



Reporting and Guidance of Students Experiencing Homelessness Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS) University 104

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- Overview, Context and Background
- McKinney-Vento Expectations and Requirements
- Reporting to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)
- Transportation – State Funding
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- Resources

Expectations and Requirements

Roberto Reyes, State Homeless Coordinator McKinney-Vento

McKinney-Vento Act Overview

- Originally passed in 1987
- Amended in 2015 by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
- Establishes the definition of homeless used by public schools
- Addresses barriers faced by homeless students, including:
 - School enrollment
 - Regular attendance and transportation
 - Educational stability
 - School success
 - Connection to services
- Focuses on homeless students prekindergarten (pre-K) through high school, with provisions applying to higher education

Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.20, subdivision 2

- The state statute which has implications for children and youth who are homeless.
- Consistency between students with individualized education programs (IEPs) and without IEPs.
- Clarifies transportation responsibilities.
- Aligns district of residence for non-shelter students.

Definition of Homelessness

- Children or youth who lack a **fixed, regular, and adequate** nighttime residence, including:
 - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
 - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
 - Living in emergency or transitional shelters
 - Living in places not meant for habitation (e.g., vehicles)
- Fixed, Regular, and Adequate
 - Fixed: Stationary, permanent, not subject to change
 - Regular: Used on a predictable, routine, consistent basis; Consider the relative permanence of the living arrangement
 - Adequate: Lawful and reasonably sufficient for meeting physical and psychological needs typically met in a home environment

Can the student go to the same place (fixed) every night (regular) to sleep in a safe and sufficient space (adequate)?

Changes with Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- Greater emphasis on identification, including requirements for training and professional development to identify and meet the needs of homeless children and youth.
- Expectations that state coordinators and local liaisons are able to carry out their duties.
- Eligible homeless students must not face barriers to accessing academic *and* extracurricular activities.
- Presumption that maintaining enrollment in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest, except when contrary to the request of the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth.
- Dispute resolution procedures can now address eligibility issues, in addition to school selection and enrollment.
- Liaisons can affirm eligibility of identified homeless children and youths for homeless programs administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Local McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison

Every school district must appoint a **local McKinney-Vento homeless liaison**, who is responsible for ensuring:

1. **Identification** of homeless children and youth.
2. **Immediate enrollment** and full and equal opportunity to succeed in school for these students.
3. **Access to appropriate educational services** for these students, including Head Start and preschool programs administered by the district.
4. **Referral to appropriate external resources**, including health, dental, mental health, housing, substance abuse, and other appropriate services.

Adapted from SchoolHouse Connection / National Center on Homeless Education

Local McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison (continued)

- 5. Access to information about educational and related opportunities** for parents/guardians, with meaningful opportunities for students to participate.
- 6. Notification of homeless students' rights**, posted in locations frequented by parents/guardians and unaccompanied youth.
- 7. Mediation** of enrollment disputes.
- 8. Assistance accessing transportation**, including to the school of origin.
- 9. Participation in professional development**, training, and other support.
- 10. Satisfaction of special provisions for unaccompanied youth**, including receiving full or partial credit and information/verification of independent student status for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Adapted from SchoolHouse Connection / National Center on Homeless Education

McKinney-Vento Act Student Entitlements

- **Maintaining school attendance and stability by:**
 - Identifying homeless students quickly and reliably.
 - Assisting with school enrollment.
 - Supporting (based on student's best interests) ongoing enrollment at a school of origin or a local school.
 - Providing transportation to the school of origin or local school, including from a shelter or temporary location.
 - Maintaining enrollment at selected school throughout duration of homelessness and remainder of school year.
- **Supporting school success by:**
 - Ensuring that fees do not impede a homeless student's ability to participate in academic or extracurricular activities.
 - Awarding appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed.

Education Responsibilities

- Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), children and youth experiencing homelessness may:
 - Remain in his/her school of origin – the school the student was attending when the student became homeless or when the staff were first aware of the homeless situation.
 - Enroll in a school whose attendance area includes the place where the student is currently living.

Education Responsibilities (2)

Minnesota Statutes allow all public school families, including those experiencing homelessness, to:

- Open enroll to a third district, or
- Transfer to a charter school.
- A student must be immediately enrolled and be attending school even if the resident district is not immediately determined or is in question.
- If no other district of residence can be determined, the school district of residence shall be the school district where the student currently resides.

How Can Your District Finance the McKinney-Vento Role?

- How may Title I Part A funds be used to support homeless students?
- For McKinney-Vento children and youth attending any school in the local educational agency (LEA).
- For services not ordinarily provided to other students.
- To fund the McKinney-Vento liaison. 20 United States Code (USC) 6313(c)(3)
Guidance M4, M10, J7
- To provide educationally related support services, including pre K.

Kelly Wosika, Student Accounting

Homeless Indicator

- MARSS
- Data Element in the Student File.
- Homeless Flag.
- [MARSS Data Elements.](#)
- Students who qualify under the federal Homeless definition any time during the current school year are to be reported as “Y” homeless.

District of Residence

- The resident district, in most cases, is the district in which the parent/legal guardian is currently residing.
- The resident district will change each time the parent moves.
- Exceptions defined in statute.

