

**PA Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness
and PA Foster Care Program**

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ACT I and the McKinney-Vento and Foster Programs in LEAs

In response to questions regarding the connection of McKinney-Vento programs, PA Foster Care Education and the new Act I legislation for students who have experienced “educational instability”, the Region 7 office has prepared the following review. Outlined below are the roles and responsibilities for the Point of Contact or Liaison in each program.

It should be noted, that each student should be identified on a case by case basis. It is required by law that each LEA have a specific McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison and a PA Foster Care Education Point of Contact. Act I does not require an LEA Point of Contact but outlines that such a staff member exists for each identified Act I student. Best practice suggests that the Act I POC be an appropriate staff member in the building in which the student is educated. The LEA policies and procedures must determine how the POC or Liaison are assigned. It is imperative that POC and Liaisons and/or building level staff that works with the liaison have the capacity and the capability to provide ongoing service to McKinney-Vento, Foster or Act I students and their families.

Act I Point of Contact Responsibilities

A school entity may satisfy the requirement of a Point of Contact by assigning the duties listed below to an existing or new point of contact established by the school entity.

The Point of Contact should be a building-level person and will be responsible for ensuring completion of all tasks.

The school entity must (1) list the name and contact information of the Point of Contact in the student's education records and (2) provide the name and contact information of the Point of Contact to the student's education decision maker.

- Ensure the LEA has a comprehensive policy and procedure in place for immediate identification of students who are Act I eligible.
- Assist ACT I youth with enrollment, school placement, and obtaining records.
- If Act I student is also McKinney-Vento or Foster, collaborate with other Liaison or Point of contact to ensure students' needs are being met.
- Ensure students don't face barriers to full participation at school including school-sponsored and extracurricular activities, and waiving fees the student maybe otherwise assessed.
- Obtain and review all students records from all prior schools within 10 days of the new placement to ensure appropriate class placement.
- Aid point of contact from other LEAs to obtain student information from your school.
- Facilitate a student's expedited with the school counselor or mental health professional, as appropriate. Refer to school teams, (SAP, Child Study, IST, Trauma Informed) as needed.
- For students in High School:
 - Create a "student-specific" individualized graduation plan for all Act I eligible in grades 9-12.
 - Determine appropriate classes and what courses a student needs to be on track for promotion and on-time graduation.
 - Assess all full and partial credits for the student and connect the student to credit recovery and course waiver opportunities.
 - If applicable, support the student in obtaining a diploma from a prior school entity or the state of Pennsylvania. (Keystone Diploma)

The LEA must designate a Homeless Liaison and ensure that the liaison is able to carry out his/her duties as legally required under McKinney-Vento. The liaison must:

- Ensure homeless children and youth are properly identified and immediately enrolled.
- Review/revise and local policies and practices to ensure that students are not segregated or stigmatized (by school or program) on the basis of their homeless status.
- Participate in professional development and technical assistance activities and ensure that school personnel providing McKinney-Vento services receive professional development and support.
- Assist unaccompanied homeless youth with enrollment, school placement, and obtaining records.
- Inform parent, guardian and unaccompanied homeless youth of educational opportunities available to ensure homeless students have equal access to magnet and summer schools, career technical education, advanced placement, and other LEA programs.
- Disseminate public notice of McKinney-Vento rights in locations frequented by parents, guardians, and unaccompanied youth, in a manner and form understandable to parents, guardians, and youth.
- Ensure that preschool-aged homeless children and their families have access to and receive services, if eligible, under LEA-administered preschool programs (may include Head Start, Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other LEA preschool programs).
- Remove enrollment barriers, including barriers related to missed application or enrollment deadlines; fines or fees; records required for enrollment including immunization or other required health records, proof of residency, or other documentation; or academic records, including credit transfer.
- Ensure students identified as homeless have school stability, and parents and school personnel are informed about how school of origin extends to preschools, receiving schools, and providing transportation until the end of the school year, even if a student becomes permanently housed.
- Inform parent/guardian/unaccompanied homeless youth of all services, including transportation to the school of origin, and the criteria for transportation assistance.
- Coordinate and collaborate with different divisions within the LEA such as special education, migrant education, Title I, nutrition services, transportation, etc. to ensure homeless students are afforded the opportunities and additional resources to have the access of their housed peers.
- Develop and coordinate collaborations with resources, including: public and private child welfare and social services agencies; law enforcement agencies; juvenile and family courts; agencies providing mental health services; domestic

violence agencies, child care providers; runaway and homeless youth centers; food banks, providers of services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act; and providers of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing, including public housing agencies, shelter operators, and operators of transitional housing facilities.

- Ensure public notification of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in locations frequented by parents, guardians and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in an understandable manner and form.
- Ensure that parents and the LEA staff are aware of the importance of the privacy of student records, including information about a homeless child or youth's living situation.
- Mediate school enrollment disputes and attend, as authorized, Student Assistance (SAP), School Attendance Review Team, Individual Education Plan (IEP), Expulsion and Manifestation Determination meetings.
- Refer homeless families and students to housing services, in addition to other services. Liaisons may affirm whether homeless students meet the U.S. Department of Housing and

The LEA Foster Care Point of Contact (POC) responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Coordinating with the corresponding CCYA on the implementation of the Title I foster care provisions;
- Sharing in the development of a process for making the best interest determination;
- Documenting the best interest determination;
- Facilitating with the CCYA the transfer of records including immunizations, medical records, and copies of IEPs and Section 504 plans to ensure immediate enrollment;
- Facilitating data sharing with CCYA; consistent with FERPA and other privacy protocols;
- Developing and coordinating local transportation procedures;
- Sharing in making the best interest determination and resolving transportation disputes;
- Ensuring that children in foster care are enrolled in and regularly attending school; and
- Providing professional development and training to school staff on the Title I foster care provisions and education needs of children in foster care, as needed.