

McKinney-Vento - Frequently Asked Questions

What is McKinney-Vento?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was originally signed into law in 1987. Title VII, Subtitle B of that law is included in the 2002 reauthorization of No Child Left Behind, Title X. The statute requires every public school district and charter holder to designate a homeless liaison to ensure that homeless students are identified, immediately enrolled in school, have access to educational opportunities equal to those of their non-homeless peers, and receive assistance in evaluating and meeting other needs unique to their situation.

Who may be considered homeless under the law?

According to McKinney-Vento definitions, homeless children and youth may include those:

- In a shelter, temporary shared housing, or transitional living program
- In a hotel/motel, campground, or similar situation due to lack of alternatives
- At a bus station, park, car, or abandoned building
- In emergency or temporary foster care "awaiting foster care placement."
- Unaccompanied youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence also have rights under McKinney-Vento. According to the law the term 'unaccompanied youth' includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Some questions parents, liaisons, and school staff should think about include:

- How old is the student?
- How deep are the student's ties to the school of origin?
- How many times has the student changed schools?
- What is the commute distance and how will it impact the student?
- Does the student have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or other special program needs to consider?
- Are there any safety issues to consider?
- How long will the student likely be at the current temporary residence?
- Where is the student likely to be relocated when permanent housing is obtained?
- Where are other school age siblings attending?

What is the enrollment procedure?

A Student Residency Questionnaire will be provided to all families or unaccompanied youth seeking enrollment.

- The student will be immediately enrolled.
- The liaison will work with eligible students/families to obtain missing records, documents, immunizations, etc. per district, state, and federal guidelines. The student needs to remain in attendance at school while these matters are being resolved.

- Once enrolled at a school site, McKinney-Vento eligible students have the right to remain in attendance at that site until the end of the school year after becoming permanently housed.
- If the liaison determines the student is NOT eligible under McKinney-Vento, the family has the right to dispute. The student has the right to remain in attendance where enrollment is sought while the dispute is being resolved.

What about transportation?

- Regular district bus transportation is provided for students more than one mile from school:
- If an eligible student is temporarily residing beyond established attendance boundaries, McKinney-Vento requires school districts to provide them with transportation to and from school of origin upon parental request and if it is determined to be in the best interest of the student.
- District transportation obligations apply only to necessary school attendance during the regular school day unless lack of extended-day transportation is a barrier to the student's full participation in school and opportunities for academic success. Contact the district homeless family liaison if there are special circumstances to be considered.
- Districts are not obligated to provide transportation to locations other than to/from school and primary nighttime residence.
- District transportation may be provided by bus, contracted transport servers, dispensing public transportation passes, or reimbursing parents who are able to transport and who meet certain district guidelines (contact the liaison for more information).
- District transportation for homeless education MUST be coordinated through the district homeless liaison.
- Some situations require two districts to share student transportation responsibilities.
- It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school of attendance or the homeless liaison that your child will not be at the designated stop. Keep in contact with the liaison to help resolve transportation or communication issues quickly.
- The same behavior rules apply for ALL students provided district transportation regardless of housing status. Transportation may be suspended for any students displaying extreme or persistent misbehavior.

What if there is a disagreement over eligibility, enrollment, or transportation?

The parent has the right to dispute any eligibility, enrollment, or transportation decision made for their student. The liaison can assist families in understanding and starting the dispute process.

If it is a liaison decision that is being disputed, the Director of Title 1 will mediate the dispute and provide a decision in writing. If the parents dispute the director's decision, they may appeal that decision to the Arizona State Department of Education.

Please note: The student has the right to remain in attendance at the school where enrollment is sought while the dispute is being resolved.