

ABSTRACT

The SERVE Center for Continuous Improvement (SERVE) at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro proposes to continue operating the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) and agrees to comply with all the Department's solicitation requirements. During its six-year existence, NCHE has established a strong network of national organizations, state coordinators, local liaisons, and service providers and has promoted awareness of homeless issues and effective practices for implementing educational rights of homeless children and youth. In addition to its in-depth understanding of the complex issues surrounding homeless children and youth, NCHE staff has developed resources and procedures for ensuring that its services are useful, comprehensive, and timely.

The tasks required in the Statement of Work are currently being implemented. In the new contract period, NCHE will build upon these tasks to enhance its services to meet the needs of those who both directly and indirectly serve homeless children and youth. Specific strategies that will shape NCHE's approach to each of the tasks include: broadening its constituency to create greater awareness of issues related to homeless children and youth, expanding its range of services and venues for technical assistance, utilizing web-based and electronic technologies for expanding its training and dissemination capacities, enhancing the centralization and accessibility of the information it collects, and increasing strategic partnerships.

Tasks will be undertaken by staff and subcontractors with demonstrated expertise. All tasks will be overseen by the project director and deliverables will undergo a rigorous quality assurance process.

NCHE is not only well-qualified to operate a technical assistance center, but it is truly committed to increasing opportunities for children and youth whose lives are devastated by the effects of homelessness.

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

A Proposal to Operate the

SERVE

National Center for Homeless Education

Prepared and Submitted per the Stipulations

of the Request for Task Order MATO Contract No. ED-04-CO-0056

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INTRODUCTION

The SERVE Center for Continuous Improvement (SERVE) at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro proposes to continue operating the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE). In its six-year existence, NCHE at SERVE has assumed a pivotal role in providing educators, administrators, advocates, service providers, and parents experiencing homelessness critical information and support necessary to ensure that homeless children and youth have educational access and services. A knowledge of homeless education stakeholders, comprehension of the McKinney-Vento legislation, and commitment to ensuring educational opportunity and success for children and youth experiencing homelessness has enabled NCHE to demonstrate creativity and expertise in disseminating information, fostering collaboration, and providing technical assistance that supports the effective implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. Data from NCHE evaluations (included throughout the following sections) and letters of support (included in Appendix B) attest to NCHE's effectiveness in meeting the needs of those who seek to increase educational opportunities for homeless children and youth. In the upcoming contract, NCHE will not only continue its performance, but will build upon its success to enhance its services.

EVALUATION FACTORS

(1) Technical Knowledge and Methodology.

(a) Knowledge of the issues. The physical and emotional challenges resulting from poverty and mobility frequently cause children and youth experiencing homelessness to fall behind in school. These challenges are exacerbated by the lack of access to services, transportation, academic support, or basic supplies. The *2000 Report to Congress* showed that at least 20 percent of school-aged homeless children and youth and 85 percent of preschool-aged

homeless children do not attend school.¹ Of the children who do attend, 41 percent will attend two different schools in a year's time, and 28 percent will attend three or more different schools,² creating significant discontinuity and instability in their education. In addition, state coordinators for homeless education reported in 2000 that barriers to school enrollment and attendance persist. These barriers include lack of transportation, immunization requirements, residency requirements, lack of birth certificates, and legal guardianship issues.³ NCHE is committed to eliminating barriers to the education of homeless children and youth.

(b) Knowledge of effective practices and model programs. NCHE will continue to identify and disseminate information on effective practices and programs. Following are some examples of effective practices related to major barriers described in existing NCHE publications:

- **Identification**—Local homeless education liaisons should locate community agencies, shelters, or motels where homeless families seek services to inform them of the educational rights of the children and invite them to contact the local liaison to assist with enrolling the children.⁴ Since only 35 percent of homeless families reside in shelters,⁵ identification efforts must include educating school staff to recognize signs of homelessness so that children who are not in shelters may be identified and provided services.
- **Enrollment**—Many families are either unaware that the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness applies to them or they do not want to disclose their homelessness. The San Antonio (TX) school enrollment form asks families to check boxes describing their living

¹ U.S. Department of Education. (2000). *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Report to Congress Fiscal Year 2000*. Washington, DC: Author. Available online at www.serve.org/nche.

² National Center on Family Homelessness. (1999). *Homeless Children: America's New Outcasts*. Newton, MA: Author. Available online at www.familyhomelessness.org.

³ U.S. Department of Education. *Op. Cit.*, 6.

⁴ NAEHCY, NCHE, NLCHP, NN4Y. (2002). *McKinney-Vento Law into Practice: Identifying Students in Homeless Situations*. (Available at www.serve.org/nche.)

⁵ U.S. Department of Education, *Op. Cit.*, 15.

situation but does not mention the word “homeless.” It includes options such as “living in a shelter” or “living doubled up with relatives or friends.” Forms indicating that a child may be eligible for McKinney-Vento services are submitted to the local homeless education liaison.

- **Transportation to the school of origin**—Decreasing school mobility is key to academic success. One homeless education program in Victoria, Texas, adopted a motto of “One child, one school, one year” that has decreased school mobility and increased the school achievement of the whole district.
- **Academic support**—Close collaboration between homeless education and Title I programs, including Title IA funds set aside specifically for homeless students, helps to ensure that children receive academic support.

(c) Knowledge of agencies, organizations, and researchers. NCHE staff has identified over 100 organizations and over 200 research documents that it uses for information dissemination, synthesis publications, and website and listserv postings. The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) and the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP) are key agencies that provide information, technical assistance, and advocacy for homeless children and youth. Sources of research include the National Center of Family Homelessness, the Institute for Children and Poverty, the Urban Institute, the Wilder Foundation, and The College of William and Mary (VA). State websites that include comprehensive information on the education needs for homeless children and youth are Project HOPE (VA), Opening Doors (IL), and Texas Homeless Education Office (TX).

