

# School Is Here No Matter What.

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Connecticut State Department of Education

**No matter what.  
School is for Everyone.**

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CONNECTICUT STATE  
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# The McKinney-Vento Act No Matter What ...

May 17, 2023

# ***McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII, Subtitle B***

- McKinney-Vento Act turns 36 this year (1987).
- ESSA amended McKinney-Vento, Title I, and the entire Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 2015.
- McKinney-Vento provides formula grants to states; States award competitive subgrants to local education agencies (LEAs).



# State Coordinators

## 42 USC 11432(d)(3)

- Ensure McKinney-Vento students receive “the full protections and services provided by” the law.
- Monitor all LEAs.
- Publish an annual updated list of the liaisons.
- Provide professional development programs for liaisons and others.
- Respond to inquiries from parents, youth, LEAs and others.
- Gather, post and report homelessness data.
- Collaborate with broad array of educators, service providers, community organizations and policymakers.



# Local Liaisons

11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)

- Identify McKinney-Vento students and ensure they are enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.
- Connect young children to preschool, Head Start, and early intervention.
- Connect families and youth to housing, health, mental health and other services.
- Post public notice of McKinney-Vento rights to parents and youth.
- Carryout enrollment disputes.
- Provide professional development and support on McKinney-Vento to school staff.



# Definition: Who is Eligible?

11434a(2)]

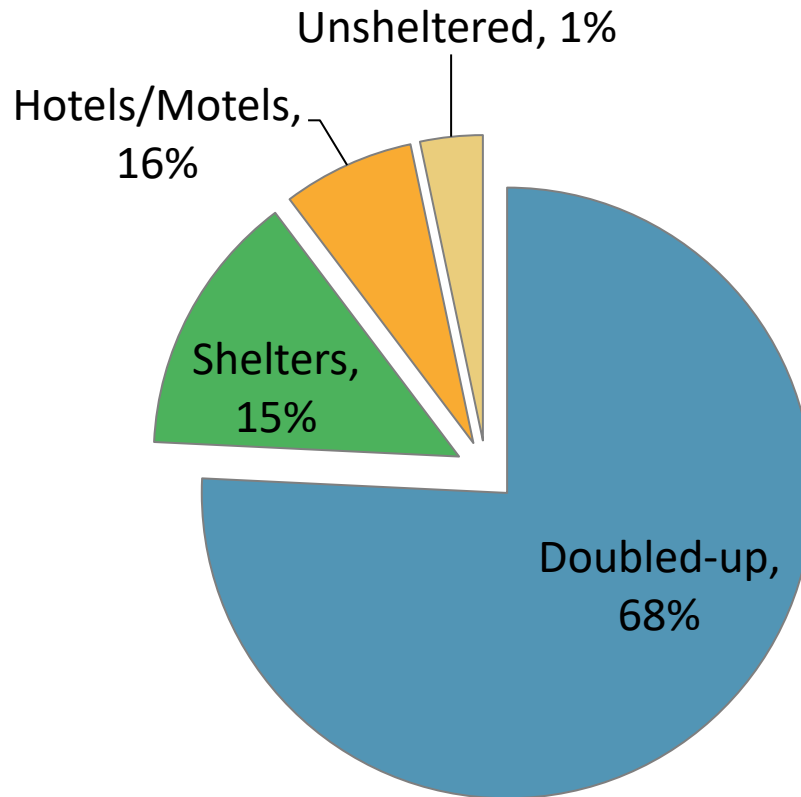
*Those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including students:*

- *Sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.*
- *Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to a lack of alternative, adequate accommodation.*
- *Living in emergency & transitional shelters.*
- *Abandoned in hospitals.*
- *Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.*
- *Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations or similar situations.*



