

## Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) Policy

Perspectives Charter Schools adheres to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §11431 et seq. (“McKinney-Vento”) and the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act, 105 ILCS 45/1-1 et seq (“IEHCA”) by ensuring that homeless children and youths have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as is provided to other children and youths. Homeless students will also have access to the education and other services needed to meet academic standards to which all students are held.

This is achieved through implementation of our Students in Temporary Living Situations (“STLS”) program as outlined hereafter.

### Definitions:

**Homeless children and youth** are defined as children and youth who lack a fixed, regular and adequate night-time place of residence, including those who are: sharing housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled up”); living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or camping ground due to lack of alternative, adequate accommodations; living in an emergency or transitional shelter; living in a car, park, public place, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station or similar setting; having a primary nighttime residence that is a private or public space not designated or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation; abandoned in a hospital; awaiting foster care placement; or migratory children living in any of the circumstances described above.

**Parent** means the parent or guardian having legal or physical custody of the child or any adult caregiver with whom the child lives.

**Unaccompanied homeless youth** are youth or children who are not in the physical care or custody of a parent or guardian and include youth who have been denied housing by their parent, youth who have run away from home even if their parent states a desire for the youth to return home, and youth discharged after a stay in juvenile detention but not to the care of an adult.

**“Enrollment”** means enrolled into the school, attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

## Enrollment

A homeless child or youth is entitled to immediate enrollment at any of the following: (1) The school in which the student was enrolled when permanently housed (school of origin as defined under McKinney-Vento and IEHCA); (2) The school in which the student was last enrolled, (school of origin as defined under McKinney-Vento and IEHCA); or (3) Any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the homeless child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

Even if unable to produce health, immunization or school records, proof of guardianship, or proof of residents, a homeless child or youth will immediately be enrolled in the school of school of origin or meeting the definition of “school”. Once enrolled, a homeless child or youth is allowed to remain enrolled in the selected school for as long as the child remains homeless or if the child becomes permanently housed, until the end of the school year.

For 9th grade students who are homeless and were homeless in 8th grade, the feeder high school for the 8th grade school of origin becomes the school of origin for 9th grade.

If a homeless student’s elementary school of origin does not go through 8th grade, the feeder elementary school for the next grade becomes the student’s school of origin.

A homeless child or youth has the right to apply to Perspectives in the same manner as students who are permanently housed.

## Transportation

Perspectives will ensure that transportation is provided to homeless children or youths who chose to continue attending their school of origin through utilizing the resources of Chicago Public Schools’ STLS Program. If a child or youth becomes homeless and chooses to remain in the student’s school of origin, each school upon learning of the student’s homelessness, must notify the student and parent of the availability of transportation services, if such services are necessary for the homeless child or youth to continue attendance at the school of origin. If such services are necessary, Perspectives will strive to provide CTA transportation assistance to the school of origin immediately upon request but no later than three school days of the request. If a student becomes permanently housed and is receiving transportation to the school of origin, the student will be entitled to transportation until the end of the school year during which he/she becomes permanently housed.

The parents of students in grades 6 who are eligible for transportation will also receive public transportation assistance to enable them to accompany their child to/from school and school related activities, including but not limited to extracurricular activities, report card pick-up, IEP meetings, graduation, and parent teacher conferences, on the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). Perspectives staff have the right to verify whether CTA assistance provided to a parent is

actually used to transport the homeless child to/from school. In any case in which a parent fails to accompany a homeless child on a regular basis despite provision of CTA assistance, the school may provide the parent with daily CTA assistance that the parent will pick-up at the child's school. Any parent of students in grades PK-6 who are eligible for transportation and are denied CTA assistance pursuant to this policy has the right to file a dispute.

Transportation assistance is provided to students and parents for the educational purpose of transporting students to and from school and school activities. Students and parents receiving transportation assistance in the form of CTA Ventra cards must adhere to the terms of the Ventra User Agreement and comply with all other CTA rules and regulations. Perspectives has the right to audit the use of the CTA Ventra cards and to investigate whether a student or parent of a student misused a Ventra card (e.g. use on a non-attendance day for non-school related activities, use during school hours other than to transport to/from school, re-sell the card, etc.).

**Hardship Transportation:** If the parent is unable to accompany his/her child on public transportation to their school of origin due to a hardship, the parent and/or unaccompanied youth may apply for hardship transportation service by submitting documentation or affidavit of the parent's inability to transport the student. The District will strive to provide hardship transportation as soon as possible but no later than ten school days of approval of the request. While awaiting hardship transportation to the school of origin, the student and parent will receive CTA transportation support. Hardship for purposes of this policy means that:

- The parent is employed or enrolled in and attending a bona fide job training or education program which precludes the parent from transporting the parent's child(ren) to/from school; OR
- The parent is mentally or physically disabled and such disability precludes the parent from transporting the parent's child(ren) to/from school; OR
- The parent is responsible for transporting the parent's children to schools at different locations; OR
- The parent resides in a shelter or similar facility which will not permit the parent to leave to transport the child(ren) to/from school; OR
- The parent is required by court order, Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) or a DCFS contract agency to engage in services which prohibit the parent from transporting the child(ren) to/from school; OR
- There is other good cause to find that a hardship exists which warrants the provision of alternative transportation; AND
- For each hardship defined above, the school may verify the information supporting such hardship. If the school is unable to verify the hardship, then the parent is required to execute an affidavit asserting the truth of the facts supporting the existence of hardship. Any parent determined to have provided false information for the purpose of securing hardship transportation under this policy may be denied such transportation.

