



Homeless Education Program Updates for Education & Community Partners

May 2025
Issue 4

Upcoming Events

FY26 EHCY Competitive Mini-Grant Application Open Date
(Tentative) August 18, 2025

2025-2026 School Year Professional Learning Calendar
Coming Soon!

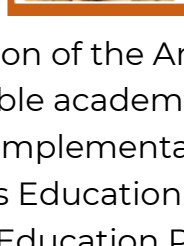
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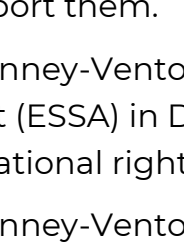
The Arizona Homeless Education Program



Homeless Education Program



Rita Rodriguez
Homeless Education Program Coordinator

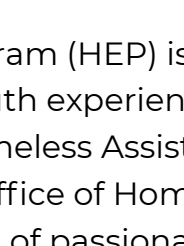


Jan Brite
Homeless Education Program Grants Specialist



Gary Waiyaki
Homeless Education Program Data & Monitoring Specialist

Homeless, Foster Care, and Refugee Student Support



Marisa Peña
Refugee Student Support, Lead Program Specialist

The Arizona Homeless Education Program

The mission of the Arizona Homeless Education Program (HEP) is to ensure positive comparable academic outcomes for children and youth experiencing homelessness through implementation of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The Arizona Homeless Education Program is housed within the Office of Homeless, Foster Care, and Refugee Education Programs. Our team is comprised of passionate and knowledgeable individuals eager to serve students experiencing homelessness and the stakeholders who support them.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in December 2015, serves as the primary federal legislation detailing the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

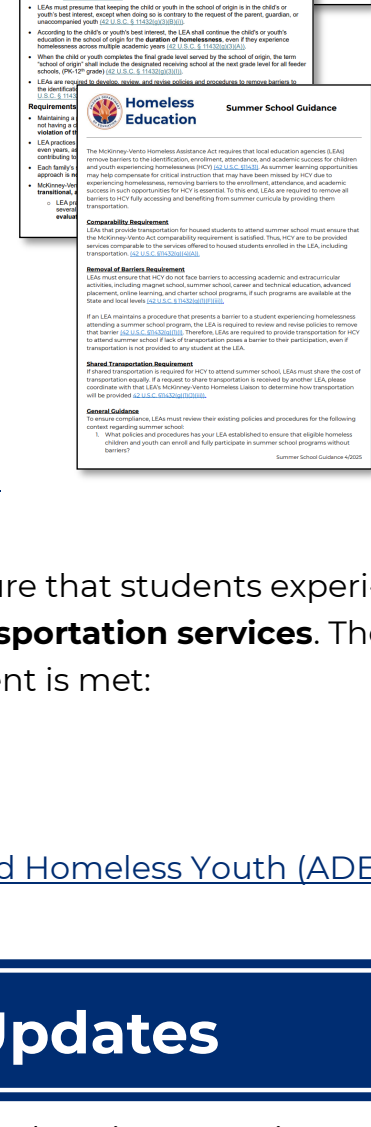
The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires that children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as provided to other children and youth. The [Arizona Homeless Education Program Overview Video](#) provides more information on the Arizona Homeless Education Program and McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Guidance Documents

It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of another school year! With that in mind, please review the following **guidance and reminders regarding end of the school year processes and re-eligibility requirements** to ensure the compliance of your local Homeless Education Program.

At the end of each school year, Local Education Agencies must ensure the following:

- Notice to eligible parents, guardians, caregivers and unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) of reevaluation process for eligibility determination for the upcoming school year
 - Resource:** [ADE HEP End of Year Notification Letter Sample](#)
- Notice of the Educational Rights of Homeless Children and Youths as well as provision of the required Arizona Student Residency Questionnaire (SRQ)
 - Resource:** [Arizona Student Residency Questionnaire and Educational Rights of Homeless Children and Youths Requirements](#)
- An internal step-by-step process to adhere to school stability provisions for the upcoming school year. This includes the re-eligibility determination process
 - Resource:** [Re-Eligibility Determination Guidance & Resources](#)



Over the summer months, Local Education Agencies must ensure that students experiencing homelessness have **access to summer school and transportation services**. The following **resources** are designed to help ensure this requirement is met:

- [Summer School Guidance](#)
- [Summer School Procedural Checklist \(ADE Sample\)](#)
- [Summer School Letter to Families and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth \(ADE Sample\)](#)

Monitoring & Compliance Updates

The **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act** requires State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to a free, appropriate public education. This includes identification, immediate enrollment, school stability, and full participation in academic and extracurricular activities.

