

# Unaccompanied Youth Eligibility Flowchart

This flowchart is a guide for making determinations of eligibility of unaccompanied homeless youth (UY) for McKinney-Vento services. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines UY as “a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian” (McKinney-Vento Act section 725(6)). There are no age-specific criteria<sup>1</sup> for eligibility in the McKinney-Vento Act. All

McKinney-Vento eligibility determinations should be made on a case-by-case basis. When determining eligibility, ground your decision-making in this guiding question:

**Can the student go to the same place (fixed), every night (regular), to sleep in a safe and sufficient space (adequate)?**

For more information, visit the NCHC publication Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness.

## Why is this student residing with someone other than a parent or a court-appointed legal guardian?

**The youth IS an unaccompanied homeless youth if any of the following situations apply:**

The youth is residing in a shelter, transitional housing, or other sleeping arrangement not meant for human habitation.

or

The family was evicted, cannot find housing together, so parent placed the youth temporarily with a friend or relative.

or

The youth left home due to danger or conflict; the youth was put out of the home for a similar reason.

or

The family was homeless before the parent’s incarceration or hospitalization, or the caregiver arrangement is not fixed, regular, and adequate.

or

The family lost housing, parent placed the youth temporarily with a friend or relative.

**Examples of situations that need more information:**

Relative or friend agreed to care for the youth.

Parent enrolled the youth in school and is no longer present.

**The youth IS NOT an unaccompanied homeless youth if any of the following situations apply:**

The youth is emancipated and living in a fixed, regular, and adequate living situation.

or

The parent moved from the area for work, and a plan for the youth’s care and support was put into place so the youth can finish school.

or

The youth moved in with a friend or relative, or a caregiver to play sports, be in a band, attend a magnet school, finish out the year, etc.

or

The youth did not change residences, and the caregiver moved in; the parent made arrangements for the youth prior to incarceration or hospitalization.

or

The parent’s work schedule was problematic, so the youth is staying with a friend, relative, or caregiver permanently.

<sup>1</sup>If a child or youth is within the state’s age range to qualify for public prekindergarten (Pre-K) through 12th grade and meets the definition of *unaccompanied youth*, the child or youth should be enrolled in school and served as a UY under the McKinney-Vento Act.