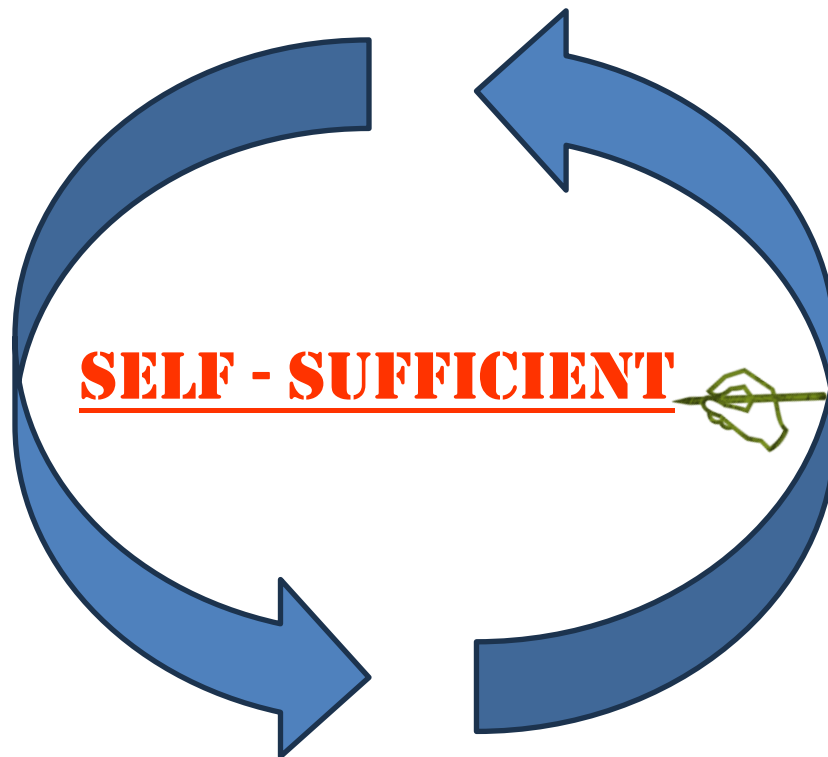


Unaccompanied Youth Manual Guide



Student Support Services – Students in Transition

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McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Educational Rights

What is meant by the term “homeless children and youth”?

The McKinney-Vento Act defines “homeless children and youth” as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth 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.
 - abandoned in hospitals.
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in the circumstances described above.

What is meant by the term “unaccompanied youth”?

The term *unaccompanied youth* include a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This would include youth living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the streets, or in other inadequate housing and children and youth denied housing by their families (sometimes referred to as “throwaway” children and youth), and school-age unwed mothers, living in homes for unwed mothers, who have no other housing available.

Homeless unaccompanied youth often face unique barriers in enrolling and succeeding in school. These barriers include school attendance policies, credit accrual, and legal guardianship requirements. Without a parent or guardian to advocate for them and exercise parental rights, they may be denied enrollment and

remain out of school for extended periods of time. Unaccompanied youth also may not understand their educational rights or know how to acquire this information.

The McKinney-Vento Act states that homeless children and youth must have access to the same educational services provided to other students.

This act guarantees homeless children and youth the following:

- Students have a right to immediate enrollment, even if they don't have all of their paperwork - for example, medical/health records, proof of residency, former school records, immunization records.
- Students have a right to attend their school of origin ("school of origin" means the school a child attended when permanently housed or in which he/she was last enrolled) or the school in the attendance area where the family or youth is currently residing.
- Students have the right to receive transportation to their school of origin.
- Students have a right to access to all of the school's programs and services (or services comparable) on the same basis as all other students, including special education, migrant education, vocational education, school nutrition programs (school breakfast and lunch), and extracurricular activities.
- Students have the right to attend school along with children not experiencing homelessness. Segregation based on a student's status as homeless is strictly prohibited.
- Students and their families have access to a dispute resolution process when they disagree with a school about how the McKinney-Vento Act applies in their situation.

Local liaisons assist unaccompanied youth in accessing educational services through such activities as:

- Helping unaccompanied youth choose and enroll in a school, after considering the youth's wishes.
- Providing unaccompanied youth with notice of their appeal rights in a language they can understand or in an accessible format.
- Informing youth of their right to transportation to and from the school of origin, and assisting unaccompanied youth in accessing transportation; and
- Ensuring that unaccompanied youth are immediately enrolled in school pending the resolution of disputes.

