

What is McKinney-Vento?

The McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act is a federal law that ensures immediate enrollment and educational stability for children and youth who are experiencing homelessness. McKinney-Vento provides federal funding to states for the purpose of supporting district programs that serve students who are homeless. It allows children and youth experiencing homelessness to immediately enroll in school, to stay in school by providing them with transportation to and from school, and to succeed in school by making sure they have other appropriate services.

This law is important because it recognizes that not having a stable place to sleep at night, lacking a place to do homework, or moving frequently in search of housing has a profound impact on a child's ability to learn and to succeed in school. For this reason, McKinney-Vento defines and recognizes as homeless a broad range of unstable or transitional living situations that may affect a child's ability to focus on school.

What does it mean to be homeless under McKinney-Vento?

The McKinney-Vento Act defines children who are homeless as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence." This generally means that a child or youth who does not have a stable place to sleep at night may be considered homeless. McKinney-Vento eligibility is decided on a case-by-case basis, because everyone's circumstances are different.

The following are situations that would qualify you for McKinney Vento services:

- Children and youth sharing housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason
- Children and youth living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations
- Children and youth living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Children and youth abandoned in hospitals
- Children and youth whose primary nighttime residence is not ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation (e.g. park benches, etc.)
- Children and youth living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations
- Migratory children and youth living in any of the above situations

McKinney-Vento requires that schools reduce any challenges in their practices or policies that may keep students without a stable place to stay from attending school and participating in school activities. Homeless liaisons know that it is difficult to talk about homelessness and are aware of how important it is to keep you and your family's information confidential. However, in order to assist you in finding services and resources, they may need to share information with school personnel and other service providers; rest assured that they would be extremely careful to protect your identity. If you have any concerns or questions about what and how information will be shared let your liaison know. Your child's friends at school will not be informed that he or she is homeless.

Do I have legal rights under McKinney-Vento?

Yes, under McKinney-Vento, youth and children experiencing homelessness have the following rights:

- A right to immediate enrollment;
- The right to attend the school attended when the student/family were permanently housed ("school of origin") or the school where student was last enrolled;

- The right to transportation to and from school of origin;
- The right to a free lunch at school;
- The right to participate in the same activities as other students;
- The right to participate in the same programs and other services provided to other students.

What schools can my child attend?

McKinney-Vento allows students experiencing homelessness the option of enrolling in the school of origin or the local attendance area school where the student resides.

- The school of origin – is the school the student attended when they were last permanently housed or the school where the student was last enrolled.
- The local attendance area school – Your student has the right to attend the local school where you are now residing due to becoming homeless. You may enroll your student immediately, without the usual documentation required for enrollment.

School selection is determined on what is in the best interest of the student. McKinney-Vento recognizes that it is in the best interest of a student experiencing homelessness to attend their school of origin to the extent it is feasible, unless it is against a parent/guardian’s wishes. Factors that schools may consider in determining feasibility include age, commute distance, personal safety issues, the student’s need for special instruction, the length of anticipated stay in a temporary shelter, and the time remaining in the school year.

What if I disagree about the school selected for my child to attend?

A school district must provide a parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written statement of the school placement decision and information regarding the right to appeal. The school district will refer the dispute to the liaison who is required to carry out the dispute resolution process as quickly as possible. While the appeal process is pending, students must be immediately enrolled in the school they have requested to attend and continue to receive services for which they are eligible until the dispute is resolved.

Issaquah School District Building McKinney-Vento Liaisons: School Counselor

Issaquah School District Liaison: Stacey Zachau at (425) 837-7158 zachaus@issaquah.wednet.edu
 State Homeless Education Program Supervisor: Melinda Dyer at (360) 725-6505 or melinda.dyer@k12.wa.us

Each school district has a district McKinney-Vento Liaison-

Homeless Education Liaison Contact List on OSPI site- <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/equity-education/homeless-education/homeless-education-liaison-contact-list>

What are some possible community resources to contact?

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| • Crisis Connections | https://www.crisisconnections.org/ | 866-427-4747 |
| • 211 | www.211.org | 211 |
| • Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank | https://issaquahfoodbank.org/ | 425-392-4123 |
| • Homeless Housing Program | https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/housing/services/homeless-housing.aspx | 206-263-8965 |
| • Friends of Youth Homeless Youth Services | http://www.friendsofyouth.org/homelessServices.aspx | |
| • HealthPoint (health care resource) | http://www.healthpointchc.org/ | 425-277-1311 |
| • Hopelink | https://www.hopelink.org/ | 425-869-6000 |

