

McKinney-Vento: Federal homeless education legislation

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act ensures the educational rights and protections of homeless children and youth so that they may enroll in school, attend regularly, and be successful. The legislation requires a local homeless education liaison in every school district to assist children and unaccompanied youth in their efforts to attend school. This act guarantees homeless children and youth the following:

- The right to immediate enrollment in school, even if lacking paperwork normally required for enrollment.
- The right to attend school in his/her school of origin (if this is requested by the parent and is feasible) or in the school in the attendance area where the family or youth is currently residing
- The right to receive transportation to his/her school of origin, if this is requested by the parent.
- The right to services comparable to those received by housed schoolmates, including transportation and supplemental educational services.
- The right to attend school along with children not experiencing homelessness. Segregation based on a student's status as homeless is strictly prohibited
- The posting of homeless students' rights in all schools and other places around the community.

While having the opportunity to enroll and succeed in school may seem like a given to many of us, the McKinney-Vento Act was enacted due to the numerous barriers homeless children faced in obtaining a free, appropriate, public education. If you have questions regarding homeless status and provision of educational services, please call 708-868-8300. The District McKinney-Vento Liaison is Dr. Vedia Y. Smith Page.

Who is homeless?

The term "homeless children and youth" as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act;

Means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and includes—

- Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are

living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or a awaiting foster care placement

- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Children and youths who are living in a cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus/train stations, or similar settings,
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above

ENTRY POINT, found at myentrypoint.org is a free service that utilizes trained intake specialists to assess a family in determining what resources are available that best meet their unique circumstances. They will connect families to appropriate and available resources based upon that assessment.