The Law Pertaining to Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

- In 2012, during the legislative session, the Legislature passed CS/HB 1351 pertaining to unaccompanied youth (youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) who are homeless as those terms are defined in 42 U.S.C. s. 11434A. Governor Rick Scott signed the bill, and it became effective July 1, 2012. This bill affects youth under the age of 18.
- The bill amends section 382.022, Florida Statutes (F.S.), by adding the definition of the term “certified homeless youth.” The term means a minor who is a homeless child or youth, including an unaccompanied youth, and who has been certified as homeless or unaccompanied by:
 - a) A school district homeless liaison.
 - b) The director of an emergency shelter program funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, or the director’s designee; or
 - c) The director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, or the director’s designee.
- It also amends s. 382.025, F.S., to require certified copies of the birth certificate be issued, upon a request and payment of the fee prescribed in s. 382.0255, F.S., to registrants of legal age, a certified homeless youth, or a minor who has had the disabilities of nonage removed under s. 743.01 or s. 743.015, F.S.
- Additionally, the bill creates s. 743.067, F.S., to read that an unaccompanied youth, as defined in 42 U.S.C. s. 11434a, who is also a certified homeless youth, as defined in s. 382.002, and who is 16 years of age or older may petition the circuit court to have the disabilities of nonage removed under s. 743.015. The youth shall qualify as a person not required to prepay costs and fees as provided in s. 57.081. The court shall advance the cause on the calendar.
- In 2022, **House Bills 1577** (Chapter No. 2022-65, Laws of Florida) and 7065 (Chapter No. 2022- 67, Laws of Florida), and **Senate Bill 7034** (Chapter No. 2022-68, Laws of Florida), amended sections (ss.) 1009.25 and 409.1452, Florida Statutes (F.S.), to modify existing exemptions and establish new criteria regarding documentation and comprehensive support structures. Beginning in 2022-23, students experiencing homelessness and students in the child welfare system will benefit from the exemption expansion and support services. The purpose of the rule is to set forth the documentation needed to establish eligibility for the exemptions and provide a standardized form to verify homelessness.
- More information on CS/HB 1351 can be found at:
 - <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2012/1351/BillText/er/PDF>
 - <http://www.flsenate.gov/Committees/BillSummaries/2012/html/2>

Age of Majority

The age of majority is a term used to describe the time in life when a person is legally no longer considered a child.

Historically, the age of majority was set at 21 in most states, but the ratification of the 26th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1971 changed that. It gave 18-year-olds the right to vote in federal elections. Most states, including Florida, lowered their age of majority to 18. (FS §743.07)

Florida law also provides for the emancipation of a minor who is at least 16 years of age, and who is married or living apart from his/her parents or legal guardian. Emancipation requires approval by a district court judge. (FS §743.015)

This does not, however, mean that you now have all of the rights and privileges available to adults. Some rights come at an earlier age, while others come later. For example, you may be issued a provisional driver's license at age 16, but you cannot purchase or consume alcoholic beverages, or enter any gaming activities or accept

any employment in gaming until the age of 21.

The age of majority has really come to mean the point when the law treats an individual as an adult for most purposes.

At the age of majority, teenagers acquire the right to:

- ♣ Enter into Binding Contracts.
- ♣ Buy or sell property, including real estate and stock.
- ♣ Marry without the written consent of a parent (or guardian) and a judge.
- ♣ Sue or be sued in their own names.
- ♣ Compromise, settle or arbitrate a claim.
- ♣ Make or revoke a will.
- ♣ Inherit property outright.
- ♣ Vote in state and local elections.
- ♣ Eligible for jury service.
- ♣ Consent to all types of medical treatment.
- ♣ Join the military without parental consent.
- ♣ Enroll in any school or college.





Emancipation in Florida

What is a minor?

A minor is anyone who is:

- ❖ under 18 years old.
- ❖ has never been married; and
- ❖ has not been emancipated by the court.

A minor must have a parent or legal guardian to make sure they are taken care of and take responsibility for the minor's property and all legal actions on behalf of the minor. The parent or guardian is required to provide housing, clothing, and meals. The parent or guardian has the right to set rules for the minor, make decisions on their behalf, and control the minor's earnings. A minor has the right to protection and care from their parent or guardian. A minor cannot be held responsible for most contracts or bring legal action on their own behalf. A minor may consent to some medical decisions and may contract to borrow money for college.

What is emancipation?

Emancipation is a process in which a minor acquires all the rights and responsibilities of an adult. In Florida Statute 743.015 it is called "removal of disabilities of nonage." Emancipation automatically happens in Florida when a teenager turns 18 or when they marry. However, a minor cannot get married without parental consent. Minors under 16 years of age cannot get married even with their parents' consent (except in certain cases when it is approved by the court). Minors who are at least 16 years old may be emancipated early by a court's order. An emancipated minor is given the status of an adult for the purposes of all criminal and civil laws of the state and has all rights and responsibilities of someone 18 years old. They are free of the legal control and custody of their parents and may manage their own affairs. However, their parents are no longer required to provide for them, and they are no longer protected by state laws on child abuse and neglect. Emancipation does not affect laws that restrict behaviors requiring a minimum age, such as drinking alcohol and voting.

