Supporting Students in Temporary Housing

Planning Your LEA Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

NYSTEACHS.org
The New York State Technical and Educational Assistance Center for Homeless Students

Presented By: NYS TEACHS
Thursday, May 15, 2025
9:30am-11:00am

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Webinar Format

Today's session will be recorded.

Your microphone will be automatically muted.

Your camera will be automatically disabled.

The in-webinar chat will allow you communicate with the panelists and host only.

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Housekeeping

We will launch poll questions periodically throughout the session and ask you to answer some questions 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 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. 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 online.

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Welcome! 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)

Other School/District Staff

BOCES Staff

Which region are you from?

* Western   * Capital

* Finger Lakes   * Hudson Valley

* Central   * New York City

* Southern Tier   * Long Island

* Mohawk Valley   * North Country

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Session Outcomes

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

Conduct an informal needs assessment to identify key areas on which to focus the McKinney-Vento program.

Review LEA data on students experiencing homelessness for program planning.

Plan efficient collaborations to support students experiencing temporary housing.

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Today's Agenda

Welcome! Who is in the Room?

Conducting an informal LEA Needs Assessment

Developing & Revising LEA Policies/Protocols

Planning Effective Collaborations
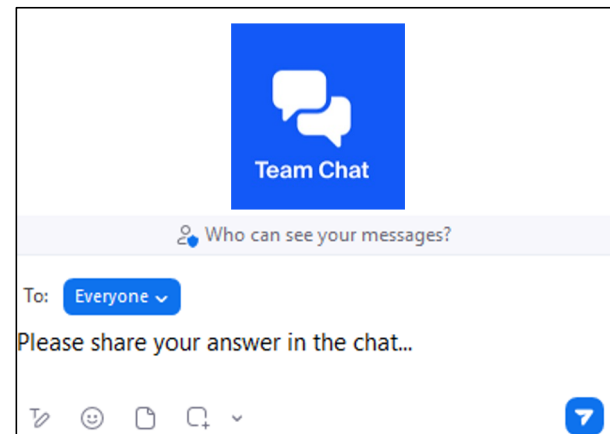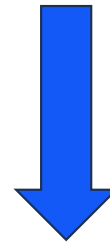
Organizing Your Work

Summary, Resources and Survey

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What Planning Have You Done for Next Year?

Importance of Program Planning

Completing Duties	Program Planning
Working from a list of duties or tasks	Working from a set of goals
Each one is equally important as the next; little thought given to assigning priorities to tasks	Focusing on activities that will lead to goals
Completing tasks as listed	Identifying needs and customizing activities
Isolated and separate activities; doesn't affect or isn't affected by other activities	Program focus connects all activities which align, reinforce each other, and create synergy
Short-term vision; immediate outcomes	Longer term vision; seeing progress over time
Success is completion of tasks (checking the boxes); data shows satisfying a requirement	Success is achieving program goals; data collection monitors progress, celebrate success; identify areas for improvement

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Prioritizing Your Work

Adapted from Stephen Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	**Quadrant I** - urgent & Important → Arranging transportation to the school of origin → Meeting with an upset parent	**Quadrant II** - not urgent but important → Developing local policies & procedures to remove educational barriers → Providing awareness & training to school & school district staff
Not Important	**Quadrant III** - urgent but not important → Attending mandatory general staff meetings → Responding to a request for information from your principal	**Quadrant IV** - not urgent & not important → Meeting with colleagues on issues not related to serving homeless children and youth → Attending community meetings that do not have a clear or relevant agenda

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Benefits of Program Planning

- Students and their families will receive services targeted toward their needs.

- You will work more efficiently and save time.

- Planning for the long term will help avoid crises.

- Prioritizing activities will result in better use of funds.

- You and your stakeholders will see progress and improvement toward goals (can result in more time for your position or more funding for your program).

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Quick Poll #1

Do you use an informal needs assessment to plan your EHCY Program?

A. Yes

B. No

C. Not Sure

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Conducting an Informal Needs Assessment

An effective needs assessment helps local stakeholders and system leaders understand *how the pieces of a complex educational system interact*. Whether that system reflects a school, a district, or an entire state, a needs assessment *can uncover both strengths and challenges* that will inform growth and improvement. The goal of a needs assessment is to help educators *identify, understand, and prioritize the needs* that districts and schools must address to improve performance.

