HB261: Homeless Students Bill
A New Tool for Schools to House Families Who Otherwise Would Be Homeless

Housing Matters! Conference | Bloomington, IL
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Presenters

• **Dr. Tom Bookler**, *North Cook Intermediate Service Center*

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• **Christi Wessel**, *Office of State Representative Michelle Mussman*
Today’s Presentation

I. Overview of the McKinney-Vento

II. Writing and Passing of HB 261

III. Implementing HB 261 – School’s Perspective

IV. Implementing HB 261 – Provider’s Perspective

V. Overview of HB 261 Toolkit

https://tinyurl.com/y4m8hzgg
Dr. Tom Bookler

McKinney – Vento Regional Liaison, North Cook Intermediate Service Center
Definitions of Homelessness

McKinney-Vento Definition
Families or youth that are living in:
• Emergency shelter or domestic violence shelters
• Motel
• Cars, campgrounds, or parks
• Substandard housing or abandoned buildings
• Transitional housing programs through homeless agencies
• Migrant youth or refugees
• **Doubled up situations/couch-surfing with friends or relatives**

HUD Definition
Families or youth that are living in:
• shelter, transitional housing, hotel or motel paid for by government or charity, or sleeping on the street, park or other place not meant for human habitation
• Fleeing dangerous or life threatening situations including domestic violence, sexual assault, trading sex for housing, trafficking, violence or threats of violence because of sexual orientation or gender identity
McKinney-Vento Definition

Families or youth that:

• lack a **fixed, regular** and **adequate** nighttime residence.
• **And includes those who** share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason.
• **Must be handled case by case.**
Q. Who Makes the Determination in Schools?
A. McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons!

- McKinney-Vento Law, Sec 722 (6)(A)(i) “homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies.” These may include welfare agencies, child attorneys, and other community members.

Q. Who is the McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison?

- **Area Lead Liaisons**: [https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL-Map-with-Contacts.pdf](https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL-Map-with-Contacts.pdf)
- **School District Liaisons** [http://webprod1.isbe.net/HomelessChildLiaison/default.aspx](http://webprod1.isbe.net/HomelessChildLiaison/default.aspx)
Required Services for McKinney-Vento Students

• Waiver of School Fees
  • Books, lab fees, class supply fees etc.
• Free Breakfast/Lunch Program
• Uniforms/Sports/Cheerleading

• Band Instruments
• Required Technology
• Field Trips
• Tutoring or Credit Recovery
  • If necessary due to homelessness
Required Services for McKinney-Vento Students

• School Choice
  1. the school last attended;
  2. the school attended when the child was last permanently housed; or
  3. the school that non-McK-V children who live in the same attendance area in which the McK-V child or youth lives are eligible to attend.

• Transportation to School of Origin
The Rubber Hit the Road!
Christi Wessel

District Director, Office of State Representative Michelle Mussman


105 ILCS 45/1-17 new
Sec. 1-17. Homeless prevention.
(a) If a child is homeless or is at risk of becoming homeless, the school district may:
   (1) provide rental or mortgage assistance in such amount as will allow the child and his or her parent, his or her guardian, or the person who enrolled the child to remain permanently in their current living situation or to obtain a new living situation;
   (2) provide financial assistance with respect to unpaid bills, loans, or other financial debts that results in housing being considered inadequate pursuant to Section 1-5 of this Act and the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; or
   (3) provide assistance under both items (1) and (2) of this subsection (a).

(b) In order to provide homeless prevention assistance under subsection (a) of this Section, a school district shall first make an attempt to provide such assistance through a homeless assistance agency that is part of the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act’s continuum of care for the area in which the school district is located. If the attempts to secure assistance through the applicable continuum of care are unsuccessful, subject to the limitations specified in Section 29-5 of the School Code, transportation funds under Section 29-5 of the School Code may be used for those purposes.

(c) Prior to providing homeless prevention assistance pursuant to subsection (a) of this Section, a housing plan must first be approved in writing by the school district and the parent, guardian, or person who enrolled the child.

(d) For purposes of this Section: “At risk of becoming homeless” means that documented evidence has been provided by the parent, guardian, or person who enrolled the child that shows that a living situation will, within 8 weeks, cease to become fixed, regular, and adequate and will result in the child becoming homeless within the definition of Section 1-5 of this Act and the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The documented evidence shall include, but need not be limited to: foreclosure notices, eviction notices, notices indicating utilities will be shut off or discontinued, or written statements from the parent, guardian, or person who enrolled the child, supplemented by financial documentation, that indicate a loss of income that will prevent the maintenance of a permanent living situation.

