



**OKOLONA MUNICIPAL  
SEPARATE SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**One Team, One Goal: All students will be  
successful.**

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Procedures Manual  
For Enrolling Homeless Students

**2011-2012**



## Okolona Municipal Separate School District Procedures for Enrolling Homeless Students

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act assures preschool-aged and school-aged children certain rights.

### **Definition:**

The McKinney-Vento Acts defines “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
  - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (*sometimes referred to as doubled-up*);
  - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - Living in emergency or transitional shelters;
  - Abandoned in hospitals; or
  - Awaiting foster care placement;
- Children and youth who 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;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

### **Requirements:**

The McKinney-Vento Act provides certain rights for homeless students. They include waiving certain requirements such as proof of residency when students are enrolling and allowing categorical eligibility for certain services. The Act also states:

- Homeless students may attend their school of origin or the school where they are temporarily residing.
- Homeless students must be provided a written statement of their rights when they enroll and at least two times per year
- Homeless students may enroll without school, medical, or similar records.
- Homeless students have a right to transportation to school.
- Students must be provided a statement explaining why they are denied any service or enrollment.
- Students must receive services, such as transportation, while disputes are being settled.



## **Procedures for Identifying a Homeless Student**

A student may be considered homeless if:

- The student indicates a homeless status at the time of enrollment
- An affidavit of residency indicates that the arrangement is temporary due to necessity (due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason)

## **Procedures for Enrolling a Homeless Student**

The school may not deny, delay, or transfer enrollment solely because a student is homeless, or because a homeless student is unable to produce school, medical, or residency records.

A school enrolling, or about to enroll, a homeless student shall:

- Immediately enroll the student, regardless of the availability of educational and/or immunization records
  - If a student attempts to register without a parent/guardian, effort should be made to contact the parent/guardian
  - The homeless student may not be barred from enrollment due to lack of immunization until an effort has been made to obtain records. If records cannot be obtained, assistance should be provided in getting the student properly immunized.
  - If a birth certificate is not available, the student should be registered. Department of Human Services may be contacted to assist in obtaining a copy of the birth certificate.
  - The student will be identified as homeless in STI
- Make a reasonable effort to verify that the child is homeless.
- Contact the school last attended to obtain relevant academic and other records
  - If student records cannot be obtained or records are not available an educational record (cumulative folder) will be developed. In these cases, an academic diagnostic test may be administered to assist in the determination of the student's skill levels and appropriate placement.
  - Priority shall be given in evaluations of homeless student suspected of having a disability.
- Provide free meals within one school day after the student enrolled. If necessary, assistance will be provided for completion of free and reduced lunch forms.
- Provide access to the same services comparable to those offered to other students in the school which the homeless student attends such as:
  - transportation services
  - educational services
  - school nutrition programs
  - preschool
  - vocational and technical programs
  - extra-curricular and enrichment activities
- Coordinate with and/or refer student to other community resources in offering assistance to the homeless student/family
- Contact the district homeless liaison

**It is important that the academic and educational programs for children who are temporarily without a home are no different than those of the general student population.**



# Appendix D: Enrollment Tools



Immediate enrollment for children and youth experiencing homelessness is a key provision of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The enrollment tools contained in this appendix will assist school districts in complying with federal law by enrolling children and youth experiencing homelessness immediately, even if they lack the documentation normally required for enrollment.

## Appendix D includes:

- Sample form: *Student Residency Form*
- Sample form: *Determining Feasibility of School Placement*
- Sample form: *Sample Affidavit for Missing Enrollment Documentation*
- Sample form: *Caregiver Authorization Form*
- Sample form: *Written Notification of Enrollment Decision*

## Additional Resources

- U.S. Department of Education Draft Non-Regulatory Guidance, Section G; available for downloading at [http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/guidance\\_jul2004.pdf](http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/guidance_jul2004.pdf). Section G of the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance deals with the school placement, school enrollment, and eligibility for services of children and youth experiencing homelessness
- NCHC enrollment tools; available for ordering at [http://www.serve.org/nche/online\\_order.php](http://www.serve.org/nche/online_order.php):
  - **Enrollment: Ready Reference for School (enrollment foldout)** This handy foldout pamphlet assists local homeless education liaisons and enrollment personnel in understanding the legal guidelines for the immediate school enrollment of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Its compact size and foldout format make it a great desktop reference.
  - **Parent Pack Pocket Folder.** This sturdy, laminated folder provides parents a place to keep important records and documents related to their children's education. The folder also

includes information on the rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness and helpful tips about enrollment and disenrollment. Available in Spanish and English.

■ **NCHE homeless education issue briefs; available for downloading at <http://www.serve.org/nche/briefs.php>:**

■ ***Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act* brief:** This brief offers step-by-step guidance on determining homelessness among children and youth whose living arrangements vary from the examples given in the McKinney-Vento definition of "homeless".

■ ***Guiding the Discussion on School Selection* brief:** This brief identifies the key provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act dealing with the homeless student's right to attend either the school of origin or the local attendance area school. It includes a helpful checklist to use when approaching the school selection decision.

■ ***Prompt and Proper Placement: Enrolling Students Without Records* brief:** This brief offers teachers, school counselors, and other school personnel valuable tools and information to assist in making sound educational decisions for the immediate placement of homeless children and youth in appropriate classroom settings.

## Student Residency Form

This form is intended to address the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act (Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act). The question below is to assist in determining if the student meets the eligibility criteria for services provided under the McKinney-Vento Act. In the event that the child is not staying with his/her parent(s) or guardian(s), use the caregiver authorization form to address guardianship issues.

Where does the student stay at night?