To meet this federal requirement, the **Arizona Department of Education (ADE)** monitors Local Education Agencies in coordination with local McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons. Monitoring ensures that Local Education Agencies are using federal funds appropriately and removing barriers that impact school access and success.

To reduce administrative burden, the **Arizona Homeless Education Program (HEP)** partners with the **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Department** to monitor Local Education Agencies that receive Elementary and Secondary Education Act Consolidated Grant funds. McKinney-Vento compliance is embedded into the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Programmatic Monitoring process as **Main Requirement 5 (MR5)** across all four monitoring cycles.

Main Requirement 5 addresses core McKinney-Vento requirements every Local Education Agency must implement. To support transparency and readiness, the Arizona Homeless Education Program has developed Desktop Monitoring Resources for each Main Requirement 5 task:

- [Cycle I – MR5](#)
- [Cycle II – MR5](#)
- [Cycle III – MR5](#)
- [Cycle IV – MR5](#)

Need more information?
Visit the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act Programmatic Monitoring & Compliance page](#) for additional guidance.

Data Reporting Requirements

Reminder: Final Date to Report School Year 2024-2025 Homeless Student Data is June 30, 2025!

All Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must submit **accurate and comprehensive data** on homeless children and youth (HCY) in the Arizona Education Data Standards (AzEDS) system by **June 30, 2025** (42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(C)).

To support this process, Local Education Agencies are encouraged to reference the following resources:

- [Arizona Homeless Education Program Data Webpage](#)
- [McKinney-Vento Internal Tracking Sheet Sample](#)

Timely reporting informs the services and supports to remove educational barriers for students experiencing homelessness at the local, state, and national levels.

2025 Liaison of the Year

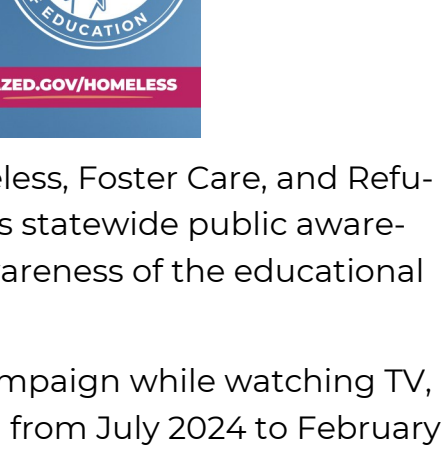


Arizona Housing Coalition
Speaking Up for Home and Hope

The Arizona Homeless Education Program (HEP), in collaboration with the Arizona Housing Coalition (AZHC), is pleased to announce that **Heather Manygoats from Holbrook Unified School District #3** has been selected as the **2025 Arizona McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison of the Year!**

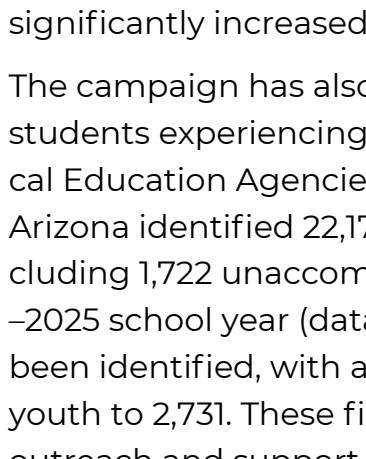
The McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison of the Year award highlights and honors the exceptional efforts of those who go above and beyond statutory requirements to advocate and address barriers to educational access, participation, and achievement for students experiencing homelessness.

Heather received multiple nominations from her colleagues in the Holbrook Unified School District #3 (HUSD), each of which made clear the impact of her work in their community. Heather's colleagues shared that HUSD #3 spans 1,500 square miles, serves 30+ Chapters, and nine (9) different communities, which underscores how essential her role is for outreach and services. Heather overcomes those challenges to ensure students are served to the highest level by prioritizing outreach to families, working with them in a caring manner, and displaying compassion as she assists in parents, students and families through very difficult situations. Heather makes home visits, ensures Chapters are notified of McKinney-Vento guidelines, attends Chapter meetings, works with businesses to provide services and collects donations for clothing and school supplies for students and families experiencing homelessness. Due to Heather's extensive efforts, her colleagues shared that "...the identification process for students has become easier working with Heather because she serves as a great liaison between the school and the student's family...She has a heart of gold and is always looking out for the best interest for the McKinney-Vento families."