"Person who enrolled the child" also means an unaccompanied youth.

105 ILCS 45/1-18 new
Sec. 1-18. Legislative intent.
It is not the intent of this amendatory Act of the 100th General Assembly to require school districts, parents, guardians, or persons who enroll children to enter into housing assistance or homeless prevention plans. It is the intent of this amendatory Act of the 100th General Assembly to permit school districts, parents, guardians, or persons who enroll children to voluntarily enter into housing assistance of homeless prevention plans when both parties agree that those arrangements will be in the best interest of the child and district.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 8/25/2017
Dr. Shawn Schleizer
Associate Superintendent, East Maine School District 63
Implementing HB261

Dr. Shawn Schleizer, Associate Superintendent • East Maine School District 63 • Des Plaines, IL

About District 63

○ 3,450 PreK-8th grade students
○ Five elementary schools, one middle school, preschool
○ 1% - 2% homeless students
○ 53.3% low income students
Implementing HB261

How does it work?

- Identifying qualifying families
- Role of MV liaisons - e.g. social workers
- Connecting with agencies
- Cost analysis
  - Transportation costs
Implementing HB261

Challenges

- Family history - e.g. criminal records, credit
- Ability to maintain housing - i.e. pay rent/utilities
- Affordable housing availability
- School districts understanding of HB261
- Need for District attention and follow-through
Implementing HB261

Recommendations

○ Make a pitch to your local school district!
○ **Know your facts.**
○ Raise awareness about resources available - e.g. HB 261 toolkit.
○ Make school district aware of your services.
○ Maintain frequent and open communication with district partner as you work with family.
Implementing HB261

Common myths and misconceptions schools districts may have.

- “We already pay for transportation - we can’t spend more money.”
- “We can’t be handing money to families.”
- “We don’t want to deal with landlords.”
Implementing HB261

Impact on District 63 Families

- Three families re-housed.
- Financial savings for District, taxpayers, and State.
- It’s a win-win-win.
Implementing HB261

Contact Information

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We impact the lives of homeless and unstably housed by connecting them to housing options and resources, stabilizing their crisis and empowering them to create a better future.
YOUTH BECOMING SUCCESSFUL ADULTS
The other site of the bright future
Hidden Homelessness
The faces of youth homeless
Consequences of Life on the Street

- Increased likelihood of exchanging sex for food, clothing and shelter (also known as "survival sex") or dealing drugs to meet basic needs.

- Difficulty attending school due to lack of required enrollment records (such as immunization and medical records and proof of residence) as well as lack of access to transportation to and from school. As a result, homeless youth often have a hard time getting an education and supporting themselves financially.

- Homeless youth are at a higher risk for physical abuse, sexual exploitation, severe anxiety and depression, substance abuse, poor health and nutrition and low self-esteem. It is estimated that 5,000 unaccompanied youth die each year as a result of assault, illness, or suicide.
National Alliance to End Homelessness - “Historically, unaccompanied youth have been undercounted”

According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, and the National Network for Youth, the average age at which a teen first becomes homeless is 14.7 years old and had been homeless for an average time of 23.4 months

Thirty-nine percent of the homeless population is under the age of 18

75 % of homeless or runaway youth have dropped out or will drop out of school

Homeless youth are at a higher risk for physical abuse, sexual exploitation, mental health disabilities, substance abuse, and death. It is estimated that 5,000 unaccompanied youth die each year as a result of assault, illness, or suicide.
The scope of youth homelessness
Invisible Homeless
Run Away Youth
Pregnant and Parenting Youth
The Economic Value

“Youth who are disconnected from school and work represent an estimated cost to society of upwards of $250 billion per year – or a loss of $4.7 trillion over the lifetime of an opportunity youth cohort.”

www.civicenterprise.net
“The most important step of all is the first step. Start something.”
INNOVATIVE INTERVENTION

“We have to start question longstanding orthodoxies, established assumptions, comfortable practices, and even goals in order to produce "transformative" change.”

The MacArthur Foundation
The role of support programs is to provide assistance to personal, economic and housing stability.