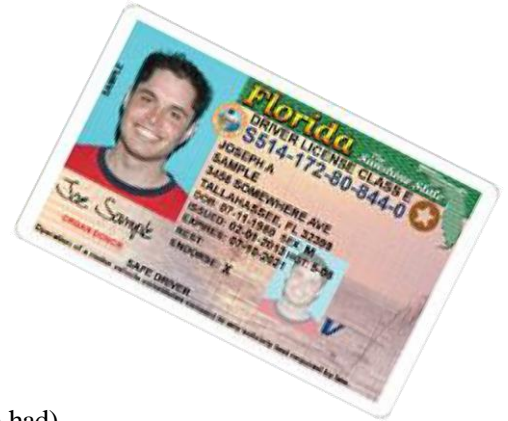
How does a minor become emancipated?

The process for obtaining a court order to emancipate a minor includes the following:

- ❖ The youth must be at least 16 years of age and be a resident of Florida.
- ❖ A petition must be filed by the minor's parents or guardians to the Clerk of Courts. There is a \$255.00 non-refundable filing fee due to the Clerk's office when the petition is filed. If there is no parent or guardian, the petition can be filed by a-guardian-ad-litem. The petition must show the court that the minor is independent, is able to support himself/herself, and is not dependent on public benefits. The petition must demonstrate that emancipation is in the best interest of the minor.
- ❖ If the petition is not signed by both parents or is filed by a guardian-ad-litem, the non-petitioning parent(s) must be served by a summons, along with a copy of the petition, through the sheriff's office in the county where the parent(s) lives or works. A separate fee is generally charged to the Petitioner by the sheriff's office for this service. The non-petitioning parent(s) will have 20 days from the date they are served the summons to file a written answer to the summons. If the parent does not respond to the petition, the Petitioner may file a Motion for Default with the Clerk of Courts.

- ❖ If the parent(s) cannot be located and diligent efforts have been made to find them, they may be served by publication (published notices in the newspaper). However, there are very specific legal requirements for using this form of notification.
- ❖ If the petition is filed by the parent or legal guardian, the court will appoint an attorney-ad-litem to represent the minor child. The Petitioner will be responsible for paying for the attorney-ad-litem's fees.
- ❖ After both parents and the minor consent to the petition, or if the non-petitioning parent(s) has been served with a summons, has failed to file a written response, and a default has been entered against him/her, it is up to the Petitioner to file a Motion for Hearing. The court will then schedule a hearing to consider the petition for emancipation. The minor, the Petitioner(s), and the attorney ad litem must attend the hearing.
- ❖ If the judge agrees that emancipation is in the minor's best interest, the judge will enter an order removing the disabilities of nonage. The minor should obtain certified copies of the order to show proof of his/her emancipation.

Now that I'm free to be me... what do I need?



PERSONAL RECORDS:

- Birth Certificate (do NOT carry this with you; keep in a safe place)
- Social Security Card (do NOT carry this with you; keep in a safe place)
- Photo identification (Driver's License or ID card)
- Family information (who your parents are, other living relatives)
- Residential history (where you have lived, the support and supervision you have had)
- Records from agencies who are providing you with services, especially records that show that you meet the eligibility requirements.
- Proof of lawful permanent residence ("Green Card" if you are not a U.S. citizen)

MEDICAL RECORDS:

- Names, addresses and phone numbers of any doctors, dentists or therapists that have treated you
- Your immunization records (do NOT carry with you; keep in a safe place)
- Dates and results of any surgeries or medical procedures
- Reports from any specialists or therapists.

EDUCATIONAL RECORDS:

- Copies of any Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), if you have had them while in school
- educational assessment reports
- School progress reports and report cards
- A copy of your final high school transcript

WORK HISTORY/VOCATIONAL RECORDS:

- Reports from any vocational assessment
- Proof of vocational courses taken.
- Work records, including the start and end dates of those jobs, contact names and phone numbers for future job references Letters of reference.
- Your résumé

OTHER: Email address (free email accounts through Yahoo, Google, Hot Mail, Outlook)



The past cannot be changed. The future is yet in your power. *Unknown*

Why finish high school?

- It will be easier to get a job.
- You will get a higher paying job.
- You will be eligible to go to college.

If you have not graduated, you have the right to stay in high school until your 19th birthday. After you turn 19, the school decides if you can stay. If you are close to completing high school, you may also be eligible for Florida's virtual online school. To learn more, visit www.flvs.net/. If it has been some time since you left school, you may also be eligible for adult high school. To learn more visit www.floridatechnet.org/ahs/.

If you have a disability, then you have a right to go to high school until you turn 22 years old, even if it is not in your Individual Education Plan (IEP). If you turn 22 in the middle of the school year, you have a right to finish that school year.

