



Illinois State Board of Education

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Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

November 2008

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Education

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP): Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program

General Information

Eligible Applicants: School districts, public university laboratory schools approved by the Illinois State Board of Education, and charter schools are eligible to apply.

Joint applications for funds may be submitted by any combination of eligible applicants. If a joint application is submitted, then an administrative agent must be designated and each district superintendent or, in the case of other eligible applicants, each official authorized to submit the proposal, must sign the application. An eligible applicant may participate in only one proposal.

Grant Award: Approximately \$3 million will be available to fund programs under this RFP in FY 2009. It is anticipated that approximately 75 to 100 programs will be funded, with the final number of projects subject to the needs addressed and the total amounts requested in the top-ranked proposals.

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than January 1, 2009, and will extend from the execution date of the grant until June 30, 2009. Funding will be available for two additional years contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program in subsequent fiscal years and satisfactory performance by the grantee in the preceding fiscal year.

Application Deadline: Mail the original and three copies to Peggy Dunn, Principal Education Consultant, Grants and Programs Division, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, N242, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001, to ensure receipt no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 15, 2008. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered. No FAX or electronically submitted copies will be accepted.

Proposals also may be hand-delivered by the deadline noted above to the following locations:

Springfield Office

Information Center

1st Floor

100 North First Street

Chicago Office

Reception Area

Suite 14-300

100 West Randolph Street

Electronic Bidders' Conference: An electronic bidders' conference will be accessible starting November 18, 2008, to provide potential bidders with explanations or interpretations of the RFP through a question-and-answer format that will be updated weekly. The website is accessible at <http://www.isbe.net/homeless> and will remain available until December 12, 2008.

All suggestions and responses to questions from eligible applicants will be posted to the website; therefore, it is advisable to check the website weekly as updates will be posted. No new information will be posted to the website after December 8, 2008. Applicants are strongly advised to check this site before submitting their proposals.

Should the conditions of this RFP materially change as a result of the electronic bidders' conference, the State Board of Education will announce the changes on <http://www.isbe.net/homeless>.

Contact Person: For more information on this RFP, contact Peggy Dunn, Principal Education Consultant, Grants and Programs Division, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, N242, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001, 217-524-4832, or madunn@isbe.net.

Background

The Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program is intended to supplement but operate independently of programs funded under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 in order to facilitate the enrollment, attendance and educational success of homeless children and youths so that they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state standards to which all students are held. Funded for the first time in FY 2009, services and activities provided under the program are to be in addition to the regular academic program and should be designed to meet the individual needs of homeless children and youth attending the schools of the district. The program also supports the state Education for Homeless Children Act (105 ILCS 45).

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 requires all school districts – regardless of whether they receive federal funding under the act – to meet certain requirements (see <http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html>). These requirements address:

- identification of a homeless liaison;
- adoption of policies and practices to ensure that students are not segregated or stigmatized due to their homeless status, as well as to ensure that transportation is provided to and from the school of origin at the request of the parent, guardian, unaccompanied youth, caregiver, or surrogate education guardian;
- equal access to services and programs provided to other children in the school, such as transportation services, preschool and education programs for which the student meets

eligibility criteria (i.e., Title I or similar state or local programs; programs for students with limited English proficiency; vocational or technical programs; gifted and talented programs; and school nutrition programs); and

- enrollment decisions based on the student's "best interest" that include immediate enrollment of the child or youth in school, even if the child or youth lacks records normally required for enrollment (e.g., previous academic records, medical records, immunization records, proof of residency, birth certificate or other records).

The state Education of Homeless Children Act makes certain requirements relative to school enrollment, transportation, and dispute resolution. (For further detail, see <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs5.asp?ActID=1013&ChapAct=105%26nbsp%3BILCS%26nbsp%3B45%2F&ChapterID=17&ChapterName=SCHOOLS&ActName=Education+for+Homeless+Children+Act%2E>).

Currently, school districts throughout Illinois are required to comply with the federal McKinney-Vento Act, the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act, and the Policy of the Illinois State Board of Education on the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (see <http://www.isbe.net/homeless/pdf/policy.pdf>). A primary purpose of these laws is to ensure that children experiencing homelessness are immediately enrolled in and continuously attending school; are maintained whenever possible in the same school despite a change in their living arrangements; are identified by school districts; and are provided with support sufficient to enable them to succeed as students. This competitive grant process seeks to stimulate school districts throughout the state to develop local responses to local needs. (See Appendix A for additional program considerations.)