(d) Knowledge of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program. The McKinney-Vento legislation, reauthorized as Title X, Part C, of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, requires that school districts identify, enroll, and support the academic needs of homeless children and youth. The legislation requires a coordinator of homeless education in every state

and a local homeless education liaison in every school district to ensure that these children are served. NCHE works primarily with state coordinators and local liaisons to assist them in the implementation of the legislation.

(e) Knowledge of technology. NCHE staff members are proficient in website design and administration, listserv administration, and database development and maintenance. Websites are designed with consideration of accessibility standards and of varying technological capabilities of its users for downloading documents. NCHE's listserv administration entails providing technical support in subscribing to and participating on the listserv. Database technology (Access) underlies all NCHE's information organization so that information can be immediately retrieved and organized for various purposes.

(f) Knowledge of publication development. NCHE publications are designed to meet the needs of a variety of audiences. Staff members pay careful attention to readability and sensitivity issues in its public awareness documents, such as avoiding the word "homeless." All publications are developed by writers with expertise in the field and with input from experts and practitioners. Draft documents are submitted to an external review and are then revised. Professional staff members edit and format them for final publication.

(g) Knowledge and skills in presentation and adult learning. NCHE's approach to professional development reflects the current thinking articulated in NCLB and the National Staff Development Council's revised Standards for Staff Development. NCHE develops training materials designed to engage its audiences and challenge them to apply key concepts. Effective professional development requires follow up and ongoing support. After a workshop, NCHE links participants to a vast network of practitioners through the listserv and provides technical assistance through its HelpLine. NCHE also gears its technical assistance and professional development to the needs of its constituents, evidenced in a recent needs assessment conducted

through focus groups and interviews with state coordinators and local liaisons. (See Appendix C for data from state coordinators and local liaisons.)

(h) Understanding of and sensitivity to issues of confidentiality. Homeless children and families and unaccompanied youth are subject to stereotyping and discrimination. Once a family reveals its homelessness, it may be subject to excessive scrutiny by child welfare and housing agencies. School personnel must be sensitized to the concerns that homeless families have related to disclosing their homelessness. In addition, school personnel (including bus drivers and teachers) must be sensitized to not making a student's homelessness public to his or her peers. Information management systems must be developed so that the confidentiality of a child's homelessness is maintained. NCHE includes issues related to confidentiality in its publication and trainings.

(i) Overall methodologies for NCHE tasks. NCHE will increase the breadth and effectiveness of its services by:

- Broadening its constituency to develop a wider awareness of homeless education issues and strategies among school and school district personnel and agencies
- Expanding its range of services and venues for technical assistance to support state coordinators and local liaisons in implementing the McKinney-Vento legislation
- Utilizing web-based and other electronic technologies to expand its training and dissemination capacities
- Expanding its dissemination strategies for services, products, and publications
- Enhancing the centralization, organization, and accessibility of the research and information it develops and collects
- Increasing its quality assurance activities to ensure that publications, trainings, and resources provided through NCHE are of the highest quality

- Increasing partnerships and collaborations with national organizations, advocates, and researchers that can expand both NCHE's capacities and those of its partners

(2) Technical Approach and Schedule. Some of the activities described in the statement of work exceed the basic requirements of the tasks and may be considered optional by the contract officer in revising the work plan for the Base Year. Also, please note that additional information on the current status of NCHE's activities for the tasks included in this section are included in *Section 4: Experience and Past Performance*.

(a) Description of how required tasks will be accomplished.

Task 1.a. Contract Startup-Transfer of NCHE property. In the event that NCHE is not awarded a contract to continue the National Center for Homeless Education, it will meet with the new contractor and arrange to transfer materials previously developed in Tasks 4-14 and Task 18 of the preceding task order contract within three weeks of the new contractor's initial management meeting.

Task 1.b. Initial management meeting with Department officials. Upon receiving the award, the NCHE project director will schedule a meeting with Department officials in Washington, D.C., to clarify expectations, establish communication protocols, identify report formats, and discuss any needed revisions to the proposed work plans. Within two weeks of this meeting, the project director will prepare and submit to the Department a revised work plan that includes timelines, staffing chart, and a deliverables list.

Task 2. Establish and manage the NCHE Working Group. NCHE has fostered a close network of national partners. The Working Group has evolved from informal networking among representatives from national organizations, each of whom brings a particular perspective and skill set to bear on improving educational services for homeless children and youth. NCHE will continue to schedule monthly teleconferences and meetings, develop meeting agendas by

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requesting input from all partners prior to the meeting, facilitate the meetings, provide notes from the meetings, and facilitate follow-up emails, phone discussions, and collaborative activities.

When additional perspectives are needed, NCHE will help identify experts or organization representatives and invite them to participate in the meetings. NCHE will schedule eight monthly teleconference calls, plan a Working Group meeting at the annual NAEHCY conference (October) and at the national symposium (March), and plan two additional face-to-face meetings in Washington, D.C. for all Working Group members.

Task 3. Convene and manage an annual national symposium on homeless education.

NCHE has conducted an annual symposium for state coordinators in each year of its current contract. (See Appendix D for an agenda and participant list for the 2004 symposium.)

NCHE will continue to coordinate the planning and facilitation of an annual national symposium to be held in March or April. NCHE has developed a detailed matrix and timeline of tasks related to planning the symposium. Staff will initiate planning with the Working Group, survey state coordinators to determine issues they want addressed, collaborate with the Working Group to develop the agenda and invite guests, communicate with state coordinators and other guests concerning meeting arrangements, and make all the hotel and logistical arrangements. Following the meeting, NCHE staff will provide meeting proceedings and/or notes to all attendees, as well as handouts to state coordinators not present at the meeting.

