Federal and State Resources for Students Experiencing Homelessness

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Executive Summary

Approximately 1.3 million public school students in the United States were identified as experiencing some form of homelessness in 2019–20. Due to their unstable living situations, students experiencing homelessness often have additional educational, social, emotional, and material needs compared to their stably housed peers. Housing instability can result in increased absences from school and can lead to students changing schools midyear. Each school move can disrupt students' education and limit opportunities to learn.

The multiple challenges associated with homelessness negatively impact student learning outcomes. Reading, mathematics, and science scores for students experiencing homelessness tend to be lower than those of their peers, including those from economically disadvantaged but residentially stable families. For example, in 2018–19, just 30% of students experiencing homelessness reached academic proficiency on state standards in reading and language arts, compared to 38% of their economically disadvantaged peers. Performance was lower, and the gap was even larger, in mathematics and science. The experience of homelessness also significantly reduces the likelihood that students will graduate and go on to college.

Students experiencing homelessness are not a homogenous group; certain groups of students are more likely to experience homelessness. Due to factors such as inequitable access to housing and economic opportunity, rates of homelessness tend to be higher among students of color. For example, in 2019–20, Black students accounted for approximately 27% of students identified as experiencing homelessness, but just 15% of all students—a rate of homelessness that is 80% higher than Black students' representation in the student population. National data also show that around 17% of students experiencing homelessness are English learners and that 19% are students with disabilities, underscoring that these students may require a combination of educational services.

There is a need for focused attention on the most vulnerable students, including those experiencing homelessness, particularly as the nation seeks to recover from the pandemic. However, districts face barriers in supporting students experiencing homelessness. These barriers include unstable funding or funding that is inadequate to meet student needs, and restrictions on the allowable uses of federal funds, which limits district ability to support noneducational expenses, such as for emergency housing. In addition, prior research has found that funding may help districts identify students experiencing homelessness, and without sufficient funding, fewer students are able to be identified as needing support, leading to inadequate services.

The purpose of the report is to examine the federal and state funding sources directed to schools to support students experiencing homelessness. We review the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the major federal effort to support students experiencing homelessness. Next, we describe currently available federal

and state financial supports for students experiencing homelessness. We conclude with policy recommendations concerning funding amounts, distribution, and data collection that may improve educational opportunities for these students.

Findings

The major federal educational effort to support students experiencing homelessness—the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987—is inadequately funded to accomplish its goals. This act outlines services and protections for students who are experiencing homelessness and requires states and districts to ensure that students experiencing homelessness "have access to the same free, appropriate public education" as other children. Local educational agencies (LEAs)—regardless of whether they receive McKinney-Vento funding—must identify and immediately enroll students experiencing homelessness; ensure their full participation in school; provide transportation to and from school regardless of where they are currently residing; inform the community and parents of the rights of children experiencing homelessness; and refer them to key resources such as housing, medical, dental, and mental health services.

McKinney-Vento provides annual grants to states to support programs for students experiencing homelessness. Between 2010 and 2020, the population of students experiencing homelessness increased by 39%. Funding for the McKinney-Vento program also increased from $65.4 million to $101.5 million, a $36.1 million increase, between the same years. This 55% increase, however, moved the funding level only from $71 per identified pupil to $79 per identified pupil, a fraction of what districts must actually spend to meet students' needs.

States do not receive funding based on the number of students experiencing homelessness, and most districts serving students experiencing homelessness do not receive federal funds to support them. McKinney-Vento funds are distributed to states based on their proportions of Title I, Part A funding. Because the funding formula is not based on the number of students experiencing homelessness, there is large variation in the funding each state receives per identified student experiencing homelessness—ranging from $38 in Utah to $287 in Vermont.

Further, because states distribute these limited funds to districts through a competitive grant process, the amount of funding is not proportional to the number of students served, and most districts do not receive such grants at all. In fact, fewer than 24% of LEAs (4,497 out of 18,844) do. Funded districts tend to be larger, serving proportionately more students, including students experiencing homelessness; in 2019–20, the districts that received McKinney-Vento funding educated approximately 63% of all students identified as experiencing homelessness. Despite their size, of the districts that did receive McKinney-Vento funding, the

average district grant was only $21,455. And over one third of all identified students experiencing homelessness were educated in districts that do not receive a McKinney-Vento grant.

The most generous investment at the federal level was a temporary, one-time investment through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). ARPA contained $800 million in one-time funding to states to support students experiencing homelessness, distributed as two sums: The first $200 million was distributed to LEAs on a competitive basis; the second was awarded to LEAs according to formula subgrants that were based on Title I, Part A payments and districts' identified enrollment of students experiencing homelessness, whichever was greater.

Only four states have allocated resources specifically to support students experiencing homelessness. In 2021, **California** appropriated $183.3 million in one-time funding to districts through allocations of $1,000 per student experiencing homelessness. **Massachusetts'** school funding formula includes a $23 million transportation reimbursement for school districts providing transportation that supports students experiencing homelessness who attend their school of origin. **New York** allocated $22.6 million to support the education and transportation of students experiencing homelessness in fiscal year 2023. **Washington** state's Homeless Student Stability Program provides $3.2 million across two competitive grants to provide educational stability by promoting housing stability within school districts; to increase identification of students experiencing homelessness; and to encourage the development of sustainable, collaborative strategies between housing and education partners.

Policy Recommendations

These findings point to lack of funding as one of the primary barriers to providing students experiencing homelessness with the education they are entitled to and need. Because the most effective way to mitigate the negative effects of experiencing homelessness on students is to prevent it, policymakers should ensure that financial resources are available to communities and schools to help keep students housed.

In addition to adopting policies that help students avoid experiencing homelessness, federal and state policymakers can consider increasing funding, making changes to funding distribution, expanding allowable uses of federal funding, and improving the quality of information about the use of funds. Four potential strategies include:

1. **Increase federal and state funding to help LEAs implement the federal protections, services, and supports afforded to students experiencing homelessness.** Policymakers at both state and federal levels should consider increasing their investments to support students experiencing homelessness. Funding should consider LEAs' costs associated with meeting the multiple needs of students experiencing homelessness. These may include a district homeless

liaison; school-level liaisons; transportation; supplies; and providing ready access to a web of supports, such as social-emotional, academic, health, nutrition, and housing services.

a. **At the federal level, annual funding for the McKinney-Vento program ($129 million for fiscal year 2023) should be substantially increased** to allow LEAs to meet the law's mandates. While additional research is needed to help determine the exact amount of funding necessary to support the educational needs of students experiencing homelessness, a good starting point would be to use the $800 million in funding provided by ARPA for student homeless programs as a baseline for future annual financing, which would amount to approximately $625 per student experiencing homelessness, based on pre–COVID-19 counts.

b. **At the state level, states should provide consistent funding that complements federal funds and is targeted to local needs.** State policymakers have several potential vehicles for funding assistance that supports students experiencing homelessness, including developing a student funding formula that includes an additional weight for these students, providing a targeted annual allotment for needed services like transportation or social supports, and providing grants to communities to coordinate services across local agencies. Whichever approach is used, the funding should be consistent and designed to supplement federal funding in ways that address acute needs in the given state and local contexts.

