

New Guidance from WIAA

DPI has received questions from liaisons around the state regarding Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) eligibility for students experiencing homelessness. Here is an update on the guidance DPI recently received from WIAA.

- The WIAA has a waiver process for students with extenuating circumstances who move, which includes students experiencing homelessness.
 - The form previously posted on the DPI EHCY website (Displaced/Homeless Student Eligibility) **does not guarantee** eligibility and was removed from the website.
- Once a liaison identifies a student experiencing homelessness, the liaison should contact the athletic director if the student wants to be involved in athletics and/or extra-curriculars. The athletic director will meet with the student about the waiver process and collect all forms and documentation. It is imperative that the liaison work with the athletic director to verify homeless status, especially when working with an unaccompanied homeless youth who may not be able to provide documentation from family members.
- WIAA wants to find ways to make students eligible to participate in athletics that complies with member rules and meets legal requirements. This may mean that a student begins participating at a junior varsity level until the waiver process is complete and varsity level participation is approved.
- See the [Residence and Waiver section of the WIAA website](#) for more information.

NAEHCY Request for Proposals

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth's (NAEHCY) annual conference for anyone working with students experiencing homelessness is happening November 2-5, 2019 in Washington, D.C. If you are interested in presenting at the conference, proposals are due by March 31, 2018. Visit [the NAEHCY website](#) to submit a proposal or for further details.

Human Trafficking

The following is guidance from the [National Center for Homeless Education \(NCHE\)](#) regarding homelessness and trafficking:

1. There is a connection between homelessness and trafficking, especially for unaccompanied homeless youth. Unaccompanied homeless youth are especially vulnerable to trafficking because it may involve the promise of meeting needs (providing a place to sleep, food, money, etc.). NCHE writes this:
 - A. "The Vulnerability of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth As defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. §§11431-11435), unaccompanied homeless youth are youth who are experiencing homelessness while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian [42 U.S.C. § 11434a (6)]. These youth may be especially vulnerable to being recruited into sex trafficking. Not only are these youth dealing with the many challenges and risks associated with homelessness, including a lack of safe and stable housing, a lack of money with which to meet basic needs, and possible exposure to the dangers of the street; but they are facing these difficulties without the support of a caring and involved parent or guardian. School districts should be aware of the particular vulnerability of this and other at-risk student groups and ensure that these students' needs are represented in any district response to the issue of minor sex trafficking."
 - B. "Of the many factors that may increase a young person's vulnerability to sex trafficking, homelessness is widely considered to be the most direct contributor (Estes and Weiner, 2001, as cited in the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2013, p. 85). This is partially due to the fact that homeless youth experience a range of risks that are not experienced by at-risk housed youth. Homelessness puts young people at an especially high risk for involvement in sex trafficking not only because street life makes these youth more vulnerable to victimization, but also because youth homelessness frequently is a result of other risk factors, such as family poverty, family dysfunction, and mental illness (pp. 86-87)."
2. Schools are in a unique position to support students due to the time students are in school and the relationships with school personnel. NCHE cites this: "According to the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, U.S. schools are emerging as a potentially promising environment for a variety of trafficking prevention and intervention activities for the young people in their care (2013, p. 297). On an average of 180 days each year, most school-age youth spend six to eight hours in school. Given the regular interaction between students and educators, school personnel are positioned uniquely to recognize changes in behavior and appearance that may be indicative of trafficking involvement (p. 297)."
3. It is important for district homeless liaisons to know the risk factors and signs of trafficking and to build awareness among school staff about homelessness and trafficking.

We have heard from multiple sources that the eastern area of Wisconsin (along Interstate 41) is where some of the highest incidents of trafficking occur. This is also where some of the highest populations of students experiencing homelessness occur (Racine, Kenosha, Green Bay, and Milwaukee).

eBrief Sign-Up

If you know of others who would like to receive this eBrief, please share [this link](#) so they can be added to our mailing list.

Important Information

Upcoming Webinar!
Please join us on April 30th from 8:30-9:30am for a webinar on Supporting Young Children Experiencing Homelessness! We will discuss strategies and requirements, as well as introduce you to our new Early Childhood Outreach Specialist working with our EHCY team. More details will follow in an email, but please mark your calendars for this professional development opportunity.

