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School Counselors' Role in Providing Advocacy and Support to Homeless Students in Rural Communities

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School Counselors' Role in Providing Advocacy and Support to Homeless Students in
Rural Communities

A Project Presented to the Graduate Faculty of
Minnesota State University Moorhead

By

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In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in
Counseling and Student Affairs

May 2018

Moorhead, Minnesota

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Abstract.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Identifying Homeless Students in Rural Communities.....	6
Rural Homelessness.....	6
School Counselors Role in Identification and Support of Homeless Students.....	7
Conclusion.....	10
Training Materials for Administrators.....	12
Kahoot.....	13
Power Point Presentation.....	14
Enrollment Forms.....	19
Training Materials for Counselors.....	21
Power Point Presentation.....	22
ASCA Position Statement.....	26
Training Material for Secretaries.....	28
Power Point Presentation.....	29
Enrollment Forms.....	32
Spreadsheet.....	34
Quick Guide.....	35
Training Material for School Staff.....	36
Power Point with Kahoot Pre and Post Assessments.....	37
Additional Resources.....	40
Community Resources.....	41
Needs Assessment.....	42
Other Forms.....	43
References.....	47

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Lastly, I want to thank Nathan, my husband and our daughters Emily and Alayna. They have supported me and put up with a hectic time during the last couple years. I could not have done this without their love and patience.

Abstract

School counselors must play in an important role in providing advocacy and support for students and their families that are experiencing homelessness. ASCA has a position statement as well as information on confidentiality to provide clarity in our role.

Furthermore, the McKinney Vento Act defines homelessness and requires schools to identify and assist families as well as educate all school staff members. Rural communities are less likely to have resources like shelters, so the homeless population may be more difficult to identify and school counselors may be in a unique position to recognize the signs of homelessness.

Introduction

The McKinney Vento Act and addressing the needs of homeless students became important to me during the 2016-17 school year. Our district was not identifying students because they did not understand the definition or understand the needs of this population. One of my students moved in with a family in a neighboring town and was about to be removed from enrollment. I researched a way to help keep her in the district as I believed this was not in her best interest. I found information regarding the McKinney Vento Act and began advocating for her to stay in our district and for the school to change policies that create barriers for homeless students.

Over the last couple of years, I have been working to educate school staff on the McKinney Vento Act. As of the 2017-18 school year I have provided information and education to the administration, counselors and secretaries and we have identified twenty-one students as homeless. In the next school year, I will be presenting to teachers as well as bringing in a poverty simulation for our fall in-service.

My goal for our district is to not only follow this act, but more importantly change our mindset. We must provide students with a safe place and immediately enroll them and welcome them to our school while providing them with the support they need to be successful.

Identifying Homeless Students in Rural Communities

The number of homeless students in the United States has continued to rise over the last thirty years. In order to understand rural homelessness and its impact one must also be aware of how homelessness is defined and what homelessness looks like in rural areas as it can be more difficult to pinpoint. The McKinney Vento Act was introduced to provide clarity in defining homelessness as well as federal funding for schools to deliver the services and resources that the students and their families need to help the students be successful at school. Homeless students may live in vehicles, shelters, on the street or even with friends or family. They often sleep on the floor or on couches and move often. It is sometimes difficult to identify homeless students because families may not even know that they are homeless or may feel a sense of embarrassment by the term. Once a student is identified as homeless they can remain in their school of origin for the remainder of the school year under the McKinney Vento Act even if they move out of the school district (Strawser, 2000).

Rural Homelessness

In working in a rural community with students and families there are differences in addressing needs and barriers. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness (2010) the reasons for homelessness differ in rural and urban communities because poverty rates in rural communities tend to be higher than urban which makes the threat of becoming homeless an issue. Also, rural communities are less likely to have resources like shelters, so the homeless population may be hidden. It is difficult to count homeless families that are staying with relatives and friends. Because of this lack of

resources and knowledge about homelessness it makes it even more important to identify these students, so needs can be assessed and supports can be put into place.

School counselors must assist in the identification, provide resources and/or services and help reduce barriers and stigma for the students in their schools. The ASCA Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2016), addresses many of these themes as well as the role to create “systemic change.” In many schools, homeless students are not being identified and are at risk of being denied enrollment, forced to change schools or not given the services that would aid them and their families.

School counselors can work with their school's designated homeless liaison to support homeless students while educating school staff members on distinct educational needs. In order to do that school counselors must realize the unique challenges that these students face to make available services and support that are evidence based.

School Counselors Role in Identification and Support of Homeless Students

The role of a school counselor in identification and support of homeless students in a school setting were examined. School counselors must be aware of the risk factors associated with being homeless as well as possible issues that homeless students are often faced with such as abuse, trauma, dissociation, perception of safety, frequent absences from school and lack of control. These issues coupled with frequent changes in schools may lead to lower academic performance.

The ASCA journal article written by Stone (2014) discusses the importance of school counselors in the process in relation to confidentiality. ASCA ethical standards allows for a balance regarding safety of students and collaboration while also following

the law. By following the law and addressing students' needs Stone (2014) asserts the following:

At the end of the day, personally identifiable information must be provided to the homeless liaison officer, but prior to doing so the skilled school counselor will work with homeless students to help them understand why the breach is necessary.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Erickson's stages of psychosocial development were considered in the recognition of challenges that are faced by homeless students. Cormack (2009) researched the perception homeless students have of counseling and factors counselors should be aware of to have more success in their sessions. Individual versus group counseling was also discussed as well as direct and indirect services, resources and referrals that may be necessary for school counselors to have knowledge of to provide support to these students and their families.

Resiliency was also a theme in working with homeless youth. School counselors that work with the students and families of the students can assist with promoting the understanding that resiliency is heightened through the strengthening of protective factors like relationships that students have with their teachers, calming strategies like mindfulness (Benzies & Mychasiuk, 2009).

Cormack (2008), used a qualitative approach on groups of homeless students that analyzed the students' perceptions of counseling, trust, dislike of the counseling process and boundaries. The adolescent participants had low levels of trust in counseling and the counseling process as well as found the experience oppressive. Participants expressed the following views: "it's like you can have a laugh as well as a chat" and "make it a bit

more casual as well and instead of one room with the two chairs or something.” The researchers found that amongst the group only one participant had not been forced to go to counseling (Cormack, 2008).