Cucio, C. & Husby-Slater. 2018. Needs Assessment Guidebook. https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/10/needsassessmentguidebook-508_003.pdf

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NCHE's LEA Informal Needs Assessment Tool

Includes major areas of LEA responsibilities outlined in the McKinney-Vento Act

- Awareness
- Policies and Procedures
- Disputes
- Identification and Enrollment
- School Selection
- Access to Services
- Transportation

- School Success
- Collaboration Within the LEA
- Collaboration With Title I
- Community Collaboration
- Resources, Capacity, Compliance

NCHE's LEA Informal Needs Assessment Tool

- Includes citations from the McKinney-Vento Act for each of the areas of responsibility
- Questions to consider
- What's in place?
- What's needed?
- Level of priority to address

Awareness			
State Plan Requirements[1] – A description of programs for school personnel (including liaisons designated under subparagraph (J)(ii), principals and other school leaders, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel) to heighten the awareness of such personnel of the specific needs of homeless children and youths, including such children and youths who are runaway and homeless youths. [42 U.S.C. § 11432 (g)(1)(D)]

Coordination Purpose – Each local educational agency is required to coordinate with State and local housing agencies. This coordination must be designed to "raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in a shelter and other challenges associated with homelessness." [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(5)(C)(iii)]

LEA liaison duties – Each local agency liaison for homeless children and youths, designated under paragraph (1)(J)(iii), shall ensure that – the parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)(v)]; public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A)(vi)].

State coordinators established under subsection (d)(3) and local educational agencies shall inform school personnel, service providers, advocates working with homeless families, parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, and homeless children and youths of the duties of the local educational agency liaisons, and publish an annually updated list of the liaisons on the State educational agency's website. [42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(B)] | | | |
| Questions to Consider | What's in Place | What's Needed | Priority |
| • What is the level of awareness of school personnel on the needs of homeless children and youth?
• What programs, activities, and trainings are conducted for LEA program administrators and school personnel to increase their awareness of homeless children and youth?
• What is the level of awareness of community agencies and organizations on the needs of homeless children and youth?
• What activities take place to increase the level of awareness in community agencies, shelters, and service providers?
• Are posters widely disseminated in schools and throughout the community? | | | |

NCHE Needs Assessment Tool

NCHE's LEA Informal Needs Assessment Tool

- Includes a planning tool to identify priority needs and set measurable goals

- Activities for the year can focus on areas of the greatest need

Needs Assessment Summary: High Priority Needs

In the following table, list the highest priority needs identified in the guiding questions and create a concrete (measurable) goal that the LEA should achieve during the next year to address each need. This information will guide the development of an annual action plan.

Focus Area	Priority Needs	Measurable Goal
Awareness		
Policies and Procedures		
Disputes		
Identification		
Enrollment		
School Selection		
Access to Services		
Transportation		

How to Use the LEA Needs Assessment Tool

Can be used very flexibly

- Respond to the questions based on what you know to create an informal snapshot of the EHCY program in your LEA
- Find data and evidence to support your assertions of what is in place or what is needed
- Complete the tool by yourself or involve other stakeholders
- Use the needs assessment each year to track progress
- Use the tool to identify challenges and to celebrate what is going well; use the tool to advocate for your program

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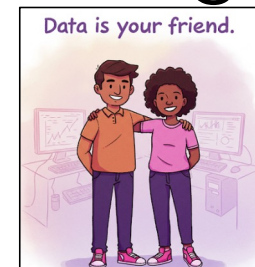MEASUREMENT
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Using Data to Answer Questions

You can't manage what you can't measure. Use data to identify the **What…**

Data can tell us:

What's happening?
What's working/not working?
What's changed?

Data is your friend.

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Good Questions to Explore

Identification

Is our school or school district identifying the expected number of students experiencing homelessness, given the level of poverty in the school district or community?

Attendance

Is the percentage of students experiencing homelessness who are chronically absent similar to that of other students in the school/district?

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Good Questions to Explore

Academic Performance

- Are students experiencing homelessness performing at a proficiency rate similar to that of other students in the school/district?

