

**SUBTITLE B OF TITLE VII OF
McKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT**

**AS AMENDED BY
THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001**

Nebraska

**STATE PLAN FOR THE EDUCATION FOR
HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTHS PROGRAM**

May, 2002

**MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT
TITLE VII, SUBTITLE B
NEBRASKA STATE PLAN**

Education for Homeless Children and Youth

1. Describe the SEA's procedures for ensuring that homeless children and youth are given the opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic achievement standards that all students in the State are expected to meet.
 - Every district with a McKinney – Vento grant will be required to report student performance on the state assessment of content standards for all students identified as homeless who have attended the school for an entire school year.
 - The state coordinator will assist in developing and implementing a comprehensive plan for ensuring that homeless children and youths are given the opportunity to meet the same challenging State academic achievement standards that all students in the State are expected to meet. Timeline: Started March 2002 and continuing.
 - The Nebraska State Homeless Education Program is part of Nebraska's Comprehensive State Plan for School Improvement (CPSI). Timeline: Started March 2002 and continuing.
 - All of Nebraska's school districts will include descriptions of services for homeless in their district CPSI.
 - Each of Nebraska's school districts will identify a homeless liaison in their district CPSI.
 - The state coordinator is a member of the Nebraska Department of Education's federal programs team that is striving towards coordination of programs, services, reporting, and etcetera.
 - The state coordinator, a school district representative, and a homeless shelter agency representative, are members of the No Child Left Behind Committee of Practitioners.
 - The state coordinator's office will coordinate with the Title I program and other programs to ensure that homeless children and youths are included in statewide assessment and accountability systems.
 - The state coordinator will review and recommend revisions of laws, regulations, practices, and policies that act as barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and academic success of homeless children and youths; Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - The state coordinator will update Nebraska's Homeless Education web page to be a reliable source for distributing information. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - Provide a separate link on the homepage of the Nebraska Department of Education's web page. Timeline: July 2002.
 - Provide a link in Nebraska's Title I homepage. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - Add and delete information to the web page as necessary. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - The state coordinator will distribute copies of relevant information to school district homeless liaisons including, but not limited to, the "State Board of Education Policy Guidelines for Educating Homeless Children and Youth." Timeline: Continuing Practice.
 - The state coordinator will work with school districts and school district homeless liaisons to ensure that homeless students receive services comparable to those provided to other students, including transportation, educational services, school meal programs, and that homeless students are not stigmatized or isolated from their peers. Timeline: Continuing Practice.

2. Describe procedures the SEA will use to identify homeless children and youth in the State and to assess their special needs.

- The state coordinator's office will disseminate public notice of the educational rights of homeless students among community service agencies and state agencies. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - The state coordinator will conduct activities to inform school district personnel of the requirements and best practices related to the identification of homeless children and youths. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - The state coordinator's office will provide training to school district's liaisons for homeless children and youth of their duties described in section 722(6)(A). Timeline: Start July 2002 and continue.
 - The state coordinator will disseminate information on successful proven practices relating to homeless children and youths. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - The state coordinator will coordinate and collaborate with state, local, and community agencies that serve homeless children and youths and their families, to assist in identifying homeless children and youths. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - The state coordinator will ensure that school districts with agencies continue to adhere to the signed agreement that the shelter will report the number of homeless children and youth in the Title I annual application. Also, all districts with shelters will reserve a portion of their Title I funds for homeless education. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - The state coordinator will disseminate the definition of homeless as provided in legislation by informing liaisons that according to section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, the term "homeless children and youths" -
 - Means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1))['one who (1) lacks a fixed, regular and adequate residence or (2) has a primary nighttime residence in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter for temporary accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill), an institution providing temporary residence for individuals intended to be institutionalized, or a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.']; and
 - Includes –
 - (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
 - (ii) 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 accommodations for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C));
 - (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
 - (iv) migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii)."
- In Section 725(6), "the term 'unaccompanied youth' includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian."

