

Title of Session	Description & Topic of Breakout Session
Guardians of Access: McKinney-Vento 101	<p>In this action-packed introductory session, we'll uncover the basics of McKinney-Vento and explore the superpowers educators have to support students experiencing homelessness. Whether it's providing stability, removing barriers, or ensuring access to education, you'll learn how to become the hero every student deserves. Suit up, and get ready to join the league of champions for student success!</p> <p>(McKinney-Vento 101)</p>
Guardians of Students Experiencing Homelessness	<p>You may not be a guardian of the galaxy, but liaisons and other staff who support students experiencing homelessness can increase their ability to protect the rights of these students and improve the provision of services by taking a deep dive into local needs to identify opportunities. Using the NCHE Local Education Agency Informal Needs Assessment, this session will provide time for staff to work through selected focus areas with colleagues. Bring your data, be ready to roll up your sleeves and share innovative ideas, Quad Blasters are optional.</p> <p>(Local Needs Assessment)</p>
The Only Limit is the One You Set for Yourself: Supporting Older Youth Experiencing Homelessness	<p>Spider-Man had the right idea. Join this session to explore what we know about the challenges and resources that affect older youth experiencing homelessness as they navigate the transition from high school to post-secondary opportunities. Explore tips that allow these young people to acknowledge and navigate structural barriers, break free from perceived limits, and thrive.</p> <p>(Older Youth - Higher Ed)</p>
Calling ALL Heroes: Building a Sustainable Training and Awareness Plan for School Staff and Community Partners	<p>This session will create a collaborative space for participants to examine the current practices and tools used for training school staff and community partners and to explore ways to grow their league of McKinney-Vento superheroes to achieve greater awareness around McKinney-Vento procedures and the needs of students experiencing homelessness. Moreover, participants will be encouraged to develop creative approaches to illustrating the unique role that school staff and community partners can play in connecting these students with the supports they need to succeed in school.</p> <p>(Training & Awareness Plans)</p>

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Guardians of Attendance: Supercharging the Approach to Attendance Support	<p>Every student deserves a team of heroes behind them, especially those navigating homelessness or housing instability. This session equips educators to become Guardians of Attendance by supercharging the practices that help students stay connected to school. We'll start with Tier 1 foundations: creating a warm and welcoming environment, building strong relationships, and engaging families as partners. Then, we'll go deeper into Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports designed specifically for students experiencing homelessness, including targeted interventions, cross-agency coordination, and strategies to reduce barriers. Walk away with a toolkit of high-impact practices to ensure every student has the support they need to attend, engage, and thrive.</p> <p>(Attendance)</p>
The Eligibility League - Making McKinney-Vento Determinations	<p>Not every hero's path is clear—and neither are all McKinney-Vento eligibility decisions. In this session, we'll step into the arena of complex housing situations. Using your problem-solving powers and a knowledge of the law, you'll learn strategies for superpowered sleuthing to make tough eligibility determinations, building your "Eligibility League," and ensuring tomorrow's heroes are appropriately identified and supported in schools.</p> <p>(Eligibility)</p>
Truth, Justice, and Better Tomorrow! The Real Purpose of Monitoring	<p>No brass knuckles! No interrogation lamps! Not even Wonder Woman's Lasso of Truth! While the word monitoring causes pulses to race, it's important to remember the purpose is improving services we provide to our students. This session will review the process for McKinney-Vento monitoring in Virginia and walk participants through the protocol, offering suggestions for documentation and strategies that have been successful.</p> <p>(Preparing for Monitoring)</p>
Flame On! Supporting Older Youth Experiencing Homelessness	<p>You don't have to be one of the Fantastic Four to fuel the desire for success that high school students experiencing homelessness need. This session will focus on ways to support McKinney-Vento students with the resources they need to complete high school and achieve success beyond.</p> <p>(Older Youth - High School)</p>

