

## The McKinney-Vento Act in Maryland

The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law that provides education rights for children and youth who have lost their housing and/or are living in housing that is not adequate.<sup>i</sup> Specifically, the law assists children and youth who are:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
- Staying in a hotel or emergency or transitional shelter; or
- Sleeping in campgrounds, cars, parks or other public places, or inadequate trailers or other substandard housing.

The law also covers youth who are living in any of these situations without a parent or guardian (“unaccompanied youth”). Children and youth living in these settings have access to rights and services designed to help them enroll, attend, and succeed in school and preschool programs. Those rights and services include:

- The right to enroll immediately in any school other children living in the same neighborhood would be eligible to attend, even if they do not have documents typically required for school enrollment, such as:
  - Proof of residency;
  - Birth certificate;
  - Proof of immunizations or other health records;
  - School records; and
  - Parent or legal guardian.
- The right to remain in their school of origin if it is in their best interest to attend that school, for as long as they are in a “homeless” situation and until the end of the academic year when they move into permanent housing.
- The school of origin is the school or preschool the student attended when they had permanent housing, or the school or preschool in which they were last enrolled.
- The right to receive transportation to the school of origin.
- The right to receive free school meals and other support they need to attend and succeed in school, such as clothing, hygiene supplies, school supplies, and partial credit for courses partially completed.
- The right to participate fully in school activities, including receiving support they need to participate in sports and clubs.

Every school system must have a McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison to ensure students receive their rights and the support they need. Contact information can be found on the [Maryland State Department of Education website](https://marylandpublicschools.org/schoolhelp).<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Maryland state regulations codify much of the McKinney-Vento Act’s requirements for the state of Maryland. See Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) section 13A.05.09.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://marylandpublicschools.org/schoolhelp>