NCHE proposes to expand the current national symposium format to include two additional components. (1) NCHE staff will conduct a half-day orientation meeting for new state coordinators to provide them with an overview of their responsibilities and an opportunity to discuss issues with veteran state coordinators. NCHE staff will invite state coordinators who have been in their positions less than a year to attend this meeting and request input from them on what issues they would like to see addressed. (2) NCHE will also convene, as part of the

symposium, a half-day optional seminar that addresses a critical topic. This meeting will assemble national experts and practitioners to identify issues and discuss policy and practice implications. NCHE will cover the cost of up to three additional consultants, over and above the three mentioned in the Statement of Work, to attend the seminar. Proceedings from the seminar will be part of a best-practices document. (See Task 9.)

Task 4. Develop and disseminate public awareness material. NCHE has already developed education rights posters, parent booklets, and school records folders and has a large inventory on hand. Also, NCHE, along with its Working Group partners, has developed informational briefs for specific audiences. NCHE will be able to continue its dissemination of these products immediately upon receiving the award.

NCHE will focus on expanding its awareness and dissemination strategies. New strategies include:

- Conducting a direct mail awareness campaign from a mailing list that includes national and local homeless coalitions, shelters, social service agencies, youth agencies, child welfare offices, legal advocacy groups, higher education agencies, departments of education, and faith-based organizations—The mailing will include a cover letter, brochure that publicizes NCHE's HelpLine and listserv, NCHE's *Introduction to the Issues* brief, education rights posters, and order form for free publications.
- Working through professional associations for education stakeholders, such as school boards, superintendents, and school secretaries, to identify the best way to provide information and materials—In the Base Year, NCHE will contact 10 professional associations and negotiate an appropriate dissemination mechanism, such as announcing NCHE products and services in the association newsletter, presenting or providing materials at a national conference, or sending an email announcement to state affiliates or state

members. NCHE will budget for two trips to national conferences. Each subsequent year of the contract, NCHE will add associations to the list of those with whom it has ongoing contact. NCHE will keep this information in a database that includes contact information, deadlines for newsletter submissions, and dates of national conferences.

Task 5. Establish the website. NCHE hosts a website (www.serve.org/nche) that provides comprehensive and easy-to-access information on the McKinney-Vento legislation, current reports and documents, state coordinator information, state and local resources, national organizations, and NCHE products and services. (See Appendix E for a summary of website offerings and the homepage of its new design.)

NCHE staff expertise in website design and administration allows for continual updating as information becomes available and for ensuring compliance with accessibility standards and Office of the Chief Information Officer's (OCIO) requirements.

In the new contract, NCHE will

- Update the website on an ongoing basis, including updating state coordinators' contact information, adding new state and local resources, announcing new publications, announcing upcoming conferences, and posting training tools
- Continue to incorporate new developments related to accessibility of information and technology design in the development and maintenance of its website, including new tools made available by commercial vendors, such as Adobe, Microsoft, Macromedia, and Netscape
- Include a disclaimer that the website's contents do not necessarily reflect the policies of the U.S. Department of Education or imply endorsement by the U.S. government, as is the current policy

For increased quality assurance, NCHE will

- Conduct an annual review of the website by a task force of state coordinators, local liaisons, service providers, and website designers
- Develop a formal set of policies and criteria for selecting materials to be posted, which will be developed within four months of the award

Task 6. Collect and disseminate information from partner organizations. NCHE has created a strong network of organizations and service providers in the area of homeless education.

NCHE's relationship with NAEHCY is particularly extensive. The NCHE director, serving on the NAEHCY board as education chair, has shaped the role and activities of the education committee, and NCHE has played an instrumental role in the annual NAEHCY conference.

During each year of the contract, NCHE will continue to

- Facilitate education committee activities that include collaboration between NAEHCY and NCHE to support local liaison training, establish and promote a research agenda, and review publications
- Assist with planning, conducting, and presenting at the NAEHCY annual conference
- Submit articles to the NAEHCY newsletter *The BEAM* on a regular basis
- Attend an annual board retreat

In addition to maintaining its current collaborative partnerships, NCHE will cultivate relationships with organizations that will broaden NCHE's understanding of issues that impact homeless children and youth as well as benefit from information NCHE provides related to their areas of interest. NCHE proposes to initiate three new intensive partnerships each year. NCHE will budget for two trips to attend partners' national conferences or serve on task forces. NCHE will provide a monthly report of its contacts with these organizations.

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One new partnership in the Base Year will be with the Weiner Center for Social Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, from where the NCHE director recently graduated. In a letter of support for NCHE (See Appendix F), the director of the Weiner Center has agreed to collaborate in the exchange of resources, ideas, and information.

Over the years, NCHE has provided information and assistance to a number of Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) and Comprehensive Assistance Centers (CCs) across the nation. NCHE will expand its networking with RELs and CCs.

Each year of the contract, NCHE will request to be placed on the agenda for an REL directors meeting and a CC directors meeting. At these meetings, NCHE staff will provide information on homeless education, provide recommendations and examples (featuring work of their colleagues) of ways to provide homeless education assistance in their region, and offer to provide assistance in addressing homeless education issues in their scopes of work. NCHE will also identify REL and CC activities that will assist homeless education administrators, educators, service providers, and parents and will provide information and links to these activities on the listservs and website. NCHE will request that the RELs and CCs link to NCHE.

NCHE has developed a database of approximately 100 national organizations and federal programs that address issues related to homelessness. NCHE will continue to expand this list of national organizations. NCHE will develop an annual newsletter that will provide a brief overview of homeless education and publicize NCHE's services and products. The newsletter will include a request for these organizations to provide a link to our website and an invitation for them to contact NCHE to discuss ways staff may assist them in helping their constituency serve homeless children and youth. NCHE will offer to announce their products and services that are relevant to homeless education on the NCHE listservs and website.

