

Supporting Evacuee and Refugee Children and Youth Under McKinney-Vento

This tip sheet:

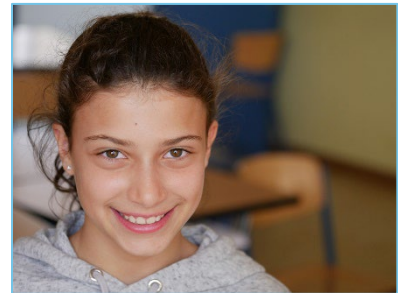
- recommends strategies for determining the McKinney-Vento eligibility of evacuee and refugee children and youth,
- suggests best practices to ensure the immediate enrollment and appropriate class placement of McKinney-Vento eligible evacuee and refugee children and youth, and
- shares resources for more information.

Context

Rising numbers of evacuees and refugees arriving from countries such as Afghanistan and Ukraine experiencing political and humanitarian upheaval have led to an increased focus on whether evacuees and refugees would be considered eligible for McKinney-Vento rights and services. This tip sheet shares considerations for determining the McKinney-Vento eligibility of evacuee and refugee students and recommendations for enrolling them in school immediately and connecting them to needed assistance.

McKinney-Vento Eligibility

McKinney-Vento eligibility may be determined easily for many students, but may require a thoughtful consideration of the student's circumstances and nuanced understanding and application of the [McKinney-Vento definition of homeless](#) [42 U.S.C. §11434a(2)] for others. Evacuee and refugee children, youth, and families often arrive in the United States in a state of turmoil and with limited or no resources available to secure safe and stable housing and acclimate quickly to the economic and other demands of American life. While evacuee and refugee students are not categorically eligible for McKinney-Vento rights and services, some may be eligible for and benefit from these rights and services **based on the nature of their primary nighttime residence.**



As with any student, determinations of McKinney-Vento eligibility for evacuee and refugee students should be made on a case-by-case basis considering the unique circumstances of each student. Local homeless education liaisons (local liaisons) may consider the following questions to help guide determinations.

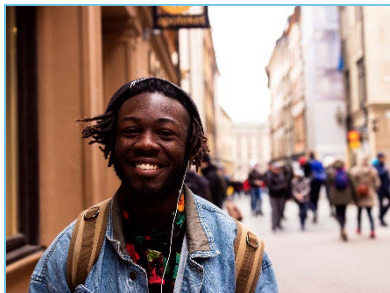
- Considering the “fixed, regular, and adequate” guiding standard and specific living arrangements listed in the statutory definition, would the household's primary nighttime residence be considered homeless? Consult the National Center for Homeless Education's [Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services](#) for a detailed, phrase-by-phrase exploration of the definition of *homeless*.
- What personal and/or public resources are available to the household to secure and maintain safe and stable housing? For instance, while a household arriving under the care and custody of the [Office of Refugee Resettlement](#) may receive sufficient assistance to secure housing quickly and remain stable there, a household arriving as humanitarian parolees may not be eligible for or receive much, if

any, public assistance. Learn more about different statuses and benefits from the [Migration Policy Institute](#) or the [National Immigration Forum](#).

- Consult the National Center for Homeless Education’s [Supporting the Education of Immigrant Students Experiencing Homelessness](#) to explore challenges many immigrant and refugee families face when arriving in the United States, tips for determining homelessness among immigrant and refugee families, and strategies for welcoming these students into U.S. schools.

It is the responsibility of the local educational agency (LEA), under the leadership of the local liaison, to make determinations of McKinney-Vento eligibility based on a thoughtful understanding and application of the McKinney-Vento definition of *homeless* [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(i)]. California LEA and County Office of Education (COE) liaisons may reach out to their [Homeless Education Technical Assistance Center \(HETAC\)](#) for thought partnership and assistance thinking through individual eligibility determinations, as needed.

Facilitating Immediate Enrollment



Enrolling students from other countries in school and ensuring their placement in appropriate classroom settings can be challenging for LEAs. There may be delays in receiving documentation normally required for enrollment and/or difficulties in understanding international transcripts and “mapping” international courses and credits to corresponding U.S. coursework. The following strategies and resources may help facilitate enrollment.

- Talk with students and families about the immunizations students have received while awaiting related records. It is important to remember that under the McKinney-Vento Act, schools must enroll McKinney-Vento eligible students in school immediately, even if lacking required paperwork [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C)(i)(I)], and local liaisons must help students obtain required immunizations, screenings, or other health records, if needed [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C)(iii)]. Consult the National Center for Homeless Education’s [Enrolling Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness in School](#) for more information.
- Talk with students and families about students’ school histories and previous coursework while awaiting documents, remembering that class placement decisions can be adjusted once records are received. Work with resettlement agencies or the [consulate](#) in the country where the student lived previously for assistance with locating needed documentation. Consult the U.S. Department of Education’s [Finding the Right Starting Point: Obtaining, Interpreting, and Evaluating International Transcripts](#) and the California HETAC’s [Prompt and Proper Placement](#) for additional records and enrollment strategies.



Additional Resources

Immigrating to the United States and acclimating to its way of life – including its public schools – can be stressful, as households leave behind family, friends, and the familiarity of their home country. The resources below may be used to help provide a more supportive and welcoming school environment for refugee and evacuee families.



U.S. Department of Education Resources

- [Confronting Discrimination Based on National Origin and Immigration Status: A Resource for Families and Educators](#)
- [Educational Resources for Immigrants, Refugees, Asylees and other New Americans](#)
- [Equal Rights to Public Education Regardless of Immigration/Citizenship Status](#)
- [Information on the Rights of All Children to Enroll in School: Questions and Answers for States, School Districts, and Parents](#)
- [K-12 Resources for Afghan Evacuees](#)
- [Keeping the Promise Website](#)
- [National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition](#)
- [Newcomer Toolkit](#)

Office of Refugee Resettlement Resources

- [Office of Refugee Resettlement: Key State Contacts](#)
- [Refugee School Impact Refugee Support Services Set-Aside: FY 2022 Funding](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Resources

- [COVID-19 Materials for Migrants, Refugees, and Other Limited-English-Proficient Populations](#)

Other Resources

- [Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services \(BRYCS\)](#)
- [Welcome.us](#)



A California Homeless Education Technical Assistance Center (HETAC) Resource
Funded by the California Department of Education
August 2022
hetac.org