

ENROLLMENT:



Enrolling homeless students is a core concept in the McKinney-Vento Act as the law's purpose is to ensure that every homeless child or youth has equal access to a free, appropriate, public education. [42 U.S.C. § 11434(a)(1)]. Schools are required to enroll students immediately, regardless of the point in the school year in which a homeless student presents for enrollment.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS:

- Students must be enrolled in school immediately, even if they do not have the required documents. Children and youth experiencing homelessness often lack the documents ordinarily required for school enrollment. Domestic violence, natural disasters, evictions and unstable living situations can make it impossible for parents to retain documents.
- The term enrollment is a critical part of the law and is defined as, “attending classes and participating fully in school activities”.
- If a student has not had immunizations or does not have immunization or medical records, the liaison must immediately provide assistance in obtaining them, and the student must be enrolled in the interim.
- Enrolling schools must obtain school records from the previous school, and students must be enrolled in school while records are being obtained. Schools must maintain records for students who are homeless so they are readily available.

STRATEGIES:

- Train all school enrollment staff, secretaries, school counselors, school social workers, and principals on the legal requirements of immediate enrollment. You can access a web-based training for school site personnel in the school site section of this toolkit!
- Make sure families and youth know about their right to attend school. Our office provides the posters that must hang in your offices. Please contact us if you need more and we will get them to you!
- Develop statements of residency or other forms to replace the typical proof of residency. It is helpful when forms are crafted as options to be checked taken directly from the language of the law rather than open ended questions. You can find sample forms like this in the resource section of this toolkit!