

Title I Set Aside Funds for Homeless Education

Serving homeless students is an integral part of Title I, Part A. Homeless students who attend any school served by an LEA, regardless of whether the school receives Title I funds, are eligible for Title I services. (ESEA section 1115(b)(2)(E).) Specifically, an LEA must reserve such funds as are necessary to provide services to homeless students who attend non-Title I schools that are comparable to those provided to students in Title I schools. These services may include providing educationally related support services to homeless children in shelters and other locations where they may live. (ESEA section 1113(c)(3)(A).)

Under the guidance of Title I, Part A funds may provide a wide variety of services to homeless students. In addition to providing services to assist homeless students in meeting the State's challenging academic achievement standards, Title I, Part A funds may be used to provide services that may not ordinarily be provided to other Title I students. For example, to help homeless students effectively take advantage of educational opportunities, an LEA may use Title I, Part A funds to provide, where appropriate, items or services including, but not limited to—

- Items of clothing, particularly if necessary to meet a school's dress or uniform requirement
- Clothing and shoes necessary to participate in physical education classes
- Student fees that are necessary to participate in the general education program
- Personal school supplies such as backpacks and notebooks
- Birth certificates necessary to enroll in school
- Immunizations
- Food
- Medical and dental services
- Eyeglasses and hearing aids
- Counseling services to address anxiety related to homelessness that is impeding learning
- Outreach services to students living in shelters, motels, and other temporary residences
- Extended learning time (before and after school, Saturday classes, summer school) to compensate for lack of quiet time for homework in shelters or other overcrowded living conditions
- Parental involvement specifically oriented to reaching out to parents of homeless students
- Fees for AP and IB testing
- Fees for SAT/ACT testing
- GED testing for school-age students
- Excess cost of transporting students to and from school
- Salary of a homeless liaison in part or in full

Several principles govern the use of Title I, Part A funds to provide such services to homeless students. First, the services must be reasonable and necessary to assist homeless students to take advantage of educational opportunities. (ESEA section 1113(c)(3)(A); OMB Circular A-87, Attachment A, C.1.a) Second, Title I, Part A funds must be used as a last resort when funds or services are not reasonably available from other public or private sources, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's free- and reduced-price school lunch program, public health clinics, or local discretionary funds (sometimes provided by the PTA) used to provide similar services for economically disadvantaged students generally. (ESEA section 1115(e)(2).)

Title I, Part A funds also may be used to support a homeless liaison POSITION. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento) requires each LEA in a State that receives McKinney-Vento funds to designate an appropriate staff person, who may also be a coordinator for other Federal programs, as a liaison for homeless children. (MVHAA Section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii)). Because the statute specifically authorizes that another Federally funded coordinator may perform these duties, an individual paid, in whole or in part, with Title I, Part A funds, including Title I, Part A ARRA funds, may also serve as a homeless liaison.