Who is homeless?

(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 2001 – Title X, Part C of the No Child Left Behind Act – Sec 725)

The term “homeless children and youth” –

A. means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence…; and
B. includes –
   i. Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; awaiting foster care placement;
   j. Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is public or private not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings…
   k. Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
   l. Migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purpose of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clause (i) through (iii).

Educational Rights

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, children in homeless situations have the right to:

- Go to school, no matter where they live or how long they have lived there,
- Attend either the local school or the school of origin, if this is in their best interest; the school of origin is the school the child attended when he/she was permanently housed or the school in which the child was last enrolled,
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin,
- Enroll in school immediately, even if missing records and documents normally required for enrollment such as a birth certificate, proof of residence, previous school records, or immunization/medical records,
- Enroll, attend classes, and participate fully in all school activities while the school arranges for transfer of records,
- Have access to the same programs and services that are available to all other students including transportation and supplemental educational services,
- Have access to free school meals/lunch programs,
- Attend school with children not experiencing homelessness; segregation based on a student’s status as homeless is prohibited.

Education for Homeless

Iowa Administrative Code - IAC [281] Ch 33

- A homeless child or youth ages 3-21:
- A child who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence and includes the following:
  - A child who is sharing the housing of others (includes doubled-up families) due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; is living in a motel, hotel, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; is living in an emergency or transitional shelter; is abandoned in a hospital, or is awaiting foster care placement.
  - A child who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for humans beings
  - A child who is living in a car, park, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station, or similar setting; or
  - A migratory child/youth who qualifies as homeless because of the living circumstances described above
    - Includes youth who have runaway or youth being forced to leave home.

Resources

Local Homeless Liaison: Every Iowa public school district is required to have a liaison for homeless students. Contact the local school district administration office.

State Coordinator for Homeless Education
Sandra Johnson, Iowa Department of Education
Sandra.johnson@iowa.gov 515-281-3965
http://www.educateiowa.gov

National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE)
http://www.serve.org/nche
Toll-free Helpline: 800-308-2145

National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAECHY)
http://www.naehcy.org