Unaccompanied Youth Information & Rights Form

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act – Pennsylvania

What Is an Unaccompanied Youth?

Under the **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**, an *unaccompanied youth* is a child or young person who:

- Is **not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian**, AND
- Lacks a **fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**.

This may include students who are:

- Staying with friends, relatives, or others due to loss of housing or family conflict ("doubled up")
- Living in shelters or transitional housing
- Living in motels or hotels due to lack of other housing
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, campgrounds, or substandard housing
- Abandoned or asked to leave home
- Living on their own for any reason without a parent or guardian

Unaccompanied youth may still qualify even if a parent allows them to stay elsewhere.

Educational Rights of Unaccompanied Youth

Students identified as unaccompanied youth have the right to:

1. Immediate School Enrollment

- Enroll in school **immediately**, even without:
    - Proof of residency
    - Immunization records
    - School records
    - Birth certificate
    - Parent/guardian signature

2. School Stability

- Remain in their **school of origin** (the school attended when permanently housed or the last school attended), if in their best interest.
- Receive **transportation** to and from the school of origin.

3. Full Participation

- Participate fully in all school programs and activities.
- Receive services comparable to those offered to other students.

4. Free School Meals

- Automatically qualify for **free school meals**.

5. Support for Academic Success

- Access to counseling and support services.
- Assistance with credit accrual and graduation planning.
- Help with college applications and verification of independent student status for financial aid (FAFSA).

6. Privacy and Confidentiality

- Information about housing status is confidential and shared only with appropriate staff as necessary.

Dispute Resolution Rights

If there is a disagreement about:

- Eligibility,
- School selection, or
- Enrollment,

The student has the right to:

- Remain enrolled immediately in the school requested,
- Receive transportation during the dispute process,
- Receive a written explanation of the school's decision,
- Appeal the decision through Pennsylvania's dispute resolution process.

McKinney-Vento School Contact

District Homeless Liaison: Mr. Shane Spack
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In Pennsylvania, each Local Education Agency (LEA) must designate a McKinney-Vento liaison to assist unaccompanied youth.