# Total Enrollment HCY: 3984

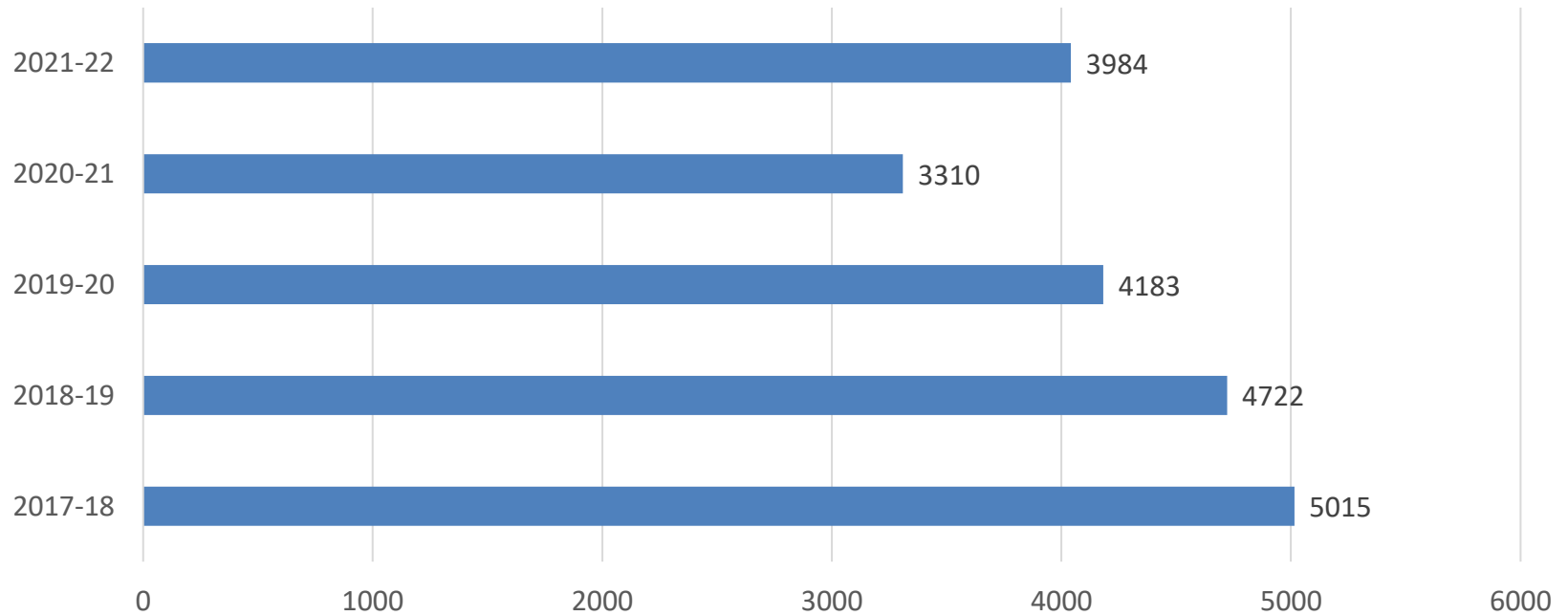
## Enrolled by Primary Nighttime Residence







# Students Experience Homelessness: Connecticut Five-year Trend



# Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)

- includes a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- Liaisons must assist UHY with enrollment, school selection, & dispute resolution.
- Have the same right to immediate enrollment & educational services as other students.



# School Stability

11432(g)(3)(I)

School of Origin (SOO): school attended when permanently housed or the school in which last enrolled, including a preschool.

- SOO includes designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools, when the student completes the final grade level served by the school of origin (ex. Middle to High School.)
- Preschool includes:
  - Preschool special education.
  - Publicly-funded program for children 0-5 for which the LEA is a financial or administrative agent, or is accountable for providing early childhood education.
  - Preschools operated, administered or funded by an LEA, including Title I or similar.
  - Head Start programs for which the LEA is the grant recipient.



# Best Interest

11432(g)(3)(A)

Each LEA shall, according to the child's or youth's best interest:

- Keep the student in the *school of origin* for the duration of homelessness, and until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes permanently housed; or
- Enroll the student in any public school that housed students living in the attendance area where the student is living are eligible to attend.



# Best Interest

11432(g)(3)(A)

- School of origin is presumed to be in student's best interest unless this is contrary to parent or UHY's wishes
- Consider student-centered factors such as impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, & safety.



# Immediate Enrollment

11432(g)(3)(C)

Students entitled to immediately enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend, even if:

- do not have required documents, such as school records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, guardianship, or other documents; or
- missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.



# Immediate Enrollment

11432(g)(3)(C)

- Enrollment includes “attending classes and participating fully in school activities.”
- Liaison must assist in obtaining immunization and other health records or screenings, and immunizations if needed; the student must be enrolled in the interim.
- Enrolling school must obtain school records from the previous school; the student must be enrolled while records are obtained.
- Immediate enrollment applies even without parent or legal guardian.



# Dispute Resolution

11432(g)(3)(B)(ii)

- Disputes may arise over: eligibility, school selection, or enrollment.
- If enrollment or continued attendance is denied, a written statement must be given explaining the reason and the local appeal process.
- Provided in a format and language the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied homeless youth can understand.
- Students must be enrolled and receive services while any dispute is pending.





