

THE MCKINNEY-VENTO ACT QUICK REFERENCE

The McKinney-Vento Act provides rights and services to children and youth experiencing homelessness, which includes those who are: sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; staying in motels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to the lack of an adequate alternative; staying in shelters or transitional housing; or sleeping in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or similar settings.[i]

[\(Resource: Editable infographic on the education definition of homelessness.\)](#)

This document summarizes some of the McKinney-Vento Act's core provisions.

At the State Agency Level

Every state educational agency (SEA) must designate an Office of State Coordinator that can sufficiently carry out duties in the Act.[ii] Key duties include:

- Responding to inquiries from homeless parents and unaccompanied youth.[iii]
- Providing professional development programs for liaisons and others.[iv]

[\(Resource: Training Resources\)](#)

- Conducting monitoring of local educational agencies to enforce compliance.[v]

At the Local Agency Level

Every local education agency (LEA) must designate a liaison for students experiencing homelessness who is able to carry out the duties described in the law.[vi] Key duties include:

- Ensuring that homeless children and youth are identified and enrolled in school, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school.[vii] [\(Resource: Identifying Students Experiencing Homelessness During School Building Closures\)](#)
- Participating in professional development and other technical assistance offered by the state.[viii]
- Ensuring school personnel receive professional development and other support.[ix]
- Ensuring that unaccompanied homeless youth are informed, and receive verification, of their status as independent students for college financial aid.[x] [\(Resource: Tips for Helping Homeless Youth Succeed in College\)](#)
- Ensuring that homeless children, youth, and families receive referrals to health, dental, mental health, housing, substance abuse, and other appropriate services.[xi]
- Disseminating public notice of McKinney-Vento rights in locations frequented by parents and youth, in a manner and form understandable to them.[xii]

[\(Resource: Editable "Know Your Rights" flyers\)](#)

School Stability

- Children and youth experiencing homelessness can remain in their school of origin for the duration of homelessness and until the end of an academic year in which they obtain permanent housing, if it is in their best interest.[xiii]
- LEAs must make best interest determinations that presume that staying in the school of origin is in the best interest of the child or youth; consider specific student-centered factors; prioritize the wishes of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth; and include a written explanation and right to appeal if the LEA determines that school stability is not in the best interest of the child or youth.[xiv] ([Resource: Interview Checklists for Supporting School Selection](#))
- The definition of school of origin now includes both the designated receiving school at the next grade level (if there is a feeder school pattern), and preschools.[xv] ([Resource: Preschool to Prevent Homelessness](#))
- Transportation to the school of origin is required, including until the end of the academic year when a student obtains permanent housing.[xvi]

School Enrollment and Participation

- Homeless children and youth must be enrolled in school immediately, even if they lack documents or have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.[xvii] ([Resource: Removing Barriers to Online Enrollment for Students Experiencing Homelessness](#))
- SEAs and LEAs must develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, and retention of homeless students in school, including barriers due to fees, fines, and absences.[xviii] ([Resource: Supporting the Attendance of Students Experiencing Homelessness](#))
- If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection or enrollment, the child or youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth seeks enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.[xix]
- States must have procedures to ensure that homeless children and youth do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities.[xx] ([Resource: Full Participation in Extra-Curricular Activities](#))

Preschool Children

- The definition of school of origin now includes preschools.[xxi]
- Liaisons must ensure homeless families and children can access Head Start, Early Head Start, LEA-administered pre-school programs and early intervention services under IDEA Part C, if eligible.[xxii] ([Resource: Pathways to Partnership Early Childhood](#))

Credit Accrual and College Readiness

- States must have procedures to identify and remove barriers that prevent students from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.[xxiii] Liaisons must implement those policies.[xxiv] ([Resource: Awarding and Accepting Partial Credit for Students Experiencing Homelessness](#))
- State plans must describe how homeless youth will receive assistance from school counselors to advise, prepare, and improve their readiness for college. [xxv] ([Resource: Quick Guide for Counseling Staff](#))

Title I, Part A

- All LEAs that receive Title I Part A funds must reserve funds to support homeless students.[xxvi]
- Reserved funds may be used for services not ordinarily provided by Title I, including local liaisons and transportation to the school of origin.[xxvii]
- State report cards must include disaggregated information on the graduation rates and academic achievement of homeless children and youth.[xxviii] ([Education Leads Home Homeless Student State Snapshots share identification, graduation and achievement data](#))

i. 42 U.S.C. §11434a(2).

ii. 42 U.S.C. §11432(d)(3)

iii. 42 U.S.C. §11432(f)(7).

iv. 42 U.S.C. §11432(f)(6).

v. 42 U.S.C. §11432(f)(5).

vi. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(ii).

vii. 42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(6)(A)(i)-(ii).

viii. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(iv).

ix. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(ix).

x. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(x)(III).

xi. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(iv).

xii. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(vi).

xiii. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(A).

xiv. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(B).

xv. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(I).

xvi. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(iii).

xvii. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C).

xviii. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(I).

xix. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(E)(i).

xx. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(F)(iii).

xxi. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(I).

xxii. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(iii).

xxiii. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(F)(ii).

xxiv. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(x)(II).

xxv. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(K).

xxvi. 20 U.S.C. §6313(c)(3)(A).

xxvii. 20 U.S.C. §6313(c)(3)(C)(ii).

xxviii. 20 U.S.C. §§6311(h)(1)(C)(ii) and (iii)



SchoolHouse
Connection

Link to webpage with resources:

<https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org/mckinney-vento-act>