Supporting Students in Temporary Housing

Identification and Determining Eligibility

- Presented By:
- Thursday, September 22, 2022
- 9:30am -11:00am

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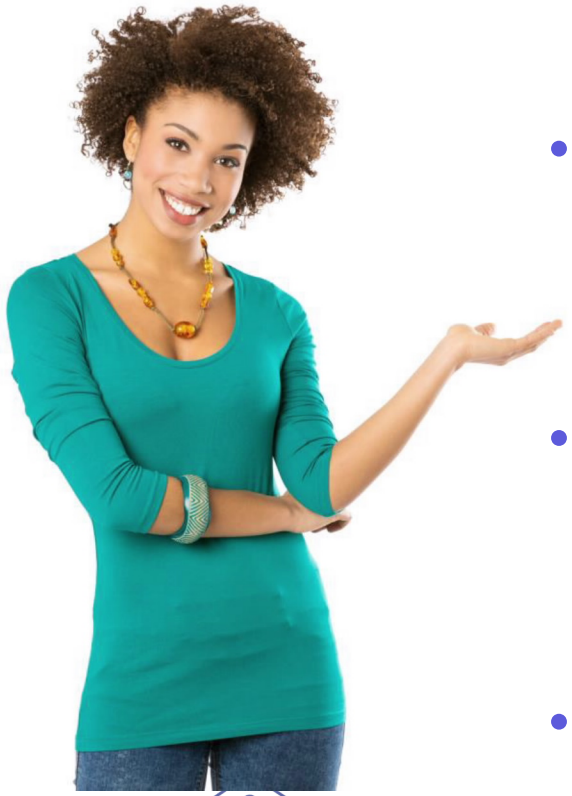
Webinar Norms

- Today's session will be recorded.
- Your microphone will be automatically muted.
- Your camera will be automatically disabled.
- The in-webinar chat will be automatically disabled.

Housekeeping



- We will launch poll questions periodically throughout the session and ask you to put your answers in the chat.
- We won't be able to answer questions about specific situations in the chat, but we welcome you to call the Help Line to discuss these issues at 800-388-2014.
- The Help Line is open 24 hours a day. Specialists are available from 9:00am – 5:00pm. If you leave a message, you will be called back by the next business day.
- Following today's webinar, today's recorded session, attachments and Q&As will be posted/accessible.

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Who Is In The Room?

Are you a…

- New McKinney-Vento Liaison (1st Year)
- McKinney-Vento Liaison (2-4 years)
- McKinney-Vento Liaison (5-9 years)
- McKinney-Vento Liaison (10 + years)
- RHY Shelter Staff
- Other School/District Staff

Which region are you from?

* Western
* Finger Lakes
* Central
* Southern Tier
* Mohawk Valley
* Capital
* Hudson Valley
* New York City
* Long Island
* North Country

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Session Outcomes

By the end of today's webinar, participants will be able to:

- Identify possible risk factors/causes of homelessness.
- Gain knowledge of strategies for identification of students experiencing temporary homelessness.
- Determine eligibility of benefits based on the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Receive resources to support the identification and eligibility of students experiencing homelessness.

Today's Agenda

Welcome! Who is in the Room?

