



Smith Academy for Excellence  
725 West Washington Boulevard  
Fort Wayne IN 46802

# McKinney-Vento Plan

2023-2024

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## **SECTION 1: OVERVIEW/GENERAL INFORMATION:**

### **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act:**

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program is authorized under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.) (McKinney-Vento Act). The McKinney-Vento Act was originally authorized in 1987 and most recently re-authorized on December 10th, 2016 by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The McKinney-Vento Act is designed to address the challenges that homeless children and youths have faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, State educational agencies (SEAs) must ensure that each homeless child and youth has equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education, as other children and youths. Homeless children and youths must have access to the educational and related services that they need to enable them to meet the same challenging State academic standards to which all students are held. In addition, homeless students may not be separated from the mainstream school environment. SEAs and local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to review and undertake steps to revise laws, regulations, practices, or policies that may act as barriers to the identification, enrollment, attendance, or success in school of homeless children and youths.

### **Definition of Homeless (McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 725(2); 42 U.S.C 11435(2)):**

Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate night time residence:

- ✓ "Double up" - Sharing the housing of others due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reasons.
- ✓ Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds, due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations.
- ✓ Living in emergency or transitional shelters.
- ✓ Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live.
- ✓ Migratory children living in above circumstances
- ✓ Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- ✓ Unaccompanied Youth - Children or youth who meets the definition of homeless and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

### **Residency and Educational Rights:**

Students who are in temporary, inadequate and homeless living situations have the following rights at Smith Academy for Excellence:

- ✓ Immediate enrollment in the school they last attended or the school in whose attendance area they are currently staying even if they do not have all of the documents normally required at the time of enrollment;
- ✓ Access to free meals and textbooks, Title I and other educational programs and other comparable services including transportation;
- ✓ Attendance in the same classes and activities that students in other living situations also participate in without fear of being separated or treated differently due to their housing situations.

### **Procedures for the Dissemination of Educational Rights:**

Smith Academy for Excellence shall ensure that public notice of the educational rights of students and families in homeless situations is disseminated where children and youth receive services under the McKinney-Vento Act. Signs will be posted in the school building and all applicable community locations.

## **SECTION 2: IDENTIFICATION AND ELIGIBILITY**

### **Title 1 Services and Funding:**

At Smith Academy for Excellence, all children and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento services are automatically eligible for Title I, Part A services, whether or not they attend a Title I, Part A school or meet the academic standards required of other students for eligibility (Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Sec. 1115(b)(2)(E); 20 U.S.C. 6315(b)(2)(E)). This automatic eligibility acknowledges that the experience of homelessness puts children and youth at significant risk of academic failure, regardless of their previous academic standing. Additionally, all children and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento services who are doing well academically are entitled to receive additional non-instructional education related support services needed to succeed in school.

### **School Selection:**

Smith Academy for Excellence will keep students in homeless situations in their school of origin defined as the school attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled, unless it is against the parent or guardian's wishes or unless it is determined to be in the student's best educational interest. Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services are eligible to remain in their school of origin for the entire duration in which they are homeless and until the end of any academic year in which they move into permanent housing. Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services may also choose to enroll in any public school that students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend.

### **Procedures to Identify and Verify Eligibility of McKinney-Vento Students:**

Every current, returning, and new student at Smith Academy for Excellence must complete the McKinney-Vento Residency Questionnaire and Form. The McKinney-Vento Residency Questions are contained in the electronic Registration forms completed by each parent at the start of the school year. Smith Academy for Excellence will utilize this information to determine if the student is facing a homeless situation. Follow-up contact to verify the information provided on the Smith Academy for Excellence McKinney-Vento Residency Questions will be conducted within 5 days of the completion of enrollment by the McKinney-Vento liaison.

## SECTION 3: SERVICES AND STANDARDS

### **Transportation:**

Each Smith Academy for Excellence child or youth facing a McKinney-Vento situation shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected including transportation services.

