When School is Home and Family:
Supporting the Attendance and Success of Youth on Their Own

By: Patricia Julianelle, JD, NAEHCY Pro Bono Counsel and NCHE Program Specialist

---

> *None of my classmates knew that I didn't have a home to call my own. No one knew that while I was listening to my teacher explain adjectives, I was also wondering whether I would still have a place to sleep that night after school let out. No one ever knew because it is an embarrassing and abasing thing to be labeled homeless. I looked like everyone else, I talked like everyone else, I made decent grades, listened to the same music, and cheered our team on Friday nights. Why would they think I was anything different than how others saw themselves?. . .*
>
> *I knew that I didn't want to be homeless for the rest of my life, and I saw education as the sure path to a more secure future. In spite of struggling with such an adverse situation, I wanted to maintain as high a standard as possible. I wanted colleges to look at me and see a student who really wanted to succeed and was willing to work as hard as necessary to reach her goals.*
>
> Ashleigh, 2005 Virginia LeTendre Scholar
> and formerly homeless youth

Between 1.6 and 2.8 million youth run away from their homes each year.[1] For many of these young people, school has been a home and a family. This brief is designed to help your school support the attendance and success of youth on their own – whether they have run away or are independent for other reasons – by providing background information about unaccompanied youth, sharing some of the challenges they face, and suggesting positive policies and programs for school divisions. The schools that work most successfully with unaccompanied youth share one common practice: open, honest, and sensitive communication with young people.

Why do young people leave home?

Generally, youth leave home due to severe dysfunction in their families, including circumstances that put their safety and well-being at risk. Unfortunately, physical and sexual abuse in the home is not uncommon; studies of unaccompanied youth report that 20 to 50 percent were sexually abused in their homes, while 40 to 60 percent were physically abused.[2] Parental drug use or alcoholism and conflicts with stepparents or partners also provoke youth to run away from home.[2]

Many young people are forced out of their homes by parents who disapprove of their sexual orientation or pregnancy. For example, 20 to 40 percent of homeless youth identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender, compared to only 3-5 percent of the overall population.[3] Over 50 percent of youth in shelters and on the streets reported that their parents either told them to leave or knew they were leaving but did not care.[4] As a result, less than half of unaccompanied youth are considered to have a realistic prospect of family reunification.[2] Finally, many unaccompanied youth should be receiving foster care services; several studies have shown that between 20 and 55 percent of homeless youth are under the care of the child welfare system.[2]

Tragically, homelessness places youth at extreme risk of victimization and violence. In that context, school can be an oasis for unaccompanied youth, where they can find safety and support and obtain the skills they need to survive on their own. Yet many unaccompanied youth struggle to attend school consistently and succeed academically. The following sections of this brief focus on strategies school divisions can use to support youth in overcoming those challenges.

A Legal Response: The McKinney-Vento Act

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act) requires that schools provide students experiencing homelessness with school access and support their academic success. The McKinney-Vento Act allows students to remain in one school to increase academic stability, even if this is no longer the school of residency. If a move to a new school is necessary, the receiving school must enroll the students immediately, even when normally required documents, such as birth certificates, immunization records, or proof of residency, are not available. By keeping students in regular attendance, schools can improve the students' chances of academic success.

Children and youth who lack **fixed, regular, and adequate** housing are eligible for McKinney-Vento protections and ser-

vices. This includes students living in a variety of situations, from staying *doubled-up* or *couch-surfing* with friends or relatives to residing in shelters, cars, parks, and other public spaces. The McKinney-Vento Act also specifically defines homeless **unaccompanied youth** as youth without fixed, regular, and adequate housing who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. Sometimes youth share this sensitive information with school officials, but the stigma associated with homelessness and loyalty to their parents can make this difficult.

To assist school personnel in the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act, all school divisions have a local homeless education liaison (liaison). When questions arise or further resources are needed, the liaison should be contacted. A listing of all liaisons in Virginia can be found at the Project HOPE-Virginia web site: www.wm.edu/hope.