- Are there differences by grade level?

- Are there differences by subject, such as math and language arts?
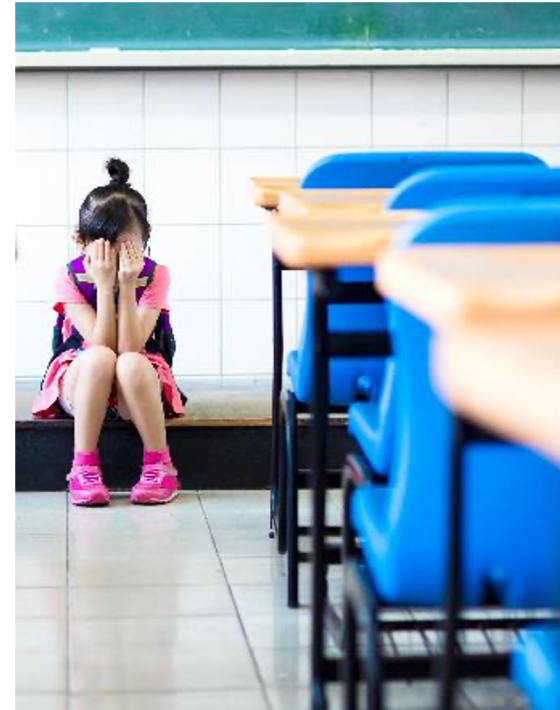
Good Questions to Explore

Discipline

- Are students experiencing homelessness being disciplined at a rate higher than other students?

- Are there categories of behaviors for which students experiencing homelessness are being disciplined more frequently than other students?

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Good Questions to Explore

Special Education

- Are students experiencing homelessness being evaluated at a higher or lower rate than other students?

- Are students experiencing homelessness being placed into special education at a higher or lower rate than other students?

Good Questions to Explore

Graduation Rate

Is the on-time graduation rate for students experiencing homelessness similar to that of other students in the school district?
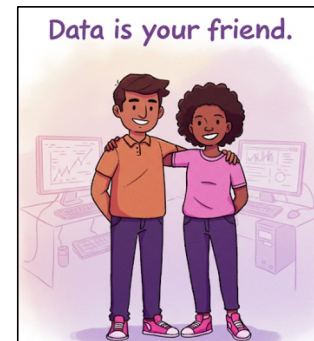
Dropout Rate

Is the dropout rate for students experiencing homelessness similar to that of other students in the school district?

Good Data Leads to Good Questions: The 5 Whys

- Provides a good way to push the boundaries of thinking

- Fosters dialogue and discussion

- Prevents jumping to conclusions and resolutions before a topic is sufficiently explored

