

Tom Bookler, Advocate for the Homeless

Dr. Tom Bookler has served as an advocate for the homeless and as a McKinney-Vento Regional Educational Liaison for over 15 years. In this role, he works with the 39 school districts in the North Cook Intermediate Service Center (ISC) / Regional Office of Education #5 area on training and monitors requirements of school districts to support McKinney-Vento homeless students and their families, as well as unaccompanied minors.

Dr. Bookler has been a supporter of the implementation of the [McKinney-Vento Homeless Act](#) for school districts and families and is instrumental in advocacy and legislation to help homeless families return to stable housing.

He connects school districts with resources for homeless students and families, including *Continuum of Care*, an organization that plans a coordinated, comprehensive approach to providing housing and services for people experiencing homelessness.

Dr. Bookler also assists with registration, enrollment and re-engagement of homeless students who have fallen through the cracks due to family issues. In addition, he offers training and assistance to various homeless agencies in north suburban Cook County. He works directly with the *Alliance to End Homelessness* on grants and helping unaccompanied or homeless youth, and with the YWCA to secure grants to support an early childhood program (age 0-3 year olds) in several school districts.

Dr. Bookler coordinates services with the North Cook Academic Navigator to ensure that McKinney-Vento eligible students are able to attend school throughout their period of homelessness. In addition, he conducts professional development events and roundtable meetings for North Cook ISC school districts on topics surrounding the needs for McKinney-Vento homeless students.

Every year, Dr. Bookler provides backpacks and school supplies to thousands of McKinney-Vento students in suburban Cook County and the collar counties. He also works with the North Suburban Cook County Bar Association to provide Christmas gifts for early childhood and at-risk students.

He initiated an [Education Fund for Homeless and At-Risk Students](#) through North Cook ISC. Donated funds are used for things such as mattresses and miscellaneous household items for families that are rehoused, emergency motel stays for families that have no place to stay other than their car or outside, and dorm supplies to help homeless youth start college. Donations are accepted year-round.

Dr. Bookler's compassion and commitment to serving others is limitless. North Cook ISC is very fortunate to have him working with its schools.

About North Cook ISC

North Cook ISC is responsible for 32 elementary and 7 high school districts, plus 3 Special Education Co-Operatives. It serves more than 900 public school administrators, almost 11,000 teachers, and 146,000 students in 228 public schools. For more information, see www.ncisc.org.

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