

McKinney-Vento Subgrant Guidance on Short-Term Emergency Housing

Overview

On **August 4, 2026**, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) released updated guidance regarding the use of McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) subgrant funds for short-term, temporary emergency housing. Specifically, the [EHCY Non-Regulatory Guidance](#) (Question H-5) clarifies that local educational agencies (LEAs) may use McKinney-Vento subgrant funds for short-term, temporary housing, such as hotel or motel stays. This assistance may only be used when necessary to remove an immediate barrier to a student's enrollment, attendance, participation in school activities, or educational stability.

Emergency housing assistance must be considered a **last resort** after all other available housing resources and funding sources have been explored and exhausted. Requests must be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, supported by appropriate documentation, and approved by the Tennessee Department of Education (department) before any expenditure is incurred or a hotel/motel stay begins.

Allowable Costs

LEAs may utilize McKinney-Vento subgrant funds **only** for the actual cost of the approved hotel/motel stays for up to seven (7) days.

Non-allowable costs include:

- Security deposits
- Damage deposits
- Liability expenses
- Incidental charges
- Damages to a hotel, motel, or temporary housing facility
- Long-term housing assistance

As a reminder, McKinney-Vento funds may not be used to provide ongoing or long-term housing assistance. These funds may only be used to address an immediate educational barrier while long-term housing solutions are actively pursued.

Approval Process

All hotel and motel stays require prior approval from the department. Requests must be submitted via email and include the following department staff (contact information is provided below).

- Vanessa Waters, McKinney-Vento Grant Manager
- Brinn Obermiller, Senior Director of ESEA Oversight, and
- Deborah Thompson, Assistant Commissioner of Federal Programs and Oversight.

The request must include a narrative describing the following:

- The student or family situation;
- The educational barrier being addressed;
- Resources and funding sources that have been explored, including documentation when available;
- The requested length of stay;
- The estimated cost, and
- The plan for securing permanent housing.

IMPORTANT: Requests submitted during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, will generally receive a prompt response. If an urgent request is submitted on a weekend, holiday, or outside normal business hours, LEAs are encouraged to contact the individuals listed above by phone in addition to submitting the request via email.

Upon receipt, the department will review the request and issue an approval or denial via email. Once written approval is received, the LEA may proceed with securing the approved temporary housing for the student or family.

The approval email serves as temporary authorization until the LEA updates the budget narrative and related documentation in ePlan.

ePlan Budget Requirements

After receiving approval from the department, the LEA must complete the following actions within the McKinney-Vento subgrant application in ePlan:

- Upload the department's approval email to the Related Documents section.
- Revise the grant budget to reflect the approved expenditure.
 - The budget revision must reflect only the costs approved by the department.
 - Any additional costs or extensions beyond the approved amount or duration require separate department approval.

Contacts

McKinney-Vento Hotel Stay Request Contact List		
Vanessa Waters, McKinney-Vento Grant Manager	Email: Vanesssa.Waters@tn.gov	Phone: (615) 917-3750
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