What Causes Homelessness

Importance of Identification

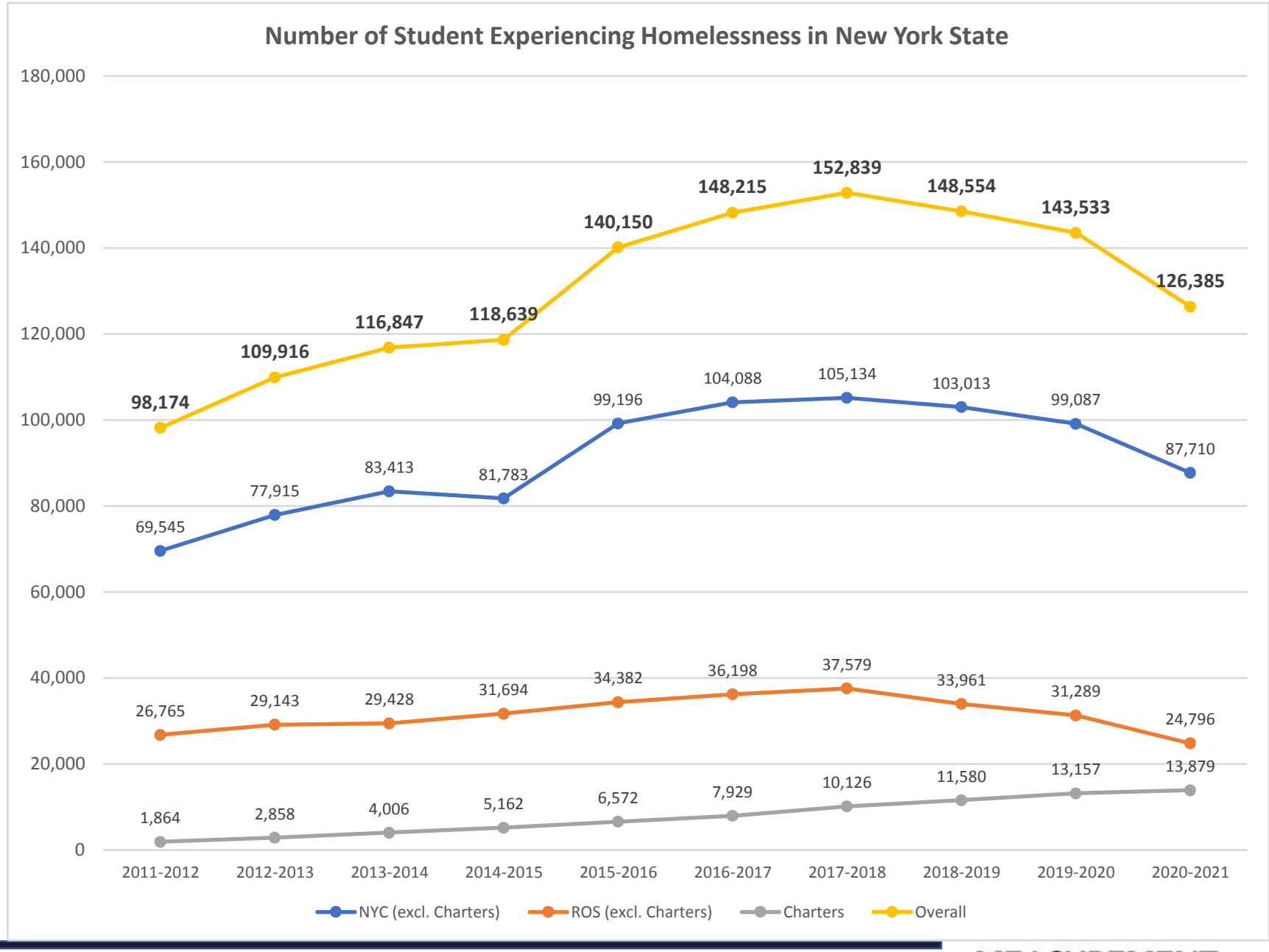
Determining Eligibility

Summary, Survey and Resources

Why Identification Matters

Why is it important to identify students experiencing temporary housing?

Students Experiencing Homelessness in NYS



Source: SIRS

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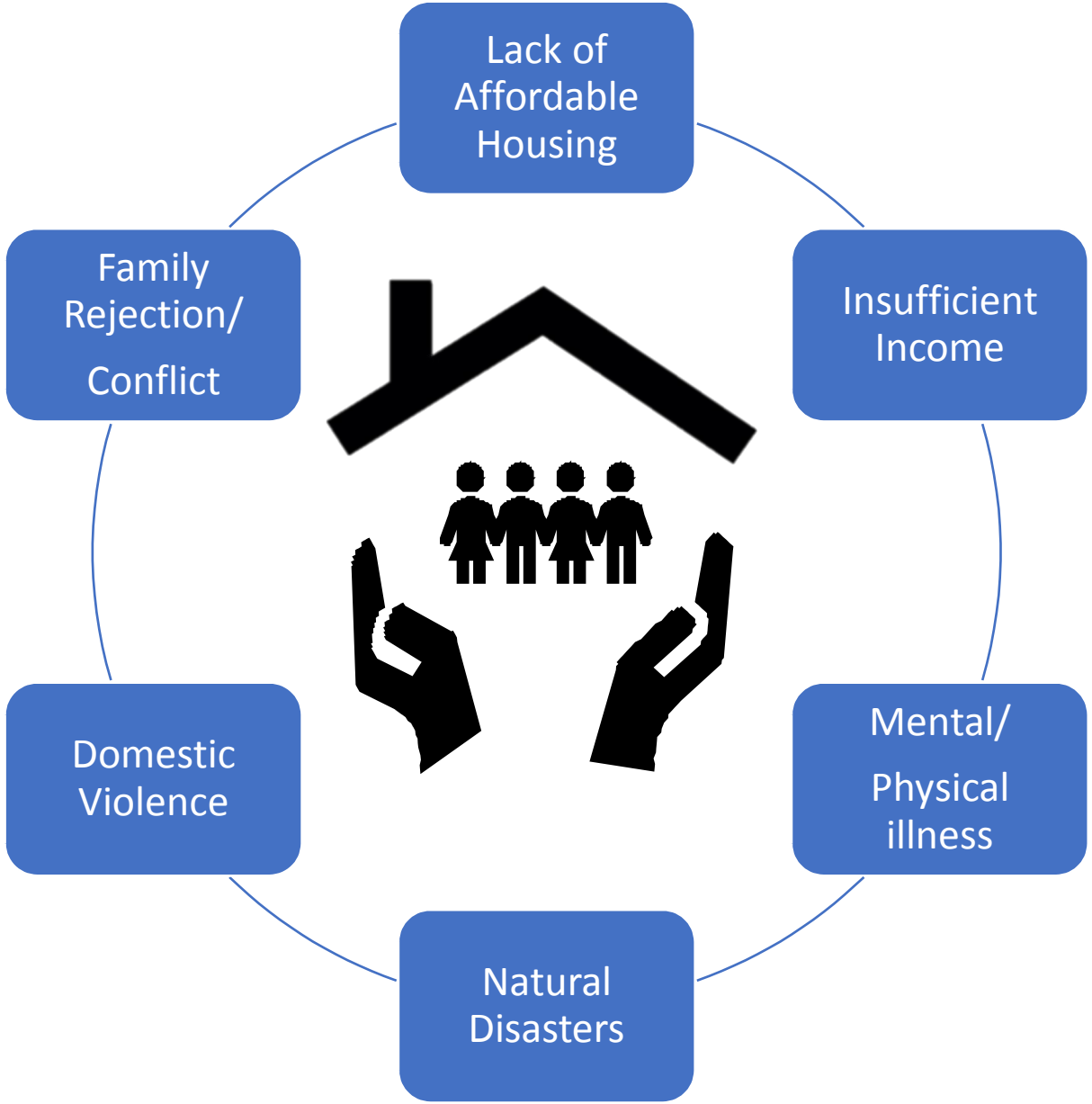
Causes of Homelessness

What are the potential causes of homelessness?