An Additional Challenge: Youth With Special Needs

Youth in homeless situations are disproportionately affected by disabilities which may further complicate educational needs, due in part to the physical health risks and extreme emotional stressors they face. Of course, not all unaccompanied youth have special needs. However, those who confront the dual challenge of homelessness and a disability need extra support from their schools. For those youth, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) should work in coordination with the McKinney-Vento Act to provide that support.

IDEA provides special education and related services to students with disabilities. Basically, IDEA requires school divisions to evaluate students who are suspected of having disabilities. If the evaluations show that a student needs special education due to a disability, the school division must develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP), which outlines the special education and related services the student will receive. In addition to services such as counseling and many types of specialized instructional support, IDEA also provides transition planning for youth starting the year they turn 16. Transition planning focuses on improving students' academic achievement and life skills so they can move smoothly and successfully from school to college, work, or other activities. Transition services must be based on students' strengths as well as their preferences and interests.

Unaccompanied youth face a particular challenge in accessing services under IDEA. IDEA requires school divisions to work with parents. Since unaccompanied youth are not with their parents or guardians, this requirement can create a barrier to services.

Challenges in Serving Unaccompanied Youth in Virginia

Unaccompanied youth in Virginia face critical challenges to good physical and mental health and academic success, yet many schools have been successful in supporting their attendance and success. To assist schools in this endeavor, Project HOPE-Virginia, with support from the Virginia Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Student Services, surveyed shelter providers, homeless liaisons, and special education transition specialists to determine the major challenges to serving unaccompanied youth. The following chart summarizes the results of that survey.

Challenges	For example…
1. Meeting basic needs, such as housing and health care	Approximately 64% of the shelters surveyed have restrictions that limit housing options for youth, including not serving unaccompanied children or youth, not serving children under 18, and not serving males.
2. Mobility	Transition specialists noted that students' mobility makes it difficult for special education staff to complete evaluations and provide appropriate services. It also exacerbates transportation challenges.
3. Lack of support services for academic success and life skills	Surveys indicated a need for a wide variety of flexible, responsive support services, including supplemental education services, truancy prevention programs, peer and adult mentors, drug education, sex education, alternative programs, support groups, teen parent programs, anger management, and job training and placement.
4. Identification	Although both IDEA and the McKinney-Vento Act require schools to seek out unaccompanied youth, only 28% of transition specialists and 33% of liaisons reported helping unaccompanied youth in the 2004-2005 school year.
5. Educational decision-making	Particularly in special education matters, the lack of a parent or legal guardian complicates educational decision-making.

Overcoming Barriers: Supporting the Attendance and Success of Youth On Their Own

School divisions in Virginia and across the country have developed strategies to meet the challenges identified in Virginia's survey. The following policies and programs have been successful in supporting the attendance and success of youth on their own. Many of the strategies can be helpful in addressing several barriers.

1. Meeting Basic Needs

Consider housing, food, and physical and mental health care. It is very difficult for any youth to attend and succeed in school if these basic needs are not met. Although schools may not be able to meet all of these needs, they can take some basic steps to make sure unaccompanied youth are ready and able to learn.

- Talk with youth to identify their immediate needs and help them access support for those where you can provide quick assistance. This will help build trust and engage the youth in school.

- Inform youth that they can immediately receive free breakfast and lunch at school, without completing an application.[5] The liaison should be familiar with your school division's procedure for starting meals immediately. Contact Project HOPE–Virginia with questions.

- Refer youth to school nurses to review their health care needs, develop a health care plan, and help youth obtain needed services in the community.

In Virginia, youth 14 and older can consent to emergency medical treatment, and younger children can be treated without risk of liability. Youth of any age can consent to mental health and substance abuse treatment, family planning, and care for sexually transmitted or infectious diseases.[6]

- Give youth access to school locker rooms and showers before and after school, so they can attend to their hygiene needs discreetly and store clothing and hygiene items.

