

PUSD Homeless Program Parent and Student Handbook



PRESCOTT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1

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Program Contacts

Website: [PUSD Homeless Services](#)

District Homeless Liaison

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District Homeless Director

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State Coordinator (Arizona Department of Education)

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Website: [Homeless Education Program](#)

Rights of Homeless Students

The LEA/Charter District shall provide an educational environment that treats all students with dignity and respect. Every homeless student shall have access to the same free and appropriate educational opportunities as students who are not homeless. This commitment to the educational rights of homeless children, youth, and unaccompanied youth, applies to all services, programs, and activities provided or made available.

McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless:

The term “homeless children and youth”— means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2)].

A student may be considered eligible for services as a “Homeless Child or Youth” under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act if he or she is presently living in one of the following situations:

- sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason,
- living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations,
- living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals,
- have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings,
- living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings, or
- is a migratory child who qualifies as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above.

To remove educational barriers for children and youths experiencing homelessness, the McKinney-Vento Act mandates the following: Immediate Enrollment: Documentation and immunization records cannot serve as a barrier to the enrollment in school [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(C)].

School Selection and Maintained Enrollment: McKinney Vento eligible students have a right to select from the options outlined below. Students may remain enrolled in their selected schools for the duration of homelessness, and until the end of the academic year upon which they are permanently housed or enroll the child or youth in any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the child or youth is living are eligible to attend. [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(A), 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(B) and 42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(I) (i)].

School of Origin	School of Residency
The school the student attended when permanently housed.	The school in the attendance area in which the student currently resides

The school in which the student was last enrolled.	
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Transportation Services: McKinney-Vento eligible students attending their School of Origin have a right to transportation to and from the School of Origin [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(iii)].

Participation in Programs: McKinney-Vento eligible students are guaranteed the right to services comparable to services offered to other students in the school [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(4) & (6)(iii)].

Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness: McKinney-Vento eligible students are guaranteed the right to immediate enrollment without proof of guardianship [42 U.S.C. §1432(g)(1)(H)(iv)].

Access to Extracurricular Activities: Removal of barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities for homeless students who meet relevant eligibility criteria [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(F)(iii)].

Dispute Resolution: If you disagree with school officials about enrollment, transportation, or fair treatment of a homeless child or youth, you may file a complaint with the school district [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(3)(E)].

Appointment of a Local Homeless Liaison: The McKinney-Vento Act mandates the appointment of a local Homeless Liaison in every school district or local education agency (LEA) to ensure that homeless children and youth are enrolled in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in school [42 U.S.C. §11432(g)(1)(J)(ii) and U.S.C. §11432(g)(6)(A)].

For more information, refer to Arizona Department of Education, Homeless Education, 42 USC CHAPTER 119, SUBCHAPTER VI, Part B: Education for Homeless Children and Youths, and the AZ State ESSA Plan

Program Overview

PUSD's McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Program is a federally funded program for children in the Prescott Unified School District who are "in transition" in their housing situation. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act protects homeless children and youth by providing additional rights and educational support services beyond that offered in the regular classroom setting.

PUSD students, preschool-grade 12, may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act if they live in any of the following situations:

- In a shelter
- In a motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation
- In a car, park, abandoned building, or bus or train station
- Doubled up with other people in someone else's home due to loss of housing or economic hardship
- Children living with non-custodial relatives or friends
- Families who live in substandard housing without access to running water or adequate heating

Screening Process

To Obtain an Application

The Student Eligibility Form (application) must be submitted for all students. Print the form from the Bulletin Board box on this page, or ask for an application at the school's front desk. They will either have applications, or they will refer you to the school's point of contact for the program.

Submitting the Application

Return the application to the staff member from which you received it, the school front desk, or the homeless liaison listed at the bottom of the form.

Screening Process

Upon receiving the application, the homeless liaison will call to discuss the student's housing situation. She will ask several questions and listen for details that indicate eligibility for the program. She must follow federal guidelines.