Another study utilized a sample of 145 homeless youth living on the street was used to learn about their ability to detect risk and protect themselves (Bender, 2014). The sample included participants that had high rates of victimization and were witness to serious injury, assault, robbery and death. Open-ended interviews were conducted with the participants and the questions had an emphasis on trauma such as “how do you know you are in a dangerous situation” and what do you do to protect yourself or keep yourself safe (Bender, 2014)?” The homeless youth described internal and external cues that prompted them to react to situations and were suspicious of people who “appeared too nice or friendly and got too close.” Forty-two percent of the participants reported that they were unable to detect risk and fifty-seven percent carried a weapon with them. Fifty percent of the participants thought it was important to have people in their lives that they trust to help stay safe, but thirty-one percent isolated themselves.

Another article researched resiliency and educating homeless and providing an educational environment for homeless students to be successful. Data from academics, attendance and assessments was analyzed from students that were identified as low-socioeconomic status and then homeless students. They found that immediately following homelessness students had an “acute risk for academic issues” (Masten, 2015). A series of studies was also done to assess quality of parenting and effective parenting related to better executive function in the homeless students. The results showed that a

student's executive functioning was related to academic achievement and success (Masten, 2015).

In relation to Maslow's hierarchy of needs homeless students are at risk academically because their physiological and safety needs are often not being met (Daniels, 1992). The need for love and belonging can also be affected because homeless students move frequently and are unable to form lasting friendships. The family is also under a large degree of stress and parents are often incapable of providing consistent care and direction to their children (Daniels, 1992). Erickson's psychosocial stage of industry and interiority is also an issue for homeless children because they lack stability and consistency (Daniels, 1992).

Conclusion

As a result of the studies and their findings it is clear that there are services that school counselors must provide to homeless students. A number of themes emerged that I would like to incorporate in my career to help address the needs of homeless students and their families. Based on the results and readings group counseling would be beneficial in the school environment to provide support and help students develop friendships. These students are often highly mobile and providing an environment where they can build friendships would help satisfy their need for love and acceptance.

The results of the findings of the Knowledge and Skills with Homeless Students Survey showed how collaboration and advocacy in the schools is necessary to ensure homeless students are successful at school. According to Havlick & Bryan (2014):

Increasing knowledge of policies, agencies and supportive services within the community and school is imperative when assisting families like being

knowledgeable of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which addresses the enrollment and transportation needs of students experiencing homelessness, as well as other barriers they may face.

The ability to recognize safe people and environments is necessary for homeless students and has been found to sometimes be lacking. Assessing homeless students' ability and providing education about safety in either a group or individual lesson may be needed. Also, finding creative ways to develop a rapport or relationship with students so that they feel comfortable is important. Adolescent homeless students had often been through mandated counseling and had negative feelings about the process so counselors may need to make themselves visible at the school and find an enjoyable activity to do with the student during the counseling process. Transportation to and from school, parenting skills and mental health of family members may also need to be addressed either directly or indirectly by the school counselor.

Homelessness is an important factor to consider for school counselors because it is not always straightforward to identify students that are homeless. School counselors are an important part of the team because they are a service to all students in the school and work closely with families and oftentimes may be the first to recognize signs of homelessness. School counselors must make sure an equitable and just atmosphere is accessible to homeless students as well as providing education about the challenges to other school staff members and resources to the families as needed.

Training Materials for Administration

The Training materials for administration on the following pages include Kahoot, a power point presentation and enrollment forms. Kahoot is an online tool that is used here to measure understanding of the McKinney Vento Act. The power point presentation covers the definition of homelessness and provides education to highlight the reason it is important to support students that are meeting this definition. It also advocates for a change in policy in regard to enrollment procedures. The enrollment forms are used at the time of enrollment for all students coming into the district. The materials are designed specifically for the school I am working in, but can be modified to conform to the needs of your school district.

-
-  **McKinney Vento**
by **jessicagilrsud** 1 hour ago
 Quiz 3 questions  Private
[Play ▶](#) 0 [Favorite ★](#) 0 [Share ↗](#) 0

 -  **McKinney-Vento WPS**
by **jessicagilrsud** 2 hours ago *(Duplicated from sueliu)*
 Quiz 4 questions  Private
[Play ▶](#) 1 [Favorite ★](#) 0 [Share ↗](#) 0
-

WPS
McKinney Vento
Definition and
Identification




School Counselors and Homelessness



**Counselor's Role
My Story
Wahpeton Schools**

Google's definition

home- less- ness
(homelessness) *n*
NOUN
The state of being homeless
"The state of being homeless" (2007)



Homeless Definition for Schools



The McKinney Vento Act is a federal law that was passed in 1987 and has been amended as recently as last year to strengthen support.

Section 112 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (see below) that will be **Definitions and Identifying Homelessness** as a condition for being eligible for federal financial assistance for children.

The term "homeless children and youth" means any individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (including any housing resource that is not a hotel, motel, or other transient lodging facility).

Homeless children and youth are those children and youth who are in a situation that is not a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (including any housing resource that is not a hotel, motel, or other transient lodging facility).

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Doubled Up



An individual may be considered to be homeless if that person is "doubled up." As term that refers to a situation where individuals are unable to maintain their housing situation and are forced to stay with a family or friends who are already overcrowded. In addition, generally homeless individuals who are not released from a prison or a hospital may be considered homeless if they do not have viable housing options in which they currently are. Recognition of the possibility of an individual's living arrangements is critical to the definition of homelessness.

Accompanied Homeless Youth

Child or youth who meets the McKinney Vento definition even if not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Many youth under the federal McKinney Vento Act are accompanied by a parent or guardian.

They are also financially disadvantaged. Youth that will continue report that school when parent is allowing drugs or alcohol.

Homeless youth are 40% considered homeless.

Why are people homeless?



- Lack of affordable housing
- Natural Disasters
- Mental Illness
- Unaccompanied Youth
- Domestic Violence

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Affects of Homelessness

Homeless children are more likely than other children to have physical and mental health problems, and experience fatigue and malnutrition.

Emotional, social, and developmental delays.

Many of these children and youth experience sleeplessness, instability and exposure to domestic violence, homelessness, and homelessness support that vulnerability to additional trauma.

Homelessness and School

Changing schools frequently is associated with lower academic achievement, behavioral issues for the full curriculum, and ultimately, dropping out of school.