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Hope as Our Superpower, Ethics as Our Compass	<p>Hope is our superpower—but how we use it matters. This engaging session explores real-life ethical dilemmas and boundary challenges faced when working with students experiencing homelessness. Through thought-provoking discussion and practical examples, participants will examine how to support students with compassion while maintaining professional integrity, protecting both those we serve and ourselves.</p> <p>(Ethics)</p>
I Have the Power! Navigating Best Interest Determinations and the Dispute Resolution Process	<p>Prince Adam knew what to say to become He-Man. This session will give participants the opportunity to explore common scenarios of conflict, applying the steps in Virginia's dispute resolution process and practicing communication skills while working with families. Come ready to roleplay!</p> <p>(Best Interest & Dispute Resolution)</p>
Leveraging Cross-School and Division Partnerships to Remove Barriers for Students Experiencing Homelessness	<p>This session will explore how McKinney-Vento Liaisons in a large, geographically diverse school division collaborate with school-based teams and community partners to support students experiencing homelessness. Attendees will gain practical strategies for building and sustaining effective partnerships with school-based staff including Family Liaisons, Registrars, and School Mental Health Staff as well as local organizations. The presentation will highlight ways to coordinate services, maximize available resources, and ensure that liaison responsibilities are fulfilled while meeting the unique needs of students experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>(Interdivisional Collaboration)</p>
Faster Than a Speeding Bullet! McKinney-Vento Hot Topics	<p>Well, maybe not quite THAT fast. This session will give participants the opportunity to visit three roundtables to discuss a variety of hot topics. Title I set asides, professional development tips, transportation, community supports, and regional liaison partnerships are just some of the areas you will be able to explore.</p> <p>(Hot Topic Round Table Discussions)</p>

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The Local Response to Homelessness: How It Started, How It's Going, and What Considerations Can Be Made to Address It Across Sectors	<p>This session will cover the context driving homelessness in rural and hybrid rural/metro regions and share on the implications of the affordable housing crisis, tenant rights, and malpractices such as redlining that are impacting progress on addressing homelessness and what public and private sectors can do in partnership with the education sector to effect change. This session will also highlight a specific program model out of Richmond, VA called Bringing Families Home that serves as an example solution for consideration.</p> <p>(Local Housing Response to Homelessness)</p>
What is Your Kryptonite? Using Your Superpowers to Lessen Its Effects	<p>Every hero faces Kryptonite. This session explores common McKinney-Vento challenges and equips participants—whether you're just starting out or a seasoned pro—with practical strategies to overcome them. Attendees will discover their unique “Superpowers,” learn how to activate them, and SUPER emPOWER themselves while strengthening support for students experiencing homelessness and their families. Leave ready to put your superpowers into action, no matter your experience level.</p> <p>(Overcoming McKinney-Vento Challenges)</p>
PLUS AWESOME KEYNOTES!	<p>Jeannette Walls is the author of the perennially bestselling, extraordinary memoir, <i>The Glass Castle</i>, which has been a New York Times bestseller for more than eight years. She takes audiences inside her resilient life journey, demonstrating that we all have more in common than we think, and that our flaws can be our greatest assets.</p> <p>Jeannette will lead a breakout immediately following her keynote and will then do a book signing (spoiler alert - you'll receive a complimentary copy of <i>The Glass Castle</i> when you sign in at the conference.)</p> <p>Barbara Duffield, Executive Director of School House Connection;</p> <p>“The Steadiness of Superheroes: Leading in Unsteady Times”: McKinney-Vento liaisons and support staff are often the steady force when everything else is shifting: policy, staffing, public narratives, and the day-to-day realities families face. Drawing on three decades in this work (and the hard-won lessons of recent turbulence), we'll take a brief “travel through time” to highlight a few pivotal moments that shaped today’s McKinney-Vento landscape, then bring it home to where we are now: the powerful strengths, instincts, and practices McKinney-Vento professionals already have in place to ensure that students can stay connected to school – no matter what changes around us.</p>

Melissa Gaona, now a news anchor with a local CBS station, a trafficking advocate for the The Lampstand and Founder of Ignition Ministries, Melissa will share her story of lived experience.

At the age of 7, her family found themselves homeless and living in a women's shelter for survivors of domestic violence. By the time she was a pre-teen, Melissa was drowning in depression and drug addiction. But something in Melissa's life shifted.

Melissa will also be leading a breakout session immediately following her keynote. The hard, but necessary topic, **trafficking**.

Patricia Popp and **Laura Hackett**, EHCY State Coordinator and EHCY Assistant State Coordinator

Superman invites us all to be superheroes. We'll pull interesting scenarios from the TA calls we receive. See if you would respond the same way! We'll walk through the thought process we use and have time for more! Capes optional. A favorite returns with items **from our inbox**.