



Chickasha Public Schools McKinney-Vento Handbook

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U.S. Department of Education - USDE

Oklahoma State Department of Education - OSDE and/or SEA

Chickasha Public Schools - LEA



Introduction

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program is authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of December 2015. The Oklahoma EHCY program addresses the needs of students experiencing homelessness in Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)/Chickasha Public Schools (CPS) throughout the state, by supporting homeless liaisons and by distributing funds from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). The Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) designates a State Coordinator to provide training and technical assistance, review policies and procedures, and monitor Chickasha Public Schools for program compliance to ensure that all children and youth experiencing homelessness are able to attend and fully participate in school.

The mission of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program at OSDE and Chickasha Public Schools is to ensure educational equity and success for students experiencing homelessness by providing support according to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The program's vision at OSDE and Chickasha Public Schools is that all students experiencing homelessness are provided the opportunity and support needed to be academically successful and able to achieve their goals.

Prohibition of Segregation

States receiving funds under 42 USC, Part B-Education for Homeless Children and Youths shall never segregate such child or youth in a separate school, or in a separate program within a school, based on such child's or youth's status as homeless. [42 USC, Section 11432(e)(3)(A)]

As an exception to this rule, "a State that has a separate school for homeless children or youths that was operated in fiscal year 2000 in a covered county shall be eligible to receive funds under this part for programs carried out in such school if—

- (i) the school meets the requirements of subparagraph (C);
- (ii) any local educational agency serving a school that the homeless children and youths enrolled in the separate school are eligible to attend meets the requirements of subparagraph (E); and
- (iii) the State is otherwise eligible to receive funds under this part."

[42 USC, Section 11432(e)(3)(B)]



Definition of Homelessness

Federal Definition of Homelessness

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Section 11434(a)(2) defines homeless children and youth as those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The law provides several examples of situations that meet the definition. This includes children and youth:

- sharing housing due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.
- living in hotels, motels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to a lack of alternative adequate housing;
- living in emergency or transitional shelters; abandoned in hospitals;
- living in a public or private place not designated for, or normally used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar places; and/or
- living in one of the above circumstances and who are migratory.

A *fixed residence* is one that is stationary, permanent, and not subject to change.

A *regular residence* is one that is used on a regular (i.e. nightly) basis.

An *adequate residence* is one that is sufficient for meeting both the physical and psychological needs typically met in home environments.

These determinations should be made on a case-by-case basis. In general, children or youth living on the streets, transitional housing shelters, cars, abandoned buildings, and other inadequate accommodations are considered homeless.

The USDE further specifies the following categories of homeless children and youth:

- Children and Youth in Transitional Shelters – Children and youth staying temporarily in trailer parks or camping areas because they lack adequate living accommodations should be considered homeless. Those living in trailer parks or camping areas on a long-term basis in adequate accommodations are not considered homeless;
- Doubled-Up Children and Youth – Children and youth who are sharing housing with other families or individuals are considered homeless if they are doubled-up because of a loss of housing, economic hardship, or another similar situation. Families living in



doubled-up accommodations voluntarily to save money generally are not considered homeless;

- Foster Children and Youth – The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) removed “awaiting foster care placement” from the definition of homeless children and youth under the McKinney-Vento Act;
- Incarcerated Children and Youth – Children and youth who are incarcerated for violation or alleged violation of a law should not be considered homeless, even if prior to their incarceration they would have been considered homeless because they were living in inadequate accommodations. Children and youth who are under the care of the State and are being held in an institution because they have no other place to live should be considered homeless. Once these children or youth are placed in more permanent facilities, they are no longer considered homeless;
- Migratory Children and Youth – Migratory children and youth should not be considered homeless simply because they are children of migratory families. To the extent that migratory children are staying in accommodations not fit for habitation, they should be considered homeless;
- Runaways – Children or youth who have run away from home and live in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, the streets, or other inadequate accommodations are considered homeless, even if their parents have provided and are willing to provide a home for them;
- School-Age Unwed Mothers – In general, if school-age unwed mothers or expectant mothers are living in homes for unwed mothers, and they have no other available living accommodations, they should be considered homeless. However, if they are staying in such a home only temporarily to receive specific health care or other services, and intend to move to adequate accommodations, they are not considered homeless;
- Sick or Abandoned Children and Youth – There are instances where children and youth remain in a hospital beyond the time that they would normally stay for health reasons because they have been abandoned by their families. These children and youth should be considered homeless because they have no other place to live. Children and youth who were homeless prior to hospitalization should be considered to be homeless while they are in the hospital, unless regular and adequate living accommodations will be made available to them upon release from the hospital;
- Throwaways – Throwaway children or youth (i.e. those whose parents or guardians will not permit them to live at home) are considered homeless if they live on the streets, in shelters, or in other transitional or inadequate accommodation.