2. **Consider revising the McKinney-Vento funding formula to target funds, at least in part, based on the enrollment of students experiencing homelessness.** The current McKinney-Vento funding level, its allocation formula, and competitive grant process result in too few dollars, wide variation in the amount of funding to states per student experiencing homelessness, and most districts not receiving any of these federal funds. Thus, in addition to increasing the overall McKinney-Vento funding levels, shifting the allocation formula away from using only a competitive grant structure and toward an entitlement model based—at least in part—on the number of students experiencing homelessness in each LEA could help distribute funds to support far more students' needs. The recent allocation of $800 million in ARPA funds for students experiencing homelessness, which combined competitive grants with formula-driven funding, was a step in this direction. In addition, because many districts are unable to identify all of their students experiencing homelessness, a new funding formula might initially take into account poverty levels as well as numbers of students identified as experiencing homelessness.

3. **Expand allowable uses of federal funds for supporting students and families experiencing homelessness.** Federal policymakers could also increase supports for students experiencing homelessness by better aligning the federal definitions

of "homeless" used by federal housing and education programs. Using different definitions can make it difficult for local agencies to provide comprehensive wraparound supports to students and their families experiencing homelessness. Federal policymakers could align the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition of "homeless" used for homeless assistance programs with the one established by the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. This would enable students who are living in motels or who are doubled up with other families to qualify for housing and homeless assistance, administered by HUD.

Another strategy for increasing supports is to expand the allowable uses of funds of the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. This might include allowing payment for emergency utilities or rent, emergency medical expenses that compete with rent, or emergency hotel stays when no shelter is available. These supports may help prevent students and their families from becoming unhoused or facing a disruptive move.

4. **Improve the quality of information about the use of funds to assist students experiencing homelessness.** States and LEAs could help improve supports for students experiencing homelessness by promoting greater use of data on existing uses of funds in order to inform technical assistance and continuous improvement. Starting in the 2022–23 school year and for the following 2 school years, the U.S. Department of Education will require state education agencies (SEAs) to report how much funding LEAs are reserving under the Title I set-aside to support students experiencing homelessness and the number of students served. The Department of Education could make this reporting permanent and also require LEAs to report data to SEAs about how they are spending the funds. SEAs could leverage McKinney-Vento's state reservation to support capacity to review these data. SEAs could use data to identify promising approaches to disseminate and to guide technical assistance to all LEAs, including those not yet receiving McKinney-Vento funding.

Introduction

Approximately 1.3 million public school students in the United States were identified as experiencing some form of homelessness in 2019–20.[1] Due to their unstable living situations, students experiencing homelessness often have additional educational, social, emotional, and material needs. As the nation recovers from the pandemic, we need focused attention on our most vulnerable students, including those experiencing homelessness.

In this report, we examine the extent of student homelessness in the United States, describing how it has grown over time, how it varies for different student groups, and its consequences for students. We then review the provisions of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, the major federal effort to support students experiencing homelessness. Finally, we analyze the federal and state financial supports for students experiencing homelessness. To determine federal financial resources, we collected information on the various federal programs designed to assist students experiencing homelessness. To assess state funding, we reviewed all 50 state school funding formulas to ascertain what funding, if any, states provide to student homelessness programs.[2]

Our review found that while the federal government has been increasing funding for students experiencing homelessness over the past several years, the level of funding remains meager relative to the need. Moreover, only four states supplemented federal dollars with additional funding to support students experiencing homelessness. We conclude that additional resources are needed for states and districts to fully realize the broad protections under federal law for students experiencing homelessness.

Students Experiencing Homelessness in the United States

Student homelessness is a large problem in the United States. U.S. Department of Education ED*Facts* data from 2009–10 to 2017–18 indicate that the cumulative number of students enrolled in public schools and identified as experiencing homelessness increased by over 60% to more than 1.5 million before dropping by around 8% in both the 2018–19 and 2019–20 school years (Figure 1).[3]

Further, the number of students identified as experiencing homelessness is likely an undercount.[4] The reasons behind this are complex and include reluctance to self-report due to fear of stigmatization; the mobile nature of housing-insecure students and families; and inadequate staff capacity, processes, or reporting procedures.[5] Anonymous survey data from nationally representative samples of students, such as from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), tend to yield higher homelessness identification rates, perhaps because these data do not have the same constraints. For example, a 2020 report from SchoolHouse Connection and Poverty Solutions drawing on YRBS data estimates that before the pandemic, "[p]ublic schools have been identifying only slightly more than half of high school students experiencing homelessness."[6]

The number of students experiencing homelessness was likely exacerbated by the COVID-19–related economic downturn when unemployment increased. Yet evidence suggests that, with most students not physically in school during 2020–21, identified student homelessness has declined since the pandemic began.[7] Figures for the 2020–21 school year indicate a 14% reduction in identified student homelessness. (See Figure 1.) This likely reflects challenges that districts had identifying and engaging students early in the pandemic when schools shifted to online learning. The federal policy response during the pandemic, including the moratorium on evictions and the expanded Child Tax Credit, may have also temporarily reduced the number of students experiencing homelessness. Both policies have since expired, which may lead to this number again increasing.

Figure 1
Number of Students Identified as Experiencing Homelessness in the U.S., 2009–10 to 2020–21
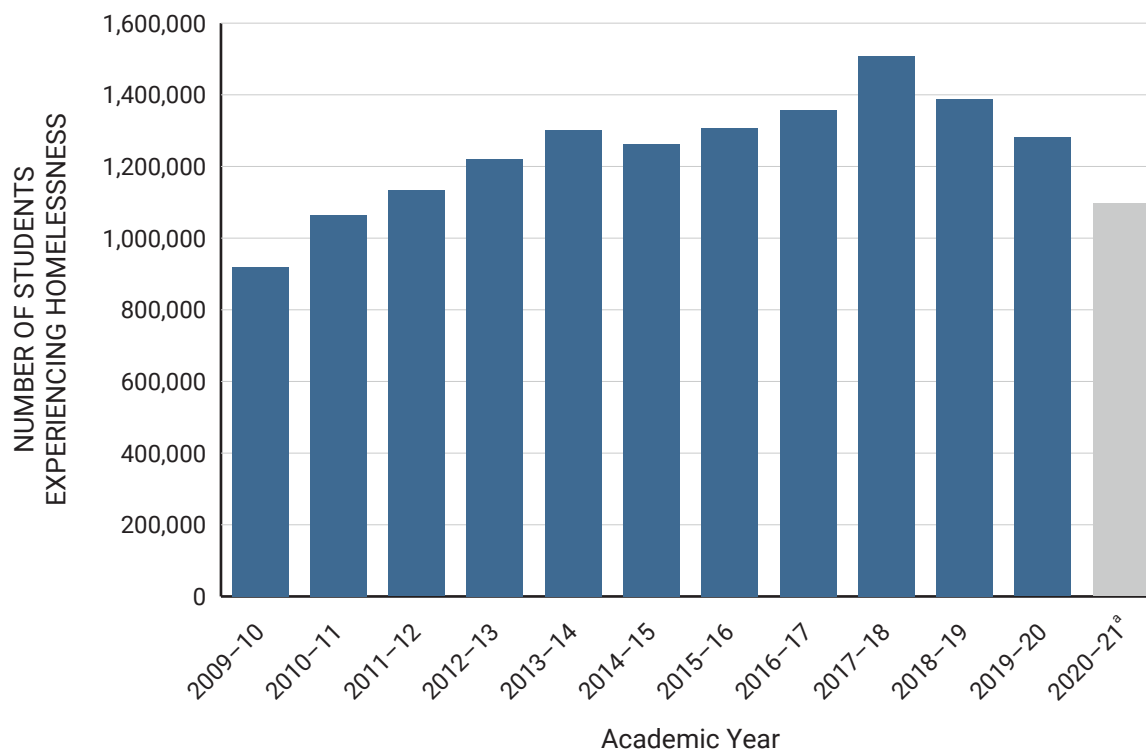
a The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the identification of eligible students in this year. Please interpret the data with caution.

