McKinney-Vento Frequently Asked Questions

# McKinney-Vento Homelessness Act

Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in 2015 by Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, is a federal law that addresses the educational needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

This document outlines frequently asked questions and answers regarding McKinney-Vento.

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## How do I determine if a student is McKinney-Vento eligible?

Each’s school homeless liaison should work with families and/or unaccompanied youth to determine if they might be eligible.

McKinney-Vento eligible students means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and/or adequate nighttime residence; and includes:

* children who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
* are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds, cars, parks, public places, emergency, and transitional shelters as well as few other living environments that are not designed for or ordinarily used as a sleeping accommodation for human beings

*See Slides 10; 35-36*

## May Colorado charter public schools obtain a waiver to opt out of adhering to the requirements of administering McKinney-Vento?

No, because it is a federal law that is not eligible for a waiver.

*See Slide 10*

## Must schools identify students as being McKinney-Vento eligible before October Count to receive funding for these students?

No, McKinney-Vento eligibility occurs year-round.

*See Slide 68*

## Is CSI’s McKinney-Vento liaison enough to satisfy the federal requirement of having a McKinney-Vento liaison?

No. Each school must have a liaison who has the *skills and capacity* to fulfill the duties.

*See Slide 30*

## What is the rate that CSI schools identify McKinney-Vento eligible students?

CSI schools identify students at a much lower rate than what is expected based on the FRL rates.

*See Slide 11*

## Must parents and students fill out the McKinney-Vento form on their own without assistance?

No. Staff may help parents and/or students complete the forms.

*See Slide 51*

## Can we deny McKinney-Vento eligibility if parents don't complete the eligibility form correctly?

No. It is the responsibility of the school liaison to complete the form correctly, not the parent.

*See Slide 51*

## Must parents sign the McKinney-Vento form for the form to be verified, even if the student is unaccompanied?

No. Legally, the only signatures needed are the MKV Liaisons from both the school and CSI.

*See Slide 59*

## Should materials advertising McKinney-Vento be kept behind the front desk?

No. They must be posted for parents to see.

*See Slide 29*

## Must a new form be completed each year for each foster student since they automatically qualify?

Yes.

*See Slide 22*

## Do McKinney-Vento eligible students have the right to transportation to and from school, even if the charter school does not provide transportation to all students?

Yes.

*See Slide 25*

## If a student at your school has chosen to live in a barn without any electricity, heat, water or sewage are they still McKinney-Vento eligible because they have chosen to live there on their own?

Yes.

*See Slide 35*

## Should schools email CSI's liaison with the McKinney-Vento forms attached to let them know new forms need to be verified?

No. Never email personally identifiable information.

*See Slide 62*

## Are McKinney-Vento eligible students eligible for free tutoring?

Yes.

*See Slide 28*

## Can a school pay for counseling for a McKinney-Vento eligible student?

Yes.

*See Slide 28*

## Can a school pay for a gas card for a student who has a car and is able to transport themselves back & forth to school?

No.

*See Slide 78*

## Do schools have to report students as “Homeless” in State Reporting fields if they have already submitted the eligibility forms?

Yes.

*See Slide 87*

## Must schools keep track of McKinney-Vento expenditures?

Yes. McKinney-Vento funds are Title IIA and must be accounted for.

*See Slide 80*

## Are students whose parents are engaged in migratory agricultural work automatically eligible for McKinney-Vento?

Yes.

*See Slide 17*

## If a student and their family move in with another family to save on childcare for a month, are they McKinney-Vento eligible?

Maybe! More information is needed.

*See Slide 42*

# Additional Questions

## Is the form required for services?

Yes, it is.

It is not required to have the parent and/or unaccompanied minor sign the form, but it is required for both the school & the CSI MKV liaison to sign.

*See Slides 58-60*

## How long does a person have to be homeless to be considered homeless?

The federal definition of homelessness uses the word “regular,” but does not define “regular” in the statute. There is no hard and fast definition here, so use your best discretion. We want to identify students & families with housing instability quickly, because they are at most at risk fordropout within the year of their first MKV qualifying event. Housing stability can change quickly, and we want to be responsive to this.

*See Slides 24; 35-36*

## How does CSI verify residency?

We use RITS to verify that the student is enrolled in the CSI school.

*See Slide 66*

## Can we pay for groceries?

Absolutely. We cannot get food gift cards, but we can pay for food. You can even set up an Instacart or other home delivery groceries & pay for food that way.

*See Slides 76-79*

## What happens when a parent doesn’t want to be identified?

The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law that requires all public schools (and charter schools are public schools) to identify, serve and protect the rights of students they know are considered homeless (unhoused, underhoused, housing instability, engaged in migratory work, unaccompanied, and/or foster care). Schools are required to protect the rights of these students even if the parents don’t want to be identified.

*See Slides 58-60*

## What happens when we know a student is unaccompanied, but we can't get ahold of them?

The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law that requires all public schools (and charter schools are public schools) to identify, serve and protect the rights of students they know are considered homeless (unhoused, underhoused, housing instability, engaged in migratory work, unaccompanied, and/or foster care). Schools are required to protect the rights of these students even if the students are difficult to get ahold of.

*See Slides 58-60*

## What happens when students need services & parents don't want them to have services?

Our schools have been creative in meeting the needs of students. Some schools keep clean clothes at school for the students to wear, keep food for them to eat, and provide them with showering and laundering services while at school. Other schools have been able to provide the family with supplies that have been “dropped off at school.”

## Can we buy formula for students who are babies?

Yes! Diapers may qualify too.

*See Slide 74*

## What kind of flexibility do we have with the money we receive?

Although funds are calculated through October count, that does not mean that each MKV eligible student has the exact monetary need as another MKV eligible student. Schools have the discretion to meet the needs of students the best way that they can in accordance with their specific needs.

## What happens when we feel as though the situation may not actually be unhoused or that their situation may not as unhoused as we were led to believe?

Although schools are not permitted to do home visits to verify housing, schools could bring supplies by to the address the students and/or families have provided, or ask for additional paperwork as they see applicable, and we strongly advise that schools tread lightly in this sensitive area.

## Are there special concerns for students who have housing instability and are intending to attend college?

Seniors who have housing instability are entitled to identify themselves as an MKV eligible student on their FAFSA forms and may benefit from MKV liaisons advocating for students to have access to early housing or dorms.

*See Slide 28*

## What kind of transportation flexibility do we have?

Charter schools are still required to remove barriers for students who attend charter schools, even if the charter school does not provide transportation. Charter schools have found creative ways to provide transportation for students by altering bus routes, partnering with a local district to provide augmented routes that serve MKV students, setting up an account with a driving service for schools such as Uber, Lyft, Everdriven, or connecting families to share rides. Charter schools have also provided bus passes, reimbursed mileage for families traveling between an address and school, and filled up gas tanks.

## What happens for transportation for students who are online and need access to educational services, tutoring or supplies?

Amazing question that I do not have the answer to yet!