



The Bridge
Project in PA

The Bridge Project in Pennsylvania

Online Mental Health Services for
Children and Youth Experiencing
Homelessness



Pennsylvania
Department of Education



CENTER FOR SCHOOLS
AND COMMUNITIES

Background

Mental health and wellbeing have a strong impact on a student's academic achievement. Research suggests that focused intervention by a team of people at schools, health and community organizations is important to help children and youth experiencing homelessness overcome detrimental effects of their situation.

Children and youth experiencing homelessness may not always receive the mental health services they need due to lack of or difficulty in accessing services, fear of stigmatization, or embarrassment.

The Bridge Project in PA provides FREE access to online mental health services for McKinney-Vento eligible children and youth in Pennsylvania. No health insurance is necessary.

The program is part of Pennsylvania's American Rescue Plan – Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) Program and is available for a limited time.



Mental Health Provider



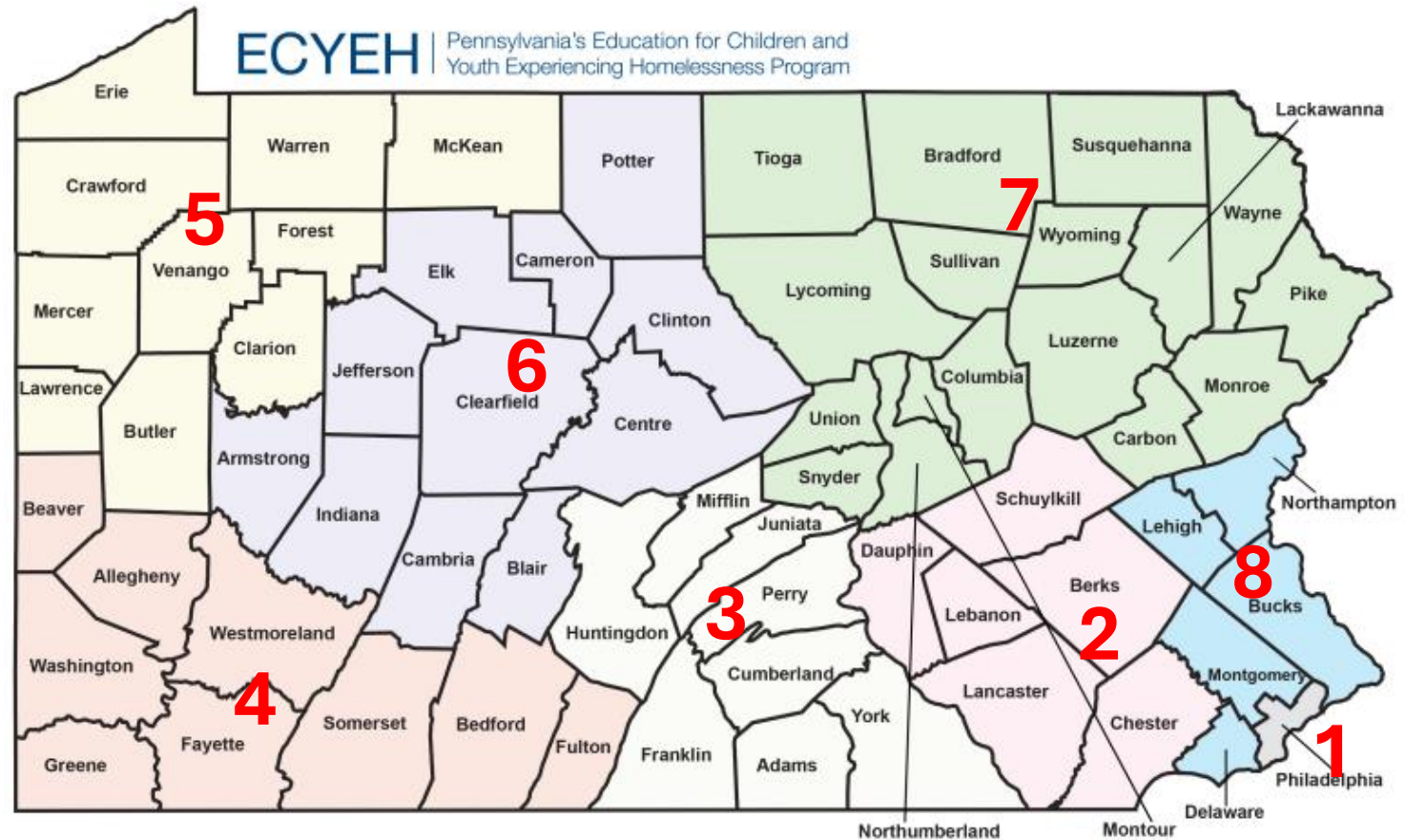
Move Forward Counseling LLC's mission is to empower youth and adults to improve their lives through excellent mental health outpatient therapy in Pennsylvania. Their highly qualified therapists provide quality and specialized in-person and virtual therapy to individuals and families from all walks of life.

