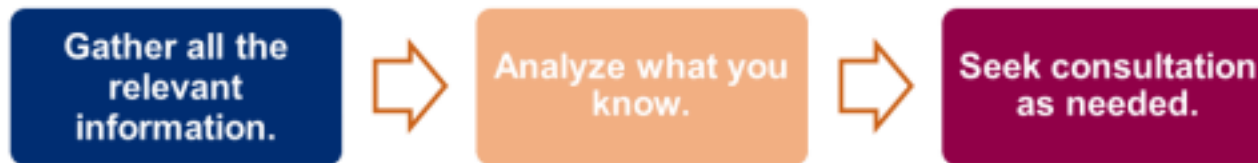




WHCS Identification & Eligibility Interview Questions & Checklist

Each local educational agency McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons for homeless children and youths, designated under paragraph (1)(J)(ii), shall ensure that homeless children and youth are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies ([42 U.S.C. §11432 \(g\)\(6\)\(A\)\(i\)](#)).

The process of identification and eligibility determination involves three basic steps:



Each student has a unique housing situation; as a result, determinations regarding eligibility and services under the McKinney-Vento Act must be determined on a case-by-case basis for each student. Remember, McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons are responsible for developing rapport and trust during the interview process to facilitate the acquisition of pertinent information. In other words, it is important to allow families to share their story to ensure you are obtaining necessary details to make a proper determination. Understanding the entire scope of the situation will enable you to make a well-informed decision.

As you conduct your interview process, consider consulting with school staff and community partners to gather information about the students' situation. Staff often build a relationship with the student, or parent, and can be privy to additional details. Remember to be mindful of confidentiality requirements when collaborating, as outlined within [The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#).



McKinney-Vento awareness is established by way of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison offering yearly training to school personnel, service providers, community partners, social service agencies, and advocates. By providing this training, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison can rely on these stakeholders in the future with the referral, identification, and information gathering to support children and youth experiencing homelessness.

For additional support regarding awareness, interview process, and identification best practices, reference the [NCHE Homeless Liaison Toolkit](#) and [NCHE Brief: Identifying Children and Youth in Homeless Situations](#).

The McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act provides a definition of homelessness for children and youths to be used by state educational agencies (SEAs) and local educational agencies (LEAs). It defines homelessness for children and youth to be those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence ([42 U.S.C. § 11434a\(2\)](#))

Use the following checklists to help guide your conversation with the parent, guardian, caregiver, or student to determine if the student's living situation is considered fixed, regular, and adequate.

Identification & Eligibility Interview Questions & Checklist

This form serves as a tool to assist McKinney-Vento personnel with determining if a student qualifies as “homeless”. This interview form is organized into the following sections:

Step 1 – Homeless Determination	Step 2 – Assessment of Need Planning Guide
Sections: Fixed, Regular, Adequate, & Other Considerations	Sections: Basic Supports, Educational/Academic Supports, & Additional Supports
Instructions	Instructions
1. Conduct the interview. Take detailed notes. 2. Contact WHCS McKinney-Vento Committee for analyzing the student’s situation as a whole. 3. If the student is <i>not</i> determined to be homeless, complete necessary notification and documentation. 4. If the student <i>is</i> determined to be homeless, continue to Step 2: Assessment of Need Planning Guide with the WHCS McKinney-Vento Committee.	1. Conduct the interview. Take detailed notes. 2. Determine what next steps will be taken, with emphasis on addressing the high needs (H) by setting a timeline and designee responsible for addressing each need. 3. Finalize documentation.

Remember, McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons are responsible for developing rapport and trust during the interview process, consider meeting or talking with the parent or guardian in a private space. It is important to allow families to share their story to ensure you are obtaining necessary details to make a proper determination. ***Ensure they are aware of their rights and the procedure of making a homeless determination prior to beginning the interview.***

Interview Conducted By: _____ **Date of Interview:** _____

Persons Interviewed: _____ **Relationship to Student(s):** _____

Student(s) Eligible: _____ **School(s) of Enrollment:** _____

Step 1 – Homeless Determination

Evaluate the following questions to determine if the student’s housing meets the definition of fixed as stated in statute. The definition of a “fixed” residence is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.

Question	Yes	No	Details

Did you and your friends/relatives decide to move in together and share a home and expenses for the long term?			
Do you have a key? Can you come and go as necessary?			
Does the homeowner or renter have a legal right to force you to leave without cause if they choose to do so?			
How long do you expect to be at this address?			
If you are residing in a shelter, do you know what your exit date is?			
If you are residing in a shelter, do you have a housing plan in place for when you exit the shelter?			
Is this a short-term situation? Do you have a specific date you are supposed to move out by?			
Is this a temporary living arrangement?			
Where would you go if something happened between you as adults?			
Why did the family move in together? Was it for mutual benefit or due to a crisis or other precipitating event?			
Is your name going to be added to the lease at the shared residence?			
Have you signed a lease?			