Sources: National Center for Homeless Education. (2020). *Federal data summary: School years 2015–16 through 2017–18*. https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Federal-Data-Summary-SY-15.16-to-17.18-Published-1.30.2020.pdf (accessed 05/20/21); National Center for Homeless Education. (2021). *Federal data summary: School years 2016–17 through 2018–19*. https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Federal-Data-Summary-SY-16.17-to-18.19-Final.pdf (accessed 05/20/21); National Center for Homeless Education. (2022). *Student homelessness in America: School years 2018–19 to 2020–21*. https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Student-Homelessness-in-America-2022.pdf (accessed 01/24/23).

Students experiencing homelessness are not a homogenous group; certain groups of students are more likely to experience homelessness. Due to factors such as inequitable access to housing and economic opportunity, rates of homelessness tend to be higher among students of color.[8] For example, in 2019–20, Black students accounted for approximately 27% of students identified as experiencing homelessness, but just 15% of all students.[9] This reflects a rate of homelessness that is 80% higher than Black students' representation in the student population. Students from Latino/a, Native American, and Pacific Islander backgrounds were also disproportionately likely to experience homelessness. Likewise, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth have an elevated risk of experiencing homelessness compared to their heterosexual and cisgender peers. An analysis of YRBS data found

that around 29% of high school students experiencing homelessness identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or questioning compared to less than 16% of all students.[10] Contributing factors are a lack of acceptance, discrimination, and mistreatment that LGBT youth experience both inside and outside the home. These obstacles may prevent youth from receiving or even seeking out assistance.[11] National data also show that around 17% of students experiencing homelessness are English learners and that 19% are students with disabilities,[12] underscoring the fact that students experiencing homelessness may require a combination of educational services.

The experience of homelessness varies among students. While most experience the ordeal with family and parents, about 9% of all students experiencing homelessness are unaccompanied; that is, they are "not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian."[13] Students experiencing homelessness can move in and out of different living arrangements as they grapple with the challenges of homelessness. National data indicate that around 11% of students experiencing homelessness were identified as staying in shelters, 7% in motels or hotels, and 4% unsheltered.[14] (See Figure 2.) The majority of students (78%) were living doubled up with other families due to economic hardship—a less visible form of homelessness.[15]

Figure 2
Primary Residence of Students Experiencing Homelessness in the U.S., 2019−20
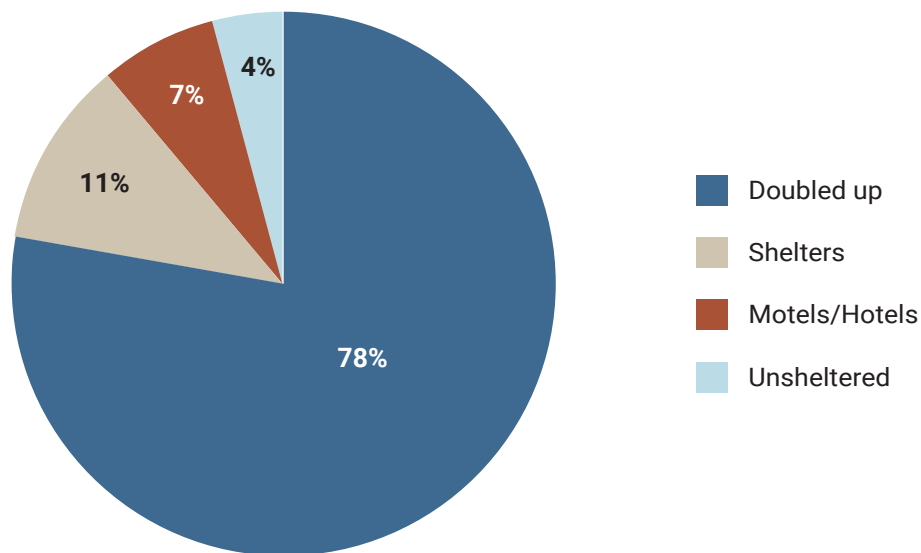
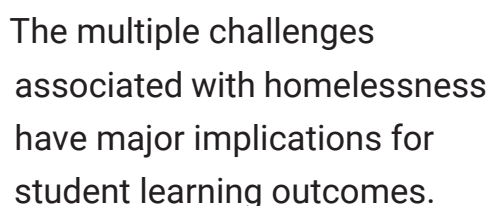Note: The category "Shelters" also includes those in transitional housing or awaiting foster care.

Source: National Center for Homeless Education. (2021). *Student homelessness in America: School years 2017–18 to 2019–20*. https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Student-Homelessness-in-America-2021.pdf (accessed 03/23/22).

Homelessness can limit youth's access to educational opportunities, as well as their physical and mental health. Housing instability and poverty can result in increased absences from school and can lead to students changing schools midyear.[16] Each school move can entail new campuses, transportation arrangements, classes, curricula, and teacher expectations, disrupting students' education and negatively impacting their opportunity to learn. Through residential and school mobility, children can become separated from family and school and neighborhood friends, with important consequences for social, emotional, and educational well-being.[17] Moreover, housing instability and severe poverty can lead to food instability and complicate efforts to receive needed health services.

The multiple challenges associated with homelessness have major implications for student learning outcomes. Academic achievement for students experiencing homelessness tends to be lower than that of their peers, including those from low-income but residentially stable families.[18] In 2018–19, just 30% of students experiencing homelessness reached academic proficiency on state standards in reading and language arts, compared to 38% of their economically disadvantaged peers. For mathematics, this figure was less than 25% (compared to 34%), and just 28% reached proficiency on state science assessments (compared to 37%).[19]

> The multiple challenges associated with homelessness have major implications for student learning outcomes.

The experience of homelessness also significantly reduces the likelihood that students will graduate and go on to college.[20] While not all states collect graduation cohort data in a uniform way, a recent report estimated that the 4-year graduation rate for students experiencing homelessness was just 68% in the 2018–19 school year.[21] To put this number into perspective, the 4-year graduation rate for all students was 86% that year and was 80% for economically disadvantaged students.[22] Educational attainment can be especially important in the lives of students who experience homelessness. Leaving school without a high school diploma or a GED is not only a potential consequence of homelessness but also a major risk factor for future homelessness.[23]

Students experiencing homelessness have the same aspirations as their stably housed peers—to graduate from high school and go on to college—but many face challenges associated with homelessness that negatively impact their academic success. This underscores the value of supportive policies and school environments that help all students foster resilience and achieve their educational potential.[24]

The Major Federal Effort to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness: McKinney-Vento Act

Because of the multiple challenges they often face, students experiencing homelessness need access to a range of services. The major federal educational effort to provide and coordinate these supports and establish rights for students experiencing homelessness is Title VII, subpart B, of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.[25] This section of the act outlines services and protection for students who are experiencing homelessness and sets out the roles of state and local agencies in their provision.

