

Know Your Enrollment Rights

National Center for Youth Law (NCYL)

www.youthlaw.org



Are You and Your Family Experiencing Homelessness or Insecure Housing?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act protects students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Students living in the following situations fall within the law's protections:

- ❖ **Doubling-up:** couch surfing, or sharing a living space with friends, family, or strangers, because of economic hardship, loss of housing, or a similar reason
- ❖ **Hotels or motels** because of a lack of alternative housing
- ❖ **Shelters or transitional housing programs:** including domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters, youth shelters, and other transitional housing
- ❖ **Substandard housing,** including spaces that do not have electricity, heat, or water, are infested with vermin or mold, or presents unreasonable dangers
- ❖ **Unsheltered:** living in cars, buses, parks, public buildings, abandoned buildings, the streets, or similar settings
- ❖ **Any other situation that is not fixed, regular, or adequate**

It **does not matter how long** you are living in any of the above situations.

You are entitled to additional rights, supports, and services.

What Are the Rights of Students Experiencing Homelessness?

- **Remain enrolled** in the school they were attending before losing secure housing for that school year
- **Enroll in a new school** where they are living now if it is in the student's best interest
- **Enroll even if they are missing required documents,** including proof of residency, birth certificates, proof of immunization, or prior school records
- **Enroll without a parent or legal guardian signature** if the student is an **unaccompanied youth**, or living without parents or a guardian
- **Enroll after the deadline**
- **Be provided a written explanation** if the school denies enrollment.
- **Challenge school decisions** about enrollment and **remain enrolled** until a final decision is made
- **Privacy** of the information about the student's living situation to others unless they give permission to disclose
- **Free transportation** to attend school and any school-related activities if needed when classes are in-person
- **Assistance with school supplies** including school uniforms, books, and devices

When students are living in the above situations, they are entitled to special rights, protections, and supports to ensure that they have the opportunity to succeed in school. Students have these rights during the entire time they are experiencing homelessness. These rights apply to all homeless students, including those who are not U.S. citizens.

Where Can I Get Help?

To ensure that your student is receiving all of the benefits and services of the McKinney-Vento Act, you should **let your school know of your living situation as soon as possible**. Call your school and ask to speak with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison. They are able to help with enrollment and other services.

If you are having trouble with a D.C. school including identifying the local homeless liaison, getting your student enrolled, or getting your student needed supports, you may contact Taylor Jones for any assistance.

Taylor Jones

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