



### Educational Barriers

Unaccompanied homeless youth face many barriers to enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school, including:

- Lack of safe, stable housing
- Lack of support from a caring adult
- Lack of basic needs, including food and healthcare, resulting in hunger, fatigue, and poor health
- Lack of consistent access to bathing and laundry facilities
- Emotional crises/mental health problems
- Lack of access to school records and other paperwork
- Lack of school supplies and clothing
- Employment that interferes with school attendance and homework
- Irregular school attendance

- Difficulty accumulating credits due to school mobility
- Lack of transportation
- Concerns about being reported to child welfare and/or law enforcement agencies

### Educational Rights Under the McKinney-Vento Act

The purpose of the McKinney-Vento is to address the problems that homeless children and youth faced in enrolling, attending, and succeeding in school. This is accomplished by ensuring that eligible students have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education as other children and youth, experience school stability despite residential mobility, and receive the educational and other services they need to enable them to meet the same challenging academic achievement standards to which all students are held. To this end, McKinney-Vento eligible students, including unaccompanied homeless youth, have the right to:

- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents
- Enroll in the local attendance area school or continue attending their school of origin (the school they attended when permanently housed or the school in which they were last enrolled), if that is the parent's/guardian's, or unaccompanied youth's preference and is feasible; if the school district believes the school selected is not in the student's best interest, then the district must provide the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth with a written explanation of its position and inform him/her of the right to appeal its decision.
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested by the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to the student's need
- Not be stigmatized or segregated on the basis of homeless status

In addition, the McKinney-Vento Act includes the following provisions specific to unaccompanied homeless youth:

- The right to immediate enrollment without proof of guardianship
- Assistance from the local homeless education liaison
- Select a school of attendance, whether the local attendance area or the school of origin, and enroll immediately
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested