California Department of Education
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# Identification Strategies in Response to Coronavirus for Homeless Students Overview

The number of students meeting the eligibility criteria of homelessness may now be greater and more challenging to identify. That is why the California Department of Education’s (CDE) Integrated Student Support and Programs Office have developed the following strategies and resources to better assist you.

For children and youth experiencing homelessness, the services you provide at your school site through your local educational agency (LEA) may be the only source of food, education, consistent caring adults, and safe place to be during the day. Our students, children and youth experiencing homelessness are highly mobile, and are at many times unlikely to benefit from initiatives that are based on a stable and safe home environment.

Please remember the following:

1. Immediate enrollment for families and students who lack fixed, regular, or adequate housing including doubled-up, due to economic hardship, loss of housing, and natural disasters is required:
	* Even without documentation typically needed to enroll, including school records**,** immunizations or other required health records**,** proof of residency, or guardianship
	* Enroll and enrollment means attending classes and participating fully in school activities
2. Continue to share your homeless liaison contact information and posters that include the educational rights afforded to youth experiencing homelessness in any/all areas as possible. The CDE can provide free homeless education posters in English and Spanish. You can also access the poster in six different languages on the CDE’s Resources for Homeless Children and Youth web page (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>)
3. **Remind teachers** of the definition of homelessness and how to reach the homeless liaison. Teachers are communicating directly with families. They are working with students via online or distance learning and **can be the first to find out if a student is in need**. They should know how to contact their liaison and other resources in the community. Record a video or develop an email message for families that the teacher can forward to families
4. Ensure that all teachers, staff and leadership know who the liaison from the county office of education, district and school site are and how they can be reached year-round
5. Remind teachers, at staff meetings or when meeting if possible, to be flexible. Homeless students might need to have additional time for assignments and might not be receiving notifications from the teachers and/or school. Students and their families may need additional time to get learning materials (e.g. may need transportation from the liaison to get Chromebook)

When updating resources for families and staff, including web sites, please add the local liaison’s contact information. The CDE has a list of all liaisons and their contacts on the CDE’s Homeless Education web page (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/>)

When guidance is being developed at the district and school levels, ensure the homeless liaison is included in the development and delivery of services or guidance. Use the homeless liaison to reach out to families. LEAs need to consult with homeless liaisons to ensure the plans meet the needs of these students as well

1. **Reach out often** to families and youth currently identified as homeless to monitor their current living situations, health, safety, basic and education needs. When connecting with students, **don’t forget those students who were or may be at risk for homelessness** for example:
* Students who are/were new to the district
* Students not responding to teacher or district correspondence
* Families who mentioned changes in addresses, etc.
1. LEAs need to consult with liaisons to develop or revisit messaging:
* Ensure messaging is sensitive and related to housing- safety, stability, academic needs. The CDE has developed and strongly encourages LEAs and school sites to use the recently updated housing questionnaire. The housing questionnaire and guidance for its use can be found on the CDE’s Resources for Homeless Children and Youths web page (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/>)
* Adding and sharing the definition of homelessness and student rights, attached as a flyer or one pager to share with staff who are still a part of the student’s life during closures such as:
	+ Nutrition Services
	+ Teachers and Academic Staff
	+ District and County Leadership that communicate with families
1. Title I, Part A reservation funds for homeless education can be used to assist students and their families experiencing homelessness to provide access beyond what is typically afforded to their housed peers. Title I, Part A Reservation Funds for Homeless Education (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/>) is an overview that explains the legislation and offers strategies for implementing the allowable uses of these funds.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact CDE’s Homeless State Coordinators at HomelessED@cde.ca.gov. Please join the CDE’s Homeless Children and Youths Resources Listserv (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/homelesslistserv.asp>) to receive information and updates relating to the education of homeless children and youth.

For information and resources regarding coronavirus (COVID-19), please visit the CDE’s COVID-19 web page (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/coronavirus.asp>).

For CDE-level information from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI), please review the news releases gathered on the CDE’s COVID-19 SSPI Communications web page (<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/covid-19sspicom.asp>). If you aren’t already following the CDE on social media, please find us on Facebook at @CAEducation and on Twitter at @CADeptEd.