Evaluate the following questions to determine if the student's housing meets the definition of "regular" as stated in statute. A regular residence is one that is used on a regular (i.e., nightly) basis.

Question	Yes	No	Details
Do you stay in the same place every night?			
Do you move often?			
Is your address subject to change soon?			
If you were unable to stay here, where would you go?			

Evaluate the following questions to determine if the student's housing meets the definition of “adequate” as stated in statute. An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

Question	Yes	No	Details
Are you safe where you are staying?			
Do you and your children have access to a phone?			
Do you have adequate space for your belongings?			
Do you share a room/bed with your children?			
Is there adequate food in the home?			

Evaluate the following questions to determine if the student's housing meets the definition of “temporary.” Temporary housing may be due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons.

Question	Yes	No	Details
Are you on a waiting list for housing? (i.e., Section-8, shelter, transitional housing).			

Are you a participant of the Arizona Address Confidentiality Program? Can you provide the authorization card?			
Are you currently employed?			
Did you lose housing due to conflict, abuse, or neglect?			
Did you lose housing due to an eviction or inability to pay rent or other bills?			
Did you lose housing due to destruction of or damage to the previous home?			
Where did you live previously? (Addresses, approximate dates)			
(Student question) Is your housing situation due to the absence of a parent or guardian due to abandonment, incarceration, or another reason?			
Are you working with any social service agency? Can you share the name of your contact there? (Case manager or advocate)?			
Did unhealthy conditions such as an inadequate physical environment or infestations cause you to lose housing?			
Was there drug or alcohol abuse in the home where you were living?			
Would you be willing to sign a Release of Information (ROI) for our WHCS to contact a shelter or agency to coordinate services (transportation and general communication).			

Eligibility Determination Decision

Once you have gathered all the relevant information, it is time to put the pieces together and determine if the student lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate night-time residence. Remember, the students' housing must satisfy all three criteria to be considered permanently housed. **If one or more of the three**

criteria (e.g., fixed, regular, and adequate) is missing, the student would be considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act's definition.

The student(s) **meets** the definition of Homeless as defined in the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act.

The student(s) **does not meet** the definition of Homeless as defined in the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act.

Summary and Final Notes: Use this section to recap the eligibility determination.

Step 2 – Assessment of Need Planning Guide if the student(s) meet the definition of Homeless.

Step 2 – Assessment of Need Planning Guide

This section is intended to assess what support the student(s) may need.

Step 1: Use this section as a needs assessment for each individual student. If they are enrolled at different schools, they will have vastly different needs (IEP, preschool, transportation, or other educational programs).

Step 2: In the first column use the indicators H, P or N to identify the level of need.

H = High Need (Need cannot be met without help.)

P = Partial Need (Need can partially meet the need.)

N = Not a need (Need can be on their own.)

Step 3: Review what plans the parent has in place to address the need over time.

Step 4: If the LEA is going to provide support, indicate if this is a one time or ongoing need. Establish the process for ongoing support with the parent.

Basic Supports			
H,P,N	Need	Action Plan	One time or ongoing
	Free breakfast & lunch (in school)		
	Food needs (outside of school)		
	Clothing needs		
	Hygiene Products		
	Laundry Facilities		
	Medical, Dental, or Vision Services referrals		

Basic Supports			
H,P,N	Need	Action Plan	One time or ongoing
	School Transportation		
	After-school Program/Enrichment		
	Other:		

Educational / Academic Supports

H,P,N	Need	Action Plan	One time or ongoing
	Enrollment assistance (documents & fees)		
	Preschool, Early Start, or Head Start programs		
	School supplies		
	Expedited evaluations for educational support programs (Sp.ED, EL, Gifted, other)		
	Summer programming		
	Parental Engagement support		
	Credit Recovery Assistance		

Educational / Academic Supports			
H,P,N	Need	Action Plan	One time or ongoing
	Graduation support or related expenses		
	Alternative educational programs		
	Other:		

Additional Supports

H,P,N	Need	Action Plan	One time or ongoing
	Access to & understanding of available community resources		
	Referral to Department of Health & Welfare Navigator Program		
	Parenting Trainings		
	Referral to kinship care agency for assistance with guardianship support.		
	Other:		

Acknowledgement and Agreement

The signatures below affirm the following: (1) the information provided on this form is true and accurate to the best of each party’s knowledge or belief; (2) non-identifying information may be shared with community and governmental agencies in an effort to more effectively provide services to the student(s), and (3) the same information, as well as other information that may identify the student(s) may be shared with WHCS staff members for legitimate educational purposes.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian/Caregiver: _____ Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Summary and Final Notes: Use this section to recap the eligibility determination and needs plan.