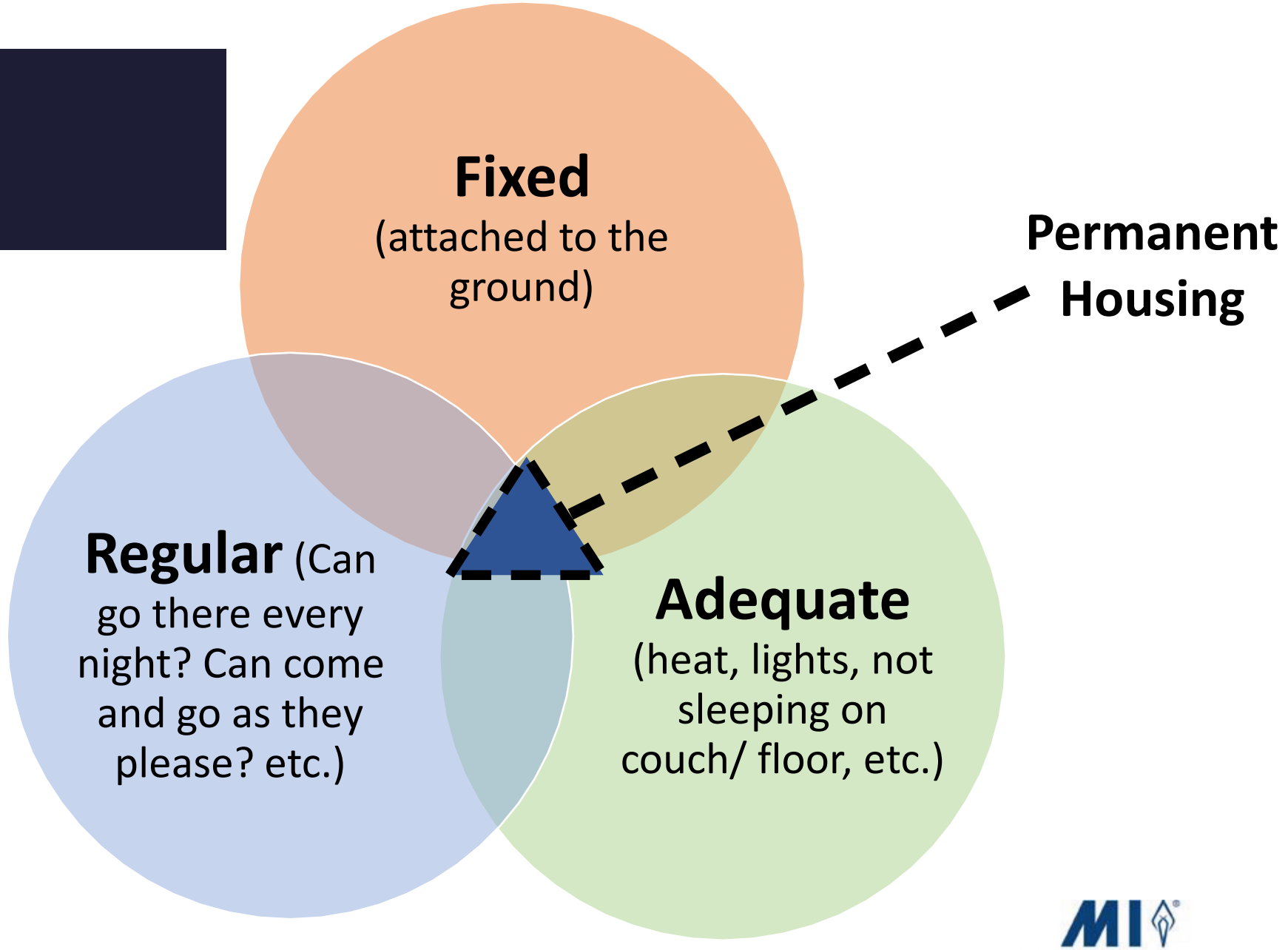


Identification

"Remember that under the McKinney-Vento Act, the local liaison is charged with ensuring 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)

McKinney-Vento Definition of Homelessness

The term "homeless child or youth" means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate primary nighttime residence.



Homelessness: Living Conditions

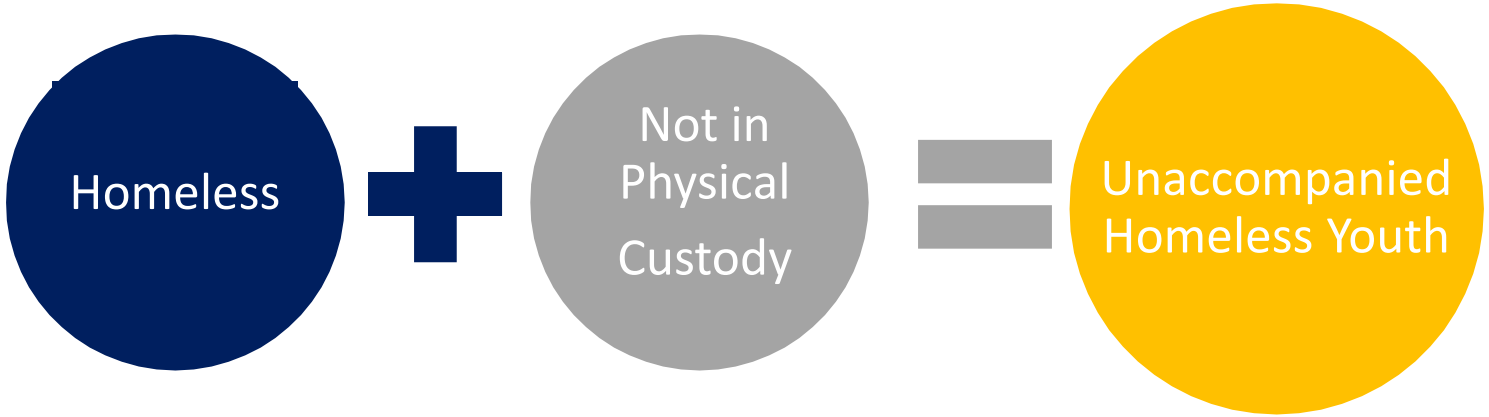
- ❑ Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason
- ❑ Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- ❑ Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- ❑ Abandoned in hospitals
- ❑ Living in a public or private place not designed for sleeping
- ❑ Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, etc.
- ❑ Migratory children living in circumstances described above
- ❑ Unaccompanied youth living in circumstances described above

Education Law §3209(1)(a); 8 NYCRR §100.2(x)(1); see also 42 USC §11434A(2)(B)(i)

Definition of an Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

An unaccompanied youth is a child or youth that is not in the physical custody of/not living with a parent or guardian.

To be eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act, the youth must also meet the definition of homeless.

