

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Under the McKinney-Vento Act

Each homeless child or youth must have “equal access to the same free, appropriate public education, including a public preschool education,” as other children and youth, including...

Equal Access to Programming

If you are homeless, your school must help you access programming you need such as:

- Sports/clubs
- Special education
- Graduation
- Before/after-school
- Field trips
- ESOL
- Gifted/talented
- Summer school

*Schools **cannot** charge homeless students fees for these programs and must remove other barriers, like strict application deadlines or admission requirements.*

► **Meals:** You are automatically eligible for free lunch and breakfast.

► **Referrals:** Schools should connect you to healthcare, counseling, food pantries, help with housing, and other resources.

Immediate Enrollment

Homeless students have the right to enroll in class and participate in school activities **immediately** even without...

- immunization records, school records, birth certificate, proof of residence or guardianship, etc.;
 - school uniforms or school fees; or
 - a parent/guardian present.
- The school must assist the student in obtaining missing records after enrollment.

Are you homeless?

You are “homeless” by law if you are staying ...

- with friends or relatives due to eviction, domestic violence, economic hardship or similar reason
- in a motel, hotel, trailer park temporarily for lack of other options
- in shelter or transitional housing
- in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, or other places not meant for living

Get Free Legal Help!

Public Justice Center

410-625-9409

Choice of School & Transportation

Homeless students have **the choice** to attend:

- The ‘school of origin,’ which is the school the student last attended, even if it is out of the school zone or district; or
- The ‘local’ or ‘zoned’ school, which is the school attended by others living in the same area as the student’s current residence.

► The choice should be based on the student's best interests, and the parent's wishes

► Homeless students have the right to **free transportation** to the school of origin;

Unaccompanied Youth

Are you homeless and staying on your own, without a parent or legal guardian?

- You can enroll and make most decisions about your education on your own, without a parent or legal guardian
- You may be eligible to attend any Maryland public college or university tuition-free

Dispute Process

- If you are homeless and your school denies you the rights described here, it must provide a written explanation and a chance to appeal
- You can appeal to the superintendent, the local board, and the state board of education
- You can stay in school while appeals are pending