

Homeless Education Program

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act) is federal legislation that ensures the educational rights and protection of children and youths experiencing homelessness. It requires all local educational agencies (LEAs) to ensure that homeless students have access to the same free, appropriate public education, including public preschools, as provided to other children and youths.

Palmdale School district provides assistance to homeless students and families in compliance with the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act, an integral part of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Program personnel work in collaboration with school personnel and community service agencies in an effort to maximize access to various educational, social and enrichment programs which promote academic success and student achievement.

What does the law say?

- All homeless school-aged children are entitled to the same free and appropriate public education that is provided to non-homeless students.
- Schools are required to remove barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and academic success of homeless students.
- EVERY school district/charter is REQUIRED to designate a homeless liaison to address the educational needs of their homeless students.

As a result, homeless students DO NOT need to provide proof of residency, immunization records or tuberculosis skin-test results, school records, or legal guardianship papers to enroll.

How is homelessness defined?

The McKinney-Vento Act defines a “homeless” student as one who **lacks** a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, which may include:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (“doubling or tripling up”)
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar setting
- Abandoned, runaway or pushed-out youth or migratory children living in any of the above circumstances

What does “fixed”, “regular”, and “adequate” mean?

A fixed residence is one that is stationary, permanent and not subject to change. A regular residence is one that is used on a regular basis (i.e. nightly). An adequate residence is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

How do we identify homeless youth?

- Upon enrollment
- Annual Student Residency Questionnaire Form
- Sudden attendance issues
- Decreasing grades
- Behavior problems
- Multiple school changes

Students that are identified as homeless, may:

- Continue to attend the last school of enrollment, or can attend the school where the family is temporarily residing.
- Receive transportation from your current residence back to your school of origin (if eligible)
- Receive free lunches
- Be eligible for Special Education Services
- Access school based mental health

School Selection: Students have the right to remain in their “school of origin” if it is in their best interest.

- Under the law, a student is eligible to:
 - o Continue at their school of origin (the school attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled) for the duration of homelessness; and now includes any schools the student attended in the previous fifteen months OR
 - o Enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend (school of residence)

Homeless Liaison, can:

- Facilitate school enrollment
- Help you decide which school is best for your child
- Help your child get basic school supplies, supplemental services and free school meals
- Set up transportation to and from the school of origin (if eligible)
- Provide referrals to resources in the community

To Foster Your Child’s Academic Success:

- Ensure your child attends school daily and on time
- Attendance leads to progress
- Meet and talk with teachers regularly to discuss your child’s progress
- Attend school meetings
- Meet with the school support staff to help your child deal with changes and challenges
- Get your child additional help if needed (e.g., tutoring, counseling)

If you are experiencing homelessness at any time during the school year and believe you may be eligible for these services, you may inform any of the following Palmdale School District employees:

Your child’s:

- Principal and/or Assistant Principal

- Secretary
- Health Aide
- Attendance Clerk
- Your child's teacher
- Social Emotional Learning Specialist
- Counselor
- Parent Community Liaison
- Homeless Liaison

For questions, contact:

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