General Information

In order to better support the education of homeless children and youth, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires a compound of activities to be implemented by the State Educational Agencies (SEAs) and the Local Educational Agencies. Among the most notable support activities are requirements for Chickasha Public Schools includes but is not limited to:

- Review and revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, and success in the education of homeless children and youth;
- Use the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition of homeless when identifying and determining which students are eligible for services;
- Designate a local liaison to coordinate services to ensure that homeless children and youth enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically;
- Coordinate the local plan required under Title I, Part A with the needs of homeless children and youth, including making a mandatory set-aside of funds under Title I, Part A to serve homeless children and youth;
- Implement procedures to ensure homeless children and youth receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school;
- School counselors to assist and advise homeless children and youth to improve college preparation and readiness;
- Inform unaccompanied homeless youth regarding their independent status on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). - See Appendix

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act guarantees to homeless children the following rights:

- to immediately enroll in school;
- to attend school in school of origin or in the attendance area where the family currently resides;
- to receive transportation to school of origin if requested by parents and is in the best interest of the child;
- to receive comparable services as other schoolmates including transportation and supplemental services;
- to attend school along with children who are not homeless;
- to have their rights posted in all schools and other places around the community that low-income families and high-risk families may visit.



The McKinney-Vento Act includes, among other things, new or changed requirements focused on:

- Identification of homeless children and youths;
- Preschool-aged homeless children, including clarification that local liaisons must ensure that these children and their families have access to and receive services, if eligible, under LEA administered preschool programs, including Head Start, Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities), and other preschool programs administered by the LEA;
- Collaboration and coordination with other service providers, including public and private child welfare and social services agencies; law enforcement agencies; juvenile and family courts; agencies providing mental health services; domestic violence agencies; child care providers; runaway and homeless youth centers; providers of services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act; and providers of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing, including public housing agencies, shelter operators, and operators of transitional housing facilities;
- Professional development and technical assistance at both the State and local levels;
- Removing enrollment barriers, including barriers related to missed application or enrollment deadlines, fines, or fees; records required for enrollment, including immunization or other required health records, proof of residency, or other documentation; or academic records, including documentation for credit transfer;
- School stability, including the expansion of school of origin to include preschools and receiving schools, and the provision of transportation until the end of the school year, even if a student becomes permanently housed;
- Privacy of student records, including information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation; and
- The dispute resolution process.



Potential Warning Signs of Homelessness

While the following are considered common signs, please recognize that they only offer general guidance. There is significant variability within the school-age homeless population. Individual students may differ significantly from the following general characteristics.

- Enrollment at multiple schools, lack of records, gaps in learning, poor/inconsistent attendance, inability to pay fees, poor organizational skills, poor ability to conceptualize;
- Poor hygiene, unmet medical/dental needs, respiratory problems, skin rashes, chronic hunger or food hoarding, fatigue and falling asleep in class;
- Erratic attendance and tardiness, numerous absences, lack of participation in field trips and/or afterschool activities, inability to contact parents;
- Lacking shower facilities/washers, etc., wearing clothes several days, inconsistent grooming;
- Social and behavioral challenges, such as extreme shyness, withdrawal, or aggression; clinginess; poor self-esteem; difficulty with peer and/or adult relationships; poor attention span; developmental delays; fear of abandonment; anxiety late in the school day;
- Consistent lack of preparation for school, incomplete or missing homework, lack of basic school supplies; inability to complete special projects, loss of books and supplies on a regular basis, elevated concern for safety of belongings.



