

## WHO IS HOMELESS?



Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act section 725(2) (McKinney-Vento Act) defines the term “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including:

- i. 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; or are abandoned in hospitals;
- ii. children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designated 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).

## EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS



Under the McKinney-Vento Act, homeless children and youth have the right to:

- receive a free, appropriate public education.
- enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documentation.
- enroll in the local school; or continue attending the school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or in which they were last enrolled), according to each student’s best interest.
  - If the school district believes that the school selected is not in the student’s best interest, the district must provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its position and inform the parent, guardian, or youth of the right to appeal its decision.
- receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested.
- receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to each student’s needs.

For more information, download NCHE’s briefs on [Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services and Children, and Youth Experiencing Homelessness: An Introduction to the Issues](#) at <https://nche.ed.gov>.



## Supporting the Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

<https://nche.ed.gov>



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**Common living situations that meet this definition** include staying with friends or family due to loss of housing, living in motels or shelters, and staying in cars or public places.

## ABOUT NCHE



The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) operates the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program. NCHE is managed by Safal Partners in collaboration with ICF and Pearl Strategies.

NCHE works with schools, service providers, parents, and other interested stakeholders to ensure that children and youth experiencing homelessness can enroll and succeed in school.

## NCHE RESOURCES



NCHE provides a variety of homeless education resources, including:

- educational rights posters
- federal homeless education data reports
- homeless liaison toolkits
- issue briefs

Visit <https://nche.ed.gov/resources> to download NCHE resources.

## NCHE LISTSERV



Through its listserv, NCHE keeps the homeless education field informed of new resources and happenings, including federal policy and practice updates, new NCHE products, NCHE webinar registration availability, and more.

Visit the [NCHE Listserv Sign-Up](#) page to join.

## NCHE HELPLINE



NCHE operates a toll-free helpline to assist educators, service providers, parents, community members, and others interested in the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness. Contact the NCHE helpline for assistance with:

- understanding the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness,
- determining how the McKinney-Vento Act may apply to a particular situation, and
- locating contact information for State Coordinators for Homeless Education and local homeless education liaisons.

Contact the NCHE helpline  
Monday-Friday  
9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET.  
Phone: +1 305-306-8495  
Email: [NCHE.helpline@safalpartners.com](mailto:NCHE.helpline@safalpartners.com)



*"Through it all, school is probably the only thing that has kept me going, I know that every day that I walk in those doors, I can stop thinking about my problems for the next six hours and concentrate on what is most important to me"*

*Formerly Homeless Student*

## NCHE WEBSITE



The NCHE website serves as a comprehensive source of homeless education information. Visit the NCHE website at <https://nche.ed.gov> to:

- learn more about the McKinney-Vento Act and other laws pertaining to the education of students experiencing homelessness;
- search for information on topics such as McKinney-Vento eligibility, enrollment, transportation, preschool, higher education, and more; and
- learn more about homeless education in your state.

## WHAT TO DO

If you believe your housing situation may qualify you for support under the McKinney-Vento Act:

- Call or visit your student's current school or the school where you want to enroll your student. Ask to speak to the McKinney-Vento local liaison.
- If you're unsure which school to call, contact your district's main office and ask for the McKinney-Vento local liaison or homeless education coordinator.
- Don't wait for paperwork. If eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act, your student can enroll and start attending school right away, even without immediately having documents typically required for enrollment, such as transcripts, immunization records, or proof of address.