Smith Academy for Excellence will arrange transportation for students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services to and from school, at a parent or guardian's request. For unaccompanied youth, Smith Academy for Excellence will provide transportation to and from the school of origin at the request of the District McKinney-Vento Liaison. If the student's temporary residence and the school of origin are in the same district, Smith Academy for Excellence will provide and/or arrange transportation to and from school.

Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services are eligible to receive these transportation services for the entire duration in which they are homeless.

*\*\*\*"School of Origin" is defined as the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. \*\*\**

### **Food Services:**

Each Smith Academy for Excellence child or youth facing a McKinney-Vento situation shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected including school nutrition programs. Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services are eligible to receive free breakfast and lunch as offered by the school for the entire duration in which they are homeless.

### **Textbooks and Technology:**

Each Smith Academy for Excellence child or youth facing a McKinney-Vento situation shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school selected including access to instructional materials, assessments, and technology. Students and youth who qualify for McKinney-Vento Services are eligible to receive free textbooks and technology fees as offered by the school for the entire duration in which they are homeless.

### **Academic Services & Standards:**

Each Smith Academy for Excellence child or youth facing a McKinney-Vento situation shall be provided services comparable to services offered to other students in the school including educational services for which the child or youth meet the eligibility criteria (Title I services, educational programs for children with disabilities or for students with limited English proficiency), programs in vocational and technical education, and programs for gifted and talented students as available.

### **School Uniform:**

The homeless liaison will assist homeless students with school uniform requirements helping students to comply with the dress code policy.

## SECTION 4: ENROLLMENT

### Enrollment Procedures:

Any child or youth who claims to be homeless will be immediately enrolled at Smith Academy for Excellence even if they do not have required documents such as:

- ✓ school records
- ✓ medical records
- ✓ proof of residency
- ✓ Guardianship papers or other documents.

Smith Academy for Excellence will request school records from the student's previous school and the student will be enrolled at Smith Academy for Excellence while records are obtained.

The McKinney-Vento District Liaison will assist unaccompanied youth in choosing and enrolling in a school after considering the youth's wishes, informing the youth of their rights to transportation and assisting the youth in accessing transportation, and informing the youth of their right to appeal school decisions. The McKinney-Vento District Liaison must ensure that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of disputes that may arise over school enrollment or placement.

Unaccompanied youth have the right to:

- Remain in their school of origin
- Transportation to and from the school of origin
- Immediately enroll in a new school serving the area in which they are currently living even if they don't have typically required documents (e.g. proof of guardianship)
- Equal access to programs and services such as gifted and talented education, special education, vocational education, and English Language Learner services.

Smith Academy for Excellence shall remove any/all barriers to the enrollment and retention of children and youth in homeless situations. Students in homeless situations shall be free from segregation, isolation, and stigmatization.

*\*\*\*The term "enroll" is defined as attending classes and participating fully in school activities. \*\*\**

*\*\*\*"School of Origin" is defined as the school that the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled. \*\*\**

### Appeal and Dispute Processes:

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment in a school, the child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Level Team, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible in accordance with the enrollment disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act as follows.

- Work with the McKinney-Vento District Liaison to ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the enrollment disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act (Appendix B) as follows:
  - I. the child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute;

- II. the parent or guardian of the child or youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal
- III. the child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Level Team, who shall carry out the Dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and
- IV. in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the McKinney-Vento District Liaison shall ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school pending resolution of the dispute.

*\*\*\*The McKinney-Vento District Level Team consists of McKinney-Vento District Liaison, Building Leader, Assistant School Leader, School Board Member.\*\*\**

If a dispute arises over qualification for McKinney-Vento services, the child or youth shall receive all McKinney-Vento rights and services provided by Smith Academy for Excellence, pending resolution of the dispute. The child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Level Team, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Act as follows.