- Outreach, Effective Engagement and Intervention
- Tailored service to address unique need
- Collaborative partnerships with school, community members and other entities
The lives of people living in poverty are affected by more than just their income. It’s multidimensional and afflicts a person’s life in many aspects at the same time. The nature and intensity of poverty at the individual level reflects the deprivations that a poor person faces all at once with respect to level of education, health outcomes and living standard.
CULTURAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL COMPETENCE

- TRAUMA INFORSED CARE
- MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING
- HARM REDUCTION
- HOUSING FIRST
- BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGAGING
  - Be Fair and Reasonable
  - Manage Your Own Discomfort
  - Be Non-Judgemental
  - Do Not Take Things Personally
  - Engage Natural and Logical Consequences
  - Establish, Model and Maintain Impeccable Professional Boundary
  - Keep Promises, Be Honest and Reliable
SERVICES GEARED TOWARDS

- STABILIZATION
- EMPOWERMENT
- HOUSING
BASIC NEEDS
HEALTH AND SAFETY
EDUCATION
HOUSING
INCOME
LIFESKILLS
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
HOUSING

- Addressing the need, barriers and resources
- Location and school boundary area
- Financial assistance
- Family income and support
- Affordability and sustainability
- Housing Navigation and Landlord mediation
- Action Plan and Resources needed
- Term of the assistance
- Exit Strategies
Challenges

- Family composition, credit score, eviction and criminal history, earning potential, transportation, language, etc.
- Available Housing Options and Housing Navigation
- Agency Staff Capacity and Skill Set
- No reimbursement for the services provided
- Access to additional resources
Access to Programs & Services

- **Entry Point**
  - A community-wide system that standardizes and expedites the process by which people experiencing homelessness or who are at imminent risk of homelessness access shelter, housing, and homeless resources.
  - Helps suburban Cook County better target the limited resources provided by the homeless assistance system to people who are experiencing homelessness and need them the most.
POSITIVE FAMILY DEVELOPMENT

Refers to intentional efforts to provide opportunities for the family to enhance their skills and abilities to overcome crisis

- Foster and promote healing and resilience
- Foster clear and positive identity
- Promote social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and moral competence
- Engage in productive activities
- Inspire belief in the future

COMPETENCE  CONFIDENCE  CONNECTION  CHARACTER  CARING
IMPROVE CORE OUTCOMES

- Safety
- Stable housing
- Education and Employment
- Permanent, Positive Connections
- Well being
The Ripple Effect

One small change can have an enormous impact.
Next Step...
BUILDING CAPACITY FOR IMPACT

- Awareness and Outreach
- Coordination and Collaboration among Systems and Organizations
- Improving Service Capacity for Homeless
- Implementing Service Strategies among Multiple Service Providers and Cross Systems
- Match Effective, Culturally Appropriate Intervention – Reduce the Risk and Strengthen the Protective Factors
- Outcome Measures and Evaluation to Monitor the Progress
- And... Just do it again!
Knowing all the answers....
“To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.”

Anatole France, poet, journalist and novelist
Katie Spoden

Advocacy and Development Coordinator, Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County
10,643
INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT IN ILLINOIS
This includes adults and children staying in emergency shelters and crisis housing, as well as those that are staying on the streets and places not meant for habitation.
Source: 2018 Point in Time Count

MCKINNEY-VENTO LIAISONS IN ILLINOIS SCHOOL DISTRICTS IDENTIFIED

47,691
STUDENTS WITH FAMILIES

4,794
UNACCOMPANIED MINORS
experiencing literal homelessness or living in a doubled-up situation in the 2017 - 2018 school year.
Source: U.S. Department of Education EDFacts Initiative

72%
of extremely low-income households in Illinois spend more than half of their income on rent.
Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition
McKinney-Vento Liaison identifies eligible students.

Housing assistance is less than cost of transportation to school of origin.

School District MV Fund provides financial assistance.

Homeless Service Agency locates housing and offers services.

*If the cost to keep McKinney-Vento eligible students in their current housing is more than the cost of transportation to school of origin, transportation funds will be provided in accordance with McKinney-Vento Act.
HB261 Toolkit Contents

- Advisory Committee Template
- Timeline
- Flow Chart
- Policies and Procedures Template
- Release of Information Template
- Approval Form Template
- Memorandum of Understanding Template
- Housing Plan Example
- ISBE Housing Plan Checklist
Key Stakeholders

- District Superintendent Office
- McKinney-Vento District Liaison
- McKinney-Vento Regional Liaison
- District Transportation Department
- District Finance Department
- Local homeless service agency
- Local Continuum of Care
Next Steps

• Access toolkit online at [www.suburbancook.org](http://www.suburbancook.org) or email Katie;
• Identify local service provider and other key stakeholders;
• Develop district-wide HB261 implementation plan; and,

Keep students housed.

Achieve student success.

Save taxpayer money.

Invest in your community.
Contact Information

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