SchoolHouse Connection

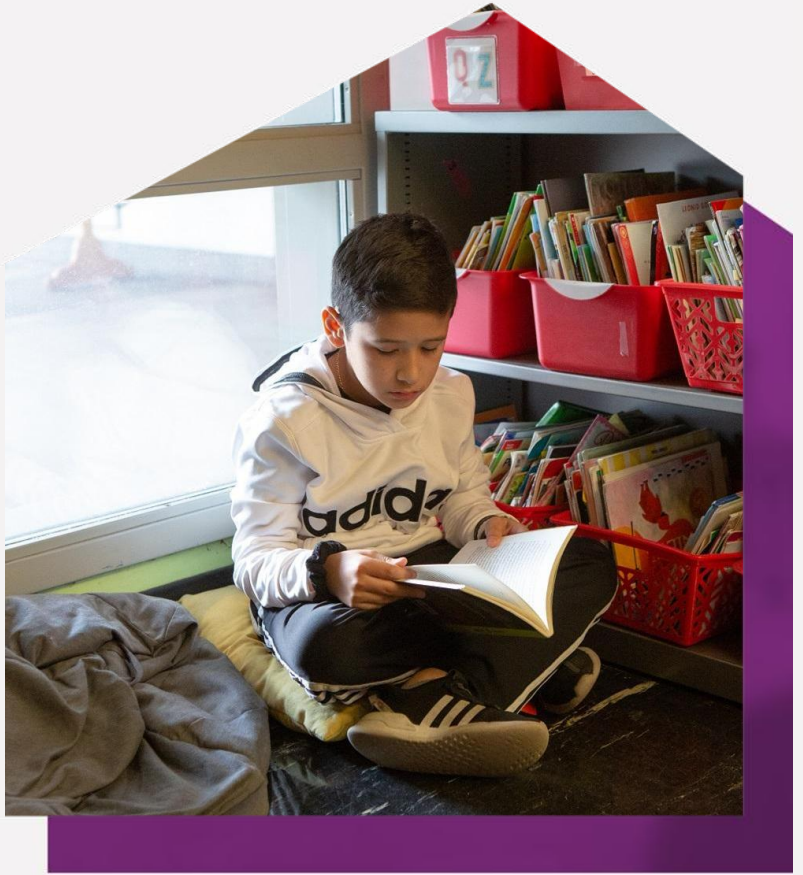
McKinney-Vento 101 Training
Education Basics

Seattle/King County
Coalition on Homelessness
August 19, 2026

SchoolHouse Connection

Today's Agenda

- ✓ MKV 101 Law
  - ✓ History, Purpose, Eligibility
  - ✓ Barriers, Rights, Advocating
  - ✓ Resolving Disputes & Hypotheticals
- ✓ Q&A
- ✓ Advocacy & Collective Power
- ✓ Resource Share



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Office of Homeless Youth (OHY)

The Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs (OHY) leads statewide efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness for unaccompanied youth and young adults, ages 12-24. OHY centers youth in funding, practice, and policy—especially youth of color, LGBTQ2+ youth, and youth with disabilities who face higher rates of homelessness.

OHY's guiding vision is:

- All Washington communities have services that are equitable, accessible, and effective.
- Every youth and family in Washington has the support they need—no young person should spend a single night without a safe, stable home.

Washington State Department of Commerce

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Early care and education can break the cycle of homelessness

School House Connection works to overcome homelessness, from prenatal to postsecondary, through strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with youth, families, schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, and service providers.

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Learning to Understand

1. Child and Youth Homelessness USA and WA
2. The relationship between homelessness and education
3. The McKinney-Vento Act
4. Living situations that are covered by the McKinney-Vento Act
5. The role of McKinney-Vento Liaisons
6. Basic McKinney-Vento protections

Child & Youth Homelessness

2022-2023 School Year

In the United States 3% of school-aged children were identified as experiencing homelessness

1.3 Million

In Washington 4% of school-aged children were identified as experiencing homelessness