Under McKinney-Vento, students experiencing homelessness are defined as children and youths "who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence"[26] and includes those who:

- are sharing the housing of other people due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;

- are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals;

- have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; or

- are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.[27]

McKinney-Vento sets out the responsibilities of local educational agencies (LEAs)—such as traditional school districts, charter schools, and county offices of education—to ensure that students experiencing homelessness "have access to the same free, appropriate public education" as other children.[28] LEAs—regardless of whether they receive McKinney-Vento funding—must designate a district homeless liaison. Their responsibilities include identifying and immediately enrolling students experiencing homelessness; ensuring their full participation in school; providing transportation to and from school regardless of where they are currently residing; informing the community and parents of the rights of children experiencing homelessness; and referring them to key resources, such as housing, medical, dental, and mental health services.[29] In addition, liaisons are required to "coordinate and collaborate with State Coordinators and community and school personnel responsible for the provision of education and related services to homeless children and youths."[30]

Identification of students experiencing homelessness can be challenging. Homelessness can be a fluid situation, with students experiencing homelessness at different times during the school year and for various amounts of time. Students and parents may not wish to identify themselves as experiencing homelessness for fear

of stigmatization and bullying. In addition, schools and districts may not have the systems or capacity to identify student homelessness or to make families aware of their rights and the services available to them.[31] In addition, prior research has found that funding may help districts identify students experiencing homelessness, and without sufficient funding, fewer students are able to be identified as needing support, leading to inadequate services.[32] One study of districts with recognized homelessness programs found that district liaisons face capacity and resources barriers to identifying and supporting the range of needs of students experiencing homelessness. Barriers include a lack of affordable housing; funding that is unstable or inadequate to meet student needs; and restrictions on the allowable uses of Title I and McKinney-Vento funds, which limits district ability to support noneducational expenses, such as for emergency housing.[33] A 2019 report on district liaisons in California found that many liaisons held multiple roles in their districts, further restricting the time available in their capacity as liaisons.[34]

Moreover, many of the services that students experiencing homelessness need—such as physical and mental health care, food, and housing supports—may be provided by groups and agencies outside of the school district. It is the role of the district liaison to ensure that students experiencing homelessness receive referrals to these various services. Yet gaps between agencies and organizations can challenge the provision of these services. For example, public housing agencies and housing providers receiving federal funding typically follow a definition of homelessness that excludes families living doubled up with others due to economic hardship. This represents 78% of students experiencing homelessness as defined under McKinney-Vento.[35] (See Figure 2.) This means many students and their families may not have access to federal housing assistance programs.[36] Likewise, transportation services for students, which are required under McKinney-Vento, may require coordination within or between school districts.[37]

To help supply needed services for students experiencing homelessness, districts need to build relationships with multiple partners, including departments of social services, housing authorities, foster care, juvenile justice, child protective services, public and private transportation agencies, and agencies providing mental health services.[38] Silos among agencies can inhibit the provision of services,[39] evidencing a need for professional learning and the development of interagency memoranda of understanding. Interagency collaboration must both provide privacy protection for student data and facilitate information sharing to remove barriers to the identification, enrollment, and retention of students experiencing homelessness.[40]

Addressing the multiple barriers that students experiencing homelessness face, which the protections of McKinney-Vento identify, requires coordination and funding. In the following sections, we examine the federal and state resources available to provide access to the supports and services students experiencing homelessness need.

Federal Funding for Students Experiencing Homelessness

There are three primary federal funding sources to support students experiencing homelessness. (See Table 1.) The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is the major federal funding source to support the work of district liaisons and services for students experiencing homelessness. Federal funds are also available through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which requires states and LEAs to plan for how they will support students experiencing homelessness. It also requires LEAs to set aside a portion of their ESEA Title I, Part A dollars for services to these students.[41] Additionally, the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act included funding targeted specifically toward students experiencing homelessness.[42] We describe each of these funding sources.

Table 1
Federal Funding to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness

Federal Funding Source	Funding Amount	Type of Funding
McKinney-Vento	$129 million in 2022−23	Dedicated annual
American Rescue Plan Act	$800 million in 2021−22	Dedicated one-time
Discretionary Set-Aside of ESEA Title I, Part A Funds	Amount set aside for students experiencing homelessness varies by district [a]	Annual discretionary set-aside

[a] This amount was previously not tracked at the national level, but as of the 2022–23 school year it will be collected by the U.S. Department of Education.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education. (2022). Department of Education budget tables; American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, H.R.1319, 117th Cong. (2021); 20 U.S.C. § 6313(c)(3)(C) (2022).

McKinney-Vento Funding for Students Experiencing Homelessness

McKinney-Vento provides annual grants to states to support programs for students experiencing homelessness.[43] Between 2010 and 2023, funding for the McKinney-Vento program increased from $65.4 million to $129 million, a $63.6 million (97%) increase.[44] (See Figure 3.)

Despite these increases, the McKinney-Vento investment remains small in terms of dollars per student experiencing homelessness. While funding is not distributed to states on a per-pupil basis, attention to this amount is helpful to underscore the level of inadequate funding. Alongside increases in funding between 2010 and 2020, the population of identified students experiencing homelessness increased by 39%. Over the past decade, the McKinney-Vento investment has varied from a low of $50 per identified pupil in 2013–14 to a high of $79 in 2019–20. Overall, between 2010 and 2020, funding per pupil has increased only a small amount—from $71 per identified pupil to $79 per identified pupil.[45] This funding represents a fraction of what districts must actually spend to meet students' needs.