# Transportation

11432(g)(1)(J)(iii)

- HCY are eligible for transportation to/from the school of origin.
- Right to transportation extends:
  - For the duration of homelessness; or
  - Until the end of the school year in which they obtain housing.
- Transportation should be comparable to what others receive.



# Services and Supports

Educational services comparable to those provided to other students, include:

- special education services,
- preschool services,
- free school meals,
- Title I services; and
- gifted and talented services.



# Removing Barriers

11432(g)(1)(I)

SEAs and LEAs must develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment and retention of McKinney-Vento students, including barriers due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences.



# Independent Student Status FAFSA

- UHY qualify as independent students on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), so they do not have to provide parent information, and their federal aid package is calculated solely on their income and assets.
- Local liaisons must inform UHY about their independent student status and assist them in documenting this status
- Independent student status may be determined by local liaisons, RHYA and HUD shelter directors, and college financial aid administrators.



# New EdSight Dashboard

## Students Experiencing Homelessness

- State level dashboard provides HCY information including:
  - primary nighttime residence;
  - demographic and programmatic characteristics;
  - academic performance on state assessments; and
  - graduation rates.
- Additional tabs provide aggregate data at state and district level for viewing on screen or downloading to Excel.
- Visit [EdSight](#).



# Resources

- [CSDE Homeless Education Webpage](#)
- [National Center for Homeless Education](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection](#)
- [National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth](#)





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# CAMPAIGN

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## **CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES**

Increase awareness of the McKinney-Vento Act and how this allows students experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity to remain in school

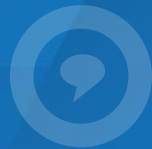
Increase ability for school-based staff/district staff to identify all students experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity





## AUDIENCES

- Primary:
  - Parents/Grandparents/Caregivers of school age children experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity
  - Youth/Young Adults experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity
    - Special focus on LGBTQ+ population
- Secondary:
  - School-based staff/district staff
  - Community organizations



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# RESEARCH

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## RESEARCH APPROACH

In order to better understand the campaign audience groups, barriers they are facing in connecting to education, as well as the process by which students are identified, OC conducted the following research steps:

- Digital surveys:
  - McKinney-Vento Liaisons
  - General School-Based Staff
- Subject matter expert interviews



## **BARRIERS TO STAYING IN SCHOOL**

- Lack of awareness that they have the right to remain in or return to their school of origin
- Mental health needs
- Transportation
- Commuting time
- Clothing - needing to wash clothes or clothing allowances
- Fees - for lost books or school supplies
- Focus is on basic needs



## CHALLENGES IN IDENTIFYING STUDENTS

- Students are reluctant to come forward and self identify
  - Fear of stigma of homelessness/not identifying as homeless
  - Fear of being separated from their families or getting families in trouble
- It is not always obvious who is experiencing these challenges



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Important to be clear on definitions of homelessness and help available based on status:
  - HUD definition of homelessness (literally living on the street or in a shelter)
  - MV's definition (unstable housing)
- Easier to track students who are in shelters; the hidden people are staying with family/friends and are not meeting the HUD definition
- People do not associate themselves with the term "homeless"
- Terms used: moving around, staying with a friend, couch hopping
- Returning a student to their home school is easier than starting over with a new placement



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# MESSAGING APPROACH/THEMES

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## BEHAVIOR CHANGE & BRAIN SCIENCE

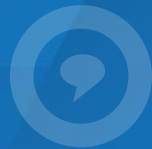
- People have a need for belonging
- Research shows that homelessness could take many forms, important to catch people who are “under the radar”
- Focus on school as support, link to other help/bring audience in
- School is an inclusive, stabilizing force even when life is difficult and other basic needs are not being met
- Create a sense of empowerment





## MESSAGING APPROACH

- Clear, simple communications
- Key points for community organizations and school district staff
- Supportive and understanding
- Create a sense of empowerment
- The target audience is dealing with a host of difficult issues and, in some cases, trauma—calls to action should have a clear benefit
- Language matters. People do not necessarily associate themselves with the term homeless



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**CREATIVE**

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# NO MATTER WHAT

Even when so much in life is unstable and you don't have a home of your own, you still have protections. No matter what your situation, there is support. School can provide stability in uncertain times and help you get support.

[CT.GOV/NOMATTERWHAT](http://CT.GOV/NOMATTERWHAT)





## Display Ads



**School is for Everyone**

This banner features a dark green background with a white torn-paper effect on the right side. On the left is the CSDE logo. The text 'School is for Everyone' is in large white font. To the right of the text are icons for a school building, stars, and a pencil.

