

Supports for Homeless Children & Families

Project ACT 216.838.0210

The public health crisis has caused hardship to many families in Cleveland, leaving many in need of support for basic necessities, including food and affordable housing. Help is available for families seeking shelter and for students who are attending school while their family is homeless and in transition.

By law, children and families are considered homeless if they do not have a “fixed,” regular and adequate nighttime residence, or are:

- living in a shelter, including emergency and transitional shelters for domestic violence and runaway/homeless youth shelters;
- living doubled-up with a friend, relative or someone else due to eviction, foreclosure, natural disaster or economic hardship;
- staying in a motel, hotel, trailer park or campground because they have nowhere else to go;
- staying in substandard housing;
- living in places not ordinarily used for sleeping, including cars, parks, public places, abandoned buildings or bus/train stations;
- abandoned in a hospital;
- children and youth not living at home, who:
 - were asked to leave home by a parent/legal guardian.
 - left home without consent of parents (runaways).
 - are living doubled-up without a legal guardian due to economic reasons or due to lack of formal custody papers while parent(s) are incarcerated, hospitalized or in a rehabilitation center.

School Supports for Homeless Children & Youth

Project ACT

216.838.0210

Monday – Friday | 8am–5pm

Coordinated Intake for Shelter

216.674.6700

Monday – Friday | 8am–8pm

Bellefaire for Unaccompanied Youth

216.570.8010 | After 5pm & on weekends

United Way

Dial 211 | 24/7 Hotline

Project ACT is a Cleveland Metropolitan School District program dedicated to supporting homeless children and families with support in every grade, including life skills coaches at select schools, referrals for counseling services, help with obtaining birth certificates, medical coverage, food stamps and social security.

Project ACT provides a weekly food bag, meal pickup and incentives for good attendance and academic progress in school.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How do I keep my children in school if I am in a shelter?

A. Your shelter caseworker will identify and refer your children to Project ACT and electronically send the documents needed to enroll your child in school. During remote learning, all students, including homeless students, are provided with a digital device and a hot spot to enable Internet access.

Q. Does my child have to change schools when we are homeless or in transition?

A. No. You have the right to keep your children at the school they were originally attending while in transition, or you may move to a school closer to the shelter, if you choose.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: If you are placed in an overflow shelter until alternate shelter placement becomes available, call Project ACT for assistance with your child's school enrollment at 216.838.0210.

Q. What should I do when I leave a shelter?

A. It is important that you notify Project ACT and your child's school to provide both with your new address and updated phone number. Families moving into permanent housing are required to submit proof of residency to the school and to Project ACT. Children already being serviced by Project ACT will remain in the program through the completion of the school year.

Q. Can I keep my children in school if I am living doubled-up with friends or relatives until I find a temporary or permanent residence?

A. You have the right to keep your children in the school they are attending or move them to a school closer to where you are staying. Be sure to call the Project ACT office at 216.838.0210 to ensure that we have the most current address phone number where your child is staying while your family is in transition.

Q. Can I enroll my child in a CMSD school if I am living doubled-up with friends or relatives until I find a temporary or permanent residence?

A. Yes. However if you are enrolling a child for the first time in a CMSD school, call Project ACT at 216.838.0210 to assist you with obtaining the necessary documents, including Immunization records, academic records, birth certificates, etc. Project ACT will help you obtain many of these documents, including court/custody records, if applicable.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: If you move from one doubled-up situation to another, call Project ACT to complete new enrollment forms to ensure your child's address and contact information are updated at his or her school so you can be reached in the event of emergency.

Q. If I am not the legal guardian of the child(ren) staying with me, am I able to enroll the child(ren) into school?

A. Yes. Children and youth who are staying with a host family without a legal guardian due to the loss of housing, fire, economic hardship, incarceration, or similar reasons are covered by the McKinney-Vento Act. The caregiver must contact the Project ACT Office to enroll the child(ren) in school and assist with obtaining the required documentation, including birth certificates, immunizations and academic records, court and custody papers, etc.