

**Montello School District
McKinney-Vento
Information Gathering Questions for Identification**

The following questions are designed to assist the School Community Outreach to gather information that is relevant for determining whether or not a student qualifies for assistance under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; to determine the extent to which a student is living in a fixed, regular, and adequate living situation. Please remember these questions are simply guidelines to help open discussion about housing arrangements.

Fixed Location

1. Why are you staying in your current place?
2. Where were you living right before this place? Why did you leave?
3. Is this a permanent situation or just temporary?
4. Are you looking for another place to live?
5. Do you plan to move out soon?
6. Are you staying with friends/relatives just for a little while?
7. Did you and your friends/relatives decide to move in together and share expenses for the long term? Or is this a temporary situation for you?
8. Did your friends/family have this home before you moved in?
9. Are you all sharing the home equally, or are you more like guests in the home?
10. Are all families that live in the home contributing equally for cost of rent, utilities, etc.?
11. Could your friends/relatives ask you to leave if they wanted to?
12. Where would you go if you couldn't stay where you are?
13. Is your family on a waitlist for shelter services?

Regular Location

1. Do you stay in the same place every night?
2. Do you have a key to the place where you are living?
3. Do you move around a lot?
4. How long have you been at that place? How long do you plan to stay?
5. How long did you live in your last place?

Adequate Location

1. How many people are living in the home? How many bedrooms/bathrooms does it have?
2. Are you and your children sharing a room? How many people are staying in one room?
3. Are you and your children sleeping in a private area like a bedroom, or a public area like a dining room?
4. Does the home have heat/electricity/running water?
5. What condition is the home in? Does it keep out rain and wind? Is it safe? Is it warm and dry? Do the windows have glass panes?
6. Can you come and go as you please?

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Does the child or youth's living situation fit into one of the specific examples of homelessness listed in the law? Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason.

1. "Sharing the housing of other persons..." implies that the student is staying in another person's home. Some pertinent questions to help determine if this is the case would include:
 - a. Does the student have any legal right to be in that home?
 - b. Can the student be asked to leave at any time with no legal recourse?
 - c. Is the living situation intended to be temporary or long-term?
 - d. Did the student move into the home as an urgent measure to avoid being on the street or in another precarious situation?

2. "...due to loss of housing..." implies that the student has no personal housing available. Did the student or family lose their previous housing due to:
 - a. An eviction or an inability to pay the rent or other bills?
 - b. Destruction of or damage to the previous home?
 - c. Abuse or neglect (such as in the case of a youth who leaves or is asked to leave the home)?
 - d. Unhealthy conditions, such as an inadequate physical environment, infestations, drug or alcohol abuse in the home, or domestic violence?
 - e. The absence of a parent or guardian due to abandonment, the parent's or guardian's incarceration, or another reason?

3. "...economic hardship ..." includes cases where limited financial resources have forced families or youth to leave personal residences and share housing due to an inability to pay rent and other bills. The way that the shared housing came about and the intention of the residents are significant. For example:
 - a. If economic hardship such as an accident or illness, loss of employment, loss of public benefits, or condition of poverty forces a family or youth to share the housing of others temporarily, the children and youth are eligible for McKinney-Vento services.
 - b. A long-term, cooperative living arrangement among families or friends that is fixed, regular, and Adequate should not be considered a homeless situation, even if the parties are living together to save money.

Unique Situations

1. Is this hospital stay crisis-based or is it a planned medical event?
2. Is this incarceration sudden and unexpected? Did you know in advance of this incarceration?
3. Is the child in foster care of group home on a temporary basis until a long-term placement is found?
4. Who has primary physical custody of the child? Does that person meet the definition of homeless?

Adapted from: Best Practices in Homeless Education Series, Determining Eligibility for Rights and Services, http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/det_elig.pdf

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