Figure 3
Annual Federal McKinney-Vento Funding, 2009−10 to 2022−23
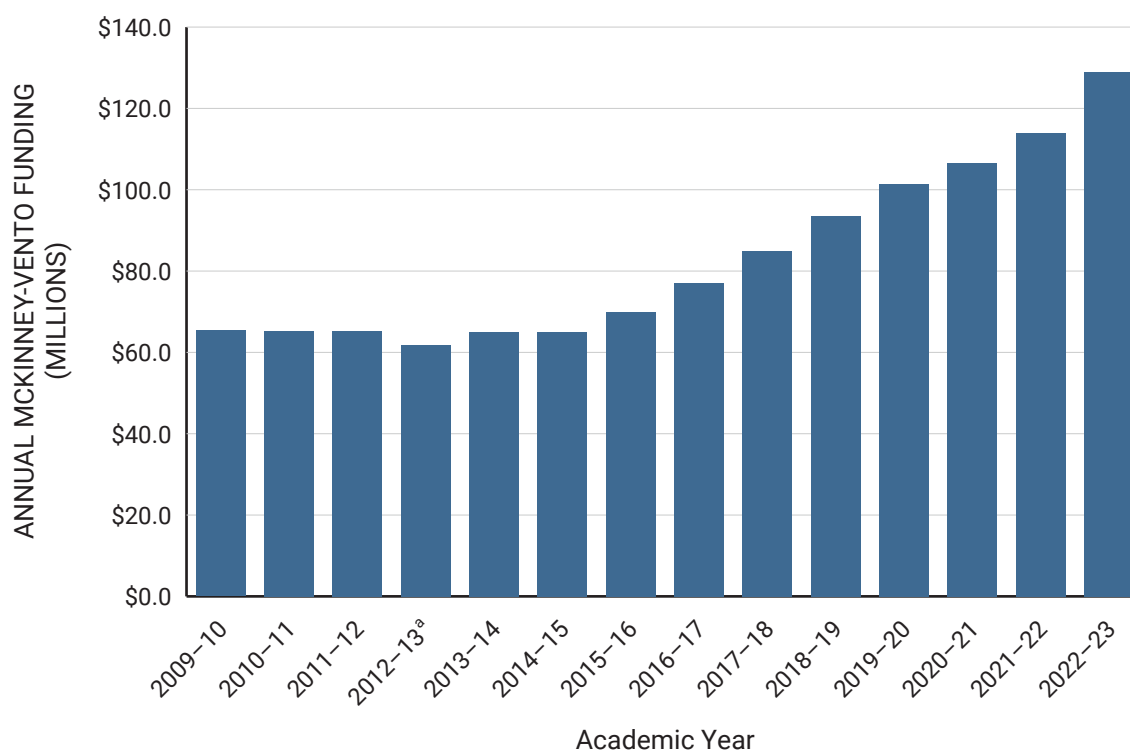
a Originally budgeted at $65.2 million, but the amount was reduced due to sequestration.

Source: U.S. Department of Education. (2022). Department of Education budget tables. https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/tables.html (accessed 07/28/22); Public Law No. 117-328, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023.

This per-pupil amount corresponds to the number of students that schools have identified as experiencing homelessness, not the actual number of students experiencing homelessness—which is greater. Improved identification would yield a still lower federal per pupil amount, underscoring the extent of need. To put these funds into perspective, in the 2020–21 school year, public schools received just over $801.6 billion in revenue from local, state, and federal sources—which means that McKinney-Vento funding accounts for just over 1/100th of 1% (0.013%) of the revenue that schools received, even though students identified as experiencing homelessness comprise 2.5% of all students and have a wide variety of needs.[46]

McKinney-Vento funds are distributed to states based on their proportions of Title I, Part A funding, which is distributed to states based on four different formulas. These formulas measure the number of students from low-income families, the concentration of students from low-income families in the population, the amount of educational funding provided by each state, and the degree to which education expenditures among LEAs within the state are equalized.[47] Because the McKinney-Vento funding formula is not based on number of students identified as experiencing homelessness,

there is large variation in the per pupil amount each state receives to support students experiencing homelessness. While McKinney-Vento allocations to states equated to $79 per identified student experiencing homelessness overall,[48] the amount of funding per identified student ranged greatly at the state level, from $38 in Utah to $287 in Vermont. (See Appendix A.)

States must distribute at least 75% of McKinney-Vento funds to LEAs based on a competitive grant process.[49] Subgrants are to be based on need and quality of the application, and the duration may be up to 3 years.[50] States have flexibility in how they distribute the remaining 25% of funds. Because the limited amount of funds is distributed through a competitive process, most districts do not receive funds—in fact, fewer than 24% of LEAs (4,497 out of 18,844 in 2019–20) do.[51] Table 2 below provides an example of this uneven distribution of funding across a state using information from California. In 2019–20, of the 10 districts in the state with the highest number of students experiencing homelessness, only 5 received a district grant, and per-pupil allocations for districts receiving funding ranged from $24.35 to $50.72.[52]

Funded districts tend to be large districts that serve proportionately more students, including students experiencing homelessness. Prior research has found that receipt of funding may drive improved identification of students experiencing homelessness.[53] Using U.S. Department of Education data, we estimate that, in 2019–20, the districts that received McKinney-Vento federal funding educated approximately 63% of all students experiencing homelessness.[54] That means that over one third of all students experiencing homelessness were educated in districts that do not receive a McKinney-Vento grant.

> Prior research has found that receipt of funding may drive improved identification of students experiencing homelessness.

Of the districts that did receive McKinney-Vento funding, the average district grant was approximately $21,455.[55] To put this into perspective, the average pay for public school instructional staff in 2019–20 was $66,038, which means that the average McKinney-Vento grant would cover only about one third of one full-time teacher's salary.[56] As noted above, all LEAs must designate one of their staff members—who may also be a coordinator for other federal programs—as the homeless liaison, regardless of whether they receive federal funding.

Table 2
McKinney-Vento Funding for the 10 California Local Education Agencies With the Largest Cumulative Enrollment of Students Experiencing Homelessness, 2019–20

School District	2019–20 Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness	2019–20 McKinney-Vento Funding	2019–20 LEA McKinney-Vento Funding per Pupil
Los Angeles Unified	10,266	$250,000	$24.35
San Diego Unified	8,075	$0	$0
Moreno Valley Unified	6,546	$250,000	$38.19
Santa Ana Unified	6,516	$250,000	$38.36
San Bernardino City Unified	6,327	$0	$0
Long Beach Unified	6,304	$0	$0
Norwalk-La Mirada Unified	4,929	$250,000	$50.72
Redlands Unified	4,257	$0	$0
Capistrano Unified	3,742	$0	$0
Pomona Unified	3,671	$175,000	$47.67

Notes: Districts without federal McKinney-Vento funding either did not apply for, or were not awarded, a McKinney-Vento grant. Cumulative enrollment of students experiencing homelessness for Los Angeles Unified School District shows a 46% decline from that reported the previous year.

Sources: Learning Policy Institute analysis of Cumulative Enrollment Data, 2019–20, from the California Department of Education. https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/filesenrcum.asp (accessed 10/13/22). Information about McKinney-Vento funding is available from the California Department of Education. https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/hs/cy/funding.asp (accessed 11/23/22).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title I Set-Aside

The federal government requires LEAs to set aside some ESEA Title I, Part A funding for programs serving students experiencing homelessness and other high-need students.[57] LEAs may determine the set-aside amount "based on a needs assessment of homeless children and youths in the local educational agency, taking into consideration the number and needs of homeless children and youths."[58] Because LEAs are not required to base their Title I set-asides on a needs assessment, there is no consistent, data-based approach for LEAs to determine how much funding to target for students experiencing homelessness. The lack of such a system could result in a wide variation in the amount of funding each district sets aside for students experiencing homelessness. In addition, the actual amount of funding set aside has not, until the 2022–23 school year, been required to be reported publicly by the LEA or the state.[59]

