Educating Missouri's Homeless Children



The McKinney-Vento Act guarantees homeless children and youth an education equal to what they would receive if they were not homeless.

Who is Homeless?

According to the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless children and youth include individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. This includes the following situations:

- Sharing the housing of others (known as doubling-up) due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Living in a nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings

The McKinney-Vento Act also recognizes unaccompanied youth who are homeless. According to the act, an unaccompanied youth is a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian.

Which School Can a Homeless Child Attend?

There are two choices for a student in a homeless situation — the school of origin and the school of residency. The school of origin is the school the child attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled. The school of residency is the school serving the area where the child or youth is currently physically dwelling. When determining the school of best interest, a homeless child or youth should remain in the school of origin (to the extent feasible) unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian or to the wishes of the unaccompanied youth.



Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

Federal Programs
P.O. Box 480 • Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480
https://dese.mo.gov/quality-schools/federal-programs/homeless-children-youth

Enrollment

The McKinney-Vento Act requires the immediate enrollment of homeless children and youth. These children must be allowed to attend school even if they are unable to produce previous academic records, immunization and medical records, proofs of residency, birth certificates, or other documentation that is usually required.

Transportation

School districts must provide transportation for homeless children and youth to the school of best interest. Districts must also provide transportation during the resolution of any pending disputes. While disputes over enrollment, school selection or eligibility are being resolved, students must be transported to the school of choice of the parent or the unaccompanied youth.

The Homeless Liaison

A school district's homeless liaison plays a vital role in ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness enroll and succeed in school. The McKinney-Vento Act requires that every school district appoint a homeless liaison who serves as the link between homeless families and school staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and social-service providers.

Call Missouri's Homeless Liaison

(573) 522-8763

Amy Ross
Homeless Liaison
West Plains R-VII
610 East Olden
(417)255-8676 ext. 4576

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