

2023-2024

Redbank Valley School District



**Education for Children & Youth
Experiencing Homelessness Program**

Homeless Liaison:

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Table of Contents

The McKinney-Vento Act	Page 2
The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless	Page 2
Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness	Page 2
Redbank Valley School District Policies & Procedures	Page 2
Definitions	Page 3
Homeless Liaison	Page 3
The Identification Process	Page 3
Common Barriers Facing Homeless Children & Youth	Page 4
Community Outreach Program	Page 4
Dispute Resolution Process	Page 5
Appendix:	
A: Residency Questionnaire	Page 7-8
B: Informational Posters	Page 9-13
Parent-English	
Parent-Spanish	
Youth-English	
Youth-Spanish	
C: Dispute Resolution Form	Page 14-17

The McKinney-Vento Act

Children and youth experiencing homelessness face unique challenges in accessing and succeeding in school. Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in 2015 by Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act (42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.; hereafter the McKinney-Vento Act), establishes the definition of homeless used by U.S. public schools, and the educational rights to which children and youth experiencing homelessness are entitled. For schools to be able to provide services to students in homeless situations, they first must be able to identify these students. To this end, an effective understanding of the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless is a key first step to ensuring the delivery of needed supports to some of our nation's most vulnerable students.

The Definition of Homeless

The term "homeless children and youth" means:

- Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence
 - children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason
 - are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations
 - are living in emergency or transitional shelters
 - are abandoned in hospitals
 - children and youths 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 youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
 - migratory children...who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above

Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness

While unaccompanied students are not referenced specifically in the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless, unaccompanied children and youth whose living arrangements meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless are eligible for services under the Act. The term unaccompanied youth is defined in the Act as "a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian" [42 U.S.C. § 11434a(6)].

Redbank Valley School District's Policies & Procedures

The Redbank Valley School Board recognizes the need to **promptly identify** homeless children and youths within the district, facilitate their immediate enrollment, and eliminate existing barriers to their attendance and education, in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.

The Redbank Valley School Board shall ensure that homeless children and youth have **equal access** to the same educational programs and services provided to other district students.

The Redbank Valley School Board, authorizes the Superintendent to **waive district policies**, procedures and administrative regulations **that create barriers** to the identification, enrollment, attendance, transportation, school stability and success in school of homeless children and youths.

It is the policy of the Redbank Valley School Board that **no student** shall be **discriminated against, segregated, or stigmatized based on his/her homeless status.**

Under the McKinney-Vento Act, eligible students have the following rights:

- Receive a free and appropriate education
- Immediate enrollment in school, even if lacking documents are required:
 - Birth Certificate
 - Immunization Records
 - Proof of Residence
 - School Records
- The school district must provide the student/family with a written explanation of its position and inform the student/family of their right to appeal the decision if they believe attending the school of origin is NOT in the best interest of the child
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin if necessary
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students similar needs

Definitions

Enroll or Enrollment means attending classes and participating fully in school activities.

School of Origin is the school the child or youth attended when permanently housed or the school in which the child or youth was last enrolled, including preschool. When the child or youth completes the final grade level served by the school of origin, the school of origin shall include the designated receiving school at the next grade level for all feeder schools.

Unaccompanied Youth means a homeless child or youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youth who have run away from home; been abandoned or forced out of home by a parent, guardian or other caretaker; or separated from a parent or guardian for any other reason.

Homeless Liaison

The Board designates the High School Guidance Counselor to serve as the district's liaison for homeless children and youth. The local liaison serves as one of the primary contacts between homeless families and school staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and other service providers. The liaison coordinates services to ensure that homeless children and youths enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically.

The Identification Process

It is the responsibility of the Redbank Valley School District to identify children and youth experiencing homelessness. In order to fully assist students who are experiencing homelessness, the following methods of identification will be utilized:

- Identification can be through self-referral and/or parent/guardian referral
 - Once this information is received, it is the homeless liaisons responsibility to ensure the student(s) have access to education resources, transportation, free meals, hygiene supplies, and support as needed
- Outside agencies, school districts, staff members and community members can assist in the identification of students who are experiencing homelessness
 - Homeless liaisons between districts will communicate regarding the best interest of the student

- Once the liaison receives this information, it is the responsibility of the liaison to contact the student and/or parent(s)/guardian to follow up with the family and get the appropriate supports in place
- A Residency Questionnaire is completed when enrolling into the district to help identify homeless students and unaccompanied youth
 - Students/guardians may utilize this form to declare homelessness
 - The homeless liaison is responsible for contacting the family once they have been identified on the questionnaire as homeless to being the identification process

Common Barriers Facing Homeless Children and Youth

Homeless children and youth face a variety of legal, social, and emotional barriers that may interrupt their education. These barriers include:

- Lack of supplies: School supplies, food, clothing, etc.
- Residency and guardianship requirements
- Lapses in program continuity
- Delays in educational evaluations (IEP, 504, GIEP)
- Lack of transportation
- Missing academic and health records
- Lack of awareness regarding homelessness and the supports available
- Inadequate parental resources
- Social stigma attached to the homeless title

