



## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) and McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) Programs

**T**his fact sheet was developed by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC) in collaboration with the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE). Its purpose is to help State and local 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and Education for Homeless Children and Youths (EHCY) program leaders:

- Understand shared priorities.
- Identify opportunities for — and benefits of — coordination and collaboration.
- Collaborate strategically.

The U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and EHCY programs supplement State and local efforts to support children and youth experiencing homelessness and to improve students' school attendance and academic performance. These programs provide funding to connect students and their families to community-based academic and non-academic supports and to build the capacity of program staff who offer these supports.

### 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC



#### Authorizing legislation:

Title IV, Part B of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA)



#### Program type:

Formula grants to State educational agencies (SEAs), which administer competitive grants to eligible entities, including local educational agencies (LEAs)<sup>1</sup>



#### Purpose/use of funds:

Community learning centers that provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours, particularly for students who attend high-poverty or low-performing schools



#### Funding cycle:

SEAs may award 3-, 4-, or 5-year subgrants

- ✓ Federally funded
- ✓ Administered by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of School Support and Accountability
- ✓ Supplement State and local efforts
- ✓ Connect students and their families to community-based academic and non-academic supports
- ✓ Build the capacity of program staff
- ✓ Served nearly 1.4 million students in School Year 2022-23
- ✓ Awards to grantees (SEAs) typically follow the Federal fiscal year (Oct. 1–Sept. 30)

### EHCY

#### Authorizing legislation:

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act), passed in 1987 and last reauthorized by ESSA in 2015



#### Program type:

Formula grants to SEAs, which administer competitive grants to LEAs<sup>2</sup>



#### Purpose/use of funds:

To identify eligible students (students experiencing homelessness) and ensure that they're able to enroll in and regularly attend school



#### Funding cycle:

SEAs may award 1-, 2-, or 3-year subgrants



- <sup>1</sup> Eligible entities, in addition to LEAs, include community-based organizations, Indian tribe or tribal organizations, another public or private entity, or a consortium of two or more such agencies, organizations, or entities. SEAs must allocate at least 93 percent of funds to subgrantees and may use up to 2 percent for State administration and 5 percent for State-level activities (e.g., evaluation, training, and technical assistance).
- <sup>2</sup> SEAs may reserve up to 25 percent of their annual allocation for State-level coordination activities; they may use part of that allocation to award grants and contracts to address State-specific needs.

## Education Definition of Homelessness

The [McKinney-Vento Act, Section 725](#), defines “homeless children and youths” as **“individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence,”** and includes not only those living in emergency or transitional shelters but also those living in shared housing because of a financial emergency or natural disaster, among many other potential living situations. This is a broader definition of homelessness than is used in programs administered by other Federal agencies, such as those operated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which may focus only on individuals living unsheltered or in shelters. [Education for Homeless Children and Youths: Data and Issues \(Congressional Research Services Report\), 2023](#)

### Both programs are Federally funded.

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program is authorized under Title IV, Part B of ESEA, as amended by ESSA. Created in 1994, the program provides funding for nearly 10,000 community learning centers around the country. These programs provide academic support and enrichment opportunities to students during non-school hours, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs also provide educational services and community connections to families of children enrolled in their programs.

The EHCY program is authorized under Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Passed in 1987, the McKinney-Vento Act was the first Federal legislation to address homelessness, providing funding for homeless shelter programs and ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness can enroll in and attend school without barriers.

### Both programs supplement State and local efforts.

These Federal funds provide services that supplement, not supplant, services provided to children participating in school-day educational programming. The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program supports community learning centers that augment school-day learning. The EHCY program requires SEAs and LEAs to remove barriers related to identification, enrollment, and school attendance for students experiencing homelessness. These barriers may include a lack of transportation, enrollment documentation, and immunizations. Funding for both programs supports coordination with State and local agencies, including State and local recipients of Federal grants, to provide comprehensive or integrated support.



