

Oregon McKinney-Vento Process for Vernonia School District

Purpose: We ensure the identification, enrollment, and support of homeless children and youth in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and Oregon Department of Education (ODE) guidelines, ensuring equitable access to education and related services.

Identification of Homeless Students

Definition: Homeless children and youth include individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, such as:

- Sharing housing due to economic hardship (doubling up).
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to lack of alternative accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- Abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement.
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or similar settings.

We may be able to help you:

- Enroll in school.
- Remain in your school if you move to another area.
- With transportation to and from school.
- Receive free or reduced-cost school meals.
- Social referrals.
- Other services.

Actions:

1. **Training and Awareness:**
 - All staff (teachers, counselors, bus drivers, secretaries, etc.) are trained annually to recognize signs of homelessness and the rights of McKinney-Vento students.
 - We provide specific guidance for staff on sensitive communication.
2. **Outreach and Identification:**
 - Posters, brochures, and flyers are distributed to community agencies, shelters, and within the district's schools.
 - McKinney-Vento information is included in district electronic and paper-based enrollment forms.
 - A staff member is assigned to follow up on absences or irregular attendance patterns to identify potential cases.
3. **Liaison Responsibility:**

- The McKinney-Vento Liaison (appointed by the Superintendent) oversees the identification process and ensures proper documentation.

Enrollment of Homeless Students

Actions:

1. Immediate Enrollment:

- We enroll homeless students immediately, even if they lack typical enrollment documentation (e.g., proof of residency, birth certificate, immunization records).
- We contact the previous school for records while allowing the student to attend.

2. Transportation:

- We provide transportation to the school of origin if it is in the student's best interest.
- We ensure coordination between the liaison, transportation department, and neighboring districts when necessary.

3. Removal of Barriers:

- We waive school fees and provide free school meals.
- We provide school supplies, uniforms, or other necessary materials.
- We offer referrals to medical, dental, and mental health services.

Academic and Social Support

Actions:

1. Individualized Support Plans:

- We develop a plan for academic success, including tutoring, counseling, or after-school programs.
- We address social-emotional needs using SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) resources.

2. Access to Programs:

- We ensure students can participate in extracurricular activities and programs.
- We provide equal access to Advanced Placement (AP), Career and Technical Education (CTE), and other academic options.

3. Communication with Families:

- We engage families in planning and problem-solving meetings.
- We provide information about rights and resources in a language they understand.

Dispute Resolution Process

Actions:

1. **Parent/Guardian Notification:**
 - We inform parents/guardians of the right to appeal any enrollment or placement decision.
2. **Resolution Steps:**
 - We allow the student to remain enrolled and transported while the dispute is resolved.
 - We follow the district's dispute resolution policy, in line with ODE guidelines.
 - We provide written explanations of decisions and next steps during the process.
3. **Liaison Role:**
 - The liaison acts as the advocate and facilitator for the family and student during disputes.

Monitoring and Reporting

Actions:

1. **Data Collection:**
 - We record and monitor the academic performance, attendance, and participation of McKinney-Vento students.
2. **Reporting:**
 - We submit annual reports to the Oregon Department of Education, ensuring compliance with state and federal requirements.
3. **Program Evaluation:**
 - We conduct an annual review of the district's McKinney-Vento process to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Applicable Laws for Oregon School Districts

- **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act:** Federal law ensuring the educational rights and protections of homeless students.
- **ORS 339.115 (Admission of Students):** Requires school districts to admit all students, including those experiencing homelessness, without regard to residency requirements.
- **ORS 339.133 (Residency of Students for School Purposes):** Specifies that students experiencing homelessness are considered residents of the district where they are currently living.
- **ODE Guidelines for Transportation of Homeless Students:** Mandates the provision of transportation to the school of origin or the school serving the area where the student is temporarily residing.
- **ORS 343.151 (Special Education for Homeless Students):** Ensures that students with disabilities who are homeless have access to appropriate special education services.

Key Contacts:

- **McKinney-Vento Liaison:** Jim Helmen– jhelmen@vernoniak12.org
- **Vernonia School District Superintendent:** Jim Helmen – jhelmen@vernoniak12.org
- **ODE McKinney-Vento Resources:** We will place the VSD Website URL

Resources:

- Oregon Department of Education McKinney-Vento Toolkit
- National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) Guidelines

Services or families dealing with Homelessness

- For immediate assistance or to find services near you, you can also contact 211info by dialing 211 or visiting their website at <https://www.211info.org/>.
- [Community Action Team \(CAT\)](#), St. Helens, OR, Provides housing assistance, including support for homeless individuals and families, across Columbia, Tillamook, and Clatsop Counties.
- [Columbia County Resource Guide](#), Columbia County, OR., Offers information on various assistance programs, including the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) for energy expenses.
- [Columbia County Housing Assistance](#), St. Helens, OR., Provides self-help housing programs to assist families in preserving housing.
- [Oregon Department of Human Services \(ODHS\)](#), Statewide, OR., Offers resources and support for youth experiencing homelessness, including connections to shelters and services.
- [Oregon.gov- Resources for Youth Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [National Runaway Safeline](#), Nationwide, Provides confidential support and resources for runaway and homeless youth. Call 800-RUNAWAY (800-786-2929).
- [Youth Hot Line-](#) Teens are available to help daily from 4-10 pm PST (adults are available by phone at all other times. YouthLine is a free teen-to-teen crisis support and helpline. YouthLine is confidential to a point- while we will never share conversations had on the lines, we are mandatory reporters.

[Columbia County Department of Human Services \(DHS\)](#) offers several programs to support homeless youth and families in Vernonia and the surrounding areas. Key services include:

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):** Provides cash assistance to very low-income families with children, helping them work towards self-sufficiency.

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** Offers food benefits to eligible, low-income individuals and families to help them purchase nutritious food.
- **Employment-related daycare (ERDC):** Assists low-income families with the cost of childcare while they are working.
- **Oregon Health Plan (OHP):** Provides health coverage for low-income Oregonians, including medical, dental, and mental health services.
- **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program:** Offers supplemental food and nutrition education for low-income pregnant or breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age five.