If you have a disability, your school may suggest that you follow a special diploma track. Before you agree, ask the school to explain what this means. Find out whether you can apply to job training, a community college, or a four-year college or university after receiving this type of diploma.

Why get your GED?

If you decide not to finish high school, you can still earn a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Almost all colleges, universities, and employers treat this diploma as if you graduated from high school. You can get a GED any time. To get one, you need to pass five written tests in subject areas like math, writing, reading, social studies, and science. If you pass some sections but not others, you can retake only the sections you did not pass. Since the GED can be a difficult test, you can take practice tests and preparation classes. To find out where classes are offered and see a list of test sites, visit <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/career-adult-edu/hse>

What to Do First

- Talk to your high school counselor.
- Take challenging classes (pre-calc, chemistry, second language)
- Read newspapers, books, articles—all will help with ACT or SAT testing.
- Pass the FSA/ELS or replace it with ACT or SAT Concordant Scores
- Pass the Algebra 1 EOC or PERT Comparative Score
- Learn about college requirements.
- Take PSAT
- Ask your high school counselor for a test fee waiver for ACT or SAT
- Take the ACT or SAT (www.actstudent.org, <http://sat.collegeboard.org/home>)
- Be aware of scholarship deadlines.
- Visit your campus of interest (university, community college or vocational school)
- Apply for federal aid at www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Get assistance from others.

FSA English Language Arts FACT Sheet, 2016 rev.



<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7764/urlt/GradRequireFSA.pdf>

Study Tips

https://cws.auburn.edu/shared/content/files/50/WISE_Study_Tips.pdf

Completing your FAFSA

[FAFSA® Application | Federal Student Aid](#)

- The first thing you need to do is go to the FAFSA application and create an account. There is a link to request a pin number at the top of the FAFSA home page. You will need your social security number, mailing address, and date of birth for this. Be sure to print the confirmation page. Once you apply for the pin number, you are now ready to complete the FAFSA.
- Go back to the FAFSA website and click on the “START HERE” button. If you have a Florida ID or Driver’s License, be sure to have that on hand. You will be applying for the 20**-20** school year. Go through each of the questions and answer them to the best of your ability.
- When you get to question number 55, which states “At any time on or after July 1, 20**, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or at risk of being homeless?”, you will mark YES. Marking YES will then qualify you as an independent student for financial aid purposes. This means you will not be required to have your parent’s tax information or to input their information into your FAFSA application. Mark NO for the question that asks, “Would you like to enter your parents’ information?”
- Complete the remainder of the application. Review it and then sign it using your pin number. Make sure that you print your confirmation page and have it sent to you via email. Once you have been accepted to the college that you are applying to, contact your Homeless information specialists so that he/she can do a letter for the financial aid department confirming that you are in the SIT program.





Living on your own without stable housing?

Do you live in any of the following situations apart from your parents and with no financial support from them?

- In a shelter, motel, vehicle, or campground
- On the street, in an abandoned building, or in another inadequate space
- Doubled-up temporarily with other people because you have nowhere else to stay.
- In the dorm, but with nowhere else to stay when the dorms close.
- Supporting yourself, but on the verge of losing housing.

If so, you may qualify as an independent student on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

This means that you don't have to include your parents' information on your FAFSA. Speak with any of the following persons to discuss your eligibility:

- The local homeless education liaison in your K-12 school district.
- The director of a HUD-funded or Runaway and Homeless Youth Act-funded shelter where you have stayed or received services.
- The financial aid administrator of the college where you are applying or where you attend.

Local Contact Information

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Famous people who experienced Homelessness



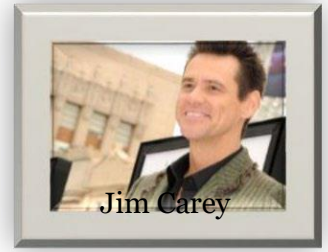
Halle Berry



Suze Orman



Michael Oher



Jim Carey



Dr. Phil



Kelly Clarkson



Sylvester Stallone



Ella Fitzgerald



Harry Houdini

Homelessness...
Homelessness...
A time in life NOT an identity.



Jennifer Lopez



Beck



William Shatner



Steve Harvey



Col. Harland Sanders



Drew Carey



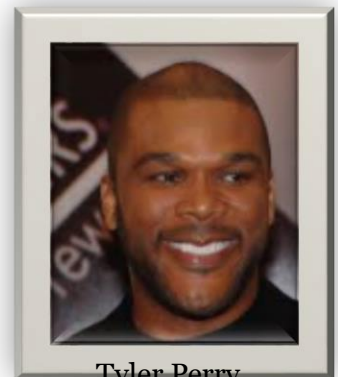
David Letterman



Daniel Craig A James Bond



Hilary Swank



Tyler Perry