In awarding a grant under the state homeless program, the Illinois State Board of Education will consider both the need of the school district (i.e., number of homeless children and youths enrolled in preschool, elementary, and secondary schools; the needs of these children and youth; the ability of the school district to meet their needs; the ability of the district to meet the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act and the state homeless education act) and the quality of the services proposed (i.e., likelihood that the services proposed will meet the needs identified; ability to coordinate with existing service entities; involvement of parents and guardians in the education of their children; quality of the proposed evaluation plan). (See "Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals", page 9.)

Program Specifications

Identification of Need

In order to propose a coherent delivery system of high-quality services for homeless children and youth, an applicant must first conduct a comprehensive needs assessment. As part of this assessment, an applicant should identify the potential number of children in its area who are homeless or might become homeless, whether or not the child is enrolled in school. This information should be gathered from school districts, homeless shelters, social services agencies and other community groups that may work with people who are homeless. Demographic characteristics of the area may also be used to gauge the likelihood that families may become homeless, and an applicant should consider rates of unemployment, influx of immigrants, and the health of the business and industrial sectors in the community.

Allowable Activities

The funds provided under the Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program may be used for activities that carry out the purpose of the federal Education of Homeless Children and Youth program, including those listed below. Services and activities may be provided on school grounds or at other facilities. All services and activities must be provided to the maximum extent practicable, through existing programs and mechanisms that integrate homeless children and youth with non-homeless children and youth. Additionally, all services and activities must be designed to expand or improve services provided as part of the school's regular academic program, but **not to replace such services provided under that program.**

1. Tutoring, supplemental instruction, and enriched educational services that are linked to the achievement of the same challenging state standards established for other children and youth (i.e., Illinois Learning Standards; see <http://www.isbe.net/ils/Default.htm>).
2. Expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of homeless children and youth, including their need and eligibility for programs and services (including gifted and talented programs, special education programs, programs for students with limited English proficiency, alternative education programs and remedial services).
3. Professional development and other activities for educators and other school personnel that are designed to develop awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of homeless children and youth and the rights of such children under the McKinney Act and the state Education for Homeless Children Act.
4. Referral services to homeless children and youth for medical, dental, mental and other health services and documentation of all referrals and outcomes.
5. Assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation for students not otherwise provided through federal, state, or local funding, where necessary to enable students to attend school.
6. Developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs for homeless children of preschool age that are not provided through other federal, state, or local funds.
7. Services and assistance to attract, engage, and retain homeless children and youth, and unaccompanied youth, in public school programs and services that are provided to non-homeless children and youth.
8. Before- and after-school, mentoring, and summer programs for homeless children and youth in which a teacher or other qualified individuals provide tutoring, homework assistance, and supervision of educational activities.
9. Where necessary, the payment of fees and other costs associated with tracking, obtaining and transferring records necessary to enroll homeless children and youth in school, including birth certificates, immunization records, academic records, guardianship records, and evaluations for special programs or services.
10. Parent education and training for the parents of homeless children and youth about the rights of and resources available to such children and youth.
11. Coordination between schools and agencies providing services to homeless children and youth to expand and enhance such services.
12. Counseling, social work and psychological services, including violence counseling and referrals for such services with documentation of the referral and outcome report of such services.
13. Activities to address the particular needs of homeless children and youth that may arise from domestic violence which can include education for school and community members about the impact and effects on children of domestic violence.

14. The adaptation of space and the purchase of supplies for non-school facilities and services made available to homeless children and youth.
15. School supplies to be distributed at shelters or temporary housing facilities documenting the number of children served, ages, and grades (no names).
16. Other extraordinary or emergency assistance essential to enable homeless children and youth to enroll and retain such children and youth in school.

Coordination with Other Providers

School districts are required to coordinate and document their homeless efforts with other service providers and programs that provide assistance to homeless families. Coordination must be designed to:

- Ensure that homeless children and youth have access and reasonable proximity to activities and related support services; and
- Raise the awareness of school personnel and service providers of the effects of short-term stays in shelters and other challenges with ongoing education and training efforts.

Fiscal Information

Approximately \$3 million will be available for FY 2009. Individual grant award determinations will be based upon the applicant's demonstrated need, and the quality of the proposed activities and their likelihood of increasing school attendance and achievement as a result of the supplemental services.

Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant funds may be used only to supplement, and not supplant any local, state, or federal funds used to support the applicant's current programs, including any costs associated with personnel. Administrative costs cannot exceed 5 percent of the approved grant amount.

Proposed expenditures will be approved only if they directly relate to the provision of one or more of the allowable services and activities enumerated on pages 4 and 5. Any proposed expenditure must be reasonable and necessary to carry out the program's purpose and objectives. Applicants are advised that while it is the intention of the ISBE to fund programs for a three-year period, funding is not guaranteed. Therefore, applicants should carefully consider their use of grant funds to hire additional personnel.