### Both programs connect students to essential community-based support.

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and EHCY programs use the assets and services of local communities to provide comprehensive support that addresses a broad range of students’ and families’ needs. By supporting in- and out-of-school services that help students learn and grow, these Federal programs frequently serve as central organizational entities for States, LEAs, and schools. Because staff within these programs often work toward similar

goals as they connect students and families to support organizations within the community, connecting 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program directors and site coordinators with the LEA's local homeless liaison (a designated person responsible for identifying and supporting children and youth experiencing homelessness) is one of the best ways to foster local collaboration.

## Both programs provide academic support for students.

The [EHCY Non-Regulatory Guidance \(NRG\)](#) states that “The McKinney-Vento Act includes a broad, ongoing requirement for SEAs and LEAs to review policies or practices that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, and school success of homeless children and youths” (Section A-4). SEAs and LEAs are charged with taking steps to revise laws, regulations, or policies to eliminate such barriers so that children and youth experiencing homelessness have full access to educational opportunities to which they are entitled. For example, some SEAs have found that specific LEA policies about residency/address verification can keep these children and youth from enrolling in school and accessing other services because families experiencing homelessness may not have (or can't afford) the required documentation. These SEAs have required LEAs to change their policies, or they negotiated with other agencies to provide these documents at no cost to the families.

“Each local application must address how the applicant will coordinate with other Federal, State, and local programs and make the most effective use of public resources. (Section 4204(b)(2)(C)). The Department strongly encourages the SEA to require applicants to identify other sources of related funding and to describe, in their application, how these resources will be coordinated to offer a high-quality, sustainable program.”

[21<sup>st</sup> CCLC NRG](#), Section D-5

21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs should be mindful of potential barriers to student participation and engagement as they implement program activities and provide a range of academic support, from tutoring and homework help to enrichment activities. Designed to enhance school-day learning, these activities may take the form of literacy activities, STEM education, hands-on learning, field trips, service learning, or career development.

Research shows that participation in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs increases school attendance, thus decreasing the dropout rate. This positively impacts the EHCY goals of keeping children and youth experiencing homelessness in school and participating fully. Students served by the EHCY program are automatically eligible for Title I services, which further support them academically during the school day and in out-of-school time. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs are required to target students who primarily attend schools eligible for schoolwide programs under Title I.

## Both programs address students' well-being.

21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs provide safe, supportive environments with caring adults where students can observe and build healthy relationships, develop social skills, overcome academic challenges, and discover or explore interests. The EHCY program provides support services that help alleviate the primary challenges faced due to homelessness and remove barriers to school attendance. These services may include providing school supplies and academic tutoring, defraying the excess cost for transportation of students to attend school, providing access to counseling services, and providing referrals to relevant resources and agencies (e.g., medical, dental).

## Both programs engage and support families.

The EHCY program supports the work of local liaisons who help families, [caregivers](#), and shelter providers as they navigate the education system, connecting them with community services and addressing barriers

to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. The EHCY program emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships between schools and families to create a supportive environment for students experiencing homelessness. Through regular communication, educational workshops, and family events, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs help to strengthen relationships between families, students, and schools and also help connect families and caregivers to resources and support throughout the community. For example, some 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs have organized regular health care events or weekend/summer food-serving events. Others have coordinated with the school or a community organization to provide a clothing closet and access to an on-site laundry room.



## Both programs provide training and technical assistance.

The SEAs and LEAs associated with EHCY are required to adopt policies and practices to ensure that local liaisons and other school personnel participate in professional development and other technical assistance activities related to homeless education. SEAs may use part of their State-level 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC allocation for training and professional development. Participation in training, professional development, and technical assistance can benefit staff across both programs. Further, combining staff from EHCY and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs in a training could broaden perspectives, enhance discussion, and provide useful insights for all participants.

## Both programs direct funds to where they are most needed.

The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant is the largest Federal funding source for out-of-school time programming for K-12 students and their families, with particular emphasis on underserved students and communities. Students experiencing homelessness are among the most at-risk of falling behind academically. To help provide comprehensive services to all students, LEAs should coordinate across programs to provide services to students based on academic needs stemming from experiencing homelessness.

