



# McKinney-Vento 101: Helpful Hints for New Liaisons

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How to Identify, Enroll and Advocate for Homeless Students

Issues of domestic violence, mental illness and substance abuse: the impact on families and homelessness



# Overview

- Why does someone lose their housing?
- Domestic violence, mental illness, substance abuse and homelessness: what is the connection?
- What are the duties and responsibilities of the Homeless Liaison?
- What strategies can you use to address the needs of homeless students in your District?

# Why Do People Lose Their Housing?

- Disaster
  - Hurricane, fire, flood, mud slide, tsunami
- Financial
  - Loss of job
  - Divorce
  - Foreclosure/bankruptcy
- Substance abuse
  - Violence
  - Incarceration
- Mental illness
- Abuse
  - Mental
  - Sexual
  - Physical
- Domestic Violence

# 2008 Street Survey of Buffalo and Erie County

Conducted by the Homeless Alliance of WNY

- In Jan, 2008, the Homeless Alliance of WNY conducted a large-scale survey of homeless and low-income individuals over a 24-hr. period.
- Some 200 volunteers canvassed over 60 service locations interviewing approximately 1,400 people.
- Respondents were either living in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs, or were accessing services from DSS, food centers, and mental health clinics.

# 2008 Street Survey of Buffalo & Erie County

## Primary Reasons for Homelessness Cited

- Family Problems (divorce; domestic violence)
- Loss of job
- Substance abuse
- Lack of affordable housing
- Mental health
- Unemployment



# Homelessness and Domestic Violence Facts

- For years, advocates have known that domestic violence is a primary cause of homelessness for women and families .
- While women at all income levels experience domestic violence, poor women experience it at higher rates than women with higher household incomes.
- Women living in rental housing experience intimate partner violence at three times the rate of women who own their homes.
- At times landlords turn victims of domestic violence out of their homes because of the violence against them.



# Facts on Homelessness and Mental Illness

- People with untreated psychiatric illnesses comprise one-third, or between 150,000 to 200,000 people, of the estimated 744,000 homeless people.
- A study of 187 patients discharged from Metropolitan State Hospital in Massachusetts reported that 27 percent had been homeless in the previous 6-month period. Substance abuse and failure to take medication were major predictors of homelessness.
- The mentally ill homeless population encounters more barriers to employment, tend to be in poorer physical health, and have more contact with the legal system than homeless people who do not suffer from mental disorder.



# Homelessness and Addiction

- The 2007 United States Conference of Mayors “Hunger and Homelessness Survey” reports that approximately 9.6% of the homeless population in a family with children is dealing with issues of substance abuse.
- Furthermore, homeless people typically do not have health insurance, including Medicaid.
- This means that few homeless people with addictive disorder are able to find the resources necessary to pay for their own treatment or health care.



# Addiction, Mental Health, and Homelessness

- Among surveyed homeless people, 39% have a mental health problem, and SAMHSA (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration) estimates that 22-25% meet criteria for serious mental illness.
- Homelessness presents serious barriers to treatment for these conditions as those without homes often are impoverished, uninsured or underinsured, and alone.
- Untreated addictions and mental illnesses present serious barriers to employment and permanent housing, perpetuating an ever-worsening cycle of poor physical health, hospitalization, social dysfunction, useless incarceration, poverty, and homelessness.

