

Locating Education Data Resources to Support Homeless Students

There are many benefits of a data-driven approach to administering the McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth program. A data-driven approach ensures that goals are attainable and measurable, and brings stakeholders together around a common goal. This is especially important when working with students experiencing homelessness, as the urgency of housing emergencies can pull attention away from long-term goals for student success. To ensure the academic success of students experiencing homelessness, it is important for homeless liaisons, administrators, parents, and community providers to understand data about this student population; however, it is often challenging for stakeholders to locate and interpret available data about these students. This fact sheet provides important details to help ensure that stakeholders have the information needed to support the academic development of homeless students.

Available Data

Currently, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) collects the following data related to the education of students experiencing homelessness:

- the number of students experiencing homelessness in each grade;
- the number of students experiencing homelessness and the number of unaccompanied homeless youth based on their primary nighttime residence;
- the number of students experiencing homelessness based on race/ethnicity;
- the number of students experiencing homelessness who are unaccompanied, migratory, English learners, or receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA);
- the number of students experiencing homelessness who are chronically absent;
- math, reading/language arts, and science assessment scores for students experiencing homelessness;
- adjusted cohort graduation rates (ACGRs);
- the number of young children experiencing homelessness who are served by McKinney-Vento subgrants; and
- the number of students experiencing homelessness who are served through schoolwide or targeted assistance programs under by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

In order to meet other state and federal data reporting requirements, state educational agencies (SEAs) also collect data related to discipline, reasons why students receive services under IDEA, advanced placement courses, gifted and talented participation, career and technical education, and types of diplomas received by students. While these data do not include a subgroup for students experiencing homelessness, data systems used by SEAs can typically generate reports that cross reference those topics with homelessness.



Accessing Data

Data are made available in a number of ways to both the public in general and to state coordinators. Any data released to the general public by SEAs or ED has had privacy protections applied to it, while data released securely to state coordinators by the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) includes all data that was submitted to ED.

- ED made basic enrollment data for homeless students available to the general public at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/data-files/school-status-data.html>. Data include School Years (SYs) 2013-14 through 2018-19 and are provided for each local educational agency (LEA).
- ED Data Express provides the general public access to data specific to homeless students as well as other programs funded under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act at both the LEA and SEA level. In addition to basic enrollment data, ED Data Express provides information on academic achievement, students served by McKinney-Vento subgrants, and information on grantees. ACGRs for students experiencing homelessness were added to ED Data Express starting with SY 2017-18.¹ Information is also included on the number of chronically absent homeless students starting with SY 2017-18, and ED plans to add SY 2016-17 to the site. These data are updated annually and are available at <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/>.
- ED releases national performance measures as part of the President's Budget Request for each upcoming fiscal year. The performance measures include national rates for reading and math achievement, ACGRs, and chronic absenteeism rates for homeless students. The budget request is released each year by October 1st and includes the latest available data at the time these measures are calculated. It is available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/index.html>.
- The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) includes a profile for each state on its website at <https://nche.ed.gov/data/>. By clicking on states included in the U.S. map, the general public can see the state coordinator's contact information and other basic enrollment data. The profiles also include a link to state tables with funding allocations for all states provided by ED.
- Each state now includes the number of students experiencing homelessness on its SEA website. In addition to the overall count of students, state report cards² provide the general public with information on the academic achievement and ACGRs for students experiencing homelessness. By visiting a state's profile on the NCHE website, the public can quickly find each state's homeless education webpage.

¹ The Every Student Succeeds Act includes a requirement for LEAs and SEAs to report ACGR information for students experiencing homelessness.

² State report cards are required under Title I, Part A of the ESEA.



- Each year, NCHE publishes a *Federal Data Summary* that can be found online at <https://nche.ed.gov/data-and-stats/>. It includes extensive data on students experiencing homelessness for each state but does not include individual LEA data.
- NCHE maintains a secure extranet for state coordinators. Information included on the extranet includes simple analyses of homeless student and related education data in both Excel workbooks and Tableau maps. The password protected extranet may be accessed at <http://nche.seiservices.com/Extranet/LoginS.aspx>.

Data Sources

Regardless of how the data is accessed, all of the data available through the ED and NCHE resources listed above come directly from the ED*Facts* data warehouse, which contains LEA and SEA data submitted to ED by ED*Facts* coordinators in collaboration with state coordinators, homeless liaisons, and LEA data managers. Any exceptions, such as the information on the percentage of children living in poverty provided on the state profile pages, include a source for the data.

Discrepancies in Reported Data

NCHE occasionally receives questions regarding why published data is not consistent from publication to publication or with data published by other agencies like the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). While the concern in those instances is that education data may not be accurate, there are several other reasons why data may not be consistent across publications:

- The information may have been pulled from the ED*Facts* data warehouse on different dates. For example, states may update data submitted to ED for a period of two years, but a report may be written using data extracted from ED*Facts* prior to the update.
- One report may use LEA level data aggregated to represent the state while another uses data that has had duplicate counts of students removed to more accurately represent homelessness for the entire state as opposed to individual LEAs. This is an important differentiation since homeless students are highly mobile and may attend more than one school district within a state during the school year.
- The methods used to gather the information may not be the same. For example, the data ED receives from LEAs and SEAs represents a cumulative count. As such, it includes any student who was homeless at any point during the year, but it does not include estimates of students experiencing homelessness. On the other hand, HUD uses point in time counts that include homeless persons identified on a particular date set by HUD each year. HUD data may also include estimates of homelessness based on these counts.



Additional Resources

NCHE publishes a *Guide to Collecting and Reporting Federal Data* each year at <https://nche.ed.gov/data-collection/> that provides a more in-depth look at data collected by ED and potential pitfalls to avoid in data collection efforts. Additionally, NCHE designed a manual to help state coordinators identify priority areas for program growth by walking through a series of considerations for developing goals and using data. This manual, *Getting to Graduation: Tools for Using Data to Support Student Success*, is available at <https://nche.ed.gov/getting-to-graduation/>. Finally, NCHE developed a tipsheet outlining statutory requirements and recommended practices that SEAs can use to ensure their websites meet requirements but remain user-friendly. It is available as a state coordinator resource at <https://nche.ed.gov/resources/>.