\_\_\_\_\_ in a shelter

\_\_\_\_\_ in another location that is not appropriate for people  
(e.g., an abandoned building)

\_\_\_\_\_ in a motel/hotel

\_\_\_\_\_ temporarily with more than one family in a house,  
mobile home, or apartment (because the family does not have  
a place of its own)

\_\_\_\_\_ in a car

\_\_\_\_\_ other (in an arrangement that is not fixed, regular, and  
adequate and is not described by the other choices)

\_\_\_\_\_ at a campsite

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_ Student's date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

I, (name) \_\_\_\_\_  
declare as follows:

I am the parent/legal guardian of (name of student) \_\_\_\_\_

who is of school age and is seeking enrollment in (name of school district) \_\_\_\_\_

Since (date) \_\_\_\_\_, our family has not had a permanent residence.

Under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state, I declare that the information provided here is true and correct and of my own personal knowledge and that, if called upon to testify, I would be competent to do so.

Name of person completing the form: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

I can be reached for emergencies at: \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from materials from the California Department of Education and the San Antonio Independent School District*

## Introduction to Determining Feasibility of School Placement

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states that once a child has been identified as homeless, residency requirements do not apply. The federal law requires that a child or youth experiencing homelessness attend one of the following:

- The *school of origin*: The school that the child last attended before experiencing homelessness or the school where the student was last enrolled.
- The *local attendance area school*: Any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.

Enrollment must take place immediately.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires schools to consider the school of origin as the first option in school enrollment. Parents may choose the school of origin or the local attendance area school. The following individuals may be consulted in determining what placement is in the child's or youth's best interest:

- The homeless child or youth
- The parents or caretakers of the homeless child or youth
- Homeless shelter personnel
- Representatives of social service agencies
- Local homeless education liaisons
- School social workers
- School counselors

It is the school district's responsibility to determine the school of origin and local attendance area school and to resolve any conflict concerning the school placement that is in the best interest of the student. Whenever possible, the school district is to comply with the parents'/caretakers' wishes. If the school district and parents/caretakers do not agree on the appropriate placement, the state's dispute resolution procedure must be followed. The student should be enrolled in the school that the parents or caretakers (or the student himself/herself, in the case of an unaccompanied youth) have chosen during the resolution process. If the local attendance area school and the school of origin are in different districts and the school of origin is determined to be the best placement, the local homeless education liaisons from both districts must work together to arrange transportation. If the two districts can not reach a mutually agreed-upon arrangement, the two districts must split equally the cost and responsibility of transporting the student to the school of origin.

The following form is provided to assist in determining which placement decision would be in the student's best interest.

*Adapted from materials developed by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*

## Determining Feasibility of School Placement Form

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, a homeless child or youth has the right to attend the school of origin or the local attendance area school, according to the best interest of the child.

■ The **school of origin** is defined as:

- the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed; OR
- the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled

■ The **local attendance area school** (local school) is defined as:

- any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend

This form will assist in determining which placement decision would be in the student's best interest.

Please provide the following information for the attendance options for the student:

**School that the child or youth attended when permanently housed:**

Name of school and district:

Dates of attendance:

Living arrangement at the time:

**School in which the child or youth was last enrolled:**

Name of school and district:

Dates of attendance:

Living arrangement at the time:

**Local Attendance Area School**

Name of school and district:

Current living arrangement:

1 Are the school of origin and the local attendance area school in the same school district?

## Determining Feasibility of School Placement Form (cont)

2. Which school does the child/youth want to attend? Why?
  
3. Which school does the parent want the child/youth to attend? Why?
  
4. What is the distance and time spent on travel from the current residence to the school of origin?
  
5. If transportation is currently unavailable to the school of origin, how can it be arranged?
  
6. What time of year is it (at the beginning of the school year, near the end of the school year, during the summer)?
  
7. How long did the child/youth attend the school of origin? Were meaningful social and educational relationships established?
  
8. Are there specific people in the school of origin who have been providing support or assistance to the family or child/youth experiencing homelessness?
  
9. Are there special programs, such as gifted, bilingual, or remedial education, in which the child/youth has been participating at the school of origin?  
  
If yes, please describe.  
  
Are these special programs also available at the local attendance area school?
  
10. Based on a knowledge of the family's situation, how long is the family likely to remain at the current residence?

## Determining Feasibility of School Placement Form (cont)

11. What is the likelihood that the family experiencing homelessness will reestablish residency in the attendance area of the school of origin?

Based on answers to the previous questions, the school district recommends the following school:

Individuals consulted to determine that this placement is in the student's best interest were:

Signature(s) of the individual(s) making the recommendation:

# Sample Affidavit for Missing Enrollment Documentation

State. \_\_\_\_\_

School district. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (name), based upon his/her personal knowledge, answers the following questions as noted in his/her handwriting on this and the attached page, which are propounded by duly authorized officials of the

\_\_\_\_\_ (district name) concerning a student's missing enrollment documentation for the following:

- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| _____ Proof of residency    | _____ Immunization record(s)           |
| _____ Proof of guardianship | _____ School physical/health record(s) |
| _____ Proof of identity     | _____ School record(s)                 |
| _____ Birth certificate     | _____ Other (please describe below)    |

You are being asked to answer these questions because you are unable to provide the enrollment documents checked above that are required for enrollment. In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 107-110), states and localities are required to address barriers to the enrollment of students meeting the definition of "homeless". Your completion of this affidavit will facilitate the enrollment of your child(ren) (or of your own enrollment if you are an unaccompanied youth).

1. What is your full name? (name of person completing form)
2. Do you understand that giving a false or otherwise untrue answer to any of the questions in this affidavit could result in a criminal charge of perjury being brought against you? Please circle "Yes" or "No"  

Yes / No
3. What is (are) the full name(s) of the student(s) you wish to enroll in this district?
4. What are the age(s), date(s) of birth, and birthplace(s) of the student(s) being enrolled in this district?

