Mission of the EHCY Program

Educating homeless children and youth in Montana presents many unique challenges due to the nature of our state. Most of our school districts are small and rural, with dedicated staff members filling multiple roles. Our communities have few resources or services designed to meet the needs of families and youth experiencing homelessness such as emergency shelters, transitional housing or soup kitchens. Despite these challenges, our educators and communities work tirelessly to meet the needs of Montana's most vulnerable children.

The OPI provides training and technical assistance to school districts and local homeless liaisons. The OPI also provides information and awareness materials to educators, non-profits, shelter providers and other interested community members throughout the state of Montana.

The Montana Office of Public Instruction's McKinney-Vento Program is located in the 1300 11th Ave, building, Helena, MT 59620, in the Educational Opportunity and Equity Division. The purpose of this program is to ensure that every homeless child and youth in Montana has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, as provided to other children and youth in Montana schools.

Montana Office of Public Instruction
Heather Denny
State Coordinator for Homeless Education
hdenny@mt.gov, (406)444-2036

BJ Granbery
Division Administrator and
Title I Director

National Center for Homeless Education

At The SERVE Center

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) provides research, resources, and information enabling communities to address the educational needs of children experiencing homelessness. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the Center serves as a clearinghouse of information for people seeking to remove or overcome educational barriers and to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness. The Center also supports educators and service providers through producing training and awareness materials and providing training at regional and national conferences and events.

Contact the NCHE helpline at 1-800-308-2145 (toll-free) or homeless@serve.org.

District Liaison Name:

School Name:

Address:

City, ST, ZIP Code:

Phone:

Fax:

E-mail address:

Place your district school logo here

Montana Office of Public Instruction

McKinney-Vento
Education for Homeless Children
and Youth
(EHCY) Program

ESEA Title X, Part C

opi.mt.gov

Denise Juneau
State Superintendent of Schools
Montana Office of Public Instruction
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(406) 444-3095

Toll-free: 1-888-231-9393

The McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program

Definition of Homeless Children and Youth

The term "homeless children and youth," refers to individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.

Under the law a child may qualify as homeless if he/she is:

- Living in an emergency shelter, domestic violence shelter, or transitional housing;
- Living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or campground, were abandoned in a hospital, or are awaiting foster care placement;
- Living in a car, park, public place, bus or train station, abandoned building, or other structure not meant for housing;
- Doubled up with relatives or friends due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- Children who are not living with a parent or legal guardian may be considered a homeless, unaccompanied youth if their living situation meets one of the four definitions listed above.

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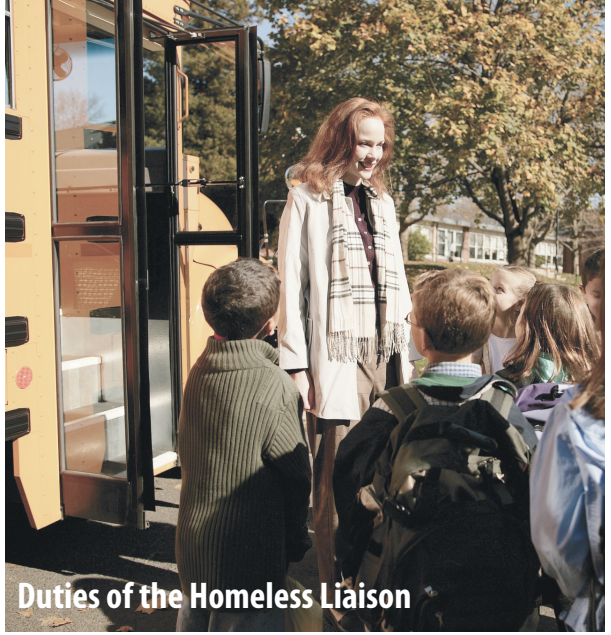
The Office of Public Instruction is committed to equal opportunity and non-discriminatory access to all our programs and services.
For information or to file a complaint, contact Tom Antonick, OPI Title IX/EEO Coordinator

at (406) 444-3161 or tantonick@mt.gov

Educational Rights of Homeless Children and Youth They have rights to:

- Immediate enrollment in school without proof of residency, birth certificate, proof of immunization, or other documents.
- Attend school. Homeless children must be given access to the same public education provided to other students.
- Continue attending the school in which they were enrolled when they became homeless, the school last attended, or the school closest to their temporary residence, if feasible and in the best interest of the child or youth.
- Receive transportation to the school they attended before they became homeless.
- Automatic enrollment in the free/reduced lunch program without proof of income or residency.
- Automatic qualification for Title I services.
- Expedited assessments for services under LEP, Migrant, Title VII and IDEA.
- Receive all school-based services for which they qualify.
- Participate in all programs and activities offered to other students, including athletics, music, clubs and other extracurricular activities.
- Have their parents participate in and attend school events and activities.
- Challenge decisions on school selection made by schools and districts through the OPI Dispute Resolution process.



Duties of the Homeless Liaison

- Identify homeless children and youth.
- Ensure that homeless children and youth enroll in school.
- Assist parents and youth with obtaining documents necessary to enroll in school.
- Ensure that homeless children have access to the same services and programs offered to other children.
- Ensure that parents of homeless children and youth are aware of their rights and are given opportunities to participate in the education of their child.
- Provide families and youth with referrals to community agencies and services.
- Coordinate activities with agencies which provide services to homeless families and children.
- Provide education and awareness training to school personnel and community members.