

Appendix I: Transportation Resources



One of the key concepts within the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is that of the provision of transportation. Children and youth experiencing homelessness are entitled to receive transportation to and from the school of origin and transportation comparable to that received by housed schoolmates.

Appendix I contains:

- Executive Summary: *Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness: Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin*

Additional Resources

- **NCHE Information by Topic: *Transportation* webpage; visit http://www.serve.org/nche/ibt/sc_transport.php.** The resources on this NCHE webpage provide information on the transportation provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and strategies for implementing these provisions.
- **U.S. Department of Education Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance, Section H; available for downloading at http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/guidance_jul2004.pdf.** Section H of the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance deals with the provision of transportation services to children and youth experiencing homelessness.



(Excerpted from the NCHE publication entitled *Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness: Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin*. This publication is available for downloading in its entirety at <http://www.serve.org/nche/products.php>.)

Increasing School Stability for Students Experiencing Homelessness: Overcoming Challenges to Providing Transportation to the School of Origin

Executive Summary

Underscoring the importance of school stability for children and youth experiencing homelessness, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, requires that school districts provide transportation to enable children and youth to remain in their school of origin (the school a student attended when permanently housed or the school in which the student was last enrolled). Although this mandate increases the complexity and expense of pupil transportation, school districts have developed resourceful strategies to provide children and youth experiencing homelessness transportation to their school of origin.

In order to provide ideas to school districts that experience challenges to implementing the mandate for transportation to the school of origin and those that seek additional implementation strategies, in 2003-2004, the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) interviewed local homeless education liaisons and pupil transportation directors from eight school districts that have instituted a variety of approaches to ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness receive transportation services to their school of origin.

Following is a summary of recommendations to school districts for providing transportation for children and youth experiencing homelessness to attend the school of origin:

1. Establish strong networks of community support.

- Initiate conversations with the department of social services, housing authorities, foster care, juvenile justice, child protective services, and public and private transportation agencies
- Create partnerships with shelters, group homes, and community agencies
- Develop memoranda of understanding to clarify roles and expectations
- Participate in local homeless coalitions or councils
- Sponsor meetings to familiarize these agencies with educational needs for children and youth experiencing homelessness and to identify strategies for collaboration
- Identify a contact in each agency with whom routine communication takes place



- Sensitize private sector businesses to the needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness

2. Develop a strong partnership between the homeless education program and the department of pupil transportation.

- Develop a team approach to coordination between the homeless education program and department of pupil transportation
- Provide training to department of pupil transportation staff to increase sensitivity to and buy-in for the needs of homeless children
- Review data on homeless children and youth in the district to identify what the transportation needs are and how the current transportation system might meet those needs

3. Establish inter-district collaboration.

- Have frequent communication between local liaisons and pupil transportation directors across districts
- Designate which district has the primary responsibility to ensure that children and youth do not “fall through the cracks”
- Host collaborative cross-district meetings of local liaisons and pupil transportation directors to plan strategies and review their effectiveness

4. Establish formal procedures for equity, transparency, and consistency.

- Involve all stakeholders in the development of procedures and publicize them in the school system and community
- Establish inter-district policies and memoranda of agreement
- Review procedures periodically and revise as needed
- Develop forms for intake and record keeping
- Develop informational brochures for parents
- Develop procedures for inter-district transportation and put in place before the need arises

5. Establish policies to support federal legislation.

- Develop state and/or local policies that reinforce the McKinney-Vento legislation
- Develop state and/or local policies that clarify roles and responsibilities related to transporting children and youth experiencing homelessness to their school of origin
- Review policies from other states or districts to serve as models

6. Establish a database and system for data collection.

- Establish an electronic database that can be shared among school and school district staff,



shelters, and other agencies involved with homeless children and youth

- Attend to confidentiality issues
- Ensure regular and accurate data input
- Use data to facilitate and expedite transportation arrangements
- Use data to report on the transportation needs of homeless children and youth for advocacy and funding purposes

7. Seek economical and creative solutions.

- Seek the most economical solutions first
- Identify potential resources in the community
- Involve private sector businesses and foundations
- Plan ahead; have resources identified and procedures in place
- Be flexible with bus routes and use of special education or magnet school buses

8. Keep in mind the safety of the child or youth

- Ensure that transportation modes for transporting children to the school of origin are equally as safe as those for other children
- Follow state and local policies related to approved vehicles and drivers
- Ensure taxis and public vehicles meet the guidelines outlined in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Uniform Guidelines for Highway Safety Programs (Guideline #17: Pupil Transportation Safety, available for downloading at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/nhtsa/whatsup/tea21/tea21programs/402Guide.html#g17>)
- Screen all drivers for background checks and driving records

9. Inform policymakers of the need for school stability for highly mobile children

- Provide accurate and concrete data
- Visit the NAEHCY website (<http://www.naehcy.org>) to become aware of national advocacy efforts