Transportation

PUSD provides for the transportation rights of homeless students in various ways. Each student's situation is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

School Bus Arrangements

PUSD school buses serve students throughout the district. If the student does not live near a bus route for his/her school of origin, PUSD will assess whether it is in the best interest of the student to add an additional stop or transfer point to bus service in the area.

Mileage Reimbursement

Mileage reimbursement is one way PUSD may supply transportation for homeless students to attend school-sponsored before or after school activities. Activities that may be covered include tutoring, after-school clubs, sports, and trips to and from bus stops or school for the regular school day (if the bus stop is far away). Please contact the district homeless liaison to inquire about mileage reimbursement.

Additional Services

Students are eligible for services from the time they are approved for the homeless program through the remainder of that school year.

Expedited Free School Breakfast and Lunch

Students who are approved for the Homeless Program are automatically eligible for the free breakfast and lunch program. The Free and Reduced Price Meal Application does not need to be completed. Free meals are usually available within a few days of being approved for the program.

Hungry Kids Project (Weekend Meals)

Hungry Kids Project is a community organization that delivers weekend food packs to students in need at all PUSD schools. School staff distribute the packs to students enrolled in the program. Ask at your school's front desk how to enroll your child.

Referrals to Community Resources

The homeless liaison may be able to provide information on community agencies that provide health and human services.

Title I Services

Students approved for the Homeless Program are automatically eligible for Title I services, even if they are not attending a Title I school. Services include supplemental education programs, such as elementary remedial summer school and academic support during the school day.

Limited Services

PUSD has applied for and received a grant to provide additional services to homeless students. Grant funding is limited and unfortunately may not last the entire school year. Grant funded services may include:

School Clothing, School Supplies, and Toiletries

A limited amount of funding may be available for each homeless child each school year for hygiene items, appropriate school clothing, and school supplies that were requested by the student's teachers. The goal of all items provided to the student is to help them be prepared for their school day.

PHS Bookstore Fees

Academic fees accrued at the Prescott High School Bookstore may be paid for by the Homeless Program. The following are likely to be covered: books, lab fees, art class fees, activity fee/ID, and possibly more. Lost book fees will not be covered.

Fees for School-Sponsored Activities

The goal of the program is to help homeless students access as many school activities in which they would normally participate. If funding is available, the following types of

school-sponsored activities may be covered:

- Sports
- After-school clubs, activities, and homework assistance

Tutoring

Homeless students in grades 1-12, with at least one grade of D, F, or N, may qualify for after-school tutoring at their school. If there is an after-school program available at the school, it will be used to serve students with academic support.

Summer School

The Homeless Program may pay for a summer school program for which the student otherwise qualifies, including:

- Elementary summer school
- Middle school summer school
- High school summer school

Dispute Resolution Process

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment for a student eligible under the McKinney-Vento Act –

The child or youth shall be immediately admitted to the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. PUSD will provide its share of the transportation to the school selected for the duration of the dispute resolution process.

The child, youth, parent, or guardian shall be referred to the district homeless coordinator, who shall carry out the dispute resolution process as expeditiously as possible after receiving notice of the dispute. In the case of an unaccompanied youth, the district homeless coordinator will work with the school principal to ensure that the youth is immediately enrolled in school, pending the resolution of the dispute.

The district homeless coordinator shall work through the expedited dispute resolution process. For Prescott Unified School District, that process involves:

- Referral from district homeless liaison, with a disputed homeless application to the district homeless coordinator.
- The district homeless coordinator will communicate directly with the child, youth, parent, or guardian. The district homeless coordinator is the decision-maker to verify eligibility of homeless status. The decision is based on the information the family provides and following eligibility guidelines as stated in the McKinney-Vento Act.
- The district homeless coordinator will contact youth, parent, or guardian within 48 hours of receipt of the application. Eligibility determination is made within 48 hours.
- PUSD will provide the parent, guardian, or homeless youth with verbal verification of status. If dissatisfied with the school's decision, the parent, guardian, or youth may appeal the decision to the state level. Contact information will be provided by the district homeless coordinator.