

St. Tammany Parish Public Schools

HOMELESS EDUCATION PROGRAM





CONTACT US:

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OUR STAFF:

CHRISTI MONTELEONE,

Director of Federal Programs

ASHLEY BENTON,

Homeless Education Coordinator & Homeless Liaison

3 MENTAL HEALTH PROVIDERS:

Gecelia Anderson, Mariel Gonzalez, & Kattie Staudermann

HOMELESS EDUCATION CONTACTS AT SCHOOLS:

Each of the 55 school sites has 2 staff members who serve as "Homeless Education Contacts" and support our homeless program. These staff members are trained yearly on the homeless laws, district policies, and assist in identifying and supporting our homeless student population.



2024-2025 STATS:

of Identified Students Meeting the definition of Homelessness:

584 students

of those students who are classified as Unaccompanied Youth:

146 students



ABOUT THE HOMELESS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

The Homeless Education program is a federally funded program supporting homeless students in the St. Tammany Parish School system.

We offer support services to families in transition and temporary living situations. As families work to find permanent housing, we make every effort to provide compassionate, confidential services for each unique situation. We can assist families in providing them with contacts and placing them in communication with community organizations to assist.

The goal of our Homeless Education program is to eliminate any barriers for any homeless students, so they have the chance to be successful in their academic career. We prioritize these students attending school regularly and ensure they have all materials and supplies needed to be successful.

HOW DO FAMILIES QUALIFY?

Our program follows all of the mandates and laws associated with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act. Families can receive assistance through the Homeless Education Program if they meet the Federal Government's definition of "homeless".

A family is considered homeless if they lack fixed, regular, or adequate housing.

Students are considered in transition or homeless if he or she is:

- sharing housing with family or friends due to recent loss of housing or economic hardship
- staying in a shelter, hotel/motel, or campground
- living in substandard housing (without electricity, water, heat, or extreme damage)
- living in places not designed for regular living accommodations, such as cars, abandoned buildings, public places, etc.





IDENTIFYING HOMELESS STUDENTS:

Each student that enrolls in St. Tammany Parish Schools must complete a "Louisiana Residency Questionnaire". This required document solicits information about the students living situation; families can indicate if they are in a temporary housing situation or if they lack housing.

- If a family indicates they reside in temporary housing or are without housing, then we:
- follow up with an informal interview to gather additional information about the living situation
 - complete a McKinney-Vento homeless referral outlining the living situation
 - All LA Residency Questionnaires, Interview Forms, and Referrals are submitted to the K.I.T. office and closely reviewed and approved/denied by the Homeless Liaison, Ashley Benton. In order to qualify, students must meet the federal definition of homelessness.

******Throughout the year, as a student's living situation may change, Homeless Education personnel on campuses follow-up with families to gain information about the student's residence and submit the required paperwork to the Homeless Education office for approval. (These situations may included loss of housing due to: job loss, house fire, domestic violence situation, eviction, incarceration of a parent, etc.)

UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH:

Our program also identifies and supports our unaccompanied youth population.

Based on the McKinney Vento Homeless Act, a child is considered an Unaccompanied Youth if the child meets the definition of homeless and also does not reside with a legal parent or guardian. Often times, these students are high-school aged students that don't live with their parents due to circumstances beyond their control. They temporarily reside with a family friend, older sibling, couch-surf at various residence, or don't have housing stability from night to night. This also includes younger students who are unable to live with their parent due to unsafe living conditions or parent incarceration.