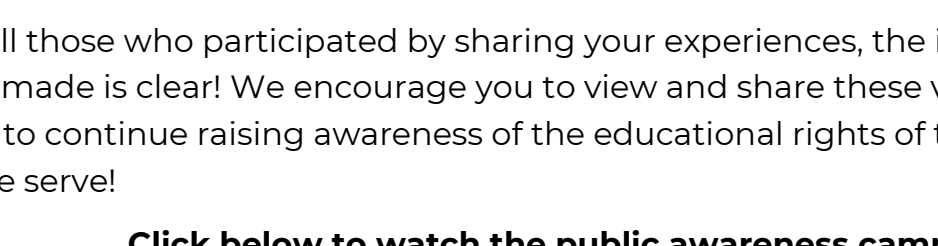
Pictured: Heather Manygoats - McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison of the Year (Holbrook Unified School District) accepting the award at the Arizona Housing Coalition Conference.

We congratulate and thank you, Heather, for recognizing the complexity of homelessness, for valuing the need for bold and creative solutions, and for your dedication to supporting your Local Education Agency to ensure that the McKinney-Vento Act provisions are actualized for students experiencing homelessness!



Pictured from left to right: Rita Rodriguez - Arizona Homeless Education Program Coordinator, Heather Manygoats - McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison of the Year (Holbrook Unified School District), and Brittany Antonio - McKinney-Vento Program Assistant (Holbrook Unified School District).

Statewide Public Awareness Campaign



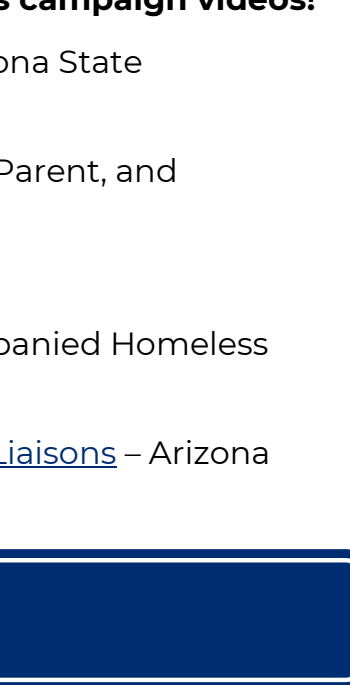
The Arizona Department of Education (ADE)'s Office of Homeless, Foster Care, and Refugee Education Programs is proud to share the outcomes of its statewide public awareness campaign aimed at increasing the identification and awareness of the educational rights of children and youths experiencing homelessness.

We hope you have seen elements of our public awareness campaign while watching TV, browsing the web, or driving around town. The campaign ran from July 2024 to February 2025, and strategically prioritized parents, guardians, and unaccompanied homeless youths throughout Arizona. Throughout the campaign, the Arizona Homeless Education Program (HEP) website rose to more than 25,000 monthly visits at the height of the campaign, and technical assistance requests more than doubled. In summary, the campaign delivered over 246 million views —more than double the projected reach—and significantly increased public engagement.

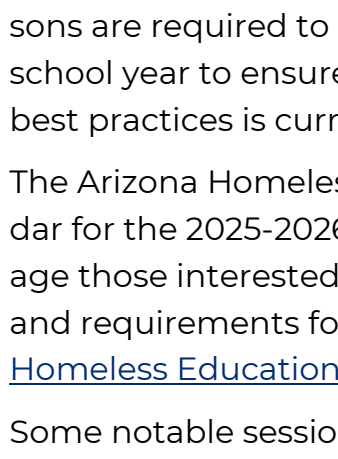
The campaign has also contributed to an increase in the number of students experiencing homelessness identified and enrolled by Local Education Agencies (LEAs). During the 2023-2024 school year, Arizona identified 22,178 students experiencing homelessness, including 1,722 unaccompanied homeless youths (UHY). For the 2024-2025 school year (data as of April 16, 2025), 21,024 students have been identified, with a notable rise in unaccompanied homeless youth to 2,731. These figures reinforce the importance of sustained outreach and support efforts.

The public awareness campaign not only enhanced awareness of educational rights of children and youths experiencing homelessness, but also built stronger connections between schools, families, unaccompanied homeless youths, and community partners.