In the fiscal year 2021 and 2022 bipartisan appropriations bills, Congress urged the Department of Education to support state education agencies (SEAs) in developing plans to (1) monitor the required reservation of funds by LEAs—both the amount and its use—to support students experiencing homelessness (and other vulnerable students), and (2) provide technical assistance to LEAs in using these funds to support students experiencing homelessness.[60] In addition, Congress encouraged the Department of Education to provide greater transparency on required LEA plans to support students experiencing homelessness, specifically that such plans should describe the amount of funds reserved, how that amount was determined, and the amount of the prior year's reservation spent on students experiencing homelessness. The fiscal year 2023 bipartisan appropriation bill builds on the last two. It requires the U.S. Department of Education to provide technical assistance to state and LEA Title I directors about the required Title I reservation to support students experiencing homelessness and how such funds can be effectively used to support these students. Likewise, the Department is required to work with states to increase transparency on the amount of funds LEAs are required to reserve.[61]

American Rescue Plan Act

In March 2021, the federal government passed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). In addition to ARPA Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds, ARPA contains $800 million in new, one-time funding to states for students experiencing homelessness.[62] The U.S. Department of Education distributed the first $200 million of funding for this program to states based on their relative Title I, Part A payments.[63] States can retain up to 25% of this funding for state-level programs, and the remainder was to be distributed by states to LEAs on a competitive basis according to McKinney-Vento requirements. The federal Department of Education encouraged states to use funding for state-level activities to, for example, provide subgrants to community-based organizations well positioned to connect rural, LGBTQ+, and Native American students to wraparound supports; provide technical assistance to districts that have not received McKinney-Vento funding; and increase supports for summer learning opportunities.[64]

The second round of funding, $600 million, was distributed to states and was then, in turn, awarded to districts based on formula subgrants. The formula weighs a combination of districts' relative Title I, Part A payments and their identified enrollment of students experiencing homelessness in 2018–19 or 2019–20, whichever is greater.[65] ARPA represents a major investment. Although these were one-time funds and not all districts received similar per-pupil amounts, the total funding equated to about $625 per student experiencing homelessness based on 2019–20 counts.

State Funding for Students Experiencing Homelessness

Given the low level of federal investment in services for students experiencing homelessness, we also examined state investments. We reviewed all 50 state K–12 education funding formulas and budgets to understand what, if any, additional state resources are being targeted to support students experiencing homelessness. We found that while many states provide funding for students experiencing poverty, which includes most students experiencing homelessness, few allocate additional resources specifically to support students experiencing homelessness.[66] For example, states may allocate additional resources based on student eligibility for free or reduced-price meals or concentrations of such students. Students experiencing homelessness are categorically eligible for free meals. However, because such strategies do not provide additional funding for students experiencing homelessness beyond what other students from low-income backgrounds receive, we excluded them from consideration here. For example, while Ohio explicitly allows at-risk funding to be spent in support of students experiencing homelessness, this is just one of many allowable uses.[67]

Only four states have specific funding sources intended for students experiencing homelessness: California, Massachusetts, New York, and Washington. (See Table 3.) Three of these states (California, New York, and Washington) provide general support funding for students experiencing homelessness, and two of these states (Massachusetts and New York) provide additional resources via transportation funding. All of these states except California provide ongoing funding to support students experiencing homelessness—California provided these dedicated resources as part of pandemic relief.

> Only four states have specific funding sources intended for students experiencing homelessness: California, Massachusetts, New York, and Washington.

Annual state funding ranges from $87 per identified student experiencing homelessness in Washington to approximately $1,015 in Massachusetts. In California, the state dedicated one-time funding that equated to $1,000 per student experiencing homelessness. These additional state dollars are helpful but may not be adequate to meet student needs. For example, a 2019 Washington state audit estimated that school districts spend $28.6 million on essentials such as homeless liaison positions, professional development, and student transportation, yet were provided only $2.5 million in funding.[68]

Table 3
State Funding to Support Students Experiencing Homelessness

State Funding	Funding Amount	Type of Funding	Number of Identified Students Experiencing Homelessness (2019–20)
California	$183.3 million	One-time	246,350
Massachusetts	$23.0 million	Annual	22,648
New York	$22.6 million	Annual	143,329
Washington: Homeless Student Stability Program	$2.0 million	Annual	36,685
Washington: Homeless Student Stability education Program	$1.2 million	Annual	

Sources: Washington State Laws of 2022, Chapter 297 § 128 & 522; Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (n.d.). FY 2023 budget: FY 2023 final budget; S.B. 8003D, Aid to Localities Budget, NY Leg. Reg. Sess. (2022); A.B. 86, 2021–2022 CA Leg. Reg. Sess. (2021); California Department of Education. (2021). *2020-21 enrollment by ethnicity and grade*. DataQuest. https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dqcensus/EnrEthGrd.aspx?cds=00&agglevel=state&year=2020-21&ro=y; National Center for Homeless Education. (2021). *Student homelessness in America: Schools years 2017–18 to 2019–20*. https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Student-Homelessness-in-America-2021.pdf (accessed 02/07/22).

California

In 2021, the California Legislature passed A.B. 86 amid widespread in-person school closures, which, among other things, appropriated in one-time funding to districts $1,000 per student experiencing homelessness.[69] The fall 2020 statewide count of students experiencing homelessness on which this funding was based indicates that the state identified over 183,000 students experiencing homelessness.[70] These funds were to be used to provide supplemental instruction and support to students and to aid with school reopening. Allowable uses include extended learning time, accelerated learning strategies, summer school, tutoring or one-on-one support, professional development, integrated pupil supports (including health, counseling, and social-emotional well-being supports), and community learning hubs. While this per-pupil allocation is generous compared to other states, it is structured as a one-time payment to districts rather than ongoing funding.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts' school funding formula includes a transportation reimbursement for school districts providing transportation that helps enable students experiencing homelessness to attend their schools of origin.[71] The state allocated just under $23 million for this purpose in fiscal year 2023.[72] Reimbursement is limited to the costs

of transporting students to and from school once a day for each day of instruction. The state has identified almost 23,000 students experiencing homelessness. If funds are distributed evenly, this amounts to approximately $1,015 per identified student experiencing homelessness.[73]

New York

New York allocated $22.6 million to support the direct cost of educational and transportation services provided to students experiencing homelessness in fiscal year 2023.[74] Pursuant to federal law, this includes transportation to a summer educational program and extracurricular activity. The state has over 143,000 identified students experiencing homelessness. If evenly distributed, state funding equals about $157 per identified student experiencing homelessness.[75]

Washington

In 2016, Washington established the Homeless Student Stability Program, which provides two kinds of competitive grants to support students experiencing homelessness. The first grant, the Homeless Student Stability education Program (HSSeP), is offered by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and provides $2.4 million over 2 years, with maximum awards of $80,000 per district per year.[76] Grant funds are intended to increase identification of students experiencing homelessness and increase district capacity to support these students.