- Refer youth to school counselors to provide mental health support and help youth obtain needed services in the community.

- Provide youth with information about public benefits, including food stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), and help them apply. To start compiling this information, visit www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/.

There is no minimum age to receive food stamps, and unaccompanied youth can apply for and receive them without a parent's signature.[7]

- Provide youth with information about all the shelter and transitional housing resources in the community. To start compiling this information, contact your nearest youth shelter or youth outreach program and visit www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/.

- When necessary, accompany youth to the offices of public benefits and physical and mental health care providers. Young people may need an adult to advocate for them and ensure they receive the services they need and to which they are entitled. For example, the liaison from Covington City Public Schools took an unaccompanied youth with disabilities to get his driver's permit and to apply for social services. Thanks to her support, the youth received these benefits and continued on to graduate from high school. The youth still keeps in touch with the liaison.

There are two fundamental barriers to meeting unaccompanied youths' basic needs that school divisions cannot overcome in the short term: 1) the extreme shortage of emergency and transitional shelters and permanent housing for youth, and 2) the legal inability of minors to take certain actions on their own

The Warren County Coalition is a model interagency collaboration in Virginia that supports students and families. Warren County Public Schools has assumed an important role in the Coalition, working to obtain grants to fund a wide variety of programs and five permanent staff. The Coalition provides a variety of programs and services: substance abuse prevention services, healthy families programs, dental and wellness services, parenting classes, and violence prevention programs. It also provides an open forum for communication among schools, shelters, law enforcement, social services, and other community agencies. In describing the strength of the collaboration in serving youth, Coalition President Michael Hirsch, Director of Special Services for Warren County Public Schools and the homeless education liaison, explained, "The Warren Coalition provides a vehicle for agencies to serve students and families. It brings all the players to the table on a regular basis."

behalf. However, educators have successfully worked as partners to create solutions to barriers youth face in housing policies and state laws. For example, educators have been key partners in interagency collaborations for youth in Virginia, Maine, Ohio, and other states. Local interagency task forces have also been very successful in supporting unaccompanied youth. Representatives from a variety of agencies and organizations that serve youth should participate, including housing, shelters, mental health, family mediation, social services, education, juvenile justice, family court, and street outreach programs.

2. Mobility

Unaccompanied youth move frequently for many reasons, including the inherent instability of temporary living situations, two-week stay limits at many emergency shelters, and the need to leave abusive or unhealthy situations. Under the McKinney-Vento Act, youth can remain in one school despite changes in their living situation. However, when youth move long distances or other issues interfere with their ability to remain in their school, they may need to enroll in a new school. School mobility can challenge every aspect of their educational success, from earning credits and graduating on time to participating in extracurricular activities and relating to teachers and peers. For youth with special needs, school mobility can interrupt educational evaluations and services.

To address the mobility of unaccompanied youth, school divisions can implement the following strategies.

- Provide youth with an adult and peer mentor upon enrollment. Both mentors can ease the youth's transition by providing orientation to school customs, activities, and rules. The adult mentor should work with youth to identify potential housing resources among family, friends, and the community and develop a sustainable housing plan to prevent mobility.

As of 2007, Virginia has federally-funded emergency shelters for homeless youth in Richmond, Virginia Beach, Charlottesville, Roanoke, and Dunn Loring, as well as two transitional living programs for up to 18 months: Family Lifeline in Richmond and the Alternative House in Dunn Loring. For the most current information regarding Virginia programs funded by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, refer to the Administration for Children and Families web site: www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/youthdivision/programs/locate/va.htm

- Provide ongoing orientation activities, so youth who enroll mid-year can meet administrators, get a tour of the school, be oriented to school rules and activities, and engage in the school community.

- Expedite records transfer between previous schools and the enrolling school. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits the transfer of school records without parental consent to schools to which a student is transferring, as long as the annual FERPA notice the school provides to parents mentions this practice. School divisions should check their annual FERPA notice to ensure this issue is addressed.

