

# Roles, Duties, and Optimal Characteristics of Successful McKinney-Vento Liaisons



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# Agenda

- Warm Up Activity
- What You Need to Know About Homelessness in Michigan
- Our Invisible Students: Michigan Statistics
- Impact of Homelessness on Children/Youth
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- The Roles of Local District Liaisons
- The Duties of Local District Liaisons
- Optimal Characteristics for Successful District Liaisons
- Q & A



# What You Need to Know About Homelessness in Michigan\*

## Families comprise more than half the homeless in Michigan...

- 1 of every 3 homeless persons in Michigan is a child
- More than half of Michigan's homeless population is comprised of families
- 33% of homeless families are working poor
- 77% of families are homeless due to lack of affordable housing
- Of homeless families, 45% reported being homeless more than once

*\* Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness, 2007 Factsheet*

# What You Need to Know About Homelessness in Michigan\*

## Rural homelessness is not the same as urban homelessness...

- 37% of the rural homeless population is between the ages of 18 and 24, compared to 13% of the urban population
- 57% of rural homeless are part of a family (versus 45% of urban homeless)
- Rural homeless is a recent phenomena – more people in rural communities report this is their first experience ever being homeless

\* *Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness, 2007 Factsheet*

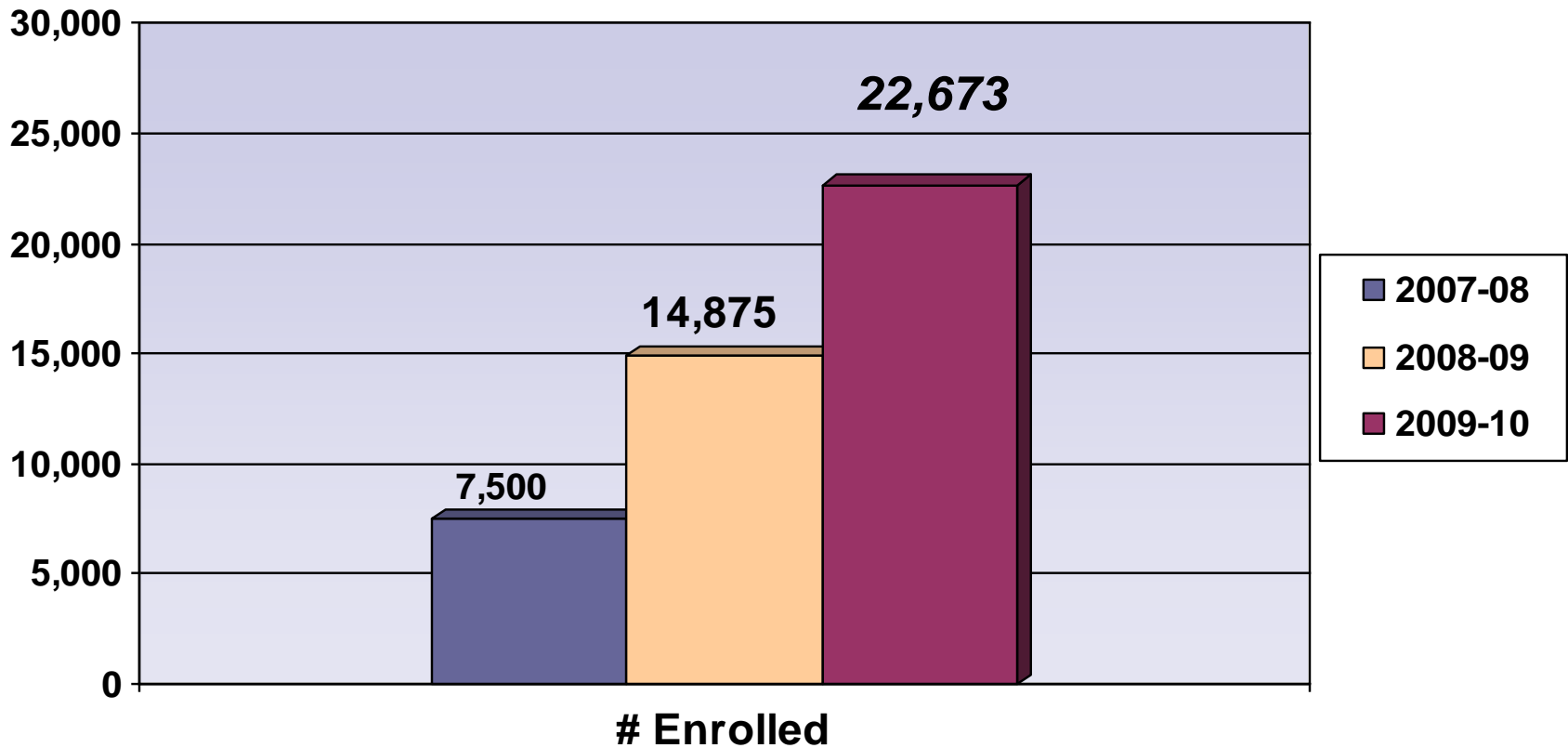
# Who is Homeless?

## Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, RV/trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency, domestic violence, or transitional shelters
- Temporary foster care placement or awaiting placement
- Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live or sleep
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, under bridges, etc.
- Migratory children living in above circumstances

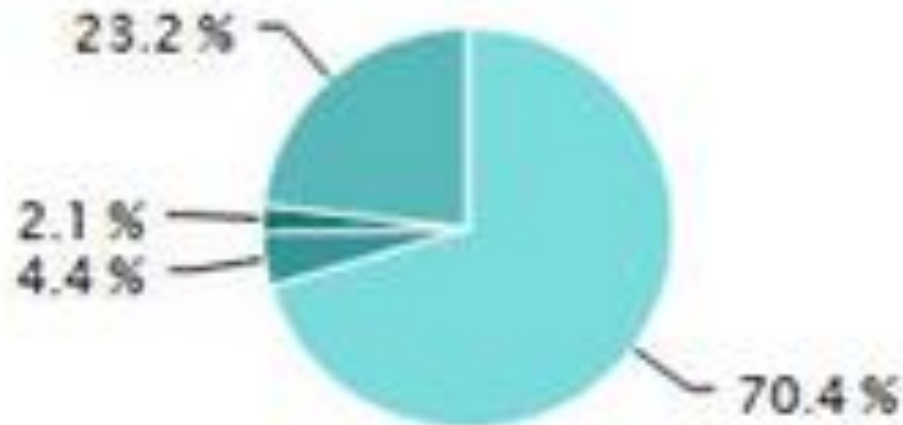
# Homeless Student Enrollment Data

## Homeless Students in Michigan



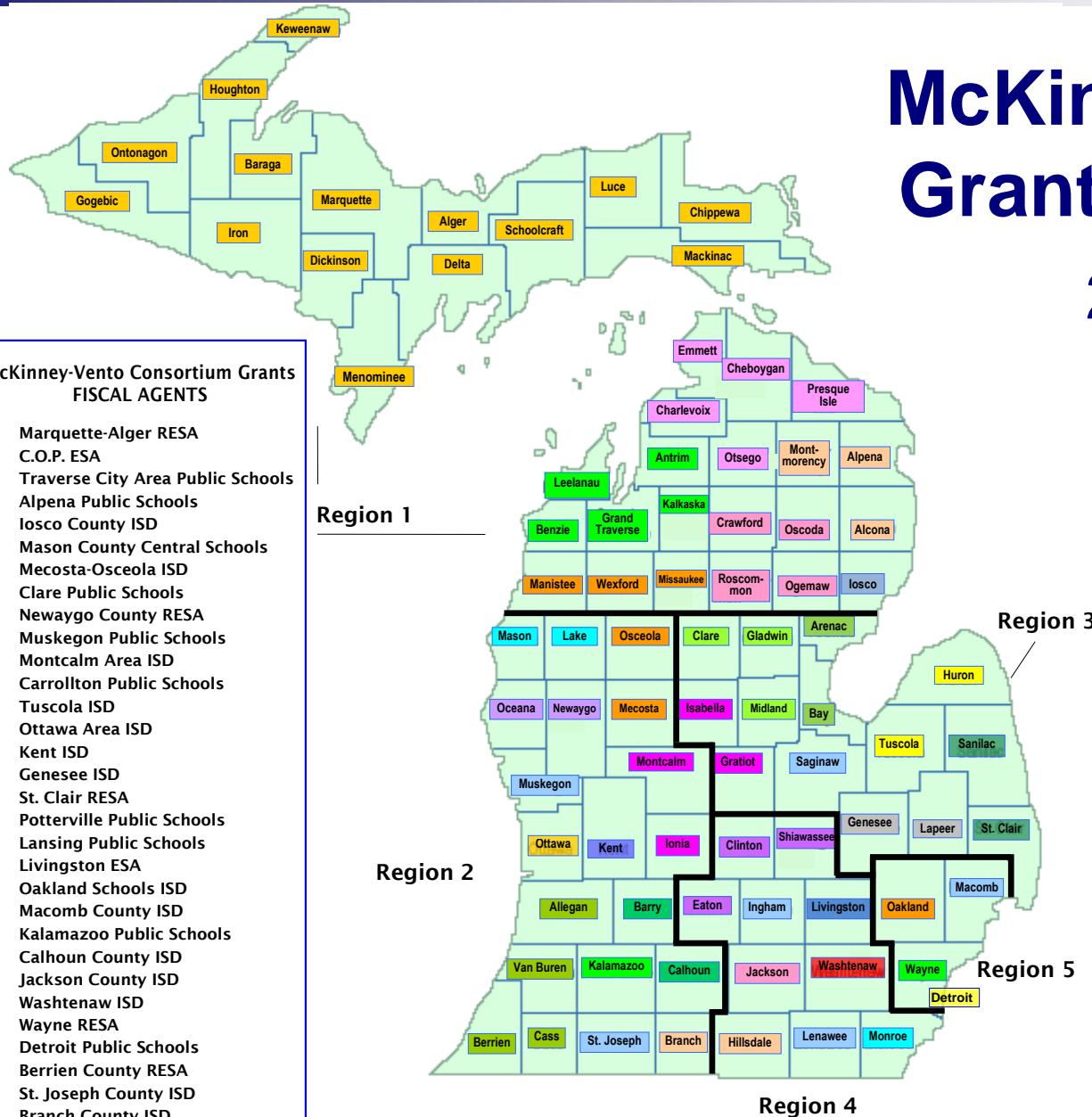
2010-11 data (MSDS) show over 31,000 homeless enrolled

