



National Center for  
Homeless Education

<https://nche.ed.gov>



## A Closer Look at File Specifications: FS 194

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) developed a series of briefs focused on ensuring data submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) meet quality standards and conform to program requirements. As the sixth in the series, this brief provides information about the data collection and submission process for File Specification (FS) 194: Young Children Served (McKinney-Vento).

### Data Collected by FS 194

FS 194 includes data group 818: Young Homeless Children Served (McKinney-Vento). It provides information on how to report the number of young children who experienced homelessness<sup>1</sup> and received services as a result of McKinney-Vento subgrant funding. This information is provided by age groups including those aged

- birth to two years old and
- three to five years old but not enrolled in Kindergarten.

When submitting data to ED, the state educational agency (SEA) should provide a count of young children for each local educational agency (LEA) that received a McKinney-Vento subgrant and a separate count for the SEA. Children should be reported for each LEA they received services from, but they should only be included once for the SEA data.

### Important Dates

FS 194 is due by December 21, 2022, for School Year 2021-22. Once the data have been submitted to ED, the information will undergo a data quality review. States will then have the opportunity to submit data again as needed; the due date for data resubmission is typically in late March.

### Data Quality Checks

During the data quality review, information submitted by states will be compared to the Business Rules Single Inventory (BRSI). The full BRSI, which contains rules for all data submitted through *EDFacts*, is available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/edfacts/business-rules-guide.html>.

The questions below are based on rules pertaining to FS 194 contained in the BRSI. State coordinators, *EDFacts* coordinators, and others reviewing data included in FS 194 can use them to validate their data. If any question results in a response of no, state coordinators should investigate the reason and work with liaisons or the data staff submitting information to make corrections prior to submitting information to ED. If upon further investigation, the data are determined to be correct, state coordinators should work with *EDFacts* coordinators to submit explanatory comments with the data.

<sup>1</sup> As defined by 42 U.S.C. § 11434a(2).

## Completeness

- Did all LEAs in the state that received a McKinney-Vento subgrant report data, including charter schools and specialty LEAs like supervisory unions and regional education service agencies?
- Do all LEAs and does the state data set include all the required data elements, including the number of young children in each age category who experienced homelessness and received McKinney-Vento funded services?

## Accuracy Across Years

- Using LEA data, calculate the statewide total of young children served who were three to five years old but not enrolled in Kindergarten for the current and previous school years. If there were more than 500 children reported during the previous school year, did the number of children reported change less than 30% between the current school year and previous school years?
- Using LEA data, calculate the statewide total of homeless students enrolled in school using the education unit total for each LEA for the current and previous school years and the percent change in the number of enrolled students between the current and previous school year. If there were more than 500 children reported as served during the previous school year, is the difference between the percent change in the number of young children served who were three to five years old but not enrolled in Kindergarten and the percent change in the number of homeless students enrolled in school less than 10 percentage points?
- If there were more than 500 children reported as served during the previous school year at the SEA level who were aged three to five but not enrolled in Kindergarten, did the number of children reported as served change less than 30% between the current and previous school years?
- Using SEA data, calculate the percent change in the number of homeless students enrolled in school using the education unit total for the current and previous school years. If there were more than 500 children reported as served during the previous school year, is the difference between the percent change in the number of young children served who were three to five years old but not enrolled in Kindergarten and the percent change in the number of homeless students enrolled in school less than 10 percentage points?

## General Data Quality Notes

All HCY counts included for FS 194 must be cumulative. Counts that only reflect the number of young children served by McKinney-Vento subgrants at the beginning or end of the school year are considered erroneous. Young children who received services as a result of McKinney-Vento funds should be included even if the services were provided during the summer.

Young children who are served by McKinney-Vento funds should be included in the count provided to ED regardless of whether they are enrolled in public schools. Because many states do not include information for young children experiencing homelessness in their student management systems unless the children are enrolled in school, state coordinators must work with liaisons and their data managers to collect this information directly. As a result, state coordinators also need to work with liaisons, their data managers, and SEA data stewards to ensure counts of children are unduplicated. While a child may be included in more than one LEA count, the SEA level count of young children served by McKinney-Vento subgrants should only count each child one time. If an SEA is unable to unduplicate the data, the SEA must submit a data quality note indicating this issue.