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The 5 Whys – An Example

A review of the data on discipline referrals in your LEA indicates that students experiencing homelessness are referred for discipline infractions at a rate 20% higher than that of other students.
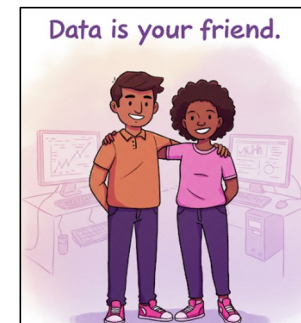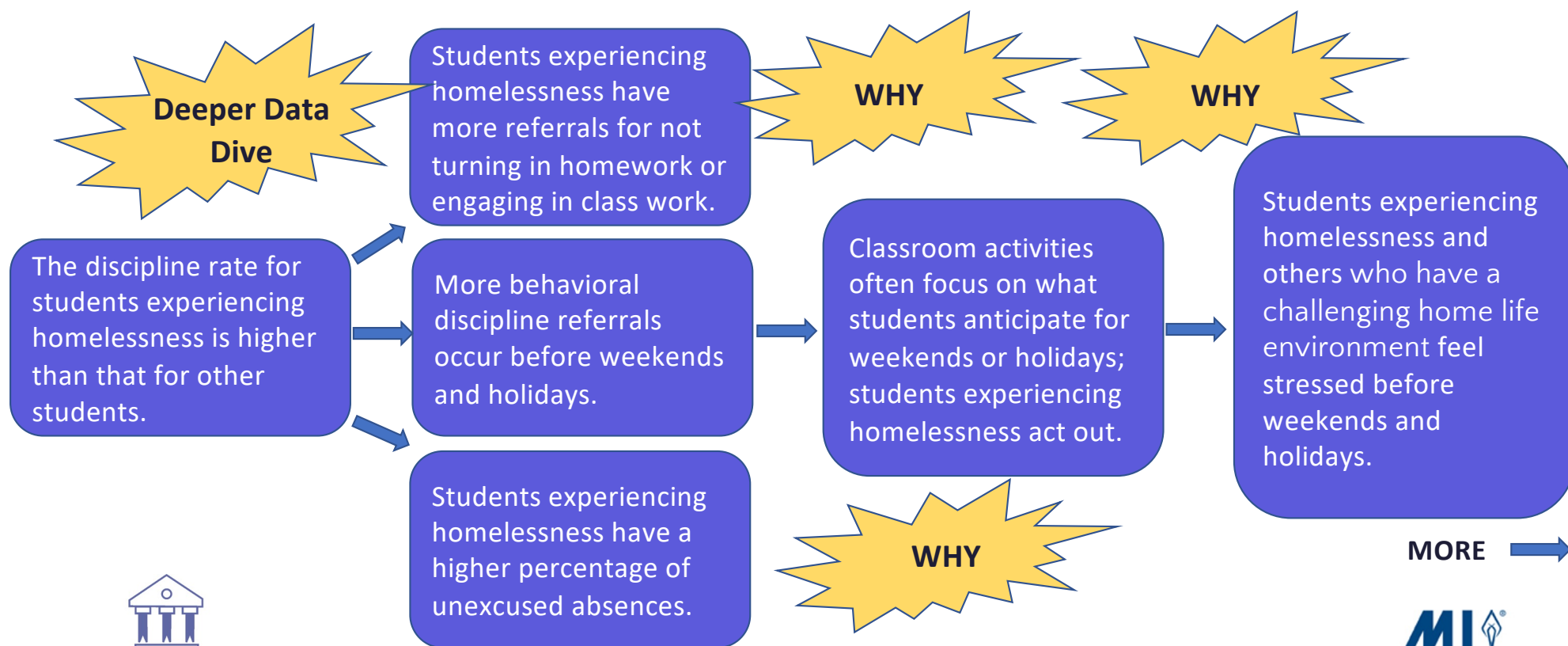
WHY

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The 5 Whys — An Example

Deeper Data Dive

The discipline rate for students experiencing homelessness is higher than that for other students.

Students experiencing homelessness have more referrals for not turning in homework or engaging in class work.

WHY

WHY

More behavioral discipline referrals occur before weekends and holidays.

Students experiencing homelessness have a higher percentage of unexcused absences.

WHY

Classroom activities often focus on what students anticipate for weekends or holidays; students experiencing homelessness act out.

Students experiencing homelessness and others who have a challenging home life environment feel stressed before weekends and holidays.

MORE

The 5 Whys – An Example (continued)

Students experiencing homelessness often return to chaotic environments on weekends and holidays where they lack sufficient food and experience domestic violence.

Teachers are unaware that weekends and holidays are difficult for students experiencing homelessness.

WHY

Teachers lack professional development in understanding homelessness.

WHY

LEA improvement plans focus on raising reading and math scores. Homelessness is not a priority for professional development.

There is not much awareness of homelessness in the LEA or community.

- **Reasons WHY should be situations that the LEA can impact.**
- **A reason should not be a person.**