43,871

During the 2024-2025 school year this number rose to

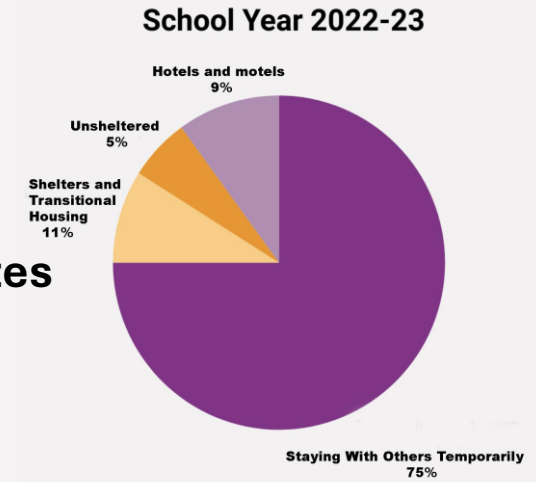
48,252

SHC Data Profile Dashboard

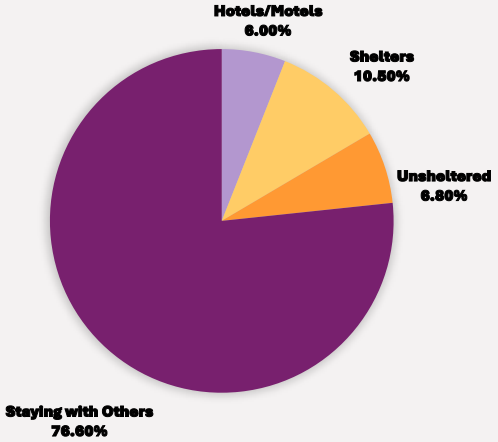
Where Do Students Stay?

- Students move between these situations frequently
- Communities lack adequate resources and shelters and families fear shelter living due to safety concerns and family (including pet) separation
- Many communities lack motels or hotels and CBOs and families do not have financial resources to support this living situation
- Children and youth who are living doubled-up are extremely vulnerable to exploitation and harm and often go unidentified

United States



Washington

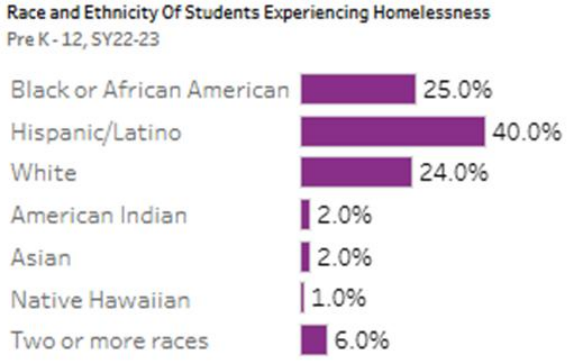


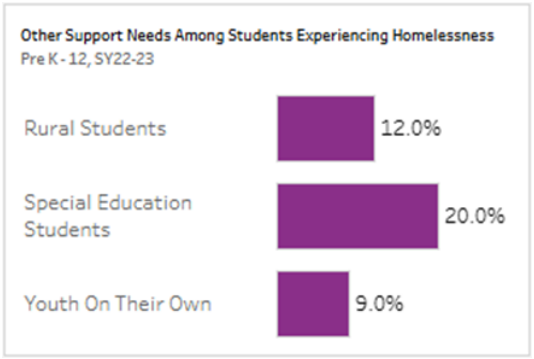
Source: National Center for Homeless Education
SHC Data Profile Dashboard

Child & Youth Homelessness

2022-2023 School Year

- United States





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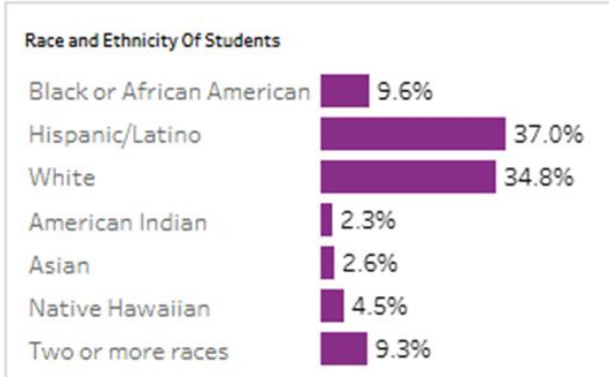
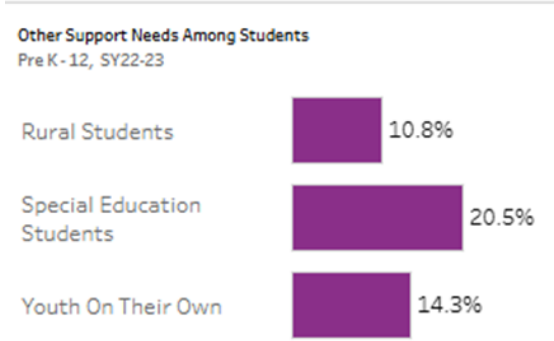




SHC Data Profile Dashboard

Homelessness & Education

Barriers:

- High mobility
- Trauma/Fear
- Invisibility
- Enrollment requirements
- Poor health/hunger/sleep
- Caring for siblings and parents

Leading to:

