Who is homeless?

(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 – Title I X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act – Sec 725)

The term "homeless children and youth" –

A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence…: and
B. includes –
   i. children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; awaiting foster care placement;
   ii. Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is public or private not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings…
   iii. Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
   iv. Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purpose of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clause (i) through (iii).

Educational Rights

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children in homeless situations have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there,
- Attend either the local school or the school of origin, if this is in their best interest; the school of origin is the school the child attended when he/she was permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled,
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin,
- Enroll in school immediately, even if missing records and documents normally required for enrollment such as a birth certificate, proof of residence, previous school records, or immunization/medical records,
- Enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in all school activities while the school arranges for transfer of records,
- Have access to the same programs and services that are available to all other students including transportation and supplemental educational services,
- Have access to free school meals/lunch programs,
- Attend school with children not experiencing homelessness; segregation based on a student's status as homeless is prohibited.

Chapter 33, Education for Homeless, Iowa Administrative Code

- A homeless child of ages 5-21;
- A child who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence,
- A child who is living in a car, tenet, or abandoned building or some other form of shelter not defined as a permanent home,
- A child who is living in a community shelter facility
- A child who is living with non-nuclear family members or with friends (includes doubled-up families)

Resources

Local Homeless Liaison: Every Iowa public school district is required to have a liaison for homeless students. Contact the local school district's main office for contact information.

State Coordinator for Homeless Education
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National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
NCHE is a technical assistance center in support of the homeless education community nationwide. NCHE is funded through the U.S. Department of Education and is housed at the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
http://www.serve.org/nche
Toll-free Helpline: 800-308-2145