

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>May 9, 2024</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Additional Severe Weather and Disaster Guidance</b>
<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>Grants and Student Supports</b>
<b>NEXT STEPS:</b>	<b>Share with appropriate staff</b>

The purpose of this letter is to provide additional resources and guidance to school systems impacted by the flooding and heavy rains in East Texas. The guidance is related to potential eligibility for federal disaster grant funds and an outline of key provisions in place to support students and their families who have been displaced by the severe weather.

## Potential Eligibility for Federal Disaster Grant Funds

If the President issues a federal disaster declaration for this natural disaster, your school system may become eligible for grant funds in addition to what may become available under FEMA. In the event this declaration is issued in the future for this disaster, you will have a very short window of time to provide the Texas Education Agency (TEA) with the following types of data to determine grant eligibility:

- List of campuses that were closed (i.e., not open for student instruction or operations for professional development or workshops or teacher work days), and the number of days each campus was closed
- List of allowable expenditures (to be determined by the specific grant program) and estimated or actual cost of these activities to restart or reopen campuses
- Numbers of students displaced from their home campus who officially *enrolled* in a different campus within your school system (do not count students who left your school system).
  - o Track these displaced students specifically by 1) LEP (emergent bilingual) status, 2) students receiving special education services, and 3) students who are not-LEP (not emergent bilingual) and not receiving special education services.
  - o Also identify each displaced student as either homeless or not.

Note these are the typical federal definitions of closed campuses and displaced students and only these defined data normally generate federal funding.

For more information, please contact the Department of Grant Compliance and Administration at [GrantSupport@tea.texas.gov](mailto:GrantSupport@tea.texas.gov) or (512) 463-8992.

## Supports for Students and Families Who Have Been Displaced

Please remember that a child whose family has been displaced due to severe inclement weather (e.g., tornados, hurricanes, and flooding) will generally meet the definition of “homeless” under the federal McKinney-Vento Act Student(s) staying with friends, relatives, or other persons, or staying in a shelter or other temporary location due to loss of housing because of inclement weather and/or disaster are generally considered homeless. McKinney-Vento eligibility is ultimately assessed on a case-by-case basis and is determined locally by the school system’s McKinney-Vento Liaison. School systems can find McKinney-Vento Liaison information by visiting the publicly available [AskTED](#) (Texas Education Directory). Instructions for how to locate your Homeless Liaison in [AskTED](#) are included in the FAQ document below.

In addition, note that “homelessness” is a characteristic of the individual and not a result of a home school district being closed temporarily. Students are not homeless because their local school may have suspended operations for a short period.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth has prepared an [FAQ document](#) to assist in supporting McKinney-Vento students during inclement weather and disasters. For further assistance, school systems are encouraged to reach out to their [McKinney Vento Regional Liaisons](#) at their regional education service centers (ESCs) for additional support and assistance.

## Resources: Grant Funding Opportunities

Additionally, for impacted school systems that are recipients of Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth (TEHCY) Continuation 2023-24 grant; ARP I TEHCY Supplemental and/or ARP Homeless II, there is funding that could be helpful for displaced families during this crisis. TEA has recently expanded the use of funds in these grants to include pre-paid gift and store cards and other uses that may be helpful during this time. For more specifics related to these opportunities please visit the grant erratum provided below:

- [2021-2024 ARP Homeless I-TEHCY Supplemental Grant Errata # 1 \(state.tx.us\)](#)
- [2021-2024 ARP Homeless II Federal Grant Errata # 1 \(state.tx.us\)](#)
- [2023-2024 Texas Education of Homeless Children and Youth \(TEHCY\)-Continuation Errata # 1 \(state.tx.us\)](#)

## Resources: Supporting Students who are Displaced

For more information about the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education program and supporting students who are displaced because of inclement weather and/or disaster, please visit:

- National Center for Homeless Education, [What School District Administrators Should Know About the Educational Rights of Children and Youth Displaced by Disasters](#)
- National Center for Homeless Education, [Meeting the Educational Needs of Students Displaced by Disasters: Youth on Their Own](#)
- National Center for Homeless Education, [Disaster Preparation and Response](#)
- [Implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act](#), including disaster response (planning checklist)
- [Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth](#) (TEHCY)
- Texas Department of State Health Services, [Disaster Response & Recovery](#)
- Texas Department of Agriculture, [Disaster Resources](#)
- U.S. Department of Education, [Natural Disaster Resources](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [Caring for Children in a Disaster](#)

## Resources: Mental Health Supports for Students who are Displaced

A natural disaster impacts the wellbeing of people in multiple ways. The following are some additional resources for supporting the wellbeing of Texans.

- The National Association of School Psychologists provides resources that can help schools emotionally support children, families, and staff:
  - [Natural Disasters: Facts and Tips](#)
  - [Large Scale Natural Disasters: Helping Children Cope](#)
- Texas Department of Emergency Management provides Texans with safety and related resource information: [Spring Storms and Floods 2024](#)

- Texas Health & Human Services Commission:
  - **Dial 2-1-1** for local social services and disaster-related information, such as extreme weather shelters, crisis counseling, and food, rent and utility payment assistance.
- Mental health crisis resources are available 24/7 from your Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) or Local Mental Health Authority (LMHA):
  - Locate your county's [mental health crisis services](#).
- The 988 Suicide Prevention and Lifeline is a service that provides 24/7, free, and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.
  - **Dial 9-8-8** to reach a crisis counselor by phone.
  - A chat function is also available for connection to emotional support 365/24/7: [988 Chat](#).
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provides a toll-free Disaster Distress Helpline at **800-985-5900** and get immediate counseling 24/7.
  - This free, confidential, and multilingual crisis support service is also available via SMS (**text TalkWithUs to 66746**). Users will be connected to trained professionals from crisis counseling centers. Helpline staff provide confidential counseling, referrals, and other support services.

### **Additional Supports and Questions**

For other general weather-related questions, please email [schoolsafety@tea.texas.gov](mailto:schoolsafety@tea.texas.gov).