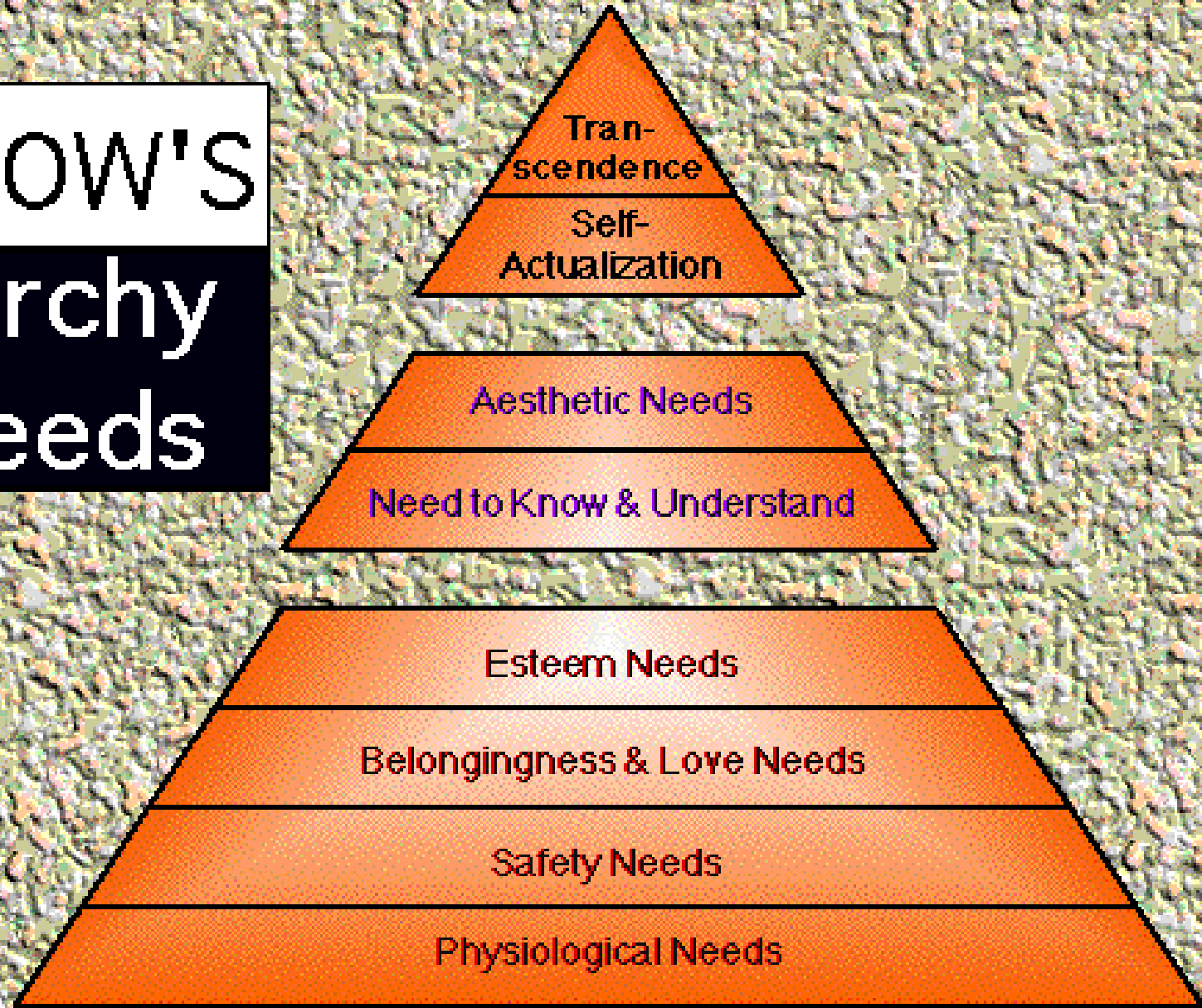
# Where do homeless children go?

- Shelters
  - Homeless shelters
  - Domestic violence shelters
  - Transitional housing
- Doubled Up
  - Family
  - Friends
- Motel/hotel
  - Placed by DSS
- Foster care/respite
  - Placed by DSS
  - Placed by CPS
- Unsheltered
  - Campground
  - Car
  - Street

# What is the Impact of Homelessness on Kids:

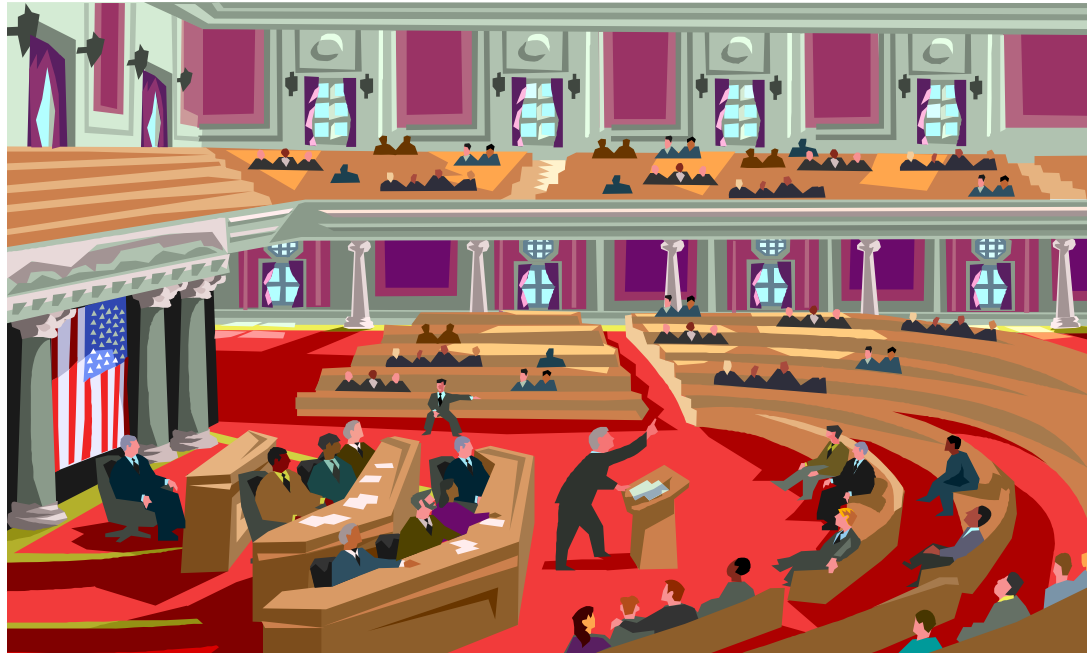
- Hunger
- Having to adjust to new situation/school
- Losing friends; trouble making new ones
- Secret/shame
- Lack of continuity
- Safety issues
- Stress