## Sample Affidavit for Missing Enrollment Doc'n (cont.)

5. Who are the parents, parents by legal adoption, legal guardians, or persons having legal custody of the student(s) being enrolled? (If you are an unaccompanied youth, please list your parent(s), legal guardian(s), or other adults who help take care of you, such as relatives, caregivers, social workers, etc.)

6. Where is (are) the student(s) currently living? Include the address and type of housing.

7. Do you have legal custody imposed by a court order or have you been designated as a court-appointed guardian for the student(s) being enrolled?

What court entered such order and what type of case was it (e.g., custody hearing, etc.)?

8. Why are you unable to present a copy of documentation for the items checked on page 1 for the student(s) that you are enrolling?

9. To the best of your knowledge, has this student (have these students) ever been reported to any law enforcement agency as a missing child (as missing children)?

If the response to question #9 is yes, identify by name and address the law enforcement agency to which the child was reported missing and the date of the report.

10. In order to help the school district locate missing information, please give the following information:

Last school(s) attended (name of school, city or county, and state).

Clinic or medical facility where the student(s) was (were) immunized or received medical treatment (name of facility, city or county, and state)

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Date

Signature

*This sample may be used to develop a state or local affidavit to facilitate the enrollment of students who are experiencing homelessness*

## Caregiver Authorization Form

This form is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 107-110) requirement that homeless children have access to education and other services for which they are eligible. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states specifically that barriers to enrollment must be removed. In some cases, a child or youth who is homeless may not be able to reside with his/her parent or guardian, however, this fact does not nullify the child's/youth's right to receive a free, appropriate public education.

### Instructions:

Complete this form for a child/youth presenting himself/herself for enrollment while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

- To authorize the enrollment in school of a minor, complete items 1 through 4 and sign the form.
- To authorize the enrollment and school-related medical care of a minor, complete all items and sign the form.

I am 18 years of age or older and have agreed to fulfill the role of caregiver for the minor named below.

1. Name of minor: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Minor's date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

3. My name (adult giving authorization): \_\_\_\_\_

4. My home address \_\_\_\_\_

5. Check one or both (for example, if one parent was advised and the other could not be located):

\_\_\_\_\_ I have advised the parent(s) or other person(s) having legal custody of the minor as to my intent to authorize medical care and have received no objection.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am unable to contact the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) at this time to notify them of my intended authorization.

6. My date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

7. My state driver's license or identification card number: \_\_\_\_\_

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from materials produced by the California Department of Education.*

## Written Notification of Enrollment Decision

To be completed by the receiving school when an enrollment request is denied.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

In compliance with section 722(g)(3)(E) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the following written notification is provided to:

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

After reviewing your request to enroll the student(s) listed above, the enrollment request is denied. This determination was based upon:

You have the right to appeal this decision by completing the second page of this notice or by contacting the school district's local homeless education liaison.

Name of local liaison: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

In addition:

- The student listed above has the right to enroll immediately in the requested school pending the resolution of the dispute.
- You may provide written or verbal communication(s) to support your position regarding the student's enrollment in the requested school. You may use the form attached to this notification.
- You may contact the State Coordinator for Homeless Education if further help is needed or desired. Contact information for the State Coordinator

*You may seek the assistance of advocates or an attorney.  
A copy of our state's dispute resolution process for students  
experiencing homelessness is attached.*

## Written Notification of Enrollment Decision

To be completed by the parent, guardian, caretaker, or unaccompanied youth when a dispute arises. This information may be shared verbally with the local liaison as an alternative to completing this form.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

I may be contacted at (phone or e-mail): \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to appeal the enrollment decision made by: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

I have been provided with (please check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ A written explanation of the school's decision.

\_\_\_\_\_ The contact information of the school district's local homeless education liaison.

\_\_\_\_\_ A copy of the state's dispute resolution process for students experiencing homelessness

Optional You may include a written explanation in the space below to support your appeal or you may provide your explanation verbally.

The school provided me with a copy of this form when I submitted it. \_\_\_\_\_ (initial)

## When Legal Guardians Are Not Present: Enrolling Students on Their Own



### Who is homeless?

*(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 - Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act - Sec 725)*

*The term "homeless children and youth" --*

- A. *means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and*
- B. *includes --*
  - i. *children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason, are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters, are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement,*
  - ii. *children and youths who 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...*
  - iii. *children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and*
  - iv. *migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).*

In most LEAs (local education agencies or school districts), enrollment procedures are predicated on the expectation that children are living with their parents or legal guardians. Requiring parents or legal guardians to sign forms upon enrolling children provides schools with protection from certain types of liability and with contact information for situations in which additional permissions or consultations are needed.

In a number of instances, however, children and youth who are enrolling in a school may not be living with their parents or legal guardians. Frequently, children in families experiencing homelessness are sent to live temporarily with friends or relatives. This type of living arrangement has been especially prevalent in families displaced by the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricanes. In other situations, youth have been forced to leave home due to abusive environments or are on their own for other reasons. These children and youth, in most cases, fit the definition of homeless, unaccompanied youth in the McKinney-Vento Act: a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian [42 U.S.C. §11434A(6)] and eligible for immediate school enrollment.

The McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to enroll homeless children and youth in school immediately, even if they lack required enrollment documents [42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(3)(C), (g)(1)(H)(iv), (g)(1)(F)(ii)]. ("Enroll" and "enrollment" are defined as "attending classes and participating fully in school activities" [42 U.S.C. §11434A(1)].) The Act further requires states to review and revise any policy that may act as a barrier to the enrollment of homeless children and youth and requires states to give particular attention to guardianship issues [42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(7)].

