

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act is a federal law that is designed to address the problems that homeless children and youth have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. Under this program, schools must ensure each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free and appropriate public education. Homeless children and youth should have access to the educational and other services they need to enable them to meet the same challenging student academic achievement standards to which all students are held. School districts are required to review and undertake steps to revise regulations, practices or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youth.

The McKinney-Vento Act defines “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
 1. Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up);
 2. Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 3. Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 4. Abandoned in hospitals; or
 5. Awaiting foster care placement;
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

RESIDENCY AND EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS

Students who are in temporary; inadequate; and, homeless living situations have the following rights:

- 1) Immediate enrollment in the school they last attended or the school in whose attendance area they are currently staying even if they do not have all of the documents normally require at the time of enrollment;
- 2) Access to free meals and textbooks, Title I and other educational programs, and other comparable services including transportation;
- 3) To attend the same classes and activities that students in other living situations also participate in without fear of being separated or treated differently due to their house situations;
- 4) Other services and resources, including transportation, may also be available.

Any questions about these rights can be directed to the local McKinney-Vento Liaison for CPCSC, Dr. Shelley Gies at (317) 535-7579.