

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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Filling in the Gaps: More Legal Services Needed to Support Children Experiencing Homelessness

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty is releasing its latest resource, [*No Barriers: A Legal Advocate's Guide to Ensuring Compliance with the Education Program of the McKinney-Vento Act.*](#) **The Law Center is publishing this resource because too many young people experiencing homelessness are currently denied education rights guaranteed to them by federal law.** The Law Center offers this manual as a tool for legal advocates and attorneys to assist children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.

Homelessness is an ongoing crisis that continues to displace and negatively impact the lives of millions of Americans each year, with particularly dire consequences for children and young people. **In 2010, 1.6 million or one in every 45 children and youth were found to be homeless. In 2013, this statistic increased to 2.5 million or one in every 30.**

“This guide will help ensure homeless students have as little academic disruption as possible at a time when they are experiencing great instability in all other parts of their lives,” explained Maria Foscarinis, Executive Director at the [National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty](#). **“While there is no simple solution for addressing the needs of 2.5 million children and youth experiencing homelessness, providing them with a stable education is key to ending the cycle of homelessness and poverty.”**

Staying in school offers homeless children and youth educational continuity, stability, and a path toward academic and lifetime achievement. Homeless children who frequently transfer schools are more likely to repeat a grade and more likely to have poor attendance than other homeless students who remain in stable school placements. School enrollment and stability are also rights protected by the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program under Title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This federal law specifically ensures that quality education is accessible by guaranteeing children and youth without a fixed,

adequate night-time residence the right to remain in their school and to receive free transportation to and from the same school after being displaced.

“Federal law guarantees homeless children and youth access to education, but too many schools disobey the law and refuse to allow homeless students to stay and participate in school,” said Michael Santos, Staff Attorney at the Law Center. **“As a result, children and youth have less stability and fall farther behind in school, reinforcing the intergenerational cycle of poverty.”**

[No Barriers: A Legal Advocate’s Guide to Ensuring Compliance with the Education Program of the McKinney-Vento Act](#) will enable more advocates to effectively assist homeless children, youth, and families with educational issues.

Read [No Barriers: A Legal Advocate’s Guide to Ensuring Compliance with the Education Program of the McKinney-Vento Act](#). A [live webinar training](#) will be available at 2pm ET on Thursday, September 24, 2015.

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The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (www.nlchp.org) is the only national organization dedicated solely to using the power of the law to prevent and end homelessness. With the support of a large network of pro bono lawyers, we address the immediate and long-term needs of people who are homeless or at risk through outreach and training, advocacy, impact litigation, and public education.