

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Expediting Identification for Displaced Students

The flood has caused many students to be displaced and to find other places for shelter and other basic needs. Federal law indicates that students displaced even for a short period of time, including those living with friends and family because of housing crises, can be considered eligible under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Among other rights under McKinney-Vento, students receive **immediate access** to free school meals. When a McKinney-Vento liaison or shelter director provides a child's name to the local school food service office, free school meals should be available immediately. Homeless students are also immediately eligible for Title IA services, including the Title IA homeless set-aside. More information on Title IA services for McKinney-Vento students can be found on the CDE Flood Resources Page: www.cde.state.co.us/cdegen/cofloodresources.

In terms of identification, McKinney-Vento student identification and eligibility determinations can be expedited during crises situations. A simple template can be filled out in a couple of minutes. (See www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/homeless_index). Every district has a McKinney-Vento homeless education liaison and these liaisons are the legal verifiers for the district. During this crisis, liaisons are training and utilizing teams of people at the district and in school-based settings to help with *initial identification* of displaced students. This process is allowable under the McKinney Act and **has been quite effective in streamlining McKinney eligibility** and opening up access to McKinney-Vento rights for students displaced by the flood.

Here are some ideas for quick and effective identification of McKinney students:

- Train front-line staff members at schools who can be *initial identifiers* that can help families fill out the identification form. Send the form to the district liaison immediately. The liaison will finalize verification and notify families of other student rights under McKinney-Vento. Some examples of staff members that can be utilized as *initial identifiers* include (this is not an exhaustive list):
 - Attendance advocates
 - Migrant recruiters
 - School-based community liaisons
 - Enrollment or front office staff
 - School counselors
- *Initial identifiers* can help with McKinney identification processes at parent and teacher nights and other district/school events where families are in attendance
- *Initial identifiers* or other liaison staff can visit area shelters and emergency operation or assistance centers to connect with displaced families who are accessing services at these centralized points

This process is not mandatory. The district homeless education liaison can decide what identification and verification process works best for the district. This information is provided as a suggestion only and is based on what we see is working in districts significantly impacted by the flood.

Additional information the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, including a full list of student educational rights, can be found at: www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/homeless_index or by contacting Dana Scott, State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth at 303-866-6930 or scott_d@cde.state.co.us