## Snapshot: Areas of Overlap and Opportunities for Collaboration

The McKinney-Vento Act guarantees children and youth experiencing homelessness access to the same free public education as children and youth in permanent housing, ensuring their immediate enrollment and educational stability, while 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs provide afterschool and summer learning centers that may offer additional support services by providing academic assistance and other enrichment activities during non-school hours.

### Key Points About Each Program

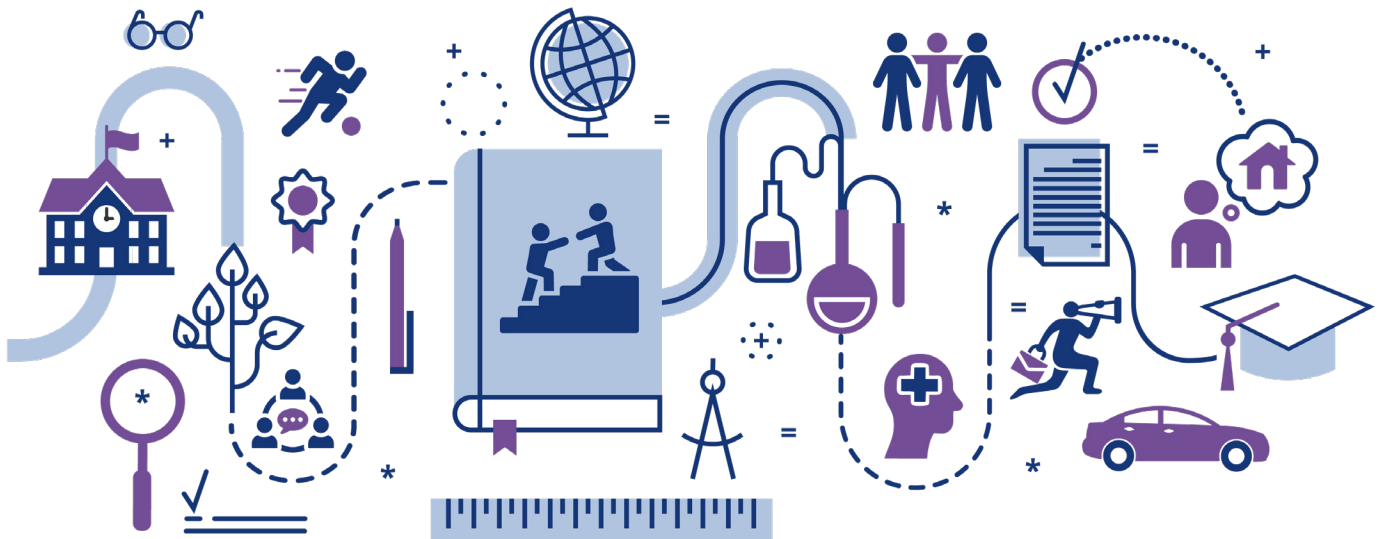
#### EHCY Program:



- Ensures the immediate enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness and access to necessary educational supports
- Allows for these children and youth to remain in their school of origin for the duration of their homelessness, even if they reside in another LEA, based on the best interest of the student
- Requires LEAs to designate a local liaison to identify and support children and youth experiencing homelessness, provide professional development and awareness training on the McKinney-Vento Act, and collaborate with community partners that serve the unique needs of this population



- 



- Arranging transportation services for students experiencing homelessness to get to and from school (and from the out-of-school time program)
- Collaborating with local businesses to provide job opportunities for students and their families
- Planning team-building activities designed to build unity and foster a sense of belonging among students, including children and youth experiencing homelessness
- Offering academic tutoring, mentoring sessions, or extra help to students
- Creating a referral system within the program to connect students experiencing homelessness (and their families) with social workers and health professionals
- Establishing peer-mentoring programs that pair students with mentors for guidance and support
- Meeting with families/caregivers to identify students' strengths and needs

