves to another LEA that does not provide widely available or universal preschool.



Extracurricular Activities

- LEAs must eliminate barriers to, among other things, the enrollment of students experiencing homelessness (including transportation barriers). Enrollment includes attending classes and “participating fully in school activities”.
- Full participation includes participation in extracurricular activities, and McKinney-Vento emphasizes that students must not face barriers to accessing extracurricular activities.
- If transportation is a barrier for a child or youth to participate in extracurricular activities, transportation must be provided.



Transportation and the Dispute Resolution Process

- An LEA is required to transport students experiencing homelessness while disputes are being resolved, including all appeals.
- The LEA must provide or arrange transportation to and from the school in which enrollment is sought by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied homeless youth.
- Inter-district transportation disputes must be resolved without impact to the student.



Transportation and Open Enrollment

- If a student experiencing homelessness open enrolls in a school that is neither a school of origin nor a school of residence, the student does not receive transportation under McKinney-Vento since they are attending a school they don't have rights to under the law.
 - The student must be identified and all other McKinney-Vento services must be provided
- If a student's nighttime residence changes after they are open enrolled and attending the school, transportation must be provided since the student has established a school of origin.



Funding Transportation

- State and local funds
- Community partnerships
 - Examples: Donations for bus tickets, community fundraising drive to help with transportation
- Title I, Part A homeless reservation funds
 - To cover excess cost



Transportation and IEP Services

- If a student receives transportation as a related service, it is a separate issue from the LEA obligation to provide transportation under McKinney-Vento.
- If a student had transportation as a related service in their IEP prior to losing housing, IDEA funds may be used to pay for transportation as a related service.
- The student's IEP team considers specially designed transportation only if it is needed because of the student's disability, not because of the student's homeless status.



How Far Is Too Far to Travel to the School of Origin?

- LEAs must consider what is in the best interest of the student
- There is **NO** time or distance limit specified in McKinney-Vento
- Things to be considered:
 - Impact of commute on education
 - Age
 - Safety
 - Need for special instructional programs
 - Length of stay at the temporary location



Answering Common Questions

- If one parent is experiencing homelessness and one is housed, and there is shared custody, transportation must be provided when the student is with the parent experiencing homelessness.
 - All other McKinney-Vento services are provided 100% of the time.
- If students are regularly late to school and/or have attendance concerns, it is important to consider changing the mode of transportation and/or developing a plan or contract with the parent, guardian or unaccompanied homeless youth.
- McKinney-Vento is a federal law, therefore when a student experiencing homelessness crosses state lines to attend their school of origin, the LEAs in each state work together in the same manner.



Transportation Options

- Use school buses (including special education, magnet school, and other buses).
- Develop formal or informal agreements with school districts where children experiencing homelessness cross district lines.
- Use public transit where feasible.
- Use approved carpools, van or taxi services.
- Reimburse parents and youth for gas.
- Pursue interagency solutions.
- More specific shared transportation ideas: LEAs send buses one way, buses meet at LEA boundaries.
- Get creative with transportation options!



Gas Cards/Gas Reimbursement

- Recommendations;
 - Have a contract
 - Consider paying gas costs up front and monitoring attendance
- Cost of mileage
 - Must be reasonable, comparable to what the district reimburses for staff
- Strategies
 - Fuel only cards
 - Set up accounts with local gas stations

[Gas Cards for an LEA's Homeless Program](#)



Transportation Contracts

- Transportation contracts are not required in the law
- Helps both the LEA and the parent/guardian/youth to understand expectations and have a plan if the mode of transportation is not working or there are “no-loads”, etc.
- Clearly outlines what transportation will be provided

[Montello McKinney-Vento Transportation Agreement](#)



Resources

- [National Center for Homeless Education \(NCHE\) Transportation Resources](#)
- [DPI Transportation Guidance](#)
- [DPI Example Forms](#)
- [DPI Pupil Transportation Homepage](#)

[Share your innovative transportation strategies here!](#)



Contact Us

Kristine Nadolski

Kristine.Nadolski@dpi.wi.gov

Karen Rice

Karen.Rice@dpi.wi.gov

Please complete our evaluation!

<https://forms.gle/2W7SHJmtfiD48SAb9>

