Requirements and Recommendations to Support Homeless Students
During school building closure

In light of the global pandemic of the novel coronavirus causing Covid-19, public schools are moving to virtual learning options for students. The McKinney-Vento Act and guidance from the Department of Education require that children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to the same public education as other children and youth, including the necessary educational and related services. The McKinney-Vento Act remains in full force and effect, even when schools are closed.

Section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Act defines "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes—
• Children and youths who are:
- sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as "doubled-up");
- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
- abandoned in hospitals;
• 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;
• Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
• Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Recommendations:
1. Utilize SchoolHouse Connections' [Checklist for Local Education Agencies and Early Childhood Providers](#) as a best practice related to identification, outreach, communications, health, safety, basic needs and access to learning.
2. Coordinate use of Title I Homeless Set-aside funds and Education for Homeless Children and Youth subgrant funds, when possible. These funds can be used for, among other things, the purchase of school supplies, emergency food, hygiene, transportation and medical, dental, vision services or medications if needed.
3. Coordinate with local shelters (family/domestic violence/youth shelters and related programs) to provide the students residing in their facilities with the access and materials they need.
4. Ensure that families and unaccompanied youth have information related to free wifi access in school parking lots and throughout the community. A list of current providers that are offering free or low-cost monthly internet access during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak can be found .
5. Consider redirecting unspent funds from other state education programs to assist low-income students with purchasing digital devices and internet service.
6. Encourage philanthropy or donations from the private sector as an option to fill the remaining funding gaps.

Additional Information from the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Supporting Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness during the Covid-19 Outbreak: Questions to Consider, March 16, 2020, https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/supporting-children-and-youth-experiencing-homelessness-during-the-covid-19-outbreak-questions-to-consider/.