87% say they drop out of school at least once, 40% say it was difficult to do so.

87% say they were uncomfortable talking with people at their school about their situation and the related challenges.

43% say they were never connected with an outside organization while they were homeless and 87% of those connected felt it was unhelpful.

© <https://www.oxfordjournals.org/doi/full/10.1093/oxfpub/adv001>

Social Emotional Needs

Homeless children:

Describe that in all generalizations that being homeless is felt to impact more for students than who are housed (100% agreed to 90% disagreed).

"I think it's hard to have a better support system. I don't think that the staff has it going through a support for a teacher and to go through. Like somebody I could talk to, that connects, every day of the school."
—TEACHER INTERVIEW

© <https://www.oxfordjournals.org/doi/full/10.1093/oxfpub/adv001>

Importance of Tangibles and Intangibles

Tangible	Intangible
School Supplies	Sense of Identity
Transportation	Feeling Safe
Food/Basic Support	Emotional Support

© <https://www.oxfordjournals.org/doi/full/10.1093/oxfpub/adv001>

Barriers

Barriers of equipment - they may mention:

- School or Transportation issues
- Most of students' organizations
- Other needs needed for enrollment

Other barriers:

- Transportation
- Food, School Supplies, Clothing
- Illness, Poor Health
- Under-identification
- Development and Lack of awareness
- Source: Home, Mental Health Issues

"It was difficult because I didn't have a legal guardian and my legal guardians weren't in the school district, but we were to get into a new school."
—MOTHER AND INTERVIEW FROM STUDENT

Removing Barriers

The intent of the McKinney-Vento Act is to remove barriers to educational success and systems for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

According to the Act, state education agencies (SEAs) must review and take steps to revise any law, regulation, or policy that may act as a barrier to the enrollment of, or the attendance, enrollment, or success in school, learning children and youth who are, or were, homeless.

Staff Training

- SEAs TRAINING teachers as among the most important and critical school staff in helping to identify homeless youth.

"It's the teachers. It's the fact that that step was in the training that the change in communication based with the students... Finding that thing relating it fundamentally. When in training really knows that students, this knowledge came being to energy"

—JOCAL LINDSEY

<https://www.indeed.com/viewjob?jk=6014614&fromOpenClick=true>

Identifying Questions

Do NOT use the term homeless

Homeless eligibility can be handled in various ways that it does not violate privacy or jeopardize housing arrangements.

It is up to the local school, enrollment staff, enrollment personnel in the enrollment establishment.

Where did you sleep last night?
Where do you plan to sleep tonight?

Other questions:
Is the living situation intended to be temporary or long-term?
How does the school support its needs based on the student it is a dangerous situation?

Student Enrollment

To be given to all new students enrolling
The form should be at the top of the papers because if they reveal the McKinney-Vento requirements it affects other paperwork.

(If something other than permanent housing is checked student is enrolled homeless for the remainder of the school year and MUST be enrolled IMMEDIATELY)

Immediate Enrollment

- Students should be enrolled with homelessness being determined.
- If determined not homeless, look for enrollment fee given in letter explaining fee waiver.
- The enrollment fee request due process. The SEA should follow the policies they have in place to outline other forms of relief.

Unaccompanied youth enrollment

Local student homelessness

After enrollment

Check with the participating private organizations or the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHES) for more information.

If the youth has unaccompanied housing, a school counselor or other staff member should meet with the student to discuss their situation, including the school's safety, home, nutrition and social responsibilities during the enrollment.

The school should contact the state homeless office.

- https://www.indeed.com/viewjob?jk=6014614&fromOpenClick=true

School of Origin

- Students can continue attending their school of origin the entire time they are homesick.
- If they become permanently housed, they can also continue at their school of origin until the end of the academic school year.
- For students in need of a transportation from the school of origin to the school requested by the parent/guardian, the SEA will provide the necessary guidelines within regulations of its district and the district of origin.

Crossing District or State Lines

If a student that temporarily housing in another district or across a state line from the school of origin, the following items may be applied:

Transportation cost should be split between the school of origin and the school of residence.



Additional Forms and Information

- Unaccompanied youth
- Health assessment
- Safe Housing Form
- Parent School
- ISMS
- Waiver
- Special Education FAQ

List of resources

1. [A Guide to Homeless Students](#)
2. [SEA](#)
3. [Homeless Education](#)
4. [SEA](#)
5. [Homeless Education](#)
6. [SEA](#)
7. [Homeless Education](#)
8. [SEA](#)
9. [Homeless Education](#)
10. [SEA](#)
11. [Homeless Education](#)
12. [SEA](#)
13. [Homeless Education](#)

Importance of Identifying

- SEA and SEA partners identify students who are unaccompanied and in the greatest number of a parent's custody and economic status to complete the Homeless Education (HE) process as required by law, ensuring they are the most vulnerable students receive information in a timely and effective manner.
- SEA and SEA partners identify students who are unaccompanied and in the greatest number of a parent's custody and economic status to complete the HE process as required by law, ensuring they are the most vulnerable students receive information in a timely and effective manner.
- SEA and SEA partners identify students who are unaccompanied and in the greatest number of a parent's custody and economic status to complete the HE process as required by law, ensuring they are the most vulnerable students receive information in a timely and effective manner.



Schools Matter...

According to the report *Students in Need of Help*:

"Students spend a significant portion of their day in school, and as a result, schools can offer these students a safe and controlled place to study and receive the instruction they need. Help these students overcome some of the challenges they face by increasing schools' role in identifying and supporting these students."



Resilience

88 percent of fathers interviewed say they are optimistic regarding the potential of youth they work with to graduate, train high or attend college, and obtain a job.

More than two young adults interviewed (73 percent) say they are motivated to take the next steps in their lives, whether that is completing their education, or pursuing a career.





NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DIVISION OF STUDENT SUPPORT & INNOVATION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL TITLE PROGRAMS

Student Residency Questionnaire

Student ID#	First Name	Last Name	Birth Date	School	Grade

Check Yes or No to statements 1-5 below:	YES	NO
1. My family lives in an emergency or transitional shelter or FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) housing.		
2. My family is sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, we are doubling up.		
3. My family is living in a car, temporary RV park, or campground due to lack of alternative accommodations; a public space, abandoned building; substandard housing, bus or train station, public or private space not designed for human beings, or a similar setting.		
4. My family lives in a hotel or motel.		
5. I am an unaccompanied youth (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian).		

