

## The Education of Homeless Children & Youth in Oregon

Under the McKinney-Vento Act each district must designate a Homeless Liaison, to identify homeless children and youth, address their educational needs, and be a primary contact to the state office and other districts regarding homeless children and youth. Homeless Liaisons help to ensure that homeless children and youth enroll and succeed in school and receive the educational services for which they are eligible, including preschool services. Liaisons also provide homeless children and youth and their families with referrals to health care, dental care, mental health services. Liaisons can expedite school placement, school of origin transportation and free meal program enrollment, and improve coordination and provision of local programs and services for homeless families and youths.

Determinations of whether a child or youth is homeless should be made on a case-by-case basis by the district's Homeless Liaison. Types of homeless situations can include:

- **Children and Youth in Transitional or Emergency Shelters**

Children and youth in transitional or emergency shelters, with or without other family members, are considered homeless. This applies to families and youth in shelters for economic hardship reasons as well as to those who are displaced from housing due to natural or other disasters (e.g., flooding, house fire).

- **Children and Youth Living in Trailer Parks, Camping Grounds**

Children and youth staying in trailer parks or camping areas because they lack adequate living accommodations should be considered homeless. Those living in trailer parks or camping areas on a long-term basis in adequate accommodations should not be considered homeless. Inadequate shelter/housing can include that which lacks electricity, plumbing, or sufficient heating, as well as housing affected by unhealthy circumstances such as head lice infestation.

- **Children and Youth Living in Motels/Hotels**

Children and youth living in motels or hotels, with or without their families, are considered homeless if they are residing there for lack of more adequate accommodations. While motels may provide a temporary "home," conditions for such families can include overcrowding, lack of cooking facilities and food storage space, no quiet place to do homework or safe area to play.

- **Children and Youth "Doubled-Up" in Housing**

Children living in "doubled-up" accommodations, sharing housing with relatives or friends, are considered homeless if they are doubled-up because of a loss of housing or other similar situation which forces shared housing. Families voluntarily living in doubled-up accommodations to save money generally should not be considered homeless, but should be considered eligible for services if the accommodations are such that the children involved have difficulty accessing or succeeding in school.

- **Homeless Migrant Families, Children and Youth**

Children and youth who are eligible under Title IC - Migrant Education, and who are living in circumstances such as those described above, or who are staying in accommodations not suitable for permanent family habitation (e.g., migrant camps) should be considered homeless. The same applies to unaccompanied youth who are eligible as migrant under Title IC.

- **Unaccompanied Minors: Runaway and Abandoned Youth**

Youth who have left home voluntarily and live in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, the streets or other inadequate accommodations, or who are staying with friends or noncustodial relatives, may be considered homeless even though their parents are willing to provide them a home. Youths whose parents will not permit them to live at home, as well as minor youths who have been abandoned by parents or guardians, are also considered homeless. The term “constructive runaway” has been used in Oregon to describe homeless youth who have fled an abusive situation in their family home. Homeless youths are entitled to the same appropriate public education as all children and youth. Under Oregon school admission law ORS 339.115(7) “a school district shall not exclude from admission a child located within the district ... solely because the child is not under the supervision of a parent, guardian or person in a parental relationship.”

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