

## McKinney-Vento for Parents and Youth

As parents raising children while trying to manage the difficulties of homelessness, the last thing you want to worry about is your children's education. The McKinney-Vento Act was created to give your children some rights as you navigate your way to a permanent housing situation. Your children's rights include:

- **The right to enroll immediately, even if you don't have all the required paperwork.** Schools normally require parents to have birth certificates, proof of residency, school records, and medical records with them when they enroll their children. If you are experiencing one of the housing situations covered by the McKinney-Vento Act, then you can enroll your children without these documents, although you may need to get some of them later.
- **The right to school placement at the school in their best interest.** Your children may go to the school they attended when they were permanently housed, also called their school of origin, even if you are not staying in that district. Alternatively, your children may attend the school where you are temporarily staying. This right lasts the entire duration of your homelessness or until the end of the school year after you achieve permanent housing.
- **The right to transportation services.** Schools must provide your children with transportation to their school, if feasible, until you get permanent housing. Parents who need this service for their children should request it from the McKinney-Vento Liaison.
- **The right to other services.** The fees for breakfast and lunch provided by the school, as well as the fees for textbooks, should be waived for your children. They also are automatically eligible for Title I services which may include before- and after-school programs, tutoring programs, or other assistance such as graphing calculators required for math classes.
- **The right to appeal decisions regarding enrollment and services.** If the school district makes a decision about your child's school enrollment or the services that your child receives (such as transportation) that you disagree with, you have the right to appeal that decision. The school's McKinney-Vento Liaison should be contacted immediately to assist you with the appeal. While the dispute with the school district is being resolved, your child has the right to attend the school or receive the services in question.
- **The right to attend school and school activities without the fear of being singled out.** Children in unstable housing situations cannot be separated from their peers just because of their housing situation. They have the right to attend school and participate in extracurricular activities just like any other student.

### Who can help?

All school corporations must have at least one McKinney-Vento Liaison. The liaison's role is to help families in homeless situations with school related issues. For example, the liaison can help with problems related to enrollment, request transportation on behalf of the children, help obtain immunizations or immunization records and birth certificates and help mediate disputes with the school district. **Liaisons also help youth without parents or guardians.** To find out who serves as your

school's McKinney-Vento Liaison call your corporation's central administration office to ask for more information.

## **Who is homeless?**

Homeless students are those who lack a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence. This includes students who are sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason; are living in motels/ hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals. The definition includes migratory students who live in the aforementioned situations. Beginning Dec. 10, 2016, "those awaiting foster care placement" are not included in the definition.

## **What if I'm not homeless, but I don't have a place of my own?**

Many families are not living in homeless shelters, but do not have a home of their own. Families who are staying with family members or friends are referred to as "doubling-up." Not all families that are doubled-up are homeless, but families who stay with others because of a loss of housing or due to economic hardship are covered by the McKinney-Vento Act and are entitled to the rights it provides for students.