

HOMELESS EDUCATION

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal education law originally passed in 1987 and reauthorized under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015. It works hand-in-hand with Title I Part A legislation and other federal programs, such as the National School Lunch Program. This law is designed to support students experiencing homelessness to ensure identification, school enrollment and stability, support for academic success, and student-centered decision-making

The McKinney-Vento Act defines “homeless children and youth” as individuals *lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence* and may include:

- Children and youth sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youth whose primary nighttime residence is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children and unaccompanied youth who meet the federal definition for homelessness

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children and youth in homeless situations have the right to:

- Receive a free and appropriate public education
- Enroll in the local school or continue attending the school of origin (the school in which they were last enrolled or the school they attended when last permanently housed)
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents typically required at enrollment, such as birth certificates, school transcripts, and immunization records
- Enroll in school, attend classes, and participate fully while the school gathers documents
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if feasible and in their best interest
- Access programs and services based on their needs, such as special education, English language services, and gifted programs
- Appeal a determination of ineligibility

Eligibility determinations must be made each school year. The statute requires every public school district and charter holder to designate a liaison to ensure that students experiencing homelessness are identified and their needs are being met. If you believe your student(s) qualify for services under the McKinney-Vento Act, please contact the Student & Family Support Services Department.

Eligible students may also receive assistance with the following:

- Enrollment in school
- Backpacks and school supplies
- School transportation and other school services
- Clothing, toiletries, and other basic needs
- Information on early childhood programs, including Head Start and preschool
- Referrals to medical, dental, and behavioral health services
- Referrals to other community resources, such as food and housing

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

AZ State Coordinator for [Homeless Education](#)
Silvia Chavez 602.542.4963 [National Center for Homeless Education](#)