

**2023-2024**  
**Union School District**  
**Education for Children & Youth**  
**Experiencing Homelessness Program**



Union School District Office: 473-6311  
Union High School: 473-3121  
Sligo Elementary: 745-2152

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## **The McKinney-Vento Act**

On July 22, 1987, the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act became public law. This was the first comprehensive federal law that addressed homelessness in America. On December 10, 2015, the President signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), which reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Under the previous version of ESEA, the No Child Left Behind Act, the education of homeless children and youth was included in Title X, Part C. Under ESSA, homeless education is included in Title IX, Part A.

### Provisions of the Act:

Homeless children have the right to attend either their original school or the school in the area in which they currently reside for the duration of their homelessness, or until the end of the school year if the family finds permanent housing.

Schools are to immediately enroll homeless children and unaccompanied youth, even if they are unable to produce records normally required for enrollment, such as previous academic records, medical records, proof of residency, and any other required documentation.

In the case where the educating district is different than the district where the student is temporarily residing, both school districts are responsible for the facilitation of transportation in the best interest of the student.

Immediately upon enrollment, homeless students are entitled to receive a daily, free school lunch.

## **Program Overview**

The Union School District acknowledges the additional stressors that a child or youth experiencing homelessness will face. Union, in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act, will protect homeless children and youth by providing equal access to educational services, transportation, nourishment, hygiene & support.

## **Defining Homelessness**

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homelessness as any child or youth that lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Furthermore, this includes:

- Children in families that are doubled-up
- Living in motels, hotels, campgrounds, campers, buses, trains, transition shelters, hospitals, churches, camps, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, etc.
- Reside at a nighttime residence that is not designed for or ordinarily used for regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
- Unaccompanied youth whom are not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian, perhaps they have run away from home, been thrown out of their home, abandoned by family, or separated from parents for other reasons
- A child of a migrant family

## **Common Barriers Facing Homeless Children**

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

- Lack of school supplies, food, clothing, etc.
- Residency and guardianship requirements
- Lapses in program continuity
- Delays in educational evaluations
- Lack of transportation
- Missing academic and health records
- Lack of awareness regarding the extent and effects of homelessness
- Inadequate parental resources
- Social stigma attached to homelessness
- Inadequate access to school activities

## **Rights of Children & Youth Experiencing Homelessness**

According to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act, eligible students have the following rights:

- Receive a free & appropriate public education
- Immediate enrollment in school, even if lacking documents that are required:
  - Records, Birth Certificate, Immunization Records, Proof of Residence, etc.
- Continue attending their school of origin when appropriate
  - A school district must provide you with a written explanation of its position and inform you of your right to appeal the decision if they believe attending the school of origin is not in the best interest of your child
- Receive transportation to and from the school of origin if necessary
- Receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students similar needs

## **The Identification Process**

It is the responsibility of the Union School District to identify children & youth experiencing homelessness. To fulfill this responsibility an identification/application process has been established. The following methods of identification will be utilized:

- **Self Identification, Parent Identification, Staff Identification**  
An individual student, or parent/guardian, may identify himself or herself as a student or family experiencing homelessness at any time. Staff members must immediately notify the school liaison when this information is received. Upon notification the homelessness liaison will contact the student/family to begin the identification process.
- **School District Identification**  
Often times, neighboring homelessness liaisons will contact the school district to share pertinent information about students. Homelessness liaisons should contact one another with information that will aide in the identification of children & youth experiencing homelessness. If information is received the homelessness liaison will contact the student/family to being the identification process.
- **Identification at Enrollment**  
The Union School District has included a Residency Questionnaire as part of the enrollment documents. Students/families may utilize this form to declare homelessness. Upon notification the homelessness liaison will contact the student/family to begin the identification process.

## **Community Outreach Program**

The Union School District attempts to seek out children & youth experiencing homelessness in our community. Informational posters with contact information have displayed at:

- Union High School
- Sligo Elementary School
- University Korner
- Fox's Pizza
- Rimersburg Library

## **Dispute Resolution Process**

If a dispute arises over school selection or enrollment for a student eligible under the McKinney-Vento Act:

The child or youth shall be immediately enrolled into the school in which enrollment is sought, pending resolution of the dispute. The Union School District will provide its share of the transportation to the school selected for the duration of the dispute resolution process.

If the Union School District disputes the identification of an individual, the student and parent/guardian will be contacted in writing to communicate their concerns. The Homeless Liaison will maintain communication until the dispute is resolved.

If dissatisfied with the school's decision, the parent, guardian, or youth may appeal the decision to the state level. Contact information will be provided by the Homeless Liaison to do so.

Contacts include:

[www.education.pa.gov/homeless](http://www.education.pa.gov/homeless)

Wendy Kinnear, PA Regional Coordinator

724.458.6700

[wendy.kinnear@miu4.org](mailto:wendy.kinnear@miu4.org)

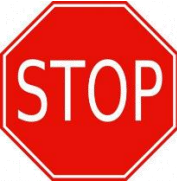
**Union School District**  
**Student Residency Questionnaire**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your responses to these questions will help staff determine what residency documents are necessary to enroll your child. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. Student name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_

2. In what type of setting is the child living now? Check one box below:

Section A	Section B
<p><input type="checkbox"/> In an emergency or transitional shelter</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In a motel, hotel, campsite, or car due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In a car, park, public space, abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other places not designed for, or ordinarily used as, regular sleeping accommodations for human beings</p> <p><b>CONTINUE TO THE QUESTIONS BELOW if you checked a box in SECTION A</b></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> None of the choices in SECTION A apply</p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div> <p>If you checked this section, you do not need to complete questions 3 through 6. Please sign and date the form and turn it in.</p>

3. Contact number for person completing this form:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Address where the child is now living:  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. The child lives with (Check all that apply):  Parent or legal guardian  
 Relative, friend or other adult  
 Alone  
 Other:  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Name, Address, and Phone Number of the school the child attended last:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Does the child have an IEP or a 504 agreement?  No  
 Yes, please explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_