



Homeless Liaison Manual: Standard Operating Procedures

Identifying and Supporting Destination Career Academy of Georgia Homeless Student Population

You may contact Destinations Career Academy of Georgia District's co-Homeless Liaison, Brandi Beavers (bbeavers@gadca.org; 404- 997-8040) or Clennette Reid (reid@gadca.org (470) 317-3094), or the Head-of-School, Nakia McCall (nmccall@gadca.org, 470-317-3096) for additional information concerning Homeless Education.

Dissemination of Public Notices can be found:

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- 1). GADCA.k12.com under Resources<Important Documents and
- 2). Semi-Annual Welcome Letter.

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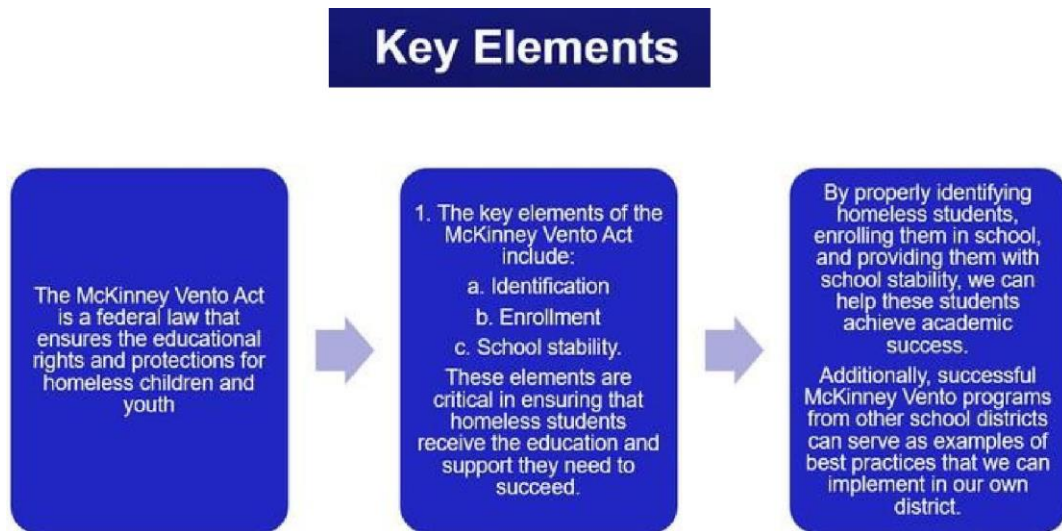
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PURPOSE

The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) which falls under Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act, has been reauthorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act as of December 2015. According to ESSA, all LEAs are required to provide necessary services to homeless children, including appointing a local homeless liaison to ensure their enrollment in school.

The McKinney-Vento Act was enacted to tackle the obstacles that homeless children and youths encounter when enrolling, attending, and thriving in school. The law strongly emphasizes ensuring school stability for this vulnerable population, recognizing that frequent school changes can hinder academic and social development. To this end, the McKinney-Vento Act mandates that school districts keep homeless students in their school of origin to foster stability and enhance educational outcomes, always keeping the student's best interests in mind.

Destinations Career Academy of Georgia (GADCA) Homeless Manual outlines federal regulations under the McKinney-Vento Act. The McKinney-Vento Act is a federal law that supersedes all local and state-level laws. The manual is intended to serve in defining, understanding, and communicating GADCA policies and procedures, identifying responsibilities, and providing guidelines in performing specific tasks.



DEFINITION: HOMLESS STUDENTS

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Destinations Career Academy of Georgia (GADCA) is committed to identifying school-aged homeless children and youth within the area it serves, promoting their enrollment, and removing any obstacles that may hinder their education due to school system policies or practices. Homeless students will receive the same services as other students based on their unique needs, including preschool, free school meals, services for English learners, special education,

career and technical education (CTE), and before- and after-school programs.

DEFINITION of HOMELESS STUDENTS - THE FAR METHOD

MCKINNEY-VENTO DEFINITION OF HOMELESS 42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)

The term “homeless children and youth” A. means individuals who lack a fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence. At GADCA, we’ve incorporated the acronym **FAR** (Fixed, adequate, and regular nighttime residence).

This includes the following situations:

- └ Sharing the housing of others (known as doubling-up) due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (*a situation where individuals are unable to maintain their housing situation and are forced to stay with a series of friends and/or extended family members*):
- └ Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations.
- └ Living in emergency or transitional shelters or abandoned in hospitals.
- └ Living in a public or private place not designated for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- └ Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- └ Migratory children living in the above circumstances.
- └ The McKinney-Vento Act also recognizes unaccompanied youth who are homeless. According to the act, an unaccompanied youth is a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian.

IDENTIFYING HOMELESS STUDENTS

GADCA understands that McKinney-Vento students may not fit the stereotypical image of homelessness and housing insecurity. Therefore, it's essential to understand the various situations that can lead to housing instability and approach each student with empathy and understanding. It is important to gather all the relevant information, analyze what you know, and seek consultation (if needed), prior to determining the student's homeless classification. Some students may be living in temporary or unstable housing situations, such as staying with friends or family members, living in motels or shelters, or sleeping in cars. Others may have experienced a loss of housing, such as eviction or foreclosure, in the past 12 months. These students may require additional support and resources to succeed in school and find stable housing.

SUPPORTING UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH

In several instances, children and youth enrolling in a school may not live with their parents or legal guardians. Children in families experiencing homelessness are frequently sent to live temporarily with friends or relatives. This living arrangement has been especially prevalent in families displaced by natural disasters. In other situations, youth have been forced to leave home due to abusive environments or are alone for other reasons. These children and youth, in most cases, fit the definition of homeless, unaccompanied youth in the McKinney-Vento Act: a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

- Immediately enroll and allow youth to attend classes and participate fully in school activities. Inform the youth of his/her eligibility to receive free school services/Offer a peer and adult mentor.
Monitor the student's performance and provide additional support (grades, attendance, behavior)
- Provide transportation to/from Milestones Testing.

The student's homeless status will carry the academic year in which the student has enrolled. Homeless status should be verified each new school year.

Develop	Develop a system for identifying and tracking these students. maintain confidentiality and sensitivity and to ensure that all necessary paperwork and documentation is completed promptly and accurately.
Training	Training school staff on the definition of homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act
Create	Creating a designated point of contact for McKinney-Vento students and families
Outreach	Conducting regular outreach to community organizations that may work with homeless families
Confidentiality	Additionally, it is important to maintain confidentiality for these students and families and to ensure that they are aware of their educational rights and protections under the McKinney-Vento Act.