

Opportunity for the 2026 NAEHCY Conference

To: Local Homeless Liaisons and School District Leaders

From: Kate Ulmer

Date: July 2026

Subject: Invitation to Apply to Attend the 2026 NAEHCY Conference

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is pleased to announce an opportunity for local homeless liaisons and school district staff to attend the 2026 National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) Conference, taking place October 31 – November 3, 2026, in Nashville, Tennessee.

Details:

- **Amount:** Up to \$3,000 per participant
 - The participant's district must agree to cover any costs exceeding \$3,000.
 - Federal regulations consider travel costs to be obligated when the travel is taken. ISBE will not be able to reimburse flight or airline costs in the event that a participant cancels.
- **Eligible Participants:** 1 to 4 individuals per district whose work includes supporting students experiencing homelessness.
- **Covered Costs:** Airfare, luggage fees, conference registration, hotel accommodations, rental car, parking, ride share, and per diem. All travel shall be by the most economical mode of transportation available.
- **Reimbursement Basis:** Funding will be provided through reimbursement after travel is completed, in accordance with federal funding regulations. Districts must submit in IWAS an approved budget of expenses to ISBE with a narrative description of allowable costs to receive reimbursement. Awardees will be provided access to the grant after application approval.

Please note: Funds are **limited** and will be awarded on a **first-come, first-served** basis.

Conference Details

Conference Information:

- [Conference Website](#)
- Changes to conference registration or cancellations must be made before Oct. 12, 2026. ISBE can only reimburse registration costs for participants who attended the conference.

Registration Prices

In-Person Conference Registration:

- **Full Conference Pricing (Includes Pre-Conference Sessions):**
 - \$975 – Member | \$925 Early Bird (until September 15)
 - \$1,000 – Nonmember | \$950 Early Bird (until September 15)
- **Conference Only (No Pre-Conference Sessions):**
 - \$900 – Member | \$850 Early Bird (until September 15)
 - \$975 – Nonmember | \$925 Early Bird (until September 15)

Registration Prices (*continued*)

Virtual On-Demand Conference:

- **Full Conference Pricing (Includes Pre-Conference Sessions):**
 - \$700 – Member | \$650 Early Bird (until September 15)
 - \$770 – Nonmember | \$700 Early Bird (until September 15)
- **Conference Only (No Pre-Conference Sessions):**
 - \$650 – Member | \$600 Early Bird (until September 15)
 - \$725 – Nonmember | \$700 Early Bird (until September 15)
- **Keynote & Career Bundle:**
 - \$400 – Member | \$375 Early Bird (until September 15)
 - \$425 – Nonmember | \$400 Early Bird (until September 15)
- **Single Learning Track:**
 - \$350 – Member | \$300 Early Bird (until September 15)
 - \$400 – Nonmember | \$375 Early Bird (until September 15)

Hotel Information

- The Gaylord Opryland Resort & Convention Center at 2800 Opryland Drive is the host hotel for this year's NAEHCY conference. The reservation window closes October 8, 2026, or when the block sells out, whichever occurs first. A link to the conference rate will be provided after registration is completed.

Application Requirements:

Interested districts must submit a completed application form. Selected districts will receive confirmation of funding and instructions for reimbursement procedures.

Post-Conference Tasks:

To accept, districts must agree to complete a Professional Learning Plan and submit documentation to ISBE. Districts that fail to complete these tasks may not be awarded additional McKinney-Vento opportunities.

1. Professional Learning Plan Submission

Submit a one-page **Professional Learning Plan** to homeless@isbe.net by Jan. 15, 2027. This plan should:

- Be completed after attending the conference
- Highlight key learning from the event
- Outline how the knowledge will be shared and implemented within the district

2. Documentation of Implementation

Provide evidence that the professional learning was carried out by Dec. 31, 2027. Acceptable documentation may include:

- Materials used for professional learning sessions
- Sign-in sheets from training events
- Participant feedback or evaluations

We encourage all districts to take advantage of this opportunity to enhance their support for students experiencing homelessness.

For questions, please contact Kate Ulmer, homeless@isbe.net.

Application Components

- Section 1: LEA Homeless Education Basic Information
- Section 2: LEA Professional Learning
- Section 3: Project Budget and Narrative
- Section 4: Assurances & Signature Page

Section 1: LEA Homeless Education Basic Information

1. Please provide the basic information outlined below:

- LEA Homeless Education Liaison: _____
- Email Address: _____
- Telephone Number: _____

2. Including the local homeless liaison, list the names and/titles of expected faculty or staff who will be attending the 2026 NAEHCY Conference in Nashville, TN, on Oct. 31-Nov. 3, 2026.

	Employee	Title	In-Person Attendance Type	Virtual Attendance Type
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

3. When was the last year that the LEA sent faculty or staff to the NAEHCY Conference?

4. Please provide the following information and discuss the implications of that data when answering the following questions.

- District's Actual 2024-2025 LEA Homeless Enrollment: _____
- District's 2024-2025 Actual Number of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch: _____

5. What is the chronic absenteeism rate for identified children and youth experiencing homelessness for the 2024-2025 school year? Please use the chronic absenteeism data found in the school report card chronic absenteeism dataset. _____

Section 2: LEA Professional Learning

1. Describe current policies and procedures that the LEA already has in place to train faculty and staff to understand homelessness and students' rights under the McKinney-Vento Act.

2. Please describe the content and skill areas that the LEA anticipates improving by attending the 2026 NAEHCY Conference.

3. How will attending the 2026 NAEHCY Conference assist in the continuous improvement of the LEA's homeless education program?

4. In order to be selected, the LEA must agree to submit a one-page professional learning plan to homeless@isbe.net by Jan. 15, 2027. Who will be responsible for sending this information to ISBE before the deadline of Jan. 15, 2027?

5. In order to be selected, the LEA must agree to submit documentation to homeless@isbe.net demonstrating the professional learning plan was carried out by Dec. 31, 2027. Who will be responsible for sending documentation of professional learning to ISBE before the deadline of Dec. 31, 2027?

6. How will the LEA evaluate the effectiveness of the professional learning?

Section 3: Grant Budget and Narrative

Use the **Proposed Budget Summary** forms provided to clearly identify anticipated expenditures. The budget must include realistic costs. In-kind contributions are not to be reflected in these budget columns. The total budget must be adequate to cover travel costs to the NAEHCY Conference and should include expenses such as airfare, hotels, registrations, etc.

1. **Column One:** Attendee – each attendee is assigned a number on page 4.
2. **Column Two:** Details regarding how many, at what rate of pay, specific quantities, etc. should be included in the second column entitled, "Detailed Description of Activity".
3. **Column Three:** An anticipated budgeted amount should be listed in column three and align to the description included in column two.

Calculating Out of State Per Diem:

Use the [GSA website](https://www.gsa.gov) for your city location to determine the out of state per diem/meals.

- Per Diem for travel lasting 2 days will be the First/Last Day amount associated with the city location.
- Per Diem for travel lasting 3 days will be as follows; Day 1: First/Last Day Amount; Day 2: Full Per Diem Amount (minus any meals provided) Day 3: First/Last Day Amount

NAEHCY Conference Proposed Budget Summary

Not to exceed \$3,000 per attendee.

Attendee	Function / Object Code	Detailed Description of Activity	Amount Budgeted
1	2210 / 300	Registration	
1	2210 / 300	Transportation	
1	2210 / 300	Lodging	
1	2210 / 300	Baggage	
1	2210 / 300	Per Diem	
Attendee 1 total:			
2	2210 / 300	Registration	
2	2210 / 300	Transportation	
2	2210 / 300	Lodging	
2	2210 / 300	Baggage	
2	2210 / 300	Per Diem	
Attendee 2 total:			
3	2210 / 300	Registration	
3	2210 / 300	Transportation	
3	2210 / 300	Lodging	
3	2210 / 300	Baggage	
3	2210 / 300	Per Diem	
Attendee 3 total:			
4	2210 / 300	Registration	
4	2210 / 300	Transportation	
4	2210 / 300	Lodging	
4	2210 / 300	Baggage	
4	2210 / 300	Per Diem	
Attendee 4 total:			
Total Budgeted Amount:			

Section 4: Assurances & Signature

The district(s) assures it will:

- A. Remove barriers that hinder the enrollment of homeless students.
- B. Administer the program in accordance with all applicable statutes, regulations, grant applications, and assurances.
- C. Use funds for the purposes described in its application for funding and will retain control of these funds and title to any property acquired with these funds.
- D. Provide all reports and data to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) as are reasonable and necessary to enable the Department to perform its duties. This includes annual reporting of Adequate Yearly Progress data based on the ESSA in the areas tested for all students served by this program.
- E. Maintain records to assure the correctness and certification of such reports, including information relating to the educational effect on homeless children and youth.
- F. Make these records accessible as the ISBE may find necessary.
- G. Not exceed the district's maximum salary schedule for a specific job classification for personnel hired with program funds.
- H. Maintain accurate time logs and documentation of services for personnel working in this program (actual time spent working directly with program).
- I. Plan specific activities to involve the parents of homeless children and youth in the program to the greatest extent possible.
- J. Comply with or will use requested funds according to local education agency requirements outlined in Section 722(g) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Section 722(2) (a) states the state (ISBE) and local educational agencies (districts) are to comply with or will comply with the provisions contained in Consolidated State Application to the U.S. Department of Education.
- K. Ensure the homeless education program does not isolate or stigmatize homeless children and youth.
- L. Ensure that the coordinator will be involved in professional development which could include attending the National Homeless Conference and ISBE sponsored professional development.
- M. Ensure that the liaison will have log-in accessibility to the Student Information System OR ensure the liaison is provided, upon request and in a timely manner, reports related to homeless students in the district.

My district hereby agrees to comply with program specific assurances.

Signed: _____

Superintendent

Date