

McKinney-Vento

The U.S. McKinney-Vento Assistance Act defines homeless children as those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime abode. In general, children or youth living in motels, transitional housing, shelters, the street, cars, parks, bus or train stations, abandoned buildings and other inadequate accommodations may be considered eligible for McKinney-Vento services. This includes, but is not limited to, the following groups:

- Children living with another family due to lack of a permanent residence;
- Children living in shelter, including transitional living programs;
- Children living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Migratory children if the accommodations are not fit for habitation;
- Children who have left home (runaway) and are living in a shelter or inadequate accommodations, even if the parents are willing to provide a home; and
- Children whose parents/guardians will not permit them to live at home.

Unaccompanied Youth

The definition of McKinney-Vento eligibility under Illinois and federal law is broad enough to include “unaccompanied youth,” defined as a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This can also include children and teens that are staying with friends or relatives because they cannot pay for a place to stay.

Whether a child or youth meets the definition of McKinney-Vento depends on the living situation and the individual circumstances. All students will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Their Rights

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, as part of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act ensures eligible children have the following rights.

- Children have the right to attend their school of origin (the school last attended or school attended when child lost permanent housing) or attend the school that serves their temporary living situation.
- They have the right to enroll immediately, even if medical or other records, birth certificates, transcripts, cannot be produced at time of enrollment.
- Transportation must be provided, if requested.

- Priority consideration must be given to eligible children for preschool programs.
- Children are eligible for free lunch and fee waivers.
- Supplemental tutoring must be provided if needed.

If children and their parent/guardian who initially share the housing of another person due to the loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar hardship continue to share housing, the local education association may, after the passage of 18 months and annually thereafter, conduct a review as to whether the hardship continues to exist in accordance with state law.

If you think you might qualify for McKinney-Vento services please contact Canton Union School District 66's McKinney-Vento Liaison, KiLee Lidwell-McFerren, by phone at (309) 647-7594 or by email at kilee.mcferren@cusd66.org.