Therefore, schools may not condition school enrollment upon the receipt of proof of legal guardianship by caregivers of homeless, unaccompanied youth; nor may they require caregivers to become legal guardians within a certain period of time after the child enrolls in school. The decision to seek legal guardianship is a serious decision that affects significantly the legal rights of the parent and caregiver well beyond the education arena. Although that step may be appropriate in some cases, it will not be in others.

In addition, it is important to note that the absence of an available caregiver must not impede enrollment. Unaccompanied, homeless youth who are on their own completely must be enrolled in school immediately.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, every school district must designate a local homeless education liaison [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)]. The local liaison plays a key role in identifying and supporting unaccompanied, homeless youth and is required to help them choose

*(continued on the next page)*

and enroll in school after considering their wishes; inform them of their right to transportation; assist them in accessing transportation; provide them with notice of their right to appeal school or school-district decisions; and ensure that they are enrolled in school immediately, pending resolution of disputes [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)].

### Best Practices

Following are some suggestions school districts have reported as best practices:

- Develop a caregiver form that establishes the responsibilities of caregivers and requests their contact information to replace traditional proof of guardianship. This form should be crafted carefully so it does not create further barriers or delay school enrollment. The 2004 U.S. Department of Education's *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non-Regulatory Guidance* suggests using "caretaker affidavits, enrollment forms for unaccompanied youth, and other forms [that] replace typical proof of guardianship" to facilitate immediate enrollment (p.16). A sample of such a form, taken from the *Local Homeless Education Liaison Toolkit*, is included in this brief. The form is based on a form in use in California and adopted by many school districts nationwide. The complete *Local Homeless Education Liaison Toolkit* can be downloaded at [www.serve.org/nche/training.php](http://www.serve.org/nche/training.php).
- Become familiar with other state and local policies pertaining to unaccompanied youth and guardianship.
- Review and revise LEA policies that may serve as a barrier to immediate enrollment for unaccompanied youth.
- Establish a local task force that includes representatives from the homeless education program, LEA legal department, child welfare agency, youth agencies, and department of juvenile justice to develop consistent and agreed-upon policies and procedures for working with unaccompanied youth.
- Ensure that enrollment staff at all district schools understand the rights of unaccompanied youth and are familiar with the policies and procedures for immediate enrollment of these students.
- Contact parents or legal guardians, when appropriate, to clarify their relationship with the caregiver and what authority they wish them to exercise.

### Excerpts from the Law

Following are related excerpts from the McKinney-Vento Act:

"The term unaccompanied youth includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian." [42 U.S.C. §11434A(6)]

"The school selected [...] shall immediately enroll the homeless child or youth, even if the child or youth is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, or other documentation." [42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(3)(C)(i)]

"The terms 'enroll' and 'enrollment' include attending classes and participating fully in school activities." [42 U.S.C. §11434A(1)]

“Each state shall submit to the Secretary a plan to provide for the education of homeless children and youths within the state. Such plan shall include the following:

[...] (H) Strategies to address other problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youths, including problems resulting from enrollment delays that are caused by---

[...] (iv) guardianship issues. [42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(1)(H)(iv)]

“Each state educational agency and local educational agency that receives assistance under this subtitle shall review and revise any policies that may act as barriers to the enrollment of homeless children and youths in schools that are selected under paragraph (3).” [42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(7)(A)]

“In reviewing and revising such policies, consideration shall be given to issues concerning transportation, immunization, residency, birth certificates, school records and other documentation, and guardianship.” [42 U.S.C. §§11432(g)(7)(B)]

“[L]ocal educational agencies will designate an appropriate staff person, who may also be a coordinator for other Federal programs, as a local educational agency liaison for homeless children and youths, to carry out the duties described in paragraph (6)(A)[.]” [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)]

The 2004 U.S. Department of Education’s *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non-Regulatory Guidance* is available at [www.serve.org/nche](http://www.serve.org/nche).

## Caregiver Authorization Form

This form is intended to address the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (P.L. 107-110) requirement that homeless children have access to education and other services for which they are eligible. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act states specifically that barriers to enrollment must be removed. In some cases, a child or youth who is homeless may not be able to reside with his/her parent or guardian; however, this fact does not nullify the child's/youth's right to receive a free, appropriate public education.

### Instructions:

Complete this form for a child/youth presenting himself/herself for enrollment while not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

- To authorize the enrollment in school of a minor, complete items 1 through 4 and sign the form
- To authorize the enrollment and school-related medical care of a minor, complete all items and sign the form.

I am 18 years of age or older and have agreed to fulfill the role of caregiver for the minor named below.

1. Name of minor \_\_\_\_\_

2. Minor's date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

3. My name (adult giving authorization) \_\_\_\_\_

4. My home address \_\_\_\_\_

5. Check one or both (for example, if one parent was advised and the other could not be located):

\_\_\_\_\_ I have advised the parent(s) or other person(s) having legal custody of the minor as to my intent to authorize medical care and have received no objection

\_\_\_\_\_ I am unable to contact the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) at this time to notify them of my intended authorization.

6. My date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

7. My state driver's license or identification card number \_\_\_\_\_

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of this state that the foregoing information is true and correct.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from materials produced by the California Department of Education*

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This brief was developed by:  
National Center for Homeless Education  
800-308-2145 (toll-free HelpLine)  
<http://www.serve.org/nche>

Fall 2006

*NCHE is supported by the U.S. Department of Education  
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs.*

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Every state is required to have a coordinator for the education of homeless children and youth, and every school district is required to have a liaison for homeless students. These individuals will assist you with the implementation of the

McKinney-Vento Act. To find out who your state coordinator is, visit the NCHE website at <http://www.serve.org/nche>.