If a homeless student's temporary residence is outside the City of Chicago and the student continues to attend Perspectives as the student's school of origin or the student's temporary

residence is in the City of Chicago and the student continues to attend the student's school of origin in another Illinois school district, Perspectives will collaborate with the school district in which the homeless child or youth is living or attending to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing transportation to and from the school of origin, and school related activities, including but not limited to extracurricular activities, report card pick-up, IEP meetings, graduation, and parent teacher conferences. Students who are homeless and qualify for transportation under another Perspectives program, such as pursuant to an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be provided such transportation as their non-homeless peers.

**Fee Waivers, School Supplies, Uniforms, Tutoring, and Credit Recovery:** To ensure continued enrollment in school and school activities, homeless students enrolled at Perspectives will have access to adequate and appropriate school supplies and school uniforms, waiver of school fees consistent with Perspective's Fee Waiver Policy, free school meals, and tutoring services beyond those provided to all students of at least one hour per week upon request. Perspectives will identify and remove any barrier that prevents unaccompanied homeless youths and youths separated from public schools from receiving appropriate high school credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.

If a school requires school uniforms or dress codes, the school will assist the family of each homeless student who is unable to supply the student's own uniform to obtain a minimum of two sets of uniforms or appropriate school clothing per year to avoid stigmatization and to allow for proper hygiene and washing of uniforms.

Homeless Liaisons: Perspectives will designate an appropriate Network staff person to be Perspectives Liaison for homeless students and their families and to lead the Perspectives STLS program. For the 2021-2022 school year the Perspectives STLS Liaisons are:

**McKinney Vento Liaison for Perspectives Charter Schools Network**

Amy Gambrel, Vice President of Student Supports  
[agambrel@pcsedu.org](mailto:agambrel@pcsedu.org) or 312-604-2200.

**McKinney Vento Liaison for Perspectives Leadership Academy**

Meloney Cook, Social Worker  
[mcook@pcsedu.org](mailto:mcook@pcsedu.org) or 773-658-6100

**McKinney Vento Liaison for Perspectives High School of Technology**

Meloney Cook, Social Worker  
[mcook@pcsedu.org](mailto:mcook@pcsedu.org) or 773-658-6100

**McKinney Vento Liaison for Perspectives Math and Science Academy**

Saint Turner, Office Manager  
[sturner@pcsedu.org](mailto:sturner@pcsedu.org) or 773-358-6800

## **McKinney Vento Liaison for Perspectives Rodney D. Joslin**

Sedalia Allen, Office Manager

[sallen@pcsedu.org](mailto:sallen@pcsedu.org) or 312-225-7400

Each Perspectives STLS Liaison will assist with identifying and enrolling homeless students in the school and facilitating student access to STLS program benefits. In addition, the school STLS Liaison will attend all mandatory training regarding Perspectives STLS program, its requirements and procedures; ensure homeless students are sensitively identified and given information and assistance in regards to the choice of schools; ensure homeless students are immediately enrolled in the school of origin or "school" as defined above; notify the student and parent of the availability of transportation services if a homeless child or youth chooses to remain in the student's school of origin and such services are necessary for the homeless child or youth to continue attendance at the school of origin; maintain on-going communication with homeless youth and families and provide referrals to community services that may address barriers to enrollment, attendance, and success in school, including health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services and other appropriate services; provide all STLS program benefits in a timely manner; provide to eligible students attending their school of origin transportation assistance in a timely manner; provide the student and family a written copy of the notice of rights of homeless students, which includes information regarding their rights and dispute resolution; display the annual poster provided by the CPS STLS Department; and if a dispute arises, the liaison will explain to the parent/ unaccompanied youth the dispute process and provide him/her with the proper forms, and referrals to free and low cost legal services.

Training: Perspectives will provide mandatory training two times per school year or as otherwise stated by Chicago Public Schools on the educational rights of homeless children/youths and their parents to Principals, school STLS Liaisons and school clerks who work with homeless children and youths. Principals will annually provide training opportunities for all school staff on the 5 educational rights of homeless students and notify in writing the STLS Liaison when such training has occurred.

Perspectives Website: A Perspectives designee will annually publish on the Perspectives website the requirements, procedures and protocols for the STLS program and will make updates to the website as necessary and appropriate. The website will provide important information for homeless families including, how to access the STLS program, including contact information for the STLS department, enroll in the school of origin or other eligible school, eligibility requirements for transportation services to and from the school of origin including hardship transportation, availability of other STLS program benefits (e.g. school uniforms, schools supplies, fee waivers) including access and eligibility requirements, process for dispute resolution, and a phone number to reach the STLS program for assistance.

Dispute Resolution: Perspectives will ensure a fair and expeditious process for resolving disputes between a school and any homeless child, parent or youth regarding enrollment, eligibility, school selection and/or transportation.

Program Inquiries: Any individual alleging the abridgement of the educational rights of homeless children or youth by PCS, other than denial of enrollment, eligibility, school selection or transportation such as denial of school fee waiver, or raising any issue of discrimination, such as unfair treatment of student or family because of their homelessness, should contact the Perspectives STLS Designee at 312-604-2200 for assistance in addressing their complaint.

Notification: Twice per year, Perspectives will direct a designee to provide written notice to all students enrolled in Perspectives and their parents containing information regarding the educational rights of homeless children and youth under this policy and under the federal and state law. Principals are to ensure this notice is distributed to families and posted in a prominent location within the school.

Support and Oversight: Perspectives' STLS Liaison will establish all necessary forms, timelines, annual notices, procedures, protocols and webpages for the effective implementation and oversight of this policy. The Principal will provide oversight to ensure the implementation of all aspects of this policy at his/her school, including identification of homeless students, immediate enrollment, including full participation in school related activities and provision of required notifications.

#### Homeless Resources/Links

[Chicago Public Schools Student in Temporary Living Situations](#)

[Regional Homeless Liaisons--State of Illinois](#)

[Student Registration and Enrollment Guidance](#)