# MASLOW'S Hierarchy of Needs



# McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act: *Turning Good Law into Effective Education*

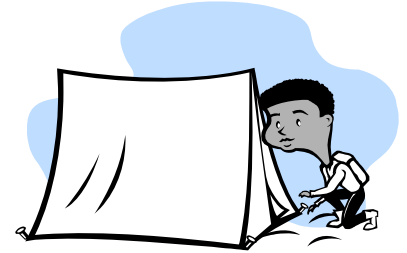
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# Who is homeless under McKinney-Vento?



- An individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth :
  - sharing housing (doubled up)
  - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds
  - living in emergency or transitional housing



- including children and youth :
  - abandoned in hospitals
  - awaiting foster care
  - having a primary nighttime residence that is a public place
  - migratory students

# District Responsibilities under the McKinney-Vento Act



Source of information in Section VI: National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE, *Local Homeless Education Liaison Toolkit, 2002 (Draft)*.

# 2002 NCLB Amendment



## Districts must:

- Appoint a liaison
- Identify and assist homeless children and youths who may be in their communities
- Expedite enrollment of homeless children
  - “even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation.”



# Strategies to Identify and Assist Families

- Request for Services
- Intake meeting with parents or student
- Pamphlet explaining rights
- Notify building personnel
- Arrange transportation

# Strategies to Expedite Enrollment

- Raise awareness about children and youth in homeless situations so that they are identified by school personnel.
- Help unaccompanied youth (youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) choose and enroll in a school.
- Assist in enrolling homeless students in school.
- Provide public notice of the educational rights of homeless students.
- Assist families so that enrollment disputes are mediated.
- Refer families, children, and youth to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.





# Additional Liaison Responsibilities

- Collect data on homeless students
- Report homeless student data to the State Education Department (primary nighttime residence)
  - ❖ Hotel/motel
  - ❖ Shelter
  - ❖ Unsheltered
  - ❖ Awaiting foster care
  - ❖ Transitional housing
  - ❖ Doubled Up
- Submit paperwork for tuition reimbursement (STAC 202 forms)

# Assist in readiness



- Provide basic school supplies.
- Ensure that school supplies are the same as permanently housed students.
- Work with District food service personnel to assure confidentiality.

# Transportation

- Working with District transportation, the liaison arranges busing or Metro pass to and from school and the temporary residence.
- In cooperation with neighboring districts, the liaison works to divide the responsibility and cost of providing transportation between districts.





# Outreach Strategies: Providing Additional Services to Families

- Shelter providers
- Food pantries
- Other liaisons
- Insurance providers
- Community agencies
  - DSS
  - Respite/Foster care



## Scenario: School Selection

Amy is a fourth grader receiving special education services. In April, an electrical fire caused substantial damage to her home; she and her family move in with friends in District B, 20 miles away.

Amy's parents want Amy to continue attending classes in her school of origin, but the principal in District A thinks Amy would be better served if she enrolled in her new local district.

As the liaison, what steps do you take?



# Answer

- Amy's parents can choose the school that best serves Amy's needs.
- Has the principal explained the parents' rights under the law? Is the principal aware of McKinney-Vento, or is (s)he following District procedures?
- How much time is left in the year?
- If the family disagrees with the District's decision, they must be informed of their right to appeal the District's decision. The liaison assists the family through the dispute resolution process.



