

# Optional Items for Homeless Status and Unaccompanied Youth Status Indicators

In addition to the information that is required for McKinney-Vento reporting, there is other information that districts have found helpful in determining homeless status, unaccompanied youth status, or eligibility for other services or programs. These components are **not required**, but may be useful. These components could be incorporated into existing forms or may even already be collected by some other mechanism in the district. They are presented here because others have found them helpful.

1. Free school meal eligibility. All students identified as homeless are categorically eligible for free school meals. The statement and signature line below can be incorporated into a district form to indicate that the student is homeless and qualifies for free school meals. If a student has been identified as homeless, all the homeless liaison needs to do to qualify the student for free school meals is to sign a statement identifying a specific student as homeless, such as in the example below, and send it to the district's child nutrition program. No additional paperwork is necessary from the family or student for free-school meal eligibility if the student is identified as homeless.

**EXAMPLE:**

*For School Use Only:* I certify the above named student qualifies for the Child Nutrition Program under the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Act.

\_\_\_\_\_

**McKinney-Vento Liaison Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

2. Where a student sleeps at night versus address. In terms of determining homeless status, some districts have found it useful to ask for the *Address where the student sleeps at night?* rather than just the student's address. By focusing on where the student actually sleeps at night, a district often obtains information that is more helpful in determining homeless status. These districts often find it useful to ask the follow-up question, *How long has student been at this address?* Such a follow-up question helps to determine the extent to which a student has a "fixed, regular, and adequate" nighttime residence.

3. Last school and district attended. When determining homeless status, some have found it helpful to ask for the name of the *last school attended* and the *last district attended*. Although parents or students might be unsure of the name of either, even sketchy information can be an important starting point for a liaison in tracking down school records and information.

4. List siblings. Because it is often easier to determine the homeless status of younger students, some districts have found that asking those younger students to list their siblings can be helpful in identifying older homeless students. Such a table as provided below could be incorporated into an identification form.

**EXAMPLE:**

List all school-aged brothers and sisters, regardless of where they live

Last Name	First Name	Brother or Sister	Stay at the same place (X)	Grade	School	District

5. List other school-aged children who live in the same place. Districts that are able to provide supplemental services to economically disadvantaged students have found it useful to ask about all the school-aged children who live in one place. When attempting to determine homeless status, they have found it helpful to ask for a list of all the other school-aged children who live at the same residence—regardless of whether or not all those listed are siblings or otherwise related. In doubled-up situations, not every school-aged child who lives in one location will necessarily be considered homeless, but they may all be in similar situations and may all need supplemental assistance, such as school supplies, emergency clothing, coats, etc. This question can also identify possible overcrowded situations.

**EXAMPLE:**

List all other school-aged children that stay in the same place

Last Name	First Name	Grade	School	District