- Declining enrollment
- Higher rates of chronic absenteeism
- Mental health challenges
- Lower high school graduation rates
- Lower postsecondary enrollment

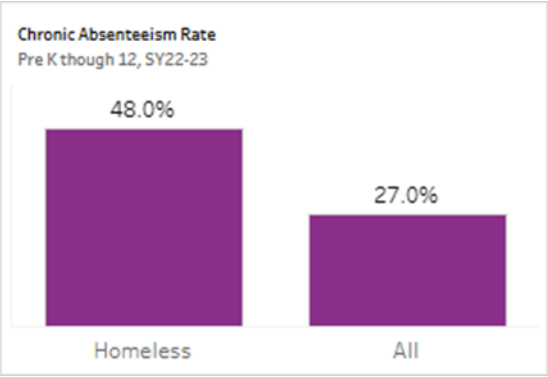
And the **lack of a high school degree or GED** is the single greatest risk factor for young adult homelessness.

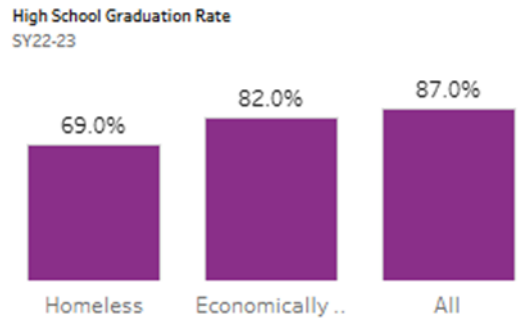
Source: Chapin Hall ChapinHall_VoYC_Education-Brief.pdf

Child & Youth Homelessness

2022-2023 School Year

- United States





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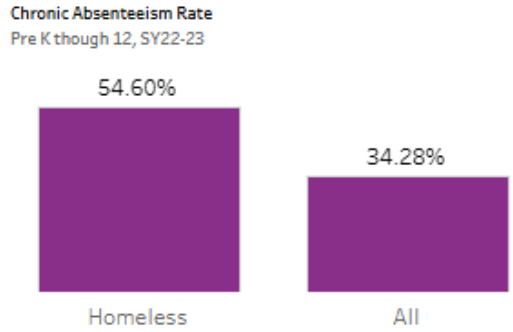

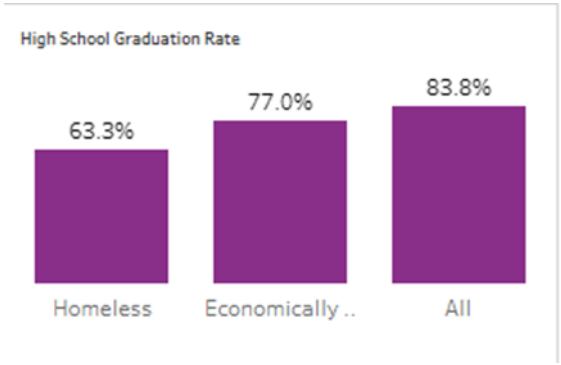

SHC Data Profile Dashboard

The McKinney-Vento Act: A Blueprint for Educational Access and Success

- Federal law originally passed in 1987
- Re-named to honor Representatives Stewart B. McKinney and Bruce F. Vento
- Last updated in 2015 as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act
- Applies to all local educational agencies and public charter schools
- Text of Law: 42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq

Goals: Ensure the identification, enrollment, and success in school, including preschool, for children and youth experiencing homelessness

Note: Congress approved FY2026 funding for early care, education, housing, and homelessness programs on February 3, including continued support for the McKinney-Vento Act's Education of Homeless Children and Youth program.

The McKinney-Vento Act Codified in Washington State Statute SHB 2594 (2026)

SHB 2594 – “AN ACT Relating to ensuring that unhoused children and youths in Washington have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education that is provided to other children and youths; adding a new chapter to Title 28A RCW; and creating a new section.”
Effective 6/11/2026

This bill will result in

- More consistent and uniform implementation of MKV across our state.
- Directs OSPI to share information regarding homeless youth with the Legislature

Who is Eligible? Definition of Homelessness

Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
42 U.S.C. §11434a(2)

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason – “doubled-up”.
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative, adequate accommodations.
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters or abandoned in hospitals
- Living in public or private places not designated or ordinary used as regular sleeping accommodations
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
    - What is substandard? Lack of utilities; infestations; mold; dangers. U.S. Department of Education Guidance, 2018, Question A3
- Migratory children living in the above situations

Definition: Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

"A homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian."
42 USC §11434a(6).