## Scenario: Ed

Ed had been living with his parents in permanent housing in District A when their house was foreclosed on because his parents couldn't make the mortgage payments. Ed's family moved in temporarily with relatives in District B. Since Ed is no longer living in District A, his parents enrolled him in District B as a permanently housed student. The liaison in District B spoke with Ed about his living situation, but neither he nor his parents consider themselves homeless.

***What questions should the liaison ask to determine whether Ed is covered under McKinney-Vento?***



# Answer

- Is this arrangement “fixed,” “permanent,” and “adequate?”
- Is Ed’s family looking for their own place?
- What were the circumstances that caused Ed’s family to leave their home?
- Where would they go if he had to leave?
- Is the arrangement more like guests in the home?



## Scenario: Ed (ctd.)

- If Ed's relatives in District B were living in Section 8 housing and the landlord was unaware that Ed and his parents had moved in, would that have any bearing on the situation?
- If instead of moving in with relatives in a neighboring district Ed and his family moved into a local motel, would Ed be covered under McKinney-Vento? Why or why not?



## Answer

- Residence information is part of a student's records and is protected by federal privacy laws (FERPA). Schools cannot contact landlords to discuss living arrangements.
- Living in a hotel/motel is specifically cited in the law and would therefore qualify as temporary housing.



## Scenario: Ed (ctd.)

After staying with their relatives for several weeks, Ed and his family then rent an apartment in District B because it was too crowded living doubled up with another family. Ed's family does not have a written lease and his parents continue to look for permanent housing in District A.



## Scenario: Ed (ctd.)

- What if the family is still living in the same apartment after 6 months?
- What if the apartment only has one bedroom and Ed is sleeping in the living room?



# Answer

- Lack of a lease sometimes, but not always, indicates unstable housing.
- Sleeping in the living room indicates “inadequate” housing with privacy a consideration.
- In addition, adequacy can also refer to enough room for everyone, enough heat and water, etc.

# Scenario : Julia

Julia is 16 years old. She frequently gets into arguments with her stepfather. One night during an argument Julia's stepfather tells her to leave and not come back. Julia flees to her aunt's house.

What information would you need to know to determine whether Julia is covered under the McKinney-Vento Act?

Would Julia be covered under the Act if her mother and stepfather would allow her to return home, but Julia didn't want to?

Would Julia be covered under the Act if she planned to live with her aunt indefinitely?



# Answer

- How long does Julia plan to stay at her aunt's? How long does her aunt plan to house Julia?
- Just because Julia's parents will allow her to return doesn't mean that is in the student's best interest.
- If the arrangement becomes permanent through court, Julia becomes a resident of the district.



# References

- Homeless Alliance of WNY. Street Survey of Buffalo and Erie County. (January, 2008).
- NYS-TEACHS (New York State Technical and Educational Assistance Center for Homeless Students) "The Educational Rights of Students in Temporary Housing." State Presentation, 2008.

# References

- National Coalition for the Homeless: NCH Fact Sheet # 5, "Mental Illness and Homelessness." June, 2008.
- National Coalition for the Homeless: NCH Fact Sheet # 6, "Addiction Disorders and Homelessness." June, 2008.
- Treatment Advocacy (TAC), Fact Sheet: "Homelessness: Tragic side effect of non-treatment." April, 2007.
- "Homelessness – Provisions of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services." Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. March, 2003.
- National Health Care for the Homeless Council. "Addiction, Mental Health, and Homelessness." Policy Statements, 2008.

## RESOURCES

State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

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**Homeless/LEA Liaisons**

**[www.nysteachs.org/statewide.cgi](http://www.nysteachs.org/statewide.cgi)**

**National Association for the Education of  
Homeless Children and Youth**

**[www.naehcy.org](http://www.naehcy.org)**

**National Center for Homeless Education**

**[www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche)**

# Website Links to Laws and Policies

The McKinney-Vento Act

[http://nysteachs.org/media/INF\\_LP\\_Fed\\_MV.pdf](http://nysteachs.org/media/INF_LP_Fed_MV.pdf)

New York State Education Law Section 3209

<http://nysteachs.org/info-forms/laws-policies/state.html>

Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Section  
100.2(x)

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/part100/pages/1002f.html>

Regulations of the Commissioner of Education for Appeals

<http://www.counsel.nysed.gov/rulesandregs/parts275and276.html>

Form Petition for Appeals Involving Homeless Youth

<http://www.counsel.nysed.gov/appeals/homelessForms.htm>

Administrative Directive 06 ADM 15

[http://www.wnyc.net/pb/docs/06\\_adm-15.pdf](http://www.wnyc.net/pb/docs/06_adm-15.pdf)