

Appender Tucson HCY & Foster Care Transportation Plan

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Purpose: To ensure LEA is arranging transportation so that barriers are removed for students experiencing homelessness and in foster care, allowing them to participate for the full school day, neither arriving late nor leaving before the school day has ended.

BACKGROUND

The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools to immediately enroll homeless students with “enrollment” defined as “attending classes and participating fully in school activities.” The law also requires LEA/charter to coordinate transportation services with other LEA/charters. Therefore, LEA/charter must arrange transportation *without delay*. [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(C)], [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(1)], [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g) (5)(A)(ii)]

McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons must ensure that the parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing transportation to the school selected in accordance with the best interest determination [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)(viii)].

The LEA/charter of origin and the LEA/charter in which the homeless child or youth is living shall agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child with transportation to and from the school of origin. If the LEA/charter is unable to agree upon such method, the responsibility and costs for transportation shall be shared equally [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii)].

The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic **and extracurricular activities** [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(F)(iii)]

The **mode of transportation** offered should be the result of a student-centered decision with consideration given to the safety, viability, and logical option. If offering public transportation, ensure assistance is provided for parents to accompany young children to and from school.

DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

Foster care means 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the child welfare agency (CWA) has placement and care responsibility.

The **school of origin** is the school in which the child was enrolled before becoming homeless. If a child's physical residence has changed, the school of origin is the school where the child was enrolled when the residence changed. LEAs must ensure a homeless youth remains in the school of origin unless it is not in the child's best interest.

When it is in the child's best interest to change schools, a child should be **enrolled immediately-and** not just technically enrolled, but attending and meaningfully participating. Enrollment cannot be denied or delayed because documents normally required for enrollment have not been submitted (proof of age, proof of residency, vaccination records, etc.). School records, including an IEP, are never required for enrollment. but an enrolling school must immediately contact the school of origin to obtain relevant

records.

CWAs can receive federal reimbursement for some children in foster care. Specifically, school transportation to ensure school stability is allowable as either Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments or administrative costs. However, CWAs may only claim reimbursement for students who are "Title IV-E eligible," which varies by state.

Title I, Part A sets assessment and accountability requirements for SEAs and LEAs. There is funding provided under Title I, Part A, to support the education of disadvantaged students across the country. Federal guidance states that LEAs can use Title I funding for the additional costs of school stability transportation.

Federal law provides for the designation of several points of contact (POC) to oversee and implement educational stability provisions for children in foster care.

State Education Agencies (SEAs) must designate a POC to oversee implementation of state responsibilities.

LEAs are required by law to designate a POC once CWAs notify the LEA that their agency has designated a POC, and to maintain written transportation procedures as of December 10, 2016.

IDENTIFICATION, ENROLLMENT AND TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT

Notification to LEA of Best Interest Decision and Identifying Students Who Need Transportation The LEA may use the following mechanisms for identification:

During the initial identification and enrollment process, parents and guardians of homeless children and youth will be asked to submit a written intake form to indicate various areas of need, including transportation.

The McKinney-Vento Liaison will follow up with qualifying parents, guardians and enrolled students throughout the year to discover and assess new and changing areas of need.

Additionally:

Identification of Students in Foster Care: The CWA may identify for the LEA when a child is attending or is to be enrolled at the LEA and is placed in foster care or changes a living placement in foster care.

Request to Participate in Best Interest Determination: The CWA may notify the LEA immediately upon learning that a student attending the LEA has been placed in care or will be moved to a new home placement that is located outside the LEA reasonable vicinity and a best interest decision must be made.

Notice of Final Best Interest Decision: When it is determined that it is in a student's best interest to remain in his/her school of origin after changing foster care placement to a residence outside the Apender Tucson reasonable vicinity, the CWA must notify the LEA of the final decisions. This notice triggers the need for the parties to collaborate under the procedures to establish the most cost-effective transportation plan available for the student.

DURATION OF TRANSPORTATION

Transportation will be provided for homeless youth and children in foster care to their school of origin for the duration of the time they are experiencing homelessness or remain in foster care as long as it continues to be in the child's best interest.

If a child ceases to be homeless or exits foster care before the end of the school year, the transportation arrangement will be maintained through the end of the school year to maintain the child's educational stability, when necessary.

HOW TRANSPORTATION WILL BE PROVIDED, ARRANGED AND FUNDED

General

1. Transportation already addressed through other means: Transportation is already addressed through other laws/requirements (i.e. part of child's IEP). The LEA will assess whether the child is entitled to transportation services under another entitlement, including as a related service under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The LEA will provide transportation funded by the LEA if the student is eligible under the McKinney-Vento Act or the IDEA.
2. Not limited by what is offered to other students: The fact that an LEA does not provide transportation for children who are not experiencing homelessness or in foster care does not exempt the LEA from ensuring transportation for children experiencing homelessness or in foster care when in their best interest.
3. Ensuring prompt transportation service: Information about homeless and foster care services offered by the school and other resources is distributed upon registration. This information is shared with the POC who can begin to make necessary arrangements.
4. Interim transportation: Should be addressed to ensure no delays for the student experiencing homelessness or in foster care while transportation is being worked out between the parties. The LEA will have 5 school days to put long-term transportation in place. At this time, the POC will coordinate efforts among school staff, available ride-share participants, the CWA and the school of origin. The CWA shall provide transportation during the interim.


No- or Low-Cost Options

The LEA will consider existing transportation options available for the student, including ride share with nearby parents or staff. Transportation will be provided and funded by the LEA if this type of solution is available.

Additional Costs

When other options are exhausted, and transportation will require "additional costs," the LEA will follow these steps to address and minimize costs:

1. The LEA will assess whether the child's transportation expenses may be covered by other state or local funds.
2. Cost-sharing: If the cost of transportation to the school of origin exceeds the original cost of transportation to our LEA, then the LEA would seek to share the cost with the CWA in the amount of additional funds needed.
3. Cost-sharing: If the student is eligible for Title IV-E funds, the CWA may seek reimbursement for the allowable portion of those transportation costs.
4. The CWA will assess whether the resources are available for foster parents to provide transportation with mileage reimbursement or other adult ride share to LEA.
5. LEA will arrange for provision of bus passes or public transportation vouchers if necessary.



Signature

Assistant Superintendent

Position

3-31-23

Date