



## **The Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program**

September 2022

- **In the 2020-2021 school year, public schools identified and enrolled nearly [1.2 million homeless students](#), PreK-12.** In addition, [the U.S. Department of Education](#) estimates that 1.3 million children under the age of 6 experienced homelessness in 2018-19, but that only 10% were enrolled in federally-funded early childhood programs. [Survey data](#) indicated a 28% decrease in the number of identified homeless students in the fall of 2020 compared to the fall of 2019, largely as a result of distance learning. When students are not identified, they miss out on critical educational protections and services that can stabilize their education and their lives.
- **[Students with disabilities, English learners, and students of color are disproportionately likely to experience homelessness.](#)** Students with disabilities represent 20% of all homeless students, compared to 15% of the overall student population. And while English learners comprise 18% of the students experiencing homelessness, they make up only 10% of the total student population. 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.
- **Homelessness has a negative impact on attendance, achievement, and graduation that is over and above the impact of poverty.** Based [on data from 49 states](#), the 2019-2020 national average graduation rate for homeless students was 67.8%. This is 12% below other low-income students (80%) and nearly 18% below all students (85.5%).
- **Homelessness creates unique barriers to educational access that have been exacerbated by the pandemic.** Barriers caused by homelessness include lack of documentation/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.
- **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.

- **The McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program is the only federal education program that removes barriers to school identification, enrollment, attendance, and success caused by homelessness.** No other federal program has the responsibility for and expertise in finding, engaging, and serving these students, and upholding their educational rights. Local liaisons help identify homeless children and youth, ensure school access and stability, provide direct services, and coordinate with community agencies to meet basic needs.
- **The FY2022 appropriation for the EHCY program was \$114 million. At this funding level, fewer than one in four school districts was able to receive an EHCY subgrant.** Limited funding hinders the ability of schools to identify homeless students, ensure their access to school and to other federal education programs, and leverage 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.
- **A bipartisan amendment to the American Rescue Plan Act provided \$800 million in funding specifically dedicated to support the identification, enrollment, and school participation of children and youth experiencing homelessness, including through wrap-around services.** These funds, known as American Rescue Plan - Homeless Children and Youth Funds (ARP-HCY), will reach many more school districts and allow schools to better identify, re-engage, and stabilize children and youth experiencing homelessness during the pandemic recovery.
- **In the wake of the pandemic and lingering economic impacts, family and youth homelessness is expected to increase.** Without the rights and protections of the McKinney-Vento Act, these students will not have basic access to any other federal education investment or program. EHCY is an essential component of any meaningful effort to achieve educational equity.
- **Given the impact of the pandemic, and research showing that not completing high school is the greatest single risk factor for experiencing homelessness as a young person, Congress should provide \$800 million in FY23 for the EHCY critical program.** An appropriation of \$800 million, less than 2% of the total federal K-12 education budget, would sustain support provided to students experiencing homelessness provided through the American Rescue Plan, while increasing the number of EHCY subgrants to reach at least half of all school districts nationwide.