



## Homeless Education Basics

~What You Need to Know and What You Need to Do~

*Presented by*

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- Introductions
  
- What you need to know....
  - 1) Identification is first step
  - 2) Definition
  - 3) Common Signs
  - 4) It's the law!
  
- What you need to do....
  - 1) Provide the 16 Services as needed  
Look close, dig deep!
  - 2) Provide resources  
Build a network of those who can provide what you & your school district/agency cannot provide
  - 3) Remove Barriers to Success  
Transportation, stigma, ignorance, lack of nearby resources (food pantries, good paying jobs, post-secondary education.)
  - 4) Protect students' and families' rights
  
- Conclusion

# HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA

No longer just that image of the ragged man sleeping on the city street . . .

- It is the face of a once middle-class family with children sleeping in parked cars or living in hotel/motels.
- It is the single mom with two preschoolers who doubles-up with other families.
- It is the unemployed teenager, banished by his parents and now sleeping in a friend's camper.
- It is the brother and sister awaiting foster care placement.
- It also may be several hundred students displaced by a tornado, flood, or winter storm.

Riley, K., & Sweeney, J. (2014). *Serving Homeless Students: A Practical Guide to Title I and Other Federal Programs* (Vol. Second Edition, p. Introduction, ix). Palm Beach Gardens, FL: LRP Publications.





## QUICK GUIDE FOR DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

**Does the living situation of the child or youth fit into one of the specific examples of homelessness listed in the law?**

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason.
- Living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping ground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- Living in an emergency or transitional shelter.
- Abandoned in a hospital.
- Awaiting foster care placement.
- Living in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.
- Migratory children in the above living situations.

**If the living situation of the child or youth does not fit one of the specific examples of homelessness listed in the law, is the child or youth living in another type of situation that is not fixed, regular and adequate? Lacking any one of these conditions would make a child eligible.**

Sample Questions:

- Fixed (“A fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change.”)
  - Is this a permanent or temporary arrangement?
  - Are you looking for another place to live?
  - Why are you living in your current situation?
  - Where would you go if you couldn’t stay where you are?
  - Where were you living before?
  - Could you be asked to leave at any time?
- Regular (“A regular residence is used on a regular basis.”)
  - Do you stay in the same place every night?
  - How long have you been staying in your current situation?
  - How long do you plan to stay?
  - How long did you live in your last place?
- Adequate (“An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.”)
  - How many people are in the living situation?
  - Where are you sleeping?
  - What are the conditions of the living situation?
  - Is there adequate heat, electricity and water?

## Common Signs of Homelessness

*Note: While these are considered common signs, please recognize that they only offer general guidance. There is significant variability within the school-age homeless population. Individual students may differ significantly from the following general characteristics.*

### Lack of Continuity in Education

- ❑ Attendance at many different schools
- ❑ Lack of records needed to enroll
- ❑ Inability to pay fees
- ❑ Gaps in skill development
- ❑ Mistaken diagnosis of abilities
- ❑ Poor organizational skills
- ❑ Poor ability to conceptualize

### Poor Health/Nutrition

- ❑ Lack of immunizations and/or immunization records
- ❑ Unmet medical and dental needs
- ❑ Respiratory problems
- ❑ Skin rashes
- ❑ Chronic hunger (may hoard food)
- ❑ Fatigue (may fall asleep in class)

### Transportation and Attendance Problems

- ❑ Erratic attendance and tardiness
- ❑ Numerous absences
- ❑ Lack of participation in after-school activities
- ❑ Lack of participation in field trips
- ❑ Inability to contact parents

### Poor Hygiene

- ❑ Lack of shower facilities/washers, etc.
- ❑ Wearing same clothes for several days
- ❑ Inconsistent grooming

### Lack of Personal Space After School

- ❑ Consistent lack of preparation for school
- ❑ Incomplete or missing homework (no place to

work or keep supplies)