The definition of *services* includes both

- direct services included as allowable expenses in Section 11433(d) of the McKinney-Vento Act and
- indirect services such as those provided by a staff member whose position is supported by McKinney-Vento funds and who is involved in the administration of the McKinney-Vento program but does not necessarily provide direct services.

Examples of direct services include the provision of developmentally appropriate preschool programs that are not otherwise covered by federal, state, or local funding, referrals for services, or the provision of expedited evaluations of the needs and eligibility of children for programs and services. An example of an indirect service includes

professional development activities for which a staff member's time is paid by McKinney-Vento funds when the outreach results in an increase in the identification of young children who experienced homelessness by others in the LEA.

## Providing Notes About Quality

SEAs are required to respond to the feedback sent to them by ED during the data quality review. Additionally, SEAs are allowed to submit comments with their data to explain why the data may be outside expected ranges. The comments should be concise, explain a problem or large change contained within the data, explain why data have not been submitted, or explain steps the SEA is taking to correct the data. The three most common mistakes SEAs make with regard to including comments with their data are:

1. using the same comment that was used for the previous collection window, even though it is out of date and no longer relevant;
2. including comments for a data point that do not apply to that data; and
3. including comments that are unclear or confusing.

The following are examples of comments that help clarify data included under FS 194, and therefore are likely to reduce the number of corrections the SEA will be asked to make:

- The state awarded a new round of McKinney-Vento subgrants during the current school year. The number of LEAs with subgrants was increased. As a result, our number of young homeless children served by McKinney-Vento subgrants increased.
- Our LEAs did not choose to use their McKinney-Vento funds on services for young children who experienced homelessness.
- Our state is providing preschool programs to all students for the first time. As a result of the increased connection to preschool aged children, our number of young homeless children served by McKinney-Vento funds has increased significantly.
- Our state has undertaken a new outreach initiative, working with early childhood education, health and development programs. As a result, our number of young homeless children served by McKinney-Vento subgrants have increased significantly.
- Professional development was provided by the state coordinator to subgrantee LEAs on identifying and providing services to young homeless children. As a result, our number of young homeless children served by subgrants has increased significantly.
- As a result of a high number of new homeless liaisons in subgrantee LEAs who were unaware of the need to identify and serve young homeless children, our number of young children served by McKinney-Vento subgrants decreased significantly.
- Two communities in our state lost a significant number of jobs when two large manufacturers were forced to lay off employees. This impacted our count of young children served by McKinney-Vento subgrants.
- We encountered an error in the system and were unable to complete the upload. Partner Support has been contacted for assistance (Ticket No. XXXX).
- SEA data include duplicate counts of students. (This information must be provided if a state is unable to provide an unduplicated count for the SEA.)

The following are examples of comments that are vague, do not indicate what steps were taken to address the concern noted by ED during the data review, or indicate that the SEA violated a rule included in the file specs, and are therefore likely to result in a data flag:

- Young homeless children counts were estimated as a percentage of preschool children with disabilities.
- In response to an error message: Data are correct.
- In response to an error message: This is the same methodology we used last year.
- Homeless counts are based on young children who were homeless on (date).

## Public Availability of Data

While data are aggregated and do not include personally identifiable information, they are made available to the public in order to increase transparency, identify technical assistance and programmatic needs, and provide information to policymakers. The following list is not all inclusive as LEAs, SEAs, and other non-governmental organizations may also release information on the education of students experiencing homelessness, but it provides several examples of how data submitted to ED are released to the public.

- ED Data Express is a website hosted by ED to improve public access to data at the district and state levels. Data on the number of young homeless children served by McKinney-Vento subgrants and related notes on data quality can be accessed by visiting <https://eddataexpress.ed.gov/> and selecting the green Download button and then the green Reset Filters button. Choose options for state, level (LEA or SEA), school year, file specification, and homeless subgroup to create a downloadable file. School Year 2020-21 data for young children who experienced homelessness are currently available for LEAs and SEAs. SEA data are also available for previous years; LEA data for previous years will be added in late August or early September of 2022.
- Federal Data Summaries published by NCHIE have historically included information on the number of young children served by McKinney-Vento subgrants. These reports are available at <https://nche.ed.gov/data-and-stats/> and <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/education-for-homeless-children-and-youths-grants-for-state-and-local-activities/performance/>.
- Early Childhood Homelessness State profiles published by ED include national and state data on children under age six using multiple data sources. The profiles present data at the national level and in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The profiles are available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oeped/ppss/reports.html#homeless>.



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