

The Data Collection Process and Students Experiencing Homelessness

Each year, states are asked to meet a number of legislative requirements under Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act) related to providing demographic and outcome data for children and youth experiencing homelessness (McKinney-Vento Act sections 434(d), 434(f), 434(h)(1)). Collecting data allows state coordinators and local liaisons to assess their implementation of the McKinney-Vento Act. Data also provide critical information that can be used to assess the educational development of children and youth experiencing homelessness and design interventions that support learning. Similarly, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) uses data to determine the effectiveness of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program and provide technical assistance to states.

The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) developed a series of briefs focused on ensuring data submitted to ED meets quality standards and conforms to program requirements. This brief provides an overview of the data collection process by addressing who is responsible for data collection, how and when data are reported, what to expect as a result of ED's data quality checks, and what resources or help are available.

Responsible Parties

Collecting data requires teamwork within the local educational agency (LEA), within the state educational agency (SEA), and between entities. The process requires the following steps:

- Once liaisons identify students in coordination with other LEA staff members and community agencies, they must either enter relevant information into the student data system or provide the information to another staff member for entry. Liaisons also track information on the number of young children served by McKinney-Vento subgrants.

It is critical that liaisons review data before the LEA's submission to the SEA to ensure it accurately represents students experiencing homelessness and the LEA. Similarly, state coordinators should review all data before submitting information to EDPass or the CSPR.

- LEA data managers submit data to the SEA. They coordinate with liaisons to verify the data's accuracy and completeness and draft comments on data quality for the SEA.
- State coordinators work with SEA data managers to provide LEAs with guidance on what data to collect, when to collect it, and how to submit it. This information should be provided to liaisons in a format that they can easily share with others in their districts. State coordinators also review data and provide information for data quality notes to the *EDFacts* coordinators and *EDPass* submitters.¹
- *EDFacts* coordinators and *EDPass* submitters work with state coordinators to submit data and related quality comments to ED. They also work with state coordinators to plan changes to state data systems that could impact data quality and cross-train LEA staff.

CSPR coordinators work with state coordinators to submit manual entry data and data quality comments required for the Consolidated State Performance Report (CSPR).²

How Data Are Reported

Most EHCY data are reported using *EDPass*, an online tool based on topical data groups (DGs), which contain specific pieces of information that ED gathers from the SEAs. For example, DG 655 includes demographic data on the number of students experiencing homelessness, their primary nighttime residence, and the subgroups they belong to.

File specification guidance, or file specs, outline the rules for submitting data in the specific DGs and provide information about changes from previous versions of the file spec. For example, FS 118 contains the rules for submitting DG 655. DG 655 contains data about homeless students enrolled in public schools. In contrast, the rules for submitting information about young homeless students served by McKinney-Vento subgrant funds, which is DG 818, are outlined in FS 194. Data about students served by McKinney-Vento subgrant funds require a separate data group and file spec because not all young homeless students who are served are also enrolled in public school districts, and not all homeless enrolled students are served by McKinney-Vento subgrants.

¹ *EDPass* submitters may include SEA staff or contractors designated by the *EDFacts* coordinator. They extract data from the SEA's state longitudinal data system, input the information into *EDPass*, answer questions about the data, or address programming issues that arise during data submission or collection.

² The CSPR is a statutorily required report that combines the reporting requirements for the McKinney-Vento Act with those required for Elementary and Secondary Education Act programs to reduce the burden on SEAs completing their annual reports.

File Spec Number	File Spec Name	Data
FS 037	Title I SWP/TAS participation	DG 548
FS 118	Homeless students enrolled	DG 655
FS 151	Cohorts for four-, five-, six-, seven-, eight-, nine-, and ten-year adjusted cohort graduation rates	DGs 696, 698, 756, 851, 855, 853, 857
FS 150	Four-, five-, six-, seven-, eight-, nine-, and ten-year adjusted cohort graduation rates	DGs 695, 697, 755, 850, 852, 854, 856
FS 170	McKinney-Vento subgrant recipient	DG 754
FS 175	Academic achievement in mathematics	DG 583
FS 178	Academic achievement in reading/language arts	DG 584
FS 179	Academic achievement in science	DG 585
FS 185	Assessment participation in mathematics	DG 588
FS 188	Assessment participation in reading/language arts	DG 589
FS 189	Assessment participation in science	DC 590
FS 193	Title I allocations	DG 886
FS 194	Young homeless children served	DG 818
FS 195	Chronic absenteeism	DG 814

Table 1. Data group and file specifications containing data on homeless children and youth

