

Homelessness

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

In 1987, Congress passed the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Title VII-B of this Act entitled “Education for Homeless Children and Youth” was amended in December of 2015 with the enactment of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The McKinney-Vento Act is designed to eliminate the challenges that homeless children and youths have faced not only in enrolling in school, but also in attending and being successful in school. This Act defines “homeless children and youths” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Who Is Homeless or Displaced?

The Basic Education Circular entitled “Education for Homeless Youth” was issued on February 3, 2010 and explains the categories of children and youths who are “homeless” and entitled to protections under the federal law. These categories include children and youths 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;
- 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;
- are “migratory children” and qualify as homeless due to any of the above reasons; and
- are “unaccompanied homeless youth” including any child who is “not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.” This includes youth who have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, been abandoned by parents or guardians, or been separated from their parents for any other reason.

Transportation

The School District of the City of York will ensure transportation is provided according to state guidelines, at the request of the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth, to and from the school of origin for a child or youth in transition. Transportation will be provided for the entire time the child or youth has a right to attend that school including during pending disputes. Requests will be processed and transportation arranged without delay. If the student in transition is living and attending school in this district and requires transportation, the School District of the City of York will arrange transportation services comparable to those offered to non-homeless students. If the student in transition is living in this district but attending school in another, or attending school in this district but living in another, The School District of the City of York will coordinate with the neighboring district to arrange transportation.

Identification

In collaboration with school personnel and community organizations, the School District of the City of York Liaison will identify children and youth in transition in the district, both in and out of school. The Liaison or designee will train school personnel on possible indicators of homelessness, sensitivity in identifying families and youth in transition, and procedures for forwarding information indicating homelessness to the Liaison's office, Transportation, Special Education or other personnel as deemed appropriate. Instruction will be provided to the District's registration personnel and school personnel to inquire about possible homelessness upon the enrollment and withdrawal of every student and to forward information indicating homelessness to the appropriate District personnel. Community partners in identification may include the following: family and youth shelters, motels, campgrounds, drop-in centers, welfare departments and other social service agencies, faith-based organizations, truancy and attendance officers, local homeless coalitions, and legal services.

Enrollment

Consistent, uninterrupted education is vital for academic achievement. Due to the realities of homelessness and mobility, students in transition may not have school enrollment documents readily available. Enrollment must be immediate.

Enrollment may not be denied or delayed due to the lack of any document normally required for enrollment, including:

- Proof of residency
- Transcripts/school records
- Immunizations or immunization/health/medical/physical records
- Proof of guardianship
- Birth certificate
- Any other document requirements
- Unpaid school fees
- Lack of uniforms or clothing that conforms to dress codes
- Any factor related to the student's living situation

Retention

School personnel will work with parents and families to prevent barriers to a student's retention and academic success in school. School personnel will work with parents and families to ensure homeless students are attending classes and participating in school activities. School personnel will work with parents and families to identify learning difficulties or other concerns as soon as possible. After identification, school personnel will work with parents and families to develop a plan for the implementation of appropriate interventions to address any concerns.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth (UHY)

Unaccompanied homeless youth (0- 21 years of age) not living with parent(s) or legal guardian(s), have all of the same rights under the McKinney-Vento Assistance Act. Unaccompanied youth must also be enrolled immediately in school. They may either enroll themselves or be enrolled by a parent, non-parent caretaker, older sibling, or the liaison. Once the student has been enrolled, a request for records is to be submitted immediately to their prior district.

Parent and Family Engagement

All homeless students and families will be afforded the opportunity to participate in a variety of family engagement activities offered throughout the school year at both the building and district level. The district's parent and family engagement policy can be accessed at <http://go.boarddocs.com/pa/york/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=B88PQK6C796F>.

Community Partnerships

The School District of the City of York encourages community partnerships. Community partnerships allow the District to extend students' opportunities for learning far beyond the school walls and the limits of the school day. We work with our community partners to create strong connections between the school, students and the local community. The SDCY creates these community partnerships by building relationships with our partners, connecting students with real world experiences, aligning community interests with our learning goals, and connecting projects to student interests and passions.

Health Referrals

School personnel will work with parents, guardians, and UHY to make referrals to appropriate health care services, including dental and mental health services.

District Contacts:

If you have specific questions about the McKinney-Vento Act or your rights under this Act, please contact your building administrator. You can also contact the district homeless liaison, Dr. Lori Bowman, at 717-849-1231 or bowmalor@ycs.k12.pa.us.

Resources:

The following sites provide additional information regarding assistance for homelessness.

www.facebook.com/ECYEHPA

www.iu12.org