

# Educational Rights When Housing Insecure:



Apply for free legal aid online at [MontanaLawHelp.org](http://MontanaLawHelp.org) or call/text Kaia, YHDP Coordinator, at (406) 594-1971

## What educational rights do I have if my housing isn't traditional?

To qualify, you must be:

- living with friends or relatives (with or without parents/guardians)
- staying in hotels/motels
- living in trailer parks/campgrounds
- staying in shelters or transitional housing
- sleeping in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, or similar settings

## What if I have run away from home?

Runaway and unaccompanied youth (not living in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) are covered under the *McKinney-Vento Act*. Even if you go to enroll yourself in school without an adult present, the school must immediately enroll and provide you will all the other services covered in the law.

## The law requires all public schools to provide you:

- **school choice** (last school attended or neighborhood you are currently in)
- **immediate enrollment** (even if you don't have your documents or someone to sign for you)
- **free breakfast & lunch**
- **free transportation** (within 60 miles/60 mins.)
- **an advocate** (who works for you)
- and other benefits that may help you succeed.

Additional information on your educational rights in Montana can be found on: [www.opi.mt.gov](http://www.opi.mt.gov)

Montana Legal Services Association may be able to assist you with legal issues such as enrollment, transportation, equal access to services/programs, discrimination, credit accrual/retention, expulsion or suspension, and accessing higher education.

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**Contact us for additional information and assistance. Find more information and the list of McKinney-Vento advocates for each school district in the state on [MontanaLawHelp.org](http://MontanaLawHelp.org)**

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## How can the law work for me?

Our communities and school districts want to see you graduate and go on to do great things, whatever your goals may be. Many students in our state live with housing instability for many different reasons but there are laws, programs, and people dedicated to supporting you.

Tribal communities may have different rules for accessing education. If you are a tribal member living in a tribal community, call MLSA for advice on your specific situation.

## How can MLSA help me?

MLSA provides FREE legal information, forms, advice, and representation to eligible clients.

MLSA's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (**YHDP**) **Coordinator** can provide you with referrals to agencies in your community and link you with free civil legal assistance.

Have more questions about your legal rights? Visit: [MontanaLawHelp.org](http://MontanaLawHelp.org)

