

McKinney Vento-Homeless Children and Education

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Examples of children who would fall under this definition:

- Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
- Children living in "motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations"
- Children living in "emergency or transitional shelters"
- Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc.)
- Children living in "cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations..."[11]

The McKinney-Vento Act also ensures school districts

- Enroll students in homeless situations immediately, even if they do not have documents normally required for enrollment, such as previous school records, medical or immunization records, proof of residency,
- Provide transportation to and from school free of charge,
- Allow children to attend their school of origin (last school enrolled or the school they attended when they first became homeless) regardless of what district the family resides in.
- Require schools to register homeless children even if they lack normally required documents, such as immunization records or proof of residence.
- Enroll students in free and reduced lunch program the first day of attendance.
- Provide supports such as but not limited to uniforms, clothes, eyeglasses, hygiene products, tutoring, bus passes, and access to afterschool activities.
- Refer the student, parent, or guardian to the district liaison to carry out any dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.
- Admit the student immediately to the requested school while the dispute is being resolved.
- Provide access to the educational and other services they need to ensure that they have an opportunity to meet the same challenging state student academic achievement standards to which all students are held.
- Designate a district-wide homeless coordinator to review policies and create procedures, including dispute resolution procedures, to ensure that homeless children are able to attend school.
- Appoint Local Education Liaisons to ensure that school staff are aware of these rights, to provide public notice to homeless families (at shelters and at school) and to facilitate access to school and transportation services.