For further information on the McKinney-Vento Act and resources for implementation, call the NCHE HelpLine at 800-308-2145 or e-mail [homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org).



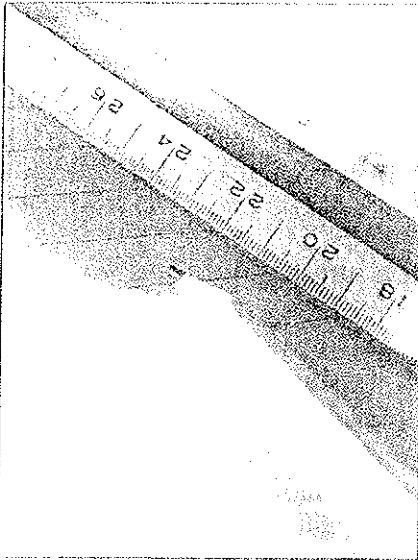
**Local Contact Information:**

Dr. L. Shird  
Okolona Schools  
662.447.2353

Kelsey Blumenberg  
Homeless Coordinator for MS  
601.359.3499



**Guiding the Discussion on School Selection**



The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act guarantees a child qualified as homeless the right to attend one of two schools: the school of origin or the local attendance area school. This brief explains the relevant legal provisions and provides a framework to assist in the decision-making process. For the McKinney-Vento (M-V) definition of “homeless,” see the panel to the left.

**Which School?**

“The local educational agency [LEA or school district] serving each child or youth to be assisted under this subtitle shall, according to the child's or youth's best interest--

- (i) continue the child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness--
  - (I) in any case in which a family becomes homeless between academic years or during an academic year; or
  - (II) for the remainder of the academic year, if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year; or
- (ii) enroll the child or youth in any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend.” [M-V: 722(g)(3)(a)]

**Who is homeless?**

*(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 - Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act - Sec 725)*

The term “homeless children and youth”--

- A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and
- B. includes --
  - i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters, are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
  - ii. children and youths who 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...
  - iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
  - iv. migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

**Schools Defined**

School of Origin: “the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled” [M-V: 722(g)(3)(G)]

Local Attendance Area School: “any public school that nonhomeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend” [M-V 722(g)(3)(A)(ii)]

**Best Interest**

“Best Interest—In determining the best interest of the child or youth under subparagraph (A), the local educational agency shall—

- (i) to the extent feasible, keep a homeless child or youth in the school of origin, except when doing so is contrary to the wishes of the child's or youth's parent or guardian,

*(continued on the next page)*

- (ii) provide written explanation, including a statement regarding the right to appeal under subparagraph (E), to the homeless child's or youth's parent or guardian, if the local educational agency sends such a child or youth to a school other than the school of origin or a school requested by the parent or guardian; ..." [M-V 722(g)(3)(B)]

## **U.S. Department of Education Guidance**

"G-4. What should a school district consider when determining the extent to which it is feasible to educate a homeless child in his or her school of origin?

As stated above, to the extent feasible, a district must educate a homeless child or youth in his or her school of origin, unless doing so is contrary to the wishes of the parent or guardian. The placement determination should be a student-centered, individualized determination. Factors that an LEA may consider include the age of the child or youth; the distance of a commute and the impact it may have on the student's education; personal safety issues; a student's need for special instruction (e.g., special education and related services); the length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location; and time remaining in the school year." (Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Non-Regulatory Guidance, July 2004)

## **How LEAs and Parents or Guardians Can Make Best Interest Decisions**

In order for parents or guardians in homeless situations to make informed decisions about selecting the school that is in their child's best interest, they need to have as much practical information as possible. Parents may have less knowledge and information about the implications of the choice they will make for the student than the local homeless education liaison or other school district staff involved in the enrollment process. The local liaison and school or district staff can play an instrumental role in assisting parents with choosing a school that is in the best interest of their children.

The local liaison, teachers, and other school or district staff can:

- \* Reinforce the importance of school stability and educational continuity for children.
- \* Provide input to the parents on the academic, social, and emotional impact that transferring to a new school may have on their children.
- \* Help the parents find out which programs at the two schools are comparable and appropriate for the child and make arrangements for the parents and child to visit the school considered for a possible transfer.
- \* Provide information on the distance to the schools under consideration, both in terms of miles and travel time.

## Key Questions to Consider When Making a School Selection

1. How permanent does the family's living arrangement appear to be?
2. How deep are the child's ties to his or her current school?
3. How anxious is the child about his or her family's upcoming or recent move?
4. How strong is the child academically?
5. To what extent are the programs and activities at the potential new school comparable to or better than those at the current school?
6. Does one school have programs and activities that address the unique needs or interests of the student that the other school does not have?
7. Would the timing of the school transfer coincide with a logical juncture such as after testing, after an event that is significant to the child, or at the end of the school year?
8. How would the length of the commute to the school of origin impact the child?
9. Are there any safety issues to consider?

Decisions regarding school selection should be made on a case-by-case basis, giving attention to the circumstances of each individual student. The following checklist may help local liaisons guide a discussion on school-selection options available to the student and the advantages and disadvantages of each option. If a district has large numbers of homeless and mobile students, it may be beneficial to train several staff members to assist parents in this decision-making process.

