

Students/Families in Transition

The Students in Transition program helps to support and provide services to students experiencing unstable housing or homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 defines “homeless children and youths” as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.”

Rights of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness:

- Access to a free and appropriate public education
- Receive the same programs and services that are provided to all other children
- Enrollment in a new school without proof of residential status, school records, proof of guardianship or other documents
- Continue in the school they attended before becoming homeless
- Receive transportation to the school they attended before becoming homeless
- Free breakfast and lunch at school

Homelessness is traumatic for children. It exposes them to unhealthy levels of stress and can take an emotional and psychological toll on their ability to grow and learn.

If you live...

- In a shelter
- In a hotel or motel
- With friends or family because you have no home
- In an empty building, in a car, or other unsafe place
- On the street
- In emergency foster care
- With friends and you are 17 years old or younger, you may be eligible for additional services for your child at school.

How we can help:

- Immediate enrollment
- Transportation
- Free breakfast and lunch at school
- School supplies
- Scholarships for school activities
- Referrals to community resources that include medical support, food, housing, mental health support, and other resources
- Information about preschool programs
- Access to a school social worker
- If you, or someone you know is experience homelessness or unstable housing please contact:

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Homeless Liaison

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TRANSPORTATION OF STUDENTS

MSBA/MASA Policy 707

Definition: "Homeless student" means a student, including a migratory student, who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes: students who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; are awaiting foster care placement; have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings. (42 U.S.C. § 11434a)

HOMELESS STUDENTS

- A. Homeless students shall be provided with transportation services comparable to other students in the school district. (42 U.S.C. § 11432(e)(3)(C)(i)(III)(cc) and (g)(4)(A) Upon request by the student's parent, guardian, or homeless education liaison, the school district shall provide transportation for a homeless student as follows:
1. A resident student who becomes homeless and is residing in a public or private shelter location or has other non-shelter living arrangements within the school district shall be provided transportation to and from the student's school of origin and the shelter or other non-shelter location (42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii)(I)
 2. A resident student who becomes homeless and is residing in a public or private shelter location or has other non-shelter living arrangements outside of the school district shall be provided transportation to and from the student's school of origin and the shelter or other non-shelter location. (Minn. Stat. § 125A.51(f); 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii)(II)
 3. If a nonresident student is homeless and is residing in a public or private homeless shelter or has other non-shelter living arrangements within the school district, the school district may provide transportation services between the shelter or non-shelter location and the student's school of origin outside of the school district upon agreement with the school district in which the school of origin is located. (Minn. Stat. § 125A.51(f)
 4. A homeless nonresident student enrolled under Minn. Stat. § 124D.08, Subd. 2a must be provided transportation from the student's district of residence to and from the school of enrollment. (Minn. Stat. § 123B.92, Subd.)

ENROLLMENT AND HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Enrolling homeless students is a core concept in the McKinney-Vento Act as the law's purpose is to ensure that every homeless child or youth has equal access to a free, appropriate, public education. The term enrollment is a critical part of the law and is defined as, "attending classes and participating fully in school activities" [42 U.S.C. § 11434(a) (1)]. Schools are required to enroll students immediately, regardless of the point in the school year in which a homeless student presents for enrollment.

In addition to enrolling students in the general education program, local liaisons are to ensure that homeless students receive educational and related services for which the families and students are eligible. As a result, homeless students should be enrolled in any program operated by the school that is appropriate for the

student's needs, such as the school meals program, services through Title I, Part A, and school transportation. It is also appropriate to give referrals to students or their families at the time of enrollment to facilitate student enrollment in community-based programs such as Head Start and other public preschool programs, or healthcare, dental, or mental health services that facilitate school attendance or success

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR ENROLLMENT

Students experiencing homelessness often do not have documents or records that are typically required for school enrollment. The McKinney-Vento Act recognizes that students often do not have the usual documentation at the time of enrollment and requires schools to enroll homeless students even if they do not have paperwork normally required. Liaisons or other appointed staff should follow up with the family and assist them with obtaining school or medical records needed by the school.

ENROLLING UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS YOUTH

Due to the recognition of unaccompanied homeless youth by the McKinney Vento Act, it is important to note that the absence of a parent or guardian is not sufficient reason to delay or deny enrollment. Unaccompanied homeless youth who are completely on their own or staying with a non-custodial caregiver must be enrolled immediately. Conditional enrollment based on the requirement that an adult obtain legal guardianship or custodianship within a set amount of time directly contradicts the law.

Liaisons are specifically charged with ensuring that unaccompanied homeless youth are aware of the educational and related opportunities available to them. Liaisons should discuss the options for enrollment with unaccompanied youth and ensure they receive assistance with making enrollment decisions.

Caregiver forms, which outline who can act on behalf of an unaccompanied youth in educational matters, can be very helpful during enrollment and when making educational decisions for the students. As your district develops new forms or revises existing ones, language that creates enrollment barriers or delays should be avoided. See Sample Caregiver Form for an example you can adapt to meet the needs of your district.

FORMS:

Missing Documents:

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http://nche.ed.gov/downloads/toolkit2/app5a.docx>

Sample Caregiver Form:

<https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http://nche.ed.gov/downloads/toolkit2/app5b.docx>

Other Resources for Enrollment:

<http://nche.ed.gov/downloads/briefs/enrollment.pdf>

<http://nche.ed.gov/downloads/briefs/assessment.pdf>

<http://nche.ed.gov/downloads/briefs/guardianship.pdf>