

The definition of homelessness

The McKinney-Vento law says that homelessness includes individuals who do not have a fixed, regular and adequate home because they have lost their own home. This means:

- Individuals who have lost their own home, suffering a financial hardship or similar reason;
- Individuals who are sharing the housing of others;
- Individuals who are living in hotels or motels or in campgrounds or trailer parks that are not viewed as year-round homes because they do not have accommodations, such as heat or running water;
- Individuals who are living in emergency shelters or who have been abandoned in hospitals;
- Individuals who are living in cars, parks or public spaces.

The rights of homeless parents and their homeless students

- Your child may stay in the school he or she was in before becoming homeless or enroll in a school where the child is living for the time being;
- You may make this choice of schools with the best interests of your child in mind;
- Your child must receive the transportation he or she needs;
- You can expect to enroll your child in school without delay, even if you do not

have paperwork, such as your child's birth certificate or medical records;

- Your child has the right to receive free meals;
- Your child must receive the same special programs and services that other children receive, including special education, migrant education and vocational education;
- Your child must receive the same public education other children receive, including preschool.
- Your child cannot be separated from other students in a different school or different program because he or she is homeless;
- Your child may attend the school you choose, even if there is a dispute while the dispute is in the appeal process;
- After being placed in permanent housing, your child may stay in his or her original school for the rest of the school year and receive transportation to that school. This will provide stability for your child.

To help your student have stability, you can:

- Keep in touch with the school district's local contact person to update this person on changes that may occur with the child;
- Inform district contacts when you foresee a change in student's transportation needs;
- Make sure your student is going to school regularly;
- Ask the district contact person about help available in the community;

- Ask for more support for your child's education, if needed. This includes school supplies and support in learning, such as tutoring.

Your district contact person can help you:

- Understand your rights;
- Make a choice between schools;
- Get school records sent to another school;
- Get birth certificates and vaccination records
- Get information about help in the community, such as health, dental and mental health care and other services;
- Make sure your student has the needed academic support;
- Refer your student for early education services, including Head Start and intervention services;
- Connect your student with after-school programs and activities;
- Represent your needs as an unaccompanied youth; and
- Manage disputes about whether you or your child qualify for these services.