McKinney-Vento Act Requirements

The U.S. Department of Education (USDE) requires all school districts including Chickasha Public Schools, with and without subgrants, to submit information to determine the extent to which homeless children and youth have access to a free, appropriate, public education under Title IX, Part A of ESSA. All data reported must be based on actual student enrollment. Estimated numbers are not acceptable.

Implement a system to collect the needed data on each homeless student who is identified and enrolled. This data collection can be facilitated by the use of an intake form at the time of enrollment, or when a currently enrolled child becomes identified as homeless.

Policy Review and Revision Requirements

Annually, Chickasha Public Schools must review and revise any laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as a barrier to the enrollment, attendance, and success in schools of homeless children and youth. In the review of such laws, regulations, practices, or policies, Chickasha Public Schools should give specific consideration to the laws regarding the following areas:

- Identification
- School Selection
- Enrollment
- Transportation
- Services
- Resolution of Disputes
- Free Meals
- Title I
- Training
- Coordination
- Preschool
- Appropriate Credit for Full or Partial Coursework Satisfactorily Completed

Best Interest Determination for School Placement

The McKinney-Vento Act requires schools to consider the school of origin as the first option in school enrollment. Parents may choose the school of origin or the school in the residency area where the child is currently living. Individuals may be consulted when determining what placements are in the child's or youth's best interest.



Chickasha Public Schools Responsibilities

The McKinney-Vento Act provides several LEA requirements for serving homeless children and youth. Under section 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3) LEAs must:

- Immediately enroll the child or youth, even without records that are normally required for enrollment, or if the child or youth has missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness;
- Assist with obtaining immunizations or other required health records;
- Continue a homeless child's or youth's education in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness and for the remainder of the academic year, even if the child or youth becomes permanently housed during an academic year;
- Enroll the homeless child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is actually living are eligible to attend;
- Presume that keeping the child or youth in the school of origin is in the child's or youth's best interest, except when doing so is contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth;
- Consider student-centered factors related to the child's or youth's best interest, including factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of homeless children and youth, giving priority to the request of the parent, guardian or unaccompanied youth;
- Provide a written explanation of the reasons for the decision, including information regarding the right to appeal to the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth, if CPS sends the child to a school other than the one requested.
- Enroll the child or youth immediately in the school in which enrollment is sought if a dispute rises over eligibility, school selection or enrollment in a school, pending final resolution of the dispute;
- Provide services comparable to those received by other students in the school.
- Treat information about a homeless child's or youth's living situation with confidentiality, as a student education record;
- Coordinate with local services agencies and other agencies or entities providing services to homeless children and youth and their families, including services and programs funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.



Chickasha Public Schools McKinney-Vento Policy and Procedures

1. The District McKinney-Vento Liaison will work with site principals to determine their site McKinney-Vento Liaison.
2. Due to the fact that the homeless/McKinney-Vento category is self-identifying, it will be necessary for the proper form to be filled out before school begins. There needs to be uniformity district wide to ensure all students are identified. Prior to the 2020-21 school year, a plan was established to have all sites develop an enrollment confirmation date when parents can come and complete all required enrollment documents.
3. This enrollment confirmation plan was determined by the district principals and the administrative team and will encompass a one week period. Site volunteers will be needed to assist with the confirmation/enrollment process.
4. The following steps will be taken by each site as the forms are completed:
 - a. Enrollment Confirmation - A site liaison will need to be determined and will be responsible for gathering the forms. This person will place all McKinney-Vento documents in a binder, identify the students who qualify for services, and place the information where it can be used to assist students/families which require services.
 - b. Binders are divided by grade level - in alphabetical order
 - c. Place the identified students in a tab at the front of the notebook
 - d. Homeless children and youth should not be stigmatized by school personnel or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
5. The students will then be listed on a Google doc to monitor absences, discipline referrals, and other assessment results. The district enrollment clerk can help set up Site Liaisons with the Wen-GAGE Mobile Student App to monitor student progress.
6. Once a student is identified, a district letter will be sent to the family which will include a list of available resources.
7. Wen-GAGE, the district student information system will be updated to include McKinney-Vento, which will be used instead of the word "Homeless".
8. Students who are identified will be monitored at least every 2 weeks. Things to be considered would be attendance and behavior issues.



