



Homeless Liaison Manual: Standard Operating Procedures

Identifying and Supporting Destination Career Academy of Georgia Homeless Student Population

You may contact Destinations Career Academy of Georgia District's Homeless Liaison, Brandi Beavers (bbeavers@gadca.org; 404-997-8040), or Head-of-School, Nakia McCall (nmccall@gadca.org) for additional information concerning Homeless Education.

Dissemination of Public Notices can be found:

- 1). GADCA.k12.com under Resources<Important Documents and
- 2). Semi-Annual Welcome Letter.

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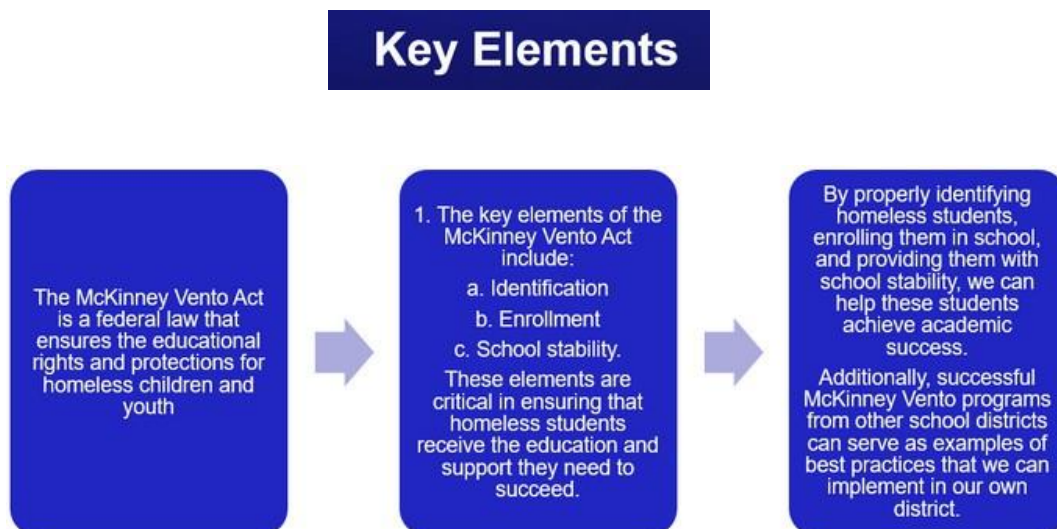
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PURPOSE

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) which falls under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act, has been reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act as of December 2015. According to ESSA, all LEAs are required to provide necessary services to homeless children, including appointing a local homeless liaison to ensure their enrollment in school.

The McKinney-Vento Act was enacted to tackle the obstacles that homeless children and youths encounter when enrolling, attending, and thriving in school. The law strongly emphasizes ensuring school stability for this vulnerable population, recognizing that frequent school changes can hinder academic and social development. To this end, the McKinney-Vento Act mandates that school districts keep homeless students in their school of origin to foster stability and enhance educational outcomes, always keeping the student's best interests in mind.

Destinations Career Academy of Georgia (GADCA) Homeless Manual outlines federal regulations under the McKinney-Vento Act. The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law that supersedes all local and state-level laws. The manual is intended to serve in defining, understanding, and communicating GADCA policies and procedures, identifying responsibilities, and providing guidelines in performing specific tasks.



DEFINITION: HOMLESS STUDENTS

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Destinations Career Academy of Georgia (GADCA) is committed to identifying school-aged homeless children and youth within the area it serves, promoting their enrollment, and removing any obstacles that may hinder their education due to school system policies or practices. Homeless students will receive the same services as other students based on their unique needs, including preschool, free school meals, services for English learners, special education,

career and technical education (CTE), and before- and after-school programs.

DEFINITION of HOMELESS STUDENTS - THE FAR METHOD

MCKINNEY-VENTO DEFINITION OF HOMELESS 42 U.S.C. § 11434a (2)

The term “homeless children and youth”— A. means individuals who lack a fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence. At GADCA, we’ve incorporated the acronym **FAR** (Fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence).