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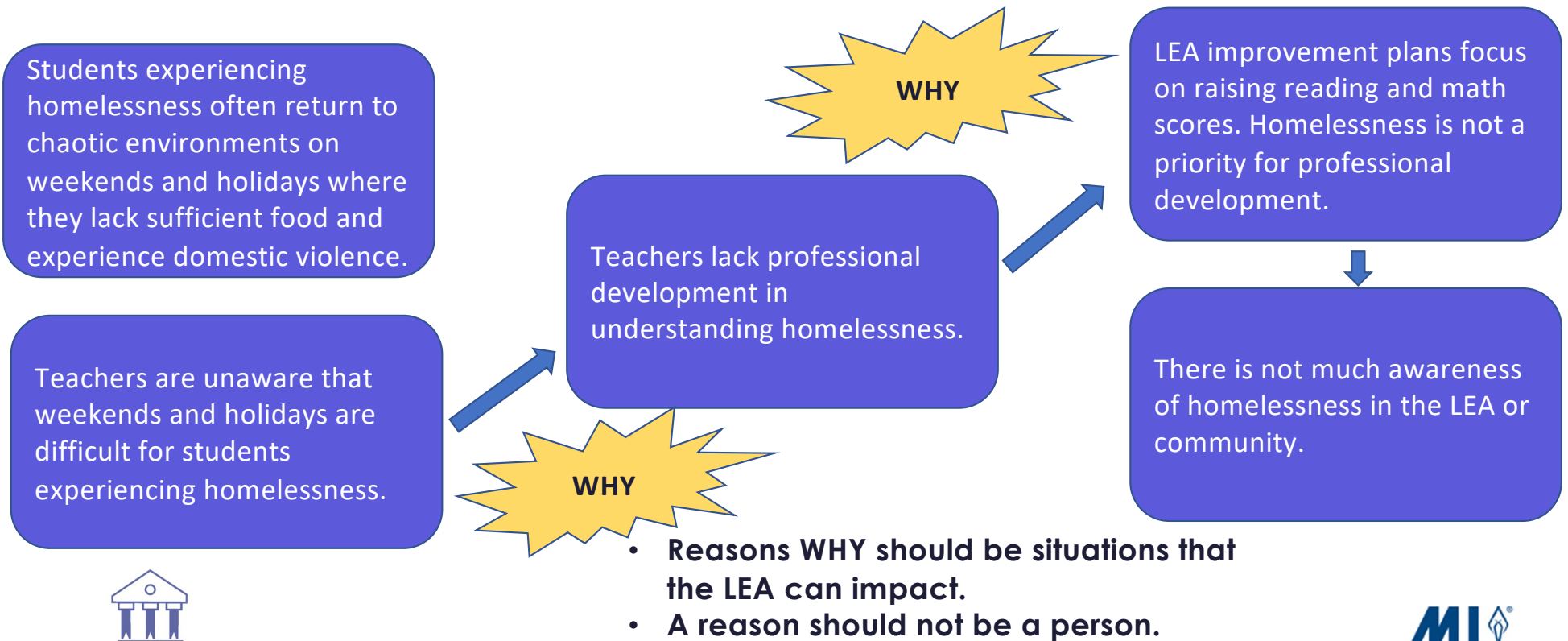Assistance Center for Homeless Students

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Quick Poll # 2

Which approach is recommended when using data to identify needs in an LEA's McKinney-Vento program?

A. Focusing solely on quantitative metrics like attendance rates

B. Using the "5 Whys" technique to push the boundaries of thinking and prevent jumping to conclusions

C. Relying exclusively on state requirements without local data analysis

D. Waiting for problems to emerge before collecting relevant data

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LEA Protocols, Policies, and Agreements

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What is a Protocol?

- Detailed plan with a set of standard procedures

- Formal agreement or understanding

- Rules, guidelines, or customs that should be observed by all parties

- Specific set of practices that all involved parties understand and follow to create a predictable, logical sequence of action

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Why are Protocols, Procedures, & Written Policy Agreements Important?

- Ensures all staff know who does what, when, and how
- Reduces delays in enrollment and attendance
- Improves consistency of responses within schools and school districts
- Reduces likelihood of disputes
- Creates more positive interactions with community organizations
- Increases appropriate service provision and referrals
- Enriches relationships with students and parents

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What Do Protocols, Procedures, & Written Policy Agreements Look Like?

- Set of policies and guidelines for action

- Checklists for what needs to be done

- Document (memo, handbook, MOU) that outlines clear roles and responsibilities

- Tasks for specific group roles involved in serving homeless children and youth (e.g., office enrollment staff, school counselors, teachers, nurses, bus drivers)

- Consistent forms used throughout the LEA

- Must be flexible enough to be responsive to emerging issues

Who Needs to Be Included?