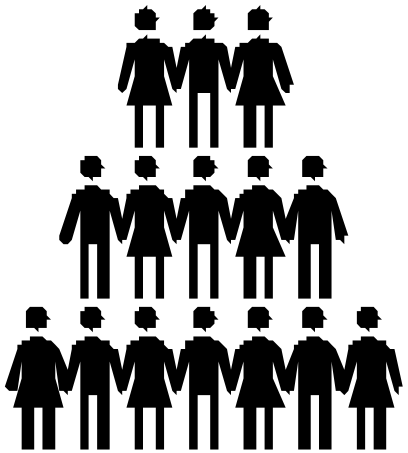


42 U.S.C. §11434a[6]; Education Law §3209[1][a][1][v]; and 8 NYCRR §100.2[x][1][iii][6])

Quick Poll

According to data from 2020-2021, what primary nighttime residence was most utilized by children and youth experiencing homelessness in New York?

A. Shelters, transitional housing
B. Doubled up (living with another family)
C. Unsheltered (e.g., cars, parks, campgrounds, temporary trailer, abandoned building)
D. Hotels/Motels



Educational Barriers for Students in Temporary Housing

Lack of basic resources like a safe and stable place to live, food, and clothing, all of which impact a student's ability to attend and succeed in school.

Difficulty accessing school, immunization records, other documentation necessary for school enrollment, and school supplies.

Challenges finding transportation to enroll with the school registration office or to attend school daily.

Identification Through Outreach

What outreach efforts have you tried to identify students living in temporary housing?

Outreach Materials

Post **outreach materials** in all schools and other community spaces such as:

- Motels, campgrounds, libraries, health centers, youth services centers, laundromats, soup kitchens and parks. Brochures are printed in English and Spanish.

Order **posters** and **brochures** or view online PDFs here, free of charge

- Posters are available in 10 languages: English, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian-Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Urdu

https://www.nysteachs.org/brochures-and-posters

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Identification Challenges

"We have students who live with other families that should be identified as homeless but are not because we do not know about their situations until a crisis occurs."

– Local Liaison

"There was nothing the education system could do because I was too embarrassed to tell them about my homeless situation at the time."

– Youth Interview

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Addressing Identification Problems

- Parents/youth hide their homelessness due to feelings of embarrassment or fear.
- Parents/youth do not know that their living situation may entitle their child/them to certain protections.
- Parents/youth do not want everybody to know about their circumstances and are worried that information might be used to negatively stereotype their child/them.

Think About It

How would you address each challenge?

Addressing Identification Problems

Parents/youth hide their homelessness due to feelings of embarrassment or fear.

- Do not use the word "homeless." Instead try, "students in temporary housing" or similar language.

Parents/youth do not know that their living situation may entitle their child/them to certain protections.

- Be transparent about questions and explain the protections and services available to children who are homeless (e.g., eligibility, priority enrollment).
- Use language to describe homelessness that reflects the living arrangement, (e.g., "doubled-up" or "staying at a shelter").

Addressing Identification Problems

Parents/youth don't want everybody to know about their circumstances and are worried that information might be used to negatively stereotype their child/them.

- Discuss living situation in an office where other parents, staff, and students can't overhear.
- Share how the information will be used (e.g., it will only be shared with staff on a need-to-know basis; program is required to report data on temporary housing).
- Provide internal trainings to staff for increased awareness and sensitivity.

Identifying Students in Our Schools

- Academic Difficulties
- Documentation Challenges
- Social and Behavioral Issues
- Poor Hygiene and Wardrobe Issues
- Lack of Continuity in School
- Lack of Support
- Unexplained Absences
- Avoidance of Personal Details
- Inability to Complete Projects

Identification Strategies

- **Raise awareness** throughout district schools and the community of the definition of homeless, the rights provided to eligible students under the McKinney-Vento Act, and the role of the local liaison in working with others to identify homeless students.

- **Conduct community assessments** that include data on homelessness in the area; levels of poverty among families; trends in foreclosures, evictions, and the availability of affordable housing; and student mobility.

- Work with appropriate district and school authorities to **ensure that local policies and procedures comply with the McKinney-Vento Act.**

Identification Strategies

- Provide **targeted outreach** through information sharing and -gathering activities.
    - Housing Questionnaire in district enrollment packet
    - Posting notices of the rights of McKinney-Vento students in the community where family and youth frequent.

- **Share information** about McKinney-Vento eligibility and services in student handbooks, on the school district website, in brochures and other informational materials distributed throughout the district schools and communities.

Determining Eligibility

The local liaison serves as the district's lead homeless education contact and is required to fulfill the duties of the position as established in the Act [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)]. According to the Act [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)], local liaisons must ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies.

