

# McKinney-Vento Act/ Homeless

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law that works to ensure educational stability for homeless youth. The McKinney-Vento act allows homeless students to enroll in school and receive transportation without delay. The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.” Examples of children who fall under this definition include:

1. Children sharing housing due to economic hardship or loss of housing;
2. Children living in “motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations”
3. Children living in “emergency or transitional shelters”
4. Children “awaiting foster care placement”
5. Children whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc.)
6. Children living in “cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations...”

Have you recently lost housing and had to move in with friends or family until you can get back on your feet?

Your child’s school is here to help to make sure that he/she gets all the benefits provided under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act.

Who qualifies for this help?

The law states any student that does not have a fixed, regular, and adequate place to sleep at night qualifies for educational assistance. This includes students and families that stay at a shelter, on the street, in a car or abandoned building. Families that have lost their housing and need to double-up with friends or relatives because they cannot afford their own place also qualify.

Immediate Enrollment

School districts are required to enroll McKinney-Vento eligible students without delay even if you do not have your student’s school or medical records. If you need assistance getting educational or medical records, ask to speak with the district’s liaison. They will assist you.

Transportation

If you, as the caregiver, choose for your student to remain at the home school, the school district will work with you on transportation options. If the ride to school is estimated to be more than one hour, the district or liaison can request a meeting with you to determine how this may affect your student’s education.

### Free Lunch & School Fees

Because of your unstable housing situation, your student is eligible to receive a free lunch each day, and if the district provides a breakfast program, that will also be provided at no cost. In addition, your student should not be charged to attend school. This includes books, locks, gym uniforms, class fees, sports programs, and graduation fees.

### Settling Disputes

With your McKinney-Vento eligibility, you must be provided with a written explanation of the district's intent to dispute. Your school district must also provide you with a list of low-cost or free legal services to assist you during the dispute/appeal process. Once you have received notice that your district has filed for dispute, please contact your regional liaison. In the event of a dispute, your Regional Office of Education or Intermediate Service Center will appoint a mediator. The mediator will set a meeting time that is convenient for you and the school district in an attempt to resolve the dispute. If you do not agree with the decision of the mediator, you can appeal to the Illinois State Board of Education.

Kings CSD #144 is committed to educating students who meet the guidelines under McKinney-Vento. If you have questions or need assistance regarding homelessness, please contact Jodi Horn by email at [jhorn@kings144.org](mailto:jhorn@kings144.org) or phone 815.582.7191

For more information regarding the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, please visit <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html>