**IF YOU ANSWERED "NO" to all of the questions above
STOP HERE.**

If you answered "YES" to any question above, COMPLETE front and back.

Parent/Guardian Name (first, last)	Parent Phone	Emergency	Email Address
Current Address	City	State	Zip

Please list all children living with you from Pre-K through high school. If needed, use an additional sheet.

Student ID #	First Name	Last Name	Birth Date	School	Grade

I declare, under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state, that the information provided here is true and correct.

Signature of Parent/Guardian or Unaccompanied Youth

Date

Training Materials for Counselors

The training materials for school counselors on the following pages include a power point and ASCA position statement. The power point addresses confidentiality in regards to McKinney Vento. It also talks about the needs of the students and families. Schools are required to have the family fill out a needs assessment and this is something I think our school counselors could be in charge of. The ASCA position statement is another handout that is helpful to provide additional information to understand our role in working with homeless students. The materials are designed specifically for the school I am working in, but can be modified to conform to the needs of your school district.

WPS McKinney Vento Definition and Identification



School Counselors and Homelessness

ASCA Position Statement

Recognize school counselor as a certified (ASCA) Position
 School counselor recognize the effects homelessness has on students' mental and physical health, and academic functioning. School counselor collaborate with community organizations, advocates to ensure barriers to academic success, and implement educational and prevention programs to promote successful performance and attendance within the school environment.

Confidentiality

The ethical imperative of breaching confidentiality to prevent a "clear imminent danger."

Information that is provided to the homeless client. Counselor is doing to the affected counselor will work with homeless students to help them understand why the breach is necessary. Some to the student what you need to let the school, and considering the disclosure of the student, it might be appropriate to let the student if he/she would like to be present or provide the information. But that is the advantage for student by collaborating with other individuals in the school with respect to funding relationships.

Carolyn Jones, Ed.D., is an associate of the University of South Carolina and ASCA's ethics chair. She can be reached at carolynjones@uscs.edu. Contact the author for references to this article.

Google's definition

home-lessness
 [ˌhɒmɪˈlesnəs] n
 NOUN
 The state of being without a home.



Homeless Definition for Schools



The McKinney Vento Act is a federal law that was passed in 1987 and has been extended its renewal as law year to strengthen support.

Section 101.101 (b) (1) (A) of the Department of Education
 (20) means the following: (A) "homeless" means a child or youth who is currently lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (B) "migrant" means a child or youth who is a migrant as defined in section 101.101 (b) (1) (C) of this part.

Doubles Up



An individual may be considered to be homeless if that person is "doubled up," a term that refers to situations where individuals are unable to maintain their housing situation and are forced to stay with a relative, friend, and/or another family member. In addition, particularly homeless individuals who are to be removed from a person or a hospital may be considered homeless if they do not have a viable housing situation to which they can return. A recognition of the feasibility of an individual's living arrangements is critical to the definition of homelessness.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Child or youth who needs the McKinney Home Definition and is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

More youth may fit the criteria for a McKinney Home Definition and are not McKinney Homeless Youth.

They are often facing health dysfunction, fresh food and hygiene needs that at least one parent is unable to meet.

Unaccompanied youth are McKinney Homeless Youth.

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Why are people homeless?



- Lack of affordable housing
- National Disaster
- Mental Illness
- Unaccompanied Youth
- Domestic Violence

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Homelessness and School

Changing schools frequently is associated with lower academic achievement, decreased access to the full curriculum, and ultimately, dropping out of school.

40% say they dropped out of school at least once, with 10% saying they dropped out 5 or more times.

47% say they were academically struggling because of their school change, their situation and the related challenges.

43% say they were never connected with an outside organization while they were homeless and 47% of those connected felt it was valuable.

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Barriers

Enrollment requirements – How many do there are?

School at immediate location

Food, shelter, clothing, hygiene

Other records needed for enrollment

Other barriers

Transportation

Food, School Supplies, Clothing

Hygiene, Poo needs

Healthcare, mental health services

Health, Drug, Mental Health issues

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Removing Barriers

The intent of the McKinney Homeless Act is to remove barriers to educational access and success for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

According to the McKinney Homeless Act, the Department of Education shall develop and disseminate guidance to states, local educational agencies, and other entities to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness are not denied access to education on the basis of their status as homeless children and youth (20 U.S.C. § 1142(d)).

Student Enrollment

To be given to all new students enrolling

The form should be at the top of the papers because if they meet the McKinney Homeless Act requirements it affects other paperwork.

(If something other than permanent housing is checked student is marked homeless for the remainder of the school year and MUST be enrolled IMMEDIATELY)



The School Counselor and Children Experiencing Homelessness

(Adopted, 2010)

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Position

School counselors recognize the effects homelessness/displacement has on children's mental and physical health, and academic functioning. School counselors collaborate with community stakeholders, advocate to remove barriers to academic success, and implement educational and prevention programs to promote successful performance and interactions within the school environment.

The Rationale

Families with children make up 34% of the homeless population; more than 1.35 million children are identified as homeless annually (The National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, 2007). Students experiencing homelessness are more likely to miss school and repeat a grade than other students from families with low-income (Buckner, 2008). They have a significantly higher prevalence of developmental delays in communication, receptive vocabulary, and visual motor skills as well as performing below grade level performance in reading or mathematics (Gewirtz, Hart-Shegos, & Medhanie, 2008). In addition, students who are homeless have an increased incidence of mental and physical health concerns, with two times the rate of depression as the general population, and as much as four times the prevalence of disruptive behavior disorders as housed students from lower income families (Gewirtz et al., 2008).

Institutional barriers within schools, such as transportation, immunization and physical examination requirements, residency and birth certificate requirements, and lack of school records, impede homeless families' ability to enroll their children in schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). The McKinney-Vento Act of 1987 outlined the rights of homeless students, and created directives for schools to ensure students are able to enroll and succeed in school (Hernandez, Jozefowicz-Simbeni, & Israel, 2006).

