



Frequently Asked Questions

Who qualifies under McKinney-Vento?

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

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Abandoned in hospitals.
- Awaiting foster-care placement.
- Living in a primary night-time residence not used as a regular sleeping accommodation.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Runaway or unaccompanied youth.
- Migratory children living in any of the circumstances described above.

What are the educational rights for children and youth experiencing homelessness?

Unaccompanied youth and children have the same rights as other students to go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there. They must be given access to the same public education provided to other students, including preschool education. Specifically, they have the right to:

- Remain in their school of origin, to the extent feasible.
- Transportation to and from the school of origin, the school attended when permanently housed or school last enrolled.
- Immediately enrolled in a new school serving the area in which they are currently living, even if they don't have required documents, e.g., proof of guardianship.
- Equal access to programs and services such as gifted and talented education, special education, vocational education, and English Language Learner services.
- They have the right to receive free breakfast and lunch immediately.

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”.

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.

If a child qualifies as CIT, they can:

- Contact the Children in Transition Advocate at your school or the school district’s Children in Transition Liaisons, for help in arranging to continue in your former school or enrolling in the zone school.
- Ask any of the following people for assistance with backpacks, school supplies, personal care items or clothing, if needed:
 - The school’s CIT Advocate, counselor at the school.
Or
 - The Liaisons for the Children in Transition program.