Thank you to all those who participated by sharing your experiences, the impact that your voice has made is clear! We encourage you to view and share these videos with your networks to continue raising awareness of the educational rights of the students and families we serve!



"Raise Your Hand. Lift Their Future."



Click below to watch the public awareness campaign videos!

- [Raise Your Hand, Lift Their Future](#) – Arizona State Superintendent Tom Horne
- [Speaking Out Loud](#) – Arizona LEA Staff, Parent, and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
- [Jamaica's Testimonial](#) – Arizona Parent
- [Taylor's Testimonial](#) – Arizona Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
- [The Role of McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons](#) – Arizona McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons

Professional Learning

The McKinney-Vento Act requires that the Office of the State Coordinator provide professional learning opportunities for Local Education Agency (LEA) personnel and McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons to assist them in identifying and meeting the needs of homeless children and youth and to provide training on the definitions of terms related to homelessness ([42 U.S.C. § 11432\(f\)\(6\)](#)).

Additionally, States are required to adopt policies and practices to ensure the participation of McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons in professional learning and other technical assistance activities. Based on this requirement, the Arizona Homeless Education Program (HEP) has determined that in the State of Arizona, McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons are required to meet a minimum of eight (8) professional learning hours each school year to ensure that the requirements of McKinney-Vento Act requirements and best practices is current ([42 U.S.C. § 11432\(g\)\(1\)\(D\)\(iv\)](#)).

The Arizona Homeless Education Program will announce a professional learning calendar for the 2025-2026 school year in the coming months. In the meantime, we encourage those interested in learning about the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and requirements for local Homeless Education Programs in Arizona to visit the [Arizona Homeless Education Program Training for McKinney-Vento Liaisons webpage](#).

Some notable sessions we encourage you to review to prepare for the new school year include:

McKinney-Vento in Practice for New Liaisons

- [Session Recording](#)
- [Presentation Slides](#)

McKinney-Vento in Practice for Experienced Liaisons

- [Session Recording](#)
- [Presentation Slides](#)

Eligibility Determinations, Best Interest Determinations (BIDS), Managing Disputes, & Providing Written Notification

- [Session Recording](#)
- [Presentation Slides](#)

Frequently Asked Questions – Parts I and II

- Part I:**
 - [Session Recording](#)
 - [Presentation Slides](#)
- Part II:**
 - [Session Recording](#)
 - [Presentation Slides](#)

Interested in preparing for the upcoming school year?
We recommend starting with these professional learning sessions!

Resources from all past professional learning sessions such as videos, recordings, and any materials discussed or shared are available on the Arizona Homeless Education Program website.

FY26 EHCY Competitive Mini-Grant Opportunity

The Arizona Homeless Education Program is excited to announce this upcoming grant opportunity!

The upcoming Fiscal Year (FY) 26 Education and Youth (EHCY) Competitive Mini-Grant opportunity will follow the following tentative timeline:

- Application Tentative Open Date:** August 18, 2025
- Application Tentative Close Date:** September 19, 2025
- Project Start Date:** July 1, 2025
- Project End Date:** September 30, 2026

Education for Homeless Children and Youth grants are intended to **supplement, not supplant** the existing services provided to all students to eliminate specific barriers to the identification, immediate enrollment, attendance and academic success of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are highly encouraged to apply for this competitive grant opportunity. Detailed information regarding this competitive grant opportunity, including applicant eligibility requirements, will be sent to each Local Education Agency in early July, as well as posted on the [Arizona Homeless Education Program \(HEP\) website](#).

If you have any questions, please reach out to Homeless@azed.gov.

Technical Assistance

It is common for McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons, other school district staff, and community partners to have questions about a variety of topics related to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Homeless Education Programs. If you need support, we encourage you to utilize the following:

Arizona Homeless Education Program

Yes, we are available to support you throughout the summer! Please reach our Office by emailing Homeless@azed.gov or calling (602) 542-4963.



Visit the [Arizona Homeless Education Program website](#) to access our extensive collection of [recorded professional learning sessions](#) and [guidance and sample documents](#) to learn more about specific topics and develop procedures for your local Homeless Education Programs. We highly encourage you to view these resources when questions arise.

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE), which operates the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance and information center, is a source of information and support. The NCHE Helpline is available Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM ET/6:00 AM to 2:30 PM PT and can be reached at 1(305)306-8495 or NCHE.helpline@safalpartners.com.