## School Selection: A Checklist for Decision Making

(adapted from the Texas Homeless Education Office)

School of Origin Considerations	Local Attendance Area School Considerations
<input type="checkbox"/> Continuity of instruction <i>Student is best served due to circumstances that look to his or her past.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Continuity of instruction <i>Student is best served due to circumstances that look to his or her future.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Age and grade placement of the student <i>Maintaining friends and contacts with peers is critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation. The student has been in this environment for an extended period of time.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Age and grade placement of the student <i>Maintaining friends and contacts with peers in the school of origin is not particularly critical to the student's meaningful school experience and participation. The student has attended the school of origin for only a brief time.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Academic strength <i>The child's academic performance is weak, and the child would fall further behind if he/she transferred to another school.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Academic strength <i>The child's academic performance is strong and at grade level, and the child would likely recover academically from a school transfer.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Social and emotional state <i>The child is suffering from the effects of mobility, has developed strong ties to the current school, and does not want to leave.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Social and emotional state <i>The child seems to be coping adequately with mobility, does not feel strong ties to the current school, and does not mind transferring.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Distance of the commute and its impact on the student's education and/or special needs <i>The advantages of remaining in the school of origin outweigh any potential disadvantages presented by the length of the commute</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Distance of the commute and its impact on the student's education and/or special needs <i>A shorter commute may help the student's concentration, attitude, or readiness for school. The local attendance area school can meet all of the necessary educational and special needs of the student.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal safety of the student <i>The school of origin has advantages for the safety of the student</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal safety of the student <i>The local attendance area school has advantages for the safety of the student.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Student's need for special instruction <i>The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met better at the school of origin.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Student's need for special instruction <i>The student's need for special instruction, such as Section 504 or special education and related services, can be met better at the local attendance area school</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location <i>The student's current living situation is outside of the school-of-origin attendance zone, but his/her living situation or location continues to be uncertain. The student will benefit from the continuity offered by remaining in the school of origin.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter or other temporary location <i>The student's current living situation appears stable and unlikely to change suddenly; the student will benefit from the developing relationships with peers in school who live in his local community.</i>

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This brief was developed by:

National Center for Homeless Education  
800-308-2145 (toll-free HelpLine)  
<http://www.serve.org/nche>

Fall 2006

*NCHE is supported by the U.S. Department of Education  
Student Achievement and School Accountability Programs.*

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Every state is required to have a coordinator for the education of homeless children and youth, and every school district is required to have a liaison for homeless students. These individuals will assist you with the implementation of the

McKinney-Vento Act. To find out who your state coordinator is, visit the NCHE website at <http://www.serve.org/nche>.



For further information on the McKinney-Vento Act and resources for implementation, call the NCHE HelpLine at 800-308-2145 or e-mail [homeless@serve.org](mailto:homeless@serve.org).



**Local Contact Information:**

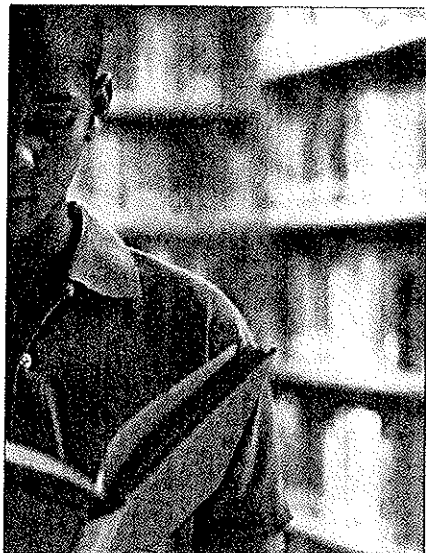
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## BEST PRACTICES IN HOMELESS EDUCATION

### Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services Under the McKinney-Vento Act



The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines “homeless children and youths” as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” However, because the circumstances of homelessness vary with each family’s or unaccompanied youth’s situation, determining the extent to which the family or youth fits the definition must occur on a case-by-case basis. Enrollment staff and/or the local homeless education liaison must gather and analyze information from the family or youth and make an appropriate determination of eligibility. Expedient determination of eligibility and immediate school enrollment are critical to the child’s educational continuity.

This tool is designed to assist school and school district staff in applying the definition to individual children and youth to determine eligibility for rights and services under the McKinney-Vento Act.

#### Step 1: Get the facts. What is the family’s or youth’s situation?

**Who is homeless?**  
**(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 – Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act – Sec 725)**

The term “homeless children and youth”—

- A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence...; and
- B. includes —
  - i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
  - ii. children and youths who 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...
  - iii. children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
  - iv. migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

- Use a standard enrollment form that asks about the family’s or youth’s living situation to gather initial information. (See U. S. Department Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Guidance, Appendix D, “Sample Student Residency Questionnaire” at [http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/guidance\\_jul2004.pdf](http://www.serve.org/nche/downloads/guidance_jul2004.pdf)).
- If the form indicates that the student may be homeless, ask questions to get a better sense of the family’s or youth’s circumstances.
- Avoid using the word “homeless” as the stigma associated with the word may lead parents or youth to insist they are not homeless, even though their living situation would fit the McKinney-Vento definition. Tell them the purpose of the questions is to determine if they are eligible for extra services like transportation, clothing, school supplies, and/or tutoring.
- Do not contact persons or agencies outside the school system to obtain information about the student’s living situation; this would likely violate the family’s or youth’s privacy and dignity as well as the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). For example, do not contact landlords, public housing agencies, or law enforcement to verify living situations. For sample questions to assist with gathering information directly from parents, guardians, or youth regarding their living situation, see page 5.
- Respect the family’s or youth’s privacy by talking to them in a private space where other students and faculty members cannot overhear the conversation.
- Share information on the rights and services available under the McKinney-Vento Act for eligible children and youth, and ask the parent/guardian or youth to provide the information you need to make the determination of eligibility. Understand that families or

(continued on the next page)



youth may be hesitant to answer questions for various reasons that include a desire for privacy, concerns related to domestic violence, or fear of losing their children or housing; however, in most cases you will have enough information to make a determination.