This includes the following situations:

- Sharing the housing of others (known as doubling-up) due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (*a situation where individuals are unable to maintain their housing situation and are forced to stay with a series of friends and/or extended family members*):
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters or abandoned in hospitals.
- Living in a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children living in the above circumstances.
- The McKinney-Vento Act also recognizes unaccompanied youth who are homeless. According to the act, an unaccompanied youth is a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian.

IDENTIFYING HOMELESS STUDENTS

GADCA understands that McKinney-Vento students may not fit the stereotypical image of homelessness and housing insecurity. Therefore, it's essential to understand the various situations that can lead to housing instability and approach each student with empathy and understanding. It is important to gather all the relevant information, analyze what you know, and seek consultation (if needed), prior to determining the student’s homeless classification. Some students may be living in temporary or unstable housing situations, such as staying with friends or family members, living in motels or shelters, or sleeping in cars. Others may have experienced a loss of housing, such as eviction or foreclosure, in the past 12 months. These students may require additional support and resources to succeed in school and find stable housing.

SUPPORTING UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

In several instances, children and youth enrolling in a school may not live with their parents or legal guardians. Children in families experiencing homelessness are frequently sent to live temporarily with friends or relatives. This living arrangement has been especially prevalent in families displaced by natural disasters. In other situations, youth have been forced to leave home due to abusive environments or are alone for other reasons. These children and youth, in most cases, fit the definition of homeless, unaccompanied youth in the McKinney-Vento Act: a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

- Immediately enroll and allow youth to attend classes and participate fully in school activities. Inform the youth of his/her eligibility to receive free school services/Offer a peer and adult mentor.
- Monitor the student's performance and provide additional support (grades, attendance, behavior)
- Provide transportation to/from Milestones Testing.

The student's homeless status will carry the academic year in which the student has enrolled. Homeless status should be verified each new school year.

Develop	Develop a system for identifying and tracking these students, maintain confidentiality and sensitivity and to ensure that all necessary paperwork and documentation is completed promptly and accurately.
Training	Training school staff on the definition of homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act
Create	Creating a designated point of contact for McKinney-Vento students and families
Outreach	Conducting regular outreach to community organizations that may work with homeless families
Confidentiality	Additionally, it is important to maintain confidentiality for these students and families and to ensure that they are aware of their educational rights and protections under the McKinney-Vento Act.

ENROLLMENT OF HOMELESS STUDENT

The McKinney-Vento Act requires School sites to ensure that every homeless child or youth has equal access to a free, appropriate, public education. The term enrollment is a critical part of the law and is defined as, "attending classes and participating fully in school activities." Schools are required to enroll students immediately, regardless of the point in the school year in which a homeless student presents for enrollment. Denying immediate enrollment to a homeless student violates federal law and may place the student in danger. If needed, consult the District Liaison for Homeless Education with any questions concerning homeless student classification.

GADCA will adhere to the following guidance to ensure compliance of identified Homeless Students.

1. It is the responsibility of GADCA to immediately enroll the child/youth and make a reasonable effort to verify the student is homeless; to contact the sending school for proper transfer documentation.
2. All potentially identified homeless parents/unaccompanied youth shall complete the Homeless Affidavit (compliance) and Referral & Needs Assessment Form (compliance) and Caregiver Authorization Form for unaccompanied youth (compliance) upon Enrollment (All elements are covered within the MKV Questionnaire).
 - a. If the enrolling family answers questions with borderline homeless or unaccompanied youth answers, GADCA will place the family on a "watch list" and follow-up with a phone call to explain the benefits of the McKinney-Vento program. Ultimately if the support of school staff, determine a student qualifies as homeless under the definition set forth by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act), the family, will receive a questionnaire via email for the family to complete.
 - b. The enrolling family will be updated with GADCA's Total View Action (TVA) database as an MKV family.
- 3.) After completion of verification, the School/Network Liaison should determine the student/youth's classification.
 - i. The parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth will be informed of all rights pertaining to students/youth that are classified as homeless (transportation for testing and school origin rights).
 - ii. Should any parent/guardian/unaccompanied youth disagree with the decision made by the school, they have a right to dispute the decision by contacting the MKV liaison. GADCA will respect the family's decision and remove the family from the MKV list.