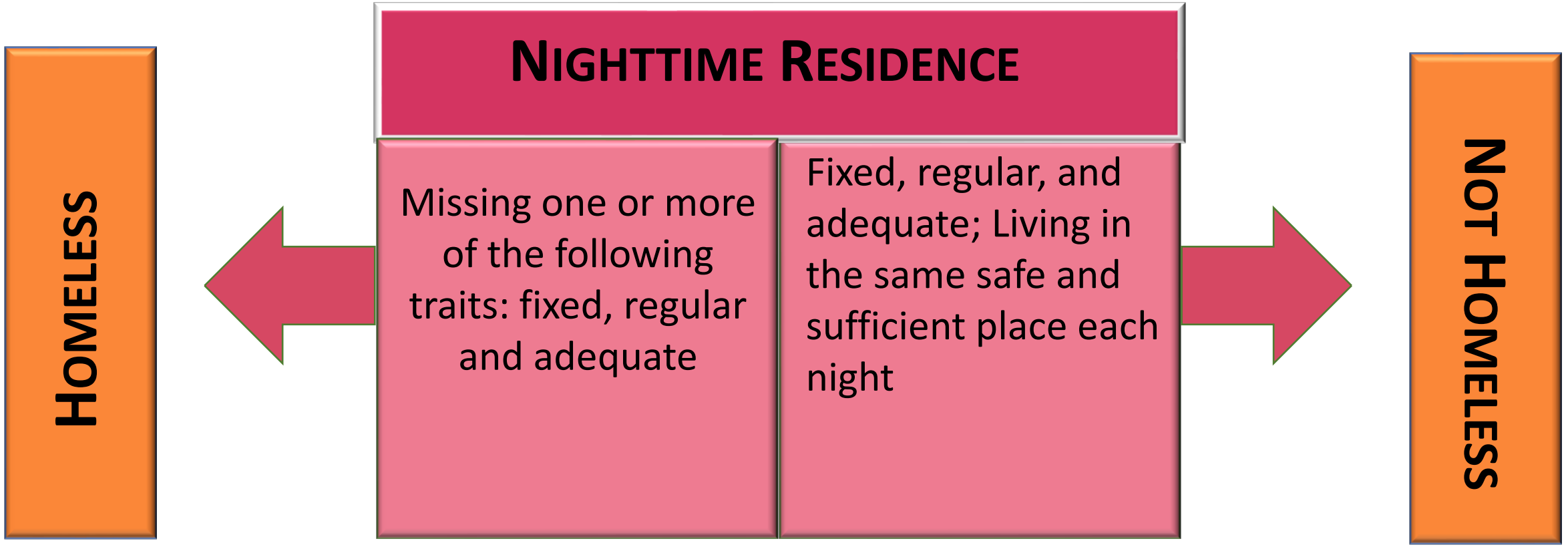
Eligibility Determination

Homelessness = lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence

If any one of these criteria is missing, the student is eligible for McKinney-Vento benefits.

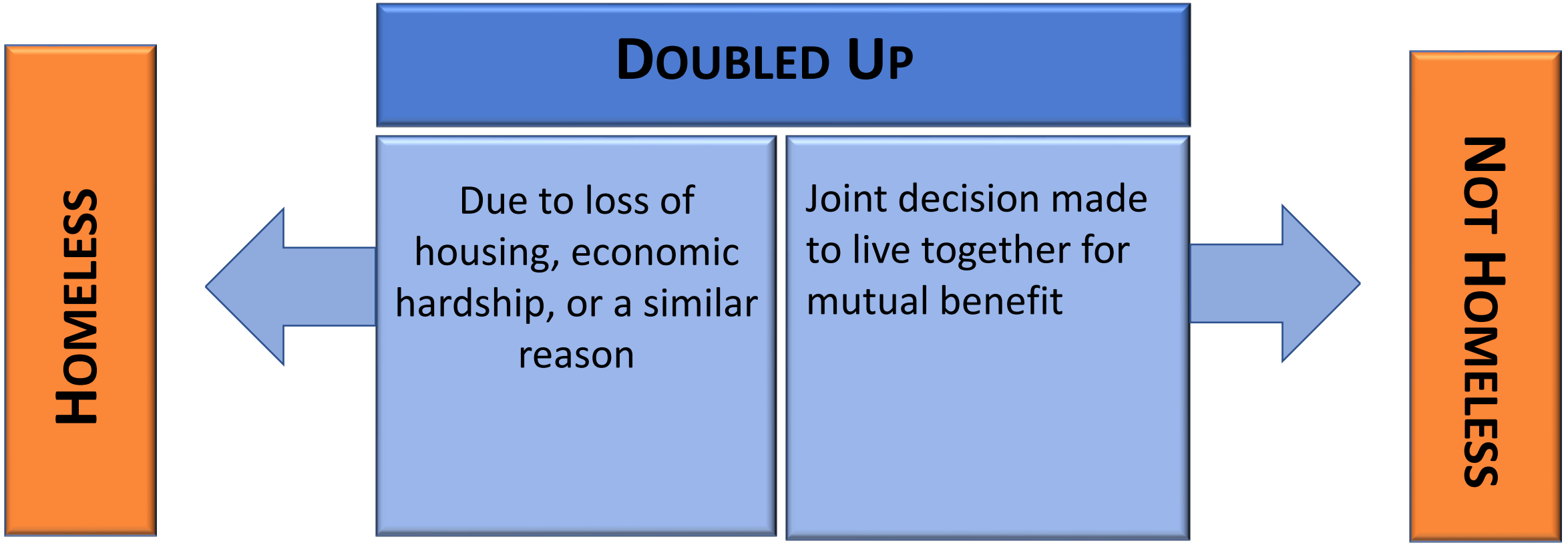
A student may be considered homeless for an unspecified length of time if housing is not fixed, regular and adequate.