Sample questions at the end of this document will assist you in obtaining information to make a determination of eligibility.

## **Step 2: Analyze the facts. Is the student eligible for McKinney-Vento services?**

To be eligible for services, the student must meet the Act's definition of homeless. The McKinney-Vento Act defines "homeless children and youths" as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." Lacking any one of these three conditions would make a child eligible. In other words, if the residence is not fixed, regular, **and** adequate, it is considered a homeless situation.

The law then lists several situations as specific examples of homelessness. Migrant children who are living in one of the described situations are included as well. The list of examples included in the definition is not exclusive; rather, it is meant to address some of the more common situations of homelessness.

Again, determining whether a particular child or youth fits the definition of homeless is a case-by-case analysis. The easiest way to make a determination of homelessness is to: (A) see if the student's situation fits into one of the specific examples of homelessness listed in the law; and if not, (B) consider if the student is in another situation that would fit the definition of homelessness by not meeting the fixed, regular, and adequate standard.

IF THE RESIDENCE IS NOT FIXED, REGULAR, AND ADEQUATE,  
IT IS CONSIDERED A HOMELESS SITUATION.

### **A. Does the child or youth's living situation fit into one of the specific examples of homelessness listed in the law?**

- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.

*"Sharing the housing of other persons..."* implies that the student is staying in another person's home. Some pertinent questions to help determine if this is the case would include:

- Does the student have any legal right to be in that home?
- Can the student be asked to leave at any time with no legal recourse?
- Is the living situation intended to be temporary or long-term?
- Did the student move into the home as an urgent measure to avoid being on the street or in another precarious situation?

*"...due to loss of housing..."* implies that the student has no personal housing available. Did the student or family lose their previous housing due to:

- An eviction or an inability to pay the rent or other bills?
- Destruction of or damage to the previous home?
- Abuse or neglect (such as in the case of a youth who leaves or is asked to leave the home)?
- Unhealthy conditions such as an inadequate physical environment, infestations, drug or alcohol abuse in the home, or domestic violence?
- The absence of a parent or guardian due to abandonment, the parent's or guardian's incarceration, or another reason?



“...*economic hardship* ...” includes cases where limited financial resources have forced families or youth to leave personal residences and share housing due to an inability to pay rent and other bills. The way that the shared housing came about and the intention of the residents are significant. For example:

- If economic hardship such as an accident or illness, loss of employment, loss of public benefits, or condition of poverty forces families to share housing temporarily, the children and youth are eligible for McKinney-Vento services.
- A long-term, cooperative living arrangement among families or friends that is fixed, regular, and adequate should not be considered a homeless situation, even if the parties are living together to save money.
- Living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or camping ground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.

The phrase “...*due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations*” can help determine whether these living situations should be considered homeless situations.

- Motels, hotels, and camping grounds will almost always be homeless situations, as they are rarely fixed, regular, and adequate; however, considering whether alternative adequate accommodations are available can help identify possible exceptions, such as a wealthy family living in a luxury hotel on a long-term basis when adequate alternatives are available to the family.
- In contrast, trailer parks often are fixed, regular, and adequate residences. Asking questions about the condition and size of the trailer, the number of people living there, the intended length of stay, and whether the family or youth has an adequate alternative will help determine if the student is eligible for McKinney-Vento services. (See the discussion of substandard housing below for more information.)
- Living in an emergency or transitional shelter.

Emergency or transitional shelters of all kinds, including youth shelters, domestic violence shelters, family shelters, transitional living programs, and supportive housing programs are homeless situations.

- Abandoned in a hospital.

A child or youth abandoned in the hospital is eligible for McKinney-Vento services.

- Awaiting foster care placement.

It is essential that state and local educational agencies collaborate with child welfare agencies, child welfare attorneys, and other community members to establish guidelines for determining if a student in the custody of child welfare is eligible for McKinney-Vento services. Such guidelines should consider the extent to which the student lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (see Step 2B below). For example, foster homes, shelters, evaluation centers, and group homes that are intended to be emergency, interim, or short-term are unlikely to be fixed, regular, and adequate.

Several states have refined the definition of “awaiting foster care placement” on a state level. For example, the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services, in consultation with the Tennessee Department of Education, has released a policy defining those students in state custody who are eligible for McKinney-Vento services to include students who are placed in emergency foster homes, emergency shelters, primary treatment centers, or other temporary, emergency placements. The policy is available at <http://www.serve.org/nche/forum/foster.php>.

Local liaisons should check with their State Education Agency to see if policies exist that clarify which stages of their state’s child welfare process are included in the McKinney-Vento definition of “homeless”.



- Living in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Examples of some places that meet these criteria include a health clinic, an office, a public restroom, or an unfinished basement or attic.

- Living in a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting.

These specific examples are largely self-explanatory. In evaluating whether housing is “substandard,” consider that substandard means “deviating from or falling short of a standard or norm” or “of a quality lower than that prescribed by law.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, determining if housing is substandard requires comparing the housing with community norms and the law, including a consideration of such factors as:

- Health and safety concerns
- Number of occupants per square foot
- Age of occupants
- State and local building codes



Local educational agencies may wish to collaborate with attorneys and other community members to establish guidelines incorporating state and local legal requirements and community standards.

**B. If the child’s, family’s, or youth’s situation does not fit the examples provided in the definition, is the child or youth living in another type of situation that is not fixed, regular, and adequate?**

If the student does not fit any of the specific situations in Step 2A, he or she may still be eligible for McKinney-Vento services if the living situation is not fixed, regular, and adequate. Consider and apply the following definitions to the information gathered from the family or youth.

