

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act is a federal law that protects the educational rights of students in temporary housing.

It defines “**homeless** children and youths” as any student who **lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**.



Transportation staff including directors, dispatchers, and drivers all contribute to the success of students in temporary housing by ensuring school stability (e.g. *busing students to and from their school of origin*) and student confidence (e.g. *starting the day off on a positive note*).

DIRECTORS: Transportation directors play an important role by ensuring that district transportation policies and practices align with the McKinney-Vento Act, the district is appropriately reimbursed for its expenses related to students in temporary housing, and there are strong lines of communication between the transportation department and the McKinney-Vento Liaison.

POLICIES & PRACTICES

- Ensure your district's **transportation policy includes** transportation of students in temporary housing (including preschool and pre-K students):
 - to/from the **school where they were last permanently housed** (up to 50 miles away)
 - to/from the **school where they are living temporarily** (if it is provided to other students)
 - for the **remainder of the school year** in which permanent housing is found and possibly one additional year if it is the terminal grade level in the school.
- The local **Department of Social Services (DSS) is responsible** for transportation if it **places the family outside of the school district of origin's boundaries and the family is eligible for Emergency Assistance for Families (EAF)**. DSS may request that the school district arrange and provide transportation, but they must promptly reimburse the district.
- Keep in mind, transportation should be arranged **within 3 business days**.

FUNDING

- Track all expenses and **explore all funding sources**. For example:
 - Make sure all transportation expenses for students in temporary housing are submitted to the State Education Department. On average, districts receive aid for 60% of the cost (*the aid range is 6.5% - 90%*).
 - If transportation is being provided for the remainder of the school year in which a student moves into permanent housing, the **district may directly bill the district of permanent location** for transportation costs.
 - Explore whether **Title I funds** could be used to help pay for transportation expenses for students in temporary housing.
 - Seek reimbursement from the State Education Department for transportation expenses related to students in **Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY)** shelters.
 - Develop billing system with the local **Department of Social Services** for transportation expenses related to students placed in temporary housing by the Department of Social Services outside of the school district boundaries.

**SUPPORT &
ACT:**

- **Check-in regularly with the McKinney-Vento liaison** in your district to ensure that transportation arrangements for students in temporary housing are promptly arranged. Make sure the liaison is made aware of students who may have become homeless (bus drivers are often the first to know!).
- **Ensure** that all transportation staff members, including bus drivers and dispatchers, are **familiar with the rights of students in temporary housing**.
 - Train transportation staff on how to identify students who may be experiencing homelessness and on trauma-sensitive transportation procedures (e.g. *For students who are staying in shelters, is there a pick-up/drop-off point near where they are staying so that students are not stigmatized by their peers?*)
- **Explore creative transportation arrangements**, for example:
 - Collaborate with neighboring districts on bus routes,
 - Offer public transit passes if available in your area and the family is able to use public transit,
 - Reimburse parents for gas if the parent has access to a vehicle,
 - Use an approved taxi or van service if available in your area, or
 - Look into using special education, BOCES, private school, and/or magnet school bus routes.
- **Develop formal or informal inter-district agreements** to transport students who are temporarily housed outside of the district's boundaries.
- **Develop procedures** that address questions such as:
 - Who will make the referral to the transportation director or the Department of Social Services if the student in temporary housing needs busing?
 - Who will be the point person for coordinating inter-district transportation arrangements?

DRIVERS: Bus drivers are often a student's first and last impression of the school day. Help everyone succeed by sharing these tips:

- Be discreet about the student's living situation.
- Avoid words like "homeless" or "shelter."
- Make a student feel safe and welcome. It can be as simple as saying "good morning" each day and "see you tomorrow" each evening.



NYS-TEACHS is funded by the New York State Education Department.