What is the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a US federal law that provides federal support for families who are experiencing homelessness or who are in transition. It was established to ensure educational rights to students who are experiencing homelessness. This law defines children or youth who are experiencing homelessness as **those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**. The McKinney-Vento Assistance Act also protects unaccompanied homeless youth.

Homelessness can include but is not limited to:

- Doubled up; temporarily sharing housing with another person or family due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
- Living in motels, hotels, or campgrounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
- Living in emergency shelters
- Being abandoned in a hospital
- Having a nighttime residence that is public or, a private place that is not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation
- Living in cars, parks, or public spaces, abandoned buildings, etc.
- Runaway your or children who are abandoned

Every situation is different; therefore, every case is unique in how it is handled. Determinations are made on a case-by-case basis.

Definitions

School of Origin: The school the youth last attended when permanently housed or the school in which the youth was last enrolled and attending, including the designated receiving school at the next grade level (feeder school)

School of Residence: The school to which a student is assigned to attend based on the student's place of residence.

Homelessness: Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: A child or youth experiencing homelessness and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

Doubled Up: Sharing the housing of other persons due to economic hardship or loss of housing

Dispute Resolution: Disputes may arise between the school district and the student experiencing homelessness and their parents, or an unaccompanied youth. A dispute resolution is the process used to address this.

Community Resources

Emergency Shelters
SAM 25: 715-851-7252
Eagles Nest: 715-756-2576
Food Support
SAFPARC: 715-524-5863
Divine Savior Food Pantry: 715-526-6880
Northeastern Wisconsin Community Action Program
800-242-7334
Shawano County Housing
715-526-6960
City of Shawano Housing
715-524-2132

Shawano School District

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Serving students and families in transition

Building McKinney Vento Coordinators:

Hillcrest Primary School
Mikaela Lee, mlee@shawanoschools.org
715-524-2134 ext. 5602
Olga Brener Intermediate School
Dani Zurakowski, dzurakowski@shawanoschools.org,
715-524-2131 ext. 4205
Shawano Middle School
Jodi Guenther, jguenther@shawanoschools.org,
715-526-2192 ext. 8158
Shawano High School
Cora Heindel, cheindel@shawanoschools.org,
715-526-2175 ext. 8123

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

An unaccompanied homeless youth is a student who meets the definition of experiencing homelessness and is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. An unaccompanied homeless youth can be a student of any age. Unaccompanied homeless youth are eligible for all services under McKinney-Vento including additional support around postsecondary planning and credit accrual. Unaccompanied homeless youth do not need a parent or legal guardian to enroll in school and receive McKinney-Vento Services. Priority must be given to the request of the unaccompanied homeless youth

Shawano School District Services

Shawano School District provides a variety of resources to students and families who are experiencing homelessness and to unaccompanied homeless youth. Those include but are not limited to:

- Transportation Assistance
- Access to basic necessities
- Free school meals
- Access to food over breaks and weekends
- Free school supplies
- Waived school fees
- Access to community resources
- Access to clothing, jackets, and shoes
- Wraparound supports
- Social Work services in every building

Please contact your district McKinney Vento Liaison for more information

Jenna Brooks, MSW
715-524-2134 ext 5405
715-851-8089
jbrooks@shawanoschools.org

Information for Parents

If your family lives in any of the following situations:

In a shelter

◆

In a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation

◆

In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station

◆

Doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship

Your school-age children may qualify for certain rights and protections under the McKinney-Vento Act

Dispute Resolution

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, unaccompanied homeless youth have the right to access the dispute resolution process, and to have any dispute resolved expeditiously and according to the law. Disputes may arise over eligibility, school selection, or school enrollment. The school district must have a policy in place to address this. Disputes related to school selection or enrollment should be initiated at the request of the parent or the unaccompanied youth and not by the school district.

Additionally, issues related to the definition of homelessness, the responsibilities of the school district to serve homeless children and youth, and/or the explicit rights of homeless children and youth are addressed in the McKinney-Vento Act

Rights and Protections Under the McKinney-Vento Act

The McKinney-Vento Act addresses educational barriers and challenges created by homelessness by guaranteeing students experiencing homelessness the right to enroll in and attend school, and providing supports needed for school success. The law places the responsibility for ensuring the rights of homeless students on states and school districts. McKinney-Vento eligible students have the right to:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment, or having missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents
- Continue attending the school of origin, or enroll in the local attendance area school if attending the school of origin is not in the best interest of the student or is contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested by the parent or guardian, or by the local liaison on behalf of an unaccompanied youth
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to each student's need

McKinney-Vento
Serving Students In Transition