

SEDOL Homeless Liaison

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McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Who is homeless?

The term “homeless children and youth” means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes:

- 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 accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement.
- Children and youths who 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.
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above.

The Laws and Provisions

The (federal) McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, as part of the No Child Left Behind Act, and the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act ensures homeless children have a right to:

- A free, appropriate public education including a priority to preschool programs
- The choice of staying in the school of origin or attending the school nearest their shelter or temporary home
- Immediate enrollment even when required documents such as school records, medical records, proof of residency, or other such documentation cannot be produced at the time of enrollment
- Assistance with transportation if needed.