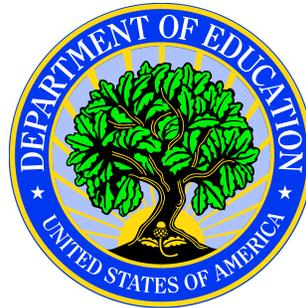


STATE PLAN

Peer Review Criteria and Notes Form for the McKinney-Vento EHCY Program

State Name: Indiana



U.S. Department of Education
September 2017

Background

Peer reviewers will apply their professional judgment and experiences when responding to the questions in response to the criteria below. Consistent with section 1111(a)(4)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, peer reviewers will conduct an objective review of State plans in their totality and out of respect for State and local judgments, with the goal of supporting State- and local-led innovation and providing objective feedback on the technical, educational, and overall quality of a State plan, including the validity and reliability of each element of the plan. Reviewer responses to the questions inform the written determination of the Secretary regarding the State plan.

Role of the Peer Reviewers

- Each peer reviewer will independently review a consolidated State plan in accordance to the criteria for Title VII, Subtitle B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY). Each reviewer will record their responses to the questions, will note where changes may be necessary for an SEA to fully address statutory and regulatory requirements, and may also present suggestions for improving the plan or to highlight best practices. Each peer will create individual recommendations to guide the remote review. These are submitted to the Department but will not be shared with the State.
- A panel of peer reviewers will meet remotely to discuss each SEA's plan. The panel of peer reviewers will generate one set of peer review notes that reflects their collective review and evaluation of the SEA's State plan, but the panel is not required to reach consensus. The notes should reflect all reviewer perspectives on each item.

After the peer review is completed, each SEA will receive the final peer review notes that include the peer reviewers' responses to the questions and any recommendations to improve the SEA's State plan in the sections that the peers reviewed. The peer review notes serve two purposes: 1) they constitute the official record of the peer review panel's responses to questions regarding how an SEA's State plan addresses the statutory and regulatory requirements; and 2) they provide technical assistance to the SEA on how to improve its plan. The peer review notes also serve as recommendations to the Secretary to determine what, if any, additional information to request from the SEA. Taking into consideration the peer reviewers' recommendations, the Department will provide feedback to each SEA that outlines the areas the SEA must address, if any, prior to the Secretary's approving its State plan. If a plan cannot be approved, the Department will offer the State an opportunity to revise and resubmit its plan and have a hearing, consistent with ESEA section 8451.

Consistent with ESEA section 1111(a)(5), the Department will make publicly available all peer review guidance, training, and final peer panel notes. The names of peer reviewers will be made publicly available at the completion of the review of all State Plans, though the peer reviewers for any individual State will not be made available.

How to Use This Document

The reviewer criteria is intended to 1) support States as they develop their consolidated State plans, and 2) inform peer review teams as they evaluate each State plan. This document outlines required elements in order for an SEA to fully address the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements. If an SEA has provided insufficient information for peer reviewers to determine whether any question is fully addressed, peer

reviewers should indicate that the SEA has not fully addressed that requirement and identify what additional information or clarification may be needed.

Instructions

Each peer reviewer should include individual review notes in the space provided below each State plan requirement. For each State plan requirement, a peer reviewer will provide:

- Peer Analysis: Describe the peer reviewer's justification for why an SEA did or did not meet the requirements;
- Strengths: Summarize strengths of the SEA's response to the State plan requirement;
- Limitations: Summarize the limitations of an SEA's response to the State plan requirement, including issues, lack of clarity, and possible technical assistance suggestions;
- Assessment: Determine if the SEA met the State plan requirement (indicated by Yes/No); and
 - If the peer reviewer indicates 'no' above, the peer must describe the specific information or clarification that a State must provide in order to meet the requirement.

The peer reviewer notes should address all of the required elements of each State plan requirement in this document, but do not need to address each element individually (*i.e.*, the peer notes should holistically look at I.5 the Strategies to Address Other Problems, incorporating each of the five identified items in this element but do not need to individually respond to each item).

SECTION I: EDUCATION FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM, MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS ASSISTANCE ACT, TITLE VII, SUBTITLE B

I.1: Student Identification (722(g)(1)(B) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA describe the procedures it will use to identify homeless children and youth in the State and to assess their needs?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA described SEA and LEA-level procedures used to identify homeless children and youth in the State and to ensure that all district services and necessary supports are identified and provided. The activities described included conducting training, using housing questionnaires at the local level, and collecting and reporting homeless student data to appropriate agencies. It was also observed that there was professional development offerings and data collection. However, the SEA did not specifically describe how homeless students' needs are assessed, other than through the use of intake and interview forms.
<i>Strengths</i>	The plan described specific ways the State and LEAs identify homeless youth, including training and enrollment forms used across the State. The LEAs used housing questionnaires disseminated to every district at the beginning of the school year and subsequent student enrollments as part of their identification process and assessed immediate needs through the use of intake and interview forms.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers found that although the SEA described the use of intake and interview forms at the local level to assess immediate needs of homeless students, it did not describe specific procedures as to how the SEA assesses their needs.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	The peer reviewers indicated that the plan would be strengthened if the SEA described specific procedures it used to assess the needs of homeless children and youth and included needs assessment guidance or procedures for LEAs.