Determining Eligibility



NCHE Flowchart for McKinney-Vento Eligibility Determinations

Determining Eligibility



NCHE Flowchart for McKinney-Vento Eligibility Determinations

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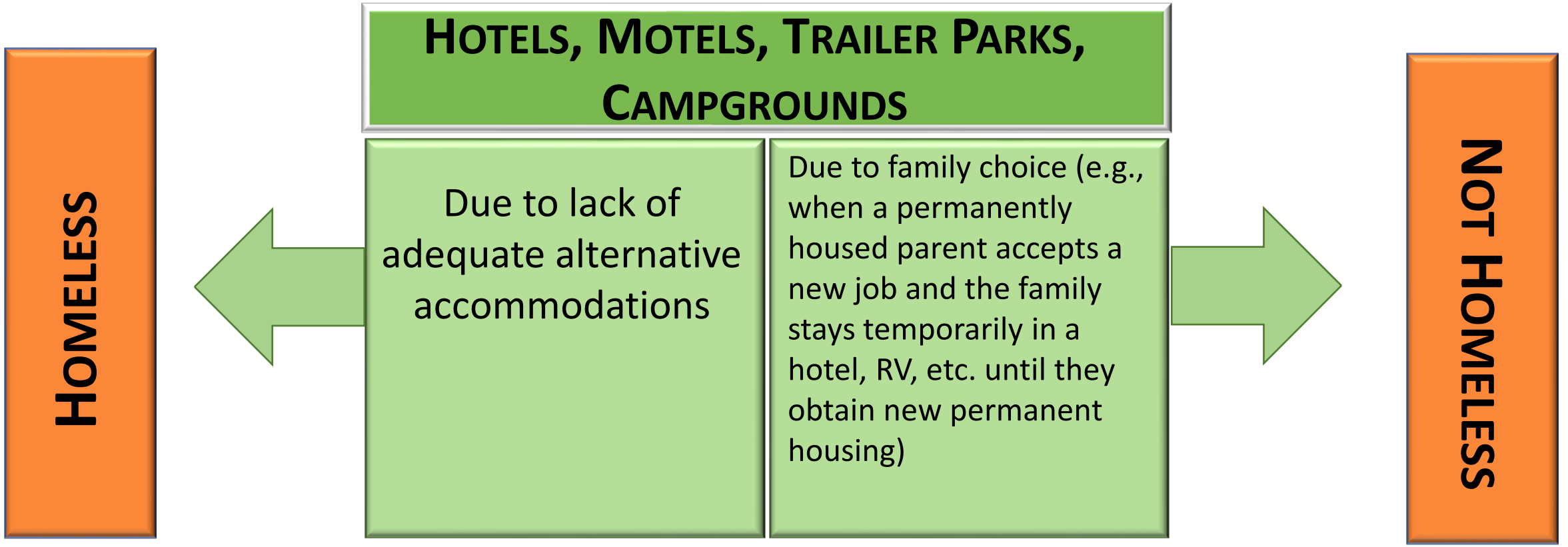
Determining Eligibility



NCHE Flowchart for McKinney-Vento Eligibility Determinations

Eligibility Scenarios

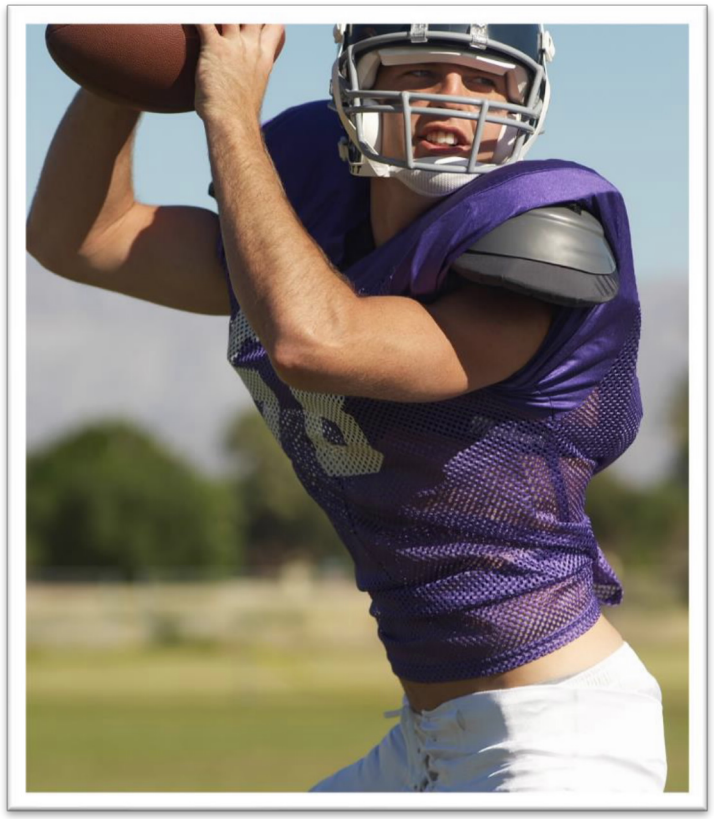
Eligibility Scenario #1

Toni, her two brothers, and her parents have been living with their uncle after a flood damaged their home last month. Toni and her brothers have nowhere to do their homework and sleep in the living room with sleeping bags.

Would Toni and her two brothers be eligible for McKinney-Vento benefits?

A. Yes
B. No
C. Not Sure

Eligibility Scenario #2



Jared, a rising junior, relocated to your school district from Florida in order to play on an exclusive football team. He temporarily lives with a family whose child plays on the same team. Jared's parents, who remain in Florida, want their son to play football, but don't want to give up custody.

Would Jared be eligible for McKinney-Vento benefits?

A. Yes
B. No
C. Not Sure

Eligibility Scenario #3

Due to an inability to pay rent, Sarah and her two children were evicted from their home. Her children attend 1st and 3rd grade in the Brentwood School District. She moves into her mother's three-bedroom home.

Would Sarah's children be eligible for McKinney-Vento benefits?

A. Yes
B. No
C. Not Sure

Determining Eligibility: Step by Step Guide

Prepare

- Prepare for a conversation with the family.

Get

- Get the Facts: Learn about the family's situation.

Gather

- Gather information about the child/youth situation through a Housing Questionnaire.

Analyze

- Determine whether the living arrangement of the child(ren) or youth meets the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness.

Communicate

- Communicate when follow-ups regarding eligibility and services will occur with parent(s)/unaccompanied youth.

Seek

- Seek additional input if needed.

Adapted from NCHE's *Determining Eligibility Brief*

Preparing for the Conversation

- Review the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness.
- Adopt a strengths-based approach toward families.
- Practice active listening techniques, using non-judgmental language when reiterating the information shared and during advising.
- Prepare questions in advance to meeting with families.

Adapted from NCHE's *Determining Eligibility Brief*

Determining Eligibility: Step by Step Guide

Prepare

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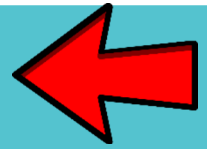

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Adapted from NCHE's *Determining Eligibility Brief*

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Get the Facts: Learn about the Family's Situation

- Talk with the family in a private location.
- Explain your role as the McKinney-Vento liaison.
- Clarify the purpose of the conversation.
- Ask permission to ask questions.
- Avoid using the word homeless.

Adapted from NCHE's *Determining Eligibility Brief*

Questions to Ask to Determine "Fixed/Regular"

- Is your current housing situation fixed to one place? (i.e., not in a vehicle, camper etc.)
- Is this a permanent arrangement? How long do you plan to stay at this address?
- What were the circumstances that caused you to leave your previous housing?

