

TRANSPORTATION



Transportation is one of the biggest barriers to school attendance and school stability and success for students experiencing homelessness. Poverty and unstable living conditions facing homeless families can make getting to and from school challenging. Transportation has been recognized as a significant barrier to attendance and success in school and as such the McKinney-Vento Act contains provisions requiring transportation for students experiencing homelessness.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS:

- Districts must provide transportation to and from the school of origin for students experiencing homelessness, at a parent or guardian's request.
- For unaccompanied youth, districts must provide transportation to and from the school of origin at the request of the district Homeless Liaison.
- If the student's temporary residence and the school of origin are in the same LEA, that LEA must provide for transportation. If the student is living outside the school of origin's LEA, the LEA where the student is living and the school of origin's LEA must determine how to divide the responsibility and cost of providing transportation. If they cannot come to an agreement they must share the responsibility and cost equally.

The McKinney-Vento Act states that LEAs are responsible for reviewing and revising policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth in schools. Transportation policies are included, as a lack of transportation can be a considerable barrier for homeless students. Because homeless students often experience challenges not faced by housed students, the provision of services to homeless students may need to extend beyond what is provided to regularly housed students.

Title I and Transportation:

As of July 2014, Title I, Part A funds can be used for transportation. Specifically, Title I, Part A funds can be used to "...provide homeless children and youths with services not ordinarily provided to other students under those sections, including supporting the liaison designated pursuant to section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, and providing transportation pursuant to section 722(g)(1)(J)(iii) of such Act."

Determining the Mode of Transportation:

According to Non-Regulatory Guidance, based on the best interest of the student and in consultation with the parent, the LEA ultimately determines the mode of transportation; however, it is important to ensure that the mode of transportation does not create barriers to a homeless student's education.

Transportation arrangements should ensure that the student is able to participate for the full school day, neither arriving late nor leaving before the school day has ended. Extremely early pick-up times or public bus transfers for young children also may be problematic and often may warrant the issuance of a bus pass for a parent to ride with their child to and from school.

The mode of transportation also should not stigmatize a homeless student or betray the confidentiality of his or her living status. Bus routes, for example, should be arranged so students staying in homeless shelters can be picked up and dropped off in a way that does not reveal their place of residence. For example, buses can make a stop at the shelter the first stop in the morning and the last stop in the afternoon.

In cases where parents or unaccompanied homeless youth have working automobiles, many school districts will arrange for the parents or student to drive to school and the LEA may provide a gas card or mileage reimbursement. A district may also note days when the student is not in attendance and adjust the amount accordingly.