Community Outreach Program

The Redbank Valley School District attempts to seek out children and youth experiencing homelessness in our community. Informational posters with contact information have been displayed at the following locations:

- Redbank Valley High School (Main hallway, restrooms)
- Redbank Valley Elementary School (Main hallway)
- Redbank Valley Intermediate School (Main hallway)
- Local churches
 - Distant Baptist, Distant
 - Grace Baptist Church, New Bethlehem
 - First United Methodist, New Bethlehem
- Community Center
- New Bethlehem Public Library

Dispute Resolution Process

If a dispute arises over eligibility, enrollment, or school selection:

- The parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth shall be referred to the district's liaison, who shall assist in the dispute resolution process
- The student shall be immediately enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought, pending final resolution of the dispute, including all available appeals
- The district's liaison shall issue a written decision of the dispute within twenty (20) business days of being notified of the dispute

- A parent/guardian or unaccompanied youth may appeal a district’s written decision or file a complaint with the Coordinator of Pennsylvania’s Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Program
 - PA Regional Coordinator, Wendy Kinnear
724-458-6700
wendy.kinnear@miu4.org

APPENDIX

A: Residency Questionnaire	Page 7-8
B: Informational Posters	Page 9-12
Parent-English	
Parent-Spanish	
Youth-English	
Youth-Spanish	
B: Dispute Resolution Form	Page 14-17

Redbank Valley School District

Student Residency Questionnaire

The McKinney-Vento, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, defines homelessness and outlines the rights of homeless students. Your responses to these questions will help staff determine what residency documents are necessary for enrollment of child(ren). Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Student Name: _____ Birth Date: _____

2. Person Completing the Form: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

3. In what type of setting is the student living now? Please check one box below:

Section A

In an emergency or transitional shelter

Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason

In a motel, hotel, campsite, or car due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations

Other places not designated for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations for human beings

CONTINUE TO QUESTION 4 IF YOU CHECKED ANY BOX IN SECTION A

Section B

None of the choices in Section A apply to my family



IF YOU CHECKED THIS SECTION, YOU DO NOT NEED TO COMPLETE THE REMAINDER OF THIS FORM. SUBMIT THIS FORM TO SCHOOL PERSONNEL.

THANK YOU.

4. Contact number of person completing this form: _____

5. Address where the student is currently living: _____

6. The student lives with: (Check all that applies)

Parent(s) or Legal Guardian

Relative, Friend(s), or other Adult(s)

Alone

Other: _____

7. School the student last attended: _____

Address of School: _____

Telephone Number of Last School: _____

Contact Person at School (If known): _____

8. Does the student have an IEP or a Chapter 15/504 agreement?

NO

Yes, Please explain: _____

The staff person who is helping you register will contact the Homeless Liaison/Homeless Coordinator to review the information provided. If homelessness is verified, additional information will follow to assist your child(ren). You will be contacted by the Homeless Liaison for additional information.

Parent/ Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

NOTE TO STAFF: All forms with Section A checked will need to be faxed to the Homeless Liaison immediately to eliminate any delay.

Redbank Valley School District
Homeless Liaison
Kyle Hicks
814-275-2424 ext. 305
Khicks@redbankvalley.net



Life is uncertain, but your child's education doesn't have to be.

Even if you lack a permanent residence, your children can receive help to stay in their home school district.

PENNSYLVANIA'S EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM

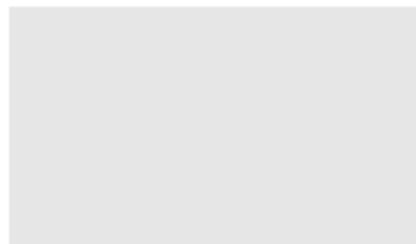
Every child deserves school stability.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act can help provide school stability for your child if you do not have a permanent home and are:

- Staying with friends or family because you lost housing.
- Living in a shelter, including transitional programs.
- Staying in motels because you cannot get your own home.
- Living on the streets, in a car, van, tent or other nonpermanent structure.



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La vida puede ser incierta, pero la educación de sus hijos no lo tiene que ser.

Aun si usted no tiene un hogar permanente, sus hijos pueden recibir ayuda para permanecer en su distrito escolar.

PROGRAMA EDUCATIVO PARA NIÑOS Y ADOLESCENTES DE FAMILIAS DEAMBULANTES DEL ESTADO DE PA

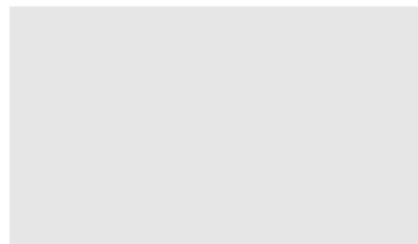
Todo niño se merece una educación estable.

El McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act le puede ayudar a conseguir estabilidad escolar para sus hijos si usted no tiene hogar fijo y esta:

- Quedándose con algún familiar debido a la pérdida su casa.
- Esta viviendo en un refugio temporero.
- Está residiendo en moteles por que no puede tener su propia casa.
- Esta viviendo en las calles, en su automóvil, tienda de campaña u otra estructura no permanente.



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Information for School-Age Youth

You may qualify for certain rights and protections under the federal McKinney-Vento Act.

If you live in any of the following situations:

- A shelter.
- A motel or campground due to the lack of an alternative adequate accommodation.
- A car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station.
- Doubled up with other people due to loss of housing or economic hardship.



As an eligible student you have the right to:

- Receive a free, appropriate public education.
- Enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment.
- Enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents.
- Enroll in the local school or continue attending your school of origin (the school you attended when permanently housed or the school in which you were last enrolled), if that is your preference and is feasible.

If the school district believes that the school selected is not in your best interest, the district must provide you with a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal its decision.

- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if you request this.
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to your needs as a student.

If you believe you may be eligible, contact one of the individuals below to find out what services and supports may be available.



Local Contact

State Coordinator
Sheldon Winnick
(717) 783-6466

Información para Jóvenes en Edad Escolar

Usted podría cumplir con los requisitos para obtener ciertos derechos y protecciones bajo la Ley federal de McKinney-Vento.

Si usted vive en alguna de las siguientes situaciones:

- Un refugio.
- Un motel o campamento debido a la falta de un alojamiento alternativo adecuado.
- Un automóvil, un parque, un edificio abandonado la estación de autobús o tren.
- Decidió compartir con otras personas debido a la pérdida de vivienda o dificultades económicas.



Como estudiante elegible, tiene el derecho a:

- Recibir una educación pública gratuita y apropiada.
- Inscribirse en la escuela inmediatamente, incluso si carece de documentos normalmente requeridos para la inscripción.
- Inscribirse en la escuela y asistir a clases mientras la escuela se encarga de reunir todos los documentos necesarios.
- Inscribirse en la escuela local o continuar asistiendo a su escuela de origen (la escuela a la que asistió cuando tenía hogar permanente o la escuela donde se inscribió por última vez), en caso de que esa sea su preferencia y sea factible.

Si el distrito escolar considera que la escuela seleccionada no es de su mejor interés, el distrito deberá darle una explicación por escrito acerca de su posición y le informará sobre su derecho a apelar la decisión.

- Recibir servicios de transporte hacia y desde la escuela de origen, si así lo solicitaran.
- Recibir servicios educativos comparables a los proporcionados a otros estudiantes, de acuerdo a sus necesidades como estudiante.

Si usted cree que tal vez elegible, póngase en contacto con uno de los individuos detallados aquí abajo para saber qué servicios y apoyos pueden estar disponibles.



Contacto local

Sheldon Winnick
Coordinador Estatal
(717) 783-6466

Existe el Programa de la Educación para Niños y Jóvenes Sin Hogar que se encarga de ayudar a los estudiantes que están atravesando por la experiencia de falta de vivienda, ofreciendo una amplia variedad de servicios para ayudarlos durante este tiempo de cambio y estrés.



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Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness – Dispute Letter

Date:

State Coordinator
Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street, 5th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Dear State Coordinator:

My name is . My child(ren) attend school in the School District.

I need your help with the following problem(s). I have checked the box that fits my situation. I have included a brief statement in the space provided.

The school district would not enroll my child (children).

Child(ren) couldn't begin school because they didn't have all their medical and/or school records.

Child(ren) not permitted to stay in their current school.

Special education testing/placement services denied or unavailable.

School District will not provide transportation to stay in the current school.

Other

I have written on the reverse side what has already been done to help me.
(Optional)

Please call me at () _____, or at () _____.

Or, you can write to me at: (print full address)

Thank you in advance for looking into this matter.

Parent Name



Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness – Conflicto por Falta de Hogar

Fecha:

State Coordinator
Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness
Pennsylvania Department of Education
333 Market Street, 5th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Estimado Coordinador(a):

Mi nombre es . Mis niño(s) asisten en la escuela del distrito .

Necesito ayuda con los siguientes problemas. A continuación he marcado las oraciones que coinciden de acuerdo a mi situación y he incluido una declaración breve en el espacio proporcionado.

El Distrito Escolar no matriculará a mi niño(s).

Los niños no pudieron empezar asistir a la escuela porque no tuvieron todos los expedientes médicos (vacunas) o los expedientes de la escuela.

Los niños no están permitido permanecer en su escuela actual.

Pruebas de Educación Especial/servicios de colocación fueron negados o no disponibles.

Distrito Escolar no proveerá transportación para permanecer en la escuela actual.

Otra razón

He escrito en el dorso qué se ha hecho ya para ayudarme.(opcional)

Por favor, llámeme al () _____, o al () _____.

o escríbame a

Gracias por adelantado por investigar este asunto.

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Nombre del padre/madre