- Revise rules for participation in extracurricular activities, including sports, clubs, and supplemental education services, so youth enrolling mid-year can participate. For example, the Virginia High School League handbook specifically allows homeless students to participate in sports after transferring schools, without having to wait the typical 365 calendar days.[8]

- Adopt flexible policies for credit accrual, including awarding partial credit, credit for independent study, and credit for work.

- Build collaborations between liaisons and pupil transportation departments to provide continuous transportation to youth as they move.

Additional strategies are available in the brief, Tips for Supporting Mobile Students, on the Project HOPE-Virginia web site.

IDEA contains several new provisions to ensure that highly mobile students with disabilities receive needed services. First, IDEA requires school divisions to complete evaluations and IEPs for transfer students within the state's timeframes, even if the student transfers school divisions during the process. Under Virginia's timeframes, this means that school divisions must complete evaluations and determine eligibility within a total of 65 business days of parental consent and develop the IEP within 30 additional days, regardless of a student's mobility during the process. The only exception to this requirement applies when a school division is making sufficient progress to ensure a prompt completion of the evaluations, and the parent and LEA agree to a specific time when the evaluation will be completed.[9] Additionally, transfer students with current IEPs from another school division must be enrolled and served immediately, including services comparable to those indicated in the IEP.[10]

These additional strategies can help schools meet the needs of highly mobile youth with disabilities:

- Collaborate with prior and subsequent schools to streamline records transfer, evaluations, and the implementation of IEPs. In addition to faxing records or transferring them electronically, phone conversations between school psychologists, counselors, and teachers can ensure that appropriate services are provided.

- Upon enrolling unaccompanied youth, ask some basic questions about their prior school program to determine if they were receiving special education or being evaluated.

- Develop clear school division policies and procedures to expedite evaluations for students experiencing homelessness. Train special education staff and liaisons on those policies.

- Consider the physical and emotional impact of the youth's homelessness in the process of conducting evaluations, determining eligibility, and developing an IEP. However, do not use it as an excuse to deny evaluations.

- In anticipation of interdivision mobility, organize regular meetings among special education staff and liaisons from area school divisions. Get to know one another's policies and procedures, and collaboratively develop procedures to expedite evaluations and immediately implement IEPs for highly mobile students.

3. Providing Educational Support Services

Unaccompanied youth can benefit from a wide variety of services to support their academic achievement and life skills. Experienced liaisons strongly agree that flexibility and individualized services are the keys to supporting youth well. The following strategies can help schools connect youth with appropriate support services.

- Work with youth to identify their strengths, interests, and goals, and be a good listener. Connect youth with education and support services that match their unique personalities, needs, and desires.

- Ensure that unaccompanied youth have access to tutoring, summer school, and other supplemental education services available in the division. Ensuring access to such services is an appropriate use of Title I, Part A set-aside funds for homeless students.

- Since unaccompanied youth very often have jobs and other adult commitments that make attendance during regular school hours a challenge, offer flexible school hours and shorter school days.

- Offer alternative education options to unaccompanied youth, such as self-paced learning modules, independent study, and credit for work. Ensure that youth in such alternative programs can remain connected to school counselors, teachers, extracurricular activities, and other school services.

- Research services available in the community, such as street outreach programs, support for pregnant and parenting teens, anger management programs, and job training. Provide youth with information about those opportunities. Collaborate with these community agencies to help them serve unaccompanied youth well. Invite them to school to meet with school counselors and youth.

- Identify areas where your school division and community lack appropriate services. Partner within your division, with neighboring school divisions, and within the community to establish those services.

> *Avoid using the word* **homeless** *when talking with youth. They may be homeless, but the stigma of homelessness will scare many young people away. To determine if they are eligible for services, ask youth if they are* on their own, couch-surfing, staying with friends, *or* in transition.