I.2: Dispute Resolution (722(g)(1)(C) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA describe procedures for the prompt resolution of disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youth?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA briefly summarized the dispute resolution process. The information given was clear and concise, indicating how the process is given to families.
<i>Strengths</i>	Peer reviewers saw the statewide process for dispute resolution to ensure consistency across the State as a strength in the plan.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the SEA’s description of the procedure was not detailed enough to ensure that all requirements of the dispute resolution process are in place, including timelines. It was also missing some other details of the process, such as information on how parents or unaccompanied homeless youth appeal.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (2) Reviewers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (1) Reviewer
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	It was indicated that the plan would be strengthened if the SEA provided more detail on the dispute resolution process to include timelines and dispute determination decisions and provide a link to the process.

I.3: Support for School Personnel (722(g)(1)(D) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA describe programs for school personnel (including the LEA liaisons for homeless children and youth, principals and other school leaders, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel) to heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the specific needs of homeless children and youth, including such children and youth who are runaway and homeless youths?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA provided a list of activities for school personnel that are designed to heighten the awareness of homeless students' specific needs. It offered a comprehensive program for all school personnel, including specific training and presentations for other federal programs on McKinney-Vento requirements, resources (such as sample forms, materials, NCHE posters, flyers, information briefs), technical assistance, the Indiana McKinney-Vento Academy site, and other opportunities.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the plan had several strengths, such as when it described how the State Coordinator will be able to track the progress of local liaisons as they transition through the McKinney-Vento Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced Courses with usage and real-time assessment data. Another strength was that onsite regional trainings are offered, and sample forms and translated materials are also offered to LEAs.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the State plan addressed this requirement fully and did not identify any limitations in the SEA response to this requirement.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	

I.4: Access to Services (722(g)(1)(F) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA describe procedures that ensure that homeless children have access to public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or LEA, as provided to other children?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA stated that through assurances students will have equal access and described how the homeless education program will ensure that homeless children have the same access to early childhood and special education services by its collaboration with early childhood and preschool learning program partners. Training will be provided and McKinney-Vento grants will target coordination with and services for public preschools programs. However, the plan’s narrative did not address specifically the SEA or LEA procedures to ensure homeless children have access to eligible public preschool programs.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers saw the plan’s description of McKinney-Vento grants targeting coordination with and services for public preschool programs as strength of the plan. This includes getting input from early childhood stakeholders for trainings offered. Reserving slots for homeless preschoolers and collecting data on early childhood education for homeless students were also noted as strengths.
<i>Limitations</i>	Peer reviewers noted that the SEA’s narrative did not specifically address the SEA or LEA procedures for application, enrollment, prioritization, or transportation of homeless children in State or LEA-administered preschool programs.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (2) Reviewers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (1) Reviewer
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	It was indicated that the plan would be strengthened if links to or copies of the procedures were included in the narrative response to this requirement.

- **Does the SEA describe procedures that ensure that homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including by identifying and removing barriers that prevent youth described in this clause from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA described the multi-pronged approach it uses to identify and ensure access to appropriate secondary education and support services for homeless youth and youth separated from public school. These strategies included training, technical assistance, subgrant funding, monitoring, supplemental educational opportunities, afterschool programming, collaboration with dropout prevention staff, and use of Individual Learning Plans. However, although it appears there is a State policy to reduce barriers, it did not describe specific procedures in place to ensure that homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are afforded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the SEA encouraged districts to use existing programs to provide supplemental opportunities for homeless students to access online courses, summer school, mentoring programs, and tutoring to enhance credit recovery for homeless students. The SEA also collaborates with other State staff on dropout prevention and encourages LEAs to provide supplemental opportunities and to use Individual Learning Plans for homeless youth.
<i>Limitations</i>	Reviewers indicated that the SEA did not describe the specific procedures it uses to ensure that homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services. The reviewers also noted that the plan did not specifically address awarding full or partial coursework completed or how counselors will be trained.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	The peer reviewers indicated that the plan would be strengthened if the SEA included copies of or links to the specific procedures, such as awarding full or partial coursework credit, it uses to ensure that homeless youth and youth separated from public schools are accorded equal access to appropriate secondary educational and support services. If procedures do not exist at the SEA, then the SEA should address how such procedures will be developed.

