

EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Unaccompanied homeless youth are young people who lack safe, stable housing and who are not in the care of a parent or guardian. They may have run away from home or been forced to leave by their parents. Unaccompanied youth live in a variety of temporary situations, including shelters, the home of friends or relatives, cars, campgrounds, public parks, abandoned buildings, motels, and bus or train stations.

The McKinney-Vento Assistance Act requires that state and local educational agencies provide students experiencing homelessness with school access and stability, and remove barriers to their attendance and success. Every school district must designate a homeless liaison to ensure the McKinney-Vento Act is implemented in the district. Homeless liaisons must do outreach to identify unaccompanied homeless youth, assist them with school enrollment and refer them to health and other community services.

The McKinney-Vento Act states that children and youth who lack a “fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” will be considered homeless. The Act does not define those terms. However, the following definitions may provide guidance:

- (1) Fixed: Securely placed or fastened; not subject to change or fluctuation. A fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.**
- (2) Regular: Normal, standard; A regular residence is one which is used on a regular (i.e. nightly) basis.**
- (3) Adequate: Sufficient for a specific requirement; lawfully and reasonably sufficient. An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.**

Children and youth who are sharing the housing of others due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason are covered by the McKinney-Vento Act.

Families who share adequate housing on a long-term basis due to preference or convenience would not be covered by the Act.

The Mckinney-Vento Act provides rights and services for children and youth experiencing homelessness.