The HSSeP operates as a competitive grant program. Greater weight is given to applicants who demonstrate a commitment to partnering with local housing organizations, serving the needs of unaccompanied youth, or implementing evidence-informed strategies to address systemic inequities that impact students experiencing homelessness and students of color.[77] A study of the program showed that grant recipients spent the funds on increasing identification efforts, building relationships to streamline referrals, increasing staff capacity to support students, and offering training to community providers.[78]

The second competitive grant is offered by the Department of Commerce and funded at $2.0 million in fiscal year 2023.[79] The goal of the grant is to provide educational stability by promoting housing stability within students' school districts and to encourage the development of sustainable, collaborative strategies between housing and education partners.[80] These strategies can include developing cross-system data sharing agreements, increasing access to tutoring, and strengthening attendance monitoring for students experiencing homelessness.[81] Grant recipients provided rental assistance to families, formalized agreements between nonprofit and school district partners, and increased collaboration and more efficiently shared resources across agencies.[82]

A 2021 evaluation report found that 473 households, including 761 students, were served by the program. The most common uses of flexible funding provided to households were rental assistance (46% of total dollars), support for move-in costs (24%), hotel or motel expenses (13%), debt reduction (4%), and essential household needs (4%). During the evaluation 385 households exited the program—over two thirds of total enrollments. Two hundred-fifty-four households (66%) exited to a permanent housing setting, while 82 (21%) remained in unstable housing. The remaining 49 households (13%) had missing data.[83]

The evaluation also noted several challenges. School closures due to COVID-19 limited referrals and identification. Additionally, limited rental housing, rising rents, and obstacles for undocumented families or families with no or unfavorable credit histories complicated efforts to stably house recipients.[84]

In total these two programs are providing an additional $3.2 million to support the state's nearly 37,000 identified students experiencing homelessness and their families. To give an estimate of the scale, these two programs amount to $87 per identified student experiencing homelessness in the state.[85]

Most states do not provide additional resources for students experiencing homelessness through their school funding formulas or related PreK–12 budgets. For the states that do—California, Massachusetts, New York, and Washington—these targeted resources make them notable.

Policy Recommendations

The housing instability faced by students experiencing homelessness is associated with a range of acute needs that impact their education. They often face issues with transportation, food security, health care, and emotional and mental health. The multiple challenges associated with homelessness also have negative impacts for student learning outcomes. To meet these many needs, the federal government requires local educational agencies (LEAs), under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, to provide students experiencing homelessness with a set of educational services, including transportation to and from the school they attended when permanently housed and referrals to services from other agencies. To in turn provide the necessary support to students experiencing homelessness, LEAs need to have targeted and consistent funding for homelessness programs.

Our research has found that few states provide dedicated funding for programs to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness. Further, the federal funds provided are either limited or provided only on a one-time basis. For example, federal McKinney-Vento funds equate to only $79 per student experiencing homelessness, with subgrants lasting 1 to 3 years, while the more generous American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) program provides nonrecurring funding. Another issue identified in our work is that not all districts serving large numbers of students experiencing homelessness receive McKinney-Vento funding. The current competitive funding process excludes many districts—and, thus, many students who need services—from receiving federal funding. Districts need adequate capacity and resources to identify and support students experiencing homelessness. Prior research has shown that districts that receive funding were able to provide essential items, transportation, academic services, and physical and mental health supports, among other things; however, even these districts believed they lacked resources to identify and fully serve all students experiencing homelessness.[86]

> The current competitive funding process excludes many districts—and, thus, many students who need services—from receiving federal funding.

These findings point to the lack of funding as one of the primary barriers to providing students experiencing homelessness with the education that they are entitled to and need. Because the most effective way to mitigate the negative effects of experiencing homelessness on students is to prevent it, policymakers should ensure that financial resources are available to communities and schools to help keep students and their families housed. Preventing homelessness could be supported by adopting policies that help eliminate child poverty, such as the 15% increase in household Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and expansion of the Child Tax Credit included in the American Rescue Plan Act, as well as increasing funding for and expanding access to policies that support affordable housing, such as a renter's tax credit or expansion of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program.

In addition to adopting policies that help students avoid experiencing homelessness, federal and state policymakers can consider increasing funding, making changes to funding distribution, expanding allowable uses of federal funding, and improving the quality of information about the use of funds. Four potential strategies include:

1. **Increase federal and state funding to help LEAs implement the federal protections, services, and supports afforded to students experiencing homelessness.**

   McKinney-Vento funding provides districts with only limited funds to provide needed staffing and services for students experiencing homelessness. Further, many districts receive no targeted federal resources to support these students. Only four states supplement these federal dollars with targeted state funds. Policymakers at both the federal and state levels should consider increasing their investments to support students experiencing homelessness. Funding should consider the costs to LEAs associated with meeting the multiple needs of students experiencing homelessness as well their obligations under the McKinney-Vento Act. This may include a district homeless liaison; school-level liaisons; identification and immediate enrollment; providing transportation to and from the school they attended when permanently housed; supplies; and providing ready access to a web of supports, such as social-emotional, health, and housing services.

   a. **Federal funding**

      At the federal level, annual funding for the McKinney-Vento program ($129 million for fiscal year 2023) should be substantially increased to allow LEAs to meet the law's mandates. While additional research is needed to help determine the exact amount of funding necessary to support the educational needs of students experiencing homelessness, a good starting point would be to use the $800 million in ARPA funding for the ESSER-Homeless Children and Youth Program as a baseline for future annual financing. This would provide just over $600 per pupil based on the number of students identified as experiencing homelessness in the 2019–20 federal data collection.

   b. **State funding**

      At the state level, states should provide consistent funding that complements federal funds and is targeted to local needs. State policymakers have several potential vehicles for funding assistance for students experiencing homelessness. One option is for states to develop a weighted student funding formula that includes a weight, or dollar amount, for students experiencing homelessness. Another option—as Massachusetts and New York have done—is to include additional state funding specifically targeted toward supporting students experiencing homelessness. A third option, which Washington has employed, is to provide grants to communities to coordinate services across local agencies that serve students and families

experiencing homelessness. Whichever approach is used, the funding should be consistent and designed to supplement federal funding in ways that address acute needs in the given state and local context.

2. **Consider revising the McKinney-Vento funding formula to target funds, at least in part, based on the enrollment of students experiencing homelessness.**

The current McKinney-Vento allocation formula, funding level, and competitive grant process results not only in too few dollars but also in (1) wide variation in the amount of funding that goes to states per student experiencing homelessness, and (2) most districts not receiving a McKinney-Vento grant. Combined with an increase in overall McKinney-Vento funding levels, shifting allocation away from using only a competitive grant structure and toward an entitlement model based—at least in part—on the number of students experiencing homelessness in each LEA could help distribute funds to support the needs of far more students experiencing homelessness. The allocation of $800 million in ARPA funds for students experiencing homelessness was a step in this direction: Funds were distributed in part through competitive grants ($200 million) and in part through entitlement subgrants ($600 million), the latter of which took into account the actual numbers of students identified as experiencing homelessness. Regardless of approach, there are a couple of factors to be considered in any revised McKinney-Vento funding formula:

- **Basing funding at least in part on the number of students experiencing homelessness could provide an incentive for districts to better identify and support students in need**. However, because many districts do not have the resources to identify all of their students experiencing homelessness, to promote fairness, a new funding system may need to be initially based both on the actual count of students experiencing homelessness and on a count of the number of low-income students in the district.

- **Aiming for funding that is more stable and predictable from year to year could help districts better meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness.** Prior research indicates that stability in school funding is essential to support LEAs' instructional and operational costs.[87] A revised formula could shift from being solely a competitive grant program to one that guarantees funding to districts with sufficient numbers of students experiencing homelessness. To further promote funding stability, the revised formula might be based on 3-year rolling-average counts of students experiencing homelessness.