Task 7. Establish and maintain a listserv. NCHE currently hosts a general listserv with 223 subscribers and a state coordinators listserv with 58 subscribers. The listservs will be upgraded to include a searchable archive and the capability to send attachments and conduct live text chats.

NCHE will establish a goal of expanding the general listserv by 100 subscribers per year. Publicizing strategies currently include placing invitations to join on NCHE brochures, conference handouts, NCHE product order forms, and the website homepage. Further efforts to publicize the listserv dovetail with Task 4 and Task 6 activities, as NCHE reaches out to organizations and agencies beyond its current constituents. As the listserv expands, NCHE will offer threaded discussions and role-related chat groups. NCHE will continue to edit and archive selected listserv discussions, and will post them on the website.

Task 8. Establish and operate a toll-free HelpLine. The NCHE HelpLine receives on average 120 calls and email requests per month. NCHE has developed a resource database to provide information to requesters expediently and efficiently.

NCHE will continue to publicize its HelpLine services on the website, on all products, and at meetings and conferences, and will make quarterly announcements of this service on the listservs. Additional efforts to publicize the HelpLine are included in Task 4 and Task 6 activities. NCHE will continue to add state and local resources to its database.

Task 9. Collect, publish, and disseminate information about effective and promising practices.

Collecting information. To address the task of collecting and organizing research and information, NCHE has developed a database of publications, best practices, and research designed to provide instant access to information by topic, author, date, or type. Information on specific topics is made available on the NCHE website on the Info by Topic page.

NCHE receives information from at least six distribution lists that provide the latest documents and reports relating to issues of homelessness, poverty, and education of children at risk. Documents are selected each week for inclusion in the database and posting on the NCHE listservs.

Publishing. NCHE has developed publications on critical issues in homeless education that include literature reviews, practitioner interviews, sample forms and policies, fact sheets, and handouts appropriate for trainings.

NCHE will develop two best-practices documents per year. Each year, NCHE will suggest to the Department topics from those frequently mentioned by state coordinators, local liaisons, and Working Group members. Dr. Beth Garriss-Hardy, former NCHE director, will develop the document and plan a topical seminar at the national symposium (Task 3).

In the Base Year and Year 1, NCHE proposes to subcontract with WestEd to fill a great gap in information and strategies to help preschools enroll and serve homeless children. WestEd will develop a handbook for preschools. Staff from WestEd's Center for Child and Family Studies (CCFS) and Center for Prevention and Early Intervention (CPEI) will identify and determine best practices for addressing the emotional, social, and physical needs of young children experiencing homelessness and ways preschools, family care centers, and other settings can effectively meet their unique needs. (See Appendix G for a further description of WestEd's expertise and a proposed scope of work.) WestEd staff will prepare a publication in Year 1 that synthesizes and summarizes the research on addressing the emotional, social, and physical needs of young children experiencing homelessness. Based on the comprehensive research conducted in the Base Year, project staff will complete the preschool handbook in Option Year 1.

NCHE will subcontract with WestEd or another agency for a publication of critical import in subsequent years of the contract.

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In addition, each year NCHE will develop in collaboration with its partners three briefs on emerging topics. (See Appendix H for an example of a recently published NCHE brief.)

Each year, NCHE will negotiate with the What Works Clearinghouse for it to develop a research summary of interventions for homeless or highly mobile children. If the Clearinghouse is unable or unwilling to do so, NCHE will develop a research summary. NCHE will utilize resources from the What Works Clearinghouse and other research agencies to identify and apply criteria to research that is reviewed for the publication. NCHE will also provide to the Clearinghouse upon request research studies related to topics of importance to homeless education.

In response to state coordinator feedback, NCHE will publish an annual bibliography of research and information published during the year that will be organized by topic areas. Each bibliographic entry will include a full APA citation and a web address (if available).

Dissemination. NCHE publications are posted on the website and publicized on listservs and at conferences. In addition to these venues, NCHE will develop a formal dissemination plan for each publication. The dissemination plan will include a list of individuals and organizations that would benefit from the document or be likely to disseminate it to constituents. The dissemination plan will identify the most effective venue to send an announcement and/or complimentary copy.

Task 10. Review, revise, publish, and disseminate handbooks for LEA liaisons and state coordinators.

Toolkit for LEA Liaisons. NCHE's *Toolkit for Homeless Education Liaisons*, published in 2002, has been updated annually to include legislative updates and Department guidances. In the Base Year and subsequent years, NCHE will continue to update the *Toolkit* and post for

download on the website. Updates will also be provided to state coordinators annually on CD and will be announced on the listserv.

Handbook for State Coordinators. In a subcontract with The College of William and Mary, Dr. Patricia Popp will develop three additional components for the *State Coordinators Handbook*, which she authored in 2003. The original handbook focuses on strategies for state coordinators to identify and support local homeless education liaisons. The additional components will provide guidance and strategies for other components of the state coordinator's role, such as coordinating with other programs and agencies, developing state policies, and resolving disputes. Actual topics will be determined by input from state coordinators and the Working Group. (See Appendix I for a description of the approach to developing the additional components.) The new *State Coordinators Handbook* components will be provided to all state coordinators upon its completion and will be utilized in the new state coordinators pre-session at the national symposium (Task 3). Dr. Popp will develop new components of the *Handbook* in subsequent years of the contract.

Task 11. Make conference and workshop presentations and provide on-site technical assistance. NCHE staff members have provided over 97 trainings to more than 4,500 participants.