4. Identification

Identifying unaccompanied youth can be a challenge. Youth are often hesitant to reveal their situation for many reasons, including fear of being referred to law enforcement or social services, loyalty to parents, and the stigma associated with homelessness. The following strategies can help schools identify unaccompanied youth, in order to serve them better.

- Word of mouth is a highly effective way to attract youth to your school or program: if you build trust with young people and provide responsive, consistent services, more youth will come.

- Ensure that school division and campus staff know about the general background and needs of unaccompanied youth and their legal rights. Include liaisons, special education staff, teachers, secretaries, bus drivers, security guards, school counselors, and school nurses in such awareness activities on a continuous basis.

> *Project HOPE-Virginia has developed a caregiver's enrollment form for use by schools. It is in the* Homeless Education Liaison Toolkit, *under Appendix E, and can be downloaded from: www.wm.edu/hope/Toolkit/AppendixE-VA.pdf.*

- Coordinate homeless identification efforts with community agencies that serve youth, including street outreach programs, drop-in centers, shelters, food programs, and social services offices.

- Put up posters about school services and youth's rights in schools, convenience stores, laundromats, and fast food restaurants.

- Identify a liaison for every school campus.

- Build collaborations between the liaison and special education child find staff to conduct joint outreach to teenagers.

> *Additional strategies are available in the brief,* Enrolling Homeless Students: First Step to the Schoolhouse Door, *on the Project HOPE-Virginia web site.*

5. Educational Decision-Making

Most school division policies and procedures are based on the assumption that students are accompanied by a parent or guardian. Schools must revise those policies and procedures for unaccompanied youth. In practice, schools ensure that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled and participating fully in school in a variety of ways, including:

- Youth enroll themselves and sign on their own behalf for school activities.

- Liaisons, school nurses, or school counselors enroll youth and sign for school activities.

- Adult caregivers enroll youth and sign for school activities.

Special education decision-making is more complicated due to IDEA's requirement that **biological and adoptive parents**, when they can be found, make special education decisions. If a school cannot identify or locate parents after making and documenting reasonable efforts, IDEA allows other adults to be considered *parents*, including a foster parent, a guardian, a person legally responsible for the student's welfare, or a person acting in the place of a parent and with whom the student lives.[12]

Many unaccompanied youth have a concerned adult in their lives who meets this definition of parent. To protect the rights of those who do not, school divisions must appoint *surrogate parents* if a person meeting the definition of parent cannot be located or identified, the student is a ward of the state, or the student is an unaccompanied youth.[13] Unaccompanied youth also have the right to a *temporary surrogate parent*: someone appointed immediately while the school division identifies and appoints a regular surrogate parent.[14] Temporary surrogate parents can be adults involved in the care and education of the youth, like shelter staff or case managers.

To ensure that unaccompanied youth with special needs can receive appropriate services, school divisions should:

- Put needed intervention services in place while proceeding with special education evaluations.

- Support teachers and school counselors in their efforts to identify unaccompanied youth who may have special needs, recognizing that there is no parent involved to bring such concerns to the school's attention.

- Talk with youth about their home situation and adults who may meet IDEA's definition of parent.

- Develop a simple, expedited procedure for appointing temporary surrogates for unaccompanied youth. The procedure could include talking with the youth about the process, asking the youth to suggest someone appropriate to serve as a temporary surrogate, and talking with that candidate to ensure that he/she has a basic understanding of the process and does not have interests that conflict with those of the youth.

- Expedite standard surrogate parent appointment procedures for unaccompanied youth.

- Collaborate with local shelters to identify staff willing to act as temporary surrogates.

Conclusion

The policies and strategies outlined in this brief can help your school division support the attendance and success of youth on their own. They will be most effective when based on a sound understanding of the challenges unaccompanied youth face and implemented cooperatively with young people. For more information, please contact Project HOPE-Virginia and consult the additional resources.