TRANSPORTATION

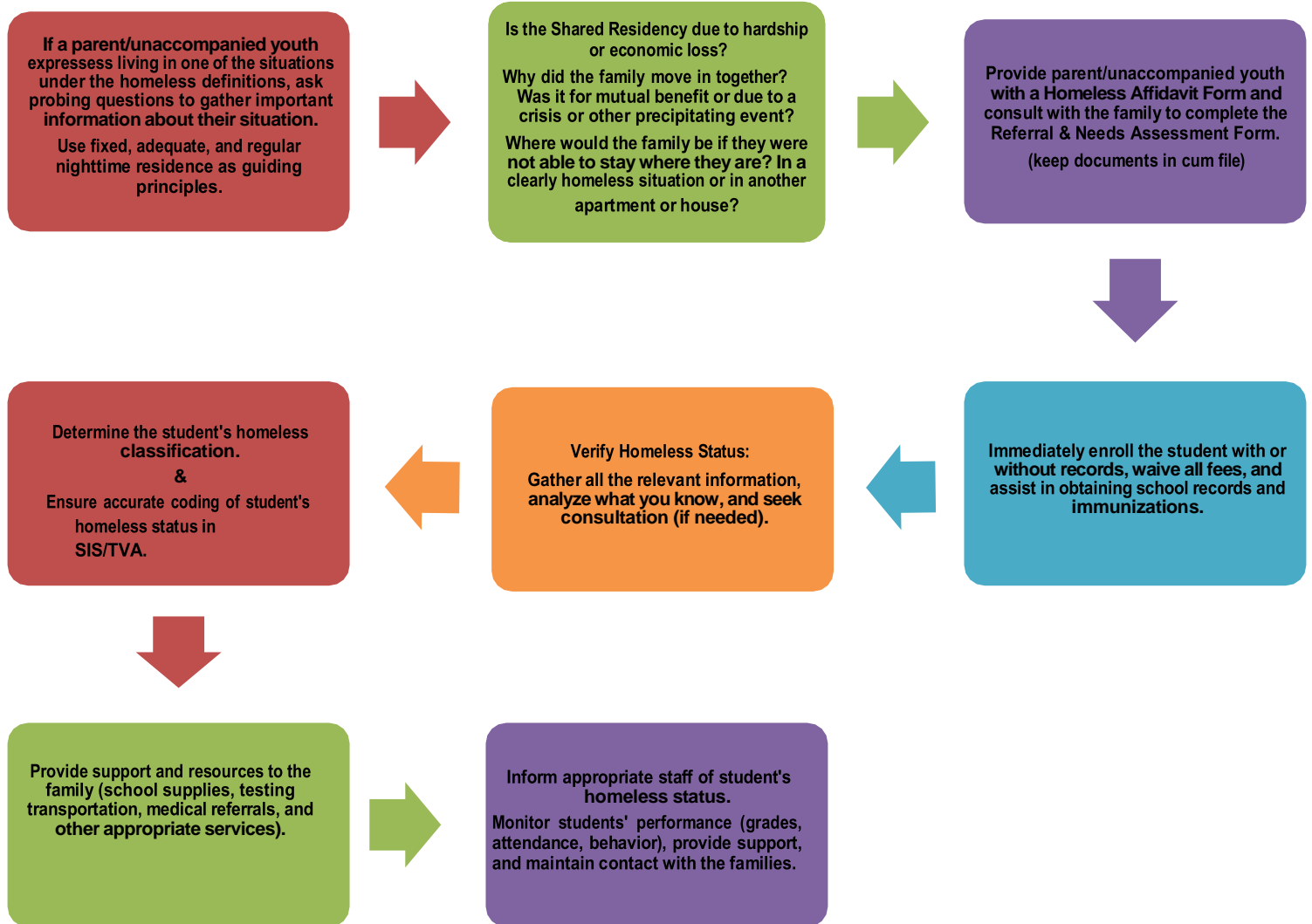
Testing: Transportation is one of the biggest barriers to regular school attendance and school stability for homeless students. Homeless students, including unaccompanied youth, must be informed of all transportation services and provided transportation to and from their Milestone Testing

The law requires LEAs to coordinate inter-district activities with other LEAs, specifically with coordinating transportation for testing. This requirement applies to all LEAs whether or not the LEA receives subgrant funds and whether or not the LEA provides transportation to students.

