




# HOMELESS LIAISONS: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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# NON-AGENDA

- We will not spend any time discussing the moral or ethical pros and cons with regards to providing services to the homeless.

# AGENDA

- Homeless liaison responsibilities
  - Awareness, guidance and training
  - Determining eligibility and identification
  - Enrollment and school selection
  - Access to Services
  - Transportation
  - Working with parents and guardians (including disputes)
  - Working with unaccompanied youth
  - Collaboration with your community
- Who should be the homeless liaison?
- Managing the work of the homeless liaison

# WHAT DOES MCKINNEY-VENTO SAY ABOUT HOMELESS LIAISON RESPONSIBILITIES

- Local Education Agency (LEA) Responsibilities
  - Creation of appropriate policy
- Homeless Liaison Responsibilities
  - Guidance in creation and amendment of policy
  - Carrying out local policy

# LEA RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provided the same opportunities to meet the same state academic achievement standards
- Homeless students are identified and their special needs assessed
- Disputes are resolved promptly
- Activities take place to heighten awareness
- Participation in nutrition programs
- Access to public preschool programs
- Access to appropriate secondary education and supports
- Not segregated or stigmatized
- Local liaisons are appointed
- Barriers causing enrollment delays are eliminated
- Transportation is provided to the school of origin

## LIAISONS WILL ENSURE THAT FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH... (MCKINNEY-VENTO)

- They are identified by school personnel and through coordination with other agencies
- Enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, school
- Receive educational services, including head start and preschool, as well as referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services
- Parents are informed of the educational and related opportunities and can participate meaningfully
- Rights of homeless children and youth are disseminated where they receive services such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens
- Enrollment disputes are mediated according to policy
- Parents and unaccompanied youth are fully informed of all services, including transportation to the school of origin

## LIAISONS WILL ENSURE THAT FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH... (FEDERAL GUIDANCE)

- Assist homeless children and youth with enrolling in school and accessing school services
- Help homeless children and youth obtain immunization or medical records
- Inform parents, school personnel, and others of the rights of homeless children and youth
- Work with school staff to make sure that homeless children and youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that might arise over school enrollment or placement



## IN SUMMARY, THE HOMELESS LIAISON ROLE INCLUDES...

- Awareness, Guidance and Training
- Determining Eligibility and Identification
- Enrollment and School Selection
- Access to Services
- Transportation
- Working with Students and Families (including disputes)
- Collaboration with the Community



# AWARENESS, GUIDANCE AND TRAINING

- Posters and Pamphlets in both Spanish and English are available on the THEO website
- Does the district know who the HoLi is? What about shelters? Churches? Food Pantries?
- Become aware yourself
  - Read the law and guidance
  - Read NCHE's Homeless Liaison Toolkit
  - Confirm/correct information on the directory
  - Attend ESC trainings
  - Attend webinars
  - Review the Texas Homeless Education Office's website (fact sheets)
  - Call Region 10, Texas Homeless Education Office, or your ESC

# AWARENESS, GUIDANCE AND TRAINING

- Within your district or charter school...
  - Is it policy? If not, write it!
  - Turn policy into procedures...train staff on these procedures
  - Who needs to know about these procedures?
  - Schedule appropriate staff training
  - Staff work best following flow-chart or step-by-step type procedures
  - Begin to take ownership of procedures and have fun!
  - Evaluate procedures for continued efficacy

# DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY AND IDENTIFICATION

- Create a Student Residency Questionnaires (SRQ) to appropriately assess student housing at enrollment, including sensitivity and FERPA
- Create procedures so that enrolling staff can easily understand how to use the information in the SRQ, including sensitivity and FERPA, for appropriate PEIMS coding
- Create procedures for storing all SRQs for a minimum of 5 years
- Create a procedure for referral to the HoLi for difficult situations, that still allows for all services
- Create procedures for analyzing doubled-up student housing on a case-by-case basis
- Coordinate with local service providers for help with identification
- Coordinate with surrounding district HoLis and create procedures for honoring of previous district coding

# ENROLLMENT AND SCHOOL SELECTION

- Create procedures and train enrollment staff on enrollment provisions
  - Immediate enrollment
  - Even during disputes
  - School selection provisions of Oklahoma Education Code
- Create procedures for lack of immunizations or immunization records
  - From Oklahoma? Consult with your nurse
  - Do you know area physicians?
  - Can you help facilitate transportation?
- Create procedures for accessing previous school records
  - Coordination with other Homeless Liaison



# ENROLLMENT AND SCHOOL SELECTION

- Create procedures for informing parents of schools available based on homeless status
- Create procedures for determining best interest school selection



# ACCESS TO SERVICES

- Nutrition Services
  - Automatic eligibility (USDA)
  - List of names with Homeless Liaison signature should be sufficient
  - Create procedures for communicating homeless status with nutrition department



# ACCESS TO SERVICES

- At-Risk and Title-I
  - Data collection of student need
    - Appropriate School Clothing
    - School supplies
    - Academic needs and tutoring
    - Access to field trips and other educational opportunities
    - Lack of available services in the community
  - Planning with Campus and District Improvement Committees
    - Data—Data—Data—Data
    - Student stories



# TRANSPORTATION

- Coordination:
  - Your own district or charter school's transportation department
    - Is there a procedure for determining feasibility?
  - Special Education Department
  - Other local Homeless Liaison





# WORKING WITH PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

- Create procedures for fully informing parents of their rights, including transportation
- Develop opportunities for school participation (resource fair)
- Develop procedures so that parents do not have to “earn” their rights
- Direct families to other available services outside of school



# DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- Create a district letter that initiates dispute for enrollment or identification
- Guide parents and students as they navigate this process (procedures?)



# WORKING WITH UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

- Procedures for determining excused and unexcused absences
- Procedures for being able to leave school mid-day for appointments
- Post-secondary planning, FAFSA access
- Non-parent caregiver forms



# COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMUNITY

- Attend local homeless coalition meetings (usually monthly)
- Investigate resources
  - Emergency Money
  - Emergency Food
  - Emergency Clothing
  - Emergency Housing
- Identify gaps in service
- Coordinate to help with identification
- Coordinate to enhance services

# WHO SHOULD BE THE HOMELESS LIAISON

- Ability to look at policy and help guide procedure
- Proper level of authority to communicate with transportation and nutrition leaders
- Proper level of authority to call and lead meetings with registrars, PEIMS and other enrollment staff
- Understanding of poverty and trauma
- Ability to develop relationships with service providers
- Ability to develop relationships with parents and students in crisis
- Has available time fulfill duties
- Ability to separate personal feelings from what maintains school compliance



# MANAGING THE WORKLOAD

- Hands on, Campus-Active Homeless Liaisons
- Delegator, Administrative Homeless Liaisons



# MANAGING THE WORKLOAD

- Emphasis on policy turned into procedure
- Train staff on appropriate procedures and provide with step-by-step, manualized, guidance
- Refine procedures over time