McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth 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 circumstances 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)].

School Responsibilities

Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act all Illinois Schools must comply with the provisions of the law.

- Board policies must not impose more restrictive requirements or barriers for enrollment and retention of homeless children and youth;
- All homeless children are to be treated and have access to all programs, including preschool and transportation, as other students in the district and shall not be segregated or discriminated against;
- The district must adopt a policy for transportation that is best for the student to attend the “school of origin”;
- Students are to be kept in their “school of origin” unless it goes against the wishes of the parents or would be detrimental to the student;
- All homeless children are to be enrolled in the national free breakfast and lunch program immediately along with all book fees are to be waived under the fee-waiver policy; and
- All homeless student’s living arrangements must be treated as an education record and are subject to the protections of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

Contact Information

For questions about homeless children or services please contact”

- Bunker Hill Homeless Liaison Bethany Spickerman at 618-585-3116 ext. 221 or bspickerman@bhcusd.org
- Regional Office of Education #40 at 618-583-5011
- Illinois State Board of Education Information at 1-800-215-6379
- [https://www.isbe.net/pages/homeless.aspx](https://www.isbe.net/pages/homeless.aspx)