3. Describe the State's procedure for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths.
- The state coordinator will convene a task force to review and revise procedures for school district liaisons to use to mediate disputes arising from enrollment or educational placement of homeless children and youth. This will include a notice of appeal rights as required in the McKinney-Vento Act. Timeline: July - August 2002.
 - The state coordinator will take the mediation process established by the task force from the NCLB Committee of Practitioners for comments and recommendations. Timeline: September 2002.
 - The state coordinator will disseminate a sample form for a notice of appeal rights to schools, parents, guardians, and community agencies in a language and manner they can understand. Timeline: Start July 2002 and continue.
 - The state coordinator will provide training to school district liaisons for homeless children and youths of their duties described in section 722(6)(A) of the McKinney-Vento Act. Timeline: Start January 2002 and continue.
 - If a dispute arises, the state coordinator will contact the homeless liaison and the homeless child or youth's parent or guardian, or the youth to determine the issues and ensure that all parties understand the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and the State of Nebraska, and the right of appeal, if not satisfied. Timeline: Start July 2002 and continue.
 - The state coordinator and/or the school district homeless liaison will ensure that the parent or guardian of the homeless child or youth will be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision on the dispute including the right to appeal.
 - The state coordinator will work to ensure that homeless children and youths will be enrolled immediately in the school of their choice and provided transportation in accordance with the law, pending resolution of the dispute.
 - The state coordinator will work on updating and revising the dispute resolution process at the state level and will continue to make the process available throughout the state. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - UPDATE: The State Coordinator has established a process for monitoring schools for having a dispute resolution process, or acceptable alternative, in the Federal Programs monitoring visit conducted in all schools receiving any federal funds from the Nebraska Department of Education. March 2003
 - UPDATE: The State Coordinator, with assistance from the NDE Legal Office has established, in Rule 19, the state law governing school enrollment, a dispute resolution process for disputes and how they be handled at the district level, and an established protocol for handling disputes that are appealed to the state beyond the local level. The state coordinator will keep a log of all disputes that reach the state level, and all action taken in regards to those disputes. Rule 19 can be accessed at this link: http://www.education.ne.gov/LEGAL/webrulespdf/Clean19_2010.pdf March 2003
4. Describe the State's programs for school personnel to heighten their awareness of the specific needs of homeless children and youths.
- The state coordinator's office will develop, disseminate, and continually update a database of contact information of all school district's liaisons for homeless children and youths to include addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. Timeline: Start July 2002 and continue.
 - The state coordinator will conduct activities to inform school district personnel of the requirements and best practices related to homeless children and youths. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - Refer to and discuss homeless education issues during the NCLB Integrated Site Review Process.
 - Disseminate relevant information on issues and topics related to homeless education via mail and or homeless education web page.

- Distribute this information, through the homeless liaison, to principals, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, pupil services personnel, and any other necessary personnel.
 - The state coordinator's office will provide state support for developing models of training programs to increase awareness of the problems that homeless children and youths face. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - The state coordinator will identify and disseminate proven, successful practices relating to homeless children and youth. Timeline: Continuing practice.
5. Describe the State's procedures for ensuring that homeless children and youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in Federal, State, or local food programs.
- The state coordinator's office will coordinate, collaborate, and monitor school districts to ensure that homeless students receive services comparable to those provided to other students, including school meal programs. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - Provide each school district's liaison for homeless children and youths with the 1992 United States Department of Agricultural Memorandum entitled *Documentation of Free and Reduce Price Meal Eligibility for Homeless Children*. This documentation states that "it is acceptable for the director of the homeless shelter at which the child resides to complete and submit an application for the child; or local level official may complete an application for a child and approve the child for free meals based solely on their knowledge that the child's address is a homeless shelter, or that the child has no known address, and is indeed homeless". Timeline: Start August 2002 and continue.
 - The state coordinator's office will coordinate and collaborate with food program personnel and school district liaisons to implement new or updated policies including the provision that liaisons may provide a list of homeless students to serve as homeless documentation for USDA. Timeline: Started April 2002 and continue.
 - The state coordinator's office will encourage professional development and trainings with Child Nutrition Directors at the State and local level, as well as soup kitchens, food banks, and other anti-hunger groups. Timeline: Continuing practice.
6. Describe the State's procedures for ensuring that: homeless children have equal access to the same public preschool programs, administered by the State agency, as provided to other children in the State; homeless youths and youths separated from the public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services; homeless children and youths who meet the relevant eligibility criteria are able to participate in Federal, State, or local before- and after-school care programs.
- The state coordinator's office with the assistance of school district liaisons, and others, will gather information on the nature and extent of the problems homeless children and youths have in gaining access to public pre-school programs, public elementary schools, and public secondary schools. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - The state coordinator's office will coordinate with other relevant educational programs, including preschool programs, and with the providers of services to homeless children and youths and their families, such as providers of shelters and youth centers, to improve comprehensive services for the homeless. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - The state coordinator's office will monitor the state and district levels engaged in homeless programs to ensure knowledge and information about the homeless population and the needs of homeless children and youths is available. Timeline: Continuing practice.
 - The state coordinator will disseminate successful proven practices relating to homeless children and youths. Timeline: Continuing practice;
 - The state coordinator will encourage Head Start grantees to keep track of the services they provide to homeless children and their families. Timeline: Continuing

practice.

