



HOMELESS EDUCATION OFFICE  
*tips for* **SCHOOL  
COUNSELORS**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act is a federal law that protects the educational rights of students in temporary housing (“experiencing homelessness”). It defines “homeless children and youths” as any student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

**As a counselor you typically are the first line of communication for students/ families living in temporary housing.**

**HOW CAN I IDENTIFY STUDENTS IN  
TEMPORARY HOUSING?**

- Physical Health: Chronic hunger, fatigue, lacks proper clothing, unmet medical/dental needs, inconsistent grooming, lack of medical / pupil records, etc.
- Attendance: Multiple school enrollments, chronic absence, tardiness, inability to contact parents/ guardians, lack of participation in school activities, etc.
- Behavior: May appear disorganized, forgetful, anxious, distracted.
- Parents: May be elusive when providing contact information or address, may mention staying with friends or relatives.



**HOW CAN I ENSURE I AM  
COMPLYING WITH THE MCKINNEY-  
VENTO ACT?**

- Maintain communication with the school homeless liaison to determine if student has a Student Housing Questionnaire on file for the current school year.
- Homelessness can carry a stigma; it is important to be sensitive, try using “temporarily housed” or “in transition” rather than homeless.
- Maintain confidentiality. Create a safe space for the student and make them feel welcomed.
- Make sure the student has equal access to participate in school activities.

**For additional support, please contact the  
Homeless Education Office at (213) 202-7581**