The School Counselor's Role

School counselors:

- advocate for students and collaborate with their parents/guardians to reduce barriers related to school enrollment and academic success
- establish educational and preventive programs for homeless parents and children
- collaborate with school and community personnel, and coordinate appropriate support services
- increase stakeholder awareness and understanding of the McKinney-Vento Act, and the rights of homeless students.
- advocate for appropriate educational placement

Summary

School counselors promote awareness and understanding of the issues students face when experiencing homelessness. School counselors collaborate with students, parents/guardians, and community stakeholders to overcome the barriers to academic, career, and personal/social success associated with homelessness.

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Training Material for Secretaries

Secretaries have an important role in the process of identifying homeless students as they are usually the first school member that new families meet. The training materials on the following pages include a power point, enrollment forms, tracking spreadsheet and quick guide. The power point is not only to provide an understanding of the definition, but also education on sensitivity in not using the term homelessness. They are also going to most often be in charge of having families fill out the enrollment forms and letting the appropriate staff members know about the family. The spreadsheet was created to share information between the building secretaries, homeless liaison and district office. The intent is to provide clarity, promote accuracy and ensure consistency among staff members. There is also a reminder about discretion and possible safety issues that might arise with families. The materials are designed specifically for the school I am working in, but can be modified to conform to the needs of your school district.

WPS McKinney Vento Definition and Identification



Doubled Up



An individual may be considered to be homeless if that person is "doubled up," a term that refers to a situation where individuals are unable to maintain their housing situation and are forced to stay with a series of friends and/or relatives of family members. In addition, commonly homeless individuals may be excluded from a place as a habitual stay for considered homeless if their chronic homelessness or other housing situation is such that they are unable to recognize the stability of an individual's living arrangement is critical to the definition of homelessness.

Google's definition

home·less·ness
[ˌhɒmɪˈlesnəs] n
state
The state of being homeless: "The increasing homelessness among..."



Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Child or youth who meets the McKinney Vento definition and is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Many youth may be unaccompanied youth if a parent or guardian is not physically present.

They are also being family dysfunction, youth that contribute to that situation and often to chronic drug or alcohol.

Unaccompanied youth are NOT considered homeless.

Homeless Definition for Schools



The McKinney Vento Act is a federal law that was passed in 1987 and has been amended to recently as far as to strengthen support.

States and localities that are implementing the McKinney Vento Act should follow the following definitions, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and the Department of Education's guidance on implementing the McKinney Vento Act.

The McKinney Vento Act defines homeless as:

- Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (including but not limited to: shared spaces, motels, hotels, truck stops, campgrounds, public shelters, transitional housing, and other forms of temporary housing);
- Individuals who are fleeing domestic violence, as defined by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA);
- Individuals who are fleeing a fire, flood, or other disaster, as defined by the Disaster Relief Act (DRA);
- Individuals who are fleeing a natural disaster, as defined by the Disaster Relief Act (DRA);
- Individuals who are fleeing a natural disaster, as defined by the Disaster Relief Act (DRA);
- Individuals who are fleeing a natural disaster, as defined by the Disaster Relief Act (DRA);

Homelessness and School

Homeless students are more likely to be absent from school, have lower academic achievement, and experience higher rates of suspension and expulsion.

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Barriers

Self-identified barriers – they say so there:

- School information incorrect
- Proof of address or guardianship
- Other records needed for enrollment

Other barriers:

- Transportation
- Food, School Supplies, Clothing
- Language Barrier
- Under Identification
- Unsanitary and Lack of resources
- Gender, Sexes, Mental health issues

"It was official because I didn't have a legal guardian and my guardianship wasn't in the school system. Took six months to get into another school" — Matt is a student at Park High

Student Enrollment

To be given to all new students enrolling

The form should be at the top of the papers because if they meet the McKinney Vento requirements it affects other paperwork.

[If something other than permanent housing is checked student is marked homeless for the remainder of the school year and MUST be enrolled IMMEDIATELY]

Removing Barriers

The intent of the McKinney Vento Act is to remove barriers to educational access and success for children and youth experiencing homelessness.

According to the Act, state educational agencies (SEAs) must ensure and take steps to create any law, regulation, practice, or policy that may act as a barrier to the identification of or the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youth (20 USC § 1141(d)).

Immediate Enrollment

- Students should be enrolled while homelessness is being determined
- If determined not homeless, then the applicant must be given an option regarding the process
- The applicant can appeal this process, but they should follow the process that leads to placement within other forms of housing

Identifying Questions

Do NOT use the term homeless

Barriers eligibility can be handled in such a way that it does not violate primary or independent housing arrangements

Work up the best barrier resolution plan, and/or accommodations to be immediate and direct

Where did you stay last night? Where do you plan to stay tonight?

Other questions:

- Is the transportation intended to be temporary or long-term?
- Was the move urgent to avoid being in the street during dangerous weather?

Unaccompanied youth enrollment

Enroll student immediately

Site enrollment

Check with the duty manager whether appropriate in the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHES) website.

Find youth homeless organizations, a school counselor or other appropriate adult should contribute to get more information about the youth, SEAs, Title I/II and provide opportunities of returning to your home.

The school should contact the school resource officer

- <http://www.nchec.org/hubccdcv159/Policy/HowToEnrollUnaccompaniedYouth>

School of Origin

- Students can continue attending their school of origin for as long as they are deemed eligible.
- If they become permanently housed, they can also continue at their school of origin until the end of the academic school year.
- If the student is sent to a school other than the school of origin or the school requested by the parent/guardian, the ISEA must provide the parent or guardian with a written explanation of its decision and the right to appeal.

Schools Matter...



According to the report *Access to Public Schools*

"Students spend a significant portion of their days in school—and as a result, schools can offer these students a safe and consistent place to study and access to caring adults who can help them navigate some of the challenges they face. From after-school health care of adolescents, to meals and the promise of stability."



NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DIVISION OF STUDENT SUPPORT & INNOVATION
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Student Residency Questionnaire

Student ID#	First Name	Last Name	Birth Date	School	Grade

Check Yes or No to statements 1-5 below:	YES	NO
1. My family lives in an emergency or transitional shelter or FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) housing.		
2. My family is sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason, we are doubling up.		
3. My family is living in a car, temporary RV park, or campground due to lack of alternative accommodations; a public space, abandoned building; substandard housing, bus or train station, public or private space not designed for human beings, or a similar setting.		
4. My family lives in a hotel or motel.		
5. I am an unaccompanied youth (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian).		

**IF YOU ANSWERED "NO" to all of the questions above
STOP HERE.**

If you answered "YES" to any question above, COMPLETE front and back.

