MCKINNEY VENTO ACT

Rights and services for Homeless Students

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

• The McKinney-Vento homeless education assistance Act is a federal law that establishes the right of children and youth experiencing homelessness to access the same public education provided to other children, to continue in the school they attended before they became homeless, to receive transportation to that school, and to enroll in school without delay. Schools cannot require proof of residency that might prevent or delay enrollment. Students have the right to attend classes while the school arranges for transfer of records required for enrollment.

• McKinney-Vento provides federal funding for the purpose of supporting services for homeless students.
Who is Homeless?

- People can be categorized as homeless if they are: living on the streets, moving between temporary shelters, including houses of friends, family and emergency accommodations.
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 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?

• 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 moved due to work situation and would like the student to remain in the same school; student wants to stay and finish school.

• Parent’s work schedule was problematic, so the child stays with relatives for school.

• Student moved in with a friend, relative, or coach to play sports, be in the band, attend a magnet school, etc.
Understanding the Homeless Definition

- Shelters often are not an option
- Not all communities have shelters
- Shelter demand often exceeds supply
- Youth may avoid entering shelter due to concerns about the shelter environment
- Shelter accommodation limit
- Shared housing arrangements are often not feasible or are offered by unscrupulous hosts
Registration Process

• McKinney-Vento students are entitled to immediate enrollment in any public school, 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 in school applies even without parent or guardian.
Rights of students in homeless situations

• Attend school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there.

• Remain 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. Students are able to finish the school year in their school even if they find permanent housing during the year. However, for the next school year a Choice Application if they are out of zone in Hartford. If they are living in another city/town they would need to register there.

• Get transportation to their school of origin, if the transportation for any reason takes more than 2 days to be effective a bus pass would be provided to the family and student to attend school. State guidelines for transportation applies. (Grades K-1.5, 2-5 1.0, 6-8 1.5, 9-12 2.0).
Rights of students in homeless situations (Cont.)

- Attend the 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 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 academic years or during an academic year. The student can remain in the school of origin.

• 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.
“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:

- 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
• Wednesday, December 15th, 2021
• Wednesday, February 16th, 2022
• Wednesday, April 20th, 2022
Hartford Public Schools
Welcome Center
330 Wethersfield Avenue, Hartford CT 06114
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