# **MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESS EDUCATION**

# **ASSISTANCE ACT**

In accordance with the Federal McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, homeless children shall have access to the same free and appropriate public education as provided to other children. The board shall make reasonable efforts to iden­tify homeless children within the district, encourage their enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their education that may exist in district policies or practices. No child or youth shall be discriminated against in this school district because of homelessness.

Your school-age children may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act if your family lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This definition specifically incudes students living in any of the following situations:

* A child who is lacking a fixed regular and adequate nighttime residence and who has a primary nighttime resi­dence that is a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations, a temporary residence prior to institutionalization, or a place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
* A child who is placed in a transitional or emergency shelter before placement in a foster home or home for neglected children.
* A child who is temporarily living in a trailer park or camping area due to lack of adequate living accommodations.
* A child who is living in doubled-up accommodations due to loss of housing or other similar situation.
* A child who is placed in a foster home for lack of shelter space.
* A migratory child who is staying in accommodations not fit for habitation.
* A child who has run away from home and lives in a runaway shelter, abandoned building, the street, or other inadequate accommodations.
* A child who is placed in a state institution because s/he has no other place to live.
* A child who has been abandoned by his/her family and who is staying in a hospital.
* A child whose parents or guardian will not permit him/her to live at home and who lives on the street, in a shelter, or in other transitional or inadequate accommodation.
* School-age unwed mothers or expectant mothers who are living in homes for unwed mothers because they have no other available living accommodations.

If you believe your children may be eligible, or to find out what services and supports may be available, email Jamee Combs at jcombs@inola.k12.ok.us

### **The Rights of Homeless Students**

### Students who meet the definition of Homeless have the right to:

* Receive a free, appropriate public education.
* Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
* Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
* Enroll in the local school; or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is your preference. \*If the school district believes that the school you select is not in the best interest of your children, then the district must provide you with a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal its decision.
* Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if you request this.
* Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to your children’s needs.

**Identification of Homeless Youth**

Identification of homeless youth can happen through the enrollment process, by the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth informing the school of their living situation, but school personnel should always be vigilant of indicators that a students living situation has resulted in being homeless. School personnel are required to report these indicators to the Homeless Liaison. Homeless families and students are encouraged to report their living situation to the Homeless Liaison for aid.

**Dispute Process**

Parents/Guardians or students who are dissatisfied with enrollment in Inola Public Schools being denied due to a decision made based on their living situation are encouraged to contact the Superintendent of Inola Public Schools. If the districts decision is still unsatisfactory to the parent/guardian or student, they can appeal by contacting the State Homeless Liaison at the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

**Services**

The Inola Public School Homeless Liaison’s duties include coordination of services provided by the school and community, training staff in identification of homeless youth, advocating for homeless students, arbitrating disputes and dissemination of information to the family/youth.

**Inola Public Schools Confidentiality Procedures:**

* The procedure for enrollment at Inola Public Schools begins with a parent/guardian providing proof of residency in the Inola school district. If this is not possible due to homelessness for a family or an unaccompanied minor, they will be referred to the Homeless Liaison.
* The Homeless Liaison meets privately with the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth regarding their living situation.
* Upon a positive homeless determination, the family/youth is given a written notification of their rights and provided with assistance in enrolling the student through the online enrollment process.
* The Homeless Liaison provides the family/youth with information pertaining to services such as free/reduced breakfast and lunch, transportation to and from school, assistance with school supply needs, Title 1 services, assistance with financial needs for extra-curricular activities, clubs, testing fees, and graduation, and community resources.
* The Homeless Liaison notifies the site principals, counselors, Title 1 Coordinator, school nurse, and Indian Education Director of the determination that the student qualifies as a homeless youth and directs them to follow up with the respective services they provide.
* Confidentiality is expected by school personnel working with this family/youth throughout the career of the youth. Student information will only be shared after obtaining written permission from the family/youth.

**Transportation**

1. Inola Public Schools is responsible for reviewing and revising policies, including transportation policies that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youths in the State. (See sections 721(2), 722(g)(1)(I)). Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless children and youths are entitled to receive transportation that is comparable to what is available to non-homeless students. (Section 722(g)(4)(A)).
2. In addition, Inola Public Schools must adopt policies and practices to ensure that transportation is provided, at the request of the parent or guardian (or, in the case of an unaccompanied youth), to or from the school of origin in accordance with the following requirements:

• If the child or youth continues to live in the area served by Inola Public Schools in which the school of origin is located, Inola Public Schools must provide or arrange for the child’s or youth’s transportation to or from the school of origin. (Section 722(g)(1)(J)(iii)(I)).

• If the child or youth continues his or her education in the school of origin but begins living in an area served by Inola Public Schools, the school of origin and Inola Public Schools in which the homeless child or youth is living must agree upon a method to apportion the responsibility and costs for providing the child or youth with transportation to and from the school of origin. If both schools cannot agree upon a method, the responsibility and costs for transportation are to be shared equally. (Section 722(g)(1)(J)(iii)(II)). Transportation must be arranged promptly to ensure immediate enrollment and so as not to create barriers to home

**Removal of Barriers**

The McKinney-Vento Act defines enrollment as “attending classes and participating fully in school activities” [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(1)]; this includes academic and extracurricular activities offered through Inola Public Schools. Inola Public Schools policy is to remove barriers to the enrollment and retention of homeless students and to help provide access to all academic and extracurricular activities.

### **Local liaisons must ensure that:**

* Homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies;
* Homeless children and youths are enrolled in, and have full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the school or schools of the LEA;
* Homeless families and homeless children and youths have access to and receive educational services for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs), early intervention services under Part C of the IDEA, and other preschool programs administered by the LEA;
* Homeless families and homeless children and youths receive referrals to health, dental, mental health, and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services;
* Parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children;
* Public notice of the educational rights of homeless students is disseminated in locations frequented by parents and guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians and unaccompanied youths;
* Enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act;
* Parents and guardians and unaccompanied youths are fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to and from the school of origin and are assisted in accessing transportation services;
* School personnel receive professional development and other support; and
* Unaccompanied youths are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards as the State establishes for other children and youths, are informed of their status as independent students under section 480 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (HEA) (20 U.S.C. 1087vv), and their right to receive verification of this status from the local liaison.

#### CONTACT US

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MORE INFORMATION



[HOMELESS EDUCATION FLYER](https://www.tulsaschools.org/fs/resource-manager/view/79e3bbf2-f1bb-464d-8e68-f8b6391b0051)