9. In addition, students who are identified will be monitored for extracurricular activities. We need to determine if the fact that they do not have a permanent residence is keeping them from participating. This may include student fees. A student identified as McKinney-Vento may have his/her fees paid with McKinney-Vento or Title I funds. If such funds are not available the fees may be waived by the district.
10. *New enrollees* after the start of school or enrollment confirmation will be as follows:
 - a. Parents/guardians will complete all of the forms at the Administration building
 - b. Administrative staff will look at the form to determine if students meet the Self-Identification requirement
 - c. The original will be sent to the office of the Director of Special Services and filed in the site notebook and the student will be identified in Wen-GAGE.
 - d. The Director of Special Services/District Homeless Liaison will scan the forms of qualified students to the site liaison.
 - e. Site liaison will add the student to the McKinney-Vento Google Sheet for monitoring.
 - f. If the site secretaries learn of a change in living arrangements of a student they will work with the site liaison to determine if the student qualifies for McKinney-Vento services.
 - g. A new McKinney-Vento form will be completed and sent to the Director of Special Services. The Director will change the status of the student in Wen-GAGE and file the new form in the appropriate binder.
11. Once a student is identified they are to remain on the McKinney-Vento list until the beginning of the next school year. If circumstances change throughout the year, they will still remain on the list.
12. If a student's status changes during the school year and they are no longer rent/own their home, they will be given a new McKinney-Vento form. They would then be eligible to receive services.
13. McKinney-Vento status is for the current school year. It will be important to update all information at the beginning of each school year.



14. McKinney-Vento students are afforded the same rights as IDEA students regarding Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Confidentiality. A student's McKinney-Vento status should only be shared with those who have an educational need to assist the student.
- a. Homeless children and youth should not be stigmatized by school personnel or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
 - b. FERPA outlines to whom records can be released and under what conditions, which can be especially important when enrolling students who are identified as homeless or an unaccompanied youth. FERPA does allow for the transfer of records from one local agency to another without parental consent, as long as the LEA had made a reasonable attempt to notify the parent of the disclosure or includes the district's annual FERPA notification to parents at that school records will be forwarded to enrolling schools. This allows districts to easily get records needed for unaccompanied homeless youth.
 - c. IDEA contains specific timelines that begin as soon as students with disabilities enroll; working with the district's special education department can ensure a smooth transition from homeless students who have disabilities.
15. Due to the fact many students identified as McKinney-Vento move often and struggle to earn credits. Federal guidelines for McKinney-Vento allow for transcribing 9-week credit at 0.25.



Chickasha Public Schools Homeless Liaison Duties

District and Site McKinney-Vento Liaison

- District McKinney-Vento Liaison is determined by the District Superintendent. The current District Liaison is Director of Special Services.
- The District McKinney-Vento Liaison will work with site principals to determine their site McKinney-Vento Liaison