NCHE will continue to present at Department-sponsored conferences and state and national conferences. Proposed national conferences to submit proposals to present in the Base Year include NAEHCY, National Title I Directors, National Rural Education Association, National Association of Social Workers, National Head Start, and National Migrant Identification and Recruitment.

To expand its capacity to train local liaisons, NCHE proposes the following activities.

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(1) Each year, NCHE will establish a team of approximately 8-10 individuals who meet certain specified criteria and are willing to provide training for local liaisons. Each year, through WebEx (a subscription service for a limited number of seats available to SERVE), NCHE will host one webconference to train selected individuals and follow up with two additional webconferences or teleconference calls per year to provide further support. When NCHE staff members are unable to fulfill a request for training, they will match the request with a training team member, assist with developing the agenda, and follow up with state coordinators and participants for quality assurance. (2) NCHE proposes to develop an online course on the educational rights of homeless children and youth and responsibilities of local liaisons. The course will be developed through UNCG's Online Development and Support Group (ODSG) in the Base Year and will be offered in Option Year 1 with additional development for Continuing Education Unit (CEU) tools. (See Appendix J for a proposed scope of work for and information on the Online Development and Support Group.) NCHE will provide participants with interactive training CDs to include Internet connectivity for facilitated web discussions for each of five modules. Participants may choose to use only the CD, use the CD and participate in the web discussions, or earn CEU credits by completing additional requirements. NCHE will also work with individual state coordinators who wish to utilize this distance learning mechanism to train all their liaisons as a cohort. Additionally, the online training course will address the high turnover among local liaisons because training will always be available.

To orient new state coordinators to their position, NCHE will contact them as soon as word of their appointment is received and provide an orientation packet that includes the *State Coordinators Handbook* and other materials to assist them in their new responsibilities.

NCHE will host two web conferences during each year of the contract. Target audiences and topics will be determined by the Working Group and will be collaboratively planned. NCHE

will schedule the conference, publicize it, register participants, provide instructions for participating, develop the agenda, assemble a panel of presenters, prepare materials and a PowerPoint presentation for posting, and provide technology support.

Task 12. Test a system of data collection for homeless education programs based on the NCHE Standards and Indicators of Quality.

Standards and Indicators of Quality Pilot Project Phase 2. In 2003-2004, seven McKinney-Vento programs participated in Phase 1 of a pilot study to determine the utility and feasibility of a universal system of data collection based on the *Standards and Indicators of Quality McKinney-Vento Programs* developed by NCHE in 2000. Recommendations from the pilot study include: (1) moving the emphasis away from creating a universal database toward the development of more specific and defined data elements; (2) creating a users' manual that focuses on specific questions for each standard; (3) recommending that Phase 2 sites collect data only on one or two standards initially; and (4) reconvening a national task force to assess the Standards and Indicators at regular intervals. (See Appendix K for further highlights of the findings from Phase 1 of the pilot study.)

Using feedback from the original pilot sites, NCHE developed a users' manual. In the Base Year, NCHE will establish a new cohort of 12 McKinney-Vento school districts to collect data on the Standards and Indicators during the 2004-2005 school year, utilizing the users' manual. The selected sites will participate in quarterly conference calls to discuss successes, challenges, and impacts associated with the McKinney-Vento Standards and Indicators of Quality.

NCHE staff will compile the ways sites use their data and expand the users' manual to include strategies for and case studies on utilizing the Standards and Indicators for program improvement. At the end of the Base Year, NCHE staff will publish the revised users' manual

and prepare a final report to the contract officer on the pilot study. In Option Year 1, at the 2005 NAEHCY conference, NCHE will convene a task force that includes state coordinators, program evaluation experts, Department staff, and pilot site participants to revisit the Standards and Indicators of Quality for possible revision. During subsequent years of the contract, NCHE will continue to develop tools to assist in data collection for local program improvement.

Database for data collected from states. Within two months of the award, NCHE will develop an Access database to organize and create reports from data submitted by the Department collected from states and LEAs.

Protocol for a national web-based data collection system. NCHE will subcontract with WestEd to develop a web-based data collection system that aligns data with the Department's Performance-Based Data Collection Initiative and GPRA. WestEd has led or provided support for over 100 projects in the last three years that provide a variety of solutions, from simple website brochures to highly complex data management systems that support agency infrastructure functions, online data collection systems, and information management. (See Appendix L for a description of WestEd's technology application background).

In the Base Year, NCHE and WestEd will meet with the contract officer and Department staff for clarification of the purpose and scope of the project and will research web-based data collection systems for homeless education programs implemented in states. WestEd will then convene a task force comprised of experts in data collection system development and homeless education data collection for input on the development of the system. The results of the planning group's activities will inform the development of a prototype. Depending on how quickly the planning group can conduct its work, the development could start as early as the second half of the Base Year. The task force will meet by conference call up to four times. NCHE and WestEd will propose a system to the Department and, upon approval, develop the database and web entry

system and test the system on a limited scale. Depending on the time needed to obtain Department approval, WestEd will refine and prepare the system and train users by the end of Option Year 1. By the end of the Option Year 1, full implementation should be possible. Implementation in Option Years 2-4 will include the collection of data and submission of at least two electronic data reports each year of the contract. WestEd will provide maintenance and routine upgrades, as well as develop additional features and components each subsequent year.

Task 13. Conduct an evaluation of NCHE. NCHE will build its project around the four major goals provided by the Department:

- Disseminate information to states and LEAs about effective programs and practices related to the issues surrounding the education of children and youth in homeless situations.
- Foster collaboration among various organizations with interests in addressing the education of homeless children in order to promote local awareness of homeless issues.
- Foster greater understanding of and compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act.
- Assist the Department with required data collection from states and analyses of data.