# Homeless Enrollment, SY 2009-2010 by Nighttime Residence



# McKinney-Vento Grant Consortia 2011 - 2014

- McKinney-Vento Consortium Grants  
FISCAL AGENTS**
- Marquette-Alger RESA
  - C.O.P. ESA
  - Traverse City Area Public Schools
  - Alpena Public Schools
  - Iosco County ISD
  - Mason County Central Schools
  - Mecosta-Osceola ISD
  - Clare Public Schools
  - Newaygo County RESA
  - Muskegon Public Schools
  - Montcalm Area ISD
  - Carrollton Public Schools
  - Tuscola ISD
  - Ottawa Area ISD
  - Kent ISD
  - Genesee ISD
  - St. Clair RESA
  - Potterville Public Schools
  - Lansing Public Schools
  - Livingston ESA
  - Oakland Schools ISD
  - Macomb County ISD
  - Kalamazoo Public Schools
  - Calhoun County ISD
  - Jackson County ISD
  - Washtenaw ISD
  - Wayne RESA
  - Detroit Public Schools
  - Berrien County RESA
  - St. Joseph County ISD
  - Branch County ISD
  - Adrian Public Schools
  - Monroe County ISD

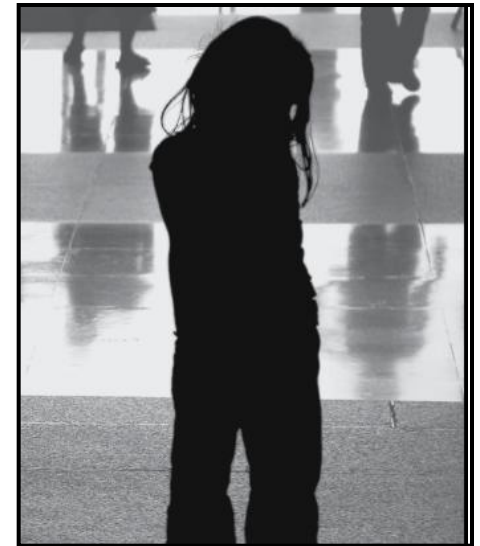


# Impact of Homelessness on Children and Youth

- Research shows that homeless children are more likely to suffer from:
  - Health problems
  - Emotional and mental health problems
  - Developmental problems
  - Academic performance problems
    - 2.5 times more likely to perform below grade level in math
    - 1.5 times more likely to perform below grade level in reading
    - 1.5 times more likely to perform below grade level in spelling
- Between the 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 school years, 459 school districts nationwide had an increase of at least 25 % in the number of homeless students identified. (Before the so-called “economic crisis”)

# Barriers to Education for Homeless Children and Youth

- Enrollment requirements (lack of school records, immunizations, proof of residence and guardianship)
- High mobility resulting in lack of school stability and educational continuity
- Lack of school supplies, clothing, etc.
- Lack of access to programs
- Lack of transportation
- Poor health, fatigue, hunger
- Prejudice and misunderstanding



# McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

- Reauthorized in 2002 as Title X of NCLB
- Main themes:
  - ❑ School stability
  - ❑ School access
  - ❑ Support for academic success
  - ❑ Child-centered focus
  - ❑ Decision making in the best interest of child



# Educational Rights of Homeless Students

- Children and youth in homeless situations can stay in their school of origin (to the extent feasible) or enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend.
- The terms “enroll” and “enrollment” include attending classes and participating fully in school activities.
- Homeless children and youth have the right to enroll in school immediately, even if they do not have required documents, such as school records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documents.
- LEAs must develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations.
- Schools must maintain records for students who are homeless so they are available quickly.

# The Roles of Local Liaisons

By linking students and their families to school and community services, local liaisons play a critical role in stabilizing students and promoting academic achievement at the individual, school, and district level.