Adapted from NCHE's *Determining Eligibility Brief*

Questions to Ask to Determine "Fixed/Regular"

- Do you have a key to the place you are living?
- Do you stay in the same place every night?
- Could your friends/relatives ask you to leave at any time?
- Are you sharing the home equally or are you more like guests in the home?
- Where would you go if you could not stay where you are currently living?

Adapted from NCHE's *Determining Eligibility Brief*

Questions to Ask to Determine " Adequate"

- How many people are living in the home? How many are sharing a room?
- Are the child(ren)/youth sleeping in a bedroom or in a different space in the house?
- Is there heat, running water and electricity?
- Is there adequate space to meet the physical and psychological needs of the child(ren)/youth staying there?

Adapted from NCHE's *Determining Eligibility Brief*

Determining Eligibility: Step by Step Guide

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Analyze

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Communicate

- Communicate when follow-ups regarding eligibility and services will occur with parent(s)/unaccompanied youth.

Seek

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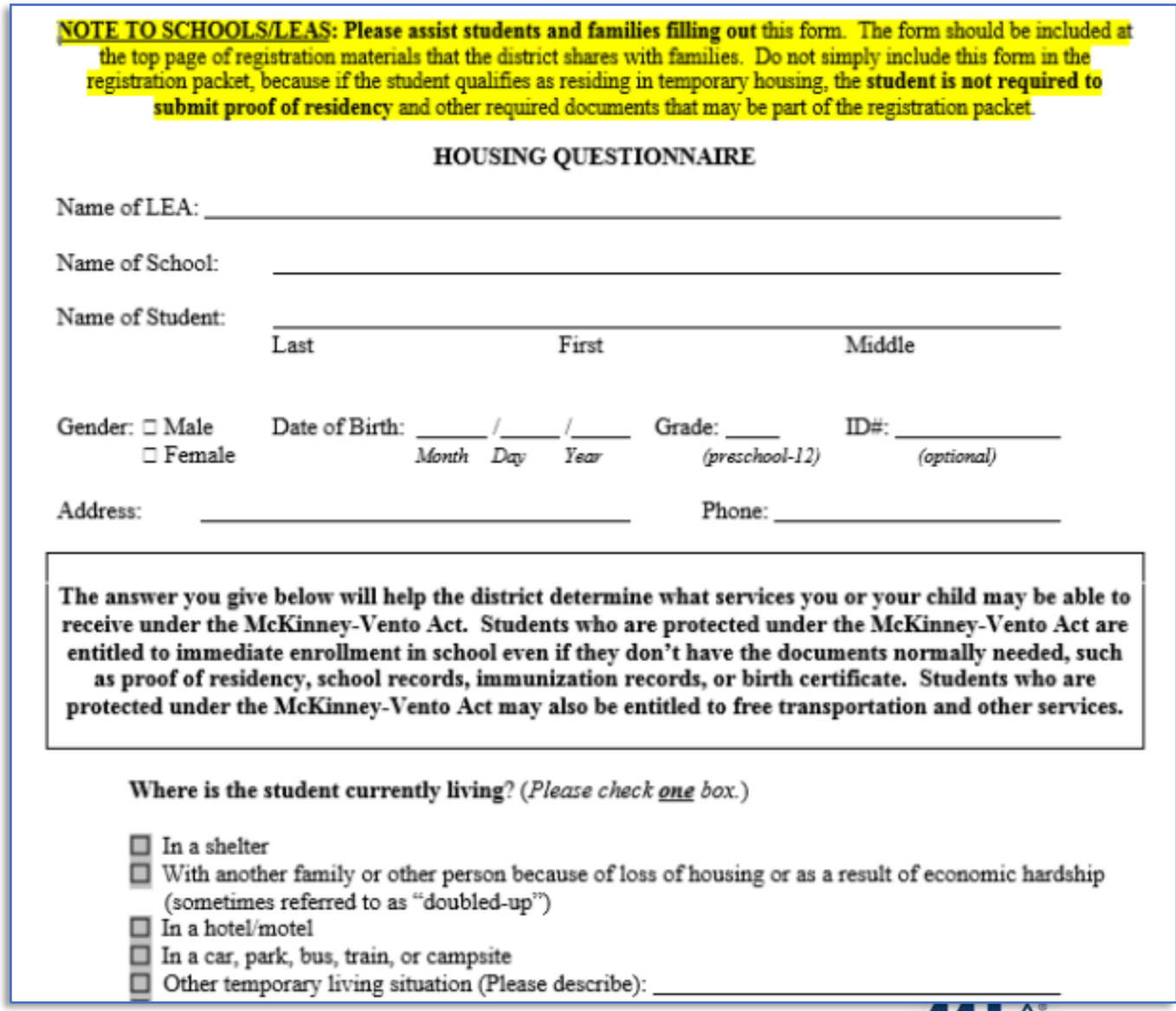
Housing Questionnaire

- Screening tool is required for all students.
- Required at the time of enrollment and change of address.



NOTE TO SCHOOLS/LEAS: Please assist students and families filling out this form. The form should be included at the top page of registration materials that the district shares with families. Do not simply include this form in the registration packet, because if the student qualifies as residing in temporary housing, the **student is not required to submit proof of residency** and other required documents that may be part of the registration packet.

HOUSING QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of LEA: _____

Name of School: _____

Name of Student: _____
Last First Middle

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female Date of Birth: ____/____/____ *Month Day Year* Grade: ____ *(preschool-12)* ID#: _____ *(optional)*

Address: _____ Phone: _____

The answer you give below will help the district determine what services you or your child may be able to receive under the McKinney-Vento Act. Students who are protected under the McKinney-Vento Act are entitled to immediate enrollment in school even if they don't have the documents normally needed, such as proof of residency, school records, immunization records, or birth certificate. Students who are protected under the McKinney-Vento Act may also be entitled to free transportation and other services.