SERVE senior program evaluation specialist Dr. Cheryl Vrooman will conduct the Base Year evaluation by monitoring progress made by NCHE as it addresses the goals. As foundations for evaluation questions, the goals are supported by measurable objectives evolving from declared tasks. Each objective will be addressed through the collection of relevant quantitative data (e.g., number of listserv members, number of consumer requests for products, frequency of website downloads, number of conference presentations) and qualitative data (e.g., consumer satisfaction regarding products and services, suggested modifications of products or services, verbal reactions to conference presentations) supportive of formative decisions as well as data indicative of project impact. Quantitative data will be analyzed through the calculation and comparison of frequencies, percentages, and means. Qualitative data, collected through

interviews and questionnaires, will be transcribed with the content being categorized for interpretation.

Dr. Vrooman will provide a draft of an NCHE evaluation plan to the Department within one month of the award, make required revisions, collect data, and prepare a report for submission by September 15, 2005. Dr. Vrooman will provide a draft of an evaluation plan in October of each year of the contract and prepare a report that will be submitted within a month after the end of the fiscal year.

Task 14. Contract closedown—Post contract. In the event that the Department chooses to either not exercise its option years for this work statement or does not compete the task order at the end of the final option year, NCHE will prepare a list of all materials that are the property of the Department and arrange to transfer the property to the Department or to a newly designated contractor within 30 days of the end of the last contract year.

(b) Schedule, showing activity milestones by task, and deadlines

**DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE
(Base Year with Option Year Notes)**

Task	Deliverables	Due Date	Format	Option Year Notes
1a	(If applicable) Transfer of materials	By 11/15/04	Electronic, mail, courier	
1b	Initial management meeting Revised work plan	By 10/21/04 By 11/05/04	Face-to-face Electronic	Work plan submitted each year
2	List of recommended Working Group members Agendas for meetings Notes for meetings	By 11/10/04 1 week prior 2 days after	Electronic Electronic Electronic	
3	Agenda List of participants Pre-meeting, on site meeting, post-meeting logistics completed on schedule and submitted to and approved by the Department Handouts Proceedings or notes	2 weeks prior 1 week prior TBD During 2 months after	Electronic Electronic Electronic Hard copy Electronic/hard copy	
4	Printed parent brochures, posters, Parent Packs List of professional associations	12/15/04 11/15/04	Hard copies and electronic (except for Par. Packs) Electronic	

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Task	Deliverables	Due Date	Format	Option Year Notes
	contacted Mailout of awareness materials	3/1/05	U.S. mail	
5	Website with NCHE home page, logo, and interactive links; evidence of compliance with OCIO guidelines Report of website updates Policies and criteria for posting-draft Website review	Review during Task 2 meeting monthly 1/10/05 7/10/05	Web Electronic Electronic Electronic	
6	Evidence of partnerships List of REL and CC projects and specialty areas relevant to homeless education Newsletter	By 12/15/04 and monthly 1/01/05 3/01/05	Electronic Electronic U.S. Mail, electronic	
7	Listserv established New subscribers	12/15/04 monthly	Electronic Electronic	
8	Toll-free hotline and email established Record of requests	12/15/2004 monthly	Electronic Electronic	
9	Listserv posting of new documents, reports, websites, articles Bibliography of research and information 2002-2004 2 best-practice documents Brief 1, 2, 3 Research synthesis	weekly 1/25/05 8/1/05 2/15/05, 4/15/05, 6/15/05 9/1/05	Electronic Electronic—listserv, web Web, hard copy Web, hard copy; dates may vary as issues emerge Web, hard copy	
10	LEA Toolkit Revision SEA Handbook Addenda	As needed; CD by 4/30/2005 6/1/2005	Web, hard copy, CD Web, hard copy	Date later than that proposed by the Dept.
11	Schedule of presentations Presentation agenda Plan for national conferences to attend Train the trainer webconference, 2 follow-up web conferences 2 web conferences Online course CD	monthly Provided 2 weeks prior By 10/21/04 12/04, 2/05, 5/05 12/04, 4/05 7/05	Electronic Electronic Electronic Electronic CD and Electronic Electronic	Base Year development-Phases 1 & 2; Year 1 offered, Phases 3 & 4
12	Users manual draft posted on website Site selection plan for Phase 2 Agenda for Phase 2 teleconferences Phase 2 Meeting notes	11/15/04 11/11/04 2 weeks prior	Electronic Electronic Electronic	

Task	Deliverables	Due Date	Format	Option Year Notes
	Final report on Phase 2 and revision of users manual	7/15/05	Electronic	Year 1-Task force meeting to revise Standards and Indicators at NAEHCY conference 2005
	Access database for ED state and local data	12/01/04	Electronic	
	Protocol for web-based data collection system and pilot test	9/30/05	Electronic, hard copy	Year 1—implement the system
13	Draft of 2004-5 Evaluation Plan	11/1/04	Electronic	
	Evaluation Report for Year 1	9/15/05	Electronic	
14	Transfer of property—end of contract	15 days after end of contract	Electronic, mail, courier	
Mgt.	Monthly reports	Before the 10 th of each month	Electronic	
	QASP reports	Jan., April, July, Oct.	Electronic in monthly repts.	

(3) Management Plan and Qualifications of Personnel.

(a) Overall management plan for the project. Four full-time staff members are allocated to operating NCHE, with .1 FTE of additional staff members allocated to Task 9, Task 12, and Task 13, and .2 FTE allocated to office support. Additional operating support will come from SERVE’s Technology Department, Publications Department, and Evaluation Unit. SERVE’s Operations Department will provide fiscal management. Support for arranging GPO printing for more than 5,000 copies and disseminating products will be provided at .05 FTE along with student labor support.

