

# Frequently Asked Questions

## *Homeless Student Transportation Project*

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### ***What is Washington State's Homeless Student Transportation Project?***

The Washington State Homeless Students Transportation Project is funding eight school districts/consortia to use a variety of transportation methods --from yellow school buses to taxis-- to enable homeless students to remain in their schools or origin.

### ***What is the McKinney-Vento Act?***

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 requires schools to provide homeless students equal access to free public education as is provided to other students, including removing transportation barriers to allow homeless students to remain in their schools of origin. Senator Patty Murray secured \$1 million to fund this pilot program in Washington State. [Text of McKinney-Vento Act from U.S. Department of Education](#)

### ***How is the project funded and structured?***

The project is funded through the [Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation](#) (ACCT). ACCT is a coalition of State agencies, transportation providers, consumer advocates, and legislators who work to coordinate efficient special needs transportation. Senator Patty Murray secured \$1 million to fund this pilot program in Washington State. The participating school districts and consortia are:

#### **Central Valley School District**

Spokane County

#### **Clarkston School District**

Asotin County

#### **Everett School District**

Snohomish County

#### **North Central Educational Service District**

Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan Counties

#### **Northwest Educational Service District**

Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties

#### **Spokane School District**

Spokane County

#### **Puget Sound Educational Service District**

King and Pierce Counties

#### **Vancouver School District**

Clark County

### ***Who's doing the evaluation?***

The evaluation is being conducted by an [Evans School of Public Affairs](#) study team through the Washington State Transportation Center (TRAC) at the [University of Washington](#).

### ***What is the purpose of the evaluation?***

The purpose of evaluating the project is to learn how different transportation methods employed in eight areas of the state meet the objectives of the McKinney-Vento Act and could be best utilized by school districts around the country.

The evaluation seeks to answer these basic questions in an effort to meet the intent of federal law and the needs to homeless students:

- Which transportation methods are most cost-effective, appropriate, and reliable for different ages and geographic locations?
- Do students remaining in their school of origin experience higher academic achievement than those students who move to other schools?

### ***How is the evaluation designed?***

The evaluation consists of a quantitative and a qualitative component. Quantitative information that will be collected and reported to the Department of Transportation includes the cost of transportation per student, administrative time spent, student attendance, and student academic achievement. This data will be assembled for homeless students that remain in the school of origin and for students who do not. The qualitative portion of the study consists of interviews with students, parents, and school district transportation coordinators to gain a fuller understanding of the workings of the homeless transportation project from the people most directly involved in it.

### ***Is there a control group in this study?***

This is a preliminary study, so the findings will indicate trends that may be tested in a larger multi-site study that has statistical validity. One of our objectives is to determine if staying in one's school of origin enhances academic achievement. Ideally we would compare homeless students who moved and stayed in their school of origin with students who moved and started attending another school (control group). Since this study does not include the resources to track homeless students who have moved and are now attending another school, we are using homeless students who are new to one of the schools in the study as a proxy control group. If there appears to be a difference in academic achievement between those 2 groups of students, then further research is indicated.

### ***Who are the major stakeholders?***

Homeless students, teachers, school service districts, lawmakers, and taxpayers are important stakeholders in this project. The State Legislature will receive the evaluation report by December 2006.