

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act

Definition of Homelessness

The McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act provides a definition of homeless children and youth to be used by state and local educational agencies (LEAs). It defines homeless children and youth to be those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Under the larger umbrella of lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, the law also provides several examples of situations that meet the definition. The examples include children and youth...

- Sharing housing due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Living in hotels, motels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate housing;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Living in a public or private place not designated for, or normally used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus, or train stations, or similar places;
- Living in one of the above circumstance and who are migratory according to the definition in Section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [42 U.S.C. 11434a(2)].

Primary Duties of School Districts

All Illinois school districts are LEA's within the meaning of McKinney-Vento and must comply with its provisions. Among the most important responsibilities for LEA's are the following:

- To allow and promote access of homeless children, youth, and families in all programs and activities offered by the school (including preschool, kindergarten, after school programs, etc.) and to refrain from any segregation, discrimination or stigmatization of such students;
- Wherever possible, and consistent with the wishes of the parent or guardian, to keep a homeless child or youth at his or her "school of origin" as defined in state and federal law;
- To adopt a policy and practice for providing appropriate transportation services to enable homeless children and youth to attend the school of origin; and
- To immediately enroll all homeless students in free breakfast and lunch programs and to waive any of the fees or charges that are subject to waiver under the Illinois fee-waiver rules.

Who to Contact for More Information

If you have questions about enrolling homeless children or providing services, please contact the following:

- Mulberry Grove Homeless Liaison Karla Rogers at 618-326-8221 or krogers@mgschools.com
- Regional Office of Education #3 at 618 283-5011
- Illinois State Board of Education Information Hotline at 1-800-215-6379
- <https://www.isbe.net/pages/homeless.aspx>