- ❑ Unable to complete special projects (no access to supplies)
- ❑ Lack of basic school supplies
- ❑ Loss of books and other supplies on a regular basis
- ❑ Concern for safety of belongings

### Social and Behavioral Concerns

- ❑ A marked change in behavior
- ❑ Poor/short attention span
- ❑ Poor self-esteem
- ❑ Extreme shyness
- ❑ Unwillingness to risk forming relationships with peers and teachers
- ❑ Difficulty socializing at recess
- ❑ Difficulty trusting people
- ❑ Aggression
- ❑ "Old" beyond years
- ❑ Protective of parents
- ❑ Clinging behavior
- ❑ Developmental delays
- ❑ Fear of abandonment
- ❑ School phobia (student wants to be with parent)
- ❑ Anxiety late in the school day

### Reaction/Statements by Parent, Guardian, or Child

- ❑ Exhibiting anger or embarrassment when asked about current address
- ❑ Mention of staying with grandparents, other relatives, friends, or in a motel, or comments, such as
  - ❑ "I don't remember the name of the last school."
  - ❑ "We've been moving around a lot."
  - ❑ "Our address is new; I can't remember it"
  - ❑ "We're staying with relatives until we get settled."
  - ❑ "We're going through a bad time."



Common signs adapted from flyers developed by the Illinois and Pennsylvania Departments of Education. For more information on homeless education, visit the National Center for Homeless Education website at <http://www.serve.org/nche>.

# MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT

## The McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq., 2001)

- ❑ Passed in 1987 by President Reagan
- ❑ Named after Rep. Stewart McKinney (R-CT) & Rep. Bruce Vento (D-MN)
- ❑ **Subtitle VII-B** focuses on the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness—Federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program.
- ❑ Reauthorized by Title X, Part C of the ESEA, as amended.
- ❑ **The Act gives us the definition of homelessness used by LEAs and also outlines the rights given to eligible students to equal access to a free and appropriate public education.**



## SIXTEEN SERVICES

### McKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

#### **1. Tutoring and supplemental instructional support**

The provision of tutoring, supplemental instruction, and enriched educational services that are linked to the achievement of the same challenging State academic content standards and challenging State student academic achievement standards the State establishes for other children and youths.

#### **2. Expedited evaluation and testing: Gifted, Title I, English Language Learners, Special Education**

The provision of expedited evaluations of the strengths and needs of homeless children and youths, including needs and eligibility for programs and services (such as educational programs for gifted and talented students, children with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency, service provided under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 or similar State or local programs, programs in vocational and technical education, and school nutrition programs).

#### **3. Professional development for teachers, administrators and staff**

Professional development and other activities for educators and pupil services personnel that are designed to heighten the understanding and sensitivity of such personnel to the needs of homeless children and youths, the rights of such children and youths under this subtitle, and the specific educational needs of runaway and homeless youths.

#### **4. Referrals to medical, dental and other health services**

The provision of referral services to homeless children and youths for medical, dental, mental, and other health services.

#### **5. Transportation (regular, after school, special education)**

The provision of assistance to defray the excess cost of transportation for students under section 722(g)(4) (A), not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding, where necessary to enable students to attend the school selected under section 72 (g)(3).

#### **6. Early childhood**

The provision of developmentally appropriate early childhood education programs, not otherwise provided through Federal, State, or local funding, for preschool-aged homeless children.

#### **7. Comparable services**

The provision of services and assistance to attract, engage, and retain homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, in public school programs and services provided to non-homeless children and youths.

**8. Before and after school and summer school programs**

The provision for homeless children and youths of before and after-school, mentoring, and summer programs in which a teacher or other qualified individual provides tutoring, homework assistance, and supervision of educational activities.

**9. Obtain and transfer records necessary for enrollment**

If necessary, the payment of fees and other costs associated with tracking, obtaining, and transferring records necessary to enroll homeless children and youths in school, including birth certificates, immunization or medical records, academic records, guardianship records, and evaluations for special programs or services.

