

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Under the McKinney-Vento Act

(42 U.S.C. 11431; COMAR 13A.05.09):

Each homeless child or youth must have “equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education,” as other children and youth. This includes.....

Equal Access to Programs/Support

Homeless students must have access to education programs and services, such as:

- ◇ Sports/clubs
- ◇ Special education
- ◇ Tutoring
- ◇ Before/after-school
- ◇ Gifted/ talented
- ◇ Bilingual/ESL
- ◇ Vocational
- ◇ Summer school

*Schools **cannot** charge homeless students fees for these programs and activities and must remove other barriers, like strict application deadlines or admission requirements.*

► **Meals:** You are automatically eligible for free lunch and breakfast.

► **Referrals:** Schools should connect you to healthcare, counseling, food pantries, help with housing, and other resources.



Immediate Enrollment

Homeless students have the right to enroll in class and participate in school activities **immediately** even if they lack

- ◇ Immunization records, school records, birth certificate, proof of residence or guardianship, etc.;
 - ◇ school uniforms or school fees; or
 - ◇ a parent/guardian present.
- The school must assist the student in obtaining missing records after enrollment.

DID YOU KNOW?

You are “homeless” by law if you are staying

- ◆ with friends or relatives due to eviction, domestic violence, economic hardship or similar reason
- ◆ in a motel, hotel, or trailer park temporarily due to lack of other options
- ◆ in emergency shelter or transitional housing
- ◆ in cars, parks, campgrounds, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations
- ◆ in certain short-term foster care placements.



Choice of School & Transportation

Homeless students have **the choice** to attend:

1. The ‘school of origin,’ which is the school the student last attended or attended before becoming homeless, even if it is out of the local school zone or district. **OR**
 2. The ‘local’ or ‘zoned’ school, which is the school attended by others living in the same area as the student’s current residence.
- If a homeless student attends the school of origin, he or she has the right to **free transportation** to school
- The decision about which school the student should attend should be based on the student’s **best interests** and the parent/guardian’s wishes.

Independent Youth

Are you living without a parent or legal guardian?

- ◆ Your school district’s Homeless Education Coordinator can provide extra help with enrollment and accessing education services.
- ◆ You can enroll even if you do not have a parent or guardian to help you, including if you are under 18.
- ◆ If applying for college, you may file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) without parental information and may list a school address as your permanent mailing address.