

Tips

- ▶ If you are staying at a youth shelter and are changing schools, it might help to have a copy of a letter from the shelter to make enrolling easier.
- ▶ However, **even if you don't have proof, the school must enroll you immediately while they search for the appropriate records.**
- ▶ Even if you have been out of school for awhile, you still have a right to go to your school of origin.
- ▶ Contact your homeless liaison if you need help.

Don't let anyone make you feel like you don't have a choice just because you're a youth!

Your Responsibilities

- During the school year, you should be going to school every day.
- Immediately ask the school for transportation help if you need it.
- Ask for special tutoring or counseling to help make up for lost time.
- Insist on what you think is the **best education** for yourself.



Ohio State Legal Services
555 Buttles Avenue
Columbus, OH 43215

To get the contact information for the legal aid office serving your county, call 1-866-LAW-OHIO or visit www.ohiolegalservices.org



Youth Empowerment Program
Coalition on Housing &
Homelessness in Ohio
175 S. 3rd Street, Suite 250
Columbus, Ohio 43215

**You have a
RIGHT to
attend school!**



**A Guide to the
Educational Rights of
Unaccompanied Youth
Experiencing
Homelessness in Ohio**

Who is “Homeless”?

For the purposes of education, a “homeless student” is someone who **doesn’t have a “fixed, regular, or adequate place to live,”** including children and youth who are in any of the following living situations:

- ▶ **sharing housing of relatives or friends 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 other adequate options; and**
- ▶ **living in emergency or transitional shelters, on the street, in a car, or similar substandard arrangements.**

Who is an “Unaccompanied Youth”?

A youth in a homeless situation (see above) who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian

Choosing a School

With the help of your district, you have a choice:

- ▶ Stay in the school you were attending when you lost housing (“school of origin”); OR
- ▶ Enroll in the school nearest your temporary location.

School Enrollment

Ohio schools must allow you to enroll in school immediately.

What about School Records?

- ▶ If you are starting at a new school, the school must enroll you, even if you don’t have records, including immunizations, transcripts, or transfer forms.
- ▶ It is the duty of the school to help you in getting the records from the last school you attended.

What about Transportation?



- ▶ If you choose to stay in your “**school of origin**,” the school is required to inform you of the availability of transportation services and provide them to you.
- ▶ If you choose to enroll in a school in the district where you **currently live**, then “comparable services” must be provided to you (comparable = same as services provided to the non-homeless students in district).
- ▶ Your district’s homeless liaison must help you with this process and act in your best interests.

In Ohio...



- ▶ Each school district has a “**homeless liaison**,” who is responsible for handling issues related to students living in transition. “Liaison” is a fancy word for someone who helps connect people with the services they need.
- ▶ If you don’t know who your homeless liaison is, you can:
 - ▶ Visit the Ohio Department of Education’s website at <http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?page=2&TopicRelationID=1037>
 - ▶ Contact the State Coordinator at (614) 466-4161.

Disputes

If a dispute arises between you and a district, you must be immediately enrolled in the school of choice while the dispute is being resolved.