



TIP SHEET 3:

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and How it Can Support Effective Reentry Planning

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is a federal law that provides important educational rights and services to children and youth experiencing homelessness in grades preK - twelve.¹ Youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system—even those placed in the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) system—may be experiencing homelessness and eligible for services. If a young person is identified as experiencing homelessness prior to or during their time in a DJJ placement, they may be eligible for services that can be critical to their school success and aid a young person's re-entry from a juvenile justice placement into the community.

Under the McKinney-Vento Act youth experiencing homelessness have the following rights that can aid in their re-entry to the community:

- To attend their school of origin, the school they attended before they became homeless or the school in which they were last enrolled, if it is in their best interest.²
- To immediate enrolment in school even if they do not have all needed documents and records.³
- To transportation to their school of origin.⁴
- To access extracurricular activities.⁵
- To receive assistance in receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school.⁶
- To receive verification of their status as an independent student for college financial aid⁷ and assistance from school counselors to advise, prepare, and improve their readiness for college.⁸

¹ 42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.

² 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(B)

³ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C)

⁴ 42 U.S.C. §11432 (g)(1)(J)(iii)

⁵ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(F)(iii)

⁶ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(F)(ii)

⁷ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(x)(III)

⁸ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(K)

- To receive free school meals through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.⁹
- To receive referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health and substance abuse services, housing services, and other appropriate services.¹⁰
- To receive support from school counselors to prepare and improve their college readiness.¹¹

In addition to the rights listed above, homeless children and youth have a right to an array of services, including:

- Ensuring that the student is aware of the rights listed above.
- Referring to community based services like health, dental, mental health, housing, substance abuse, and other appropriate services.
- Providing school supplies and uniforms.
- Arranging for free school meals.
- And more!

Connecting With McKinney-Vento Liaisons

Every Local Education Agency (LEA) is required by federal law to designate a [McKinney Vento Liaison](#) who helps make sure the rights listed above are carried out and that services are provided to support students who are experiencing homelessness. DJJ acts as a LEA for youth who are placed and attending school at facilities. The McKinney Liaison for DJJ is Ms. Kenyatta McLeod (KenyattaMcLeod@djg.sc.gov.) You can find the contact information for the liaison for each school district in South Carolina [here](#).

Additionally, LEAs are required to review and revise their [policies and procedures](#) to “remove barriers to the identification of homeless children and youths, and the enrollment and retention of homeless children and youths in schools in the State, including barriers to enrollment and retention due to outstanding fees or fines, or absences.”¹² DJJ should review their policies to ensure that:

- ☐ All DJJ staff are trained on the McKinney-Vento Act requirements;
- ☐ There are procedures at intake to assess a youth's living situation prior to entering DJJ placement;

⁹ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(E)

¹⁰ 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)(iv)

¹¹ 42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(1)(K)

¹² 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(I)(4)

- ☐ There is a referral process by which Probation officers and other DJJ personnel can reach out to the DJJ McKinney Vento Liaison when they identify a youth as homeless;
- ☐ There are procedures in place for youth exiting DJJ placement to connect with the Liaison for the district to which the youth will attend when they re-enter the community.