McKinney-Vento District Liaison's Responsibilities

- Review and revise policies or practices that act as barriers - District and Site Liaisons develop, review and revise policies to reduce barriers and support students identified as McKinney-Vento. Identify potential barriers such as but not limited to participating in extracurricular activities, assisting with student fees and equipment which may limit a student's participation.
- Identification and enrollment - Homeless children and youths are identified by school personnel through outreach and coordination with other agencies.
- Link to educational services - Homeless families, children and youths have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start programs, early intervention services under Part C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other preschool programs administered by Chickasha Public Schools.
- Link to related services - Homeless families, children, and youths receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.
- Provide parents with opportunities to participate in children's education - The parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- Post public notice - Public notice of the educational rights of homeless children and youths is disseminated in locations frequented by parents or guardians of homeless children and youths, and unaccompanied youths, including schools, shelters, public libraries, and soup kitchens, in a manner and form understandable to parents and guardians and unaccompanied youth.
- Mediate disputes - Enrollment disputes are mediated.
- Inform parents of transportation services - The parent or guardian of a homeless child or youth, and any unaccompanied homeless youth is fully informed of all transportation services, including transportation to the school of origin.



- Provide professional development - School personnel who serve homeless children and youths receive professional development and other support.
- Provide opportunities to prepare and assist students for post-secondary opportunities - Unaccompanied homeless youths are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards established for other students, and are informed of their status as independent students and assisted to receive verification of their status for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Ensure accurate data reporting - Complete and submit Federal and State reports.

McKinney-Vento Site Liaison's Responsibilities

- Identification and Enrollment - The Site Liaison will be responsible for gathering the Student Enrollment Questionnaire forms. This person will place all McKinney-Vento documents in a binder, identify the students who qualify for services, and place the information where it can be used to assist students/families which require services.
 - a. Binders are divided by grade level - in alphabetical order
 - b. Place the identified students in a tab at the front of the notebook
 - c. Homeless children and youth should not be stigmatized by school personnel or segregated on the basis of their status as homeless.
- Notification to parent, guardian, youth - Once a student is identified, a district letter will be sent to the family which will include a list of available resources.
- Provide parents with opportunities to participate in children's education - The parents or guardians of homeless children and youths are informed of the educational and related opportunities available to their children and are provided with meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.
- Monitor Students - The students will then be listed on a Google doc to monitor absences, discipline referrals, and other assessment results. Site Liaisons can be set up with the Wen-GAGE Mobile Student App to monitor student progress.
- Assist in reviewing and revising policies or practices that act as barriers - District and Site Liaisons develop, review and revise policies to reduce barriers and support students identified as McKinney-Vento. Identify potential barriers such as but not limited to participating in extracurricular activities, assisting with student fees and equipment which may limit a student's participation.
- Link to educational services - Homeless families, children and youths have access to and receive educational services for which they are eligible, including Head Start programs, early intervention services under Part C of Individuals with



Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other preschool programs administered by Chickasha Public Schools.

- Link to related services - Homeless families, children, and youths receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.
- Provide professional development - School personnel who serve homeless children and youths receive professional development and other support.
- Provide opportunities to prepare and assist students for post-secondary opportunities - Unaccompanied homeless youths are enrolled in school, have opportunities to meet the same challenging State academic standards established for other students, and are informed of their status as independent students and assisted to receive verification of their status for completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).



Chickasha Public Schools Dispute Resolution Policy

Parents, guardians, or unaccompanied youths experiencing homelessness and schools or school districts may disagree on issues related to eligibility for McKinney-Vento services, school enrollment, and school selection. In most cases, parties can resolve these issues before entering into a formal dispute; however, there are times when an informal resolution is not possible and the intervention of an objective third party must be pursued.

When a dispute arises over eligibility, or school selection, or enrollment in a school, the law requires the following minimum procedures:

1. The child or youth "shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals.
2. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth must be provided with a written explanation of any decisions related to school selection or enrollment made by the school, district or state involved, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth to appeal such decisions.
3. The parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth must be referred to the local liaison, who will carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible.