## 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and McKinney-Vento EHCY Partnerships: Where to Start

### 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC SEA Coordinators and EHCY State Coordinators

- **Connect with each other.** Connecting is the first step toward engaging in purposeful cross-system and interagency collaboration. Encourage and support braiding of relevant funding streams (such as [Title I, Part A and Part D funds and EHCY funds](#)) with other Federal, State, local, and private funding earmarked for children and youth who are experiencing homelessness, in foster care, and/or involved in the juvenile justice system to provide coordinated and comprehensive support. Braiding funds, where possible, can help leverage monies from multiple streams to support a common goal. Other Federal funding streams such as Title IV, Part A; Title III, Part A; and Title IV, Part B (which authorizes 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs) provide opportunities to creatively address the multifaceted needs of all students.
- **Share information and tools.** For example, many SEAs customize and post NCHE's educational rights posters (available in English and Spanish) so that LEAs, schools, 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs, and community partners [can make homeless families](#) and [youth aware of educational services and supports that may be available to them](#).
- **Recommend and facilitate connections and collaboration among subgrantees.** For example, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) includes the following in its [21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Grant Program Guide](#):



See [NCHE's Collaboration web page](#) for resources to support collaboration with schools, community-based organizations, government agencies, and service providers.



21<sup>st</sup> CCLC SEA Coordinators and EHCY state coordinators may benefit from reading and discussing the NRGs for both programs.

"It is recommended that collaboration with the district or Community Development Office homeless liaison occurs to ensure students experiencing homelessness have access to and are prioritized for 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programming. Find a list of all District Homeless Liaisons using the [DPI Homeless Liaison Directory](#). More information about McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance can be found on the [DPI Education for Homeless Children and Youth website](#)."

## EHCY Programs



- **Connect.** Identify the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC sites that serve students experiencing homelessness. Reach out to the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program to plan how to coordinate support for students. If the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program is operated by a nonprofit, faith-based, or community-based organization, they'll be especially glad to have a school connection.
- **Consult.** Check with your EHCY state coordinator for additional ideas, resources, and connections.

## 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Programs



- **Connect.** Reach out to your LEA to identify the McKinney-Vento Coordinator or local liaison so that you can discuss ways to enroll, engage, and support students in your program who are experiencing homelessness.
- **Consult.** Check with your 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC SEA Coordinator for additional ideas, resources, and connections.

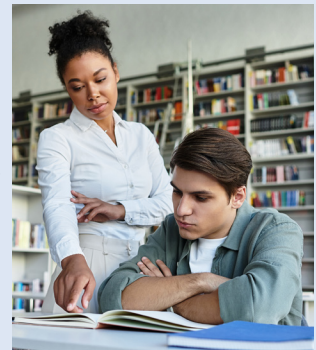
## Stories From the Field



### Colorado: Collaboration and Innovation

People and programs at the State and local level are collaborating and innovating to help mitigate challenges associated with homelessness, like chronic student absence, poor academic performance, and dropping out of school.

- In 2019, the Colorado Department of Education launched a new program office called the [Office of Student Support](#) (OSS). OSS houses both Highly Mobile Student Programs and Out-of-School Time Programs. This intentional pairing underscores the fact that connecting students who are experiencing homelessness or in the foster care system with essential academic, non-academic, and comprehensive supports offered through out-of-school time programs can lead to improved outcomes for students, families, and school communities.
- OSS works with schools, community-based organizations, and partners to make learning accessible and responsive for students and families, with additional supports and resources to increase educational access, stability, success, and growth.
- For example, OSS sponsors Regional Collaborative Conversations to Support Highly Mobile Youth. During these events, partners who serve students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, and migrant students jointly engage in professional development, action planning, network planning, and resource sharing.
- A powerful example of collaboration at the local level comes from Lake County School District in the form of [El Camioncito – Project Dream's Mobile Learning Center](#). Community partners redesigned a school bus and equipped it with Wi-Fi to deliver tutoring and enrichment to students in rural, high-poverty areas. Also, family members volunteer to read to students on the bus ride home from school, creating meaningful connections and reinforcing literacy. Lake County, like many small rural districts, has one staff member supporting both McKinney Vento and 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs, creating impactful opportunities for synergy between the programs.



