# Highly Mobile Youth

## Frequently Asked Questions

**How is *Highly Mobile Youth* defined?**A highly mobile student is defined as a student who experiences (or is at risk of experiencing) multiple school moves during their k-12 education outside of regular grade promotion. This includes youth in foster care, those experiencing homelessness, and migrant students **A student experiencing homelessness** is an individual lacking a fixed regular and adequate primary nighttime residence.  This definition applies to students birth through grade 12.

**Unaccompanied homeless youth** are young people who lack safe, stable housing and who are not in the care of a parent or guardian.

**A student in Foster Care** is a school-aged individual experiencing an out-of-home placement (e.g., kinship placement, licensed foster or group home, or residential childcare facility) for any length of time, from a few days to years.

**Migrant Youth -** A migrant child is defined as a child who is, or whose parent, spouse, or guardian is, a migratory agricultural worker, including a migratory dairy worker, or a migratory fisher.

### Migratory Out-of-School Youth is a youth who works in agriculture or fishing rather than attending school and is not in the custody of a parent or legal guardian.

### McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children & Youth

***The definition of homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is any child or youth who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate primary nighttime residence. What does fixed, regular and adequate mean?***

The law does not define fixed, regular, and adequate; however, the non-regulatory guidance points to using the dictionary definition to guide the determination of eligibility. A few examples of fixed, regular, and adequate are listed below, as well as a few examples of unfixed, irregular, and inadequate are articulated under the law.

**Fixed:** Stable, Permanent, Stationary; not subject to change

**Unfixed:** Cars, campgrounds, hotel/motels

**Regular;** Constant, Recurring, Consistent; Used on a predictable and routine basis.

**Irregular:** doubled-up due to economic hardship, couch surfing

**Adequate:** Sufficient for meeting the physical and psychological needs typically met in a home environment. In good repair and enough space for the people living there.

**Inadequate:** no heat or running water, broken windows, walls and/or floors where outdoor elements can get in.  

***Are there specific examples of what would qualify under the law as experiencing homelessness?***

**Categorically Included Under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**

* Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up)
* Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, campgrounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations
* Living in emergency or transitional shelters
* Living in a public or private place not designed for ordinary use as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans (cars, parks, bus or train stations, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, etc.).
* Unaccompanied youth living in the above circumstances.
* Migrant children and youth living in the above circumstances.

### Migrant Education Program

***What is the difference between the Migrant Education Program and individuals who identify as a migrant, an immigrant, or a refugee?***

The Office of Migrant Education at the Colorado Department of Education, is federally funded under [Title I, Part C](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg8.html) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The Migrant Education Program may serve children from birth to the age of 21 who are eligible for a free public education under State Law. In order to qualify for services, children must have moved within the past three years, across state or school district lines with or to join a migrant parent or guardian who has obtained qualifying temporary or seasonal employment in agriculture, fishing, or dairy.

**Migrant:** A migrant is someone who is moving from place to place (within his or her country or across borders), usually for economic reasons such as seasonal work. Similar to immigrants, they were not forced to leave their native countries because of persecution or violence, but rather are seeking better opportunities.

**Immigrant:** An immigrant is someone who makes a conscious decision to leave his or her home and move to a foreign country with the intention of settling there. Immigrants often go through a lengthy vetting process to immigrate to a new country. Many become lawful permanent residents and eventually citizens.

**Refugee:** A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her home because of war, violence or persecution, often without warning. They are unable to return home unless and until conditions in their native lands are safe for them again. (<https://www.rescue.org/article/migrants-asylum-seekers-refugees-and-immigrants-whats-difference>)

**Foster Care Education  
*How do I know if a child is in foster care?***County Child Welfare Agencies are responsible for notifying school districts when a child enters an out-of-home placement. Keep in mind that schools may receive notification from counties other than where their district is located about a student in their district in an out-of-home placement. For example, a child may be in the custody of El Paso County but could attend school in Denver. Each county is in varying stages of implementing school stability laws, and it is possible a caseworker may not be aware that they need to contact a school. Currently, there is not a “real time” system for CDE or school districts to identify students in foster care. Statute requires counties to notify schools when a child enters out-of-home placement.**Who can help in outreach, identification, and connection to services for highly mobile youth?**

**McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaisons**

The local liaison is the key to ensuring homeless children and youths receive the services they need. Required in all local education agencies regardless of subgrant status, the liaison is the primary contact between homeless families, school and local education agency/district staff, shelter workers, and other service providers. In 42 U.S.C. § 11432(g)(6)(A), the McKinney-Vento Act lists the responsibilities of the local liaison including ensuring the protection of student and parent rights outlined under the law.  <https://www.cde.state.co.us/studentsupport/mvliaisons>

**A Child Welfare Education Liaison** is a special point of contact at the school district required under Every Student Succeeds Act to support youth experiencing foster care with child placement agencies, county departments, and the state department to facilitate the prompt and appropriate placement, transfer, and enrollment in school of students in out-of-home placement.

**Migrant Education Recruiters**The recruiter’s primary job is to find and enroll eligible migratory children into the Migrant Education Program. The recruiter is often considered an ambassador or a connector between migratory parents, the school district, agricultural employers, and the community. Recruiters can be instrumental in explaining important school policies to migratory families and an important connection for Out of School Youth (Migratory Youth not in the custody of a parent or legal guardian) to educational and social services.

(<https://results.ed.gov/idr-manual/article/chapter-2-the-mep-recruiter/recruitment-duties-and-responsibilities>)

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