- Work with the McKinney-Vento District Liaison to ensure that enrollment disputes are mediated in accordance with the enrollment disputes section of the McKinney-Vento Act as follows:
  - V. the child or youth shall receive all McKinney-Vento rights and services, pending resolution of the dispute;
  - VI. the parent or guardian of the child or youth shall be provided with a written explanation of the school's decision regarding school selection or enrollment, including the rights of the parent, guardian, or youth to appeal (Appendix A)
  - VII. the child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the McKinney-Vento District Level Team, who shall carry out the Dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute; and
  - VIII. in the case of an unaccompanied youth, the McKinney-Vento District Liaison shall ensure that the youth receives all McKinney-Vento rights and services pending resolution of the dispute.

## **SECTION 5: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **McKinney-Vento Professional Development Opportunities:**

Professional development for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act will be provided to all staff members of Smith Academy for Excellence via the following ways:

- 1 Professional Development meeting per semester
- The McKinney-Vento District Liaison will meet with staff to insure success of MKV students (ongoing)

### **District Website:**

The Smith Academy for Excellence Website will include a page that will be used to communicate McKinney-Vento information with students, parents, staff, and community members. Information on the Smith Academy for Excellence Website will include:

- Contact information for the McKinney-Vento District Liaison

- Notice of Rights for McKinney-Vento Families
- Dispute Resolution Documents
- Link to McKinney-Vento Resources

## **SECTION 6: EDUCATIONAL STAFFING AND SUPPORT**

### **McKinney-Vento District Liaison's Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Assistant School Leader at Smith Academy for Excellence serves as the District McKinney-Vento Liaison and will:

- Identify students that may be facing homeless situations.
- Monitor school attendance.
- Facilitate training at the building level.
- Make sure parents feel welcome and set the tone for further parental involvement.
- Establish a trusting relationship with students and parents.
- Ensure that building level procedures are established and followed to provide each child and youth who qualifies for McKinney-Vento services with a free and appropriate education.
- Post public notice of the educational rights of students in homeless situations at the school.
- Work collaboratively with transportation and food services personnel to coordinate appropriate services for any child or youth who qualifies for McKinney-Vento Services.
- Disseminate critical information concerning the rights of students in homeless situations to school staff.
- Post information regarding the availability of school programs and services for students facing homeless situations in local shelters, local hotels, the local post office building, city hall, local library, and local food banks.
- Maintain a McKinney-Vento District Liaison Log to document the McKinney-Vento process for each child and youth who qualifies for McKinney-Vento services.
- Plan and facilitate professional development regarding the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to all staff responsible for identifying and working with students facing homeless situations.
- Work with building level staff and administration to facilitate success of the McKinney-Vento program and each student facing a homeless situation.
- Meet with community agencies and volunteers to share resources and information and to evaluate impact of services.
- Monitor all district data collection and reporting requirements on each child and youth who qualifies for McKinney-Vento services.
- Attend state level professional development opportunities.

### **McKinney-Vento District Liaison:**

- Name: Michael Muter
- Email: m.muter@staff.fwsafe.com
- Phone: 260.579.6939



# McKinney-Vento Act Residency & Educational Rights

In Indiana over 29,000 children experience homelessness each year. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act was created with the goal of ensuring the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in school.

The McKinney-Vento Act provides certain rights for homeless students. This includes waiving certain requirements such as proof of residency when students are enrolling and allowing eligibility for certain services, such as free textbooks.

When families and students find themselves in transition due to their housing situation, it is important that they know their rights regarding education. If students meet the requirements as stated in the McKinney-Vento Act(42 U.S.C11431)(Title VII, Subtitle B), their rights are as follows:

- ✓ Students may attend their school of origin or the school where they are temporarily residing.
- ✓ Students must be provided a written statement of their rights when they enroll and at least two additional times per year.
- ✓ Students may enroll without school, medical or similar records.
- ✓ Students have a right to transportation to school.
- ✓ Students must be provided a statement explaining why they are denied enrollment or any other services.
- ✓ Students must receive services, such as transportation, while disputes are being settled.
- ✓ Students are automatically eligible for Title I services.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, people living in the following situations are considered homeless:

- ✓ Doubled up with family or friends due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- ✓ Living in motels and hotels for lack of other suitable housing
- ✓ Runaway and displaced children and youth—Unaccompanied Youth
- ✓ Homes for unwed or expectant mothers for lack of a place to live
- ✓ Homeless and domestic violence shelters
- ✓ Transitional housing programs
- ✓ The streets
- ✓ Abandoned buildings
- ✓ Public places not meant for housing
- ✓ Cars, trailers (does not include mobile homes intended for permanent housing), and campgrounds
- ✓ Migratory children staying in housing not fit for habitation

## **Notice of Dispute Resolution Procedure Enrollment of Homeless or Unaccompanied Youth School District**

These are Smith Academy for Excellence procedures for receiving and resolving disputes pertaining to transition of children and youth experiencing homelessness as identified under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001. The School District McKinney-Vento Liaison, Michael Muter can be reached at 260-579-6939.

The McKinney-Vento Liaison oversees the School District's identification of homeless or unaccompanied youth, informs the parents/guardians of homeless youth and unaccompanied youth of their rights, assists in locating services for the youth, and coordinates resolution of disputes regarding enrollment.

### **How to Present a Dispute**

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment, the McKinney-Vento Liaison needs to be advised of the dispute the same day that it occurs. The parent/guardian **may** advise the Liaison of the dispute. The School District representatives involved in enrolling the student **must** advise the Liaison of the dispute.

### **The McKinney-Vento Liaison will:**

- Provide a copy of this procedure to the parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth;
- Assure that the child or youth is immediately enrolled (granted the opportunity fully to participate in school activities) or granted continued enrollment in the school in which he/she is seeking enrollment pending resolution of the dispute;
- Assist the parent/guardian in completing the Request for Dispute Resolution form;
- Inform the parent/guardian of the right to submit written or oral information to support a Request for Dispute Resolution;
- Assist the School District enrolling officials in completing the Response form;
- Gather other relevant information from both parties;
- Submit to the School Building Leader resolution of the dispute, the basis for the recommendation, and provide copies to the parent/guardian; and
- Additionally, in the event of an inter-district dispute, the McKinney-Vento Liaison will represent Smith Academy for Excellence in the resolution of the dispute by the Indiana Department of Education.

### **The School Building Leader will:**

- Review the Report of the McKinney-Vento Liaison;
- Gather any additional information that will assist in resolving the dispute; and
- Provide to the parent/guardian, the McKinney-Vento Liaison, and the School District enrolling officials a report of the final resolution.

### **How to Appeal the School District's Final Decision**

If the parent/guardian is not satisfied with the final resolution, the parent/guardian may challenge the decision by contacting the McKinney-Vento Education Coordinator at the Indiana Department of Education. The Coordinator can answer questions regarding the rights of a youth under the McKinney-Vento Act and will consider appeals of a school's final decision on an enrollment dispute involving a homeless or unaccompanied youth. The contact information for the McKinney-Vento Coordinator is listed below.

The Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE) State Coordinator for the McKinney-Vento Act.

Mandi Bielanski

IDOE McKinney-Vento State Coordinator

[mbielanski@doe.in.gov](mailto:mbielanski@doe.in.gov)

[MckinneyVentoPoc@doe.in.gov](mailto:MckinneyVentoPoc@doe.in.gov)

317-232-9189

IDOE McKinney-Vento Children and Youth Homeless Program





# Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education


**Please sign and return this completed form to the local district/school.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Person Submitting Appeal**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

**\*\*\*\*\* FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY \*\*\*\*\***

1. Send a copy of this completed form to the Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Director: [mckinneyventopos@doe.in.gov](mailto:mckinneyventopos@doe.in.gov)
2. Maintain the original copy of this form at the local LEA McKinney-Vento liaison's office (enter liaison's name):  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. A copy of the form must be retained (or provided if a verbal submission) to the individual requesting the appeal.
4. For verbal submissions, please provide the name of the person receiving the data at the LEA or school: \_\_\_\_\_

Status:  Resolved at the LEA    Escalated to IDOE    Unresolved/recommended for further review