**School is Here No Matter What**

This banner has a dark green background. At the top are icons for a speech bubble, laptop, tablet, and speech bubble. The CSDE logo is in the top right. The text 'School is Here No Matter What' is in large white font. Below the text is a photograph of the lower legs and feet of several children wearing various styles of shoes and socks, including one with a rainbow stripe.

**School is Here No Matter What**

This banner has a white background with a blue torn-paper effect on the right side. At the top are icons for an open book, speech bubble, paper airplane, and stars. The text 'School is Here No Matter What' is in large blue font. On the right is a photograph of a young woman with long dark hair wearing a striped shirt. Below her is a school building icon and the CSDE logo.

**School is for Everyone**

This banner has a white background with a blue torn-paper effect on the right side. On the left is the CSDE logo. The text 'School is for Everyone' is in large blue font. To the right of the text are icons for a paper airplane, an open book, and a laptop.

This banner features a dark blue background with four colorful school backpacks (yellow, green, pink, and orange) lined up. There are small white stars scattered around the backpacks.



## Animated Story Ads (Snapchat & Tiktok)





# No Matter What, School is for Everyone

CT schools are here for all students—  
even those dealing with **unstable  
housing or homelessness.**

Learn more at  
[CT.gov/NoMatterWhat](https://CT.gov/NoMatterWhat)

Digital Screens

## Supporting Students No Matter What

School staff can help students dealing with unstable housing or homelessness get the tools and support they need to succeed.

Housing instability and homelessness can cause many struggles for children and teens, especially in school. Because students and families may not want to share information about such difficult situations, school staff members can play an important role in helping to identify and support students who may be experiencing homelessness.

If you're noticing signs that a student may be unstably housed (e.g. poor attendance, statements suggesting lack of shelter, poor hygiene, etc.), you can ask these questions to better understand their housing situation:

- Have you recently moved?
- Was your move due to a loss of housing?
- Are you in a safe place?
- Are you staying far away from school?

Avoid using the word "homeless" when speaking to students about their housing situation. Try these suggestions instead:

- Family in transition
- Temporary housing
- Loss of housing
- Unstable housing
- Moving from place to place
- Doubling up with family or friends
- Couch surfing

If you believe a student is likely experiencing homelessness, please direct them to their district **McKinney-Vento Liaison** and assure students that any information disclosed will be kept confidential.

District PDF Flyer





**CT Schools:  
Supporting Kids  
Through Housing  
Difficulties,  
No Matter What**

CONNECTICUT STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

If your family is moving from place to place, it can be difficult to keep things stable for your children. **But you don't have to go it alone.**

All Connecticut schools support students and families who don't have a steady housing situation or are experiencing homelessness.

**Get confidential help and support.**  
[ct.gov/NoMatterWhat](https://ct.gov/NoMatterWhat)

Print Ad (English, Spanish, Polish, Portuguese)

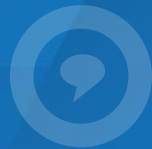
**School is Here  
for Your Child,  
No Matter What**

All Connecticut schools support students and families who don't have a steady housing situation or are experiencing homelessness. Get connected to confidential help.

[CT.gov/NoMatterWhat](https://ct.gov/NoMatterWhat)

Pediatrician Poster





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# MEDIA PLAN

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# PAID MEDIA

1.9 - 5.31.23

## English Media Tactics:

- Facebook & Instagram
- Snapchat & Tiktok
- Google Display
- GeoFencing Digital Banners
- Patch.com
- Newspapers
- Pediatrician Offices
- Gas Station Audio
- Convenience Store Digital Screens

## Spanish Media Tactics:

- Facebook & Instagram
- Digital Content
- Influencer Vignettes
- Supermarket Screens



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Distributing posters to locations in the local community to promote awareness
- Food pantries, soup kitchens, community centers, YMCAs, libraries, faith-based organizations, LGBTQIA+ organizations, laundromats, etc.
- Concentrating on 4 markets: Bridgeport, Norwalk, Stamford, Danbury

**No Matter What**

Housing problems can be a barrier for students to get the education they need. But there is always a place for them in CT schools—**no matter what**.

**A child or teen is protected by the McKinney-Vento Act if they are:**

- Staying with friends or family
- Staying with multiple families in one space
- Couch surfing
- Living in a car or in tents

**Protections for children and teens experiencing homelessness or unstable housing situations (including teens who are living on their own) include:**

- The chance to enroll and attend class in the school of their choice.
- A decision on where a student should go to school based on their best interests.
- Free school meals and transportation.
- Other special programs and services that are provided to all other students, if needed.

