

Open Enrollment and Tuition Waiver for Homeless Students

A student experiencing homelessness automatically qualifies for transportation to the school of origin. However, once the family finds permanent housing, the student is not automatically eligible to continue attending a nonresident school district beyond the end of the school year. Therefore, it is recommended that students also take advantage of tuition waivers and open enrollment to the extent they are eligible.

Since both open enrollment and tuition waivers have some specific date and timeline requirements, it is recommended that the student's potential eligibility for tuition waivers and open enrollment be considered as soon as the student begins receiving McKinney-Vento services.

Open Enrollment: It may be helpful to suggest to families experiencing homelessness that they apply for open enrollment for their children if the family is reasonably certain of the community they will be living in next fall, and have expressed a desire to keep their children in their current school district. If the student's family finds permanent housing outside of the district, being accepted into the open enrollment program will enable the student to continue to attend the school where they are currently enrolled during the next school year.

Parents are responsible for transportation under the open enrollment program. There are no guarantees that a family applying for open enrollment will be accepted into the program.

Tuition Waivers: Although it is not necessary to apply for a tuition waiver for a homeless child to return to the school of origin, it is recommended that the student do so to the extent s/he is eligible. If permanent housing is found and the student is no longer eligible under McKinney-Vento, the student may still be eligible to continue attending the nonresident district under a tuition waiver (although transportation is not provided for tuition waivers).

Open enrollment applications and tuition waiver forms are available on the open enrollment home page at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/psctoc.html>.

Please contact Mary Jo Cleaver, Open Enrollment Consultant, at 608-267-9101 or email, maryjo.cleaver@dpi.wi.gov if you have additional questions about open enrollment or tuition waivers.