Unique Family Situations

Resident District is defined as follows:

- A. Where the parent or legal guardian resides.
- B. Where the student resides at the time when any of these occurred:
 - Parental rights terminated by court order.
 - Parent/guardian is not living in Minnesota.
 - Parent or guardian with custody is in the Minnesota correctional system, prison or halfway house.
 - No district of residence can be determined.

Unique Family Situations (2)

- C. If a district of residence cannot be determined, where the student is living, or
- D. If district of residence is not agreed upon among involved districts, as determined by the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).

Unique Family Situations (3)

- For a youth on his/her own (not under the direct control of his/her parent or legal guardian), having left home or was kicked out, the resident district remains where the parent or legal guardian resides even if the student is no longer living at home.

- For families that are homeless and highly mobile, the resident district changes as the parent and students move to another district.
- Therefore, tracking family movement and exchanging with the new resident district will be necessary.

MARSS Reporting

- Homeless Indicator – When a student first becomes homeless during a given school year, a new enrollment record is required.
 - If the student starts the school year as homeless this is the only record needed.
 - If student starts school, and then became homeless, a new record would be created with the homeless flag set to Y.
 - There is no requirement to end the record when a student moves to permanent housing. It is a district decision if a new record would be created, it won't create an error, however it will generate warning message #387.

MARSS for Homeless Students

- The student's homeless status needs to be re-evaluated for the following year.
- Report Economic Indicator as “Free” while reported as homeless.
- Categorically Eligible for Title I services.
- Generally, the resident district is where parent resides.

State Aid Category for Homeless

State Aid Category (SAC) is dependent on school of enrollment and where parent resides:

- 00 – if living in district of enrollment.
- 01 – if utilizing open enrollment to transfer elsewhere.
- 03 – if student is enrolled in State Approved Alternative Program.
- 08 – if enrolled in charter school.
- 10 – if student is enrolled in a cooperative or intermediate.
- 11 – if returning to independent school district of origin.

MARSS 51 Homeless Federal Count

- Local MARSS Web Edit System (WES) report.
- List of all students flagged as homeless during the school year.
- Export to Excel and provide to the homeless liaison to indicate:
 - Nighttime residence on first night of homelessness .
 - Unaccompanied youth.
- Data used for state/federal reporting.
- Note: When exporting to Excel be sure to specify “Data Only.” The additional data columns do not appear on the initial report, but will be included as columns in the Excel spreadsheet.

Transportation for Homeless Students

Kelly Garvey, Student Transportation Specialist

Transporting Students Experiencing Homelessness - Responsibility

- The district that enrolls the homeless student will be responsible for the transportation.
- For charter schools, the district or charter school currently providing transportation for all other students must provide transportation.
- For cooperative and intermediate school districts, the resident district is responsible for providing transportation. The statutes was amended to include students with an IEP in a program offered by the intermediate or cooperative for the remaining of the school year.
 - Legislation passed in the 2019 session makes the district that placed a homeless student with an IEP in a program offered by an intermediate school district, special education cooperative, service cooperative or education district responsible for transporting that student for the remainder of the school year. The amendment allows the original district and the current serving district to mutually agree that the current serving district is responsible for transporting the homeless pupil.
- Transportation funding – through the Special Education Aid Entitlement Formula.
- Minnesota Statutes, section 120A.20, subdivision 2(c).

Transportation Provided By

Transportation could be provided by:

- Rerouting regular school bus routes past shelters, motels and other places where students live.
- Using existing routes such as those set up to serve special education programs, desegregation programs or nonpublic schools.
- Contracting with the parent or guardian of the child.
- Issuing public transit passes.
- Using a taxi service.
- Contracting with other districts.
- Collaborating with other public agencies.

Transportation Funding

- When a district provides transportation on a special route because of homelessness, report the cost in Finance Dimension 728, Special Transportation.
- When a student that is experiencing homelessness is provided transportation on a regular route, use Finance Dimension 720, Regular.
- For students that have IEPs, that require special transportation accommodations, record the transportation expenditures in UFARS Finance Dimension 723, as Finance Dimension 723 prevails over 728.

Transportation MARSS Reporting

- Students experiencing homelessness will be reported in MARSS with Transportation Category 06 – Special.
 - This includes students with IEPs that do not require special transportation and students without an IEP.
 - When a student is transported on a regular bus route, and the regular bus route does not have any special accommodations, report the Transportation Category 01 – Regular.
 - For students that have IEPs, that require special transportation accommodations, report Transportation Category 03 – Disabled. As Transportation Category 03 – Disabled prevails over Transportation Category 06 – Special.

Transportation of Students Experiencing Homelessness

More information on transportation of students experiencing homelessness is found in the document:

- [Transportation of Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)
 - From the [MDE home page](https://education.mn.gov) (<https://education.mn.gov>)
 - Districts, Schools and Educators
 - Business and Finance
 - School Finance
 - Transportation
 - By Student Type

Questions and Resources

Questions?

Resources on Student Homelessness

- [MDE McKinney-Vento program](http://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/ESEA/home/)
(<http://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/ESEA/home/>)
- [National Center on Homeless Education](http://nche.ed.gov) (<http://nche.ed.gov>)
- [National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth \(NAEHCY\)](http://naehcy.org/) (<http://naehcy.org/>)
- [Minnesota Homeless Transportation Frequently Asked Questions](https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/schfin/Trans/)
(<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/schfin/Trans/>)

Thank you!

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