McKinney-Vento dispute procedures apply to any dispute arising under the Act, including disputes over questions such as:

- Eligibility - Does the child or youth requesting enrollment meet the definition of homeless such that immediate enrollment is required, regardless of missing school records, proof of residency, immunization and other required health records, lack of parent or guardian, or other documentation?
- School Selection - Is it in the child's or youth's best interest to continue attending the school of origin or to enroll in the local attendance area school? Does the parent's, guardian's, or unaccompanied youth's preference conflict with the school's determination of best interest?
- Participation - Is the child or youth attending classes immediately, even if the school has not yet received school records, including special education records, immunization or other required health documents? Is the student provided full participation in school activities? Is enrollment granted immediately in any public



school that non-homeless students who reside in the same area as the homeless child or youth are eligible to attend?

- Transportation - Is the school district required to provide transportation to a student in a particular situation? Does the transportation provided permit the child to attend classes and participate fully in school activities?

School District Level

Every effort must be made to resolve the complaint or dispute at the school district level before it is brought to the OSDE. It is the responsibility of the school district to inform the complainant of the district's Complaint Resolution Procedure when a question concerning the education of a homeless child or youth arises.

1. Notify the district's homeless liaison.
 - a. Request a copy of or access to the district board of education policies addressing the education of homeless children and youths and review them. Make an appointment with the homeless coordinator to discuss the complaint.
 - b. If the dispute is not resolved after the initial discussion with the district's homeless liaison, the complainant may file a complaint in writing to the district's homeless liaison for further review.
 - c. In the complaint include a request that a written proposed resolution of the dispute of a plan of action be provided within five (5) days of the date the complaint was received by the district's homeless liaison. A review of the proposal or plan of action with the homeless liaison should follow. The parties may mutually agree on an extension; however, every effort should be made to resolve the complaint in the shortest possible time.
2. If the dispute is not resolved at the district homeless coordinator level, the complaint may be forwarded to the superintendent of the district for review followed by a meeting with the superintendent to discuss the dispute. The complainant should request from the superintendent a written resolution within five (5) days of the date of the discussion. The parties may mutually agree on an extension; however every effort should be made to resolve the complaint in the shortest possible time.
3. If the dispute is not resolved at the district superintendent level, the complainant may take the matter before the school district board of education for resolution.



State Level

If a dispute is not resolved in a satisfactory manner at the school district level, the complaint may be brought to the OSDE. Complaints made under this process must be made in writing and signed by the complainant. The following steps are to be taken:

1. Address the complaint to the State Homeless Coordinator, Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2500 North Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105. Include in the complaint:
 - a. A detailed description of the dispute
 - b. The name(s) and age(s) of the children involved
 - c. The name(s) of involved school district personnel and the district(s) they represent
 - d. A description of attempts that were made to resolve the issue at the school district level
2. The Team Leader of the Office of Grants Planning will inform the involved school district(s) of the complaint. The team leader or team leader's designee will gather needed information including documentation and statements of the parties and may conduct an independent investigation through an on-site visit if necessary.
3. Within thirty (30) days after receiving a complaint and investigating the complaint, the theme leader will make a determination regarding the allegations on the complaint and will inform the parties, in writing, of the decision. The parties may mutually agree on an extension; however, every effort should be made to resolve the complaint in the shortest possible time.
4. If a complainant disagrees with the decision, the complainant may, within ten (10) working days, appeal the decision to the Deputy State Superintendent of Public instructions. This appeal must be in writing and state the reasons why the complainant disagrees with the decision.
5. Within thirty (30) days after receiving the appeal, the Deputy State Superintendent of Public Instruction will render a final decision and notify the complainant and all other interested parties in writing. Although the standard procedure allows thirty (30) days for response, every effort will be made to resolve the complainant in the shortest possible time.
6. While the dispute is ongoing, the child(ren) in question must be enrolled in and attending school. If the dispute revolves around which school is the school of best interest for the child, the child shall remain in the school they currently attend until the dispute is resolved, unless arrangements already implemented allow the child to attend the school of origin.



FAQS

Q: If a family becomes permanently housed during the school year, does the student's homeless status change?

A: No. They continue to be identified as homeless and receive services for the remainder of the current school year. This includes the right to continue attending the school that they have been attending and receiving services such as transportation, free lunch, fee waivers, etc. The students will then attend the boundary school of their permanent address the next school year. Homeless Liaison should notify the family that the students must attend the boundary school of the new address the next school year.