- The state coordinator's office will provide liaison for homeless children and youths and Head Start grantees the United States Department of Health and Human Services 1992 Information Memorandum that provides guidance to Head Start agencies to foster the recruitment and enrollment of homeless pre-school aged children and their families into the Head Start program. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator and school district liaisons will coordinate with Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs, Alternative Education Programs, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Neglected and Delinquent, Drop Out Prevention, and other programs who reach and serve homeless youths, and youths that are separated from school. Timeline: Start July 2002 and continue.

7. Describe the SEA's strategies for addressing problems set forth in its FY 2000 report provided to the Secretary under subsection 722(f)(3) of the Act.

- The state coordinator will review and recommend revisions to laws, regulations, policies, and practices that may act as barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and academic success in school of homeless children and youths. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator will work with the school district homeless liaison to facilitate immediate enrollment of homeless children and youths. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator will inform school districts via liaisons of the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act that homeless children and youths should remain in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, unless doing so is not feasible or contrary to parent/guardian wishes. Timeline: Start July 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator's office will increase homelessness awareness through a variety of tactics including, but not limited to, public appearances, speeches, coordination among liaisons and other relevant personnel, and televised programs. Timeline: Start May 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator's office with the assistance of school district liaisons, and others, will strengthen homeless education programs. Timeline: Start July 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator will support all legislation that supports the educational needs of homeless children and youths. Timeline: Start April 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator and school district liaisons will conduct state level and district level policy reviews and revisions. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator's office, with the assistance of the Title I office, will monitor the utilization of school districts' Title I reservation of funds, including enforcing the matching funds guideline established in Nebraska. Timeline: Start May 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator and school district liaison will coordinate with state and local housing agencies to minimize educational disruption for children and youths who become homeless. Timeline: Start July 2002 and continue.

8. Provide the SEA's strategies for addressing problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youths, including problems resulting from enrollment delays that are caused by: immunization and medical records requirements; residency requirements; lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation; guardianship issues; or uniform or dress code requirements.

- The state coordinator will inform the school district liaison that lack of immunization or medical records, residency requirements, lack of birth certificates, school records or other documentation, guardianship issues, or dress code requirements can not be used to prohibit the enrollment of homeless children and youths. Timeline: Start August 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator will revise, review, and disseminate a question and answer advisory letter that provides answers, along with references and resources, to commonly

asked questions regarding enrollment of homeless children and youths. Timeline: Start March 2002 and continue.

- The state coordinator will conduct and/or provide professional development opportunities to district liaisons for homeless children and youths in Nebraska relating to the enrollment of homeless children and youths so that those liaisons can train staff and personnel. Timeline: Start August 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator will provide and/or conduct professional development opportunities for school district liaisons for homeless children and youths throughout Nebraska regarding procedures to review and revise board policies at the local educational agency level. Timeline: Start: August 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator will inform school district liaisons of, and encourage the implementation of, when feasible, the school of origin concept establish in the McKinney-Vento Act. Timeline: Start August 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator will review and distribute "State Board of Education Policy Guidelines for Educating Homeless Children and Youth;" Timeline: Start: August 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator will provide professional development resources to school district liaisons for homeless children and youths to conduct their own trainings as it relates to the enrollment of homeless children and youths. Timeline: Start April 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator's office will develop and disseminate a database of contact information of school district's liaisons for homeless children and youths to include addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses, in order to encourage coordination and collaboration in the field. Timeline: Start August 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator will review, revise and encourage use of the Homeless Web site as a resource to assist in improving homeless awareness and educational opportunities. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator will encourage collaboration among community agencies to assist in eliminating the barriers to enrollment and promote the opportunity for homeless children and youth to be successful in school. Timeline: Continuing practice.

9. Demonstrate that the SEA and local educational agencies (LEAs) in the State have developed, and will review and as necessary revise, policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youths in schools in the State.

