

Who Is Homeless? (continued)

As a result of the lack of shelter, most students in homeless situations share housing with friends or relatives, stay in motels or other temporary facilities, or live on the streets, in abandoned cars, and in woods and campgrounds. Of the children and youth identified as homeless by State Departments of Education in FY2000, only 35 percent lived in shelters, 34 percent lived doubled-up with family or friends, and 23 percent lived in motels and other locations.⁸ Yet, these children and youth may not immediately be recognized as homeless and are sometimes denied the protections and services of the McKinney-Vento Act. Therefore, the Act now contains a specific definition of homelessness that includes a broad array of inadequate living situations. This definition can help educators, families, and youth understand who is entitled to the Act's protections.

The issue brief entitled "Identifying Students in Homeless Situations" provides strategies to locate and serve children and youth living in a variety of homeless situations. Consult other issue briefs in this series for legal provisions and implementation strategies to ensure children and youth in homeless situations can select their school, enroll in school immediately, access transportation services, have disputes resolved quickly, and access Title I services.

Footnotes

- ¹ Burt, M. & Laudan, A. *America's Homeless II: Populations and Services*, The Urban Institute, 2000.
- ² U.S. Conference of Mayors. *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities: 2001*.
- ³ National Low Income Housing Coalition. *Out of Reach*, 2001. www.nlihc.org/oor2001
- ⁴ Harvard University, Joint Center for Housing Studies, *The State of the Nation's Housing: 2001*. www.jchs.harvard.edu/publications/son2001
- ⁵ U.S. Conference of Mayors. *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities: 2001*
- ⁶ Interagency Council on the Homeless. *Homelessness: Programs and the People They Serve*, Summary Report. December 1999.
- ⁷ U.S. Conference of Mayors. *A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities: 2001*
- ⁸ U.S. Department of Education. *Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program Report to Congress*, 2000.

Endnotes

All definitions are contained, exactly as written here, in McKinney-Vento Act Sec. 725(2); 42 U.S.C. 11435(2).

"Children or youth who have run away from home and live in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, the streets, or other inadequate accommodations are considered homeless, even if their parents have provided and are willing to provide a home for them.... Throwaway children or youth (i.e. those whose parents or guardians will not permit them to live at home) are considered homeless if they live on the streets, in shelters, or in other transitional or inadequate accommodations." U.S. Department of Education Preliminary Guidance for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, Title VII, Subtitle B (June 1995), 22-3.

Every state is required to have a coordinator for the education of homeless children and youth, and every school district is required to have a liaison for homeless students. These individuals will assist you with the implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. For information on the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness in Texas and to obtain contact information for the liaison in your district, please contact:



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