



Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Nebraska



Offered in Partnership By



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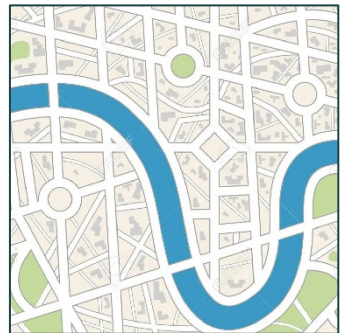


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Today's Roadmap

- Who are unaccompanied youth?
- Educational rights and supports for unaccompanied youth
- Resources for more information





Who Are Unaccompanied Youth?



McKinney-Vento Basics

- Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
 - Was reauthorized by Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act
 - Establishes the definition of *homeless* and *unaccompanied youth* used by U.S. public schools
 - Addresses the unique educational barriers and challenges faced by students experiencing homelessness
 - Requires state education departments to designate a State Coordinator for Homeless Education and school districts to designate a [local homeless education liaison](#)





Who Is Homeless?

Children and youth who **lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**, including

- Sharing the housing of other persons, *due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason*
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds *due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations*
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters, or abandoned in hospitals
- Living in a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation
- Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Migratory children living in the above circumstances

Unaccompanied Youth

- The term “unaccompanied youth” includes a **homeless** child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian
- For a student to be an unaccompanied youth, they must be **experiencing homelessness and unaccompanied**
- The McKinney-Vento Act does not include age-related eligibility criteria, including for unaccompanied youth





“But the student chose to leave...”



- A student may be considered an unaccompanied youth regardless of whether the student was forced from the home or ran away
- The cause of student/parental separation may not be disclosed readily due to its sensitive or private nature
- Determinations of McKinney-Vento eligibility for unaccompanied youth should be made on a case-by-case basis focusing on the nature of the student’s nighttime residence

Causes of Youth Homelessness

- Youth may run away or be forced from the home due to family conflict related to
 - Parental abuse or neglect
 - The youth's or parent's alcohol or drug use
 - The youth's sexual orientation, gender identity, or pregnancy
 - Other challenging household dynamics, including economic hardship

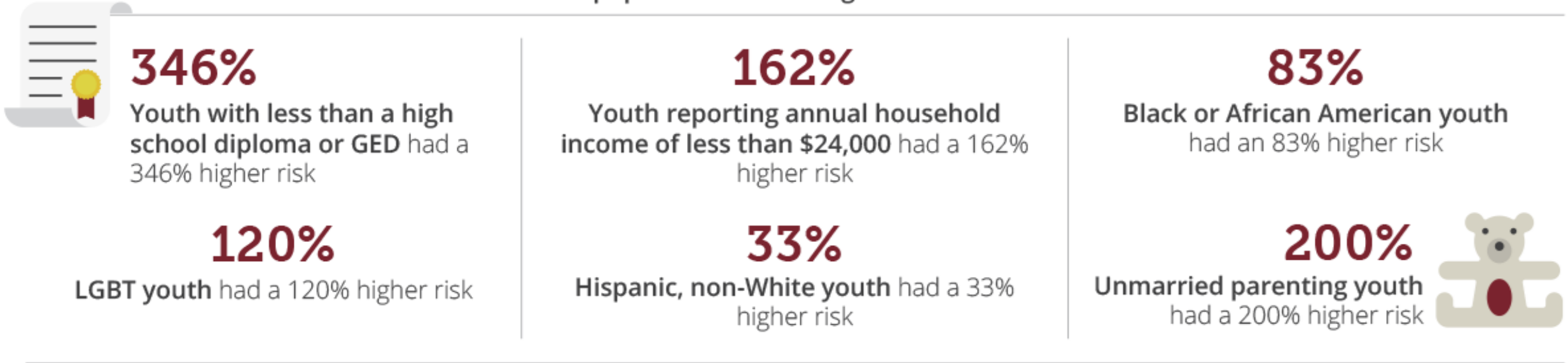
Source: Congressional Research Service,
[*Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics and Programs*](#)





Risk Factors for Youth Homelessness

Particular subpopulations are at higher risk for homelessness



Source: Chapin Hall, [Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America, National Estimates](#)

Effects of Youth Homelessness

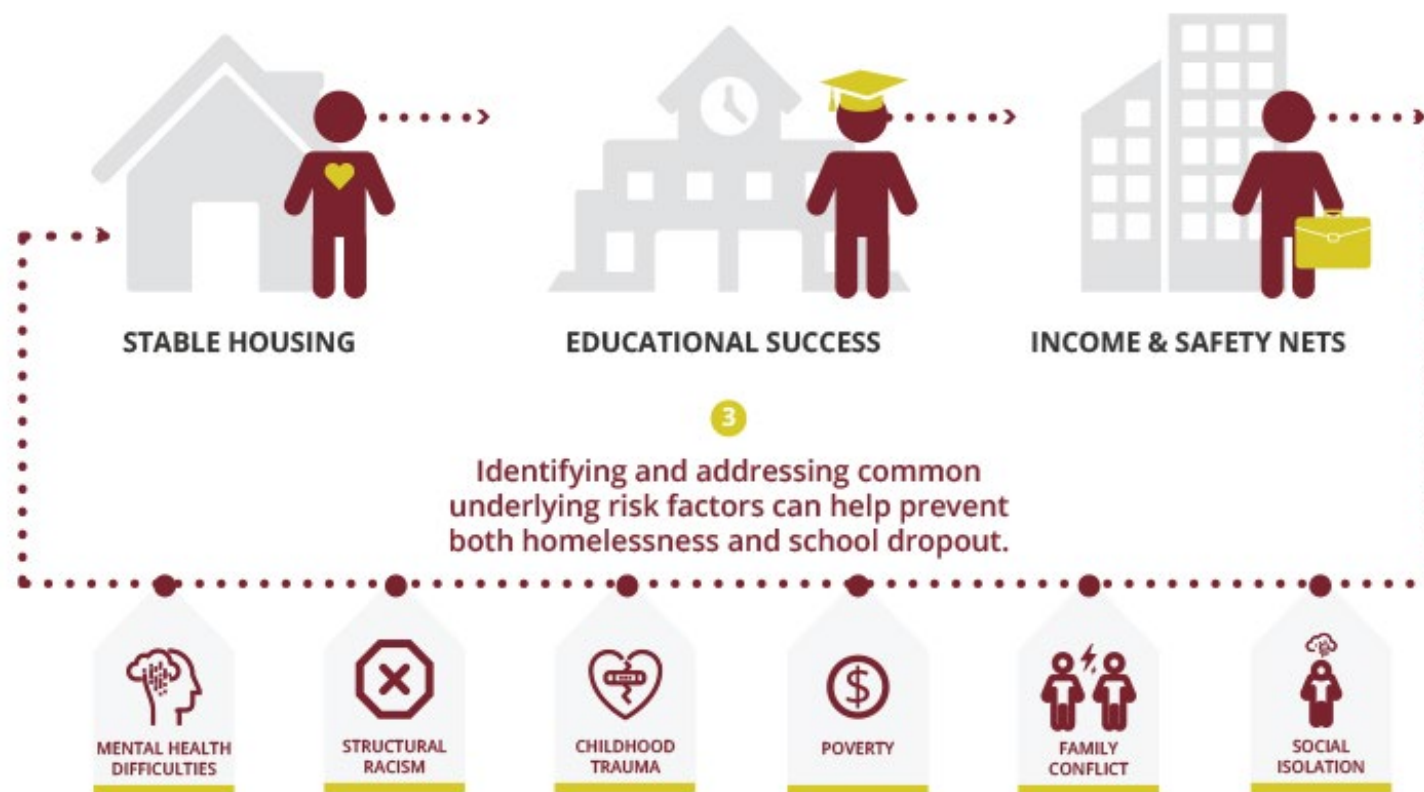


Homeless youth experience disproportionately high rates of

- Unmet basic needs
- Poor health
- Untreated mental health issues
- Substance use
- Sexual, physical, or criminal exploitation
- School disengagement

Source: Congressional Research Service,
[*Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics and Programs*](#)

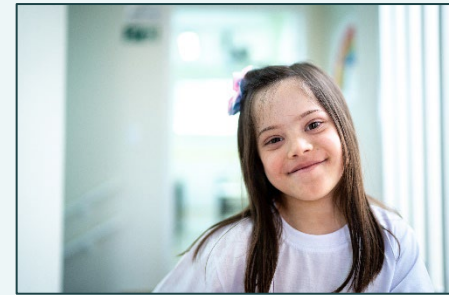
Opening Doors with Education



Source: Chapin Hall, [*Missed Opportunities: Education Among Youth Experiencing Homelessness in America*](#)



Educational Rights and Supports for Unaccompanied Youth





Educational Rights and Supports

Unaccompanied youth have the **same educational rights** under the McKinney-Vento Act as students experiencing homelessness with a parent or guardian

- Immediate school enrollment, even if lacking required documentation
- School selection (school of origin or local school)
- School of origin transportation

- College preparation and readiness assistance
- Comparable services
- Title I, Part A services
- Free school meals

Visit the website of the [Nebraska Department of Education](#) or the [National Center for Homeless Education](#) for more information.



Educational Rights and Supports

- Immediate enrollment, even without a parent or guardian
- Prioritization of the unaccompanied youth's requested school in best interest determinations
- Targeted support from the local liaison
 - Obtaining needed records once immediate enrollment has occurred
 - Accessing school of origin transportation
 - Accessing the McKinney-Vento dispute resolution process





Access to Federal Student Aid

- Local liaisons must inform unaccompanied youth of their **independent student status** on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and assist with verification of this status
- Independent students do not include parent information on their FAFSA, and their federal aid is calculated based only on the student's income and assets

Access a template for documenting independent student status from [SchoolHouse Connection](#)



SAMPLE FORM LETTERS TO DETERMINE INDEPENDENT STUDENT STATUS

For Unaccompanied Youth

Special Education

- Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a parent usually serves as the student's educational decisionmaker
- IDEA defines *parent* as
 - a natural, adoptive, or foster parent;
 - a guardian (but not the state if the child is a ward of the state);
 - an individual acting in the place of a natural or adoptive parent with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare



Special Education

- For unaccompanied youth who do not have a parent who is willing and/or able to act as educational decisionmaker:
- A **surrogate parent**, who may not be involved with the care or education of the child, should be appointed within 30 days
- A **temporary surrogate parent**, who may be involved with the care or education of the child, may be appointed immediately



Removing Barriers

- The McKinney-Vento Act requires school districts to **develop, review, and revise policies and practices** that create educational barriers for McKinney-Vento students, including unaccompanied youth
- For more information, download the National Center for Homeless Education's [*Supporting the Education of Unaccompanied Students Experiencing Homelessness*](#) issue brief





For More Information

- [NDE homeless education webpage](#)
- [SchoolHouse Connection website](#)
- [National Center for Homeless Education website](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education EHCY Program Non-Regulatory Guidance](#)



Thanks for Joining!



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