

The McKinney-Vento Act

On July 22, 1987, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act became public law. This was the first comprehensive federal law that addressed homelessness in America. On December 10, 2015, the President signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Under the previous version of ESEA (the No Child Left Behind Act), the education of homeless children and youth was included in Title X, Part C. Under ESSA, homeless education is included in Title IX, Part A.

Provisions of the Act:

- Homeless children have the right to attend either their original school or the school in the area in which they currently reside for the duration of their homelessness, or until the end of the school year if the family finds permanent housing.
- Schools are to immediately enroll homeless children and unaccompanied youth, even if they are unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, and any other required documentation.
- In the case where the educating district is different than the district where the student is temporarily residing, both school districts are responsible for the facilitation of transportation in the best interest of the student.
- Immediately upon enrollment, homeless students are entitled to receive a daily, free school lunch.

Administration of the Program:

The Pennsylvania's Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness initiative is administered by the Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV in collaboration with the School District of the City of Erie, the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit 5, & Riverview Intermediate Unit 6.



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Pennsylvania's Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness

REGION #5

Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie,
Forest, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer,
Venango and Warren



Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV
A Regional Site of Pennsylvania's
Education for Children & Youth
Experiencing Homelessness

Region 5 Pennsylvania's Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness

The Pennsylvania's Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness initiative ensures homeless children and youth a free and appropriate public education on an equal basis with all other children of Pennsylvania. Program objectives and activities are intended to remove barriers to enrollment and educational success, and to ensure that education is as uninterrupted as possible while students are homeless.

In the fall of 2005, Pennsylvania Department of Education made the decision to restructure Pennsylvania's Education for Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness into 8 regions.

Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV is the administrative agent for Region 5, which includes Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango and Warren Counties.



Homeless children face a variety of obstacles that impair their ability to attend school, including transportation.



Definitions of Homelessness

A child is considered homeless if he or she is living with or without a parent:

- In a homeless or domestic violence shelter or transitional housing
- In a public or private place not designated as regular sleeping accommodation, such as a vehicle, park, hotel or campground
- With relatives or friends due to lack of housing ("doubled up")
- "Unaccompanied homeless youth" including any child who is "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." This includes youth who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, been abandoned by parents or guardians, or separated from their parents for any other reason.
- Substandard housing
- In any of the situations listed above as a child of a migrant family
- Homeless children reside in situations that are not fixed, regular or adequate.

Barriers Facing Homeless Children

Homeless children face a variety of legal, social and emotional barriers that may interrupt their education. They include:

- Lack of school supplies and clothing
 - Residency and guardianship requirements
 - Lapses in program continuity
 - Delays in educational evaluations
 - Lack of transportation to school
 - Missing academic and health records
 - Lack of awareness regarding the extent and effects of homelessness
 - Inadequate parental resources
 - Social stigma attached to homelessness
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How Homeless Children's Initiative Coordinators Can Help

- Assisting with school enrollment and placement
- Providing referrals for clothing, food, shelter, rent, medical services, preschool, housing, advocacy, counseling, etc.
- Coordinating transportation to and from school
- Implementing tutoring and enrichment services in shelters and other settings
- Coordinating support services
- Distributing literature regarding homeless children
- Providing training and in-service related to the McKinney-Vento Act
- Increasing public awareness of homelessness
- Assisting with obtaining school clothing, shoes and supplies for homeless students

How School Personnel Can Help

- School administrators can help by knowing the rights of the homeless and encouraging sensitivity
 - Identified Homeless Liaisons can identify and track homeless students, train district staff on Federal and State policies, and contact HCI staff with questions and requests for technical assistance
 - Principals can create a welcoming environment for homeless families
 - School secretaries can discreetly assist parents with forms and paperwork
 - Counselors can refer for needed services
 - School nurses can expedite immunization and health record transfers
 - Transportation staff can arrange for children to attend their school of origin
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