



August 30, 2022

Students Experiencing Homelessness – McKinney-Vento Homeless and Youth Program

Gateway Online Academy is committed to support the success of all children and young adults in earning a high school diploma. The purpose of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Youth Program is to ensure that all children and youth, have equal access to the same free and appropriate public education as non-homeless children and youth (<http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Student-Supports/Homeless-Youth>). We at Gateway Online Academy seek to create equal opportunities in alignment with Ohio’s strategic plan, [Each Child, Our Future](#). We want to be sure that students are successful despite the barriers that homelessness may create.

To counteract these barriers, Gateway Online Academy has established a liaison between the school and families who may be considered homeless. Our liaison for the 2022-2023 school year, is Christina Lamorgese, our Student Services Director, and may be contacted by email at clamorgese@gatewayoh.org or by phone at: (330) 267-4274. Her role assists in the following:

- Ensures the safety and security of identification of homeless families
- Supports eligibility/best interest determination and education about McKinney-Vento educational rights;
- Ensures immediate enrollment with full and equal opportunity to succeed;
- Access to appropriate, supportive educational services;
- Provides referrals to physical, behavioral and mental health services;
- Provides, supports and encourages increased family/caregiver engagement;
- Ensures that there is public posting for educational rights of students and families experiencing homelessness;
- Provides for facilitating and mediating enrollment disputes;
- Ensures for the provision for the needs of the unaccompanied youth are supported, including receiving partial credit and providing information about their status as an independent student for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and verification status;
- Collaborates with Gateway Online Academy administration to ensure professional development for all school personnel.

Homeless children and youths is defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes-

- Children and youths who are:
 - Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as “doubled-up”);



- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
- Abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designate for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, and abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above. (<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcyguidance072716updated0317.pdf>)

The McKinney-Vento act does not apply to children or youths awaiting foster care placement. For more information or guidance regarding homeless children and youth, please visit: [Ohio Department of Education: Students Experiencing Homelessness](#).

Martin Yoder, Principal of Gateway Online Academy of Ohio