- Fixed
  - “Securely placed or fastened.” “Not subject to change or fluctuation.”<sup>2</sup>
  - “A fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.”<sup>3</sup>
  - “Inhabitant: One who, although he may not be a citizen, dwells or resides in a place permanently or has a fixed residence therein, as distinguished from an occasional lodger or visitor.”<sup>4</sup>
  - “Domicile: The place where a person has his true fixed permanent home and principal establishment, and to which place he has, whenever he is absent, the intention of returning, and from which he has no present intention of moving.”<sup>5</sup>
- Regular
  - “Normal, standard.” “Constituted, conducted, or done in conformity with established or prescribed usages, rules, or discipline.” “Recurring, attending, or functioning at fixed or uniform intervals.”<sup>6</sup>
  - “Consistent.”<sup>7</sup>

*(continued on the next page)*

<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Arizona, Massachusetts, and Michigan McKinney-Vento State Plans, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Ballentine’s Law Dictionary, 3rd Edition.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition.

<sup>7</sup> Ballentine’s Law Dictionary, 3rd Edition.



- “A regular residence is one which is used on a regular (i.e., nightly) basis.”<sup>8</sup>.
- “Habitual: By habit; constant; customary, accustomed, usual; common; ordinary; regular; familiar.”<sup>9</sup>.
- Adequate
  - “Sufficient for a specific requirement.” “Lawfully and reasonably sufficient.”<sup>10</sup>.
  - “Fully sufficient; equal to what is required; lawfully and reasonably sufficient.”<sup>11</sup>.
  - “An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.”<sup>12</sup>.

(Adapted from “Determining Homelessness by the Definition,” National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, <http://www.nlchp.org>.)

### Step 3: Get additional input.

If you are still not sure if a student is eligible for McKinney-Vento services, consider the following resources:

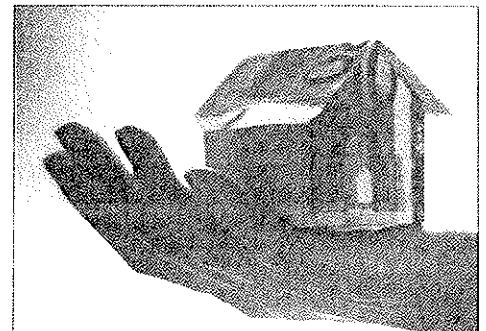
- Contact your local homeless education liaison (if you are a school staff person).
- Contact your State Coordinator for Homeless Education.
- Post a question to the NCHE Homeless Education Listserv to solicit input from other homeless education practitioners. (Contact Beth Hartness at [bhartnes@serve.org](mailto:bhartnes@serve.org) to learn how to join the listserv.)
- Call the NCHE Helpline at 800-308-2145.
- Contact other national homeless education partners (see below for contact information).

### Sample Questions to Ask the Students or Parents for Information Gathering

The following questions are designed to elicit information that is relevant for the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless; that is, to determine the extent to which the children and their families or the youth are living in a fixed, regular, and adequate living situation.

Fixed (“A fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.”<sup>13</sup>)

- Is this a permanent arrangement or just temporary?
- Are you looking for another place to live?
- Do you plan to move out soon?
- Why are you staying in your current place?
- Where were you living right before this place? Why did you leave?
- Where would you go if you couldn’t stay where you are?
- Are you staying with friends/relatives just for a little while?
- Did you and your friends/relatives decide to move in together and share a home and expenses for the long term? Or is this a temporary situation for you?
- Could your friends/relatives ask you to leave if they wanted to?
- Are you all sharing the home equally, or are you more like guests in the home?



<sup>8</sup> Arizona, Massachusetts, and Michigan McKinney-Vento State Plans, 2002.

<sup>9</sup> *Ballentine's Law Dictionary*, 3rd Edition.

<sup>10</sup> *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Tenth Edition.

<sup>11</sup> *Ballentine's Law Dictionary*, 3rd Edition.

<sup>12</sup> Arizona, Massachusetts, and Michigan McKinney-Vento State Plans, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*.



Regular ("A regular residence is one that is used on a regular [i.e., nightly] basis."<sup>14</sup>)

- Do you stay in the same place every night?
- Do you have a key to the place where you are living?
- Do you move around a lot?
- How long have you been at that place? How long do you plan to stay?
- How long did you live in your last place?

Adequate ("An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments."<sup>15</sup>)

- How many people are living in the home? How many bedrooms/bathrooms does it have?
- Are you and your children sharing a room? How many people are staying in one room?
- Are you and your children sleeping in a bedroom, or a public area, like a dining room?
- Does the home have heat/electricity/running water?
- What condition is the home in? Does it keep out rain and wind? Is it safe? Is it warm and dry? Do the windows have glass panes?
- Can you come and go as you please?

**If the child or youth is eligible, provide appropriate services.**

Determining eligibility is only the first step. Children and youth who are eligible for services may have different needs. They may have physical needs for clothing, uniforms, school supplies, free meals, and health care. They may have mental health needs. They may have academic needs. They may need transportation. Or they may need nothing more than the ability to enroll in school immediately without documents.

In determining the appropriate services for a particular child, youth, or family, consider what barriers to education can be removed by applying the McKinney-Vento Act and what is in the best interest of each child or youth. Also consider all the programs in the school district that can support children experiencing homelessness, especially Title I, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Center programs, Even Start, Head Start, special education and related services, Section 504 services, drop-out prevention programs, and Safe Schools/Healthy Schools grants.



### **National Partners in Homeless Education**

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY)  
<http://www.naehcy.org>

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)  
<http://www.serve.org/nche>

National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (NLCHP)  
<http://www.nlchp.org>

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*



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This brief was developed by:  
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