Grant funds **may not** be used for:

- Equipment, including cell phones, other communication technology purchases, computers, Whiteboards, Smartboards, or similar items;
- technology services;
- Out-of-state travel;
- Remodeling or facility adaptation of any space not used directly by homeless children and youth in their receipt of allowable services and activities.

Any applicant with questions about whether certain expenditures would be allowable under the grant may contact the Homeless Education State Coordinator (see page 2 for contact information).

Proposal Format

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal. Incomplete proposals, proposals submitted without an original signature, proposals with narratives longer than 10 pages, and proposals with unrequested attachments, including letters of support, will not be reviewed. Proposals must be clipped or stapled, not bound.

Each proposal must be submitted in the format outlined below and must be double spaced using 10 point font. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed proposal.

- ___ **1. Cover Page (Attachment 1):** Must be signed by the school district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal.
- ___ **2. Joint Application (Attachment 1a):** Joint proposals must have the signature of the superintendent of each participating school district or agency official authorized to submit the proposal, in the case of other eligible applicants. Joint applications must designate either the superintendent of one of the participating school districts, or official from one of the participating entities, to serve as the administrative agent. Eligible applicants may participate in only one proposal for a specific initiative.
- ___ **3. Proposal Abstract (Attachment 2):** Provide a brief overview of the project. Briefly describe the overall objectives and activities of the project.
- ___ **4. Proposal Narrative:** Respond to each of the requirements, beginning on page 7.
- ___ **5. Goals, Outcomes, Activities, and Measures (Attachment 3):** Use the form provided to list in a time-specific format the objectives of the proposed project and the services and activities to be implemented to meet those objectives (see pages 4 and 5 for allowable services and activities). Additional pages may be used to provide detailed objectives; activities; and measures, tools, and strategies for evaluation of each goal identified for the proposed program.
- ___ **6. Budget Summary and Payment Schedule (Attachment 4):** Must be submitted on the form provided and signed by the district superintendent or official authorized to submit the proposal. The payment schedule should be based on the projected date of expenditures. Salaries and fringe benefits should be requested in equal intervals on the schedule. Supplies, equipment, contracted services and professional development should be requested in the month for which the expenditure is anticipated.
- ___ **7. Budget Narrative (Attachment 5):** Must include descriptions of the anticipated expenditures, correlated to the line items set forth on the Budget Summary. Itemize and explain each expenditure amount. Provide a thorough description for each function and object.

Use Attachment 5 to provide the information required under item 7 of the document titled “Certification and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant” (Attachment 6) directly

linking the subcontracting activities to the expenditures detailed on the Budget Breakdown.

- **8. Certifications and Assurances (Attachments 6 and 7):** Each applicant is required to submit the two certification forms attached (“Certification and Assurances, and Standard Terms of the Grant” and “Program-Specific Terms of the Grant”) with the original proposal (no copies are needed). The forms must be signed by the school district superintendent or official legally authorized to submit the proposal and to bind the applicant to its contents.

Narrative Requirements

Following the format below, respond to each requirement in the order presented. Limit the proposal narrative to 10 pages.

1. Needs Assessment

- a. Indicate the area that the applicant intends to serve and include the number in each of the categories below that operate in that area.

School Districts	_____
School Buildings/Attendance Centers	_____
Teachers	_____
Administrators	_____
Shelters	_____
• Family Homeless Shelters	_____
• Domestic Violence Shelters	_____
• Transitional Shelter Housing Programs	_____
Community Groups	_____

- b. Describe the process used to determine the need for homeless services in your area. This description should at least include the entities involved in the process, the demographic and other statistical information gathered, methods used, and, as applicable, the number of homeless children and youth currently residing in the area.
- c. Describe the barriers (i.e., educational and related needs) faced by homeless children and youths residing in the attendance areas of the school district(s) to be served by the applicant. Address each barrier separately using the section headings below. It may be helpful to consult with local homeless shelters, homeless coalitions, families and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness, food banks, and other service providers to identify specific barriers.

Indicate the services and activities, as enumerated on Attachment 3 that will be implemented to improve and remove each of the barriers identified.

Barriers to School Enrollment faced by homeless children and youths residing in the attendance area(s) of the school district(s) in the region to be served. For example, a

barrier exists when homeless families with children and youths are living with other families or relatives and are routinely denied enrollment in the district because they do not live in shelters, lack valid leases, and lack utility or other bills.

Barriers to School Attendance faced by homeless children and youths residing in the attendance area(s) of the school district(s) in the region to be served. For example, a barrier exists when homeless children are unable to secure transportation to and from school.