- The term *unaccompanied youth* is defined as a child or youth experiencing homelessness, and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
- The student must be both homeless (experiencing homelessness according to the McKinney-Vento definition) and;
- Unaccompanied (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) to be McKinney-Vento eligible.
- A guardianship or custody issue alone does not qualify a student for McKinney-Vento services.

Reference: 42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)

Note: Homelessness is not a reason to report unaccompanied youth to child protective services.

Interactive Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determination Tool

McKinney-Vento Act:

Student Rights

42 USC §1141 et seq.

- 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 documents
- Continue attending the school of origin, or enroll in the local attendance area school
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin
- Have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to each student's need
- Removal of barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities

McKinney-Vento Liaisons
Roles & Responsibilities

Every local educational agency (LEA) must designate a McKinney-Vento Liaison

42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)

Duties liaisons must be able to carry out according to law:

1. Identification
2. Enrollment
3. Identification of Young Children and Referrals to Early Childhood Programs
4. Community Referrals
5. Full Participation
6. Outreach and Awareness
7. Policies and Dispute Resolution
8. Transportation
9. Professional Development
10. Unaccompanied Youth

The Ten Legal Duties of the Homeless Liaison

Every K-12 Public School in Washington must designate a building point of contact

SSB 5324 (2019)

SSB 5324 established a requirement for each K-12 public school in the state to establish a building point of contact (BPOC). The role of a BPOC is to identify students experiencing homelessness and connect them with resources and services.

Prior to passage of this bill, only middle and high schools that had identified more than ten unaccompanied youth were required to establish building points of contact.

McKinney-Vento Basic Protections

- School stability
- Transportation
- Immediate enrollment
- Removing barriers
- Specific to unaccompanied youth

School Stability for Academic Success

Each LEA shall, according to the child's or youth's best interest:

- Keep the student in the *school of origin for the duration of homelessness, and until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes permanently housed; **or**
- Enroll the student in a local school,
- There is a presumption in favor of the school of origin, as well as parent/unaccompanied youth wishes.

*School of origin "means the school that a child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including a preschool." 42 USC 11432(g)(3)(I)(i).

42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(A)

Transportation

- LEAs must provide students in homeless situations with transportation to the school of origin.
  42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(iii)

- LEAs also must address transportation barriers to attending classes and participating fully in school, including extra-curricular activities.
  42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(4)(A)

The right to enroll in school immediately

- McKinney-Vento students are entitled to
  - Receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE)
  - Immediate *enrollment, even without required documents, such as school records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, guardianship, or other documents. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C)
  - Access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including services through Head Start programs, early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and other preschool programs administered by the local educational agency

*Enrollment means “attending classes and participating fully in school activities.” 42 U.S.C. §11434a(1)

Removing barriers

- SEAs and LEAs must
  - Develop, review, and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, and retention of McKinney-Vento students, including barriers due to outstanding fees, fines, or absences. 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(I)
  - Remove barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities, including magnet school, summer school, career and technical education, advanced placement, online learning, and charter school programs for homeless students who meet relevant eligibility criteria

McKinney-Vento Provisions Specific to Unaccompanied Youth (UY)

- The right to immediate enrollment without proof of guardianship, have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards (including partial credit procedures)
- Assistance from the local homeless education liaison to select a school of attendance, whether the local attendance area school or the school of origin
- Ensure the prompt and fair resolution of any disputes in accordance with the Act (see the Disputes under the McKinney-Vento Act sidebar for more information)
- Be informed of their status as independent students, and can obtain verification for FAFSA purposes

WA State Information and Resources:

Office of Homeless Youth

- Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) – Washington State Department of Commerce
- Youth Education and Employment – Washington State Department of Commerce
- Ed & Employ Webpage Resource List.xlsx | Powered by Box
- K-12 Homeless Education Quick Reference Guide.pdf | Powered by Box
- OHY Provider List- 1.26.xlsx | Powered by Box

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Washington Office of Superintendent of PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

- OSPI Students Experiencing Homelessness
- OSPI Homeless Education Liaison Contact List
- OSPI Dispute Resolution Process
- Guidance for Substandard Housing Determination
- Report to the Legislature Data on Students Experiencing Homelessness 2025
- Washington State McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program School Staff Resource
- OSPI McKinney-Vento Awareness Videos - YouTube

Resources

- Join Our School/Housing Network - Building Changes - The School/Housing Network is a peer-learning group for advocates, McKinney-Vento liaisons and community-based partners from across Washington State
- Resources Archive - Building Changes
- Preventing Homelessness - Building Changes
- Homeless Student Stability Program (HSSP) – Supports school–housing partnerships that help students and their families remain stably housed so children can stay enrolled and succeed in school.
- Washington Youth & Families Fund (WYFF) – A statewide grantmaking initiative that invests in community-led strategies, testing new approaches and scaling proven prevention solutions across Washington.
- Homelessness Prevention & Diversion Fund (HPDF) – A flexible pool of dollars available to local providers that can be used immediately to resolve housing crises—covering costs like deposits, utilities, or transportation.
- Youth Diversion Infrastructure Project (YDIP) – Provides training, coaching, and resources to service providers so that diversion practices are equitable, effective, and rooted in the strengths and choices of young people and families.