The Bridge Project facilitates one-on-one virtual appointments between the student experiencing homelessness, in some cases the student's family, and highly qualified counselors at Move Forward Counseling.

Regional Coverage



Regions 1 - 8



Program Overview

- Who**
- McKinney-Vento eligible children and youth in grades K-12 in Pennsylvania are eligible for services.
 - Parents or guardians may participate if deemed appropriate or required by the therapist.
 - School Homeless Liaisons make referrals for students to receive program services and assist the provider with paperwork and appointment logistics.
 - Highly qualified Move Forward Counseling therapists conduct virtual counseling sessions.
 - CSC serves as funding conduit and overall program support, on behalf of PDE.
- What**
- FREE of charge online counseling sessions with Move Forward Counseling therapists.
 - No health insurance or billing necessary. Funding is coordinated at the state level.
- Where**
- A private location with internet access in school or a safe space outside of school.
- When**
- Referrals may begin as of 5/8/2024.
 - Appointments will occur generally during daytime hours on weekdays.
 - Special appointment accommodations can be made on a case-by-case basis.
 - The Bridge Project in PA services through ARP-HCY funding will be available for a limited time.

Webpage Information

- Getting started steps for Homeless Liaisons
- About our service provider
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Make a referral
- Learn about the research



<https://ecyehpennsylvania.center-school.org/the-bridge-project-in-pa/>



Program Steps

1. The School Homeless Liaison concludes that a student experiencing homelessness may benefit from mental health services.
 - Student or family may already know of The Bridge Project in PA and inquire about the program.
 - Community organizations may alert students or families about the program.
 - The Bridge Project services must not be used as part of student Individualized Education Plans (IEP) or 504 Plans
2. The School Homeless Liaison discusses The Bridge Project in PA services with the student and/or family and establishes whether there is interest in a referral.
 - Students under 14 years old must have parent/guardian approval.
3. The School Homeless Liaison makes a referral for the student.
 - From The Bridge Project in PA webpage: <https://ecyehpennsylvania.center-school.org/the-bridge-project-in-pa/> :
 - a. Select “Make a Referral” – you are redirected to the Referral Process webpage
 - b. In the “Steps to make a referral” box, choose the county where the school is located
 - c. You will be redirected to Move Forward Counseling’s referral landing page.
 - d. Enter all required information on the provider’s referral form and submit.

Program Steps

Provider Referral Page



Move Forward Counseling, LLC Referral page:

<https://moveforwardpa.com/the-bridge-project-in-pa/>

717-462-7003

Information Required for a Referral

- School Homeless Liaison name
- School Homeless Liaison contact information
- District/school entity name
- Student name
- Student contact information
- Parent/guardian name
- Parent/guardian contact information
- Acknowledgment that school will make reasonable accommodations help the student with reasonable accommodations for the student

Tip! If the parent/guardian is not required for the referral (child is 14 years or older) “Not applicable” can be used for parent name.

Program Steps

4. The mental health provider contacts the School Homeless Liaison to confirm the referral and next steps.
 - Intake paperwork required by the provider is finalized (with student/family).
 - A therapist is matched to the student.
 - First intake appointment is scheduled.
 - A secure virtual link for the appointment is confirmed for the liaison to provide to the student.
 - The ongoing contact for future scheduling is confirmed.

