

STATE PLAN
Composite Notes Form
for the McKinney-Vento EHCY Program

State Name: Texas



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 State plan outlined collaboration between the TEA and THEO to implement the homeless education program and that the plan described various trainings, resources and supports that are available.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers identified strengths in the State plan’s utilization of the SRQ at enrollment to identify and assess the needs of homeless students. Trainings are provided to school districts and community agencies to assist with identification and services.
<i>Limitations</i>	It was noted that the State’s plan did not describe the role of the local liaison, how monitoring and needs assessment data is used to identify areas for improvement, what staff are trained annually and what the training requirements are.
<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.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 State plan provided detail on the multilevel dispute process with defined time limits. The role of the local liaison, communication, trainings and a question and answer document outlining procedures and processes for LEAs is described within the plan. McKinney-Vento students are to be immediately enrolled and their rights to appeal are explained.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers identified strengths in the State plan’s commitment to the immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth. The plan outlined timelines and described training, technical assistance and tools to assist LEAs with implementing the dispute resolution process.
<i>Limitations</i>	It was noted that the State’s plan did not include a description of the use of monitoring dispute data, policy review or trainings required for the local liaison and other personnel.
<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.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 State’s plan included several modalities of training, professional development, support and resources provided to school personnel.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers identified strengths in the State plan’s description of the number of modalities that the TEA employs to disseminate information, and that an implementation manual has been developed for new liaisons. Peer reviewers noted that the plan provided detail on professional development, technical assistance, annual trainings and a conference that is held for agencies serving runaways, the helpline for unaccompanied homeless youth, and a train-the-trainer’s curriculum for liaisons and other school personnel.
<i>Limitations</i>	It was noted that the State’s plan did not mention monitoring in relation to this requirement to ensure attendance of personnel or how data is used to prioritize training topics for different audiences.
<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 State plan described collaboration between Region 10 ESC, THEO, ECI and Head Start programs to increase awareness of the importance of including information about the special needs of homeless children and youth and their families in trainings and professional development activities, and noted that the plan did not fully address the process for access to public preschool programs.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers identified strengths in the State plan’s collaboration with ECI and Head Start programs, and that preschool homeless children are eligible for free services.
<i>Limitations</i>	It was noted that the State’s plan did not address slot allocation or transportation for services. It was also noted that the State’s plan did not cite local board policies and procedures or monitoring to ensure removal of potential barriers and to ensure access is provided to preschool aged children to public preschool programs.
<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>	

- **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 State plan provided detail on the State laws, processes and procedures that exist to ensure equal access to secondary education and supportive services and noted that the State plan included information about staff development opportunities, materials and technical assistance that are provided to school personnel.
<i>Strengths</i>	Peer reviewers identified strengths in the State plan's collaboration with providers who serve youth who have been separated from school in awarding full or partial credit for coursework completed, and that students can complete needed graduation courses at no cost. Also, there is a review of the students' graduation plan in the ninth grade and school records are transferred no later than ten days after enrollment.
<i>Limitations</i>	It was noted that the State's plan did not cite how monitoring and data reviews are used to ensure the removal of barriers or if or how it is used to prioritize training.
<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>	

- **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 State plan included detail on the State law requirement that TEA promote practices that facilitate homeless students access to programs at little or no cost.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers identified strengths in the State plan’s description of the multiple levels of training, support and materials that are utilized. There are State laws and policies in place that support this requirement.
<i>Limitations</i>	It was noted that the State’s plan did not cite how monitoring and data reviews are used to ensure the removal of barriers or if or how monitoring and data review are used to prioritize trainings. It was also noted that the State’s plan did not include information regarding nominal costs and uniform requirements for activities.
<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.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 State plan described ongoing efforts and trainings provided to school personnel to ensure awareness in each of the areas listed in the requirement through the dissemination of information. The plan provided strategies and policies that are provided to districts to address issues with enrollment delays.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers identified strengths in the State plan’s description of timeframes that are in place for receipt of records after a student has been enrolled and ensuring that unaccompanied homeless youth do not face barriers to enrollment. Strengths also included a defined funding stream for uniforms and the plan’s detail regarding requirements for all areas, citing the TEA State policies.
<i>Limitations</i>	It was noted that the State’s plan did not address what happens if records are not obtained beyond the 30-day timeframe for immunizations. The plan State’s plan also did not address the SEA responsibility to provide uniforms at no cost to the students identified as homeless. Reviewers also observed that the plan did not provide detail as to how issues are addressed if enrollment barriers do occur, and if data is collected to track enrollment delays or describe how monitoring is used to identify issues with the implementation of policies.
<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 observed that the State plan described the TEA’s collaboration with Region 10 ESC and THEO to review and revise policies to remove barriers on a regular basis. The State plan ensures that any documents, professional development materials, newsletter articles, training sessions, website information and other communications convey the laws and policies concerning enrollment delays and the expectation of immediate enrollment for students who are experiencing homelessness.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers identified strengths in the State plan’s use of a toll-free helpline and email, and that services are provided to students who are at risk of dropping out. The peer reviewers also saw strengths in the State plan’s description of policies at the State and local level. Region 10 ESC and THEO disseminate information statewide via trainings and publications and provide technical assistance focused on the removal of barriers to school access.
<i>Limitations</i>	It was noted that the State’s plan did not address outstanding fees, fines or absences and how these are addressed to ensure that they are not barriers to enrollment and retention. Clarity as to how monitoring of these areas is used to identify problem areas would strengthen the plan.
<i>Did the SEA meet all requirements?</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (2) Reviewers <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (1) 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 State plan would be strengthened if the SEA describes procedures in place regarding fees and fines, and provides clarity in the description of retention procedures due to attendance.

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 State plan described State laws that require engagement and promote high school completion, college and career preparedness, and successful transitions for homeless students.
<i>Strengths</i>	The peer reviewers identified strengths in the State plan’s description of the multiple layers of support that are in place, including that school counselors assist homeless students with the FAFSA and college applications, and work with the local liaison to ensure homeless students are on track for graduation by reviewing graduation plans if the homeless students do not graduate before their fifth year.
<i>Limitations</i>	It was noted that the State’s plan did not address training on the unique needs of homeless students.
<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>	