These Unaccompanied Youth students may experience hardships such as:

- lack of financial means to live independently
- lack of connections with adults or agencies that could help
- struggling to balance school with other responsibilities
- lack adult guidance and support
- lack access to parental info to fill out FAFSA for college
- lack basic necessities such as clothing, food, shelter



RIGHTS OF HOMELESS STUDENTS:

Based on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act, all of our students classified as homeless, have the following rights:

- Be immediately enrolled in school, despite lack of required documents, such as birth certificates, SS card, etc. (This helps to establish stability and prioritizes academics and school attendance!)
- Attend the school the student went to prior to becoming homeless ("School of origin"), despite where he or she lives in the district now
- Receive the same school services and special programs provided to all other students, such as special education services or gifted/talented services
- Receive free breakfast and lunch
- Get help with education-related needs, such as school uniforms, supplies, and tutoring
- Receive transportation services from the place they are temporarily residing to assigned school





OTHER SERVICES OUR PROGRAM PROVIDES:

Here are some other services and resources our program and our Homeless Education personnel can provide:

- Monitor attendance to ensure students are regularly showing up to school; regular attendance helps with stability for students in transitional situations
- Check grades regularly and communicate with teachers to advocate for these homeless students
- Communicate with families to ensure they have the resources they need and to keep in touch about student progress and needs
- Assist students with completing FAFSA and completing college enrollment processes
- Help with students who may need assistance accessing or acquiring important documents such as birth certificates, etc.
- Communicate regularly with local shelters who are working with our families, to coordinate efforts
- Provide mental health, behavioral, or counseling services within the school day or provide a list of community resources that can help with outside services

FUNDING:

OUR PROGRAM RECEIVES
FEDERAL FUNDS FROM TITLE I
AND MCKINNEY VENTO
HOMELESS FUND

These funds are received based on the number of homeless students each year and are allocated to be used for allowable services such as the following:

- Uniforms: Providing students with school uniforms and other necessary clothing items (such as hoodies, socks, underwear, shoes, undershirts, PE Uniforms, etc.)
- Toiletries: We are able to provide students with needed toiletries or sanitary products to support their health and cleanliness (toothbrushes, wipes, feminine products, shampoo/conditioner, deodorant, toiletry kits, etc.)
- Tutoring: Providing students the option of at school tutoring sessions by certified teachers; these are before or after school. We are able to cover the pay of the tutors using these funds.
- School Supplies: Our funds cover the cost of all school supplies, bookbags, and any practice testing materials needed to help with academic success. If students require additional supplies for specific classes, such as Art, Welding, etc. we can purchase the items needed using our federal funds.
- School Field Trips: We assist with paying for our Homeless Education students to attend school-related field trips throughout the year.
- Technology: If students need repairs or replacements for their Chromebook device at school, our program will coordinate with the tech. department to ensure this gets resolved and we are invoiced for the needed fix.
- Graduation Fees: Our program covers the cost of the Homeless Education Senior students caps and gowns for graduation.
- Other school related fees: Other fees associated with school or academics can also be requested by the Homeless Education Contacts on behalf of the student. These are covered on a case by case basis depending on funding.



FUNDING: DONATED FUNDS



HOW YOUR MONETARY DONATION HELPS:

Since our Federal funds must be used for specific items, any funds acquired by donation, can be used to support other various needs of our homeless students, such as:

- Resources to support extra-curricular activities and sports: (cheer uniforms, track shoes, band fees, etc.)
- Additional School Experiences: Prom tickets, senior photos, dance tickets, Project Graduation experiences, class picnics, 8th grade t-shirts, non-academic based school events, water day fees, etc.
- Food and snacks: If students are in need of snacks or food for weekends/holidays due to food scarcity, we can assist in providing this.
- Gas Cards: for our Unaccompanied High School Youth who need gas cards to get to and from work occasionally
- Caring Angels Christmas Gift Cards: Each December, our program puts on a program called Caring Angels, where we provide holiday gift cards and small gifts to our Unaccompanied Youth. These items are purchased with donated funds.
- Other Necessities: With donated funds, we are able to provide students with additional items needed such as bike lights/locks for students who bike to and from school/work, laundry detergent, etc.

Please note: For any physical donated items or monetary donations, we must have a completed donation form and any related documentation on file for our records. If you or your organization plan to make a donation, please reach out to Ashley Benton to get the required paperwork. She can assist in completing the documentation that is needed.



For further information about our
Homeless Education Program, the services
we offer, or how you can help, please
contact:

ASHLEY BENTON

Federal Programs Coordinator
/Homeless Liaison