## Local liaisons must ensure that:

- Children and youth in homeless situations are **identified** by school personnel and **through coordination activities** with other entities and agencies.
- Students experiencing homelessness **enroll, attend, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed** in school.
- Families, children, and youth experiencing homelessness **receive educational services for which they are eligible**, including Head Start, Even Start, and preschool programs administered by the LEA; and referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.

# The Roles of Local Liaisons continued

## Local liaisons must ensure that:

- Parents or guardians of students experiencing homelessness are **informed of educational and related opportunities available** to their children and are **provided with meaningful opportunities to participate** in the education of their children.
- **Public notice of the educational rights** of students in homeless situations is disseminated where children and youth receive services.
- **Enrollment disputes are mediated** in accordance with the Enrollment Disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Parents, guardians and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are **fully informed of all transportation services available** under the McKinney-Vento Act, including transportation to the school of origin, and are assisted in accessing these services.

# The Duties of Local Liaisons

## Local liaisons must:

- Assist homeless children and youth who do not have immunizations or immunization or medical records to **obtain necessary immunizations or immunization or medical records.**
- **Help unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school**, after considering the youths' wishes, and provide youth with notice of their right to appeal an enrollment decision that is contrary to their wishes.
- Ensure that unaccompanied youth are **enrolled in school immediately pending the resolution of any dispute** that may arise over school enrollment or placement.

# The Duties of Local Liaisons continued

## Local liaisons must:

- **Collaborate and coordinate** with State Coordinators for Homeless Education and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to children and youth in homeless situations.
- State Coordinators and LEAs must **educate school personnel, service providers, and advocates** who work with families in homeless situations **about the duties of the local homeless education liaison.**

***SUCCESSFUL  
homeless education programs  
depend directly on the  
RELATIONSHIPS  
developed by McKinney-Vento  
HOMELESS LIAISONS  
in the district and community  
through a comprehensive  
network of providers***

# Optimal Characteristics of Successful Homeless Liaisons

**The staff person selected as your district liaison should be available and able to perform the following tasks:**

- Facilitate the educational continuity of homeless students through immediate enrollment.
- Monitor attendance and report problems to the M-V Grant Coordinator.
- Meet with the M-V Grant Coordinator and parents to resolve attendance issues.
- Maintain accurate, current, and complete records of your district's homeless students and all services provided to each one.
- Meet and maintain contact with representatives of state and community agencies, organizations, and groups who work with low-income and homeless families and youth to coordinate, collaborate, and plan for the M-V Homeless Education Program in your district, region, or consortium.

# Optimal Characteristics continued

**The staff person selected as your district liaison should be available and able to perform the following tasks:**

- Attend state professional development conferences for homeless liaisons, as well as regional training sessions and meetings for the grant consortia.
- Distribute support items to students and/or families identified as experiencing homelessness within your district. These items may be provided by the grant and your own district.
- Stay current on procedures and referral information for services available to low-income and homeless families within the city/community and county (as well as the State of Michigan).

# Optimal Characteristics continued

**The staff person selected as your district liaison should be available and able to perform the following tasks:**

- **Maintain contact with building-level homeless contacts and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Grant Coordinator in order to identify students at risk of becoming homeless, as well as those who are experiencing homelessness, communicate the needs of these students, refer families and youth to appropriate community and district resources, report on outcomes of homeless students served, and report students in the state student database.**

# Optimal Characteristics continued

**In addition, when selecting the staff to serve as your district-level or building-level homeless contact, you should consider the following personal and professional criteria:**

- Ability to communicate professionally and effectively with children and parents/guardians in “crisis mode” in order to determine their status and their immediate and long-term needs
- Ability to provide positive, non-judgmental emotional support to homeless students and families during a traumatic time in their lives
- Ability to build a trusting relationship with homeless students and parents/guardians that goes beyond housing status and continues after a housing crisis is resolved

# Optimal Characteristics continued

## Personal and professional criteria - continued:

- Ability to communicate professionally, effectively and confidentially with other school staff (within your own or other districts or states) regarding the status and needs of homeless students and families (with appropriate parent and/or student permission)
- Ability to prioritize multiple demands effectively and organize effectively for prompt action
- Genuine concern and caring for children, youth, and families

# Why we do what we do...

*“...Through it all, school is probably the only thing that has kept me going. I know that every day that I walk in those doors, I can stop thinking about my problems for the next six hours and concentrate on what is most important to me. Without the support of my school system, I would not be as well off as I am today. School keeps me motivated to move on, and encourages me to find a better life for myself.”*

Carrie Arnold, LeTendre Scholar, 2002



# Questions?



# Contact Information

**Homeless Education Program Office**  
**517-241-1162**

[www.michigan.gov/homeless](http://www.michigan.gov/homeless)

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