Parent/Guardian Name (first, last)	Parent Phone	Emergency	Email Address
Current Address	City	State	Zip

Please list all children living with you from Pre-K through high school. If needed, use an additional sheet.

Student ID #	First Name	Last Name	Birth Date	School	Grade

I declare, under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state, that the information provided here is true and correct.

Signature of Parent/Guardian or Unaccompanied Youth

Date



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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DIVISION OF STUDENT SUPPORT & INNOVATION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL TITLE PROGRAMS

Student Residency Questionnaire (continued)

Parent/Guardian Name (First, last)

I would like referral assistance with the following (check if applicable):

Medical	Dental	Counseling	Homeless Center	School Transportation	School Supplies	Other
---------	--------	------------	--------------------	--------------------------	--------------------	-------

ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY
Notes:

McKinney Vento/In transition Students	
All Families	Every time a student registers or has a change of address have them fill out the residency form
If all boxes are check NO on the form	Discard form
If one or more are checked YES	Scan the form to Steve and Jess to make the determination. We would also like to meet with the family right away if possible to fill out a needs assessment.
	A free lunch form needs to be signed by Steve and sent to Roxane
	Check the student in power school
	Fill out the shared excel spreadsheet in One Drive
	Call if you have questions
Tips for working with families	
	Do not use the term homeless... use in transition or McKinney Vento
	We need to enroll while the determination is being made, so if they check the box start getting enrollment ready and start them in school as quickly as possible
	Make sure the family feels welcome
	Offer to help them fill out forms...may have difficulty reading or focusing
	If you suspect the kidnapping or unsafe situation alert your principal, law enforcement or child protection. Student can still be enrolled even if we suspect kidnapping as we let these agencies make this determination while the student is safe at school.

Training Materials for School Staff

The power point presentation and Kahoot are included in this section. The presentation provides an explanation of the definition of homelessness and why it is important. A Pre and Post Assessment was created on Kahoot to be utilized during the training session. The pre assessment contains basic questions regarding the McKinney Vento Act and the number of students identified at our school. The post assessment contains hypothetical situations and how they would respond. The materials are designed specifically for the school I am working in, but can be modified to conform to the needs of your school district.

<input type="checkbox"/>		McKinney Vento by jessicagilrsrud 1 hour ago  Quiz 3 questions Private	Play ▶ 0	Favorite ★ 0	Share ↗ 0
<input type="checkbox"/>		McKinney-Vento WPS by jessicagilrsrud 2 hours ago <i>(Duplicated from sueliu)</i>  Quiz 4 questions Private	Play ▶ 1	Favorite ★ 0	Share ↗ 0



Introduction

- Overview of the McKinney Vento
- Mission of the Office of Counseling and Student Affairs with primary McKinney Vento
- Implementation of McKinney Vento
- Student Services
 - Transportation and enrollment assistance
 - Identification of McKinney Vento students
 - McKinney Vento team member
 - McKinney Vento team



Google's definition

home-less-ness
(ˈhɑːmlɪsnəs) n
NOUN
the state of having no home
"homeless people are living in tents" (BBC)

Rural Homelessness and Personal Experiences



Supporting Students

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HmL6Gd8e80>

Homeless Definition for Schools



The McKinney Vento Act

Doubled up

Forced to stay with friends or family members

Unstable living arrangements

Why are people homeless?

- Lack of affordable (BART)
- Eviction/Disaster
- Mental illness
- Domestic violence
- Domestic violence



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=808pK9M880u>

54%

of America's homeless students lack tangible and intangible assets to help them succeed in school

TANGIBLE + INTANGIBLE

Assets include:

- Homeless child
- Homeless parent
- Unstable housing
- Food insecurity
- Health care access
- Transportation
- Financial resources
- Social support

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

All School Staff Members

"It's the teachers. It's the fact that they see in the morning that too few change conversations based on the students... Feeling that strong relationship is fundamental. When a teacher really knows their students, they know when something is wrong."

—LUCAS LARSEN

Social Emotional Needs

"I don't think I should have a better support system... I don't think that the staff that I'm going through... responsible for it I guess will be get through. The students I could see in. It's a constant, every day at the school"