BUILDING CHANGES

National Resources

NAEHCY
National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

- National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth
- Confirming Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services

National Center for Homeless Education
NCHE

- National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
- Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services
- School Selection & Best Interest – National Center for Homeless Education

SchoolHouse Connection Website and Resources

Website: www.schoolhouseconnection.org

Resources:

- What is McKinney-Vento?
- What is the McKinney-Vento Act?
- Child and Youth Homelessness in the United States: Data Profiles
- To Those Showing Up: Students Who Experienced Homelessness Share a Message of Gratitude
- Educating Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (Fact Sheet)
- Interactive Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determination Tool

THE TEN LEGAL DUTIES OF THE HOMELESS LIAISON

SchoolHouse Connection

Homeless liaisons are required (42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)) to ensure that:

1. Homeless children and youths are **identified by school personnel** through outreach and coordination activities with other entities and agencies.
2. Homeless children and youths are **enrolled in, and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, schools** of that local educational agency.
3. Homeless families and homeless children and youths have **access to and receive educational services** for which such families, children, and youths are eligible, including services through Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs), early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and other preschool programs administered by the local educational agency.
4. Homeless families and homeless children and youths **receive referrals to health care services**, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.
5. The parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are **informed of the educational and related opportunities available** to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
6. **Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated** in locations frequented by parents or guardians of such children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to the parents and guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths.
7. **Enrollment disputes are mediated** in accordance with this law.
8. The parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied youth, is **fully informed of all transportation services,** including transportation to the school of origin, and is assisted in accessing transportation.
9. School personnel providing services under this law receive **professional development and other support.**
10. **UNACCOMPANIED YOUTHS—**

1) are **immediately enrolled** in school;

2) have **opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards** as the State establishes for other children and youth, including through implementation of partial credit procedures;

3) And are **informed of their status as independent students and are able to obtain assistance** from the local educational agency liaison to receive verification of such status for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

SCHOOLHOUSECONNECTION.ORG

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FEDERAL EDUCATION DEFINITION OF HOMELESSNESS

Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Shelters/Transitional Housing

This includes domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, youth shelters, trailers provided by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), housing paid for by programs such as Rapid Re-Housing, transitional living facilities, etc.

Hotels/Motels

Staying in motels/hotels due to lack of adequate alternatives is included, regardless of who pays for the motel/hotel room.

Staying with others

Staying with others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason is included.

Unsheltered

This includes staying in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.

www.schoolhouseconnection.org

POTENTIAL INDICATORS OF HOMELESSNESS

SchoolHouse Connection

MISSING THE BUS

HUNGER

TARDINESS OR ABSENCES

HYGIENE

LACK OF PARTICIPATION/ SCHOOL SUPPLIES

UNMET MEDICAL OR DENTAL NEEDS

SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES

SLEEPING IN CLASS/ FATIGUE

Scan the code or visit the link to learn more!

bit.ly/3Oub5sB

ENROLLMENT AT MULTIPLE SCHOOLS, LACK OF RECORDS, GAPS IN LEARNING

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

SchoolHouse Connection

Supporting Children and Youth Displaced by Disasters

Has your family experienced a loss of housing due to a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, flood, fire, or other disaster?

Are your children temporarily staying in any of the following situations because of the disaster?

- someone else's house or apartment due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason?
- a hotel or motel?
- a shelter?
- a car, park, campground, abandoned building, or other inadequate space?

If the answers to the questions above are yes, your children have educational rights under federal law (the McKinney-Vento Act):

- The right to stay in the school where the student was previously attending and receive transportation to and from that school.
- the right to immediately enroll in the local attendance area school if the student is unable to continue in their original school.
- Schools have Title I, Part A funds that can provide support with food, clothing, and other basic needs.
- Children and youth can access free school meals without needing to complete income verification documents.

Please reach out to the homeless liaison to see if your child may be eligible.

[INSERT LIAISON NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION]

If you are unable to reach the liaison, please contact your McKinney-Vento Homeless Education State Coordinator: schoolhouseconnection.org/homeless-directory