

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

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Law Center on Homelessness Releases Education Manual to Help Students and Families After Hurricane Disasters

(November 8, 2017, Washington, D.C.) – The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (the Law Center) released its *Homeless Education Advocacy Manual: Disaster Edition*, a resource that guides homeless students and their families displaced by a disaster on their rights to educational continuity and stability during disaster recovery.

The Law Center first released a disaster manual in 2005 following Hurricane Katrina and added updates in 2013 following Hurricane Sandy. This newest version reflects the changes the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 made to the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The recent amendments strengthened homeless students' right to attend the same school, even if they were displaced by a disaster.

“It can take years for a community to recover from a major natural disaster,” said Maria Foscarinis, founder and executive director of the Law Center. “Such a disruption can have long-term negative effects on students. It’s critical for school districts to help minimize disruptions in a child’s education by informing parents of their rights under the McKinney-Vento Act.”

According to the report, studies have shown that when children change schools, they need “six to eighteen months to regain a sense of equilibrium, security, and control.” The disaster manual provides step-by-step instructions for parents of displaced students to reference while working with a school system.

“School districts are often unaware of or may be confused about how the McKinney-Vento Act can help homeless and displaced students in times of disasters,” said Michael Santos, attorney at the Law Center. “School officials must work with homeless students, their families, and other advocates to ensure that such students attend the school that’s in their best interest.”

The Law Center produced the updated Education Advocacy Disaster Manual with pro bono support from Schulte Roth & Zabel LLC and financial support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Bank of America Charitable Foundation, the Dimick Foundation, and the Ogden Foundation.

[A copy of the Homeless Education Advocacy Manual: Disaster Edition can be viewed here.](#)

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The [National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty](#) (the Law Center) 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.