



FY2022 Funding for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program

April 2021

In response to the lasting impact of the coronavirus pandemic and increased hardship in the wake of the economic crisis, Congress should appropriate at least \$300 million for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program in FY2022. This is \$193.5 million above the FY2020 level of \$106.5 million.

- **Nationally, 77% of local educational agencies are not able to receive EHCY subgrants due to lack of funding. Lack of funding limits the ability of schools to identify homeless students, ensure their access to school, and connect them to community supports.** EHCY subgrants are used for outreach and identification, enrollment assistance, transportation, school records transfer, immunization referrals, tutoring, counseling, school supplies, professional development for educators and community organizations, and referrals for community services.
- **In the wake of COVID-19, school district EHCY programs face significant costs in meeting the needs of homeless children and youth.** These costs include staff time to identify students, provide outreach, and leverage community services. No other federal program has the responsibility and expertise for finding and serving these students. Other costs include educational and related services, as well as transportation. In many areas, schools are the hub for social service provision, especially when community partners face high demand and have had to scale back services.
- **An appropriation of \$300 million would sustain the support to students experiencing homelessness provided through COVID-19 relief packages while increasing the number of EHCY subgrants to reach at least half of all school districts nationwide.**

Key Facts

- **Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, [public schools identified and enrolled 1.4 million homeless students](#).** This represents an 3% increase over the past three years, and a 104% increase since the 2006-2007 school year. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education estimates that [1.4 million children under the age of six](#) experienced homelessness in 2017-2018, but that only 9% were enrolled in federally-funded early childhood programs.
- **[Children and youth of color are disproportionately likely to experience homelessness.](#)** Black high school students are 2.25 times more likely to experience homelessness, and Hispanic high school students are 2 times more likely to experience homelessness, than white high school students. Racial inequity is apparent in early childhood homelessness, too.
- **Even prior to the pandemic, homeless children and youth struggled in school, and were more likely to drop out.** Based [on data from 49 states](#), the 2018-2019 national average graduation rate for homeless students was 67.7%. This is 12% below other low-income students (80%) and nearly 18% below all students (85.5%).
- **The McKinney-Vento Act’s Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program, strengthened by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), is the only federal education program that removes barriers to school enrollment, attendance, and success caused by homelessness.** Local liaisons help identify homeless children and youth, ensure their school access and stability, provide them direct support service, and coordinate with community agencies to meet basic needs.
- **Homelessness and two of its key drivers, poverty and unemployment, are expected to worsen as a result of the economic downturn.** Communities are already reporting an uptick in the numbers of families and youth experiencing homelessness; many were not protected by eviction moratoria, and also are at heightened risk due to family stress. Based on these early indicators, as well as the surge in homelessness after the Great Recession in 2008, we expect unprecedented levels of family and youth homelessness and its lasting impacts on the education, health, and development of children and youth.
- **The pandemic has created additional barriers to education access and success.** School closures are expected to result in lost learning time for many vulnerable students, especially those who have faced barriers to distance learning. For homeless students, this includes lack of a quiet, safe place to study, as well as hunger, illness, and trauma. Additional barriers include being unable to meet enrollment requirements; high mobility resulting in lack of

continuity and absenteeism; lack of transportation; lack of supplies; poor health, fatigue, and hunger; and emotional crisis/mental health issues.

- **Federally-funded research shows that youth without a high school diploma are 4.5 times more likely to experience homelessness later in life.** [Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago](#) found that the single greatest risk factor for experiencing homelessness as a young adult is lack of a high school diploma or GED. Education plays a key role in early intervention and prevention of future homelessness.