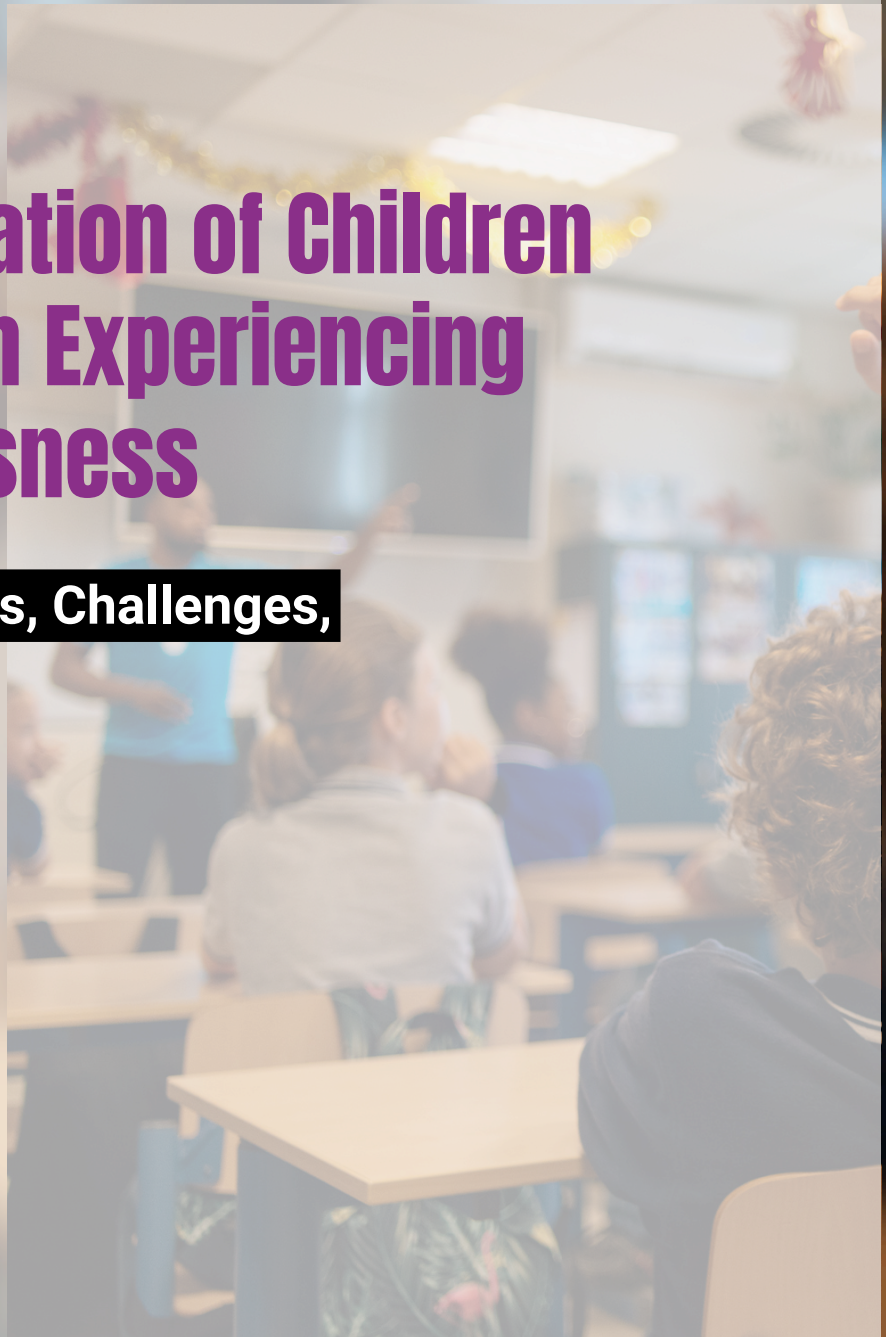


March 2024



The Education of Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Current Trends, Challenges, and Needs



Student Homelessness Has Increased Since The Pandemic, Creating A Greater Need For Targeted Support

- Public schools reported 1.2 million preK-12 students experiencing homelessness during the 2021-2022 school year, a 10% increase over the previous year. This increase nearly made up for the decline in homeless student enrollment that was attributed primarily to identification challenges during virtual learning.
- While the pandemic is officially over, the crisis of homelessness is unabated and growing. Last year, the number of families staying in homeless shelters or visibly unsheltered increased by 16%, while the number of unaccompanied youth staying in homeless shelters or visibly unsheltered increased by 15%.
- Many homeless children, youth, and families move between couches, cars, floors, motels, and other unstable situations. Nearly 76% of students identified as homeless by public schools in the 2021-2022 school year were sharing the housing of others temporarily due to loss of housing or similar reasons. These living arrangements are unstable and sometimes unsafe, but much more hidden.

The Chronic Absence Rate Of Students Experiencing Homelessness Is More Than Double The Rate Of All Students And Was Exacerbated By The Pandemic.

- More than half (52%) of students experiencing homelessness in the 2021-2022 school year were chronically absent, a rate that jumped 20% following the pandemic and is now 22 percentage points higher than other students.
- The high chronic absence rate among students experiencing homelessness is directly linked to the barriers to education caused by homelessness, which 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.

Students Experiencing Homelessness Graduate At Significantly Lower Rates Than Students From Families with Low Incomes Who Are Stably Housed.

- The 2020-2021 national average graduation rate for homeless students was 68%. This is 12 percentage points below other low-income students, and nearly 18 percentage points below all students.
- These data are particularly concerning because youth without a high school diploma are 4.5 times more likely to experience homelessness later in life, making lack of a high school diploma/GED the single greatest risk factor for experiencing homelessness as a young adult.

Students With Disabilities, English Learners, And Students Of Color Are Over-Represented Among Students Experiencing Homelessness.

- Students with disabilities represent 20% of all homeless students, compared to 15% of the overall student population.
- English learners comprise 18% of the students experiencing homelessness, but they make up only 10% of the total student population.

- Students of color who are over-represented among students experiencing homelessness include Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, Black or African Americans, and Hispanics/Latinos.

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 education liaisons help identify homeless children and youth, ensure school access and stability, provide direct services, and coordinate with community agencies to meet basic needs. 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.

The FY2023 Appropriation For The EHCY Program Was \$129 Million. At This Funding Level, Approximately One In Four School Districts Will 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.

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), have reached over half of all school districts to date – more than double the number of school districts reached with previous annual funding allocations. Subgrant funds allow schools to better identify, re-engage, and stabilize children and youth experiencing homelessness during the pandemic recovery.



Congress should provide \$800 million in FY2025 for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program.

In light of the lingering impacts of the pandemic, the accompanying economic fall-out, and research showing that not completing high school is the greatest single risk factor for experiencing homelessness as a young person, ongoing support for students experiencing homelessness is needed. An appropriation of \$800 million, less than 2% of the total federal K-12 education budget, would allow at least half of all school districts nationwide to continue to receive dedicated funds to identify and support these students when ARP-HCY expires.