NCHE will develop subcontracts with The College of William and Mary, WestEd, and UNCG Online Development and Support Group. Subcontractors will be provided a scope of work and timeline approved by the Department contract officer. The NCHE project director will oversee their work by participating in critical meetings and conference calls, reviewing all drafts, and requiring submissions of monthly progress reports that will become part of the monthly reports provided to the contract officer.

The NCHE director will communicate with the contract officer by email and phone bi-weekly or as often as needed and will provide meeting notes within two days. The director will

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submit a monthly management report and drafts of all products for approval. Copies of final products and reports will be submitted to the Department Contracts and Purchasing Operations. NCHE will willingly assist the contract officer with emerging issues and tasks over and above its scope of work.

On a quarterly basis, NCHE will provide written evidence of its performance on each of the key tasks described in the Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan.

(b) Name of specific person to serve as Director and his/her vitae. Ms. Diana Bowman, Senior Program Specialist, will continue to serve as project director. (See Appendix A for resumes of key staff.) Ms. Bowman has over 10 years of project management experience, four of which have been as director of NCHE. She has provided over 25 workshops and presentations on homeless education and facilitated national, state, and local meetings. She has developed publications on a range of educational issues (including homeless education), written articles for newsletters, and developed reports. She has taught disadvantaged students and adult literacy and has facilitated community development projects.

Ms. Bowman's primary duties related to NCHE include overseeing all NCHE tasks, facilitating the Working Group, planning and facilitating the symposium, establishing collaborative partnerships, developing publications and online courses, training trainers of local liaisons, training and presenting at conferences, and communicating with the contract officer.

(c) Other staff positions and criteria to be used to fill these positions. Other key staff and their qualifications follow:

- Ms. Beth Hartness, Program Specialist, has worked for NCHE for four years and provides database development and maintenance expertise and informational research skills to the work of NCHE. She has expertise in website administration. She is well versed in issues related to homeless education and has provided training workshops at national and

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state conferences in identifying online research and resources for homeless families and children. She has served as editor and writer for newsletters and websites and has written publications for educators related to virtual libraries, distance learning, and search strategies.

Ms. Hartness's primary duties for NCHE will include administering the listserv, developing and maintaining databases, developing the resource database, assisting in administering the website, researching and organizing information, responding to HelpLine requests, training and presenting at workshops and conferences, developing articles for newsletters, and establishing partnerships.

- Ms. Christina Dukes, Program Specialist, brings experience in managing migrant education projects to NCHE and is fluent in Spanish. She has expertise in website design and administration and online course development. She has planned and implemented student technology activities. She has delivered trainings at the national and regional levels in the area of homeless education. She has developed publications, newsletter articles, and reports on homeless education and migrant education and on using technology with English language learners. She has also developed online courses.

Ms. Duke's primary responsibilities for NCHE will include designing and administering the website, conducting trainings and making presentations, planning the national symposium, developing partnerships, providing information to Spanish callers, translating documents into Spanish, developing publications and articles, writing reports, and assisting state coordinators with developing online data collection systems.

- Ms. Jan Moore, Assistant Program Specialist, previously held the position of administrative assistant to SERVE's executive director. In her former post, she planned meetings and conferences, developed reports, and wrote newsletter articles. Her background includes a Bachelor's degree in sociology with a criminal justice concentration. She has

worked with adjudicated youth and youth in foster care and has advocated for abused and neglected children. She currently volunteers at the local soup kitchen and with Greensboro Interfaith Hospitality Network, which serves homeless families.

Ms. Moore's primary duties for NCHE will include administering the HelpLine and email requests, planning the national symposium, coordinating publication dissemination, writing articles for newsletters, developing synthesis documents, assisting with training, identifying and posting current publications, and developing an annual bibliography.

Additional SERVE staff members who will work on specific tasks include:

- Dr. Cheryl Vrooman, Senior Program Specialist in Research and Evaluation—Task 13 (NCHE evaluation)
- Dr. Beth Garriss-Hardy, Senior Program Specialist and former NCHE project director and former director of the SERVE's Children, Families, and Communities program—Task 9 (publications development)
- Ms. Kathleen Mooney, Program Specialist in Evaluation and lead on Phase 1 of the Standards and Indicators pilot project—Task 12 (Standards and Indicators data collection project)

(4) Experience and Past Performance

SERVE's corporate capability statement submitted in response to the Department's solicitation for proposals is included in Appendix M.

(a) Experience working with educational agencies, community organizations, and families.

NCHE. NCHE has convened meetings of and provided technical assistance to state coordinators for homeless education, local education agencies, community organizations, and families. Since 2002, NCHE has convened two meetings each year of state coordinators (the

national symposium and a meeting at the NAEHCY conference). Feedback from the meetings is consistently positive. Evaluation from the March 2004 state coordinators meeting showed that 97 percent of the respondents felt the meeting was well planned, 93 percent felt the information was relevant, and 94 percent felt that they learned something that will help them fulfill their responsibilities related to homeless education.

NCHE has conducted over 97 local education agency and community organization trainings. A 2003 evaluation survey reported that responding state coordinators who requested training services rated the planning of the trainings as excellent (100 percent) and the content as either excellent (87.5 percent) or good (12.5 percent).

Through its HelpLine, NCHE has provided direct assistance to state coordinators, school districts, local agencies, homeless families enrolling their children in school, as well as families seeking shelter. The following table shows role groups served by the NCHE HelpLine from 2002-2004.