Where is the student currently living? (*Please check **one** box.*)

- ☐ In a shelter
- ☐ With another family or other person because of loss of housing or as a result of economic hardship (sometimes referred to as "doubled-up")
- ☐ In a hotel/motel
- ☐ In a car, park, bus, train, or campsite
- ☐ Other temporary living situation (Please describe): _____

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Who Fills Out The Housing Questionnaire

A Housing Questionnaire should be filled out:

1. **FOR** all students enrolling in school and for all students who have a change of address in grades preschool-12 .
2. **BY** the student's parent, person in parental relation, or in the case of an unaccompanied youth, by the student directly.

Student Privacy Rights Under FERPA

- Strategies used by school districts to identify McKinney-Vento students should be grounded in sensitivity and demonstrate a commitment to protecting student confidentiality.

- According to the McKinney-Vento Act, information about the living situation of a child or youth experiencing homelessness is not deemed to be directory information; rather it considered a student education record and must be provided with the applicable confidentiality protections. [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(3)(G)]

Communicate with School Staff

McKinney-Vento Liaison notifies on an "as needed basis":

- Building Principal
- Transportation Director
- Building Secretary
- School Nurse
- Guidance Counselor/ Coordinator of Student Services/ Title 1 Coordinator
- Food Services Director
- Director of Special Education
- Director of Services for ELLs
- College Counselor

Determining Eligibility: Step by Step Guide

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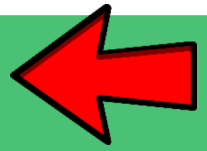

- Determine whether the living arrangement of the child(ren) or youth meets the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness.

Communicate

- Communicate when follow-ups regarding eligibility and services will occur with parent(s)/unaccompanied youth.

Seek

- Seek additional input if needed.

Eligibility Scenarios: Part 2

Eligibility Scenario #4

Cheryl, an 11th grade student, left home and says she doesn't feel safe there. Her mother says Cheryl doesn't want to follow the rules to live at home.

Would Cheryl be eligible for McKinney-Vento benefits?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Not Sure

Questions to Ask to Determine Eligibility

What questions would you ask Cheryl?

- Where are you staying?
- How long do you plan on staying there?
- Can you share some information on why you don't feel safe at home?

Eligibility Scenario #5

A family, including three children, lives in a trailer in Long Island. The mother contacts the McKinney-Vento Liaison asking if her children are eligible for benefits.

Would this family be eligible for McKinney-Vento benefits?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Not Sure

Questions to Ask to Determine Eligibility

What questions would you ask the family?

- How long do you plan on staying in your location?
- Is the trailer fixed to the ground with a foundation wall, footers and support beams underneath?
- Does the trailer have running water, heat and electricity?

Eligibility Scenario #6

In Spring, a landlord took legal action, resulting in a mother and her two children to be evicted from their apartment in the Buffalo school district. The mother and her child are now staying, doubled up, with her mother.

Would this family be eligible for McKinney-Vento benefits?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Not Sure

Questions to Ask to Determine Eligibility

What questions would you ask the mother?

- How long do you plan on staying at this address?
- Where would you go if you couldn't stay with your mother?
- Are there any occupancy issues where your mother is staying?
- Are you and your daughter sleeping in a bedroom or in another place in the house?

Determining Eligibility: Step by Step Guide

Prepare

- Prepare for a conversation with the family.

Get

- Get the Facts: Learn about the family's situation.

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Analyze

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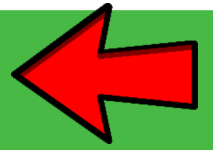
Communicate



- Communicate when follow-ups regarding eligibility and services will occur with parent(s)/unaccompanied youth.

Seek

- Seek additional input if needed.

Summary

Role of LEAs and McKinney-Vento Liaisons

Ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness are identified through outreach and coordination activities with other entities.

Determine eligibility by using the definition of homelessness as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Assist eligible families by providing information, benefits and resources as provided by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Ed Law 3209, and the Commissioner Regulation 100.2 (x).

Identification Strategies

Collaborate	**Collaborate** with community service agencies, such as shelters, food pantries, law enforcement, legal aid, public assistance and housing agencies, mental health agencies and public health departments.
Coordinate	**Coordinate** with youth-serving agencies, such as drop-in centers, street outreach, child welfare, juvenile courts, teen parent programs, LGBTQ youth organizations.
Access	**Access** available data to inform outreach – district and regional homeless identification, poverty data, primary nighttime residence data.
Utilize	**Utilize** definitions and sample questions from NCHE's Determining Eligibility brief

Summary 3-2-1

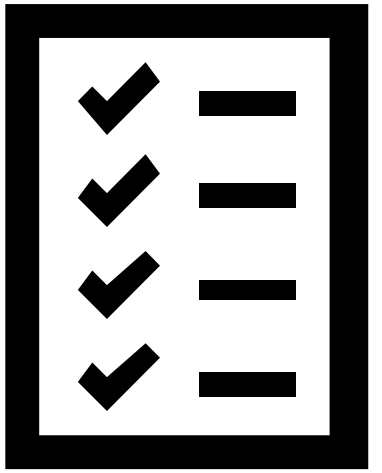
3 Key Points…

2 Actions to Take…

1 Idea to Explore Further…

Session Survey

Please take a few moments to complete our survey. https://mi-surveys.com/Webinar-SupportingStudentsInTemporaryHousing092122



We appreciate your feedback! Responses are used in the planning of upcoming Professional Learning sessions.

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Resources

[McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act]

[Housing Questionnaire]

[NCHE Brief: Identifying Children and Youth in Homeless Situations]

[NCHE Brief: Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services]

[NCHE Brief: Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights]

[Eligibility Flowchart]

Technical and Educational Assistance Center

- Help Line (800-388-2014)
- Website (https://nysteachs.org)
- Web-Based Trainings
- Outreach Materials
  - For outreach materials, email Ailin Mendoza: amendoza@measinc.com

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Next Webinar:

Supporting Students in Temporary Housing: The Role of Transportation
Wednesday, September 28, 2022