HOMELESS LIAISON ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

GADCA shall have a person designated as the contact for students in homeless situations. The liaison is the primary contact between homeless families, school and LEA staff, shelter workers, and other service providers. The Homeless Liaison is the key to ensuring homeless children and youths receive the services they need. The Homeless Liaison ensures that children/youth experiencing homelessness enroll and succeed in school.

HOMELESS IDENTIFICATION PROCESS



MKV MONITORING AND SUPPORT

Stride's Process

1. The family answers questions in the portal with their living situation. This triggers us to contact them.
Which of the following accurately describes the student's current living situation?
2. When we contact the family, the agent confirms their living situation and if anything, other than permanent/stable housing the family completes the MKV form.
3. Once the complete the form it is then escalated to me, and I then send this to you for review. Once you review their MKV eligibility and get back to me is when I would then remove their documents if you deemed eligible or if not, I would have someone reach out to let the family know to submit all enrollment documents.

If they were to become MKV after filling out the application the only thing we will have to go on is if the family calls in and informs us. We would then add the document for the family to fill out and send to you once completed.

MKV CONTINUOUS SUPPORT

GADCA POLICIES

Standard Operational Procedure for Monitoring McKinney Vento Eligibility of Students Enrolling at Destinations Career Academy:

1. GADCA will send a Welcome Letter via email to all newly enrolled students, which will contain information about the McKinney Vento Act and its eligibility requirements.
2. The Welcome Letter will also provide contact information for Brandi Beavers, who will be the point of contact for families who wish to inquire about their eligibility for McKinney Vento services. The contact information will include an email address (bbeavers@gadca.org) and a phone number (404-997-8040).
3. Upon receiving an inquiry from a student, Brandi Beavers will review the student's eligibility for McKinney Vento services:
 - a. Review the Questionnaire
 - b. Contact Southern Escalations to upload the questionnaire.
 - c. Make a determination
4. If the student is found to be eligible for McKinney Vento services, GADCA will document this in their student record and ensure that the student receives the appropriate supports and resources.
5. GADCA will also monitor the eligibility status of all enrolled students on an ongoing basis, and provide McKinney Vento services to eligible students as needed.

6. The Welcome Letter will be shared at the beginning of the school year, with newly enrolled students throughout the school year and during the second semester to ensure all students are aware of GADCA's MKV services. In the event that a student becomes eligible for McKinney Vento services after enrolling at Destinations Career Academy, we will follow the same procedures outlined above to ensure that they receive the appropriate supports and resources.

By following this procedure, we will ensure that all eligible students have access to the McKinney Vento services they need to succeed at Destinations Career Academy.

GADCA FILES

Request Forms
Birth Certificate Request Form
Identification Request Form
Community Resources for Families
Jetdoc
Staff: Professional Development & Resources
Georgia Learns Homeless Training Guide.ppt
Homeless Training.ppt
GaDOE McKinney Vento 101.ppt
McKinney Vento 102.ppt
Transportation Strategies for Homeless Children and Youth
Homeless Toolkit
Resources for Unaccompanied Youth & High School Homeless Students
Unaccompanied Youth Eligibility Flowchart
Enrolling Unaccompanied Youth
Unaccompanied Youth: Eligibility Tool for Financial Aid
Information for Homeless Youth
Credit Accrual & Credit Recovery for Homeless Students
Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Youth
Federal Program Requirements
Federal Program Monitoring Tool
Compliance Checklist
GADOE COVID-19 Guidance
COVID-19: Human Services Georgia Department of Public Health
Required Documentation of Homelessness
Homeless Questionnaire (required)
Referral & Needs Assessment Form (required) -Within TVA

Please be advised that requiring notarization of any document is in violation of the McKinney-Vento Act.