State Coordinator Corner

Karen and Kristine will continue to visit grant-funded districts around the state now that the weather should be improving. We presented at the Preserving Early Childhood Conference in March, and will present at the CESA 2 Youth Homelessness Summit in April. The training module we have been creating will focus on unaccompanied homeless youth, based on data analyzed from questions from across the state.

Clara is busy with compliance monitoring. The EHCY team is excited about updates to our monitoring process (more information can be found on [our website](#)).

We are excited to introduce a new member to the EHCY team at DPI. Dan Bomberg is our new Office Operations Associate. You may receive communication from him throughout the year. Welcome Dan!

The EHCY team is also working on updating our website to make it as helpful for you as possible. If you have any suggestions on what we can do to improve our website, please contact one of us!

Resources

[DPI EHCY website](#)
[NCHE](#)
[NAEHCY](#)
[SchoolHouse Connection](#)
[McKinney-Vento Act](#)
[McKinney-Vento Non-Regulatory Guidance](#)

Contacts

Kristine Nadolski
State Coordinator
kristine.nadolski@dpi.wi.gov
(608) 267-7338

From our perspective as State Coordinators for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, we want homeless liaisons to be aware of risk factors and ideally, to be a part of their district's planning team on developing safety and reporting protocols. Each district is required by law to designate a homeless liaison, and an important role of the liaison is to build awareness with district staff about homelessness. DPI is making an effort to start talking about trafficking with liaisons. We hope liaisons will have a base knowledge of recognizing signs of trafficking and will share information with their district staff to help draw the connection between homelessness/vulnerability and trafficking.

School Counselor Role in Assisting Students Experiencing Homelessness with the FAFSA

Youth under age 24 who are experiencing homelessness or in out-of-home care may assume that they cannot pursue higher education because of their financial status and lack of parental support. They are unlikely to know they have a special status on the FAFSA that allows them to apply for aid on their own. Let them know they can apply for financial aid without a parent's signature or financial information, and the importance of completing the FAFSA as early as possible.

Under the Higher Education Act, school district homeless liaisons, directors (or their designees) of Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) shelters, and financial aid administrators are authorized to verify an unaccompanied homeless youth's independent status. Nonetheless, unaccompanied homeless youth and youth in out-of-home care may face barriers related to documentation of their homeless or out-of-home care status.

1. Let youth know about the FAFSA
 - A. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, school district homeless liaisons are required to ensure that unaccompanied homeless youth are informed of their status as independent students for the FAFSA and receive assistance to verify their homelessness. Liaisons should work with school counselors to inform all unaccompanied homeless youth that they can apply for financial aid as an independent student.
 - B. Youth who were in out-of-home care at any time after age 13 are considered independent students on the FAFSA. Case managers and district foster care points of contact working with youth in out-of-home care or former youth in out-of-home care should let them know that they can apply for financial aid as an independent student.
2. Help youth complete the FAFSA
 - A. Completing the FAFSA is challenging for many students due to its complexity and length. It may be especially difficult for youth who are in crisis and/or may not have supportive adults in their lives.
3. Remove documentation barriers related to the FAFSA
 - A. Use a sample form letter to determine the independent student status of unaccompanied homeless youth or youth in out-of-home care. Here is a [sample letter](#) for the 2019-2020 FAFSA. This letter may be edited as appropriate for your school district.
 - B. Maintain copies of determination letters in case students lose them due to frequent moves.
 - C. Inform unaccompanied homeless youth that liaisons and service providers can continue to make determinations of their status in subsequent years if they have enough information about their living situation; otherwise, youth will need to obtain a determination from the financial aid administrator at their school.

(Adapted from "Three Things You Can Do to Help Homeless and Foster Youth" by [SchoolHouse Connection](#))

A PDF of this eBrief is available on the [DPI EHCY Webpage](#)
A Newsletter from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction,
Carolyn Stanford Taylor, State Superintendent

Karen Rice
State Coordinator
karen.rice@dpi.wi.gov
(608) 267-1284

Clara Pfeiffer
Grants Specialist
clara.pfeiffer@dpi.wi.gov
(608) 261-6324

Dan Bomberg
Office Operations Associate
daniel.bomberg@dpi.wi.gov
(608) 267-9146