Required paperwork will not refer to fees or insurance:

- Standard Intake Questions
- Informed Consent (parent consent if under 14 years of age)
- Notice of Privacy
- Emergency Contacts
- Release of Information
- Self-Rated Symptom Questionnaire

Program Steps

5. The School Homeless Liaison works with the student/family for appointment logistics and helps remove barriers to access.
 - Provides the secure appointment link to the student/family
 - Helps identify confidential space to participate in appointments
 - Works with teachers to accommodate the student's ability to receive services during the day
 - Possible transportation coordination
 - Ensures the student has an internet-enabled electronic device

Equipped electronic devices are available on a limited basis through a program called Connecting People To Resources. Homeless Liaisons may request a device by emailing arpactivities@csc.csiu.org.

6. The mental health provider communicates serious case management information to the student's Homeless Liaison when deemed necessary and according to provider policy and all laws.
 - Examples: household utilities shut off, suicidal intent, planned violence, child abuse, dependent adult abuse, etc.

Program Steps

7. The School Homeless Liaison must record an entry into the PA ECYEH reporting system for every McKinney-Vento identified student that receives The Bridge Project services.

- Liaisons do not need to track every Bridge Project appointment a McKinney-Vento student has.
- Only one entry for each student is required to indicate they are receiving services.
- In the PA ECYEH reporting system:
 - Under Service Delivery Type, toggle “ARP-HCY Funds” under category “referrals for medical, dental and other health services”
 - In the additional comment box, enter a note “BRIDGE PROJECT”

Service Delivery Type	Title I	ESSER	MV Funds	ARP-HCY Funds	Other Funding
Tutoring or other instructional support	No	No	No	No	No
Expedited Evaluations	No	No	No	No	No
Referrals for medical, dental and other health services	No	No	No	Yes	No
Transportation	No	No	No	No	No

School Name of Current Enrollment	***Select this AFTER selecting an LEA above***
LEA of Origin	
Any additional comments:	BRIDGE PROJECT
Record Entered In Error:	

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: I want to make sure I understand which students are eligible for The Bridge Project services.

A1: Children and youth experiencing homelessness enrolled in a Pennsylvania school entity in grades K-12 are eligible for services. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines “homeless children and youths” as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” Services may be provided to children as young as 5 years old at the discretion of the service provider.

Q2: How do I refer a student for services?

A2: Each Pennsylvania school entity has an identified Homeless Liaison. The Homeless Liaison is authorized to make a referral for a student following the referral process. If you are not the Homeless Liaison but would like to explore services for a student, please use our Homeless Liaison Directory and contact them directly.

Q3: Our district will require a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the mental health provider. How should we approach this?

A3: The provider is aware that some schools will require MOUs or other paperwork. This paperwork should be coordinated between the school and provider directly. Although CSC will not be part of the paperwork, the MOUs must not include any reference to pricing or insurance for The Bridge Project in PA services.

Q4: Do we need to record every Bridge appointment a student has in the PA ECYEH Reporting system?

A4: No, just once to indicate that the student is receiving “medical, dental or other health services” under ARP-HCY funding.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q5: We work limited hours during the summer. How should I handle communication with the provider during this time?

A5: Although new referrals may be less during the summer, The Bridge Project services will occur all summer. We recommend that liaisons set up their email and voicemail out-of-office messages as they would for any lengthy absence. For instance, an alternative contact in the message may be warranted, depending on your specific circumstances.

Q6: I have a student who will graduate in 2024 who could benefit from these services. Is it too late to make a referral?

A6: No, if you can get the referral submitted before the student graduates. The student could then receive The Bridge Project Services through the summer.

Q7: Can students who are not McKinney-Vento eligible use The Bridge Project in PA services?

A7: No. The funding for The Bridge Project in PA is through ARP-HCY and must be utilized for McKinney-Vento eligible children and youth where services are tracked as support for the funding.

Q8: What is the age-range for a student to receive The Bridge Project in PA services?

A8: The student should be enrolled in a Pennsylvania school entity in grades K-12. Services may be provided to children as young as 5 years old at the discretion of the service provider.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q9: If this is tied to ARP-HCY funding, won't that be done by September 2024? Will the program be that short?

A9: The U.S. Department of Education is allowing states to submit a liquidation request for the ARP-HCY Fund. CSC and PDE are working together to submit a request for extension of the funding to the federal Department of Education, which could extend The Bridge Project timeline.

Resources

- Digital flyers and outreach materials in final review - available very soon and will be circulated!
- <https://ecyehpennsylvania.center-school.org/the-bridge-project-in-pa/>
- Questions: arpactivities@csc.csiu.org