**10. Parent education**

The provision of education and training to the parents of homeless children and youths about the rights of, and resources available to, such children and youths.

**11. Coordination between schools and local services**

The development of coordination between schools and agencies providing services to homeless children and youths as described in section 722(g)(5).

**12. Counseling and referrals for domestic violence issues**

The provision of pupil services (including violence prevention counseling) and referrals for such services.

**13. Other specific needs due to domestic violence**

Activities to address the particular needs of homeless children and youths that may arise from domestic violence.

**14. Adapt space/supplies and provide off site services**

The adaptation of space and purchase of supplies for any non-school facilities made available under subsection (a)(2) to provide services under this subsection.

**15. School supplies**

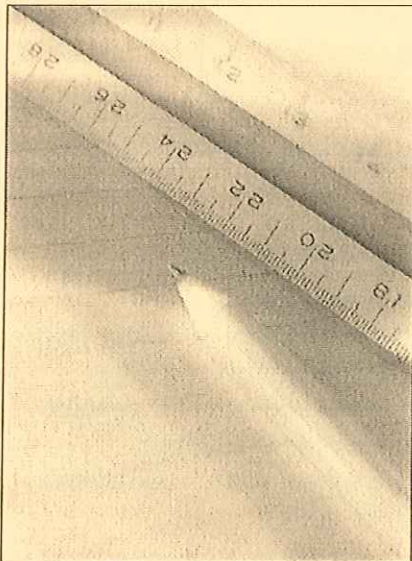
The provision of school supplies, including those supplies to be distributed at shelters or temporary housing facilities, or other appropriate locations.

**16. Emergency assistance to enable a student to attend school**

The provision of other extraordinary or emergency assistance needed to enable homeless children and youths to attend school.



**Guiding the Discussion on School Selection**



The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act guarantees a child qualified as homeless the right to attend one of two schools: the school of origin or the local attendance area school. This brief explains the relevant legal provisions and provides a framework to assist in the decision-making process. For the McKinney-Vento (M-V) definition of “homeless,” see the panel to the left.

**Which School?**

“The local educational agency [LEA or school district] serving each child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall, according to the child’s or youth’s best interest--

- (i) continue the child’s or youth’s education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness--
  - (I) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or
  - (II) for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
- (ii) enroll the child or youth in any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.” [M-V: 722(g)(3)(a)]

**Who is homeless?**  
*(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 – Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act – Sec 725)*  
 The term “homeless children and youth”—

A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and

B. includes —

- i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings...
- iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- iv. migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

**Schools Defined**

**School of Origin:** “the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled” [M-V: 722(g)(3)(G)]

**Local Attendance Area School:** “any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend” [M-V 722(g)(3)(A)(ii)]

**Best Interest**

“Best Interest—In determining the best interest of the child or youth under subparagraph (A), the local educational agency shall—

- (i) to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child’s or youth’s parent or guardian;

*(continued on the next page)*

- (ii) provide written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal under subparagraph (E), to the homeless child's or youth's parent or guardian, if the local educational agency sends such a child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian; ..." [M-V 722(g)(3)(B)]

### **U.S. Department of Education Guidance**

"G-4. What should a school district consider when determining the extent to which it is feasible to educate a homeless child in his or her school of origin?"

As stated above, to the extent feasible, a district must educate a homeless child or youth in his or her school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian. The placement determination should be a student-centered, individualized determination. Factors that an LEA may consider include the age of the child or youth; the distance of a commute and the impact it may have on the student's education; personal safety issues; a student's need for special instruction (e.g., special education and related services); the length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location; and time remaining in the school year." (Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, July 2004)

### **How LEAs and Parents or Guardians Can Make Best Interest Decisions**

In order for parents or guardians in homeless situations to make informed decisions about selecting the school that is in their child's best interest, they need to have as much practical information as possible. Parents may have less knowledge and information about the implications of the choice they will make for the student than the local homeless education liaison or other school district staff involved in the enrollment process. The local liaison and school or district staff can play an instrumental role in assisting parents with choosing a school that is in the best interest of their children.

