

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Fact Sheet

Starting in the 2012-2013 academic year, the definition of an “independent student” was expanded to include any applicant who has been **verified during the school year in which the application is submitted as either:**

- An unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth, as such terms are defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; or
- An unaccompanied youth who is at risk of homelessness **and** is also self-supporting.

Verification Requirements

Students who apply for assistance as an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth, as such terms are defined in section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, should be able to provide documentation of their status from a McKinney-Vento School District Liaison, a director or designee of a HUD- funded shelter, a director or designee of a RHYA-funded shelter, or have the written approval of a Financial Aid Officer at Northwestern Michigan College.

Critical Definitions

- **McKinney-Vento and CCRAA Definition of Homelessness:** Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence which includes:
 - Living in shelters, motels or cars OR
 - Temporarily living with other people because the applicant had nowhere else to go

The education subtitle of the McKinney-Vento Act is overseen by the U.S. Department of Education. For more information, see: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/homeless/legislation.html>

- **Unaccompanied Youth:** Unaccompanied homeless youth are young people who lack safe, stable housing and who are not in the care of a parent or guardian. They may have run away from home or been forced to leave by their parents. Unaccompanied youth live in a variety of temporary situations, including shelters, the homes of friends or relatives, cars, campgrounds, public parks, abandoned buildings, motels, and bus or train stations. **“Youth” means that the applicant (student) is 21 years of age or younger OR that the applicant is still enrolled in high school as of the day he/she completes the FAFSA.** Applicants between the ages of 21-24 who otherwise meet all other criteria should contact the Financial Aid Office for more information.
- **McKinney-Vento School District Liaisons:** Under subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, every school district is required to designate a liaison for students experiencing homelessness. Homeless liaisons have a number of legal responsibilities under the Act, including identifying youth who meet the definition of homeless and are unaccompanied. A local educational agency (LEA) homeless liaison, designated pursuant to 722(g) (1) (J) (ii) of the **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**. To find local liaisons: contact the Office State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth. http://www.serve.org/nche/states/state_resources.php.
- **HUD-funded Shelters:** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) administers funding for homeless shelters and services under Title IV of the McKinney-Vento Act. These funds are distributed to communities through a competitive grant process. For more information, see: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/homeless/programs/index.cfm>
- **RHYA-funded Shelters:** The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services administers the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs. These programs provide funding for Basic Centers, Transitional Living Programs, and Street Outreach Programs that serve runaway and other unaccompanied homeless youth.
 - For more information, see: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/youthdivision/index.htm#sub1>
 - The director or a designee of the director of a program funded by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. To find Runaway and Homeless Youth Act service providers go to: <http://www2.ncfy.com/locate/index.htm>

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