- Superintendents, supervisors, school district attorneys, school boards
- Parents and unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY)
- School secretaries, registrars, enrollment staff, other student support staff, and transportation department
- Program administrators (Special Ed, Child Nutrition, Title I, Migrant, Early Childhood)
- Principals and teachers
- Staff of community-based organizations
- Other LEAs with whom you frequently share students

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Interdistrict Agreements

- Include relevant provisions of the law
- Be specific about the issues to be addressed
- Describe the roles and responsibilities for the LEA of origin and LEA of current location
- Require a collaborative approach to address challenges
- Describe how to settle disagreements
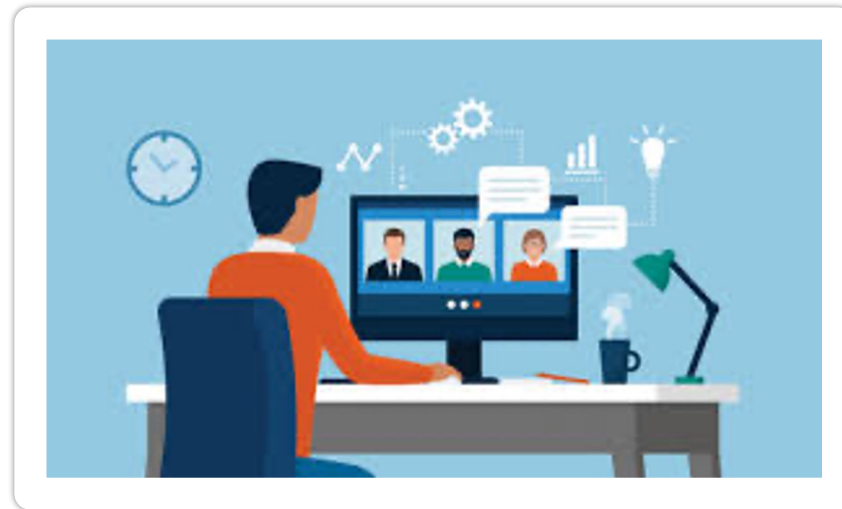- Keep the best interest of the students at the center

Effective Collaborations

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Collaborations to Consider

Within the LEA
- Transportation Department
- Title I, Part A
- Special Education
- Child Nutrition
- Migrant Education Program
- Dropout Prevention
- Teachers
- School Administrators
- School Social Workers and Counselors
- Early Childhood
- Career and Technical Education Programs

In the Community
- Shelters
- Housing Agencies
- Food Banks
- Medical, Dental, Mental Health Clinics
- Libraries
- Businesses
- Civic Organizations
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Head Start
- Institutions of Higher Education
- Youth Providers

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Managing the Time Collaboration Requires

- Revisit what the law requires.

- Revisit your needs assessment–prioritize collaborative activities.

- Develop a schedule for meetings over the course of a year.

- Focus on collaborations that are productive–ensure that homeless education is on the agenda.

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Match the Type of Contact With the Purpose

Purpose	Example	Type of Contact
Increase awareness of homelessness	Shelters, libraries, clinics, and food banks need awareness of homeless education services	Annual memo, awareness materials
Coordinate services	There needs to be coordination between the LEA and Head Start regarding referrals	Meetings with Head Start director/staff to develop an MOU; revisit annually
Obtain resources	The LEA is asking a faith-based organization to provide food for backpacks	Present to the congregation; follow up with awareness materials; periodic contact with success stories and appreciation
Align policies and procedures	Determining transportation for students experiencing homelessness with IEPs	Meetings with the special education coordinator to develop protocol
Build cross-agency advocacy or policy initiatives	Youth agencies' collective advocacy for minor medical consent policy changes	Collective advocacy for changes to medical consent policies for minors.

Types of Collaborations

- Awareness

- Coordinating Services

- Obtaining Resources

- Aligning Policies and Procedures

- Cross-Agency Policy Work

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Track and Plan Your Contacts

Using a collaboration tracking form will help you

- Maintain a list and contacts for all collaborations

- Align the type of collaborative contact with the purpose of the contact: determine if the purpose matches your needs assessment priorities

- Create a schedule for contacts into your overall schedule for the school year

Organization or Program	Contact Information	Purpose for Collaboration	Type of Collaboration or Communication Needed	Date of Last Contact and Current Status	Action Needed	Deadline for Next Planned Contact

Quick Poll # 3

When planning effective collaborations for a McKinney-Vento program, which time management strategy is recommended?