—KYLE WILLIAMS

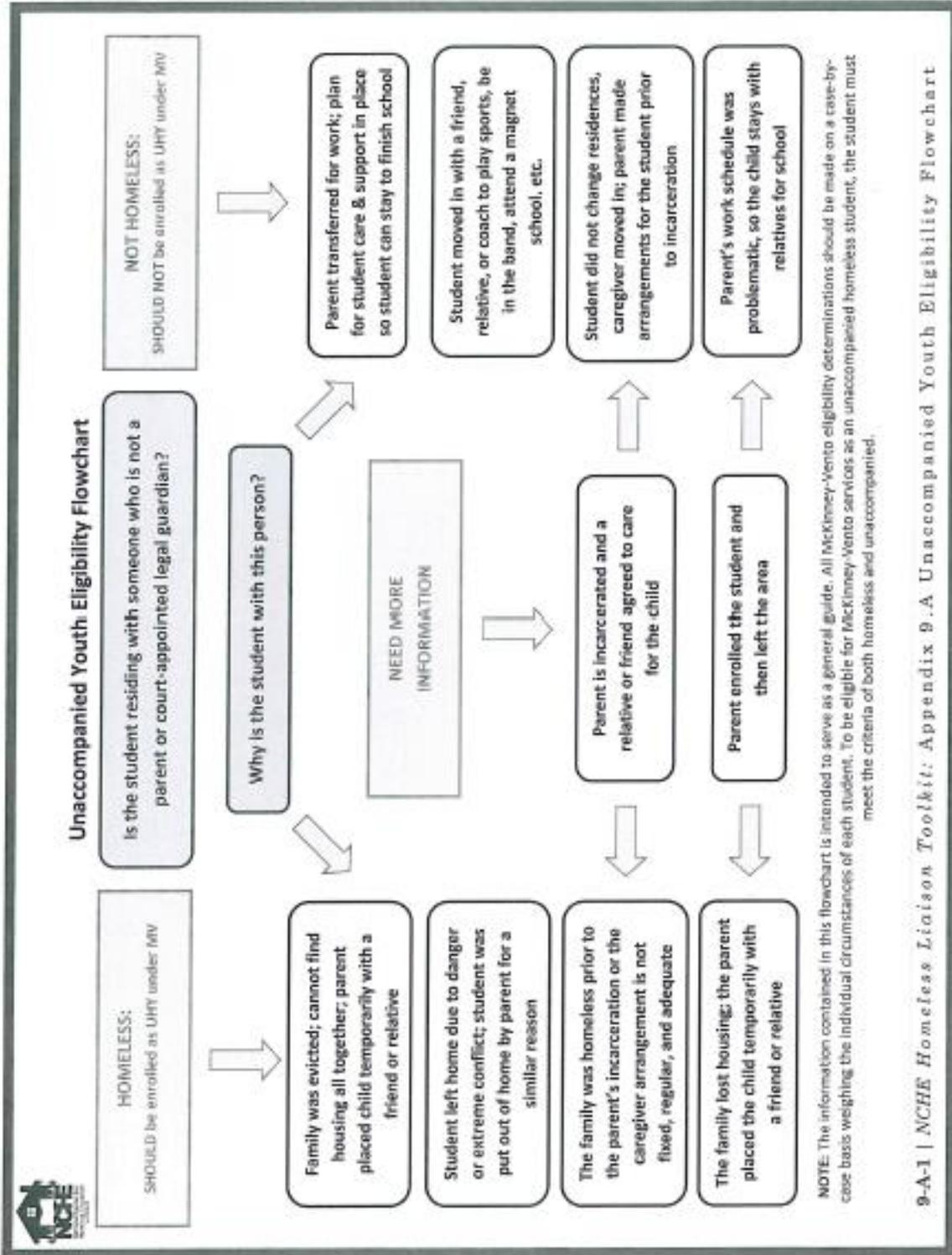
Additional Resources

Included in this section are checklists, resources in Wahpeton, needs assessment and additional forms regarding homelessness.

School Selection Checklist for Decision Making

(Adapted from the Texas Homeless Education Office)

School of Origin Considerations	Local Attendance Area School Considerations
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Continuity of Instruction <i>Student is best served due to circumstances that look to his or her past.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Continuity of Instruction <i>Student is best served due to circumstances that look to his or her future.</i></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Age and Grade Placement of the Student <i>Maintaining friends and contacts with peers is critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation. The student has been in this environment for an extended period of time.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Age and Grade Placement of the Student <i>Maintaining friends and contacts with peers in the school of origin is not particularly critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation. The student has attended the school of origin for only a brief time.</i></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Academic Strength <i>The child's academic performance is weak and the child would fall further behind if he/she transferred to another school.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Academic Strength <i>The child's academic performance is strong and at grade level; the child would likely recover academically from a school transfer.</i></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Social and Emotional State <i>The child is suffering from the effects of mobility, has developed strong ties to the current school, and does not want to leave.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Social and Emotional State <i>The child seems to be coping adequately with mobility, does not feel strong ties to the current school, and does not mind transferring.</i></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Distance of the Commute and Its Impact <i>The advantages of remaining in the school of origin outweigh any potential disadvantages presented by the length of the commute.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Distance of the Commute and Its Impact <i>A shorter commute may help the student's concentration, attitude, or readiness for school. The local attendance area school can meet all of the necessary educational and special needs of the student.</i></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Personal Safety of the Student <i>The school of origin has advantages for the safety of the student.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Personal Safety of the Student <i>The local attendance area school has advantages for the safety of the student.</i></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Student's Need for Special Instruction <i>The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be better met at the school of origin.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Student's Need for Special Instruction <i>The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met at the local attendance area school.</i></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Length of Anticipated Stay <i>The student's current living situation is outside of the school of origin's attendance zone, but the living situation continues to be uncertain. The student will benefit from the continuity offered by remaining in the school of origin.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Length of Anticipated Stay <i>The student's current living situation appears stable and unlikely to change suddenly; the student will benefit from the developing relationships with peers in school who live in the local community.</i></p>





NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DIVISION OF STUDENT SUPPORT & INNOVATION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL TITLE PROGRAMS

Student/Family Needs Assessment Form
McKinsey-Vento

Student:		School:		Date:	
Current living arrangement: (shelter, motel, relatives, friends, etc.)				Income:	
Prior living arrangement:					
Primary Contact Information:			Emergency/Alternate Contact Information:		
Name:			Name:		
Mailing Address:			Mailing Address:		
Cell # _____			Cell # _____		
Home # _____			Home # _____		
Work # _____			Work # _____		
Email:			Email:		
Relationship:			Relationship:		
Employer:			Employer:		
Others living in residence & relationship to student:					
Name	Age	Relationship	List of schools in district		
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
Additional:					
Family status: <input type="checkbox"/> Couple, married <input type="checkbox"/> Couple, unmarried <input type="checkbox"/> Single parent <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Separated <input type="checkbox"/> Relatives <input type="checkbox"/> Friends					
Comments:					
Emotional Concerns for your child: <input type="checkbox"/> sad <input type="checkbox"/> anxious <input type="checkbox"/> nervous <input type="checkbox"/> sleepiness <input type="checkbox"/> bedwetting <input type="checkbox"/> refusal to obey <input type="checkbox"/> tantrums <input type="checkbox"/> stealing <input type="checkbox"/> lying <input type="checkbox"/> shyness <input type="checkbox"/> running away <input type="checkbox"/> fighting <input type="checkbox"/> hurting pets <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty: <input type="checkbox"/> concentrating <input type="checkbox"/> sleeping Comments:					
Agency Involvement:					
Child: <input type="checkbox"/> DSS <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Court <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior/Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Health Dept. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____					
Parent: <input type="checkbox"/> DSS <input type="checkbox"/> Court <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health <input type="checkbox"/> Health Dept. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____					
Benefits received: <input type="checkbox"/> WFFA <input type="checkbox"/> SSI <input type="checkbox"/> Food Stamps <input type="checkbox"/> Other					



NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

DIVISION OF STUDENT SUPPORT & INNOVATION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL TITLE PROGRAMS

Stressful events:		Description/Comments:
Parents: <input type="checkbox"/> separated <input type="checkbox"/> divorced <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
Change(s): <input type="checkbox"/> school <input type="checkbox"/> job <input type="checkbox"/> residence <input type="checkbox"/> finance <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
Family: <input type="checkbox"/> illness <input type="checkbox"/> accident <input type="checkbox"/> death <input type="checkbox"/> loss of pet <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
Health status:		
Problems: <input type="checkbox"/> hearing <input type="checkbox"/> vision <input type="checkbox"/> speech <input type="checkbox"/> dental <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
Conditions: <input type="checkbox"/> asthma <input type="checkbox"/> diabetes <input type="checkbox"/> seizures <input type="checkbox"/> lead poisoning <input type="checkbox"/> sickle cell <input type="checkbox"/> physical disability		
Diagnosis: <input type="checkbox"/> ADHD <input type="checkbox"/> Bipolar <input type="checkbox"/> depression <input type="checkbox"/> ODD <input type="checkbox"/> OCD <input type="checkbox"/> self-injurious <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
Medication(s): _____		
Contact information, provider for: Healthcare: _____		
Mental Health: _____		Dental: _____
Insurance: <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> Health Choice <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
Environment :		
Check if Concerns or need assistance.		
	X	Comments
Overall		
Housing		
Stability		
Income/Employment		
Financial Management		
Food/Nutrition		
Personal Hygiene		
Transportation		
Learning Environment		
Highest needs: <input type="checkbox"/> housing <input type="checkbox"/> transportation <input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> financial <input type="checkbox"/> insurance <input type="checkbox"/> family/relationship <input type="checkbox"/> vocational		
<input type="checkbox"/> physical health <input type="checkbox"/> dental health <input type="checkbox"/> recovery <input type="checkbox"/> spirituality <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
Comments: _____		
Resources, personal & social (support system):		
Student support services requested/needed: <input type="checkbox"/> free lunch <input type="checkbox"/> school supplies <input type="checkbox"/> food <input type="checkbox"/> hygiene items		
<input type="checkbox"/> emergency clothing/uniform/shoes Assistance obtaining: <input type="checkbox"/> school records <input type="checkbox"/> immunizations		
<input type="checkbox"/> medical records <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
Referrals made:		
School: <input type="checkbox"/> counselor <input type="checkbox"/> social worker <input type="checkbox"/> nurse <input type="checkbox"/> crisis intervention <input type="checkbox"/> EC <input type="checkbox"/> 504 <input type="checkbox"/> ESL <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
Academic: <input type="checkbox"/> educational needs, services, testing <input type="checkbox"/> tutor <input type="checkbox"/> mentor <input type="checkbox"/> enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
Provider: <input type="checkbox"/> mental health <input type="checkbox"/> healthcare <input type="checkbox"/> dental <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
Agency: <input type="checkbox"/> Health Dept. <input type="checkbox"/> DSS <input type="checkbox"/> domestic violence <input type="checkbox"/> substance abuse <input type="checkbox"/> counseling <input type="checkbox"/> parenting classes		
<input type="checkbox"/> housing assistance <input type="checkbox"/> food stamps <input type="checkbox"/> Medicaid <input type="checkbox"/> WFFA <input type="checkbox"/> transportation <input type="checkbox"/> employment <input type="checkbox"/> afterschool care		
<input type="checkbox"/> daycare <input type="checkbox"/> other _____		
Comments: _____		
Resources provided: <input type="checkbox"/> information about what families need to know about the legal rights under McKinney-Vento Law		
<input type="checkbox"/> Resources for children and youth experiencing homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> Contact numbers, information for support personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Other, describe: _____		

Counseling Resources

St. Francis Hope Unit
2400 St. Francis Drive, Breckenridge, MN
(218)643-0499

Sanford Health- Wahpeton
Ariane Getz, PSYD
Child and Adolescent Psychology
(701) 642-7000

Solutions Counseling Services
Pam Thompson
415 Nebraska Ave, Breckenridge, MN
(218)643-9330

Three Rivers Crisis Center
Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse
509 Dakota Ave Wahpeton, ND
Local line: 701-642-2115
Toll Free: 1800-627-3659
(24 hour crisis line)

Prairie St. John's
Free needs assessment or referral (24 hours)
501 4th Street South, Fargo, ND
(701)476-7216 or (877)33-9565

NDSU Family Therapy Center
212 Ceres Hall, NDSU
(701)231-8534

MSUM Community Outreach Center
Lommen Hall 113, MSUM, 1104 7th Ave
South Moorhead MN
(218)477-2513

Southeast Human Service Center
Sliding Fee Scale
2624 9th Ave S Fargo, ND
(701)298-4500

Lakeland Mental Health Services
21333 County Hwy 1
Fergus Falls, MN
(218)736-6987

Tischer Therapeutic Services
115 5th St. N Breckenridge, MN 56520
(218)651-0212

FARGO
Suicide Line
(701) 232-HELP
(701) 232-4357

**Mental Health Association
in North Dakota**

24 hours / 7 days
2-1-1
1-800-472-2911

The Richland/Wilkin Collaborative to end
 Childhood Hunger
 The Food Backpack Program for Kids



Dear Parent,

All of the children of your school have been invited to participate in the 2017-2018 Food Backpack program. This program is a partnership with several community agencies to address hunger and unmet nutritional needs of children in our area. Research has shown the impact of unmet nutritional needs to social, academic, behavioral and physical health.

The Backpack program will provide a bag of kid-friendly, shelf stable food for your child to take home and eat over the weekend. This bag will be placed discreetly into their school backpack. They will receive foods like cereal, pudding, soup, fruit juice, granola bars, and other items. With your approval, we will send a bag of food home with your child every Friday during the school year. If you have more than one child in elementary in the school district, each child can receive food for the weekend. Parents are responsible for checking items in the bag for any potential food allergies.

This program is funded through grants and private donations so there is no charge. Participation is voluntary. If you do not have a need in your home for hunger assistance, your child and family may participate by making monetary or food donations.

We respect your privacy and the information that you share to participate in this program will be kept confidential. The sign up forms are maintained at the School District office.

Please indicate below if you would like your child/children to receive the food and sign:

_____ Yes, I would like my child to receive food from the Backpack Program. Please complete information below.

Child's Name	Grade	Teacher's Name
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please list any known food allergies below and attach the Physician's note determining the allergies: Parents are responsible for checking items in the bag for any potential food allergies.

Please inform your child they will be receiving the food. Please instruct your child not to open the food bag on the bus.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please return this form to the School Office or send with your child to school. If you have any questions please contact Colette, United Way, at 701 642-1250, colette@unitedwayrw.org



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