

## **The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987**

(Pub. L. 100-77, July 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 482, 42 U.S.C. § 11301 *et seq.*)

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento) is a federal law that ensures the right of students to go to school even when they are homeless or don't have a permanent address. The Act aims to reduce barriers that have prevented many homeless youth from enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school, including: transportation; residency requirements; and documentation requirements, such as birth certificates and medical records.

McKinney-Vento was the first significant federal legislative response to homelessness, and was passed by the 100th United States Congress and signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on July 22, 1987. The McKinney-Vento has been reauthorized several times over the years.

### **Who Can Get Help Under McKinney-Vento?**

The McKinney-Vento uses the Illinois statute in defining homeless children as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." The McKinney-Vento then goes on to give the following examples of children who would fall under this definition:

- a) Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing.

- b) Children living in "motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to lack of alternative accommodations."
- c) Children living in "emergency or transitional shelters."
- d) Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (park benches, etc.).
- e) Children living in "cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations..."

### **What School Can They Go To?**

Youth have the right to attend either: the school nearest to where they are living; or the school where they were last enrolled (called "school of origin"), even if they move out of the school district. When youth choose to go to the school in the area where they are living, the school must immediately let students enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in school activities, even if students do not have a parent or guardian with them or documents typically required for enrollment, such as birth certificates, proof of residency, medical records, and school records.

### **How Do They Get There?**

The district in which the student chooses to attend school must provide or arrange transportation.

## **Working with School Districts and Schools**

McKinney-Vento requires every school district to have a Homeless Education Liaison who works with young people, schools, and service providers to make sure that the homeless youth have a smooth transition into school and receive the support services for academic achievement they are guaranteed under law.

### **How Do I Find Out Who My Local Liaison Is?**

Contact the Wyoming Homeless Education State Coordinator at (307) 777-3672 or online at <http://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StateID=59>

### **What Do I Do If the School Refuses to Take A Student?**

If you feel a school may not have followed the McKinney-Vento requirements, call your local educational agency Homeless Education Liaison or the Wyoming Homeless Education State Coordinator .

### **What are Homeless Youth Entitled To?**

Homeless youth are automatically eligible for Title I services, such as free lunch programs. Work with the local liaison to make sure young people receive needed and available services. Become familiar with your school district's policies about enrolling unaccompanied youth.

Some districts allow youth to enroll themselves while others permit service agency personnel or the local liaison to

sign for them. Work with local liaisons to encourage schools to permit flexible exceptions on a case-by-case basis to school policies on class schedules, tardiness, and credits to accommodate students' needs.

Offer to assist with school district professional development activities on homelessness, provide training on how to recognize school absences that may be the result of homelessness, and talk with school personnel about the causes and effects of homelessness and ways the school can support students who are homeless.

### **Where Can I Go If I Have More Questions?**

National Center for Homeless Education  
<https://nche.ed.gov/>

State coordinators: a list of state coordinators for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is available at <http://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StateID=59>

Videos: available at [http://www.serve.org/nche/web/s\\_p.php](http://www.serve.org/nche/web/s_p.php)  
These videos give brief introductions to key issues covered in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Frequently Asked Questions: Available at <http://naehcy.org/dl/faq.pdf>

The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth provides answers to the most frequently asked questions on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

## For more information on **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

### **CONTACT:**



## **Parent Information Center**

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PHP of WY is a non-profit, 501(c) 3 organization; therefore, your donation is tax deductible. We welcome all donations. Every donation helps us strengthen our network of support for families.

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# **MCKINNEY - VENTO**

*Disability Brochure #40*



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**Parent Information Center**  
(307) 684-2277

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