Role Group	Number of Requests
State Coordinators	206
Local liaisons and other local education agency staff	1914
Community organizations and shelter providers	525
Homeless families	276

SERVE. SERVE has a long-standing reputation for support, technical assistance, and research and development in the Southeast. A SERVE senior policy research analyst is assigned to every SEA to provide evidence-based policy education research to state superintendents and their staffs. The Eisenhower Math and Science Consortium at SERVE conducts the Technical Assistance Academy for Mathematics and Science Services (TAAMSS) that provides long-term professional development to mathematics and science service providers in the SERVE region. Academy participants represent various agencies in the region, from Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) in Georgia to the Mathematics & Science Education Network

(MSEN) centers in North Carolina and SEAs. The SouthEast Initiatives Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR*TEC) conducts an academy that trains state technology staff to improve their state programs for teacher educators from regional universities and SEAs.

SERVE has also hosted programs that work closely with communities and families, such as the Anchor Schools Project, which provided an electronic and human lifeline to support migrant children and families as they relocated to pursue work, and ASPIRE, which is a Migrant Even Start program. SERVE partners with the 21st Century Community Learning Centers in the Southeast to provide their programs with training, technical assistance, and other resources. Most of these programs are affiliated with community organizations like the Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs and YWCAs, and other community-based organizations.

(b) Experience hosting an educational support center. SERVE developed the original proposal for the National Center for Homeless Education in 1998 and has hosted it for six years. SERVE has operated the Regional Educational Laboratory for 15 years, the Southeast Regional Consortium for Mathematics & Science Education at SERVE for 12 years, and the Southeast Initiatives Regional Technology in Education Consortium (SEIR*TEC) for nine years. Across all program evaluation reports, over 92 percent of constituents confirm the high quality of services and products offered to a vast array of audiences.

(c) Experience hosting national and/or regional conferences and meetings.

NCHE. NCHE has hosted a national symposium during each year of its existence. In 2001, NCHE hosted a series of meetings of a national task force to develop Standards and Indicators of Quality for McKinney-Vento Programs. In 2000, NCHE planned and hosted the annual NAEHCY conference in Greensboro, North Carolina, for over 500 participants.

SERVE. SERVE routinely hosts national and regional (multi-state) conferences each year. Following is a sample of conferences planned and hosted by SERVE:

- Early Childhood State Specialists Meeting—(April 2001) national meeting for state specialists
- Linkages to Learning After-School Institutes—(November 2002, March 2003) part of the SERVE Leadership focus national meetings on topics of interest
- The SERVE Forum on School Improvement—(seven conducted to date) an annual three-day learning event designed to bring educators together from across the Southeast and the nation
- Southern States Seminar—(seven conducted to date) an annual forum for selected representatives from the departments of education in SERVE states
- SERVE Annual Literacy Symposium—(2001, 2002, 2003) meetings designed to bring current reading research to a regional and national audience

(d) Experience developing publications for information dissemination.

NCHE. NCHE publishes and disseminates brochures, booklets, and posters for a wide variety of audiences. (See Appendix N for a sample of its awareness publications.) Since July 2001, NCHE has disseminated upon request over 85,000 posters, 44,000 school records folders, and 34,000 parent brochures.

In addition, NCHE has developed publications to assist state coordinators, local liaisons, and service providers. Publications include *Education for Homeless Children and Youth: A Compendium of Research and Information*, *National Symposium on Transportation for Homeless Children and Youth Proceedings*, *Local Homeless Education Liaison Toolkit*, and *State Coordinators Handbook for Supporting Local Homeless Education Liaisons*. (See Appendix O for a complete listing of NCHE publications.)

SERVE. SERVE offers an extensive list of publications that span a wide range of topics and reach audiences of educators, administrators, and policymakers. See Appendix P for a list of selected publications.

(e) Experience hosting websites, listservs, hotlines.

SERVE established the NCHE website six years ago and currently averages 6,400 visitors per month. In the 2003 NCHE evaluation, a local liaison survey reported that nearly 85 percent of local liaisons who had visited the NCHE website felt that the information provided was moderately to extremely useful, and over 90 percent indicated that the website was moderately or extremely easy to navigate.

SERVE also hosts the SERVE website and Expanded Learning Opportunities website.

SERVE's web services are housed on UNIX and Windows 2003-based systems and incorporate Java, PHP, and Perl web technologies. Desktop publishing/imaging applications experience includes photo editing in Photoshop, InDesign, GoLive, multimedia development in Dreamweaver, Flash, Director, and streaming audio and video. Staff members are knowledgeable about website accessibility standards, as established by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and have brought its site into compliance with the Office of the Chief Information Officer's (OCIO) requirements for accessible electronic and information technology.

NCHE currently hosts a general listserv with 223 subscribers and a state coordinators listserv with 58 subscribers, representing all states but South Dakota and including Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico.

NCHE operates a toll-free HelpLine and receives on average 120 requests per month. NCHE serves callers in both English and Spanish and provides information usually within two days, utilizing information in its database of state and local resources. State coordinators

surveyed in 2003 found the information useful (96 percent) and staff members polite and timely in their responses (100 percent).

(f) A record of previous project implementation and timeliness of completion.

In addition to NCHE, SERVE has successfully operated 14 major contracts, including three REL contracts, three Eisenhower Math and Science Consortium contracts, a Regional Technology in Education Consortium contract, a migrant education technology grant (Anchor Schools), a Migrant Even Start grant, and a 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant (Kaleidoscope). (See Appendix Q for a list of major awards.) Over its 15-year existence, SERVE has been awarded nearly \$100 million in contracts and grants. Without exception, the program objectives of all these contracts and grants have been consistently met, and deliverables have been completed in a timely manner.

CURRENT CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

Employee	Federal Contractual Obligations	Non-federal Contractual Obligations
Diana Bowman	100%	0%
Beth Hartness	100%	0%
Christina Stern	100%	0%
Jan Moore	100%	0%
Kathleen Mooney	100%	0%
Beth Garriss-Hardy	0%	100%

Contract Staff	Federal Contractual Obligations	Non-federal Contractual Obligations
Cheryl Vrooman	100%	0%