A. Attending all community meetings regardless of relevance to homeless education

B. Prioritizing collaborative activities based on the needs assessment and creating a schedule for contacts

C. Focusing exclusively on within-LEA collaborations and ignoring community partnerships

D. Developing new materials rather than utilizing resources from organizations like NCHE or NYS TEACHS

Your Reflections

How do you manage your multiple roles and responsibilities?

Please put your answers in the chat.

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Tips to Manage the Work

Time Management Tips

- Keep a copy of the McKinney-Vento Act on your desk or desktop with key sections highlighted.

- Maintain a contact list for schools, program administrators, and community resources—anyone you contact on a regular basis.

- Create templates for responses to questions that you receive over and over, including links to resources and briefs from the U.S. Department of Education, NCHE, and NYSTEACHS.

- Conduct training for school office staff, teachers, principals, pupil support personnel; send periodic memos. Use online training resources.

MV Liaison Turn-Key Presentation

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Time Management Tips

- Keep detailed records and organize them for easy retrieval; review the LEA monitoring protocol for what you need to easily compile the correct information.

- Create an annual schedule of deadlines, meetings, trainings, holidays, and conferences.

- Utilize resources from NCHE, SchoolHouse Connection, NYS TEACHS, and/or your colleagues; don't reinvent the wheel!

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Track All Phone and Email Requests

- You may need documentation for disputes.

- You can identify areas of needed technical assistance, non-compliance, or protocols.

- Creating an electronic tracking system will enable you to filter by issue, school, or person requesting.

Appendix 15.E Sample Barrier Tracking Form

Request Date	Response Date
Contact Name, Phone Number, Email	
Contact Role (Parent, Agency, Student, etc.)	
School Involved	
Request Topic	
Type of Request	☐ Request for Information ☐ Complaint or Possible Compliance Concern ☐ Inquiry from School or Program Administrator ☐ Request for Action ☐ Request for or Indicator of Need for Technical Assistance
Request Description	
Response	

Repeat Table as Needed

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Plan for Busy Times

Back to School Checklist

❏ Review goals and focus areas in your annual plan.

❏ Place posters in schools and community.

❏ Provide information on procedures and protocols in schools.

❏ Contact community agencies for referrals and resources (back-to-school memo).

❏ Schedule training events—review the annual plan for priorities.

❏ Update contact list for school contacts, LEA program administrators, community agencies.

❏ Arrange for extra help when determining eligibility and best interest and for connecting students experiencing homelessness to services.

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Quick Poll # 4

According to the presentation, what is one of the primary benefits of having written protocols, procedures, and policy agreements for homeless education programs?

A. They increase the likelihood of disputes between schools and families

B. They eliminate the need for collaboration with community organizations

C. They ensure all staff know who does what, when, and how, reducing delays in enrollment and attendance

D. They allow liaisons to focus exclusively on administrative tasks

Wrap Up

In the chat, complete the following sentence -

"One strategy that I plan to use from this presentation is …"
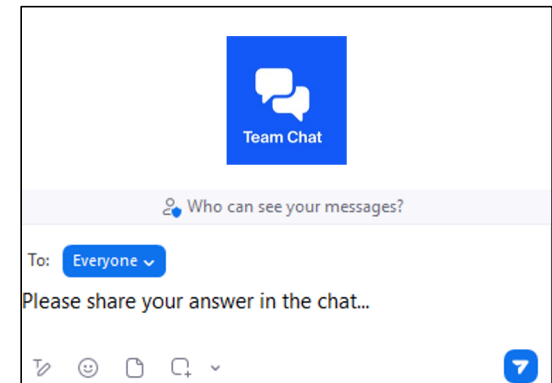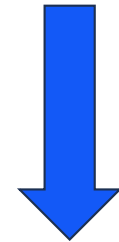
Resources

5 Whys Template and Guidelines

NCHE's LEA Informal Needs Assessment

NCHE's Homeless Liaison Toolkit

NCHE's Monitoring and Program Evaluation

NCHE Barrier Tracking Form

MV Liaison Turn-Key Presentation

More
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- **Outreach Materials**
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- **Tales from the Field** talesfromthefield

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