To learn more about how your school can help and get confidential support, please visit [ct.gov/NoMatterWhat](https://ct.gov/NoMatterWhat)



## OUTREACH RESULTS TO DATE

- **405** Posters distributed throughout Bridgeport, Danbury, Norwalk and Fairfield
- Visited **145** locations, such as
  - Food Pantries
  - Community Centers
  - Libraries
  - Churches
  - Malls
  - Restaurants
  - Bodegas
  - LGBTQIA+ Organizations



## QUOTES FROM THE FIELD

"Nice to know these kids have this support in place."

"Thanks for sharing these posters with us, while I don't know any youth currently struggling with this. It's good to have this in mind in case I see any of them."

"Wow, I hadn't heard about the McKinney-Vento Act at all - but this is good information to keep in mind for youth experiencing housing insecurity."

I know a lot of people in the community that could benefit from this information."



Field Photos



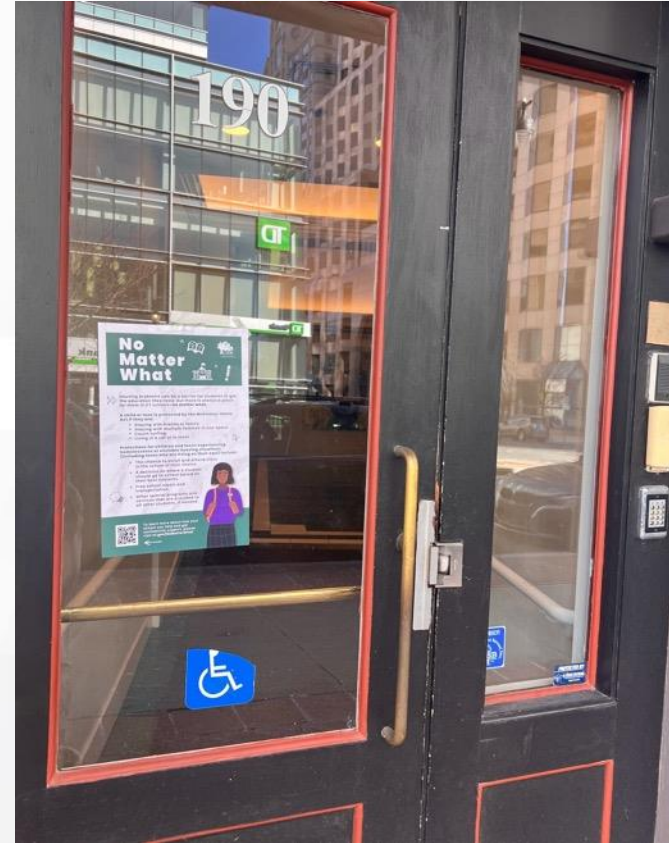


Field Photos



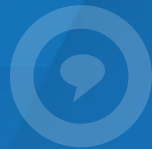
Field Photos





Field Photos





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**SPREAD THE WORD**

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## CSDE SOCIAL/WEB LINKS

- [www.facebook.com/ctdepartmentofeducation](https://www.facebook.com/ctdepartmentofeducation)
- [www.instagram.com/educate.ct](https://www.instagram.com/educate.ct)
- CT.GOV/NOMATTERWHAT



## UTILIZING TOOLKIT ASSETS

- Add to your school website
- Email communication to parents/caregivers
- Like/Repost/reshare elements from our social channels
- Display at school
- Share with PTA/PTSA/Athletic Associations for their distribution
- Share during faculty and/or staff meetings



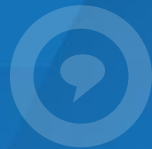
## ENGAGING STUDENTS

- Homeroom or school assembly
- Clubs re: Community/Volunteer activities
- Student Council/Student Government
- Volunteer hours for those to help spread the word
  - Putting posters in local areas
  - Share on their social media
  - Start a conversation
  - Collect needed items to keep in school for housing insecure



## **SPREAD THE WORD!**

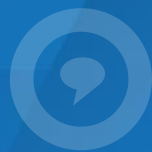
- Check out the toolkit elements on [ct.gov/nomatterwhat](https://ct.gov/nomatterwhat)
- Post information on your district social media accounts and follow the CSDE social accounts
- Connect with your Communications Director and/or McKinney-Vento Liaison!



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# QUESTIONS

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**THANK  
YOU**

# Questions?

[www.cceh.org](http://www.cceh.org)  
[info@cceh.org](mailto:info@cceh.org)

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