Barriers to School Success faced by homeless children and youths residing in the attendance area(s) of the school district(s) in the region to be served. For example, a barrier exists when due to the amount of class time missed, the academic achievement levels of the homeless students in the area to be served by the program are below grade level or a homeless youth is unable to accumulate necessary credits for graduation.

- d. Describe any challenges that the district has encountered in meeting the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 and/or the state Education for Homeless Children Act, including steps that have been taken to address those challenges. List the specific areas in which assistance is needed and provide a rationale for how funding under this program will enable the district to effectively address existing deficiencies.
2. **Program Description:** Describe the proposed activities and services to be provided (see allowable uses on pages 4 and 5) and how these activities and services will meet the needs of the homeless children and youth to be served.
3. **Local Coordination:** Describe how the applicant will ensure effective coordination with other providers serving homeless families.
4. **Staffing:** Describe the qualifications of the staff responsible for the proposed activities and other services. This description must include the background, experience, and qualifications of the school district and school homeless liaisons and any other personnel to be assigned to the project specific to their ability to manage, coordinate, and complete each of the activities to which they will be assigned.
5. **Evaluation:** Describe the data to be collected and the specific methods to be used to determine the success of the program in ensuring that homeless children and youth receive the supports and services necessary for them to meet the Illinois Learning Standards.

Describe how the evaluation results will be used in the continued development and improvement of the program.

Criteria for Review and Approval of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated in comparison with other Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program proposals received by ISBE, based upon the criteria below. Final determination for selection will be made by the State Superintendent of Education.

1. There is sufficient need for the program, as evidenced by the number or proportion of students identified as eligible for program services. Convincing evidence is presented of the applicant's inability to adequately meet the needs of its homeless children and youth without the additional assistance provided pursuant to the state homeless program. (25 points)
2. The proposed activities and other services to be provided have a strong potential for helping the applicant design and continue programs that enable homeless children and youth to achieve stability and integration within the regular education programs in order to reach the same challenging state content and student performance standards to which all children and youths are held, including preparation for self-sufficiency. The proposed activities and services address effective mechanisms for involving parents or guardians of homeless children and youth in the education of their children. (35 points)
3. **Coordination with Other Providers.** The proposal demonstrates that effective coordination with private, non-profit entities, social services agencies and others serving homeless children and youths and their families will occur, as necessary, so that the applicant is able to provide services that are appropriate and comprehensive. (15 points)
4. **Evaluation.** The proposed evaluation process is designed to assess the effectiveness of the program's activities and services in relation to the program's goals and objectives and likely to produce data that can be used to improve the program. (15 points)
5. **Budget Summary and Budget Information:** The proposed budget is consistent with the proposal's activities and appears to be cost-effective. (10 points)

Education of Homeless Children and Youth Programs: Staffing Considerations
(Provided by the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless)

Education of Homeless Children and Youth programs that have the best results are those serving homeless students in districts throughout the country where financial support is provided for adequate staffing. At least one staff person assigned full time or part time can dedicate sufficient effort to fully addressing the challenges a district faces in educating homeless students and working with homeless families. These staff are able to drive change, develop new ideas and adapt in their respective school systems.

Under the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth program, each school must designate a liaison for the education of homeless children and youth (see Section 722 of the law; <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg116.html>). Currently, all school districts in Illinois have designated a homeless liaison.

In determining whether additional staff should be hired with grant funds, an applicant must consider the needs of the homeless children and youth that it serves, as well as its current capacity to meet those students' needs. Depending on the local needs and service gaps identified, exemplary programs, for example, may address the following.

- Support for the district homeless liaison position to enable the liaison to focus on a particular need or service.
- Creation of and support for dedicated youth worker positions. Workers could circulate throughout the community to locate and re-enroll homeless youth, develop effective credit recovery plans and offer counseling, mentoring or case management support to ensure such youth graduate.
- Creation and support for dedicated early childhood worker positions. Workers could circulate throughout the community (not simply in shelters) to locate homeless families with young children, facilitate enrollment, and streamline access to available birth-to-three and preschool programs operated by the district or other providers, offering transportation support where necessary.
- Creation and support for dedicated social worker positions. Workers could act as parent coordinators working directly with families to locate and apply for housing resources, counseling, mental and medical health services, recreational and educational activities in the community, and subsistence needs (income, food, clothing, etc.).
- Creation and support for dedicated case manager positions. Case managers could assist homeless families whose children have Individualized Education Programs or need assessments to determine eligibility for special education and other services.
- Creation and support for dedicated certified teacher positions. These teachers could provide an enriched after-school program that could include family participation.