Such changes, especially when combined with substantially increased funding to enable LEAs to meet their McKinney-Vento obligations, would help ensure that every student experiencing homelessness gets the support they need and are entitled to.

3. **Expand allowable uses of federal funds for supporting students and families experiencing homelessness.**

    Federal policymakers could also increase supports for students experiencing homelessness by better aligning the federal definitions of "homeless" used by the federal housing and education programs. Using different definitions can make it difficult for local agencies to provide comprehensive wraparound supports to students and their families experiencing homelessness.[88] Federal policymakers could align the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) definition of "homeless" used for homeless assistance programs with the one established by the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program.[89] This would enable students who are living in motels or who are staying doubled up with other families to qualify for housing and homeless assistance administered by HUD.

    Another strategy for increasing supports for students and their families experiencing homelessness is to expand the allowable uses of funds of the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. This might include allowing payment for emergency utilities or rent, emergency medical expenses that compete with rent, or emergency hotel stays when no shelter is available. These supports may help prevent families from becoming unhoused or facing a disruptive move.

4. **Improve the quality of information about the use of funds to assist students experiencing homelessness.**

    States and LEAs could help students experiencing homelessness by promoting greater use of data on existing uses of funds in order to support continuous improvement and inform technical assistance. Starting in the 2022–23 school year and for the following 2 school years, the U.S. Department of Education will require state education agencies (SEAs) to report how much funding LEAs are reserving under the Title I set-aside to support students experiencing homelessness and the number of students served.[90] The U.S. Department of Education could make this reporting permanent and also require LEAs to report data to SEAs about how they are spending the funds. SEAs could leverage McKinney-Vento's state reservation to support capacity to review these data. SEAs could use data to identify promising approaches to disseminate and to guide technical assistance to all LEAs, including those not yet receiving McKinney-Vento funding.

Conclusion

Approximately 1.3 million public school students in the United States were identified as experiencing some form of homelessness in 2019–20. Due to their unstable living situations, these students often have additional educational, social, emotional, and material needs. Yet there is a mismatch between the federal requirements established to meet the needs of students experiencing homelessness and the federal and state resources available to fulfill them. More than one in three students experiencing homelessness attend school in districts that receive no dedicated federal funding to support this student group. In those districts that do, the level of funding is insufficient for the level of need. Further, only four states provide additional state resources to support these students. Federal and state policymakers can take a range of actions to bring greater resources, transparency, and alignment to help address barriers to providing students experiencing homelessness with the equitable education experience to which they are entitled.

Appendix A: McKinney-Vento Funding per Identified Student Experiencing Homelessness, 2019–20

State	Total Funding 2019–2020	Identified Students Experiencing Homelessness 2019–20	Students Experiencing Homelessness as a % of All Students 2019–20	Funding per Identified Student Experiencing Homelessness 2019–20
Utah	$498,670	13,223	1.9%	$37.71
Oregon	$907,854	22,336	3.7%	$40.65
Washington	$1,500,093	36,685	3.2%	$40.89
Missouri	$1,584,472	34,942	3.8%	$45.35
Colorado	$944,685	20,821	2.3%	$45.37
Idaho	$356,430	7,835	2.5%	$45.49
Nevada	$868,537	18,264	3.7%	$47.55
Oklahoma	$1,209,971	25,010	3.6%	$48.38
District of Columbia	$313,082	6,332	7.0%	$49.44
California	$12,204,082	246,350	4.0%	$49.54
New York	$7,282,547	143,329	5.3%	$50.81
West Virginia	$616,624	10,394	3.9%	$59.32
Massachusetts	$1,482,673	22,648	2.4%	$65.47
Florida	$5,702,319	79,357	2.8%	$71.86
Montana	$309,596	4,265	2.8%	$72.59
Wisconsin	$1,264,057	17,220	2.0%	$73.41
Arkansas	$1,015,036	13,339	2.7%	$76.10
Kentucky	$1,688,526	21,620	3.1%	$78.10
Minnesota	$1,069,511	13,295	1.5%	$80.44
New Hampshire	$284,055	3,518	2.0%	$80.74
Illinois	$4,095,516	47,445	2.4%	$86.32
New Mexico	$793,182	9,033	2.7%	$87.81

State	Total Funding 2019−2020	Identified Students Experiencing Homelessness 2019−20	Students Experiencing Homelessness as a % of All Students 2019−20	Funding per Identified Student Experiencing Homelessness 2019−20
Kansas	$672,709	7,650	1.5%	$87.94
Texas	$10,087,967	111,411	2.0%	$90.55
Michigan	$3,012,610	32,935	2.2%	$91.47
Alaska	$290,704	3,126	2.4%	$93.00
Hawaii	$334,148	3,586	2.0%	$93.18
Indiana	$1,616,074	17,324	1.6%	$93.29
North Dakota	$253,750	2,675	2.3%	$94.86
Georgia	$3,441,819	35,538	2.0%	$96.85
Virginia	$1,708,412	17,496	1.3%	$97.65
Maryland	$1,580,787	15,548	1.7%	$101.67
Iowa	$627,264	6,042	1.2%	$103.82
North Carolina	$2,915,982	27,044	1.7%	$107.82
Nebraska	$442,081	4,084	1.2%	$108.25
Tennessee	$2,015,328	18,482	1.8%	$109.04
Arizona	$2,091,980	17,386	1.5%	$120.33
Ohio	$3,621,759	30,060	1.8%	$120.48
Delaware	$332,869	2,709	1.9%	$122.88
Pennsylvania	$4,048,513	31,876	1.8%	$127.01
Louisiana	$2,109,921	15,533	2.2%	$135.83
Alabama	$1,636,580	11,578	1.6%	$141.35
Maine	$333,330	2,302	1.3%	$144.80
Wyoming	$253,750	1,747	1.8%	$145.25
South Carolina	$1,711,223	11,736	1.5%	$145.81
South Dakota	$309,596	2,015	1.4%	$153.65
Mississippi	$1,318,266	7,973	1.7%	$165.34

State	Total Funding 2019–2020	Identified Students Experiencing Homelessness 2019–20	Students Experiencing Homelessness as a % of All Students 2019–20	Funding per Identified Student Experiencing Homelessness 2019–20
New Jersey	$2,239,747	12,741	0.9%	$175.79
Connecticut	$896,000	4,183	0.8%	$214.20
Rhode Island	$336,224	1,531	1.1%	$219.61
Vermont	$253,750	883	1.0%	$287.37

Note: The McKinney-Vento program also included funding for American Samoa ($31,623), Guam ($34,264), Northern Mariana Islands ($19,115), Puerto Rico ($2,402,839), and the Virgin Islands ($16,498), as well as a Bureau of Indian Education set-aside ($1,015,000). This table uses 2019–20 funding and student count data because the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the identification of eligible students in the 2020–21 school year.

Sources: Learning Policy Institute calculations based on data collected by the National Center for Homeless Education. National Center for Homeless Education. (2021). Student homelessness in America: School years 2017–18 to 2019–20. https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Student-Homelessness-in-America-2021.pdf (accessed 03/23/22); U.S. Department of Education. (2021). Budget history tables. https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/history/index.html (accessed 12/02/22).

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