

College Accessibility for Students Experiencing Homelessness

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The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) organizes and advocates to prevent and end homelessness, because we believe housing is a human right in a just society.

CCH has a Policy Department, Organizing Department and Law Project.





Snapshot of Homelessness

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) reported that public schools

identified **49,596** homeless students in

Illinois during the 2019-2020 school year.

The current seating capacity for Wrigley Field is **41,268**.

Chicago Public Schools identified **13,843** homeless students during the 2019-2020 school year.

Snapshot of Homelessness

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Homelessness disproportionately impacts students of color.

98% of homeless students in Chicago Public Schools are students of color despite making up only **88.5%** of total CPS students.

81% of homeless students are black despite making up **36%** of the general CPS student population.





**Illinois
State Board of
Education**

**McKinney-Vento
Homeless Education**



Applicable Law

- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act
 - *42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.*
- Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act
 - *105 ILCS 45/1-1 et seq.*
- Illinois Equal Opportunity Regulation
 - *23 Ill Admin. Code 1.240*
- Policy of the Illinois State Board of Education on the Education of Homeless Children and Youth

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/homeless/pdf/policy.pdf>

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act As Amended By The Every Student Succeeds Act

Purpose:

- “Ensure that each child of a homeless individual and each homeless youth has equal access to the **SAME FREE, APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION.**”
- “Eliminate barriers to the identification of, or the enrollment, attendance, or success in school of, homeless children and youths.”

42 U.S. Code § 11431 - Statement of Policy





Definition Of Homeless Children & Youth

- Those who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including:
 - Living in emergency or transitional shelter
 - **Sharing housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason**
 - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations

42 U.S.C. 11434A (2)(a)&(b)



Definition Of Homeless Children & Youth

- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- In a primary nighttime residence not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Migratory children living in any of the above described situations

42 U.S.C. 11434A (2)(a)&(b)

Definition Of Homeless Unaccompanied Youth

A child or youth who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

42 U.S.C. §11434A(6)



Background College Homelessness

Despite facing many challenges including deep poverty and instability many youth who experience homelessness wish to pursue careers that require some form of postsecondary education.

They are often invisible on campus, they are unsure if there are services available, confused on who or if they should turn to someone when problems arise. Students attempt to blend in because they want to be like other students despite their atypical circumstances.



Background College Homelessness

CCH scholarship recipients shared their perspectives expressed struggles with applying for financial aid, finding housing, and identifying staff on campus who can answer their questions. Overall, students shared that they felt alone, and that there was an expectation that they should be able to make it without asking for help. This conversation inspired what became SB190 – College Access for Students Experiencing Homelessness (Sen. Glowiak-Hilton and Rep. West).



Need Identified



In talking to our scholarship recipients, we confirmed what we already knew: with supports similar to those provided in K-12 schools, these students can continue to succeed at the college level.

The data collection portion of the legislation is imperative because both schools and students need to know that these students are not an anomaly. National numbers show that over 20% of youth experiencing homelessness enroll in higher education. Schools cannot disregard these students' existence and the value they bring to their institutions.

Need Identified

- Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago's study found that **4.2 million** youth and young adults experienced homelessness on their own during a 12-month period.
- The study also found that **29%** of young adults who experienced homelessness were enrolled in college or another educational program at the time that they experienced homelessness.



Legislative Proposal

- Ask Illinois colleges and universities to designate a HOUSE (Housing and Opportunities that are Useful for Students' Excellence) liaison for students experiencing homelessness and/or are students in care.
- Create training for HOUSE liaisons to ensure they have the information needed to best serve the students.
- Provide students experiencing homelessness and students in care priority for on- campus housing.



Legislative Proposal



- Provide the opportunity for students experiencing homelessness and students in care to remain on campus during school breaks if on-campus housing remains open, ensuring they have access to housing as well as other necessities.
- Ensure students experiencing homelessness and students in care leaving high school seamlessly matriculate into higher education
- Require colleges and universities to identify students who are experiencing homelessness and report this information to Illinois Student Assistance Commission.
- If after three academic years of tracking data universities and colleges with one percent of their student body experiencing homelessness or in care the liaison position will become a standalone position to best serve students.

Legislative Update



SB 190 – College Access for Students Experiencing Homelessness unanimously passed the Illinois House on May 21, after passing the Senate in April.

Legislative Update



SB190 does a few things:

- It creates a liaison on campus, housed in the Financial Aid, Bursar, or Student Life Department.
- The liaison is required to participate in a training created by the CCH Law Project.
- Students experiencing homelessness will have priority in applying for on-campus housing.
- If the school remains open during breaks, with housing available to athletes and international students, the same opportunity will be afforded to students experiencing homelessness.
- And universities and colleges will be required to track data on the number of students experiencing homelessness on campus and their completion rates.

Implementation



Next Steps:

- Governor's signature
- Training and Material Creation
- Outreach
- Data Collection
- August 2022

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