Additional Resources

Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services   http://www.dmhmrsas.virginia.gov/SVC-CSBs.asp
Provides quality treatment, habilitation, and prevention services for individuals and their families whose lives are affected by mental illness, mental retardation, or substance use disorders

Juvenile Law Center   www.jlc.org
Legal advocacy organization for children and youth

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth   www.naehcy.org
National grassroots membership association, serving as the voice and the social conscience for the education of children and youth in homeless situations

National Association of State Directors of Special Education
www.nasdse.org
Organization of state directors of special education
Note particularly two publications on special education for students in homeless situations, available at:
www.nasdse.org/publications/homelessness_and_SWD.pdf
www.nasdse.org/publications/HighlyMobileChildrenandYouthwith-Disabilities-PoliciesandPracticesinFiveStates.pdf

National Center for Homeless Education   www.serve.org/nche
Federal clearinghouse for the education of homeless children and youth
Note particularly a publication on special education and homelessness, available at:
www.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/idea.pdf

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty   www.nlchp.org
The legal arm of the nationwide movement to end homelessness

National Network for Youth   www.nn4youth.org
Advocacy organization for runaway and homeless youth

National Runaway Switchboard
1-800-621-4000   www.1800runaway.org/
National support center for runaway youth and their families

Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center   www.peatc.org
Special education information and support for families of children with disabilities in Virginia

Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Program, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/youthdivision/index.htm
Federal programs for runaway and homeless youth

Youth Law Center   www.youthlaw.org
Legal advocacy organization for children and youth

Endnotes

_____

[1] Hammer, H., Finkelhor, D., & Sedlak, A. (2002). *National incidence studies of missing, abducted, runaway, and thrownaway children. Runaway/thrownaway children: National estimates and characteristics.* Washington DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
See also National Runaway Switchboard, http://www.1800runaway.org/.

[2] Levin, R.L., et al. (2005). *Wherever I can lay my head: Homeless youth on homelessness.* Chicago: Center for Impact Research. Retrieved July 18, 2007, from http://www.impactresearch.org/documents/homelessyouthreport.pdf
See also: MacLean, M.G., Embry, L.E., & Cauce, A.M. (1999). Homeless adolescents' path to separation from family: Comparison of family characteristics, psychological adjustment, and victimization. *Journal of Community Psychology, 27(2), 179-187.*
Moore, J. (2006). *Unaccompanied and homeless youth: Review of literature (1995-2005).* Washington, DC: National Center for Homeless Education. Retrieved July 18, 2007 from http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/uy_lit_review.pdf
Robertson, M.J., & Toro P.A. (1999). *Homeless youth: Research, intervention, and policy.* Practical Lessons: The 1998 National Symposium on Homelessness Research. Retrieved July 13, 2007, from http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/progsys/homeless/symposium/3-Youth.htm

[3] Ray, N. (2007). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: An epidemic of homelessness.* Retrieved July 13, 2007, from http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/HomelessYouth.pdf

[4] Greene, J. et al (1995). *Youth with runaway, throwaway, and homeless experiences: Prevalence, drug use, and other at-risk behaviors.* Washington DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

[5] U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Child Nutrition Division. *Categorical eligibility for free lunches and breakfasts of runaway, homeless, and migrant youth: Reauthorization 2004 implementation Memo SP 4.* July 19, 2004. Retrieved July 18, 2007, from http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/usda_memo_jul2004.pdf.
See also Virginia Superintendent's Memo No. 8, September 24, 2004, http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/suptsmemos/2004/reg008.html

[6] Va. Code §§54.1-2969 and 16.1-241.

[7] 7 C.F.R. §§273.1, 273.3, 273.5, and 273.11.