- **Does the SEA describe procedures that ensure that homeless children and youth who meet the relevant eligibility criteria do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs, if such programs are available at the State and local levels?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA plan provided a description of the expectations applicable to removal of barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities. These included encouraging school districts, through collaboration, to explore comprehensive equivalent alternative educational programs and support services to implement the McKinney-Vento requirements, monitoring and review of documentation of districts' policies and procedures, and working with the Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA). It was also observed that the SEA plan states requirements under McKinney-Vento without describing details of what the SEA or LEA roles are.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers identified a strength of the plan in the SEA's monitoring of district compliance, including a review of district policies and procedures. In 2017-2018, the State Coordinator will work with the IHSAA to develop guidance and explore best practices related to full athletic participation by homeless students, and will work with LEAs to remove barriers due to outstanding fees and fines.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the SEA encouraged school districts to remove barriers homeless students faced, but did not describe the specific procedures it used to ensure that homeless children and youth had access to academic and extracurricular activities such as magnet schools, summer schools, and charter school programs. The plan needs a description of how and which funds can be used, as well as how information will be disseminated to LEAs.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (1) Reviewer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (2) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	The plan would be strengthened if the SEA more fully described its procedures to ensure that homeless children and youth have access to academic and extracurricular activities, and included copies of, or links to, the specific procedures to address this area, including LEA procedures.

I.5: Strategies to Address Other Problems (722(g)(1)(H) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA provide strategies to address other problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youth, including problems resulting from enrollment delays that are caused by—(i) requirements of immunization and other required health records; (ii) residency requirements; (iii) lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation; (iv) guardianship issues; or (v) uniform or dress code requirements?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA provided strategies to address removing problems that can result in enrollment delays. It specifically addressed its strategies pertaining to requirements of immunization and other health records, residency, lack of birth certificates, school records, or other documentation, guardianship, and uniform or dress code requirements. It was observed that there were connections, collaborations, and guidance to reduce barriers.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers saw several strengths in the SEA’s plan, including collaborations with the Indiana Department of Public Health, which reviews its policies on immunizations and health records annually. Notifications of updates are posted and go out to all schools, and collaboration with local medical, dental and mental health clinics that provide immunization and physical examinations, resulting in more homeless students being treated medically. Specific strategies are listed that LEAs can do to ensure enrollment delays do not occur, and training of enrollment staff was also noted.
<i>Limitations</i>	The peer reviewers indicated that the State plan addressed this requirement fully and did not identify any limitations in the SEA response to this requirement.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	

I.6: Policies to Remove Barriers (722(g)(1)(I) of the McKinney-Vento Act)

- **Does the SEA demonstrate that the SEA and LEAs in the State have developed, and shall review and revise, policies to remove barriers to the identification of homeless children and youth, and the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools in the State, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers noted that the SEA described that it had developed, and periodically reviewed and revised, policies designed to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless students and provided a list of activities that the SEA and LEAs use to serve homeless children and youth. However, it was observed that the SEA and LEAs did not demonstrate that policies to remove barriers to the identification of homeless children and youth, and the enrollment and retention of those youth in school were developed, reviewed, and revised. It was also noted that SEA and LEA homeless education policies were not included in the plan.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers saw several strengths in the plan, such as the SEA providing a list of activities that it used to identify, enroll, and retain homeless students, including training of school enrollment and other staff on immediate enrollment requirements, development of caregiver affidavits and enrollment forms for unaccompanied homeless youth, school-based immunization clinics, and short diagnostic assessments to immediately place students.
<i>Limitations</i>	Peer reviewers noted that SEA and LEA homeless education policies were not included in the plan. The plan also did not include the process for reviewing and revising policies and procedures. It was also noted that the plan did not clearly define how students will be identified or how absences will be reduced.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	The plan would be strengthened if the SEA included copies of the SEA policies and sample LEA policies, or links to them, in the plan and clarified how it ensures that policies described are developed, reviewed, and revised at the SEA and LEA levels. If policies do not exist at the SEA or LEA levels, then the SEA should address how such policies will be developed. The plan would also be stronger if the housing questionnaire was included.

I.7: Assistance from Counselors (722(g)(1)(K))

- **Does the SEA include how youths described in section 725(2) will receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college?**

	<i>Peer Response</i>
<i>Peer Analysis</i>	The peer reviewers observed that the SEA described how all school counselors are expected to assist all students in the development of a graduation plan, and provide counseling services that prevent or alleviate problems that interfere with student learning. Educational and career services at the school level include: admission and orientation; student skills/tutoring; achievement testing; advising and scheduling; career education, assessment, planning, and placement. The plan also included information on coordination between the State Coordinator and other stakeholders in the counseling and higher education fields. It was also observed that references to policies, information, and awareness by the State Coordinator are included.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers identified strengths in the plan, including that the State Coordinator is piloting a program and services to address awareness of unaccompanied youth and their needs to prepare and improve their readiness for college. Another strength was that the State Coordinator has provided guidance to higher education personnel, and guidance counselors to expand their awareness of homeless youth's transition to higher education and their unique needs. The plan also described State rules and policies that exist to support students in college readiness and counseling services.
<i>Limitations</i>	It was noted that although the SEA mentioned the expectations for how school counselors are to assist all students, a more detailed description of how counselors specifically work with homeless youth to prepare and improve their readiness for college would have strengthened this section.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (3) Reviewers
<i>If no, describe the specific information or clarification that an SEA must provide to fully meet this requirement</i>	