Q: How do you determine if a student meets the definition of being identified as homeless?

A: The best way to determine if families are eligible is to ask them questions that focus on "is the living situation FIXED, REGULAR, and ADEQUATE".

- FIXED: Stationary, permanent, not subject to change
- REGULAR: Used on a predictable, routine, consistent basis.
- ADEQUATE: lawfully and reasonably sufficient, sufficient for meeting the physical and psychological needs typically met in a home environment. You can ask yourself: "Can the student go to the SAME PLACE (fixed) EVERY NIGHT (regular) to sleep in a SAFE AND SUFFICIENT SPACE (adequate)?"

Q: How can you determine if a family or unaccompanied youth that is sharing a house with another family meets the definition of homelessness?

A: A family must be sharing the home of others due to economic hardship, loss of housing, or a similar reason. Just because they are living with another family, does not mean that they qualify to be identified as homeless. OSDE - TITLE IX, PART A HANDBOOK 19 Here are some examples: A family chooses to move in with grandma because grandma needs someone to care for her. - does NOT qualify to be identified as homeless. A family moves into Mom's boyfriend's house because she wants to live with him. - does NOT qualify to be identified as homeless. A family was evicted from their home and cannot afford a new place so they are living with an uncle. - DOES qualify to be identified as homeless. A mother and her children are fleeing from a domestic violence situation and are currently living with a friend. - DOES qualify to be identified as homeless.



Q: What does the term “unaccompanied youth” mean?

A: Unaccompanied youth are students who are living WITHOUT a parent or legal guardian. An unaccompanied youth can be difficult to identify. This includes students who were kicked out or who have run away. This does NOT include foster care or any other out of home placements made by the courts. This also does NOT include parents who have made arrangements for their student to live with someone else. Some examples include:

- A student who was kicked out of the home and is currently living with a family member or friend. - DOES qualify to be identified as an unaccompanied youth and homeless.
- A student who has run away from home and is staying with a family member or friend. - DOES qualify to be identified as an unaccompanied youth and homeless.
- The parent is currently homeless and the child has to stay with a family member so the child is not in a shelter with the parent. - DOES qualify to be identified as an unaccompanied youth and homeless.
- The parent is currently incarcerated and an out of home placement has not been made by the courts. - DOES qualify to be identified as an unaccompanied youth and homeless.
- The parent decided that the student is going to live with a grandparent because mom doesn't want to have her child attend a specific school. - does NOT qualify to be identified as an unaccompanied youth or homeless.
- Arrangements have been made for a student to stay with someone else, if the parent gives consent for the child to stay somewhere other than with the parent. - does NOT qualify to be identified as an unaccompanied youth or homeless.

Q: If a student is an unaccompanied youth, can they automatically be identified as a homeless student?

A: No. The unaccompanied youth still needs to meet the definition of homeless.

Q: Are children who are awaiting foster care placement still eligible for services under the McKinney-Vento Act?

A: The McKinney-Vento Act no longer includes children and youths who are awaiting foster care placement in the definition of “homeless children and youths.” This means that children who are awaiting foster care placement will no longer be considered homeless and will therefore not be eligible for McKinneyVento services unless they meet the revised definition of “homeless children and youths.”



Contacts:

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Sources for this document:

- *Oklahoma State Depart of Education - Title IX, Part A Handbook*
- *National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) nche.ed.gov*
- *SchoolHouse Connection*
- *Schoolhouseconnection.org*
- *McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act, 42 USC*
- *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), July 31, 2018*
- *Office of Management and Budget (OMB), 2 CFR Chapter I, Chapter II, Part 200, December 26, 2013*



Forms and Community Resources

- McKinney-Vento Letter to Families
- Student Enrollment Questionnaire
- Best Interest Determination for School Placement
- Dispute Resolution
- Independent Student Status of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determination for FAFSA and Grant
- Community Resources for students Identified as Homeless