In addition to providing guidance on the specific data points that must be submitted to ED, the file specs describe which education units must provide data. For example, current file specs require that SEAs submit two data files for most data groups that include EHCY data: one that provides data for each LEA and another that provides data for the SEA. Data submitted at each level must be unduplicated to the extent possible. For example, LEAs must remove repetitive counts of individual students who have enrolled in more than one school within the LEA. Similarly, if a student attends more than one LEA, the SEA should only include the student once when submitting the SEA count of students. Removing multiple counts of individual students is essential to program management and development, as including the same student multiple times distorts the representation of homeless

students and their needs. While ED collects most data using EDPass, states enter the number of LEAs that reported data directly into the CSPR. Each state is required to have one CSPR coordinator but may grant access to additional system users. As a result, some state coordinators may be expected to review manual entry information and coordinate the submission of this information with another system user; other state coordinators will be expected to enter information into the report.

When Data Are Reported

State coordinators should work with the data manager assigned to handle the collection of EHCY data to confirm the timeline for LEAs submitting data to the SEA. Some SEAs collect data once at the end of the school year or at the start of the next year; others collect data more often. Regardless of when data are collected, it is very difficult to correct errors after the end of the school year. For this reason, state coordinators, liaisons, and data managers need to complete frequent checks on data as they are collected and reported.

SEAs usually begin submitting EHCY data in EDPass in November of each year. Data are submitted on a rotating schedule based on their content and the reports they are used to complete.

Part I of the CSPR includes the majority of the EHCY program data. Part II includes data on the number of homeless students served by Title I, Part A programs, as well as information on the adjusted cohort graduation rates (ACGR) of students experiencing homelessness. ED will announce due dates for the CSPR later this year.

Important Dates

FS 037, 150, 151, and 193 will likely be due by February 2027 for School Year (SY) 2025-26. All other files related to the EHCY program will likely be due in January of 2027. Files are usually enabled in EDPass in November 2026 and may be submitted at any time between then and January 2027. These data will be submitted via ED's new data submission system, [EDPass](#).

Once Data Are Submitted

After states submit their ED*Facts* data, it will be used to populate or complete the CSPR. In addition to the data submitted through ED*Pass*, SEAs may submit explanatory comments to inform the reader of any known errors in the data or variables that may have impacted it. Data submitted to ED*Pass* are automatically checked against a list of rules contained in the [Business Rules Single Inventory](#) (BRSI). The rules account for differences between states, such as the size of a student population. Moreover, many are cross-file comparisons between the homeless enrollment file and the assessment, adjusted cohort graduation rate, or chronic absenteeism files. When the counts of children and youth experiencing homelessness in these last three files are less or more than the homeless enrollment counts by grade level in the SEA or LEA file, this discrepancy triggers a business rule requiring an explanatory comment. Furthermore, some business rules flag significant increases or decreases in year-to-year comparisons. Data that violate the rules included in the BRSI will be immediately flagged. States may not submit data in ED*Pass* until the error is addressed by submitting corrected data or a note explaining the discrepancy.

It is very important that state coordinators, ED*Facts* coordinators, CSPR coordinators, liaisons, and LEA data managers work together before submitting data to ensure that the data are of high quality and to review the BRSI before submission. The data collection guides in this series also cover relevant business rules for each file or cross-file comparison and can provide support in this review. If a potential error is noted during the submission process, it is equally important for the data staff, the state coordinator, and liaisons to work together to identify reasons for anomalies in the data and respond to ED's request for a response during the data review period. Any remaining errors become a permanent part of the state's data and are included in future reports.

Resources and Help

The collection and coordination of data, along with the use of that data to improve student outcomes, can be a daunting challenge. As a result, several resources are available to state coordinators and other stakeholders in the data process:

- NCHE staff can answer questions about data elements and their definitions, as well as questions about effective practices for the collection and use of data. Such practices could include using data to inform subgrant competitions, utilizing technical assistance offered by the state coordinator and program partners, monitoring program performance, and facilitating interagency coordination at the state or local levels. For assistance, contact NCHE at nche.helpline@safalpartners.com.

- The Partner Support Center (PSC) is available to assist states with technical difficulties when submitting data in EDPass, such as requesting help with a password reset or when a file fails to upload correctly. The PSC is available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday, by email at EDFacts@ed.gov. The EDFacts Community offers resources, tips, and other data announcements online at <https://edfacts.communities.ed.gov/#program>.
- The list of all current, past, and upcoming file specifications is available at <https://www.ed.gov/edfacts-file-specifications>.



May 2026

The National Center for Homeless Education operates the U.S. Department of Education's National Technical Assistance Center for Homeless Education (NTACHE). The contents of this brief were developed under a contract with ED; however, these contents do not necessarily reflect ED's views or policies.