McKinney Vento Act

Rights and services for Homeless Students

Presenter: Leslie Carrillo, Homeless & Family Service Assistant
What is the McKinney -Vento Act?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act is a federal law that ensures immediate enrollment and educational stability for homeless children and youth. McKinney-Vento provides federal funding for the purpose of supporting services for homeless students.
The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence”. The act provides examples of children who would fall under this definition:

- Children and youth sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason.
- Children and youth living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations.
- Children and youth living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- The term unaccompanied youth includes a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
Who is Homeless?

There is a common misconception that the homeless live on the streets. The truth is more like this:

- Shelters and transitional housing agencies
- Hotels
- Friend or relative’s house
- Abandoned buildings
- Cars
Who is homeless?

- Children and youth abandoned in hospitals.
- Children and youth awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youth living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations.
- Migratory children and youth living in any of the above situations.
- Children and youth whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (Park, benches, etc.).
- Living in a public or private place not designed for ordinary use as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
NOT Homeless

- Parent transferred due to work; student wants to stay and finish school.
- Student moved in with a friend, relative, or coach to play sports, be in the school band, attend a magnet school, etc.
- Parent’s work schedule was problematic, so the child stays with relatives for school.
Understanding the Homeless Definition

- Shelters are often not an option.
- Not all communities have shelters.
- The demand for shelters often exceeds supply.
- Youth may avoid entering shelter due to concerns about the shelter environment.
- Shelter stay limits.
- Shared housing arrangements are often not feasible, unsustainable or are offered by unscrupulous hosts.
Rights of students in homeless situations

- Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there.
- Stay in the school they attended before becoming homeless or the last school they were enrolled (referred to as, “school of origin”) even if they move out of their district zone. They can also finish the school year in their school even if they find permanent housing during the year, but for the next school year they need to complete the “Choice Application” if they are out of zone in Hartford or transfer if they have moved to a different town.
- Get transportation to their school of origin, if the transportation for any reason takes more than two days to be effective a bus pass would be provided to the family and student to attend school. State guidelines for transportation applies according mileage as follows: grades K-1 0.5, 2-5 1.0, 6-8 1.5, 9-12 2.0.
Rights of students in homeless situations (Cont.)

- Attend local 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 the required documents.
- Get free or reduced school meals, services for English Learners, Special Education, Title 1 Services.
- Students cannot be separated from the regular school program because they are homeless.
- Get information and referrals from liaisons, including information about all available educational programs and how parents can participate.
Duration of school of origin rights

- If a family becomes homeless between or during academic years, the student can remain in the school of origin.
- For the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year.
- If a family moves into permanent housing during the academic year, the student can remain in the school of origin for the remainder of the school year.
Registration

- McKinney-Vento students are entitled to immediate enrollment in any public school that other students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend, even without required documents, such as school records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, guardianship, or other documents.

- Immediate enrollment applies even without parent or guardian.
“But the student chose to leave...”

- A student may be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth regardless of whether the student was forced from the home or ran away.
- Sometimes what has caused the separation between the student and his/her parents may not be disclosed readily due to its sensitive or private nature.
- Determinations of McKinney-Vento eligibility for unaccompanied students should be made on a case-by-case basis, focusing on the nature of the student’s nighttime residence.
Homelessness Creates Barriers
Students experiencing homelessness may:

- Be unable to meet school enrollment requirements.
- Move around and change schools a lot.
- Be hungry, tired, and stressed.
- Not have school supplies or a quiet place to study.
- Not have access to reliable transportation.
- Not have a parent or guardian to help them (unaccompanied youth).
Homelessness Affects Education

Students experiencing homelessness are more likely to:

- Be chronically absent from school
- Get lower grades
- Have special education needs
- Score poorly on assessment tests
- Drop out of school
Services provided:

- Transportation to remove attendance barriers.
- Student is provided with uniform assistance, underclothing, socks, hygiene kits, and backpack with school supplies.
- Referrals for mental health stability.
- Referrals for food pantries.
- Family in need of housing or shelter, are provided with assistance to complete the CAN Assessment to call or visit 2-1-1.
Future MCKVA Sessions

- Thursday, February 4, 2021
- Thursday, March 18, 2021
- Thursday, April 22, 2021
- Thursday, May 20, 2021

Upcoming Family Learning Sessions

- Thursday, November 19, 2020
- Thursday, December 17, 2020
- February, 2021 TBD

Parent Teacher Conference 20-21

November

- Wednesday, November 18, 2020 evening, 5:00 PM-7:00 PM
- Thursday, November 19, 2020 afternoon, 1:00 PM-3:30 PM

February

- Wednesday, February 17, 2021 evening, 5:00 PM-7:00 PM
- Thursday, February 18, 2021 afternoon, 1:00 PM-3:30 PM

May

- Tuesday, May 4, 2021 evening, 5:00 PM-7:00 PM
- Wednesday, May 5, 2021 afternoon, 1:00 PM-3:30 PM

June

- Wednesday, June 2, 2021 afternoon, 1:00 PM-3:30 PM
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