

Strategies for Identifying Homeless Students (cont.)

- Train faculty and staff to identify possible indicators of homelessness, such as:
 - Persistent fatigue
 - Frequent absences
 - Clothing that is dirty or worn repeatedly
 - Inability to complete homework assignments
 - Hoarding food
 - Sudden changes in behavior
- Add items to enrollment questionnaires that could aid in identifying homelessness. Send questionnaires that indicate homelessness to the district's homeless liaison. To find your liaison, contact the State Coordinator at 614-466-4161.

Image Not Available



Ohio State Legal Services
555 Buttles Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-221-7201
800-589-5888
www.oslsa.org

To get the contact information for your local legal aid office, call **1-800-LAW-OHIO** or visit www.ohiolegalservices.org

Equal Justice Foundation
88 E. Broad St., Suite 1590
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-221-9800



Youth Empowerment Program
Coalition on Housing and Homelessness in Ohio
175 South 3rd Street, Suite 250
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-280-1984

Identifying Students Experiencing Homelessness



A Guide to
Identifying Children and Youth
Experiencing Homelessness in Ohio

Who is Homeless?



Under the main source of law in education rights for students experiencing homelessness (McKinney-Vento), an individual is considered homeless if she does **not have a fixed, adequate, or regular place to live**, including the following situations:

- **Sharing housing** of a relative or friend due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds **due to the lack of other adequate housing**;
- Living in emergency or transitional **shelters**, on the **street**, or in a **car**;
- or
- Living in similar **substandard arrangements**.

The Problem of Identification

Students experiencing homelessness can often be difficult to identify for many reasons, including:

- The parents may be ashamed of their living situation, or may fear that their children will be taken away.
- The youth may fear being returned to an unsafe family situation.
- The family may not consider themselves homeless, even though they fit within the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness.

It is very important to identify students experiencing homelessness in order to provide them with the services they need.



Note: The information contained in this brochure was received from the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. See www.naehcy.org

Strategies for Identifying Homeless Students



There are several strategies that schools and communities can use to identify homeless students, including:

- Locate community service agencies, food banks, shelters, soup kitchens, etc. and develop a relationship on issues such as the enrollment process, transportation, and other student services;
- Contact managers of low-cost motels and campgrounds to tell them about assistance for homeless students. Leave written materials for them and for the families and youth who stay there, as well as contact information for the liaison;
- Provide outreach materials and posters to inform students of the services available to them under McKinney-Vento;
- Compile a list of shelters, motels, transitional living programs, and campgrounds for registrars and secretaries to check against enrollment addresses.