The local liaison, teachers, and other school or district staff can:

- Reinforce the importance of school stability and educational continuity for children.
- Provide input to the parents on the academic, social, and emotional impact that transferring to a new school may have on their children.
- Help the parents find out which programs at the two schools are comparable and appropriate for the child and make arrangements for the parents and child to visit the school considered for a possible transfer.
- Provide information on the distance to the schools under consideration, both in terms of miles and travel time.

## Key Questions to Consider When Making a School Selection

1. How permanent does the family's living arrangement appear to be?
2. How deep are the child's ties to his or her current school?
3. How anxious is the child about his or her family's upcoming or recent move?
4. How strong is the child academically?
5. To what extent are the programs and activities at the potential new school comparable to or better than those at the current school?
6. Does one school have programs and activities that address the unique needs or interests of the student that the other school does not have?
7. Would the timing of the school transfer coincide with a logical juncture such as after testing, after an event that is significant to the child, or at the end of the school year?
8. How would the length of the commute to the school of origin impact the child?
9. Are there any safety issues to consider?

Decisions regarding school selection should be made on a case-by-case basis, giving attention to the circumstances of each individual student. The following checklist may help local liaisons guide a discussion on school-selection options available to the student and the advantages and disadvantages of each option. If a district has large numbers of homeless and mobile students, it may be beneficial to train several staff members to assist parents in this decision-making process.

Waiver of School Fees for  
McKinney-Vento Children and Youth

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INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

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McKinney-Vento children and youth qualify for a waiver of school fees. This is based on their categorical eligibility for Federal Free Lunch Program. The Illinois State Board of Education defines "school fees" as "any monetary charge collected by a public school or public school district from a student or the parents or guardian of a student as a prerequisite for the student's participation in any curricular or extracurricular program...." (ISBE policy on fee waivers; IL Admin. Code Sec. 1.245 and 105 ILCS 5/10-20.13).

"School fees" include, but are not limited to:

1. Charges for text books and instructional materials
2. Charges and deposits for use of school property such as locks, towels, lab equipment
3. Charges for field trips made during or after school hours if the trip is a required or customary part of a class or extracurricular activity
4. Charges for uniforms or equipment related to sports or fine arts programs
5. Charges for supplies related to a particular class such as shop, home economics, lab, art
6. Graduation fees such as caps and gowns
7. School records fees
8. School health services fees
9. Driver's education fees

The cost of regular school supplies are not considered "school fees". However, many schools have resources to help children and youth obtain school supplies.

"School fees" do not include: library fines; charges for class rings, yearbooks, pictures, diploma covers or similar items; charges for optional travel undertaken by a school club or group of students outside of school hours; and admission charges for dances, athletic events or other social events.

*Please note: No discrimination or punishment of any kind, including the lowering of grades or exclusion from classes, may be exercised against a student whose guardian /caregivers are unable to purchase required textbooks or instructional materials or to pay required fees [105 ILCS 5/28-19.2(a)].*

## Educational Right to ...

- Enroll in school without giving a permanent address
- Enroll and attend classes while the school arranges for the transfer of school and immunization records or any documents for enrollment.
- Receive the same special programs and services, if needed, as provided to all other children served in programs.
- Receive transportation to school and to school programs comparable to that provided to children who are not homeless



## Educational Right to...

- Attend school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there. Continue in the school they last attended before becoming homeless (school of origin) or the school they last attended, if that is the parent's or guardian's choice and is feasible.
- Receive transportation to the school they last attended before their family became homeless or the school they last attended, if a parent or guardian requests such transportation.
- Attend school and participate in school programs with children who are not homeless.



## “I Statements

I learned that I...

I realized that I...

I relearned that I...

I noticed that I...

I discovered that I...

I was surprised that I...

I was pleased that I...

I was displeased that I...



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