

The McKinney-Vento Act and ARP-HCY Reference Guide for First-Time Grantees

The McKinney-Vento Act provides rights and services to children and youth experiencing homelessness, which includes those who are: sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; staying in motels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to the lack of an adequate alternative; staying in shelters or transitional housing; or sleeping in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or similar settings.¹ This document summarizes some of the McKinney-Vento Act's core provisions.

If you have questions, please email the [OSPI Homeless Ed team](#).

Liaisons

- Every school district must designate a liaison for students experiencing homelessness.²
- The liaison must have the capacity to complete all the duties described in the law.³
- Each elementary, middle, and high school also must have a building point of contact, appointed by the principal.⁴

Resource

[*Designating and Supporting a Local Homeless Liaison*](#)

School Stability

- Children and youth experiencing homelessness can remain in their school of origin for the duration of homelessness and until the end of an academic year in which they obtain permanent housing, if it is in their best interest.⁵

¹ 42 U.S.C. §11434a(2).

² 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(ii).

³ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(ii).

⁴ RCW 28A.320.142.

⁵ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(A).



- The school district must make best interest determinations that presume that staying in the school of origin is in the best interest of the child or youth; consider specific student-centered factors; and prioritize the wishes of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth.⁶
- The school of origin is the school the student attended when permanently housed or the school in which they last enrolled, including preschools.⁷
- Transportation to the school of origin is required, including until the end of the academic year when a student obtains permanent housing.⁸
- If a dispute arises over eligibility, school selection, or enrollment, the child or youth must be immediately enrolled in the school in which the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth seeks enrollment, pending resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.⁹

Resource

[*McKinney-Vento Dispute Resolution Procedures*](#)

Immediate Enrollment

- School districts must immediately enroll children and youth experiencing homelessness, even if they are unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency, or other documentation, and even if they have missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness.¹⁰
- “Enroll” is defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities.¹¹
- In addition, school districts must review and revise policies to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, and retention of McKinney-Vento students in school, including barriers due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences.¹² States must have procedures to ensure that homeless children and youth do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities.¹³
- School districts must facilitate on-time grade level progression and graduation for students experiencing homelessness, including through calculating and awarding partial credits and waiving local graduation requirements (in some cases).¹⁴

6 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(B).

7 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(I).

8 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(iii).

9 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(E).

10 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C)(i).

11 42 U.S.C. §11434a(1).

12 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(I).

13 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(F)(iii).

14 RCW 28A.320.192.

Resources: [*Immediate Enrollment Checklist*](#)

[*“On-Time Grade Level Progression and Graduation for Highly Mobile Students—A Guide to Implementing RCW 28A.320.192”*](#)

Title I, Part A

- All LEAs that receive Title I Part A funds must reserve funds to support homeless students.
- Reserved funds may be used for services not ordinarily provided by Title I, including liaisons and transportation to the school of origin.

Resource

[*A Closer Look at ESSA, Title I Part A, and Students Experiencing Homelessness*](#)

American Rescue Plan–Homeless Children & Youth (ARP-HCY)

Many school districts in Washington are receiving McKinney-Vento funds for the first time, through ARP-HCY. Those funds are flexible and must be spent by January 30, 2025.

- Districts may use ARP-HCY funds for [any of the sixteen uses permitted by the McKinney-Vento Act \(see 42 U.S.C. 11433\(d\)\)](#). In addition, funds may be used for “any expenses necessary to facilitate the identification, enrollment, retention, or educational success of homeless children and youth in order to enable homeless children and youth to attend school and participate fully in school activities, such as:
 - providing wraparound services (which could be provided in collaboration with and/or through contracts with community-based organizations, and could include academic supports, trauma-informed care, social-emotional support, and mental health services);
 - purchasing needed supplies (e.g., personal protective equipment, eyeglasses, school supplies, personal care items);
 - providing transportation to enable children and youth to attend school and participate fully in school activities;
 - purchasing cell phones or other technological devices for unaccompanied, homeless children and youth to enable such children and youth to attend school and fully participate in school activities;
 - providing access to reliable, high-speed internet for students through the purchase of internet-connected devices/equipment, mobile hotspots, wireless service plans, or installation of Community Wi-Fi Hotspots (e.g., at homeless shelters), especially in underserved communities;
 - paying for short-term, temporary housing (e.g., a few days in a motel) when such emergency housing is the only reasonable option for COVID- safe temporary housing and when necessary to enable the homeless children and youth to attend school and participate fully in school activities (including summer school); and

- providing store cards/prepaid debit cards to purchase materials necessary for students to participate fully in school activities.”¹⁵
- Identification, capacity-building, and increasing attendance are some powerful options for using funds.
- To use funds strategically, conduct a [brief needs assessment](#) and target funds toward the greatest needs of students experiencing homelessness.

Resource

[*SchoolHouse Connection's ARP-HCY web page.*](#)

15 U.S. Department of Education, [Letter to Chief State School Officers Announcing Grant Award](#) (04-23-2021).