## Meeting the Transportation Needs of Homeless Children and Youth

### Strategies and Examples

These resources from SchoolHouse Connection highlight strategies and examples from across the nation:

- [HCY Transportation Spotlights](#)
- [McKinney-Vento FAQ on Transportation](#)
- [Considerations, Strategies, and Examples From School Districts and Charter Schools](#)



### Wyoming: Engaging Local Homeless Liaisons to Find Solutions

A statewide conference that convened 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC and McKinney-Vento programs highlighted the expertise and connections local homeless liaisons can provide to support students experiencing homelessness.

- **Professional Development:** Homeless liaisons in LEAs provide training in ways to identify and enroll students experiencing homelessness, including students experiencing homelessness that lack documentation typically required for school enrollment, and ways to support students who've experienced trauma.
- **Transportation:** Liaisons work with the LEA to find transportation solutions for students experiencing homelessness so they can attend their school of origin or the area school (their choice), and participate in the same programs and services provided to other students, such as extracurricular activities and out-of-school time programs.
- **Family Engagement:** Homeless liaisons provide referrals to help families meet basic needs such as health and dental care and housing. Also, they make families aware of resources they may not know about. For example: Did you know that students who are "doubled up" (e.g., sharing the housing of another due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason) may qualify for McKinney-Vento services?



## Selected Resources and References

### Links to Program Resources From the U.S. Department of Education

[21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Non-Regulatory Guidance](#)

[21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program Office Website](#)

[EHCY Non-Regulatory Guidance](#)

[EHCY Program Office Website](#)



Other Helpful Resources

50 State Afterschool Network. (n.d.) [50 State Afterschool Network](#) (Website).

Afterschool Alliance. (2024). [21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers: Accelerating Learning. Supporting Families. Earning Results](#) (Fact sheet with infographics).

Afterschool Alliance. (2021). [The Academic and Social and Emotional Benefits of Participation in 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Programs](#) (Research brief).

Congressional Research Service. (2023). [Education for Homeless Children and Youths: Data and Issues](#) (Report).

LRP Publications. (2023). [Spot Signs That a Student Is Experiencing Homelessness](#) (Excerpt from *Serving Homeless Students: A Practical Guide to Title I and Other Federal Programs* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)).

National Center for Education Statistics. (n.d.) [Common Core of Data](#) (Data files).

NCHE. (2025). [Collaboration](#) (Annotated resource list).

NCHE. (2025). [Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness Under Title I, Part A](#) (McKinney-Vento Law Into Practice Brief).

NCHE. (2023). [State Coordinators’ Handbook](#) (Handbook for EHCY state coordinators).

National Evaluation and Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk (NDTAC). (2024). [Voices From the Field: Program Feature on the Intersection of Title I, Part D; McKinney-Vento Act; and Title I, Part A Foster Care](#) (Research and practice brief).

Round Rock Independent School District. (n.d.) [Round Rock Independent School District Families in Transition \(FIT\) Homeless Education Program](#) (Examples of LEA program brochures in English and Spanish).

Technical Assistance Center Websites and Contact Information

21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC NTAC	NCHE
<a href="#">21<sup>st</sup> CCLC National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC)</a>	<a href="#">National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)</a>
Helpline (Monday-Friday, 9-5 p.m. ET):	Helpline (Monday-Friday, 9-5:30 p.m. ET):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="mailto:info@21stcclcntac.org">info@21stcclcntac.org</a></li><li>833-732-NTAC (6822)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="mailto:NCHE.helpline@safalpartners.com">NCHE.helpline@safalpartners.com</a></li><li>305-306-8495</li></ul>

U.S. Department of Education Program Pages and Contact Information

21 <sup>st</sup> CCLC Program	EHCY
<a href="#">21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program</a>	<a href="#">Education for Homeless Children and Youths</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="mailto:21stCCLC@ed.gov">21stCCLC@ed.gov</a></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="mailto:HomelessEd@ed.gov">HomelessEd@ed.gov</a></li><li>202-219-1662</li></ul>

This resource was developed in 2025 by the Nita M. Lowey 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) National Technical Assistance Center (NTAC), funded under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Department) and administered by Synergy Enterprises, Inc. under Cooperative Agreement No. 287E230009 with the Department’s Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the Department, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the Department or the Federal government. The 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC project officers are Dr. La’ Shawndra Scroggins and Ms. Andrea Jackson.