- The state coordinator will revise, review, and have available for dissemination a question and answer advisory letter that provides answers, along with references and resources, to commonly asked questions regarding enrollment of homeless children and youths. Timeline: Start March 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator will assess current procedures and practices for enrolling students and obtaining immunization and school records, and continually revise and update these to promote a smoother, more efficient procedure for all students enrolling in school. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator will review existing rules, regulations, policies, and practices at state and district level. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator will encourage liaisons to use as a resource the Administrative Manual for Federal Discretionary Programs which contains valuable information on homeless children and youths, including, but not limited to, identification, school assignment, records, testing, immunization, responsibilities, transportation, staff development, and comparable services. Timeline: Start September 2002 and continue.

10. Describe how the State will ensure that LEAs will comply with the requirements of paragraphs in Section 722(g)(3) through (g)(7) of the Act.

- The state coordinator will encourage schools and school district personnel to assess the effectiveness of educational programs, services, and support activities provided to homeless students through regular use of the state's Title I Integrated Site Review

process. Timeline: Continuing practice.

- The state coordinator will develop and disseminate a database that includes school district liaisons for homeless children and youths contact information to include addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses to promote communication and collaboration throughout the state of Nebraska. Timeline: Start August 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator will review, revise, and update as necessary to continue having homeless questions be a part of the written checklist for Integrated Site Reviews of NCLB. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator's office will award and monitor grants to successful applicants who apply for a competitive grant for the homeless to ensure that homeless children and youths enroll in, attend fully, and succeed in school and that homeless children and youths and their families receive the services for which they are eligible. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator and local liaison will work together to ensure that school personnel, service providers, and advocates know the duties of the liaison. Timeline: Continuing practice with special efforts for new liaisons to start in August 2002.
- The state coordinator will conduct site visits to school districts to offer best practices to ensure enrollment, participation, and success in school for homeless children and youths, as well as unaccompanied youths. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator's office will offer input into local enrollment policies to ensure that current policies fulfill the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator will provide technical assistance activities such as the revision of the Homeless Web site and the dissemination of resources as required. Timeline: Continuing practice.

11. Describe the technical assistance that the State will furnish to LEAs and how the SEA will coordinate its compliance efforts with the local educational agency liaisons designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii) in Section 722 of the Act.

- The state coordinator will develop and maintain a database of contact information of school district liaisons for homeless children and youths to include addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. Timeline: Start August 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator will provide training and resources to school district's liaisons for homeless children and youths of their duties described in section 722(6)(A). Timeline: Start July 2002 and continue.
- The state coordinator will inform school district liaisons of their duties designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii). Timeline: Start April 2002 and continue.
 - Ensure that homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
 - Ensure that homeless children and youths enroll in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools of that district.
 - Ensure that homeless families, children, and youths receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including Head Start and Even Start programs and preschool programs administered by the school district, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
 - Ensure that the parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
 - Ensure that public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated where such children and youths receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act, such as schools, family shelters, and soup kitchens.
 - Ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with paragraph (3)(E) of the McKinney-Vento Act.
 - Ensure that the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including

transportation to the school of origin, as described in paragraph (1)(J)(iii) of the McKinney-Vento Act, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school that is selected under paragraph (3)(A) of the Act.

- The state coordinator will meet with other state agencies providing services to homeless children and youths. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator will provide information about curricula, instructional materials, pedagogical practices, and alternative programs that have been successful in ensuring homeless students access to the full academic programs at their schools, including special services for which they meet eligibility criteria, such as services provided under Title I, children with disabilities, limited-English proficiency, vocational and technical, gifted and talented, and school nutrition programs. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator will review, revise and encourage the use of the Homeless Web site. Timeline: Continuing practice.

12. Describe how the SEA will use the funds it receives under this program to carry out State-level activities and to make subgrants to LEAs.

- The state coordinator will revise and make available an application for competitive subgrants to school districts based on the need of the district for assistance and the quality of the application submitted. Timeline: Continuing practice;
- The state coordinator will create a rubric and scoring guide to determine the quality and need of districts that submit applications. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator will recruit a review panel to read and score applications using rubric. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator will conduct site visitations as a part of NCLB Integrated Site Reviews of school district's homeless programs at least once every three years. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator's office will require and review reports, narrative and fiscal. Timeline: Continuing practice.
- The state coordinator will ensure that all districts that receive a grant from the McKinney-Vento Act will match that amount in Title I funds and all districts with shelters will reserve a portion of Title I funds for homeless education. Timeline: Start June 2002 and continue.