[8] "28-6-1 TRANSFER RULE-The student shall not have enrolled in one high school and subsequently transferred to and enrolled in another high school without a corresponding change in the residence of his/her parents, parent, or guardian.
"28-6-2 Exceptions
"…(15) Students who qualify under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act are eligible provided the school has on file all required documentation substantiating the student's status and provided the student is eligible in all other respects." Virginia High School League, Inc. (2006). *Handbook and Policy Manual, 2006-2007* (page 63). Charlottesville VA: Author. Retrieved June 1, 2007, from http://www.vhsl.org/Handbook.pdf

[9] 20 U.S.C. §1414(a)(1)(C)(ii); 34 C.F.R. §300.301(d)-(e).

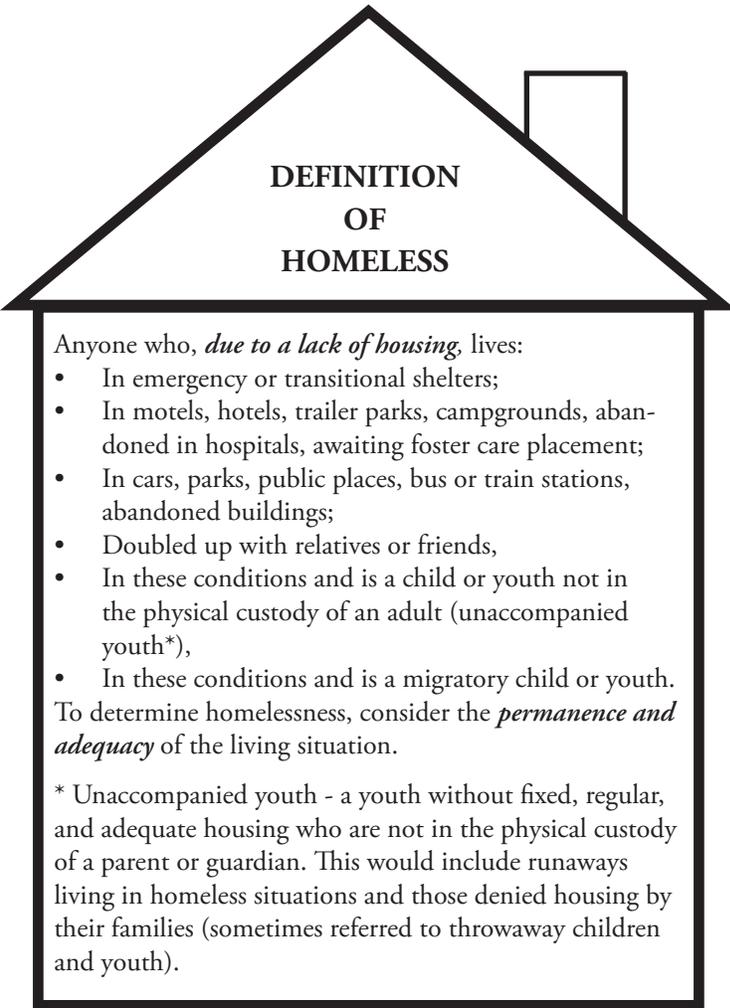[10] 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(2)(C)(i); 34 C.F.R. §300.323(e)-(f).

[11] For more information about The Online Academy, visit its web site at http://toa.gmu.edu/.

[12] 20 U.S.C. §1401(23); 34 C.F.R. §300.30.

[13] 20 U.S.C. §1415(b)(2); 34 C.F.R. §300.519(a)-(b).

[14] 34 C.F.R. §300.519(f).

DEFINITION OF HOMELESS

Anyone who, *due to a lack of housing,* lives:
- In emergency or transitional shelters;
- In motels, hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds, abandoned in hospitals, awaiting foster care placement;
- In cars, parks, public places, bus or train stations, abandoned buildings;
- Doubled up with relatives or friends,
- In these conditions and is a child or youth not in the physical custody of an adult (unaccompanied youth*),
- In these conditions and is a migratory child or youth.

To determine homelessness, consider the *permanence and adequacy* of the living situation.

* Unaccompanied youth - a youth without fixed, regular, and adequate housing who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This would include runaways living in homeless situations and those denied housing by their families (sometimes referred to throwaway children and youth).