



Stuff the Bus Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is *Stuff the Bus*?

Stuff the Bus is a countywide drive to gather basic school supplies for children who otherwise would not be able to afford them. We're collecting the supplies that students are required to have to be able to keep up in the classroom.

2. Who is spearheading this drive?

United Way Monterey County is spearheading the school supply drive. We want every child to start school with self-confidence, knowing they have the same supplies as everyone else. You can reach us at 831-372-8026.

3. Why is United Way Monterey County involved in *Stuff the Bus*?

UWMC sees this as an investment in our future. Providing children with the necessary supplies to participate in school promotes learning, encourages self-esteem and helps kids stay in school.

4. How much does UWMC hope to collect this year?

Ideally, we'd like to send each child in need back to school ready to learn.

There are more than **7,000** students who are considered homeless in Monterey County. Many more come from families that are barely struggling to get by. We hope to serve as many of those students as we can.

5. Who will get the backpacks?

Backpacks will be distributed to each school district's homeless liaison through the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE). The liaisons know the students and will distribute backpacks to students who qualify. If we don't gather enough backpacks to fulfill all requests, the amount distributed to each school district will be prorated.

6. How are the children selected to receive the school supplies?

MCOE will work with local school district staff to distribute supplies to children who are homeless and in the greatest need.

7. What can I do to help?

- Text **StuffBus** to **313131** to make an online donation.
- **Post on your social media** to share with your friends and ask them to donate.
- Make an [online donation](#)
- Grab a [shopping list](#) and **donate supplies** at one of our [locations](#).
- Donate gift cards or money. Please make checks payable to UWMC and note the donation is for **Stuff the Bus**.
- [Volunteer](#) for **Stuff the Bus**.

8. Can I just make a cash contribution? Credit card?

Yes, we can stretch your money so it will do more -- **\$20 buys a full stuffed backpack**. Text **StuffBus** to **313131**, donate online or send a check.

9. How much does it cost for one "stuffed backpack"?

We estimate that a new backpack with the basic school supplies costs \$20. We've struck some great deals with vendors and can stretch your money.

10. When will the backpacks be distributed?

The backpacks will be distributed before the start of school or on the first day of classes to students with the greatest need. Any extra supplies will be kept to distribute to children who start school after the first day.

11. May I donate individual items or do I need to donate a complete backpack?

You can donate individual items or a complete backpack. The need is great and any assistance for the students is welcome.

12. What supplies go into the backpacks?

A stuffed backpack consists of the basic supplies a child is expected to bring to class. Check out the [shopping list](#) for a full list.

13. Where can I donate?

Look for our [drop off sites](#) after June 21.

14. Can I donate used supplies?

For the children we prefer that all supplies be new. However, if you have a **gently used** item that you believe will benefit a young student, please donate it.

15. I need a backpack for my children. Whom do I contact?

Backpacks will be distributed by each individual school's staff working in partnership with the homeless liaisons and MCOE. If you don't know the homeless liaison at your school, either ask at the office or dial 2-1-1 to request the information.

16. What is the definition of homelessness?

The **McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act** is a federal law to ensure educational stability for homeless children and youth. The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children as those "who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence."

Examples of children who fall under this definition those:

- Sharing overcrowded housing because of economic hardship
- Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camp grounds due to lack of alternative accommodations
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Children and youth whose primary nighttime residence is not meant for human habitation (e.g. backyard tents, garages, park benches, etc.)
- Those living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations
- Migratory children and youth living in any of the above situations

17. Where do I find more information?

At the United Way Monterey County website, <http://www.UnitedWayMCCA.org/Stuff-Bus>